

Stonington Island

68°11'S, 67°00'W

ANTARCTIC TREATY

visitor site guide



Key features

- Historic East Base (USA)
- Historic Base 'E' Stonington (UK), including the graves of Noel and Allen
- Glacial scenery



Description

TOPOGRAPHY

Stonington is a small island in Neny Fjord at the southern end of Marguerite Bay. It is approximately 750 metres long and 250 metres wide. The island has areas of relatively flat boulder or gravel between rocky outcrops. It was until recently connected to the Antarctic mainland by North East Glacier.

FAUNA

There is no breeding fauna on the island.

FLORA

Seven species of lichen and two species of moss have been reported from Stonington Island.

OTHER

East Base is designated as Historic Site and Monument No. 55 under the Antarctic Treaty. It was established during the United States Antarctic Service Expedition led by Richard E. Byrd (1939-41), and was subsequently occupied during the Ronne Antarctic Research Expedition (1947-1948). The latter included Edith Ronne and Jenny Darlington, the first two women to overwinter in Antarctica. The buildings were also occupied and modified by the UK during the construction and operation of Base 'E'. Base 'E' is designated as Historic Site and Monument No. 64 under the Antarctic Treaty. It was established by the UK in 1946, 100 m from the US East Base. The station closed in 1950 as sea ice conditions prevented access. It reopened in 1960 as the centre for field work in the south Antarctic Peninsula, and a new steel-framed, two story plywood hut was erected in 1961. Stonington served largely as a staging post for access to the peninsula via the North East Glacier. Up to 120 sledging dogs were spanned on the glacier above Stonington Island, which also served as runway for aircraft. The original Base 'E' was burnt down by accident in 1972 and only fragmentary remains mark the site. The station closed down in February 1975.

Visitor Impact

KNOWN IMPACTS

None known.

POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Fire. Disturbance to historic artefacts. Minor fuel spills.

Landing Requirements

SHIPS*

Ships* carrying 500 or fewer passengers (however, note visitor restrictions below). One ship at a time. Maximum 2 ships per day (midnight to midnight), of which no more than 1 can carry over 200 passengers.

VISITORS

No more than 100 visitors ashore at any time, exclusive of expedition guides and leaders. No more than 12 visitors are allowed inside any single building at any one time **. Visitors must be closely supervised. East Base was proposed as HSM No. 55 by the USA, and Base 'E' was proposed as HSM No. 64 by the UK. Visits to Base 'E' may only take place with prior permission given by a Party. The Party undertaking management of the site should also be informed prior to the visit.

Visitor Area

LANDING AREA

The preferred landing site is in Fishtrap Cove, to the south of the two bases.

CLOSED AREAS

Access to the East Base is limited to the main hut (via the main doors at the northern end of the building). Visitors should not enter the southern extension, the meteorological tower, the bunk room, the small hut to the south of the bunk room originally used by Finne Ronne and his wife, or the rubbish dump.

Access to Base 'E' is limited to the main hut and the main generator shed at Base 'E'. Access is not permitted to any of the attached or associated structures, including the dog pens and jetty.

GUIDED WALKING AREAS

None.

FREE ROAMING AREAS

Visitors may roam freely under close supervision.

* A ship is defined as a vessel which carries more than 12 passengers.

** Visitors enter the bases at their own risk and neither the UK nor the US authorities will be liable for any personal injury or damage to property that may be sustained.

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Visitor Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOUR ASHORE

Walk slowly and carefully. Give any animals the right-of-way.

No overnight stays in any of the huts or other structures are allowed. The huts are available for educational visits and, except in emergency circumstances, should not be used for any other purpose.

The Base E hut windows are all covered with fixed shutters and so electric torches will be needed to see anything of the interior.

Care should be taken not to disturb the remnants of the old burnt out Base 'E' (this lies between the American and British buildings). The site can be distinguished by foundation brick, ash and fragmentary ferrous material.

The grave of Thomas Allan and John Noel takes the form of a rock cairn above ground with the coffins only marginally concealed. This site should be treated with appropriate respect.

Artefacts in or outside the buildings should not be handled or removed from the site.

Do not sit on chairs or other furniture, or lay objects down on tables or work surfaces.

All boots and outdoor clothing should be cleaned of snow and grit before entering the building. All backpacks and large bags should be left outside the hut.

Loose gravel, mud and snow should be swept up after each visit.

Smoking and the use of candles, matches or stoves are prohibited in and around the hut.

A record of each visit should be left in the Visitors Book in Base 'E'. Expedition Leaders should provide the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust with a report on the condition of Base 'E'.

Visitors are to leave the bases safe and fully closed up on departure.

CAUTIONARY NOTES

The rocks at the landing site can be slippery when wet.

The island is subject to very strong katabatic winds.



The side of the bunk house at East Base

American East Base



British Base



Light tank abandoned by East Base

