



Copa Sitrep # 5
11/16/07 – 11/22/07

This week has been split between our bird work and the preparations for our Thanksgiving festivities - both of which were full-time jobs. Between nest checks and skua hikes, we baked breads and pies, prepped the main dishes and prepared Copa for an unknown number of guests. 14 of our faithful friends from Arctowski showed up in marginal weather - hiking over the glacier to celebrate with us. The food was good, the company was cheerful, & a nice time was had by all. All was quickly forgotten the next day, however, when we received word that a cruise ship, with close ties to Arctowski, had struck ice and sunk off of King George Island. We were relieved to hear that all aboard were rescued, needless to say. We are now buttoning down for what we have been warned is a large storm building that will last through the weekend.

1. Penguins: All of our 100 Adélie penguin Repro Study nests have now initiated their clutches and, as of 11/23, only 52 remain active. And out of 40 known-age Adélie nests, only 7 remain active. Gentoos are initiating clutches at a fast pace despite a serious lack of nesting materials for many of them. Many eggs are being found unattended in shallow snow cups without the pairs that laid them – very unusual for gentoos, as mentioned in the previous sitrep. The first chinstrap penguin eggs at Copa were seen on the 11/21.
2. Skuas: The first Back-Country skua check proved a little more productive than our Demay skua hike last week, but the majority of sightings were of single skuas, with very few pairs being observed. Regular checks of Copa skuas continued.
3. PTTs: All but one of the 11 satellite transmitters that were deployed on female Adélies have been recovered. The downloaded tracks of all but this last female, showed the same pattern as was found last week, with the birds going to the middle of the Bransfield Strait, remaining there for some time (presumably foraging), then returning to their nests. The female that hasn't returned lost her nest prior to departing, and seems to be taking her time coming back (if she ever will), preferring the area north & west of Joinville Island, off the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula – we are keeping a close eye on her activities, to make sure we are able to recover the PTT when/if she finally returns.

End of Sitrep #5

The 2007-08 Copa Field Team

Stefan Kropidowski - Field Team Leader
Jefferson Hinke
Angie Kaufman
Małgorzata Korczak

