Name: Date: Score: / 6

Emperor Penguins: Reading Comprehension

Nonfiction: Animals · about 245 words

Read the passage. Then answer each question. Circle the best answer or write your answer on the lines.

Emperor Penguins

Emperor penguins are the largest penguins in the world. They stand nearly four feet tall and can weigh up to about 88 pounds. They live only in Antarctica, the coldest, windiest continent on Earth, where winter temperatures can drop below minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Unlike most animals, emperor penguins breed during the harsh Antarctic winter. In the fall, they march as far as 70 miles across the ice from the ocean to their breeding grounds. There, each female lays a single egg. She carefully passes it to the male and then heads back to the sea to feed.

For about two months, the male balances the egg on his feet, covered by a warm fold of skin called a brood pouch. During this time, he eats nothing at all. To survive the freezing winds, thousands of males huddle together in a tight group. They take turns moving from the cold outer edge to the warm center, so no penguin stays in the wind too long.

When the chick hatches, the female returns with a belly full of fish. She feeds the chick by bringing food back up from her stomach. The father, who may have lost almost half his body weight, finally walks to the sea to eat.

Emperor penguins are excellent divers. They can dive deeper than 1,500 feet and stay underwater for more than 20 minutes while hunting fish, squid, and krill. Scientists are watching them closely because shrinking sea ice may threaten their future.

1. **Main idea:** What is this passage mostly about?

   A. how fish swim B. the weather in Antarctica

   C. how emperor penguins survive and raise chicks in Antarctica D. how to dive deep

2. **Detail:** How tall can emperor penguins stand?

   A. ten feet B. about one foot C. six feet D. nearly four feet

3. **Detail:** Who keeps the egg warm during winter?

   A. both, taking turns each day B. the female C. the male D. no one

4. **Vocabulary:** A brood pouch is...

   A. a bag of fish B. a warm fold of skin that covers the egg C. an ice cave D. a nest made of rocks

5. **Inference:** Why do the males take turns at the center of the huddle?

   A. to see their chicks B. to stay cool C. so no penguin stays in the cold wind too long D. to find food

6. **Detail:** How deep can emperor penguins dive?

ANSWER KEY

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