

Sad end for 'Happy Feet Jr.' in New Zealand

February 21 2013



This undated handout photo obtained from Wellington Zoo on February 20, 2013 shows the penguin dubbed Happy Feet junior in New Zealand. The penguin that washed up in New Zealand 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) from his home has died despite intensive efforts to save him, Wellington Zoo said Friday.

A penguin dubbed Happy Feet junior that washed up in New Zealand 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) from his home has died despite intensive efforts to save him, Wellington Zoo said Friday.

A veterinary team spent five days caring for the bird, a juvenile royal penguin which had drifted far from a breeding colony in sub-Antarctic Macquarie Island after spending an estimated 12 months at sea.

But the zoo's chief vet Lisa Argilla said the penguin died overnight as malnutrition and [kidney failure](#) took their toll.

"As the penguin arrived nearly three kilograms (6.6 pounds) underweight, it had absolutely no reserves and subsequently we suspect that this led to multiple [organ failure](#), following the kidney failure diagnosed on its arrival," she said.

"Wildlife medicine is a very challenging field and though we did the best we could, sadly the penguin didn't survive."

The bird's discovery revived memories of the original Happy Feet, an [emperor penguin](#) that was found stranded near Wellington in June 2011, attracting worldwide interest during an eight-week recuperation at the zoo.

A New Zealand [research ship](#) eventually released the penguin into the Southern Ocean after it received visits from celebrities such as Stephen Fry and best wishes from New Zealand Prime Minister John Key.

However, a tracking device attached to the bird stopped transmitting after a few days, sparking fears it had been eaten by a shark.

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