

SGC-006a

Job Description

SAERI (Falklands) Limited (SFL)



Job Title:	Senior Seabird and Marine Mammal Observer (Lead SMMO & Training Coordinator)		
Department:	Environmental Monitoring		
Reports to:	General Manager SFL		
Level:	B1	Salary Range:	£47,397 pa + £50/day seagoing
Probation?	Yes ☒ No ☐	Period	6 months

Job Purpose (Succinctly summarise the reason for the role)

This is an exciting opportunity to establish and lead a Seabird and Marine Mammal Observer (SMMO) programme within SAERI (Falklands) Limited (SFL), the consultancy arm of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI). The programme will provide independent, scientifically robust seabird and marine mammal observation services to support environmental monitoring requirements associated with offshore hydrocarbon development and exploration in the Falkland Islands, including commitments under the Environmental Monitoring and Management Plan (EMMP) for the Sea Lion Field development.

The post holder will lead the design, delivery and quality assurance of offshore observation programmes using internationally recognised European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) methodologies, maintaining continuity where practicable with the historic JNCC Seabirds at Sea Team (SAST) approach used in Falkland Islands waters. They will undertake offshore surveys where required, oversee data management and reporting, and ensure observations are collected consistently and to high scientific standards.

A key objective of the role is to build long-term SMMO capacity within the Falkland Islands. The post holder will develop and deliver a structured training and mentoring programme for Falkland Islands residents interested in becoming Seabird and Marine Mammal Observers, including individuals with no previous professional SMMO experience. Training will develop participants progressively from initial seabird and marine mammal identification and survey skills through practical and at-sea experience towards the competencies required for independent ESAS-standard survey work and, where appropriate, formal ESAS accreditation. The Senior SMMO will also provide technical leadership, standardisation and ongoing professional development for the programme's qualified SMMOs.

Working closely with SFL staff, vessel operators, hydrocarbon industry clients, regulators and relevant stakeholders, the Senior SMMO will provide scientific leadership, maintain programme standards and contribute to the development of a sustainable local environmental monitoring capability.

Job Facts & Figures:

This is a two-year full-time position with SFL, subject to programme review. The programme is intended to commence as soon as practicable to establish contemporary baseline and monitoring data ahead of and during increasing offshore hydrocarbon development activity in the North Falkland Basin.

Observers will undertake deployments aboard a range of offshore vessels operating in Falkland Islands waters. Significant periods at sea will be a core requirement of the role.

The post holder will:

- lead implementation and scientific oversight of the SMMO programme;
- develop, deliver and quality-assure ESAS-standard survey methods;

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- provide technical oversight, mentoring and professional development for qualified SMMOs, and train and assess locally based trainees;
- undertake offshore seabird and marine mammal surveys as required;
- oversee data quality, database development, analysis and reporting; and
- liaise with SFL, vessel operators, hydrocarbon industry clients, regulators and other stakeholders.

Main Accountabilities:

The successful candidate will lead and deliver the following:

- Plan and undertake systematic seabird and marine mammal observations at sea using ESAS survey protocols, maintaining continuity where practicable with the historic JNCC SAST approach used in Falkland Islands waters.
- Ensure consistent application of survey methods across observers, vessels and deployments, and maintain clear Standard Operating Procedures and quality-assurance processes.
- Develop and deliver a structured local SMMO training programme for Falkland Islands residents, providing classroom, practical and at-sea training from entry level through to the competencies required for independent ESAS-standard survey work.
- Train, mentor and assess local participants in seabird and marine mammal identification, survey methodology, distance estimation, data recording, navigation, offshore working and quality assurance, supporting progression towards ESAS accreditation where appropriate.
- Lead database design, data validation, QA/QC and secure data management, ensuring compatibility where practicable with historic Falkland Islands SAST datasets.
- Produce technical summaries and programme reports to support SFL client requirements and relevant hydrocarbon environmental monitoring commitments, including EMMP reporting.
- Coordinate observer deployments with SFL logistics staff and vessel operators and support efficient mobilisation and demobilisation.
- Provide technical oversight, standardisation, mentoring and continuing professional development for the programme's qualified SMMOs.
- Contribute to programme review at the end of the initial two-year period and make recommendations for future monitoring and local capacity development.

Deliverables and capacity building

- A fully operational, standardised SMMO programme supporting offshore hydrocarbon environmental monitoring in the North Falkland Basin.
- An established team of qualified SMMOs delivering the offshore monitoring programme, together with a growing pool of Falkland Islands residents trained and mentored from entry level towards independent SMMO capability and ESAS accreditation.
- A quality-assured database of ESAS-standard seabird and marine mammal observations suitable for long-term monitoring and relevant EMMP reporting.
- Improved contemporary understanding of seabird and marine mammal occurrence, abundance and seasonality in the North Falkland Basin.
- Recommendations following the two-year review on continuation, refinement and future deployment of the programme.

The job description is not an exclusive or exhaustive definition of the duties attached to this post. The successful incumbent shall undertake such additional or other duties as may reasonably be required by their line manager commensurate with the position.

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Additional Information:

SAERI (Falklands) Ltd (SFL) is a 100% owned subsidiary of the South Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI). Its clients include local and international governments, industries, and others through carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Baseline Surveys, Environment Baseline Description, Risk Assessments, applied fisheries science; fisheries management advice and stock assessments.

SFL offers a dynamic working environment with opportunities to develop exciting consulting opportunities and collaborations locally and internationally in what is considered to be a scientific 'frontier' region.

Person Specification:			
Criteria	Essential	Desirable	Assessment Method
Education and Training:			
Degree in Marine Biology, Zoology, Ecology, Environmental Science or a closely related discipline	X		A
Postgraduate qualification in marine ecology, ornithology or a related discipline		X	A/I
Relevant offshore safety and medical certification, or willingness and ability to obtain these	X		A/I
Current JNCC-accredited European Seabirds at Sea (ESAS) Surveyor accreditation	X		A/I
JNCC-accredited ESAS Trainer status, or demonstrable experience delivering ESAS training and mentoring surveyors towards accreditation	X		A/I
Appropriate sea personal survival certification	X		A/I

Knowledge, Skills and Experience:	Essential	Desirable	Assessment Method
Extensive practical experience of seabird identification, including pelagic and coastal species	X		A/I
Demonstrated experience of offshore seabird surveys	X		A/I
Experience of marine mammal identification and observation	X		A/I
Experience training, mentoring and assessing field staff or observers	X		A/I
Experience of scientific data management, QA/QC and database systems	X		A/I

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Experience preparing technical reports and communicating results to clients, regulators or stakeholders	X		A/I
Experience coordinating offshore field programmes and working with vessel operators	X		A/I
GIS and/or statistical data analysis skills	X		A/I
Willingness and ability to undertake regular and extended offshore deployments	X		A/I

Person Specification:			
Criteria	Essential		Assessment Method
Personal Attributes:			
Ability to manage time where there are multiple demands	X	X	I/R I/R
Ability to lead and work effectively within a small team	X		I/R
Excellent communication, teaching and mentoring skills	X		I/R
Strong attention to detail and commitment to data quality	X		I/R
Resourceful, adaptable and able to work independently in remote offshore environments	X		I/R
Familiarity with the Falkland Islands environment		X	I/R
Commitment to health, safety and professional conduct offshore	X		I/R

Method of assessment:

A - Application Form

I - Selection Interview

R – Reference

P - Presentation