

Elephant Seals Used as Remote Data Gatherers for Ocean Research Project



The BBC has reported on how southern elephant seals are being used as ocean samplers (SEaOS project). Valeport, UK, has been working with the University of St Andrews since 2006 to provide bespoke CTD sensors for this project. The specially tagged seals which wander the Southern Ocean are wearing sensors which are programmed to collect and relay temperature and conductivity profiles along with dive information. This initiative is providing insights into the interconnections between ocean physics and ecology.

Dr Lars Boehme of the [SEaOS project](#) has said the critical flow of information is like 'tweeting' and to date they've received nearly 400,000 environmental profiles of the Southern Ocean from the seals. The Valeport sensors used in the research project are non-invasive and fall off when the seals moult, and the university said they are the only

devices of their kind that can be attached to animals.

Further phases of the project may see [Valeport](#) CTF (Conductivity, Temperature & Fluorometer) sensors integrated into these devices. Currently on trial, these CTF sensors may add a whole new range of information to the data gathered.

The [full BBC story](#).

Image: a seal with the sensor attached. Image courtesy: Valeport.