

Seabirds:

1. Chinstrap chicks have begun to fledge this week. On 18 February we started weighing fledglings immediately before they depart to obtain a measure of condition. We will continue to collect these data throughout the fledging period.

2. On 19 February we weighed and banded 200 gentoo penguin chicks. The weights are used as a measure of condition. In the future, re-sights of these bands will help us determine cohort survival and with luck some of these penguins will become part of our known age reproduction study.

3. Of the eighteen pairs of brown skuas that we are monitoring, four nests are still active, 14 nests have failed, and of the two failures that have re-layed both have failed again.

4. A significant portion of the week was spent compiling data.

Pinnipeds:

5. Only eight of our attendance mother/pup pairs remain in the study out of the original 30. Leopard seal predation is the likely cause of death for the other 22. Mean number of trips is 14 since pupping, and mean trip length this week was 3.5 days, similar to the last several weeks.

6. Fur seal diet sampling continued this week with the collection of 10 scat samples from areas of suckling females. Nine of them primarily krill and one was composed entirely of fish.

7. Systematic surveys of defined areas of the Cape for the 500 per annum fur seals tagged as pups continued this week. This will give us a measure of tags sighted per unit of effort for different cohorts and for different areas of the Cape. This week we sighted a new two year old. A total of 95 different known-age individuals have been seen so far. In comparison, last year at this time 131 known-aged fur seals tagged as pups had been sighted.

8. We completed our fourth and final CCAMLR pup weights this week, weighing 100 pups. Thirty-one of the pups already had tags and the remainder were tagged and had a small piece of tissue from tagging collected for DNA studies. Average for males was 15.2 kg and for females 13.3 kg. We have now put out 375 of our 500 pup tags for this season. Twenty of these are on the pups of tagged females.

9. We recovered two ARGOS PITs this week and four TDRs (time-depth recorder) from adult females. Two of the TDRs were GPS-TDRs that were set up to record latitude/longitude once an hour.



10. We sighted two entangled juvenile male fur seals this week. Both had what appeared to be loops of plastic sheeting or heavy strength plastic bags. Both had their marine debris removed from their necks without capture. These are the first recorded entanglements for fur seals this year (in December we removed some material from the head of a juvenile elephant seal).

11. We are sighting fewer leopard seals than in previous weeks. We believe this may be because penguins are fledging and leopards are switching from fur seal pups to young naïve penguins.

Weather:

12. This week has been windy with some light rain. The temperature peaked at 7.1 °C and we had a low of -0.2 °C. The mean was 1.9 °C. Mean wind speed for the week was only 8.3 mph with a max. gust was 37.0 mph. Most winds have been out of the west and south. We recorded no precipitation for this week.

Camp:

13. On 14 Feb we had a ship pass by the Cape. It appeared to be a large fishing vessel.

14. The R/V *Moana Wave* arrived at Cape Shirreff yesterday 21 February. Conditions were marginal but the ship was able to remove all trash and deliver some fresh vegetables.

15. The ship also dropped off three field personnel to complete the remainder of our field season. We welcomed Douglas Krause, Jefferson Hinke, and Nicola Pussini, DVM.

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

