

The Wanderer

MARCH 2019

hut of the month
Katedral

BEARDS OF MARION

**THE SEALERS
& THE CHEF**

celebrations

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COVER IMAGE:
Kergeulen Cabbage
Pringlea antiscorbutica
- Dineo Mogashoa -



environmental affairs

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Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



letter from the *editors*

Time is slipping through our fingers... The last month was a memorable one as many of the field researchers and base personnel completed the last of their work and some are still busier than ever. We had a streak of *One Day Round Islands* and some of our base personnel experienced their very first Round Islands this month. We had birthday celebrations throughout the month and the Island has also announced the change of season with the hundreds of Wandering Albatross chicks which have made their appearance. The cycle is complete. This year has been one hell of an experience and every *Wanderer* edition was a feast. Thank you to all the contributors and all the support from our friends and families - without YOU this would not have been possible. **Thank you Marion** – for an expedition of a life time. M75 was the best team I could have asked for!

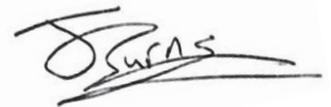


It's impossible not to feel a pang of sadness as we enter into these final days of the expedition. This island has been our home for the last year and the memories we have made and lessons we've learnt have shaped us in ways we will only appreciate fully when we're gone

March was an eventful month. For me personally as you'll read soon but also for the whole team as the pressure is on to finish up with the fieldwork and also do as much last minute exploring as possible; all the unclimbed peaks, unphotographed landscapes, unhugged penguins. Back at base, we are busy preparing for the arrival of the out red taxi; cleaning rooms, making space (and beds) for the new arrivals. We wish all the best to the M76 team for their expedition! Take care of this place!



Elsa van Ginkel
Editor



James Burns
Co-Editor

Interview with....

The sealers



Welly Qwabe (WQ) Liezl Pretorius (LEP) Mike Voysey (MV)

No beach goes unchecked, no animal goes untagged and no seal goes uncounted... The Sealers are three extremely hard-working human beings! They spend the most of their time out in the field and hardly ever touch ground – *abs of seal* and perseverance for days. On the rare days when they aren't busy with North and South census, TAPS/GAPS, tagging animals, deploying devices, weighing pups at Cape Davis, Trypot or Watertunnel or doing a Round Island, they are always there to give a helping hand. Sealers, M75 salutes you, you are a remarkable part of this team.

Job description

MV – I am employed by the Marion Island Marine Mammal Programme (MIMMP) as the Killer Whaler/Sealer. This means I take responsibility for the killer whale work that takes place on the island while at the same time being very much involved in work done on the three seal species. I have cherished the diversity of my role here on Marion.

WQ – Research field assistant under the MIMMP. This job entails working with seals, counting, handling, sampling, device attachment and marking. I have also been assisting Mike with the killer whale work throughout the year.

LEP – I am employed as a MIMMP field research assistant (sealer). I work mainly with the three seal species on the island, namely the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic fur seals, as well as Southern elephant seals.. I assist with the killer whale work when necessary.

Best part of your job

MV – Shucks, that is a tricky one! I think above all it has been to observe the full cycle of a year, through the different seasons, and to watch all the changes take place. This is why I came to Marion; the beauty of it all has exceeded my expectations. Of course, this privilege is not restricted to my job specifically, but to all those who have developed a deep appreciation for the island. However, I have to say that watching killer whales cruise past, sometimes only 5 meters away, is simply incredible.

WQ – Weighing fur seal pups and conducting census on elephant seals.

LEP – Getting to know these animals on such an intimate level is phenomenal. To be able to work with them throughout their entire annual life cycle is something I will cherish forever.



What do you miss most from back home?

MV – Definitely my family and close friends. But also playing and watching cricket, fishing, being in the bushveld and munching on good cheese and yoghurt.

WQ – Scuba diving, and of course my family and friends.

LEP – My family, friends, our pets, swimming in warm(ish) water, fresh food (especially fruit and vegetables) and walking around in summer clothes.

Favourite book

MV – (read on the island) *The Sheltering Desert* by Henno Martin. A true story about two friends who sought refuge in the Namib Desert, where they lived a primitive life for two and a half years, to avoid being conscripted into World War 2 on the side of the Germans. What a great story!

WQ – *In the shadow of Man* by Jade Goodall.

LEP – *Redeeming Love* by Francine Rivers.



Favourite movie

MV – *Long Walk to Freedom*. A must see for every South African. The book is even better.

WQ – *Lion* (based on the true story of Saroo Brierley, who was accidentally kidnapped and subsequently adopted at the age five, but later on finds his parents at the age of 25).

LEP – *Namia - The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Favourite seal on the island and why

MV – All three seal species have their own unique character of which I have become very fond of. Yes, you guessed it. I am still on the fence on this one. Each of their life cycles are incredible, particularly that of Southern Elephant Seals, and to have witnessed their full cycle for a year, as it has done for thousands and thousands of years, is a grand privilege. Nonetheless, one moment I particularly enjoy, is to watch a Sub-Antarctic Fur seal mom call yearningly for her pup as she arrives back to land after spending a long time foraging at sea, and then to hear the pup call back with its typical lamb-like bleat, and then after much rock hopping and stumbling (mostly on the pup's part) to see them meet up, sniff each other's muzzle and finally settle down to suckle. This, for me, is a very endearing moment to witness.

WQ – *Arctocephalus tropicalis* (Sub-Antarctic fur seal), particular their pups. Why? Not only because they are physically adorable, but also for their behaviour, especially when they start swimming in the pools.

LEP – DO I REALLY HAVE TO CHOOSE?!?! I truly love them all!!!



Describe the hardest day that you've experienced on the island

MV – The toughest aspect of my experience as a sealer is not necessarily that one day is so tough (although many were), but rather that one had to be able to endure many long, tough days consecutively; to wake up each new morning refreshed and ready to go again was not always easy. Breeding season was particularly testing in this manner.

I could describe a few different days that I think would satisfy the criteria of my “toughest day”. One that comes to mind was on a south census stretch during our Southern Elephant Seal breeding season. Building up to this specific day, Liezl and I had been walking between 20 and 30 km daily - come rain, sunshine or gale - for nearly two months. On this particular day we were making the trek to Watertunnel and Goodhope Bay, with an additional beach to check at Rooks Peninsula. This month it was my turn to make the added trek to “Rooks Pen” since Liezl had done it the month before. After finally finishing my work at Rooks Peninsula at 6 PM that evening, I began to make my way back towards Watertunnel, where Liezl and I would be spending the night. However, I still needed to finish things up at Goodhope, which I had left for the return leg of my census. By the time I arrived at Goodhope Bay, I was so fatigued from the day and months preceding, that I began to lose my vision. All in all, quite a strange nerve-wrecking experience. Losing one's vision is a pretty dangerous hobby with aggressive adult female elephant seals to check and testosterone-filled Antarctic Fur Seal bulls dotting the beach. I sat down for a moment and tried to pull myself together. After a few minutes I decided to slowly make my way down to the churning waves to see if a splash of icy sea water might jolt my body into action. It eventually took a close encounter with an Antarctic Fur Seal bull to pump my body with adrenaline, which seemed to give my body some sort of a temporary kick and restored me to my senses. After that very bizarre experience, I finished the census and got back to Watertunnel hut at around 8 PM after doing a total of 35 km for the day. Needless to say, I was bugged. Moments like these were not easy but I reflect on them now with great fondness, especially since I know that my fellow field workers had many similar experiences. I am very grateful that I had the opportunity during this expedition to push my body and mind closer than it has ever been to its limit.

WQ – Ever since I was incapacitated in June 2018, almost every day is a challenge for me because I cannot conduct work in areas that are far from the base. Though, in many ways I have conquered this battle between physical and mental states.

LEP – Crossing Karookop in snow and 40 knot wind with much stronger gusts...not cool. At one point I was bent over, literally hanging onto a rock when a gust ripped my hands loose and made me do a backflip, slamming my knee on a rock. With another hour's walk left on a really sore leg, I was not a happy chappy.

What do you like most of being in the field?

MV – Drinking water straight from icy cold streams, the crisp air, and to be able to walk for miles and miles without any restriction.

WQ – The inner peace I get for being close to nature and pristine environment, but also the joy of accomplishing my daily task often against the unfavourable weather conditions of Marion.

LEP – The freedom associated with our work here on Marion...except for the elements and the animals themselves, you never feel unsafe! I also absolutely love the way this entire place just vibrates with life; from the plants and animals to the vast ocean surrounding us.

Favourite field hut

MV – Repetto's. This is probably a strange answer in the eyes of many who know the island, since Repetto's is probably the wettest and mouldiest of the huts, hence its other name, “Repwetto's”. But for some reason I have grown fond of the mouldy shelter.

WQ – It has to be Cape Davis, for its prime location, scenic view of the ocean, Prince Edward Island and “boot rock”, not to mention that exquisite view of the sunset towards the ocean horizon on the western flank of the island.

LEP – For me it is a tie between Repetto's and Watertunnel! For Repetto's, it's the majestic Repetto's Hill and for Watertunnel the exquisite gazella plain!



Describe the best day you've had on the island so far

MV – A week before Christmas I had been given the go-ahead from my PI (Principle Investigator i.e. my boss) to begin deploying tracking devices on killer whales – a very exciting challenge for me. On Christmas Eve, Welly and myself decided to do a 3 hour killer observation since we had seen Poseidon the day before, cruising along the north coast. Also, for the most part, our weekly tasks did not stop over Christmas, so the ball needed to keep rolling. We were all hoping to have Christmas Day off from work, hence the late afternoon killer observation on Christmas Eve. Excitedly I packed the device along with my crossbow for this festive occasion on the “Rock”. We were in luck – Poseidon came cruising past us one hour into the session and I managed to get a good shot and secured the device successfully half way up his dorsal fin. What an exhilarating moment. Later on, after the session was over, a few of us enjoyed a cold beer while looking over the mighty Southern Ocean. Man! What a cool afternoon.

WQ – The 21st of June 2018, which is the last day I was at the hut. It was a frigid day with snow encrusting almost the entire island. Though, it was hard for me to discern my way back to base from the Greyheaded hut, walking on the snow for 6 hours is something I would treasure forever.

LEP – My birthday, 19 September 2018, will go down as certainly one of the best days in my life!! Started with cookies for breakfast, heading out to census elephant seals with Mike, finding our FIRST elephant seal pup for the season at Blue Petrel Bay (WHAT A BIRTHDAY PRESENT!!!), having a laughter-filled lunch on Long Ridge overlooking Sea Elephant Bay with Charlotte and Monica, getting to Repetto's hut only to be surprised by Elsa and Marike (who conspired with Mike) with SO much cake and “black lava” (also cake), that we ate some of it for breakfast the next morning as well. Awesome memories with awesome friends!!

Describe in three words...

MV – Elephant seal breeding season:

Bloody beautiful chaos.

WQ – TAPS and GAPS:

Challenging, interesting, rewarding.

LEP – An elephant seal birth:

Humbling beyond compare.

Advice to future Marionites

MV – Try stay in the present and suck the marrow out of each day, “The date is TODAY, the time is NOW”.

WQ – Make each and every day count.

LEP – Find something in every single day that takes your breath away (it's easier than you think!)...love the people around you...and also, take pictures of any- and everything...many MANY pictures...

Possible title for a movie about your year on Marion

MV – “Paradise”

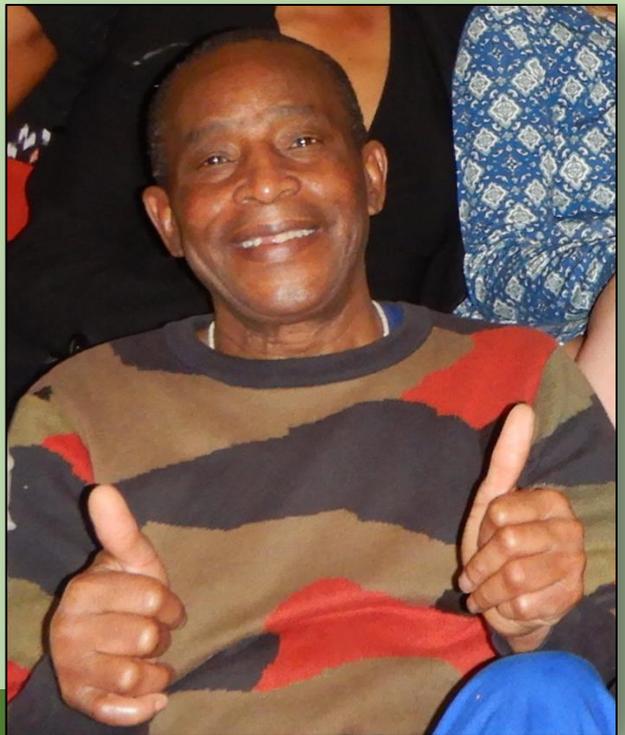
WQ – “Umuntu nguMuntu Ngabantu “would be the title of my movie, which basically means, a person is a person because of other people.

LEP – “Indescribable”



Interview with.....

Baba Jabu, The M75 chef



Baba Jabu joined the M75 team late but he quickly became a loved part of this team. His characteristic announcement of “Ja-ja-ja-ja M75 M75...it is dinner time!!!” (with numerous variations on the theme), never fails to make you smile and effortlessly draws everyone to the dining hall. The kitchen is always filled with wonderful smells and more often than not, great music as well. He is a man with a great sense of humour and when he starts telling his jokes, everyone cracks up. Baba Jabs, you are truly one of a kind and M75 love you for it!

Describe your job on the island

I prepare food for the team, make sure the food in the store is packed right and also make sure the kitchen is clean.

Best part of your job

Cooking

What do you miss most from back home?

My whole family, all my friends and colleagues

How many kids do you have?

I have 4 kids; one girl and three boys



Favourite movie

“My wife and kids” by Will Smith and “The diary of a black woman” by Tyler Perry

What food dishes do you enjoy preparing most?

Spaghetti bolognaise, lasagne and fish and chips

What do you like most about base?

It is a comfortable and friendly environment

Describe the weather on the island in three words

Windy, cold, rainy

Describe your stay on the island

It is good and lovely, I would love to come back once again

In which countries have you worked before?

Namibia, Mozambique and Mauritius

Would you like to work on other isolated places?

Yes! Obviously Gough Island and Antarctica

Any advice for future chefs?

“Remember that you will work with different people coming from different backgrounds...”



Katedraal

Hut Stop # 9

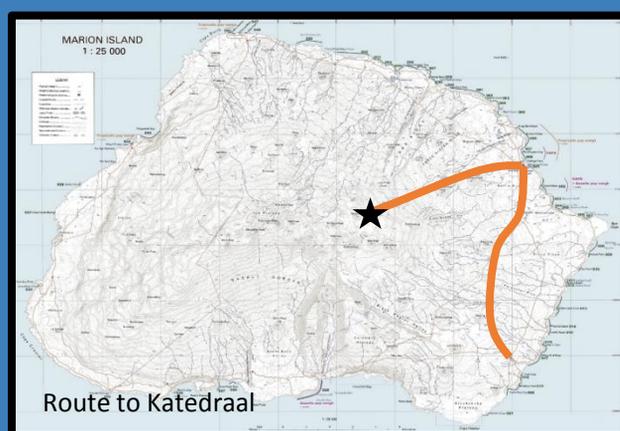
- Elsa van Ginkel

Hut of the Month: Katedraal

The Route

We are still at Kildalkey and normally we'll rather walk back to base than walk to Katedraal from Kildalkey, so first we'll head back to base, regroup and then set off for Katedraal the next day. ☺

The walk from Kildalkey usually takes between 2-3 hours depending on your route. We'll pass on the southeastern side of Mesrug, find a suitable spot to cross Soft Plume river (after heavy rains, it's quite a mission to find a safe area for crossing), and then aim for Fred's Hill until we reach Stoney Ridge. This is the long stretch home as you can see base at some point, just after you crossed Hansen river at Stoney Ridge... but it is still an hour to an hour and a half of treacherous walking. About 30 minutes from base you'll pass Tom, Dick and Harry – three small hills on the way to Nellie's Humps. After Nellie's Humps, you're practically home! Welcome!



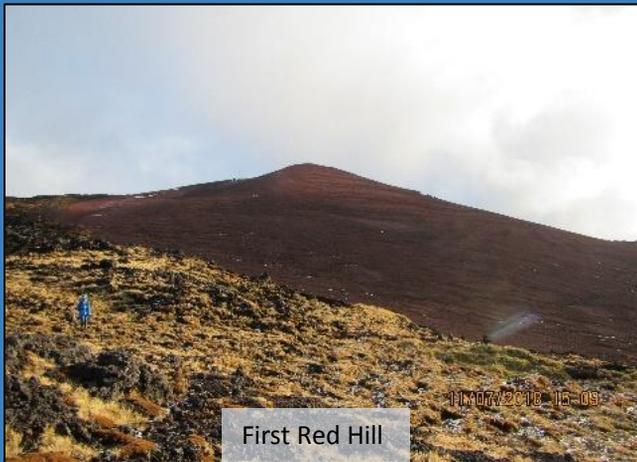
Now for Katedraal.

We will set off towards Junior's Kop on the route that meanders along the pipeline that supplies our drinking water and pass on the northern side of Junior's. Here you will aim between Hendrik Fister Kop and Tafelberg and travel along the river towards First Red Hill. For the beginner, First Red can be hell because it feels like you go two steps backwards for every step you manage to go forward!



Juniors Kop

Welcome to the life of walking on scoria. It's entirely something else when compared to 'mire-walking'. Believe me. Scoria on a flat surface, is like heaven but scoria at an angle, now that's your worst nightmare. The more angled the scoria, the worse the experience... but at least you'll have a story to tell. Heads up: angled scoria and gale force winds are a recipe for disaster, just saying...



First Red Hill

Now, after First Red, life is a breeze (that is if the wind is also quiet on the day you go to Katedraal), as it's a gradual climb until you reach Katedraalkrans - with Ned's Kop in the distance.



Katedraalkrans and the arrow found after First Red

As you approach Ned's, you'll realise that there is an unexpected opening in the long stretch of black wall and it is through here that you'll find the Katedraal hut - sheltered from three directions with walls of black and grey volcanic rock.



Katedraal hut on a misty day

This is the interior, it's truly a different world up here. Depending on what time of the year you visit this region, you'll either have tons of snow or you'll have a bare and open environment. The main colours are dark reds, blacks and greys and the only evidence of life is your occasional *Ditrichum* moss - a small dark green ball-forming moss - and if you're lucky, you might stumble upon the flightless moth up here, also a very interesting creature to see.

Needless to say but **'Welcome to Katedraal!'**



Marike's Happy Dance at Katedraal

The Hut

In colours of white and green and rusty red, this hut has the same design as the Rooks hut, thus older than the majority of the huts and due to its location, this hut has definitely taken a hit from the forces of freezing and thawing that the interior is known for.



Katedraal at his best

Water

No perennial rivers. No small streams. Snow – yes, occasionally. Thus water in the interior can be quite a problem if there is no snow available but at least we have two watertanks near the hut... if they are not frozen, they are of some help but it is advisable to bring all the water you can carry as you are never certain of the water status up at Katedraal.



Water tanks

Hut recipe: Chilli-con con

Ingredients

- Packet of soya mince
- tin of bake beans
- onion flakes
- dollop of chutney
- water

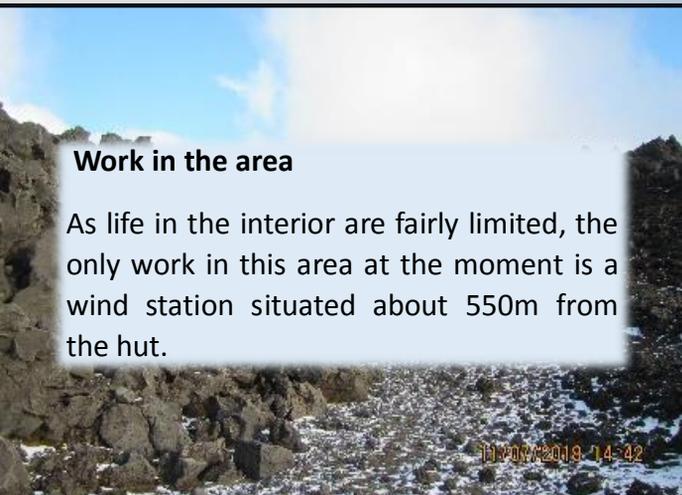
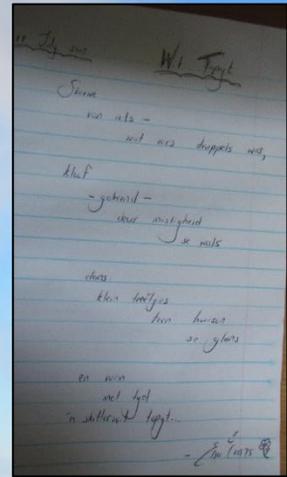
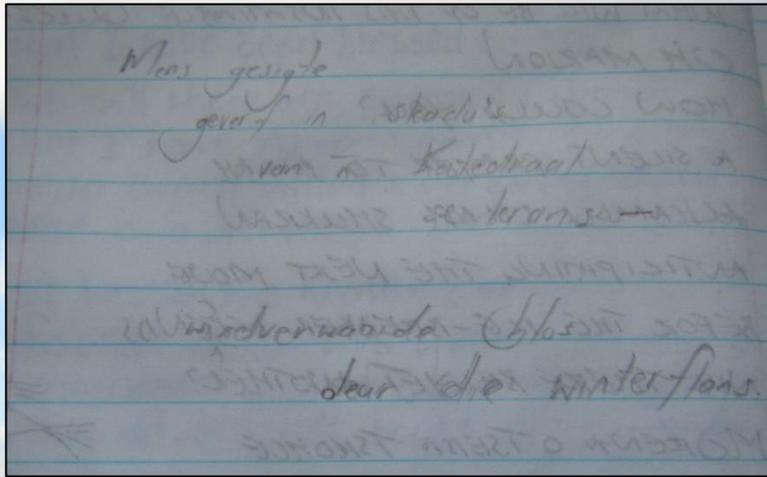
Methods

- 1.Mix all ingredients together
- 2.Cook for approximately 15 minutes.
3. Voíla!



Typical view of the interior

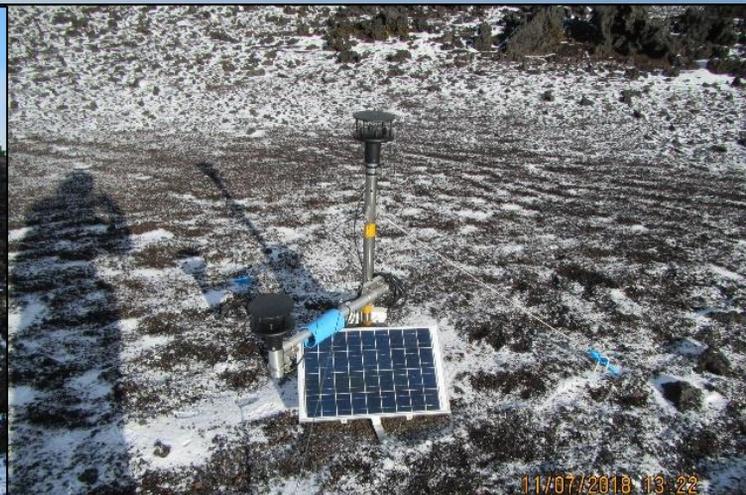
Hut Entry



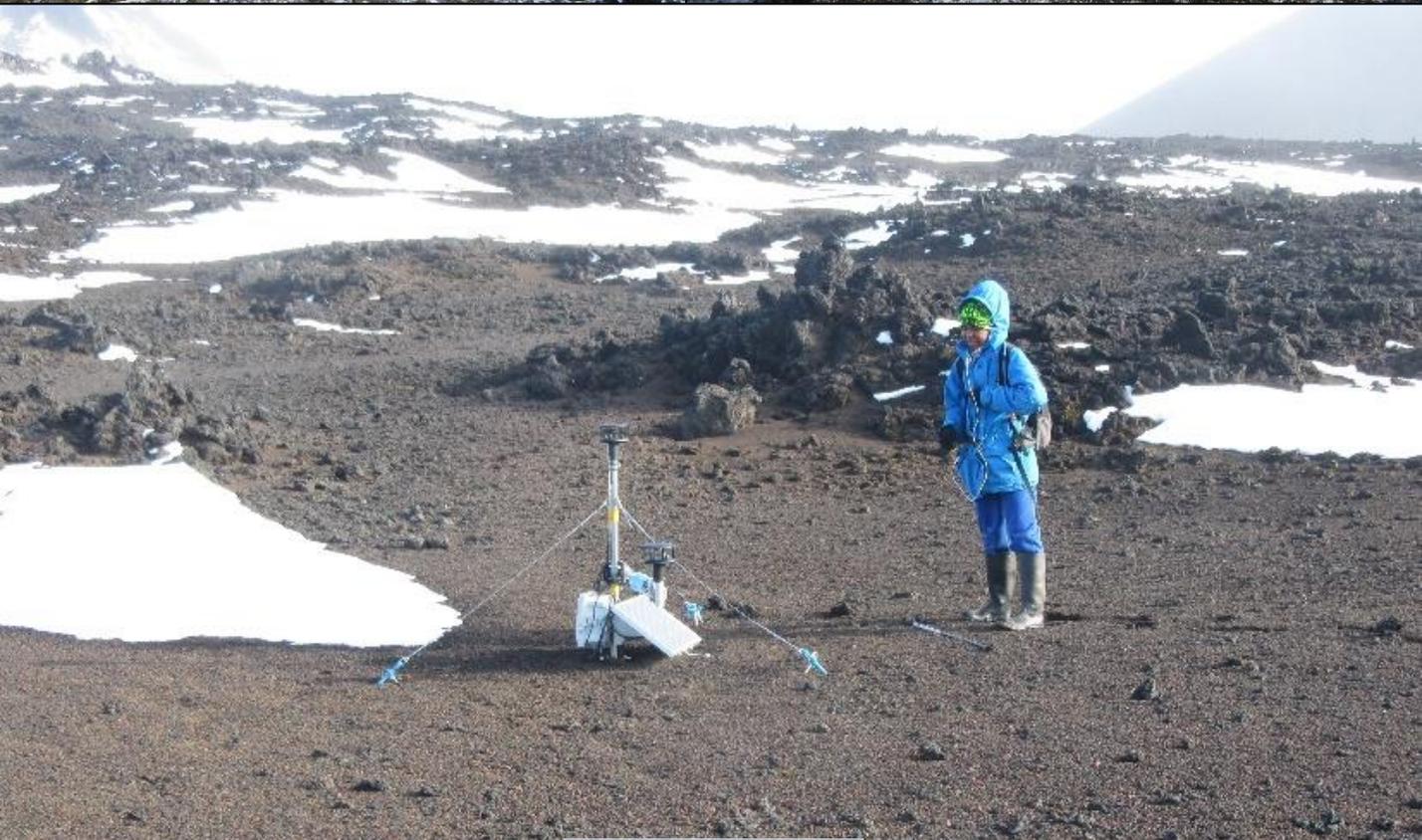
Work in the area

As life in the interior are fairly limited, the only work in this area at the moment is a wind station situated about 550m from the hut.

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11/07/2018 13:22



ONE DAY ROUND ISLANDS!

The streak has begun!



Elsa van Ginkel – On her 3rd hut stop at Mixed Pickle, where two awesome birders were ready with a glass of Game and a condensed milk-coated Marie-biscuit 😊



Dineo Mogashoa - Mama Mavis welcoming Dineo when she came in from her One day.



Mike Voysey – Made very good time on his One Day.

7 huts

6 days

5 nights

1 Round Island!

- metkassie adventures -

- James Burns

Since our arrival on Marion, over a year ago, it has been my dream to see as much of this beautiful island as possible. As one of the base personnel, however, this does not come with the job and I have had to do my exploring in my free time. It quickly became clear that the only way to properly experience Marion, is by completing the Round Island trip (which we have been taking you through since our first *Wanderer* edition). I am incredibly happy, grateful and relieved to report that I have finally done it! With the care, encouragement and support from my two fantastic guides (Dani and Stephan), I managed to experience more fully what Marion has to offer.

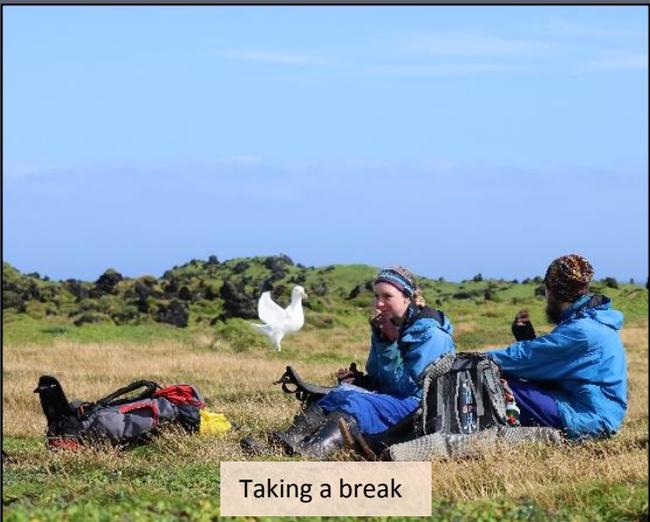


Cape Davis – with the pup-weighers

On day two, my guides took me over Azos in the mist... typical Marion. We spent the night at Mixed Pickle - to the calling of seals and abundant birdlife - after some time at the coast and a beautiful sunset.



Dani & Stephan – my two fantastic guides!



Taking a break

Passing Repetto's by myself on the first beautiful day of my adventure, I spent a fun night at Cape Davis with the team of pup-weighers (including Dani and Stephan).

Day three started out quite wet and windy but the walk to Swartkops was wonderful and the weather cleared up just in time to enjoy some amazing sightseeing, rock formations, hundreds of wallabies with their just-hatched chicks, and the Amphitheatre full of penguins...wow!



View from the Amphitheatre

The weather on day four was unpleasant, to say the least. The wind was pumping and we were quickly drenched on this long walk. Despite the dismal conditions, it was fantastic to see this side of the island.

We joined Michelle here for a night of fun and games (and much laughter).



Finding direction in Santa Rosa Valley

On day five, the four of us travelled through Santa Rosa, along the Golden Highway and up Devil's Staircase to Watertunnel where we continued our fun and games through the afternoon.



Wandering Albatross chick

We stopped briefly at Rooks for a hot drink but after waiting for a gap in the deluge, we pushed on to Grey-headed, saying "hi" to the albatross chicks on the way down to the hut.



Great fun at Watertunnel



Grey-headed Ridge and its inhabitants

My last day started with a steady climb up to Karookop but after this it was downhill all the way through Black Haglet, along Stony Ridge and back to base for a nice hot shower. With my previous adventures to Katedral and Kildalkey, I've now ticked all of the huts off my list and am proud to share the round island experience with all of the M75 field researchers!



Uurglas van Marion

✂ Verandering op die horison... ✂

- Elsa van Ginkel

Elke nuwe dag beklemtoon die verandering wat sy merk agterlaat op die heuwels van die eiland. Daar is nie een eiland-rondomtalie wat dieselfde gebeurtenisse belig nie. Elke liewe een is anders. Ongelooflik!



'n Skua en sy kuiken

As dit nie die *Skuas* is wat hul kleinspan verdedig nie, is dit die *Wanderers* wat die blou lug bevlek met hul reuse vlerkspan. Tyd stap onbepalend aan...



Jong Grootalbatros (*Diomedea exulans*)

Met elke voetspoor wat val; tref die kleurverwisseling in die plantegroei, die aankoms van nuwe voëlspesies en die verandering in rob-aktiwiteit op die strande 'n mens met 'n nuwe hou. Tyd is al wat ons het, maar tog staan dit vir niemand stil nie.

Soos elke nuwe rondomtalie, maand na maand aangebreek het, het die eiland sy verandering in ons gedagtes ingeëts.



In die winter is die plantegroei maar 'n vaal besigheid, maar sodra die lente en somer dié eiland tref, is dit 'n visioen van nuwe kleure. *Blechnum penna-marina*, die mees volopste varing wat orals op die eiland-heuwels groei, verkleur van 'n vaal grysgroen in winter na 'n fees van helder groen-rooi wanneer die nuwe groei uitspruit in die somermaande.



Blechnum penna-marina in sy nuwe rooi-en-groen

Die grasse gee nuwe karakter aan al die laagliggende gebiede, met die mees algemene grasse wat die wêreld vol staan - grasse soos *Agrostis magellanica* - die mees volopste, *Poa cookii* en *Poa annua* – gewoonlik kuslans naby die robpoele en *Agrostis stolonifera* – hoofsaaklik in die omgewing van basis.

Die eerste blomplante wat hul rondtes doen in begin September, is *Azorella selago*, *Colobanthus kergeulensis*, *Cotula plumosa*, *Acaena magellanica*, *Ranunculus biternatus* en *Pringlea antiscorbutica*.

Azorella selago is die alombekende spesie op die eiland. As jy nie 'n *Azorella*-kussing op jou eerste stappie op die eiland gewaar het nie, dan is jy op die verkeerde eiland! Hierdie prominente kussingplant is donkergroen van kleur en kom in byna in alle groottes en vorme wat jy jouself kan indink, voor. Wanneer die eerste klein, fyn Azo-blommetjies gesig wys in September, kan mense hulle nogal waardeer. Ten spyte vir die feit dat jy eintlik 'n vergrootglas nodig het om hul raak te sien, is dit verwondering wat plek inneem in jou gedagtes, sodra jy beseft die geel spikkels is eintlik die plant se blommetjies.



Azorella selago met sy geel spikkels

Colobanthus kerguelensis is baie soortgelyk aan *A. selago* in voorkoms, maar aansienlik minder opsigtelik aangesien hul veel kleiner is. Klein klompies groei sporadies op *Azorella*-kussings en kuslangs op rotse, én as jy nie opsetlik daarvoor uitkyk nie, sal jy dit verseker miskyk. Wanneer jy hul betyds in die somermaande opspoor; sal jy die ligte, wit-groen blommetjies dalk te siene kry.



Colobanthus kerguelensis op 'n *Azorella*-kussing

Cotula plumosa – dis iets ongeloofliks. Een oggend stap jy uit veld toe vir werk en skielik is daar iets nuuts wat die Marion-bries in die lug dra. Iets soet en lieflik wat ruik soos lente en somer en piekniek-in-die-park.



Cotula plumosa

Dis die ongelooflike reuk van die matte van groen-wortelblaar-struikgewas wat orals langs die kus hulle blommegeure in die lug vrystel. Naby Swartkops is daar talle grondvoëls wat in die *Cotula*-holtes verberg is en wanneer mens onverwags en onbepland 'n nagstappie oor die *Cotula*-vlaktes neem, is dit 'n belewenis van 'n kombinasie van krakende *Cotula* onder jou stewels en onheilspellende nagklanke.



Acaena magellanica blomhofie

Acaena magellanica. Nou hiërdie plant het sy plus- en minuspunte! In die blomseisoen, wanneer *A. magellanica* nog nie begin saad vorm het nie, is dit eintlik 'n heel aanskoulike plant spesie: diep-rooi blomhofies met eenaardige swart helmknoppe wat wit stuifmeel te voorskyn bring wanneer die stuifmeel gereed is, maar jong, as die saad gereed is om pos te vat; is alle vorme van frustrasie in die toekoms van elke veldnavorser, *Wandering Albatross* (Grootalbatros), *Giant Petrel* (Reuse Nellie), *Skua* (Bruinroofmeeu) en nog vele ander van die eilandbevolking...



'n Nagmerrie wat wag om te gebeur...



Acaena magellanica saadhofies

As jy bekend is met die term ‘Knapse kêrels’, oftewel die ‘Black Jack’ (*Bidens pilosa*) wat volop is in Suid-Afrika - die klein vabond wat ‘n geneigdheid het om aan enige kledingstuk vas te sit as mens net perongeluk aan dit vat - dan sal die frustrasie wat *A. magellanica* bied, realiteit in jou gedagtes word! Mens raak skaars aan die saadknop, dan sit die hele knop oor jou handskoen versprei en binne sekondes is dit op albei handskoene en die stekelrige irritasie veroorsaak dat jou gemoedstoestand iets onaanvaarbaars raak, want nou moet jy alweer stop om die simpel saadjies uit jou handskoen te verwyder, en dié plantspesie is natuurlik orals oor die eiland versprei, só wees gewaarsku!



Ranunculus biternatus

Ranunculus biternatus, ‘n blomplant met helder geel blommetjies, met ‘n ligte soet reuk. Hierdie plant dans vir lank onder die radar totdat die blomseisoen aanbreek, dan spruit duisende geel blommetjies na vore, gevolg met helder rooi saadjies wat orals op die mosmatte en *Azorellas* te voorskyn kom.



Pringlea antiscorbutica – bloeiwyse, plant, saadvorming

Pringlea antiscorbutica, ‘n eenaardige, heldergroen kool-agtige plantspesie (ook bekend as die *Kergeulen Cabbage*), is orals te vind aan die voet van scoria-heuwels en langs rivierstrome en gedurende September-Oktobermaand, stoot hierdie plant lang stingels met groenerige saamgestelde blomme uit. Dis iets besonder.



Kort na dié spesies hul verskyning gemaak het, breek ‘n nuwe fase aan rondom mid-Oktober - ‘n fase gevul met *Cerastium fontanum* en *Sagina procumbens* blommetjies wat gesig wys.



Cerastium fontanum en *Sagina procumbens*

Cerastium fontanum, ‘n uitheemse blomplant met fyn harige blaartjies (ook bekend as *mouse-ear chickweed*) kom plek-plek voor, hoofsaaklik al langs die voetpaadjies en alhoewel dit ‘n ongewenste spesie is, is die wit, klokvormige blommetjies iets aanskoulik in die blomseisoen. *Sagina procumbens*, ‘n uitheemse spesie wat soms verkeerdelik gesien kan word vir ‘n mos as jy nie weet waarvoor jy uitkyk nie, vertoon ‘n ligte groen blommetjie – skaars sigbaar vir die blote oog.



Die laaste plantspesies wat op die toneel verskyn gedurende laat-Desember, is *Callitriche antarctica*, *Montia fontana* en *Juncus scheuchzerioides*. *C. antarctica* het eenaardige onkonvensionele blommetjies - helder geel helmknoppies en stempels wat sonder kelkblare op die fyn stammetjie voortspruit. Die plant besit roosvormige blaartjies en word gewoonlik aangetref in robpoele saam met *M. fontana*, langs die kus, tussen plate van *Poa annua* en *Poa cookii*-gras. *M. fontana* het klein blaartjies van gemengde kleure van rooi, groen en pienk; wat gepaard gaan met fyn wit blommetjies.



Callitriche antarctica en *Montia fontana*

Juncus scheuchzerioides is 'n miniatuur biesie, bruin van kleur, wat nie sommer 'n mens se oog vang nie en wat selfs tydens die blomtydperk wegkruipertjie speel - aangesien dit so besonders klein is. Dit groei baie laag op die grond, skaars 2-5cm in hoogte en die enigste plek waar mens dit werklik raaksien, indien jy vir hul uitkyk, is op die voetpaadjies.



Juncus scheuchzerioides bloeiwyse



As mens wegskop vir 'n eiland-rondomtalie is die Grootalbatros (Wandering Albatross), die dominante voëlspezie in die gesigsveld. 'n Reuse voëlspezie wat tydens hul hofmakery iets skouspelagtig is, ongelooflik - mens kan hul vir ure dophou, veral by Swartkops – waar hul paringsdans iets is vir die boeke. Tydens Aprilmaand is die eiland gespikkel met klein lyfies van wit dons wat gedurende die jaar ontwikkel tot reuse bruin-en-wit jong volwassenes wat rondom November vertrek vir die lewe op die see - waar hul eers jare later sal terugkeer om die lewensiklus voort te sit.



Wandering Albatross – the full cycle

Die Witoorpickewyn (Gentoo Penguin), bekend as *Gentoo's*, is die derde grootste pickewyn en met hul duidelike witvlek bokant die oog en die helder oranje voetjies kan mens hul nie eintlik mis nie. Hul broei in afgesonderde groepies op verskeie plekke op die eiland (soos East Cape en Bullard) in die somer en hul is baie sensitief vir enige versteuring.



Gentoo - *Pygoscelis papua*

Koningpickewyne (King Penguin), met hul kenmerkende helder oranje oorvlekkie, word gewoonlik in digte kolonies op beskermende strande aangetref, waar hul regdeur die jaar broei. Mens kan enige tyd van die jaar dié strande besoek en daar sal tussen die mengsel van swart, wit en oranje 'n klomp bruin wollerige lyfies staan. Kuikens. Mooi van ver af, maar die reuk wat die mooi vergesel, maak dit lelik van naderby.



Koningpickewyn – *Aptenodytes patagonicus*

Die Grys-kop-albatros (Grey-headed Albatross), soos die naam impliseer, is 'n pragtige voël met 'n grys kop en helder swart-en-geel snawel, donkerswart vlerke en wit onderdele. Grey-headed Ridge is heel jaar geveer met aktiwiteit, van jong volwassenes in begin Mei maand tot die aankoms van talle nuwe broeipare rondom Junie/Julie - waar hul lewensiklus nuwe klein lyfies te voorskyn bring. Elke keer as mens daar verby ploeter tydens 'n eiland rondomtalie, is daar nuwe verandering in sig, én teen Februarie begin al die kletterende kuikens soos jong volwassenes lyk en só breek 'n nuwe tydperk aan...



Gryskopalbatros
Thalassarche chrysostoma

Teen die berghange by Rooks, vind mens die Bruinalbatros (Sooty Albatross) en die Swartkopalbatros (Light-mantled Albatross), teen gevaarlike hoogtes. Die twee spesies is beide elegante voëls, met smal vlerke en donkerbruin verdrag en hul vlieg meestal in pare van twee of drie (of dit beplan is of nie, dit lyk altyd soos 'n eskader van vliegtuie – netjies in formasie). Wat hierdie twee eenderse spesies hoofsaaklik onderskei, is die ligte-lyf en ligte-blou mondstreep van die Swartkopalbatros teenoor die algehele donkerlyf en geel mondstreep van die Bruinalbatros. Hulle is pragtige voëls, maar die klank wat hul uiter, is iets onheilspellend – tussen 'n kat wie se stert vertrap is en 'n kleintjie wat sy longe uitgil...

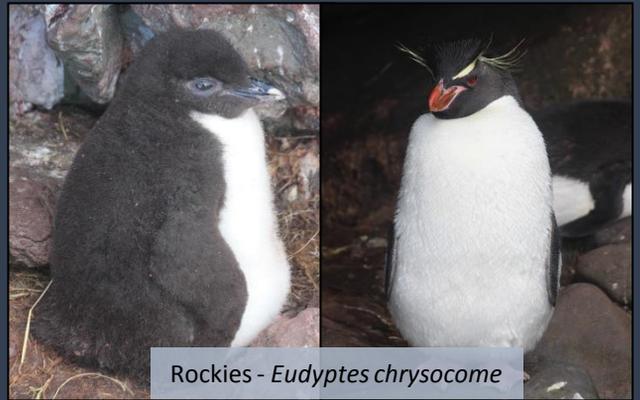


Bruinalbatros
Phoebastria fusca

Swartkopalbatros - *Phoebastria palpebrata*

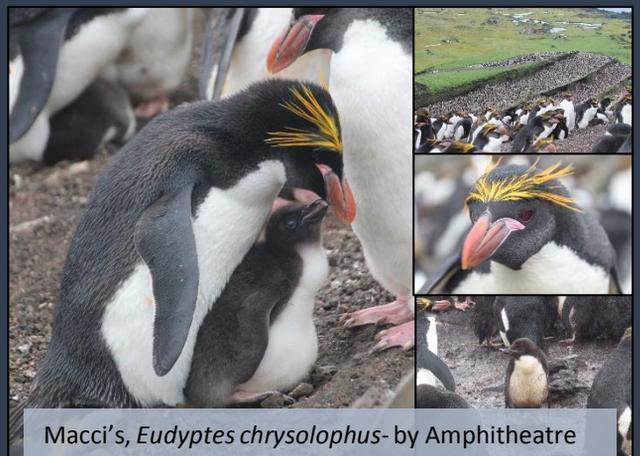
Soos mens om die eiland beweeg, vind mens ook die Suidelike Geelkuifpikkewyn (Southern Rockhopper Penguin) en die Langkuifpikkewyn (Macaroni Penguin)-kolonies. Die 'Southern Rockhopper Penguin', bekend as *Rockies*, broei in verspreide los kolonies in rotsskeure op verskeie plekke op Marion Eiland - gedurende die somermaande, maar hul is mees prominent in die toffie lawa gedeelte aan die suidwestelike deel van die eiland. Dis die gedeelte tussen Rooks en Swartkops.

Hul broei 'n paar weke later as die *Macci's* om kompetisie te vermy. Vanaf Meimaand, waartydens die toffie lawa leeg en doodstil is, is daar 'n drastiese verandering rondom laat-Oktober as dié gedeelte skielik lewe kry wanneer die *Rockies* aanland kom om te broei.



Rockies - *Eudyptes chrysocome*

'Macaroni Penguin', meer bekend as *Macci's* onder die veldnavorsers, is effens groter as die *Rockies*. Die grootste *Macci*-kolonie is by Swartkops, waar hierdie pragtige pikkewyne in hul duisende by die Amphiteater saam drom. Vanaf die Swartkops-hut klink dit soos die dreuning van 'n reuse byekorf. Die eerste *Macci's* maak hul verskyning vroeg in Oktober, waar die Amphi binne etlike weke met duisende pikkewyne opvol. Gedurende hierdie tydperk, is daar talle 'Giant Petrels' en 'Skuas' wat op die uithoeke van die *Macci*-kolonie rondweg met die doel om óf 'n eier of 'n kuiken vanuit die ouers weg te raap. In die omliggende omgewing rondom die Amphi, lyk dit soos 'n pikkewyn begraaftplaas soos die eierdoppe en pikkewyn-karkassies oor die *Cotula*-matte gestrooi lê. Die kuitens bereik uiteindelik volwassenheid rondom einde Februarie.



Macci's, *Eudyptes chrysolophus*-by Amphitheatre

Dán is daar die Reusenellie (Southern Giant Petrel, SGP) en die Grootnellie (Northern Giant Petrel, NGP) wat voed op die onoplettende prooi... Hierdie twee nellies, meer bekend as GPs, is orals te vinde op Marion. Hul is moeilik onderskeidbaar in vlug, maar op land is hul onderskeidbaar aan die SGP se groen-punt snawel en die NGP se rooi-punt snawel. GP-kolonies gaan gewoonlik gepaard met 'n stank reuk – SGPs is geneig om gewoonlik in groter groepe voor te kom, terwyl NGPs geneig is om slegs in enkel broeipare voor te kom. SGPs broei om en by 6 weke later as NGPs en die kuikens groei teen 'n skrikwekkende tempo. Dis omtrent 'n belewenis om die verandering van donslyfie na dons-en-volwasse-vere na volwaardige jong volwassene dop te hou. Ongelooflike omskakeling, én ons het die voorreg om elke oomblik te beleef soos die jaar aanstap.



Skua (Bruinroofmeeu) - *Stercorarius antarcticus*

By Mixed Pickle en verskeie ander plekke, vind mens die Crozetduiker (Crozet Shag) gewoonlik op groot rotsstapels teen die kranse, en met hul helder blou oogring en goudgeel vere, lok dit onmiddellik aandag. Hul broei hoofsaaklik in die somermaande.



Grootnellie (NGP) - *Macronectes halli*



Crozetduiker - *Leucocarbo melanogenis*

'n Ander roofvoël, is die Bruinroofmeeu (Brown Subantarctic Skua). Sodra die Skuas aankom, is daar orals lewe. Op lukrake plekke, altyd onverwags – sal jy 'n Skua-broeipaar aantref, waar die een op 'n byna onsigbare nes, met twee bruin gespikkelde eiertjies sit, terwyl die ander Skua wild tekere gaan en soms op jou afduik om te verseker jy bly weg van die nesgebied. Van al die voëlspesies, het hierdie spesie my die meeste beïndruk. Trots, vurig en bereid om hul nageslag met alle mag te beskerm. Die meerderheid broei tussen Oktober en Desember, en binne twee maande is die fyn geluidjies van jong volwasse Skuas die klank wat jou om elke hoek en draai bekruipt. 'n Alomteenwoordigheid.

Die Grysborsterretjie (Antarctic Tern) en die Kergeulense sterretjie (Kergeulen Tern) verskyn rondom Julie en is baie beskermend oor hul nesgebied en sal sonder waarskuwing reguit op jou afduik - as jy nie koes nie, sal hul jou heel waarskynlik tref!



Aggressiewe Sterretjies

Regoor die eiland was die nag-aktiwiteit meestal op 'n maksimum, met 'n verskeidenheid van spesies gedurende die somermaande. Die Marionwalvisvoël (Salvin's Prion) is een van die mees volopste voëlspesies regdeur die jaar - gewoonlik aktief gedurende die aande, maar kom voor in hul duisende op dae van stormweer. Die Salvinskuikens kom te voorskyn tydens Februarie-Maartmaand, waar mens hul veral in die Santa Rosa Vallei in smal rottskeure te siene kan kry – in die vorm van klein bolletjies dons.



Salvin's-kuiken (*Pachyptila salvini*) – 'n bolletjie dons

Die naggeluide - 'n sameflans van voëlklanke wat in die swartnag heers. Hierdie klanke was 'n mengelmoes van Donsveerstormvoëls (Soft-plumaged Petrels), Langvlerkstormvoëls (Great-winged Petrels), Pediunkers (Grey Petrels) – wat rondom Mei-Juniemaand broei en verdwyn soos 'n dief in die nag, tot hul terugkeer in vroeg Maartmaand, Bassiaans (White-chinned Petrels) – wat volop is in die *Blechnum*-heuwels en wat onophoudelik geraas maak, Grysrugstormswaels (Grey-backed Storm Petrels) en Kleinduikstormvoëls (South Georgian Diving Petrels).



Pediunker
Grey Petrel)
Procellaria cinerea



Bassiaans
(White-chinned Petrels)
Procellaria aequinoctialis

Die groter diere wat op die strande vergader, sluit die volgende drie robspesies in: Antarktiese Pelsrob (Gazellas), Sub-Antarktiese Pelsrob (Tropicalis) en die Olifantrob (Ellies); en hul hou die 'sealers' drukbesig. Die Gazellas is volop in reuse harems op verskeie plekke, maar veral gazella plein op pad vanaf Watertunnel na Grey-headed en hul kleintjies raak besonders vinnig groot. Vir die Tropicalis, is daar gereelde 'pupweighing' by Cape Davis en dis gewoonlik 'n groot feestelikheid, en die tropicalis-kleintjies vat aansienlik langer as die gazella-kleintjies om volwassenheid te bereik. Die Ellies gaan bos in September wanneer die 'Ellies Birthday Round Island' plaasvind. Binne drie weke vertrek al die nuwe Ellies (dis nou nadat die 'sealers' hulself byna dood gewerk het om al die nuwe olifantrobbe te merk...).



Antarktiese Pelsrob

Sub-Antarktiese Pelsrob

Olifantrob

Dus, die uurglas van Marion staan vir niemand stil nie en ons tyd op die eiland hardloop nou vinniger uit as ooit te vore...

Binne 'n paar weke is dit tyd om die uurglas finaal om te draai.

'n Nuwe siklus, nuwe lewe...

Verhaal van ouds.

Dankie Marion.

Elke sekonde was die moeite werd!

PICK OF PICS

Graceful Landing... or not?



Danielle Keys

Wandering Albatross

Diomedea exulans

Walk and Talk



Brown (Subantarctic) Skua

Stercorarius antarcticus

Flipper Five

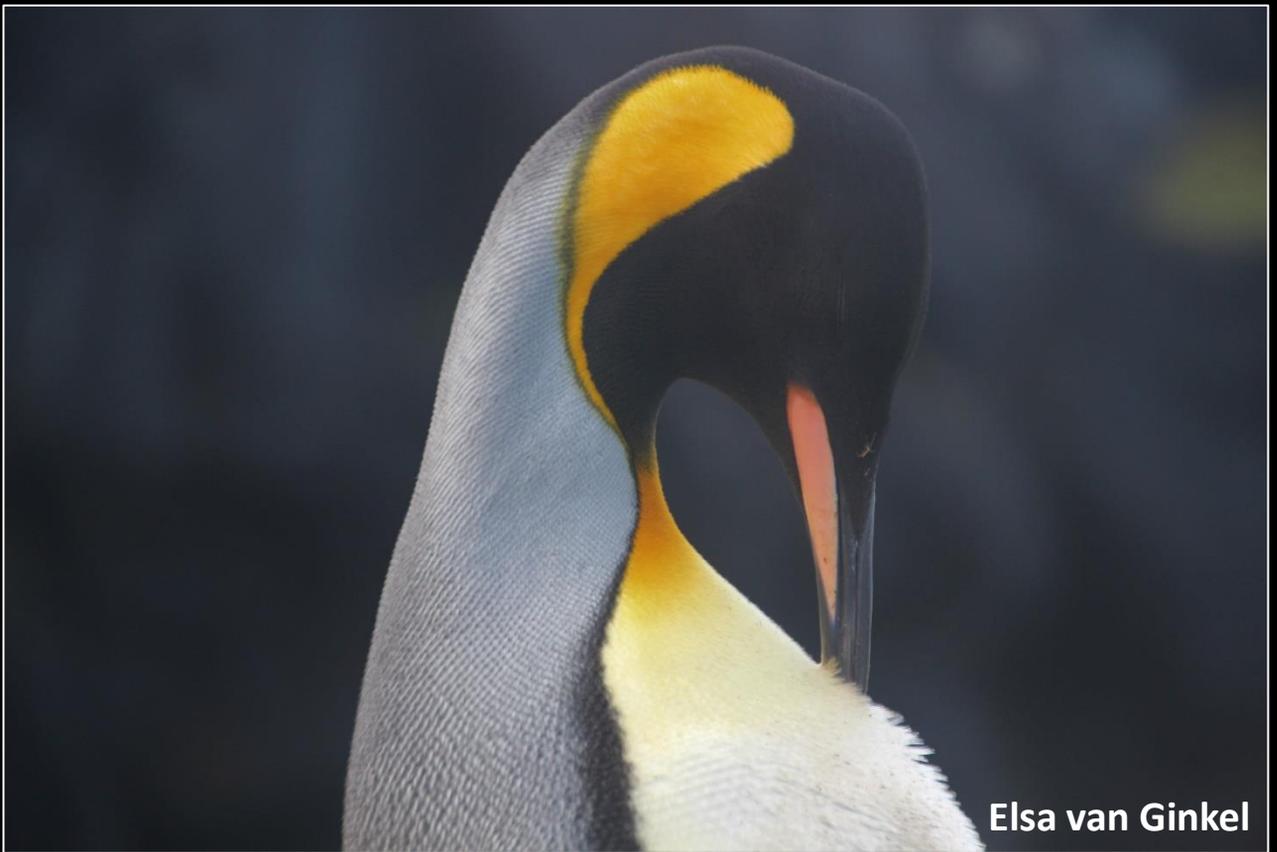


Elsa van Ginkel

Killer Whale

Orcinus orca

The Praying Penguin



King Penguin

Aptenodytes patagonicus

Big Eyes



Liezl Pretorius

Southern Elephant Seal

Mirounga leonina

Icy World



Elsa van Ginkel



DK's Birthday



He's Got This...





Jabu's Birthday



Jabu and his *crazy* pool skills ensured a competitive and fun-packed evening.



Sechaba's Birthday



Lots and lots of karaoke!

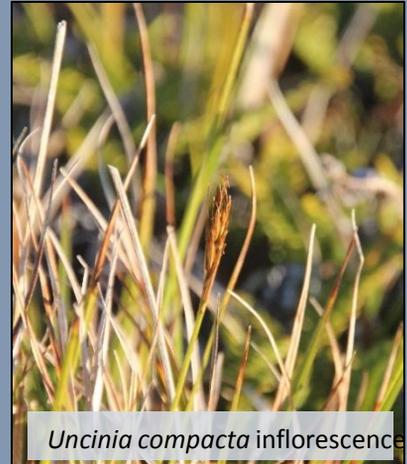


sedges have edges...

- Marike Louw

Uncinia compacta

***“Sedges have edges,
rushes are round,
grasses have knees that bend
to the ground!”***



Uncinia compacta inflorescence

The sing-song rhyme was enthusiastically uttered when a group of Marionites bent over a tiny little plant that looked back up at us with grassy indifference.

At first glance, the little sedge *Uncinia compacta* does indeed look like a grass. But it does not have the nodes (or “knees” in the rhyme) that grasses do, and a cross-section of the sedge is triangular - in contrast to the circular shape of a rush.

Here on Marion, it is easy to confirm the identity of *Uncinia compacta* by simply touching it... it’s unyielding and uncomfortably sharp and bristly. Nothing like gentle, bendy lawn grass!



U. compacta with its edgy leaves

You do NOT want to lay down on a thin blanket for a romantic picnic on this hardy little veg!



Typical *Uncinia compacta* habitat – a mirey area among *Agrostis magellanica*-grass

- This little plant belongs to the family *Cyperaceae*
- The Latin word *uncinus* means hook or barb.

Sometimes when peering at tufts of *U. compacta* on Marion, it seems as if the inflorescences have been neatly snipped off. One theory for this is that the introduced house mouse, *Mus musculus*, is the sneaky culprit gnawing off these tasty bits. But if so, the M75 botanists have yet to catch the creatures in action!



Liezl Pretorius

Taste of Island life



Danielle Keys



Elsa van Ginkel



Elsa van Ginkel



Elsa van Ginkel



Elsa van Ginkel



Danielle Keys



Favourite Piece of Equipment



Automatic Weather Station

My favourite piece of equipment is the Automatic Weather Station (AWS) control unit. Its circuit is not too difficult to figure out but to some extent it's a sophisticated machine. It houses the CR10X data logger, which records and calculates minute averages of the following parameters: temperature, humidity, air pressure, wind direction and speed.

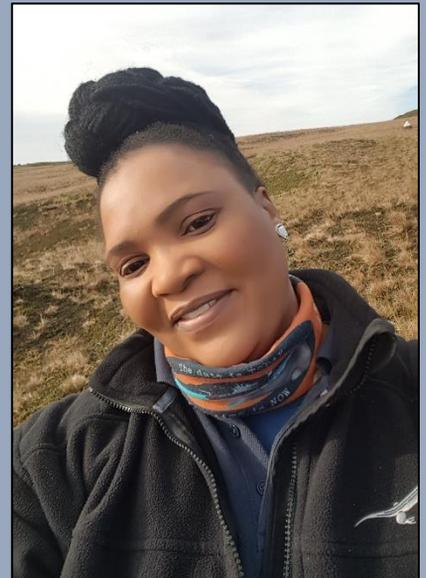
- **Sechaba Nyaku (#Senior Metkassie)**

What to choose...

I find it difficult to choose a single piece of equipment as technicians have trustworthy resources to look up information and advanced equipment when troubleshooting problems, which makes us more effective. Other equipment helps you to solve the problems or at least point you in the right direction to resolve the issue. In those cases, I can say that my mind is my most reliable piece of equipment.

When I have a heavy workload, I make sure to stay level-headed because getting nervous or worried only decreases my efficiency. I prioritise any problems from important to least important, based on the level of impact and issue it has. I focus on problem isolation and quick implementation of solutions and testing. If things need to wait until the next day, I'll talk to my colleagues to ensure expectations are met accordingly.

- **Bukelwa Lekhesa, a.k.a *Mama Mavis* (#CommsTech)**



... beards of Marion...

- the home stretch -

- James Burns

And so comes the time for a final update on the beards of Marion. We have been cultivating these majestic whiskers for over a year now and they have been a big part of our Marion identity.

The general consensus, however, has been that (after maybe a week or so of "show and tell" when we get home) they will have to go ... or at least get a trim as, in some cases, a serious concern has been whether or not airport security will permit certain individuals *coughseancough* to board their flights home from Cape Town. For now though, we are still carrying them proudly as the rugged, sub-Antarctic explorers that we are.

Enjoy these latest photos (and most likely the last) in the beard-evolution chain!



James Burns



Mike Taunyane



Mike Voysey



Sean Morar



Stephan Keys

What's up with this Weather?

- James Burns

Winter has arrived (well... technically it's still Autumn but...) Although, as we have noticed throughout the expedition, the seasonal fluctuations are not very extreme; temperatures are only a few degrees lower on average, wind speeds are unpredictable whatever the season and rain is never unexpected!

This weather update will most likely be the last as the upcoming take-over period promises to be chaotic and quick. In terms of our expected weather, we are always hopeful for the best, especially with all the helicopter operations and fieldwork happening, but the tendency of April to be mostly unpleasant has led to the popular phrase "take-over weather" which no-one is looking forward to.

With the conclusion of March, we can say with confidence that we have lived through all seasons of Marion. Winter, spring, summer, autumn and now winter again at last. We have been surprised every so often with a snowy interior but nowhere near as much as the next few months will bring! We did have a fair amount of rain though and many days of gale force winds and even stronger gusts.

From what we hear, the new team of meteorological technicians successfully completed their training on the mainland and are looking forward to the M76 expedition. We'll be pairing with them to show them the ropes but then we'll say goodbye and trust they'll manage to pick up where we've left off.

SAWS MONTHLY WEATHER STATS – March 2019

TEMP	MIN	MAX	AVERAGE	AVERAGE LOW	AVERAGE HIGH
	1.0°C	16.6°C	7.7°C	4.6°C	10.8°C
PRESSURE	MIN	MAX	AVERAGE	HUMIDITY	AVERAGE
	979.09hPa	1023.4hPa	1007.2hPa		83%
RAIN	TOTAL	DAYS WITH RAIN (>1mm)		MAX IN 24 HOURS	
	165.0mm	21 (16)		30.0mm (24 th)	
WIND	MAX	DIRECTION	SUNSHINE	TOTAL	
	143km/h	NW		132.1 HOURS	



M75



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