

BirdLife Australia Rarities Committee

Rarity Report Form

Please include any relevant information including any digital images. When including images please keep total document size below 10MB.

Name & Contact information:

Tony Palliser

Species: (Please include scientific name)

King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*

Date Range: (Please include first and last date the bird was seen where possible)

6th – 7th January 2020

Location (where the bird was seen)

Seven Mile Beach, Tasmania

Were other observers present?

James Smith (a recreational boater) found the bird on the 6th January 2020 and then reported the sighting to the Marine Conservation Program

Has this sighting been published?

Yes this submission was made to ensure the publication and sighting is endorsed by BARC

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-06/lost-king-penguin-spotted-on-southern-tasmanian-beach/11844490?fbclid=IwAR2bONaBkV8H59rIKL8t3Hix3RAu1-Z4_toxnve6OF4DeLZdx6w7h874Urc

The record was posted to Australian Twitchers Facebook page, where there were many comments but no detailed discussion of identification.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/718576241555767/permalink/2651094688303903/>

How confident are you of your identification?

100%

Please confirm that you are willing for BARC to electronically publish a copy of your submission

Yes

Other details: e.g. Do you have historical and or anecdotal information/comments relating to the prior occurrence/status of the species within or near this location?

From memory there are only a few records from Tasmania

Description (Number of birds involved, age & sex information, a description, moult information etc)

A juvenile bird that appears to have come ashore to moult

Please indicate other species with which you think it might be confused and how these were eliminated?

Identification is straightforward as the similar Emperor Penguin can quickly be eliminated given the shape and colour of the ear patch.

Were photographs taken? (please include where possible)

Yes these are included within the published account along with a video

Date of Submission

Tony Palliser 8th January 2020



King penguin encounter on Southern Tasmania beach a rare sight, experts say

ABC Radio Hobart By Georgie Burgess

Updated Tue 7 Jan 2020, 7:42am

A king penguin has been spotted more than a thousand kilometres from its home on a southern Tasmanian beach, but a wildlife expert says it may not be lost.

It is believed to be only the third king penguin sighting on Tasmanian shores in 15 years.

The closest king penguin colony is on Macquarie Island, about 1,500 kilometres south of Hobart.

Marine Conservation Program wildlife officer Dr Julie McInnes said the sighting at Seven Mile Beach was exciting.

"It's a pretty rare thing to see king penguins up here in Tasmania, it's quite a way north from the usual range," Dr McInnes said.

"It's not unheard of, we have seen them a couple of times in different parts of the state."

Dr McInnes said it was not clear if the bird was lost — it may have come ashore to rest after a big fishing trip, or was undergoing its annual moult.

Penguin 'fat and healthy'

Dr McInnes said penguins underwent what is known as a 'catastrophic moult', where they come ashore to lose all their feathers over a few weeks.

"They tend not to go back into the water during that time because their feathers are no longer waterproof," she said.

If it was resting after a big fishing trip, it may be gone from the area within a few days, she said.

Dr McInnes said the penguin was in good condition and did not appear to be injured.

"It looks like quite a fat penguin which is always nice," Dr McInnes said.

She said outside the breeding season penguins would swim well away from colonies in search of food, and did not need to moult at their home base.

King penguins are the second largest penguin species.

RELATED STORY: Rare white penguin hopes birds of a different feather still flock together

RELATED STORY: Albatross caught in Chile nine years after being tagged on Macquarie Island

Key points:

- Conservationists do not know if the bird is lost
 - They say it could be undergoing a 'catastrophic moult' whereby they lose all their feathers
 - King penguins are the second largest penguin species
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PHOTO: The penguin is in a healthy condition, experts say. (Supplied: James Smith)

Give the penguin space

If moulting, the penguin may be in the area for several weeks, Dr McInnes said.

"Just try and give it some room, don't go close to it. We want to give it ample space so it's safe from people, dogs and boats," she said.

"If it is moulting it can't go back into the water, so the last thing we want to do is scare that animal back into the water."

She said while it had not lost any feathers yet, it could begin to happen over the next couple of days.

"It's a pretty exciting sight, we don't get these birds around too often," Dr McInnes said.

Recreational boater James Smith spotted the penguin on Monday afternoon while out fishing near Lewisham.



PHOTO: King penguins call Macquarie Island home. (Supplied: Chris Howard)

"I've been boating around here for 35 years and I've never seen anything like it before," Mr Smith said.

"It's pretty amazing, it's a once in a lifetime opportunity. He's a long way from home, that's for sure."

Mr Smith reported the penguin sighting to the Marine Conservation Program.

"I got nice and close without disturbing him, a few people got a bit too close and scared him a bit," he said.

"It's a nice and quiet spot, away from people."

Mr Smith watched the penguin about 20 metres offshore in his boat.

"He's pretty healthy looking, he's pretty fat. I said to the other people nearby 'you'll never see this again'," he said.

Topics: birds, marine-biology, offbeat, lewisham-7173, seven-mile-beach-7170

First posted Mon 6 Jan 2020, 6:13pm

Contact Georgia Burgess