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Further population growth in the Heard Island King Penguins.—The current recolonization of Heard Island (53° S, 73° E) by the King Penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonica*) presents an interesting example of population growth under natural conditions, for the island is remote and rarely visited, and its native ecosystem has not been damaged by human activities. The King Penguin began regular breeding there at some time between 1955 and 1963 (Budd and Downes, *Emu*, 64: 302, 1965), and the breeding population more than doubled in the two years 1963-1965 (Budd, *Auk*, 85: 689, 1968). This note reports observations made in March 1969 by Warwick Deacock, Robin Miller, and myself, when as members of the Australian National Antarctic Research Expeditions (ANARE) we visited the island aboard the USCGC 'Southwind.' During our 7 days ashore we searched most of the coast-line on foot, but had to omit the southeast coast from the Spit to Long Beach. Two of us had taken part in the 1963 and 1965 counts, and we used the same methods as before.

TABLE 1
KING PENGUINS AT HEARD ISLAND, 1963-1969¹

Place	Date			Adults			Eggs and chicks		
	1963	1965	1969	1963	1965	1969	1963	1965	1969
Spit Bay north	20 Feb.	31 Jan.	14 Mar.	24	56	90	13	36	49
Spit Bay south	20 Feb.	31 Jan.	14 Mar.	10	25	63	5	9	37
Vahsel Moraine	3 Mar.	— ²	17 Mar.	6	— ²	40	1	— ²	17
Skua Beach	6 Mar.	1 Feb.	14 Mar.	2	12	0	1	1	0
Fairchild Beach	7 Mar.	1 Feb.	15 Mar.	7	4	0	0	0	0
TOTAL				49		193	20		103

¹ Places not visited in 1969 (such as Long Beach) are omitted.

² Not visited.

The results (Table 1) show that the breeding population has increased fivefold since 1963—we counted 98 chicks (most of them approaching the size of an adult) and 5 eggs, as compared with 14 chicks and 6 eggs in the same places in 1963. The most striking increase has been at Vahsel Moraine in Southwest Bay, where we saw 40 adults, 16 chicks, and 1 egg, as compared with 6 adults and 1 egg in 1963. We found a total of 193 adults in or near the colonies at Spit Bay and Vahsel Moraine, and single pairs at Red Island, West Bay, and Atlas Cove. In contrast to our observations in 1963 and 1965, we saw no King Penguins at Skua Beach, Fairchild Beach, or Saddle Point. Because of the lateness of our visit we saw only one juvenile, which was just finishing its molt to adult plumage.

The breeding population at Spit Bay as a whole has grown almost linearly since 1963, at the rate of about 11 pairs per year, but the growth rate of the north colony appears to be declining, while that of the south colony is increasing (Table 1). The reason is not clear, although the south colony has moved since 1965 to a level area of tussock grass some 100 yards northeast of the area of lush grass and Kerguelen cabbage it previously occupied, and its habitat now resembles that of the north colony. Movement between the two colonies seems unlikely, for they are separated by a mile of tussock grass and swamp where we have never seen any King Penguins, and by a sea distance of 12 miles around the Spit.

The hospitality and support given by the crew of 'Southwind' are gratefully acknowledged.—G. M. BUDD, *Department of Environmental Health, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, The University of Sydney, New South Wales, 2006.*

Woodpecker nest failures in creosoted utility poles.—Woodpeckers of several species damage wooden utility poles throughout the Holarctic region (Turcek, 1960). Dennis (1964) states that seven species are largely responsible for damage in North America. Two of these, the Red-headed (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*) and Pileated (*Dryocopus pileatus*) Woodpeckers, are especially troublesome in the southern and eastern United States.

Most poles used in this region are impregnated with creosote before being installed. Length of time poles are in service seems to have some effect on rate of damage, with newly installed (hence recently creosoted) poles being most readily attacked (Dennis, 1963). Some damage, which is of little consequence, consists of shallow excavations along surface checks. Of more concern are large internal cavities for roosting and nesting, which extend downward 12 to 24 inches in the cores of poles. They considerably reduce the strength of the poles and provide an opening for decay organisms through the outer shell of wood that contains the highest concentration of preservative.

Several theories have been advanced to explain why woodpeckers are attracted to poles. These include search for food, acoustical stimulation from vibrations of poles and wires, good vantage points, protection from snakes and ectoparasites, and pecking to prevent abnormal bill growth. All have been discussed at length by Turcek (1960) and Dennis (1963, 1964), and most have been disproved. The fact remains that the birds excavate and nest in poles containing oily preservative when there are many suitable trees nearby. The attraction of the poles becomes still more difficult to understand in that the study reported here showed nests in relatively new poles to be unsuccessful.

During the spring and summer of 1965, 1966, and 1968, 37 nests of Red-headed and 6 of Pileated Woodpeckers in creosoted poles of southern pine were watched periodically in central Louisiana. Heights of nests ranged from 8 to 45 feet above