

THE GOUGH BUNTING

G65

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FROM THE TEAM LEADER

If I speak in tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can analyse all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing...

We as the ten individuals of G65 signed up to spend the next 13 months here at this remote island. Some of us have an idea what to expect, for others it is a whole new experience. We have bits and pieces of information from previous over-winterers, and current take-over expeditioners...some good advice, some...well...

However, it is our responsibility to make this island our beloved home for the next 13 months. It our responsibility to get in touch with one

another, love one another, have faith in one another, and share the hopes of one another. G64 left us an excellent example of what to build further on, we thank you for that.

But at the end, we remain with faith, hope and love. Faith in the Almighty that we will find peace and harmony where we become a united family, hope that this will become the most exciting year of our lives, and love for our self-esteem, our purpose, our families, our colleagues, this beautiful island and our planet.



I thank you all.

Errol

FROM THE EDITOR

As first timer on Gough and an editor, I am proud to be a part of this experience and a member of the G65 team. With takeover gone, peace and quiet has finally fallen on the base and the team has settled in very comfortably. This is going to be one exciting and busy year, because in only

a few short months, the ten of us will have more visitors to welcome, more stories to share and more memories to make. Here's to a good first issue of the G65 Gough Bunting Newsletter, and a great year to team G65!

I hope you enjoy

Dylan



MEET THE TEAM

Errol Julies:
Communication & Electronics
Engineer (Team leader)



Where are you from?

Originally from De Doorns, but for the last years in Stanford, just outside Hermanus.

What are your hobbies?

Fishing

What is your responsibility on the island?

Appointed Communications Engineer and Team leader. As Communication Engineer it is my responsibility to maintain, monitor and service the satellite communication system, computer network, servers and user Computers, HF Radio network etc. As Team leader, to be that link in the chain to ensure a harmonious team.

What were you doing before Gough?

Before Gough... Train driver, Geomagnetic Observatory Technician at the Space Agency, Engineering Technician at the Department of Environmental Affairs.

What made you apply for this job?

Since I became aware of the SANAP programme, I always had this dream of overwinter at one of the bases. I visited all three bases as either an





Assistant or Directorate Coordinating Officer. However, Gough base was always my number one choice. Though my appointment to the team was very late, I am planning to make this year a very exceptional year in all my experiences.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

I hope to learn more about the different bird species, want to explore the Geology, and apply my passion for fishing towards the research on plastics in sea-life.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Purpose of life...? Live life to the fullest...!

**Christopher (Most-excellent) Jones
– Senior Field Assistant for the
Royal Society for the Protection of
Birds, Gough Island Restoration
Programme**



Where are you from?

Durban, KZN

What are your hobbies?

Back home I enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking,



SCUBA diving and surfing. Gough is an ideal place for outdoor adventure bar the water sports, so we do a lot of hiking here. I am also a keen amateur photographer (and in the last year or so, drone photography) and videography as a hobby. Indoors I enjoy a good book, movies and series.

What is your responsibility on the island?

Mainly population monitoring of key bird species on Gough. This involves various surveys and intensive monitoring areas where we tag birds with rings and following their breeding success throughout the season. These data will be an important baseline to understand the ecological benefits of the planned mouse eradication, set to happen next year. Additionally, we also deploy tracking devices on some of the seabird species as part of projects studying their distribution at sea. We also work a bit with seals, weighing fur seal pups at set dates and a census of the elephant seals this season.

What were you doing before Gough?

Island hopping, first overwintered on Gough in 2014/15 and have been working on islands since then. See Michelle’s blurb for details.

What made you apply for this job?

I initially learned about Marion and Gough Islands





in my undergraduate studies; with my penchant for adventure, I just knew that I had to visit these amazing places.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

Being part of the mouse eradication. An incredible conservation that I feel privileged to be a part of.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

42? Just kidding, I guess it's just to make the most of our infinitesimally short existence in the vast timescale of the universe. Also, always know where your towel is...

Alexis Osborne – Field Assistant employed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



Where are you from?

I'm from a small town in the Northern Cape called Concordia.

What are your hobbies?

When I'm outdoors hiking and exploring the island, I always have my camera with to capture the beauty that Gough offers, but other than photography, I also enjoy a good book. Chris and Michelle recently introduced me to podcasts... now I can listen to my favourite books and radio shows while hiking to my favourite spots on the island 😊.

What is your responsibility on the island?

I'm part of a team of three biologists that are responsible for the long-term monitoring of seabird populations breeding on the island. This requires us to monitor individuals from egg stage to when the chicks are ready to leave the island and later start their own families. We also assess the impacts the invasive species such, as mice are having on the bird population on the island. In essence, we are the custodians of the birds on the island 😊.

What were you doing before Gough?

This is my second year on Gough Island, consecutively. I have been here since September 2018 and will leave Gough Island in September 2020. Before I came to Gough, I was a student at the University of Cape Town.

What made you apply for this job?

I have spent a year on Marion Island, where my love for seabirds were sparked. A few years later, I visited Gough Island for a take-over and immediately fell in love with it and just knew that I had to spend a year on this beautiful island. Now I'm spending two years in a row, I couldn't be more grateful.



What do you hope to get most out of this year?

During this year I plan to explore more of the island, take more photos and just enjoy my time, because it goes by so fast.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

I base my answer to life on my faith which is the most important thing in my life. I am a firm believer that God created the universe. When I walk around the island, I see the beauty that God created... from the big albatrosses, to the tiny insects. I am so privileged to be here and to do such amazing things.

Michelle ‘Most-excellent Jones’ Risi – Field Assistant employed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds



Where are you from?

Ballito, KZN

What are your hobbies?

I love photography, hiking and listening to podcasts, and indoor hobbies include baking and watching quality TV series such as The Crown.



What is your responsibility on the island?

I am on the island collecting data for long term monitoring studies on seabirds. These data are used to help assess the population size and survival of the birds. And these data will also be crucial in determining the recovery of seabirds once mice are (hopefully) eradicated from Gough. We also occasionally weigh seal pups as well as do some herbicide spraying on an invasive plant.

What were you doing before Gough?

I have been working as a seabird biologist on islands for the last few years. I am very lucky to be doing this work with my husband Chris. Gough is incredibly special to us, as it is the first island we worked on, arriving back in 2014. After Gough, we spent a year working in the Seychelles and then a year on South Africa’s own Sub Antarctic Island - Marion Island, before arriving back in Gough in 2018. This year will be my third year on Gough as we are staying for two consecutive years to be on the island for the mice eradication, set to start in 2020. Before all the islands, I completed my MSc in Marine Biology at UKZN.

What made you apply for this job?

I love working with seabirds, and I am very



passionate about restoring Gough for the millions of birds that call Gough home. So, it was a no-brainer when the opportunity arose for us to stay on for a second year.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

Saying goodbye to mice on Gough. It is one of the most important conservation projects for birds of our time, so it is a huge privilege to be part of it.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Albatrosses. The answer is always albatrosses.

**Sikhwari Thendo:
Senior Meteorological Technician
(Deputy Team leader)**



Where are you from?

Sikhwari Thendo was born and bred in the Limpopo Province, at Tshino (Ha-Nesengani) which is under Makhado Municipality.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies include playing chess, fitness training and listening to music.

What is your responsibility on the island?

My responsibility is to perform at-surface meteorological observations, conduct upper-air balloon releases, quality control of data and maintain and verify all equipment at Gough Island. Also, as deputy team leader, it is my responsibility to ensure the well-being of each team member and always strive towards overall success of the team.

What were you doing before Gough?

Before I joined the Department of Environmental, Forest and Fisheries, I was working at Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife as a Research Technician under the National Research Council (NRF).

What made you apply for this job?

I was inspired by one of my friends Thando Cebekhulu, and he encouraged me to apply for this kind of expedition, as he once worked on Marion Island, and the opportunity was aligned with my career.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

For this expedition I am hoping to get a lifetime experience by surviving in one of the world's most remote areas, living only with ten people. I also plan on learning more about the bird species as this island is home of various ocean and land birds. After this expedition, I would also like to grow and share





my leadership skills with team members in a remote area. Last but not least, I would like to build a solid technical experience in the meteorological sphere.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Life is not a mickey-mouse game, what you are today is the sum of total time you have utilized (*_*)

Siyasanga Mpehle – Assistant Meteorological Technician



Where are you from?
Tsolo, Eastern Cape.

What are your hobbies?

Swimming, traveling, watching national geographic and reading.

What is your responsibility on the island?

Provide meteorological data.

What were you doing before Gough?

Junior Researcher at Human Sciences Research Council.

What made you apply for this job?

I believe that for everyone with an environmental background must work at least one remote island as these islands are biodiversity hotspot.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

Explore the island and get in touch with mother nature at its finest roots.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Live everyday like it's my last day.

Dylan Seaton – Assistant Meteorological Technician



Where are you from?

Born and raised in the southern suburbs of Cape Town, South Africa.





as much as I can from each specialist I am living with. I also hope to take up the hobby of wood carving, and of course be the best 'metkassie' I can be.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

42...

Thabiso Maphumulo – Electrician

What are your hobbies?

I'm a big PC gamer and love binge-watching series, but also enjoy reading and exploring nature.

What is your responsibility on the island?

I am responsible for observing and recording the weather changes on the island, as well as capturing data from the automatic weather station, and perform upper-air measurements. I, along with my team am also responsible for maintaining the weather equipment on the island and ensuring the data is accurate and on time for SAWS.

What were you doing before Gough?

I was completing my masters at the University of the Western Cape, focusing on using remote sensing to map and monitor surface water availability in the non-perennial rivers of the Western Cape.

What made you apply for this job?

This is something I have wanted to do since I was in high school, and heard about meteorologists living on remote islands for extended periods of time observing weather changes and providing crucial information for weather forecasters.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

I hope to explore every inch of this island and learn



Where are you from?

I am from Swayiman, KZN Msholoz, South Africa.

What are your hobbies?

I like watching movies, singing, playing games, and being in the kitchen is my favourite place.

What is your responsibility on the island?

I am responsible for keeping the base warm, the



lights on, the freezers running and ensure the cooking equipment is working. I also make sure that the base is clean, and when necessary, warm flowing water, as well as ensure all drain pipes are working, i.e. the plumbing. I am also skilled at carpentry.

What were you doing before Gough?

Before Gough I was in the telecommunications industry working under the service provider Vodacom. I was doing reinstatement and collective preventative maintenance as an electrician, so, fencing and welding of the palisades and concrete was also part of my job, as well as air conditioning (split units and window units). I also had to ensure that the site had power and was working from the ground up to the mast.

What made you apply for this job?

To experience life on sea and in a remote area, and to train my mind to live with a limited number of people around me, and to be able to handle situations. Also, to learn more about nature.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

This year, I want to see a baby bird to start flying and learn how to float on water in the ocean. I would also like to learn how to fish.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Nature can either kill you or protect you. So, you must look after nature, in order for nature can look after you.

Bubele Nongwejana – Medical Orderly



Where are you from?

Libode, Eastern Cape.

What are your hobbies?

Gym, reading, watching movies and listening to music.

What is your responsibility on the island?

My responsibility is to provide medical support to the team members.

What were you doing before Gough?

I was an operational medic.





What made you apply for this job?

I wanted new challenges and a taste of a different ground.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

To gain cooking skills (I just cannot cook!).

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

It is the close relationship with God, the Creator of the universe.

Gilbert ‘Papa-G’ Kgang – Diesel Mechanic



Where are you from?

I come from Pimville zone 2, Soweto.

What are your hobbies?

Playing Pool-table and watching movies.

What is your responsibility on the island?

Repair / Maintenance of the Diesel Engines.

What were you doing before Gough?

I have my own company.

What made you apply for this job?

To experience the natural beauties of the island.

What do you hope to get most out of this year?

Self-introspection, the opportunity to experience the mice eradication at first hand.

What is the answer to life, the universe and everything?

Life is what one makes out of it, and the universe is there for us with all its inhabitants for our amusement.

THE BUNTING-BIRD-BLURB

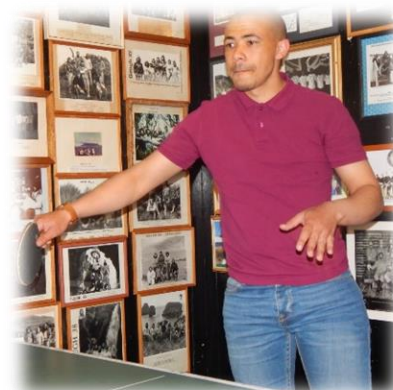
The Gough Bunting, also known as the Gough Finch is, similar to Darwin’s Finches of the Galapagos, neither a bunting, nor a true finch, but part of a group of songbirds called Tanagers. They only occur on Gough and are critically endangered due to the mouse epidemic, where the mice are eating their eggs and chicks. Photos courtesy of Christopher Jones.



BUBELES' BIRTHDAY



We were very fortunate to celebrate our first birthday early in to the expedition of our medic, Mr. Bubele Nongwejana. The 12th of October was filled fun, excitement and joy as we celebrated Bubeles' birthday, and we are looking forward for the remaining nine to come.





FROM THE 'METKASSIES'

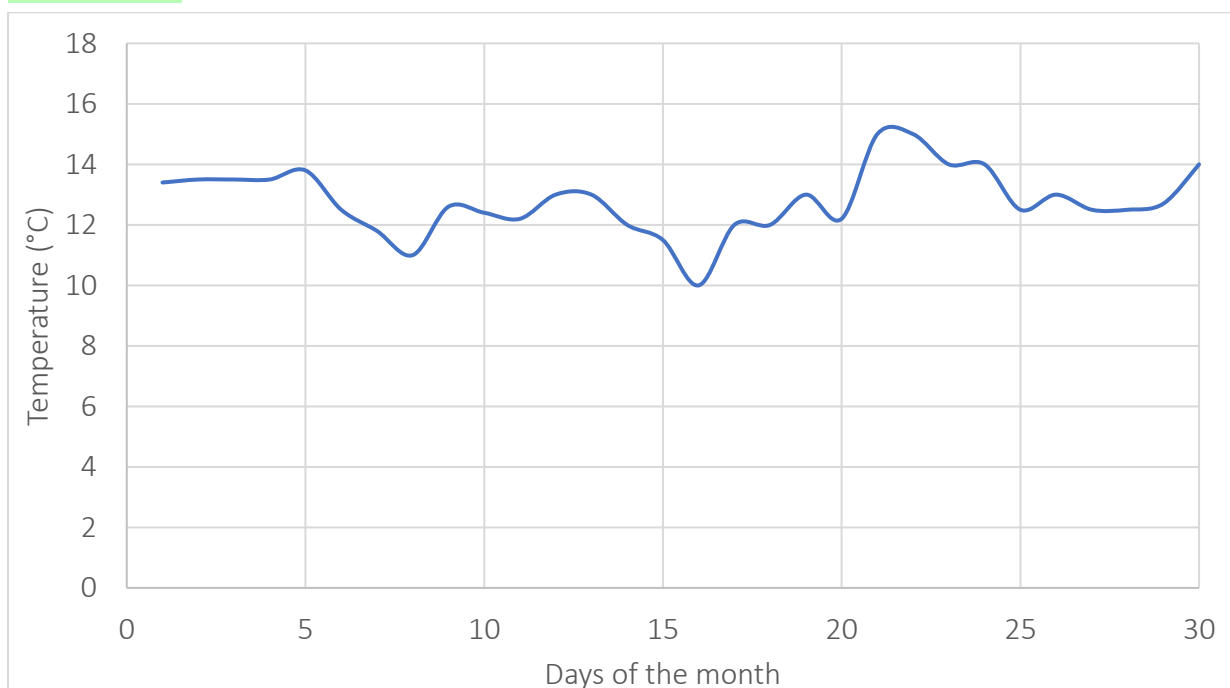


Figure 1: Daily average sea temperature

Ave Max Pressure	1016.8 (hPa)
Ave Min Pressure	1008.0 (hPa)
Ave Pressure	1012.3 (hPa)
Max Pressure	1027.6 (hPa)
Min Pressure	981.8 (hPa)
Ave Max Temp	13.2° (C)
Ave Min Temp	8.0° (C)
Ave Temp	10.5° (C)
Max Temp	19.5° (C)
Min Temp	3.7° (C)
Ave Humidity	78 (%)
Max Humidity	94 (%)
Min Humidity	44 (%)
Max Wind Gust	30.1 m.s ⁻¹ = 60 knots = 120.4 km.h ⁻¹
Total Rainfall	311.00 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	79.6 mm
Total days with rain	22 days
Total days > 1mm	20 days
Total Sunshine	96.9 hours

Figure 2: Monthly averages

