

# The Antarctic Site Inventory – 2013 Annual Report

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## To all Oceanites supporters and friends . . .

The 2013-14 field season of Oceanites' Antarctic Site Inventory has just begun — our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season! Proud to say, the Inventory continues to be the only publicly supported science project working in Antarctica, and the only project monitoring significant penguin population changes in the vastly warming Antarctic Peninsula. Over the Inventory's 19 seasons, we've now accomplished 1,354 visits to 203 different sites.

That said, we've also been *sequestered* — the project's NSF funding now ended after 10 straight seasons and 14 of the 19 we've worked. Happily, the New Zealand and UK governments and The Jeniam Foundation have generously moved up to support our 20th season — but, more than ever, looking ahead, we need to enhance our public support.

Hopefully, some of that will arise through THE PENGUIN COUNTERS documentary about the Inventory's long-standing science effort. Getzels Gordon Productions launched a successful Kickstarter funding campaign to produce a festival-ready cut of the film, which, we hope, is ready in 2014 and, ultimately, broadcast nationally and internationally. We're grateful to those of you who contributed to the film campaign — and to all of you who, one way or another, provide support to keep our important work going.

As a result, this 'little science engine' keeps chugging forward — and we hope to continue doing so, producing important, cost-efficient work that advances the cause of Antarctic conservation for future generations.

As always . . . Keep Dreaming Penguins!

With all best wishes,  
Ron Naveen  
President, Oceanites, Inc.  
December 2, 2013

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- The 2013-14 Field Season
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Oceanites, Inc. / Antarctic Site Inventory  
P.O. Box 15259  
Chevy Chase, MD 20825  
USA

PHONE  
1-202-237-6262

EMAIL  
[oceanites.mail@verizon.net](mailto:oceanites.mail@verizon.net)

WEBSITE  
[www.oceanites.org](http://www.oceanites.org)

THE OCEANITES NEWS BLOG  
<http://oceanitesfeed.wordpress.com/>

The PENGUIN COUNTERS movie:  
<http://penguincountersmovie.com>



## **The 2013-14 Antarctic Site Inventory Field Season – Counting Penguins, Round 20**

The Inventory's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary field season is already underway, the project once again working closely with One Ocean Expeditions and its two vessels, *Akademik Ioffe* and *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, to achieve 60-70 visits at 'core sites' that we census regularly from season to season. We'll be onboard for nine departures and with this roster of researchers: Ron Naveen, Heather Lynch, Steven Forrest, Paula Casanovas, Lesley Thorne, Phil McDowall, Catie Foley, Maureen Lynch, and Michael Schrimpf. We hope to resume our 'remote sites' research via yacht next season.

## **Directed Research Onboard *GOLDEN FLEECE*, January 2013**

Like our previous, directed, research effort at Deception Island in December 2011, our work onboard *Golden Fleece* in January 2013 was designed to fill important 'data gaps' in the Antarctic Site Inventory database — in this case, focusing on identifying new gentoo penguin colonies south of 65° S. latitude and censusing Adélie penguin colonies as far south as Marguerite Bay. We continue to be the only project monitoring the significant penguin population changes in this region — Adélies and chinstraps declining significantly, gentoos increasing both their range and numbers.

The captain of *Golden Fleece* is Jérôme Poncet, who's been sailing Antarctic waters for three decades. Critically, we were able to retrace the routes Jérôme followed during his years' surveying penguin colonies in the Peninsula (which were the first-ever penguin surveys across the whole Peninsula), and we are crafting a paper that updates Jérôme's seminal work.

What was not anticipated, wonderfully, was exceptionally good, calm weather. We covered an amazing amount of distance, achieved 47 site censuses, 35 of which sites were new additions to the Inventory database. In total, we censused 96 locations at or within these sites in 68 hours, 59 minutes of field work, counting 22,865 penguin nests, 64,543 penguin chicks, and 2,677 shag nests. All census sites were track-logged or way-pointed with our GPS devices, which will assist better mapping of these sites and their penguin colonies.

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Our findings will have notable, positive impact on the Antarctic community, providing everyone detailed information about the changes both to the wildlife and the environment. In turn, this helps Antarctic Treaty Parties make decisions about site and visitor management.

In particular, at the *scientific* level, we discovered that Adélie penguin colonies at the southern end of the Peninsula are faring better than Adélie colonies to the north. This, of course, leads us to examining factors that potentially explain the difference — for example, the extent of winter sea ice, changing chlorophyll-a levels, increased sea surface temperatures, or perhaps a combination thereof. These analyses are underway.

We're grateful to The Tinker Foundation for supporting this critical work. Our results and analyses are integral to the way the Antarctic Treaty Parties determine how to update extant site management guidelines and draft new ones.

The last edition of Oceanites' *Antarctic Peninsula Compendium* covered 142 sites. Now, with the work accomplished from *Golden Fleece*, the Inventory has visited 203 sites in 19 seasons.

Depending on funding, a 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Antarctic Peninsula Compendium* is intended by the start of the 2015-16 field season.

## **THE PENGUIN COUNTERS**

### **Documentary**

As previously reported, Inventory researchers were accompanied by accomplished documentary filmmakers from Getzels Gordon Productions during their seminal penguin censusing at Deception Island in December 2011.

The Deception work confirmed that chinstrap penguins are declining significantly throughout the Antarctic Peninsula. Getzels Gordon Productions captured 70+ hours of amazingly beautiful footage about that effort and, this fall, ran a successful Kickstarter fundraising campaign to produce a festival-ready cut of the film. The working plan is to broadcast the completed film in the US and internationally.

Many of you contributed to the fundraising campaign for the film and, for that, we are immensely grateful. Please follow progress on the film at the film's website —

<http://penguincountersmovie.com>

The film also will generate numerous short, educational video clips that will be used in the University of Antarctica portion of the Oceanites website.

## Other News

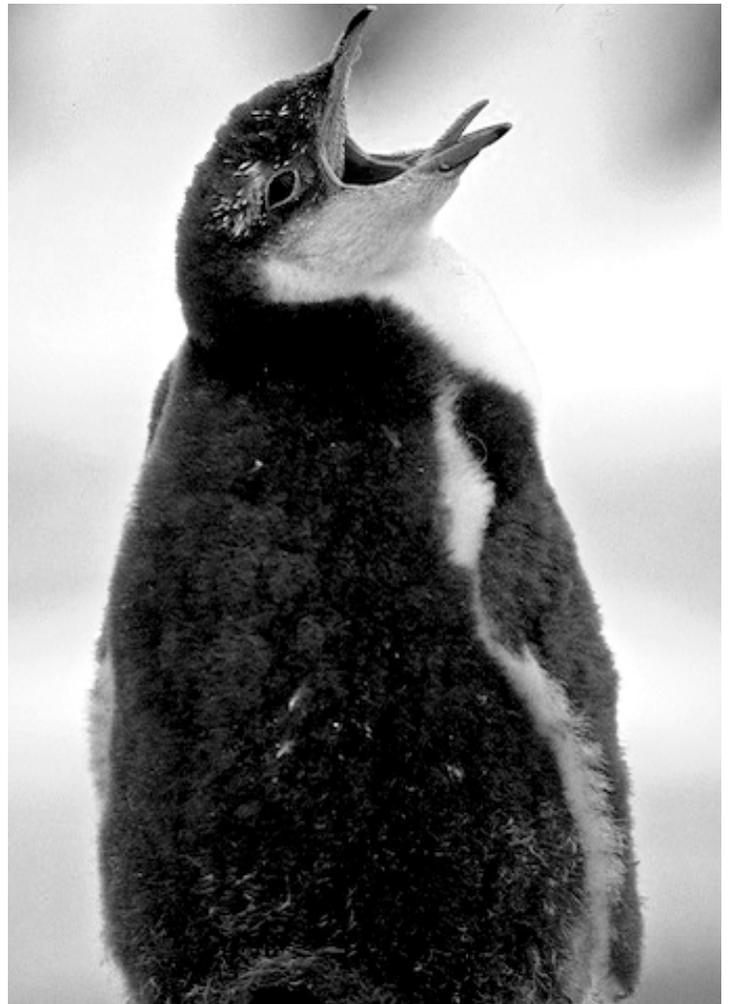
• **Results.** Over 19 seasons, 1994-2013, the Inventory has now made 1,354 site visits and collected census and descriptive data at 203 locations.

During the 2012-13 field season, the Inventory made 127 site visits and collected data at 86 sites; 25 of these sites were visited multiple times, 61 were visited only once.

• **Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.** At the 2013 Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting in Brussels, the US once again submitted an Information Paper informing all delegates of results from and progress of the Antarctic Site Inventory to date.

Ron Naveen again participated as a governmental adviser to the US delegation.

The next Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting will be held in Brasilia, Brazil in May 2014.



All photographs by Ron Naveen, ©2013 Oceanites, Inc.

- p.1 Adélie penguin, Admiralty Bay
- p.2 Floating ice with penguins, Paradise Bay.
- p.3 Sparing chinstrap penguins, Paradise Bay
- p.4 Gentoo penguin chick, Petermann Is.

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