

18. Half Moon Island

62°35'00" S, 59°54'00" W
2km long crescent shaped island between Greenwich and Livingston Islands. Guidelines refer to the eastern end of the island as defined in the accompanying map.

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key Features

- Chinstrap penguins
- Vegetation
- Wilson's storm-petrels
- Weddell & fur seal haul-out



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Half Moon Island has a series of raised cobbled beaches along the centre and the south-eastern end of the island, which is characterised by a small hill and series of igneous rock outcrops. The north side of the hill comprises steep scree slopes with cliffs to the south and east.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Antarctic tern, Blue-eyed shag, chinstrap Penguin, Kelp gull, Skua, Snowy sheathbill, Wilson's storm petrel.
Regularly haul out: Fur seal, Weddell seal.

FLORA

Usnea Antarctica and crustose lichen spp. can be found on rock outcrops near penguin colonies. Patches of Deschampsia Antarctica, pearlwort Colobanthus quintensis and small growths of moss spp. can be found on the raised beaches and amongst the rocky outcrops.

OTHER

A whaling dory lies on the main landing beach. Towards the west of the site lies the Argentine Antarctic summer station Cámara. The station and its associated structures are excluded from these guidelines. In summer, scientists from Cámara Station work in different locations of the island.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

Track erosion, trampling of vegetation.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, further trampling of vegetation, damage to breeding burrows, enhanced track erosion and damage to the dory.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Max pax on board: 500

Ships at a time: 1

Comments: Maximum 3 ships per day (midnight to midnight) of which no more than two may be vessels carrying more than 200 passengers.

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

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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

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Primary: Small beach area on the north shore of the south-eastern tip of the island, marked by the dory. (The dory may be covered by snow in the early season.)

Secondary: Cobbled beach immediately to west of the primary landing site.

CLOSED AREA

Closed Area A: Small coastal beach point immediately to the east of primary landing site where terns and kelp gulls regularly nest.

Closed Area B: Small hill crowned by a navigation tower, where chinstrap penguins breed, and in whose scree slopes Wilson's storm-petrel burrows. Walking around closed area B is discouraged, given the restricted space available on the narrow beach, especially during high tide.

GUIDED WALKING AREA

Walks to the eastern tip should be guided with careful attention to give wildlife the right-of-way when crossing the penguin access route above Closed Area A and between the rock outcrops when crossing towards the eastern shore. Carefully evaluate access to the eastern tip during certain periods in the summer, given the high level of wildlife activity in this area. If the visit is possible, it is recommended deploying a guide in order to avoid disturbance to the fauna, in particular in the area of penguin access routes and between the rock outcrops on the preferred route to ensure disturbance is minimised. Given the limited space through the pass to the eastern tip of the island, visits are strongly discouraged from going through or beyond the pass from the start of the breeding season (October) until after early penguin incubation phase (mid-January).

FREE ROAMING AREA

Visitors may roam freely in the immediate primary landing beach area. They also can roam freely on the southern shore, all along a raised beach, towards the west, taking special care to the likely presence of vegetation and fur seals. Fur seals camouflage themselves in the surrounding landscape. Deploying a guide between these two areas is recommended.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

- Do not touch or climb into the dory.
- Respect conduct of scientific activities, if any.
- All visits are to be conducted in accordance with the General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic.
- Be aware that the terns can shift their breeding location inter-seasonally. Be alert to their presence and keep an appropriate distance.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

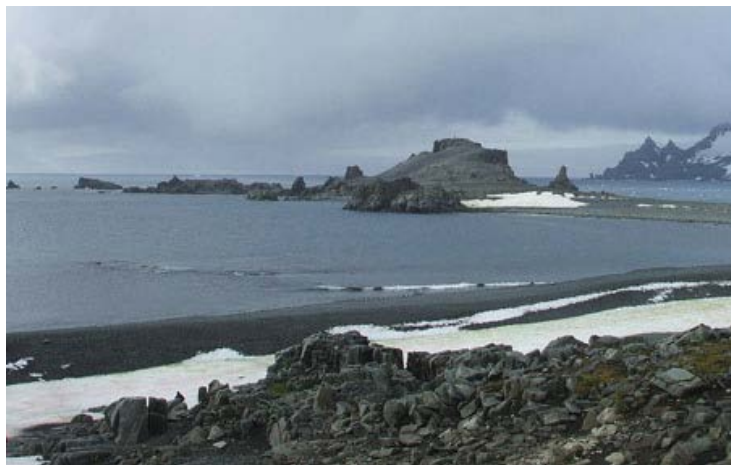
- The landing site is susceptible to swells from the east.
- The preferred route goes through a narrow pass used by penguins. Move to one side to maintain an appropriate distance. Wait for any nearby penguins to clear the area.

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View of the southeast end of Half Moon Island and landing site



Overview of the south coast of Half Moon Island

