

Sit. Rep. #5
U.S. - AMLR Field Station
Cape Shirreff, Livingston I., Antarctica
4 December 2006

Seabirds:

1. Among our gentoo reproductive study nests none failed this week so the failure rate remains at 6%, slightly less than last year prior to hatching. 7% of the chinstrap penguin reproductive study nests have failed so far. This percentage is similar to last year at this time.
2. We have seen a slight decline in numbers of breeding known-aged penguins. 15 known-aged gentoos initiated clutches this year, compared to 17 last year and 21 the year before. 15% of these nests have failed during incubation so far. Of these breeders: 40% are 5 year-olds and 53% are 2, 3, and 4 year-olds. The oldest breeding gentoo penguin is eight years old. Currently, 25 known-aged chinstrap penguins have initiated clutches this year, compared to 27 last year and 28 the year before.
3. The first gentoo yearling banded here last year was resighted on 30 November. A chinstrap penguin yearling, identified by darker feathers around the eyes, was seen on 17 November. Since then at least 3 other yearlings have been seen, however we have yet to see one that was banded here last year.
4. Out of 23 territories with brown skua pairs attending, currently three pairs have one egg and eight pairs have completed their clutches.

Pinnipeds:

5. We began tagging and instrumentation of fur seal mother/pup pairs for attendance studies on 1 December but due to weather have only completed 2 of 25 pairs we intend to do. All females will be 1-2 days postpartum and by 15 December we will be able to compare differences in mass, girth, or length of both mothers and pups to previous years data. None of the transmittered females has departed on her first trip to sea.
6. Four of our females tagged in previous years have returned from their first trip to sea. Their trip durations ranged were three (n=1) and four (n=3) days.
7. Counts of fur seal pups and females continue to be higher than last year for the same dates. Our last count of our study beaches (3 December) indicated a 17.6% increase in pups born for the same date last year.
8. Our adult tagged females continue to return from previous years, 98 (43.8%) have returned. The natality rate for those returned thus far is 81.6% (80/98), both slightly higher than the same

time period last year. Tagged females returning for the first time this season should continue to arrive until the end of the first week of January.

9. To date we have seen three females and 13 adult and sub-adult males that were tagged as pups at Cape Shirreff. It is still early in the season and we expect many more arrivals of individuals tagged as pups in previous years to arrive in the coming weeks. Thus far we have not seen any yearlings.

Cape Shirreff Weather for the Week:

10. Weather this week was mostly overcast, wet, and windy. The mean temperature for the week was 2.1C; the high was 10.7C and the low, -0.9C. The lowest wind chill for the week was -15.2C and the mean wind speed was 10.5 mph. Precipitation was above average at 0.29 inches. Our cumulative precipitation since we began recording on 3 November is 0.88 inches. Mean daily solar radiation was 15,405 watts per meter squared.

Camp:

11. We had our first birthday celebration for the season last Wednesday. One of the Chilean crew had his birthday and they hosted a dinner with ice cream and two cakes.

12. The Chileans reported seeing a leopard seal feeding on a bull fur seal.

Submitted by AMLR researchers currently residing at Cape Shirreff.