

2009-2010 Weekly Field Reports

Copacabana, King George Island

Volume 13
January 24, 2010

Science report:

1. Penguins: The first chinstrap and fourth Adélie diet samples were conducted this week. The sex ratio of the krill (*Euphausia superba*) in the samples yielded more males than females, with the majority 40-50 mm in length, the same as our samples last week. Some of the Adélie diet samples also had small amounts of juvenile *E. superba* and some *Thysanoessa macrura* (a smaller species of krill).

Three satellite transmitters (PITs) were deployed on chinstrap penguins at Uchatka this week. This will be the only deployment for the chinstraps and they will be retrieved later next week. Preliminary maps from the downloaded data show that they are foraging out in the Bransfield Strait at about the 1000 m bathymetry line, in the same general area as the Adélie penguins.

Four PITs were also deployed on gentoo penguins. This is the first of two deployments for the gentoos.

Of the 79 known-age gentoo penguins that nested this year, only 42 nests have successfully hatched chicks, although there are three more nests with eggs (relays) that have not hatched yet. Sixty-two of the 100 nests in our reproductive study successfully hatched chicks. Most of the eggs that didn't hatch in the lower beach colonies were addled (i.e., had stopped developing and died), most likely due to the heavy snow during peak egg laying.

2. Skuas: Skua reproductive success rate is low at Point Thomas, with only seven chicks remaining out of the 19 nests that successfully hatched.

3. Whales: Two humpback whales were observed exiting Admiralty Bay this week.

4. Seals: Fur seals have started to arrive in greater numbers at Copacabana and the surrounding areas. And the number of elephant seals is also increasing, with just under 500 counted this week.

Camp Activities:

We have begun to use the canoe to cross the lake below Ecology Glacier to get to Point Thomas, since the glacier is getting too dangerous to traverse now, with all the thawing that has occurred lately.

We celebrated Renee's birthday on Thursday (1/21) with a small gathering of some members of the Polish and Brazilian stations.

We often collect garbage that has washed up on the beaches and this week we picked up in one day: a five gallon bucket, five plastic water/soda bottles, rope, two pieces of foam and some Styrofoam. The majority of the debris is plastic.



Weekly Weather:

The weather this week was mostly nice and relatively calm, with temperatures in the high 30's. Wednesday (1/20) was a beautiful day, with temperatures in the 40's. There was a small storm on Thursday evening (1/21) and another on Friday evening (1/22); the latter left about an inch of fresh snow.

The 2009-10 Copa Field Team:

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