Animal Sanctuary



EXPLORE an AMAZING Antarctic Centre

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Nelson Literacy Directions

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ANIMAL Sanctuary



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1 Are We at the South Pole?

An **Antarctic** Experience

Imagine flying high above snowy mountains. The pilot throttles back the engines and you begin to descend.

Minutes later, you're stepping off the plane. You gather your bags and head outside.

Follow Blue Footprints

You follow a trail of blue footprints on a brick path.

As you walk, you see a giant aircraft used by the United States Antarctic Program. Ahead of you is the building where people prepare to travel to polar stations.

The USA, Italy, New Zealand and other countries all have polar stations here.

An All-Terrain Snow Vehicle

From your right comes the roar of a powerful engine. It is an all-terrain snow vehicle. It rumbles forward on its heavy rubber tracks.



follow these blue footprints



the US Antarctic Program hangar in Christchurch, New Zealand



an all-terrain snow vehicle

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some of the sights that will greet you

The International Antarctic Centre

You have come here to learn about the Antarctic. You will:

- dress in clothing designed for sub-zero conditions
- experience the chilly howl of a polar winter blizzard
- hear the voices of polar explorers
- get up close to the penguins, as they sing, swim and feed together.

You might be wondering if we're at the South Pole … but we're not. We're in New Zealand, 5000 kilometres away.

This is the International Antarctic Centre, in Christchurch, on the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand. Here, visitors can learn about what it's like to be in Antarctica. They can also see little blue penguins.

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2 Feeding Time


waiting for lunch


catching a fish

Still So Fast!
No one would ever guess that almost every one of the penguins at the sanctuary is either injured or has a disability. Some are blind, while some have only one flipper or one leg.



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A **Natural** Diet

Ensuring every penguin receives proper nutrition is an important part of the work of the penguin rangers. This helps to keep the penguins happy and healthy. How do they manage to ensure this is done?

Planning the Food

First, the rangers plan the penguins' food to ensure they get all the nutrition they need. They know that penguins in the wild like to eat small fish and other sea creatures. Small fish, such as sprats, are the main part of the penguins' diet at the sanctuary. This means the penguins' diet is as close as possible to what they would eat in the wild.


sprats


looking for fish

Preparing the Food

In the food preparation area, the rangers measure and weigh sprats and herring. They need to ensure there is enough food for every penguin. Then, at the same time every day, they get ready to feed the penguins.

The 26 little blue penguins also know exactly what time it is – feeding time!



Jo, a ranger

Feeding the Penguins

Jo, one of the rangers, then carries a bucket of sprats and herring over to the pool. Because the penguins catch and eat food underwater, they shuffle to the edge of their huge pool, and dive in.

As you can see, the penguins at the sanctuary are given a healthy, balanced diet to ensure that they live for a long time. The penguins seem to love feeding time, as they dive and turn like torpedoes beneath the water.


diving for fish

Penguin Care

One Fish at a Time

It's important that every penguin is fed properly. Jo doesn't just throw fish into the pool. Instead, she drops the fish into the pool one at a time, in different places.

Jo explains to the visitors why she feeds the penguins one at a time, so everyone understands what is going on.


one at a time

Record the Fish Eaten

As each penguin catches a fish in its beak, Jo calls out its name. A volunteer helper writes down how many fish each penguin eats. By keeping careful records, the rangers can make sure every bird gets enough food every day. By the time the bucket of fish is empty, Jo will know that all 26 birds have had something to eat.


see what is eaten

After Feeding

After feeding time, Jo looks at the list with the helper to check that every bird has been fed. The penguins climb out of the pool. Then they sun themselves on the rocks while they digest their food.


time to digest the food

Extra Care for Penguins

By comparing daily records, the rangers can be sure all the penguins will stay healthy and well fed. They are also able to tell if a bird has lost its appetite or is eating more than usual. This might be a sign of illness or injury, which they can then check out.

PENGUIN SIZE

Little blue penguins are the smallest species of penguin. When fully grown, they stand about 40 centimetres tall and weigh about one kilogram.

Questions and Answers

Before Jo leaves the pool area, she answers questions from visitors who come to the penguin sanctuary. Because feeding time is popular with visitors, Jo can answer many questions like:

"***What does it take to work with penguins?***" asks one visitor.

"***You need to not mind getting dirty,***" says Jo.

Finally, Jo checks her bucket for leftovers, and makes a joke. "***Does anybody want a raw sprat? You have to eat them whole, just like a penguin!***"

The visitors laugh, and head towards the cafeteria. The real human food is much better!


question time

FOOD IN THE WILD

In the wild, penguins eat small fish (like krill), squid, shrimps and other small sea creatures.

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