

CAN I SEE A PENGUIN ON THE WEST COAST?



Blue penguins move between sea and shore under cover of darkness, so you're unlikely to see them, but look for their prints when you walk the beach, especially in the early morning. Penguin tracks head straight for the sea and the lines of footprints are easy to see, most commonly during the breeding season, around July to December.



PHOTO: TUI DE ROY
Fiordland crested penguins inhabit some of the remoter parts of South Westland. If you are fortunate enough to come across them, stay still and hidden as they are very timid when on land.

All West Coast penguins are easily disturbed, potentially abandoning chicks, so please remember:

- + Don't go looking for their burrows, or approach birds on their nests
- + If you see penguins, use binoculars and observe from a distance, hiding so they can't see you
- + Be quiet and stay still or move slowly
- + Keep dogs away from penguin nesting areas, generally coastal vegetation; dogs kill penguins
- + Moulting birds look scruffy and may look sick as they shed the old and grow new feathers each year. Leave them alone as this is the most stressful time in a penguin's year (approximately December to March for both species).



www.bluepenguin.org.nz



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

If you drive on coastal roads:

- + **slow down** in areas where penguins cross roads at night, particularly the coast road between Punakaiki and Charleston, between Hokitika and Kumara Junction, around Cobden, and on **all roads near the sea**

If you are a dog owner, dogs and penguins can safely share the beach if you:

- + keep your dog under **direct control** at all times
- + ensure your dog cannot roam freely if you live near the beach
- + keep your dog **away from the dunes** or coastal vegetation where penguins may be nesting
- + enjoy the beach during **daylight hours** when penguins will generally be at sea or in burrows
- + take special care at **dawn and dusk** when penguins may walk between the sea and their burrows
- + keep your dog under direct control and preferably on a leash at all times in coastal areas south of Bruce Bay, as Fiordland penguins come and go at all times of day and night

Support West Coast Penguin Trust; your contribution will make a difference.

The West Coast Penguin Trust has been protecting penguins, other seabirds and the coastal environment since 2006. The Trust is a charity and we need your help to continue this urgent work as populations of penguins and seabirds continue to decline.

Follow the QR code or go to www.bluepenguin.org.nz/donate

Email info@bluepenguin.org.nz for more information or to join our newsletter mailing list.



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WEST COAST PENGUINS



West Coast
Penguin Trust
www.bluepenguin.org.nz

Protecting penguins, other seabirds and the coastal environment, with your help

There are two penguins on the West Coast, the blue penguin, which nests in scattered colonies along much of the coast, and the Fiordland crested penguin, which is found in South Westland. Both are protected native species.



NESTING HABITS

Fiordland Crested	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Nest Occupation												
Egg Laying												
Chick Raising												
Moult												

Blue Penguins	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Burrow Occupation												
Egg Laying												
Chick Raising												
Moult												

THE COOL DUDE

The Fiordland crested penguin, or tawaki, is 'Nationally Endangered' and possibly the second or third rarest penguin in the world.

QUICK FACTS

- + Nest only in coastal temperate forest of South Westland, Fiordland and Stewart Island,
- + Population estimated to be 2500-3000 pairs
- + 60cm tall, weigh an average of around 4kg, with a distinctive yellow crest
- + Nest in hollows under fallen trees, roots, boulders or in rock crevices
- + In common with other crested penguins, tawaki lay two eggs. The larger one hatches first, generally producing the only surviving chick.
- + Eggs hatch in September and chicks meet up to form groups or crèches after about three weeks
- + The chicks fledge at around 75 days old and most penguins are at sea between March and late June or early July
- + Prey includes squid, krill and fish

These rare penguins are at risk from fisheries bycatch, introduced predators and human disturbance.

The West Coast Penguin Trust is leading one project and supporting other research to better understand the ecology of and the threats to these penguins.

These penguins could become extinct in our lifetime. With your help, we can help ensure these endangered penguins survive.



THE LITTLE GUY

The blue penguin or korora, is the world's smallest penguin at about just 33cm tall, weighing a little over 1kg. Their numbers are declining due to the persistent threats from roadkill, dogs, fisheries bycatch, habitat loss and introduced predators.

QUICK FACTS

- + Blue penguins are found in many places around New Zealand and southern Australia
- + There are two species, the Australian penguin in Australia and Otago, and the New Zealand penguin elsewhere in New Zealand
- + Small colonies of up to 40 breeding pairs are found scattered along the West Coast in both rural and urban areas
- + They come ashore after dusk and leave before dawn, commonly nesting in burrows, rock crevices and caves, in nest boxes and under buildings
- + They can travel up to 75km at sea in a day, pursuit diving for their prey, including small fish and squid

The West Coast Penguin Trust has, through trapping predators, monitoring breeding and recording all known deaths, found that the most significant threats to blue penguins on the West Coast are roadkill and dogs.

The Trust has implemented a variety of practical actions to reduce the risk from these threats, including awareness signs at popular beach access points and fencing on the Coast Road to prevent penguins straying onto the highway.

With your help, we can continue research and implement further practical solutions to protect blue penguins.

