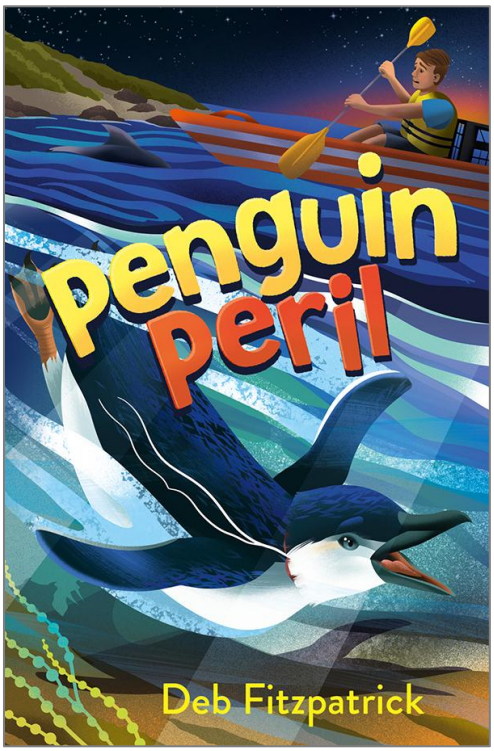
PENGUIN PERIL

DEB FITZPATRICK
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YEAR LEVEL: Y2–5
CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITIES: Sustainability



ABOUT THE BOOK

Mitch just wants to go on a little solo fishing adventure in his dad's new kayak. But when he gets caught in the tide and almost swept out to sea, things take a scary turn. Beaching at the last minute on Penguin Island, Mitch is trapped for the night, without food, in the dark, surrounded by strange noises and … penguins?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Deb Fitzpatrick is the author more than a dozen books for readers of all ages, many of them set in the South West of WA, such as *Tawny Trouble* and *Kelpie Chaos*, the Spencer Gray books and her YA classic *90 Packets of Instant Noodles*. Deb loves bushwalking with her kelpie and, when she can, she sneaks away to a shack in the karri forest to be among wildlife and write adventure-in-nature stories. Deb has a Master of Arts in creative writing from UWA.



THEMES

- Penguins
- Natural environment
- Family
- Adventure
- Fear
- Grief

AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

- Y2–5 English
- Y2–5 The Arts
- Y2–5 Humanities and Social Sciences
- Y2–5 Science
- Y2–5 Health and Physical Education

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: debfitzpatrick.com.au
- WA Wildlife: wawildlife.org.au
- Penguin Island: exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au/park/penguin-island-conservation-park
- Australian Museum: australian.museum/learn/animals/birds/little-penguin-eudyptula-minor
- Royal Lifesaving Western Australia: www.royallifesavingwa.com.au/staying-safe/safety-advice/risk-factors/rip-currents

CLASSROOM IDEAS

Discussion Questions

1. Before reading, make predictions about the book based on the title and cover image.
2. Mitch describes Penguin Island as his mum's **'favourite place in the whole world'** (p. 7). Describe your favourite place to a partner, and explain what makes it so special to you.
3. Most of this story is told in the first person point of view, but the chapter 'The weatherman' switches to third person point of view (p. 34).
    a. How can you tell which point of view a story is being told from?
    b. Why do you think the point of view changes in this chapter?
    c. How does changing the point of view help build suspense?
    d. Do you think hearing the story from Mitch's own voice helps you feel closer to Mitch and understand him better?
4. Mitch and his family often use casual language, such as, **'gotta be keen'** (p. 3) and **'no probs'** (p. 11).
    a. Why do you think the author has chosen to include this language?
    b. How does language choice help the reader get to know the characters?
5. What do these vocabulary words from the text mean? Find and copy a definition for each word, then create an original sentence for each.
    a. wrangling (p. 13)
    b. tentative (p. 21)
    c. weathervane (p. 35)
    d. rogue (p. 51)
    e. granules (p. 61)
    f. dwindling (p. 65)
    g. regurgitate (p. 67)
    h. manoeuvre (p. 70)
    i. crevice (p. 89)
    j. rancid (p. 102)
6. In what way did Mitch's feelings about his older brother Jas lead him to make a risky decision? Consider this quote: **'I clench my teeth as Jas's words replay in my head, more times than I want to hear. By lunchtime, I've decided: I'll show him exactly what I can catch'** (p. 16).
7. Mitch's father tells the boys a **'cautionary tale'** (p. 17).
    a. What is a cautionary tale?
    b. What do you think Mitch's father wants the boys to understand from the drownings?
    c. Do you know any other cautionary tales? What message/s do they convey?
8. The author has used several literary devices to make her writing more engaging for readers. What type of literary device (simile, metaphor, onomatopoeia, rhyme, personification, alliteration) is used in these examples?
    a. **'Liam clambers in [the kayak], wobbling it like it's on jelly'** (p. 11).
    b. **'There's a small satisfying splosh'** (p. 12).
    c. **'It's like a switch. A Mitch Switch'** (p. 13).
    d. **'[I] dig the paddle into the buttery water'** (p. 20).
    e. **'I see a silky silver flash'** (p. 22).
    f. **'My mouth is as dry as the Sandy Desert'** (p. 57).
    g. **'At the entrance a dark opening gapes at me like an awful jaw'** (p. 62).
    h. **'My body is suddenly begging to get horizontal'** (p. 63).
    i. **'It's a zoo out here'** (p. 64).
    j. **'Squarrrrk, craawwkkk, qwak'** (p. 64).
    k. **'My brain has officially turned to mush'** (p. 76).
    l. **'Splash!'** (p. 92).
9. Which five adjectives would you use to describe Mitch?
10. What lesson/s do you think these characters have learned through the events of the book: Mitch, Dad, Jasper.
11. In what ways can a fiction book, like *Penguin Peril*, teach us about real places, animals or experiences, even though the story is made up?

12. Are there moments in the plot where characters are faced with choices? What are they? How has the author made you care about the characters' decisions and the consequences?

Creative Writing

1. Write a newspaper report on little penguin population declining on Penguin Island, using one of the headlines from page 8: '**DEVASTATING PENGUIN COLLAPSE'** or **'WILDLIFE COLONY APPROACHES EXTINCTION'**.
2. Create a tourist brochure for Penguin Island. Include information on how to get there, activities on the island and rules to follow while on the island.
3. Reread the description on p. 50 and the 'fun facts' on pp. 115–116, then create an informative poster about little penguins. Search online to include information about little penguin habitat, diet, lifecycle and threats.
4. What rules are in place to protect the real little penguins on Penguin Island? Create a poster to instruct visitors to the island what to do and avoid.
5. Mitch says, **'I'd really like to be a ranger when I grow up'** (p. 55). What skills and knowledge do you think are needed to be a ranger? Write a job advertisement for a ranger in a natural area near you.
6. Write a book review for *Penguin Peril*, including a brief plot summary, opinion, star rating and who you would recommend the book to.
7. Write a character description for one of the members of Mitch's family: Mitch, Dad, Jasper or Liam.

The Arts

1. Reread the description of the Penguin Island setting, beginning on p. 112. Using the medium of your choice, create an artwork based on the description.
2. With a partner, act out an imagined phone call between Dad and Auntie Lennie in which they arrange the search for Mitch (p. 36).
3. Imagine you were going to adapt this novel into a feature film.
    a. Which actors would you cast to play the lead roles, and why would they suit the characters?
    b. What song would you choose as the theme song, and how would it help set the 'mood' of the movie?
    c. What choices would you make about the setting to bring the story to life on screen? Consider accuracy, environmental impact and the atmosphere you want to convey in the film.

Health and Physical Education

1. Mitch uses several techniques to control his emotions, especially when he is scared or missing his mum. Have you used any of these techniques? If so, which did you find helpful?
    a. **'Breathe, Mitch. Eyes on Dad'** (p. 14).
    b. **'Box breathing … you imagine a square, and breathe your way around it'** (p. 30).
    c. **'I can't go there now. Those thoughts are not for now, Mitch'** (p. 30).
    d. **'I let myself cry for a bit. I usually feel a little bit better afterwards'** (p. 80).
    e. **'Being here on the island makes me feel close to Mum. I can always come here, for this feeling'** (p. 114).
2. When caught in the rip current, Mitch explains, **'I need to stay in the kayak and wait until the water spits me out'** (p. 27). Research rip current safety advice to find out how to avoid and handle rip currents.
3. Mitch's family enjoy fishing. Do you know the meaning of these fishing terms?
    a. bag limit (p. 24)
    b. top limit (p. 24)
    c. undersize (p. 24)
    d. measure sticker (p. 22)
    e. lures (p. 16)
4. What personal qualities do Mitch and his brothers show in the story? How are they similar or different to you?
5. What is 'resilience'? When does Mitch demonstrate resilience throughout the story?
6. How do you think the challenges faced in the story helped unite Mitch's family? How can you tell?
7. What are some steps Mitch could have taken to make his kayak journey safer? How does Dad try to keep Mitch and his brothers safe?

Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Write an information report about Goolidja Goorda/Penguin Island. Some possible topics include: location, habitat, history, flora and fauna.
2. Draw a map of Penguin Island, showing key features such as the jetty, lookouts, boardwalk, walk trails, sanctuary and visitor facilities. Include labels, compass directions and a legend/key to help readers better understand the map.
3. Penguin Island is a popular tourist destination and an important wildlife habitat in Western Australia. What challenges might arise when a place is used for both tourism and conservation?
4. At the end of the story, Mitch and his family work with the ranger and community volunteers to clear rubbish from Penguin Island.
    a. Why do you think these people volunteered their time to help protect the penguins and their habitat?
    b. How does this kind of community action make a difference to the environment?
    c. What is one way you could contribute to caring for a local place or animal habitat?
    d. Do you agree with the chapter title, 'This problem belongs to all of us' (p. 107)?

Science

1. Why does the Department of Fisheries set size limits and bag limits for recreational fishing?
    a. How do these rules help protect fish populations and keep ecosystems healthy?
    b. Why are upper and lower size limits in place for some species? Pick three different fish species and list their limits.
    c. What could happen if people do not follow the rules? Consider both personal and environmental consequences.
2. Make a list of physical characteristics (such as waterproof feathers) and behavioural characteristics (such as forming colonies) that allow little penguins to survive in their coastal island habitat.
3. Islands like Penguin Island are affected by both long-term and short-term changes.
    a. How do long-term changes, such as erosion and rising sea temperatures, alter the island's habitat over time?
    b. How do short-term changes, such as weather and tides, influence the way humans and animals use the island each day?