Revised Management Plan and maps for Antarctic Specially Managed Area No. 7 Southwest Anvers Island and Palmer Basin

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| ASMA No. 7 Southwest Anvers Island and Palmer Basin | |
| **1. Is a new ASPA proposed?** | No |
| **2. Is a new ASMA proposed?** | No |
| **3. Does the proposal relate to an existing ASPA or ASMA?** | Yes |
| *First designation:* | Measure 1 (2008) ASMA No. 7 |
| *First adoption of management plan:* | Measure 1 (2008) ASMA No. 7 |
| *Any revisions to management plan:* | Measure 2 (2009), Measure 14 (2010), Measure 14 (2010) |
| *Current management plan:* | Measure 11 (2019) |
| *Any extensions of expiry dates of management plan:* | N/A |
| *Renamed and renumbered by Decision 1 (2002) as:* | N/A |
| *Other relevant measures:* | Measure 19 (2021) |
| **4. If the proposal contains a revision of an existing management plan, please indicate the types of amendment:** | |
| *(i) major or minor?* | Minor. |
| *(ii) any changes to the boundaries or co-ordinates?* | None. |
| *(iii) any changes to the maps? If yes, are the changes in the captions only or also in the graphics?* | Map updates reflect adoption of ASPA No. 176 Rosenthal Islands (Measure 19 (2021). Map 19 covering the former Rosenthal Islands Restricted Zone has been removed because maps for this site are available from the ASPA management plan. Maps showing Torgersen Island have been updated to reflect de-designation of the Visitor Zone and inclusion of the whole island as a Restricted Zone. A 50 m buffer has been added to the boundary of the Joubin Islands Restricted Zone. Important Bird Areas have been added to relevant maps. |
| *(iv) any change to the description of the area that is relevant to identifying its location or its boundaries?* | Changes to internal boundaries of the Torgersen Island Restricted Zone and Visitor Zone, as noted above. |
| *(v) any changes that affect any other ASPA, ASMA or HSM within this area or adjacent to it? In particular, please explain any merger with, incorporation of or abolition of any existing area or site.* | Updates reflect adoption of ASPA No. 176 Rosenthal Islands (Measure 19 (2021) and changes to zoning at Torgersen Island. |
| *(vi) Other - brief summary of other types of changes, indicating the paragraphs of the management plan in which these are located.* | Revisions to Appendix D Restricted Zones and Appendix E Visitor Zones reflecting:   * de-designation of the Rosenthal Islands Restricted Zone; * de-designation of the Torgersen Island Visitor Zone. Accordingly Visitor Zones have been removed from Section 6(ii) and Appendix E has been deleted because there are no longer any Visitor Zones within the Area. This is in accordance with the provision in Section 6(ii) that a zone no longer needed may be delisted; * Extension of the Torgersen Island Restricted Zone to include the full island including a 50 m buffer around its coastline; * Extension of the Joubin Islands Restricted Zone to include a 50 m buffer in the zone boundary around the outermost islands in the group.   Updates have been made to reflect changes in bird species taxonomy accepted by BirdLife International since the plan was last adopted. The changes are:   * Chinstrap penguin – *Pygoscelis antarctica* changed to *Pygoscelis antarcticus*; * Brown skua –*Stercorarius lonnbergi* changed to *Catharacta* *antarctica*; * South polar skua –*Stercorarius maccormicki* changed to *Catharacta* *maccormicki*. |
| **5. If a new ASPA or ASMA is proposed, does it contain any marine area?** | N/A |
| **6. If yes, does the proposal require the prior approval of CCAMLR in accordance with Decision 9 (2005)?** | N/A |
| **7. If yes, has the prior approval of CCAMLR been obtained?** | N/A |
| *If yes, please list the CCAMLR Final Report and Paragraph No.* | N/A |
| **8. If the proposal relates to an ASPA, what is the primary reason for designation (i.e. which part under Article 3.2 of Annex V)?** | N/A |
| **9. Have you identified the main Environmental Domain represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 3 (2008))?** | No changes. |
| **10. Have you identified the main Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Region represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 3 (2017))?** | No changes. |
| **11) Have you identified any Antarctic Important Bird Areas represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 5 (2015))?** | No changes. |

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Working Paper submitted by the United States

Summary

The area surrounding Palmer Station was originally designated as Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA) No.7 through Measure 1 (2008) in order to protect its scientific and environmental values, and in view of the need to coordinate management of activities to ensure that these values can be sustained for the long-term. Since adoption, the Management Plan was revised and adopted through Measure 2 (2009), Measure 14 (2010), and Measure 11 (2019). Recently the Rosenthal Islands Restricted Zone was adopted as ASPA No. 176 Rosenthal Islands through Measure 19 (2021).

The adoption of ASPA No.176 required de-designation of the Rosenthal Islands Restricted Zone and a number of changes to maps of the Area to reflect the changes in status. As such, the Rosenthal Islands have been removed from the list of Restricted Zones within the Area, and the maps have been updated to reflect designation of ASPA No.176. The former Map 19 of the Rosenthal Islands Restricted Zone has been deleted, and maps for the Rosenthal Islands are now available from the ASPA No.176 Rosenthal Islands management plan. This approach is consistent with the maps available for ASPA No.113 Litchfield Island and ASPA No.139 Biscoe Point, which also lie within the Area.

For a number of years Torgersen Island has been divided into a Restricted Zone (researchers only) and Visitor Zone (tourist and station personnel visitors plus researchers) to enable comparisons of Adélie penguin population trends between the two sides of the island. Studies suggested that the impacts of visits by tourists, station personnel, and scientists on breeding performance have been small compared to longer-term climate-related forcing factors (Fraser & Patterson 1997, Emslie *et al.* 1998, Patterson 2001). However, in recent years the number of breeding Adélie penguins within the Visitor Zone decreased more rapidly than within the Restricted Zone. The causes and mechanisms of this trend are complex and cannot necessarily be attributed to visitor impacts. Breeding groups are now so small that the site is no longer considered suitable for conducting population trend comparisons. However, the bird colonies on Torgersen Island remain the subject of on-going scientific study. Following consultations within the scientific community working at Palmer Station, it was decided to close the Visitor Zone and to extend the existing Torgersen Island Restricted Zone to cover the whole island.

Because Torgersen Island was the only Visitor Zone within the Area and the United States has no intention of designating another Visitor Zone within the foreseeable future, the Visitor Zone is now considered redundant in Management Plan. As such, the Visitor Zone has been removed from Section 6(ii) and Appendix E has been deleted, which is in accordance with Section 6(ii) where it provides that a zone type no longer needed may be delisted from the Management Plan.

Recognizing that de-designation of the Torgersen Island Visitor Zone has implications for Non-Governmental Visitor groups, the United States consulted with IAATO on the changes proposed. IAATO recognized the importance of on-going scientific studies and supported the proposal to extend the Restricted Zone to apply to the whole island. Consistent with the scientific results, IAATO drew attention to the fact that the reasons for closure of the Visitor Zone were not related to impacts resulting from visits by tourists or station personnel. Rather, the zoning changes are based on a precautionary approach to site management because of population changes occurring more generally as a result of changes to climate and in local precipitation patterns.

A minor adjustment to the boundary of the Joubin Islands Restricted Zone has been made to include a 50 m buffer around the outermost islands in the group (see Map 18). Inclusion of the marine buffer has been made to be consistent with the boundaries of other Restricted Zones within the Area.

These revisions have necessitated changes to the text and maps of the ASMA management plan, such that it was considered necessary to make a formal update to the ASMA in advance of the next formal management plan review, which falls due in 2024. The opportunity has been taken to include minor editorial corrections to the text of the plan and supporting materials. These updates will ensure that the latest policies agreed are clear for those working within or visiting the Area. The proposed changes are considered minor.

With de-designation of the Torgersen Island Visitor Zone, and re-designation of the whole of Torgersen Island as a Restricted Zone, it is no longer appropriate that Visitor Site Guidelines apply at Torgersen Island. The United States therefore proposes that Visitor Site Guidelines No.26 Torgersen Island, Arthur Harbor, be de-designated and removed from the list of Visitor Site Guidelines maintained by the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat.

Recommendations

1. The revised Management Plan and maps for ASMA No.7 Southwest Anvers Island and Palmer Basin are attached for consideration by the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) for recommendation for adoption by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM).
2. Visitor Site Guidelines No.26 Torgersen Island, Arthur Harbor, be considered by the CEP for recommendation for de-designation by the ATCM, and that this site be removed from the list of Visitor Site Guidelines maintained by the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat.