

Seabirds:

1. Currently 84% of the reproductive study gentoo penguins have completed clutches of two eggs, 10% have one egg, and 6% have failed. Of the chinstrap penguins in the reproductive study, 37% completed their clutches this week and 43% have laid one egg.
2. We have continued to resight known-aged penguins. There are 24 known-aged gentoos incubating eggs; three have already failed and 79% have complete clutches. There are 41 known-aged chinstraps that have initiated clutches so far and 29% have two eggs.
3. We counted gentoo penguins on 18 November. There were 834 nests, representing a 10% decline from last year. This count is 2% above the previous 13-year mean.
4. On 19 November we weighed a sample of adult chinstraps at peak clutch initiation along with measuring their first egg. The mean masses of males and females were 2% lower than the 13-year mean. The average egg volume was less than 1% different than the 13 year mean.
5. Brown skuas are attending their nesting territories, however only a few pairs have initiated nest building.

Pinnipeds:

6. As of this morning, thirty elephant seal females have weaned their pups and departed to sea. One mom remains with a suckling pup. She was the last to give birth so we expect that it will take a couple more days for her to wean her pup.
7. We have weighed, measured and tagged nine weaned elephant seal pups. All were weighed within 24 hours of weaning. Weaning mass, thus far, has ranged from 91-161 kilograms. Of the thirty weaned animals, 16 are females.
8. On the last weekly phocid census of the Cape, 18 November, we recorded 18 Weddell seals, 92 elephant seals, and no leopard or crabeater seals.
9. We recorded the first female Antarctic fur seal to arrive on one of the AMLR study beaches on 13 November. Since then we have recorded 18 tagged fur seals including three adult females. The first tagged female arrived on 19 Nov. The rest have all been adult males, first tagged as pups.
10. We have recorded five fur seal pups on the AMLR study beaches so far.
11. Males are continuing to arrive every day. There are now 410 adult males on territory within the U.S. AMLR study area. We have recorded 15 adult males with tags. Most of them were tagged as pups in 1999/2000, and are now 10 or 11 years old.
12. We completed our range tests of our automated VHF receiving stations. We have both stations up and running for the start of captures of attendance females instrumented with VHF radio transmitters for measuring trip durations.
13. On Tuesday we helped the seabird biologists weigh and measure chinstrap eggs. It was a great team effort and for some of us the first time to actually handle a penguin.



14. On Wednesday we performed a capture on an adult female Weddell seal. This animal has carried a CTD-PTT since March. If not recovered, it would have been lost once she molted in December-January. We darted and anesthetized the animal in order to remove the instrument as well as collect samples and morphometrics. We are now testing a new anesthesia protocol that is considered to be safer for the animals. It has also allowed the use of a reversal antagonistic agent to the anesthetic resulting in a quicker and nicer awakening for the animal. It worked really smoothly.

15. We are organizing the laboratory and getting ready for the perinatal captures, which should start next week. We have been running some fecal analysis to monitor the parasite burden of fur seals, which will be an ongoing project.

Weather:

16. We had a couple of really good sunny days, which is not very common here. The mean temperature for the week was 1.4° C (last year for this week the mean was -2.1° C). The maximum temperature for the week was 9.5° C and the low was the lowest since we arrived, -1.2° C. The mean wind speed for the week was 14.7 mph; most winds were westerly winds.

Camp:

17. The weather has been nice and all our water barrels are full of fresh water. The solar array and wind generator are both working well and batteries are fully charged.

18. Today we used the grill for the first time since arriving, and Kevin cooked a wonderful dinner to celebrate the incoming week.

19. We are all looking forward to Thanksgiving. In preparation for the holiday we have one turkey thawing and have dug out our smoker, which was buried in over five feet of snow on the east-side of our main hut.

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

