

# SALISBURY PLAIN

Visitor Management Plan

v2015



*King Penguin*

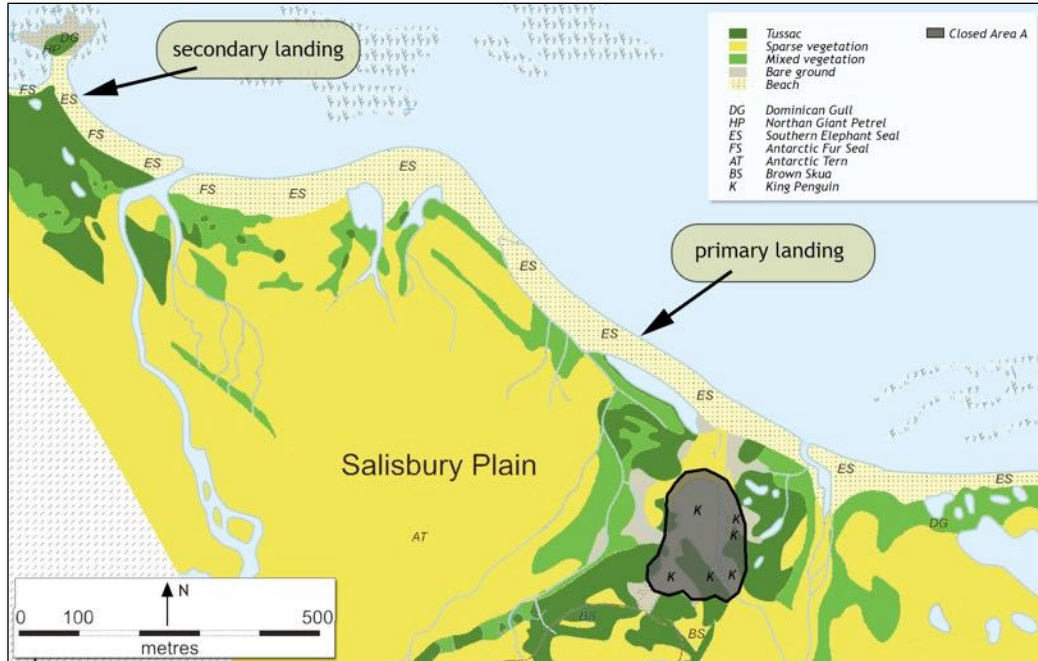


*Salisbury Plain landing*

# SALISBURY PLAIN VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## LOCATION



Sketch Map. Not for navigation.

- Latitude: 54° 03' S
- Longitude: 37° 19' W

Southern shore of Bay of Isles.



## KEY FEATURES

- King penguins
- Elephant seals
- Fur seals

## DESCRIPTION

### ○ Topography

Glacial outwash plain below the Grace Glacier, situated between Start Point and Lucas Glacier, laced with rivers and small pools. Prominent rock outcrops and bluffs descend to the coast from the inland ridges and peaks. Large swift-flowing rivers run from each of the glaciers carrying sediment-laden water to the coast.

### ○ Fauna

Confirmed breeders: king penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*), gentoo penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*), light-mantled sooty albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*), snowy sheathbill (*Chionis alba*), kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus*), southern giant petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*) northern giant petrel (*Macronectes halli*), white-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), brown skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*), Antarctic tern (*Sterna vittatae georgiae*), South Georgia pintail (*Anas georgica georgica*), elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*) and fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

Habitat restoration projects to remove introduced land mammals commenced in 2013 with the removal of reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), and the brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). Any subsequent evidence live rodents or reindeer must be reported to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI).

### ○ Flora

Tussac covers the hills and bluffs in the vicinity of the king penguin colony and at Start Point. The glacial outwash plain is primarily covered with sparse lowland fellfield. The streams and rivers which intersect the outwash plain are fringed with moist lowland fellfield and short mixed grassland dominated by *Poa annua*.

### ○ Other

The primary landing beach area is steeply shelving, usually with heavy breaking surf. Start Point is fringed by extensive kelp beds.



## **VISITOR IMPACTS**

- **Known Impacts**

None known

- **Potential Impacts**

Disturbance of wildlife.

## **LANDING REQUIREMENTS**

- **Ships \***

Ships carrying 500 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time.

Maximum 3 ships per day (midnight to midnight) of which no more than 2 vessels carrying more than 200 passengers.

- **Visitors**

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. 1 experienced guide (minimum) per 20 visitors.

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



## VISITOR AREAS

### ○ Landing Area

Primary: long gravel beach in front of glacial outwash plain, surf permitting.

Secondary: beach at the foot of the headland lying 200 m east of Start Point, fur seals and river from Grace Glacier permitting.

### ○ Closed Areas

Closed Area A: king penguin colony and a 10m buffer zone around its perimeter.

### ○ Guided Walking Areas

Hikes up the hill to overlook the king colony should be scouted and flagged to avoid skua nests and areas of lichen and moss.

### ○ Free Roaming Areas

Glacial outwash plain between Start Point and the king penguin colony, fur seals permitting and avoiding any Antarctic tern nesting areas and moulting king penguins.

Upper beach area, wildlife permitting.



*Closed Area A includes a 10m buffer zone*



## VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

### ○ Behaviour ashore

Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance from wildlife and give animals the right-of-way. Increase your distance if any change in behaviour is observed.

Be alert to fur seals.

Do not stray into the king penguin colony and keep at least 10 m from the colony edge. Avoid the king penguin access routes between the colony and the beach. Take particular care not to disturb, or shift, moulting king penguins.

When beach area is crowded with wildlife particularly during elephant seal and fur seal breeding period, visitors should be encouraged to stay on the upper beach area. It may be necessary to flag a route along the beach to the king colony.

Avoid skua nesting sites and areas of lichen and moss when hiking on the hill above the king colony.

### ○ Cautionary notes

Landings at Salisbury Plain are very dependent on surf and wind conditions. The bay is prone to sudden, strong katabatic winds coming off the glacier and to ocean swells from the north.

This is a primary elephant and fur seal breeding area. Landings may be impossible during the peak fur seal breeding season. Colonies of breeding seals must not be disturbed. If it is not appropriate to land, zodiac cruising should be considered.

Minimise use of ship lights at nightfall to reduce risk of bird strikes and remain vigilant.

Rivers can be deep and fast flowing. Use caution if attempting to cross them. Minimise use of ship lights at nightfall to reduce risk of bird strikes.

### ○ Biosecurity

All landings must comply with GSGSSI biosecurity measures and rigorous self-audit checks must be carried out prior to landing.

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