



# The Antarctic Site Inventory

2008 Annual Report  
from  
Oceanites, Inc.

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**To all Oceanites supporters and friends —**

I'm happy to report that our work continues at a very high level of achievement, both on the science front with the Antarctic Site Inventory project, as well as on the education front with the Oceanites website and our upstart University Of Antarctica.

Our work continues because of the gracious and very generous assistance of so many of you, in the midst of these very difficult, economic times. Speaking for all of us in the Oceanites community, we are overwhelmingly grateful for your support.

Rest assured: For the Antarctic, for the penguins, to better understand the vagaries and consequences of global warming — we will keep the good fight going.

Another field season is underway, with the impetus of a new grant award from the US National Science Foundation and the ongoing support of both Lindblad Expeditions and the National Geographic Society, whose vessels, the *National Geographic Endeavour* and *National Geographic Explorer*, we utilize to gather data for the Antarctic Site Inventory. I also want to introduce you to Opus The Penguin and all the excitement that's happening on the Oceanites website.

Thanks again. We're looking forward to more successes and glad that you're with us. Keep dreaming penguins!

With all best wishes,

Ron Naveen  
President, Oceanites, Inc.  
November 30, 2008

## Antarctic Site Inventory News

The Antarctic Site Inventory continues setting the pace with its Antarctic Peninsula monitoring program. These baseline data and associated analyses assist the Antarctic Treaty governments in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Antarctic Environmental Protocol. We continue to report our results each season at Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and work closely with the US National Science Foundation to ensure a coordinated, Treaty-wide approach to monitoring Peninsula sites.

In 14 seasons from November 1994 through February 2008, the Inventory now has made 784 visits and collected data at 123 Antarctic Peninsula locations. During the recently concluded 2007-08 field season, the Inventory made 86 visits and collected data at 45 sites, including 11 sites not previously visited by Inventory researchers.

Our latest paper — Lynch, H., Naveen, R., and Fagan, W., 2008, *Censuses Of Penguins, Blue-eyed Shags, and Southern Giant Petrel Populations On The Antarctic Peninsula* (in *Marine Ornithology*) — updates census results for Adélie penguins, gentoo penguins, chinstrap penguins, blue-eyed shags, and southern giant petrels collected by the Inventory through the 2006-2007 field season.

The paper officially describes the new breeding population of gentoos in the Yalour Islands, the southernmost-known breeding colony of this species, and documents the gentoos' range expansion and population increases throughout the Peninsula. Further, the paper reports the continuing population decline of Peninsula Adélie, and documents that all three *pygoscelid* penguins — Adélie, gentoo, and chinstrap — are breeding at Booth Island, the fifth known site where they nest contiguously on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Very exciting news is a new, 5-year grant from the US National Science Foundation's Office Of Polar Programs to Oceanites and our colleagues at the Fagan Lab at the University Of Maryland, for ongoing data collection and unique-to-Antarctica, hierarchical Bayesian statistical analyses of the 14-year-old Antarctic Site Inventory database in concert with other long-term Peninsula datasets.



We are hoping these analyses will enable a more precise understanding of how Peninsula biological and physical processes may connect. Our goal is to characterize decadal scale changes in penguin and seabird populations in the Peninsula and to discern how Antarctic species are changing in abundance, relative abundance, and spatial distribution, and more importantly, identifying factors specifically driving these long-term changes.

Inventory results again were updated in an Information Paper presented by the US at the 2008 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Kiev, The Ukraine. The Antarctic Treaty's Committee On Environmental Protection (CEP) once more acknowledged and specifically welcomed the work of Oceanites in these regards. We continue to be honored that our work is given such prominent attention.

As noted in previous Annual Reports, the Inventory database is critical to ongoing efforts by Treaty nations to fulfill their responsibilities under the Antarctic Treaty, and is the cornerstone reference for the development of site visitation guidelines at key Antarctic Peninsula visitor locations.

### The 2008-09 Field Season

The Antarctic Site Inventory's 15th field season began in early November 2008. Once again, we are privileged to be working with Lindblad Expeditions and the National Geographic Society, and doing our shipboard surveys from their expedition ships, the *National Geographic Endeavour* and the new *National Geographic Explorer*.

Because the analyses under our new NSF grant focus on the Antarctic Peninsula as a whole, we have discontinued our focused monitoring/camping effort at Petermann Island, but we'll continue monitoring Petermann's penguins from the ships.

The roster of researchers for the new season includes: Ron Naveen, Heather Lynch, Rosemary Dagit, Steven Forrest, Ian Bullock, Megan McOsker, Iris Saxer, John Carlson, Michael Polito, Melissa Rider, Aileen Miller, Paula Casanovas, Thomas Mueller, Elise Larsen, and Evan Grant.

## Opus & The Oceanites Website

by Ron Naveen

The educational Oceanites website — [www.oceanites.org](http://www.oceanites.org) — continues to grow and expand. We're hoping the website will be the place everyone will access for up-to-date news about Antarctic science and the Antarctic Site Inventory project, and for a suite of educational presentations covering a range of subjects.

Our goal is a virtual classroom that enables people from all countries — irrespective of age and language — to learn more about Antarctica.

And, to that end, we're very excited that Opus, our fave cartoon penguin, has officially migrated to our website, where he's become the Dean of our online University Of Antarctica, as well as our official Antarctic "spokes-penguin."

Many, many thanks to Berkeley Breathed, who created Opus, for sharing him with us.



Courtesy of Berkeley Breathed, ©2005

The first course in the University, an *Introduction To Penguins*, with accompanying videos and quizzes, is now posted. Enjoy, enjoy!

Importantly, we'd value all of you heading to the website and adding your email address information, so you may receive email updates about the latest Antarctic news and science, and the latest educational courses in the University Of Antarctica. We want to substantially increase our flock of modern-day "Antarcticists" — as the great explorer Apsley Cherry-Garrard defined the term, who will help conserve the great Seventh Continent for future generations.





### **Heroes — Jean-Baptiste Charcot & Louis Gain**

Petermann Island, where the Antarctic Site Inventory had its monitoring field camp from 2003-08, is historically prominent because the French explorer Jean-Baptiste Charcot overwintered there in 1909 on his second Antarctic expedition aboard the vessel *Pourquoi Pas?*

During that sojourn, Charcot's lead biologist, Louis Gain, became the first scientist to ring and census Antarctic penguins — data that we're using to analyze how the Antarctic Peninsula has changed over the last century.

Louis Gain's penguin-ringing experiment at Petermann Island in 1909 launched the grand march to understand penguin breeding biology and population dynamics. His results were the first to suggest that adult penguins returned to the same location, season after season, to breed.

2009 is the 100th anniversary of Charcot's and Gain's seminal work — and, again, [please update your email information on The Oceanites Website](#) so we may apprise you of various events commemorating Charcot's and Gain's achievements.

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### **Photo credits:**

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Cover — Adélie penguin at Petermann Island.

p. 2 — Gentoo penguin chick at Petermann Island.

p. 3 — Adélie penguin control colonies on Paulet Island.

p. 4 — Lenticular cloud over Baily Head, Deception Island, one of the Antarctic Site Inventory's regular census sites.