Revised Management Plan for Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 149 Cape Shirreff and San Telmo Island, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ASPA No. 149 Cape Shirreff and San Telmo Island, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands | |
| **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:* | Recommendation IV-11 (1966) SPA No. 11 |
| *First adoption of management plan:* | Recommendation XV-7 (1989) SSSI No. 32 |
| *Any revisions to management plan:* | Measure 2 (2005), Measure 7 (2011), Measure 7 (2016), Measure 16 (2022) |
| *Current management plan:* | Measure 16 (2022) |
| *Any extensions of expiry dates of management plan:* | Resolution 3 (1996), Measure 2 (2000) |
| *Renamed and renumbered by Decision 1 (2002) as:* | ASPA No. 149 Cape Shirreff and San Telmo Island, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands |
| *Other relevant measures:* | Decision 4 (1998) |
| **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?* | No. |
| *(iii) any changes to the maps? If yes, are the changes in the captions only or also in the graphics?* | Yes. Map 3 has been replaced by a new version showing the change in designated route from Módulo Beach to the field hut located on the northern Cape Shirreff peninsula. |
| *(iv) any change to the description of the area that is relevant to identifying its location or its boundaries?* | No. |
| *(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.* | No. |
| *(vi) Other - brief summary of other types of changes, indicating the paragraphs of the management plan in which these are located.* | Section 7(ii) *Access* has been amended to allow vehicle use on a designated route between the main Cape Shirreff Camp and a field hut located on the northern Cape Shirreff peninsula. |
| **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)?** | The primary reason for designation is to protect the biota present within the Area, in particular the large and diverse seabird and pinniped populations which are the subject of long-term scientific monitoring. Under Article 3.2 of Annex V the main reasons for special protection are:  (b) representative examples of major terrestrial, including glacial and aquatic, ecosystems;  (c) areas with important or unusual assemblages of species, including major colonies of breeding native birds;  (e) areas of particular interest to on-going or planned scientific research;  (h) sites of recognised historic value. |
| **9. Have you identified the main Environmental Domain represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 3 (2008))?** | Yes. Environment E – Antarctic Peninsula, Alexander and other islands and Environment G – Antarctic Peninsula offshore islands. |
| **10. Have you identified the main Antarctic Conservation Biogeographic Region represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 3 (2017))?** | Yes. ACBR3 – North-west Antarctic Peninsula. |
| **11. Have you identified any Antarctic Important Bird Areas represented by the ASPA/ASMA (Resolution 5 (2015))?** | No. |

ASPA No. 149 Cape Shirreff and San Telmo Island, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands

1. The Management Plan for ASPA No. 149 Cape Shirreff and San Telmo Island, Livingston Island, South Shetland Islands, was last reviewed in 2022.
2. In light of practical experience during construction of replacement hut facilities in the 2022/23 season, scientists raised concerns about following the existing management plan access route to the research hut located on Enrique Hill, northern Cape Shirreff peninsula, when transporting materials necessary for the rebuild of this facility.
3. In particular, scientists working within the Area recommended an alternative access route closer to the coast as being more practical and safer for access to the northern research hut. The alternative follows an existing walking route from the main Cape Sherriff camp to the northern hut, which is shorter and crosses terrain of more gentle relief. This route comprises rocky terrain mostly devoid of visible vegetation.
4. In addition, an even shorter vehicle route is proposed from Alcázar Beach on the northern coast to the field hut. While transporting the necessary materials by this route is preferred because it is short, it depends on the feasibility of small boat access to the beach. Thus, both options are allowed for in the management plan.
5. It is estimated that approximately 50 trips will be needed to transport materials for the field hut reconstruction. It will not be practical to undertake this work early season, and therefore snow cover along the route is unlikely to be present. As a result, the current requirement in the management plan to undertake vehicle movements in this general area only when snow cover is present and >40cm in depth needs to be amended in order to enable vehicle use.
6. For these reasons and to meet essential operational needs in support of scientific research a change to the current management plan provisions on vehicle access is proposed.
7. The proposed change to the existing management plan is:
   1. Section 7(ii) Access to, and movement within or over, the Area. Subsection *Vehicle access and use* Second bullet:
      1. **Existing wording - to be deleted –**
8. in support of annual re-supply of the bird blind / emergency hut following the designated route (see Map 3), which should be undertaken prior to 15 November in a given season and only if the entire route is snow-covered to a depth of at least 40 cm, to minimise the possibility of damage to underlying soil and vegetation (Felix & Raynolds 1989). A journey after 15 November should be considered carefully, due to potential disturbance to adult female fur seals, which tend to arrive around that time of the year. No more than two re-supply journeys by vehicle to the emergency hut are allowed per season. An inspection of the route should be undertaken when it is snow-free to check for any evidence that vehicle use has caused damage to soils or vegetation. Should any damage be observed, use of vehicles for the purpose of re-supply shall be suspended until such time as a review of this policy has been completed. As of 2021, the vehicle route between the main camp and the bird blind has never been used (Krause pers. comm. 2021).
   * 1. **Revised wording - to replace existing wording –**

[Vehicles may be used] for access to the location of the United States field hut at Enrique Hill (Map 3) when the following conditions are met:

* Large and / or heavy items need to be transported for essential facility maintenance and / or reconstruction purposes provided it is impractical and / or presents unacceptable risks to personnel safety to carry the required items on foot. Other purposes for use of a vehicle along the designated route, including for research, are prohibited (except in an emergency);
* The designated routes to / from the field hut from Módulo Beach and / or Alcázar Beach, as shown on Map 3, shall be strictly followed. By preference, the shortest of these routes that is practical to transport materials by vehicle shall be selected;
* By preference, vehicles should be used at times when the ground is frozen, either early or late season or at times of the day when this is more likely;
* The vehicle and any towed trailer, if used, are of a size and design that minimizes potential damage to soils and vegetation along the designated vehicle route, such as a small ‘quad bike’ with four-wheel drive traction and with wide tyres installed to spread loads (including on any trailer);
* The weights carried by the vehicle and / or trailer are not overloaded so as to cause tyres to sink into ground and / or result in loss of vehicle traction which could otherwise be avoided;
* Potential damage to soils and / or vegetation by vehicles should be monitored closely, and vehicles should avoid visible vegetation and / or soft (potentially waterlogged) soils to the maximum extent practicable while adhering to the designated route. Where unavoidable, at the first sign of any damage to soils and / or vegetation, vehicle users should implement mitigation measures to prevent further damage. Measures may include laying removable boarding or matting to avoid the necessity for route deviations. Any materials laid should be removed when no longer necessary and not left *in situ* in order to prevent their uncontrolled release into the environment.

Recommendation

The revised Management Plan is attached for consideration by the Committee for Environmental Protection for recommendation for adoption by the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.