

## Robert Point (Draft)

### Primary Landing Site:

62°26'27.05"S 59°22'49.52"W

### Ship's anchorage for the primary landing site:

62°26'39.31"S 59°21'12.86"W

### Secondary Landing Site:

62°26'36.29"S 59°23'38.54"W

### Ship's anchorage for the secondary landing site:

62°27'32.74"S 59°23'7.86"W

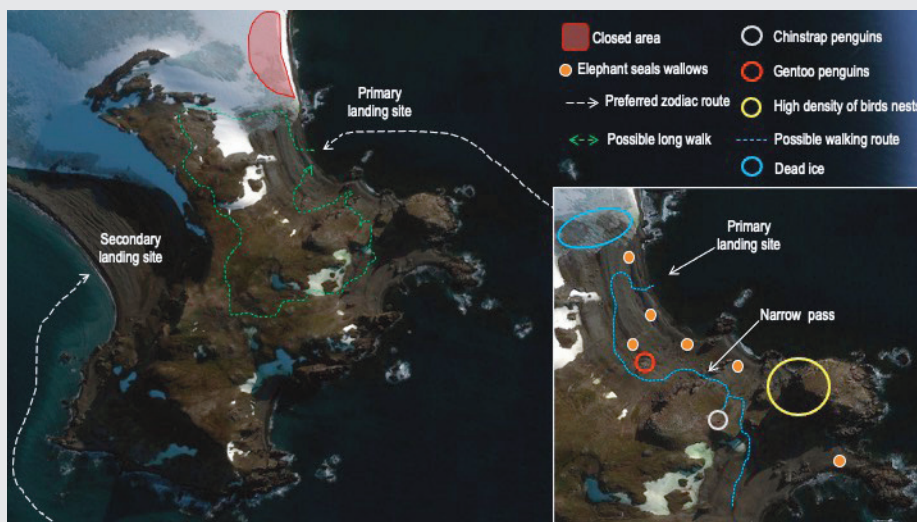
# IAATO

visitor site guide



## Key Features

- Elephant seals
- Chinstrap penguins
- High variety of wildlife
- Scenery (glacier, mountain, vegetation)
- One of the two flowering plants (Antarctic Hairgrass)
- Longer walking available (Condition dependant)



## Description

### TOPOGRAPHY

Robert Point is an ice-free volcanic promontory located Southeast of Robert island which is covered by a permanent ice cap. The point is about 1km (0.6mi) long and 1km (0.6mi) wide.

The primary landing is East of the point. It consists in a 170m (560ft) long and relatively straight beach bounded on the Northern side by the glacier and on the South by rocky promontories. The landing approach is quite steep, and the beach itself composed of medium size pebbles all along, on land and on the sea floor.

The primary landing is more commonly used due to the nature of the prevailing westerly winds and gives protection from the Bransfield. It is very common to experience swell/surf on this long-exposed beach. However, because of the shape of the seabed note that the surf tends to increase at this location as the tide is going down.

The secondary landing site is located West of the point. The feature is similar aside from the size of the beach which is 600m (2000ft) long.

After landing on the primary beach, be prepared to walk on a very rocky and slippery area (when wet or with guano).



## FAUNA

**Confirmed breeders:** Brown skua, Chinstrap penguin, Gentoo penguin, Kelp gull

**Suspected breeders:** Southern giant petrel

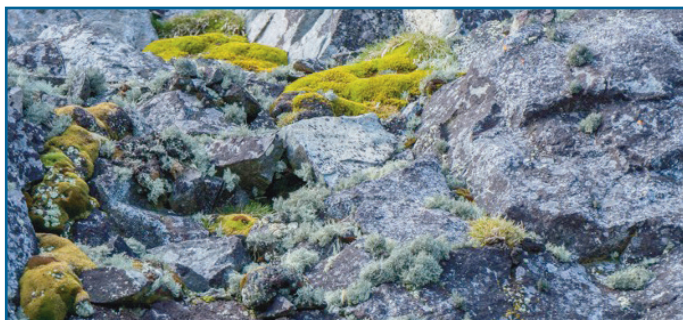
**Pinnipeds often hauled out:** Weddell seal and Southern elephant seal

**Pinnipeds often present after mid/end of January:** Antarctic fur seal

## FLORA

Vegetation can be prevalent here.

Among them one of the two flowering plants that are native to the white continent: Antarctic hair grass (*Deschampsia antarctica*). Moss and lichen can be found also, including the very common one in the South Shetland: Antarctic Beard Lichen (*Usnea antarctica*).



## Visitor Impact

### POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Nesting skuas and seals are camouflaged, watch your step.

Avoid trampling vegetation which can be dense.

Be aware of skuas nesting on flat grounds, watch your step.

When leaving the vicinity of the beach going towards the first small colony of gentoos and moving towards the chinstraps, rocks can be extremely slippery when wet or covered with guano.

Maintain recommended distances from any nesting Southern Giant Petrels.

Watch out for camouflaged elephant seals who can be solitary or congregated in wallows.

Always monitor the swell/tide at the landing site.

## Landing Requirements

### SHIPS\*

Maximum 3 ships per day. One of which can be Category 2.

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

### VISITOR NUMBERS

No more than 100 passengers ashore at a time, exclusive of guides.





## Visitor Area

### LANDING AREA

**Primary landing:** due to the reefs all around the point, the mother vessel cannot be close and, in most cases, won't see the landing area from the ship. On approach, take time to observe the swell and possible surf prior landing as a set of waves out of ten is larger.

**Secondary landing:** don't drive too close to shore to avoid the shallows and reefs. Watch out for possible surf and breakers. There is a high variety of wildlife on the point and the beach can be crowded to a point it may not be possible to land.

For the primary landing area, the main attraction is the elephant seals and chinstraps, located along the beach.

To reach the chinstraps colony, you can pass by the first gentoo rookery, walking inland to the left, then continue left towards an obvious volcanic pinnacle formation, avoiding the elephant seal wallows on the way. Pass the pinnacle through a "notch", turn right to go up to the chinstraps.

Do not walk on vegetation as the density of moss and hairgrass increases a lot on that area.

### CLOSED AREA

On the glacier to the right over the tidewater glacier.

Walking on the glacier should only happen with experienced guides, and properly roped.

### GUIDED WALKING AREA

Close to the landing on the northern side, with trained staff, on the dead ice, going up on the glacier to the left towards the rocky ridge for a viewpoint.

Guided walks or mark a flagged route towards the chinstrap colony and the Southern beach. Route should pass by the first gentoo rookery, walking inland to the left, then continue left towards an obvious volcanic pinnacle formation, avoiding the elephant seal wallows on the way. Pass the pinnacle through a "notch", turn right to go up to the chinstraps.

Restrict passenger numbers at colony to maintain proper wildlife distances (recommended less than 50).

Guided walks in small groups up the hill for a viewpoint. People may walk at their own pace along a clear marked path under close staff supervision around the landing area to enjoy the dense variety of wildlife first, before reaching the small colony of gentoo penguins.

Then you will pass by a small pass close to a pinnacle. This uneven area can be very slippery when snow free. You can proceed further East to reach the next beach where you may find more seals.

Do not attempt any walk if vegetation cannot be avoided.

Guided walks on the dead ice towards the rocky ridge, led by experienced staff.



### FREE ROAMING AREA

Along the beach to enjoy the seals, penguins walking around, and bird life.

## Visitor code of conduct

### BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- Keep your eyes open as skuas and seals are well camouflaged.
- Boulders create uneven and slippery terrain. Walking sticks recommended.
- Do not trample dense vegetation.
- Access to the chinstrap penguins should be well monitored due to the density of vegetation in that area.

