

Cuverville Island

64°41'S, 62°38'W - North Errera Channel



Key features

- Extensive colony of gentoo penguins in the Antarctic Peninsula
- Glacial and ice scenery



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

This 2km by 2.5km island is a steep-sided dome, two-thirds of which is covered by a permanent ice-cap. The northern shore is a beach of cobbles and boulders, approx 1.5km long, backed by steep vegetation-covered cliffs toward the east and gentler slopes to the west.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), kelp gulls (*Larus dominicanus*), Antarctic terns (*Sterna vittata*), snowy sheathbills (*Chionis alba*), blue-eyed shags (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*), Wilson's storm-petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*), skuas (*Catharacta* spp.), snow petrels (*Pagodroma nivea*), pintado petrels (*Daption capense*).

Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) and Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) regularly haul out. Leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) often hunt near-shore.

FLORA

Deschampsia antarctica, *Colobanthus quitensis*; swards of moss species; and lichen species including *Xanthoria* spp., *Buellia* spp., *Caloplaca* spp., *Usnea* spp.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife and trampling of vegetation.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships carrying 500 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time. No more than 3 ships carrying more than 200 passengers per day (midnight to midnight).

VISITORS

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. 1 guide per 20 visitors. No visitors ashore between 22:00hrs and 04:00hrs (local time), except for those engaged in organised overnight stays. This is in order to establish a resting period for the wildlife.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Primary: The wide cobble beach on the northern end of the island. Avoid landing in the immediate vicinity of the gentoo colonies on the western end.

Note: The small beaches on the eastern end of the site should not be used for landing, as they provide major access routes to the sea for penguins.

CLOSED AREAS

Closed Area A: Small beaches where gentoo penguins access the sea.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely, but under supervision, except in the closed areas. Visitors should always remain within the sight of guides.

Note: the eastern end of the island contains the same wildlife (gentoo penguins) as the west, but has less room for visitors, and a higher likelihood of disrupting routes to and from the sea. Therefore, guides should discourage visits to the eastern end.

* A ship is defined as a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers.

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Visitor Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance of 5 metres from wildlife and give animals the right-of-way. Increase this distance if any change in behaviour is observed. Be careful near Antarctic fur seals and skuas, they may be aggressive. Do not walk on any vegetation.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

In the late season (moult time), the density of penguins will probably confine visits to the immediate vicinity of the landing beach.



Cuverville Island landing beach

CUVERVILLE ISLAND



Gentoo penguins



Closed area

