

Hydurga Rocks (Draft)

Primary Landing Site:
64°8'35.22"S 61°37'35.86"W

Ship's anchorage:
64.148214°S 61.610978°W

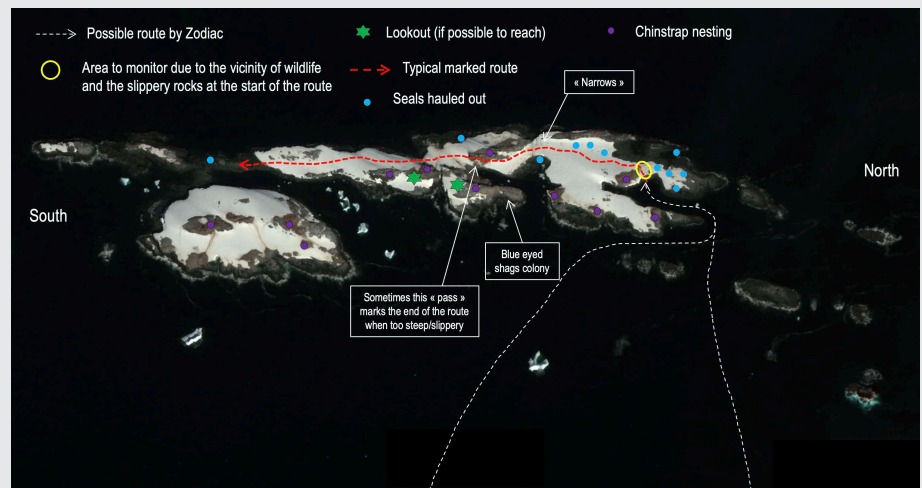
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visitor site guide



Key Features

- Chinstrap penguins nesting
- Seals regularly hauled out
- Variety of bird life



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Hydurga Rocks are a small group of islets located East of the much larger Two Hummocks Island, on the Northwest of the Gerlache strait at the same latitude of Cierva Cove.

The largest island that we visit is around 1.2km/0.75mi long and 115m/375ft wide.

The landing beach is located on the Western side of a little cove that you access from the very Northern side of the main island.

The beach, which has an axis North-South, is very small, 25m/85ft long, composed of small to medium size pebbles, relatively flat and about 10m/35ft wide. The beach is bound to the North and South by larger Rocks. The specific areas of interest are via an uneven terrain on flat metamorphic rocks, with some areas permanently covered by snow.

The place is sheltered from the elements (wave, winds).

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Blue eyed shag, Kelp gull, Brown skua and Chinstrap penguin

Other birdlife regularly present on site: Southern giant petrel and Snowy sheathbill

Pinnipeds very often hauled out: Weddell seal

Pinnipeds occasionally seen hauled out: Leopard seal and Southern elephant seal

Pinnipeds very often present after mid/end of January: Antarctic fur seal

Around the island, various species of cetaceans can be observed sporadically: Humpback whale and Antarctic minke whale

On rare occasion: Killer whale

FLORA

Few lichens, like the common orange lichen "Xanthoria elegans" is found on the cliff down from the birds' nests, as well as other unknown species of lichen.

Visitor Impact

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Possible disturbance of wildlife in the landing area.

Minimum 5m/15ft distance must be kept from wildlife.

Keep the volume down and walk slowly and carefully passing by the seals.

The metamorphic rocks can be very slippery when covered with guano and melting snow, especially in the immediate vicinity of the landing area and close to the steep pass on the very South of the island.

Expect deep snow at the beginning of the season, which will make the transit more difficult for some passengers.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships per day: 3 ships may visit Category 1 or 2. Only Category 1 ships may land, with a maximum of 2 landed visits per day.

Category 2 ships may not land but could do small boat cruising.

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

VISITOR NUMBERS

50 pax max ashore at one time.

Recommend guide to pax ratio – 1:10 on guided walks.

The site is very small and could become congested, especially at the end of the season when there is less space to walk around due to the melting snow.

LANDING AREA

Ships are often located East of the island. En route to the Northern side of Hydrurga Rocks, some obvious reefs must be avoided.

Shallow water inside the landing cove.

Take care to the swell and change of weather around the ship.

It may not be possible to see the ship or monitor the weather, and changes in weather may not be felt when ashore.

To reach the landing area there are two possible routes:

- a – from the southern side of the island
- b – strait between the northern reefs off the shore and left towards the cove

Once landed, move carefully and slowly due to potential presence of wildlife at the landing site. Walk inland and turn slightly left behind the first rookery of chinstrap penguins. If you need to walk on bare rocks, they can be extremely slippery due to guano. Then, reach the permanent snow cover and walk straight towards the South. If snow conditions and the terrain allow, you might proceed further South to reach the Southern end of the island or a viewpoint, although noted this is a narrow and steep passage and care should be taken.

CLOSED AREA

The top of the rocky promontory should be avoided.

See the map for more info.

No ASPA/ASMA in the vicinity.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Possible “loop” route where passengers can walk freely, rather than a straight line where there can be some traffic jam and post-holing when turning around.

The walking route extends to the South, to the end of the island if possible, or stops when the terrain is too difficult.



Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Be quiet and courteous of wildlife.

Avoid penguin highways.

Take care to the slippery rocks covered with guano in the vicinity of the landing.

The site is also excellent for zodiac cruising. The same wildlife can be enjoyed from water level, and growlers and icebergs are often grounded around, plus there are good opportunities for whale watching in this area.

Split landing / small boat cruising is a good option here.

