

Neko Harbour (Draft)

Possible landing area:
64°51'00"S, 62°32'00"W

Located in Andvord Bay

IAATO

visitor site guide



Addendum to the ATCM Visitor Site Guideline

Key Features

- Glacial scenery
- Gentoo Penguins



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

A beach and small rocky outcrop on the shore of Neko Harbour, backed by towering peaks and surrounded by glaciers which are heavily crevassed. The glaciers surrounding the bay regularly calve.

FAUNA

Regularly haul out: Weddell seal

Confirmed breeders: Skua, Kelp gull, Gentoo penguin

FLORA

Swards of moss species, the green alga *Prasiola crispa* and snow algae.

OTHER

The foundations of an Argentine refuge hut are still visible. Following weather damage in 2010 the hut was removed and the site cleared.

Visitor Impact

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Maximum passengers onboard: 500

Ships per day: 3

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

Maximum passengers onshore at one time (exclusive of guides): 100

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

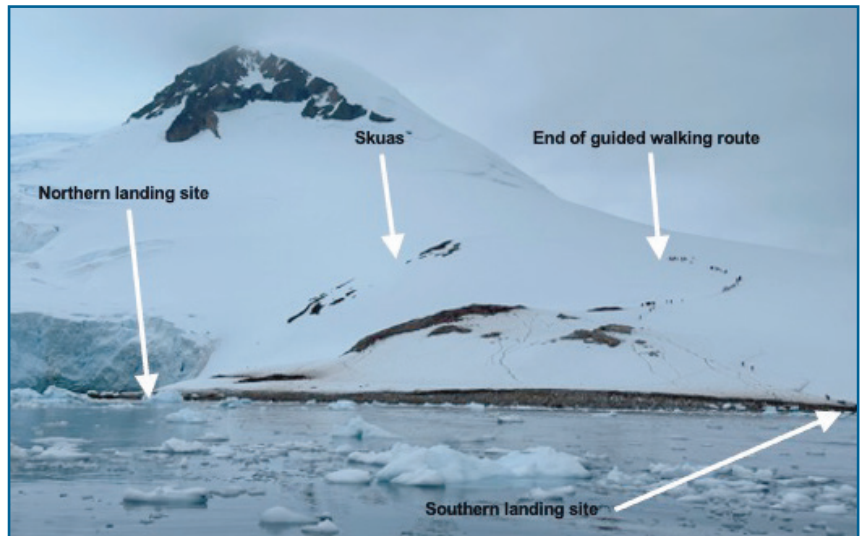
LANDING AREA

One possible landing site is the cobble beach on the south-west side of the large boulder, by a small reef. Avoid the inner stretch of beach leading to the glacier due to the risk of dangerous waves resulting from glacier calving. Avoid also the sandy beach due west of the penguin colony which is an important access route for penguins.

Another possible landing site is on the south side of the sandy beach mentioned above. There are two different reasons to use this landing site over the previously mentioned landing site.

1. After mid-December, or whenever the snow melt allows for the gentoo colony to be at its maximum extent, there are many nests now found on the sandy beach. This will require landing south of this sandy beach for the middle and latter parts of the season.
2. If there is a high concentration of ice – either from glacial calving or iceberg disintegration – surrounding the cobble beach, it may not be accessible. Early in the season there may be enough snow on the southern area of the point to allow for landing on a boulder and digging snow steps to access the standard walking and roaming areas

Once the colony is well-established, there are a large amount of gentoo nests on the sandy beach above the high tide line. This blocks access to the "preferred" landing site on the cobble beach, and landing should be done only to the south of the sandy beach if there is access around the colony.



GUIDED WALKING AREA

Once the gentoo colony is established, a full loop route is no longer possible with maintaining adequate distance from wildlife. The northern portion of the loop is a major penguin highway and nesting region that should not be accessed by visitors. At this point, the route should be two branching out-and-back walks, each ending with a view of the lower and upper portions of the colony, respectively.





FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors can roam freely, but under supervision.

RESTRICTED ZONES

There is a possible nesting area for skuas in the vicinity of the rocks at the higher rocky outcrop lookout point, ensure guides that are marking the end of the guided walking area maintain sufficient distance.

Additionally, any alpine guides should also be aware of possible nesting skuas and other birds when venturing to higher elevations.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

All visits are to be conducted in accordance with the General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Be aware that glacier calving may produce dangerous waves. Avoid the beach or be prepared to evacuate quickly up the hill. The route to the higher rocky outcrop skirts areas are heavily crevassed and extremely dangerous. Report any signs of crevasses to IAATO (shipscheduler@iaato.org) and the fleet at your earliest possible opportunity.

Routes to higher rocky outcrop should only be assessed by appropriately trained mountain guides with appropriate equipment.

