

# Distinguishing males from females among king penguins

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Male female couple. Credit: Hannah Kriesell

It is difficult to distinguish males from females among King Penguins, but a new *Ibis* study reveals that King Penguins can be sexed with an accuracy of 100% based on the sex-specific syllable pattern of their vocalisations. Using the beak length, King Penguin individuals can be sexed with an accuracy of 79%.

The new findings may help investigators understand how King Penguins choose mates, and they offer a cost-effective, non-invasive technique for researchers to sex King Penguins in the field.

"The sex-specific syllable pattern in King Penguin calls is a very interesting finding, both from an [evolutionary perspective](#) as it is rare in non-passerine species, but also because it allows researchers with very little training to reliably identify the gender of King Penguins without handling the individuals," said lead author Hannah Kriesell, of the Centre Scientifique de Monaco and the University of Strasbourg.

**More information:** Hannah J. Kriesell et al, Sex identification in King Penguins *Aptenodytes patagonicus* through morphological and acoustic cues, *Ibis* (2018). [DOI: 10.1111/ibi.12577](https://doi.org/10.1111/ibi.12577)

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