



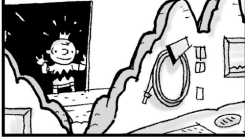
words & pix by M.E. RUSSELL; shades by CHAD ESSLEY

**THE DATE:** THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2005. **THE ACTIVITY:** FEEDING ENDANGERED *HUMBOLDT PENGUINS* AT THE OREGON ZOO!

THE OREGON ZOO'S "PENGUINARIUM" RE-CREATES THE ENDANGERED *HUMBOLDT PENGUIN*'S HABITAT ...



... BUT FROM THE OTHER SIDE, IT LOOKS LIKE THE BACK OF A HOLLYWOOD SET!



WE'RE INSIDE THE "PENGUIN KITCHEN" - THE SECRET NERVE CENTER BEHIND THE HABITAT - WITH SENIOR PENGUIN KEEPER SHAWN ST. MICHAEL!



THERE'S A PENGUIN NAMED *MOCHICA* WANDERING FREELY BACK HERE!



HE COMES IN HERE IN THE MORNINGS, HANGS OUT, GETS A CUP OF COFFEE.



HIS NAME'S TAPED ON THE LOCKER NEXT TO YOURS. WHAT'S IN THERE?



AND NOW SHAWN AND *MOCHICA* ARE GOING TO TEACH US ...




HE HAD A LOT OF HUMAN HANDS ON HIM WHEN HE WAS A YOUNGSTER. HE PREFERS PEOPLE!

WE CHUCK HIM OUT OF THE KITCHEN AROUND NOON.

PROBABLY HERRING.

## ... How to Feed a Penguin!

### 1. KNOW YOUR BIRD!



**NAME:** MOCHICA  
**BREED:** HUMBOLDT (APPROX. 24,000 LEFT IN THE WILD)  
**FOUND IN:** PERU, CHILE  
**SEX:** MALE  
**AGE:** 15  
**SENSIBILITY:** SURPRISINGLY HUMAN

### 2. KNOW ITS FOOD!

TINY SMELT, RIVER SMELT AND SMALL HERRING - INJECTED WITH A SPECIAL COMPLEX VITAMIN MIX!



### 3. KNOW YOUR APPROACH VECTOR!

IT'S EXCEPTIONALLY BAD MANNERS TO FEED A PENGUIN TAIL-FIRST. THEY'LL GIVE YOU A DIRTY LOOK.

THE FINS CAN GET STUCK IN THEIR THROAT!



### 4. BE CAREFUL!

THEY'RE VERY TERRITORIAL, AND CAN TAKE A BIG CHUNK OUT OF YOUR LEG.



WE HAVE MORE KEEPERS WITH SCARS FROM *PENGUINS* THAN FROM JUST ABOUT ANY OTHER ANIMAL!



THEY GRAB YOU WITH THEIR BILL AND WHACK YOU WITH THEIR FLIPPERS HARD ENOUGH TO BREAK YOUR FINGERS!



### 5. WATCH FOR SIGNALS!

COME ON!

OH, NOW, SEE, YOU'VE OFFENDED HIM.



WHAT DID I DO?

HONESTLY? IT CAN BE REALLY HARD TO TELL.



THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY AWKWARD MOMENT.

GNAW GNAW



THAT WAS ACTUALLY PRETTY GOOD!

GULP!



NOW HE'S SAYING, "I DON'T WANT A FISH, BUT I DON'T WANT TO OFFEND YOU. PLEASE FORGIVE ME."

HE'LL ALSO DO THAT IF YOU'RE THROWING HIM OUT OF THE KITCHEN.



6. DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY!

HEY - THIS IS AN ANIMAL THAT CAN GO ABOUT A MONTH WITHOUT EATING!



### ENDNOTES AND DIGRESSIONS:

1. Would you like to know more about the "Penguinarium"? Visit the Oregon Zoo's Web site at [www.OregonZoo.org/Exhibits/penguin.htm](http://www.OregonZoo.org/Exhibits/penguin.htm).

2. This comic has **online bonus features!** I actually conducted a longish interview with Senior Penguin Keeper **Shawn St. Michael**. Basically, I asked him every stupid question that a person completely ignorant of penguins or

zookeeping (i.e., me) might ask, and Shawn offered gloriously detailed, funny and well-spoken answers. Want to learn a lot more about **Mochica**? Want to learn about the growing science of helping these animals thrive in captivity? Want to learn how a penguin - a surprisingly rough-tempered bird - can royally mess you up? You can find these answers (and see photos of Mochica) *right now* at ...