

6. Hannah Point

62°39'00" S, 60°37'00" W
South coast of Livingston Island

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- High concentration of diverse wildlife: nesting gentoo, chinstrap, and a small number of macaroni penguins; nesting southern giant petrels; southern elephant seals
- Diverse vegetation
- Geological features



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Hannah Point (the Point) is a narrow peninsula undulating upward to knife-edged ridges and vertical cliff edges 30-50 metres above sea level. There is loose scree on higher slopes and ridges, evidence of rock falls, and a Jasper mineral vein. Ash-covered slopes link the Point to the flat open beach area of Walker Bay.

FAUNA

Weddell seal - Regularly haul out, Southern Elephant Seal - Regularly haul out, Antarctic fur seal - Regularly haul out, Wilson's storm petrel - Confirmed breeders, Southern giant petrel - Confirmed breeders, Snowy sheathbill - Confirmed breeders, Skua - Confirmed breeders, Macaroni Penguin - Confirmed breeders, Kelp gull - Confirmed breeders, Gentoo penguin - Confirmed breeders, Chinstrap Penguin - Confirmed breeders, Cape petrel - Confirmed breeders, Blue-eyed shag - Confirmed breeders, Black-bellied storm-petrel - Confirmed breeders, Antarctic tern - Confirmed breeders

FLORA

Vegetation covers the upper slopes of the Point. *Deschampsia antarctica*, *Colobanthus quitensis*, *Xanthoria*, spp. and other crustose lichens are present. The green alga *Prasiola crispa* is widespread. Large moss patches cover Walker Bay.

OTHER

Some fossil and rock specimens may be observed towards the eastern end of the flat open beach area of Walker Bay.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Temporary paths form in the loose volcanic ash slopes closer to Walker Bay, and compacted paths are evident around the Point, formed by wildlife and possibly visitor use. In two reported instances since 1995 elephant seals have fallen from the cliff top wallow near the Jasper Dyke, due to disturbance.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Erosion and disturbance of vegetation and wildlife, especially as visitor space is limited on the Point.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS

Max pax on board: 200

Ships per day: 1

VISITORS

Visitors per guide: 20

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Comments: No more than 100 visitors at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders, with not more than 50 on the Point. One ship at a time. The Point: Given the limited space at this site, visits are strongly discouraged from the start of the breeding season (October) until after early penguin incubation phase (mid-January). After then, maximum 1 ship per day (midnight to midnight). Visits to last no longer than 6 hours. No visitors on the Point between 22:00hrs and 04:00hrs (local time). Walker Bay: a maximum of 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight).

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

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Primary: The small cobble beach on the northern coast of Hannah Point.

Secondary: If conditions permit, an alternative landing area is the flat open area of Walker Bay, to the north of the Point.

CLOSED AREA

Closed Area A: Cliff area with nesting southern giant petrels.

Closed Area B: Rocky outcrops with nesting southern giant petrels, including a 50 metre buffer zone.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Because of restricted visitor space, all walks around the Point should be strictly controlled in guided groups of no more than 15-20 visitors, which are well spaced and which follow the same path. Visitors walking on the Point should proceed in single file along a designated route, avoiding wildlife and other sensitive features.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely, but under supervision, on the beach in Walker Bay, avoiding Closed Area B.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Be vigilant for nesting southern giant petrels and, when on the same level or higher elevation than the birds, maintain a precautionary distance of at least 50 metres. Increase this distance if any change in the birds' behaviour is observed.

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

CAUTIONARY NOTES

The Gentoo colonies are thought to be expanding and the Point and the landing beach may be quite crowded as the breeding season progresses. The primary landing beach may be crowded with wildlife - under such circumstances it would not be possible to make a landing and maintain the required precautionary distances. Both landing beaches are prone to swells. Be careful near the jasper dyke. It is brittle and may crumble. Exercise particular caution not to disturb animals near cliff edges. If they are disturbed, they may retreat and fall.



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Hannah Point landing beach



Hannah Point from above



Caution - restricted visitor space and dense concentrations of wildlife

