

2008-2009 Weekly Field Reports
Cape Shirreff, Livingston Island

Seabirds:

1. In the 2 weeks since gentoo penguin peak clutch initiation one nest has failed and 49 continue to incubate partial or full clutches.
2. We estimated chinstrap penguin peak clutch initiation to have occurred on November 21. To date, 87 of the 100 chinstrap reproduction study nests have initiated clutches.
3. On November 22, we weighed a sample of adult chinstraps and measured their first egg. Mean masses of males was slightly lower than the 9 year mean while the mean female mass was slightly higher than the 9 year mean. Mean egg mass was approximately equal to the 9 year mean.
4. We continue to resight known age penguins. Of the 32 known age gentoo penguins that have initiated clutches, 3 have failed and 29 are currently incubating partial or full clutches. One known age gentoo penguin that was reported as failed last week has relayed and is now incubating a full clutch. Currently, there are 24 known age chinstrap penguins that have initiated clutches.
5. We started to monitor brown skua territories for nesting activity this past week, no eggs were seen but multiple nest bowls were observed on many territories.
6. A shorebird was observed on Cape Shirreff this past week. After examining photos we believe that it was a white-rumped sandpiper (*Calidris fuscicollis*). We will review our identification when we return to the mainland and have access to more comprehensive identification guides.



Pinnipeds:

7. All but two of the 40 southern elephant seal pups born on Cape Shirreff has weaned (one died soon after birth or was still born and the remaining one is still suckling). Of the 38 that have weaned we have weighed and measured 32 and all 38 have been tagged. Tissue from the flipper tag hole punches was collected on all 38 pups for DNA analysis.
8. We have recorded two adult female elephant seals with tags. One was tagged with a pup in Nov 2005 and the other was a PTT female first tagged in Feb 2005.
9. At the last census of fur seal study beaches on 23 Nov we recorded a total of 140 adult females and 46 pups (44 live and 2 dead).
10. We are still conducting tests of our automated VHF receiving stations as one receiver seems to have an intermittent problem with extraneous RF. We will soon have both stations up and running for the start of captures of attendance females instrumented with VHF radio transmitters for measuring trip durations.

Weather:

11. This past week was warm and we have lost a lot of snow. By Thanksgiving we will have to give up our skis for getting to study colonies. The mean temperature for the week was 1.2C. The high temperature for the week was 6.0C and the low was -1.4C. Total precipitation this week was 0.2 inches. Most winds, this week, were from the west. Mean wind speed was 15.2 mph with maximum winds 42 mph. Sunrise and sunset are now 03:28 and 22:04 and we are gaining about 6 minutes of sun per day. Mean solar radiation this week was 13,063 Watts per sq. meter.





Camp:

12. We set up a directional horizontal wire antenna for communication with Palmer and Copacabana on King George Island bypassing our omni-directional antenna. The alternate antenna has greatly improved our reception of Palmer.
13. With the warmer weather we put up all our gutters for water collection. We increased the number of supports to guard against heavy snow sliding off the roof in case we get colder weather and more snow.
14. We are all looking forward to Thanksgiving. Tomorrow one of our crew, Ryan, will have a birthday celebration as well.

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

