

Paulet Island (DRAFT)

Possible landing area:
63°35'S, 55°47'W

Northwestern Weddell Sea,
southeast of Dundee Island

IAATO

visitor site guide



Addendum to the ATCM Visitor Site Guideline

Key Features

- Extensive Adélie Penguin colony
- Stone hut, grave and cairn
(Historic Site and Monument No.41)



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

This circular island is 1.6 km (1mi) in diameter. It has a distinct volcanic cone that rises to a height of 350 metres (1150ft). A flat terrace forms an apron around the north and northeast side of the island. At high tide, this terrace is largely submerged, severely restricting visitor space.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguin, Antarctic shag, Kelp gull, Snowy sheathbill

Likely breeders: Snow petrel, Wilson's storm-petrel

Commonly present: Weddell seals, Antarctic fur seals, Leopard seals

FLORA

Swards of moss species, the green alga *Prasiola crispa* and snow algae.

OTHER

Stone hut, grave and cairn (Historic Site and Monument No.41)

Visitor Impact

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, particularly Adélie penguins, and damage to the historic site.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS'

Maximum passengers onboard: 200 or fewer passengers

Ships per day: 2

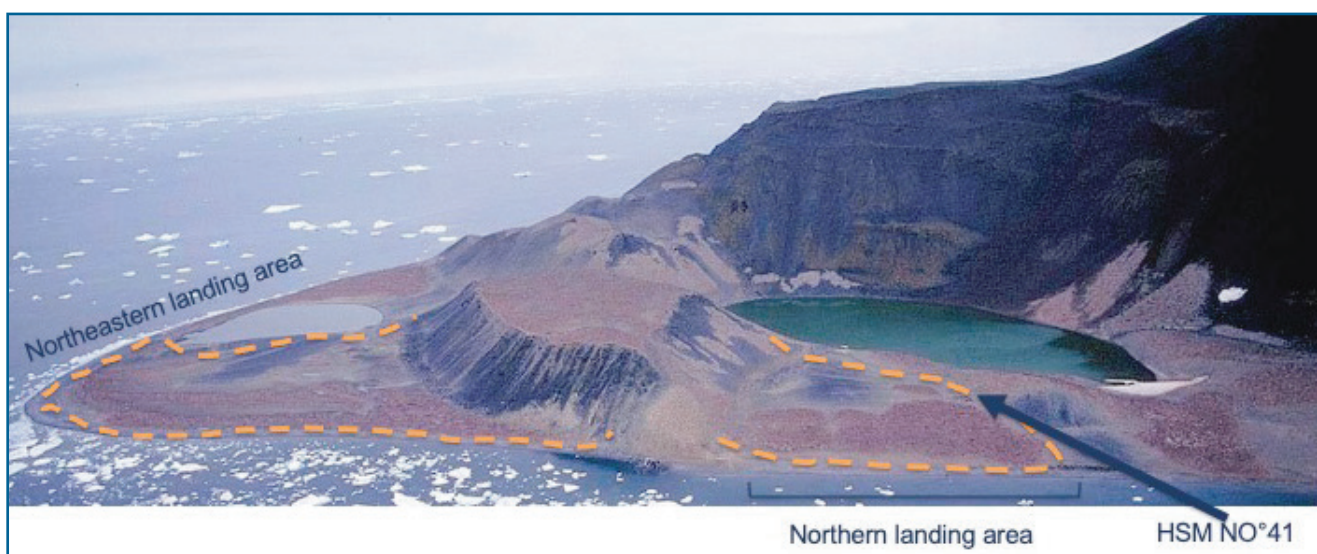
* A ship is defined as a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers

At high tide, no more than 50 visitors at any time in the area around the northern coast landing site. Maximum visitor numbers are exclusive of expedition guides and leaders, maintaining a minimum ratio of 1 guide to 20 visitors. No visitors ashore between 22:00hrs and 04:00hrs (local time). This is in order to establish a rest period for wildlife.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Ice conditions in the vicinity of the northern landing site can change rapidly. When operating amongst sea ice or icebergs, be vigilant to local sea and wind currents. Be alert to ice movement in relation to your operation and how it may affect both vessel and shore operations.



Penguin colony distribution and high concentrations of Adélie penguin nests and entering/exiting the ocean along this beach will limit access to the Northern landing site and HSM. Based on penguin activity, this may be better as a small boat cruise or ship cruise for viewing the colony and HSM.

Both landing areas can become very populated with penguins as the summer progresses, and all possible landings should be thoroughly evaluated prior to visitor arrival for maintaining adequate distances from wildlife.

The best route to view the HSM will vary depending on colony distribution. In order to maintain appropriate distances from wildlife, mid- to late-season viewing may be limited to stopping at a higher viewpoint near a meltwater lake, or by conducting only watersports such as small boat cruising to reduce wildlife disturbance.

If landing is possible, it is recommended to consider a one-way walk – for example from the east site to the north site, or vice versa – to avoid doubled up traffic or crowding and reducing overall disturbance to wildlife.

CLOSED AREAS

Closed Area A: Loose steep scree slopes which are densely packed with breeding Adélie penguins. Snow petrels and Wilson's storm petrels strongly suspected of breeding in the scree.

Closed Area B: Densely packed area to the northeast of the island, with breeding Adélie penguins and blue-eyed shags, including Adélie penguin control colonies.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Because of restricted visitor space, all walks at this site should be carefully controlled in guided groups of no more than 15–20 visitors. Groups should be well-spaced and follow the designated paths along the northern coast, or towards the historic hut and the volcanic, ovoid lake.

In the mid to late part of the season, it is likely to be impossible to follow the long walking route due to concentrations of Adélie penguins.



RESTRICTED ZONES

There is a possible nesting area for skuas in the vicinity of the rocks at the higher rocky outcrop lookout point, ensure guides that are marking the end of the guided walking area maintain sufficient distance.

Additionally, any alpine guides should also be aware of possible nesting skuas and other birds when venturing to higher elevations.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance of 5 metres (15 feet) 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.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Stay clear of – and do not venture on – loose scree slopes.

Ensure the protection of the Historic Site and Monument. Maintain a distance of at least 1 metre from the walls of the hut, as trampling immediately next to the loose walls may cause damage.