

2009-2010 Weekly Field Reports

Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 15
February 7, 2010

Science report:

1. Penguins: The fourth gentoo penguin diet sample was conducted this week. The majority of the krill (*Euphausia superba*) was 43-53 mm in length and there was a fairly even sex ratio, with slightly more females than males. Once again, two of the five samples contained fish, which is quite common in the gentoo penguin diets. Whenever fish is found in the samples, the ear bones (or otoliths) of the fish are saved, to be sent back to California and used to identify the species of the fish.

Six satellite tags (PTTs) were attached to gentoo penguins this week, the final deployment of the season.

2. Skuas: There was minimal skua work done this week due to the weather, but when we did get out, we found that three of the Copa area chicks had been lost in the storms.

3. Whales: Two humpback whales were seen in the bay this week, the first in quite a while.

4. Seals: Fur seals continue to become much more abundant in the area and are now regularly seen “lounging” in front of Copa. This is the time of year when these seals come ashore to molt, beginning with non-breeders in January, followed by post-breeding individuals later in the season. Since there are no major pupping grounds on King George Island, these seals could be from the nearby Livingston or Elephant Island breeding areas or from as far away as South Georgia, to the north.

Camp Activities:

Due to the poor weather, most of our time was spent indoors, entering data. We had a beautiful day on Saturday (2/6) for our celebration of the Copa Field Station’s 25th anniversary, but due to the heavy snow cover and still-rough seas, only a few Poles were able to attend.

Weekly Weather:

The majority of the week was stormy, with snow and high winds from the southeast, averaging 35 mph, with gusts into the high 40’s. The only decent weather was on Wednesday afternoon (2/3) and then again all day Saturday (2/6) and into Sunday (2/7).

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