

Gough Bunting G57

First Edition

Oct 2011



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Welcome from the Leader

Good day all. Here we are the bright new team on our way to the new and unexpected. We all have been waiting for a opportunity like this. Thanks to the D&A for making all this happen and for all the training we did. The team really enjoyed the first aid and fire training not to mention the cooking training that was a lot of fun. Also for the other more focused training. Behind us is the red taxi taking us to our new home. This was the last trip the SA Agulhas did to Gough Island, we as team where very privileged to be part of the great ships history. Next year the SA Agulhas 2 will be fetching us, if all works according to plan. On the island now we are trying to figure out what, where and when. Some of us already started some projects. I just wane thank Shiraan the DCO for all the assis-tance at takeover and we all hope to see him next year with the new ship. To all friends and family in SA and in France hope all the best for u guys and thanks for all the support.

Sunette



The Team



Team Leader, Medic: Sunette Ligthelm

All I can say is wow, to have a opportunity like this I though never possible, but here I am on one of the most beautiful places on earth. I grow up in Namibia and now live in Strand in the Western Cape. I was a medic for a private company in the Western Cape. This is my first ever expedi-tion on one of the islands.



Deputy Leader, Radio Tech: Leonard Maree

A farm boy from the Vrystaat, here to make sure the comms with SA and Tristan Da Cunha. Love being back on the island and being a islander again. Looking forward to the new challenges and having faun with new islanders.



Diesel Mechanic: Marius Wolmarans

Born in Namibia living in New Zealand.

Looking after the base, the generators and all and all maintenance of day to day living. Enjoying the breathtaking outdoors to the fullest and spending time with the team and birds.



Senior Meteorologist: Gerard Oppel

A young lad from Springbok, I find the place so awesome and breath taking just to see this is such a unbelievable experience the trueness of pure nature. Lov-ing every moment of the experience and beauty. Looking forward to future walks on the beautiful island.



Assistant Meteorologist: Jack Mathabatha

Been here before looking for new and exiting times on the Is-land. Taking each day as they come and doing all I can for pure enjoyment. It's better than I remember, going forth and building new friendships and memories.



Assistant Meteorologist, Environmental officer: Brendan Dunne

Young man from Jozy coming from the smoke and noise of the city is all taken away by the sheer beauty of Gough. Enjoying the birds and new landscapes to the fullest.



Senior Field Assistant: Karen Bourgeois

All the way from the north down to the south and loving it. Might not be France but Gough is now home with a bunch of nuts from SA. The closeness of the wildlife is astonishing



Field Assistant: Sylvain Drumzee

A Frenchman on Gough having the time of his life. Photos can't express the beauty of the birdlife. Don't even miss France I enjoy it too much here on Gough.

From the pen of an Old Islander.

The saying goes that old habits never die. Maybe it should be: Old inhabitants never die because here I am once again on Gough Island. Never thought I would have the opportunity to visit this wonderful Island again, and yes, the first sighting from the ship made me feel like I was coming home. Like the old song goes: "The old house is still standing while the paint is cracked and dry."

The Sooties still greet you with their synchronous formation flying, The Yellow noses gives you the occasional nod of recognition from their nests and the Skuas still look at you as if you were a fresh supply of meat from abroad.

The turns are still quarrelling and fluttering about to pouch a morsel of seafood from one another while the moorhen is taking a luxury bath in the inner court of the base and the Bunting hops onto the stoep for a quick morning chat.

Nothing has changed except for the many improvements in communications, recreational facilities and other household and cooking conveniences as well as safety equipment which all contribute to better quality of living at Gough. My thanks to DEA as well as Private Works Department.

Although it was good to see the ship depart after a busy Takeover. We soon realised that we would miss all the new friends we accumulated during the trip. It was a pity we could not disembark at Tristão da Cunha to shake hands with old friends on that side but it was due to the unpredictable weather. Luckily we are in daily contact with them on HF Radio which make us feel less isolated.

It also seems that the winter takes longer this time to dissipate so I did not feel ready yet to go take a dip in Swemgat. Maybe December will be warmer.



I took a walk to Sealbeach yesterday to go greet my old friends and realised once again how easy it is to step on one of them if you are not cautious . Some rocks suddenly becomes awake if you step too close and you can leap quite high if it suddenly barks at you. It is also strange but some little ones call me MaMaaaahh.....Meeeee!!!!!!!!!!!!!! . Could be that they saw some pictures of the birthday party!

Due to a Birthday the team had the opportunity of bonding together with a fancy dress party which was a lot of fun. And a lot of games was played afterwards. See the accompanying photos in this issue. Food on the island is as always good and it seem that all the team members are excellent cooks. The cooking training we had this time around was excellent and could be the reason for this. To my family and dear friends in South Africa. I miss you a lot and wish you could come over for a day or two to also experience this fantastic Island. In the meantime I will collect as many photos as possible to display on our next get-together.

I wish you all luck an happiness in sunny S.A.

Untill next month.

Leo.



From the lab – by K. Bourgeois and S. Dromzée

Our discovery of the Gough Island fauna began during our voyage from Cape Town to Gough as we saw most of the island breeding species at sea. However, our sightings on the island are much more impressive as we can approach seabirds much closer and observe their behaviour during a longer time.



The first real contact with Gough and its wildlife was during the round-island count of Tristan albatross chicks undertaken during the take-over with Henk Louw (Gough 54) and Nic Le Maître (Gough 56). This was the occasion to see almost the entire island, to familiarize us with the walk with boots in the bogs, and to get the measure of how changing and harsh the weather can be here. During the three days spent in the mountain we had beautiful weather with blue sky and sun shining, mist and rain making uneasy the navigation and the chick count, and wind making difficult the walk and the standing position.

However, we enjoyed this walk and amazing land-scapes we have seen. We saw with emotion our first Tristan albatross chicks who survived mice attacks and bad weather conditions. We also learnt how to handle and ring these big babies of 7-9 kg, avoiding biting and flushing. The metal ring fitted on the leg of birds is a mean to identify them and to estimate the age of first breed-ing, fidelity to the breeding site and to the mate, survival rate. . .

(Karen; Kenk; Sylvain)

When we came back to the base, Kenk and Nic also showed us the yellow-nosed albatross and northern rockhopper penguin study colonies and handling, while John Cooper (conservation officer), Jan Bradley and Rouberre Botha (rope access tech-nicians) showed us areas infested by the invasive plant procumbent pearlwort and how to treat these areas. Last year, John has set up a study on a colony of southern giant petrels located below Low Kump. So he showed us the site and how to moni-tor and handle these birds.



Yellow-Nosed
Albatrosses



Great Shearwater

When the S.A. Agulhas went away on the 5th October, we began to perform monitoring alone. We have monitored the yellow-nosed albatross study colony to identify breeding birds, egg-laying dates and the fate of eggs. Only 31 eggs were laid this year, which is quite few in comparison to previous years. This trend is confirmed by the annual count of this species breeding pairs on southern colonies. Similarly, we have pursued the monitoring of southern giant petrels, observing the first hatchings in the early October. We have almost completed the annual counts of yellow-nosed albatross, sooty albatross and northern rockhopper penguin colonies in the southern part of the island. These counts, as well as those of Tristan albatrosses, southern giant petrels, Atlantic petrels, great shearwaters and Gough moorhens, are parts of a long-term monitoring aiming to evaluate bird population trends on Gough Island.

We have also recovered and deployed geolocator devices on skuas, penguins and shearwaters. These devices are generally deployed during at least one year in order to identify inter-breeding and foraging areas. Great shearwaters will lay their egg in November, so we should be able to recover more devices next month. However, October offered us amazing observations of great shearwaters with thousands of birds flying above colonies around the base just after the sunset. During the darkness, they displayed an intense calling activity, defending, digging their burrow and mating on the ground.



Finally, we have undertaken some nocturnal surveys (spotlighting and call listening). These gave us the opportunity to appreciate the huge number of burrowing seabirds breeding on the island (especially great shearwaters, broad-billed prions and soft-plumaged petrels) and to observe some less common species such as Kerguelen petrels, common diving petrels and white-faced storm petrels.

K & S

(Common diving Petrel; Broad-billed Prion; Kerguelen Petrel)

Gough Island – A honour , and a dream come true

Firstly I would like to thank D&A, NDPW and S&WS for the opportunity given to me to be part of Team G57. During the takeover period I was fortunate enough to get to know so many amazing people who made a lasting impression on me. The public works guys with there "can do" attitude who went out of there way to make my year on the island a pleasure.

Our DCO Shiraan who co-ordinated the takeover from the moment he set foot on the island, he had everything under control and kept it that way. Mr John Cooper the wise but humble old man who through his actions showed me conservation is a passion not a job.

There where so many amazing people around during takeover and during my stay on Gough they will be missed. When the Agulhas finally departed it was with mixed feelings happy that we now had the base to ourselves but sadness knowing that friends we had made were leaving.

The first few days on our own was to say the least a shock. After having so many people around and then to not see anyone till ten in the morning took a while to get used too. We have now got into our separate routines and look forward to having dinner together or just a chat in the bar. Going for walks around this paradise we are on and taking thousands upon thousands of photo's has become the norm. Just sitting back watching the Albatross's soaring on the thermals. The Moor hens doing their thing and even the Skua's who dive bomb you when you get to close to the nests are moments

I will treasure for years to come.

Marius



Trip to Gough Island and the experience thus far.

The first day we departed on the S A Agallus was a wonderful feeling, being that it was my first time on a ship and the excitement of visiting some of the most remote islands in the world. The crew onboard the ship made me feel right at home and along with most of the passengers, always warm smiles and friendly faces. I found that the first two days onboard a ship for a newbie can be difficult, I was sea sick and it is the worst feeling I have experienced, but it did settle down after the pass of the second day and I could move about more freely. At Tristan Da Cunha, I experienced my first helicopter flight also, I was a bit nervous, but as soon as we took off it was nice. We got the opportunity to walk about on Tristan for about two hours; we bought trinkets and walked about taking pictures of how it looks there.



After a day or so after sailing from Tristan we could see Gough Island in the distance, I could hardly contain myself. We had a helicopter flight again to the Island and on arrival the whole team was waiting there for us, they greeted us with screams of excitement.



We started unpacking our luggage for the take over and got paired with our met partners to start learning the ways of the Island. The first couple of days getting use to the life on the Island were very easy, everybody would gladly help answer any questions and give advice.



We took a walk to Admirals one of the sites to visit at the Island, it was a hard walk there with the ground there sucking you in as you try to move forward. The weather was also changing constantly changing, raining for 2 minutes and then starting to clear again the next minute. The beauty of the Island and the fresh clean air just makes you feel alive and at one with nature.

After the takeover has passed us the new team needed to find our rhythm we held a meeting and discussed the rules and plans for cooking, food, rooms, cleaning and basic living ethics. I am quite use to the place now and the work is also good, because during take over the other two met kassies learned most of what they must do, at our first meeting we will look back at the progress and try to sharpen where needs sharpening.

Boy

GOUGH ISLAND SEATEMP AND CLIMATE STATS REPORT

SEATEMP REPORT: October 2011

Date	Seatemp	Date	Seatemp	Date	Seatemp
01	10.6	11	SWELL	21	SWELL
02	10.7	12	10.3	22	SWELL
03	10.7	13	10.6	23	SWELL
04	10.2	14	10.6	24	10.5
05	10.7	15	10.6	25	10.7
06	10.7	16	10.6	26	10.8
07	10.7	17	10.7	27	10.7
08	10.2	18	10.7	28	10.7
09	10.2	19	SWELL	29	10.5
10	SWELL	20	SWELL	30	10.8
				31	10.9

CLIMATE STATS: October 2011

Ave. Max Pressure	1016.1hPa
Ave. Min Pressure	1007.2hPa
Ave. Pressure	1011.5 hPa
Max Pressure	1027.0hPa
Min Pressure	984.1 hPa
Ave. Max Temp	12.4 °C
Ave. Min Temp	7.0 °C
Ave. Temp	9.7 °C
Max Temp	18.0 °C
Min Temp	1.8 °C
Ave Humidity	75%
Max Humidity	85%
Min Humidity	61%
Max Wind Gust	31.8 m/s or 114.5 km/h
Total Rainfall	153.0mm
Highest in 24 Hours	28.6 mm
Total days with rain	23 days
Total days >1mm	13 days
Total Sunshine	131.0 hours