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## A WELCOME NOTE FROM THE TEAM LEADER

At last we are here. We come from all over South Africa and as far as New Zealand. Each with his/her own dream and reasons for going on an expedition to Gough Island and stay there as part of the over wintering team.

Thanks to the organisation from DEAT, we all received training in our different fields of working. I started in the Pretoria office and just want to thank Mr. Richard Skinner for the time they spent with me to inform me about Tristan, Gough and all the admin I have to know to fulfil my tasks as team leader. Susan Vosloo has a job description that is very difficult to be filled by only one person, but she somehow manages. Susan you are a star, always there for me and always friendly and also Tannie Eugene, you always treated me as if I belong there and were so helpful. Then there was Nick Booysen. Without his help we wouldn't have our trunks to pack our stuff for the island, and also the transport of our personal belongings down to Cape Town. Adriaan was very helpful to bring a last package for a team member down to Cape Town so that he could also have some presents to open during the year.

My next stop was DEAT's office in Cape Town where I was given a very warm welcome by Oom Sam Oosthuizen also the DCO for the journey, and the rest of the DEAT's team. There are so many that I am not going to name each one of you in case I miss one of you, but you can be sure that I really appreciate every one of you and what you have done for us to see that we have a safe and enjoyable journey and stay on Gough.

We also want to thank DEAT for the time and money spent for a two week fun filled team training, where Dr. Charles of the Navy gives each one a dental check. The self-development session at Ysterplaat with Chaplain Kobus de Lange where we learn in a different way to know each other, all the special courses about fire training, first aid and cooking. DEAT really made an effort to equip the new team the best way they can.

So here we are, each with his/her own mission but part of a special team, only 8 members, the GOUGH 55 team, we are friends, already have lots of fun and laughter and we are ready for our stay on the island. By the grace of God we will meet you again in about 13 month's time. All glory to Him that created this for us to explore and enjoy.

*Sonja Lizemore*





## Meet the team

### Daphne Hollenbach—senior meteorologist



I'm a divorced mother of two! Born and bred in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape Region. Joined the South African Weather Service in 2005 after which they sent me for a year's training in Pretoria. Ever since then I've been part of the excellent team at the Weather Office in Springbok.

I would describe myself as a dreamer, a loner most of the time. A person misunderstood by society. This island experience is a journey I'm embarking on paving the way to be part of a Spiritual realm that would take me to exhilarating heights, Lord willing.

### Leon Keyser - Diesel Mechanic



I'm from Riversdale in the Western Cape. I am a qualified diesel mechanic. I'm married with three children. I enjoy challenges and adventures and that has brought me to Gough Island.

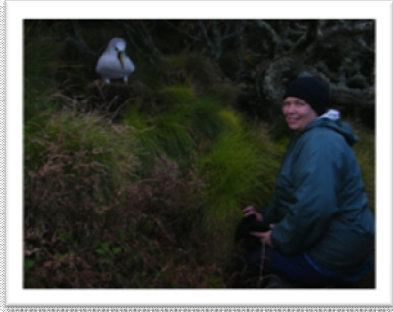
### Llewellyn Kriedemann - Comms engineer and deputy team leader



I was born and raised in Vredenburg on the West coast. I studied Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Stellenbosch. Soon after University I found and seized the opportunity to spend an incredible year in Antarctica as part of the SANAP program. When the opportunity came along to experience the majestic beauty of Gough island, I didn't hesitate for a second.



### **Sonja Lizemore - Medic and team leader**



I come from the best city in South Africa, the BLUE BULL city of Pretoria. I stayed on a game ranch 60km outside Pretoria, where I was working as a nature conservationist. I am a qualified nurse with 25

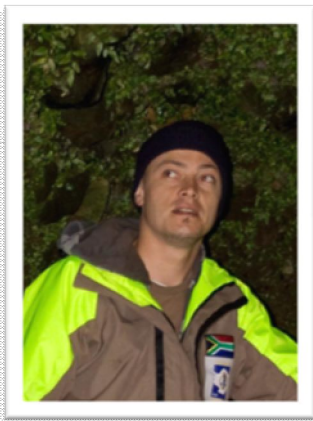
years of experience working in intensive care units, but always loved nature. Weekends I had to do some work and then leave the veld to go back to the city. I've done my diploma in nature conservation and at present I am busy with my BTech.

When the chance came to be part of the Gough 55 overwintering team, I didn't hesitate. I love to be

on the go and experience something different. I spent 2 years in Botswana during the winter seasons to pitch tents and cook for clients while touring through Botswana, and I also spent a year in Saudi Arabia.

This is a chance of a lifetime to be one of just 8 people to spend a year on Gough Island and I am so grateful to Him for guiding me on my way. Here, on this remote island I know I will have lots of time and opportunities to experience the wonders God gave us to enjoy.

### **Martin Nysschens - Junior meteorologist**



I am from Bellville. I spent 5 years working in various cities in the UK. My love for travel and strong sense of adventure brought me to Gough island. I grabbed the opportunity that presented itself to be the junior meteorologist on Gough.

### **Graham Parker - Field Assistant**



I'm from New Zealand, my home is in the Southern end of the country. I studied Ecology at Otago University, and then proceeded on to a Post-Graduate Diploma in Wildlife Management and a Masters in Zoology.

I have worked on many conservation projects, mostly involving bird species facing threats from exotic mammals. The Sub-Antarctic regions of our planet have always greatly intrigued me. The opportunity to work on an island as bountiful in biota as Gough is a real privilege.

I am on Gough with my partner Kalinka, and we hope to be able to contribute as much as possible to the current knowledge of Gough's biodiversity, and to help develop ways it can be preserved for perpetuity.

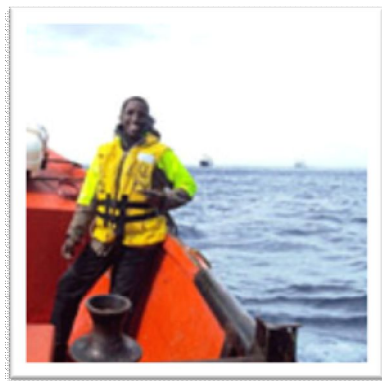


## Kalinka Rexer-Huber - Field Assistant



I come from the cool mountainous end of New Zealand, the land of the kea and the kiwi. After a brief sojourn in tropical mountainous Venezuela, I went back to New Zealand to study neuroscience and zoology in Dunedin. Gough's mountains called, so I came running.. and found them swarming with stunning birdlife. Here's to the Gough Year!

## Tshepo Tawane aka TauTona - Junior meteorologist



Who would have ever known that a Transvaalian guy could catch fish in the deep waters of Gough Island...Oh! Let me rephrase that in the Atlantic Ocean!, If you are wondering what I mean by a "Transvaalian guy" I'm from Rustenburg by the way; *The Platinum City*, from one of the Royal Bafokeng villages called ROBEGA. I am a born again child of God, who loves the Lord with all of his heart, I'm nothing without him.

I am a quiet, inquisitive guy.....on second thoughts make that "*loud inquisitive*". That's how I got to know about the Island expedition, which to me came as a grand opportunity, for the first time in my life to get out of the country, travel by Ship "for seven days nogal" and by the way we did First aid, Fire fighting and cooking lessons which came in as a bonus.....*how do you like that....!!J*

I believe this experience will help me get in touch with my inner self, learn to live with different kinds of people with different kinds of characters and lifestyle, to learn from them and accept them the way they are. I believe again that being away from home will make me appreciate the people I love "friends and family" more than ever before. Most of all I will get enough time to spend with and seek the Lord while he may be found *Isaiah 55:6*.



## An experience to treasure!

Ever since the initial island training started in Pretoria, impatience, or was that a feeling of awe, started building up inside of me. I wanted the schlep of the preparation period to be over and done with, to at last experience a dream come true!

Then the day finally arrived and on the 3rd of September, we boarded the ship and I realized that I'm actually living my dream! I've finally entered a world foreign to my small-town upbringing.

When the majestic SA Agulhas left Cape Town harbor I felt like a child again. An exhilarating feeling grabbed hold of my entire being. Imagine a woman in her late thirties, standing on the deck of a sailing vessel, the SA Agulhas, with a history so great, looking at these tumbling masses of water, in total astonishment! All I could utter at that very moment, was: "God! How Great You are! Thank You Lord, for making me experience this!"



But, after being wined and dined with the most exquisite food and waiters, reality kicked in with a bang! Motion sickness! Seasickness! Whatever the case may be! It hit me right at the core of my stomach! The only thing that really worked and lifted that pressing feeling off my stomach, was lying down flat on my back. For a whole four precious days at sea, I couldn't enjoy any of the journey.



Fortunately from the fifth day I started feeling like a human being again. Since the day we left Cape Town harbor, sea conditions were terrible! Strangely enough, I was never frightened at all, even though the swells reached heights of at least 6m. Sometimes one could see the waves reaching up to the portholes inside the ship! We all just knew to trust the excellent experienced crew who managed to keep the ship on course. Because of the sea conditions, the vessel could only travel at a speed between 6 and 11 knots.

Great was the day, after endless and endless views of majestic ocean, that we reached the island of Tristan da Cunha. We were flown over with the helicopter to spend at least 4 hours on the island exploring. I think it amazes most of us how this small group of people, whom have made the island



their permanent home, could manage to live thousands of kilometers away from civilisation. The great thing about this is that they all seem so at peace and they really live comfortable lives there. It's just amazing!

Then finally, the day arrived when we reached our destination. Gough island! When the helicopter dropped us off on the island, it felt so unreal, but at the same time incredibly awesome! I think that's a feeling unique as a whole, for every individual! All I can say from the very depth of my soul, is that our Creator is and always will be Lord of lords and King of kings for making me share in His awesome creation!



*Daphne Hollenbach*





## Mr Keyser's Patented\* Biltong Box

DIE WINDGAT

One day Leon vanished down to the Brown Store workshop and didn't reappear all day. After a while we wondered what he was quietly working away at. We walked in to sawdust and sunlight and the noisy generators. Leon stood at the plywood-and-sawhorses workbench humming away happily, putting the finishing touches on a box. Not just any old box though – this was to be a Biltong Box.

Created from scraps and offcuts and recycled bits and pieces, Leon's Biltong Box is square, tidy and beautifully finished. Plywood pieces make up the top and sides; the back has space for a suction fan; and the door at the front is covered with mesh to keep the flies out, then with some mat just to finish it off. "I didn't have a plan or a tape-measure," says Leon; "Just found one bit of wood and looked at it then cut the other bit". He points out a slightly wavy top edge – "see, it's not all square" – but it's certainly straighter than I could make it with only a jigsaw at hand.



Inside, the box is clean and warm-looking: a tray at the bottom catches any stray drips and three levels of horizontal bracing wires run from side to side to hang the drying meat from. A few electrical connectors find a new home on the outside of the box, holding the wires in place. Gough is too humid just to leave hung meat drying on its own and the flies are already around. The trick is in the fan, Leon tells me. "It's a suction fan – a blow fan would just blow the biltong into each other." Mounted at the back of the box, it sucks air through the box day and night.

Around 20 kg of rump steaks will fit in the box, says Leon. The meat is carefully trimmed, cut into long strips and marinated. "I just throw in whatever. Vinegar draws the blood and leaves a good flavour, also BBQ spice and some salt. And coriander seeds!" It is left for around six hours, then each bit of meat is hooked up on Leon's home-made bracing-wire hooks and hung in the box.



Two to three days later the steaks are biltong. Long and dry and chewy, they have a great flavour and are very moreish. Leon's third batch is almost ready to come out of the box now and the team will probably devour it in days. The boerewors experiment didn't run quite so smoothly – it took too long, says Leon. “And on the warm days fat dripped out of them, but they were still too fatty”. But tasty anyway. However, Leon's keen to try making chilli bites, using tenderised steak because it absorbs the flavour best. Sometime he'll also use the biltong spice from his butcher at home.

Bring on more of these Biltong Box experiments, we say!

***Kalinka Rexer-Huber***

\* Gough Island Patent Office



## Team training for Gough Island

17 August 2009. DEAT's office. East Pier building. Cape Town. 8 Total strangers come together. The new overwintering team for Gough Island. They are the GOUGH 55 TEAM. The team is: Sonja Lizemore (medic & team leader), Llewellyn Kriedemann (radio tech & deputy), Leon Keyser (diesel mech), Daphne Hollenbach (senior met), Tshepo Tawane (assist. met), Martin Nysschens (assist. met), Graham Parker (field assist) and Kalinka Rexer-huber (field assist). We came from all over South Africa and the two field assistants come all the way from Nieu-Zeeland, everyone's geared for the team training that will prepare us for our stay on Gough Island.

After a warm welcome from Mr. Sam Oosthuizen and the DEAT staff, we were briefed about the administration work. In the afternoon we went to Simon's town for a final dental check.

We spent 3 days in the woods of Tokai for fire training, and now we are prepared for anything on Gough.

Our next stop was really fun. Pick & Pay cooking school show us how to bake and cook. We proved that we are going to eat like kings and queens on the island.

Although there is a medic in the team, it is very important that everyone will be able to help in an emergency situation. We had training for first aid for 3 days, and the guys get to "kiss" a plastic doll!



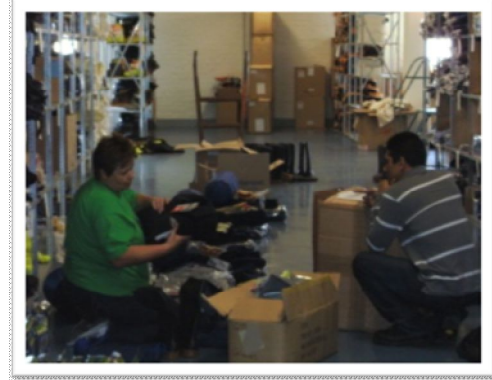


We all were very excited when we fetched our clothes. **This is reality! We are going to an island!** We received thermal underwear, shirts, socks (enough to go for a week and half before washing), overalls, gum/safety boots, fleece jackets and enough bags for all the clothes. Then the BIG PACKING started.

DEAT also gave us a farewell braai.

Then the final day came and in Cape Towns rainy weather we had to say our goodbyes. After 2 weeks of intense training we are prepared for our years stay on the island. We are all looking forward to this unique opportunity that we got. To explore every inch and to leave *"The Legacy enriched"*

*Sonja Lizemore*



## The Night of the Prions



They may not be the biggest, noisiest or most numerous seabirds on Gough, but this month we want to write about broad-billed prions (*Pachyptila vittata*) because they're the most whale-like.. hang in there and we'll explain.

Last week we had a night of heavy fog, sitting still and low on the ground, and there were prions everywhere. Literally everywhere - crashing into *Phylica* trees, bumbling around on and under the catwalks around base, sitting by the hundreds on the roof, scrambling around on tussocks, flying in through doors only briefly opened, thumping into heads that were foolish enough to walk around wearing headtorches.. Gough is thought to have two million pairs of broad-billed prions breeding here and it seemed like they were all out on this night.

Like many birds that spend most of their lives at sea, they are fairly clumsy on the ground – not so good at walking. But oh they can fly - looking up

into the night we could see thousands of birds zooming to and fro, looking for all the world like little aerial acrobats coming in to roost. They were so dense in the sky we wondered how they manage to avoid crashing into each other, especially since they certainly couldn't avoid crashing into us big humans.

The first time a prion used him as a convenient sitting spot, Graham was somewhat speechless. After the third or fourth time (not counting the birds that thwapped into us as they flew), it started getting a bit cumbersome..

Despite appearances, we weren't out that night just to gawp at the hundreds of broad-billed prions all over the ground and the thousands that filled the night sky. We got to work: despite prions being everywhere, we needed to find prions in their burrows, where they nest. It turns out that's somewhat easier said than done.

Prion burrows are surprisingly variable in size, some so small that Graham couldn't get his hand in and often very long – way longer than our arms, in burrow up to the shoulder. They're also mixed in with thousands upon thousands of burrows of all sorts of other species that breed around here.

We spent a couple of hours literally up to our ears in burrows, finding prions. Fortunately they make





# Gough Bunting

a deep, dove-like cooing call which you can hear from the surface, making it easier to tell whether anyone is at home in a particular burrow.

Broad-billed prions have chicks at the moment, little balls of squeaky grey down that paddle their feet and nip their beaks at you, but fortunately we didn't disturb any during our burrow-gropings.

Kalinka just put a band and a very small geolocator on this wee prion then dug around to find his mate so that we could put them on her as well.

Hopefully we'll find both birds again next year when we want to get the geolocators back. The information the geolocators record will help us figure out where the birds flew when they leave Gough.

This will also tell us about where they feed.

These prions have a particularly interesting way of feeding – not only do they snatch small fish and squid from just under the surface, but they can also filter feed. They have a fringe of tiny lamellae along the top jaw, little hair-like plates that they use to sieve water, leaving behind all the tiny plankton (like krill, for example). Just like a very very small baleen whale.

***Kalinka Rexer-Huber***

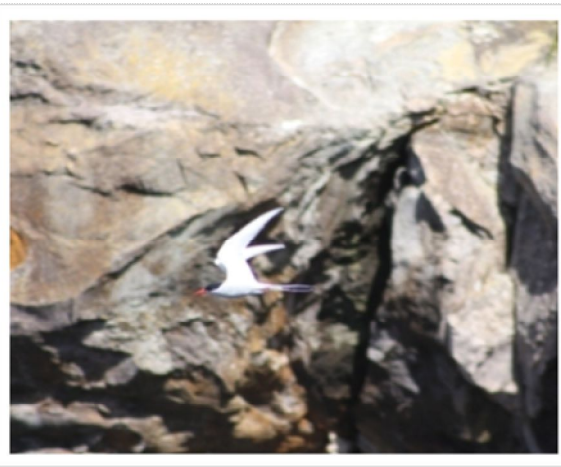




## Spring has sprung on Gough

With the arrival of spring the days on Gough are becoming longer and often very warm when the sun is shining. The island feels very busy, summer breeding birds have been arriving in great numbers, building nests or digging burrows and hurrying to raise chicks during the good weather.

The most notable arrival was the Great Shearwaters. These birds flock to Gough each year in the millions, generally around the middle of September. It is a good distance to fly to the paradise of Gough for Great Shearwaters; they winter in the North Atlantic around Newfoundland, Canada and Greenland. In late September the sky around the base filled with excited Shearwaters courting one another. The birds find their mates, prepare their burrows and then leave for a month's time before returning to lay their eggs.



Another notable summer breeder is Antarctic Terns. They are busy little birds, far more often heard than seen, or at least seen for any length of time. Terns seem to be racing from place to place, chasing each other a lot and singing. Male Antarctic Terns feed females during courtship, and invariably if you watch a pair in flight one of them is energetically chasing the other with a fish in its beak.

The mol-  
lies, or  
Atlantic  
Yellow-

nosed albatross, are well into their nesting season now. The big birds are dotted all over the landscape around the base, sitting atop their large mud pedestal nests. We find ourselves constantly deviating from our routes to avoid walking too close to the birds on their nests. The colony of Mollies around the base is being studied for the 28<sup>th</sup> year; John Cooper from Cape Town University started the study in 1982! There are currently 57 birds incubating eggs in the study colony. The parents take turns incubating, with each bird sitting tight on eggs for 10-12 days before getting to leave and feed at sea again. The eggs take around 70 days to hatch, so there will be chicks in December. The chicks will leave Gough in April, not returning to breed themselves until they are at least six years





# Gough Bunting

It often sounds a bit like suburbia around the base at the moment. Male seals have returned to their breeding colonies and their territorial wails and barking is very similar to your average suburban dog. The barking echoes of the cliffs and creates quite a cacophony. The coast of Gough is also covered with thousands of Rockhopper penguin nests. Rockhoppers breed in colonies of up to a couple of thousand birds, guarding their nests from the constant threat of egg stealing Skuas.



The local Skuas have also launched into their breeding season. Rather intriguingly a pair built a nest immediately adjacent to the cat-walk that goes to the helicopter pad, and to our rubbish bins. The catwalk got a lot of traffic during September with the busy change-over period. Less than three days after change-over though the Skuas had built a nest and laid an egg, shortly followed by another. Fortunately we only have to go the rubbish bins once a week, as walking past the nest generally results in a noisy amount of aerial swooping and what likely aren't kind words in Skua language

This is Gough Island though after all, World Heritage Site, where the birds reign supreme. We eight lucky humans are fortunate enough to be able to live on a little speck of this wild island and appreciate the immense spring nature show at our doorstep.

*Graham Parker*







## Halloween party

On the night of All Hallows' eve some scary characters came out of hiding to join forces in the Gonçalo Alvarez bar. The local residents of Gough island ran and hid as best they could but to no avail. They were quickly rounded up and had to join in on the Feast of the Fondue.

The details of what followed is still a bit sketchy. Some residents claim that they had great fun until the early hours of the morning - a clear cut case of Stockholm syndrome.

Several cases of loss of memory have also been reported. These individuals claim that they have no recollection of events that happened after midnight on the night in question. Video footage from a camera found at the scene show these individuals to be joining in on the ritualistic feast and it almost seems as if they enjoyed it.

This video footage also showed the residents joining in on games such as pool and engaging in hearty conversations with the tyrants. Then, as mysteriously as these beasts appeared, they disappeared again. The only evidence that they were there was a slightly disorganized bar.

Many of the resident complained of headaches and fatigue the following morning. The base was quiet until much later that afternoon when a few brave individuals dared to come out of their rooms. These poor people looked like they were in a state of shock, obviously still reeling from the brain-washing and torment of the previous night. As a fire was lit - to keep the evil at bay - and meat was incinerated, the residents huddled together, staring blankly into space. Some stories were exchanged and nervous laughter was heard as the resident slowly recollected what happened on that horrible night.

Nothing is known of the characters that invaded that night. They are not believed to hold any threat to local wildlife but they might be to blame for the spread of *Sagina* at Snoekgat.

*Llewellyn Kriedemann*





## PHOTO SYNTHESIS

Presented here over the next few pages is a selection of photos taken by the team during their time here on Gough island. Vote for your favourite photo.

Email: [gough@sanap.ac.za](mailto:gough@sanap.ac.za)  
Telephone: 021 405 9470

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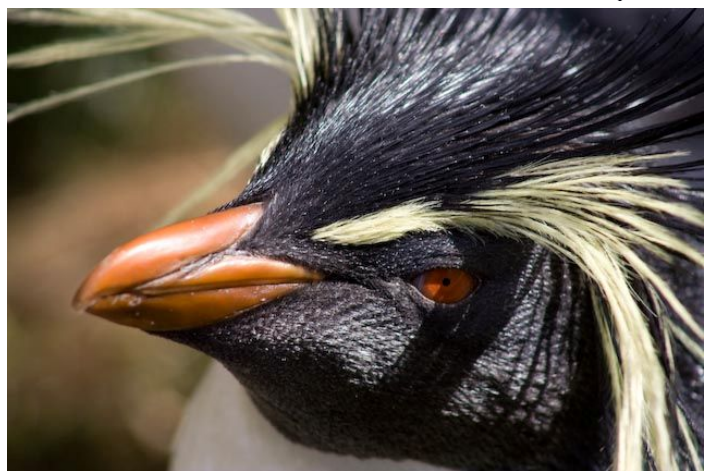
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7



# Gough Bunting



8

9

10



11





## Gough Weather

### Pressure

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<b>Ave Max Pressure</b>	<b>1014.4hPa</b>
<b>Ave Min Pressure</b>	<b>1000.5hPa</b>
<b>Ave Pressure</b>	<b>1010.2hPa</b>
<b>Max Pressure</b>	<b>1028.3hPa</b>
<b>Min Pressure</b>	<b>834.1hPa</b>

### Temperature

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<b>Ave Max Temp</b>	<b>13.6°C</b>
<b>Ave Min Temp</b>	<b>9.7°C</b>
<b>Ave Temp</b>	<b>11.7°C</b>
<b>Max Temp</b>	<b>20.3°C</b>
<b>Min Temp</b>	<b>5.0°C</b>

### Humidity

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<b>Max Humidity</b>	<b>97%</b>
<b>Min Humidity</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Ave Humidity</b>	<b>83%</b>

### Wind

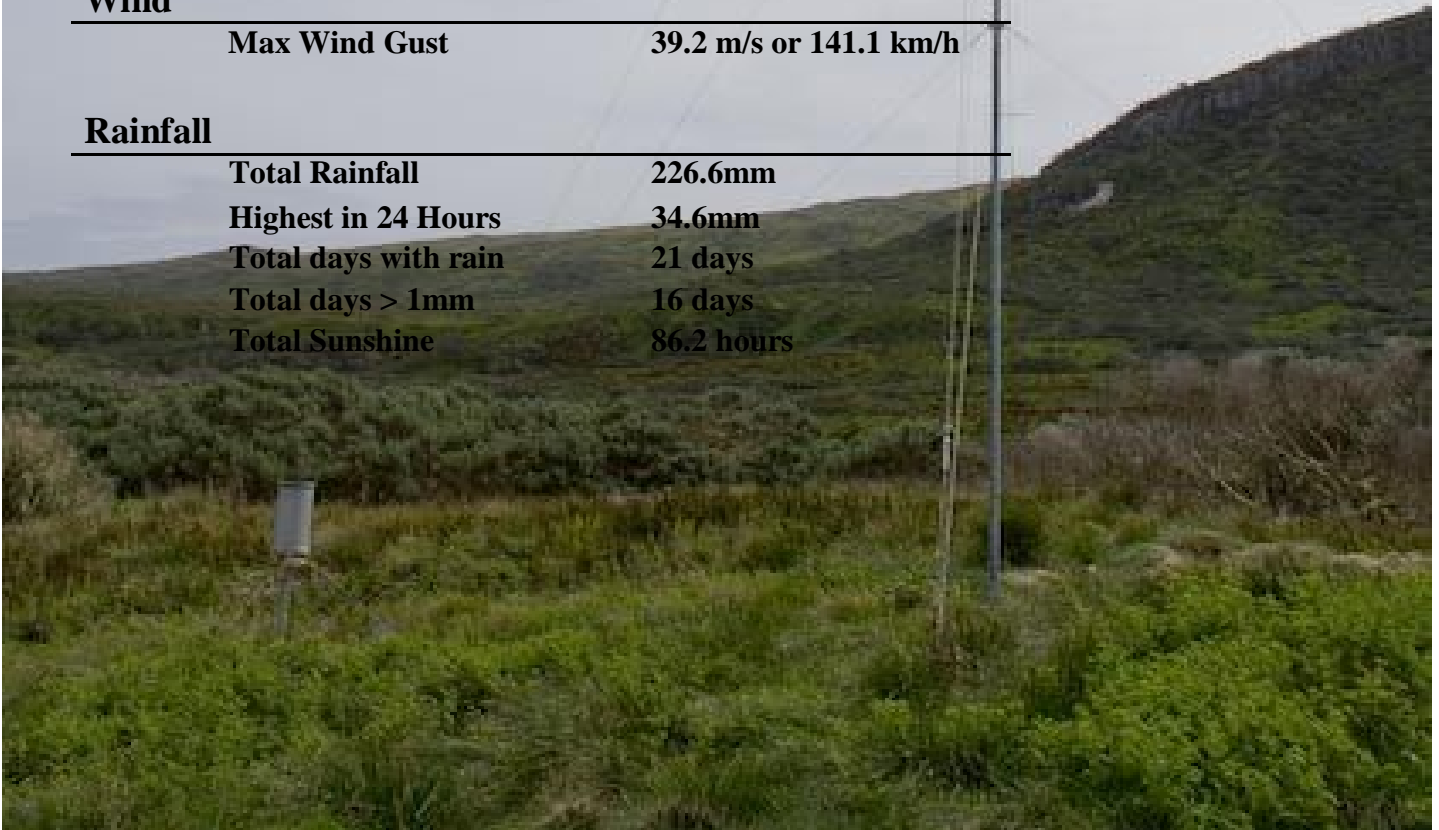
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<b>Max Wind Gust</b>	<b>39.2 m/s or 141.1 km/h</b>
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### Rainfall

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<b>Total Rainfall</b>	<b>226.6mm</b>
<b>Highest in 24 Hours</b>	<b>34.6mm</b>
<b>Total days with rain</b>	<b>21 days</b>
<b>Total days &gt; 1mm</b>	<b>16 days</b>
<b>Total Sunshine</b>	<b>86.2 hours</b>





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