

**Seabirds:**

1. The first gentoo chick was seen on 11 December. Currently 4% of nests in the gentoo reproductive study have begun to hatch, 86% still have eggs, and the remaining 10% have failed. The failure rate of the chinstrap study nests has increased from last week to 7%.
2. The nests of known-age gentoo penguins have not yet begun to hatch. 76% still have eggs, and 24% have failed. The failure rate of known-age chinstrap penguins is higher than the reproductive study nests at 16%.
3. Of the 27 brown skua pairs attending territories, 56% have laid eggs. Out of these, one pair has already lost a full clutch of eggs.
4. Since fur seal pupping began, large numbers of brown skuas have arrived at Cape Shirreff.
5. The first kelp gull chicks were seen on 10 December.
6. The blue-eyed shags that breed in a small colony on the west side of Cape Shirreff are currently brooding chicks.

**Pinnipeds:**

7. This week, we spotted an entangled adult male Antarctic fur seal. The animal had a rope so tight around his shoulder region that it was cutting through the fur and into the skin. Luckily we were able to remove the entanglement without capture, and free the seal from the rope.
8. We have completed 36 fur seal captures, 25 of which were perinatal female captures we had planned. Another nine captures were for retrieval of overwinter instruments. All 25 females have received VHF radio transmitters for monitoring of attendance behavior and trip duration (CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program protocol). Eleven females also received a time depth recorder for monitoring diving effort for the first six trips to sea. Five of these also have GPS Fast-loc technology for recording at sea location. Captures began on 27 Nov and, as of yesterday, 12 females have departed for their first trip to sea. Eight have completed their first trip and two have departed on a second trip. Four of our transmitters failed sometime after the female's perinatal visit.
9. We are monitoring pup growth of our CCAMLR attendance females and have collected a post-perinatal mass for 10 of the pups whose mothers have departed sea.
10. At the last census of fur seal study beaches on 11 December we recorded a total of 720 adult females and 902 pups (880 live and 22 dead).
11. Thus far 90.4% (132/146) of our tagged female population has returned to Cape Shirreff. The natality rate for returned females thus far is 85.3%. There are, however, still females arriving and pupping.
12. To date we have seen 51 fur seals that were tagged as pups in previous years (36% of these have been 11-year-olds from the 1999/00 cohort). Surprisingly we have seen one yearling on one of the study beaches.
13. We recorded the arrival of our first leopard seals this week. We saw a total of four leopard seals, two of them already tagged in previous years.



**Weather:**

14. We did not have much good weather this week. Wind and cold characterized our capture days. Most days this week we had winds gusting into the lower 40's (mph). Mean wind speed was 17.9 mph, predominantly from the east all week. The mean temperature was  $-0.9^{\circ}$  C, the high was  $4.9^{\circ}$  C and the low was  $-3.0^{\circ}$  C. Total precipitation this week was 0.01 inches. Mean daily solar radiation this week was 12,850 watts per sq. meter.

**Camp:**

15. The weather now is giving us a break after a stormy week. We are doing well in food supplies and water.

16. Christmas is coming up and our CD player has already been playing Christmas songs. We are planning a "decorate camp day" suggested by the female part of the crew. We will get our camp ready with lights and Christmas a tree; the males on the other hand are thinking about perfecting our "smoked turkey" technique.

17. On a personal note, I (Nicola) became an uncle. My sister gave birth to Flora whom I will meet in Italy in April.

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

