



# PENGUINS

AND OTHER SEA BIRDS



MATT SEWELL



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Spotting and Jotting  
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## ABOUT THE BOOK

Did you know...

The Galápagos Penguin's speckled markings make each of them as unique as a snowflake?

The Emperor Penguin weighs the same as a Labrador retriever?

The Adélie Penguin takes its name from the sweetheart of a Napoleonic naval captain turned explorer?

From tiny fairy penguins to the regal emperor penguin, street artist and ornithologist, Matt Sewell, illustrates one of the world's favourite birds in this charming follow-up to *Owls*, *Our Garden Birds*, *Our Songbirds* and *Our Woodland Birds*. Matt captures the famously quirky characters of penguins through his unique and much-loved watercolours accompanied by whimsical descriptions. You'll discover everything you've ever wondered about this enigmatic bird and his feathered friends from across the globe.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Artist and illustrator Matt Sewell has been described as the Banksy of the bird world. Matt works in a variety of media including T-shirts, posters, interiors, sculptures and walls. He has illustrated for the *Guardian* and *Barbour*, amongst many others; painted underpasses for the RSPB; and exhibited in London, Manchester, New York, Tokyo and Paris, as well as being an avid ornithologist and regular contributor to the Caught by The River website (he also designed their logo). He lives in Shrewsbury with his partner and two children.

PENGUINS  
AND OTHER  
SEA BIRDS

MATT SEWELL



EBURY  
PRESS





In loving memory of Pat Lee





## FOREWORD

Seabirds inhabit the planet's greatest wilderness and thinking of them out there now, in that vast, ever-changing landscape, fires the imagination like nothing else.

My personal favourite is the gannet. A distant, brilliant-white cross, haunting the open seas from high above the waves, until it falls as though shot down, dislocating its wings as it moves between worlds of air and water.

Sadly the imagination is as close as most of us can get to experiencing their world, but that distance is what makes them so inspiring to me. Fortunately, Matt's book of beautiful, distinctive interpretations of their sleek wind-shaped forms will have your mind soaring before you know it...

Brian Briggs, Stornoway, August 2015



## INTRODUCTION

When I first started researching this book, Google accidentally auto-suggested the question: ‘Are penguins fish or birds?’ I spat my tea out laughing! But for the search engine to do that, a lot of people must have asked that very question. And penguins are pretty mysterious: cute, but actually very odd and distinct in their own way.

Mankind has always ascribed seabirds with a certain mystical quality, owing to their prowess in the air, ease in and on water, their migrational comings and goings and their sheer volume. They are souls of lost sailors, saints, storm-bringers, omens, witches and warriors. They are also easy to catch, at risk from man-made as well as natural disasters ... no wonder many are endangered.

Hopefully in this book you will discover that there is a lot more to penguins than being cute. In fact, they are one of the hardest souls on the planet, evolving millions of years ago to thrive in Earth’s toughest and loneliest environment.

And they are definitely not fish!



# THE BIRDS



# Emperor Penguin

## *Aptenodytes forsteri*

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As penguins go, this guy is the boss, the sultan of the Antarctic snow. The star of Hollywood movies and blue-chip nature documentaries; so high and mighty amongst his penguin peers that he alone was chosen to represent his species on the wrapper of my favourite chocolate biscuit. In his Olympic wetsuit, with eyes darker than Ozzy Osbourne's Ray-Bans, the Emperor is the biggest and heaviest of all known penguins – weighing the same as a fat Labrador retriever and standing just as tall as the dog on its back legs. His bulk isn't gained through being lazy; it comes from his 'thermal underwear', a physical necessity to protect him and his offspring from the sub-zero temperatures of the South Pole as he and his Empress choose to make babies during the winter. The females leave to recuperate after childbirth, feeding solo in the ocean while the males, for months, suffer the banshee-wailing whipping wind, snow drifts and sunless gloom of new fatherhood.

At -70°C the daddies bunch together in a hundred-strong, rotating huddle, eggs safely tucked up on their shuffling feet inside the warm incubating brood pouch.

Soon after the fluffy chicks hatch, the females return from the sea, fat, sleek and healthy. They relieve the dad of his duties and – like ships that pass in the night – the Emperors slip off to feed themselves on fathoms-deep dives, reaching depths of 540m and holding their breath for 15 minutes at a time. Wow!





# King Penguin

## *Aptenodytes patagonicus*

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Second to the Emperor, but still a King, our only other Aptenodytes family member stands one metre tall with a haughty air in his mithril silver cloak and glowing imperial topaz neckwear. His vivid opulence is a stark contrast to the rocky, snow-flecked terrain of the King Penguin's kingdom, which stretches from Subantarctic islands, the Falklands and South Georgia, to parts of Australia and even as far north as Argentina. Living in more hospitable conditions than the Emperors, the Kings share the parental day-to-day duties of caring for their egg and, eventually, their chick, which – especially when compared to the dignified nobility of its folks – looks like an awkward toddler in a Sasquatch outfit. These baby Bigfoots gang up and hang out, forming crèches in defence against the predatory skuas and giant petrels whilst their olds are off feeding and stocking up in the ocean, expertly avoiding killer whales and leopard seals. Despite these everyday struggles and the fact that they were once massively hunted for food, fuel and for their warm feathery robes, the King Penguins' population is figured to be well over a whopping 2 million pairs.







