



# The southernmost Miocene penguin (Aves, Spheniscidae) from South America

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With 1 figure

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**Abstract:** MLP 00-III-5-1 is a distal end of a right tibiotarsus belonging to a fossil penguin. It comes from the Cerro Águila Conglomerate (53°50'14.85"S, 67°47'29.78"W) near Río Grande City, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina. These beds overly sediments referable to the Cabo Peña Formation, probably similar in age to that of the Middle Miocene Carmen Silva Formation. The fossil described here is the only fossil penguin from this unit and represents the southernmost record of a Neogene penguin in South America.

**Key words:** Spheniscidae, Miocene, Cerro Águila Conglomerate, Patagonia, Argentina.

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## 1. Introduction

Penguins constitute a group of marine birds exclusively distributed in the Southern Hemisphere. The oldest record belongs to *Waimanu manneringi* JONES et al., 2006, coming from the Early Paleocene strata of New Zealand (SLACK et al. 2006). In South America, the Paleogene records correspond to *Perudyptes devriesi* CLARKE et al. 2007, *Icadyptes salasi* CLARKE et al. 2007, and *Inkayacu paracacensis* CLARKE et al. 2010, all three coming from the Middle Eocene of Peru (CLARKE et al. 2007, 2010), a recent mention of isolated material assigned to *Palaeudyptes* sp. from the Middle Eocene of Chile (SALLABERRY et al. 2010) and the late Middle Eocene Pansphenisciformes of Argentina (CLARKE et al. 2003). These species did not survive beyond the Late Eocene or possibly the Oligocene. They

were replaced by more slender forms directly related with modern species (ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE 2006; ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE et al. 2007). This idea is supported by a rich Neogene record.

From the Early Miocene Gaiman Formation *Eretiscus tonni* (SIMPSON, 1981), *Palaeospheniscus bergi* MORENO & MERCERAT, 1891, *P. patagonicus* MORENO & MERCERAT, 1891 and *P. biloculata* (SIMPSON, 1970) are recorded. The contemporaneous Chenque Formation yielded *P. bergi* and *P. patagonicus*; whereas from the Early Miocene Monte León Formation only *Paraptenydytes antarcticus* (ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE, 2006) is recorded.

Fossil penguins are also recorded from the Middle Miocene Puerto Madryn Formation, by *Madrynornis mirandus* (ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE et al., 2007) and *Paraptenydytes antarcticus* (ACOSTA HOSPITALECHE,