

Cierva cove - MARINE ONLY

This is a Marine Only Site – Landing at the station may only take place with permission of the Argentine Antarctic Division (DNA), and recorded appropriately in the PVRs.

Cierva cove is a bay across the Gerlache strait from Two hummock islands, located on the northern side of the Danco coast, at the entrance of Hughes bay, South East of Cape Herschel (named also Cape Sterneck). It ends on the southern side with Cierva point.

Approximate place of the center of the bay: 64° 9'17.76"S 60°51'50.48"W

Location of the jetty at Primavera station, Cierva point: 64° 9'19.53"S 60°57'11.69"W

Location of the Extreme Ice Survey camera: 64° 9' 49.93"S 60° 53' 50.38"W

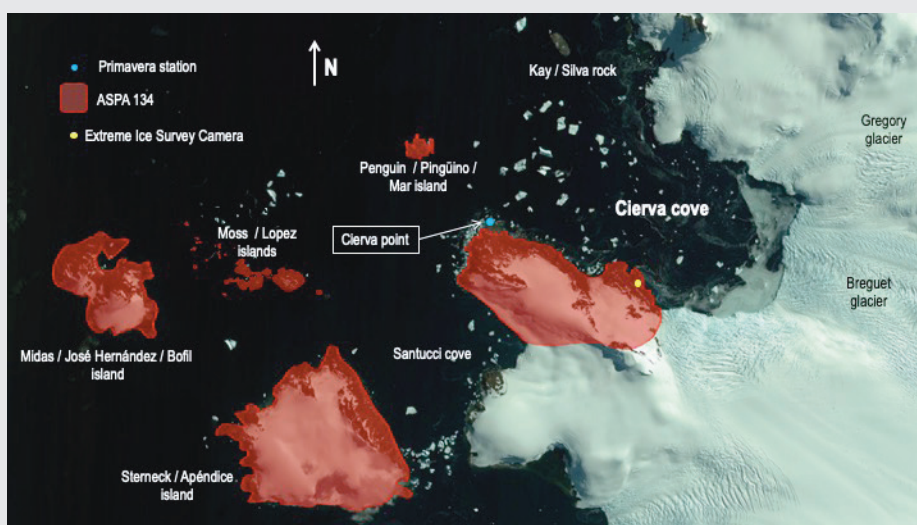
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visitor site guide



Key Features

- Icy scenery
- Glacial ice of all sizes
- Diversity of wildlife
- Leopard seals
- Chinstrap penguins



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Cierva cove is an astonishing bay where glacial ice of all sizes is always present, ending on the East with a massive tidewater glacier, and combines a great variety of wildlife. It is located in the vicinity of ASPA 134 which has 90% of Antarctic animal species. At least ten species of birds breed there and a great plant diversity has colonized the ice free places. Three species of seals are abundant and regularly visits each southern summer the bay, including leopards seals. Whales are also frequent visitors to these waters.

The unique topography, together with the abundance and diversity of vegetation, offers very favourable conditions for the formation of numerous microhabitats, which in turn favour the development of great biodiversity and gives the Area exceptional landscape value.



The bay is about 2.5nm deep and 1.2nm wide. It is bounded on the southern side by steep granitic ice free hills with abundant vegetation, bird life, and ends at Cierva point where you find the summer station from Argentina Primavera. The northern side is surrounded by ice cliffs while the Eastern end is formed by the two large tidewater glaciers Breguet and Gregory. Cierva Cove is just besides ASPA 134.

The entrance of the bay is exposed to large swell from the West coming from the Gerlache strait.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders (counting Cierva point and penguin island): Blue eyed shag, Kelp gull, Brown skua, Sooty Polar Skua, Chinstrap penguin, Gentoo penguin, Cape Petrel, Snowy Shearwater, Antarctic tern

Other birdlife regularly present on site: Southern giant petrel, Antarctic Shag

Pinnipeds very often seen: Leopard seal, Weddell seal, Crabeater seal

Pinnipeds occasionally seen hauled out: Antarctic fur seal (after mid-January), Southern elephant seal

In the bay can be often observed: Humpback whale, Antarctic minke whale

On sporadic occasion: Orca



FLORA

Mosses dominate in wet areas in the form of carpet cover (*Drepanocladus uncinatus*) and turf (*Polytrichum alpestre*). Dry places, on the rocks, are dominated by lichens of the *Usnea* and *Xanthoria* genera. Antarctic hair grass (*Deschampsia Antarctica*) grass is also abundant. The cover of mosses, lichens and grasses is very extensive. The most conspicuous plant communities are the associations of dominant lichens, moss turf dominated by *Polytrichum alpestre* and *Chorisodontium aciphillum* and the *Deschampsia colobanthus* subformation.



OTHER

A year round camera from the project Extreme Ice Survey South East of Cierva cove is taking pictures at regular intervals of Breguet glacier.

The camera is placed within the ASPA 134 at 64° 9' 49.93"S 60° 53' 50.38"W

Visitor Impact

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, in particular penguins close to the highways reaching the sea. Seals hauled out, and whales transiting. Change of behavior of penguins who can be disturbed on their way to the ocean.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Marine Only Site. 3 Ships a Day (Category 1 and 2)

When the station is manned, establish a communication with the base leader before any operation.

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

Visitor Area

VISITOR SAFETY

There is always a lot of brash ice in the bay, which can be unpredictable depending on the current and weather.

Small growlers drifting and grounded close to the shore around Cierva point can block you in.

Icebergs in the bay can be very large and can calve without warning, keep a safe distance and be maneuverable at all time (not in dense brash) to move away quickly if necessary.

A tsunami along the coastline can happen if a large iceberg grounded close to the shore disintegrates.

Calving ice front around Gregory glacier (which is more often ice free than Breguet glacier and therefore more approachable) keep a safe distance.

Large swell at the entrance of Cierva cove.

RESTRICTED ZONES

ASP 134 in the vicinity due to the rich biodiversity and exceptional aesthetic value. *ASPAs may only be entered with appropriate permissions.*

The ASPA comprises the following land areas:

- The ice-free area between the southwest coast of Cierva Cove and the northeast coast of Santucci Cove.
- Apéndice Island
- José Hernández Island
- The Moss islands
- Penguin island

and all the off shore islets between these islands and Cierva point.

Note that the intertidal zone of each of these areas is included in the ASPA.

Is not part of ASPA 134:

The subtidal marine environment is not part of the ASPA.

The Primavera Base (Argentina) and its associated facilities, as well as the beach area used as access to it, are excluded from the ASPA zone. Landings may not be made at the base without explicit permission from the Argentine National Program (DNA)

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Monitor your timing and be aware that ice conditions are constantly changing. Be aware of brash ice that can pack quickly and slow you down a lot.

