

Diversity and Prevalence of the Coccidians (Apicomplexa: Eucoccidia) of Gentoo Penguins (*Pygoscelis papua* FORSTER, 1781) from King George Island (South Shetland Archipelago, the Antarctic)

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Abstract: Three species of Eucoccidia were established in 38 studied Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua* FORSTER, 1781) from King George Island, the Antarctic: *Eimeria pygosceli* GOLEMANSKY, 2003, *Eimeria* sp. and *Isospora* sp. Data on the morphology, microphotographs of their oocysts and prevalence of invasion with the observed coccidians are given. The total prevalence of the studied 38 birds with coccidians is 60.5%. The most frequent parasite is *Isospora* sp. (prevalence 39.5%), followed by *E. pygosceli* (26.3%) and *Eimeria* sp. (18.4%). In 4 of the studied birds a high abundance of oocysts of *Isospora* sp. and *E. pygosceli* was observed. The author supposes that the coccidiosis is probably one of the limiting factors on the population abundance of Gentoo penguins from the South Shetland Archipelago.

Key words: Antarctic, King George Island, Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), Eucoccidia, prevalence