

2008-2009 Weekly Field Reports
Cape Shirreff, Livingston Island

Seabirds:

1. The peak gentoo penguin clutch initiation occurred on Nov. 6th. To date 96% of the gentoo reproduction study nests are incubating partial or full clutches and 4% have yet to initiate clutches.
2. Chinstrap penguins are defending territories but have yet to initiate clutches. We will set up our reproduction study plots this coming week.
3. We continue to monitor known age penguins. Of the 12 known age gentoos that have initiated clutches 24 are incubating partial or full clutches and 2 have failed. No known age chinstrap penguins have been seen with eggs.
4. Brown skuas have been observed on their nesting territories.

Pinnipeds:

5. There have been two additional elephant seal births since we reported last week bringing the total elephant seal pup production to 32. As of yesterday eighteen females have weaned their pups and departed to sea. There are now 14 adult females remaining and all have suckling pups.
6. On an excursion to Punta Oeste, to the west of Cape Shirreff we found an additional breeding group of elephant seals on Punta San Telmo mid-way between Cape Shirreff and Punta Oeste. There were two adult males and six adult females suckling pups. These additional pups bring the total elephant seal pup production to 38.
7. We have weighed, measured and tagged the 18 weaned elephant seal pups. All were



weighed within 48 hours of weaning. Mass ranged from 78.8-189.4 kilograms. The mean mass of weaned pups thus far is 112.9 kg (st.dev.: 29.6, N=18). Sixteen of the 18 pups have been male.

8. We recorded the first female Antarctic fur seal to arrive on one of the AMLR study beaches on 1 November. Since then, however, there have only been two females recorded within the U.S. AMLR study site.
9. Males are continuing to arrive every day. Our last census of males was 9 Nov and there had been 48% increase in males on territory since 5 Nov. There are now 239 adult males on territory within the US-AMLR study area. We have recorded five adult males with tags. All were tagged as pups in 1998/99 and 1999/00 (9 & 10 years old).

Weather:

10. Our first week on the Cape was unseasonably warm with above freezing temperatures every day. This past week, however, has been colder and below freezing most days. The mean temperature for the week was -0.5C (compared to +0.9). The maximum temp for the week was 8.4C and the low was -3.6C. We had no recorded precipitation this week. Most winds this week were easterlies.
11. On Saturday we had our first really big storm of the season with winds gusting to a maximum of 60 mph. The storm lasted all day and prevented most science collection and work outdoors. It came from the east and the next morning most of the east side beaches were pink with washed up krill.





Camp:

12. We had some damage to the mount for our single sideband antenna in the storm on 8 November. It was easy to repair, however, and there was no break in our daily radio schedule with Palmer Station.
13. We spent lots of time this week drying out the camp and scrubbing mold and mildew from walls, shelves and floors.
14. We got our 12-volt sample freezer up and running this week.

Submitted by AMLR staff currently residing at the Cape Shirreff field station, Livingston Island.

