

# ST ANDREWS BAY

Visitor Management Plan

v2015



*St Andrews Bay*

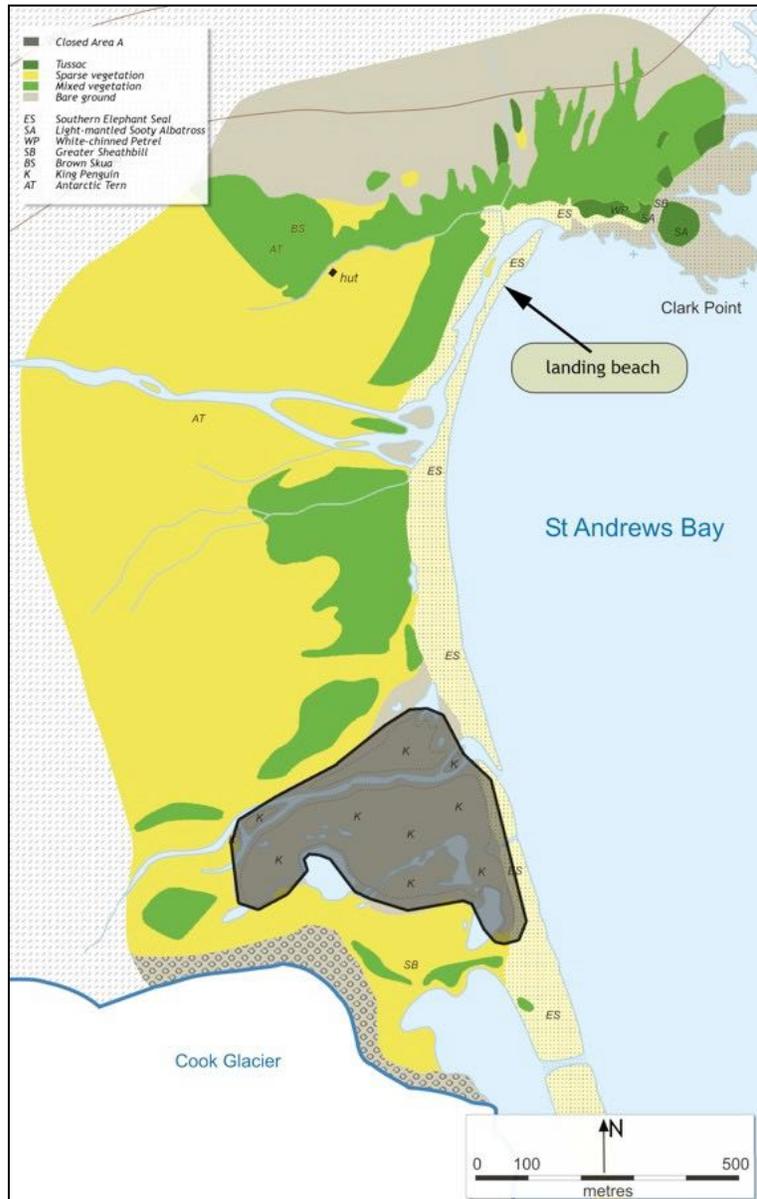


*Glacial meltwater streams can be deep and fast flowing*

# ST ANDREWS BAY VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## LOCATION



Sketch map. Not for navigation.

- Latitude: 54° 26' S
- Longitude: 36° 11' W

Exposed bay, 30km to the southeast of the entrance of Cumberland Bay.

Zodiacs need to land to the south of this river to walk to the King Penguins.



## KEY FEATURES

- King penguins
- Elephant seals

## DESCRIPTION

### ○ Topography

St. Andrews Bay is a wide exposed bay at the southern end of the Allardyce Range. The fine dark sand beach runs north-south for 3 km. The wide glacial outwash plain behind the beach is ringed to the west by the Cook, Buxton and Heaney Glaciers. The retreat of the Cook Glacier has left a large lagoon at its snout, fringed by the original St. Andrews beach coastline which forms a long low sand bar breached by a deep, fast-flowing river. Heaney and Buxton Glaciers also have melt water rivers whose course changes seasonally. The north end of the beach is sheltered by Clark Point and a shallow kelp-covered reef.

### ○ Fauna

Confirmed breeders: king penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*), light-mantled sooty albatross (*Phoebetria palpebrata*), white-chinned petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*), snowy sheathbill (*Chionis alba*), brown skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*), Antarctic tern (*Sterna vittatae georgiae*), elephant seal (*Mirounga leonina*) and fur seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*).

Suspected breeders: kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus*)

Habitat restoration projects to remove introduced land mammals commenced in 2013 with the removal of reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*), and the brown rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). Any subsequent evidence live rodents or reindeer must be reported to the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI).

### ○ Flora

The glacial outwash plain is dominated by sparse lowland fellfield, interspersed with patches of moist lowland fellfield. Stretches of short mixed grassland dominated by *Poa annua* cover the area immediately behind the beach and to the north of the king colony. Tussac was formerly restricted to those steeper coastal slopes at Clark Point that were inaccessible to reindeer, though areas that were grazed are expected to recover.

### ○ Other

Two isolated kelp-surrounded shoal patches lie at the northern approaches to the bay. A small emergency refuge is located on the northern edge of the outwash plain at the north end of the bay.

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## VISITOR IMPACTS

- **Known Impacts**

None known

- **Potential Impacts**

Disturbance of wildlife.

## LANDING REQUIREMENTS

- **Ships \***

Ships carrying 500 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time.

Maximum 3 ships per day (midnight to midnight) of which no more than 2 vessels carrying more than 200 passengers.

- **Visitors**

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. A minimum of 1 experienced guide per 20 visitors.

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

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## VISITOR AREAS

- **Landing Area**

To the south of the obvious glacial outflow, towards the north end of the beach.

- **Closed Areas**

Closed Area A: king penguin colony, including the river adjacent to the north side of the colony and a 10 m buffer zone around the perimeter of the colony.

- **Guided Walking Areas**

None.

- **Free Roaming Areas**

Glacial outwash plain and beach area.



*St. Andrews Bay King Penguin colony is the largest in South Georgia*



## VISITOR CODE OF CONDUCT

### ○ Behaviour ashore

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

Do not stray into the king penguin colony. Keep at least 10 m from the edge of the colony. Avoid the king penguin access routes between the colony and the beach. Take particular care not to disturb, or shift, moulting king penguins.

When lower beach area is crowded with wildlife particularly during elephant seal breeding period, visitors should be encouraged to stay on the upper beach area.

Be aware of, and avoid, breeding terns and skuas on the glacial outwash plain.

If you have to use the hut, make sure you shut the door when you leave. The use of any stores from the hut in an emergency should be reported to the Government Officer.

### ○ Cautionary notes

Landings at St. Andrews Bay are dependent on sea and weather conditions. Unexpected changes in the weather should be anticipated. Strong katabatic winds can descend from the glaciers with little warning.

Exercise caution when crossing the river at the north end of the beach. It can be very deep and fast flowing during thaw periods.

Minimise use of ship lights at nightfall to reduce risk of bird strikes and remain vigilant.

### ○ Biosecurity

All landings must comply with GSGSSI biosecurity measures and rigorous self-audit checks must be carried out prior to landing.

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