



36. Orne Harbour

Updated: 2013

64°38'S, 62°33'W - Southern arm of Orne Harbour, Gerlache Strait

Key features

- Moderate climb to a vantage point overlooking the Errera Channel, Gerlache Strait, Anvers and Brabant Islands
- Continental landing
- Chinstrap penguin colonies, mosses and lichens
- Blue-eyed shag colony which can be viewed from the water

Description

Topography: The landing site centres on a low saddle on the inside southern arm of Orne Harbour. The site comprises a rocky shoreline below scree slopes and patches of permanent snow, rising to a saddle which overlooks Errera Channel and Gerlache Strait. The southern side of the saddle is covered with deep permanent compacted snow and ice. From the saddle a steep ridge rises to a prominent rocky headland called Spigot Peak. The Harbour is ringed with glaciers and steep peaks.

Fauna: Confirmed breeders: Chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarctica*), pintado petrels (*Daption capense*), snow petrels (*Pagodroma nivea*), Wilson's storm-petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*), blue-eyed shags (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*), skuas (*Catharacta* spp.), kelp gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) and Antarctic terns (*Sterna vittata*).

Suspected breeders: Snowy sheathbills (*Chionis alba*).

Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) regularly haul out. Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) and Leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) may be seen near-shore. Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) may be seen off shore.

Flora: Moss species; bearded and crustose lichen species including *Xanthoria* spp., *Buellia* spp., *Caloplaca* spp. and *Usnea* spp. grow on the north facing slopes of Spigot peak and on the rocky outcrops.

Visitor Impact

Known impacts: None.

Potential impacts: Disturbance to wildlife and trampling of vegetation.

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



Landing Requirements

Ships*: Ships carrying 500 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time. No more than 3 ships carrying more than 200 passengers per day (midnight to midnight).

Visitors: No more than 100 visitors ashore at once, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. 1 guide per 20 visitors.

Visitor Area

Landing Area: A low lying rock platform approximately 500m along the southern shore from the entrance to Orne Harbour, directly below the saddle leading to Spigot Peak.

Guided Walking Areas: Routes to the saddle should be marked or guided. Once on the ridge, visitors should be closely supervised.

At the northern end of the level rock ridge leading onto Spigot Peak it is possible to follow a route to the top of the Peak. This is an occasionally steep and exposed route, initially on rock and then snow. The route above the saddle towards Spigot Peak should only be attempted by those with suitable glaciated mountain experience and training, and using suitable equipment.

Free Roaming Areas: There is limited level ground around the landing site, but visitors can roam freely under supervision in this area. Do not walk on loose scree to avoid disturbance to burrowing petrels and damage to vegetation.

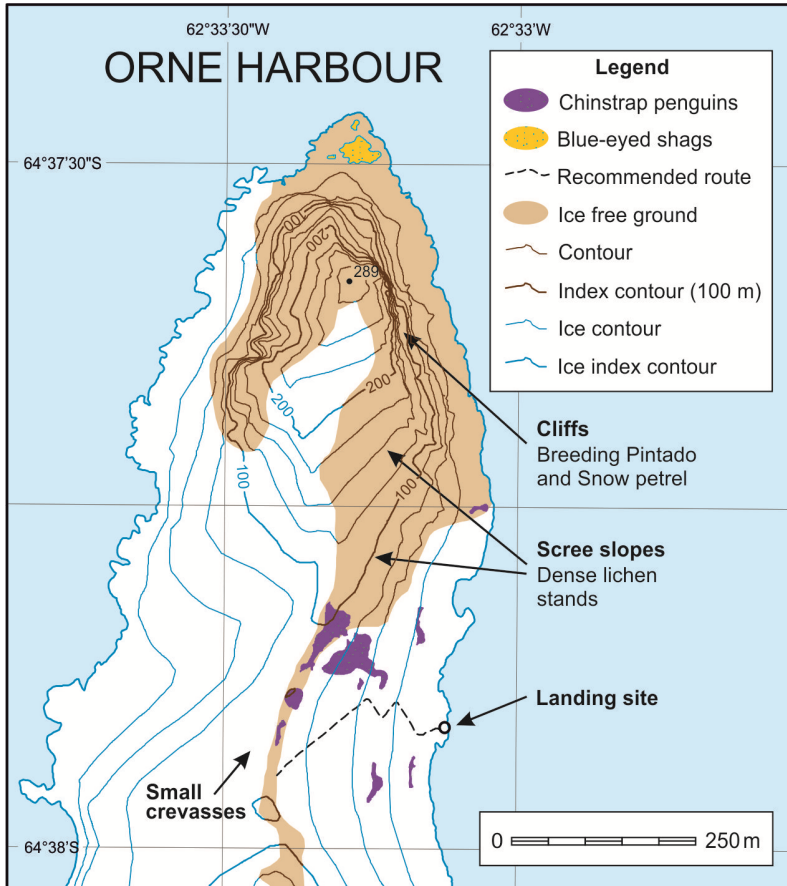
Visitor Code of Conduct

Behaviour ashore: All visits are to be conducted in accordance with the *General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic*. Be alert to Antarctic terns which may nest very near the landing site. Be prepared to move away from rocky outcrops.

Chinstrap penguins nest in rocks along the ridge. Be aware that their nests may be partially obscured. Where possible walk on snow. When on rock, avoid trampling moss and other vegetation. Burrowing petrels nest in loose scree, so do not walk in these areas to protect their nests.

Cautionary Notes: The permanent ice on the Errera Channel side of the saddle and Spigot Peak are corniced, crevassed and dangerous, even on the ridge itself. Routes should be checked carefully and if needed only visited by those with suitable training and equipment. Boat drivers should be aware of rocky approaches to the landing site. Beware that glacier calving may cause dangerous waves.

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ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide

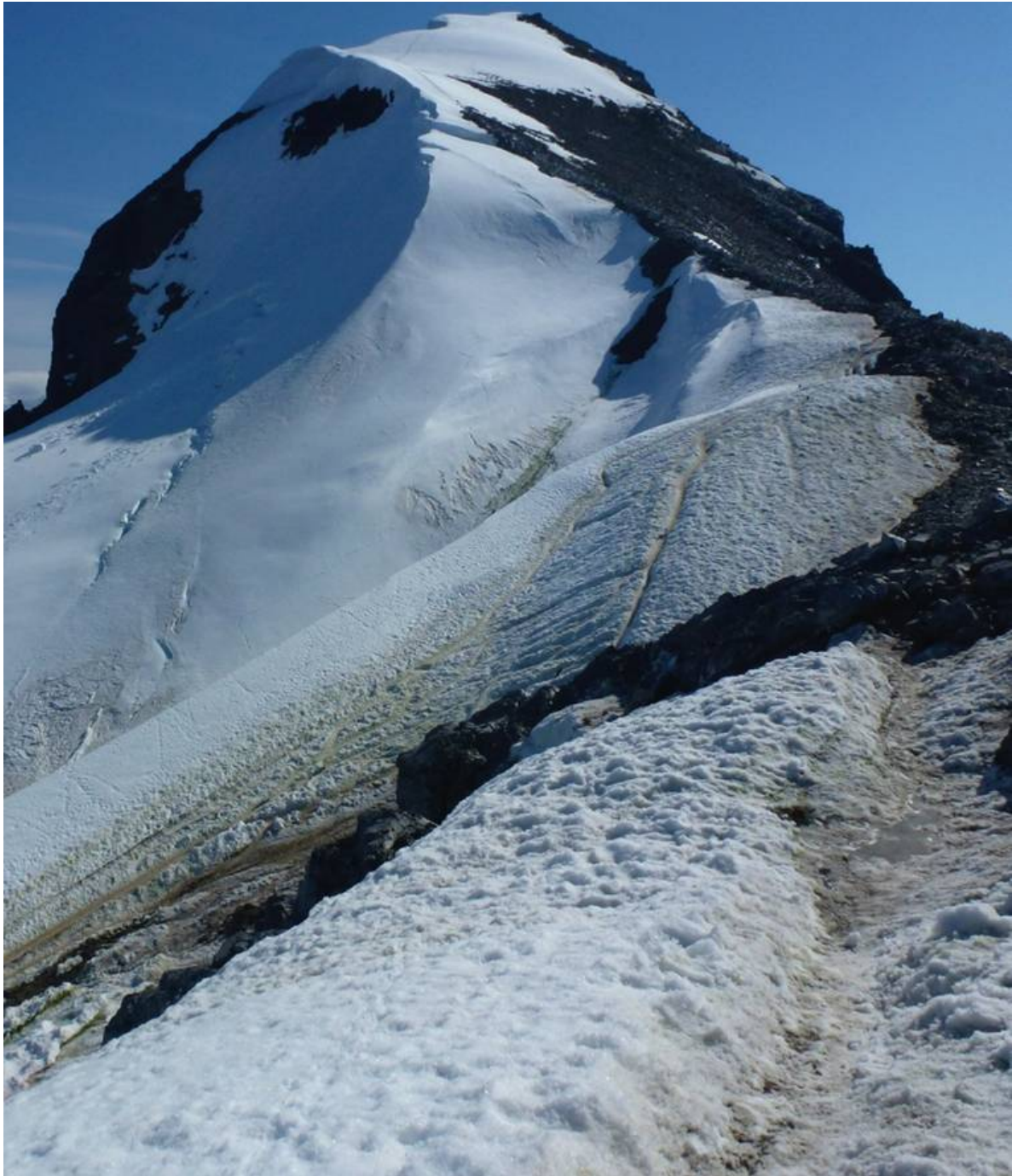


View of landing site (left hand side) and route to the ridge

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The steep and exposed route north along the ridge towards Spigot Peak

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Holes may be present on top of the saddle and on the approaches

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