

Hi all

13 January 2013

Well here we are, still off Casey station in Antarctica.

The weather has been windy with snow storms until two nights ago when the wind dropped and at last they could start off loading the cargo for Casey and then yesterday start pumping fuel ashore. We are anchored about 1.5 km offshore in a beautiful bay. The station buildings, each a different colour, sit on a small hill overlooking the bay in which we are anchored. The coast is alternating ice and rock, the rocks different hues of browns, greys and black and the ice different textures of white with hints of blue.

There are some small rocky islands and, in the distance, the icebergs that have stranded in the shallow waters off Casey having drifted here from the east. On this still calm quiet day the scene is rather special. The refuelling has finished and cargo operations should finish this evening; perhaps tonight we will set out for Hobart, eight days travel from here across the stormy but bird rich Southern Ocean.

I have been working on two of the many science papers we will produce from this expedition, the most interesting for me investigates the changing fortunes of the penguins at Cape Denison as Antarctica warms, the katabatic winds strengthen, pack ice conditions change and large icebergs calve off from the ice shelves more often.

It has been a wonderful opportunity for me, a seabird biologist, to work with climate scientists and oceanographers. I have learned so much. This is one of the most productive research expeditions I have had the privilege to take part in. I just hope this expedition is remembered for the research we undertook and that we could share this with the public, rather than our ship becoming beset in the ice.

Kerry-Jayne