

= Falkland Islands =

The Falkland Islands (/ ˈfɑːlklənd / ; Spanish : Islas Malvinas [malˈβinas]) are an archipelago in the South Atlantic Ocean on the Patagonian Shelf . The principal islands are about 300 miles (483 kilometres) east of South America 's southern Patagonian coast , at a latitude of about 52 ° S. The archipelago , with an area of 4 @, @ 700 square miles (12 @, @ 000 square kilometres) , comprises East Falkland , West Falkland and 776 smaller islands . As a British overseas territory , the Falklands have internal self @-@ governance , and the United Kingdom takes responsibility for their defence and foreign affairs . The islands ' capital is Stanley on East Falkland .

Controversy exists over the Falklands ' discovery and subsequent colonisation by Europeans . At various times , the islands have had French , British , Spanish , and Argentine settlements . Britain reasserted its rule in 1833 , although Argentina maintains its claim to the islands . In April 1982 , Argentine forces temporarily occupied the islands . British administration was restored two months later at the end of the Falklands War . Most Falklanders favour that the archipelago remain a UK overseas territory , but its sovereignty status is part of an ongoing dispute between Argentina and the United Kingdom .

The population (2 @, @ 932 inhabitants in 2012) primarily consists of native @-@ born Falkland Islanders , the majority of British descent . Other ethnicities include French , Gibraltarian and Scandinavian . Immigration from the United Kingdom , the South Atlantic island of Saint Helena , and Chile has reversed a population decline . The predominant (and official) language is English . Under the British Nationality (Falkland Islands) Act 1983 , Falkland Islanders are British citizens .

The islands lie on the boundary of the subantarctic oceanic and tundra climate zones , and both major islands have mountain ranges reaching 2 @, @ 300 feet (700 m) . They are home to large bird populations , although many no longer breed on the main islands because of competition from introduced species . Major economic activities include fishing , tourism and sheep farming , with an emphasis on high @-@ quality wool exports . Oil exploration , licensed by the Falkland Islands Government , remains controversial as a result of maritime disputes with Argentina .

= = Etymology = =

The Falkland Islands take their name from the Falkland Sound , a strait separating the archipelago 's two main islands . The name " Falkland " was applied to the channel by John Strong , captain of an English expedition which landed on the islands in 1690 . Strong named the strait in honour of Anthony Cary , 5th Viscount of Falkland , the Treasurer of the Navy who sponsored their journey . The Viscount 's title originates from the town of Falkland , Scotland , whose name comes from " folkland " (land held by folk @-@ right) . The name was not applied to the islands until 1765 , when British captain John Byron of the Royal Navy , claimed them for King George III as " Falkland 's Islands " . The term " Falklands " is a standard abbreviation used to refer to the islands .

The Spanish name for the archipelago , Islas Malvinas , derives from the French Îles Malouines ? the name given to the islands by French explorer Louis @-@ Antoine de Bougainville in 1764 . Bougainville , who founded the islands ' first settlement , named the area after the port of Saint @-@ Malo (the point of departure for his ships and colonists) . The port , located in the Brittany region of western France , was in turn named after St. Malo (or Maclou) , the Christian evangelist who founded the city .

At the twentieth session of the United Nations General Assembly , the Fourth Committee determined that , in all languages other than Spanish , all UN documentation would designate the territory as Falkland Islands (Malvinas) . In Spanish , the territory was designated as Islas Malvinas (Falkland Islands) . The nomenclature used by the United Nations for statistical processing purposes is Falkland Islands (Malvinas) .

= = History = =

Although Fuegians from Patagonia may have visited the Falkland Islands in prehistoric times , the

islands were uninhabited at the time of their discovery by Europeans . Claims of discovery date back to the 16th century , but no consensus exists on whether these early explorers discovered the Falklands or other islands in the South Atlantic . The first recorded landing on the islands is attributed to English captain John Strong , who , en route to Peru 's and Chile 's littoral in 1690 , discovered the Falkland Sound and noted the islands ' water and game .

The Falklands remained uninhabited until the 1764 establishment of Port Louis on East Falkland by French captain Louis Antoine de Bougainville , and the 1766 foundation of Port Egmont on Saunders Island by British captain John MacBride . Whether or not the settlements were aware of each other 's existence is debated by historians . In 1766 , France surrendered its claim on the Falklands to Spain , which renamed the French colony Puerto Soledad the following year . Problems began when Spain discovered and captured Port Egmont in 1770 . War was narrowly avoided by its restitution to Britain in 1771 .

Both the British and Spanish settlements coexisted in the archipelago until 1774 , when Britain 's new economic and strategic considerations led it to voluntarily withdraw from the islands , leaving a plaque claiming the Falklands for King George III . Spain 's Viceroyalty of the Río de la Plata became the only governmental presence in the territory . West Falkland was left abandoned , and Puerto Soledad became mostly a prison camp . Amid the British invasions of the Río de la Plata during the Napoleonic Wars in Europe , the islands ' governor evacuated the archipelago in 1806 ; Spain 's remaining colonial garrison followed suit in 1811 , except for gauchos and fishermen who remained voluntarily .

Thereafter , the archipelago was visited only by fishing ships ; its political status was undisputed until 1820 , when Colonel David Jewett , an American privateer working for the United Provinces of the River Plate , informed anchored ships about Buenos Aires ' 1816 claim to Spain 's territories in the South Atlantic . Since the islands had no permanent inhabitants , in 1823 Buenos Aires granted German @-@ born merchant Luis Vernet permission to conduct fishing activities and exploit feral cattle in the archipelago . Vernet settled at the ruins of Puerto Soledad in 1826 , and accumulated resources on the islands until the venture was secure enough to bring settlers and form a permanent colony . Buenos Aires named Vernet military and civil commander of the islands in 1829 , and he attempted to regulate sealing to stop the activities of foreign whalers and sealers . Vernet 's venture lasted until a dispute over fishing and hunting rights led to a raid by the American warship USS Lexington in 1831 , when United States Navy commander Silas Duncan declared the dissolution of the island 's government .

Buenos Aires attempted to retain influence over the settlement by installing a garrison , but a mutiny in 1832 was followed the next year by the arrival of British forces who reasserted Britain 's rule . The Argentine Confederation (headed by Buenos Aires Governor Juan Manuel de Rosas) protested Britain 's actions , and Argentine governments have continued since then to register official protests against Britain . The British troops departed after completing their mission , leaving the area without formal government . Vernet 's deputy , the Scotsman Matthew Brisbane , returned to the islands that year to restore the business , but his efforts ended after , amid unrest at Port Louis , gaucho Antonio Rivero led a group of dissatisfied individuals to murder Brisbane and the settlement 's senior leaders ; survivors hid in a cave on a nearby island until the British returned and restored order . In 1840 , the Falklands became a Crown colony , and Scottish settlers subsequently established an official pastoral community . Four years later , nearly everyone relocated to Port Jackson , considered a better location for government , and merchant Samuel Lafone began a venture to encourage British colonisation .

Stanley , as Port Jackson was soon renamed , officially became the seat of government in 1845 . Early in its history , Stanley had a negative reputation due to cargo @-@ shipping losses ; only in emergencies would ships rounding Cape Horn stop at the port . Nevertheless , the Falklands ' geographic location proved ideal for ship repairs and the " Wrecking Trade " , the business of selling and buying shipwrecks and their cargoes . Aside from this trade , commercial interest in the archipelago was minimal due to the low @-@ value hides of the feral cattle roaming the pastures . Economic growth began only after the Falkland Islands Company , which bought out Lafone 's failing enterprise in 1851 , successfully introduced Cheviot sheep for wool farming , spurring other

farms to follow suit . The high cost of importing materials , combined with the shortage of labour and consequent high wages , meant the ship repair trade became uncompetitive . After 1870 , it declined as the replacement of sail ships by steamships was accelerated by the low cost of coal in South America ; by 1914 , with the opening of the Panama Canal , the trade effectively ended . In 1881 , the Falkland Islands became financially independent of Britain . For more than a century , the Falkland Islands Company dominated the trade and employment of the archipelago ; in addition , it owned most housing in Stanley , which greatly benefited from the wool trade with the UK .

In the first half of the 20th century , the Falklands served an important role in Britain 's territorial claims to subantarctic islands and a section of Antarctica . The Falklands governed these territories as the Falkland Islands Dependencies starting in 1908 , and retained them until their dissolution in 1985 . The Falklands also played a minor role in the two world wars as a military base aiding control of the South Atlantic . In the First World War Battle of the Falkland Islands in December 1914 , a Royal Navy fleet defeated an Imperial German squadron . In the Second World War , following the December 1939 Battle of the River Plate , the battle @-@ damaged HMS Exeter steamed to the Falklands for repairs . In 1942 , a battalion en route to India was redeployed to the Falklands as a garrison amid fears of a Japanese seizure of the archipelago . After the war ended , the Falklands economy was affected by declining wool prices and the political uncertainty resulting from the revived sovereignty dispute between the United Kingdom and Argentina .

Simmering tensions between the UK and Argentina increased during the second half of the century , when Argentine President Juan Perón asserted sovereignty over the archipelago . The sovereignty dispute intensified during the 1960s , shortly after the United Nations passed a resolution on decolonisation which Argentina interpreted as favourable to its position . In 1965 , the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 2065 , calling for both states to conduct bilateral negotiations to reach a peaceful settlement of the dispute . From 1966 until 1968 , the UK confidentially discussed with Argentina the transfer of the Falklands , assuming its judgement would be accepted by the islanders . An agreement on trade ties between the archipelago and the mainland was reached in 1971 and , consequently , Argentina built a temporary airfield at Stanley in 1972 . Nonetheless , Falklander dissent , as expressed by their strong lobby in the UK Parliament , and tensions between the UK and Argentina effectively limited sovereignty negotiations until 1977 .

Concerned at the expense of maintaining the Falkland Islands in an era of budget cuts , the UK again considered transferring sovereignty to Argentina in the early Thatcher government . Substantive sovereignty talks again ended by 1981 , and the dispute escalated with passing time . In April 1982 , the disagreement became an armed conflict when Argentina invaded the Falklands and other British territories in the South Atlantic , briefly occupying them until a UK expeditionary force retook the territories in June . After the war , the United Kingdom expanded its military presence , building RAF Mount Pleasant and increasing the size of its garrison . The war also left some 117 minefields containing nearly 20 @,@ 000 mines of various types , including anti @-@ vehicle and anti @-@ personnel mines . Due to the large number of deminer casualties , initial attempts to clear the mines ceased in 1983 .

Based on Lord Shackleton 's recommendations , the Falklands diversified from a sheep @-@ based monoculture into an economy of tourism and , with the establishment of the Falklands Exclusive Economic Zone , fisheries . The road network was also made more extensive , and the construction of RAF Mount Pleasant allowed access to long haul flights . Oil exploration has also begun , with indications of possible commercially exploitable deposits in the Falklands basin . Landmine clearance work restarted in 2009 , in accordance with the UK 's obligations under the Ottawa Treaty , and Sapper Hill Corral was cleared of mines in 2012 , allowing access to an important historical landmark for the first time in 30 years . Argentina and the UK re @-@ established diplomatic relations in 1990 ; relations have since deteriorated as neither has agreed on the terms of future sovereignty discussions . Disputes between the governments have led " some analysts [to] predict a growing conflict of interest between Argentina and Great Britain ... because of the recent expansion of the fishing industry in the waters surrounding the Falklands " .

= = Government = =

The Falkland Islands are a self @-@ governing British Overseas Territory . Under the 2009 Constitution , the islands have full internal self @-@ government ; the UK is responsible for foreign affairs , retaining the power " to protect UK interests and to ensure the overall good governance of the territory " . The Monarch of the United Kingdom is the head of state , and executive authority is exercised on the monarch 's behalf by the Governor , who in turn appoints the islands ' Chief Executive on the advice of members of the Legislative Assembly . Both the Governor and Chief Executive serve as the head of government . Governor Colin Roberts was appointed in April 2014 ; Chief Executive Keith Padgett was appointed in March 2012 . The UK minister responsible for the Falkland Islands since 2012 , Hugo Swire , administers British foreign policy regarding the islands .

The Governor acts on the advice of the islands ' Executive Council , composed of the Chief Executive , the Director of Finance and three elected members of the Legislative Assembly (with the Governor as chairman) . The Legislative Assembly , a unicameral legislature , consists of the Chief Executive , the Director of Finance and eight members (five from Stanley and three from Camp) elected to four @-@ year terms by universal suffrage . All politicians in the Falkland Islands are independent ; no political parties exist on the islands . Since the 2013 general election , members of the Legislative Assembly have received a salary and are expected to work full @-@ time and give up all previously held jobs or business interests .

Due to its link to the UK , the Falklands are part of the overseas countries and territories of the European Union . The islands ' judicial system , overseen by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office , is largely based on English law , and the constitution binds the territory to the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights . Residents have the right of appeal to the European Court of Human Rights and the Privy Council . Law enforcement is the responsibility of the Royal Falkland Islands Police (RFIP) , and military defence of the islands is provided by the United Kingdom . A British military garrison is stationed on the islands , and the Falkland Islands government funds an additional company @-@ sized light infantry Falkland Islands Defence Force . The territorial waters of the Falklands extend to 200 nautical miles (370 km) from its coastal baselines , based on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea ; this border overlaps with the maritime boundary of Argentina .

= = = Sovereignty dispute = = =

The United Kingdom and Argentina both claim the Falkland Islands . The UK 's position is that the Falklanders have not indicated a desire for change , and that there are no pending issues to resolve concerning the islands . The UK bases its position on its continuous administration of the islands since 1833 (except for 1982) and the islanders ' " right to self @-@ determination as set out in the UN Charter " . Argentine policy maintains that Falkland Islanders do not have a right to self @-@ determination , claiming that in 1833 the UK expelled Argentine authorities (and settlers) from the Falklands with a threat of " greater force " and , afterwards , barred Argentines from resettling the islands . Argentina posits that it acquired the Falklands from Spain when it achieved independence in 1816 , and that the UK illegally occupied them in 1833 .

In 2009 , British prime minister Gordon Brown had a meeting with Argentine president Cristina Fernández de Kirchner , and said that there would be no further talks over the sovereignty of the Falklands . In March 2013 , the Falkland Islands held a referendum on its political status , with 99 @.@ 8 percent of voters favoured remaining under British rule . Argentina does not recognise the Falkland Islands as a partner in negotiations ; consequently , it dismissed the Falkland Islands ' sovereignty referendum .

= = Geography = =

The Falkland Islands have a land area of 4 @,@ 700 square miles (12 @,@ 000 km²) and a coastline estimated at 800 miles (1 @,@ 300 km) . Two main islands , West Falkland and East Falkland , and about 776 smaller islands constitute the archipelago . The islands are predominantly

mountainous and hilly , with the major exception the depressed plains of Lafonia (a peninsula forming the southern part of East Falkland) . The Falklands are continental crust fragments resulting from the break @-@ up of Gondwana and the opening of the South Atlantic that began 130 million years ago . The islands are located in the South Atlantic Ocean , on the Patagonian Shelf , about 300 miles (480 km) east of Patagonia in southern Argentina .

The Falklands are situated approximately at latitude 51 ° 40 ' ? 53 ° 00 ' S and longitude 57 ° 40 ' ? 62 ° 00 ' W. The archipelago 's two main islands are separated by the Falkland Sound , and its deep coastal indentations form natural harbours . East Falkland houses Stanley (the capital and largest settlement) , the UK military base at RAF Mount Pleasant , and the archipelago 's highest point : Mount Osborne , at 2 @,@ 313 feet (705 m) . Outside of these significant settlements is the area colloquially known as " Camp " , which is derived from the Spanish term for countryside (Campo) .

The climate of the islands is cold , windy and humid maritime . Variability of daily weather is typical throughout the archipelago . Rainfall is common over half of the year , averaging 610 millimetres (24 in) in Stanley , and sporadic light snowfall occurs nearly all year . The temperature is generally between 21 @.@ 1 and ? 11 @.@ 1 ° C (70 @.@ 0 and 12 @.@ 0 ° F) in Stanley , but can vary to 9 ° C (48 ° F) early in the year and ? 1 ° C (30 ° F) in July . Strong westerly winds and cloudy skies are common . Although numerous storms are recorded each month , conditions are normally calm .

= = Biodiversity = =

The Falkland Islands are a biogeographical part of the mild Antarctic zone , with strong connections to the flora and fauna of Patagonia in mainland South America . Land birds make up most of the Falklands ' avifauna ; 63 species breed on the islands , including 16 endemic species . There is also abundant arthropod diversity on the islands . The Falklands ' flora consists of 163 native vascular species . The islands ' only native terrestrial mammal , the warrah , was hunted to extinction by European settlers .

The islands are frequented by marine mammals , such as the southern elephant seal and the South American fur seal , and various types of cetaceans ; offshore islands house the rare striated caracara . The Falklands are also home to five different penguin species and a few of the largest albatross colonies on the planet . Endemic fish around the islands are primarily from the genus *Galaxias* . The Falklands are treeless and have a wind @-@ resistant vegetation predominantly composed of a variety of dwarf shrubs .

Virtually the entire land area of the islands is used as pasture for sheep . Introduced species include reindeer , hares , rabbits , Patagonian foxes , brown rats and cats . The detrimental impact several of these species have caused to native flora and fauna has led authorities to attempt to contain , remove or exterminate invasive species such as foxes , rabbits and rats . Endemic land animals have been the most affected by introduced species . The extent of human impact on the Falklands is unclear , since there is little long @-@ term data on habitat change .

= = Economy = =

The economy of the Falkland Islands is ranked the 222nd largest out of 229 in the world by GDP (PPP) , but ranks 10th worldwide by GDP (PPP) per capita . The unemployment rate was 4 @.@ 1 percent in 2010 , and inflation was last calculated at 1 @.@ 2 percent rate in 2003 . Based on 2010 data , the islands have a high Human Development Index of 0 @.@ 874 and a moderate Gini coefficient for income inequality of 34 @.@ 17 . The local currency is the Falkland Islands pound , which is pegged to the British pound sterling .

Economic development was advanced by ship resupplying and sheep farming for high @-@ quality wool . The main sheep breeds in the Falkland Islands are Polwarth and Corriedale . During the 1980s , although synthetic fibres and ranch underinvestment hurt the sheep @-@ farming sector , the government established a major revenue stream with the establishment of an exclusive

economic zone and the sale of fishing licenses to " anybody wishing to fish within this zone " . Since the end of the Falklands War in 1982 , the islands ' economic activity has increasingly focused on oil field exploration and tourism .

The port city of Stanley has regained the islands ' economic focus , with an increase in population as workers migrate from Camp . Fear of dependence on fishing licences and threats from overfishing , illegal fishing and fish market price fluctuations have increased interest on oil drilling as an alternative source of revenue ; exploration efforts have yet to find " exploitable reserves " . Development projects in education and sports have been funded by the Falklands government , without aid from the United Kingdom .

The primary sector of the economy accounts for most of the Falkland Islands ' gross domestic product , with the fishing industry alone contributing between 50 % and 60 % of annual GDP ; agriculture also contributes significantly to GDP and employs about a tenth of the population . A little over a quarter of the workforce serves the Falkland Islands government , making it the archipelago 's largest employer . Tourism , part of the service economy , has been spurred by increased interest in Antarctic exploration and the creation of direct air links with the United Kingdom and South America . Tourists , mostly cruise ship passengers , are attracted by the archipelago 's wildlife and environment , as well as activities such as fishing and wreck diving ; the majority are based in accommodation found in Stanley . The islands ' major exports include wool , hides , venison , fish and squid ; its main imports include fuel , building materials and clothing .

== Demographics ==

The Falkland Islands are a homogeneous society , with the majority of inhabitants descended from Scottish and Welsh immigrants who settled the territory in 1833 . The 2006 census listed some Falklands residents as descendants of French , Gibraltarians and Scandinavians . That census indicated that one @-@ third of residents were born on the archipelago , with foreign @-@ born residents assimilated into local culture . The legal term for the right of residence is " belonging to the islands " . The British Nationality Act of 1983 gave British citizenship to Falkland Islanders .

A significant population decline affected the archipelago in the twentieth century , with many young islanders moving overseas in search of education , a modern lifestyle , and better job opportunities , particularly to the British city of Southampton , which came to be nicknamed " Stanley north " . In recent years , the island 's population decline has steadied , thanks to immigrants from the United Kingdom , Saint Helena , and Chile . In the 2012 census , a majority of residents listed their nationality as Falkland Islander (59 percent) , followed by British (29 percent) , Saint Helenian (9 @.@ 8 percent) , and Chilean (5 @.@ 4 percent) . A small number of Argentines also live on the islands .

The Falkland Islands have a low population density . According to the 2012 census , the average daily population of the Falklands was 2 @,@ 932 , excluding military personnel serving in the archipelago and their dependents . A 2012 report counted 1 @,@ 300 uniformed personnel and 50 British Ministry of Defence civil servants present in the Falklands . Stanley (with 2 @,@ 121 residents) is the most @-@ populous location on the archipelago , followed by Mount Pleasant (369 residents , primarily air @-@ base contractors) and Camp (351 residents) . The islands ' age distribution is skewed towards working age (20 ? 60) . Males outnumber females (53 to 47 percent) , and this discrepancy is most prominent in the 20 ? 60 age group . In the 2006 census most islanders identified themselves as Christian (67 @.@ 2 percent) , followed by those who refused to answer or had no religious affiliation (31 @.@ 5 percent) . The remaining 1 @.@ 3 percent (39 people) were adherents of other faiths .

Education in the Falkland Islands , which follows England 's system , is free and compulsory for residents aged between 5 and 16 years . Primary education is available at Stanley , RAF Mount Pleasant (for children of service personnel) and a number of rural settlements . Secondary education is only available in Stanley , which offers boarding facilities and 12 subjects to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) level . Students aged 16 or older may study at colleges in England for their GCE Advanced Level or vocational qualifications . The Falkland Islands

government pays for older students to attend institutions of higher education , usually in the United Kingdom .

= = Culture = =

Falklands culture is " based on the British culture brought with the settlers from the British Isles " , although it has been influenced by the cultures of Hispanic South America . Some terms and place names used by the islands ' former Gaucho inhabitants are still applied in local speech . The Falklands ' predominant and official language is English , with the foremost dialect being British English ; nonetheless , inhabitants also speak Spanish and other languages . According to naturalist Will Wagstaff , " the Falkland Islands are a very social place , and stopping for a chat is a way of life " .

The islands have two weekly newspapers : Teaberry Express and The Penguin News , and television and radio broadcasts generally feature programming from the United Kingdom . Wagstaff describes local cuisine as " very British in character with much use made of the homegrown vegetables , local lamb , mutton , beef , and fish " . Common between meals are " home made cakes and biscuits with tea or coffee " . Social activities are , according to Wagstaff , " typical of that of a small British town with a variety of clubs and organisations covering many aspects of community life " .