Analysis of the current status of the Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 144, Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), Greenwich Island

English version provided by the author

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**Information Paper presented by Chile**

***Summary***

The analysis carried out for ASPA No. 144, Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), Greenwich Island, is presented in a practical way, based on the “Checklist to assist in the inspection of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas and Antarctic Specially Managed Areas” and in the “Guidelines for implementation of the Framework for Protected Areas”. This analysis determined to suggest suppressing the site as a protected area.

***Introduction***

In order to establish the relevance of maintaining the protection of the Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 144, Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), the management plan, the activities developed in the area and the available scientific literature were reviewed.

Following the details and the results of the analyses developed are presented.

***Assessment of the Zone***

Chile starts to develop a scientific program on benthic fauna in the South Shetland Islands in 1967, beginning the studies in Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), Greenwich Island. After the volcanic eruption of Deception Island in December 1967, it was delaminated to concentrate the studies in Port Foster. Lately, it was decided to keep the studies in Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) as a reference area and comparison site for the studies that Chilean researchers carried out in Deception Island. Since 1968 until the beginning of the 1980s, systematic activities were developed in the area, and the results were presented at scientific meetings, technical and scientific reports and in publications.

In 1987, Chile proposed Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the XIV ATCM nominated them as SEIC No. 26, protecting the area covered by polygons considered in the coordinates 62º 28.9'S, 59º 41.2'W and 62º 29.3'S, 59º 41.7'W, as the benthic habitat “A”, and 62º 28.3'S, 59º 40.3 ' W and 62º28.7'S, 59º 40.8'W, as benthic habitat “B”. Subsequently, by Decision 1 (2002), the ATCM modified the nomenclature and numbering of protected areas, passing SEIC No. 26 to be designated Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 144.

The main characteristics of the area are:

* Corresponds to two sub-areas of benthic habitat, between 50 and up to 200 m depth, whose bottom consists of coarse to fine silt.
* The vertical distribution of the temperature is clearly stratified, with values over 0ºC and up to 1,7ºC. The salinity is also clearly stratified, presenting values between 33.61 and 34.10%o.
* The benthic fauna present in the sub-zones is dominated by polychaetes, bivalve molluscs, crustaceans and pycnogonids, being the representative species of habitat A the polychaete *Maldane sarci antarctica* and bivalves such as *Genaxinus bongraini*. The characteristic fauna of habitat B corresponds to the bivalve *Yoldia eightsii* and the crustacean *Eudorella gracilor*.

In the 1990s, Chile discontinues the benthic research in the protected area. In that decade, the researches focussed on inter and subtidal fauna associated to the coastline and present in the water column, above 50 m depth. These activities were systematically developed until 2003, when the Antarctic station "Arturo Prat" was closed. Since 2008, upon reopening the station and the Chilean operations in Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), the scientific research that Chile is developing in the area is focused on environmental monitoring and the study of interstitial and intertidal invertebrates, microorganisms and macroalgae, none of which has required develop activities into the protected area.

Ecuador has also developed marine biological activities in the area, outside of the protected area. Currently develops environmental monitoring research, including studies on tourism; Studies in the intertidal marine environment and in marine vertebrates.

Chile Bay (Discovery Bay), on the other hand, is not an usual place for tourist visits; the boats that arrive to the area correspond mainly to those of the National Antarctic Programs that support the activities of the stations located in the vicinity of the area, although sometimes it is possible that those boats visiting Barrientos Island (Aitcho Islands) or Yankee Bay also visit Chile Bay (Discovery Bay). The Area is not considered to develop activities by the fishing vessels operating in subarea 48.1 of the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, CCAMLR.

The Area information was reviewed and analysed based on the “Checklist to assist in the inspection of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas and Antarctic Specially Managed Areas”, as well as on the “Guidelines for implementation of the Framework for Protected Areas” set forth in Article 3, Annex V of the Environmental Protocol, analyses that are presented below:

**1. Analysis according to the Checklist to assist in the inspection of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas and Antarctic Specially Managed Areas**

*Assessment of Area Management Plan*

1. Are the values for which the Area was designated still relevant?

Due to the low development of activities in the area, it is considered that the values for which the area was originally designated do not remain relevant. Originally, the area was proposed in order to maintain it as a control area for the studies carried out in Puerto Foster, Deception Island. However, the scientific information indicates that the environmental instability in Foster port has allowed the parallel and equitable development of a large number of species, regularly finding changes in the specific dominant composition, which have maintained low values of diversity-homogeneity and those of high dominance, conforming the structure of this type of environments, altered by the volcanic influence, while the bay Chile maintains a typical structure of zones of stable environments, with a high specific diversity, high homogeneity and low dominance.

1. Are the values of the Area being protected effectively?

Based on the low level and intensity of the activities carried out in the area, it is considered that the values present in the area remain well protected.

1. Are the management aims and objectives appropriate?

Under the current panorama of activities in the area, it is considered that the original protection goals and objectives are no longer necessary.

1. Is the period of designation appropriate?

The original designation of the area as protected was for a period of 10 years, but more than 25 years have already passed with special protection for this area.

1. Do maps and photographs show the boundary of the Area clearly and the key features it contains?

The proposed limits for the area are shown on the original map, but without detailing the main characteristics clearly. There is not a good cartography for the area.

1. Are the boundaries easy to locate?

The protected area is located in the marine environment, in the benthic zone, under 50 m depth, without the presence of specific indications of it, so it is not easy to locate the limits.

1. Are maps and photographs easy to use and up to date?

The original map is not easy to use, so as to easily determine in the field the proposed limits for the area. The original map was not updated. To date, the revision of the updated management plan that contains a new map, which was approved in 2012 by CCAMLR, is under discussion within the Subsidiary Group of Management Plans of the Committee for the Protection of the Environment.

1. What are the geographical coordinates of the Area? Are they correct (clearly state how this was checked in the field)?

The geographical coordinates of the area are determined by the polygons established between points 62º 28.9'S, 59º 41.2'W and 62º 29.3'S, 59º 41.7'W, for the benthic habitat A, and 62º 28.3'S , 59º 40.3'W and 62º28.7'S, 59º 40.8'W, for the benthic habitat B. The revision is based on the cartography of the Hydrographic and Oceanographic Service of the Chilean Navy, SHOA, scale 1: 20,000, SAD-69 datum, 1998.

*Management activities*

1. Are appropriate management activities being undertaken to protect the values of the Area?

In general, the management plan originally proposed has been complied with, in order to limit the activities to be developed within the protected area. In addition, the two countries that mainly carry out activities in the area, in the vicinity of the protected area, develop environmental monitoring programs.

1. Is any monitoring of the Area being undertaken?

Since the 1990s, activities have not been carried out specifically monitoring the protected area.

1. What measures are in place to ensure that the aims and objectives of the Management Plan are being met? Do they need to be revised?

In spite of not currently carrying out scientific activities in the protected area, compliance with the originally indicated measures is maintained, no artefacts have settled in the bottom or elements are discharged into the marine environment. Wastes of human origin generated in the surrounding stations are discharged into the marine environment only after being treated. Chile develops an environmental monitoring program since 2009 in the area to determine the impact of human presence in the area and minimize them.

**2. Analysis according to the Guidelines for implementation of the Framework for Protected Areas set forth in Article 3, Annex V of the Environmental Protocol**

*Assessing Values to be Protected*

Checklist of the values

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| **Value** | **Description** | **Answer** |
| **Environmental values** | does the area contain physical, chemical or biological features e.g., glaciers, fresh water lakes, melt pools, rock outcrops, plant life or animal life that are particularly unique or representative components of the Antarctic environment? | Yes, it contains fauna representative of the Antarctic environment. |
| **Scientific values** | does the area contain physical, chemical or biological features of special interest to scientific researchers where the principles and methods of science would be applicable? | Yes, it contains characteristics that may be of interest for the development of scientific research. |
| **Historic values** | does the area contain features or objects that represent, connate or recall events, experiences, achievements, places or records that are important, significant or unusual in the course of human events and activity in Antarctica? | No, it is a marine area located between 50 and 200 m of depth. |
| **Aesthetic values** | does the area contain features or attributes e.g., beauty, pleasantness, inspirational qualities, scenic attraction and appeal that contribute to people’s appreciation and sense or perception of an area? | No, it is a marine area located between 50 and 200 m of depth. |
| **Wilderness values** | does the area contain characteristics e.g., remoteness, few or no people, an absence of human-made objects, traces, sounds and smells, untravelled or infrequently visited terrain that are particularly unique or representative components of the Antarctic environment? | No, the area does not contain desert values. |
| **Combination** | does the area contain any combination of the above values? | Yes, the area combines environmental and scientific values. |
| **Ongoing or planned**  **scientific activities** | does the area include ongoing or planned scientific projects or activities? | Not specifically in the protected area, but scientific activities have been planned in the vicinity. |

*Assessment of Potential Protection and Use Category*

Checklist for identifying and clarifying the type of area to be protected (protection category) as well as the use or reasons (use category)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Protection Categories** | **Description** | **Answer** |
| **Ecosystems** | would the area be protected for its ecosystems? I.e. dynamic complexes of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as an ecological unit. | No |
| **Habitats** | would the area be protected for its habitats? I.e. the places or types of site where an organism or population naturally occurs. | Yes |
| **Species assemblages** | would the area be protected for its species assemblages? I.e. important or unusual groupings or populations of one or more species of fauna or flora (usual type of area protection of species in Antarctica). | Yes, it presents important groups of benthic species, although not unique to the area. |
| **Species (taxa)** | would the area be protected for its species? I.e. special groups of organisms which resemble each other and sometimes are linked to a common habitat to a greater degree than members of other groups, and which commonly form reproductively isolated groups that will not normally breed with members of another group. | Yes, there are groups of organisms’ presents in other habitats, but they are reproductively isolated, because they are benthic. |
| **Geological,**  **glaciological or**  **geomorphological**  **Features** | would the area be protected for its geological, glaciological or geomorphological features? I.e. distinctive or special characteristics of the history, structure or components of the Earth’s crust, rocks, fossils and cryosphere or a result of present or past processes beneath or at the Earth’s surface in Antarctica. | No |
| **Landscapes** | would the area be protected for its landscape? I.e. expanses of coastal or inland scenery, usually at a scale where they contain a mosaic of inter-related ecosystems, and characterised by particular patterns of geometry, heterogeneity, patch dynamics and biophysical processes. | No |
| **Aesthetic** | would the area be protected for its aesthetic features? I.e. attributes concerned with beauty, appreciation, perception and inspiration. | No |
| **Wilderness** | would the area be protected for its wilderness features? I.e. attributes concerned with remoteness and a relative absence of both people and indications of past and present human presence or activity. | No |

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| **Protection Categories** | **Description** | **Answer** |
| **Historic** | would the area be protected for its historic features? I.e. things which represent or recall events, experiences, places, achievements or records that are important, significant or unusual in the course of human events and activity in Antarctica. | No |
| **Intrinsic** | would the area be protected for its intrinsic features? (The real or inherent nature of a thing is worth protecting in its own right i.e. without requiring use). | Yes |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Use Categories** | **Description** | **Answer** |
| **Scientific research** | would the area be protected for scientific research? | Yes, to develop benthic studies, under 50 m of depth. |
| **Conservation** | would the area be protected for its conservation purposes?  (Conservation embraces both protection and judicious use, management of biodiversity, intrinsic value and importance in maintaining the life sustaining systems of the biosphere: distinguished from “sustainable use” and “sustainable management”. | No |

*Quality Criteria*

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| **Representativeness** | |
| Is the potential area **representative** of other comparable parts of Antarctica? | Yes |
| Does it contain ecosystems, species, habitats, physical, historic, aesthetic and wilderness or other values or features represented elsewhere? | Yes, it contains species and habitats present in other sites in the Antarctic Peninsula region. |
| What contribution would the area make to an Antarctic Protected Area system with a full range of outstanding natural environmental, biological, geographic and geological values of the Antarctic region? | The literature recognizes that Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) has high values of benthic fauna diversity. However, it would have lower densities and biomass than other sites within the South Shetland Islands themselves. In addition, it has a species composition similar to that recorded in other sites of the South Shetland Islands. |
| In relation to Antarctica as a whole, what proportion of the values or types of protected area identified in Articles 3(1) and 3(2) are represented in the site being investigated?  *E.g. an area containing representative examples of marine & terrestrial ecosystems & assemblages of species of seabird may be higher quality than one containing a single colony of a common species.* | There is a low proportion of values, mainly presenting the combination of natural (or environmental) and scientific values. |
| **Diversity** | |
| What diversity of species, habitats or other values or features does the area contain?  *For example an area might be of higher quality if it contained a greater diversity of biological and/or geological features than a nearby area.* | In the protected area, it is possible to find groups of polychaetes. |

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| **Distinctiveness** | |
| Is the potential area **distinctive** from other areas? How different is it from other areas? | It does not present unique/distinctive characteristics. |
| Does it contain species, habitats or other values or features not duplicated elsewhere? Are they **unique**, **rare**, uncommon or common? | Yes, they are commons. |
| Are there naturally uncommon taxa present, including “*sparse*” taxa which occur within typically small and widely scattered natural populations, “*range restricted*” taxa whose distribution is naturally confined to specific substrates (e.g a specific rock type), habitats (e.g. geothermally-heated soils) or geographic areas (e.g. nunataks), “vagrant” taxa which may appear for short periods without establishing long-term breeding populations, and “*seasonal*” taxa which migrate into the polar regions during summer? | No |
| Are there naturally uncommon abiotic features present that have been formed or preserved through an unusual or infrequent set of geological, geomorphological or glaciological processes?  *For example an area containing the only example of a terrestrial ecosystem or a unique fossil locality might be of higher quality than one that contained a common terrestrial ecosystem or type of fossil..* | No |
| **Ecological importance** | |
| How **important**/critical is the area ecologically or numerically for key species, ecosystems or as a type locality? | The area is representative of the Antarctic ecosystem, but it is not relevant in ecological terms, according to species presence or the type of site. |
| Do the number of individuals or groups occurring at the area include a high proportion of the global population? *For example, if 90% of the global population were present, this would represent a key population and a very important ecological site*. | No |
| What contribution does the area make to maintenance of essential ecological processes or life-support systems or habitats? | There is no clear contribution. |
| Does the area have any inherent vulnerability due to local endemism, rarity of species, biological vulnerability or for other reasons? | No. However, the bay faces glaciers on Greenwich Island. |
| **Degree of interference** | |
| To what extent has the area been subject to human **interference**? | It has been subjected to a low degree of human interference: A station operates throughout the year, with a staff that does not exceed 12 people and other during the summer period. Staffs at both stations do not exceed 80 people in summer season. According to IAATO statistics, a total of 2,214 people visited the area in the period 2000-2017. |
| Does the area lack signs of human activities (e.g. tracks, litters)? | Because it is a deep marine zone, there are no visible signs of human activity. |
| Is there minimal loss or addition of species, natural processes and abiotic material? | According to the available scientific information, there are no changes in species, natural processes or abiotic material in the zone. |

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| What is the degree of visitation and alteration of the adjacent landscape?  *E.g. an area that has not experienced local human-induced change and is protected from it because of isolation may have higher quality wilderness values and might be more valuable as an undisturbed reference area than a less natural area.* | In spite of finding two stations in the vicinity of the area, it is considered that the degree of visits is low, as well as the alteration of the landscape. |
| **Scientific and monitoring uses** | |
| What is the potential for the pursuit of science including gaining of knowledge by study and analysis? | As in the rest of Antarctica, it is considered high. |
| What is the potential of the area to be used as a reference area (e.g. for environmental monitoring)? | Medium, with characteristics similar to other areas in the South Shetland Islands. |

*Human activities and impacts*

* Are human activities regularly, infrequently or almost never carried out in the area?

The “Arturo Prat” Station (Chile) since 2008 develops regular activities in the area. The “Pedro Vicente Maldonado” Station (Ecuador) executes activities during the austral summer. In the winter months, the bay freezes, so there is no access to the protected area.

In the protected area, as such, activities are not currently carried out.

* Are biological or abiotic components or processes of the area vulnerable to any existing or likely future human activities in the area itself or nearby?

Based on the available scientific information, and recognizing that human activities have been carried out in the area since 1947, it is considered that the biological and abiotic components of the area are not threatened by existing or future human activities. As in the rest of the Antarctic marine environment, the main threats are those caused by shipping accidents, including the sinking of ships and the spillage of fuel stored in them.

* Could these activities directly, indirectly or in a cumulative way result in impacts on the values for which this area has been identified or modify them in any way?

Since 1947 and during more than 25 years in which the area has had special protection, human activities have been developing. Today, in addition, there is greater concern in the bases in terms of environmental protection, so it is considered that human activities should not directly, indirectly or cumulatively affect the values of the area.

* How likely, frequent and intensive might the impacts be and over what temporal and spatial scales?

The area is visited regularly by vessels that support the activities of the National Antarctic Programs. However, the anchorages of these ships are located near the stations and far from the protected area.

* When disturbance occurs, what is the time taken to return to pre-disturbance or equilibrium levels?

To date, no disturbance caused by human impacts has been reported in the area.

*Natural processes*

* Are natural processes (e.g. atmospheric, climatic, marine, biological or glacial processes) likely to modify the area or its values?

Yes, as with any other area in Antarctica of similar conditions of presence of glaciers in the vicinity.

*Natural variability and viability*

* What are the short and long term variations (e.g. seasonal changes) in populations of biota present in the area?

According to the available information, in general the populations are stable. However, if a greater glacial contribution to the bay occurs (increased melting process), it is possible that the abiotic conditions undergo modifications, and may even alter the biological composition of the area. This situation could also occur in other sites of the South Shetland Islands with similar conditions.

* Is the likely variation due to natural processes likely to be smaller, similar to or larger than impacts of human activities in the area?

The glacial contribution and climate modifications are the main natural processes that could affect the area and, depending on the level that could be reached in the future, its impact would be greater than that of human activities.

* Are there any medium- or long-term indications that natural trends could result in significantly different characteristics of the area which could affect its future viability, require a reassessment of protected status or necessitate changes in management?

In the entire region of the Antarctic Peninsula there is currently an increase in air and sea surface temperature, so those areas with similar conditions to Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) could face same future impacts, with similar effects.

* To what extent does natural buffering protect the area from outside influences?

To date, scientific research indicates that, despite the changes registered in the region, the area remains stable. In addition, the geographical location of the area, the English Strait with the Aitcho Islands in the far north, limits the transit of ships in the area.

*Non-Antarctic threats*

* Would protection of the area be compromised by processes originating or driven from outside the Antarctic such as global change, ozone depletion or long-range transport of contaminants such as long-lived chemical pollutants and introduction of non-native species?

Like the rest of the Antarctic Peninsula region, the increase in air and sea temperatures could affect the values of the area in some way, directly or indirectly, as well as those of the other islands in the region.

*Urgency*

* Do human activities pose imminent environmental risks?

No, because in general in the area there is a low number of activities (presence of two stations and few ship visits each season).

*Scientific uncertainty*

* How well known are the natural values and other characteristics of the area and potential impacts of human activities on them?

Scientific research is carried out in the area on a regular basis, which allows knowing well its characteristics as well as the potential human impacts. However, there is little research under 50 m depth in the area.

* Could these uncertainties mask significant threats to the area and its values?

So far, uncertainties are not recognized.

*Boundaries*

* Are the proposed boundaries consistent with management objectives? (E.g. do they protect foraging areas of birds in an important breeding area and/or do they enclose other ecosystem components required for continuity of species identified?).

The proposed limits were originally related to the proposed comparison with Port Foster, Deception Island. In addition, the two zones were selected with different depths and conditions, but looking for similar representativeness.

* Can boundaries be easily defined for management purposes and identified by visitors? (E.g. can fixed natural boundaries such as mountain peaks, ridgelines, shorelines, or water depth be used?).

The limits on the surface are not demarcated. The marine Zone considers two subareas below 50 m depth.

* Can management objectives be met regardless of the future use of areas adjacent to the protected area boundary, including conflicts between different values or management objectives, and acceptability to others?

Yes. The area was protected in 1987, when activities were already being carried out in the area, in Prat Station. Later a new station (Maldonado) was built in the area. Also tourist activities have been developed. In general, the area receives few maritime visits, and human activities are developed regularly trying to minimize the potential impacts on the marine environment.

*What are the existing scientific or other uses of the area?*

* Are there conflicting values (e.g. between environmental and scientific values in Article 3(1)) or between protection and use categories, or management objectives.

The area presents scientific values (terrestrial, marine, microbiological and environmental studies) and environmental ones. The activities are carried out without presenting conflicts between those values.

*Size*

* Is the area large enough to maximise the chance of management objectives being achieved?

The area reaches less than 2 km2 of area, between 50 and 200 m of depth. The Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) has about 25 km2 of surface, in total, from the intertidal line to the 200 m depth. For the purpose of comparison and control of studies with Foster port, in Deception Island, the area has a sufficient size to achieve the original management objective. However, ecosystems are different.

* Is it large enough to contain all or most of the key elements identified, in their natural relationships, so that it will be self-perpetuating?

No, but it's representative.

* What is the minimum size needed to achieve management objectives?

The proposed size allows the achievement of the management objectives.

* Is the area small enough to minimise conflicts between different values or management objectives?

Yes, the proposed size allows reducing the conflicts between the different values of the area.

* Is the area large enough to accommodate future changes (e.g. due to climate change?)

The proposed size allows including and considering possible future changes.

*Possible management tools*

* Are there management tools available that could be used to help achieve management objectives and minimise conflicts? (E.g. would zoning be useful to facilitate recognition, protection and management including partitioning between objectives such as protection of vulnerable species in core breeding areas, provision of reference areas and capacity for human activity in suitable fringe areas?).

Due to the depth in which the Zone is located, there are no other tools, beyond the methodology of benthic studies, to facilitate the recognition of the area, as well as its protection and management.

* Can management programmes be formulated to attain management objectives? (E.g. signage or boundary markers, survey and research, monitoring, any specific information needed for reporting).

Due to the location of the Zone (more than 50 m depth) it is not practical to establish signs that demarcate it on the surface.

*Time period/duration*

* Can the area be protected for a time period that allows full achievement of management objectives?

The area was protected originally for 10 years, period that was subsequently extended. To date, the site has been protected for more than 25 years and it is considered that the proposed objectives were achieved during the first years of protection, while comparative studies with Foster Port were developed.

* Are there some seasonal periods when parts of the area or species in it are not vulnerable to human activity?

In general, due to the location of the Zone (marine environment at more than 50 m depth), the values are not vulnerable to human activity.

*Accessibility/logistics*

* Is the area sufficiently accessible for management operations?

Access to the area is easy. However, since the two sub-areas of the protected Zone are under 50 and 100 m depth, appropriate equipment is required to perform benthic studies in the area.

* Might the logistics needed negatively impact on management objectives and are there alternative management options?

Eventually, the ships that support the activities of the stations could have a negative impact. However, the anchorage sites are located far from the Zone.

* Would inaccessibility help achieve management objectives by deterring potentially impacting activity?

The depth in which the Zone is located hinders the development of activities in it.

*Ability to protect more than one value and meet different management objectives (i.e. complementarity)*

* Is there more than one value or objective in Article 3 (1) & 3(2) that can be protected in the area?

The area has given protection to more than one value (habitats, species and intrinsic values of the site, in addition to scientific research).

* Would the site add value to the Antarctic protected area system, in quality as well as quantity?

The Zone contributes to the Antarctic protected area system as a marine zone, but not in a transcendental way given the values are also found in other areas of the region.

* Is there an appropriate balance between the costs and benefits of protecting the area, and appropriate equity in the distribution of it and adjacent protected and unprotected areas?

According to the available scientific information, there are other sites in the region that can be considered more relevant from a biological and environmental point of view than the protected area in Chile Bay (Discovery Bay). In addition, due to the depth of the Zone, appropriate vessels are required for the study of benthic species, with an associated cost for the Antarctic Program wishing to develop those activities.

In the region of the South Shetland Islands there are 12 ASPAs, and in the region of the Antarctic Peninsula region there are 5 marine areas. The protected area of Bahía Chile (Discovery Bay) was proposed as a specific study control area for Port Foster. However, the available literature points out that the sites have different population structures and environmental conditions, which do not make them comparable.

***Conclusions***

The protected area of Chile Bay (Discovery Bay) was proposed as a study control for Port Foster, on Deception Island. However, the current literature points out that the sites have different population structures and environmental conditions, which do not make them comparable.

Currently, scientific research in the area is aimed to environmental monitoring and the study of microorganisms and seabirds, marine invertebrates and macroalgae, none of which has required work in the protected Zone, but in coastal, inter and subtidal areas, associated to the coastline, or in the water column at no more than 50 m of depth. In addition, Chile has been developing an environmental monitoring program in the area since 2009 to determine the impact of human presence.

The Zona has been subjected to a low degree of human interference: A station operates throughout the year, with a staff that does not exceed 12 people and other during the summer period. Staffs at both stations do not exceed 80 people in summer season. According to IAATO statistics, 2,214 people visited the area in the period 2000-2017 (17 years). In the last report presented by IAATO to the XLIII ATCM (2021) the Area is not included in the list of the 20 most visited places in the Antarctic Peninsula region.

Due to the low level of activities in the area, it is considered that the values for which the Zone was originally designated are not threatened.

Therefore, it is suggested to review the protection of the Zone as an Antarctic Specially Protected Area.

***Bibliographic review***

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