

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK

Extended Walk Visitor Management Plan

v2015



**Walk rating: Red**  
**Staff/guests ratio: 1/10 (minimum)**  
**Max guests: 50**  
**Distance 6 km**  
**Height gain approx. 200m**  
**Est. time 3-4 hours**  
**Map: Barff Peninsula, Series BAS 25**

## INTRODUCTION

This is a demanding walk over challenging terrain, which should only be attempted by fit, experienced and competent hillwalkers. The route described in this plan was walked in March 2014 and the landslip observed on the route was very fresh. There is every likelihood that this area and the slope traversing across to Echo lake will experience changes over the coming few years, potentially making the route inaccessible. It is therefore critical that guide leaders evaluate the nature of this slope before taking groups across and remain prepared to backtrack to their point of origin if changes to the terrain have occurred that make the level of risk too high.

The walk would provide difficult navigation in poor conditions and the ground is relatively complicated and rough underfoot. Because of this, only competent parties should consider this route. Walking boots are essential.

The route described and waypoints given in this description give the safest route to be followed, though the route should not be considered as straight paths between waypoints and leaders should exercise judgment in picking their route. **However, waypoints 9, 10 and 11, leading out of Reindeer Valley and into Sandebugten, are critical and must be followed. Other routes out of the valley lead into exceptionally steep and difficult terrain.**

Extended walks should never be undertaken if guides or visitors have any concerns. Careful consideration must be given to the fitness and ability of visitors intending to undertake the walk before participation can be approved. The remote location, lack of medical facilities and highly changeable weather mean that the consequences of an accident on an extended walk will be far more serious than would otherwise be the case in other less remote locations. For this reason alone, it is inappropriate to treat these walks as something that 'anyone can do'.

It is a condition of the visit permit that Visit Permit Holders (and all staff) adhere Site Visitor Management Plans and guidelines for extended walks. Permit Holders must ensure that all other staff and guides are equally well briefed and that they adhere to all SVMP's.



## WALK PLANNING AND PREPARATION

### ○ Walk Grading

The Godthul to Sandebugten Walk is graded as **RED**:

- Guides should expect to cross high-risk sections on the route that may be challenging and, if not correctly managed, potentially hazardous to negotiate with visitors. Guides will be required to route find through awkward terrain, involving complex navigation skills.
- Staff (guide) to visitor ratio: 1:10. Additional staff must also accompany the walk to ensure adequate staffing levels are maintained at all times to manage and respond to any incident arising.
- Only suitable for confident, experienced hill walkers who are physically fit and capable of traversing challenging terrain. Walking boots are essential.
- Maximum group size 50 (plus guides/staff).

### ○ Waypoints

The waypoints have been produced as an aid to navigation on the walks. In the majority of cases, these provide a tangible point to head towards in poor visibility; the ground covered between the points is at the discretion of the leader and will depend on, for example, the nature and experience of the group.

**However, waypoints 9,10 and 11 are critical and must be followed. Other routes out of Reindeer Valley lead into exceptionally steep and difficult terrain.**

### ○ Staff Experience

Leading guides should ideally hold recognised qualifications (for example Mountain Leader Award).

All staff should be able to use GPS, map and compass and hold a current first aid qualification. Previous hill walking and guiding experience is important. Every staff member is expected to have sufficient experience to be able to independently and confidently manage and navigate a group of visitors down off a hill to safety.

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## ○ **Staff Equipment**

There should be sufficient equipment carried by the each staff member to keep a group sheltered from the elements, raise the alarm if necessary, deal with immediate first aid, and have the tools to navigate independently.

This should include:

- Compass and whistle
- Local area map (plus GPS as required)
- Spare food and drink
- Spare clothing
- Basic first aid kit
- VHF

As a group, the staff should ensure they carry:

- 1 Iridium phone (minimum)
- 2 GPS units and spare batteries (minimum), more are required for larger groups
- Spare walking poles
- Group shelters to accommodate the complete party distributed between staff members

## ○ **Visitors Equipment**

Visitor's personal equipment should include:

- Spare clothing
- Hat and gloves
- Emergency food & Drink (or access to these at all times)
- Personal medication (in case of delay ashore)
- Walking poles (if they normally used).

Careful consideration must always be given to footwear. Wellington boots should be avoided, particularly if visitors are not steady on their feet. Walking boots are strongly encouraged and recommended for this walk, due to the slippery conditions.

Guides should pay close attention to the footwear worn by the visitors.

## ○ **Medical Provision**

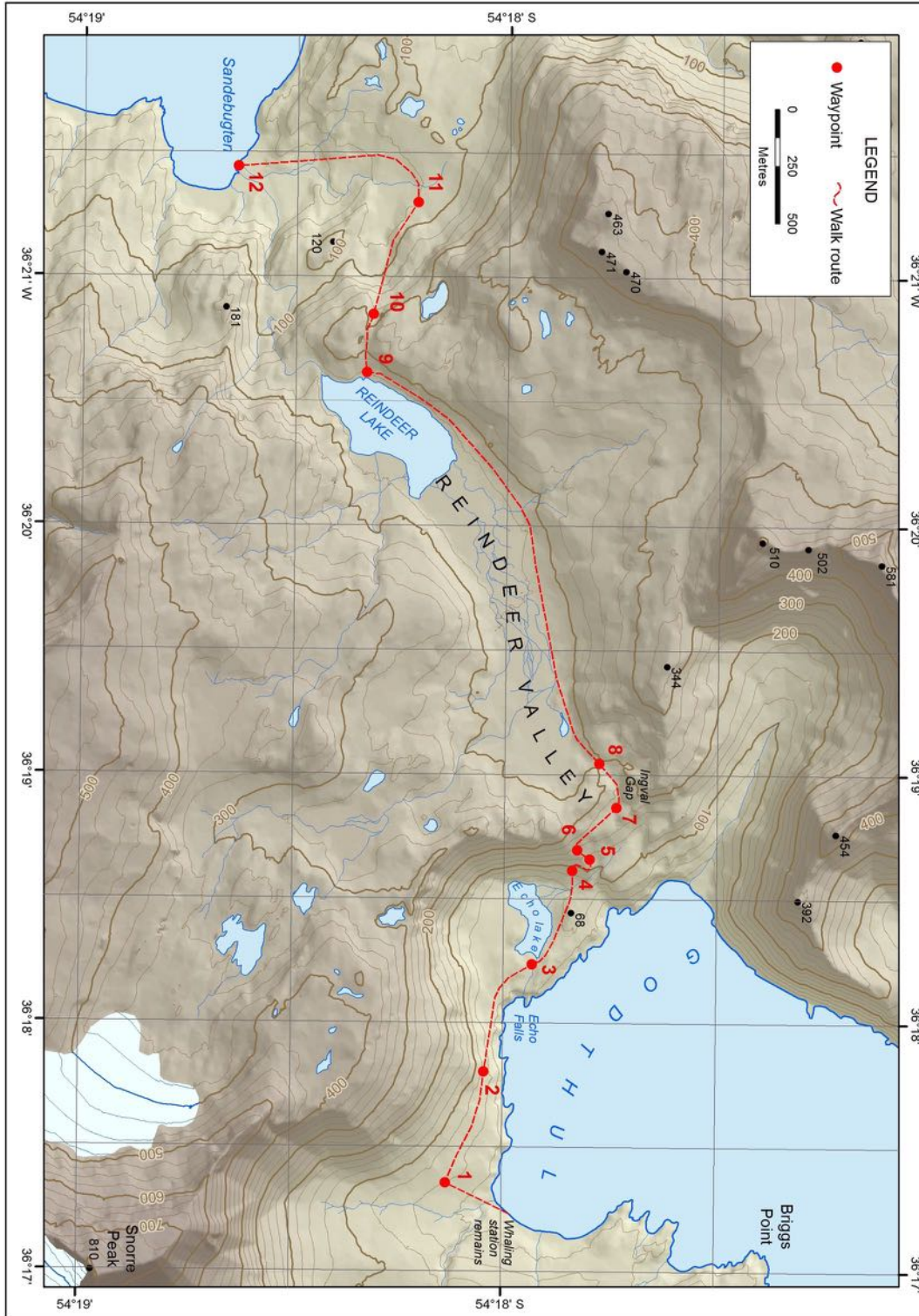
It is a requirement of visiting vessels to be self sufficient in every respect, including medical cover. The visit permit holder and leading guide must both check and ensure that there is adequate medical provision and a tested medical response plan in place to rapidly respond to any injury sustained during the walk or medical trauma incident.

All incidents, accidents and injuries, no matter how minor, must be reported to GSGSSI.

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## ROUTE DETAILS



# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



The start of the walk in Godthul can be directly accessed from the beach just to the south of the whaling station debris; pick the easiest line through tussac to the slopes leading to Echo Lake.

If accessing the route from higher up to the east, it is safest to cross the stream at the outflow from Lake Aviemore ( $54^{\circ} 18.132' S$ ,  $036^{\circ} 17.354' W$ ) to avoid steep gully walls below the lake.

Either route leads you to the first waypoint on the hillside:

## **WPT 1 Stream crossing**

**$54^{\circ} 18.132' S$**

**$036^{\circ} 17.354' W$**



From WPT 1, traverse the tussac slopes WNW towards Echo Lake. At the time of writing there were good reindeer tracks to follow across these slopes. Keep working up towards an obvious long outcrop of rock on gradually steepening tussac.

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



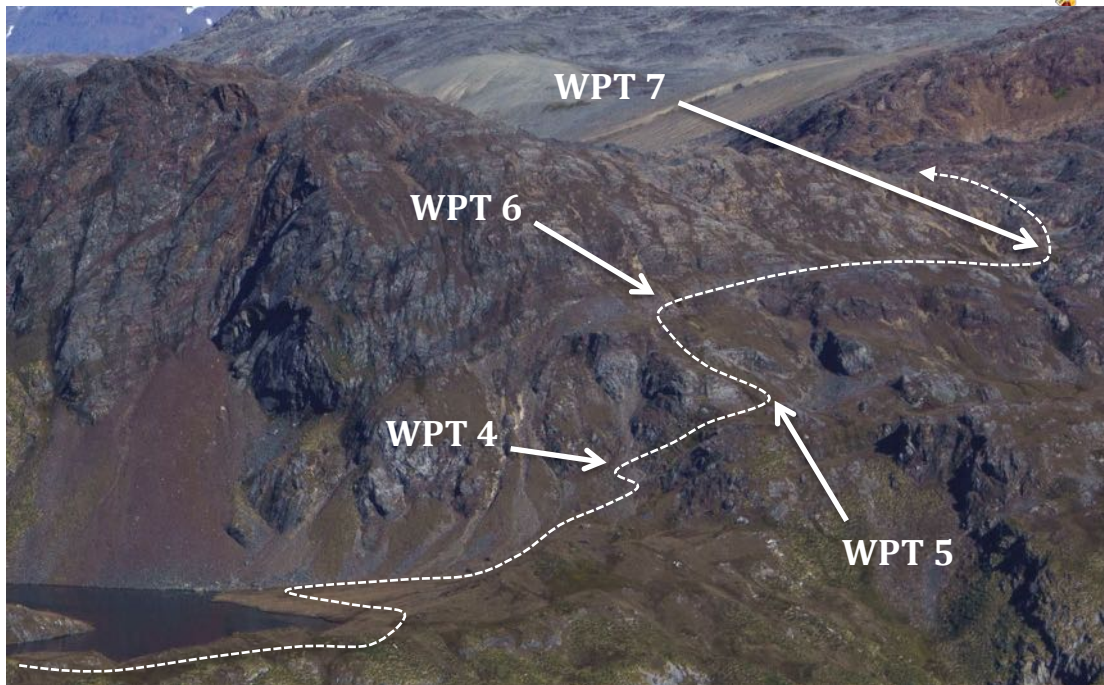
**WPT 2 Beneath western end of rock outcrop**  
**54° 18.044' S**  
**036° 17.802' W**

Just beyond the outcrop the route turns to the west, traversing very steep tussac on a good reindeer path. This soon meets a landslip with a thin covering of peaty soil over bedrock. This can be crossed with care in dry conditions but would be significantly more hazardous in the wet. **A slip here would have serious consequences as the slopes below are very steep and drop directly into the bay.** Note the tussac above the landslip is likely to be unstable and is also burrowed by White-chinned petrels so please avoid this.



The following few hundred metres continue to traverse steep tussac with the angle easing as you approach the corrie containing Echo Lake. Heading towards the outflow to the lake it is possible to get a good view of the waterfall that cascades into the sea.

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## WPT 3 Outflow of Echo Lake

54° 17.933' S

036° 18.235' W

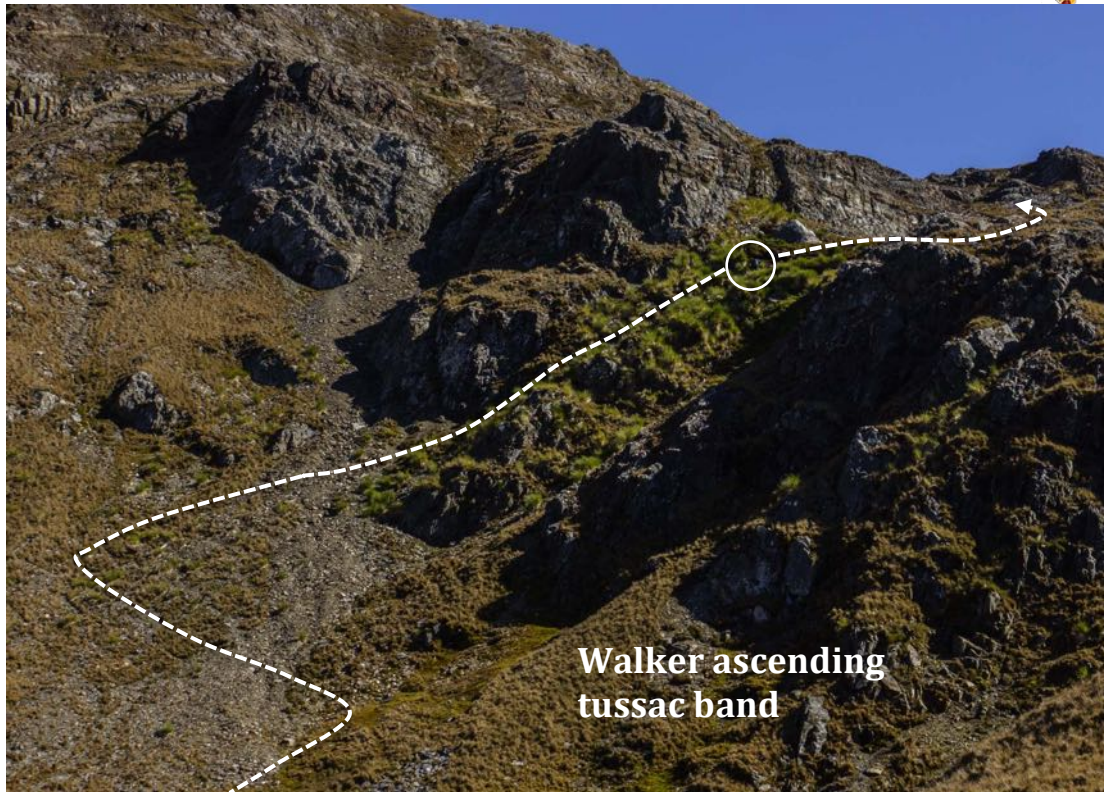
From here, make your way to the inflow on the opposite side of the lake. Work up the slope to the west of the stream to an area of blocky scree with a faint path that makes a diagonal rising traverse towards a steep band of tussac. The next waypoint is at an obvious 90 degree bend in this path.

## WPT 4

54° 17.840' S

036° 18.612' W

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



From here, head steeply up NNW on a relatively good path through the band of tussac. Continue in the same direction as the tussac thins to enter a more open area.

**WPT 5 Flats above tussac band**  
54° 17.799' S  
036° 18.658' W

From this point zig zag SSW up a steep grassy slope onto a flat platform at:

**WPT 6 Flat platform**  
54° 17.829' S  
036° 18.696' W

Head NW, rising through undulating broken ground before arriving at a tarn/mire:

**WPT 7 Tarn**  
54° 17.737' S  
036° 18.867' W



# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



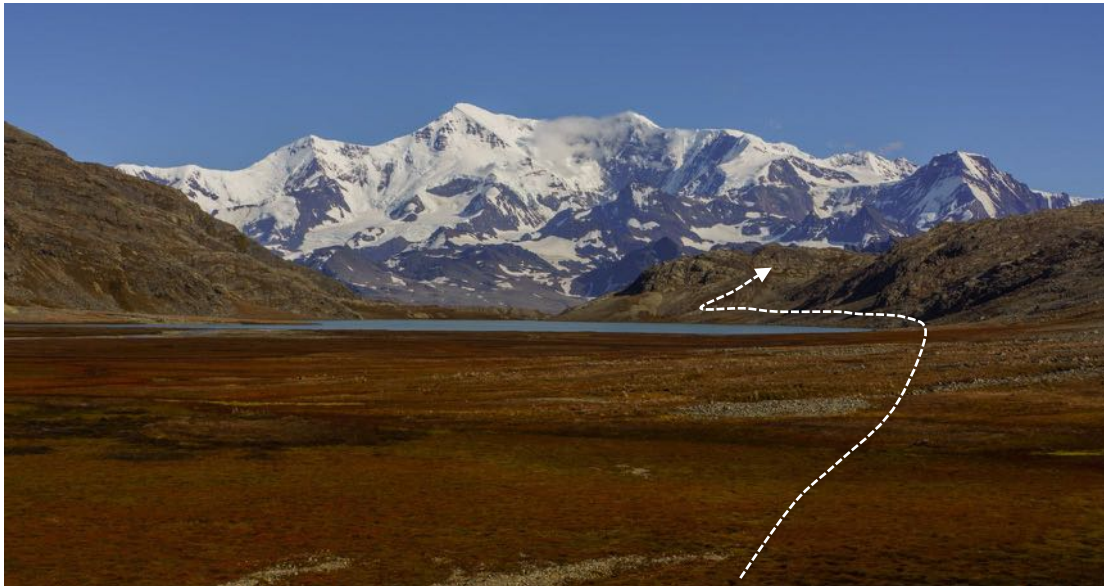
From this waypoint follow the watercourse W through a steep sided rocky gully. Avoid the extensive moss beds here that are easily damaged by trampling. The watercourse eventually swings to the SW before coming to a minor col with a view of the top of Reindeer Valley:

## **WPT 8 Col entering Reindeer Valley**

**54° 17.779' S**

**036° 19.045' W**

Descend the valley, avoiding moss beds. Aim for the west side of the lake (right hand side of the valley). The route turns out of the valley before reaching the end of the lake to avoid steep unpleasant slopes beyond.



**Waypoints 9, 10 and 11 are critical and must be followed. Other routes out of Reindeer Valley lead into exceptionally steep and difficult terrain.**

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## WPT 9 Base of broad scree gully

54° 18.333' S

036° 20.614' W

From this waypoint, turn W to head up a shallow scree gully which levels into a distinctive steep-sided gully/col. After descending briefly to the NW this opens out to give a view down into Sandebugten.

## WPT 10 Top of steep gully and broad gentle shelf

54° 18.319' S

036° 20.848' W

From this waypoint a steep gully dropping to the west can be seen. **This should be avoided.** Instead, there is a broad, gentle shelf descending to the NNW that provides a safe descent. Follow this beneath large rock buttresses to reach steep grassy slopes that drop into the open valley below.



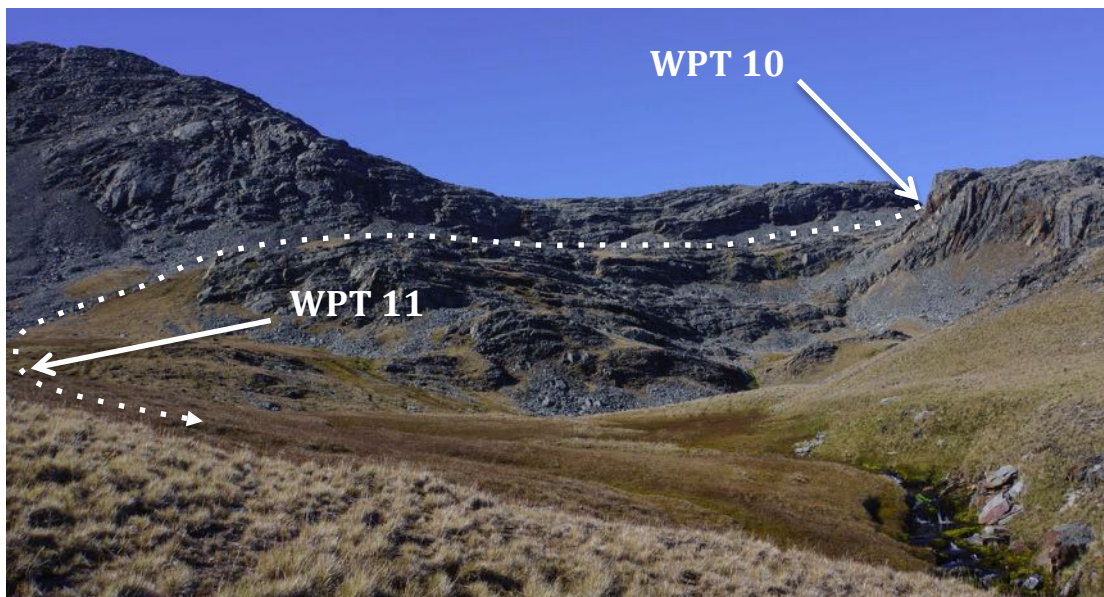
# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



**WPT 11** Head of gentle slopes leading to Sandebugten.  
**54° 18.216' S**  
**036° 21.299' W**

Head SSW down the valley before trending south to descend to the beach.

Note that as an alternative to Sandebugten, Corral Bay offers a sheltered landing and also a hut that may be used in an emergency (marked on the map). This can be reached relatively easily from WPT 11 if necessary.



**WPT 12** Beach  
**54° 18.639' S**  
**036° 21.442' W**

# GODTHUL TO SANDEBUGTEN WALK EXTENDED WALK VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLAN



## **DISCLAIMER**

*Information, including GPS positions, provided in publications of the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands is considered to be true and correct at the time of publication. Changes in circumstances after time of publication may impact on the accuracy of this information and the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands gives no assurance as to the accuracy of any information or advice contained. By using the information presented in these, each user waives and releases the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands to the full extent permitted by law from any and all claims relating to the usage of material or information made available through the system. In no event shall the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands be liable for any incidental or consequential damages resulting from use of this material.*

## **COPYRIGHT CONDITIONS**

*Text Copyright © 2015 Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands*

*Digital Visitor Management Plan Maps are copyright © of the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands. These maps may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, for any other purpose than the Site Visitor Management Plans, without the express, written consent of the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands.*

*Site photographs Catrin Thomas. Copyright remains with the individual photographers.*