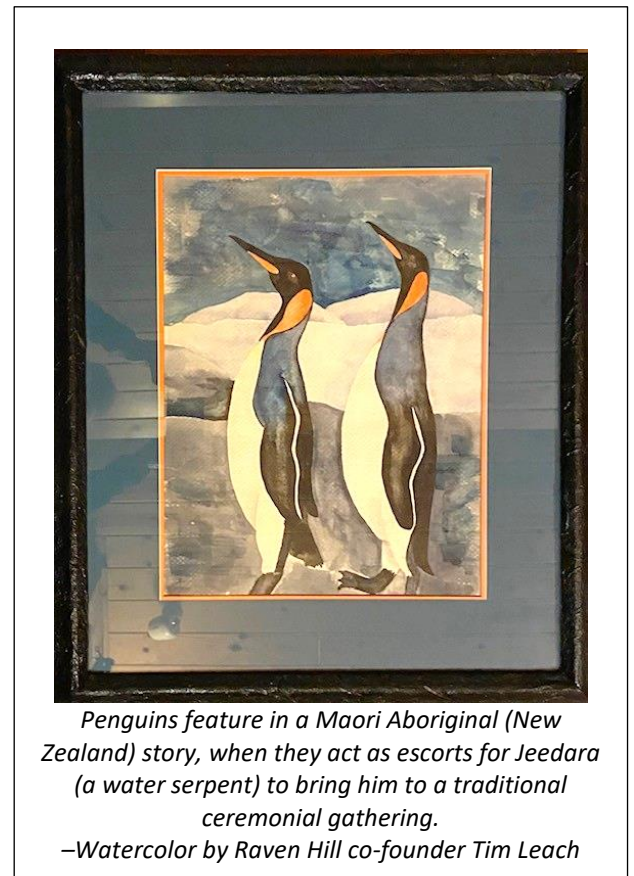
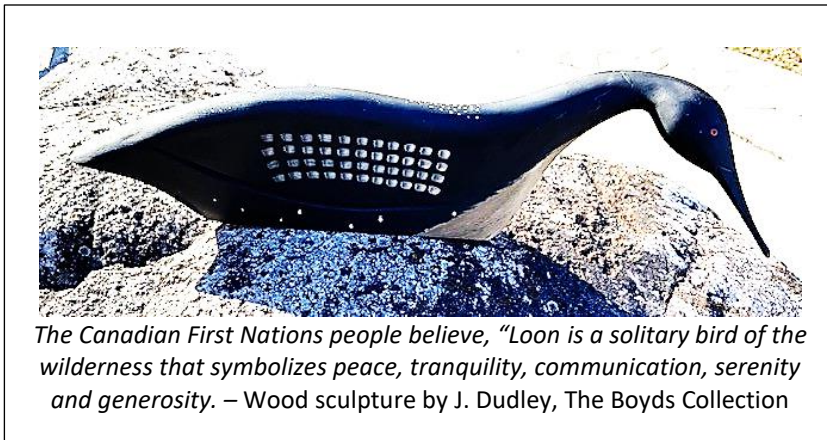


WHERE **SCIENCE****HISTORY****AND****ART** CONNECT

To: Friends of Raven Hill  
From: Cheri  
Date: January 20, 2024  
Re: Penguin Awareness Day

Today, January 20, 2024, is Penguin Awareness Day. World Penguin Day is celebrated on April 25, 2024. Both days help raise awareness about these flightless birds and their disappearing habitats. However, it seems much more appropriate to think about penguins this time of year in all this snow and cold that we are currently experiencing here in northern Michigan. You might be wondering, “Why penguins?” I say, “What better way to connect science, history and the arts?!”

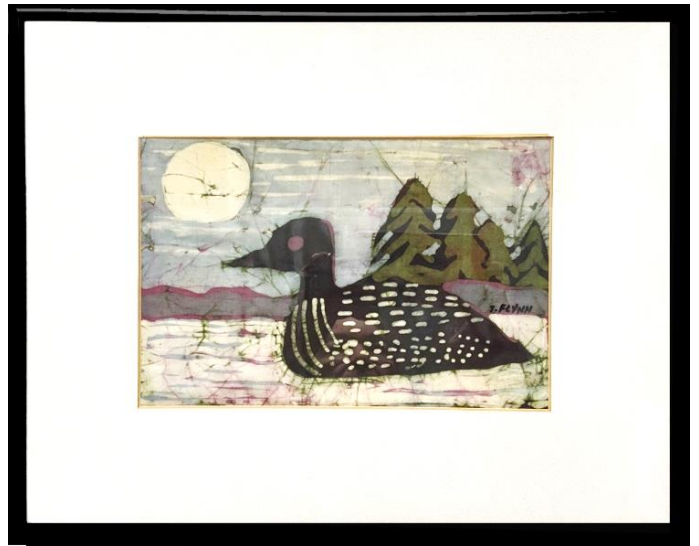
Both penguins and loons are among our oldest birds. In fact, they have a common ancestor from fifty-five million years ago. The oldest penguin fossils that have been found were discovered in New Zealand and are estimated to be sixty million years old. Loons appeared over forty million years ago. Scientists believe penguins evolved from birds of flight about eighty million years ago and are closely related to seabirds like albatrosses, petrels and **loons**.



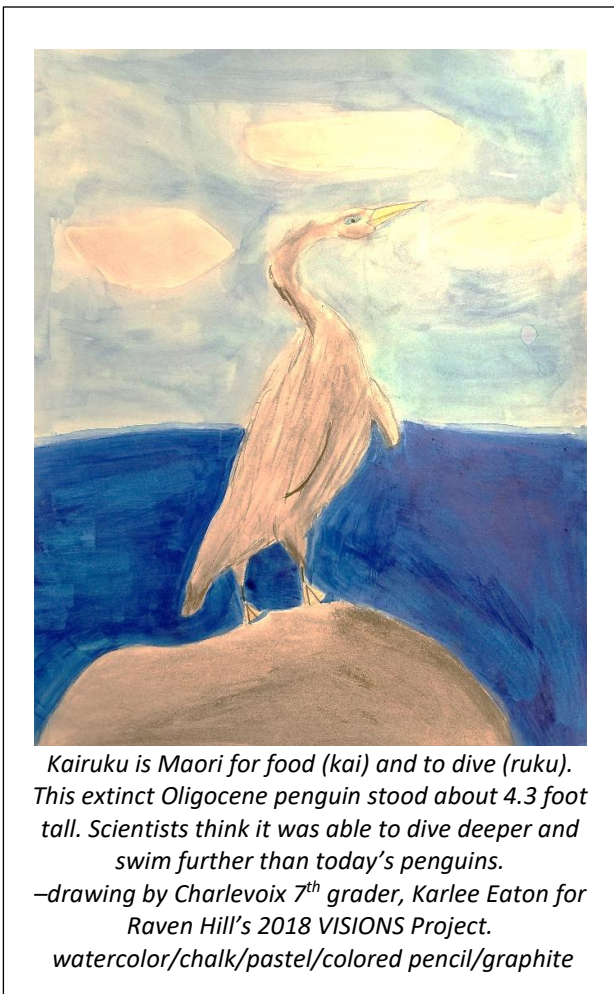
Penguins and loons have several things in common besides their black and white colors. They are also the only birds with solid bones. This does not help them fly, but does allow them to dive deep to chase fish 200 feet below the surface of the water. Because they are aquatic birds, both have their feet towards the back of their bodies making them more streamlined. Of course, there are differences too. Penguins are

mostly found in the Southern Hemisphere and loons in the Northern Hemisphere. Loons can fly and penguins are flightless. Penguins can stay below the surface for much longer than loons.

Animals often have a spiritual significance or represent a certain quality. Penguins are very social birds and symbolize honesty, hope, reliability and resilience to many people of the world. Penguins do a kind of sacred spiral dance. According to SpiritAnimal.com, “The outer penguins move into the center as others move out. This behavior keeps everyone warm and reflects the marvelous attributes of cooperation, unity, harmony, teamwork, and symbiosis. By focusing on global group needs, they ensure survival.” Conversely, loons are solitary birds and are associated with tranquility and serenity. First-Nations believe “Loon awakens the imagination and reminds us that all hopes, dreams and wishes can become realities.” What do you think? Are you more a penguin or a loon?!



*In Native American mythology, Raven gives us the sun, moon and stars, while Loon plays the role of Earth-Diver. Legend says that Loon is the only animal to succeed at diving to the ocean floor to bring up earth for the Creator to use for making land.  
—Batik by artist Jennifer Flynn*



*Kairuku is Maori for food (kai) and to dive (ruku). This extinct Oligocene penguin stood about 4.3 foot tall. Scientists think it was able to dive deeper and swim further than today’s penguins.  
—drawing by Charlevoix 7<sup>th</sup> grader, Karlee Eaton for Raven Hill’s 2018 VISIONS Project.  
watercolor/chalk/pastel/colored pencil/graphite*

Once again, remember, this is a great time to visit the Center. Raven Hill is open weekends—noon to 4pm on Saturdays; 2pm to 4pm on Sundays, as well as holidays and other times by appointment. Families and field trip groups can visit and explore both indoors and outside or book a science, history or art class for all ages and abilities. The Center is a perfect place for scout and 4H activities, birthday parties for youngsters & adults, retreats, weddings and other gatherings. Outreach programs are also available for booking. Small group “assemblies”, classes and touring exhibits can travel to schools and public libraries, as well as other venues. For more information about onsite or outreach programs, email [info@miravenhill.org](mailto:info@miravenhill.org) or call Cheri at 231.536.3369.

Happy Penguin Day,

Cheri

*Raven Hill Discovery Center is supported by*

