

Seabirds:

1. On December 8, we weighed and measured eggs from a sample of 50 gentoo penguin nests. Mean egg masses were slightly lower than the previous 12-year mean.
2. In the second week since gentoo penguin peak clutch initiation all 50 of the reproduction study plots are incubating partial or full clutches. In the second week since chinstrap penguin peak clutch initiation 75% of the reproduction study nests are incubating partial or full clutches and 25% have failed.
3. We continue to monitor known-age penguins. Of the 25 known-aged gentoo penguins that initiated clutches 88% continue to incubate and 12% have failed. Of 68 known-aged chinstraps that have initiated clutches 63% continue to incubate partial or full clutches and 37% have failed.
4. We continue to monitor brown skua territories for nesting activity. Fifteen pairs of brown skuas are now incubating partial or full clutches.

Pinnipeds:

5. We have completed 28 of the 30 fur seal perinatal female captures we have planned. All females have received VHF radio transmitters for monitoring of attendance behavior and trip duration (CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Program protocol). Fourteen 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 2 Dec and, as of yesterday, 15 females have departed for their first trip to sea. Five have completed their first trip and two have departed on a second trip. One of our transmitters failed sometime after the female's perinatal visit.
6. We are monitoring pup growth of our CCAMLR attendance females and have gotten a post-perinatal mass on twelve of the pups whose mothers have departed to sea.
7. At the last census of fur seal study beaches on 13 Dec we recorded a total of 1031 adult females and 1208 pups (1158 live and 50 dead). We estimate that the median date of pupping this year will be 7 Dec.
8. Thus far 71.4% (137/192) of our tagged female population has returned to Cape Shirreff. The natality rate for returned females thus far is 86.1%. There are, however, there are still females arriving and pupping and we expect over-winter survival and natality rate to increase.
9. To date we have seen 53 fur seals that were tagged as pups in previous years (45.3% of these have been 10-year-olds from the 1999/00 cohort). No yearlings, 2-year olds or 3-year-olds have been seen yet.
10. We recorded the arrival of our first leopard seal this week. It was an un-tagged seal.
11. We weighed, measured, tagged and collected a DNA tissue sample from the weaned pup of elephant seal 060. We now only have one remaining elephant seal pup suckling. We also observed two tagged elephant seals this week. One was an adult female tagged at Cape Shirreff and the other was tagged in the Falkland Islands.



12.. We sampled 30 adult territorial male fur seals for genetic analysis.

Weather:

13. We had a storm on Saturday this week, with winds gusting into the lower-50's (mph). Mean wind speed this week was 12.5 mph with maximum wind gust of 55mph. Winds were predominantly from the west all week. The mean temperature, 1.4° C, made this our warmest week since arriving on 18 Oct. The high temperature for the week was 13.0° C and the low was -1.2° C. Total precipitation this week was 2.3 inches. Sunrise and sunset are now 02:57 and 22:50. Mean daily solar radiation this week was 11,191 watts per sq. meter indicating less sun this week compared to last week.

Camp:

14. Our sightings of feeding humpback whales off the east side of the Cape increased this week.
15. We put up more gutters for rain collection and were able to fill one full barrel (55-gallons) with the increased precipitation this week. The warmer weather has also made skiing and hiking much more difficult as the snow becomes slushy.

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

