

Code of Conduct for Visitors to Deception Island

1. Introduction

This code of conduct has been produced for commercial tour operators (IAATO and non-IAATO affiliated), private expeditions and National Antarctic Programme staff when undertaking recreational visits to Deception Island.

There are four sites on Deception Island which may generally be visited: Whalers Bay, Baily Head, Pendulum Cove, and Telefon Bay (east). Stancomb Cove, in Telefon Bay, is also used as an anchorage for yachts. Visits to Decepción Station (Argentina) and Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain) are only permitted by prior agreement with the respective Station Leaders. Tourist or recreational visits to other sites on the island are discouraged.

2. General Guidelines

The following general guidelines apply to all the above sites visited on Deception Island:

- Visits are to be undertaken in line with the Management Plan for Deception Island ASMA 4 and with Recommendation XVIII-1.
- All visits must be planned and conducted taking into account the significant risk to human life posed by the threat of volcanic eruption.
- Expedition Leaders of cruise ships and Masters of national programme support vessels are encouraged to exchange itineraries in order to avoid two ships unintentionally converging on a site simultaneously.
- Vessels approaching or departing from Port Foster must announce over VHF Marine Channel 16 the intended time and direction of passage through Neptunes Bellows.
- For commercial cruise operators, no more than 100 passengers may be ashore at a site at any time, accompanied by a minimum of one member of the expedition staff for every 20 passengers.
- Do not walk on vegetation such as moss or lichen. The flora of Deception Island is of exceptional scientific importance. Walking on the alga *Prasiola crispera* (associated with penguin colonies) is permissible as it will not cause it any adverse disturbance.

- Maintain an appropriate distance from birds or seals which is safe and does not cause them disturbance. As a general rule, maintain a distance of 5 metres. Where practicable, keep at least 15 metres away from fur seals.
- In order to prevent biological introductions, carefully wash boots and clean clothes, bags, tripods and walking sticks before landing.
- Do not leave any litter.
- Do not take biological or geological souvenirs or disturb artefacts.
- Do not write or draw graffiti on any man-made structure or natural surface.
- Scientific equipment is routinely deployed during the austral summer by National Antarctic Programmes at a number of locations on Deception Island. The Spanish Antarctic Programme deploy equipment for important and necessary seismic monitoring. Such equipment is highly sensitive to disturbance. At least 20 metres must be maintained from seismic monitoring equipment, which will be marked with a red flag. This distance is under examination - any revisions will be provided as necessary.
- Do not touch or disturb other types of scientific instruments or markers (e.g. wooden stakes marking botanical plots).
- Do not touch or disturb field depots or other equipment stored by National Antarctic Programmes.

3. Site Specific Guidelines

3.1 Whalers Bay (latitude 62°59'S, longitude 60°34'W)

Whalers Bay is the most visited site on Deception Island, and one of the most visited sites in the Antarctic. It is a small bay immediately to the east after passing into Port Foster through Neptunes Bellows. It was named by the French explorer Jean-Baptiste Charcot because of the whaling activity that took place there. The site includes the remains of the Norwegian Hektor Whaling Station, the site of the cemetery and the abandoned British 'Base B', as well as the whaling remains along the length of the beach, some of which pre-date the whaling station. Appendix 3, Conservation Strategy for Whalers Bay Historic Site and Monument No. 71, contains further information about Whalers Bay.

- Visits to Whalers Bay must be undertaken in line with the Conservation Strategy for Whalers Bay Historic Site and Monument No 71.

3.2 Pendulum Cove (latitude 62°56'S, longitude 60°36'W)

Pendulum Cove (see figure 1) is a small cove on the north east side of Port Foster. It was named by Henry Foster of the British Royal Naval vessel HMS *Chanticleer* who, in 1828, undertook magnetic observations there using pendulums. The gently sloping ash and cinder beach leads to the remains of the abandoned Presidente Pedro Aguirre Cerda Station (Chile), Historic Site and Monument No. 76, which was destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1967. Thermal springs along the shallow shoreline of Pendulum Cove offer visitors the opportunity to 'bathe' in warm water.

- Water temperatures in excess of 70° C have been recorded at Pendulum Cove. Bathers are to be made aware of the potential risk of scalding. Expedition staff should carefully choose a 'bathing area' for passengers where the hot water mixes with the cooler sea-water.
- Shoes or boots should be worn when entering the water to avoid scalding ones feet.
- Educational visits to Historic Site and Monument No. 76 are welcomed. The remains are a dramatic visual representation of the force of a volcanic eruption. At least one member of the expedition staff is to be present at the site during visits. For safety reasons, large groups of visitors are not to approach the site simultaneously. Do not go inland beyond the station ruins.
- Equipment is routinely deployed by the Spanish Antarctic programme for important and necessary seismic monitoring at Pendulum Cove. A distance of 20 metres must be maintained from seismic monitoring equipment, which will be marked with a red flag.
- Do not walk on vegetated areas. Elsewhere, tread gently to avoid disturbing ground surfaces which may host inconspicuous biota.
- The slope to the south east of HSM No. 76 is designated as Site G of ASPA 140 and must not be entered without a permit issued by the appropriate National Authority. This surface, created during the 1969 eruption, is being colonized by numerous moss and lichen species. Two species of moss that grow here are not found anywhere else in the Antarctic.

3.3 Baily Head (latitude 62°58'S, longitude 60°30'W)

Baily Head (see figure 2) is a rocky headland exposed to the Bransfield Strait on the south east coast of Deception Island. It was named after Francis Baily, the English astronomer who reported on Foster's magnetic observations at Pendulum Cove. The site comprises the southern end of a long linear beach which runs along most of the eastern side of Deception Island, and a narrow valley that rises

steeply inland to a semi-circular ridgeline, giving the impression of a natural ‘amphitheatre’. It is bounded to the north by a large glacier and to the south by the cliffs of Baily Head. A substantial melt-stream runs through the centre of the valley during the austral summer.

Within this unnamed valley, and to the south of it, is one of the largest colonies of chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarctica*) in Antarctica - it is estimated that 100,000 pairs breed here. Brown skuas (*Catharacta antarctica lonnbergi*), cape petrels (*Daption capensis*) and snowy sheathbills (*Chionis alba*) also nest at Baily Head. Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) haul out along the beach in large numbers during the austral summer.

- No more than 350 visitors are to land at Baily Head in any one day.
- Total visiting time is not to exceed 6 hours in any one day.
- Staff and visitors are to exercise extreme caution when undertaking landings by small boat - such landings may be hazardous due to the swell resulting from the steeply sloping beach.
- Maintain a safe distance from the rock cliffs and the glacier front to avoid falling rock or ice.
- Maintain an appropriate and safe distance from birds or seals which does not cause them disturbance. Remain outside the natural ‘boundary’ of discrete colonies.
- Walk slowly and carefully when near to penguins, in particular when birds are nesting, moulting, crèching or returning from foraging trips. Give ‘right of way’ to penguins at all times.
- Hiking between Baily Head and Whalers Bay is discouraged because of environmental and safety concerns.

3.4 Telefon Bay (east) (latitude 62°56’S, longitude 60°40’W)

Telefon Bay (see figure 3) was named after the whaling vessel *Telefon* which was moored in the bay for repairs in 1909 by Adolfus Amandus Andresen, founder of the company Sociedad Ballenera de Magallanes. At the easternmost end of Telefon Bay a gently sloping beach leads to a shallow valley which rises sharply to the rim of an unnamed volcanic crater.

- Exercise extreme caution when approaching the steep edge of the crater lip. The soil is friable and may collapse underfoot.

3.5 Decepción Station (Argentina) and Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain)

Visits to Decepción Station (Argentina) and Gabriel de Castilla Station (Spain) may only be undertaken with the prior agreement of the appropriate Station Leader. Visits to the stations must be undertaken in line with the Code of Conduct for the Deception Island Facilities Zone (Appendix 4).

Figure 1. Pendulum Cove

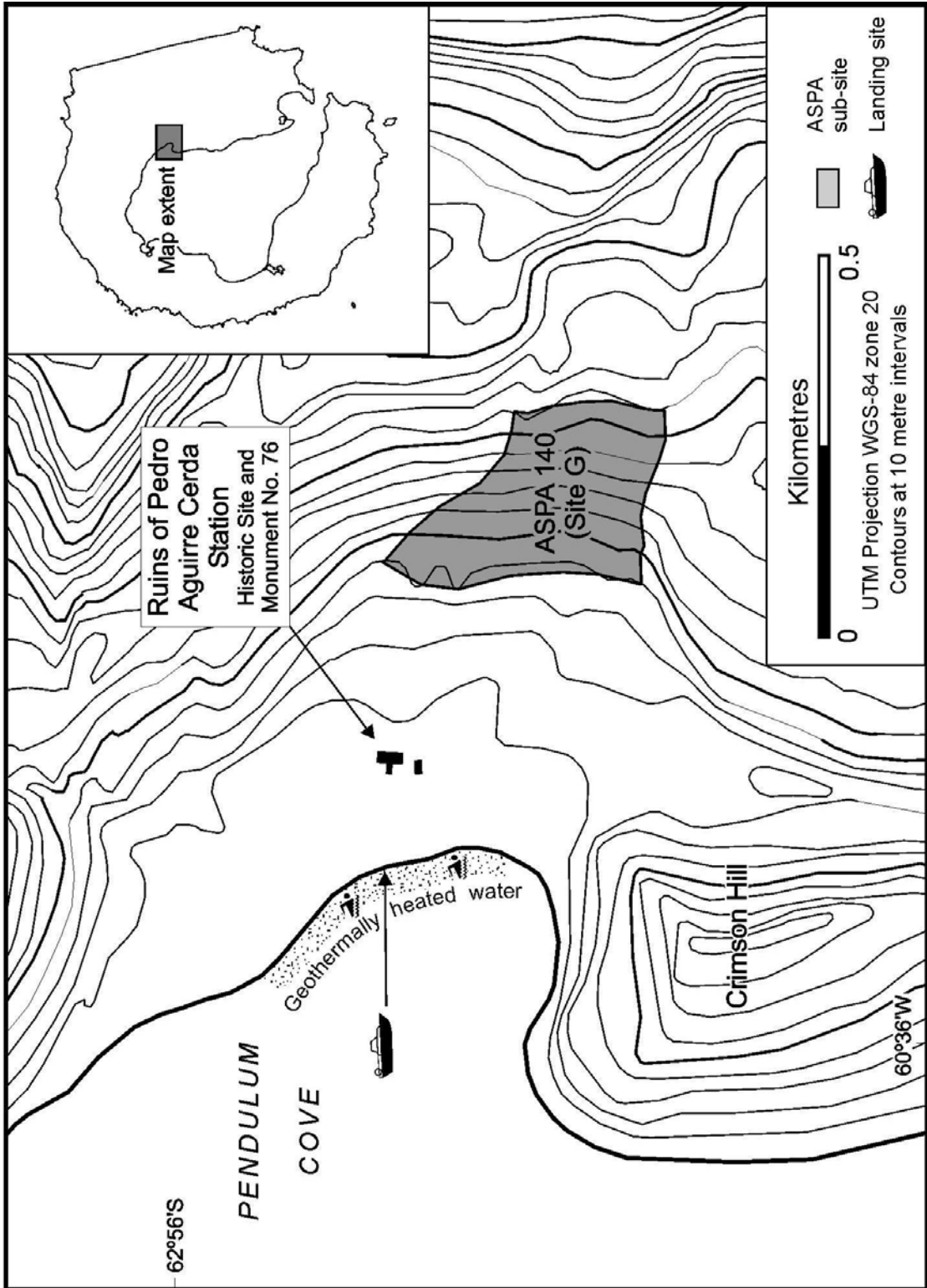


Figure 2. Baily Head

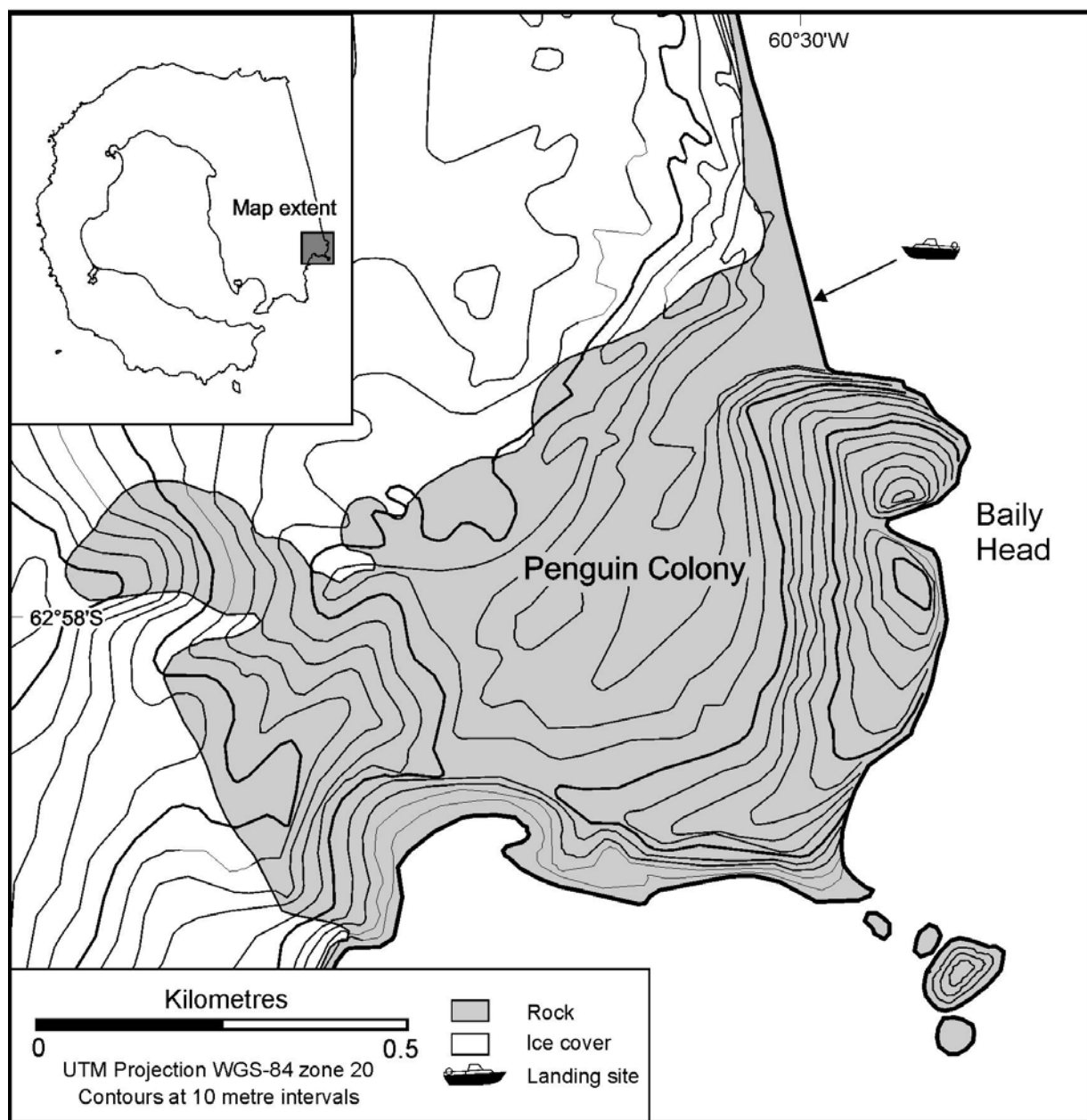


Figure 3. Telefon Bay (East)

