

4 May 2016

Dear Mrs Stefani's Class,



Hi my name is Fuzzy and I just wanted to say thank you for adopting me!

I've spent the last few weeks at a place called SANCCOB in Cape Town, South Africa. SANCCOB is an animal hospital that works with different types of seabirds. I am a seabird because I live by the sea and my food comes from the ocean. My favourite food is sardines and I can gobble up a whole fish without even chewing it once! While I was at SANCCOB, many penguins told me about how they came to the hospital. Some said that came in very hungry because they struggled to find fish in the ocean after massive boats would come collect it all and leave very little food over for penguins and other marine animals to eat. Some had come to SANCCOB because they had got caught in or swallowed rubbish that people hadn't thrown away properly. Most scary of all was that some had come in after the ocean turned black from an oil spill, ruining their feathers and making them feel very sick.

It's because of these things that in 2010 African penguins were reclassified from vulnerable to ENDANGERED - that's bad news for us penguins as it means that our population is rapidly shrinking and that conservation measures should be stepped up. I've heard that at the turn of the last century there were more than 4 million African penguins living in Southern Africa, and I've seen pictures of my ancestors on the islands standing together in their thousands; I find this difficult to believe because today there are no more than 21 000 breeding pairs of us left in the wild.

What to do if you meet a penguin on the beach?

Well, I suggest that you do not give him a penguin-high-five-greeting, as he'll most likely bite your fingers! We are "wild" birds and we tend to bite and struggle if we are scared or unsure of what is happening around us. The folk at SANCCOB have a step-by-step plan worked out for you if you spot one of us on a beach so you should call SANCCOB on +27 (0) 21 557 6155 who will assess the situation and either dispatch their seabird 'ambulance' to come and get us, or if someone is there to help you then they will ask you to please pick us up and take us to SANCCOB.

People are always asking 'how can we help' so I've prepared a couple of tips of how you can help to save seabirds and the precious marine environment that we rely on:

- Please stop using straws. Most of the time straws can't be recycled and they can be picked up by our flying friends to make nests or in the water where our food lives.
- If you can ever chose between a can or a plastic bottle, always go for the can.
- Reduce. Don't use as much 'stuff'! You'll probably find that most of the things you're using you don't really need.
- Reuse. Use things more than once before throwing them away.
- Recycle. When possible recycle your rubbish so that it can be made into something new for someone else to use. Remember you are not the only person on earth. You are sharing this planet with billions of people and trillions of other animals.
- Become a member of SANCCOB

So, once again thank you for adopting me and remember that every little bit helps. Help SANCCOB to save us. So far they've saved 90,000 seabirds... let's keep counting, together.



From your penguin:
Fuzzy (APO49)

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