

2012-2013 Weekly Field Reports

Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 19
February 18, 2013

Science Report:

1. Penguins: Adélie penguin fledglings have almost completely disappeared from the colonies and beaches at Copa. An occasional fledger and a few molting adults have been seen at Point Thomas and Copa.

Gentoo penguin chicks continue to grow and provide ample entertainment as they chase their adults for food and explore the decks and buildings around the hut.

Two chinstrap penguins from the Uchatka colony that are fitted with satellite tags (PTTs) remain at large. The final two gentoo penguin PTTs on Copa Beach were recovered on Tuesday (2/12) and Wednesday (2/13).

Chicks from the breeding chinstrap penguins on Copa Beach have crèched and been seen mingling occasionally with groups of gentoo penguin chicks.

2. Skuas: The numbers of active brown skua nests at Copa remain at four. All chicks appear to be healthy and many have been observed taking their first flights.
3. Giant Petrels & Sheathbills: 107 giant petrel chicks were banded in the colonies around Copa on Friday (2/22). A chick census of the Glacier Bay giant petrel colony at Point Thomas yielded 17 chicks, bringing the grand total to 124. This year's reproductive success of 0.57 chicks per nest is slightly less than the twenty-year mean of 0.61 chicks per nest.

One sheathbill was seen on Copa Rock Friday (2/22) and Sunday (2/24). Still no nesting activity has been observed.

4. Other: A kelp gull chick was observed on Copa Rock again on Friday (2/22), almost fully feathered.



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The following are all the collaborations with the Copa seabird work done this 2012-13 season:

- Analysis of phytoplankton eaten by Krill collected from Penguin diet samples between Dec 2012 and Feb 2013, Dr. Anna Panasiuk-Chodnicka, Institute of Oceanography, University of Gdansk, Poland
- Isotopic analysis of feathers and egg shells collected from adult Adélie, gentoo and chinstrap penguins for winter diet study. Dr. Mike Polito, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, MA and Dr. Steve Emslie, UNC Wilmington, NC
- Soil core samples collected across penguin colonies for Brazilian geochemists to examine degradation of guano in penguin colonies. Dr. Arli Costa, Universidad São Paulo, Brazil
- Analysis of the fish component of the diets of penguins and skuas determined by otolith extraction and identification. Dr. Nina Karnovsky, Pomona College, CA
- Tracking skua foraging at sea using GPS and wet/dry loggers to determine the distribution and time-energy budgets of marine feeding skuas during the breeding season. Ana Bertoldi, PhD Thesis, Cambridge University, UK.

Weekly Weather:

Snow returned to Copa on Tuesday (2/18), but melted quickly as temperatures increased all week. Saturday (2/23) and Sunday (2/24) were beautiful days with sunny skies and temperatures reaching a season high of 53 degrees.

Camp Activities:

Cleaning and packing have dominated activities at Copa this week, as well as loads of data entry, data proofing, and photocopying, in preparation for closing, which is scheduled for 27 or 28 February.

The 2012-13 Copa Field Team:

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Brette Soucie, Co-Field Team Leader

Caitlyn Bishop

Ana Bertoldi

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