South African Weather Service
Meteorological and Oceanography Network

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South African Weather Service (SAWS) is the National Meteorological Service (NMS) in South Africa. The SAWS is currently growing its scientific research capacity, especially in the Marine Sector. Currently the Marine Unit consists of 4 scientists and a manager. The SAWS is in the process of appointing more Scientists and Technical staff dedicated to the Marine Sector.

The Marine research group is currently working on various research and tool development projects. These include research on the social understanding of marine meteorological information and data, the importance of spatial varying winds in coastal models in Southern Africa and the wave energy distribution along the South African coast.

As an NMS, the SAWS participate in multiple international panels including Data Buoy Cooperation Panel (DBCP) and Voluntary Observing Ship (VOS). As part of DBCP the SAWS deploys drifting buoys which are donated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The SAWS coordinates the deployments of these drifting buoys with various national stakeholders. Each year the SAWS coordinate the deployment of approximately 40 drifting weather buoys. This includes monitoring buoys on South Thule and Tristan da Cunha which is monitored and exchanged on an annual basis.

The South African national Government owns and maintains a research vessel (SA AGULHAS II) which conducts annual logistical and research cruises in the oceans around Southern Africa. SAWS have a designated weather office on board the SA Agulhas II. The permanent weather office allows for visual and automatic weather observations are conducted on all voyages. The SAWS sends two staff members on each voyage to conduct weather observations and upper air radiosonde ascents aboard the SA Agulhas II. The ship has scheduled annual take-over voyages to the South African Remote research stations on Antarctica, Marion Island and Gough Island. Various research groups participate to collect valuable data. The SAWS conducts year round weather observations on all three remote stations. Visual observations are conducted every 3 hours on Marion Island, Gough Island and Antarctica, while upper air ascents are conducted at Gough and Marion Island weather stations only.