

GYPSY COVE



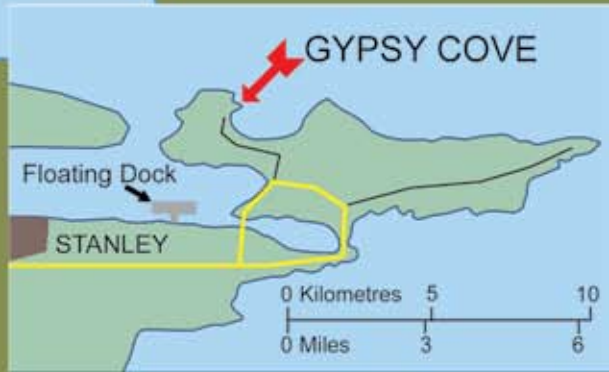
**Best
wildlife site
close to Stanley**



GYPSY COVE



The Falkland Islands archipelago lies 280 miles (350 km) to the east of the South American continent. It consists of two large islands, East and West Falkland, and 780 small islands and islets.



GYPSY COVE lies less than 4 miles (6 km) from Stanley, to the northwest of Yorke Bay. You may arrive here by taxi or on a coach trip as part of a cruise ship visit.

The walk from Stanley takes approximately an hour and a half. Take the road to Stanley Airport, go over the Boxer Bridge, and then follow signs to Gypsy Cove.

There is an easy to follow trail around the site.



On busy summer days, a warden is likely to be present to ensure there is no undue disturbance to wildlife and that visitors are aware of the Falkland Islands Countryside Code. Yorke Bay and parts of Gypsy Cove are fenced off to prevent access to minefields. These areas must not be entered under any circumstances.

Be especially alert to the danger of fire. Please do not smoke.

In summer the heathland can become very dry and is particularly at risk from discarded cigarettes. Public toilets are located in the car park.

About Gypsy Cove

Gypsy Cove forms part of the Stanley Common/Cape Pembroke peninsula, which is a National Nature Reserve owned by the Falkland Islands Government. The Cove is one of the best sites in the Stanley area for seeing typical Falklands wildlife and contains the nearest penguin colony to the Islands' capital.

It is a small bay with a crescent of white sand, sheltered from prevailing winds. The beach is backed by dry heathland with patches of tussac grass, cinnamon grass, and dune. Tussac grass can grow up to 10 ft (3.5m) tall and is particularly important for wildlife in the Falklands - a land without any native trees. Before the introduction of sheep and cattle it used to be much more widespread than it is

today. Much of the tussac along this strip of coast has re-established as a result of fencing to protect it from grazing.

Adjacent to the Cove is the larger picturesque area of Yorke Bay, a favoured feeding ground for waders, wildfowl and gulls. In the other direction, towards Ordnance Point there are low cliffs where rock cormorants and black-crowned night herons nest.

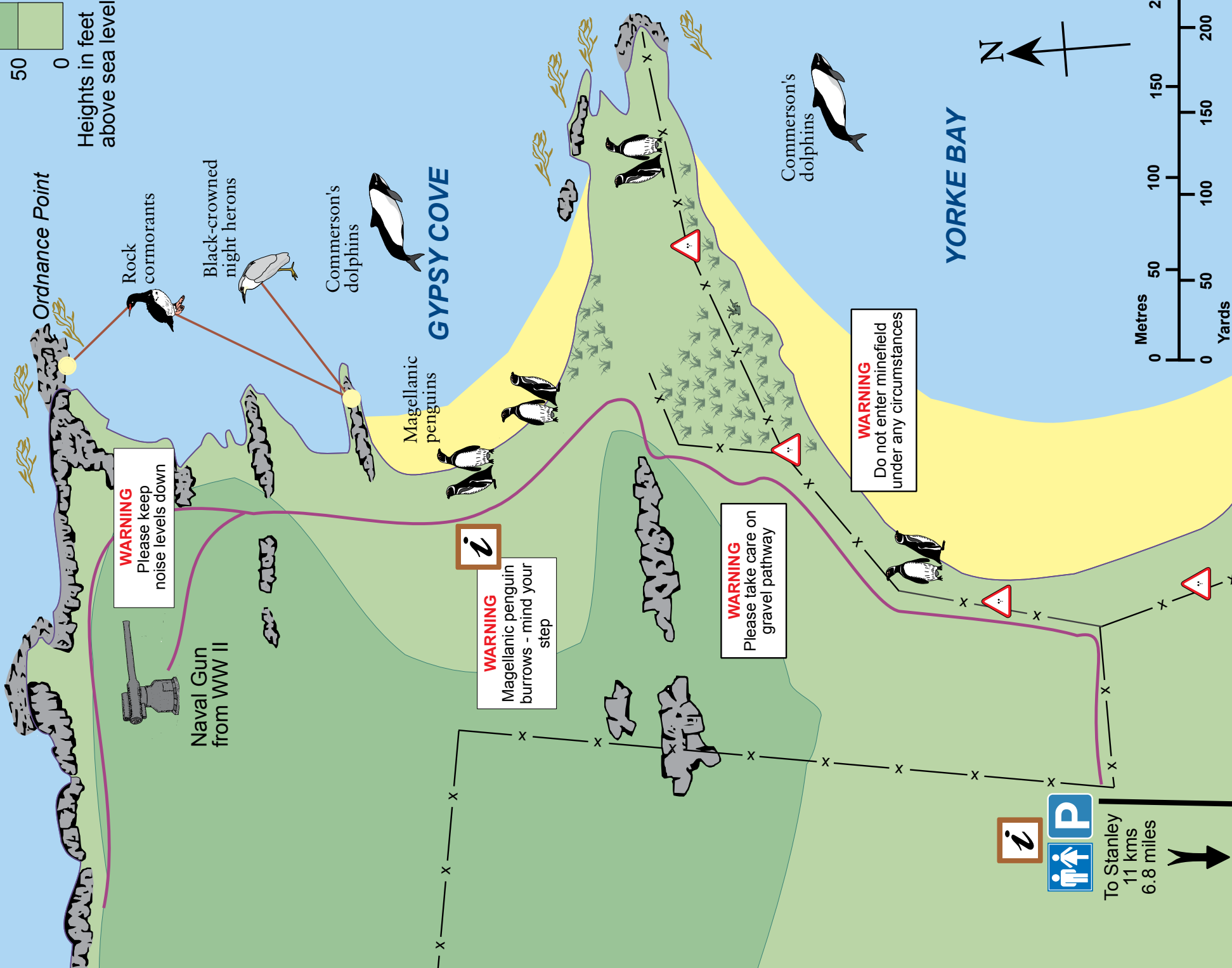
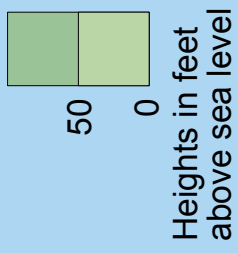
On the prominent ground behind the Point are the remains of World War II guns. These were used to defend Port William, the outer harbour on the approach to Stanley. It was one of 14 outposts manned by men of the Falkland Islands Defence Force.



GYPSY COVE

Magellanic Penguin Hike - 330 yards (300 metres)

PORT WILLIAM



WARNING
Please keep noise levels down

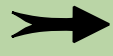
WARNING
Magellanic penguin burrows - mind your step

WARNING
Please take care on gravel pathway

WARNING
Do not enter minefield under any circumstances



To Stanley
11 kms
6.8 miles



Magellanic Penguins

Magellanic Penguins can only be seen at Gypsy Cove in the spring and summer months. They arrive in September, but have left by April to travel hundreds of miles north, sometimes as far as Brazil. This area supports a breeding population of 200 pairs.

Magellanic penguins are known as Jackass penguins in the Falklands because of their loud, mournful, braying call. They nest in underground burrows, mostly in the tussac grass area north of the Cove. The burrows are up to 6 ft (2m) deep in soft, peaty soil. Please be careful not to stand on these when walking around the area because they can easily collapse. The birds will defend their burrows vigorously turning their heads from side to side. Their stout hooked bill can inflict a nasty wound. Two white eggs are laid in November, with chicks hatching a few weeks later. When rearing chicks one parent will leave the colony early in the morning in search of food at sea, returning later the same day or next day. Diet consists of small crustaceans, small fish and squid. Towards the end of the summer in February and March large groups of penguins congregate to moult prior to migration. They are unable to feed during this time and should not be approached or disturbed.

The Falkland Islands hold about 10% of the world population of this species, which is widely distributed around the extensive coastline, and particularly on offshore tussac islands. It is also found all around the coasts of southern South America. There are concerns that accidental oil spills, discharge of waste by vessels offshore, disturbance when nesting and shortage of food in some years are causing a decline in numbers.



Magellanic penguins

The Wildlife of Gypsy Cove

The heathland area contains many typical Falkland birds such as the **grass wren**, **dark-faced ground tyrant**, **Falkland thrush** and **black-throated finch**, both endemic sub species. On the beaches you can see both **Magellanic** and **blackish oystercatchers**, **white-rumped sandpipers**, **two-banded plovers**, **kelp geese**, and the endemic (unique to these Islands) **Falkland flightless steamer duck** (known locally as the logger duck).

Watch out for **South American terns** which nest on the offshore islet. The cliffs provide a good vantage point to spot other seabirds such as **Falkland skuas**, **southern giant petrels**, **imperial** and **rock shags**, and **black-browed albatross**. The Cove is frequented by the occasional **sea lion**, on the look out for a meal of penguins or fish.

Inland much of the area is covered with dwarf shrub heath, dominated by **diddle-dee**, a small shrub whose red berries are eaten in huge quantities by birds and are locally made into jam, jellies and tarts. **Gorse**, introduced from Europe, can be seen on the sand dunes behind the beach where there are also patches of rare native **boxwood**, which used to be much more common in the wild than it is today. Around Ordnance Point look out for **balsam bog** – large, hard and very pale green mounds of densely packed rosettes.

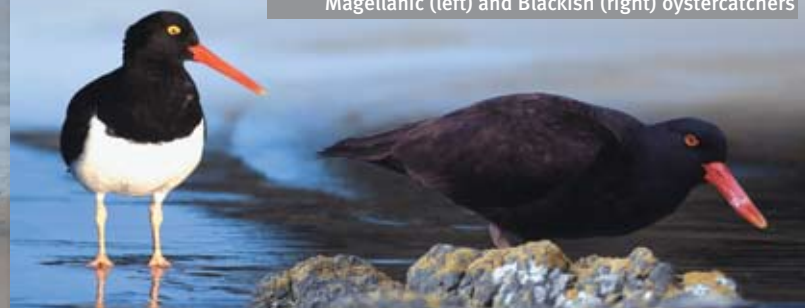
There are plenty of wildflowers including **pale maiden**, the Falkland national flower. **Almond flower**, **Christmas bush**, **Falkland lavender**, **scurvy grass** (once collected and eaten by sailors because of their high vitamin C content), endemic **woolly ragwort** and **vanilla daisy** can be found here in summertime.



Top to bottom:
Black-browed albatross;
Black-throated finch;
Diddle-dee; Balsam bog;
Woolly ragwort



Magellanic (left) and Blackish (right) oystercatchers



Bird Checklist for Gypsy Cove

- Magellanic penguin
- Rock shag
- Black-crowned night-heron
- Kelp goose
- Upland goose
- Ruddy-headed goose
- Falkland flightless steamer duck
- Patagonian crested duck
- Turkey vulture
- Variable hawk
- Peregrine falcon
- Two-banded plover
- Magellanic oystercatcher
- Blackish oystercatcher
- Rufous-chested dotterel
- Magellanic snipe
- White-rumped sandpiper
- Dolphin gull
- Kelp gull
- Dark-faced ground-tyrant
- Falkland pipit
- Falkland thrush
- Grass wren
- Long-tailed meadowlark
- Black-throated finch

OUT TO SEA:

- Black-browed albatross
- Southern giant petrel
- Imperial shag
- South American tern



Long-tailed meadowlark



Grass wren

Falklands Conservation works to protect the wildlife of the Falkland Islands. To find out more about us and how you can support what we do visit us at the Jetty Visitor Centre, Stanley or visit our website:

www.falklandsconservation.com

For more information on this site and other areas of outstanding wildlife and scenery we recommend

A Visitor's Guide to the Falkland Islands.

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