



Monterey Bay
Aquarium®



Meet Our African Penguins

Amigo

Amigo hatched at the Aquarium on January 19, 2016. His genetic parents are Bee and Geyser, but he was raised by Walvis and Boulders. He is currently paired with Elizabeth.

What to look for: Amigo has three small dots on his throat. He spends a lot of time in the water. One of our younger penguins, he's very playful and often interacts with guests through the exhibit window, as well as with enrichment items introduced by our staff. He enjoys hanging around people when they clean the exhibit.

Bee

Bee, short for Bumblebee, hatched March 23, 1999 at the Memphis Zoo, and arrived at the Aquarium in 2010. While Bee is one of our smaller penguins, she's also one of our mightiest and very good at defending her nesting area from other birds. Bee and her mate, Geyser, are the biological parents of Amigo, a chick that hatched at the Aquarium and raised by another pair in the colony.

What to look for: Bee has a few white feathers on her back, and her chest is almost completely white. She usually sticks pretty close to Geyser.

Boulders

Boulders hatched April 23, 1994, and arrived at the Aquarium from the Aquarium of Americas in 2000. He's named after Boulders Beach, which is part of the Cape Peninsula National Park in Simon's Town, South Africa—home to more than 2,000 African penguins. Boulders is paired with Walvis, and they've raised several chicks on exhibit, including Amigo. They are one of our most devoted pairs. Boulders is quick to defend Walvis if a staff member approaches the nest box.

What to look for: Boulders has a Y-shaped spot pattern on his chest. His eating style on land is to come up when he wants food, eat pretty fast—a lot of the time with his wings out—then leave; he doesn't hang around. During nesting season, he's an expert gatherer; picking up even the biggest rocks that other birds can't carry to bring back to the nest. He will even try to carry large enrichment items, such as a hula hoop, dropping them if they don't fit into the nest area.

Dassen

Dassen hatched December 29, 1998, and arrived at the Aquarium from the Aquarium of the Americas in 2000. He's named after Dassen Island off the west coast of South Africa, which is home to a major breeding colony of African penguins. Dassen and Seekoei are siblings. He's paired with Umngane, and they are parents to Pebble, the first chick on exhibit at the Aquarium.

What to look for: When Dassen eats on land, he often opens his mouth for staff to place a fish far back into it before he swallows. A line of black feathers on his neck distinguishes him from the rest of the penguins. Dassen is very food motivated, and often one of our star performers in training sessions. He also has one of the loudest brays, or calls, of the entire colony.

Durban

Durban hatched at the Aquarium of the Americas on February 7, 1992, and came to the Aquarium in 2000. He's named after the city of Durban, on the east coast of South Africa. He's one of our oldest penguins and one of the smallest males on exhibit. His sibling is Karoo, and he's paired with Velma.

What to look for: Durban can be a little shy when interacting with staff, but he's still one of our friendlier penguins. The black feather line on the side of his face is noticeably curved, which makes him look like he's wearing white earmuffs. He's good at collecting rocks for a nest but not keeping them—he'll leave his nest unguarded a bit too long and his rocks get stolen. During water feedings, he enjoys getting food directly from staff so you might see them squat down and hand-feed him in the water. He has the softest bray, or call, of the entire colony.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth hatched at the Knoxville Zoo on January 26, 2009, and came to the Aquarium in 2015. She's currently paired with Amigo, but is still pretty independent and can be seen by herself a lot of the time. Her name comes from Port Elizabeth, an area in South Africa known for its pristine beaches.

What to look for: Elizabeth spends a lot of time in the water. She often interacts with the public at the exhibit window. On her abdomen, she has a spot in the shape of a triangle, which has a spot in the center of it.

Geyser

Geyser hatched July 8, 2006, and arrived at the Aquarium in 2010 from the New England Aquarium. He's named after Geyser Rock, a small rocky island off the southern tip of South Africa. Geyser is paired with Bee, and they are the biological parents of Amigo, a chick that hatched at the Aquarium and raised by another pair in the colony.

What to look for: Not the most patient of birds, Geyser often pushes his way to the front when it's feeding time on land. His distinctive markings also make him easy to identify—he's got more black spots on his chest and abdomen than any of the other birds. He's very good at collecting nesting material and usually has one of largest piles of rocks in the colony.

Karoo

Karoo hatched at the Aquarium of the Americas November 2, 1998, and came to the Aquarium in 2000. He's siblings with Durban, and paired with Molopo. (He used to be paired with Messina but she left him for Pringle.) Karoo is the biological parent of Rey, one of the chicks hatched at the Aquarium. He's named after the Karoo plateau that covers much of South Africa.

What to look for: Karoo has an X-shaped spot pattern across his chest. He's comfortable interacting directly with people and is often seen in special programs at the Aquarium. During nesting season, besides cobblestones, another of his favorite nesting materials is the enrichment item known as "carwash kelp," and he often tries to drag long strands into his nest. He also enjoys tugging on staff's pant legs.

Messina

Messina hatched December 29, 2008, and arrived in 2009 from the Maryland Zoo. Messina's paired with Pringle, and is the biological parent of Rey, one of the chicks hatched at the Aquarium. She used to be paired with Karoo, but after a few years decided she preferred Pringle. She gets her name from the town of Messina in the Limpopo Province of South Africa.

What to look for: She has a smiley face spot pattern on her left shoulder. During nesting season she's a master thief, and will try to steal anything she can fit into her nest box, such as the staff's scrub brushes. She's very curious and loves shadows and shiny enrichment items.

Molopo

Molopo hatched at the Aquarium of the Americas May 25, 1994, and arrived at the Aquarium in 2000. She's named after the Molopo River that meanders along the border between South Africa and Botswana. Her current mate is Karoo.

What to look for: One of Molopo's distinctive marks is a collection of small dark spots on her neck, which give her the appearance of wearing a necklace. She tends to be wary of people and prefers to have plenty of space. When it comes to feeding on land, she often eats and runs—she'll grab a fish and retreat to her nesting area to gobble it up. She likes to catch fish while swimming in the water, and will wait for staff to toss her a fish directly. She tends to hang out on the periphery during feeding times rather than be in the thick of things.

Pringle

Pringle is the largest penguin in the exhibit. He hatched October 31, 1998, and arrived in 2000 from the Aquarium of the Americas. He's named after Pringle Bay, northeast of Cape Town in South Africa. He is paired with Messina.

What to look for: Pringle is the largest penguin on exhibit, weighing about 9.5 pounds (4.3 kg). He's one of our most confident birds and enjoys exploring new areas. Pringle often tugs on pant legs or whatever else he can find as he looks for nesting material. During feedings while nest boxes are in use, Pringle will skip out early and go see if he can steal rocks from other nests.

Rey

Rey hatched June 3, 2014, at the Aquarium. Her parents are Messina and Karoo. Rey's name comes from the word Monterey. After her first few weeks with Karoo and Messina, Rey was moved behind the scenes and hand-raised by staff. She made her debut on exhibit in December 2014. Rey is not yet paired with another penguin.

What to look for: Rey is one of the smallest birds on exhibit, weighing just over 5 pounds (2.3 kg). She likes to climb up and hang out on the waterfall. She enjoys interacting with people and often tries to follow staff outside the exhibit. She often participates in special programs at the Aquarium. She has some vision limitations that make it challenging for her to find food in the water. Because of this, staff often hand-feed her throughout the day.

Sabie

This female hatched November 12, 2008, at the Maryland Zoo and arrived at the Aquarium in 2009. She is paired with Seekoei and is highly defensive of her nest box during breeding season. Her name comes from the Sabie River, which is one of the most biologically diverse rivers in South Africa. Sabie is also the name of a flower found in the Namibian Desert.

What to look for: She can be an awkward eater, either on land or in water. She will often take food, drop it, and then pick it back up to eat it.

Seekoei

Seekoei hatched September 30, 1998, and arrived in 2000 from the Aquarium of the Americas. He's Dassen's sibling and paired with Sabie. He's named after the Seekoei River, which flows through the upper Karoo region of South Africa to the Indian Ocean.

What to look for: Seekoei has an S-shaped spot pattern on his chest. He's one of our friendliest penguins when it comes to interacting with people, so often participates in special programs at the Aquarium. During land feedings, he gently tugs on staff's pant legs to communicate that he's ready for his fish.

Umngane

Umngane hatched February 22, 2002, and arrived in 2006 from the Maryland Zoo. She's paired with Dassen, and they are parents to Pebble, the first chick on exhibit at the Aquarium. Umngane means "friend" in Zulu.

What to look for: Umngane has three small black spots on the right side of her neck. She enjoys sitting on top of driftwood or larger rocks.

Velma

Velma hatched September 15, 1992, at the California Academy of Sciences. She came to the Aquarium in 2012. She's currently paired with Durban.

What to look for: Velma likes having fish tossed to her, either on land or in the water. She has a few white feathers on the back of her head. She's one of our more timid birds and doesn't interact much with staff.

Walvis

Walvis hatched December 29, 1994, and arrived at the Aquarium in 2000 from the Aquarium of the Americas. Her name is from Walvis Bay in Namibia. She's paired with Boulders, and they've raised several chicks on exhibit, including Amigo.

What to look for: Walvis has an M-shaped spot pattern on her chest. She's a great surrogate mother and very devoted to her mate.