



Who are Tib and Harmony?

Let us tell you the story about why Tib and Harmony were admitted to the Penguins Rehab & Release center and how they became a couple!

TIB

Tib went into care after being tormented and tortured along with other penguins down at the West Beach penguin colony in Burnie on Sunday 12th March 2023.

When Tib was rescued, his tibia had been snapped in half, his toe had been mashed and torn off, and had superficial wounds to his flippers. By the time the rescuers reached the beach the youths who had committed this horrendous act had left; however, with very good eyewitnesses and CCTV footage, the team could witness what had occurred. The police caught and charged the youngsters in no time.

Tib underwent very complex surgery where a small plate and tiny screws less than 2mm in diameter were inserted to join the broken bones in his leg together. Tib also needed his damaged toe removed and the foot resected.

For the first few weeks of being in care, Tib remained isolated from other penguins in quarantine as we tried to ensure that his body did not reject the plate and screws. Part of this is maintaining high hygiene standards to ensure no infection sets in.

Penguin feet, being so fleshy, adapted for the water rather than for land, have a tendency to develop complications after injury. Tib is not likely to be allowed outside with the other penguins until the incisions are healed over completely and practically non-existent.

HARMONY

Harmony was one of the penguins who was tormented by children on Sunday the 12th of March 2023. She had sticks and branches shoved in her, and was found hiding in a pipe next to a stormwater drain close to West Beach in Burnie.

It was an incredibly narrow pipe, measuring only 25cm in diameter, which made it impossible for the rescue team to remove her for examination. Despite this, the team monitored her throughout the week noticing she remained stationary, never shifting her position. A week later on the 19th, aid was given from Parks and Wildlife who successfully removed her from the drain. At this point



she was just beginning to moult. Harmony would have been a very good weight to moult prior to the 12th, but her weight dropped to 1.3kg upon being rescued. This additional weight loss would have been caused by the stress of being attacked.

Penguins, when being disturbed during molting can lose up to 150 grams per day, compared to the usual 50 grams. Following her moult, Harmony would have weighed a maximum of 600g if she hadn't received supplemental feeding. Her chances of survival would have been slim.

Harmony had also suffered a small laceration to one of her feet, which had almost healed by the time she went into care, but she was an extremely frightened bird. She was rehydrated, but wouldn't accept support feeding at first due to her fear for humans. Even so, she was a very gentle penguin from the very beginning. Harmony just wanted to get away and to be left alone. A very different temperament to Tib, who wanted to draw blood!

It wasn't until her second week in care that she grew confident towards her carers, and would accept support feeding. After two weeks hiding in a hospital box she was ready to move outdoors. Being the eldest penguin, the others all looked up to her. As she came out of moult she had lost all her muscle mass. Penguins have evolved to undergo molting on land, enduring periods of starvation during the process. They rely on their fat reserves to sustain them through the challenge, while preserving their muscle mass.

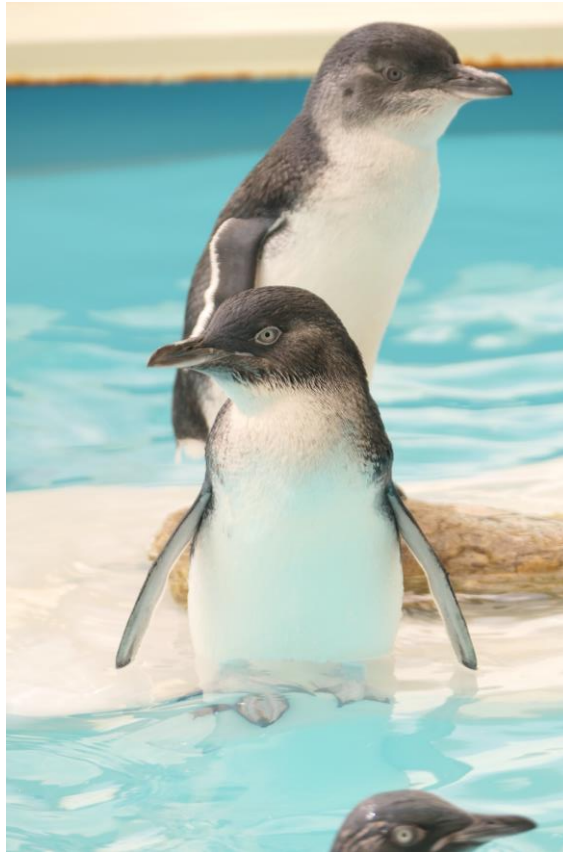
However, Harmony lost muscle, which indicated that she suffered from myopathy, due to the trauma she had undergone. Myopathy is a condition where, due to a prolonged adrenaline surge, muscles start to dissolve and release toxins into the bloodstream. This can affect kidney and liver function and if it is prolonged for too long, the heart muscle gets attacked. This is a very painful condition and is often fatal.

Updates on Tib and Harmony

After 2 ½ months of being restricted to a small space, **Tib**'s foot had healed enough for him to go outdoors.

When Tib was placed on the edge of the pool ready for his first swim, he spotted **Harmony**. Harmony and Tib lived near each other at the West Beach Colony, and are both victims of the cruel attack that occurred in March.

Penguins can be nervous when going into the pool for the first time, but Tib dove straight into the pool and swam to Harmony looking immediately comfortable.



Although Tib has some trouble with his waterproofing, he hasn't let that dampen his spirits. At first, he got agitated as the water started to seep in, but when the carer took him out and rested him on the combing, he chose to go back into the pool. He now makes use of the rest-step in the pool when he needs to.

During his time inside, Tib had lost some condition due to limited exercise, but now outside and spending some time in the pool, he is beginning to regain his agility and stamina.

Harmony has also started gentle exercises to regain her strength. The carers remain cautious and will gradually increase her activity levels to ensure her well-being. When in the pool, she has started to dive, but will often bob up tail first as she is still lacking muscle strength. Like most adult penguins when in the pool, she has a tendency to snooze and cruise and gets rather irritated when she is forced to exercise!

With the other penguins, she has shown her natural maternal instincts. Together with Tib, the two adult birds have taken the younger ones under their wing/flipper.

A penguin love story

Despite the suffering endured by Tib and Harmony, there is a **happy ending**: in fact, Tib and Harmony became a mated pair towards the end of Spring. It was certainly quite an education for the younger penguins in the enclosure watching Tib and Harmony's antics! Tib spent a lot of time and effort wooing Harmony, making elaborately decorated burrows for her.



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He would often be seen crossing the enclosure with a very determined-looking march to gather new sponges or grasses to take to his burrow to decorate it for her. Despite all Tib's wooing, the pair didn't produce any eggs. Tib and Harmony share a very close bond and are completely in sync, even going into moult on the same day.



During moult, Tib was extremely grumpy and made it clear that he hated everybody except, of course, Harmony. Tib and Harmony spent their moult together, isolating themselves in their burrow away from the other penguins.



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They have only recently finished moulting and need to regain some weight before they will be ready for release. Harmony, in particular, also needs to regain her strength and stamina in the water. Before moult, Harmony was making great progress in her agility in the water, but we will need to ensure that she hasn't lost too much of her muscle tone during moult.

Tib and Harmony won't be ready for release until they both have good energy reserves and prove that they are able to fend for themselves in the wild again.

WSF's commitment is to support this pair of penguins until they are both able to return to the wild.