

# 2012-2013 Weekly Field Reports

## Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 13  
January 7, 2013

### Science Report:

1. Penguins: Reproductive monitoring of Adélie penguins now yields 22 out of the 100 original study nests still with chicks, 18 of which have crèched. The only three remaining known-age Adélie penguin nests have crèched chicks, two of which became the first banded penguin chicks of the year. Diet sampling of Adélie penguins continued on Friday (1/11), with five more Adélie penguins from the Castle Rocks colonies selected. Three (of the five) Adélie penguin satellite transmitters (PTTs) were retrieved. One of the remaining PTT birds has travelled across the Bransfield Strait to the islands off the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula, while no signals have been transmitted from the other, meaning the bird is either dead or the PTT has malfunctioned.

Gentoo penguin reproductive success remains steady with 81 out of 100 nests still with chicks, ten of which have crèched. Known-age gentoo penguin nests with chicks stands at 52, two of which have crèched. Five Gentoo penguin diets were conducted on Tuesday (1/8).

Breeding chinstrap penguins on Copa Beach stand at five nests, four nests have two chicks each, while the remaining nest has one chick and one egg.

2. Skuas: Regular daily checks of the Copa skua breeding territories continue. There are currently six active brown skua nests at Copa, one nest with an egg, the others with chicks. Two nests (one with a newly hatched chick and one with an egg) had failed after a big wind & snow storm on Monday (1/7). No new breeding activity was observed this week.

Point Thomas skua routes were completed on Thursday (1/10) and Saturday/Sunday (1/12 and 1/13). There are three active brown skua nests, all of which have chicks. One failure this week was confirmed, with the remains of two chicks found on their territory. As with the Copa territories, additional skuas were seen on territories this week, but the resights remain inconsistent and no new breeding activity was observed.

The Demay and Patelnia skua routes were completed on Wednesday (1/9). There remain only two active nests, one with a single chick and the other with two eggs. One of the failed territories we found had two cold eggs in the unattended nest, even though the territory holders were nearby. As with both Copa and Point Thomas, some additional skua pairs have arrived on territory, while territories occupied in previous weeks were once again vacant. No new breeding activity was observed.



# 2012-2013 Weekly Field Reports

## Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 13  
January 7, 2013

Back Country skua routes were completed on Saturday (1/12). Resights in the Back Country, as with the rest of the routes, remain somewhat sporadic and irregular, with new pairs coming and going every week. There are still no active nests in the Back Country.

3. Sheathbills and Giant Petrels: Two unbanded sheathbills have still been observed near Copa Rock and appear to be attending the old nest site used last year. We checked the site on Sunday (1/13), and although it contains a nest that looks newly built and tended, there are still no eggs.

Giant Petrel resights were finalized on Thursday (1/10) and the first chick of the season was observed in the Moraine colony.

4. Whales and Seals: A single humpback whale sighting occurred on Wednesday (1/9); the whale was seen exiting the bay.

The Demay and Patelnia seal census, carried out on Wednesday (1/9), yielded 410 juvenile/unknown sex elephant seals and four large adult male elephant seals. There were also three Weddell seals. The Copa and Point Thomas seal census, carried out on Sunday (1/13), yielded 83 juvenile/unknown sex elephant seals.

Leopard seal attacks continue off Copa Beach. There were six leopard seal kills observed, four on Tuesday (1/8) and two on Wednesday (1/9). Two of the prey species were identified as Adélie penguins, the other four were not identified. During a beach walk on Tuesday (1/8), twenty-one banded carcasses were found, nineteen of which were identified as Adélie penguins. An additional five Adélie penguin bands were pulled off carcasses on the Point Thomas beaches on Wednesday (1/9).

5. Other: One lucky gentoo penguin pair continues to attend a four-week old Adélie penguin chick on the outskirts of the Bolinas colony, while still trying to incubate its own eggs.

A king penguin was observed near the Adélie Beach colony at Point Thomas on Sunday (1/13).

A macaroni penguin has been seen wandering around the Copa colonies for most of the week.



# 2012-2013 Weekly Field Reports

## Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 13  
January 7, 2013

### Weekly Weather:

Wind and snow deterred our work on Monday (1/7), with average wind speeds of 40 knots for most of the day, gusting to the high 50s. The rest of the week was fairly accommodating with temperatures above freezing, resulting in some melting of the remaining snow.

### Camp Activities:

The camp welcomed the arrival of our fearless leader, Wayne Trivelpiece, in the early hours of Friday (1/11).

### The 2012-13 Copa Field Team:

Matt Henschen, Co-Field Team Leader

Brette Soucie, Co-Field Team Leader

Caitlyn Bishop

Ana Bertoldi

Wayne Trivelpiece, Co-PI

