



Copa Sitrep # 3
11/2/07 – 11/8/07

We are approaching the end of our first month at Copa and all of the Copapods are finding their grooves. Snow continues to cover Copa and the penguins, completely burying a number of penguin nests (7% of our repro plots failed that day) and some of the birds are staking out nest sites on what we believe is 10 feet of snow in some areas.

1. Penguins: 78 out of the 100 monitored Adélie pairs have laid at least one egg as of Thursday, 11/7. Peak of egg-laying for the Adélie penguins was approximately 11/3, at which time we collected adult weights & egg 1 measurements – we select 50 nests at the Point Thomas colony (near the Polish station) with both adults present & only 1 egg, then weigh both adults & measure & weigh the egg. This will be used as an indicator of adult condition at the start of the breeding season. Gentoo penguin Repro Study plots have been set up at Ipanema Beach and at the new Cascade Head colony (previously an Adélie penguin colony) that now hosts >100 nests and is growing every day. Copa Beach gentoos have only a single egg so far, but most are still in loose groups, with no definite colonies or nests yet.
2. Skuas: Regular checks of Copa skuas continued, although, as of yet, only brown skuas that hold penguin territories have been regularly seen. The first round of Point Thomas skua territory checks was completed on Thursday, 11/7. Only a handful of birds from previous years were found on their territories and it appears they are still working out the details between themselves as many border disputes were observed. The first south polar skuas of the year were also observed during our hike.
3. PTTs: 10 satellite transmitters (PTTs) were deployed on 11/5 on female Adélie penguins with 1 egg and, as of today (11/9), 9 have departed the colony on their first foraging forays and are currently being tracked.

Weekly Weather A 12-hour blizzard dumped/drifted an additional 3 feet of snow on the area on Wednesday, 11/7. The remainder of the week has been gray & cold, so little or no melting has occurred.

End of Sitrep #3

The 2007-08 Copa Field Team
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