



Pre-Conference Workshops

Preconference workshops will be held on **Saturday, 29 August** and **Sunday, 30 August 2026**.

There is **no additional fee** to attend these workshops. As each workshop has a limitation, **delegates must register for their chosen workshops in advance**. If you have **already registered for the conference**, you should have received an email with information about adding workshops to your registration. If you need assistance, please contact [Chatz](#).

Saturday, 29 August	
0800 – 1600	<p>International penguin early career scientists (IPECS) 6th Early Career Workshop</p>
Venue: TBC	<p>Alex Thornton <i>Lead</i> <i>International Penguin Early Career Scientists (IPECS)</i></p>
<p>Early career researchers (ECRs) are central to the future of penguin science, yet their long-term engagement and retention depend on access to supportive, collaborative professional spaces. This workshop focuses on evidence-informed approaches to strengthening ECR participation by fostering community, skill-building, and meaningful connections across career stages. Drawing on over a decade of experience developing international ECR networks in penguin science, we highlight how structured, participant-informed engagement improves collaboration, conference participation, and career persistence.</p> <p>This workshop will comprise of four sessions, co-developed with senior mentors in penguin science. Session topics are shaped by requests from penguin ECRs, focusing on Australasian needs. All sessions are designed using Fink’s and Bloom’s taxonomic principles for learning, ensuring activities are engaging while grounded in clear educational outcomes.</p> <p>First, a science communication workshop will provide hands-on opportunities for participants to present and refine communication of their research. Second, a professional visibility session will focus on developing effective conference engagement strategies, from elevator pitches to broader professional presence. Third, a workshop on creative fundraising will address strategies for securing support in competitive funding environments. Fourth, a Penguin Careers Panel will bring together mentors from across sectors to discuss diverse career pathways, followed by an open Q&A.</p> <p>Given the three-year interval between International Penguin Conferences, this workshop maximises a critical opportunity for ECRs to build lasting networks. Organized by an international group of ECRs in partnership with local ECRs, the program is designed to reflect participant needs while strengthening connections across the global penguin research community. The workshop will also feature IPECS mentors as guest speakers, including selected conference keynote speakers.</p>	

0800 – 1200 Venue: TBC	Trouble-shooting terrestrial predation at mainland African penguin colonies: Towards evidence-based mitigation Dr Lisa Nupen <i>Research Manager and Seabird Ranger Program Coordinator</i> SANCCOB
<p>Terrestrial predation is an emerging and urgent threat to African Penguins, especially at mainland colonies in South Africa, which now support ~20% of the global population. While island colonies give refuge from land-based predators, sites like Stony Point and Simon’s Town near Cape Town experience increasing predation by inter alia caracal, mongoose, and Kelp Gulls. Between 2017 and 2025, >650 suspected predation cases were recorded at SANCCOB, with caracal predation disproportionately affecting adults, mongoose predation impacting chicks, and gulls taking eggs. Intensifying predation pressure, including confirmed surplus killing events by caracal, poses a significant risk to already declining populations of this Critically Endangered species.</p> <p>Evidence from other systems, such as puma predation on Magellanic Penguins in Argentina, demonstrates how predictable, seasonal prey aggregations can alter predator behaviour and drive repeated exploitation. Similar dynamics may be occurring at mainland African Penguin colonies, yet predator behaviour, movement ecology, and the effectiveness of mitigation interventions remain poorly understood.</p> <p>This interactive workshop will develop and refine an evidence-based framework for terrestrial predator management. The workshop will focus on peer-learning, experimental design and methodological approaches to test mitigation strategies, including predator-proof fencing (planned for 2026–2028), deployment of camera trap arrays, and the use of collars to track caracal movements and identify high-risk periods and locations. Collaring provides a non-lethal, adaptive management tool to predict and prevent predation events, assess post-capture behavioural responses, and inform trap placement and fence design.</p> <p>Additional approaches, including aversive deterrents (e.g., scent cues, guardian animals, hazing), will be discussed.</p>	

1230 – 1630	What works for banded penguins? Translating science into effective conservation for African and Humboldt penguins
Venue: TBC	Dr Patty McGill <i>Program Leader, Senior Conservation Scientist</i> <i>AZA Safe African Penguin Program</i>

Banded penguins are among the most threatened seabirds globally, with both African (*Spheniscus demersus*) and Humboldt penguins (*S. humboldti*) undergoing rapid population declines. African penguins have declined by ~80% over the last three decades, largely driven by prey depletion linked to climate variability and industrial fishing. Similarly, Humboldt penguins along the coasts of Peru and Chile face sustained declines due to fisheries interactions, habitat disturbance, climate variability (including El Niño), and emerging threats such as disease.

Despite decades of research and conservation action, population trajectories remain negative, raising a critical question: which conservation strategies are truly effective, scalable, and resilient under changing ocean conditions?

This workshop will bring together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to synthesize lessons learned across the range of banded penguins, focusing on African and Humboldt penguins. We will highlight evidence from long-term monitoring programs, experimental management interventions, and cross-sector collaborations in Peru, Chile, and southern Africa. Key themes include: (1) fisheries management and spatial protection (e.g., no-take zones, bycatch mitigation); (2) colony-based interventions e.g. predator control, artificial nests, disturbance reduction; (3) adaptive monitoring frameworks linking oceanographic variability to demographic responses; and (4) roles of governance, stakeholder engagement, and international partnerships in sustaining conservation outcomes.

Participants will engage in interactive discussions to identify best practices, knowledge gaps, and priority actions. The workshop will (1) produce a concise policy brief summarizing evidence-based recommendations for decision-makers, and (2) establish an international working group on banded penguin conservation to facilitate ongoing collaboration, data sharing, and coordinated action across regions.

Sunday, 30 August

0800 – 1200

Improving methods for population estimates and identifying research priorities for rockhopper penguins

Venue: TBC

Dr Jeff White
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Cornell University

This workshop aims to bring together experts to discuss the need for accurate population estimates globally, regionally, and locally and identify research priorities for rockhopper penguins.

Globally rockhopper penguins have been experiencing declines in recent decades, yet in many cases quantifying these population changes is difficult because of a lack of accurate population counts and inadequate surveying methods for these unique species. Unlike the many penguins which breed in large, open colonies, most rockhoppers breed in more cryptic locations.

For example, in the South Pacific rockhopper colonies are often concealed by dense tussock, boulder fields, or caves making censuses difficult and often inaccurate. While sub-colonies have been well monitored (in some cases), the sharp decline seen across rockhoppers worldwide warrants a more comprehensive surveying methodology to quantify these losses and inform research priorities. By bringing together rockhopper experts working at diverse sites, we hope to facilitate discussions of what is currently working (or not) and brainstorm alternative methods.

From our discussions we hope to identify research priorities for rockhopper penguins, particularly those related to population dynamics. Topics discussed and ideas will be compiled and made available to workshop participants following IPC 12.

<p>0900 – 1200</p> <p>Venue: TBC</p>	<p>The science communication of penguins: A new approach</p> <p>Dr Wiebke Finkler <i>Senior Lecturer in Marketing</i> <i>University of Otago</i></p> <p>Prof Lloyd Davis, <i>Stuart Professor of Science Communication</i> <i>University of Otago</i></p>
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Two-thirds of penguin species are endangered in some way. We can document this with our research all we like but it will have little effect unless we can communicate the results of our science to the public and politicians in a way that moves them to action. In this workshop, we demonstrate a new approach to science communication that marries storytelling and design with marketing. We will show you how to "sell" your science and how that can evoke behaviour change.

The workshop will cover story structures that work, visual literacy, understanding your audience, and how to develop a campaign with the intention of producing behaviour change. While these are general techniques that can be applied to nearly all science communication, we make it particularly relevant to this conference by applying these techniques using instances of penguin conservation as exemplars.

<p>1230 – 1500</p> <p>Venue: TBC</p>	<p>Antarctic ParasiteNet: A global network on host-parasite interactions across Antarctica</p> <p>Dr Meagan Dewar <i>Lecturer</i> <i>Federation University Australia</i></p>
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The Antarctic ParasiteNet Network aims to integrate and analyse existing sample sets and generate standardized data on parasite communities on a temporal and spatial scale across different Antarctic regions, establishing baselines, detecting trends, and guiding conservation efforts.

Key Objectives: 1) Assess the impact of climate change on parasite diversity and host-parasite dynamics; 2) Standardize protocols and integrate parasitological data into conservation frameworks; 3) Build capacity by training early-career researchers in fieldwork, analysis, and data sharing.

This network will create a robust, interoperable database of parasite-host records that supports early-warning systems and resilience assessments for ecosystems. By linking ecology, parasitology, climate science, and conservation, the project will provide a scalable model for biodiversity monitoring in vulnerable regions.

We invite members of the Penguin Community to join the network and this new global initiative. This workshop will provide potential members with an overview of the project and begin discussions on moving forward with this project.

1230 – 1630	Signals before the storm: Detecting early-warning signals of regime shifts in penguin populations
Venue: TBC	Dr Vincent A Viblanc <i>Researcher</i> <i>Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique, IPHC</i>

Predicting penguin populations' future requires understanding their resilience to disturbance in marine and terrestrial habitats. While many environmental changes are gradual, ecosystems can also undergo abrupt, persistent reorganizations known as regime shifts. Identifying tipping points beyond which such critical transitions occur is therefore essential.

Detecting these thresholds is complex. Theory aimed at identifying early-warning signals (EWS) indicating when a system approaches a critical tipping point is well established, but empirical applications remain limited. The expansion of long-term ecological monitoring programs, many now spanning several decades, creates new opportunities to evaluate EWS in real populations.

Around 2008, the mega-colony of little penguins on Phillip Island, monitored over twenty-six years, experienced an abrupt transition, suggestive of a critical transition. Breeding phenology advanced by ~6 weeks, double brooding emerged in ~25% of birds, divorce rates reduced, and adult mass gain during foraging increased, leading to increased interannual variability in breeding success.

This dramatic shift, the starting point for Alice Eparvier's PhD project, raises the question of whether this pattern is specific of the Penguin Parade colony or a more regional/global change affecting other populations. Can critical transitions across penguin populations be detected and anticipated through EWS?

In this workshop, we seek collaborators (1) monitoring other little penguin colonies to investigate the generality of this possible regime shift on a global level; (2) to expand the quantification of changes in penguin life-history traits to other penguin species: abrupt regime shifts vs. gradual trends; (3) to build a global network advancing analytical tools on EWS.