

Fiordland crested penguin/tawaki



What are they doing this month?

January	From mid-January the moulting season begins – if you're lucky you might see a penguin during this time.
February	Moulting takes about 4 weeks and is a stressful, vulnerable time for the penguins. They stay ashore and don't eat, losing about half their body weight and becoming disorientated. They often look sick.
March	The penguins finish moulting in early March and head out to sea.
April	Out at sea.
May	Out at sea.
June	Out at sea.
July	Breeding season begins, and lasts until December.
August	Eggs are laid by the end of August and incubated by both parents for the first 5–10 days, after which the female leaves the nest for a 10–14 day foraging trip. When she gets back it's the male's turn to go out and feed at sea, also for 10–14 days.
September	Eggs hatch after 31–35 days of incubation. Chicks are guarded by the male and fed by the female for the first 3 weeks.
October	The chicks form small crèches and are left unattended for long periods while both parents are at sea foraging for food.
November	Chicks become independent. Adults and chicks leave the colony in late November – early December and head out to sea to fatten up before for the moulting season.
December	Out at sea.



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Keep your distance

Fiordland crested penguins are Nationally Endangered. They are sensitive to human disturbance particularly at breeding and moulting sites, so please keep your distance and move away if they seem stressed.

Distressed penguins may flee causing moulting penguins to starve, or be scared away from the nest leaving chicks without food and vulnerable to predators.

You have a much greater chance of seeing penguins if you sit quietly on the beach and wait rather than moving around. Tawaki are active at any time of day.



DON'T LET YOUR DOG GO WILD

Keep your dog close and under control

Don't let it roam in the dunes or vegetation above the high water mark where penguins are nesting and roosting. Both adults and chicks are vulnerable to dogs.