

**Seabirds:**

1. Peak hatch for gentoo penguins was on 20 December. Of our reproductive study nests, 82% are currently brooding one or two chicks, 4% of nests have eggs, and 14% of the nests have failed.
2. Peak hatch for chinstrap penguins was on 26 December. So far 36% of the reproductive study nests still have eggs, 53% have hatched one or two chicks, and 11% of the nests have failed.
3. Of the nests of known-age gentoo penguins 14% are still incubating eggs, 59% have chicks, and 27% have failed. The failure rate of known-age chinstrap nests has increased since last week to 28%. To date, 43% of the known-age chinstraps nests still have eggs and 29% are brooding chicks.
4. Of the 27 brown skua pairs attending territories on Cape Shirreff, 30% have not laid eggs yet this year. Three nests failed and one of these pairs that lost its clutch earlier this year has re-layed. Another new territory was discovered this week on Playa Chungungo. They are currently incubating one egg. The female in this new pair is seven years old and was banded at Cape Shirreff.
5. A rockhopper penguin has been on one of the chinstrap colonies since 23 December. This has been a delightful Christmas treat for us.

**Pinnipeds:**

6. All our CCAMLR attendance females (n=30) have completed at least one trip to sea. Mean trip duration for the first trip to sea was 2.5 days (s.d.: 1.00; range: 0.94-4.48). Two females have already completed five trips to sea.
7. We continue to census pups, live and dead, on the U.S. AMLR study site every other day. Our maximum count, however, was on 21 Dec we recorded a total of 1,179 pups (1,145 live and 34 dead). We are still observing an occasional pregnant female arrive and give birth, the last pup borne at the Cape so far was on Dec 26.
8. We are still recording an occasional tagged female arriving for the first time. The natality rate for returned tagged females thus far is 84.2%.
9. We also continue to see new arrivals of tagged juvenile fur seals. To date we have seen 79 fur seals that were tagged as pups in previous years. We continue to see what we think are several yearlings and two year old seals on our study beaches.
10. Elephant seals are returning to molt in increasing numbers.
11. Leopard seals are increasing and we observe new animals tagged in previous years arriving almost daily. Fur seal pups have just begun entering the water and we observed our first leopard seal predation of a fur seal pup on 26 Dec. We have tagged one leopard seals that were not tagged and we have observed seven others that were tagged in past years at Cape Shirreff.
12. We collected our second week of scats for studies of fur seal diet. We collect ten every week. All scats collected this week were composed primarily of krill.



**Weather:**

13. The snow is melting fast. This week has been windy, mostly dominated by east winds. Mean wind speed was 13.3 mph with maximum wind gust of 36 mph. The mean temperature for the week was 1.8° C. The high temperature for the week was 8.7° C and the low was -0.7° C. Total precipitation this week was 0.5 inches.

**Camp:**

14. We had a wonderful Christmas. On Christmas day we exchanged presents with each other and we all got some funny and nice presents from the other members of the crew, that made Christmas at the Cape more like home! Everyone sends their thanks to all those family and friends that sent Christmas presents and cards with the camp opening in November. For dinner, we all cooked something, (except me, Nicola, ...I made four pounds of gnocchi the day before and so I was relieved from the Christmas dinner preparations). We smoked two turkeys. Unlike our Thanksgiving turkey which was a bit undercooked, our Christmas turkeys were perfect and delicious. We had a big dinner, great atmosphere, good wine and lot of laughing. Was a great night for all the crew, the sort that builds on the already great team spirit!

15. The R/V *Moana Wave* is scheduled to arrive in early January and four more people will arrive and join our team. The new team members will work and test a small quadrocopter to take aerial photos of seabird and pinniped colonies so that they can be counted and monitored with less disturbance. We are looking forward to their arrival and are looking forward to welcoming them to the U.S. AMLR camp.

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

