



# *Let's* **SAVE** **THE WORLD**

---

## **GLOBAL WARNING**

---

---

### **LITTLE HOMES FOR LITTLE PENGUINS**

The little penguin population of Penguin Island, off the coast of Perth in Western Australia, has new digs to call home, thanks to the construction and delivery of 20 nesting boxes by the Rotary Club of Palm Beach, WA.

---





In the old boxes, little penguin chicks struggled during warm weather. The new nesting boxes are designed with air vents on the sides, as well as raised roofs, complete with insulation, allowing hot air to rise and dissipate.

Two pairs of Penguin Island's little residents have already settled in to two of the new nesting boxes.

**PENGUIN** Island is home to around 1200 little penguins, the largest population of the tiny, seafaring birds in Western Australia. Unfortunately, the colony is on the decline, with numbers dropping from between 1600 to 2000 during breeding months in 2007, to 1000 only four years later. Prey depletion, climate change, and human activity are major pressures affecting reproduction and the penguins' future.

The nesting box project came about when club member and former wildlife officer Rick Dawson took a job driving tourist ferries to Penguin Island, with visitors permitted during mid-September to early June during daylight hours. Rick discovered that the man-made nesting boxes previously installed on the island to help increase available nesting spaces were crumbling – a situation he reported to his fellow Rotarians.

With the help of a PhD student and club member, Des Mant, newly designed nesting boxes were constructed out of plywood, tailored to the penguin's needs, in Des's backyard workshop. They imitate natural burrows, with a tunnel leading to a main chamber where the penguins can stand.

In the old boxes, little penguin chicks struggled during warm weather. The new nesting boxes are designed with air vents on the sides,

as well as raised roofs, complete with insulation, allowing hot air to rise and dissipate.

The rest of the Rotary Club of Palm Beach then helped paint the boxes and transport them to the island – carting them to the jetty in a cleaned-up rubbish truck owned by a member and taking them to the island in Rick's private boat in two trips.

The new nesting boxes were placed

where most needed by Parks and Wildlife staff, with plans by the Rotary Club of Palm Beach to create more. This year's nesting has just begun, with two pairs already taking up residence in two of the new boxes.

This was the second project by the club to help struggling bird species, with 300 artificial nesting hollows previously made for endangered Carnaby's black cockatoos. •



Rotarians Andy Chapman, Alan Guthrie, Hal Baxter, Mick le-Cocq, Des Mat and Rick Dawson, with marine parks coordinator Melissa Evans and one of the nesting boxes.