



Copa Sitrep # 11
12-28-07 to 1-3-08

Happy New Year to all!! A solid week of high winds and rain rang in the New Year at Copa, melting all but a few patches of snow in the work areas. The winds have not affected the penguins, but several skua chicks were blown off their nests, causing some losses.

1. Penguins: 25 out of 100 Adélie Repro nests remain active, plus 9 that have crèched. Out of the 57 chicks that were hatched, 43 remain, 15 of which have successfully crèched. A few fully-feathered chicks have been seen in the colonies, but most of the chicks are still being tended by their parents.
72 out of 98 gentoo penguin Repro nests remain active (25 of which are relays), and have produced 59 chicks to date. The mean gentoo chick hatch date for active nests was 1/3. However, we also collected the first 21-day chick weights this week, which shows what a protracted breeding season this has been for the gentoos. Failed gentoo repro birds have continued to initiate relays and the latest to re-initiate to date was on 1/3. Chinstrap penguin chicks appear to be about 2 weeks old now.
2. Skuas: A total of 48 nests are now active throughout the study area. Many old pairs have returned in the previous 2 weeks and have become increasingly territorial. The strong winds this week caused some chick losses, when they were blown out of their nests.
3. Giant Petrels: Band reading began on Copa rock this week. 23 nests are currently active and one of each adult pair has been re-sighted so far. Banding of unbanded adults will begin as time and weather allow.
4. Sheathbills: A single egg was found in a nest on 12/30, but was gone by 1/2. Only a single sheathbill has been seen in the previous months.

Weekly Weather: High winds and light rain dominated most of the week. For two days, wind speeds were at a consistent 50 knots, with higher gusts making boating and high country work impossible. Aside from a few patches of snow, the ground is now bare in all flat and exposed areas, although some ravines and gullies are still filled.

End of Sitrep #11

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