

Director of the British Antarctic Survey, has been chosen as the chairman of the scientific steering committee and will be one of the conference proceeding editors.

The objective of the symposium is to bring together scientists working on nutrient cycles and food chains in terrestrial, marine, and freshwater antarctic and subantarctic ecosystems. Through papers and discussion participants will review existing knowledge and its application in major fields of research, pinpoint areas where more research is necessary, evaluate problems in each field, consider how multidisciplinary research might solve these problems, and identify priorities for future research.

The program will consist of invited and contributed papers. Scientists interested in contributing papers must submit a 200- to 300-word synopsis with a title to the Symposium Secretariat by 30 September 1982. The scientific steering committee will review proposed titles and synopses and notify the authors of the committee's decision by 31 December 1982. Manuscripts, not exceeding 15 pages including tables and illustrations, will be required by 31 July 1983. All papers will be sent to referees before they are accepted for publication in the printed proceedings. Authors, whose papers are accepted, should note that they must attend the conference and personally present their papers.

All correspondence related to the symposium should be directed to the Symposium Secretariat S.283, CSIR, P. O. Box 395, Pretoria 0001, South Africa. The international telephone number for the symposium office is +27 12 86-9211.

The three previous conferences held by SCAR dealt with microbiology, biogeography, ecology and physiology, and human physiology and psychology (1962, Paris, France); antarctic ecology and antarctic biology except human physiology and psychology (1968, Cambridge, England); and adaptations within antarctic ecosystems (1974, Washington, D.C.).

## South polar skua at Palmer Station

The south polar skua (*Catharacta macrorhynchos*) is one of two skua species common to Palmer Station and the Anvers Island area. The bird's average weight is less than 1,800 grams, and its overall length is approximately 53 centimeters. It has a dark brown back with a black bill and feet that sometimes have white markings.



NSF photo by William Curtsinger.

A skua, like YABY, flies near the Antarctic Peninsula. "Many people thought YABY was a tame bird, a pet. But that's not so. YABY was as wild as all Antarctica. He was a lot like us, a migrant . . . He was just better at it than we were . . . He was hungrier, more aggressive, demanding, and, in the end, successful. His children will carry on for him." From Gary Bennett's eulogy for the south polar skua YABY. The eulogy was delivered in January 1982 at Palmer Station on Anvers Island.

With average wingspread of 127 centimeters this stocky bird is known for its rapid, powerful flight. It fiercely defends its territory, nest, and young and challenges intruders by raising its open wings over its back as it issues a harsh scream, known as a "long call." When defending its nest, it swoops down and strikes intruders with its wings and feet.

The south polar skua shares the Peninsula breeding grounds with the brown skua (*Catharacta lonnbergi*), which is a larger and more solitary bird. Both species are predators and scavengers, but studies conducted by University of Minnesota biologists since 1974 indicate that the south polar skua feeds mostly at sea and regularly brings its young krill and fish. It adapts to artificial feeding sites such as station dumps, and some of these birds prey on penguin eggs and young.

The south polar species is susceptible to climatic changes. In the Antarctic Peninsula region near Palmer Station the austral summers of 1974-1975 and 1975-1976, were relatively mild. During these two summers the south polar skua bred at record-high rates, and a larger than usual number of chicks survived. The next two austral summers, bad weather and severe ice conditions predominated. The combination of these two factors prevented the south polar skua from being able to get

enough food for its young. In 1976-1977 skua productivity and chick survival rates dropped radically; in 1977-1978 no chicks survived.

Probably the most southern-ranging bird, the south polar skua has been sighted at many locations around the continent including the South Pole. It migrates northward into the subtropics and probably the northern hemisphere during the austral winter. Birds banded in the Antarctic Peninsula area have been recovered in Baja California, Mexico (September 1975) and Godthabsfjord, Greenland (July 1975). These and other recoveries have led biologists to believe that the south polar skua may regularly cross the Drake Passage and fly northward across the Equator into the North Pacific and North Atlantic regions.

During the week of 25 January 1982, the personnel of Palmer Station mourned the passing of a south polar skua named YABY, who was known to Palmer Station residents since he was banded in 1975. Each year he and his mate returned to their breeding ground on Bonaparte Point across from Palmer Station. Each year he faithfully defended his mate and young and struggled to survive in the icy antarctic environment. A notorious scavenger at the station, YABY claimed Palmer as his territory but was never tamed by his human companions.

YABY received his name when he was banded in 1975 by David Neilson. Mr. Neilson, who during that austral summer was a member of the University of Minnesota research team, has written the brief eulogy for YABY that follows.

## Eulogy for YABY

Yellow, Aluminum, Blue, Yellow—YABY for short—the colorful band by which Palmer Station's resident skua was known. YABY bred across Hero Inlet from Palmer Station on Bonaparte Point since at least the 1974-75 austral summer. It was there on 15 January 1975 that I color coded YABY. From then on the legend grew.

YABY was a skua's skua. Despite his average size, breeding weight 1,300 grams, tarsus (leg) 68 millimeters and culmen (the edge of the bird's upper bill) 47.5 millimeters, he was unquestionably the dominant south polar skua in the area. No other south polar skua defended both a breeding and a feeding territory at Palmer except YABY. And what a prize feeding territory it was—the Palmer Station front porch! YABY had mastered the art of stealing Gary Bennett's delicious bratwursts and T-bones from a hot grill. Always the first in line, YABY made sure he brought home the bacon.

While YABY appeared tame at the station, he was really fearless and guarded faithfully his prize from all others. For YABY, it was a daily routine of long calls and wing raises until, being the last skua remaining, he would migrate north. Generally the first to return, YABY's migratory period at sea was the shortest of any south polar skua at Palmer—202 days. Defending Palmer meant being there.

On his breeding territory, YABY the protector was known only to a few of us who ventured there to band and weight chicks. What a rage he would assume when one stepped across the invisible, but real, territorial boundary. Catapulting off his perch while screaming the alarm call, he would swoop down upon us smartly administering head slaps with his leathery feet and talons. How many did we experience? Probably too many, perhaps not enough. It was just YABY's way of protecting his investment in the currency of life—the passing of genes to future generations. Without a doubt, YABY gave his all.

As the attentive parent, YABY and his mate YAWG bred each year, fledging six young between 1974-1975 and 1976-1977. Their successful reproduction was broken only by the icy 1977-1978 season when only six of over 200 skua pairs laid eight eggs. None were destined to hatch, but

YABY and YAWG laid a full clutch of two and faithfully incubated them for 26 days until they finally aborted the cause after losing 20 percent of their body weight.

### YABY's kids

Band number	Date hatched
877-34117	January 1975
877-34250	January 1975
877-36530	January 1976
877-36531	January 1976
877-36942	January 1977
877-37026	January 1977

The table lists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service band numbers for 6 of YABY's chicks and the month and year in which each chick was born. All of these chicks were banded by D. R. Neilson when he was a member of the University of Minnesota research team.

Can any skua succeed YABY at Palmer? In today's fickle world, his territorial devotion and faithfulness to YAWG seem unattainable, but there is hope. Certainly his superior genes have been perpetuated by his offspring, and maybe one of the kids (see table for list of chicks hatched and banded between 1975 and 1977) will return to Bonaparte Point and continue YABY's legend.

—David R. Neilson, Spooner, Wisconsin

## Sailing directions for Antarctica revised

The Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic and Topographic Center published corrected pages for *Sailing Directions for the Antarctic* (Publication 27—Change 1) in December 1981. These changes incorporate all revisions made since 1976 to the revised, second edition of the publication (1976) and include information from the British Admiralty *Antarctic Pilot*, 1974 edition.

The antarctic sailing directions describe the coasts of Antarctica and outlying islands as far north as 60°S latitude. Areas beyond the northern limit are included in other Defense Mapping Agency Hydrographic and Topographic Center sailing directions.

The second edition of the publication, issued in 1960, was compiled by RAdm. Robert A. J. English, U. S. Navy (Ret.) from various surveys and publications. Assistance was provided by staff members from the Johns Hopkins Medical School, University of Michigan, Library of Congress, Department of State, National Ar-

chives, American Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, the Royal Geographic Society (London), and the Hydrographic Department of British Admiralty.

The Defense Mapping Agency publishes the sailing directions under the authority of a Department of Defense directive and sections *Titles 10 and 14* of the U. S. Code. They comprise information on harbors, coasts, and waters around the world that cannot be illustrated on nautical charts or that is not available from other sources. Although new editions are issued only at specific intervals, changes made between updates are published in the weekly Notice to Mariners.

Purchasers of the book receive published changes free of charge. Subsequent changes may be purchased from sales agents listed in the DMA brochure *Numerical Listing of Charts and Publications* (Pub. 1-N-L) or ordered by mail directly from the Defense Mapping Agency, Hydrographic/Topographic Center, Attention: DDCP, 6500 Brookes Lane, Washington, D.C. 20315. The price of the book is \$4.50. Orders must be accompanied by a check from a U.S. bank or a money order. Both should be made payable to the Defense Mapping Agency. U. S. naval vessels and government agencies, which require copies for official use, will receive future changes automatically. If a government agency needs copies for its programs, the agency can request to be added to the official distribution list by contacting the Defense Mapping Agency at the above address.

