Plight of the Penguins
Stars of *Happy Feet* face decline in population as Antarctic climate warms

By Laura Leigh Davidson | December 13, 2007

1 The majestic Emperor penguins, stars of the movie *Happy Feet*, are facing a serious decline in population. As the climate of their home on the Antarctic Peninsula gets warmer, the ice on which the penguins raise their chicks is literally melting away. The Emperors are not the only penguin population under pressure. Chinstraps, Gentoo, and Adélie are all finding themselves pushed into a smaller area as arctic sea ice melts. Many colonies have decreased in population by 50 percent, according a report released this week by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

2 The report, *Antarctic Penguins and Climate Change*, also cites diminishing food supply as a reason for the decline in the penguins' population. The decrease in sea ice and overfishing in the area have led to a reduced number of krill—crustaceans that are the main food source for Chinstrap penguins. Increased competition for food makes it difficult for young penguins to survive.

3 "...it seems these icons of the Antarctic will have to face an extremely tough battle to adapt to the unprecedented rate of climate change," says Anna Reynolds, Deputy Director of WWF's Global Climate Change Program.
Too hot, too soon

4 Scientists believe the Antarctic Peninsula is warming five times faster than the average rate of global warming. Warmer winter temperatures and stronger winds mean that the penguins have had to raise their chicks on increasingly thinner sea ice. Because temperatures are warming sooner than ever, sea ice breaks off earlier in the penguins' breeding season. Many eggs and chicks have been blown away before they were ready to survive on their own.

5 "Having just returned from the Antarctic, I've witnessed what is happening to the penguins there," says Dr. Lara Hansen, Chief Scientist of WWF's Global Climate Change Program. "The warming climate means warmer, wetter air and too much snow at the wrong time of year. Penguins have to wait for snow to melt and they are breeding later—much too late," she added. Hansen believes the competition for territory and food among the different species is "a recipe for disaster." As WWF released its report on Monday; Dr. Hansen made a plea to the leaders meeting at the United Nations Climate Conference in Bali, Indonesia, this week. "The delegates…have a chance to protect Antarctica's penguins and many other species, but they must act now," she said. The UN conference in Bali will come to an end on Friday. Negotiations over a new agreement on global warming have been the central focus, and reports say the debate has been intense. The European Union is pushing for an agreement that contains specific limits on the amount of pollutants that can be released into the environment by automobiles, factories, and power plants. The U.S. delegation is reluctant to enter into such an agreement at this time, and believe more negotiation is needed.

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Monday
Part A:
1. What is causing the penguin population to decrease?
a. The polar bears are taking over the Antarctic Peninsula.
b. The krill that penguins eat are swimming away.
c. The climate is not changing.
d. The temperatures are warmer and the ice is melting.

Part B: Which detail best supports your answer for Part A? Circle ALL answers that apply.
a. “Many colonies have decreased in population by 50 percent…”
b. “Increased competition for food makes it difficult for young penguins to survive.”
c. “…stars of the movie Happy Feet, are facing a serious decline in population.”
d. “…climate of their home on the Antarctic Peninsula gets warmer, the ice on which the penguins raise their chicks is literally melting away.”

Tuesday
Part A:
2. What does the author mean in this sentence, “Increased competition for food makes it difficult for young penguins to survive.”
a. Because there are less krill, the penguins are fighting for food.
b. The penguins are racing to see who can swim the fastest.
c. There are no krill for the penguins to eat.
d. Because the penguins are competing the krill are leaving the Antarctic.

Part B: Which detail best supports your response for Part A? Circle ALL answers that apply.
a. “…diminishing food supply as a reason for the decline in the penguins' population.”
b. “The decrease in sea ice and overfishing in the area have led to a reduced number of krill…”
c. “…sea ice breaks off earlier in the penguins' breeding season.”
d. “Many eggs and chicks have been blown away before they were ready to survive on their own.”

Wednesday (Writing) Writing MUST be done to earn full credit. Complete on the writing page.
Write a letter to the WWF (World Wildlife Fund). In your letter give some suggestions about what you think should be done to help the penguin population. In your letter include the following:
✓ What are your feelings about what is happening in the Antarctic Peninsula and the change in the climate?
✓ What do you think the WWF can do to help the penguins?
✓ What do you think the world would be like if the penguin population were to become extinct?

Thursday
Part A:
3. Based on the article you can tell that Dr. Lara Hansen-
a. wants to create a penguin recipe.
b. wants to build the penguins a new home.
c. likes to visit the Antarctic.
d. is concerned about the penguin population.

Part B: What is the meaning of the word reluctant in paragraph 5?
a. getting mad or upset
b. in a hurry
c. unwilling
d. never

Friday
Part A: What is the BEST main idea of the section “Too Hot Too Soon”?
a. The penguins chicks are dying.
b. Dr. Hansen is worried about the penguins.
c. The Antarctic Peninsula is becoming too warm for penguins to survive.
d. The WWF will not do anything to help the penguins.

Part B: Which detail best supports your answer for Part A? Circle ALL that apply.
a. “As the climate of their home on the Antarctic Peninsula gets warmer, the ice on which the penguins raise their chicks is literally melting away.”
b. “The U.S. delegation is reluctant to enter into such an agreement at this time, and believe more negotiation is needed.”
c. “Dr. Hansen made a plea to the leaders meeting at the United Nations Climate Conference in Bali, Indonesia, this week.”
d. “Scientists believe the Antarctic Peninsula is warming five times faster than the average rate of global warming.”

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Wednesday’s Writing Prompt

**Wednesday (Writing) Writing MUST be done to earn full credit.**
Write a letter to the WWF (World Wildlife Fund). Your letter must be at least 3 paragraphs long.

**REMEMBER that a PARAGRAPH has 4-6 SENTENCES!!**
In your letter give some suggestions about what you think should be done to help the penguin population.
In your letter include the following:

- What are your feelings about what is happening in the Antarctic Peninsula and the change in the climate?
- What do you think the WWF can do to help the penguins? How will your suggestions help?
- What do you think the world would be like if the penguin population were to become extinct?
- Your letter must also be formatted correctly with a letter heading, greeting, body, and closing.
- Be sure to check your writing for spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

Article taken from [http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3748563](http://www.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=3748563)
Comprehension Log for the week of December 1, 2014.
Comprehension logs are for an assessment grade and all questions MUST be answered for full credit, including the writing or reading response.

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