

Dispatch from Tuesday, 1 May 2007

Greetings:

One of the hard things about this job is that we have to use a small boat to search the area around Palmer Station looking for crabeater seals. Along the way we stumble upon a variety of interesting wildlife. Today we followed up on our crabeater seal friend from yesterday to see how she was doing and came upon a group of Gentoo penguins that had returned from a foraging trip. Unlike the more numerous Adélie Penguin, Gentoo Penguins stay in the general area after the breeding season. Thus you can generally see Gentoo Penguins coming ashore to rest after a feeding trip. I've included a picture of a Gentoo as it arrived on the beach prior to joining his buddies up on the snow, where Dave was watching them and taking some pictures.

It's always fun to see an old friend, the elephant seal. Many of us, on this project have worked on elephant seals for many years. However, I had to admit these big guys are pretty impressive and appear quite a bit larger than the northern elephant seals we get at the Año Nuevo IsdI rookery just north of our campus. These guys were hauled out to molt. It's hard to see in this compressed image, but the hair and skin just falls off in big sheets.

Best from the seal team



