

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 Island, located on the northern side of the Danco coast.

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

IAATO

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Icy scenery
- Glacial ice of all sizes
- Diversity of wildlife including Leopard seals and Chinstrap penguins
- ASPA 134 boundaries includes surrounding islands.



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: Blue Eyed shag, Kelp gull, Brown skua, South Polar skua, Chinstrap penguin, Gentoo penguin, Cape petrel, Snowy sheathbill, Antarctic tern.

Other birdlife regularly present on site: Southern Giant petrel, Antarctic shag.

Pinnipeds seen: Leopard seal, Weddell seal, Crabeater seal, Antarctic fur seal (after mid-January), Southern Elephant seal.

Cetaceans 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

Cierva Point, Apéndice Island, José Hernández Island, Moss Islands, and Penguin Island are designated as Antarctic Specially Protected Area no. 134 under the Antarctic Treaty.



Visitor Impact

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife.

Disturbance of scientific or monitoring program.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Marine Only Site.

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

When operating amongst sea ice or icebergs, be vigilant to local sea and wind currents. Be alert to ice movement in relation to your operation and how it may affect both vessel and shore operations.

Be aware that a collapsing iceberg can cause a huge breaking wave and ice fragments can move remarkably quickly over a large distance. Be prepared. Anchoring close to ice is not advisable, instead maintain a watch and keep your engine running.

Small boats cruising in the vicinity of glaciers should keep at least 200m (600ft) from glaciers. For high activity glaciers, this should be increased to 400m (1200ft). This distance should be increased in narrow fjords, shallow fjords, or locations with ice cliffs higher than 40-50m (120-150ft)

Large swell from the west is common at the entrance of Cierva Cove.

RESTRICTED ZONES

ASPAs 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

Monitor timings and be aware that ice conditions are constantly changing. Be aware of brash ice that can pack quickly and slow vessels of all sizes down in transit.

