

GREETINGS TO ALL THE FOLKS THAT SIDE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN. FEBRUARY ON MARION ISLAND HAS COME AND GONE, LEAVING US WITH ONLY ONE MONTH BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE S.A. AGULHAS., A THOUGHT GREETED WITH MIXED FEELINGS BY THE LOCALS.

THE WEATHER THIS MONTH HAS TREATED US WELL, AND SOME OF THE BASE PERSONNEL MADE THE MOST OF THIS OPPORTUNITY TO GET OUT AND SEE SOME MORE OF THE ISLAND. PETE OLDACRE AND STEPHEN G. WERE THE FIRST TO DO THE CIRCUM-INSULAR HIGHLIGHTS FROM THEIR TRIP WERE THE SWIM IN A VERY COLD WATER TUNNEL STREAM, PETE FALLING DOWN GREY-HEADED RIDGE AND STEPHEN GETTING LOST BETWEEN MIXED PICKLE AND SWARTKOP HUTS AFTER WALKING HALF WAY AROUND THE ISLAND IN ONE DAY. NEXT OUT WAS DAVE, FOR A LEISURLY TEN DAY TRIP. DANIE SAW HIS TRIP AS A MISSION OF MERCY, CARRYING PETE BARTOETT'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT OUT TO HIM, THEN MOVING AROUND THE ISLAND WITH THE SELECTIVE EYE OF AN EXPERIENCED ROUND-ISLANDER. MARC ALSO TOOK SOME TIME OUT, DECIDING TO ADD HIS ENERGY TO THE CAT PROGRAMME. HE SPENT IT HUNTING WITH OLIVE AT KILDALKEY. THEY GOT TO SEE A FEW CATS BUT OBVIOUSLY WORD GOT OUT BEFORE THEY DID, BECAUSE THE CATS WOULDN'T ALLOW THEM MORE THAN A FLEETING GLIMPSE, MAKING THE MOST OF HIS OPPORTUNITY TO RELAX AND TAKE SOME PHOTOS. MARC PERFECTED THE EMERGING ART OF ECONOMICAL PHOTOGRAPHY, TAKING 36 PHOTOS ON ONE FRAME. THE ONLY PLACE HE CAN GO AFTER ATTAINING THIS LEVEL OF EXPERTISE IS TO TAKE ALL HIS PICTURES WITHOUT NEEDING ANY FILM AT ALL. WE WAIT IN ANTICIPATION. IAN WILKINSON AND RORY ALSO DID A ROUND ISLAND TRIP, TAGGING AND COUNTING FUR SEAL PUPS. STEVE H. DID IT AS WELL TO RING THE GIANT PETREL CHICKS. FINALLY, COLIN AND STEVE SPARKS ARE PLANNING TO LEAVE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

APART FROM ONE OR TWO PARTIES IN THE TRADITIONAL MARION SPIRIT, LIFE IN BASE HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET THIS MONTH. A LEVEL OF ENTERTAINMENT HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY DERRICK, WHO'S TAKEN TO PLAYING THE GUITAR LIKE A SKUA TO LEFT-OVERS, REFINING HIS TECHNIQUE WAY INTO THE EARLY HOURS OF THE MORNING AND CAUSING POPULATION MOVEMENTS ANY TRANSPORT OFFICIAL WOULD BE PROUD OF. SPARKS SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING COLOUR FILTERS FOR THE PHOTOGRAPHIC ENLARGER, THEY WERE INSIDE THE ENLARGER ALL THE TIME BUT COULDN'T BE SEEN FOR RUST. JOHNY HAS PACKED AND CRATED HIS GEAR AND INTENDS AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE SHIP IN THE PEACE AND QUIET OF THE HUTS. GERRIT IS STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET WHEN IT COMES TO REPAIRING HIS OVER-ALL PANTS, AND OLIVE IS SINGLE HANDEDLY HOLDING BACK A MOUSE INVASION OF THE BASE. THEIR PATH OF ATTACK SEEMS TO RUN STRAIGHT THROUGH HIS ROOM. HIS INDUSTRIOUSNESS IN THIS MATTER IS MOST IMPRESSIVE. IAN W. AND HIS BUDDY IVAN HAVE BEEN SORTING OUT IAN'S SLIDES FROM THE PAST THREE SUMMERS ON THE ISLAND. WITH IVAN AT THE HELM OF THE PROJECTOR THERE HAVE BEEN CLAIMS OF UNSELECTIVE FOCUSING, IN THE HOPE THAT SOME OF THE MORE SPECTACULAR SHOTS WILL BE REJECTED.

AS FAR AS THE WILDLIFE IS CONCERNED, FEBRUARY SAW THE NORTHERN GIANT PETRELS FINISH OFF THEIR BREEDING TERM ON THE ISLAND, MOST OF THE YOUNG BIRDS DESERTING US AND GOING TO SEA. THE SKUA CHICKS ARE THE SOURCE OF MUCH ENTERTAINMENT, EXERCISING UNSURE WINGS AND CHASING WAYWARD FEATHERS OR SIMILAR DEERIS. THE GULL, CORMORANT AND SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL CHICKS ARE LOOSING THEIR DOWNY PLUMAGE AND SETTLING FOR A SLEEKER APPEARANCE. THE MACARONI PENGUINS WHICH RAISED CHICKS THIS SUMMER STARTED TO LEAVE THE ISLAND THIS MONTH TO PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THEIR RETURN NEXT MONTH TO MOLT. THE ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN CHICKS STARTED TO MOLT OUT OF THEIR DOWN COATS, AND THEY TOO WILL SOON BE LEAVING US. WE WISH THEM WELL. COLIN HAS ADOPTED A PINK KING PENGUIN CHICK AT ARCHWAY BEACH, AND PROVIDES A DETAILED REPORT ON HIS HEALTH AND STATUS WITHIN THE COLONY AT THE SLIGHTEST PROMPTING.

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THE LARGE ELEPHANT SEAL BULLS RETURNED TO MARION THIS MONTH TO GO THROUGH THE VERY RELAXED PROCESS OF MOLTING. SOME OF THE PUPS BORN HERE THIS SEASON HAVE ALSO RETURNED AFTER ABOUT TWO MONTHS AT SEA FOR A REST. THE ANTIARCTIC FUR SEAL PUPS ARE GETTING READY TO LEAVE, WHILE THE SUB-ANTARCTIC FUR SEAL PUPS ARE STILL ENJOYING THE PREFERRED LIFE THAT PUPS LEAD.

HERE FOLLOWS THE WEATHER DATA FOR THE PAST MONTH:

AVERAGE PRESSION.....1014,9 MB  
AVERAGE HUMIDITY.....86  
RAINFALL.....137,8 MM  
AVERAGE SEA TEMPERATURE.....6,1 DEGREES C.  
SUNSHINE.....5,1 HOURS PER DAY  
DAYS WITHOUT SUNSHINE.....4  
AVERAGE TEMPERATURE.....7,5 DEGREES C.  
LOWEST TEMPERATURE.....0,9 DEGREES C.  
HIGHEST TEMPERATURE.....16 DEGREES C.

WELL THATS ALL FROM US FOR THIS MONTH. PLEASE KEEP WRITTING.

STAY WELL  
MARION 45

NEWSLETTER BY STEVE HENLEY  
WEATHER DATA SUPPLIED BY DANIE FERREIRA

*2890302.*