



Copa Sitrep # 15
1/25/08 – 1/31/08

Copa has finished its first transition week from a heavy load of fieldwork to more casual workdays. All but two diet sample sets have been collected and the required skua work has tailed off. The Adélie penguin chicks are slowly disappearing from the colonies and off to sea. About half of our gentoo penguin chicks have crèched now, while the chinstrap penguin chicks have just begun to crèche. We've been squeezing our fieldwork into the few lulls we have experienced in what has been an extremely windy two weeks, with Arctowski reporting the highest wind speed ever recorded at 74 m/s or 165 mph.

1. Penguins: Daily beach walks to weigh Adélie penguin fledglings are all that remain of the Adélie fieldwork. Adélie chicks have slowly been leaving the colonies in small numbers, but we are not seeing any large groups of fledgling on the beaches. Out of the 98 gentoo penguin repro nests we had, 20 are still active & brooding chicks, and 36 have crèched 56 chicks, out of the total of 93 hatched for the year. No nests remain with eggs. We had our first of two gentoo chick roundup sessions and banded 100 chicks from Ipanema Beach and Cascade Head, with the help of some of the Poles.

2. Penguin Diets: The third of 4 gentoo & chinstrap penguin diet sample sets were collected this week.

3. Skuas: Of the 88 pairs that have initiated nests in the study area, 39 have failed, and the remaining 49 have produced 30 surviving chicks.

4. PTTs: 3 of the four satellite transmitters that were deployed on gentoos were retrieved. The remaining transmitter has not been seen and was likely lost. 3 of the 5 satellite transmitters on chinstraps were recovered. More on this in the next sitrep.

Weekly Weather: Extremely high winds continued for the second week, topping out at 74 m/s (or about 144 knots!), according to the Arctowski weather station. At Copa, wind gusts have been consistently 20-40 knots and temperatures just above freezing, with lots of rain and mist. Thursday brought our first real reprieve from the weather, with a calm, warm day.

End of Sitrep #15

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