



XXXIX ANTARCTIC TREATY  
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25 YEARS PROTOCOL ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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Presented by: United Kingdom,  
Chile, IAATO  
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## Site Guidelines for Point Wild, Elephant Island



# Site Guidelines for Point Wild, Elephant Island

## Working Paper submitted by the United Kingdom and Chile, in conjunction with IAATO

### Summary

Site guidelines have been prepared for Point Wild, Elephant Island. The proponents recommend that the CEP submit the site guidelines for adoption by the ATCM.

### Background

1. Point Wild (61° 6S 54°52W) is six Nautical Miles West of Cape Valentine on the North Coast of Elephant Island in the South Shetland Islands.
2. The site is the location where the crew of Sir Ernest Shackleton's shipwrecked *Endurance* expedition camped for four months until rescued in August 1916 by the Chilean Naval vessel *Yelcho*, commanded by Captain Luis Alberto Pardo. It is the location of HSM 53 which consists of a Bust of Captain Pardo, a monolith and plaques celebrating his rescue of Shackleton's men.
3. Currently levels of visitation to the island are low, but it is anticipated that the historic importance of the site will continue to maintain interest in the location. Site guidelines may therefore be of long term benefit to the site.
4. The United Kingdom, Chile and IAATO have produced site guidelines for Point Wild (Annex 1 and attached map).

### Recommendation

The United Kingdom, Chile and IAATO recommend that the CEP submit the site guidelines for adoption by the ATCM.

## Point Wild

### Elephant Island

61° 6S 54°52W - Point 6 nm to the west of Cape Valentine on the north Coast of Elephant Island, South Shetland Islands.

#### Key features:

- Narrow rocky and gravel point
- Chinstrap penguin colony, mosses & lichens
- Site of Sir Ernest Shackleton's shipwrecked *Endurance* expedition that camped on the point for four months until rescued in August 1916 by the Chilean Naval vessel *Yelcho*.
- Location of HSM 53 Bust of Captain Luis Alberto Pardo, monolith and plaques commemorating the rescue of Shackleton's men.
- Frequently grounded icebergs.

#### Description:

**Topography:** A small, low lying, narrow, sand and rock point, rising to a small rock outcrop at the northerly end. Steep tidewater glaciers and cliffs fringe the point. Large icebergs often ground on off shore pinnacles.

**Fauna:** Confirmed breeders: Chinstrap penguin (*Pygoscelis antarctica*), kelp gull (*Larus dominicanus*) and Antarctic tern (*Sterna vittata*).

Suspected breeders: Wilson's storm-petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*), snowy sheathbill (*Chionis alba*)

Antarctic fur seals (*Arctocephalus gazella*) regularly haul out. Weddell seals (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) and Leopard seals (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) may be seen near-shore.

Finback (*Balaenoptera physalus*), humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and other whale spp. are often seen offshore in large groups late season

**Flora:** Small patches of bearded and crustose lichen species including *Xanthoria* spp., *Buellia* spp., *Caloplaca* spp. *Usnea* spp.

#### Visitor Impacts:

**Known Impacts** None

**Potential Impacts** Disturbance to wildlife and damage to historic artefacts

#### Landing Requirements:

**Ships<sup>1</sup>** Ships carrying 500 or fewer passengers. One ship at a time. Maximum 2 ships per day.

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<sup>1</sup> A ship is defined as a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers.

<b>Visitors</b>	No more than 30 visitors at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. However, this is principally a small boat cruising site with occasional opportunistic landings at low tide.  If landing, see Landing Area guidance below. No landing between 2200 h and 0400 h (local time) to allow a resting time for wildlife.
<b>Visitor Area</b>	The rock outcrop at the southern part of the point, and the isthmus accessible at low tide connecting the point to the main island.
<i>Landing Area</i>	Landings are often prohibited by the local conditions, and need to be considered on an opportunistic basis, usually with no more than one small boat at a time, depending on sea state, weather conditions and presence of wildlife.
<i>Closed Area</i>	None
<i>Guided Walking Areas</i>	If setting foot ashore this should be done in small, closely guided groups (of up to 15 visitors) avoiding disturbing any wildlife present.
<i>Free roaming Areas</i>	None

**Visitor Code of Conduct**

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Any visits are to be conducted in accordance with the *General Guidelines for Visitors to the Antarctic*.

Photo document, geo-locate and report any historic artefacts discovered to your competent authority. Any artefacts discovered should not be handled or removed from the site.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

Small boat drivers should be aware of submerged rocks and foul waters surrounding the point, in particular to the north and along the eastern shores.

Be aware that glacier or iceberg calving may produce dangerous waves.