

Side Scan Sonar Training Course

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A training course on the use of side scan sonar for marine habitat mapping will take place in the warm waters of Ascension Island from the 21st to the 26th of January. Sam Cherret, from Saint Helena, will be leading the course, utilising her experience using side scan sonar to identify marine habitats in the inshore waters of Saint Helena since last May. Participating in the course will be the AIMS team of Ascension, and iLaria Marengo and Deborah Davidson from the Falkland Islands.

The course will be focussing on the practical use of the StarFish side scan sonar, with a 50 metre cable. Data will firstly be gathered and then processed using Triton Perspective software package, from Triton Imaging. This is an advanced data processing and interpretation package that allows the user to erase noise in the data, mosaic the images and convert them into a format readable with GIS programs such as QGIS.

Areas of the sea to be surveyed will be decided based on the weather conditions at the time, as this has a strong impact on data gathering. The sea state and the priority areas for the AIMS team will be coordinated by Senior Marine Fisheries Scientist, Andrew Richardson. The training programme has been made possible thanks to the joint support of the Ascension Island Government Conservation Centre and the IMS-GIS data centre.

More details on the outcomes of the course will be available on the blog section of SAERI website in February.