

Seabirds:

1. The gentoo penguins have started to build nests and lay eggs this past week. We established the gentoo penguin reproduction study plots. These plots will be monitored daily throughout the season to assess the timing of breeding and reproductive success. We will begin banding one adult at each nest this coming week.
2. The first gentoo penguin eggs were seen on 21 November. To date, two gentoo penguins have initiated clutches in the reproductive study.
3. Chinstrap penguins have been busy laying eggs in our reproductive study plots this week. To date, 35 of the 100 reproductive study nests have initiated clutches.
4. We continue to monitor known-age penguins. To date, no known-aged gentoo penguins have initiated clutches but 22 known-aged chinstraps have initiated clutches.
5. We started to monitor brown skua territories for nesting activity this past week. Most of the hilltops where the skuas breed are still snow covered. No eggs were seen but nest bowls were observed on a few territories.

Pinnipeds:

6. We have had two late-arriving elephant seals give birth this week. This is almost a month later than the previous last pup to be born. All but those two of the total 21 pups born on Cape Shirreff have weaned. All 19 weaned pups have been weighed and measured and all 19 were tagged. Tissue from the flipper tag hole punches was collected on all of them for later DNA analysis.
7. One of the late arriving elephant seal females that gave birth is tagged. She was the last to arrive last year and gave birth only two days later than she did last year. She was first tagged on Cape Shirreff in Nov 2005.
8. At the last census of fur seal study beaches on 21 Nov we recorded a total of 19 adult females and 2 pups. The first pup was born on 21 Nov this year. Last year the first pup was born on 15-Nov and by 21 Nov there were 20 pups on our study site.
9. 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.
10. We have recorded 15 tagged fur seals including two adult females that arrived on 21 Nov. The rest have all been adult males first tagged as pups.
11. On 16 Nov we had what appeared to be a recently weaned Crabeater pup arrive on the Cape. It was hauled out for three days before departing. While on shore it spent most of its time hauled out with a recently weaned elephant seal pup. We also had two recently weaned Weddell pups arrive that must have been born somewhere off the Cape.



Weather:

12. This past week was warm and we have lost a lot of snow. This is the first week we have had our mean temperature above freezing. The mean temperature for the week was 1.1° C. The high temperature for the week was 10.8° C and the low was -3.9° C. Total precipitation this week was 1.0 inch with 0.8 inches of that on Saturday. Most winds, this week, were from the east. It was generally a calm week with mean wind speed of only 9.6 mph. Maximum winds were 32 mph. Sunrise and sunset are now 03:31 and 22:00 and we are gaining about 6 minutes of sun per day. Mean solar radiation this week was 19,127 Watts per sq. meter.

Camp:

13. We spent part of the week on our annual task of scrubbing walls and shelves of mold and mildew. This is a never-ending task but is helped by re-applying a coat of mildew resistant paint periodically.

14. Even though this week was warmer we still will not be able to put up gutters for water collection for another week as just one heavy snow fall can cause damage to our gutters and water collection system.

15. We are all looking forward to Thanksgiving and one of our crew has a birthday this week too. In preparation for the holiday we have two turkeys 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.

