

NEWSLETTER -- OCT 86

NOW THAT OCTOBER HAS PASSED THERE ARE FEW OF US THAT WILL NOT WANT TO ENJOY IT AGAIN. ALTHOUGH WE HAD SEVERAL REALLY UNPLEASANT DAYS DURING THE MONTH, THE WEATHER DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS OF THE MONTH HAS MADE UP FOR THE TIME WE ALL LOST OUTSIDE. AS SUMMER SETS IN ONE CAN SEE A CHANGE IN THE ISLAND. THE ISLAND IS NOW TEAMING WITH ANIMAL LIFE, MANY OF THE BIRDS ARE NOW SITTING ON EGGS, THE ELEPHANT SEALS HAVE NOW FINISHED PUPPING AND ONE FINDS THE FAT LITTLE WEANED PUPS ON THE BEACHES WAITING TO GO TO SEA AS THEIR PARENTS DO.

THE MONTH STARTED WITH VERY GOOD KILLER WHALE SIGHTINGS. THERE WERE A TOTAL OF SIX SIGHTINGS THAT DAY, DURING WHICH MARK AND ANDRIES WERE ABLE TO ATTRACT A GROUP OF FOUR TO GUNNERS POINT WHERE THE REST OF US ON TOP OF THE CLIFFS MANAGED TO GET THE MUCH TALKED ABOUT SCOOP PHOTO 5. ALL THE PHOTOGRAPHERS RAN OUT OF FILM DURING THIS EPISODE AND ARCHIE, OUR VIDEO JOCKY, RAN OUT OF BATTERIES. DURING THE MONTH ONE COULD ALWAYS FIND SOMEBODY AT THE CRANE ON THE POINT LOOKING OUT FOR THE WHALES IN THE HOPE OF GETTING A SIMILAR SIGHTING. AS YET, THERE HAS BEEN NO SUCH LUCK. THE KILLER WHALE TALK WAS ONLY BROKEN AT ONE STAGE THIS MONTH WHEN A BOENG WAS SEEN ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE ISLAND BY RORY AND WARREN. THE BOENG WAS SEEN FLYING OVER THE ISLAND OFTEN AFTER THAT BY A SELECT FEW AND FEW BELIEVED THESE SIGHTINGS UNTIL A PHOTO WAS TAKEN THAT BROUGHT THE CONTROVERSEY TO AN END. WE ARE NOW ALL WAITING TO SEE IF PERHAPS IT WAS NOT A BIRD THAT WAS PHOTOGRAPHED, IN WHICH CASE ONCE AGAIN FEW WILL BELIEVE THE STORY OF THE BOENG.

STEVE HUNTER AND NEIL DECIDED TO GO ROUND THE ISLAND ON ONE OF THEIR BUSINESS TRIPS AND RETURNED AFTER FIVE DAYS. STEVE A DAY EARLIER THAN NEIL BECAUSE HE DIVED INTO THE WATERTUNNEL STREAM FULLY CLOTHED AND WITH HIS BACKPACK ON. AT THE SAME TIME ADRIAAN AND JOHN (FINALLY) ALSO HEADED AROUND THE ISLAND, STAYING AWAY FOR A BLISSFUL TEN DAYS. STEVE HUNTER DECIDED DURING THE EARLY PART OF THE MONTH TO GIVE ONE OF THE NEW TOILETS A WORKING OVER AND LOCKED HIMSELF INTO ONE - BY BREAKING THE KEY OFF IN THE LOCK. THIS GAVE ARCHIE THE EXCUSE TO FLEX THOSE MUSCLES THAT HE HAS BEEN WORKING SO HARD ON AND HE PROCEEDED TO KNOCK DOWN THE TOILET DOOR. BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH INCLUDED STONY, SAMPIE AND GERHARD.

OUR FEATHERED FRIENDS ALSO STARTED TO MAKE THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN ON THE ISLAND AS STEVE H. AND NEIL RAN AROUND COUNTING THE GIANT PETRELS ON THEIR AROUND ISLAND TRIP. THE MACCI PENGUINS HAVE NOW STARTED ARRIVING IN FORCE ON KILDALKEY BEACH AND SOME OF THEM HAVE ALREADY STARTED LAYING EGGS. WE HAVE THE FIRST ROCKHOPPER PENGUINS ARRIVING AT BASE DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS, WHICH HAVE BEEN WELL VIEWED BY ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM. THE SKUAS HAVE NOW MARKED OUT THEIR TERRITORIES AND WILL SOON BE LAYING THEIR EGGS WHICH MEANS WE WILL BE COMING UNDER ATTACK FROM THEM AS THEY PROTECT THEIR VARIOUS NESTS. OF THE MORE RARE BIRDS, A LESSER BLACKBACKED GULL AND A WHITEHEADED PETREL HAVE BEEN SEEN DURING THE MONTH.
(CONTRIBUTED BY: NEIL GARTSHORE)

A PAINTED LADY (BUTTERFLY) WAS SEEN ON THE ISLAND BUT AS YET NONE OF US HAVE BEEN ABLE TO CATCH ONE ALTHOUGH A REWARD HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE POOR INSECTS HEAD.
(CONTRIBUTION: STEVE CHOWN)

THE BREEDING SEASON OF THE ISLANDS ELEPHANT SEAL POPULATION IS ALMOST OVER. WITH THE PEAK HAULOUT ON OCTOBER 15TH. THE NUMBERS HAVE BEEN FALLING DAILY AS THE COWS RETURN TO SEA TO FEED BEFORE THE MOULT. 38 OF THE 56 PUPS BORN AT TRYPOT BEACH THIS YEAR HAVE BEEN WEANED AND ARE LEARNING TO SWIM AND FEED THEMSELVES BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE SEA. ONE YOUNG MALE WENT FOR AN UNINTENTIONAL DIP THE OTHER DAY AND CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF A PASSING KILLER WHALE, RESULT: 37 WEANERS. THE 18 PUPS REMAINING WILL BE WEANED WITHIN THE NEXT 4 DAYS AND JOIN THE REST OF THE CLASS OF 86 IN THE WALLOW AREA AT TRYPOT BEACH. ONE BULL IS DOING HIS BEST TO ENSURE THAT ALL OF THE COWS ON THE BEACH WILL BE RETURNING WITH PUPS FOR THE NEXT YEAR. WE WOULD JUST LIKE TO SAY CYRIL, KEEP IT UP.
(CONTRIBUTION- IAN WILKINSON)

THE POA, ACEANA AND COTULA ARE FLOWERING AT THE MOMENT. THE HONEYISH SMELL OF THE COTULA FLOWERS ARE VERY SOOTHING ON THE NOSE WHILE APPROACHING THE VARIOUS SMELLY PENGUIN COLONIES.
(CONTRIBUTED BY: MARIANNA STEENKAMP)

WEATHER DATA - OCT

AVERAGE TEMP FOR MONTH 5.4 DEG C
AVERAGE PRESSURE 1010.5 MB
SUNSHINE 98.7 HOURS
RAINFALL 228.4 MM
NO OF DAYS WITH 1MM OR MORE RAIN 19

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