

Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 132 (Site of Special Scientific Interest No. 13)

Potter Peninsula, 25 de Mayo (King George) Island, South Shetland Islands

1. Description of Values to be Protected

This area was originally designated as SSSI No. 13 in ATCM Recommendation XIII-8 after a proposal by Argentina because of its diverse avian and mammal fauna and locally rich vegetation, providing a representative sample of maritime Antarctic ecosystem. Coastal areas support large breeding colonies of ten seabird species, including three penguin species and three species of marine mammals.

The reasons for the original designation of the Area are still relevant. Scientific research on the breeding ecology of elephant seals and seabirds has been undertaken since 1982. This includes both the CCAMLR Ecosystem Monitoring Programme and basic biological and ecological research that must be developed without interferences by other human activities. Long-term research programmes could be endangered by accidental interference, especially during breeding periods.

2. Aims and Objectives

Management of Potter Peninsula aims to:

- Avoid major changes in the structure and composition of communities of flora and fauna;
- Prevent unnecessary human disturbance to the area;
- Permit scientific research which cannot be served elsewhere, and allow the continuity of the ongoing long-term biological and ecological research programmes established in the Area.

3. Management Activities

The following management activities will be undertaken to protect the values of the area:

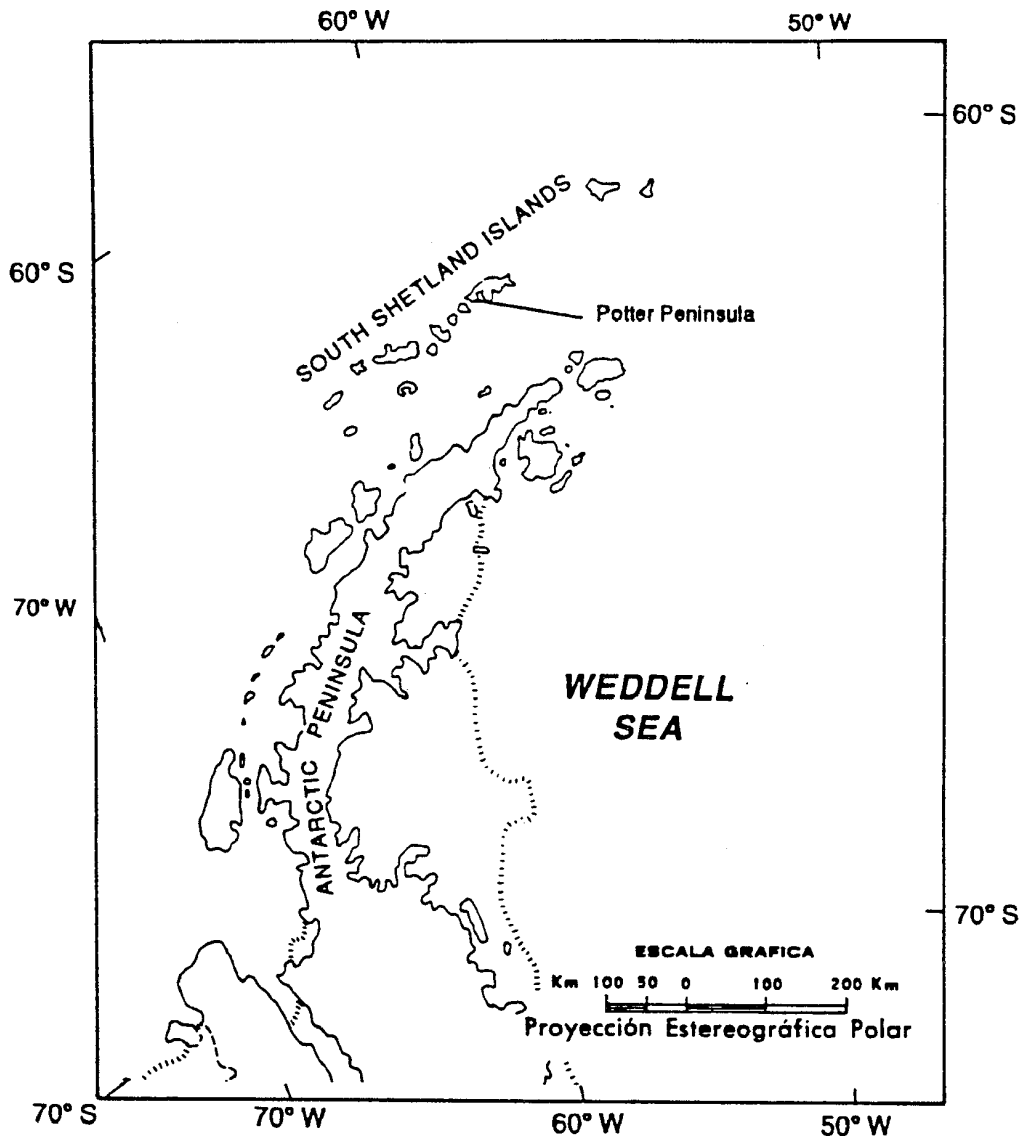
- Because the area is close to a station permanently occupied, a marker board will be placed at the principal access point illustrating the location boundaries and stating entry restrictions;
- Within the Area those locations used for research will be clearly marked.
- Priority pedestrian routes within the Area will be established for transit to sample sites.
- Collection of samples will be limited to the minimum required for approved scientific research.
- Visits shall be made as necessary to ensure management and maintenance measures are adequate.

4. Period of Designation

Designated for an indefinite period.

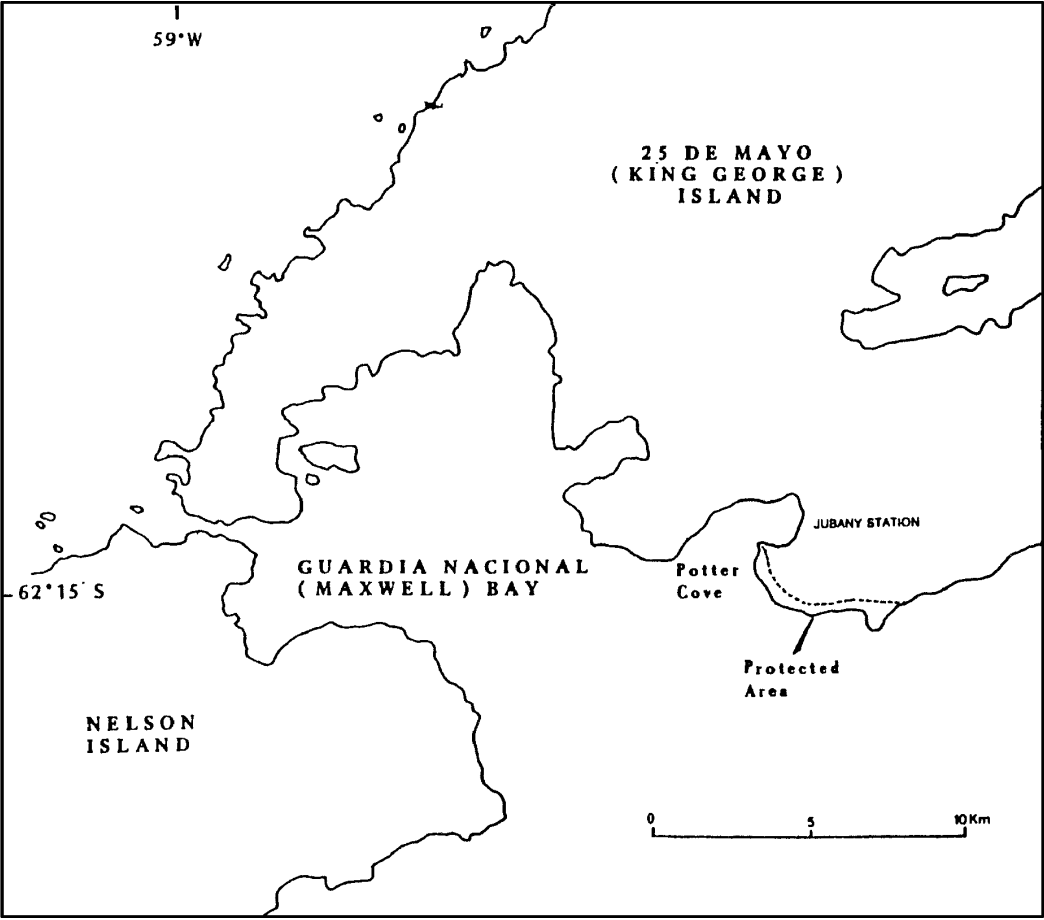
5. Maps

Map A shows the location of Potter Peninsula in relation with the Antarctic Peninsula.



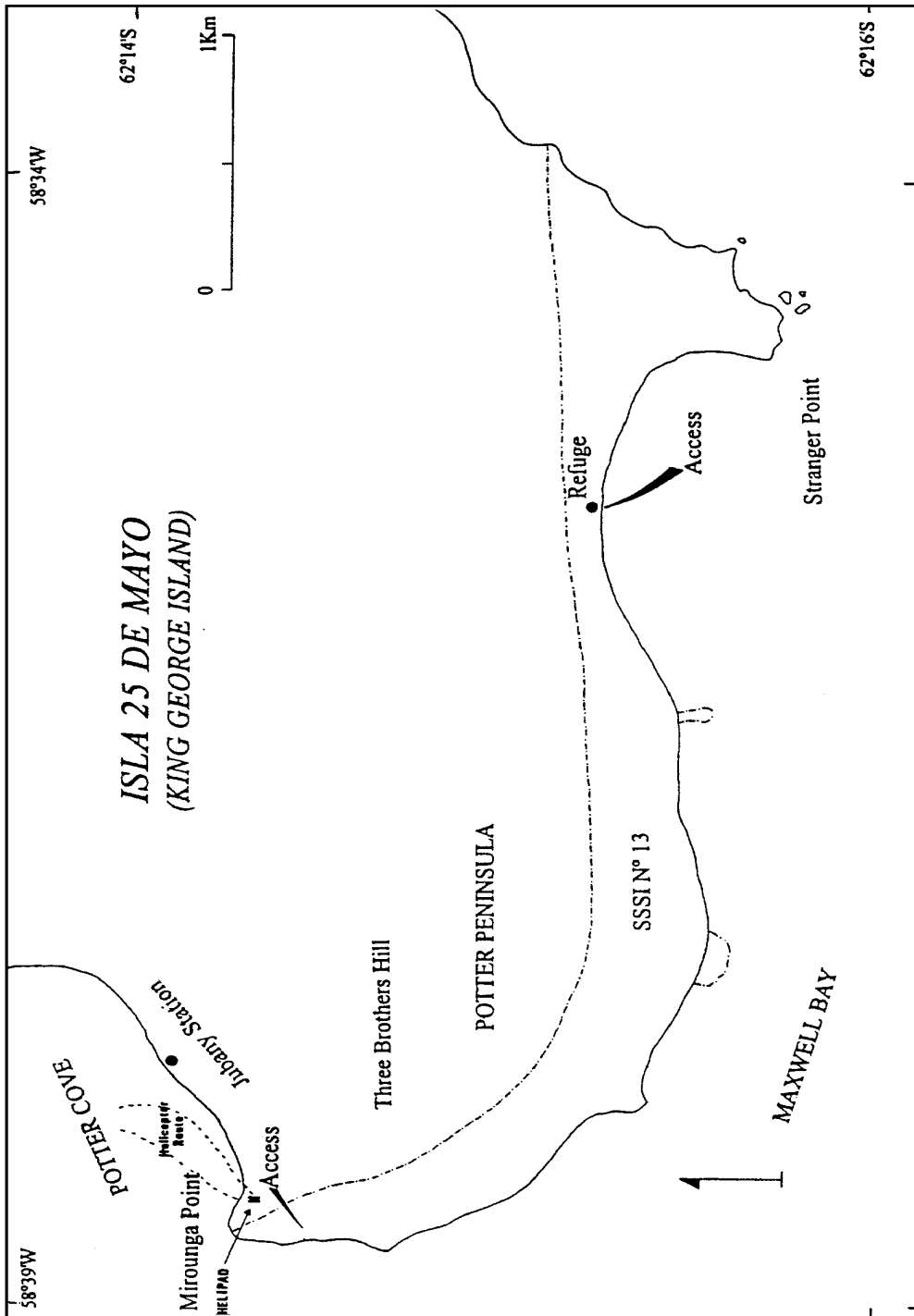
ASPA 132
Map A*

Map B shows the location of Potter Peninsula in relation with 25 de Mayo (King George) Island.



ASPA 132
Map B*

Map C shows the Protected Area in greater detail.



ASPA 132
Map C*

6. Description of the Area

6(i) Geographical co-ordinates and natural features of the Area

The site is located on the east side of Maxwell Bay, south-west of 25 de Mayo (King George) Island between Mirounga Point (the north-west most extreme point of Potter Peninsula) and the east side of Stranger Point (lat. 62°15' S - long 58° 37' W). The site occupies the coastal zone of variable width up to 500 m from the shore line (low water mark) and rising to above 70m altitude at Stranger Point. It is mainly an area of raised beaches, mostly pebble-covered, backed by basalt cliffs, terminal or lateral moraines and small glaciers. The coastline is very irregular and alternates between small base and rocky headlands.

This area offers a great scientific value by the presence of many bird colonies (Adelie penguin, gentoo penguin, chinstrap penguin, Dominican gull, brown skua, Antarctic tern, sheathbill, giant petrel and cape petrel) and breeding groups of marine mammals (Crabeater seal, Weddell seal, Southern elephant seal). There is a relatively abundant development of lichen-dominated plant communities, especially on the succession of prominent rocks along the beach. Long-term research and research programmes could be endangered by accidental interference, destruction of vegetation and soil, and perturbation of breeding birds and mammals.

6(ii) Restricted zones within the Area

None

6(iii) Location of structures within the Area

Within the Area there is a small Argentine refuge used by research teams. The refuge measuring 3 by 2.5m, is built of metal sheets and glass-fibre roof. It can accommodate up to two persons. Approximately 500 metres outside the site is placed Jubany Station.

6(iv) Location of other Protected Areas within close proximity

SSSI No. 5, Fildes Peninsula lies about 20 km to the east direction. SSSI No. 8 Western Shore of Admiralty Bay lies 10 km to the north-east direction. SSSI No. 14 Harmony Point, lies about 30 km to the WSW direction.

7. Permit conditions

Entry into the Area is prohibited except in accordance with a permit issued by appropriate national authorities.

Conditions for issuing a Permit to enter the Area are that:

- It is used to continue study for the natural history, biology and ecology of the flora and fauna of the area or for a compelling scientific purpose that cannot be met elsewhere;
- The actions permitted will not jeopardise the natural ecological system in the Area;

- Any management activities are in support of the objectives of the Management Plan;
- The actions permitted are in accordance with this Management Plan;
- The Permit, or authorised copy, must be carried within the Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- A report or reports are supplied to the authority that issued the Permit.

7(i) Access to and movements within the Area

The access to the Area is restricted to the Northern end, near the helipad. Marine access will be restricted to a landing site in front of the refuge. No vehicles or aircraft are permitted in the Area except under emergency.

Limitation on access to particular localities used by breeding birds and mammals for specific periods may be necessary.

7(ii) Activities which are or may be conducted within the Area including restrictions on time and place

Scientific study and monitoring of the populations of flora and fauna in the area and compelling scientific research which cannot be conducted elsewhere and which will not interfere with ongoing long-term research programmes or jeopardise the structure or dynamics of the ecosystem of the Area.

Essential management activities, including monitoring.

7(iii) Installation, modification or removal of structures

No additional structures are to be erected in the Area, or scientific equipment installed, except for essential scientific or management activities, as specified in a Permit.

7(iv) Location of field camps

Parties using the Area will normally be able to use Jubany Station. In the event that this is not possible, a camp site should be used near the existing station and outside the Area.

7(v) Restriction on material and organisms which may be brought into the Area

No living animals or plant material shall be deliberately introduced into the Area.

No poultry products, including food products containing uncooked dried eggs, shall be taken into the Area. No herbicides or pesticides shall be brought into the Area. Any other chemicals, which may be introduced for compelling scientific purpose specified in the permit, shall be removed from the Area at or before the conclusion of the activity for which the Permit was granted.

As far as possible the use of chemicals should be clearly documented for the benefit of later researchers.

Fuel, food and other material are not to be stored in the Area, unless required for essential purposes connected with the activity for which the Permit has been granted. All such material introduced are to be removed when no longer required. Permanent depots are not permitted.

7(vi) Taking or harmful interference with native flora and fauna

This is prohibited, except in accordance with a Permit. Where animal taking or harmful interference is involved this should be in accordance with the SCAR Code of Conduct for Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Antarctica, as a minimum standard.

7(vii) Collection or removal of anything not brought into the area by the permit holder

Biological specimens and samples may be collected and/or removed from the Area only according to a permit. Debris of human origin should be removed and reported to the authority that issued the permit. Dead biological specimens may be removed for pathological analysis.

7(viii) Disposal of waste

All non-human wastes shall be removed from the Area to the nearby research station. Human waste may be deposited in the sea.

7(ix) Measures that may be necessary to ensure that the aims and objectives of the management plan continue to be met

Permits may be granted to enter the area to carry out biological and ecological studies and monitoring, and site inspection activities, including the collection of small amounts of plant material and small numbers of animals for scientific purposes, to erect or maintain notice boards and protective measures.

All scientific structures and instrumentation, including research markers, installed in the Area must be authorised in a permit and clearly identified by country, name of investigator and year of installation. Research markers and structures must be removed at or before the expiry of the Permit. If specific scientific projects cannot be concluded within the permitted time, applications must be made for an extension to leave the items in situ.

7(x) Requirements for reports

The principal permit holder for each issued permit shall submit a report of activities conducted in the Area. This report shall be submitted to the authority named in the Permit as soon as practicable. Such report should be stored indefinitely and made accessible to interested Parties, SCAR, CCAMLR, and COMNAP if requested, to provide the documentation of human activities within the Area necessary for good management.