

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MONTAGUE ISLAND OVERNIGHT CONSERVATION TOUR PARTICIPANTS



Introduction

Welcome to Montague Island Nature Reserve (MINR) – a place of great natural and historical significance. As a nature reserve the Island is a highly protected environment, and any activity conducted on the Island must be in sympathy with the objective of conserving this special place for the future. The following information will help you appreciate the role you can play in ensuring your stay has a minimal impact on the natural and cultural heritage that surrounds you.

During your stay on the island we ask you to:

- conduct yourself in a spirit of conservation and consideration for the unique environment that is Montague Island;
- observe the no-go areas as listed in this document;
- assist with keeping the accommodation clean and tidy;
- participate cooperatively with preparation of meals and with keeping kitchen and ablutions areas clean during your stay;
- securely store all foodstuffs, particularly last thing at night, to prevent pest animals and insects having access and for obvious health reasons;
- be safety conscious - inform someone of your whereabouts at all times and **never head off alone**. Leave your details on the whiteboard near the back door;
- take the commonsense precautions of wearing of appropriate clothing, sun protection, and carrying fluids during activities. (Some activities will also require the wearing of gloves and safety glasses – these will be provided where needed).

Respect for others

The Island is home to a permanent NPWS officer (and family on occasion), and occasionally additional NPWS staff, contractors and Charles Sturt University students may be carrying out various essential projects on and around the Island. These personnel are housed in a separate building to overnight eco-tours, and we ask you to respect their space and privacy by refraining from entering their accommodation areas uninvited. Conversely, those people will also respect your privacy.

Guided groups of members of the public visit the Island for day or evening tours, and primarily use the hardstand tracks & middle quarters precinct of the Island. These tours place Montague very much in the public spotlight, and it is important that the conduct or activities of anyone staying on the Island do not detract from their tour experience. It is therefore suggested that all “after hours activities” be conducted out of sight of the day / evening tours as much as possible. Evening tours usually depart the island at around 9.30pm at the latest.

Respect for Aboriginal culture

Montague Island (Barunguba) has great spiritual and cultural significance to the local Aboriginal people. Dreaming stories and song lines link the island to Gulaga (Mt. Dromedary), and Najanuga (Little Dromedary). Barunguba is a men’s teaching place and the location of important men’s ceremonies. Local Elders acknowledge that the island is used for important scientific research and public education and accept that people will be involved in these pursuits, and other activities on the island.

The Elders and members of the local Aboriginal community ask that all visitors acknowledge and respect the significance of the island. There are several locations on the island that are particularly sensitive; some areas are out of bounds to all visitors (see below). **Stones and rocks, no matter how small, should NOT be moved or touched.** Please seek advice from the duty NPWS officer before going “exploring” and please follow the access guidelines within this document.

Respect for the environment

It is our goal for all visitors to have minimal environmental impact during their stay. With this in mind, our waste management systems are designed to either remove or recycle as much as possible (eg., waste water is recycled with the end product irrigating the lawn area between the buildings). Please bear in mind that the Island’s water supply is reliant on rain collected from the roof so please use water wisely. Please also assist with solar power conservation by turning off all unnecessary lights.

You will observe wildlife during your stay, and the network of tracks which criss cross the Island (some more than 120 years old) are used as much by little penguins as by humans. Their nests and burrows are often just off track edges so please take care and stick to the tracks.

Feeding of wildlife is not encouraged, and when observing wildlife on and around the Island, aim to cause minimum to disturbance by maintaining reasonable stand-off distances.

The historical precincts in and around the Light Station are heritage listed and all care must be taken to keep them in good condition.

Smoking is only permitted around the buildings and in the courtyards where ashtrays are provided.

Respect for your guide

Your guide will be your central reference point during the stay, endeavouring to make your experience on the Island everything you expect. Whilst the guide will remain on location with the tour group for the duration of the visit, they will not be on active duty 24 hours each day. The guide will inform the group when they are ceasing duty for the day, and during this time it is asked that the guide's privacy and personal space is respected. (Obviously, this does not apply in an emergency situation).

Respect for the sea and its power

Please be alert anywhere near the water's edge, particularly on the exposed sides of the island. Freak waves can and do occur. Surfaces can be slippery. Always be there with someone else!

Artefacts

Please do not move or pick up **any kind** of artefact you may see around the island such as pieces of metal, building materials, bottles, etc. If you do find anything significant, please report it to your guide but do not move it.

No-go areas for visitors (except in emergencies or when required)

- The northern end of Montague Island.
- The southern end of the island, south of an imaginary east/west line that runs through the graves.
- Off any of the formed trails.
- The lighthouse structure (unless accompanied by an accredited guide or NPWS staff member).
- The battery, inverter and generator rooms.
- The first aid room in the middle quarters.
- The boat shed and any part of the jetty crane structure.

Communication

The island has email, fax, phone and voice mail facilities and any incoming messages will be passed on to visitors by the duty NPWS officer on the island. These facilities will not be available to visitors to send outgoing messages except in case of emergency. Both CDMA and digital mobile telephone both work very well over most of the Island.

Safety, First Aid and Medical

- For some activities you will be provided with personal protective equipment. Please use/wear it appropriately.
- Montague Island is equipped with comprehensive first aid kits located as follows: Inside the western door of the Head Keepers quarters; in the boatshed; in the workshop; and in the 1st Aid room of the middle quarters. An oxygen kit and a Royal Flying Doctor medical kit that has strict protocols regarding its use are also in the 1st Aid Room.
- Fire extinguishers are located near the rear door, in the kitchen and in the rear courtyard of the Head Keeper Quarters. Evacuation plans are provided in each bedroom. The building has smoke detectors installed.
- All injuries (minor or otherwise) **should be reported** immediately to the guide who will then report to the NPWS duty officer on the island.

Food handling

We ask all people to agree to use either gloves and/or the provided antiseptic wash as a matter of hygiene.

Room issues

Please let your guide know of any problems or issues with linen or with your room, (eg. spillages) as this will help us rectify them sooner rather than later. Bedding and towels are bagged at the end of the tour for transport to the mainland. Please assist by making sure only soiled linen goes into the bag. If necessary, quilt covers or blankets should go in a different bag.

Fishing, Snorkelling and Swimming

These activities are not catered for within the framework of these tours. Engaging in them without the necessary legally appropriate conditions may jeopardise the future of overnight trips. Opportunities may exist to undertake these with professional operators during your stay. Your pre-departure information and your guide will supply details. Wading is possible at Old Jetty Bay, subject to sea conditions and presence of marine stingers etc. Talk to your guide.

Tour activities

Overnight trips have flexible timetables to allow for opportunities as they arise and to match the seasons and the weather. A tentative plan for each day will be placed on the whiteboard near the rear door. If you have suggestions or ideas, please let your guide know.

All activities will start from near the rear door. Please advise your guide if you are planning an alternative.

Feedback

We welcome your feedback during and after your Montague experience. Opportunities for feedback are available through your guide, through a short survey at the end of your tour and through later contact with CVA or NPWS Narooma.

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