

40. Astrolabe Island

63°17'00" S, 58°40'00" W
Off of North West Coast of
Antarctic Peninsula

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Chinstrap penguins
- Crescent Moon shaped long gravelly beach



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

A 3 mile long island situated 14 miles NW off of Cape Ducorps on the Trinity Peninsula. Beach on the northern shore of Astrolabe Island. A small fractured boulder field of weathered rocks lies on the path between the beach and the penguin colony.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Antarctic Fulmar, chinstrap Penguin, Wilson's storm petrel.

Hauled out: Antarctic fur seal.

Offshore: Leopard seal.

Suspected Breeders: Blue-eyed shag, Skua.

FLORA

Various crustose and fruticose lichens

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None identified

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife.

Damage to fractured boulders field, repeated walking over the field will dislodge the plates of rock so that eventually the cracked boulder effect will be lost.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Max pax on board: 500

Ships per day: 2

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

VISITORS

Maximum number of visitors 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: 22:00-04:00

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Comments: 50 visitors only at any one time on walk to chinstrap colony.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Primary landing site - either end of main crescent shaped beach on eastern side of small rocky peninsula, rocks behind the beach contain chinstrap penguin colony. Antarctic fur seals are likely to be present in late season making landing difficult.

Secondary landing site - Opposite side of peninsula on the rocky shore below the penguin colony. Extreme caution should be taken on very slippery rocks.

CLOSED AREA

Small area of fractured boulders on the walk from primary landing site to the penguin colony. Can be skirted on the lower rocks.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Short walk from the beach up the rocks to chinstrap penguin colony, avoiding the closed area. Only 50 at a time on the walk, which should be marked and closely guided. Do not walk up into the scree slopes where birds are nesting.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors are free to roam on the upper shore of the long stony landing beach.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance of 5 metres from wildlife and give animals the right-of-way. Increase this distance if any change in behaviour is observed.
- Be careful near Antarctic fur seals, they may be aggressive.
- Stay clear of - and do not venture on - slopes where chinstrap penguins are nesting.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

- Be careful of hidden rocks on approach to landing sites. Ice conditions on approach to the beach can change rapidly - extreme caution should be used in approaching and departing the island.
- Be extremely careful walking on rocks, especially close to the secondary landing site, which are very slippery and covered in guano.



Fractured boulders



Primary landing site

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Alternative landing site

