# MORE GOODBYES AS PREPARATIONS ARE MADE TO HEAD TO THE COAST



© © International Polar Foundation

The German scientists leave, and preparations are made to head to the coast to unload the supply ship, which is expected to arrive on Saturday, January 24th

## Saying goodbye to our German friends

Yesterday the scientists from the Alfred Wegener Institute flew their last of their 20 scheduled flights scheduled for this season whiles based at the Princess Elisabeth station. They managed to conduct all scheduled flights, which is exceptional in Antarctica. Once the weather improves, they'll fly to the Russian Novo station, where they'll dismantle the magnetometers and the gravimeter before making one more flight from Novo to re-take radar data over an area that had not been correctly collected previously.

After this, some of the scientists will fly home to Germany, and the Polar 6 will be used for logistical flights between the German Kohnen and Neumayer III bases. If there is time left, they will do observation flights on the Filchner Ice Shelf in preparation of future survey. At the end of the season, the Polar 6 will be flown back to Canada for maintenance.

The AWI team was very happy with their stay at Princess Elisabeth station, and it's been a season to remember. Not only did they manage to work out a few bugs in the instruments and collect excellent data,

but the team also managed to generate a great deal of media interest when geophysicist Christian Müller spotted what he believed to be a possible meteorite impact site on the King Baudouin Ice Shelf.

However, glaciologists from around the world feel that this feature may actually be an ice doline. AWI team leader Graeme Eagles also consideres this to be a possibility now as well. But we'll know more in a few months once the AWI scientists in Bremerhaven analyze the data the survey team collected this season.

In any case, Jan Lenaerts plans to visit circular feature on the ice shelf when he returns in November 2015 to continue his research for the second season of the BENEMELT project (thanks to funding from the 2014 InBev-Baillet Latour Antarctica Fellowship). The circular feature is within a day's travel from the automatic weather station Jan set up this past season at the grounding line of the ice shelf.  If possible, Jan hopes to take some ice radar data and extract some some firn cores.

## A long journey ahead

For the past week, a team of eight (Alain Hubert, Kristof Soete, Walter Cumps, Ilir Berisha, David Rigotti, Nicolas Degand, Benoît Tyberhgien and Jos Van Hemelrijck) has been preparing to head to Breid Bay at the coast to unload the supply ship, the Mary Arctica, when it arrives.  At the writing of this news, it looks as if the ship will arrive at Breid Bay by Saturday January 24th, which means Alain and the team will have to leave tongiht so they can arrive on time to meet the ship!

On the way out to the coast, the crew will take four Prinoth tractors, each hauling three or four sledges behind them. Over the next week, the different members of the team will have to make three trips back and forth in order to transport 30 containers of material to the station.

One thing that the tractors won't have to haul back with them will the the new modified Toyota Hiluxes that the Mary Arctica is bringing. Able to drive up to 50 km/h on treads, the modified Hiluxes will be a welcome asset to the Princess Elisabeth team in Antarctica.

While the Prinoths will still be necessary to haul the very heavy loads, the Hiluxes will be able to haul up to a ton of materials and five persons, allowing greater flexibility in transporting crew, scientists and materials.

## Countdown to the end of the season

At the station, work continues as the end of the 2014-15 season starts to approach. Canadian builder Jaques Touchette is preparing to jack up the central garage hall in order to add a couple of steel plates under the gliding foundations that were installed two seasons ago to compensate for the flow of the ice.

Meanwhile, Kristof has been taking inventory of everything at the station and making a list of what needs to be brought on the next shipment next year. Walter is preparing the unused skidoos to be put away for winter and bringing them to the winter park (the parking area of empty containers in the wind shadow of Utsteinen Ridge).

It's hard to imagine that the end of the season is only five weeks away!