GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR VISITORS TO THE ANTARCTIC

The General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic applies to all visitors and all activities in the Antarctic Treaty area. All visits to Antarctica should be conducted in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty, its Protocol on Environmental Protection, and relevant Measures, Decisions and Resolutions adopted at Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings (ATCM). All activities must be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment and must have prior approval/permission or meet all the requirements of the relevant National Competent Authority.

PROTECT ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE

WILDLIFE
• The taking of, or harmful interference with, Antarctic wildlife is prohibited.
• When in the vicinity of wildlife – either on land or at sea, move or maneuver slowly and carefully and keep noise to a minimum.
• Maintain an appropriate distance from wildlife to avoid disturbance. While in many cases a greater distance may be necessary, in general keep at least 5m from wildlife on land. Alibie by any guidance on distances in species or site-specific guidelines.
• Always give animals the right of way and do not block their access routes between the sea and land, nesting places or other destinations.
• Animals may alter their behaviour if disturbed. Observe wildlife behaviour. If wildlife changes its behaviour (standing when it was sitting, moving its head around) start vocalizing when it was silent, etc.) stop moving, or slowly increase your distance.
• Stay outside the margins of a colony and observe from a safe distance. Animals are particularly sensitive to disturbance when they are breeding (including nesting) or mating.
• Every situation is different. Consider the topography and the individual circumstances of the site, as these may have an impact on the vulnerability of wildlife to disturbance.
• Watch your step for eggs, chicks or nest materials of skuas, penguins or petrels.
• Unmanned aerial vehicles must not be used in the vicinity of wildlife.
• Do not feed wildlife or leave food or scraps lying around.

VEGETATION
• Vegetation, including mosses and lichens, is fragile and very slow growing. Do not walk, drive or land on any moss beds or lichen covered rocks, in order to avoid damage.
• When travelling on foot, stay on established tracks whenever possible to minimise disturbance or damage to the soil and vegetated surfaces.
• Where a track does not exist, choose your route carefully, taking the most direct route while avoiding vegetation, fragile terrain, scree slopes, and wildlife.

INTRODUCTION OF NON-NATIVE SPECIES AND PATHOGENS
• Do not introduce any plants or animals into the Antarctic.
• To prevent the introduction of non-native species and disease, carefully wash boots and clean all equipment including clothes, bags, trailer and walking sticks before bringing them to Antarctica. Pay particular attention to boot treads, velcro fastenings and pockets which could contain soil or seeds. Vehicles and aircraft should also be cleaned.
• To prevent the transfer of non-native species and disease between locations in Antarctica ensure all clothing, boots and equipment is cleaned thoroughly before moving between sites and regions.

RESPECT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
• Some Antarctic stations may accept visitors where prior arrangements have been made. Obtain permission before visiting Antarctic stations.
• Reconfirm scheduled visits well in advance, or according to guidance provided by the manager of a station before arriving.
• In addition to these general guidelines, comply with any site-specific rules or visitor guidelines in place when visiting Antarctic stations.
• Do not interfere with or remove scientific equipment or markers, and do not disturb experimental study sites, field camps or stored supplies.

WASTE
• Do not deposit any litter or garbage on land nor discard it into the sea.
• No smoking except in designated areas at stations or camps, to avoid litter and risk of fire to structures. Collect ash and litter for disposal outside Antarctica.
• Ensure that wastes are managed in accordance with Annexes III (waste disposal) and IV (marine pollution) of the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty.
• Ensure that all belongings, equipment and waste is secured at all times in such a way as to prevent dispersal into the environment through high winds or wildlife foraging.

WILDERNESS VALUES
• Do not disturb or pollute lakes, streams, rivers or other water bodies (e.g. by walking, washing yourself or your equipment, throwing stones, etc.)
• Do not paint or engrave names or other graffiti on any man-made or natural surface in Antarctica.
• Do not take souvenirs, whether man-made, biological or geological items, including feathers, bones, eggs, vegetation, soil, rocks, meteorites or fossils.
• Place tents and equipment on snow or at previously used campsites where possible.

KEEP ANTARCTICA PRISTINE
LEAVE NO TRACE OF YOUR VISIT

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS/ PREPARATIONS
• Be prepared for severe and changeable weather. Ensure that your equipment and clothing meet Antarctic standards.
• Remember that the Antarctic environment is inhospitable, unpredictable and potentially dangerous.
• Know your capabilities, the dangers posed by the Antarctic environment, and act accordingly. Plan activities with safety in mind at all times.
• Keep a larger safety distance from potentially dangerous or territorial wildlife like fur seals, both on land and at sea. Keep at least 15-25m away where practicable.

BE SAFE

ANTARCTIC SPECIALLY MANAGED AREAS (ASMs) AND ANTARCTIC SPECIALLY PROTECTED AREAS (ASPs)
• Activities in ASPs and ASMs must comply with the provisions of the relevant Management Plan and abide by any restrictions regarding the conduct of activities in these areas.
• A permit from a National Competent Authority is required for entry into any ASPA. Carry the permit and obey any permit conditions at all times while visiting an ASPA.
• Check the locations and boundaries of ASPAs and ASMs in advance and refer to the provisions of their Management Plans (all can be found on the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty website - www.ats.aq).

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS (HSMs) AND OTHER STRUCTURES
• Some historic huts have been designated as ASPAs and require a permit to visit. Visits must follow the provisions laid out in the respective management plan.
• Historic huts and structures can, in some cases, be visited for touristic, recreational and educational purposes. Visitors should not use them for other purposes except in emergency circumstances.

LARNING AND TRANSPORT REQUIREMENTS

TRANSPORT
• Do not use aircraft, vessels, small boats, hovercraft or other means of transport in ways that disturb wildlife, either at sea or on land.
• Avoid flying over concentrations of birds and mammals. Follow the advice in Resolution 2 (2004) Guidelines for the operation of aircraft near concentrations of birds in Antarctica.
• Refilling of fuel tanks for small boats should take place in a way that ensures any spills can be contained, for example onboard a vessel.
• Check small boats are free of any soil, plants or animals prior to the commencement of any ship-to-ship operations.
• Small boats must at all times regulate their course and speed so as to minimise disturbance to wildlife and to avoid any collisions with wildlife.

SHIPS
• Only one ship may visit a site at any one time.
• Vessels with more than 500 passengers shall not make landings in Antarctica.

LANDING OF PASSENGERS FROM VESSELS
• A maximum of 100 passengers may be ashore from a vessel at any one time, unless site specific guidance requires fewer passengers.
• During landings from vessels, maintain a 1:20 guide-to-passenger ratio at all sites, unless site specific advice requires more guides.