

# AUSTRALIA'S WORLD HERITAGE PLACES

## MACQUARIE ISLAND INFORMATION SHEET



### Quick Facts

- Macquarie Island is approximately halfway between Tasmania and Antarctica.
- No humans live there permanently but scientists live and work there at the Australian Antarctic Division station.
- Approximately 3.5 million seabirds and 80,000 elephant seals breed and moult (shed their fur), on Macquarie Island.
- Each of Australia's 17 World Heritage Places are also on Australia's National Heritage List.

### Why is Macquarie Island of World Heritage value?

Macquarie Island was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1992 for its natural values.

- **It helps us understand how the earth was formed**  
Macquarie Island is the only island made entirely of oceanic crust and rocks from the mantle. It provides examples of rock types found deep within the earth, below the ocean floor. Macquarie Island also provides evidence of plate tectonics and continental drift.
- **It contains beautiful natural formations and features**  
Macquarie Island is a remote and beautiful windswept island with lakes, bays and coves, interesting plants and many kinds of wildlife. The island is home to elephant seals, albatross and many penguins including the royal, king, gentoo and rockhopper penguins.

### Challenges and Management

Macquarie Island is managed by the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service (part of the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment).

#### Challenges

Human impact

To protect the island, the number of humans allowed to visit is restricted and visits require authorisation. Human activity is confined to one area as much as possible to minimise environmental impact. Only a very small number of tourists are able to visit for educational purposes with an approved tourism operator. Tourism areas are limited and visits only occur during summer for a few hours at a time. Any facilities or structures that are no longer required are removed, unless they have historic value.

#### Management



**Australian Government**  
Department of the Environment,  
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Introduced animals	When Europeans came to Macquarie Island by ship, they introduced animals including cats, weka (a flightless bird from New Zealand), rabbits and rodents. Cats and weka have been successfully eradicated and now action is taking place to eradicate rabbits, rats and mice. Introduced animals cause extensive damage to the biodiversity and landscape of the reserve. Research, control programs and strict precautions are in place to prevent the introduction of new feral animals.
Introduced plants and insects	Quarantine methods help to protect Macquarie Island from introduced insect pests and plants that can arrive in cargo, food, equipment and personal clothing. Precautionary measures, such as inspecting, cleaning and fumigating supplies and equipment are carried out.
Pollution and waste	Pollution and rubbish from ships can harm marine mammals and birds, and all efforts are made to prevent oil and fuel spillage. Appropriate waste is burnt in an incinerator on the island and the ash, along with waste that cannot be burnt (e.g. plastic), is returned to mainland Australia for recycling or disposal.

### Read more

[www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/macquarie/index.html](http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/world/macquarie/index.html)



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