

New Penguin Species (*Pygoscelis kerguelensis*)

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Why in News?

An international team of experts published a study identifying a new species of penguin, "Gentoo Penguin" (*Pygoscelis papua*) for the first time in over 100 years.

- **Common Name** - It is also known as the **Southeastern Gentoo Penguin (*Pygoscelis kerguelensis*)**.
- It is a newly identified species of penguin native to the remote **Kerguelen Islands** in the southern Indian Ocean.

Key Characteristics

- **Appearance** - While *P. kerguelensis* looks virtually identical to other gentoo penguins on the surface, its true differences are deeply embedded in its DNA.
- It does, however, exhibit slight variations in body size and vocalizations.
- **Genetic Diversity** - The Kerguelen population shows remarkably high genetic diversity.
- Scientists believe these remote islands served as a crucial glacial refuge where the penguins managed to persist and evolve independently during past ice ages.
- **Isolation** - Their habitat is one of the most isolated places on Earth, situated roughly 1,200 miles (2,000 km) north of Antarctica and far from any permanently inhabited landmass.

Other species

- The study elevates 4 geographically isolated lineages to full species status.

Species Name	Common Name	Primary Distribution / Habitat
<i>Pygoscelis kerguelensis</i> (New)	Southeastern Gentoo	Endemic to the Kerguelen Islands & Heard Island (Southern Indian Ocean).
<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>	Northern Gentoo	Restricted to the Falkland Islands / Malvinas and Martillo Island.
<i>Pygoscelis ellsworthi</i>	Southern Gentoo	Antarctic Peninsula, South Shetland Islands, and South Georgia.
<i>Pygoscelis taeniata</i>	Eastern Gentoo	Crozet, Marion, and Macquarie Islands.



FOUR GENTOO PENGUIN SPECIES

Four divergent evolutionary lineages recognized in a 2026 integrative genomic, ecological and morphological study.

NORTHERN GENTOO

Pygoscelis papua



Falkland/Malvinas & Martillo Islands

SOUTHERN GENTOO

Pygoscelis ellsworthi



Antarctic Peninsula, South Orkneys, South Shetlands & South Georgia

EASTERN GENTOO

Pygoscelis taeniata



Crozet, Marion & Macquarie Islands

SOUTHEASTERN GENTOO

Pygoscelis kerguelensis



Kerguelen Islands (ecologically connected with Heard Island)



Taxonomic revision proposed by Noll et al., Communications Biology (2026).

Reference

[The Indian express | Pygoscelis Kerguelensis](#)



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