

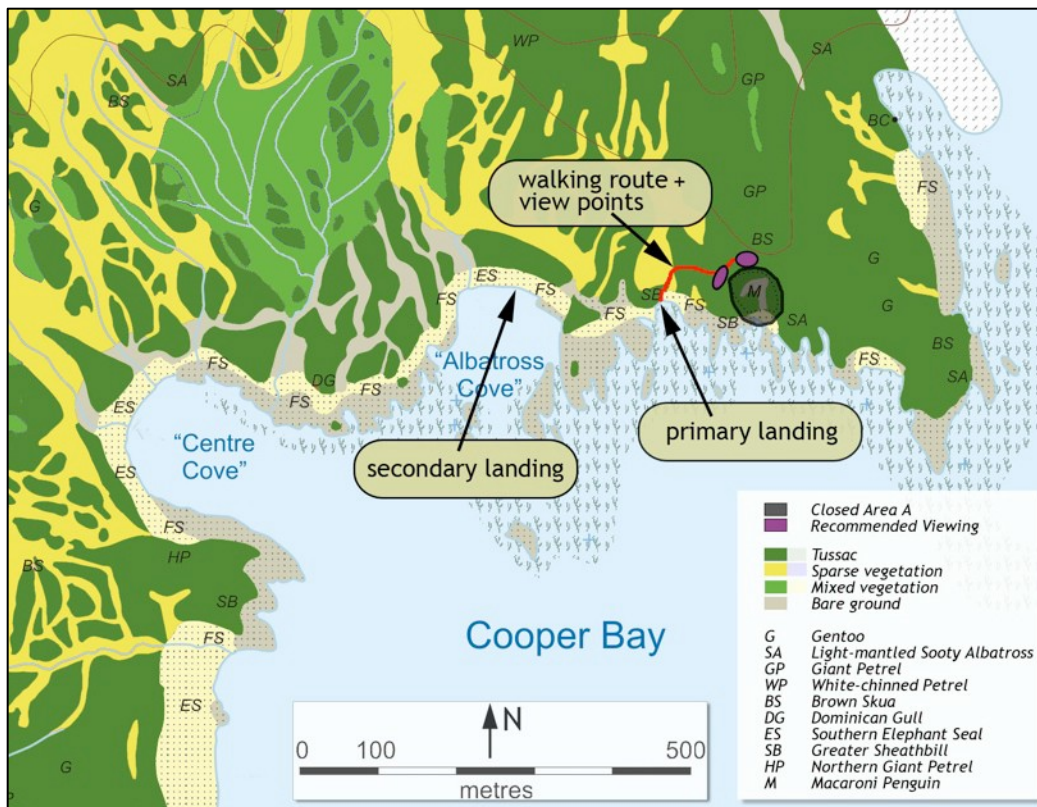
COOPER BAY

Visitor Management Plan

v2015



LOCATION



Sketch map. Not for navigation.

- Latitude: 54° 46.8' S
- Longitude: 35° 48.4' W

Northeastern shore of Cooper Bay.



KEY FEATURES

- Macaroni penguins
- Fur seals

DESCRIPTION

○ Topography

The northeastern shore of Cooper Bay consists of low cliffs of tightly folded sedimentary rock and wave-cut platforms with a series of cobbled beaches indenting the bay and providing access via steep scree slopes to the higher ground. Slopes are vegetated to approximately 200m altitude. Above this, scree slopes, lichen-covered boulder fields and bare rock dominate.

○ Fauna

Confirmed breeders: gentoo penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*), macaroni penguin (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*), light-mantled sooty albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*), southern giant petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*), white-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), Wilson's storm-petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*), snowy sheathbill (*Chionis alba*), kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus*), brown skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*). South Georgia pintail (*Anas georgica georgica*), South Georgia pipit (*Anthus antarcticus*), Antarctic tern (*Sterna vittate georgiae*), elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*) and fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

The habitat restoration project to remove the brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*) is scheduled for early 2015.

○ Flora

Predominantly tussock interspersed with sparse lowland fellfield. Rock outcrops and upper scree slopes support extensive lichen communities. Dense tussock is interspersed with deep mud pools at the edge of macaroni colony.

○ Other

Extensive kelp beds, hazardous rocks and reefs lie immediately off shore.



VISITOR IMPACTS

○ **Known Impacts**

Track starting to form on scree slope behind primary landing beach.

○ **Potential Impacts**

Disturbance of wildlife and track formation.

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

○ **Ships ***

Ships carrying 200 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time. Maximum 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight).

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

○ **Visitors**

No more than 80 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. A minimum of 1 experienced guide per 20 visitors. No more than 20 visitors plus guide at a time at each of the recommended macaroni colony viewing points.

Note that it may not be possible to land at certain times due to heavy concentrations of fur seals.



Visitors in viewing area



VISITOR AREAS

○ Landing Area

Primary: small beach immediately to the east of 'Albatross Cove', identifiable by rectangular rock stack which almost divides the beach at its western end.

Secondary: 'Albatross Cove' situated to the west of the primary landing beach.

○ Closed Areas

Closed Area A: macaroni colony including penguins' access routes to sea and the beach directly below the main colony and a 10m buffer zone around the colony perimeter. Where visitors are likely to come close to the edge of the Closed Area, the 10m buffer zone should be marked with flags.

○ Guided Walking Areas

A single, flagged route should be followed from the landing beach directly up the scree slope to the un-vegetated area at the top of the initial slope (at approximately the same elevation as the macaroni colony) to avoid the formation of multiple paths.

A single flagged route through the tussac towards recommended macaroni colony viewing points should be followed to avoid straying into the colony and penguin paths. The recommended viewing areas are to the west and the north of the colony and are identified on the map.

Hikes in the tussac above the macaroni colony or out towards the gentoo penguin colony should be closely guided to avoid nesting birds.

○ Free Roaming Areas

The un-vegetated area at the top of the initial slope up from the beach to the west of the macaroni colony before entering the tussac area.

Wildlife concentrations permitting, the two landing beach areas.



VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

○ Behaviour ashore

Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance from wildlife and give animals the right-of-way. Increase your distance if any change in behaviour is observed.

Be alert to nesting gentoos, skuas and giant petrels in the tussac to the north and east of the macaroni colony. Be alert to fur seals hidden in the tussac.

Visits to the macaroni colony should be closely supervised and in distinct well-managed groups.

○ Cautionary notes

This is a primary fur seal breeding area. Landings may be impossible during the peak fur seal breeding season.

In some seasons, and at certain periods of the year, gentoo penguins can occupy the primary landing beach and adjacent scree slope preventing access.

The bay is prone to sudden, strong katabatic winds and ocean swells from the SSW and east.

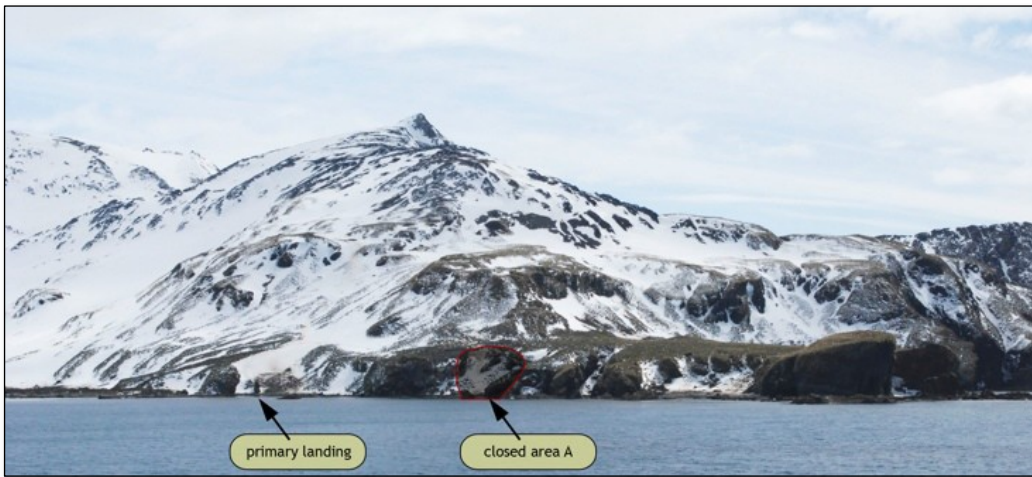
Minimise use of ship lights at nightfall to reduce risk of bird strikes and remain vigilant.

Repeat outbreaks of Avian Cholera at the neighbouring chinstrap penguin colony have resulted in site closures. Access arrangements must always be checked with GSGSSI. Remain vigilant for any sick birds in the vicinity of the bay and report any concerns immediately to the Government Officers at King Edward Point.

○ Biosecurity

All landings must comply with GSGSSI biosecurity measures and rigorous self-audit checks must be carried out prior to landing. (See cautionary note concerning Avian Cholera outbreaks.)

COOPER BAY VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



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