

Antarctic Specially Protected Area No. 134 (Site of Special Scientific Interest No. 15)

Cierva Point, Danco Coast, Antarctic Peninsula

1. Description of Values to be Protected

This area was originally designated as SSSI No. 15 in ATCM Recommendation XIII-8, after a proposal by Argentina, as an important example of well developed maritime vegetation and having breeding colonies of at least five bird species.

This area has a great scientific value due to the presence of important bird colonies (gentoo penguin, brown skua, blue-eyed shag, snow petrel, Dominican gull), an abundant development of plant cover, and a diverse flora that includes the two Antarctic flowering plant species and some liverworts and an associated invertebrate fauna. Its littoral area possesses abundant tidal pools inhabited by a large number of marine invertebrates. Long-term research programmes on terrestrial ecology and natural variability could be endangered by accidental interference, destruction of vegetation and soil, pollution of rock pools and perturbation of breeding birds.

2. Aims and Objectives

Management of Cierva Point aims to:

- Avoid major changes in the structure and composition of communities of flora and fauna;
- Protect long-term research programmes on terrestrial ecology and natural variability established in the Area;
- Prevent unnecessary human disturbance to the area;
- Utilize the Area as a monitoring site to assess direct and indirect effects of the neighbouring station.

3. Management Activities

The following management activities will be undertaken to protect the values of the area:

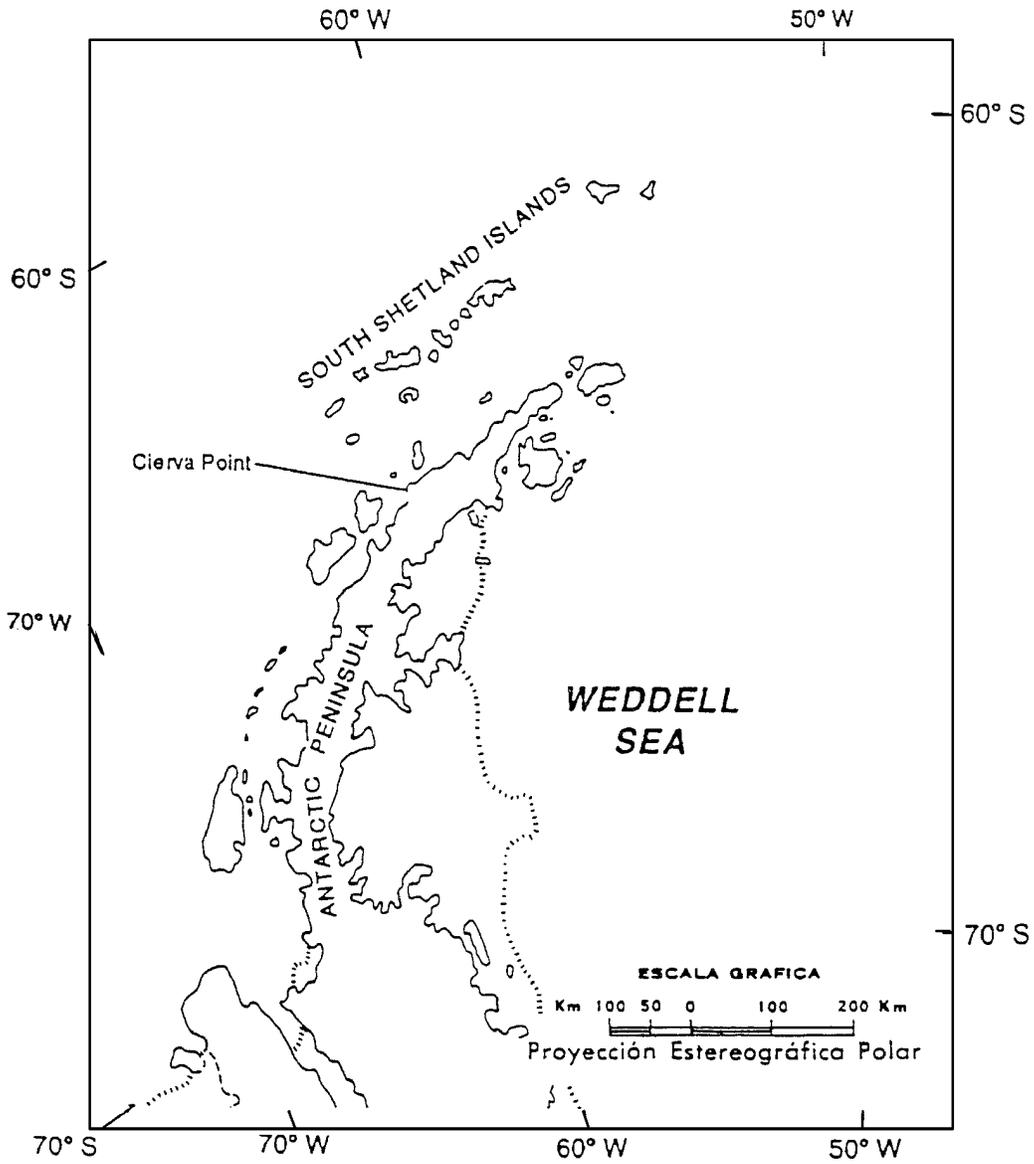
- A marker board will be placed at the principal access point illustrating the location boundaries and stating entry restrictions;
- Access to the Area and paths will be marked;
- Priority pedestrian routes within the Area will be established for transit to sample sites;
- Collection of samples will be limited to the minimum required for approved scientific research;
- Visits shall be made as necessary to ensure management and maintenance measures are adequate.

4. Period of Designation

Designated for an indefinite period.

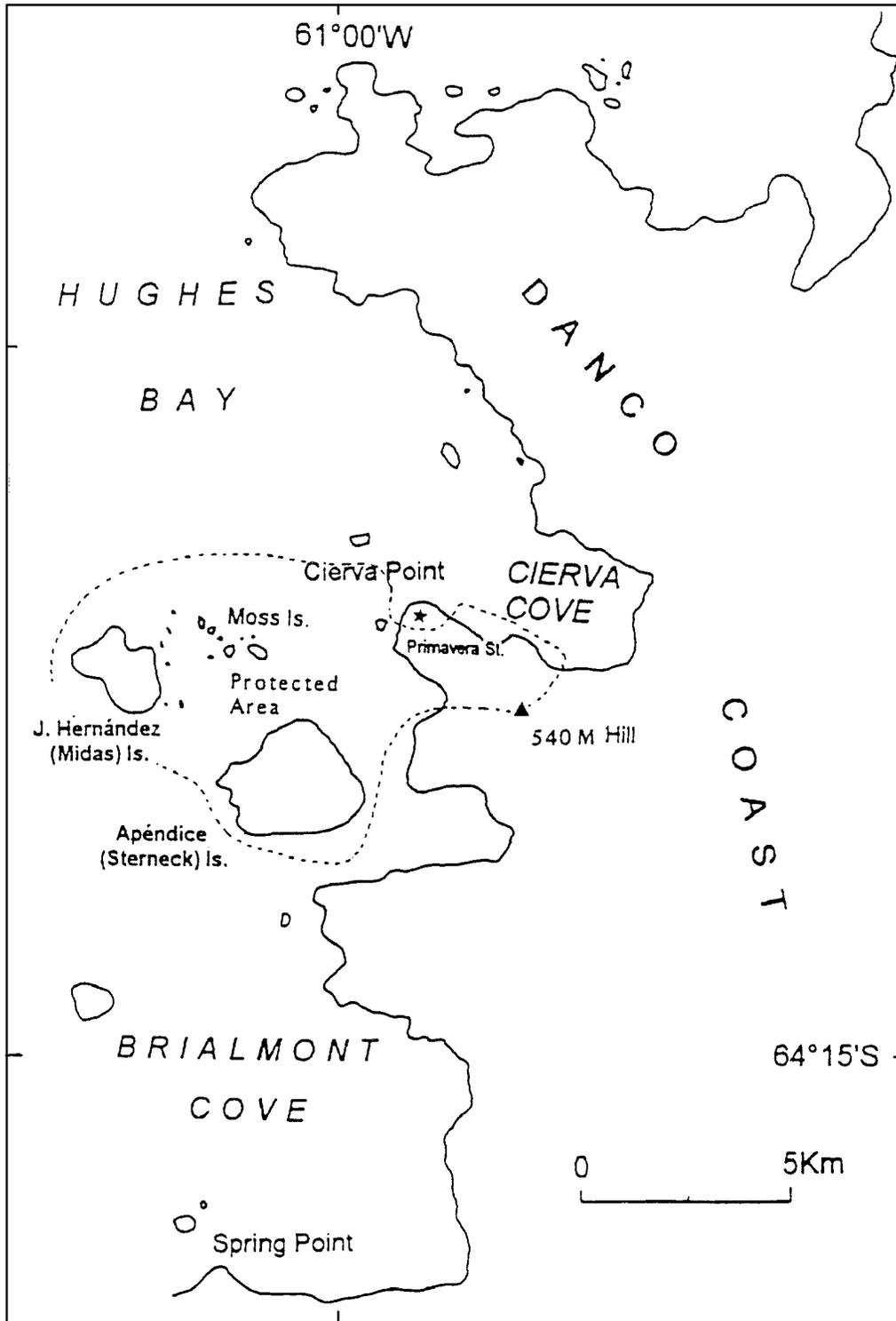
5. Maps

Map 1 shows the location of Cierva Point in relation with the Antarctic Peninsula.



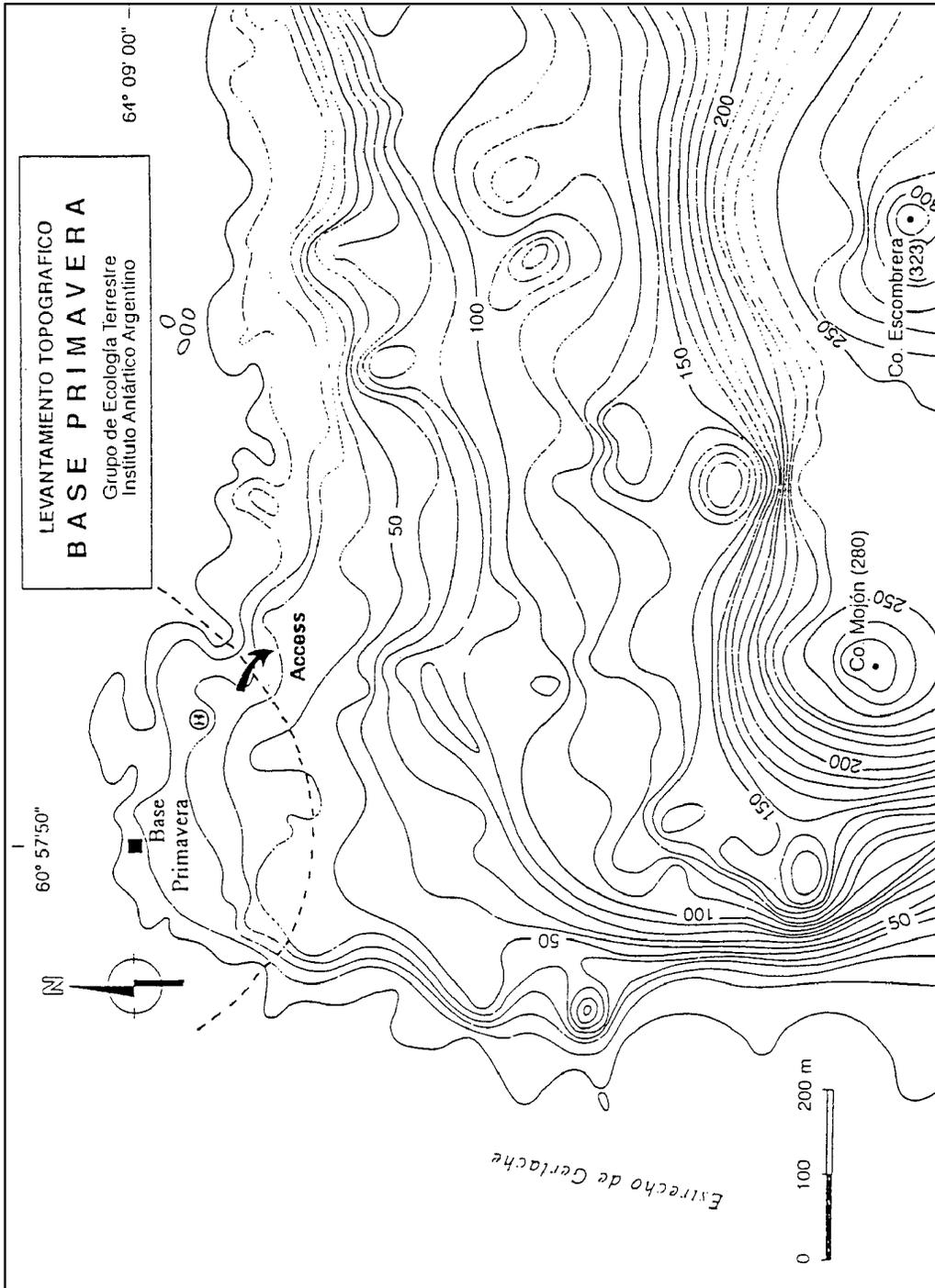
ASPA 134
Map A*

Map 2 shows the location of Cierva Point and adjacent islands in relation to Danco Coast.



ASPA 134
Map B*

Map 3 shows the area surrounding Primavera Station in detail to indicate access to the Protected Area.



ASP A 134
Map C*

6. Description of the Area

6(i) Geographical co-ordinates and natural features of the Area

Cierva Point (lat. 64°10' S. lon. 60°57' W) is in the north-west of the Antarctic Peninsula, on the south coast of Cierva Cove, at the north end of Hughes Bay. The site comprises Cierva Point, encompassing the land west on an imaginary line drawn from the southeast of the north side of the Point, through the summit of a flat hill of 540m high, to the southeast of the south side of the Point. Also included are Apendice/Rivera/Sterneck Island, and Jose Hernandez/Bofill/Midas Island and Lopez/Moss Island, which lie mainly between Jose Hernandez/Bofill/Midas Island and Cierva Point. Although the intertidal zone of each of these areas is included in the Area, the subtidal marine environment is not included.

Base Primavera (Argentina) and all its associated installations and areas of disturbance are excluded from the area.

The plant cover of lichen, moss and grass-dominated communities is very extensive. The dominant plant communities are lichen-dominated fellfield, *Polytrichum-Chorisodontian* moss turf and *Descampsia-Colobantus* subformation. Areas of more than a hundred square metres off the ground are covered by moss turves, with a peat depth of about 80 cm. This type of habitat allows the establishment of many bird colonies, including gentoo penguins, chinstrap penguins, blue-eyed shags, brown skuas, Wilson's storm petrels, sheathbills and kelp gulls.

6(ii) Restricted zones within the Area

None

6(iii) Location of structures within the Area

There are no vehicular routes, structures or refuges within the Area. Primavera Station (Argentina) located at the north west of the cape, is open in summers. It is composed of eight huts, and a place delimited for helicopter landings.

6(iv) Location of other Protected Areas within close proximity

None

7. Permit Conditions

Entry into the Area is prohibited except in accordance with a permit issued by appropriate national authorities.

Conditions for issuing a Permit to enter the Area are that:

- It is issued to continue study of terrestrial ecology and natural variability of the area or for a compelling scientific purpose that cannot be met elsewhere;
- The actions permitted will not jeopardise the natural ecological systems in the Area;

- Any management activities are in support of the objectives of the Management Plan;
- The actions permitted are in accordance with this Management Plan;
- The Permit, or authorised copy, must be carried within the Site of Special Scientific Interest;
- A report or reports are supplied to the authority that issued the Permit.

7(i) Access to and movements within the Area

There is only one access to the Area for helicopters. Helicopters may only land in the specified area ESE of the station. The aircraft route to be used is limited to a north approach and departure. Marine access is allowed to any point for any of the islands. Access will be by permit issued by a component authority and will only be allowed for activities which are in accordance with this management plan. Tourism or any kind of recreational activities are not permitted. Movement within the site should be by designated pedestrian routes. No vehicle access is permitted.

7(ii) Activities which are or may be conducted within the Area including restrictions on time and place

Scientific study and monitoring of the terrestrial ecosystem and natural variability in the area and compelling scientific research which cannot be conducted elsewhere and which will not interfere with ongoing long-term research programmes or jeopardise the structure or dynamics of the ecosystem of the Area.

Essential management activities, including monitoring.

7(iii) Installation, modification or removal of structures

No structures are to be erected in the Area, or scientific equipment installed, except for essential scientific or management activities, as specified in a Permit.

7(iv) Location of field camps

Parties should not normally camp in the Area. If it is essential for safety reasons, tents should be erected having regard to causing the least damage to vegetation and disturbance to fauna.

7(v) Restriction on material and organisms which may be brought into the Area

No living animals or plant material shall be deliberately introduced into the Area.

No poultry products, including food products containing uncooked dried eggs, shall be taken into the Area. No herbicides or pesticides shall be brought into the Area. Any other chemicals, which may be introduced for compelling scientific purpose specified in the permit, shall be removed from the Area at or before the conclusion of the activity for which the Permit was granted.

As far as possible the use of chemicals should be clearly documented for the benefit of later researchers.

Fuel, food and other material are not to be stored in the area, unless required for essential purposes connected with the activity for which the permit has been granted. All such material introduced are to be removed when no longer required. Permanent depots are not permitted.

7(vi) Taking or harmful interference with native flora and fauna

This is prohibited, except in accordance with a Permit. Where animal taking or harmful interference is involved this should be in accordance with the SCAR Code of Conduct for Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes in Antarctica, as a minimum standard.

7(vii) Collection or removal of anything not brought into the area by the permit holder

Biological specimens and samples may be collected and/or removed from the Area only according to a permit. Debris of human origin should be removed and reported to the authority that issued the permit. Dead biological specimens may be removed for pathological analysis.

7(viii) Disposal of waste

All non-human wastes shall be removed from the Area to Primavera station. Human waste may be deposited in the sea.

7(ix) Measures that may be necessary to ensure that the aims and objectives of the management plan continue to be met

Permits may be granted to enter the area to carry out biological and ecological studies and monitoring, and site inspection activities, including the collection of small amounts of plant material and small numbers of animals for scientific purposes, to erect or maintain notice boards and protective measures.

All scientific structures and instrumentation, including research markers, installed in the Area must be authorised in a permit and clearly identified by country, name of investigator and year of installation. Research markers and structures must be removed at or before the expiry of the Permit. If specific scientific projects cannot be concluded within the permitted time, applications must be made for an extension to leave the items on site.

7(x) Requirements for reports

The principal permit holder for each issued permit shall submit a report of activities conducted in the Area. This report shall be submitted to the authority named in the Permit as soon as practicable. Such reports should be stored indefinitely and made accessible to interested Parties, SCAR, CCAMLR, and COMNAP if requested, to provide the documentation of human activities within the Area necessary for good management.