

3. Cuverville Island

64°41'00" S, 62°38'00" W
North Errera Channel

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Extensive colony of Gentoo penguins
- Glacial and ice scenery
- Whaling artefacts



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

This 2km by 2.5km island is a steep-sided dome, two-thirds of which is covered by a permanent ice-cap. The northern shore is a beach of cobbles and boulders, approx 1.5km long, backed by steep vegetation covered cliffs toward the east and gentler slopes to the west.

FAUNA

Weddell seal - Regularly haul out, Antarctic fur seal - Regularly haul out, Leopard Seal - Hunt Near Shore, Wilson's storm petrel - Confirmed breeders, Snowy sheathbill - Confirmed breeders, Snow petrel - Confirmed breeders, Skua - Confirmed breeders, Kelp gull - Confirmed breeders, Gentoo penguin - Confirmed breeders, Cape petrel - Confirmed breeders, Blue-eyed shag - Confirmed breeders, Antarctic tern - Confirmed breeders

FLORA

Deschampsia antarctica, *Colobanthus quitensis*.; swards of moss species; and lichen species including *Xanthoria* spp., *Buellia* spp., *Caloplaca* spp., *Usnea* spp.

OTHER

Early 20th century whaling artefacts including scattered whalebones and a whalers' dam on the landing beach, and a waterboat and mooring chain on an offshore islet.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Graffiti on the waterboat was reported in 2010.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, trampling of vegetation, and damage to whaling artefacts.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS

Max pax on board: 500

Ships per day: 3

VISITORS

Visitors per guide: 20

Comments: One ship at a time. No more than 3 ships carrying more than 200 passengers per day (midnight to midnight). No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. No visitors ashore between 22:00hrs and 04:00hrs (local time), except for those engaged in organised overnight stays on Cuverville Island. This is in order to establish a resting period for the wildlife.

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

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Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Preferred: The wide cobble beach on the northern end of the island. Avoid landing in the immediate vicinity of the gentoo colonies on the western end.

Note: The small beaches on the eastern end of the site should not be used for landing, as they provide major access routes to the sea for penguins.

CLOSED AREA

Closed area A protects the routes used by penguins between the sea and colonies, and the closely spaced colonies on the high ground and outcrops below the cliffs

GUIDED WALKING AREA

When it is possible to stay 5m from wildlife, small groups of up to 15 people may visit the eastern end of the landing beach under close supervision, observing closed area A. The eastern end of the island contains the same wildlife (gentoo penguins) as the west, but has less room for visitors, and a higher likelihood of disrupting routes to and from the sea

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely, but under supervision, except in the closed areas and the guided walking area.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

In the late season (moult time), the density of penguins will probably confine visits to the immediate vicinity of the landing beach.

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



Cuverville Island landing beach

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