

Penguin Observations – Teacher Resource

The following set of observation sheets were designed for teachers to use with their students when visiting the zoo. Students may visit the penguins at any time of the day with their small chaperoned groups. Data can then be taken back to class and combined to use in a variety of ways; create graphs, write short stories or observation notes about what they observed while at the exhibit, etc.

There are two different types of observation methods presented in these worksheets.

The *snapshot method* simply has students count the number of penguins they see in the water and on land as they observe the penguin exhibit. This may be used to determine where the penguins spend most of their time or to see if they spend time in the water vs land at different times of the day.

The *ethogram* is a study of an animal's behavior, these are often used by field biologists and zookeepers to monitor animals in their environment. The students make a note of what behavior the penguin is doing at 10 second intervals for 1 minute. Observation lengths may be extended for longer studies (ex. every 30 seconds for 5 minutes).



Do penguins spend more time on land or in the water?(snapshot method)

Go to the penguin exhibit in the Living Shores Aquarium and write down the following information about the penguins you see:

How many penguins are in the water?	
How many penguins are on land?	
What time is it?	



What do penguins do all day? (ethogram)

Once at the penguin exhibit, pick a penguin and note its band color combination. Observe your penguin for 1 minute. At 10 second intervals (have a chaperone keep time – saying “Mark” to the group every 10 seconds) make a check mark next to the behavior being observed.

Possible behaviors include the following:

- Diving under water
- Swimming on the water surface
- Walking on land
- Standing/sitting on land
- Vocalizing (making noise)
- Other

Example

Behavior	10 secs.	20 secs.	30 secs.	40 secs.	50 secs.	1 Minute
Diving Under Water	x					
Swimming on water surface		x	x			
Walking on Land				x	x	x
Standing/Sitting on land						
Vocalizing						
Other						

Identify your penguin observed for the ethogram:

Right Band _____ Left Band _____

Behavior	10 secs.	20 secs.	30 secs.	40 secs.	50 secs.	1 Minute
Diving Under Water						
Swimming on water surface						
Walking on Land						
Standing/Sitting on land						
Vocalizing						
Other						

