



**AFRICAN PENGUIN CHICK BOLSTERING PROJECT**

Founding Partners – SANCCOB (Southern African Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds), Bristol Conservation and Science Foundation, Department of Environmental Affairs (Oceans and Coasts), Cape Nature, ADU University of Cape Town, Robben Island Museum, IFAW (International Fund for Animal Welfare)

# AFRICAN PENGUIN CHICK BOLSTERING PROJECT REPORT

**PROJECT UPDATE:** 9 January 2013

Chick report and data supplied by Dr. Nola Parsons SANCCOB Veterinarian and Researcher

Compiled by Margaret Roestorf SANCCOB Executive Director

**African penguin chicks removed from moulting parents 2012**

**4 January 2013**

Area	Admit	Release	%	Died	%	Still at SANCCOB	%
Betty's Bay	318	13	4%	84	26%	221	69%
Boulders	1		0%	1	100%	0	0%
Dyer Island	10	3	30%	2	20%	5	50%
Robben Island	2	1	50%		0%	1	50%
Langebaan	1		0%	1	100%		0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>68%</b>

Since 1 November 2012, we have admitted 332 chicks, mainly from the Stony Point colony at Betty’s Bay. The chicks have mostly been in poor condition with 27% mortality to date. There are currently 227 chicks at SANCCOB. The age groups are mostly represented by P4 (40%), P3 (30%) and P2 (20%) stages on admission.

There have been 88 deaths so far and causes of death include infectious causes (airsacculitis and pneumonia (45), aspergillosis (4), endocarditis (1), malaria (2), umbilical infection (1), liver infection (6) and enteritis and peritonitis (7)) as well as emaciation (10), anaemia (5), head injury (1) and unknown (6). Of the 88 deaths, 24 have died after a week of admission to the centre, with a median of 5 days, strongly indicating that many of the chicks are already sick or compromised on admission. In addition, the chicks have high parasite burdens (mostly *Ornithodoros capensis* ticks) on admission and many have moderate quantities of plant matter (mostly small twigs) in their stomachs on post mortem evaluation. The ticks spread blood parasites such as *Babesia* and *Borrelia* which can compromise the chicks’ condition. The plant matter indicates that the chicks are starving in the colonies and trying to eat anything that they find.



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The longer the chicks stay in rehabilitation, the more prone they are to succumbing to captive related problems and this is exacerbated by being in an initial poor condition.

Area from	Released at Boulders	Number banded	Released at Robben Island	Number banded	Total released	Total banded
Betty's Bay	8	6	5	5	13	11
Dyer Island	2	2	1	1	3	3
Robben Island			1		1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>14</b>

We have released 17 blues of which 14 have been banded with black rubber bands (CapeNature permission).

