

2010-2011 Weekly Field Reports

Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 14
January 16, 2011

Science report:

- 1. Penguins:** The gentoo penguin chick census was completed this week. In total, 1.12 chicks fledged per nest at Copacabana, which is lower than the 20-year average of 1.27 chicks fledged per nest. We conducted our fourth diet sample on gentoo penguins with chicks on Monday, 10 January. The five samples contained almost 100% krill (*Euphausia superba*), with the exception of one sample that contained less than 1% fish. The krill continues to range from 40 to 55 mm in length, with both sexes represented equally. We retrieved our final satellite tag on Monday, 10 January and then deployed five more on gentoo penguins on Thursday 13 January. This deployment of satellite tags is particularly important as it will overlap with the at-sea work being conducted nearby by the NOAA research vessel, the R/V *Moana Wave*.
- 2. Skuas:** A total of 25% of our 164 currently active skua territories have chicks and 15% are incubating eggs. The number of actively breeding skuas continues to increase, with pairs laying eggs for the first time; many that lost nests early are re-laying.
- 3. Giant Petrels:** The first southern giant petrel chick was observed on Saturday, 15 January.
- 4. Seals & Whales:** Elephant seals continued to constitute the majority of the seals seen on the Copacabana to Patelnia seal census on Tuesday, 11 January; one male, four recently weaned pups and 361 juveniles were counted. Also seen were three Weddell seals (including one recently weaned pup), and one fur seal. Elephant seals were also prevalent on the Copacabana to Point Thomas census on Sunday, 16 January, with 37 juvenile elephant seals and two fur seals. Two humpback whales were seen on Saturday, 15 January, entering the bay. One minke whale was seen on Tuesday, 11 January, at the mouth of the bay.

Weekly Weather:

The average temperature dropped this week, with easterly and southerly winds that brought the thermometer back into the low 30s (Fahrenheit). The wind speeds have remained low all week (average ≤ 20 mph), except for Friday, 14 January, when winds averaged 30 mph. There was no significant precipitation for the week, and Saturday, 15 January, was particularly fine, sunny, calm and warm.

Other:

On Saturday, 15 January, the NOAA-chartered R/V *Moana Wave* delivered Wayne, a load of fresh vegetables, and replenished our supply of propane.

The 2010-11 Copa Field Team:
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