

MELBOURNE AQUARIUM GIVES THE AAD A LEG UP

Australian Antarctic Division Sea Bird Ecologist Dr Barbara Wienecke, is working with Melbourne Aquarium's staff and colony of Gentoo penguins, to trial a data-logging leg band which will help the long-term monitoring of their Adelie cousins in Antarctica.

Gentoo penguins Roxy, Crumpet, Mushroom, Aroha, Herbie, Woody and Indi will be fitted with the 1.5g leg bands, with Melbourne Aquarium's keepers watching to make sure they do not interfere with the penguins' daily activities.



"It is a great advantage to have an opportunity to test a new method before going into the field where this kind of monitoring is not possible," said Dr Wienecke.



The computer contained in the leg band has the ability to record where the birds travel, their temperature and how fast they swim.

"With advances in technology it is now possible to attach data loggers to the birds which collect information about individual birds, such as location and their activity patterns but also physical variables, such as light and temperature," said Dr Wienecke.

"By putting all this information together we are gaining valuable insights into the areas important to seabirds at the various stages of their annual cycle, as well as variations in their environment."

The one-month trial will be conducted at Melbourne Aquarium throughout October.

Melbourne Aquarium is proud to be supporting the Australian Antarctic Division.

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For more information or images, please contact:
Gabiella Iacuone
Gabiella.iacuone@melbourneaquarium.com.au
03 9923 5982 / 0448 569 824