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PENGUIN & PUFFIN COAST

From the ends of the earth come some of the most fascinating, specialized oceanic birds, penguins of the Southern Hemisphere and puffins of the Northern Hemisphere. In May 2003, the St. Louis Zoo opened this unique new exhibit for an astonishing look at these seaworthy birds.

Visitors follow a rugged coastline to Jones Family **Humboldt Haven**, the outdoor home of about 20 Humboldt penguins. Here a 22-foot-waterfall plunges into a misty tidal pool. Above the pool looms a craggy rock outcropping, with six Humboldt nesting chambers carved into the face of the rock. Windswept grasses jut out along the stony shore.

Humboldt penguins, a threatened species, are native to the coasts of Peru and Chile, where the driest deserts of the world meet with the coldest currents of the Pacific. Surging tides and ambient sounds of terns, cormorants, gulls and sea lions add to the Humboldt experience.

From here the path leads indoors to two spacious domed exhibits, complete with rugged coastlines, towering rockscapes and underwater viewing of these oceanic birds. At Lichtenstein **Penguin Cove**, the first walk-through subantarctic penguin exhibit in North America, visitors journey through high coastal cliffs, like those of the Island of South Georgia, to watch penguins on land and underwater. About 60 gentoos, rockhoppers and king penguins share this habitat.

The barrel vault ceiling has theatrical lighting, which can be used to simulate a colorful sunrise, a sunset over the horizon or the reversed seasons of the Southern Hemisphere. Sounds of crashing waves and a sea lion's bark can be heard in the distance. With a constant temperature of 45-50° F., this cove is a visitor favorite in summer and a comfortable destination year round.

As visitors travel through a rough-hewn cave, they arrive at Taylor Family **Puffin Bay**, home of puffins, fast-swimming birds of the Northern Hemisphere. Puffin Bay, complete with rocky cliffs and frigid water, houses both horned and tufted puffins, about 30 in all. Like their penguin counterparts in the Southern Hemisphere, puffins are black-and-white birds skilled in diving and swimming. They are known as "sea parrots" or "clowns of the sea."

The innovative open-air design of Penguin & Puffin Coast allows visitors a close-up experience with the birds. Direct lighting concealed in the rockwork provides full spectrum light important for bird growth and breeding cycles.

Admission to the St. Louis Zoo and Penguin & Puffin Coast is free.

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