

Danco Island, Errera Channel

64°44'S, 62°37'W

Key features

- Gentoo penguin colony
- Glacial scenery

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Danco Island is a one mile long island in the southern part of the Errera Channel. Its north shore is characterised by a wide flat cobbled beach with a long snow-free slope behind it which rises up to the island's ice-covered summit. Permanent ice dominates the top and south side of the island.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Gentoo penguins (*Pygoscelis papua*), snowy sheathbills (*Chionis alba*). Unconfirmed breeders include: Dominican gulls (*Larus dominicanus*), Subantarctic skuas (*Catharacta skua*), Antarctic terns (*Sterna vittata*) and blue-eyed shags (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*). Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) frequently haul out and crabeater seals (*Lobodon carcinophagus*) are regularly sighted in the vicinity.

FLORA

Snow algae may be extensive in late summer. Two species of moss have been recorded on the island, and lichen may be present.

OTHER

Previously the site of Base 'O' (UK) which was occupied from Feb 1956 to Feb 1959. Subsequently abandoned, the hut was demolished and cleaned up in March-April 2004 but concrete foundation blocks remain.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None known.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships* carrying 500 or fewer passengers (however, note visitor restrictions below). One ship at a time. Maximum 3 ships per day (midnight to midnight), of which no more than 2 can carry over 200 passengers.

VISITORS

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The preferred landing site is on the western end of the north shore, near the site of the former British base.

CLOSED AREAS

None but the permanent ice slopes are crevassed and dangerous, particularly to the south of the island's peak.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely under close supervision.

Visitor code of conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully around the penguin colony. Give animals the right-of-way and maintain a precautionary minimum distance of 5m from wildlife. Increase this distance if any change in behaviour is observed.

Avoid walking in the deep snow pathways created by penguins.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Boat drivers should be aware of shallow, rocky approaches to the landing beach.

The permanent ice slopes are crevassed and dangerous, particularly to the south of the island's peak. They should only be accessed by those with suitable alpine experience and training and using suitable equipment (eg, roped access).

Beware of wash from calving icebergs in beach area, particularly on the beach to the south of the site of the former Base 'O'.

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

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Landing site, be aware of shallow rocky areas off the beach.



The site of the former British base is marked with concrete foundation blocks.



Exposed rock is located at the island's peak. The ice slopes to the south are crevassed and can be dangerous.

