



Copa Sitrep # 14  
1/18/08 – 1/24/08

We held our annual Adélie penguin roundup this week and banded 250 chicks in just over an hour, with the help of 2 Polish scientists (in addition to the 5 Copapods). A severe windstorm stranded the Copa crew at the Polish station over the weekend and also caused a number of skua nests to fail. We passed the halfway point of our diet collections this week and censused the chinstrap penguin chicks.

1. Penguins: All 250 Adélie penguin chick bands have now been deployed on birds. Adélie fledglings have not yet been sighted on the beaches, so fledging weights have not begun yet. Out of 98 gentoo penguin Repro Study nests, 44 are still active with chicks or eggs, and 21 nests have crèched 30 chicks out of the total of 87 hatched chicks so far. 794 chinstrap penguin chicks were counted in the census this week, including 2 chicks at Copa.
2. Penguin Diets: The last Adélie penguin diet collection was completed this week. The second sets of gentoo & chinstrap penguin diet samples were collected this week.
3. Skuas: 88 pairs have initiated nests in the study area. Of these, 29 have failed and the remaining nests have produced 24 surviving chicks (i.e., alive at last check).
4. PTTs: Satellite transmitters have been deployed on 5 adult chinstrap penguins with chicks, and previous deployments on Adélies and gentoos are being retrieved. So far, the data downloaded for the adult Adélies & gentoos feeding chicks, showed them going just out of the bay into the Bransfield Straits, mostly to the 1000m bathymetry line, or just beyond. The last 2 Adélies still with satellite transmitters are currently in the northwestern Weddell Sea, east-southeast of Joinville Island, so appear to be heading for their winter grounds and will not likely be recovered; we will continue to follow them until they stop transmitting.

Weekly Weather: Extremely high winds all week maxed out the Polish wind gauge that only goes up to 50 m/s (about 100 knots). The wind gusts have been consistently 40-60 knots with a steady 20 knots blowing for most of the previous 6 days. The high winds have been accompanied by lots of light rain and temperatures just above freezing, which have finally cleared the glaciers of snow and allowed for crossings on foot again.

End of Sitrep #14

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