

Northern Rockhopper Ethogram

Land-based Behaviours

General Behaviours

Rest – Neck is withdrawn, bill facing forward, flippers at side. Eyes may be closed/open and close. Resting can occur in an upright or prone position (laying on front).

Walking/Hopping – Locomoting on land by moving on foot forward at a time, or both feet leave the ground and jump forward.

Stand/Lay & Observe – Penguin is stationary and visually scanning his/her environment.

Feeding – Penguin is taking fish from the zoo keepers.

Investigating – Penguin is focused on looking at something particular. Generally accompanied by walking/hopping in the direction of the object.

Comfort Behaviours

Preening Self – Involving contact with the bill and feathers. (See Yellow Eyed Penguin Ethogram for further breakdown of preening if necessary).

Shaking movements – Head shake (rapid head flicks from side to side) or body shake (neck withdrawn and bill forward body twisted vigorously, flippers may also rotate). Ruffle shake – Neck stretched forward, neck and body feathers stand on end and shake.

Stretching movements – Both flippers – flippers thrust back, legs and body upright, neck stretched, bill may be open. Leg stretch – In prone (laying down on front) position, one leg pushed back behind the body and toes spread.

Yawn – Bill is fully open, neck withdrawn and head tilt back. Bill closes and penguin may swallow a few times.

Sneeze – A sharp exhalation of air.

Social Behaviours

Courtship Behaviours

Allopreening – Penguin uses bill to sort through another penguins' feathers.

Mutual Display – both birds of a pair stand up, bodies leaning forward and then they call together. The mutual display may commence with a variety of soft vocalizations and head shaking, building in intensity then subsiding with similar actions.

Vertical trumpeting - A sexual call given by male rock hoppers. His head will be raised skywards and accompanied by harsh trumpeting sounds. Call may be done along with head being waved from side to side.

Mounting – Male penguin jumps up onto the back of the female penguin.

Copulation – In the mounted position, penguin touch cloacas together.

Incubation – penguin lays or sits on the egg(s) young chicks.

Nesting Behaviours

Collecting – picking up nest material from the ground, or pulling it off plants.

Carrying – nest material carried in the bill while walking/hopping.

Depositing – penguin drops nesting material in or around the nest with a head shake.

Arranging – Penguin is either laying or standing in the nest moving nesting material around with bill.

Scraping – Penguin lies prone and scrapes with feet moving material to rim of nest.

Aggressive Behaviours

Nest Crouch – Body flattened down to nest, flippers pressed against sides. Watching intruder.

Attack – Pecking another penguin/human or using flippers to slap opponent.

Guard – In a semi-upright position, slightly leaning forward with neck lowered and bill forward, watching intruder.

Threat (point) – closed bill pointed at opponent, body leans forward, crest erect, eyes wide and gives a loud call.

Stare – Head moved from side to side so that alternate eyes are presented to the opponent.

Water-based Behaviours

Swimming – Penguin is locomoting forward through the water, using flipper for propulsion and feet for steering.

Bathing – Comfort behaviour in the water. Head dip, head shake, body roll from side to side, possible tail wag and preening behaviours.

Wading – Penguin is standing at the edge of the pool with less than half of its body submerged.