



The view across Gold Harbour.

Copyright: SAERI 2019



A composite image of Bird Island.

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# Using drones to map South Georgia's coastal habitats

THE recent South Georgia Archaeological Project expedition to South Georgia (see centre spread) included Neil Golding of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI), project manager for the Institute's ongoing Darwin Plus Coastal Habitat Mapping.

The aim of the trip for this project, Neil told Penguin News, was to reach areas identified by the project's stakeholders as priority areas, that is to say, areas where the stakeholders wanted "much more detailed information than they got from the broad-scale maps originally developed through the project for South Georgia."

Those areas include popular visitor sites, which will provide a useful tool to help better inform their management, he said.

But the detailed imagery and consequent mapping will also provide a valuable baseline into how habitats and the island's vegetation are changing and develop-

ing in the wake of the successful eradication of rodents and reindeer from South Georgia.

The trip allowed the project to add 241 points of ground validation data into the model, in other words, checking the broad-scale habitat model predictions against the reality on the island's surface.

The use of a drone further allowed Neil to obtain detailed imagery of eight locations within South Georgia: Bird Island, Elsehul, Koppen Point, Jason Harbour, Start Point (Salisbury Plain), Fortuna Bay, Albatross Cove (Cooper Bay) and Gold Harbour. From this imagery, he says, we can then interrogate to compare with what is predicted on the broad-scale maps, but also it gives us that much higher level of resolution about what's on the ground; [and helps with] species counts, so we've got a really good data-set from Fortuna Bay, which has a large colony of king penguins.

The drone imagery, together

with high res World View satellite imagery from the Digital Globe Foundation will result in "more robust fine-scale habitat maps" as well. The project was grateful for the support they received from Iridium Communications.

Neil also supported the archaeological project, providing invaluable aerial footage of dig sites, allowing "archaeologists to put those sites in the context of the wider environment."

The Coastal Habitat Mapping Project aims to develop the first

island-wide broad-scale and fine-scale habitat maps of the coastal margin for South Georgia and the Falklands.

The project is led by SAERI with the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands as an integral partner, and further partner support from the Falkland Islands Government, Oregon State University, the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC), and the Shallow Marine Surveys Group.

The drone used in the project.

Pic: N Golding Copyright: SAERI 2019



## **Falkland Islands Obesity Awareness Day – 2019**

**To observe World Health Day held annually on 07<sup>th</sup> April,**

**KEMH is organising a**

**"Falkland Islands Obesity Awareness Day"**

**Everyone is invited to attend to have their Body Mass Index (BMI), Blood Pressure (BP) and Blood Sugar checked.**

**When? – Monday 08<sup>th</sup> April 2019 between 10:00am and 12:00 noon and 1:00pm and 4:00pm**

**Where? – Book in at KEMH Reception and you will be called through to see the Practice Nurse**