Adaptations of Penguins

This is a reading comprehension about penguins that children can use to fact-find about how penguins are adapted to their environment. They can use the information to label the image of a penguin with the adaptations it has to enable it to survive in Antarctica.

The extension task will require access to the internet or relevant research books.

Adaptations of Penguins

Introduction

Penguins are pretty amazing birds. There are at least 18 different species of penguin. Although there are so many different species, they all have many things in common including the fact that they are flightless, excellent swimmers and can be found in wild colonies in the Southern Hemisphere.

Looking Smart

The colouring of penguins is often referred to as a tuxedo. However, there is more to their complexion than just looking dapper. In fact, having white bellies and black backs is an adaptation to help penguins hide from predators while they swim! If a predator was above a penguin when it was swimming, the penguin's black back would help camouflage it against the ocean floor. If a predator was swimming underneath a penguin, the white belly would help to camouflage the penguin against a cloudy sky.

Keeping warm

Many penguins live in extremely cold conditions and they have many adaptations to help them to stay warm, aside from the well-known penguin huddle! Penguins have a thick layer of blubber (fat) which helps to protect them against the cold. They also have tightly packed feathers which help to keep the cold wind off of their skin. Penguin feathers are also covered in an oily substance which keeps the ice-cold water away from their skin!

Super Swimmers

Penguins spend a lot of their lives in the water, so they have become incredible swimmers. Their wings have become flippers which help to propel the birds through the water. They also have webbed feet which help them to swim better.

Adaptations of Penguins

Challenge
Label all the adaptations penguins have that allow them to survive in their environment.
Can you explain why each of those adaptations helps penguins to survive?

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

.....
.....
.....

Adaptations of Camels

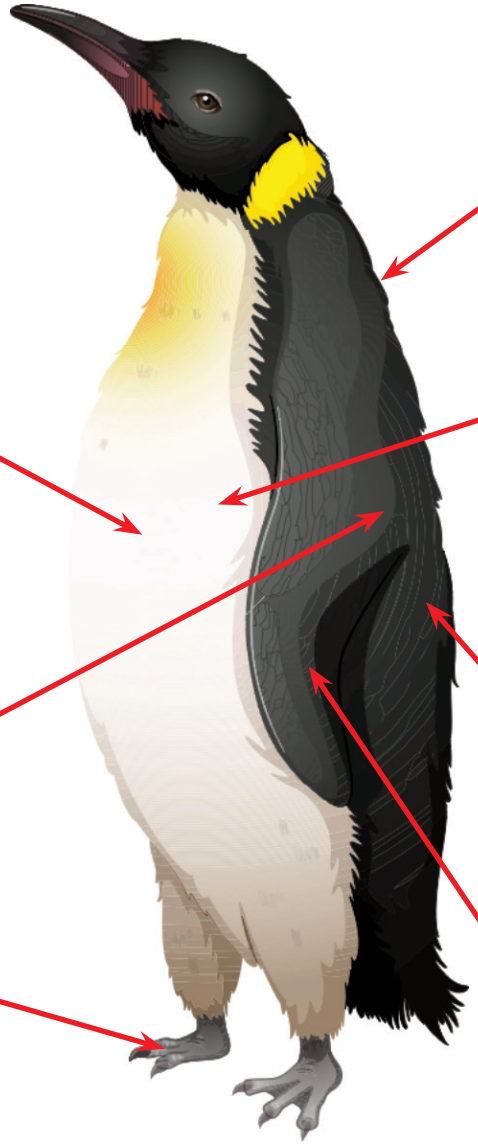
Extension

Can you research the adaptations a camel has that enable it to survive where it lives?
Draw a picture of a camel and label it with the adaptations you've found.

Answers

Adaptations of Penguins

Challenge
Label all the adaptations penguins have that allow them to survive in their environment.
Can you explain why each of those adaptations helps penguins to survive?



White bellies to camouflage against the sky, to hide from predators swimming underneath.

Black backs to camouflage against the sea floor, to hide from predators swimming above them.

Webbed feet to help them to swim better.

Oily feathers to keep the ice-cold water off their skin, which will keep them warm.

Thick blubber to help keep them warm.

Tightly packed feathers to help to keep them warm by keeping the wind off their skin.

Flippers instead of wings to help them to swim faster.

Answers

Adaptations of Camels

Extension
Can you research the adaptations a camel has that enable it to survive where it lives?
Draw a picture of a camel and label it with the adaptations you've found.

Camel adaptations include:

- Wide feet for walking in sand.
- Long eyelashes to keep sand out of the eyes.
- Closable nostrils to keep sand out of the nose.
- They store fat in their humps, which they can use as an energy 'bank' when food is hard to find.
- Can survive for a long time without eating or drinking.
- Thick fur which reflects light, prevents camels from overheating and from sunburn.