

## Working in the Falkland Islands

By Student Intern Amy Guest

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### The Gap Project

I started my placement year at SAERI in September 2017 as an assistant to the Gap Project, where my time has been primarily spent managing data and entering the metadata records to the IMS-GIS Database for scientific research undertaken in the islands over the past three decades. It certainly has proved interesting to see the different types of research carried out, from environmental surveys to GPS tagging of seabirds and marine mammals by academic researchers.

### On the Water at Port Howard

November saw me escaping office duties for a week to head 'out West' to help with the surveying of Commerson's Dolphins (*Cephalorhynchus commersonii*) as part of SAERI's 'Dolphins of the Kelp' team. Despite chilly southerly winds most days, we had a successful week on the SMSG rib boat photographing, identifying and cataloguing hundreds of dolphins which included



some of this year's new born calves. The team also successfully retrieved anchored C-Pods that had been recording evidence of passing cetaceans throughout the winter months. Working with GIS and as data manager is exciting, but it becomes even more when the job is taking you to unusual places such as Tristan da Cunha, a small volcanic island in the middle of the Southern Atlantic ocean surrounded only by other two smaller islands, Inaccessible and Nightingale and, further south, Gough.



# SAERI NEWS

## **A Helping Hand in the Lab**

Besides the office and field work, I was also able to assist SAERI PhD student Tom Busbridge with some of his research in the lab at the Fisheries Department. This included taking body measurements, weights, genetic samples and otoliths from Southern Blue Whiting (*Micromesistius australis*).

## **Coming up...**

In the New Year I hope to begin collecting data for my undergraduate thesis which will look at microplastics in the Falklands marine environment.

I'm also especially excited to be heading out to Bird Island, a wildlife haven at the very south of West Falkland, to assist with Petrel surveys with researchers Dr Paulo Catry and Dr Ewan Wakefield. Rumour has it that it isn't the easiest place to land a zodiac, so fingers crossed the weather allows for a smooth landing!

It certainly has been a busy first few months, with more and more opportunities appearing almost weekly. I have very much enjoyed these first few months and hope I've proved to be a useful addition to the very welcoming, wonderful SAERI team!