

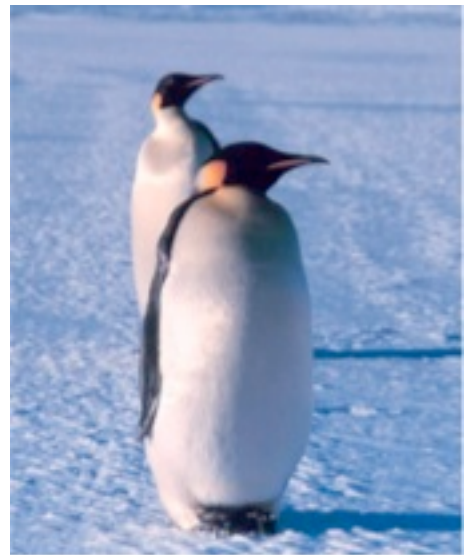
Colour and Survival

As humans have more effects on the Earth, we will play a bigger part in deciding which species survive, say scientists. Our choices are affected by simple things such as colour. With penguins, the most popular ones have markings of red, orange or yellow, said a biologist. The more popular a species is the more likely it will survive.

Researchers studied the popularity of penguins by counting pictures in books about them. How many and which photos to use are made based on what appeals to the public. “Penguins are lucky because they are popular with people ...” said a scientist.

At the top of our “penguin list” are the Emperors, featured in the film “March of the Penguins.” At the bottom are the Adelie, Yellow-eyed and Little Blue. Researchers were surprised by the low popularity of Adelie penguins because they are the most familiar to us. In all, there are 17 penguin species.

The most popular penguins have ‘warm’ colors in the upper body, neck and head. One scientist compared them to “a man in a tuxedo pinning on a red carnation.” Unlike some animals, our liking certain penguins is not decided by how “cute” they are to us.



Emperor penguins (courtesy NOAA)

Colour is not the only factor, things such as small size, or large eyes can also make us like some animals more. For example, pandas or zebras are black and white but are still liked by humans. “Millions of insects” are not as lucky, said a scientist.

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