

Prey from three chinstrap penguins *Pygoscelis antarctica* at Bouvet Island, December 1982

J. Cooper and J.W. Enticott¹
T. Hecht²
and N. Klages³

¹Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology
University of Cape Town, Rondebosch 7700

²Department of Ichthyology and Fisheries Science
Rhodes University, P.O. Box 94, Grahamstown 6140

³Port Elizabeth Museum, P.O. Box 13147, Humewood 6013

Chinstrap penguins Pygoscelis antarctica at Bouvet Island, southern Atlantic Ocean, consume krill Euphausia superba and the myctophiform fish Electrona carlsbergi? based on three birds collected in December 1982. The first record of a chinstrap penguin eating a squid was made.

Introduction

The chinstrap penguin *Pygoscelis antarctica* is one of the more abundant Southern Ocean penguins and its population is thought to be increasing (Wilson 1983 and references therein). For these reasons, and because it feeds on krill *Euphausia superba* (Croxall & Furse 1980, Volkman *et al.* 1980), the species has been selected for longterm monitoring (BIOMASS Working Party on Bird Ecology 1982). Bouvet Island (54°26'S, 03°24'E) is one of the less studied islands in the Southern Ocean (Watkins *et al.* 1984). Three species of penguins are known to breed there (Wilson 1983) but to date nothing has been published on their diets at this locality. This note reports on the stomach contents of a few individual chinstrap and macaroni penguins *Eudyptes chrysolophus* at Bouvet Island.

Methods

On 21 December 1982 JWE visited the mixed chinstrap and macaroni penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus* breeding colony at Nyrøysa (Haftorn *et al.* 1981, Watkins 1981). At the time of the visit most penguins were incubating but some chinstrap penguins had small young. Six individuals of each species were collected by injection with Pentobarbitone. Pairs were taken in the case of chinstrap penguins. The specimens were deep frozen and taken to the Percy FitzPatrick Institute where they were weighed and measured, defrosted and their stomach contents removed. Stomach contents were weighed and then separated into crustacean, fish and squid remains. The numbers of crustacean eyes, fish otoliths and squid beaks were counted. Otoliths were identified by TH, whole crustaceans and squid beaks by NK. Total length of whole crustaceans was measured. Use of reference collections and conversion formulae (TH, NK unpubl. data) allowed estimates to be made of the sizes of whole animals from measurements of otoliths and squid beaks.

Results

Sex, mass, mensural data (culmen and bill depth at the gonys) and mass of stomach contents of the penguins collected are given in Table 1. Three chinstrap and five macaroni penguins

Table 1
Mensural data and stomach content sizes of chinstrap and macaroni penguins collected at Bouvet Island on 21 December 1982

Specimen No.	Sex	Mass (g)	Culmen × Bill depth at gonys (mm)	Stomach contents mass(g)
Chinstrap penguins *				
C1	♂	5 150	50 × 17,5	131
C1A	♀	4 200	46 × 16	0
C2	♀	4 300	45,5 × 16,5	170
C2A	♂	4 600	55 × 20,5	0
C3	♀	4 650	49,5 × 17,5	58
C3A	♂	5 000	49,5 × 19,5	0
Macaroni penguins				
M1	♂	3 600	53,5 × 24	0
M2	♂	5 700	62,5 × 25	0
M3		5 550	60,5 × 25,5	0
M4	♀?	6 300	61 × 26	0
M5	♂	5 700	63 × 26	0
M6	♂	5 250	62 × 25,5	0

*Represent three breeding pairs

had empty stomachs. Chinstrap penguins with food in their stomachs had clean plumages and had probably recently returned from foraging, while those that had empty stomachs had dirty plumages. In all three cases in this species, only one member of the pair (two females and one male) contained food in its stomach. All three stomachs contained crustacean remains and one also contained fish and squid remains. Only two prey species have been positively identified: the krill *Euphausia superba* and the myctophiform "lantern" fish *Electrona carlsbergi?* (Table 2). Seven whole *Euphausia superba* in one stomach had a mean total length of 41,5 mm. A second stomach contained a whole *E. superba* of total length 32 mm. Mean caudal length of 30 *Electrona carlsbergi?* was estimated from otolith size to be 71,6 mm. The single upper squid beak was identified as belonging to the family Onychoteuthidae (possibly *Kondakovia longimana*).

One macaroni penguin (M5: Table 1) contained a pair of squid beaks identified as *Kondakovia longimana* with a lower rostral length of c. 2,3-2,4 mm. This is equivalent to a mantle length of c. 100 mm.

Discussion

At Bouvet Island in December 1982, chinstrap penguins consumed krill, fish and squid. Krill may form the larger part