

13. Brown Bluff

63°32'00" S, 56°52'00" W
East coast of Tabarin Peninsula on
the south-western coast of
Antarctic Sound.

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Geological features including towering red brown cliffs
- Adélie and gentoo penguins
- Continental landing



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

1.5km long cobble and ash beach rising increasingly steeply towards towering red-brown tuff cliffs, which are embedded with volcanic bombs. The cliffs are heavily eroded, resulting in loose scree and rock and ice falls on higher slopes and large, wind eroded boulders on the beach. At high water the beach area can be restricted. Permanent ice and tidewater glaciers surround the site to the east and west occasionally filling the beach with brash ice.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguin, Cape petrel, Gentoo penguin, Kelp gull, Skua, Snow petrel.

Hauled out: Weddell seal.

Offshore: Leopard seal.

Suspected Breeders: Southern Fulmar, Southern giant petrel, Wilson's storm-petrel.

FLORA

The lichens *Xanthoria spp.* and *Caloplaca spp.* are present on exposed boulders from the shoreline to an elevation of 185m. Some mosses are present at higher elevations near glacial drainage.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife. Trampling of moss and lichen on moraine.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Max pax on board: 500

Comments: Maximum 3 ships per calendar day, of which no more than 1 may be a vessel carrying more than 200 passengers.

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

VISITORS

Maximum number of visitors at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders: 100

Visitors per guide: 20

Curfew time period (from/to), in order to establish a rest period for wildlife: 22:00-04:00

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Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The eastern end of the beach, to the east of the three large boulders at the western end of the snow slope - protected by two reefs.

CLOSED AREA

Closed Area A: Kelp gull and Gentoo penguin colony in the boulder area behind the landing beach, extending from the three large boulders up the small gully running south-southeast behind the moraine ridge.

Closed Area B: From the edge of the Adélie penguin colony (close to the end of reef), including all the beach and up the slope encompassing the whole colony.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Visits to the edge of the Adélie penguin colony should be closely supervised.

Visits to the snow petrel nests on the slopes behind the penguin rookeries should be done in closely guided groups with a ratio of 1 guide to 5 visitors - where the guide knows the location of the nest in advance. A minimum distance of 20 metres should be kept from the nest. Care should be taken not to disturb loose rocks.

Glacial walking - The route along the snow covered ground on the edge of the moraine ridge to the east of the landing beach should be clearly marked, or guided. Visitors should conduct the walk in single file.

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely along the main flat beach area between the landing site and the closed areas. Visitors should remain above the high tide mark as far as possible, leaving beach free for penguins to access the sea.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- Visitors should remain above the high tide mark and at high water be aware it may be necessary to have visitors walk in small groups escorted by guides.
- Take care not to disturb nesting sea birds.
- Take care not to displace penguins along the shoreline.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

- Strong winds are a feature of this area, and pack and brash ice are frequently blown onto the beach area.
- Rock falls occur from the cliffs and steeper scree slopes.
- The primary landing beach may be crowded with wildlife.
- Landing beach is prone to swells from the north and the north-east.
- Hazardous rocks and reefs lie immediately off shore.
- Scientific equipment may be found in the area, take care not to disturb the equipment.



Aerial view of Brown Bluff

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Edge of Adélie Colony



Brown Bluff Beach

