

= Peter I Island =

Peter I Island (Norwegian : Peter I Øy) is an uninhabited volcanic island in the Bellingshausen Sea , 450 kilometres (280 mi) from Antarctica . It is claimed as a dependency of Norway , and along with Queen Maud Land and Bouvet Island comprises one of the three Norwegian dependent territories in the Antarctic and Subantarctic . Peter I Island is 11 by 19 kilometres (6 @. @ 8 by 11 @. @ 8 mi) long and 156 square kilometres (60 sq mi) , slightly larger than Staten Island . The tallest peak is the ultra and 1 @, @ 640 @- @ meter (5 @, @ 380 ft) tall Lars Christensen Peak . Nearly all of the island is covered by a glacier and it is surrounded most of the year by pack ice , making it inaccessible almost all year round . There is little life on the island apart from seabirds and seals .

The island was first sighted by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen on 21 January 1821 and was named for Peter I of Russia . Not until 2 February 1929 did anyone set foot on the island , when Nils Larsen and Ola Olstad 's Second Norvegia Expedition , financed by Lars Christensen , was successful . They claimed it for Norway , who annexed it in 1931 and made it a dependency in 1933 . The next landing occurred in 1948 and the island has been subject to some scientific research and a limited amount of tourism . The island became subject to the Antarctic Treaty in 1961 . Since 1987 , there has been an automated meteorological station on the island . Three amateur radio DX @- @ peditions have visited the island and there are sporadic landings by tourists .

= = History = =

The first sighting of Peter I Island was made on 21 January 1821 by Fabian Gottlieb von Bellingshausen 's expedition , who commanded the ships Vostok and Mirnyy under the Russian flag . He named the island for Tsar Peter I the Great of Russia . Drift ice made it impossible for Bellingshausen to come nearer than 25 kilometers (16 mi) from the island . It was the first land to have been spotted south of the Antarctic Circle , and was thus also the southernmost sighted land at the time of its discovery . In January 1910 , the French expedition led by Jean @- @ Martin Charcot and his ship Pourquoi @- @ Pas confirmed Bellingshausen 's discovery , but they also did not land , being stopped 5 kilometers (3 @. @ 1 mi) from the island by pack ice .

In 1926 and 1927 , Norwegian Eyvind Tofte circumnavigated and surveyed the island from Odd I. However , he was also prevented from landing . The Norwegian whale @- @ ship owner Lars Christensen financed several expeditions to the Antarctic , in part for research and in part to claim land for Norway . The latter was motivated by the British taxation of whaling stations in the Antarctic , and Christensen hoped to be able to establish stations on Norwegian territory to gain better privileges and so at least the taxes went to his home country . The first expedition to land on the island was the Christensen @- @ financed second Norvegia expedition , led by Nils Larsen and Ola Olstad . They landed on 2 February 1929 and claimed the island for Norway . Larsen attempted to land again in 1931 , but was hindered by pack ice . On 6 March 1931 , a Norwegian royal proclamation declared the island under Norwegian sovereignty and on 23 March 1933 the island was declared a dependency .

The next landing occurred on 10 February 1948 by Larsen 's ship Brategg . Biological , geological and hydrographic surveys underwent for three days , before the pack ice forced the expedition to leave . The expedition built a hut and placed a copy of the document of occupation from 1929 inside . On 23 June 1961 , Peter I Island became subject to the Antarctic Treaty , after Norway 's signing of the treaty in 1959 . Since then , there have been several landings on the island by various nations for scientific investigations , as well as a limited number of ships that have successfully landed tourists on the island .

In 1987 , the Norwegian Polar Institute sent five scientists to spend eleven days on the island . The main focuses were aerial photography and topographical measurements to allow an accurate map of the island to be produced . The second important area was marine biological investigations , although also geological , biological and other surveys were conducted . The team also built an automatic weather station . Three DX @- @ peditions have been sent to the island , in 1987 , 1994

and 2006 .

= = Geography = =

Peter I Island is a volcanic island located 450 kilometres (280 mi) off the coast of Ellsworth Land of continental Antarctica . It has an area of 154 square kilometres (59 sq mi) . The island is almost entirely covered by glacier , with about 95 % of the surface covered by ice .

Surrounding the island is a 40 @-@ meter (130 ft) tall ice front and vertical cliffs . The long stretches of ice caps are supplemented with rock outcrops . Landing is only possible at three points , and only during the short period of the year in which the island is not surrounded by pack ice . These landings take place on the west side at Kapp Ingrid Christensen , a peninsula which divides the bays Norvegiabukta and Sandefjordbukta . On the cape are some narrow strips of beach , which are suitable for landing . The beach in Norvegiabukta is just 4 meters (13 ft) wide and is entered via the natural arch Tsarporten . On the west side is a plateau , while the north and south coasts feature ice shelves . The eastern side is the steepest and features two rock columns with flat tops in the sea .

The island is a shield volcano , although it is not known if it is still active , and it has been categorized as either Holocene or historic , based on date samples ranging from 0 @. @ 1 to 0 @. @ 35 million years ago . The summit , Lars Christensen Peak , is a 100 @-@ metre (330 ft) wide circular crater . An ultra prominent peak at 1 @, @ 640 metres (5 @, @ 380 ft) elevation , it is named for Lars Christensen . It is not known whether this volcano is extinct or not , because the upper part is apparently unmodified by glaciation ? indicating an eruption several centuries ago .

= = Environment = =

The island 's vegetation consists exclusively of mosses and lichens which have adapted to the extreme Antarctic climate . The island has a very harsh climate with strong winds and freezing temperatures . The steady snowfall keeps vegetation to a minimum . The island is a breeding ground for a few seabirds , particularly southern fulmars , but also Wilson 's storm petrels and Antarctic terns . Penguins , including Adélie and chinstrap penguins , visit the island infrequently . There are numerous seals , particularly crabeater seals , leopard seals and smaller numbers of southern elephant seals .

= = Politics = =

Peter I Island is one of Norway 's two territorial claims in Antarctica , the other being Queen Maud Land . Peter I Island is the only claim within 90 ° W and 150 ° W and is also the only claim which is not a sector . Being south of 60 ° S , the island is subject to the Antarctic Treaty . The treaty ensures free access to the island for any scientific investigation , and states that it can only be used for peaceful purposes . Norway , Australia , France , New Zealand and the United Kingdom have all mutually recognized each other 's claims in Antarctica .

Norwegian administration of the island is handled by the Polar Affairs Department of the Ministry of Justice and Public Security , located in Oslo . The annexation of the island is regulated by the Dependency Act of 24 March 1933 . It establishes that Norwegian criminal law , private law and procedural law applies to the island , in addition to other laws that explicitly state they are valid on the island . It further establishes that all land belongs to the state , and prohibits the storage and detonation of nuclear products .

Since 5 May 1995 , Norwegian law has required all Norwegian activity in Antarctica , including Peter I Island , to follow international environmental law for Antarctica . All Norwegian citizens who plan activities on Peter I Island must therefore report to the Norwegian Polar Institute , who may deny any non @-@ conforming activity . All people visiting the island must follow laws regarding protection of nature , treatment of waste , pollution and insurance for search and rescue operations .