



# South Georgia Island Code of Conduct Whilst Ashore

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## When ashore:

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- Visitors must know their capabilities and also the dangers posed by South Georgia's environment, and act accordingly. Plan activities with safety in mind at all times.
  - Visitors should take note of, and act on, the advice and instructions from leaders and staff. Do not stray from the group.
  - Be prepared for severe and changeable weather. Ensure that equipment and clothing are of sufficient strength and quality to withstand Antarctic conditions. South Georgia's weather is unpredictable, when ashore be prepared for the worst, however pleasant it may seem when setting out.
  - Do not walk on to glaciers or snowfields without proper equipment and experience. Surface conditions are constantly changing, particularly in the present period of glacial retreat.
  - Avoid walking on fragile vegetation; A footprint on a moss bank may remain there a long time. Trampling of vegetation, especially in wet and peaty soils, can cause significant erosion over time. Moss beds and the margins of streams and lakes are particularly fragile.
  - Do not collect anything. This includes shells, stones, plants, skulls, bones, teeth and eggs. No items or scientific specimens may be removed from South Georgia without an export permit from GSGSSI. Under the Wildlife and Protected Areas Ordinance the removal of any item without a permit is an offence.
  - Be careful when taking photographs or filming. Never disturb plants or animals to get better pictures. Do not use flash photography for animal photographs. A respectful distance from wildlife should be maintained between you and the animal, including the use of 'selfie sticks' and other equipment.
  - Always give wildlife the right of way (see wildlife protection guidelines).
  - Firearms must not be brought into South Georgia.
  - Remove all rubbish.
  - Do not pollute lakes or streams.
  - Do not remove, disturb or destroy any historical artefacts.
  - Do not paint or engrave names or graffiti on rocks or buildings; or deface or vandalise any field huts or other structures.
  - Avoid marked sites where scientific experiments are being conducted and do not disturb any scientific equipment.
  - Do not smoke. Do not light camp fires.
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## Wildlife Protection Guidelines

**Failure to comply with Wildlife Protection Guidelines and Biosecurity Protocols could result in prosecution for the individual(s) involved.**

It is the responsibility of everyone to minimise their personal impact on the environment by observing the following guidelines. The guidelines are legally enforced through the Wildlife and Protected Areas Ordinance (2011, as amended). In addition, IAATO staff must ensure that IAATO codes of conduct are adhered to.

- Do not disturb mammals or birds and always maintain a respectful distance.
- Do not use vessels, small boats, or other means of transport in ways that disturb wildlife, whether at sea or on land.
- Stay on the edge of animal groups, approaching slowly and quietly. Do not use flash photography. Avoid surrounding the groups. Back-off immediately if mammals or birds show any sign of being disturbed. If animals are responding to your presence, you are too close.
- Never disturb territorial seals, or seals in breeding colonies to affect a landing, or cause disturbance by cruising offshore in close proximity.
- Do not offer food to any animal. This avoids animals becoming dependent on un-natural food sources, prevents the spread of avian diseases and protects visitors from potential injury.
- Rigorously adhere to biosecurity measures (see separate Biosecurity Handbook).
- Be alert whilst ashore, particularly in tussac grass. Take care to avoid stumbling inadvertently upon a fur seal or a nesting bird, or causing damage to seabird burrows, both in tussac and on scree. Return to the shore if a high density of burrows is encountered.
- Do not touch animals. This may cause substantial stress and disturbance, and may jeopardize the bond between parent and offspring and lead to an aggressive response from the animal.
- The use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), (also known as drones and quadcopters) for recreational purposes is not permitted. UAVs can only be operated, if permitted in advance by GSGSSI (Regulated Activity Permit for approved use in support of either science or media).

The Wildlife and Protected Areas Ordinance (2011) is available online at [www.gov.gs](http://www.gov.gs).

It is important that we collect accurate and complete data on bird strike incidences. This information is used to will help us better understand the issue and to develop appropriate mitigation measures. All bird strikes (including birds released unharmed) must be recorded and reported in the GSGSSI Bird strike report form and emailed to the Government Officers whenever a bird strike occurs.