



Devil Island – Vega Island

63°48'S, 57°17'W - Narrow Island lying in centre of a bay on the north coast of Vega Island. 1 NM east-south-east of Cape Well-met.

Key features

- Adélie penguins
- Vegetation
- Twin summits
- Fur seals in late season



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

This narrow 1 mile long island is so named for the two peaks located at either end of the island separated by a low lying valley. The peaks are fringed by cliffs on their north facing side creating an amphitheatre effect on the north shore where the penguin colony is located. The peaks slope off to the south. The site consists primarily of loose tuff gravel with a distinct raised beach along the northern shore.

FAUNA

Confirmed breeders: Adélie penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) and skuas (*Catharacta*, spp.).

Suspected breeders: kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus*), snowy sheathbill (*Chionis alba*) and Wilson's storm-petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*).

Regularly haul out: Antarctic fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

FLORA

Usnea Antarctica, *Xanthoria*, spp. and *Caloplaca*, spp. observed on higher slopes of north eastern peak. Large area of moss spp. situated on flat area behind penguin colony.

OTHER

Hazardous rocks and band of reef lie immediately off shore the northern shore. Bergy bits, growlers and brash regularly get stranded on the reef.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Disturbance of wildlife, trampling of vegetation, erosion of footpaths.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships carrying 200 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time.

Maximum 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight).

VISITORS

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. 1 guide per 20 visitors. At high water this number may need to be reduced.

No visitors ashore between 22:00hrs and 04:00hrs (local time). This is in order to establish a resting period for the wildlife.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

Primary: beach area below Adélie colony on northern coast of island. A semi submerged reef runs from the western end of the north shore out at a diagonal to the shore. Care must be taken on the approach.

CLOSED AREAS

Closed Area A: vegetation patch situated behind the Adélie colony.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

The short steep route from the landing beach to the raised beach area behind the Adélie penguin colony should be flagged and closely guided with no more than 20 people in the area at one time.

Walks to the top of the south-western peak should be flagged. A single track should be followed to prevent creation of ribbon paths.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely in the immediate landing area at low tide and the extensive flat area behind the penguin colony.

Note: the littoral zone up to the high tide mark is often used as an access route by Adélie penguins.

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

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Visitor Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully. Maintain a precautionary distance of 5 metres from wildlife and give animals the right-of-way. Increase this distance if any change in behaviour is observed.

Take care not to displace penguins along the shoreline.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Landing may be difficult at high water or if extensive ice present on shore.

Strong winds and tidal variation can bring pack and brash ice quickly onto the beach area. Tidal variation can also result in small growlers and bergy bits being stranded in the shallow area offshore. These can fracture suddenly during stranding or subsequent re-floating.



Landing beach at low water



Devil Island Adélie colony and landing beach

