

21. Cape Royds

77°33'11''S, 166°10'07''E
West coast of Ross Island,
McMurdo Sound

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Historic hut and associated artefacts from British Antarctic (Nimrod) Expedition 1907-09 led by Sir Ernest Shackleton.
- Designated Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA) No. 157 - entry strictly by permit.
- Views of the southernmost Adélie penguin colony (ASPA No. 121) - entry strictly by permit.
- Views of Mt Erebus and the Transantarctic Mountains.



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Cape Royds is a strip of low-lying volcanic ice free land on the western coast of Ross Island (Map 1). Mt Erebus (3795 m), an active volcano, lies ~24 km east of Cape Royds.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), South Polar Skua (*Catharacta maccormicki*).

Regularly haul out: Weddell seal (*Leptonychotes weddellii*).

Seen near-shore: Antarctic petrel (*Thalassoica antarctica*), Emperor penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*), Leopard seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), Snow petrel (*Pagodroma nivea*).

A polynya (open water) commonly present off Cape Royds supports a rich and diverse marine fauna.

FLORA

The southernmost recorded green snow algae in the Ross Sea region occur near the penguin colony at Cape Royds. Crustose lichens, common only in a few sites in the region have been recorded in the area.

OTHER

Cape Royds is one of the principal areas of early human activity in Antarctica. The hut built by Shackleton's Nimrod Expedition 1907-09 remains at Cape Royds as an important symbol of the heroic era of Antarctic exploration and has been designated Historic Site and Monument (HSM) No. 15. Numerous artefacts remain within the hut and in the surrounding area. Cape Royds hosts the most southerly established Adélie penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) colony.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Disturbance to the penguins and skuas, disturbance to historic artefacts, cumulative effects of human presence in and around the hut, tracking and ground compaction.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance to sensitive flora and fauna communities, damage to hut and associated artefacts, fire, importation of non-native species, litter, disturbance to research, tracking and ground compaction, noise.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

No current limit on ships, although visitor numbers are subject to the limits set below.

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

VISITORS

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Entry into ASPAs No. 157 and No. 121 is prohibited except in accordance with a permit which must be carried on site. Permits to enter ASPA No. 121 will not be given for recreational visits; visitors to ASPA No. 157 must avoid ASPA No. 121, including the marine area. All visitors to ASPA No. 157 must be accompanied by a trained guide. Consult the ASPA Management Plans and permits for further information. The historic hut is locked and a key must be obtained as part of the permitting process.

- Annual max. number of visitors into ASPA No. 157 (including guides): 2000 people.
- Max. number of people in ASPA No. 157 at any one time (including guides and those within the hut): 40 people.
- Max. number of people inside the hut at any one time (including guides): 8 people.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Access by foot or small boat should be made from Backdoor Bay (taking care to avoid the marine extent of ASPA No. 121) following the walking route shown in Map 2. Small boat access may also be made to a bay on the western coast of Cape Royds ~100 m north of the boundary of ASPA No. 121 (Map 1). Helicopter landings and overflight below 610 m (~2000 ft) Above Ground Level (AGL) within ASPAs No. 121 and No. 157 are prohibited. Helicopters should land at the Primary landing site (77° 33.06'S 166° 10.38'E, Maps 1 & 2), 250m northeast of Shackleton's hut.

CLOSED AREA

- ASPAs are closed except to permit holders. Permit holders must be careful to adhere to the requirements and visitor numbers specified in the management plans.
- ASPA No. 121 is closed to recreational / tourist visits.
- Refuge huts for science / conservation support are closed to visitors.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Visitors entering ASPA No. 157 and the hut must be accompanied by a guide. Particular care should be taken when walking along the preferred routes to the areas suitable for viewing penguins, to the helicopter landing site and to Backdoor Bay, to avoid historic artefacts still present on the ground, vegetation and skua nesting sites, which may be difficult to see. Visitors must stay on the preferred walking routes.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely under supervision outside of the boundaries of ASPAs No. 157 and No. 121. The Visitor Code of Conduct (below) shall be followed at all times. In particular, care should be exercised to avoid nesting skuas, any vegetation, and any scientific installations or camps in the area.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- All waste including human waste must be removed from the area.
- Any newly discovered historic artefact(s) should be left in situ. Photograph the item(s), record the location by GPS or on a map, write a description and submit the information to the appropriate national authority as soon as practicable.
- Do not approach wildlife closer than 5m (or viewing distance consistent with your national programme's code of conduct), increase the distance if the animal is disturbed, and take particular care around nesting birds.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Nothing, except for waste, is to be taken from the area.
- Use the preferred walking routes.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: As many areas are cramped and artefacts can be accidentally bumped, do not take bags or wear packs inside, do not use 'selfie' sticks for photos, and avoid tripods or monopods when the maximum number of visitors (8) are in the hut at one time.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Do not touch, move or sit on any items or furniture in the hut - handling artefacts causes damage.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Only use tripods or monopods with flat bottomed rubber bases as opposed to those with metal spikes which can damage the hut floor.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Remove or dry before entry, any clothing made wet by sea water, and any sea ice crystals from boots, as salt particles accelerate corrosion of metal objects.

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- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Smoking or the use of any naked flames in or around the historic hut is strictly prohibited, as fire is a major risk.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Thoroughly clean grit, dirt, guano, ice and snow from boots using the brushes provided before entering the hut to reduce floor abrasion.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE HISTORIC HUT: Visits should be recorded in the visitor book provided. This allows data on times and numbers of visitors to be correlated with temperature and humidity data automatically logged inside the hut.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREA: No plant or animal materials, food products or chemicals are to be taken into the protected area, and food is not to be consumed inside the hut or surrounding area.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREA: Overflights / landings by remotely piloted aircraft systems (drones) are prohibited, except if authorised by permit by a national authority.
- BEHAVIOUR WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREA: Take care not to tread on any artefacts, which may be difficult to see.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

- Hazardous materials (e.g. asbestos, chemicals, mould etc.) are present on site, and visitors enter at their own risk. Strictly avoid handling anything within the protected area and huts.
- Be aware of the ASPA boundaries, especially the boundary between the ASPAs and the marine extent of ASPA No. 121.



Fig 1: Shackleton's hut, Cape Royds. Photo A. Kerr, Antarctica NZ (23 Oct 2016).

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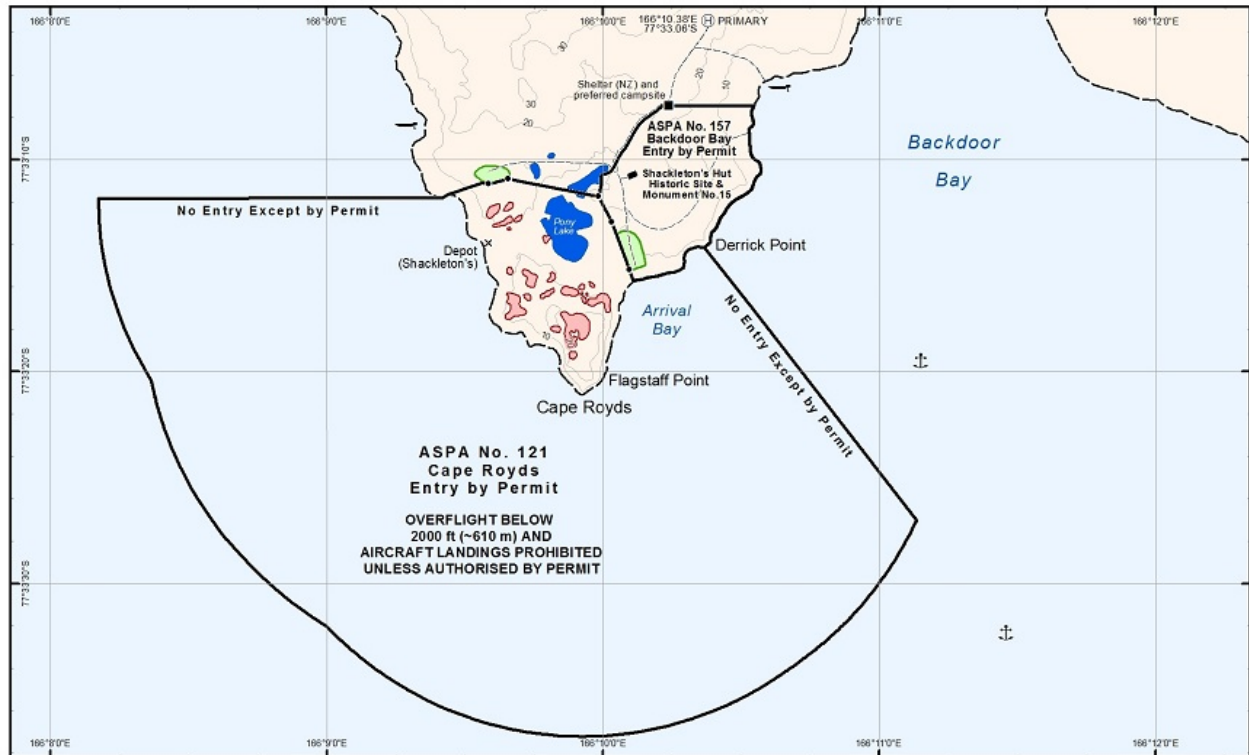
Fig. 2: Shackleton's hut with Mt. Erebus.
Photographer and date unknown.



Fig. 3: Crustose lichens at Cape Royds



Fig 4: Interior of Shackleton's hut. Photo A. Kerr, Antarctica NZ (23 Oct 2016).



Map 1: Cape Royds - Antarctic Treaty Visitor Site Guide



- Ocean
- Permanent ice
- Ice free ground
- ASPA boundary
- Coastline (approx)
- Contour (10 m)
- Path
- Penguin nesting area 2019 (approx.)
- Penguin viewing area
- Building
- Survey marker
- Signpost / boundary point
- Helicopter landing site
- Preferred small boat landing site
- Ship anchorage

0 50 100 150 200 250
Metres

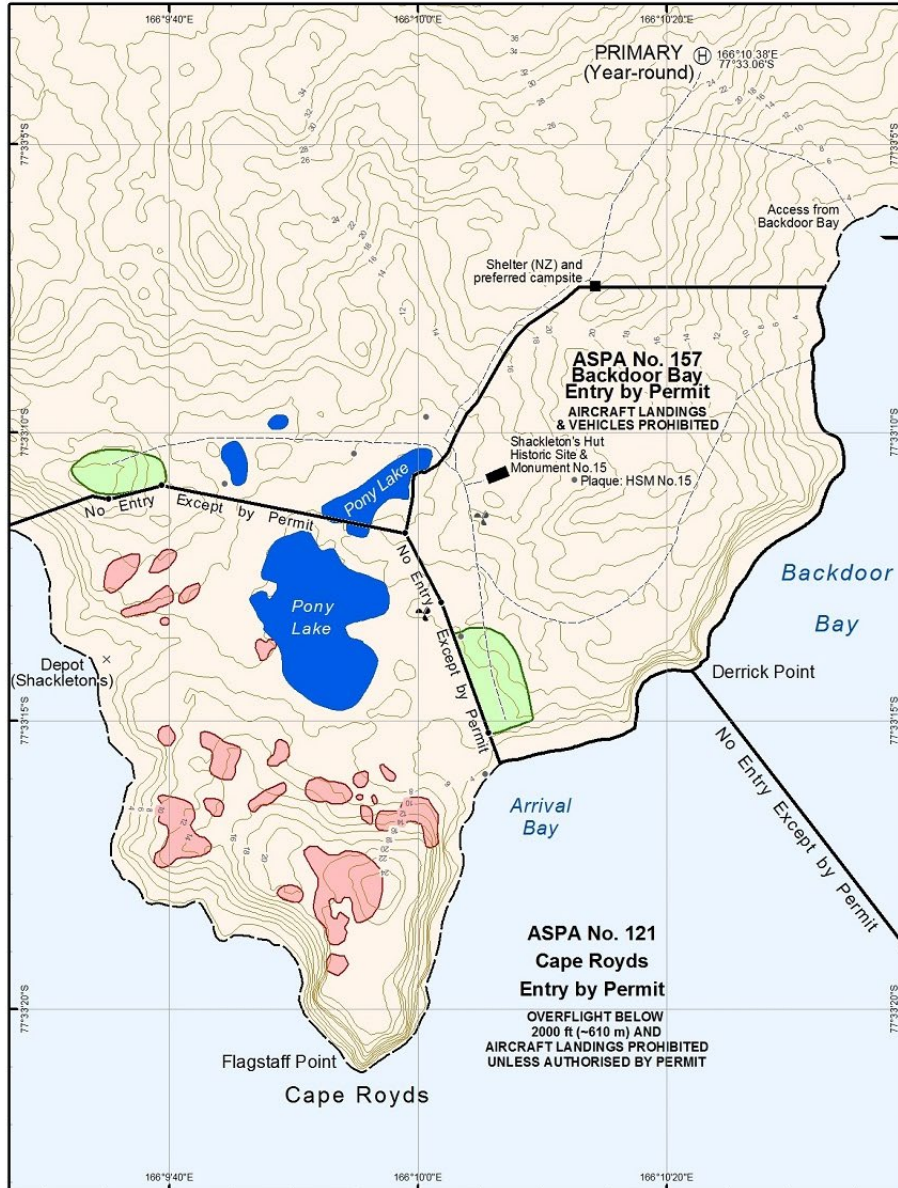
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Spheroid and horizontal datum: WGS84
Data sources: ASPA boundaries: EPA (2020);
Signposts: UNAVCO (Jan 2014); Topography &
infrastructure data supplied by Antarctica NZ (2018);
Penguins: aerial image (Landcare Research 2005)
digitised by ERA, updated 2019 Anley pers. comm

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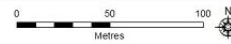


Map 2: Cape Royds - Antarctic Treaty Visitor Site Guide



- Ocean
- Permanent ice
- Ice free ground
- Lake / pond
- Coastline (approx)
- Contour (2 m)
- ASPAs boundary
- Penguin nesting area 2019 (approx.)
- Penguin viewing area
- Path
- Building

- Signpost / boundary point
- Signpost
- Historic weather station
- Automatic Weather Station
- Preferred small boat landing site
- Helicopter landing site



Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Spheroid and horizontal datum: WGS84
Data sources: ASPA boundaries: ERA (2020)
Signposts: UNAVCO (Jan 2014)
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