

LITTLE PENGUIN

Eudyptula minor

Little (or Fairy) Penguins are flightless seabirds. They use their modified wings, called flippers, for swimming. Little Penguins are the smallest of all the 17 penguin species; approximately 33cm tall and weigh around 1 kilogram. They are the only penguins with blue & white feathers instead of black & white feathers. Penguins moult once a year to replace their old & worn feathers.

DISTRIBUTION & HABITAT

The Little Penguin is the only species of penguin native to Australia. They can be found from Fremantle in WA through southern Australia & as far north as Coffs Harbour. They spend approximately 80% of their lives at sea, returning to land to breed, moult and rest. When ashore they usually live in social colonies.

DIET

They can eat about 30% of their body weight (approx. 300g) of small fish daily such as Anchovies, Red Cod, Pilchards and Squid. They usually travel between 10 to 30km daily to feed & swim at speeds of between 4 - 9 kph. An average dive in search of fish is between 5 & 20 metres (the deepest dive recorded is 72 metres). Their scientific name - *Eudyptula minor* - means 'good little diver'. They can hold their breath for 2 minutes.



LIFE EXPECTANCY & BREEDING

The average lifespan is 7 years but there have been recorded cases of Little Penguins living to 26 years. They reach sexual maturity at 2 -3 years. Breeding season is from June to October. 2 eggs are usually laid, hatching after 33 -37 days. Chicks leave the nest when they are fully fledged at 7-9 weeks and head to the ocean to mature.