



Application guide: Visits to Kidney Island

FIG Environment Department

Version 2: May 2024

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1. Introduction

Some of the small offshore islands located around the Falkland Islands are owned by The Crown, which are managed by the Falkland Islands Government, including Kidney Island. If you wish to visit Kidney Island you will need to be in possession of a valid visitor permit issued through the FIG Environment Department. This guidance document will provide useful information for your visit and guide you in making your application to visit Kidney Island. This document outlines the process for applying for a visitor permit and advises on some practical aspects for your trip.

The FIG Environment Department is responsible for processing your application and issuing your permit. If you need further information in relation to the visitor permit application please do not hesitate to contact us.

There are approximately 126 named islands, but most Crown-owned islands are rarely visited. The most popular visit site is Kidney Island, and due to its popularity has a modified visitor protocol; focusing on the risks of heavier foot traffic to the island whilst ensuring fair visitor access. Every island is a unique environment but many of the offshore islands are home to a wide range of iconic wildlife: from fur seals and sea lions to albatross and rockhopper penguins. Most of these islands are densely covered in Tussac grass that grows up to 3 m high and have rocky approaches.

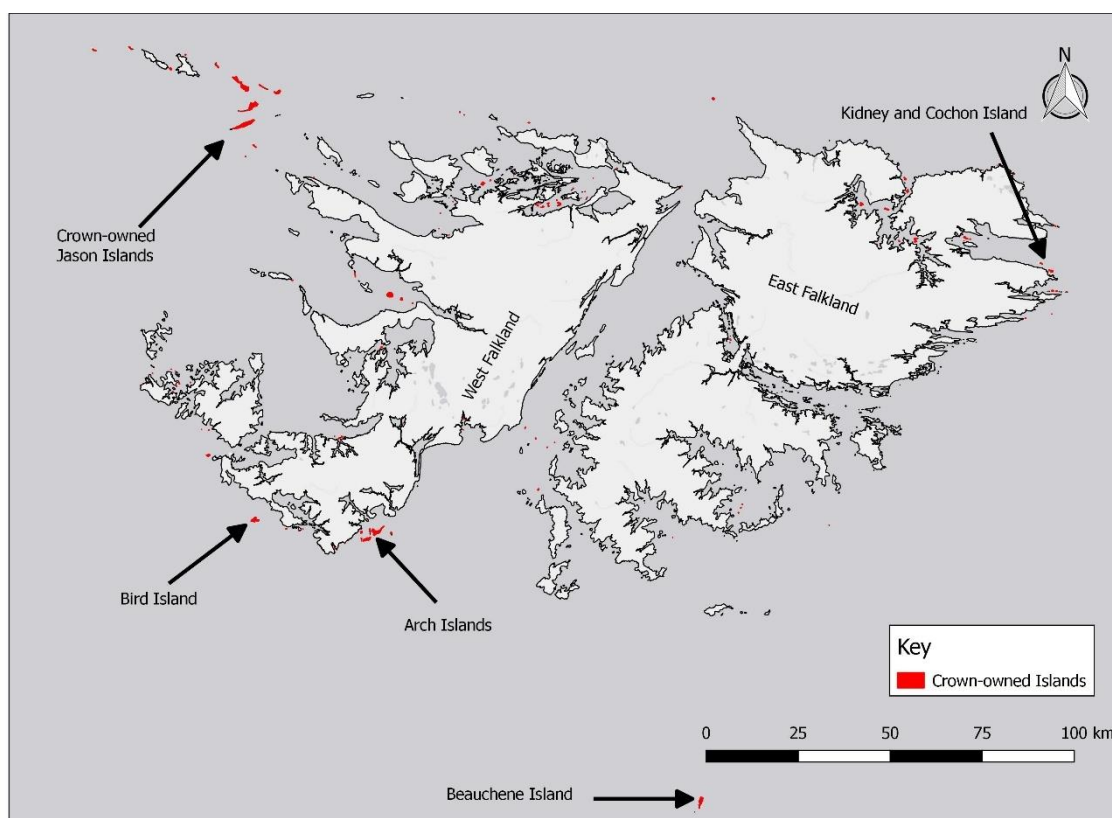


Figure 1: Crown-owned Islands around the Falkland Islands. Some key islands and island groups are labelled.

Of the 126 islands, 27 are part of a National Nature Reserve. A list of all islands is found in Appendix 1 noting whether these are a National Nature Reserve. National Nature Reserves enjoy a legal protection, although all visitors to islands are obliged to conform to the conditions of their visitor permit.

2. The Application Process

Any groups or persons wishing to visit a Crown-owned island must obtain a Visitor Permit. Depending on the nature of your visit, you may also be required to obtain additional permissions such as, for example, a research permit. Please allow up to three (3) working days for your application to be processed. Applications for the same day cannot be processed. Please note that it is not possible to expedite this process.

The Kidney Island booking platform and this guide can be found on the website of the FIG Environment Department: <https://www.falklands.gov.fk/policy/environment/kidney-island>

If you have any questions or queries during the application process, please do not hesitate to contact the Environment Department on 28449 or email environment@sec.gov.fk.

Please note that there are no landing fees and all permits are provided free of charge.

For Kidney Island visits, you will find the booking process online. Please note that the 09:00 slot is for a morning trip and the 16:00 slot is for an afternoon/evening trip; the time of your trip does not need to correspond exactly with one of these times, but needs to be either a morning or afternoon/evening trip. Before proceeding with your booking, please read through the conditions found on the Kidney Island webpage, which you will need to agree to when completing your booking. When you make a booking, you will need to provide the following information:

- Full name
- Email address
- Falkland Islands Address
- Falkland Islands telephone number: A working, Falkland Islands telephone number is imperative and should be used to contact the group leader/guide on or near the date of your trip. Please note that it is not appropriate to provide the office contact details of a tour operator here.
- Falkland Islands telephone number on the day of visit
- Identify which of the three types of people you (the organiser) are (you could be any combination of these):
 - The group leader: This is the person who organises the trip. They organise the list of people going on the trip, and arrange a date and book the boat. For the other people on the trip they are the person of contact. Your group leader does also not need to be yourself or your guide but should be the person taking overall responsibility for the safety of the group.
 - The group guide: This is the person who guides the group when on the island. A guide does not need to be a qualified guide but someone who takes responsibility for

ensuring the welfare of the environment and wildlife of the island during the trip and monitors the group in conjunction with this. The guide can be anyone who has previously visited the island (or a similar island – NB: for Kidney Island previous experience to visiting the island is essential), feels comfortable guiding a group and is familiar with the countryside code.

- A person not going on the trip: You may be an agent for organising trips or simply someone who has offered to do “the paperwork”. But, most important, you are not going on the trip.

If you are unclear about which of these roles you take, please do not hesitate to contact us. Please note that access to the island without the named guide and group leader is not permitted.

- Contact details of the group leader (if not yourself)
- Contact details of your group guide. We reserve the right to contact your guide and ensure they are comfortable guiding your group. It is imperative that you provide a working Falkland Islands telephone number.
- Number of people in your group (adults and children). Note that for Kidney Island, a maximum of 14 people are able to land on the island at any one time. It is recommended that there is at least one adult for each child under the age of 16 to ensure proper supervision.
- Reason for visit. If you are undertaking scientific research or filming operations please detail other permit numbers here and briefly describe the research or filming procedures intended. If you are waiting for these permits to be processed or have not received your permit number yet, you will not be able to submit your application. If you cannot locate your number then please do not hesitate to contact us. Your permit will not be issued until other relevant permissions are in place.
- Approximate duration of visit
- Name of vessel or company taking you to the island. If you have booked through Sullivan Shipping or FIC Penguin Travel but are unsure of the name of the vessel, then please provide the name of your tour operator.

Please note your permit to Kidney Island is only finalised once you receive a permit issued by the Environment Department. If you do not receive your permit within the three (3) working days of your booking, please contact the Environment Department to ensure that your booking it has been received.

3. Planning your trip

Visits to Kidney Island are popular during the summer season and often become booked up rapidly. Your trip can be organised through a number of straightforward steps. Groups can be up to 14 people in size, including your group guide, but bear in mind that there are limitations on the amount of passengers that some boats can carry. Once you have organised your group, please check the date availability on the Kidney Island booking platform.

Boat trips can be arranged through Sullivan Shipping or Penguin Travel, FIC, though you can also take an alternative boat. You are responsible for booking this, and the FIG Environment Department cannot provide logistical support for your trip.

Once you have confirmed these details, please make your booking through the Kidney Island booking platform, provided on the Kidney Island webpage.

To protect the unique biodiversity of the island, we require that you undertake a number of biosecurity precautions prior to your visit to the island:

- Please ensure that you and your party check your pockets, velcro and any creases in clothing or bags for any plant or animal products, including soil. These should *not* be brought onto the island. Please also ensure that your shoes are clean and free of any dirt.
- If you are bringing food and drink with you, please ensure this is kept in air tight containers.
- You are required to use a footbath filled with a biocide (Virkon¹) before landing on Kidney Island. This is to prevent harmful pathogens being passed on to wildlife. Once you have completed your booking online, you will receive a confirmation email with details regarding collection of the footbath and Virkon. The footbath and virkon can be collected from the Environment Department during working hours and it must be returned to the Environment Department the first working day after your trip. Please note that we reserve the right to take a deposit for the footbath.

Your guide should be familiar with the Countryside Code and will be responsible for informing you of it; however, your whole group is responsible for adhering to it. This and other environmental guidance is available from the Department or our website

(<https://www.falklands.gov.fk/policy/environment/kidney-island>).

¹ Please note that Virkon is a chemical substance and subject to COSHH procedures. Ensure you only use Virkon with adequate ventilation and do not inhale the product. Ensure that if you do get Virkon onto your exposed skin, face or eyes that you rinse it carefully. Do not drink Virkon. If you would like more information please contact the FIG Environment Department for the full Material Safety Data Sheet.

FALKLAND ISLANDS Countryside Code

The Countryside Code is here to protect our environment so it is there for all to enjoy. We ask that those visiting and living on the Islands follow it when they are out and about. It's easy...

In general:

- ▶ Always ask for **permission** before entering private land. Follow any advice and guidelines you are given by the landowner.
- ▶ **Keep to paths** wherever possible. Leave gates, open or shut, as you find them.
- ▶ Be aware of the **high fire risk** throughout the Islands particularly when lighting fires, BBQs or smoking.
- ▶ **Do not litter.** Take your rubbish home with you or use a bin provided.

Around wildlife:

- ▶ **Never feed, touch, handle, injure or kill** any wild bird or animal.
- ▶ **Always give animals the right of way.** Do not block the routes of birds or animals coming home to their colonies. **Do not startle or chase** wildlife from resting or breeding areas.
- ▶ **Prevent disturbance** to wild birds and animals. Always stay on the outside of colonies and remain at least 6 m (20 ft) away.
- ▶ When taking photographs or filming stay low to the ground. Move slowly and quietly. Make sure your flash is turned off. Always be aware of the location of your camera and equipment. **Do not use self-sticks to get closer to wildlife.**

In nature:

- ▶ **Some plants are protected** and should not be picked. Wildflowers are there for all to enjoy.
- ▶ Whalebones, skulls, eggs, etc. **may not be exported** from the Falkland Islands. These should be **left where they are found.**
- ▶ **Do not disfigure** rocks or buildings.

Failure to follow this guidance may constitute an offence in the Falkland Islands and could result in significant fines.



Kidney Island is a natural area, the ground is uneven and all the animals you encounter are wild. Please take exceptional care when planning your approach to and route across the island to avoid disturbing animals and for your own safety. There is a high density of burrows from burrowing seabirds on the island. All visitors should be made aware of this and care should be taken not to trample burrows. The western end of the island should not be visited unless special permission has been received due to its high burrow density.

During the peak visitor season, the fire risk on the island greatly increases. Peat and Tussac grass are highly flammable at any time of the year. There should be no fires or naked flames on the island at any point. At present there is no place on the island where a stove can be used. Smoking is strictly prohibited on the island. The tussac cutters hut is also closed to visits due to the risk the structure provides to human health. Please do not attempt to enter the hut.

An online Post Visitor feedback form must be completed by the group leader. A link to this will be provided by email 24 hours after your trip and should be completed as soon as possible. The feedback is essential for monitoring the state of the environment on the island and helping us protect the island.

4. Understanding your permit

Your permit will be made out to your group leader and provide the following detail:

- Name of your guide; note it is not permitted to land on the island without your guide. They should be first on and last off the island.
- Date and duration of your visit. You may visit for a shorter period within this timeframe but should never exceed this.
- Number of people in your group. You should never exceed the number of people in your group stated on your permit. This number includes the guide. Less people than on your permit may access the island.
- The name of the vessel taking you to the island. If this changes, please let us know at least 3 working days ahead of your trip so we can amend your permit.

Once you receive your permit, please read this carefully and take note of any conditions. If you have any queries, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

5. Liability

5.1 Health, Safety and welfare arrangements

It is a condition of the issuance of any permit to visit any of the Islands in Falkland Islands Government Ownership that those leading and/or guiding the visit ensure that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment is performed regarding the risks that may be encountered and that the salient provisions of that risk assessment and any mitigation measures it recommends are brought to the attention of the visitors.

In addition, all visitors are to be appropriately briefed regarding:

- The risks that may be encountered including the risks posed by:
 - Embarking and disembarking vessels, including transferring to another sea-going craft, going ashore whether at a jetty, on beaches, on a rocky shore, and the risk of slipping;
 - Being on board the vessel and being at sea;
 - Getting wet;
 - Getting cold – including the effects of wind-chill;
 - Marine life, wild animals and wild birds;
 - The landscape – including cliffs, rocks, stones, mounds, holes, burrows, tussock grass, unstable surfaces;
- Additional risks faced by the young, the elderly, the infirm, the vulnerable etc.;
- The importance of wearing appropriate clothing and footwear;
- Any safety equipment required to be worn such as life-jackets or life preservers;
- What to do in a medical emergency including the limitations of medical assistance available through calling 999;
- The limitations regarding mobile phone signals;
- The importance of remaining in contact with the guide throughout the visit – and what to do if the visitor becomes separated from the group and guide; and

- What to do when encountering wildlife – including the risks associated with large marine mammals such as sea-lions.

It is the responsibility of the guide to ensure that before visitors assemble to be taken on the trip that they are made aware of the welfare facilities that will be available to them whilst on the trip including what provision will be made for toilets, water, hot and cold drinks, snacks and the like.

5.2 Protection of Wildlife and Wildlife habitats

It is a condition of the issuance of any permit to visit any of the Islands in Falkland Islands Government Ownership that those leading and/or guiding the visit ensure that all visitors accompanying them are appropriately briefed on:

- The Countryside code;
- Biosecurity precautions required for the visit;
- Falkland Islands law – Conservation of Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999 and the criminal offences it creates regarding:
 - disturbing wild animals, wild birds, and marine animals, and
 - protecting wild plants

5.3 Limitation of liability

It is a condition of the issuance of any permit to visit any of the Islands in Falkland Island Government Ownership that those leading and/or guiding the visit accept the following limitation of liability provision:

The Falkland Islands Government is not and shall not be responsible or liable in any manner for any harm, injury, loss and/or damage of whatever nature suffered by you, any of your visitors, any other party or third party nor shall it be responsible or liable in any manner for any damage to property resulting from any acts, neglect, reckless conduct and omissions occurring (however caused or arising) during your trip.

It is a further condition of the issuance of any permit that this limitation of liability is brought to the attention of all visitors

5.4 Certificate and signature

In relation to 5.1 to 5.3 above you will be asked to sign the following:

“I confirm that I have read and understood each and every part of this Application Form and the conditions attached to it. I confirm that:

- a suitable and sufficient risk assessment will be performed
- all visitors will be briefed about:
 - the risks they may encounter
 - the importance of wearing or having available appropriate clothing and footwear
 - the importance of wearing and/or using safety equipment
 - how to respond to emergencies, including medical emergencies
 - what to do if they become separated from the group or guide

- the limitations on the medical facilities on the Falkland Islands including the limitations of the emergency services and the mobile phone service
- protecting and preserving wildlife
- their need to take personal responsibility and to take care of themselves and those in their party
- the Falkland Islands Government's limitation of liability

6. Appendix 1: Crown-owned islands

Island Name	General Location	National Nature Reserve
Albemarle Rock	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Big Arch Island	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Clump Island (Arch Islands)	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Natural Arch Island	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Pyramid Rock	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Tussac Island (Arch Islands)	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	Yes
Beauchene Island	Beauchene Island	Yes
Cochon Island	Berkeley Sound	Yes
Kidney Island	Berkeley Sound	Yes
Elephant Jason	Jason Islands	Yes
Elephant Jason rocks centre	Jason Islands	Yes
Elephant Jason rocks east	Jason Islands	Yes
Elephant Jason rocks west	Jason Islands	Yes
Flat Jason	Jason Islands	Yes
Jason East Cay	Jason Islands	Yes
Jason West Cay	Jason Islands	Yes
North Fur Island	Jason Islands	Yes
Seal Rocks (Jasons) centre	Jason Islands	Yes
Seal Rocks (Jasons) northwest	Jason Islands	Yes
Seal Rocks (Jasons) southeast	Jason Islands	Yes
South Fur Island	Jason Islands	Yes
South Jason	Jason Islands	Yes
The Fridays northwest	Jason Islands	Yes
White Rock (Jasons)	Jason Islands	Yes
Middle Island (King George Bay)	King George Bay	Yes
Bird Island	Port Stephens	Yes
Sea Dog Island	Weddell Island and Smylie Channel	Yes
Sisters centre island	Adventure Sound	No
Sisters north island	Adventure Sound	No
Sisters south island	Adventure Sound	No
Cape Lagoon island	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	No
Cape Lagoon islet	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	No
Eagle Rock islet	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	No
Pyramid Rock islet	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	No
Sand Bay Island	Arch Islands and Cape Lagoon	No
Porpoise Island	Bay of Harbours	No
Shag Rock / Little Harbour Island	Bay of Harbours	No
Castle Rock (Beaver)	Beaver Island	No
Channel Rock	Beaver Island	No
Cucumber Island	Beaver Island	No
Herald Rock	Beaver Island	No
Rat Island (Beaver)	Beaver Island	No

Stinker Island	Beaver Island	No
The Colliers	Beaver Island	No
Celery Island (Berkeley Sound)	Berkeley Sound	No
Hog Island	Berkeley Sound	No
Peat Islet	Berkeley Sound	No
Shag Rock	Bleaker Island	No
Clay Island	Brenton Loch	No
Bluff Island	Byron Sound	No
Hill Cove islet	Byron Sound	No
Skip Rock	Byron Sound	No
Sloop Rock	Carcass Island and Westpoint Island	No
Fox Bay east islet	Fox Bay	No
Government Island	Fox Bay	No
Knob Island (Fox Bay)	Fox Bay	No
Box Island south islet	Golding Island area	No
Monday Island	Golding Island area	No
Clarke's Islet	Jason Islands	No
Steeple Jason islet	Jason Islands	No
Gid's Island	King George Bay	No
Green Island (King George Bay)	King George Bay	No
Rabbit Island Rocks main island	King George Bay	No
Rabbit Island Rocks south island	King George Bay	No
Round Island	King George Bay	No
Split Island (King George Bay) islet	King George Bay	No
The Crouching Lions north	King George Bay	No
The Crouching Lions south	King George Bay	No
Leicester Creek Island	Lake Hammond	No
Dutchmans Island	NE coast of East Falkland	No
Macbride Head islet	NE coast of East Falkland	No
Seal Bay islet	NE coast of East Falkland	No
Volunteer Rocks	NE coast of East Falkland	No
Eddystone Rock	North Falkland Sound	No
White Rock (White Rock Bay)	North Falkland Sound	No
East Rock	Pebble Island	No
Penguin Point islet	Pebble Island	No
White Island	Pebble Island	No
Christmas Island (Port Egmont)	Port Egmont	No
Seal Point Islet	Port Harriet	No
Wolf Rock	Port Harriet	No
Bullock Island (Philomel Pass)	Port Philomel	No
Seal Island (Philomel Pass)	Port Philomel	No
Castle Rock (Port Stephens)	Port Stephens	No
Stephens Bluff	Port Stephens	No
Ten Shilling Bay Islands islet	Port Stephens	No
Bottom Island	Port William	No
Kelly Rock	Port William	No

Seal Rocks (Port William)	Port William	No
Top Island (Port William)	Port William	No
Double Creek Islands east island	Queen Charlotte Bay	No
Double Creek Islands west island	Queen Charlotte Bay	No
Double Creek outer islet	Queen Charlotte Bay	No
Double Rocks	River Harbour	No
Kent Island	River Harbour	No
Kent Island Knob	River Harbour	No
Rabbit Island (River Harbour)	River Harbour	No
River Island Knob	River Harbour	No
River Island Reef	River Harbour	No
Shag Rocks (River Harbour)	River Harbour	No
Top Island (River Harbour)	River Harbour	No
Top Island centre islet	River Harbour	No
Top Island east islet	River Harbour	No
Top Island south islet	River Harbour	No
Top Island west islet	River Harbour	No
Big Shag Island	Salvador Waters	No
Bob's Island	Salvador Waters	No
Centre Island (Salvador Waters)	Salvador Waters	No
Ear Island	Salvador Waters	No
Green Island (Salvador Waters)	Salvador Waters	No
Little Shag Island	Salvador Waters	No
Ram Island	Salvador Waters	No
Teal Inlet islet	Salvador Waters	No
Whittington's Rincon islet	Salvador Waters	No
Channel Point islet	Saunders Island	No
Port Egmont Cays northwest	Sedge Island area	No
Port Egmont Cays southeast	Sedge Island area	No
Clump Island	South Falkland Sound	No
North Wedge Island	South Falkland Sound	No
Stinker Island (Falkland Sound)	South Falkland Sound	No
Wedge Islet	South Falkland Sound	No
West Island (Falkland Sound)	South Falkland Sound	No
Cliff Island (Weddell)	Weddell Island and Smylie Channel	No
Horse Block	Weddell Island and Smylie Channel	No
Letterbox Island	Weddell Island and Smylie Channel	No