



Sit. Rep. #17
3 March 2008
US AMLR Field Station
Cape Shirreff, Livingston Island, Antarctica

Seabirds

1. We concluded collecting Chinstrap penguin fledgling weights on February 29th. We weighed a total of 115 fledglings, of which 29 were banded. Average weight was 3052 g (SD= 319), the second lowest average observed in the past eleven years.
2. We have completed 48 day measurements of brown skua chicks, and expect that all five chicks on territories around Cape Shirreff and Punta Oeste will fledge.
3. A significant portion of the week was spent compiling data and preparing the penguin blind for overwinter.



Pinnipeds

4. Only eight attendance mother/pup pairs remain in the study out of the original 28. Nineteen of these pups were likely lost due to leopard seal predation.
5. Fur seal diet sampling continued this week with the collection of 10 scat samples from areas of suckling females. We have processed seven of these scats. Six of them contained evidence of krill and six of them contained otoliths. This week we also finished processing the previous weeks scat samples. Nine of the scats contained krill carapaces, seven contained otoliths, and one contained squid beaks.



6. Young fur seals tagged as pups continue to arrive. This week two new yearlings and one two year old were seen for the first time this season. We have seen a total of 133 different known-aged individuals with the following percent return: (1997) 1.2%; (1998) 1.2%; (1999)

6.2%; (2000) 2.6%; (2001) 4.4; (2002) 2.2%; (2003) 0.8%; (2004) 0.0%; (2005) 4.4%; and (2006) 3.6 %.

7. We continue to tag pups as part of the cooperative Chilean – US deployment of 500 tags on pups. We have flipper and PIT tagged 218 pups, 80 of these are pups of tagged females.

Cape Shirreff Weather for the Week

8. Rain and wind have been frequent and strong again this week. We recorded 1.2" of rain this week, far exceeding the previous high for the season of 0.7" in one week. Winds averaged 16.3 mph with a high gust of 50.0 mph.

9. We also had a mid-week snow storm, with heavy winds from the east that left the cape white for several days.

10. Average temperature for the week was 1.8 degrees Celsius, with a high of 5.5 degrees and a low of -0.9 degrees.

Field Station Notes

11. We finished the remaining needed painting of both indoor and outdoor areas this week.

12. We inventoried several of our buildings and conducted other closing camp activities. We expect the *R/V Yuzhmorgeologiya* will arrive at the end of this week or very early next week to close our camp for the season.



Report submitted by AMLR researchers currently residing at the Cape Shirreff field station on Livingston Island. These reports are posted at <http://swfsc.noaa.gov/aerd-field.aspx>. Photos by M. Goebel (NMFS/AERD).