

Gough Bunting

May 2008



Another month, another season

Winter: warm blankets, water bottles and a nice fire (oh, we do not have the fire place).



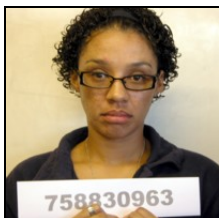
The Soaking

The rain, the water, it comes down!



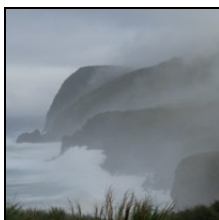
Survival

Everyone is doing well in the extreme colds of the Island.



Candy Bandits at Large

Crime has found its way to Gough!



Hibernation

This is the time when most of us wish we were working indoors.

Another month, another season

It is winter on Gough. As always when it is winter we are looking forward to seeing the spring. The vegetation is dying and most of the birds left for a warmer area. The vegetation is becoming brown piece by piece. It is so much different from the green that I am used to on Gough. It looks beautiful although the vegetation is dying. We are here and enjoying the cold on the Island. During the month we had a taste of what is to come. We had some rough seas and big waves. I was on cloud nine when I saw this spectacular view. It looked like it is raining but it was the spray from the sea that hit the rocks. It was suspended in the air or carried by the strong wind. It was so cool! Johan and I went down to Crane Point one afternoon to take some pictures and make some movies. While we were standing there we saw the sun for the first time that day. It felt like we were only there for a few minutes but indeed an hour had past since we left the house.



I am showing a picture of Archway rock on a calm day and one with the rough sea. To experience this is wonderful, I know that if my family were here they would have felt the same way as I did. I will just have to show them when I go home. The time here is getting short so fast.

Well till next month.



Calm day



Stormy day

The Soaking



Sarel & Kholekile:
Soaked to the bone,
standing in a puddle.

Anyone who was in doubt can now be assured: Winter is truly here! There is a crispness in the air and wetness in the face which make even the hardest of us long for the warmth and dryness of the great indoors. Even Charlene is now agreeing with Mel: A sandy beach with lots of sunshine will be appreciated. Ironman Kholekile went out to monitor the birds again. He brought news of the cold from Gonydale and although he probably wouldn't make a display of it, he did seem veeerrry happy that he is back. Since Gonydale is covered in a thin veneer of snow, we can assume that the north of the island will be much the same.

We've also had two big rain storms come through here the past month. Each bringing rather rough seas. At one point the meteorologist on duty remarked that, although there is water falling on the roof, the rain has stopped quite some time ago. The waves hitting the cliff sends so much seaspray into the air that it falls on the base roof as salty rain. I wish I could take photo's, but salt water and cameras, sadly, don't mix.

We have now run short of interesting and stimulating things to do outside. At least until the weather becomes friendlier. The base video collection is now receiving quite a beating as my colleagues try to alleviate their boredom. The book selves also seem emptier than before. I thought baking would become a more popular

hobby at about this time, but alas the yeast is all gone. This leaves us to rely on frozen pre-baked bread for all our "fun-food" creations. With a little bit of imagination hamburgers are easy, but for hotdogs either the bread is too short, or the sausage too small.

Yak yak yakity yak-yak. I've typed too much already. Till next time.

-Johan



Fun in the Sun?
No, just seeking
a little warmth at
the balloon hut.

SURVIVAL

This month, we have been blessed with plenty rain, strong winds and to cut meteorological story short, we even had some snow on top of the Western Rowett. Although the weather was not on our side, we managed to do our routine check (Tristan Albatross chicks). It was very cold and we felt very bad for the chicks and we even forgot about ourselves but the little ones are surviving through wintertime as usual.
Till next month, ...Cheers!!!
Kholekile

If only these gloves were waterproof



Candy Bandits at Large



No Sweet is Safe

Residents of Gough Island are “concerned” since the recent spate of “mysterious” incidents. Sweets, in particular, but also miscellaneous other snacks, such as potato chips, chocolates and biscuits, have gone missing.

Forensic expert, the highly decorated medical officer, Dr. K. Cita, says evidence points to the perpetrators having very low blood sugar. “It is a well-known fact that increasing the sucrose level in your blood will help alleviate the problem of low blood sugar. I want to urge these troubled

individuals to come forward. I can help them and it will not be necessary to turn to a life of crime”, said the peace-loving officer.

Not all residents are as forgiving as the concerned doctor. The radio technician, mr. J. Hoffman, has reported that these “criminals have taken all the Jelly Babies, leaving nothing for me!. Gough Island has been a crime free community up until recently. Is nothing sacred anymore?” The disgruntled engineer hopes that they will “be made to pay dearly for their crimes”.

Observers M. McPherson and C. Oppel were the chief suspects in this heinous crime, but have denied all involvement in these acts, saying that cannot possibly be the case as they are in fact “on a very strict diet.” Observer J. Mathabatha was not available for comment. Claims that he fears for his life in the weather office, have been vehemently denied by his co-workers.

Miss McPherson and Miss Oppel have taken over investigations. “Our good names have been smeared by these vile allegations,” the two claimed indistinctly past chocolatey obstructions in their mouths. “We will do all in our power to bring the true criminals to justice!”

Mellany McPherson

Hibernation

May felt more like the beginning of winter than the end of Autumn. It was mostly cold with strong winds. We have also had a lot of precipitation in the form of showers, with small hail a few times. At times the swells were very big resulting in sprays as they hit the shore. Sometimes the spray looked and felt like drizzle and left salt all around the base.

At the beginning of the month I once again accompanied Kholekile to check the Tristan Albatross chicks at Gonydale and Tafelkop. It was overcast which is good for walking but the problem was that it was also windy, cold and drizzling. All the chicks have been left alone in the nests with the parents coming occasionally to feed them. I assume some of you would like to know what happened to that chick with a head wound, sadly it did not survive and it is not the only one, a few more have fallen prey to the mice.

When we sat down to eat lunch we had to finish quickly so that we can put our gloves back on. While eating one of the ever so curious Gough Bunting paid us a visit as usual. On our way down from South Peak to Tafelkop visibility was greatly reduced and to some point we were a bit disorientated but fortunately our knowledge of the area came in handy. We were planning to camp but after this trip we decided that would not be a good idea.

I have been mostly indoors this month going out when doing observations, going to take sea water temperature and on Fridays when going to dump refuse in the containers at the helipad.

While hibernating we have found a new hobby, puzzle building, thanks to Mellany. It keeps us busy during the day, slowly making little progress.

Beside the illnesses associated with it, winter may happen to be very interesting with big swells and frozen precipitation and I am looking forward to the experience.

Stay warm and blessed!

Nkoane Jack Mathabatha



Climate Stats: May 2008



Pressure

Ave. Max	1005.3 hPa
Ave. Min	995.2 hPa
Average	1000.4 hPa
Maximum	1026.2 hPa
Minimum	975.6 hPa



Temperature

Ave. Max	12.2 °C
Ave Min	7.6 °C
Average	9.9 °C
Maximum	18.9 °C
Minimum	4.9 °C



Humidity

Average	79%
Maximum	96%
Minimum	55%



Wind

Max Gust	37.4 m/s or 134.6 km/h
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Rainfall

Total	319.4 mm
Highest in 24h	53.8 mm
Total days with rain	28 days
Total days >1mm	22 days



Sunshine

Total sunshine	70.6 hours
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Gough 53 team members

Charlene Oppel – Meteorologist

Johan Hoffman – Radio Technician

Kholekile Cita – Medic
(Deputy Leader)

Mellany McPherson – Meteorologist(snr)

Nkoane Mathabatha - Meteorologist

Sarel Steyn – Diesel Technician
(Team Leader)