

African Penguins, Boulders Beach, Simon's Town, South Africa.

Source: Journal of Coastal Research, 38(6)

Published By: Coastal Education and Research Foundation

URL: <https://doi.org/10.2112/0749-0208-38.6.i>

The BioOne Digital Library (<https://bioone.org/>) provides worldwide distribution for more than 580 journals and eBooks from BioOne's community of over 150 nonprofit societies, research institutions, and university presses in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences. The BioOne Digital Library encompasses the flagship aggregation BioOne Complete (<https://bioone.org/subscribe>), the BioOne Complete Archive (<https://bioone.org/archive>), and the BioOne eBooks program offerings ESA eBook Collection (<https://bioone.org/esa-ebooks>) and CSIRO Publishing BioSelect Collection (<https://bioone.org/csiro-ebooks>).

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Digital Library, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Digital Library content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non-commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne is an innovative nonprofit that sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.



www.JCRonline.org

COVER PHOTOGRAPH



www.cerf-jcr.org



African Penguins, Boulders Beach, Simon's Town, South Africa. The African penguin, *Spheniscus demersus*, is closely related to the temperate penguins of South America (the Humboldt penguin, the Galapagos penguin, and the Magellanic Penguin), and these four species are together known as the banded penguins. The African penguin is critically endangered and breed only in Namibia and South Africa. Currently, only two percent of the African penguin population that existed in the early 1900s remains today, with fewer than 20,000 breeding pairs left in the wild (13,300 of these are located in South Africa). As seen in the photograph above, African penguins can be found year-round on Boulders Beach in Simon's Town, South Africa. Around November, more penguins from near False Bay (which Simon's Town overlooks), in addition to other areas along the southern coast of South Africa and as far as Namibia, begin landing on the beach to molt. Single penguins will find mates, and couples, both new and established, will start breeding in January or February. By April, the colony swells to approximately 1,000 breeding pairs, with nests carpeting the beach and spreading into residential gardens around the town.

With a typical lifespan of 20 to 30 years, African penguins begin breeding between the ages of four and six. The birds lay one or two eggs at a time and can raise up to two broods per year. Eggs incubate for about 40 days before they hatch. When the chicks are several weeks old, both parents will go to sea and the chicks will stay on land in a *creche* (or "penguin daycare"), sometimes with an adult standing guard. At three or four months, the chicks begin to fledge, as their feathers are now waterproof, and they can swim without drowning. The parents leave them on their own on the beach and the fledglings head out to sea with others their age. The penguins travel long distances, often heading out to the north and to the west and can stay out at sea for up to a year. Only 35 to 40 percent of all fledglings survive the first year at sea. These survivors return to land to molt into their adult plumage. The Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds (SANCCOB) is an important organization for the survival of these birds. The SANCCOB has researchers, veterinarians, rangers, and rehabilitators devoted to studying, rescuing, and rehabilitating African penguins, as well as hand-rearing chicks when abandoned eggs are found on the beach. (Photograph taken in April 2014 by Chris Makowski, Coastal Education and Research Foundation (CERF), Charlotte, North Carolina, USA.)