



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



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AFRICAN PENGUIN CHICK BOLSTERING PROJECT

Summary of African penguin chicks admitted to SANCCOB for 2014

Centre	Admitted	Released	%	Died	%	Still at SANCCOB	%
Table View	877	665	76%	155	18%	57	6%
Cape St. Francis	95	82	86%	10	11%	3	3%
Total	972	747	77%	165	17%	60	6%

Summary of African penguin chicks admitted to SANCCOB for 2013

Centre	Admitted	Released	%	Died	%	Still at SANCCOB	%
Table View	793	528	67%	235	30%	30	4%
Cape St. Francis	92	72	78%	19	21%	1	1%
Total	885	600	68%	254	29%	31	4%

2014 was a very busy African penguin chick year. The Chick Bolstering Project has grown from strength to strength due the hard working staff at SANCCOB and the amazing partnerships that have developed as a result of this critical project.

The Cape Town centre received a total of 877 chicks during the year, which is the highest number since our records start in 2001. Of these, 538 were chicks admitted due to moulting parents at the end of the year; previous years: 841 in 2006, 481 in 2007, 483 in 2010, 335 in 2012 and 463 in 2013. In 2013, the Chick Rearing Unit (CRU) also increased the number of eggs hatched to 123. The release rate for eggs hatched to release improved dramatically this year due to multiple strategic interventions. The overall release rate for both the Cape Town and Cape St. Francis centres combined stands at 77% (could still potentially increase) which is an outstanding achievement considering the poor condition that many of the chicks when they were admitted to the centres. There are currently 60 chicks still remaining in both centres from 2014, which will increase the release rate even further.

Chick Rearing Unit (CRU)



Chick Rearing Unit (CRU)

Incubators and Brooders in the CRU

A CRU audit was conducted in 2014 by the Head of Veterinary Services and the Rehabilitation Manager that identified problem areas within the CRU so as to reduce the chick loss rate (especially chicks hatched from eggs). Numbers of chicks that hatch from eggs in the CRU were evaluated from 2012 and 2013 and compared to values published for hatching and fledging of African penguins in the wild. Our release rate of c. 25% was below the fledging rate of c. 50% for birds in the wild. With successful interventions in 2014, the 2014 hatching to release rate increased to 58%, a vast improvement on the previous years.

Nursery

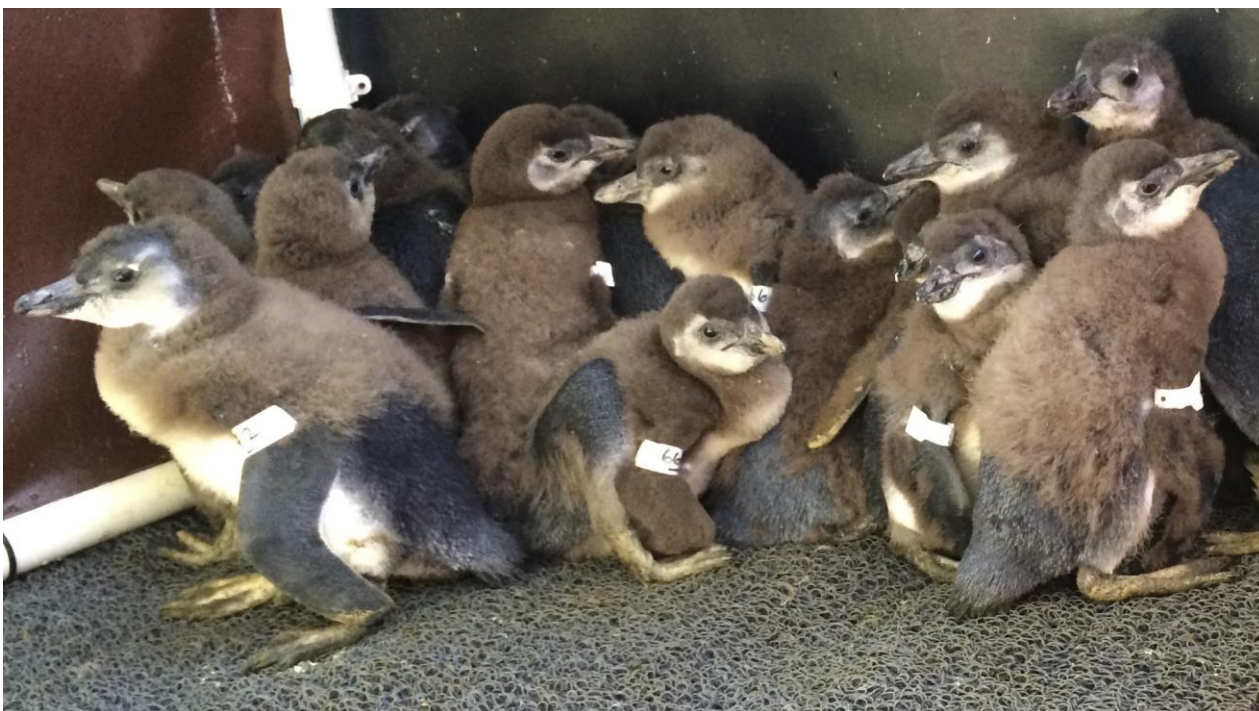
The Nursery was constructed in 2014 as a result of the CRU audit. The audit highlighted the need to increase the space required for the rearing of the large number of chicks as well as a requirement to separate older chicks from the very young chicks to prevent the increase in the bacterial load in the rearing rooms, which was detrimental to the newly hatched chicks.



Nursery

Chick Pens in the Nursery

Transponders inserted into African penguin chicks admitted in 2014



Older African penguin chicks at SANCCOB

Transponders Inserted	Chicks Released	Chicks Died	Chicks still at SANCCOB	Transponders Failed or fallen out	%
455	405	7	42	1	4%

455 transponders were inserted into African penguin fledglings before release. It is important to note that the 7 deaths were not related to inserting the transponders, but rather due to other problems such as various illnesses. This transponder work is part of the African penguin Transponder (PIT) Project in South Africa, which is under development to ensure that researchers gather information on African penguin survival, and potentially allows more detailed studies on foraging behaviour, movement (dispersal) and colony attendance patterns. It is envisaged that all rehabilitated African penguins including the chicks from the chick bolstering project have transponders inserted to assist with the aims mentioned above, but also to be able to monitor the long term success of rehabilitation.

Project partners and supporters:

The CBP is a collaboration between SANCCOB (project administrators), the Bristol Conservation and Science Foundation, the Animal Demography Unit (UCT), DEA (Oceans and Coasts), CapeNature and Robben Island Museum and SANParks, and is supported by Allwetterzoo Münster; Artis Zoo; Banham Zoo; Basel Zoo; Bristol Zoo Gardens; Burger's Zoo; California Academy of Science (Stenhardt Aquarium); Cheyenne Mountain Zoo; Detroit Zoo; Dierenpark Amersfoort; Disney Rapid Relief Fund; Erlebnis Zoo Hannover; Florida Aquarium; Fort Wayne Kid's Zoo; Georgia Aquarium; International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW); Jenkinson's Aquarium; La Palmyre Zoo; Leiden Conservation Foundation; Leipzig Zoo; Le Pal Nature Foundation; Little Rock Zoo; Living Coasts; Memphis Zoo; Minnesota Zoo; Monterey Aquarium; National Aviary; Oceana; Océarium du Croisic; Old Mutual Staff Volunteer Fund Trust; Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium; Ripley's Aquarium in the Smokies; Riverbanks Conservation Fund; Sea Research Foundation (Mystic Aquarium); SeaWorld Busch Garden Conservation Fund and the SeaWorld Animal Crisis Fund; Shedd Aquarium; Toledo Zoo; US Fish and Wildlife Service; ZOOM Torino.



Young African penguin chick

Conclusion

The importance of the Chick Bolstering project cannot be overemphasized. 2014 was a successful year and this conservation initiative is a leading example of how partnerships can make a tangible difference to conservation of a species. Thank you to all involved.