

A large colony of penguins, likely King penguins, is gathered on a rocky beach. The penguins are densely packed in the middle ground, extending from the water's edge towards a grassy hillside in the background. Some penguins are standing, while others are resting on the ground. The water is calm, and a few penguins are visible swimming in the foreground. The overall scene depicts a natural habitat for these birds.

Animals of Antarctica

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What animals live in Antarctica?
- 2) How have they adapted to living in a cold environment?
- 3) Which animals migrate during the winter months?
- 4) Do any animals stay in Antarctica all year?

Animals in Antarctica

Most animals that live in the Antarctic region migrate during the harsh winter months. The Emperor penguin is the only large animal that stays on the continent all year.

Some animals spend all or most of their lives in the surrounding oceans. Some come onto the continent or islands to breed.

Antarctic animals have adapted to the harsh environment in amazing ways.



Adapting To Harsh Conditions

Animals that spend a great deal of their time in the Antarctic region need to be able to protect themselves against the cold. Whales, seals and penguins all have a layer of fat called 'blubber' that insulates their bodies against the cold.

Birds often have densely arranged downy feathers under their flight feathers that help keep them warm. Some birds also produce a special oil that they use to waterproof their feathers while they are preening.



Land Invertebrates of Antarctica

Animals that live in the soil in Antarctica are tiny! They often can only be seen through a microscope. They have found amazing ways to adapt to the extreme conditions. Most are able to become dormant and wait for temperatures to rise again before they reawaken.

Springtails, one of the largest invertebrates living in Antarctica at less than 1mm long, are able to slow down their metabolism to save energy when temperatures drop.

Rotifers and nematodes are able to pump all of the water out of their body to prevent ice forming in their cells. They stay in this dormant state until temperatures rise and water once again becomes available in the soil so they can rehydrate.

Nematode Worm



Springtail



Rotifer

