Paulet Island (63°35'S, 55°47'W) - landscape in conflict of tourism with conservation of nature and historical monuments

**Diedrich Fritzsche**

Alfred Wegener Institute, Foundation for Polar and Marine Research, P.O. Box 60149, 14473 Potsdam, Germany

**e-mail:** dfritsch@awi-potsdam.de

---

**Geographical setting**

Paulet Island is a roughly circular islet with about 3 km diameter in the north-western Weddell Sea. It is a volcanic crater island with a lake which is about 500 m long and a conic summit rising an elevation of 350 m. Paulet Island is a roughly circular islet with about 3 km diameter in the north-western Weddell Sea. It is a volcanic crater island with a lake which is about 500 m long and a conic summit rising an elevation of 350 m.

**Tourism**

Remains of the hut are still evident and they attract together with the penguin colony yearly up to 5,000 tourists from cruise vessels. The huge rookery of 95,000 to 105,000 pairs of Adélie penguins (Pygoscelis adeliae) is the second largest of this species in the area of the Antarctic Peninsula. The population of Blue-eyed Shags (Phalacrocorax atriceps) with about 400 nests is one of the largest in the South Atlantic as well. Snow Petrel (Pagodroma nivea) and Wilson’s Storm-petrel (Oceanodroma lherminieri, Cheng-Sheng Albatross (Diomedea resonans)) are also abundant. Kelp Gull (Larus dominicanus) is a regular visitor. More than 1000 Weddell (Leptonychotes weddelli) and Leopard Seals (Hydrurga leptonyx) haul-out on the shoreline each year.

**Wildlife**

**Problems of conservation**

Preferable in 2003 the hut was reinforced with prefabricated segments and racks. In February 2003 some information boards (left side) are installed in front of the Larsen’s hut. The space between fences and the hut’s wall is too small for a group of people. Photo: B. Weber, January 2005

**Recommendation**

A solution of the problem could be to install information boards separately on a proper place (e.g. at the landing side directly on the beach). Existing fence segments are unsuitable and should be removed. Unused metallic fence segments lying around create a harm risk for people and penguins.

---

**References**


Boards in front of the ruin inform visitors about history of the Swedish Antarctic expedition (1901-03) on Esperanza. The existing fence segments are unsuitable and should be removed. Unused metallic fence segments lying around create a harm risk for people and penguins.

---

**Map of northern part of the Antarctic Peninsula with routes of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1901-02. Paulet Island, Hope Bay and Snow Hill Island.**

**Sketch map of Paulet Island (after Baker, 1973)**

**Information board about the Swedish Antarctic Expedition 1901-03.**

**Tourist ship Herminia anchored off Paulet Island. Tourists land on the shore using Zodiaces.**

**Ruins of the hut at Hope Bay (Esperanza) where the members of the Swedish Antarctic expedition (1911-12) and Nordenskjöld's expedition stayed. This remains are protected by a chain-only.**

**January 2005**: A pile of unused metallic fences and racks lying beside the hut. They endanger penguins and visitors.

**The remains of Larsen’s hut amidst the Adélie penguin colony.**

---

**History**

Paulet Island was discovered by the British Antarctic expedition (1908-10) led by Charles S. Drayton. It was named by him after a captain in the British Royal Navy. In 1903-04, the relief ship of Otto Nordenskjöld's Swedish Antarctic expedition was crushed by the ice of the Weddell Sea and sank. The ship’s crew of 22 managed to get ashore on Paulet Island and erected a stone hut in order to survive the Antarctic winter. This hut is also called Larsen’s hut after the commander of the Argentine vessel Uruguay.

---

**Situation**

---

**PAULET ISLAND**

---

**Wildlife**

- Adélie penguins (Pygoscelis adeliae)
- Blue-eyed Shags (Phalacrocorax atriceps)
- Snow Petrel (Pagodroma nivea)
- Wilson’s Storm-petrel (Oceanodroma lherminieri)
- Cheng-Sheng Albatross (Diomedea resonans)
- Kelp Gull (Larus dominicanus)
- Leopard Seals (Hydrurga leptonyx)
- Weddell Seals (Leptonychotes weddelli)

---

**Problems of conservation**

- The remains of Larsen’s hut amidst the Adélie penguin colony.
- More than 1000 Weddell (Leptonychotes weddelli) and Leopard Seals (Hydrurga leptonyx) haul-out on the shoreline each year.

---

**Recommendation**

- A solution of the problem could be to install information boards separately on a proper place (e.g. at the landing side directly on the beach) and enclose the huts with chain-racks as used to fence the 2nd hut of the Swedish Antarctic expedition (1911-12) on Esperanza. The holding fence segments are unsuitable and should be removed.