

Melchior Islands – Marine Only (Draft)

Possible anchorage
64° 18' 47" S 062° 57' 25" W

IAATO

visitor site guide



Key Features

- A sheltered anchorage on the edge of the Drake Passage
- Small boat cruising
- Argentine research base.



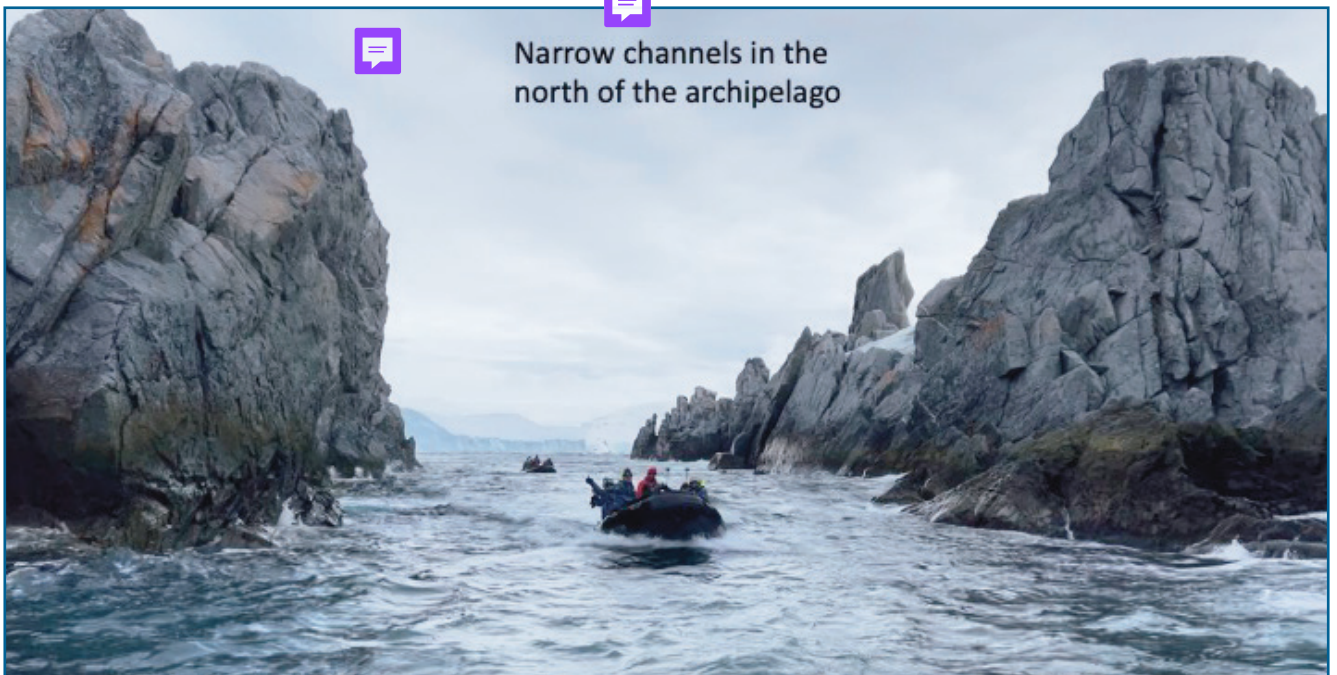
Description

TOPOGRAPHY

A complex archipelago 3.5x5 NM in area in the north of Dallmann Bay, on the edge of the Drake Passage. It provides extensive cruising opportunities with a variety of geographies.

The islands are covered in snow and glacial ice. Fast ice persists well into summer in the eastern parts of the group, particularly Alphabet Channel.

To the southwest there is Base Melchior while to the west broad channels separate the many islands.





Narrow west coast channels

To the east broader channels allow access between the islands but in some places overhanging ice or steep snow slopes and shallow water provide hazards which must be assessed.

The rocks appear to be greenstones and metamorphosed sediments, likely Jurassic/Cretaceous in age.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Antarctic shags.

Present: Gentoo penguin, Chinstrap penguin, Snowy sheathbill, Kelp gull, Brown skua, Wilson's storm petrel, Antarctic tern

Visitors: Antarctic fur seals, Weddell seals, Humpback whales, Killer whales.

Visitor Area

VISITOR SAFETY

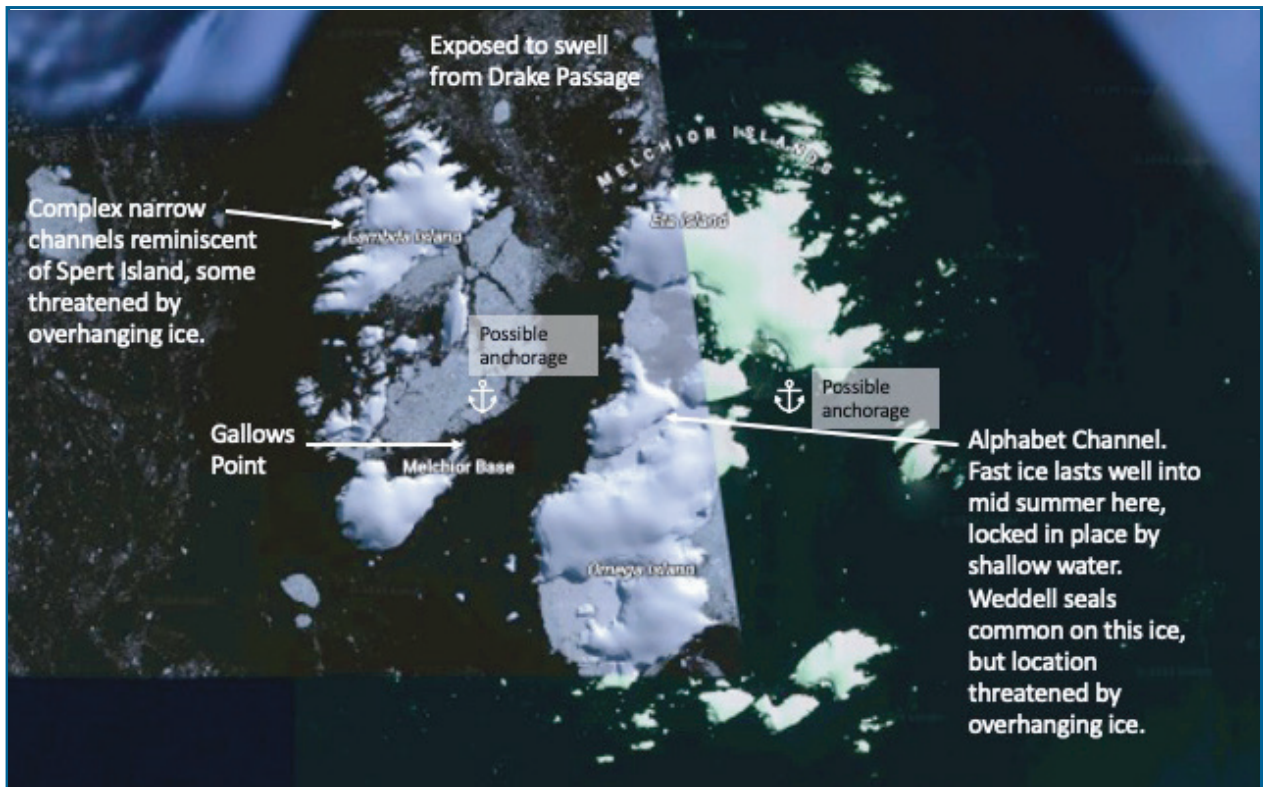
West and north of Melchior Base, the channels become narrower and steeper-sided and may be blocked by icebergs or threatened by overhanging ice. The far west and north receive swell from the Drake Passage that breaks into rocky channels.

The slopes of the islands are steep and snowy and an assessment should be made of any risks posed by these steep slopes during early season or after heavy snow. Ice may fall into channels, particularly narrow or restricted channels, and routes for small boat cruising must be assessed thoroughly.

Areas where fast ice persists in Alphabet Channel the water is very shallow and threatened by steep or even overhanging glacial ice.

Experienced small boat driver recommended due to frequently challenging situations.

Until the middle of summer fast ice persists in the east of the island group.



Historical Information

First discovered by the Dallmann Expedition in 1873-74, and named by the Third French Antarctic Expedition on 1903-05. Argentina's second Antarctic base, "Base Melchior", was built in 1947.