

Detaille Island

66°52'S, 66°48'W



Key features

- Historic British Base 'W', Detaille Island



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Detaille is a small island set in the Lallemand Fjord off the Loubet coast. The ground is predominantly rocky with areas of gravel.

FAUNA

There are no records of any breeding fauna on Detaille Island.

FLORA

In the absence of any detailed floristic survey, only one species of lichen has been recorded at Detaille Island.

OTHER

Base 'W' is designated as Historic Site and Monument No. 83. It is sited at the northern end of the island. It is noteworthy as a relatively unaltered British scientific base of the late 1950s, providing an evocative insight into the way the bases were occupied during this period. It was built in 1956 and closed in 1959 due to the difficulty of accessing the base. It was subsequently reoccupied for six months in 1965/66. During its short history as an occupied base it contributed towards the geophysical programme of the International Geophysical Year (IGY). In addition to the base building, there are also dog kennels, an emergency store, fuel drum and cargo depots, an anemometer tower and wireless masts.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None known.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Fire. Minor fuel spills. Disturbance of historic artefacts.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships* carrying 500 or fewer passengers (however, note visitor restrictions below). One ship at a time. Maximum 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight), of which no more than 1 can carry over 200 passengers.

VISITORS

No more than 50 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. No more than 12 visitors are allowed inside the base at any one time **. Visitors must be closely supervised. Base 'W' was proposed as HSM No. 83 by the UK. Visits to the hut may only take place with prior permission given by a Party. The Party undertaking management of the site should also be informed prior to the visit.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The preferred landing site is in the small bay to the south of the hut.

CLOSED AREAS

Visitors should not access any of the secondary huts or other structures.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely under close supervision.

Visitor Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

No overnight stays in the hut are allowed. The hut is available for educational visits and, except in emergency circumstances, should not be used for any other purpose. The hut windows are all covered with fixed shutters and so electric torches will be needed to see anything of the interior. Artefacts should not be handled or removed from the site. Do not sit on chairs or other furniture, or lay objects down on tables or work surfaces.

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

** Visitors enter the base at their own risk and the UK authorities will not be liable for any personal injury or damage to property that may be sustained.

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All boots and outdoor clothing should be cleaned of snow and grit before entering the building. All back-packs and large bags should be left outside the hut. Loose gravel, mud and snow should be swept up after each visit. Smoking and the use of candles, matches or stoves are prohibited in and around the hut. Base 'W' has a large amount of material inside and around the outside of the main hut, including hazardous materials. This makes the base extremely interesting from a historical point of view. Visitors should not touch or disturb any of the material even where it appears to have been discarded as rubbish. Visitors are also asked to be aware of broken glass and protruding nails around the buildings. A record of each visit should be left in the Visitors Book, located in the base. Expedition Leaders should provide the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust with a report on the condition of Base 'W'. Visitors are to leave the base safe and fully closed up on departure.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Boat drivers should be aware of submerged rocks on approaching the landing site. The rocks at the landing site can be slippery when wet.



Used hydrogen cylinders (for filling weather balloons) dumped outside the hut



The Aga cooker in the kitchen



The Generator still in place in the Generator shed



The main hut seen from the air with the emergency store in the foreground and a kennel to the rear

