

TWO RECORDS OF SEABIRD ENTANGLEMENT AT CASEY, ANTARCTICA

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Woehler & Johnstone (in press) document the first known instances of seabird entanglement in the Australian Antarctic Territory (AAT); that of approximately 20 Adélie Penguins *Pygoscelis adeliae* trapped in a fishing net that had been lost from a research cruise near Davis (68 35S, 77 58E) in Prydz Bay, East Antarctica, during February 1986. Given the increasing attention now being focused on the impact of incidental mortality on seabirds and seals in the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, CCAMLR, (Croxall 1990), documentation of all instances of entanglement and deaths as a result of fisheries' activities in the region is warranted, and may lead to the identification of areas and/or species particularly sensitive to such impacts. CCAMLR initiated a reporting protocol designed to document the occurrences of entangled seabirds and seals, but has failed so far in its efforts to enforce the reporting of such instances (Croxall 1990).

Two further instances of seabird entanglements in the AAT are reported here; both from Casey (66 17S, 110 32E). On 23 April 1987, a long dead South Polar Skua *Catharacta maccormicki* was found with fishing line coming out of its mouth and wrapped around its neck. No further details were recorded.

Skuas are scavenging birds, known to frequent station rubbish sites and to follow ships at sea. It is possible that the fishing line came from the nearby Casey rubbish site, although the bird may have travelled some distance before dying, and, by implication, the fishing line may have come from a site distant to Casey, since this species is migratory

(Watson 1975).

On 1 December 1989, a juvenile Adélie Penguin was found with wire wrapped around its legs and flippers (Fig. 1) at Whitney Point (66 15S, 110 32E), approximately six kilometres north of Casey. The wire was tangled extensively around the feet of the bird, and it was clear that the wire was responsible for death through immobilisation. The bird had been dead for at least nine months, i.e. since the previous season, but may have been one year older. The wire in which the bird was entangled continued through the colony, and when collected, was found to be c. 50 m long. The origin of the wire is also unknown, but may have been used during the occupation of the nearby Wilkes Station (66 15S, 110 31E) between 1957 and 1969.

The entanglement of the Adélie Penguin demonstrates the potential sensitivity of this species to ground-laid cables. Given the large number of stations and field sites present in the Antarctic, and the concomitant services utilizing ground cables, it is surprising that such instances have not been previously reported.

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Figure 1

Entangled Adélie Penguin *Pygoscelis adeliae*, Whitney Point, 1989/90.