

Guidelines



Working in penguin habitat

G-10.1

Little penguins are a highly valued iconic species that can be found adjacent to urbanised areas in Tasmania where their sensitive habitat is preserved and disturbance of their colonies is kept to a minimum. When working on the coast in penguin habitat it is important to minimise the impact of work activities on the penguins. Through careful planning and consultation with specialists it is possible to design a works program that will provide the best possible outcome for the penguins and their habitat. Penguins and their habitat are protected under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002*.

Use these guidelines in conjunction with the information provided in Chapter 10 when planning works and engaging consultants and contractors to ensure the proposed works use the most effective methods and minimise the risk of causing damage to coastal values.

Planning

Plan works carefully and consult with wildlife specialists.

Schedule works to minimise impact on the penguin colony. Do not work in and around a penguin colony during breeding and moulting times, as the birds can be stressed and may abandon their burrows if disturbed.

The best months for works are usually from May to July, provided the birds have finished raising chicks and have completed their moult. Avoid works if any birds are present at the site and consult wildlife specialists at DPIPWE.

Include local residents and community groups in planning for management actions to protect little penguins. Local residents can make a big difference to improving outcomes for little penguins by making changes in their behaviour such as keeping dogs and cats locked up and not modifying the foreshore environment.

Working around burrows

Ensure there are no penguins on site before works commence.

Ensure all works staff and contractors are briefed on minimising impacts to little penguins and their habitat and provide adequate supervision to ensure best practice environmental standards are being implemented.

Consider the impact on any penguins that may return to the area. The use of lighting during works, noise and intense vibration are very disturbing and should be minimised wherever possible.

Avoid leaving rock or gravel on the roadside during road work or other infrastructure activities. Dumping of road side rock is problematic for little penguins needing to cross the road.

Ensure that any rubbish from work activities is removed from the site as soon as possible and no later than the completion of works.

Ensure that burrows are not obstructed by movement of soil or sand and that vegetation or debris is not left in piles that make it difficult for penguins to negotiate.

Fencing and artificial burrows

In some instances penguin habitat may need to be enriched with artificial burrows and penguins may need protection from roadsides with fencing. Seek specialist advice from wildlife experts before planning these activities.

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Weeding and revegetation works

Remove weeds gradually and revegetate at the same time to ensure sufficient burrow habitat is always available.

Prickly weeds are sometimes the only safe habitat for penguins so any removal needs to be carefully staged to maintain shelter and habitat.

Spraying of herbicides is not recommended in penguin colonies.

If herbicide needs to be used, the 'cut and paste', 'scrape and paint' or 'drill and fill' methods are recommended, where appropriate (Pryor & Wells 2009).

Choose revegetation species carefully. Preferred species generally include *Tetragonia implexicoma*, *Rhagodia candolleana* and *Poa* species, but this depends on the site. Some species such as *Acacia sophorae* become too entangled on the ground for penguins to negotiate (Pryor & Wells 2009).

Information on appropriate revegetation species can be obtained from the Understorey Network.

Monitoring

Monitoring of penguin populations is undertaken by DPIPWE and some community groups. It is important for land managers to note and report any mortality of penguins and any damage to penguin habitat and protective structures such as fences.

Regular inspections will identify new threats to penguin colonies (such as unauthorised tracks or vegetation removal) and any works required to restore habitat.

More Information

Co-existing with little penguins in the Derwent Estuary - Information and guidelines, Pryor & Wells 2009

Guidelines for works in areas of little penguin habitat, Marker & Wind 2008

Tasmanian coastal works manual: Chapter 10, Page & Thorp 2010

Understorey Network

www.understorey-network.org.au

Wildlife Management Branch and Biodiversity Conservation Branch, DPIPWE
6233 3556



Checklist

C-10.1

Working in penguin habitat

When working on the coast in penguin habitat it is important to minimise the impact of work activities on the penguins. Through careful planning and consultation with specialists it is possible to design a works program that will provide the best possible outcome for the penguins and their habitat.

Use this checklist in conjunction with the accompanying Guideline and the information provided in Chapter 10 when planning works and engaging consultants and contractors to ensure the proposed works use the most effective methods and minimise the risk of causing damage to coastal values.

Planning

- Penguin presence/habitat identified
- Works rescheduled to avoid penguin breeding and moulting times if possible
- Consultation with wildlife specialists undertaken
- Consultation with local community care groups undertaken

Working around burrows

- No penguins on site
- All works staff and contractors briefed on minimising impacts to little penguins and their habitat
- Adequate supervision provided to ensure best practice environmental standards are being implemented
- Minimal use of lighting, noise and intense vibration during works
- All piles of rock or gravel removed from the roadside during road work or other infrastructure activities
- Any rubbish from work activities removed from the site as soon as possible and no later than the completion of works
- Burrows not obstructed by movement of soil or sand
- No piles of vegetation or debris left around to impede penguin movement around colony

Fencing and artificial burrows

In some instances penguin habitat may need to be enriched with artificial burrows and penguins may need protection from roadsides with fencing.

- Specialist advice sought from wildlife experts before planning fencing or artificial burrows

Weeding and revegetation works

- Sufficient burrow habitat maintained by gradual removal of weeds and revegetation
- Staged removal of prickly weeds to maintain protection and shelter for penguins
- Spraying of herbicides avoided
- Herbicide use minimised and restricted to the 'cut and paste', 'scrape and paint' or 'drill and fill' methods
- Revegetation species chosen carefully to ensure species are suitable for penguins to utilise and negotiate

Monitoring

- Penguin mortality, damage to penguin habitat or protective structures reported to DPIPW
- Regular inspections scheduled to identify new threats to penguin colonies and any works required to restore habitat

More Information

Co-existing with little penguins in the Derwent Estuary - Information and guidelines, Pryor & Wells 2009

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