

## Survey Method 5.3

### Regular counts at designated areas

#### Little Penguin toolkit

This section of the toolkit contains standardised survey and monitoring methods for community and land managers.

#### Survey Methods

- Presence or absence
- Penguin track counts
- Regular counts at designated areas
- Colony count
- Wildlife camera monitoring

#### Results

The results of these surveys will provide information on the Little Penguin population in Tasmania.

#### When is this survey method the best to use?

This survey method can provide an index of the activity of penguins in an area over a period of time.

If counts are undertaken on a regular basis throughout the year, this survey can indicate the variation in penguin activity.

This method can be easily used at designated areas such as:

- Viewing platforms or boardwalks.
- Easily accessible runways.
- Easily accessible headlands or coastal areas where penguins exiting from the ocean are in view.



#### Before you start

- Ensure the counts are undertaken by members of a registered community group for insurance purposes.
- Ensure you have permission from the land manager and all the necessary approvals.
- Become familiar with the associated data entry spreadsheet to ensure all relevant information is collected.

#### When to survey

- Counts are already a regular part of the daily activities a community group carry out during guided penguin viewing from September to March but can be continued outside of this period.
- Counting should commence for about 1 hour from when the first bird emerges from the water. This is usually within an hour after sunset.
- This survey method can be carried out throughout the year.

## How to prepare for your survey

- Define a section that can be counted easily. This can be either from a penguin viewing area (if the community group is involved in providing guiding) or at a headland or a runway used by penguins.
  - GPS and mark your boundaries (or use permanent natural features) and viewing points to ensure repeatability.
- The identified area must be accessed by use of a current established boardwalk / platform or path.
- Warm dark clothing and sturdy boots are recommended.
- Binoculars, a torch covered with red cellophane or a red - filtered torch should be used when counting.
  - Also read information provided in Section 5.4 of this toolkit: *Survey method 4: Colony Count*
- Record information using a tally sheet.

## Method

- A roster for the community group should be established so that birds are counted on a weekly or fortnightly basis.
- Ensure the counts are done from the same designated area.
- Counts should be undertaken in pairs, with people establishing their positions at dusk.
- The number of birds can be tallied after one hour (sample unit of time) and recorded on the data sheet, with any other observations of behaviour (e.g. mating, rearing chicks or moulting).

## Record details

- After the survey, complete the survey form and provide a copy to the land manager and relevant organisations.
- Email completed survey forms/spreadsheet (LPT\_SECTION 5.1\_SURVEY METHOD 3 PRESENCE OR ABSENCE DATA SHEET.xlsx) to [Penguins@dpipwe.tas.gov.au](mailto:Penguins@dpipwe.tas.gov.au)

The information from the Field Survey form is useful to inform the community group and land manager, DPIPWE and researchers on the number of penguins at the site.

Example survey form

Survey Method 5.3: Regular Counts at Designated Areas									
Record the following survey details									
Date									
Name of site									
Name of Community Group									
Name of count Coordinator									
Contact details	Phone				Email				
Community Group									
Names of participants									
Start time					First penguin arrival (time)				
End time					Last penguin arrival (time)				
Length of beach surveyed			GPS Start			GPS Finish			
Search area (GPS/Lat/Long)									
Tide (Time/Height)	Rising			High			Falling		
Moon	Full			3/4			1/2		
Total number of Little Penguins coming ashore									
Number of Little Penguins on Land									
Behavioural observations									
Any other animal / unusual sightings									