

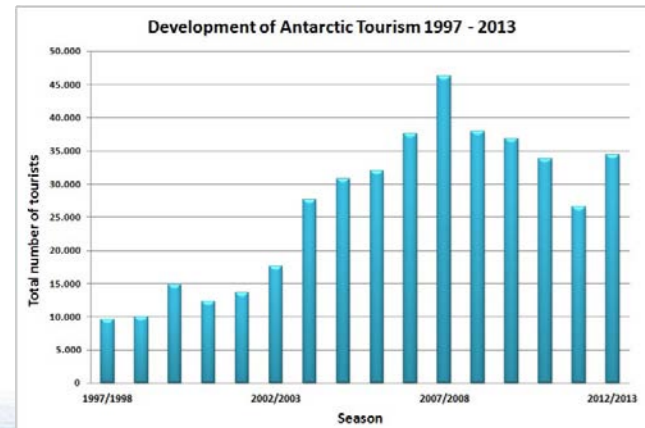
Preface

Antarctica, the last wilderness of our planet, with its unique fauna and flora is fascinating an ever increasing number of visitors. Until the last decades, only a privileged number of discoverers, researchers and sailors were able to set foot on Antarctica, whereas nowadays it has emerged as a popular and comparably comfortable travel destination for cruise expeditions. From the beginning of commercial tourism to the Antarctic, which continues to focus mainly on the Antarctic Peninsula, visitor flows have constantly increased and have more than quintupled in the period between 1992 and 2013. Nonetheless, due to its remoteness and extreme weather conditions, the Antarctic bears certain risks for its visitors.

To safeguard the continent's naturalness in times of growing visitor numbers, internationally binding visitor guidelines have been adopted for the Antarctic and are presented in this brochure.

Please observe these guidelines during your stay. They represent your personal contribution to the protection of the Antarctic and shall enable impressive experiences for yourself as well as for future generations.

Your German Federal Environment Agency



Source: IAATO 2013

Listen to the silence

More than anything else, Antarctica is a continent of tranquillity and forces of nature. Narrow, ice-free coastlines provide habitats for wildlife and vegetation, while the interior of Antarctica is mostly inanimate. This pure wilderness is what sets the Antarctic apart from other ecosystems of our planet.

To ensure that you and your fellow travellers can enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of Antarctica, please refrain from causing unnecessary noise and loud shouts. These disturbances may cause escape-flight responses of sea birds and penguin colonies and may eventually lead to changes in their behaviour and dislocation of entire colonies. Therefore, we request you:

- Avoid unnecessary noise and shouts!
- Do not use electronic entertainment equipment!

*[...] Have you known the Great White Silence? [...]
Dared the unknown, led the way? [...]
Have you marked the map's void spaces, [...]
Grown bigger in the bigness of the whole? [...]
Heard the text that nature renders? [...]
Then listen to the Wild -- it's calling you.[...]*

Robert W. Service, The Call of the Wild
Canadian Poet (1874-1958)



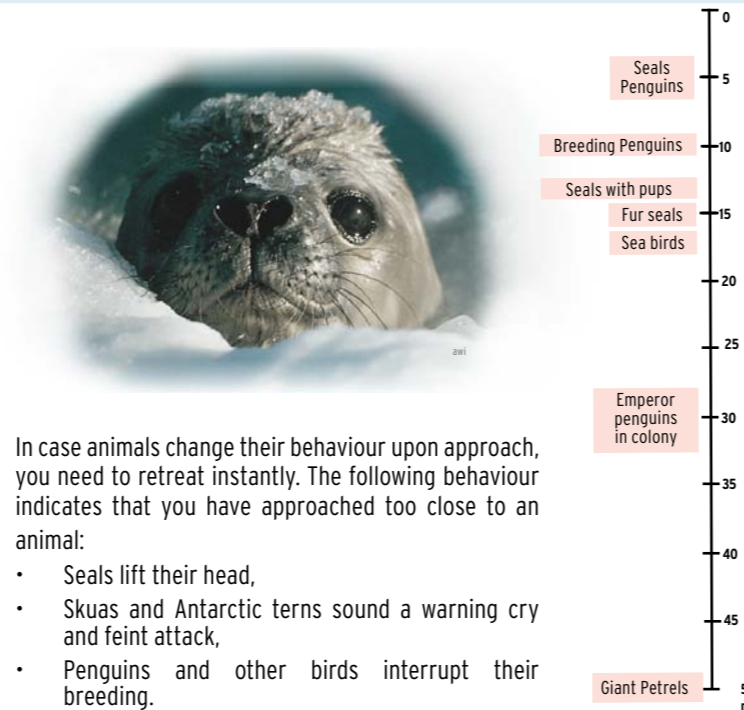
Keep your distance

Antarctic wildlife is particularly susceptible to human disturbances. Once animals are startled, they suffer loss of heat and energy, which under the Antarctic climate and extreme living conditions can rapidly and substantially jeopardise the viability of nestlings and adult animals.

Once birds desert their nests, eggs and nestlings are unprotected against the cold and may become prey of hungry skuas. Therefore, it is crucial that you keep sufficient distance particularly to breeding penguins and other birds. Keep the following in mind:

- Animals always have the right of way!
- Never block the way between an individual and its colony or the water!
- Remain at the edge of colonies!
- Never circle or touch animals!
- Keep your distance!

The UBA recommends the following minimum distances:



In case animals change their behaviour upon approach, you need to retreat instantly. The following behaviour indicates that you have approached too close to an animal:

- Seals lift their head,
- Skuas and Antarctic terns sound a warning cry and feint attack,
- Penguins and other birds interrupt their breeding.

Take only memories...

Some areas of the Antarctic are visited by more than 16,000 tourists annually. In order to preserve wilderness and integrity at these sites, it is crucial that visitors do not take any "souvenirs" with them.

Please leave stones, fossils, bones, and driftwood in their place, do not extract plants and do not take animals with you.

Only take your experience as a memory.

...and do not leave footprints

Because of the extreme climatic conditions and the short vegetation period in the Antarctic, plants and animals are very vulnerable to external influence. Slow vegetation growth rates - lichens may grow only by 10 -16 mm in the course of a century - leads to footprints remaining visible for long periods.

Be sure not to cause damage to grass, moss or lichens. Do not leave your group and remain - if possible - on existing trails.



Nests of ground breeders such as the Antarctic tern are camouflaged. Therefore, be particularly careful in areas unintersected by paths.

Especially when taking pictures, many visitors disrespect the sensitivity of Antarctica. Therefore, please avoid damage and disturbance to plants

and wildlife when in search for a motif.

Respect these guidelines:

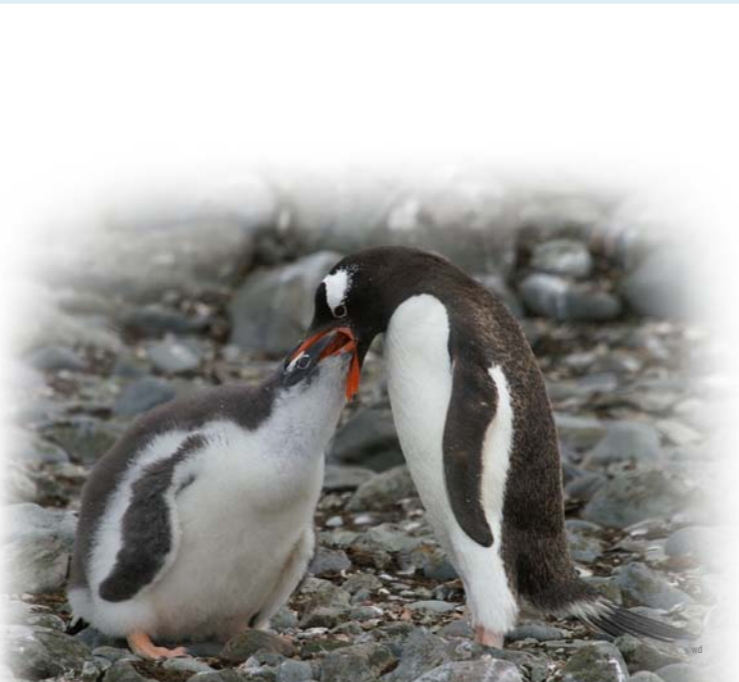
- Take nothing with you and leave nothing behind!
- Remain on existing trails!
- Do not smoke!
- Do not use flashlight near animals!
- Avoid stepping on vegetation!
- Look out for ground breeders!

Do not introduce uninvited guests

Due to its exceptional climate and remoteness from the next continent, the Antarctic has for a long period been shielded against the immigration of non-native species and pathogenic germs, which as competitors for food and habitats and as triggers of diseases potentially pose a substantial threat to Antarctic biocoenoses. In the course of growing human activities in the Antarctic, this isolation is no longer sustained. The pressure on the Antarctic ecosystem is additionally intensified by climate change. In some areas, the array of species is shifting towards more thermophile animals and plants, to the detriment of species that are adapted to cold habitats.

The Antarctic flora and fauna is threatened by germs and viruses as well as by unintentionally introduced microorganisms, plant seeds and spores. Thus, please observe the following:

- Carefully clean your shoes, Velcro, hiking poles and tripod before entering Antarctica for the first time and after every onshore visit!
- Do not introduce animals or plants into Antarctica!



Respect protected areas

Antarctic Specially Protected Areas (ASPAs) have been created to protect Antarctic fauna and flora against disturbances and to preserve particularly pristine areas of the Antarctic in their natural condition.

Apart from these ASPAs, in which tourist activities are generally prohibited, the Signatories of the Antarctic Treaty have established Antarctic Specially Managed Areas (ASMAs) at places with high visitor frequencies. In these ASMAs, special, mostly individual visitor management tools are in place to plan and co-ordinate tourist and non-tourist activities. These measures are designed to minimise impacts on local ecosystems despite high visitor frequencies. Summing up, this means:

- Do not enter ASPAs!
- Respect the restrictions effective in ASMAs!

Preserve historic sites

Due to its comparatively short history of human discovery, Antarctica is featuring remarkably authentic testimonies of its exploration, research and industrial history. To preserve these landmarks, they have been declared and put under protection as Historic Sites and Monuments (HSMs).

Help to preserve them in their original condition. Through responsible conduct, you can help ensure that these sites will remain open to the public in the future.

That means:

- Do not modify historic sites and monuments!
- Be careful inside historic sites and do not touch artefacts!
- Do not remove artefacts from buildings or their surroundings!

Prominent Antarctic Species



Gentoo Penguin



Adelie Penguin



Chinstrap Penguin



Antarctic Tern



Giant Petrel



Brown Skua



Weddell Seal



Antarctic Fur Seal



Elephant Seal

Edited by Stefan Marzelli, Florian Lintzmeyer (ifuplan) on behalf of the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA).

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German Federal Environment Agency (UBA)

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Respect scientific research

For more than a century, research has been conducted in the Antarctic in fields such as astrophysics, biology, geology, glaciology, climatology, medicine, meteorology and oceanography. Globally unique conditions of the Antarctic environment are incentive for numerous countries to carry out research in the Antarctic under considerable logistic efforts:

- The Antarctic features the best air quality globally, allowing measurements to be performed against reliable background data.
- Inland ice and glaciers of Antarctica are unique "archives" of historic climate conditions and can provide the key to understanding today's climate changes.
- The comparatively simple food chains of Antarctic ecosystems are particularly well-suited for the study of biological relationships and interactions.

Therefore, please keep in mind not to disturb scientific research during your stay. We ask you:

- Do not enter marked-off research sites!
- Do not touch or remove equipment or labels/markers!
- Respect the privacy of research personnel!

Wildlife watching at sea

A memorable experience in the Antarctic is wildlife watching of marine animals, most notably whales, e.g. from a zodiac. With a bit of luck, whales will be just as curious as you are and approach your boat.

Apart from a cautious operation of the boat, your personal conduct will be crucial for whether marine animals feel undisturbed. The following guidelines shall ensure memorable and safe wildlife watching at sea:

- Avoid loud noise, whistling etc.!
- Avoid rapid movements when a whale is approaching the boat or the coastline!
- Do not touch or feed the animals!
- Whales can surface at unexpected places. Be prepared and stay calm!
- Always follow the instructions of the zodiac operator!

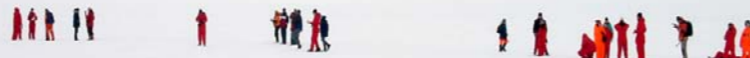
Stay safe

Your personal safety has priority over any type of animal encounter. Also when looking for photo opportunities, you should always keep in mind your own safety.

In the Antarctic, weather conditions can rapidly change. Fog, sudden gale-force winds, and the monotony and similarity of the coastline can potentially impede orientation and thus the return to the landing site. Please stay alert, don't overestimate your abilities and stay close to your group. That way, you minimise the need for dangerous search and rescue operations, which are also prone to have negative impacts on the Antarctic environment.

The windy continent

Catabatic winds: A common phenomenon in the Antarctic are sudden, off-shore, down-slope winds, so called catabatic winds. They occur by cooling and sinking of air mass over the Antarctic interior and its canalisation and intensification through topography. Complete calm can suddenly change to wind speeds of above 70 km/h.



White out - Diffuse reflexion of sunlight causes the horizon to vanish.

Existing refuge huts are only to be used in emergencies. Should you be using equipment or food, notify your tour guide immediately.

Particularly fur seals and skuas can react aggressively and cause serious injuries when disturbed. Therefore, keep a sufficient distance and retreat instantly upon any sign of disturbance. In your own interest, you should keep in mind the following rules:

- Stay with your group!
- Expect sudden weather changes and orientation difficulties!
- Remain at a safe distance to animals!

A continent of peace and scientific research - the international treaty system of the Antarctic

The Antarctic Treaty

Through the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, the Antarctic was declared as a continent of peace, international co-operation and scientific research. For the first time, this international treaty bindingly regulates human activities for an entire continent.

The Federal Republic of Germany joined the Antarctic Treaty in 1979 and is thus bound by the treaty and the decisions taken at the annual meetings of its Signatory Parties.

50 states have ratified the Antarctic Treaty to date. 29 of them, among them Germany, are entitled to the status of a Consultative Party through substantial research activities in the Antarctic, allowing them to participate in the elaboration of international regulations.

The Environmental Protocol

Through the Protocol on Environmental Protection (EP) to the Antarctic Treaty, the Signatories to the Treaty agreed to comprehensively protect the Antarctic environment and its intrinsic and wilderness value. The EP bans any exploitation of Antarctic resources and regulates the environmental impact assessment of planned scientific or tourist activities in the Antarctic. Germany has transposed the EP into national law by the Act implementing the Protocol of Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (AUG).

Additional regulation of tourism

As early as 1994 at their XVIII meeting held in Kyoto, the Signatories to the Antarctic Treaty adopted binding provisions for the protection of flora and fauna, applying to tour operators as well as to individual visitors to the Antarctic. 2007 the Signatories to the Antarctic Treaty furthermore agreed that no more than 100 passengers are to be on shore at any one time and that ships carrying more than 500 passengers may not make any landings in the Antarctic. For 38 landing sites, additional site guidelines were adopted.

These guidelines are based in part on the environmental and safety regulations already applicable to the members of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators. Special Yachting Guidelines apply to the Signatories to the Antarctic Treaty since 2012.

All these documents are available on board of your cruise ship and will be made available to you upon request.

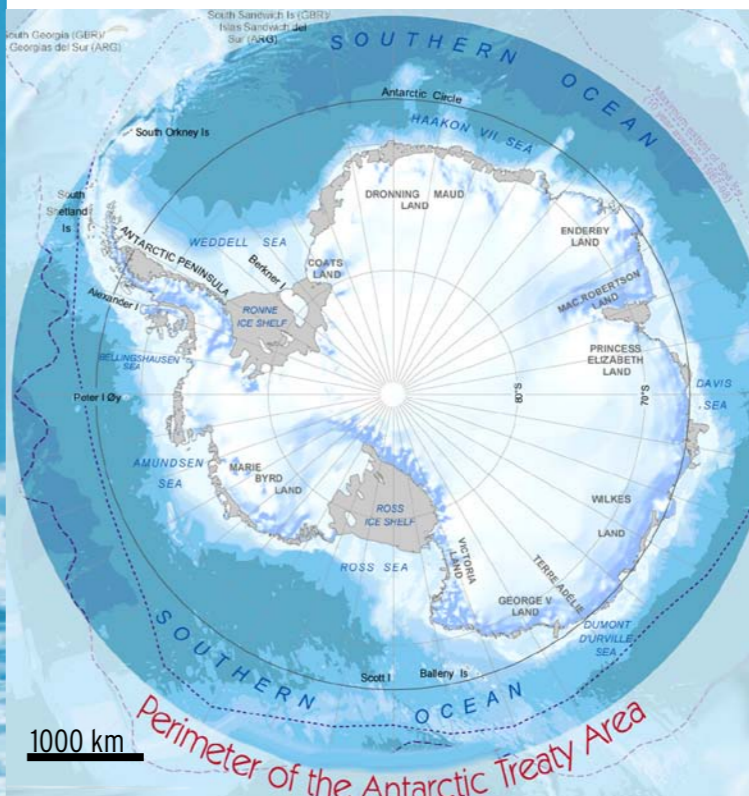


South pole with flags of the Antarctic Treaty Parties

The role of the German Federal Environment Agency

The AUG designates the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) as authority responsible for authorising all activities in the Antarctic that either are organised in Germany or proceed from its territory. Consequently, German tour operators are obliged to obtain permission for planned expeditions in the Antarctic from the UBA. Furthermore, tour operators are required to inform their guests on board about environmentally sound behaviour and ensure compliance with these guidelines. As the UBA is also obliged to verify compliance with the AUG and the permit issued, tour operators are to hand in a post-visit report describing the actual course of the itinerary.

Map of the Antarctic



Map courtesy of Antarctic Treaty Secretariat & Australian Antarctic Data Center

Selection of relevant sources of information on environmental protection in the Antarctic:

- Antarctic Treaty Secretariat: www.ats.aq
- Committee for Environmental Protection: www.cep.aq
- International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators, IAATO: www.iaato.org
- Antarctic platform of the German Federal Environment Agency (UBA): www.uba.de/antarktis

Further environmental information can be obtained from:

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How to behave?

Visitor Guidelines for the Antarctic

