

GOUGH BUNTING



NEWSLETTER

JANUARY

SANAP

2013

JANUARY 2013 – TEAM LEADER’S EDITORIAL Dearest friends, family and sponsors

The Christmas tree is been put away and with the New Year’s party still (vaguely) on our minds, we’d started a new year.

As of the 1st of January, we have 256 days until the ship arrives and though it seems like a long way to go, it doesn’t feel like it here on the island.

Just 5 days into the new year, I’ve conquered yet another peak on the island – Richmond Hill.

Even though it doesn’t look too much of a challenge, I can ensure you it was. Chris and Mara offered to take us out and it was an adventure – even Happy had a chance to get out and experience the island. It took a lot of self-talk, encouragement from our beloved field assistants and with determination to reach the top, but I’ve made it.



Chris, Jasper, Christiaan, me and Mara on Richmond Hill with the Gough base in the background

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There was even time for a nap...

The Edinburgh also came around to fish in Gough waters and there was also parcels from home onboard. It was again Christmas – this time just in January. The Edinburgh also brought us some visitors from Tristan. Sean (the Tristan Administrator), his wife Marina and Trevor (Tristan Environmental Officer) stayed on the island for a few days.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

Talk to you soon again!

Marilette & “Happy”

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY

1 January – Burnan (Marilette's friend)

25 January – Hedwig Liniger (Mara's grandma)

25 January – Zeta-Rose (Mara's niece)



A couple of first's for G58...

3 January – 1st game of Settlers (Thank you, Barbara and team!)

28 January – 1st overnight visitors (Tristan Administrator)

29 January – 1st team member to catch a fish (even though the circumstances was a bit suspicious)

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AWARDS OF THE MONTH

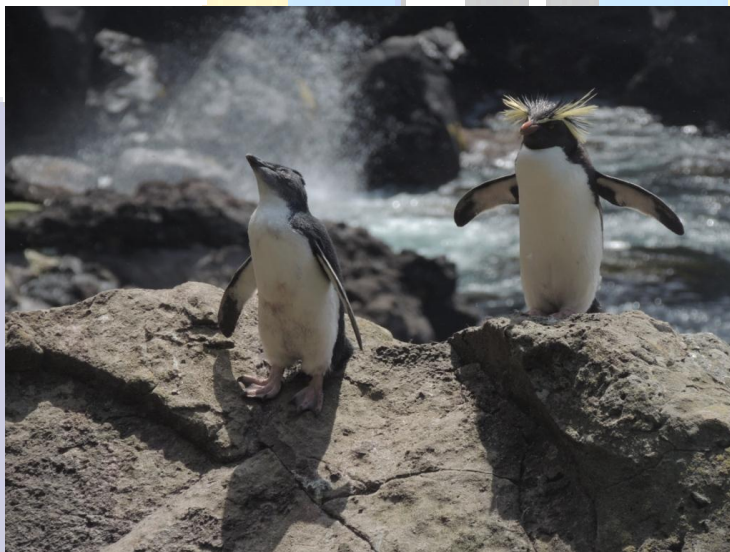
Marilette – Darwin Award



The Darwin Award was earned by Marilette this month, for almost causing an international incident, after hoisting the South African flag on the highest post (that will indicate that South Africa claimed the island as theirs!)

A WORD FROM THE FIELD ASSISTANTS...

Mid-summer Madness



This month saw us really getting to grips with the wicked Sagina plant, that noxious weed that we are attempting to control from spreading across the island, and eventually to eradicate it altogether. At present the Sagina (a little noticed native of northern Europe) is confined to an area of cliffs around the base, and we intend to keep it that way! Our main tool is poison applied with sprayers, besides digging out the plants, but to reach many of them we have to abseil the cliffs, allowing us to see the island from

a very different perspective. Not only plants live on these cliffs, we have Sooty Albatross chicks and nesting terns to keep us company, and January has also seen the eggs of the Antarctic Terns hatch, and has made the adults very aggressive.

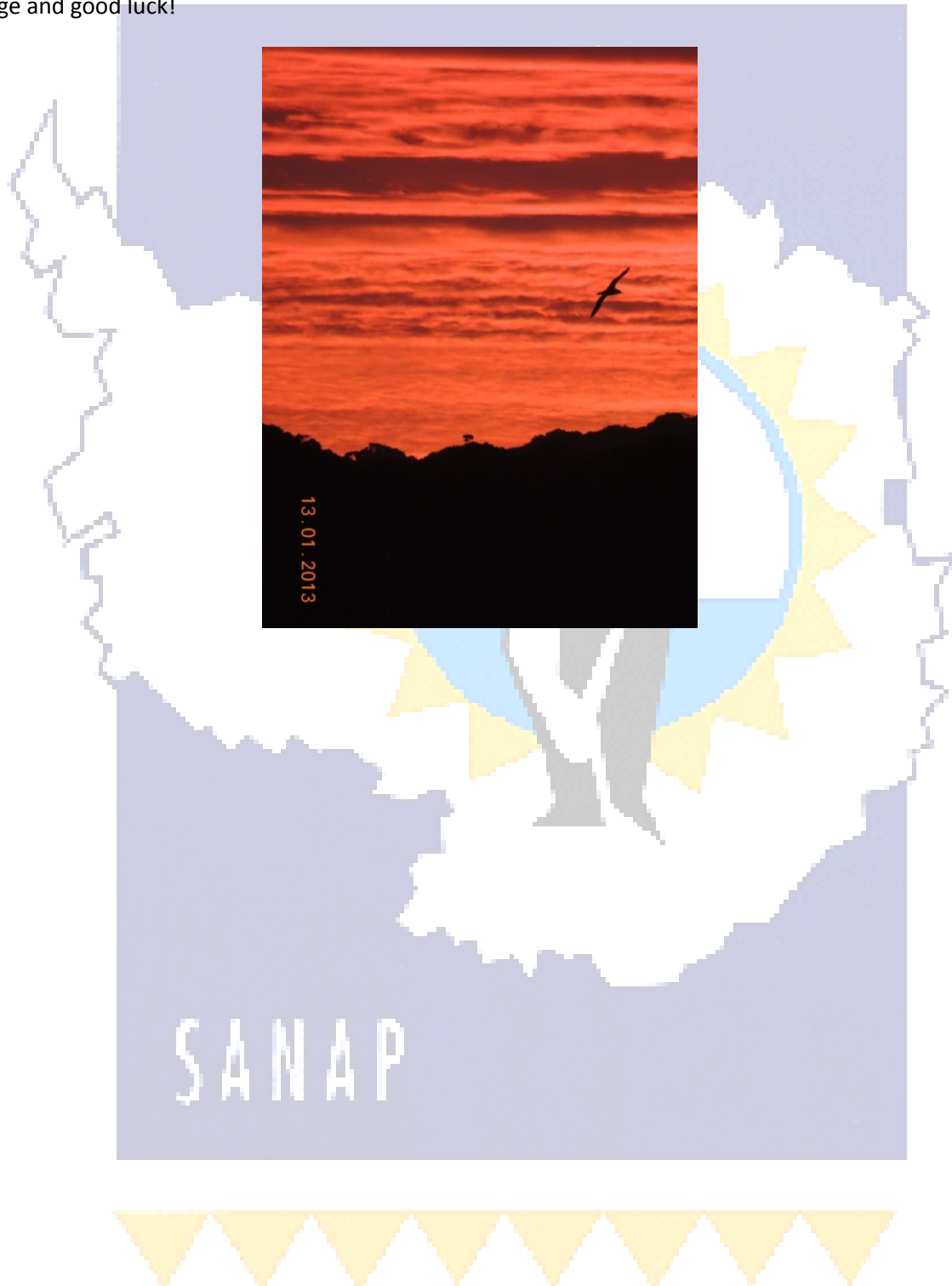


A trip over Tafelkoppie and Gonydale shortly after New Year (to blow away some of the festive excess) revealed to us a huge change in the mountainous uplands...the Tristan Albatross' had returned! The Tristans take almost a year from laying their egg to fledging their chick, so most pairs only breed every two years in order to give themselves a break. This means that though the last years chicks had only just fledged, new adult pairs are already setting up and laying their fresh new eggs. This commences a busy time for us field assistants, as camping up in the hills and studying these birds is a big part of the job, though sadly by time this generation of chicks fledge next year, we will be long gone from the island.



Other landmark events in the Gough natural calendar have come by this month; the Great Shearwaters have hatched their chicks, and every evening on the island is marked by the many thousands of adult shearwaters coming in at dusk to see to their young. However, what has struck us most is the fledging

of the Rockhopper Penguin chicks. We arrived on the island just as the first eggs were being laid, and have spent a huge part of our time studying these amazing birds and seeing their chicks hatch and grow. The penguins have enormous charisma and personality and we can recognise individual character traits in our study chicks, so as they moult their down and grow into true birds of the sea, we wish them bon voyage and good luck!



FROM THE WEATHER OFFICE...

During January Jasper and I went to Tumbledown to weight seal pubs for researchers of the University of Pretoria.



Tumbledown

Tumbledown is about an hour's hike from the base, and after descending the cliff the first signs of life on the beach area is a large penguin colony.



Penguin colony

After tip-toeing through the rowdy gathering of penguins, the weighing of the seal pups started. They were probably born mid-December, making them approximately a month old on the date of weighing.



Seal pups

At 5-6kg they are also not very big, but what they lack in size is made up for by plenty of attitude. Their animated behavior is however not intimidating but quite adorable.



Christiaan

CHANGING TIMES

Our lives are so busy and sometimes we are forced to live so far from our families, friends, colleagues, lovers and all. We daily miss those relationships and important life events we used to share. Every minute passing by I so wish I could go back to them, but what an unfortunate wish I have...if so then I can't in actual distance I can keep them closer to my heart through best memories I have till such time comes....Ohhh time.....!! What a great enemy on earth.....!

It starts with new born's first breath, ends with a man's death

Where does it really go once it passed?

Why does it fly whenever people are having fun?

And slow whenever they want it to fly

With time universe was created

With time we rejoice, cry, and experience all scary events

With time we grow old, and all our decisions are done

In time there's everything, with a blink of an eye all's shown

It is with time there's this distance between us

It is with time that all will draw us near

Because of that I'm where I am from where I have been

With time I'll be where I want to be

I once heard that time is patient, but not humans

I am patiently waiting along for it to come

But honestly I can't wait

Whoever has the fast forward button please press it...!!

..... *Namhla*

January



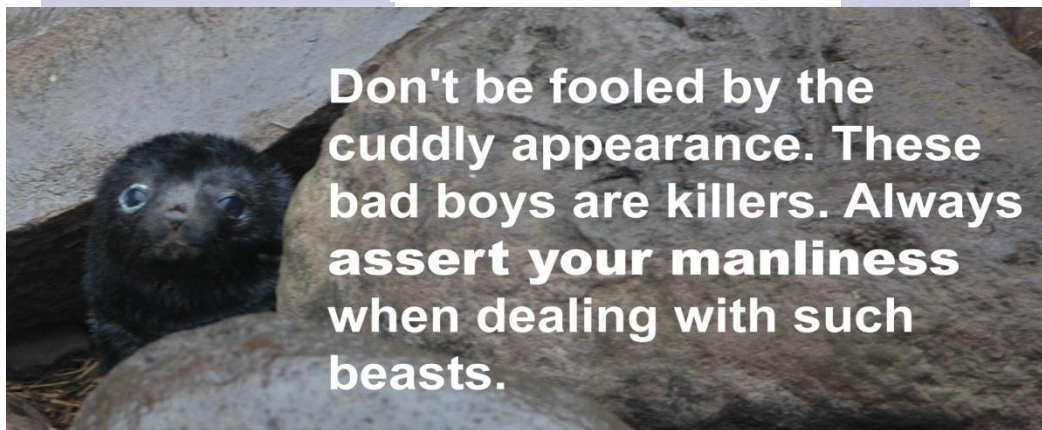
It came and went way too quickly. Then again, it wasn't until the 2nd or 3rd day into the New Year when we finally emerged from our darkened rooms. The smell of burnt-out cigarettes and spilt liquor still heavy in the air.

It took some major time before the wheels on base began to turn again. Reluctantly.

We grabbed some fresh air a few days later with a quick trip to Richmond hill. From the top you can gaze on the tongue of land curving down from the reaches of Gonydale to the lower part of the Transvaal bay area.

We also went downtown to Tumbledown. Seal cub weighing season, understand. Our environmental officer will probably give a detailed report of the event. I was just along for the ride. The lower scree slopes of that rocky beach is absolutely heaving with seals at this time of year. You can get quite a workout after picking up about a hundred small, squirming bags of indignant blubber.

-JJ Stone



Don't be fooled by the cuddly appearance. These bad boys are killers. Always assert your manliness when dealing with such beasts.

CARTOON OF THE MONTH

By Chris Bell



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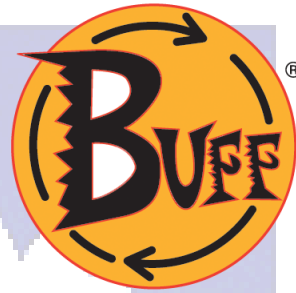
CLIMATE STATS: January 2013

Ave. Max Pressure	1014.3 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1008.1 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1010.9 hPa
Max Pressure	1023.0 hPa
Min Pressure	999.9 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	19.1 °C
Ave. Min Temp	12.6 °C
Ave. Temp	15.9 °C
Max Temp	24.5 °C
Min Temp	8.5 °C
Ave Humidity	78%
Max Humidity	96%
Min Humidity	26%
Max Wind Gust	38.4 m/s or 138.24 km/h
Total Rainfall	137.6 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	51 mm
Total days with rain	20 Days
Total days >1mm	12 Days
Total Sunshine	178.7 Hours



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