

Torgersen Island

64°46'S, 64°04'W – Arthur Harbour, southwest Anvers Island



Key features

- Adélie penguin colony- Outstanding scenery
- Scientific monitoring of visitor impacts



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Torgersen Island is roughly circular and approximately 400m across. The island slopes upwards from its rocky shoreline to a summit of 17m, and is bisected by a stony ridge lying in an east-west direction.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguins (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), South Polar skuas (*Catharacta maccormicki*), brown skuas (*Catharacta lonnbergi*), Wilson's storm petrels (*Oceanites oceanicus*). Other birds present: chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarctica*), gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), emperor penguins (*Aptenodytes forsteri*), king penguins (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*), macaroni penguins (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*). Haul out: Leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*), Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*), crabeater seals (*Lobodon carcinophaga*), southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) and Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

FLORA

A variety of mosses grow on Torgersen Island, including *Polytrichum strictum*, *Chorisodontium aciphyllum* and *Sanionia uncinata*. Antarctic hair grass (*Deschampsia antarctica*) - one of the two flowering plant species present in Antarctica - is also present on the island.

OTHER

The island is divided into a Visitor Zone and a Restricted Zone. The Visitor Zone is for general access, whilst the Restricted Zone serves as a control site for scientific research related to human impacts. The Restricted Zone should not be entered, except in an emergency to access the emergency cache located on slopes opposite the landing site. Use the cache only in a genuine emergency and notify Palmer Station if anything is used.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Survey benchmark embedded in rock at summit.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance to wildlife and trampling of vegetation. Disturbance to scientific research.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships and small boat cruising should avoid disturbing seal and bird colonies and should take into account the 50m operational limit around Restricted Zones (see map). Tour vessels and yachts visiting the area should provide advance notice of their visit schedule to National Programs operating in the area, in particular to Palmer Station (US).

VISITORS

No more than 40 passengers should be ashore at any time.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Landings on Torgersen Island should be made at the designated small boat landing site on the northwestern shore of the island (64° 46' 17.8" S, 64° 04' 31" W).

CLOSED AREAS

A Restricted Zone covering the southwestern half of the island is closed to visitors.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely within the Visitor Zone, which lies in the northeastern half of the island.

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Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

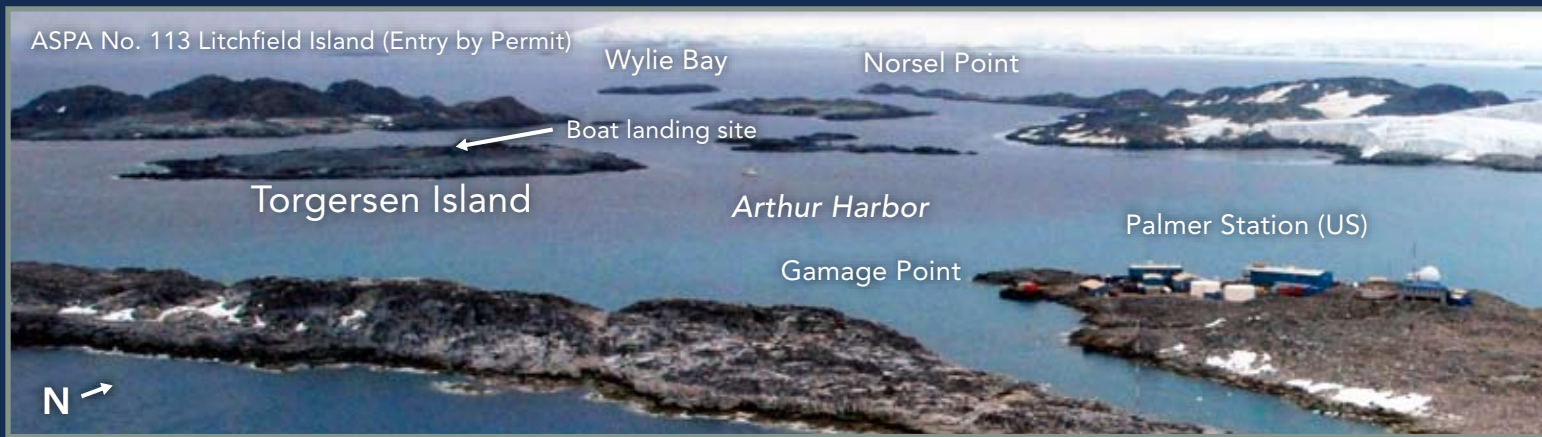
Visitor activities should be undertaken in a manner that minimizes any adverse impacts to the ecosystem or scientific activities on the island. Visitors should not remove any biological, geological or other souvenirs from the island and no litter should be left behind. Walking on vegetation should be avoided.

Visitors should maintain a distance of at least 5m from birds to avoid causing disturbance and a distance of at least 15m from fur seals where practical. A distance of at least 15m should also be maintained from Southern elephant seals, especially if they are hauled out near nesting penguins. Disturbing seals could cause a stampede and threaten nearby breeding birds.

Visitors should not touch or disturb scientific equipment, research areas, or any other facilities or equipment.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Be sensitive to penguin nesting sites, which may extend beyond the limits shown on the map.



Torgersen Island Adélie penguin colony (D. Patterson-Fraser, 2008)

