

EMPEROR (PARENTAL CARE) PENGUINS OF ANTARCTICA

By Dr.M.Vasantha B.V.Sc&A.H

Introduction: Antarctica, a natural laboratory and global barometer, is ideal for monitoring and understanding the changing climate. Hence every country is trying to step their feet in South pole. The fauna of Antarctica especially Penguins population are declining due to climate change

Emperor Penguins: Emperor penguins are the tallest and heaviest of the 18 penguin species. They can weigh up to 88 pounds (40 kilograms) and stand 45 inches (1.1 meters) tall. They live close to the Antarctic coastline, breeding on the permanent ice sheet (this is declining due to global warming) or fast ice during the Antarctic winters. A female emperor lays one egg per breeding season, then passes it over to her male partner to incubate while she forages for food for about a two-month period. Male takes care of the egg and waits for the female in starving condition. Once the female bird returns, she shares parenting duties with her partner until their chick leaves the colony about 150 days after birth. The chick is then able to look after itself and set out for open water to forage. But first, the chick must shed its down before growing the waterproof feathers it uses to swim — if it's still covered in down when the ice breaks, it'll sink and drown. Emperor Penguins, extreme example of parental care in the world.



A post card released in a presentation pack by India post on 40 th expedition to Antarctica . This picture shows a colony of Emperor penguins on ice.

The stamps below issued by Australian post shows penguins with their chick (released in 1992) and others showing the flightless birds as a colony (2 nd one 1988, 3 rd stamp 1985)



Conclusion: It is our responsibility to conserve these rare species. If we are not taking care of our environment, our next generation will not know these mighty birds.