



37. Orne Islands

Updated: 2013

64° 40'S, 62° 40'W

Key features

- Outstanding views of Gerlache Strait, Errera Channel and Cuverville Island.
- Chinstrap and Gentoo penguin colonies

Description

Topography : A group of small low-lying islands close to Rongé Island at the entrance to the Errera Channel. The largest of the Orne Islands is a moderately sloped low rocky dome rising to around 75 metres, with a rocky central ridge and permanent snow banks. The group includes three other small islets.

Fauna: Confirmed breeders: Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), Chinstrap penguins (*Pygoscelis antarctica*), snowy sheathbills (*Chionis alba*), skuas (*Catharacta* spp.), kelp gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) and Antarctic terns (*Sterna vittata*).

Fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) regularly haul out later in the season. 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 rocky outcrops.

Visitor Impact

Known impacts: None.

Potential impacts: Disturbance to wildlife and trampling of vegetation.

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

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



Landing Area: A low rock platform on the north-west side of the island approximately 250m from the northern end. The other islets are suitable for small boat cruising.

Guided Walking Areas: None.

Free Roaming Areas: Visitors may roam freely.

Visitor Code of Conduct

Behaviour Ashore: All visits are to be conducted in accordance with the *General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic*. Skuas nest in the rocky outcrops. Be alert to their presence, monitor their behaviour and increase your distance if needed. Avoid trampling the small patches of moss and lichen which grow on the rocky outcrops.

Cautionary Notes: Hazardous rocks along the shoreline may be exposed, depending on the tide. Note that snow cliffs at the edge of the island are often corniced and unstable. They may not be readily apparent.



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View of the island looking south west, with the preferred landing area at the rocky area on the right hand side

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View of small Chinstrap colonies towards the NE of the island

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The island has several Chinstrap colonies on rocky outcrops

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