

26. Torgersen Island

64°46'23" S, 64°04'33" W
Arthur Harbor, southwest Anvers Island.

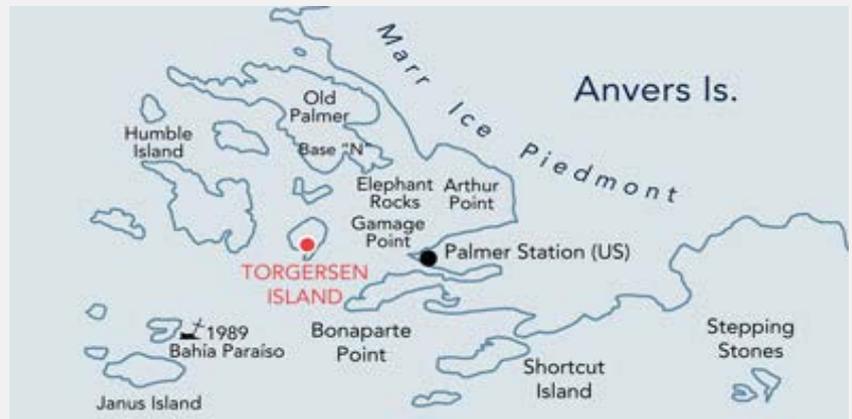
ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Adélie penguin colony
- Scientific monitoring of visitor impacts



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Torgersen Island is roughly circular and approximately 400m across. The island slopes upwards from its rocky shoreline to a summit of 17m, and is bisected by a stony ridge lying in an east-west direction.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguin, Brown skua, South Polar Skua, Wilson's storm petrel.

Regularly haul out: Antarctic fur seal, Crabeater Seal, Leopard seal, Southern elephant seal, Weddell seal.

Also present: chinstrap Penguin, Emperor penguin, Gentoo penguin, King Penguin, Macaroni Penguin.

FLORA

A variety of mosses grow on Torgersen Island, including *Polytrichum strictum*, *Chorisodontium aciphyllum* and *Sanionia uncinata*. Antarctic hair grass (*Deschampsia antarctica*) - one of the two flowering plant species present in Antarctica - is also present on the island.

OTHER

The island is divided into a Visitor Zone and a Restricted Zone. The Visitor Zone is for general access, whilst the Restricted Zone serves as a control site for scientific research related to human impacts. The Restricted Zone should not be entered, except in an emergency to access the emergency cache located on slopes opposite the landing site. Use the cache only in a genuine emergency and notify Palmer Station if anything is used.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Survey benchmark embedded in rock at summit.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance to wildlife and trampling of vegetation. Disturbance to scientific research.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Comments: Ships and small boat cruising should avoid disturbing seal and bird colonies and should take into account the 50 m operational limit around Restricted Zones (see map). Tour vessels and yachts visiting the area should provide advance notice of their visit schedule to National Programs operating in the area, in particular to Palmer Station (US). Given that the Adélie penguin colony has been significantly declining in recent years, visits are strongly discouraged from 01 October to 15 January, the time when penguins are most sensitive to disturbance.

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

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VISITORS

Maximum number of visitors at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders: 40

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Landings on Torgersen Island should be made at the designated small boat landing site on the northwestern shore of the island (64° 46' 17.8" S, 64° 04' 31" W).

CLOSED AREA

A Restricted Zone covering the southwestern half of the island is closed to visitors.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

None.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely within the Visitor Zone, which lies in the northeastern half of the island.

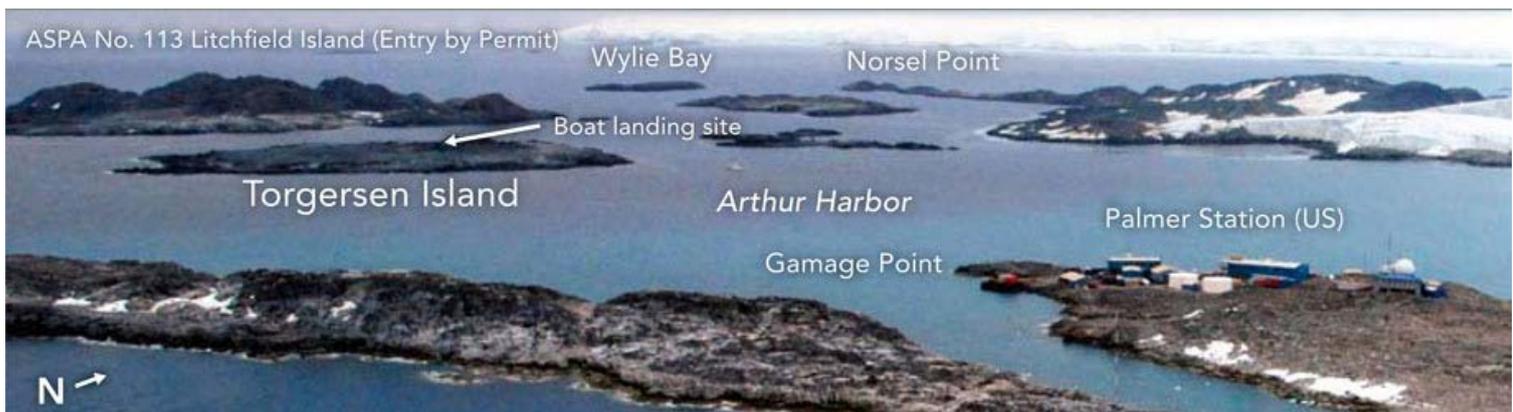
Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- Maintain a distance of at least 15m from Southern elephant seals, especially if they are hauled out near nesting penguins. Disturbing seals could cause a stampede and threaten nearby breeding birds.
- All visits are to be conducted in accordance with the General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic.
- Visitors should not disturb the camera at the boundary between the Visitor Zone and the Restricted Zone.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Be sensitive to penguin nesting sites, which may extend beyond the limits shown on the map.



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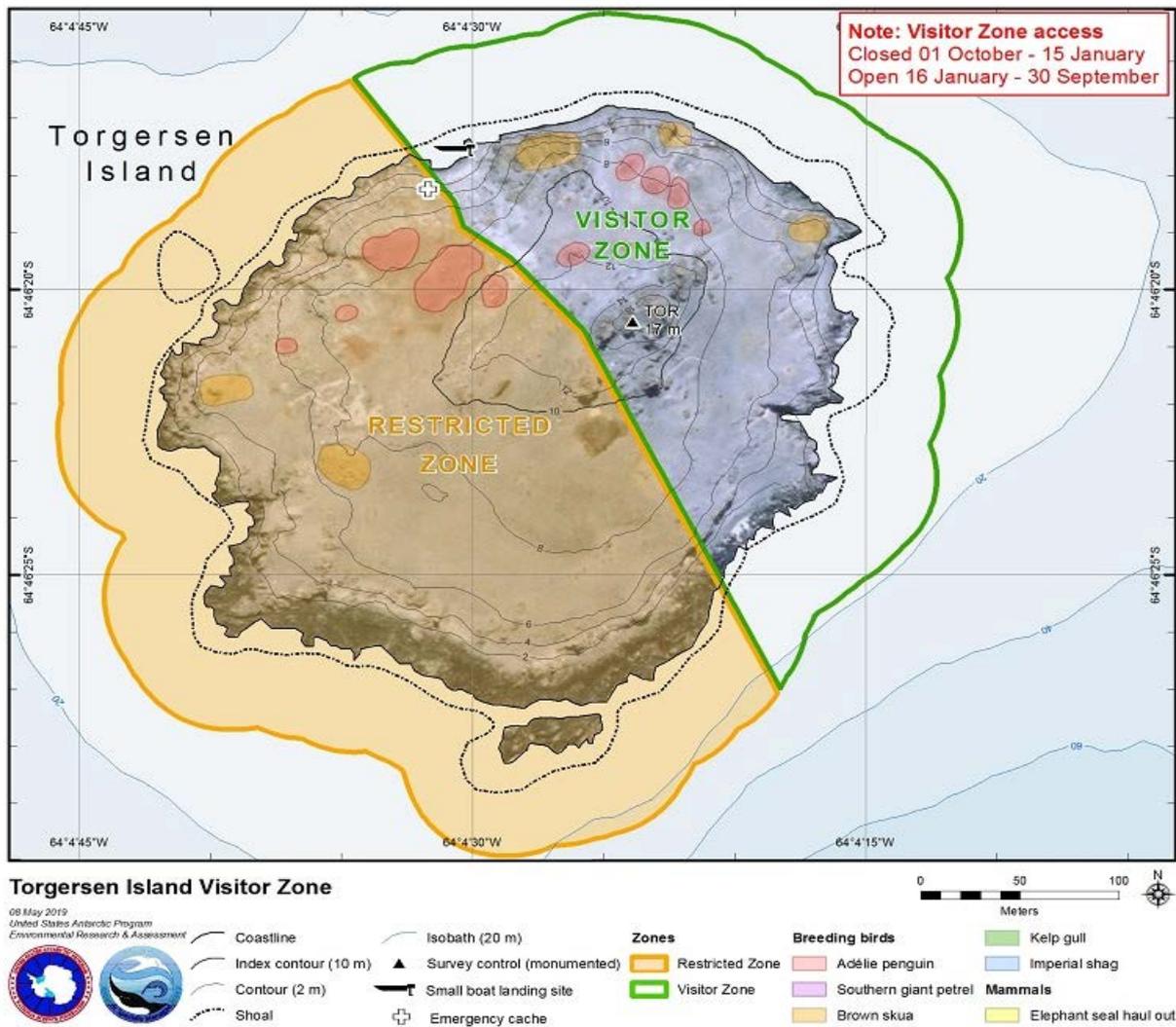
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Torgersen Island Adélie penguin colony (D. Patterson-Fraser, 2008)



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Arthur Harbor & Palmer Station

08 May 2019
 United States Antarctic Program
 Environmental Research & Assessment



- Ice coastline (approx.)
- Rock coastline
- Contour on ice (10 m)
- Contour on land (10 m)
- Shoal
- Bathymetry (20 m)
- Ice free ground
- Permanent ice
- ASMA Boundary
- Operations Zone
- Restricted Zone
- Visitor Zone
- Protected Area (ASPA)
- Standard Boating Area
- Small boat ice/craft safety limit
- Permanent station
- Former station site
- Emergency cache
- Wreck
- Small boat landing site

0 0.5 1 1.5 2 Kilometers

Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
 Spheroid & horizontal datum: WGS84
 Data source: Rock coastline & ice free ground (GISBase from orthorectified aerial imagery (Feb-09)), ice coastline updated to 11 Jan 2019 from Landsat-7 imagery (2019) (GISBase.com), bathymetry contours derived from RPOB & Colgate PROBO survey data infrastructure AGC (2019), Zones and Protected Areas: SRA List 2019