

# Falklands' waters identified as globally important for whales

By Caroline Weir

WORLDWIDE recognition of the significance of Falklands' coastal waters for whales continues to increase.

The special importance of our waters as a summer and autumn feeding ground for Endangered sei whales has been understood for several years, with the identification of the Falkland Islands Inshore Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) in 2021 – the first KBA for sei whales anywhere globally.

KBAs are selected by an international partnership using a set of strict scientific criteria to assess whether sites host globally important habitats or species occurrences that warrant protection.

Recently, a proposal was drafted by Falklands Conservation (FC), as part of a project funded by Darwin Plus, to add the southern right whale as a KBA trigger species. Last month the proposal was accepted, and the Falkland Islands Inshore KBA is now recognised as hosting globally-significant aggregations of two baleen whale species.

The southern right whale is a conservation success story, with most populations now bouncing back from whaling exploitation and becoming more conspicuous across the southern hemisphere.

Targeted research carried out by FC since 2019 has shown that right whales aggregate along our coastline predominantly between May and September to mate and socialise, with at least several hundred individuals present on a given day during the peak season.

Genetic and tagging work has shown that they are part of a south-west Atlantic population that ranges from Brazil and Argentina to the Scotia Sea and Antarctica. For most of the year the whales are spread widely across this distribution range, with aggregations only forming during winter at a few well-defined coastal calving and mating sites.

Their choice to use the Falklands as one such winter aggregation site is really special, and we can expect that the number of animals wintering around the Islands will only increase as the population recovers to its pre-whaling abundance.

In addition to the KBAs, three Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) were also recently identified for cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) in Falklands' waters. IMMAs are IUCN-led and are intended to identify global marine mammal hotspots that can potentially be delineated and managed for conservation.



Southern Right Whale. Pic Caroline Weir

The North-east Falklands Right Whale Wintering Area IMMA was designated for wintering southern right whale aggregations, while FC worked alongside the Elephant Seal Research Group to identify the Falkland Islands Inner Shelf Waters IMMA for a variety of marine mammal species, and the Sea Lion Islands Group IMMA for killer whales.

The growing whale populations around the Falklands are welcome news, providing increasing opportunities to see these amazing animals and the reassurance that our

marine ecosystems are healthy. However, it also highlights our responsibility to safeguard both the animals and the habitats they rely upon.

Pressures on the marine environment are increasing globally, with vessel collisions, fishing gear entanglements, habitat loss and noise (e.g., piling and air-guns) comprising major modern threats to whales. Care must be taken to manage such activities to ensure that our whales can continue to thrive alongside human users of our seas.

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### Who should apply?

Electricians, heating & Electrical Engineers, Air conditioning technicians, Technical Managers (who are responsible for signing off work or executing contracts of a technical nature)

### Course entry requirements

Applicants must be aged 16 and over, have basic knowledge of electrical science and provide proof of GCSE English grade C/4 or above. If you do not have grade C/4 or above then you will be required to attend Falkland College, at an arranged time, to sit an English assessment. The cost of this course is £280, which includes the wiring regulations book. To apply please contact Falkland College.

Closing date for applicants is 4pm 25th March 2025

### Course details

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3 EXAM
01/04/25 6-8pm	01/04/25 6-8pm	15th April 2025
02/04/25 6-8pm	02/04/25 6-8pm	
03/04/25 6-8pm	03/04/25 6-8pm	
05/04/25 9am-1pm	05/04/25 9am-1pm	Course cost <b>£280</b>
06/04/25 9am-1pm	06/04/25 9am-1pm	

To apply



Email [cvillegas@college.ac.fk](mailto:cvillegas@college.ac.fk) or phone 27133 and ask to speak to Caroline

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Further information on this position can be obtained from [Samantha Davis](#) (email: [samantha@chandlery.co.fk](mailto:samantha@chandlery.co.fk)) or contact via telephone 22755, to receive a job description and an application form.

Closing date for this position is **Friday, 14th of March 2025**. Applications are to be submitted by 4:00 pm.

