

19. Baily Head, Deception Island

62°58'00" S, 60°30'00" W
Natural amphitheatre with the Antarctic Peninsula's largest colony of Chinstrap penguins.

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Chinstrap Penguins
- Outstanding Scenery



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Baily Head is a rocky headland exposed to the Bransfield Strait on the south east coast of Deception Island. The site comprises the southern end of a long linear beach which runs along most of the eastern side of Deception Island, and a narrow valley that rises steeply inland to a semi-circular ridgeline, giving the impression of a natural 'amphitheatre'. It is bounded to the north by a large glacier and to the south by the cliffs of Baily Head. A substantial melt stream runs through the centre of the valley during the austral summer. During the breeding season, along the sides of the meltstream, there is a penguin "highway," with many penguins heading downhill to sea, and many going uphill, returning to their nests.

FAUNA

Southern Giant Petrel - Suspected Breeders, Antarctic fur seal - Regularly haul out, Snowy sheathbill - Confirmed breeders, Chinstrap Penguin - Confirmed breeders, Cape petrel - Confirmed breeders, Brown skua - Confirmed breeders, Southern giant petrel - Also present

FLORA

The green alga *Prasiola crispa* is abundant at Baily Head. Four species of lichen, six species of moss and the flowering Antarctic pearlwort (*Colobanthis quitensis*) have also been recorded.

OTHER

Baily Head comprises part of the Deception Island Antarctic Specially Managed Area No 4.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, in particular as visitor space is limited. Trampling of vegetation, and trail formation. The chinstrap colony is currently declining and may be more susceptible to disturbance.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS

Max pax on board: 200
Ships per day: 2

VISITORS

Maximum number of passengers at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders: 100
Visitors per guide: 20
Curfew time period (from/to), in order to establish a rest period for wildlife: 10:00-04:00

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Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Beach immediately in front of penguin colony. Note that the landing beach is susceptible to heavy swell and surf that can make landings impossible.

CLOSED AREA

Closed Area A: the foot of the rock cliffs to avoid falling rock.

Closed Area B: the glacier front to avoid falling ice.

Closed Area C: the upper slopes on the steep southern side of Baily Head to avoid rock and soil disturbance and damage to vegetation.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Visits to the colony should be in small closely supervised groups of no more than 15 visitors which are well spaced with at least one guide per group. Each group should follow the same route. Visitors need to be guided in groups of no more than 15 and very closely supervised when passing through the narrow corridor that runs alongside the main melt stream between the colony and the beach. Visitors must remain outside the natural 'boundary' of discrete breeding groups.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely in the landing beach area between the cliffs and the edge of the penguin highway, taking care to maintain sufficient distance from the birds to avoid displacement. Visitors should give penguins the right of way.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Tour Operators visiting Deception Island ASMA should ensure that their staff, crew and passengers are briefed on and are aware of the requirements of the Management Plan and supporting documentation.

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

Be especially cautious and be alert to maintaining sufficient distance from birds when passing through narrow corridor that runs alongside the main melt stream between the colony and the beach.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Large swell and strong winds can make landings and pick up of passengers extremely hazardous. Landings should only be undertaken when safe to do so. Once ashore, remain vigilant to changes in sea state and weather conditions at the landing site and safe return to vessels. Beware of falling rock in the vicinity of Closed Areas A and B.

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Landing beach



Penguin highway along the melt stream

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BAILY HEAD

-  Chinstrap penguins (approx.)
-  *Prasiola crista* blooms (late spring, summer)
-  Melt stream (approx.)
-  Closed Area

