

World Oceans Day 2019

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For the second year in a row the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI) banded together with several other local organizations in the Falkland Islands to partake in the celebrations for World Oceans Day.

Raising awareness to protect and restore the ocean is the aim of the game, and there were no lack of activities to keep young ones involved. In the morning the event was open exclusively for youth groups consisting of the Girl Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and the Conservation Watch Group, and they made the most of having the run of the hall.

Not forgetting the conservation message of 'preventing plastic pollution' Dr Marina Costa, from SAERI, had children diving in rubbish pits saving animals from trash. As well as having fun throwing 'food' at cardboard cut-outs children also learned how to identify and group sea-creatures



Dr Costa explaining one of the games



Feed Me! Children separated 'food' from trash and fed an orca or a penguin, Picture Dr Stephanie Carter

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“Marine biology is quite a tough subject, unfortunately. But if children can learn about the biodiversity of the animals with the game ‘Group Me’ for example and learn that there are animals (...) living with other animals that we need to provide food for. So, for example, with the fishery we can’t collect all the fish we are interested in because other animals are also interested in them.”



Image right: Dr Jones at the craft table

Being waste aware was something that was on everyone’s mind. Marina’s games were constructed from items readily available; cardboard boxes and rubbish. Items that were bought, such as identifying cards and paints, will go on to be used for future events. The café used no disposable crockery and the crafts on offer had also been carefully sourced as Dr Jess Jones explained.

“The theme of World Oceans Day is to do with plastic and to make us more aware of the plastic situation. So I got the youth groups to go out and collect plastic and we’ve been making plastic octopus and using bottle caps to make the arms. So we’re reusing all of the things that we can’t recycle (in the Falklands).”

The output from this clever crafting was then attached to a salvaged fishing net which the junior school will display as part of their Science Week.



Salvaged items for the craft corner

Falklands Conservation were also displaying the message of reducing waste and were armed with pledges that were created by their youth Watch Group.



Getting to grips with the bottle caps

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“The Watch Group started this journey back in October by promoting their clean-up pledge,” says Outreach Officer, Mike Ford.

“They looked at what they thought was really important for the Falkland Islands and came up with their own Islands Plan – which kind of mimics what the MLAs did. (...) As well as getting the MLAs to pursue this waste agenda, we can make soft approaches when we meet the community. Actually if everybody does their own little bit by cleaning up and reducing their amount of plastic, we’ll eventually just reduce the amount we put in landfill.”



Falklands Conservation stall

Image left: The amazing crafts made by children on World Oceans Day will go on display during Science Week at the Infant and Junior School. Picture-Jess Jones

Falklands Fisheries and the Government of South Georgia attended en masse to promote having sustainable fish on the menu. If you didn’t notice the fisheries stall from the smell, then the three foot long toothfish would certainly have caught your attention.

Dr Thomas Farrugia explained the idea behind their display.



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“Fishing is a really big industry here but it’s done off-shore and the boats very rarely come in to shore. A lot of people don’t actually know what species are being caught in the Falklands (...) so we thought we’d give people an idea of what’s out there and what’s commercially valuable in the Falklands.”

He also had some advice for those who want to make sustainable choices when it comes to the food they eat.

“Ask where the fish is from. The long line fishery down here is MSC certified so it’s very safe to eat that fish, you shouldn’t feel bad about eating it because it’s very well monitored. The problem is when people don’t ask for that information, then there’s no incentive for fisheries to get better at doing what they’re doing. If we only buy sustainable fish, then they’re only going to produce sustainable fish.”



Image above: Thomas showing what’s available as Falkland Islands produce



Jorge from Fisheries department teaching children about otoliths

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Giving the public the chance to experience and see what the ocean provides was also the aim for the local dive group. Sacha Cleminson from Shallow Marine Surveys Group (SMSG) wanted to give people the opportunity to encounter these species by taking in a touch tank filled with underwater creatures.

“All of these little critters all live at the bottom, we’ve got some Red Chilean Urchins from about ten metres deep. And we’ve got a similar urchin called a Naked Urchin because it doesn’t have spines on top. We’re really lucky because we get to go diving and see them but, unfortunately, if you don’t have a load of dive kit then you can’t get to see them. So we thought we’d take some of them so people can see them and get some enthusiasm for them. It’s an amazing world down there so we’re just trying to bring that up here.”

The local Sailing Club brought in a bit of their world too with videos of sailing adventures from around the Islands and the Environmental Department pushed their new glass recycling scheme with quizzes.

The event was a success and the team is already looking forward to next year.



Neil from SAERI helped children make ocean-themed origami animals. Photo – Neil Golding

World Oceans Day is led by The Ocean Project. To find out more about how you can join in then visit their Website:

<https://www.worldoceansday.org/about>

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Falkland Island Government encouraged people to reduce and reuse

SAERI would like to thank everyone involved with the event: Falklands Conservation, Falkland Islands Government, Fisheries, IJS, Watch Group, Girl Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Scouts, the Yacht Club, Government of South Georgia & South Sandwich Islands, The Library, Monika Lukomska and SMSG