

SAERI at Farmers Week

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From 7th – 11th July, the annual farmers' week took place in Stanley at the Town Hall, and SAERI staff took the opportunity to present the current research projects.

The role of landowners in the Falkland Islands is particularly important when considering the type of environmental studies undertaken by an institution such as SAERI; local knowledge, access and assistance are all vital to the success of this work.

On Monday 7th Dr Debs Davidson and Dr Megan Tierney presented their works respectively in inshore fisheries and in higher predators at the SAERI stand. Farmers had the opportunity not only to listen to both researchers, but also to have a look at a new SAERI poster highlighting the main activities of the institute and the area of interest, which extends across the South Atlantic.



On Wednesday 9th, a fairly large audience of farmers attended a presentation where each member of staff provided information about their roles in SAERI. Dr Davidson, after a general introduction about the Institute, focussed her attention on the 20 species which may be potential candidates for small scale fisheries and/or aquaculture in the Falklands' inshore waters. Many farmers showed interested in getting involved in the identification of the species and many went

SAERI NEWS

away with a leaflet depicting the species and a small booklet with further pictures and interesting facts. Anyone who missed farmers' week can always ask Dr Davidson for one of the species identification leaflets. Landowners are the first people who can spot the "creatures" that Dr Davidson is after for her research project and help from everyone is much appreciated. Dr Marengo provided a brief outline of what Geographic Information System (GIS) means and how can be beneficial for farmers and land managers in general. GIS is not only a tool for mapping but also a tool that can analyse geographical data and provide information for making better decisions. Landowners can be extremely helpful in providing data on soil and variation on grassland growth, which could be correlated to other environmental factors. Dr Blockley and Dr Tierney presented their GAP project which aims at filling gaps in the local knowledge of benthic species, oceanography, seafloor environment, and higher predators. These data are extremely valuable and are needed to inform and monitor potential impacts to the environment from offshore hydrocarbon activities which will be operating in the Falklands' offshore waters.

Farmers' week was a great occasion to promote what SAERI is doing locally in the Falklands and more in general in the other UK OTs in the South Atlantic. The objective is to consolidate what has been achieved after the first two years, continue to deliver high quality research projects, and above all to build strong collaboration with the local community and landowners, as working in synergy results to be beneficial for everybody in the Falklands.

Talking about more high quality projects, SAERI is welcoming Emily Hancox and Dr Amélie Augé who have started their respective posts as PhD student in shallow benthic and intertidal communities and project manager in Marine Spatial Planning.