

PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON  
THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

- A. **PROPOSAL:** Listing of *Spheniscus demersus* in Appendix II.
- B. **PROPONENT:** The Government of the Republic of South Africa

C. **SUPPORTING STATEMENT**

1. **Taxon**

- 1.1. Class: Aves
- 1.2. Order: Sphenisciformes
- 1.3. Family: Spheniscidae
- 1.4. Genus & Species: *Spheniscus demersus* (Linnaeus, 1758)
- 1.5. Common names:
- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| English: | African Penguin, Jackass Penguin, Blackfooted Penguin (zookeepers) |
| Spanish: | Pinguino del Cabo  |
| French:  | Manchot du Cap   |
| German:  | Brillenpinguin   |

2. **Biological data**

2.1. Distribution

Breeds at c 27 colonies (all except three on offshore islands) in South Africa and Namibia. Nonbreeding birds move as far north as Gabon on west coast of Africa and Inhaca Island, Mozambique, on east coast.

2.2. Population

In 1990-94, there were an estimated 56 000 breeding pairs representing c. 179 000 adults; c. 5 300 pairs breed in Namibia, the balance in South Africa. In 1900, it is likely that there were 1.4 million adults at Dassen Island alone. By 1956, the overall population numbered 300 000 adults. The present rate of decrease is 1.5% per annum.

2.3. Habitat

Coastal waters, usually within 12 km of coastline; breeds on islands, preferably in shelter of a rock or bush, or where they can tunnel into gauno or sand, but they also nest in the open if a sheltered site is unavailable.

2.4. Migrations

Individual birds move through South African and Namibian waters on a more-or-less regular pattern; in particular juveniles from South African islands move northwards to Namibian waters before returning to breed, usually at their natal colonies.

3. **Threat data**

3.1. Direct threats

Oil pollution; introduced predators on breeding islands, especially cats; predation by Cape Fur Seals *Arctocephalus pusillus* and other marine predators; egg collecting; accidental mortality

in fishing nets and entanglement with fishing gear and other marine debris. 3.2 Habitat destruction: Cape Fur Seals have occupied certain breeding islands; gauno collection forces birds to use open nest sites, where they are vulnerable to aerial predators, especially the Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*.

3.3. Indirect threats

Commercial fisheries and increasing Cape Fur Seal herds have lead to reduced availability of prey. human disturbance at breeding colonies causes losses of eggs and chicks to Kelp Gulls *Larus dominicanus*. A port is proposed for development near to the largest colony (St Croix Island, Algoa Bay) and will increase risks of pollution at this colony.

3.4. Threats connected with migration

Oil pollution; food shortages; predation by Cape Fur Seals.

3.5. Utilization

Eggs; live animal trade; bait in crayfish traps - none of these utilization threats currently considered serious.

4. **Protection status and needs**

4.1. National protection status

Full protection status in South Africa and Namibia.

4.2. International protection status

Mace-Lande: Vulnerable; 1994 IUCN Red Data Book - K;  
Listed in CITES Appendix II, due to live animal trade.

4.3. Additional protection needs

Reduction in amount of oil entering the sea. Improvement of emergency facilities for cleaning birds after oil spill incidents; reduction of disturbance during the collection of oiled birds in breeding colonies. Elimination of cats from breeding colonies. Culling of individual Cape Fur Seals that cause excessive mortality.

5. **Range States**

a: South Africa (B), Namibia (B), Mozambique (M), Angola (M), Zaire (V), Congo (?) and Gabon (V) (Dowsett 1993).

a B = breeding range, M = occurs as migrant, V = vagrant, ? = occurrence requires substantiation.

7. **Additional remarks**

The African Penguin is the only member of the Order Sphenisciformes to breed in Africa. With its particular emotional attraction to the general public, it is the flagship species for seabird conservation in southern Africa.

Further research is required to establish the reasons for the ongoing decline in the populations of this species, in spite of the conservation measures applied at their breeding colonies.

Because of this decline, populations of the African Penguin require ongoing monitoring.

## 8. References

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**Proposal II/5**

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