

FOOD TRANSFER BETWEEN GENTOO PENGUIN *PYGOSCELIS PAPUA* SIBLINGS

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Fig. 1. *Gentoo Penguin chick feeding its smaller sibling.*

On 19 January 1994, during the course of undertaking field-work on Gentoo Penguins *Pygoscelis papua* at Paloma Beach, Falkland Islands (51°27'S, 58°58'W), I observed some unusual behaviour between two siblings of differing size.

In the absence of a parent, the smaller of the two chicks in one nest spent over half an hour probing the bill of the larger sibling in an apparent attempt to provoke a feeding response. Eventually the larger chick, which would have been about seven weeks old, responded by regurgitating food and feeding the smaller chick. This was repeated a few minutes later, and photographs of this activity were taken (Fig.1).

I am not aware of this behaviour being reported previously, and it is rather unexpected since the larger sibling is helping to improve the competitiveness of the smaller sibling, and in theory could thus be reducing its own survival chances.

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