



THE WANDERER

ISSUE 3

16 JULY - 15 AUGUST

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*PLEASE GIVE A THOUGHT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND DON'T PRINT THIS IF YOU DON'T NEED TO. THANKS, M69

Die Besef

"Ja, so ek dink ons is nou klaar vir vandag. Ek gaan nou bietjie uit, dit is so mooi dag. Julle kan saam kom of bly, maar ek gaan nou gaan!" Die bebaarde man wat my en my kollegas alles moet leer van sealer wees is nou moeg vir die kantoor. 'n Hele dag spandeer om die fynere besonderhede van data verwerking te bespreek met 'n klomp groen sealers is nie dié ou se idee van pret nie. Hy leef vir buite wees.

Tien minute later vind ek myself op 'Boulders beach' – 'n geskiedkundige plek waar, in 1947, die Suid-Afrikaanse anneksasie-span voet aan wal gesit het. Die handjie vol ander mense wat ook uit gekom het om die mooi weer en sonskyn ('n baie seldsame verskynsel hier op Marion) te geniet, koek saam om 'n pelsrob kleintjie. Ek besluit om 'n entjie aan te loop – weg van die klikende kameras en opgewonde stemme. Na 'n week op die eiland besef ek, ek is vir die eerste keer alleen. Ek kyk om my rond – die rustige bruin water van Gentoo-meer lê in skrilte kontras teen die helder blou van die Suidsee branders wat langs my breek. Op 'n groen heuweltjie agter die basis staan die ou 'Mammal lab' en verder op die horison

word die rooi skoria van Juniorskop verlig deur sagte skermersonlig. Oombliklik is al my sintuie gelyktydig geprikkel deur hierdie ongelooflike, ongerepte en somtyds ongenaakbare plek. Op daardie oomblik tref dit my soos 'n brander teen 'Crane point' se kranse – na jare se droom en maande se voorbereiding is ek uiteindelik op Marion

eiland!

Verder langs die strand af gewaar ek die bebaarde man. Hy is ook diep in gedagte. Ek kan sien dat hy tot 'n soortgelyke maar teenoorgestelde besef as ek gekom het. Ek is uiteindelik hier terwyl sy tydjie in die paradys vinnig tot 'n einde kom.

Wiam Haddad



Wiam Haddad

Marion Orca Awards

This month, because we had so many *super* entries for photo of the month, we decided to award multiple categories (see below). Many of the other pictures (nearly as deserving) are included in the gallery at the end of newsletter, so peak at them!



"Flop of the month" awarded to Zandi, who was distracted by the beauty of the Agulhus II on our shores and only fed us at 11 pm.



"Darwin award of the month" awarded jointly to Nico and John—fittingly—as will be explained in the Beard Progress Report.



"Meal of the month" awarded to Ben & Delia (Kebabs).



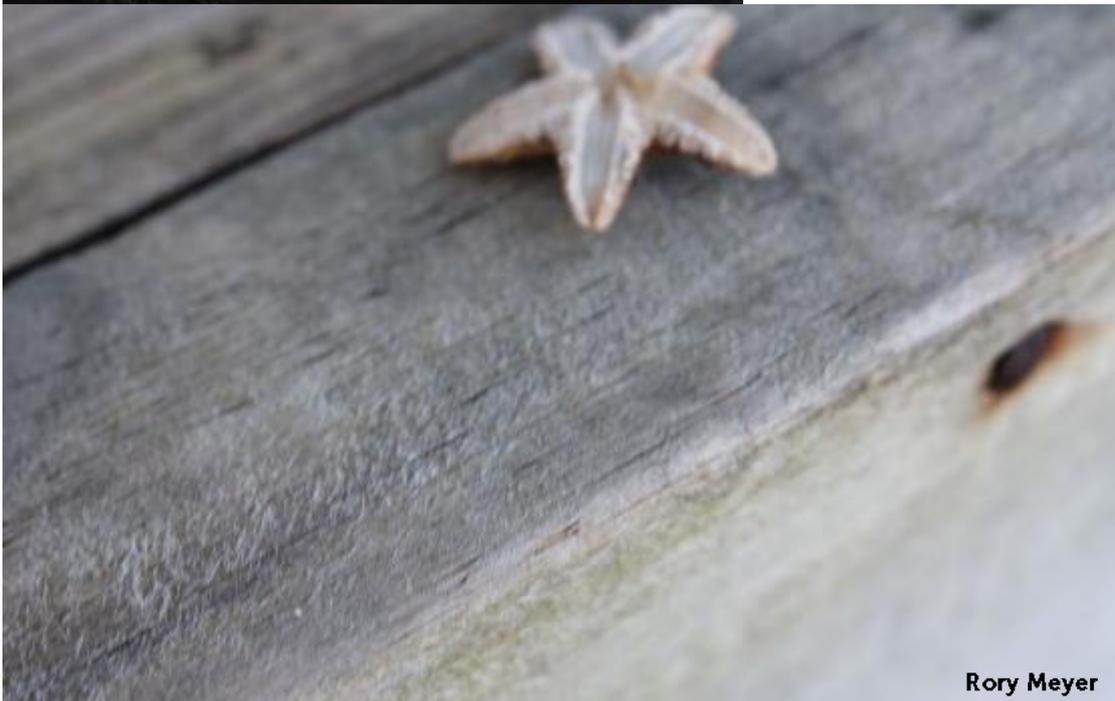
"Dessert of the month" awarded to Christelle (Chocolate Babke).



"Photos of the month" in the following categories awarded to: Landscape (Jason); Abstract (Rory); Action (Mia); Portrait (Mia); Composition (Wiam).



Jason Nel



Rory Meyer

(top) Jason's winner in Landscape category.

(left) Rory's winner in Abstract category.

See other winners overleaf)

Marion  Orca Awards cont'd



Mia Wege

(left) Mia's winner in Action category.



Wiam Haddad

Mia Wege

(left) Wiam's winner in Composition category.



(left) Mia's winner in Portrait category.

The Gogga-man speaks

Katedraal hut versus Gogga Man

As the day began looking misty, but calm. I took my equipment and headed out to Katedraal hut. Every two months I have to change I-buttons along a transect going to Katedraal. With my map and GPS, I looked up the gradient and misty it was. But I was ready to go up the lava, Blechnum slops and mire; then the icy slopes of Katedraal. Zandile the Eco also had some work at the hut, so she came with.

Off we went up the altitude and passed Juniors, then we disappeared into the misty terrain. As we got up the slope of fernbrakes and bryophytes, legs started to weaken and sweat started to drip. But it's part of the fight. Pole after pole we went up; finally we reached the 500 m altitude. The trip was not favourable for me to collect my I-buttons. We abandoned collecting the I-buttons and returned to base. Well I had lost round one, what a sad time for me. If there's one thing I hate, it is to lose.

Days passed and finely the climate was good. Early morning I prepared my equipment and went out to the field, with collection of I-buttons and sampling

at Van den Boogaardt River after that. I put my coring-pack at the hydro-shack and headed up to Katedraal. This time full of steam from the last time, I put on my gloves and turned on my cell phone music. Up the Blechnum slope I went, in no time I was at the 3rd sister hill. I stopped and drank game juice, that gave me wings and I flew up to the hut with ease. But there was snow all-over and I slid up and down the slopes. I managed to collect I-buttons 800, but 700m and 600m were covered with snow.

Running down the slope to the hydro-shack, I had a smile on my face of victory. But my job was not done as site two of *Agrostis stolonifera* had to be sampled, and then to walk back to base. After a hard day out only a cold beer will do. Oh what a day!

Before I go I would like to thank everybody from C.I.B; especially Anne, CJ, Erika and Tanya for organizing my equipment and sending some goodies. It means so much.

Until next time.

Rashawe Kgopong



Rashawe Kgopong

Katedraal

Marion Island is an amazing island with beauty that no photograph can truly explain to someone that has not been here to experience all its seasons or the comings and goings of its unique wildlife. Yet for all the time we spend working along the coast, tagging seals and ringing birds handling animals which we may never of thought existed, there is still something that captivates our imagination even further, something pulling at our heart strings – something we cannot explain. This something is found at that point where the coast starts to rise and the terrain starts to change. Many a time we find ourselves pausing in our stride to look inward not only into ourselves for strength to take the next step but inward towards the centre of the island. Looking towards the snow-capped peaks, towards the thick ice and towards what lies beyond, those places marked on our maps as Ice-Plateau, Mascarin, Resolution and Katedraal.

It is this area pulling at our heart strings and this area calling to us as we circle it monthly on our round islands and pass alongside it over Azorella en-route to Mixed Pickle Hut or over Black Haglet en-route to Water Tunnel Hut. Over the past few months as weather permits members of the team have taken the opportunity to detour from our census routes or make a quick dash for Katedraal Hut. On the 24-25 July it was our turn to go and seek the high ground of the island, to explore the ice sheets and snow falls of the outskirts of the heart of this beautiful island we now call home, Marion.



Christelle van Vuuren

So early the morning of the 24th Christelle, Wiam and I found ourselves running around packing packs and collecting ice axes as well as crampons, what a thought packing equipment which is so foreign to us as South Africans but yet so exciting. So with childlike excitement we headed past the hellhanger and up towards Juniors, on towards Hendrik Fister, Tafelberg, First Red and then Katedraalkrans and the elusive and yet ever present Katedraal Hut. It was an amazing walk and to think

that for a one night "holiday" we decide to go walking as if we do not walk enough. Though it was worth every step, raising higher and higher until we walked into the cloud bank and weather along First Red.

On the side of First Red we realised that contrary to popular belief, snow covered slopes were actually never meant to be climbed, but instead to be slid down. With great excitement, sometimes a little too much for the faint of heart we took on the slopes. Climbing up only to slide it down once atop, the slopes got steeper and steeper, we went faster and faster and the snow covered rocks at the bottom of the slopes seemed to be getting bigger and bigger. So, slowly but surely we made our way to the Katedraal Hut.

The higher we got the more amazing the colours became and the fascinating the land forms. From ice caves, ice bridges, snow walls over 2 meters high to ice covered rocks, the world was a mixture of greys and whites it

seemed as if someone had changed our outlook on life to monochrome or grey scale. It was an amazing sight and yet to focus on the world of white somehow seemed to place strain on one's mind, to think of a world with no colour.

So our path continued to our sanctuary from the weather a little, old iced-in hut stuck between rocky outcrops and found alongside a cliff. With water frozen in the drums and icicles hanging from the ceiling inside the hut we made something warm to drink before heading off to take some photos and explore. The wind blowing chunks of ice and the snow formations were absolutely breathtaking. After a somewhat cold night of melting ice for drinking water and layering up in a cold leaking hut, we were ready the following morning for our descent. Crampons on, ice axes ready and jackets zipped up we passed ourselves to the first slope we found and slid our way to-



John Lucas



John Lucas



John Lucas



Wiam Haddad



wards First Red. Once at First Red we decided to climb over the scoria cone and continue our decent. If you are ever told that walking on scoria with crampons is a good idea...well let us say the idea's success will be determined by numerous factors. Though we made it and the view from the top was a mixture of wind and mist.

Our trip to Katedral ended too quickly and I can tell you that the interior still calls for us when we walk alongside it, looking to its snow-capped peaks. More than that our curiosity is what draws us to the interior. Not only our curiosity for the landscape and the exploration for the unknown, but also our curiosity for the strange things we have been hearing about

the interior. Stories which are spoken only in whispers between the field workers, a story of footsteps in the snow and movements in the mist, the only proof we have of something up there above the cloud line is a photo Wiam took.

John Lucas



Wiam Haddad

Going Green

Word from the ECO

Wading through the throngs of people lined up in the base, my anxiety was rising while trying to check gear, wash boots, and decontaminate everything. Time seemed to be racing and the loud noise of the Kamov helicopter hovering outside wasn't helping. The first flights out to the huts would be starting soon, and I just couldn't seem to work fast enough. I could feel the panic building up as I forced myself to keep my head in the game and keep moving. The faster I worked, the louder the cutting blades of the chopper became, people were restless, and the room was spinning, or was it my head? The crowds made it difficult to move, I still had backpacks to inspect, people couldn't leave, why were they going? The deafening thunder

from the Kamov drowned my calls and the room swirled, pitching and churning, mirroring my escalating anxiety...

I never thought I'd have ECO-themed nightmares. Although the SA Agulhas II's visit was only a cargo drop off, it didn't prevent my mind from exercising a little 'creative licence' while I was sleeping. In another ECO nightmare I desperately needed to take notes, but I couldn't find my pencil - it turns out that that can be quite stressful. It also featured a 2 m remote controlled helicopter with a plough attached beneath which went rummaging through the mires, ripping up everything in its path. Consequently, the general theme of ECO nightmares seemed to be destruction and mayhem. I am, however, very pleased to report that the actual SA Agulhas II's visit was anything but.

The new, bright, red and white ship came steaming in effortlessly from the north. We were all very excited to see the SA Agulhas II, and to receive the precious cargo she was

carrying. Armed with insecticide spray, sample vials and plastic bags the ECO's were ready to deal with any unwanted little guests. With the help of fellow team mates we successfully unloaded all the cargo and transported an entire container full back to base where it was quarantined in a sealed room. No stowaway invertebrates or propagules were found, save for one blackjack seed on a backpack. Overall, it was a very successful endeavour indeed, thanks to the help and cooperation of the whole team.

Just as quickly as she arrived the SA Agulhas II disappeared into the night, leaving us on our own, and putting an end to my ECO nightmares, for now.

Jacqueline Davis



Marion Island Weather Statistics

July 2012

Supplied by Marion Island Weather Office

Ave. Max Pressure	1012.6 hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1000.2 hPa
Ave. Pressure	1006.9 hPa
Max Pressure	1035.2 hPa
Min Pressure	959.9 hPa

Ave. Max Temp	6.4 °C
Ave. Min Temp	1.5 °C
Ave. Temp	4.0 °C
Max Temp	10.9 °C
Min Temp	-3.1 °C

Ave Humidity	857%
Max Humidity	100 %
Min Humidity	59 %

Max Wind Gust	168.8 km/h
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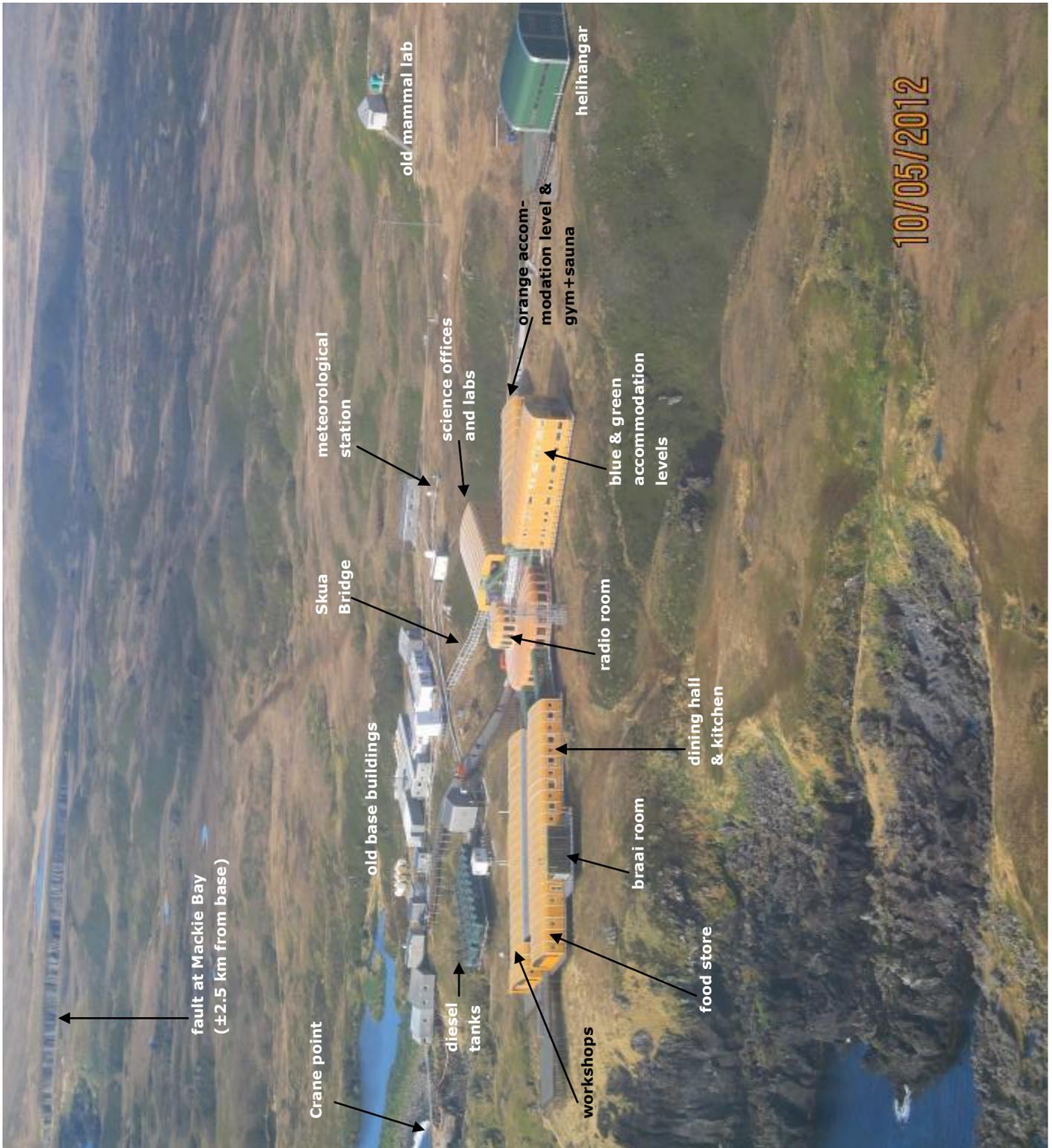
Total Precipitation	157.8 mm
Highest in 24 Hours	29.8 mm
Total days with rain	26 days

Total Sunshine	67.6 hrs
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Base layout

Base is perhaps not the wildest frontier here on Marion, but it's home (especially for the base-paddies) for the year. The members who are repeat overwinterers have many funny (sometimes peculiar) stories about their time in the old base and how things have changed. Being a bit of a spoilt city girl I'm rather glad for many of the luxurious and spacious facilities we have. I read on-line that the covered base area totals just under 4000 m². With that size, it's no wonder we sometimes lose each other in base. Not so much during take-over, but during the overwintering period it is possible to walk along the corridors and not encounter any of your team mates. There are great socializing spots though—the kitchen is where we congregate (haphazardly) for breakfast and lunch and then (in an organized fashion) for supper; the bar and braai room has seen many parties and good "kuiering"; the movie house is where you'll find us most nights. View the aerial photo below (taken by Clokes during a helicopter trip in take-over) to orientate yourself in our world.

Christelle van Vuuren



What-the-weather!

WEIRD EVENTS

Lightening and thunder does not come often to the island. In fact the convective forces that generate the cumulonimbus clouds needed for these phenomena is seldom present or strong enough. The basic theory dictates that one needs strong updraft in unstable conditions, which is prevalent when large land-masses are heated by the sun (we are a relatively small land-mass and the sun isn't around all that often) or cold-fronts move through with a very steep gradient. (convergence lines). Of course one also needs "warm" humid air to form these clouds—but we have plenty of humidity on Marion, being subject to a maritime climate.

So when we had two thunderstorms in one week, it was cause for much discussion and speculation. The first was 12.08.2012 around 01:00 and the second on 15.08.2012 around 22:00. The first time, I was out with team mates at Repettos hut and Fred and I eventually got the nerve to exit the hut (still under cover) to watch. The second time I was back in base and the team huddled in the connecting tunnels to watch for the lightning. We could not see lightening strikes as such, but the whole sky would light up bright white.

Besides being an amazing display of the power of nature, it also reminded of home. The summertime afternoon thunderstorms over the Highveld have always been something wonderful to experience.

The figures shown below (figure A and figure B) are cropped synoptic charts relevant for each of the thunderstorm events. The each show a cold front approaching from the west (uplift along convergence lines) and a warm front having passed only a little earlier.

PRECIPITATION

Figure 1 shows the comparison

of the rainfall for the June, July and August of this year (excl. August) and the previous 2 years for comparison. If the trend continues, we could expect about 150 mm of precipitation during August—much the same as July—which all-in-all is perfectly fine weather.

TEMPERATURE

Figure 3 shows the maximum daily trends for the past four years, including 2012 (June, July and August as relevant). The July 2012 average maximum daily temperature was comparable to that of July 2009 and just up

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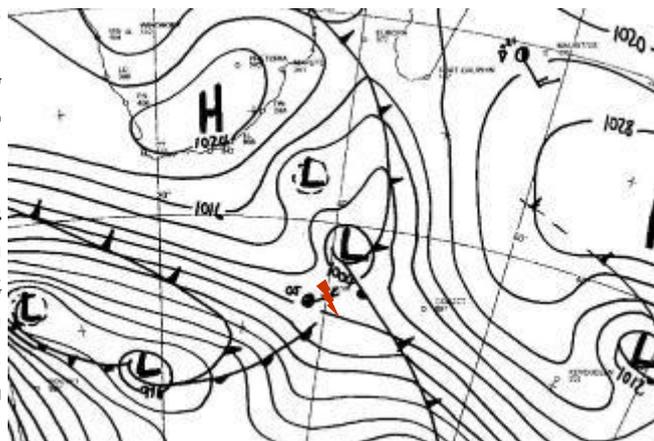


Figure A: Segment of synoptic chart for 12.08.2012 18:00 GMT (21:00 Marion time), with the red marker Marion location.

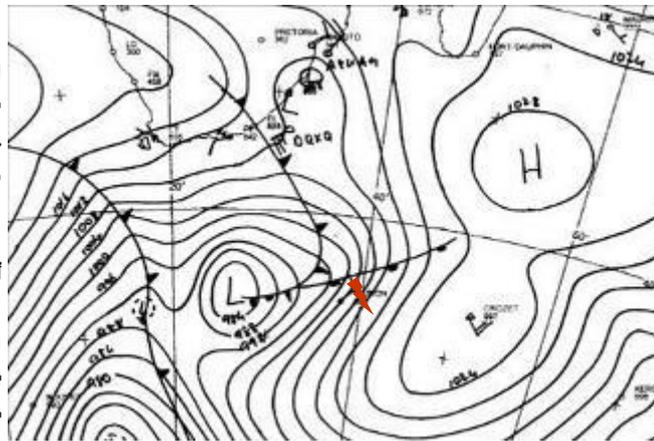


Figure B: Segment of synoptic chart for 15.08.2012 18:00 GMT (21:00 Marion time), with the red marker Marion location.

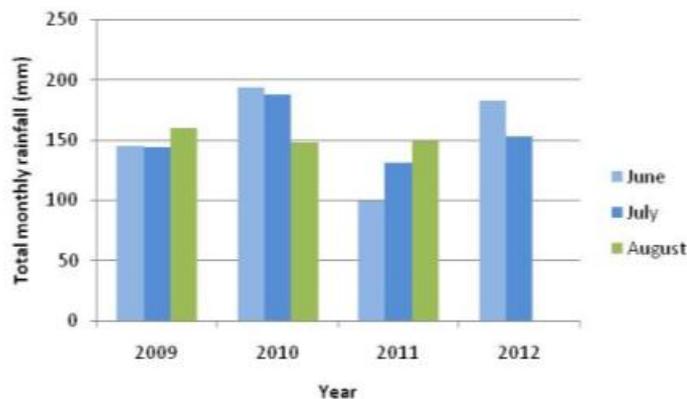


Figure 1: Monthly precipitation 2009–2012 (June–August)

from the June 2012 experience, which is somewhat cooler than July 2011 and July 2010. By the trend of 2011, we can expect a small average maximum temperature in August which will be welcome. Our warmest day was the 19 July at 10.9°C (positively sweltering!), with the coolest maximums occurring on the 12th and again the 16th July at 2.2°C.

The July 2012 average minimum was the same as that of June 2012 at 1.8°C which is slightly warmer than that of July 2009 but cooler than July 2011 and July 2010. If the 2011 trend is followed we can expect slightly warmer temperatures in August. We had 8 instances of the night temperatures dropping below

zero, with the coldest being on the 28th July at -3.1°C. Our warmest night occurred on the 18th July at 6.3°C, which the night before our warmest daytime temperature. A series of relatively warm evenings followed that.

SUNSHINE

The days are getting progressively longer as the 2nd half of the year goes on. We gained nearly an hour during July. The July 2012 average sunshine ex-

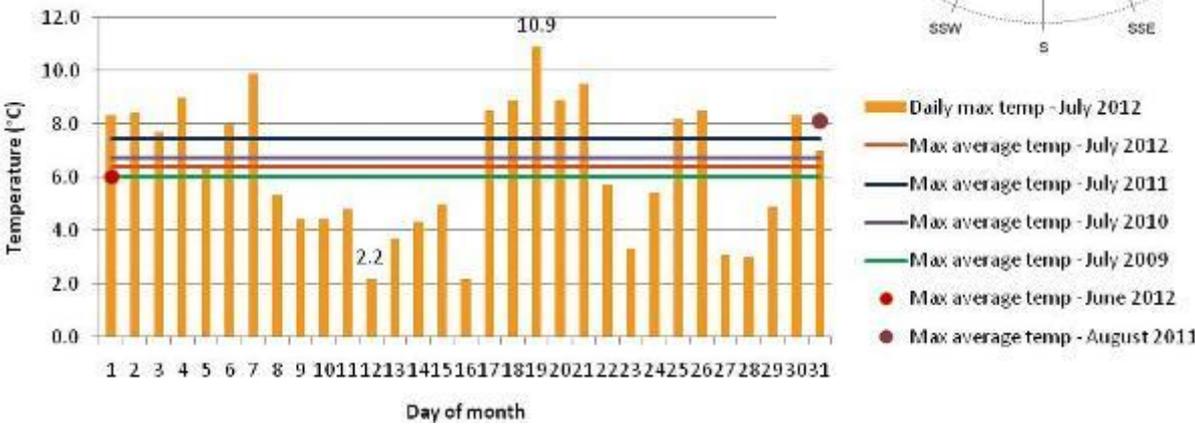
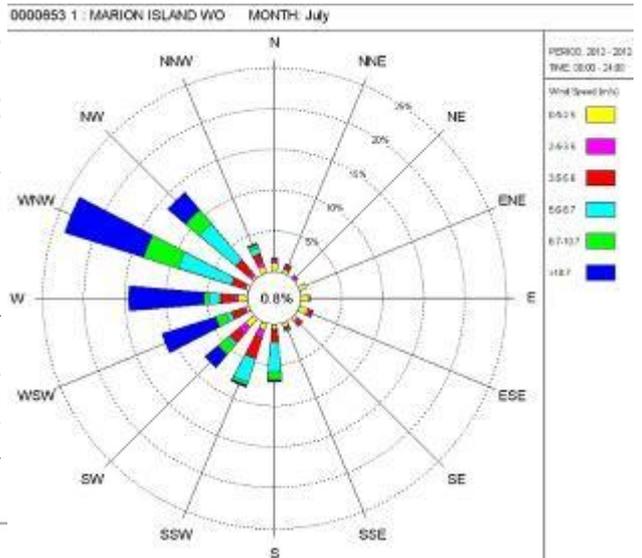


Figure 3: Daily maximum temperatures in July 2012, daily average maximum in July 2012 (6.4°C), July 2011 (7.5°C), July 2010 (6.7°C) and July 2009 (6.0°C); average daily maximum in June 2012 (6.0°C) and August 2011 (8.1°C).

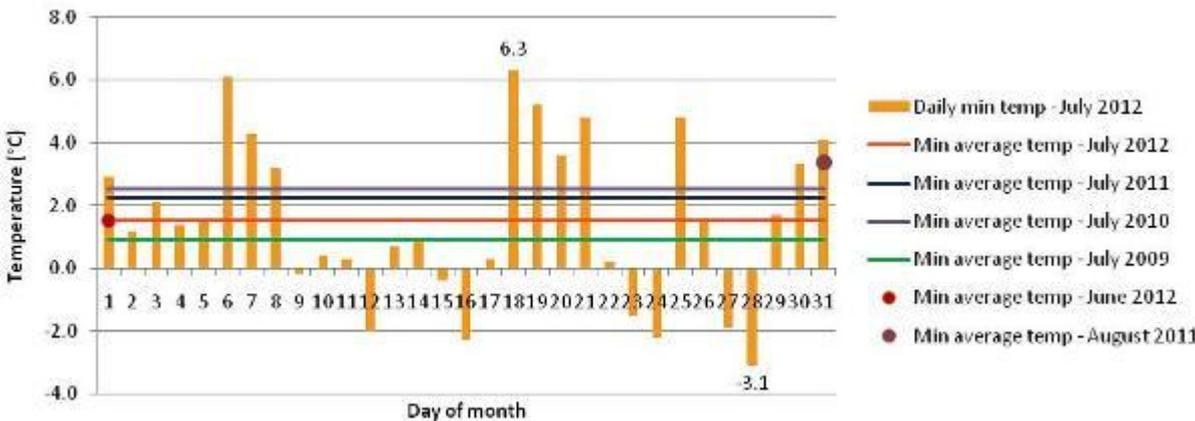


Figure 4: Daily minimum temperatures in July 2012, average daily minimum in July 2012 (1.5°C), July 2011 (2.3°C), July 2010 (2.5°C) and July 2009 (0.9°C); average daily minimum in June 2012 (1.5°C) and August 2011 (3.4°C).

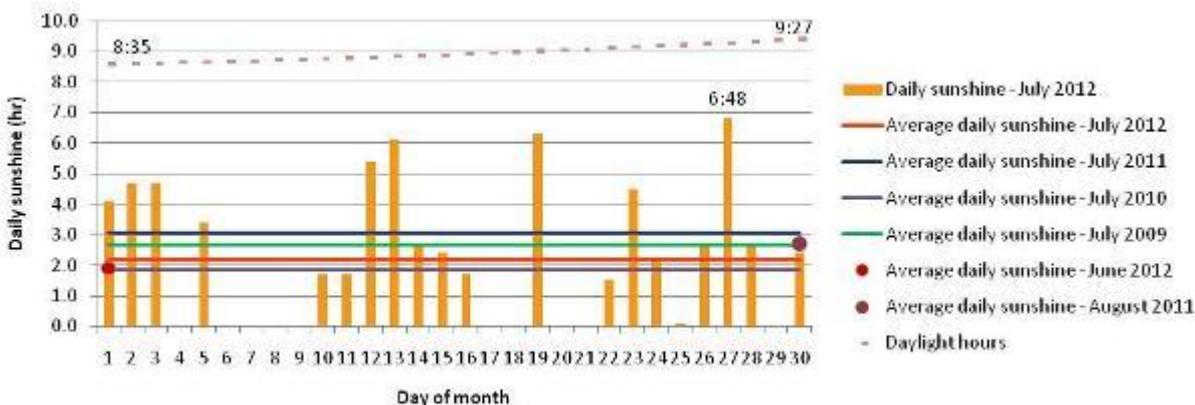


Figure 5: Daily sunshine hours in July 2012, average daily sunshine in July 2012 (2.2 hrs), July 2011 (3.1 hrs), July 2010 (1.8 hrs) and July 2009 (2.7 hrs); average daily sunshine in June 2012 (1.9 hrs) and August 2011 (2.7 hrs).

perienced was slightly more than that of June 2012 and July 2009, but less than that of July 2011. In 2011, August yielded less average sunshine than July so we may well have a cloudy month ahead of us. There were 10 completely over-cast days during July 2012. But we had a glorious day on the 27th July with nearly 7 hours of sunshine, which also happened to be rather a cold day, but so it goes.

WIND

During July 2012, it was only wind-still for 6 hours during the whole month (which is a 200% increase on June 2012). However the significant proportion of the month was in excess of 40 km/h in the WNW to WSW direction.

Christelle van Vuuren

Interviews

This month we have introductions made to Jason Nel (Junior Met Officer) and Zandile Simame (assistant ECO), as the next two birthday's on the team.

Get to
know the
team.

ZANDILE SIMAME



Q: What is your name, age and do you have a nickname?

A: My name is Zandile Simama I'm 26 years old...I have a few nicknames that I've been given, its Sara butt-butt, Winnie, Ntyilontyilo and Zar .

Q: What were your reasons for coming to Marion Island?

A: It's a blessing I didn't want to pass, an opportunity of a life time and knowledge that can never be taken away .

Q: What were you doing before coming to Marion?

A: I'm a Boilermaker Artisan. I passed my trade test July 2011, but I'm was undergoing training to be a Fire Fighter and Rope Access Technician (cutting alien trees).

Q: Where do you come from?

A: I'm from Port Elizabeth (Eastern Cape) but I stay in Cape Town (Muizenburg).

Q: Tell us about your family.

A: I'm the eldest of 2 girls (myself and Lithemba) and 2 boys (Wandisile and Thamsanqa) to my single Mom (Lungiswa Simama). I have a 5 year old and his name is Dini.

Q: What type of movies do you enjoy?

A: I'm a chick-flick (especially if it's about music or dance), suspense and comedy lady.

Q: What music do you listen to?

A: Gospel, old school classics, soul, jazz and a bit of pop and hip- hop.

Q: What has been your greatest achievement in life so far?

A: I was in a jazz band back home in PE (from 2010 -2011, then I moved to Cape Town); passing my Boilermaker trade test and coming here (Marion Island).

Q: What has been your biggest challenge coming to the Island?

A: I couldn't go back home to see my family especially my son, I last saw them November 2011, so I was like what if my boy forgets me?? But I talk to them often enough. And my boyfriend... he's my best friend (I LOVE HIM), but we talk every day and that's making things a little easier.

Q: What are your plans after Marion Island?

A: .Before I got a job on Working on Fire it was very hard for me to get a job as a Boilermaker, I couldn't afford to do my licence, so I'm gonna pass my licence and do a rope access course level 2, I'm level 1 now, if I can't do Conservation Engineering.

JASON NEL

Q: What is your name, age and do you have a nickname?

A: I'm Jason. I've recently turned 26 earth years old. People back call me Jay, Jas and Jason. The island has dubbed me Son of Jay.

Q: What were your reasons for coming to Marion Island?

A: Adventure! I've always looked beyond South Africa's borders imagining all the places and experiences to discover. Being here has been an incredible blessing and saying that I'm grateful for the experience doesn't quite express how I truly feel about it.

Q: What were you doing before coming to Marion?

A: I was dabbling in various things. I was involved with a company facilitating team building and leadership camps. I was part of my local church's campus ministry doing a year of service. I sold hot chocolate from a canister on my back in Loftus.

Q: Where do you come from?

A: Pretoria has become my home but I grew up in Brits and Bloemfontein. You can see why there was a need for adventure! Jokes aside, I'm very grateful to come from these places and I love living in Pretoria.

Continued on next page...

Interviews cont'd



Q: Tell us about your family.

I have two families. The family I was born to who I appreciate with all my heart and love even more. They've always supported and encouraged me regardless of my silly ideas. It is said that we can't choose our family but I'm glad I didn't have to (cheesy but sincere). Then there's my church family. These people are sincere in their actions and have taught me so much about life and what's really important to me. I love them

equally.

Q: What type of movies do you enjoy?

A: Just about everything except horrors. I'm not a fan of gore. Otherwise I'll watch just about everything. I really appreciate the art and expression of filming. And there's nothing like a blockbuster or ridiculous comedy – Hot Rod!

Q: What music do you listen to?

A: A terrible question! I listen mostly to folk but after that just about everything will suffice. I tend to have a weak spot for 60's and 70's pop. I've never truly enjoyed heavy metal though but I can't say I've listened to it all either.

Q: What has been your greatest achievement in life so far?

A: Completing an uninterrupted 360 on my freeboard. Learning how to bake Portuguese rolls. Receiving the meal of the month nomination. Picking up 10kg in 3 months. And now honestly, befriending the people I have befriended over the years. I'm incredibly blessed with great people in my life and especially those who are close to me. They're the type of people who inspire and encourage you to be the best version of you possible.

Q: What has been your biggest challenge coming to the Island?

A: Being away from spiritual family. This small but ever growing community back home has fathered me in my walk with God and the amount of support, encouragement and friendship I experienced in my short time with them has changed my life and perspectives completely. I always had someone who I trusted to bounce ideas off on and help guide me through various decisions and experiences. They became my family while I wasn't with my real family.

Q: What are your plans after Marion Island?

A: I'll probably complete my year of service with my local church and then be led into new things. I've been thinking of continuing my studies and getting involved with community development programmes but I trust the right thing will come to me when it's time to decide. I'm quite relaxed about it.

Marion Star

I saw a star through my closed blind,
 Twinkling about as if it wants me to see it.
 Glowing so brightly, as if it's waiting for me to smile for it.
 Moving up and down, as if it's waiting for me to touch it,
 Clear blue sky at night is as clear as it is in the day light,
 The difference is the star.

Zandile Simame

The Northern Giants

Northern Giant-Petrels are breeding at Marion Island this month, usually choosing to lay an egg in a nest sheltered in the lee side of a protruding lump of lava.

On Marion, there are two species of giant-petrels, known simply as Southern or Northern Giant-Petrels. There is not much to distinguish between the two, except for some small differences of darkness or lightness to the feathers and perhaps a change in the paleness of the eyes. My easy birding tip for the

Sealers, ahem, to distinguish between the two in the field: The Southern Giant-Petrels have a greenish tinge to the tip of their bills just like the Springbok rugby jersey is green, while the Northern Giant-Petrels

wear a darker red tinge on the bill like the red-shirted Lions of the northern hemisphere. Just like that. More or less six weeks separate the breeding seasons of the two species of giant-petrels, so in August these same wicked predators that we watch in fascination scavenging or feasting on whatever they find lying injured or dead on the island, are now seen incubating their eggs diligently, napping with their sharp machete bills tucked sweetly into the soft feathers of their backs.

While staring into the gray eyes of a giant-petrel usually means that you are an animal about to die and be devoured, for now I maintain that their strange eyes are quite lovely this time of year. Thank you to Jason, Mia and Rory for joining in the search for giant-petrel nests this month.

Delia Davies



Rory Meyer



Ben Dilley



Jason Nel



You will never get anything done on this Island if you wait for favourable weather condition. (English)

Kulelizwe alisoze lakhipha umkhovu etsheni, alibaleli ngisho ebukhwani bezinja. (IsiZulu)

Jy sal nooit enige iets gedoen kry as jy wag vir die sonskyn nie. (Afrikaans)

Ketla ga e bereke mo marion. (Sesotho)

Ungalahli imbo ngophoyiyana. (IsiXhosa)

Moleta ngwedi ke moleta lefifi. (SeTswana)



O ka se tswile or dirile mo-shumo wa gago mo Islanting , ge o kaya le setla. (Sepedi)

Arali wa lindela mutso wavhudi hunga sivhene tshine wa bvedza f hano. (Tshivhenda)

Muridza nwati, muridza xinyami. (Xitsonga)

Kuncono manje. (Isiswati)

Nompilo Radebe

A Birder's Tale

Once again I find myself in the awkward position of having to write a story about life on Marion. After 3 previous expeditions, I thought that everything that had to be said had already been written. However, life on the island is so challenging and exciting some experiences just have to be shared.

Most of the "birders" tasks revolve around censusing, meaning that our time is spent counting the different bird species, giving an overall picture of the status of the different populations breeding on Marion Island during our year.

We have now been on the island for 4 months, and during that time we have watched the small albatross chicks grow in size. It takes 11 months for the chicks to reach "fledgling" status. At this stage they boast a wingspan of over 2.5metres. During the 11 months of being classified as a "chick", the chick has to sit on the nest its parents built, (normally very close to the same site they use each breeding season i.e. every second year) and endure all kinds of weather conditions and predators. It's only means of defense is to vomit a thick, smelly, oily slime, the smell of which is extremely difficult to get rid of. As the chicks are fed at random times, when either one of the parents arrive, the chick cannot afford to lose any of its precious energy through vomiting. The adults both feed the chick, but there seems to be no arrangement as to whose turn it is, as they may be away from the nest for up to 10 days. Once the adult returns, it regurgitates the precious food which the chick then

swallows. Another 3 months to go, so will keep you posted!

From my side, I so enjoy coming back and seeing the same animals over the years. All that can be said is LUCKY ME!!

Linda Clokie



Sealer's Chronicle—

A loud thundering roar announced their arrival - It's coming!

Walking on the beach, gazing at the snow covered interior, a loud thundering roar broke through the racket made by King Penguins. The ground shook (or just my legs). My eyes searched frantically for the source of the sound and with awe my eyes landed upon the behemoth of all elephant seals. Yes, they have arrived! The beach-masters are here. Breeding season is coming! Three beach-masters have pitched-up during the course of the week; Fanta (10), Martin (10), and Bernie (12) are here to defend their harems once again. Weighing up to 3 tonnes, the bulls demand respect from the much smaller females (400 - 900 kg) as well as from ±80 kg sealers. During the course of the breeding season we will keep you up to

date with the size of their harems. The bravery and running speed of the sealers will also be put the test. Let the battle begin... This is nature - this is battle for the survival of the fittest!

Nico Lübcker



Wiam Haddad



Mia Wege

(top) Bernie laying on the beach at the Van den Bogaart River with one tooth missing

(middle) Martin on Archway .

(bottom) Nico standing in front of Fanta trying to read his tags.



Wiam Haddad

Beards—A shocking twist!

Things on the beard contest front have taken an unexpected turn in the past month. We believe that National Women’s day, celebrated on the 9th of August, was the catalyst for the surprising and somewhat disturbing events that have unfolded. All the ladies seemed to have grown an enviable beard in a record time, while two of the top male contenders have taken a different and somewhat questionable approach. To be honest, we as the writers of this column are so shocked and concerned for the honour of the bearded man world-wide, that we cannot express ourselves adequately in words.

Let the pictures do the explaining...

Wiam Haddad and Fred Fourie



(top l-r) Christelle caught in the kitchen before shaving; Zandi showing off the "air of intelligence" that a beard automatically bestows.

(middle l-r) Delia looking pensive; Clokes showing off the wild-Island look; Mia demonstrates the Sealer-Death-Stare used on penguins.

(bottom l-r) Nompilo phones home to tell them about her transformation; despite the considerable handicap of being inanimate, Dolly manages to enter the competition as a front-runner.



Continued on next page...

Beards update cont'd



(top l-r) Rory must have taken steroids (or horse powder) to catch up so quickly, what a thick and luscious beard!; Jacqui shows a beautiful auburn number; Leonie demonstrates that only with a beard can you achieve true physical feats of strength.

(middle l-r) a fierce looking Red-Beard the Pirate (aka Dawn) threatens our photographers; Nico is soothed by John's loving touch. Note the "Pink Passion" nail polish on opposite hands.

(bottom) Fred and Wiam are dumbfounded by unexpected progress of the contest. In the wake of the scandal, Nico and John have both been issued with beard-point demerits.



NOVO's Subantarctic Holiday

What your coffee machine does when you're not looking...

After 'NOVO's' successful kidnaping, and the failure of the team to meet the ransom demands, NOVO requested a leave of absence to explore the island. It turns out that NOVO was very happy and even relieved to have been kidnapped. His adventures provided him with some relaxation time to recuperate from his demanding work schedule of making coffee for 21 people all day every day.

Ironically, the very first thing NOVO did was make himself and his captors a sensationally delicious cup of coffee. Later that evening he discovered that he was an excellent pool player, which attracted the local talent at the bar. The following day he cured his hangover by taking a slow amble in the fresh air to see his first Wandering Albatross (at a safe distance) and then took the time to unwind and suntan with a stunning view of the crashing ocean waves. The next day he was up for a more adrenaline pumping adventure and decided on some rock climbing (NOVO did not sign the Adventure Policy and is therefore not subject to its directive).

To end his holiday NOVO took a long sunset hike over the blechnum, through the mires, down to the rocky shore where he happened, rather suddenly, upon a fur seal pup which gave him such a fright that he almost dropped his coffee beans.

Much to his delight, when NOVO was returned home by the B.S. Bandits, he met a new addition to the kitchen appliance family, a beautiful Grey Petrel coloured toaster. They fell head over plug point for each other; sparks flew, and currently are ecstatic about each other. The team welcomed NOVO back with open arms and empty coffee mugs, and everyone lived happily ever after.

No coffee machines were harmed in the making of this adventure.

The Black Skua Bandits



(clockwise from top left) NOVO enjoys a cuppa; NOVO sinks the 8-ball; NOVO in the wild; mountaineering; the shock of seeing a seal pup; meets a hot new member of the kitchen; slow walk in the fresh air; catching a tan; living it up in the bar with Dolly.

Photo Gallery

(clockwise from top left) Mia makes a meal for one (hut burger) at Mized Pickle; all things tiny; Gentoo Penguin with two chicks; Jason in a cave; Nompilo having a ball; snow wakes.



Mia Wege



Jason Nel



Jason Nel



Nompilo Radebe



Inno Mthembu



Nico Lübcker

Photo Gallery

(clockwise from top left) hand portrait in the sunset; interior and Prince Edward above the clouds; small waterfall and cave on the way to Repettosl a Tern takes a break; the Agulhas II makes her appearance; the team watches for lightning in the tunnels; Fred, Mia and Rory having a laugh at Crane Point.



Nico Lübcker



Wiam Haddad



Christelle van Vuuren



Wiam Haddad



Jason Nel



Tshepo Tawane



Jason Nel

Photo Gallery

(clockwise from top left) Remote camera captures the Gentoos with the Agulhus II in the background; sunrise at Mixed Pickle; a fur seal wonders what "that" is; King Penguin beauty; an Orca pops up after eating a seal.



Linda Clokie



Wiam Haddad



Wiam Haddad



Fred Fourie



Wiam Haddad

Photo Gallery



Fred Fourie



Wiam Haddad

(clockwise from top left) Petrel crane at dusk; trio of Killer Whales; kelp under the microscope; igneous rock extrusions; sea debris after a storm; receiving cargo at crane point, Fred directing; curious petrel.



Fred Fourie



Rory Meyer



Rory Meyer



Tshepo Tawane



Fred Fourie

Thoughts from the editor...

July into August has been genuinely fantastic. 4 months on the island now. I had the chance to walk to Repettos and Katedraal huts and had great experiences with team mates and personal moments of quiet that wouldn't have happened otherwise. As the time passes I prove to myself that I am more than I was (or I can exert myself more than I thought possible—or pleasant!), by sheer will-power and exposure to the elements.

Aside from rat-race-escape reasons to come to Marion, I

wanted the experience of the proximity and honesty of the wildlife and landscape. The island hasn't let me down, and every time I take a moment to catch my breath I scan the environment to take in the contrasts and beauty it has to offer. I positively wax lyrical!

August is meant to be a cold windy month, but there have been some lovely days so far. The beach-masters making their appearance heralds the start of a truly exciting spring coming up—what I've come to see first-

hand.

We also had the Agulhus II make her majestic appearance and we had early Christmas (or it felt that way!). Seeing foreign faces in the speedboat as it delivered wares to us was also peculiar. Thanks very much to everyone involved in the logistics of those deliveries, including and especially the DEA.

Let's hope the best for the next month.

Marion, Out.

Christelle van Vuuren

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