

1 SETTLEMENT TRAIL

This short trail is ideal for families and provides a great introduction to the immediate area. Taking in whale bones, settlement buildings and gardens, the walk also provides a glimpse into farming life with the chance to watch farm activities such as shearing or cattle work if the time is right. It includes a short climb to the summit of Bleaker's highest hill, an altitude of just 27m (89 feet), giving views across the island and surrounding ocean.



Main route

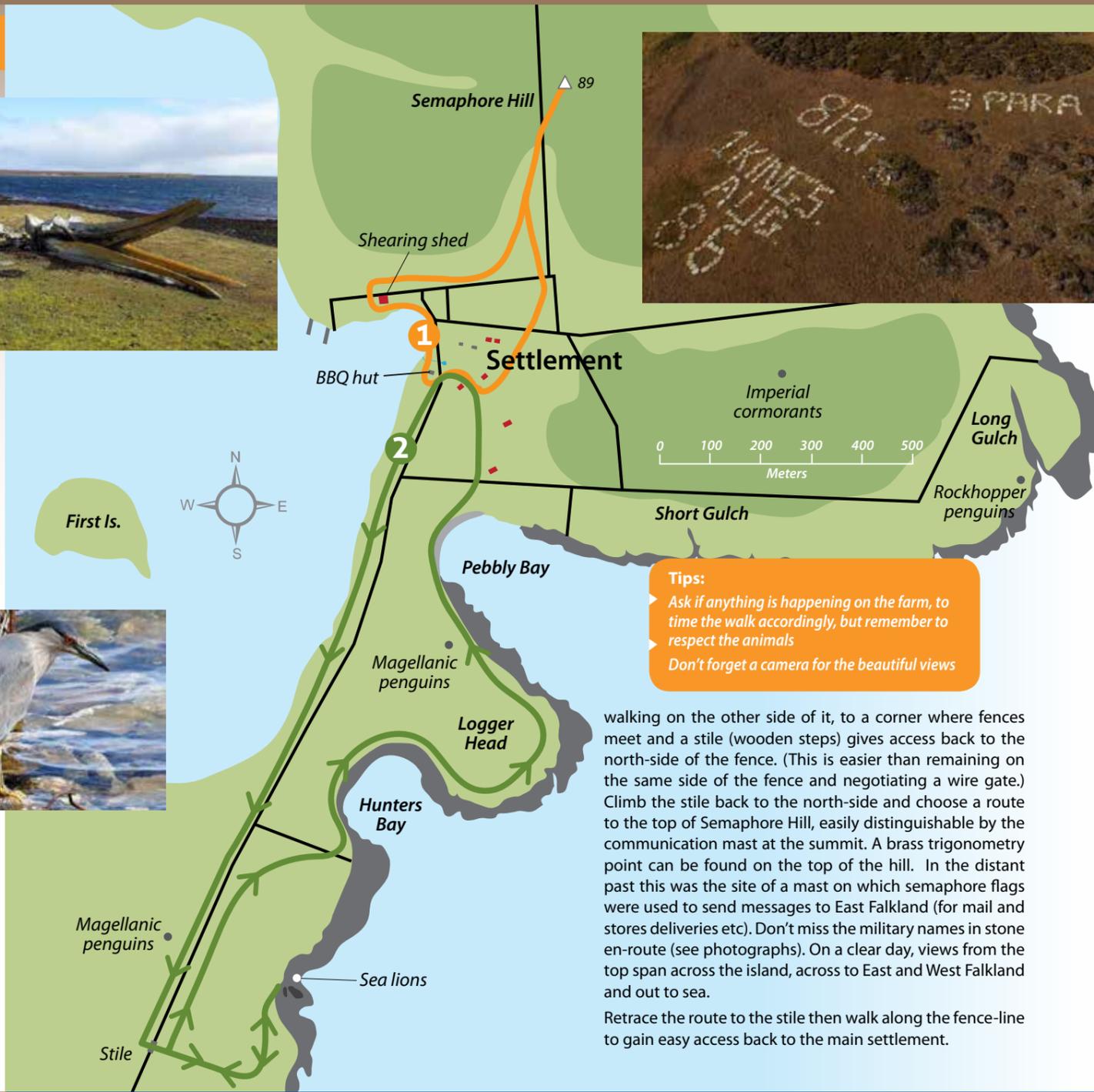
Walk first to the BBQ hut in front of Cassard House. Take time to admire the "Essence of our Community" artwork on the south-facing wall then go through the gate to see a full Sei whale skeleton, above the beach, nestled into the green.

From here a route can usually be picked out along the shore in a northerly direction towards the shearing shed and stock yards, taking in a pretty little bay with a variety of birds. If the weather is very wet and the shoreline muddy, an alternative is to walk back through the gate by the bar-b-que hut, down through the low valley via the wind turbine and solar panels, then through two gates along a clear track. You may see the remains of the 'Black Swan' on the beach, a boat used around East Falkland and Bleaker in the 1960s. You will see the old stone jetty; at low tide you may see the remains of historic fish walls built to catch local mullet. Take a detour here to see the vegetable gardens if wished.



To the west of the shearing shed are views to the remains of a jetty, on which cormorants frequently perch, and landing ramp with First, Second and Third Islands beyond. A variety of birds can be seen in this area, notably the black-crowned night heron. You will also find two old cart wheels perched on the bank above the beach.

Walk around the shearing shed and follow the track through a gate, then turn immediately right to follow the fence-line to the east. Look for a gate on the right-hand side just after passing the gardens and polytunnels; go through this gate. Continue to follow the fence-line, now



Tips:
 Ask if anything is happening on the farm, to time the walk accordingly, but remember to respect the animals
 Don't forget a camera for the beautiful views

walking on the other side of it, to a corner where fences meet and a stile (wooden steps) gives access back to the north-side of the fence. (This is easier than remaining on the same side of the fence and negotiating a wire gate.) Climb the stile back to the north-side and choose a route to the top of Semaphore Hill, easily distinguishable by the communication mast at the summit. A brass trigonometry point can be found on the top of the hill. In the distant past this was the site of a mast on which semaphore flags were used to send messages to East Falkland (for mail and stores deliveries etc). Don't miss the military names in stone en-route (see photographs). On a clear day, views from the top span across the island, across to East and West Falkland and out to sea.
 Retrace the route to the stile then walk along the fence-line to gain easy access back to the main settlement.

Countryside Code

1. Always ask for permission before entering private land.
2. Keep to paths wherever possible. Leave gates, open or shut, as you find them.
3. Be aware of the high fire risk throughout the islands; particularly when lighting fires, BBQs or smoking.
4. Do not litter*. Take your rubbish home with you or use a bin provided
5. Never feed, touch, handle, injure or kill any wild bird or animal*.
6. 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*.
7. Prevent disturbance to wild birds and animals. Always stay on the outside of colonies and remain at least 6 m (20 ft) away.
8. 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, including "selfie-sticks". Do not use this to get closer to wildlife.
9. Some plants are protected and should not be picked*. Wildflowers are there for all to enjoy.
10. Whalebones, skulls, eggs, etc. may not be exported from the Falkland Islands*. They should be left where they are found.
11. Do not disfigure rocks or buildings*.

*Such actions may constitute an offence in the Falkland Islands and could result in significant fines.

Stay Safe

Seek local advice before heading out on any walk. Weather changes quickly, the terrain can be tough and there may be areas to avoid at certain times of year due to breeding wildlife and the farming calendar. Always tell someone where you are going with an estimated return time. Ensure you have plenty to eat and drink along with additional warm clothing.

Bleaker Island is a working sheep and cattle farm and has many gates and these should be used wherever possible. However, fences can be crossed if necessary. Signs show electrification but this is only at certain times of year. Ask before setting out. Please respect fences, stepping over or through the wires not onto them, and leave all gates as found; they are there for a reason!

Self-Guided WALKS

BLEAKER ISLAND SETTLEMENT & THE SOUTH

Flora & Fauna highlights

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Black-chinned siskin | Magellanic oystercatcher | Two-banded plover |
| Blackish oystercatcher | Magellanic penguin | Upland goose |
| Black-throated finch | Patagonian crested duck | White-rumped sand piper |
| Brown-hooded gull | Rock cormorant | White-tufted grebe |
| Chiloe widgeon | Rockhopper penguin | |
| Dark-faced ground tyrant | Ruddy-headed goose | |
| Dolphin gull | Rhufous-chested dotterel | Diddle dee |
| Falklands flightless steamer duck | Silvery grebe | Christmas bush |
| Falklands pipit | Silver teal | Lady's slipper |
| Falklands thrush | Skua | Pig vine |
| Gentoo penguin | Snowy sheathbill | Scurvy Grass |
| Grass wren | South American snipe | Sea cabbage |
| Imperial cormorant | Southern caracara | Small fern |
| Kelp goose | Southern giant petrel | Tussac grass |
| Kelp gull | Speckled teal | Yellow violet |
| Long tailed meadowlark | Striated caracara | |
| | Tussac bird | |



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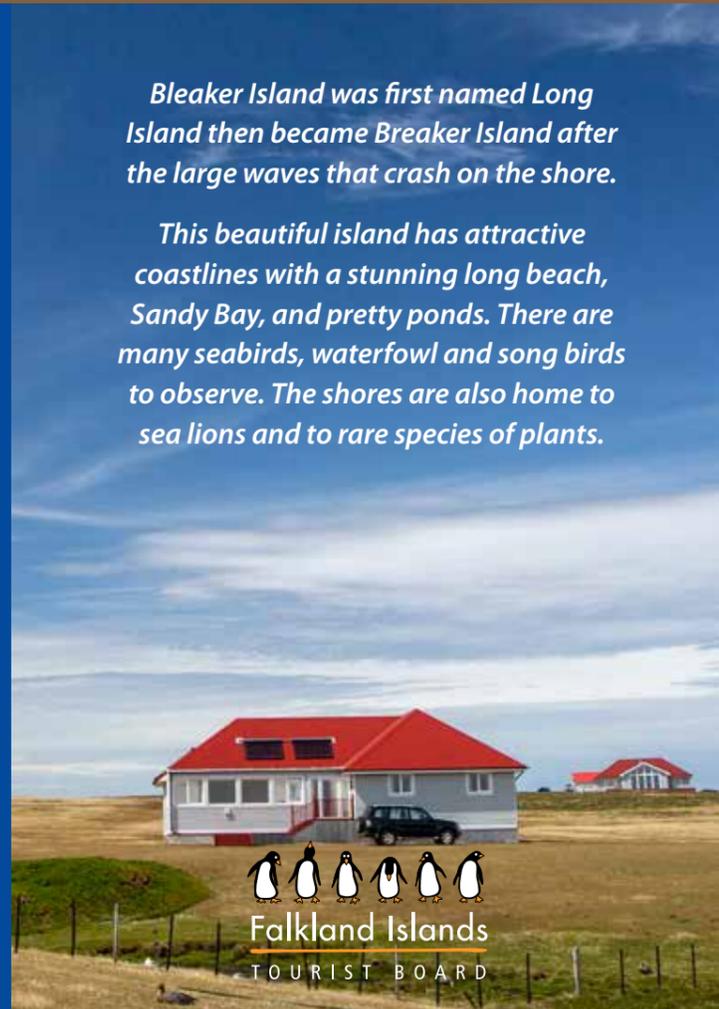
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Self-Guided WALKS

BLEAKER ISLAND SETTLEMENT & THE SOUTH

Bleaker Island was first named Long Island then became Breaker Island after the large waves that crash on the shore.

This beautiful island has attractive coastlines with a stunning long beach, Sandy Bay, and pretty ponds. There are many seabirds, waterfowl and song birds to observe. The shores are also home to sea lions and to rare species of plants.



2 SEA LIONS & PEBBLY BAY

This short walk introduces visitors to the spectacular sea lion colony, close to the settlement. As well as breeding sea lions, young elephant seals are also sometimes seen here. The main return route via the edge of the tussac fringe also takes in part of the eastern shoreline, including Pebbly Bay, with opportunities to observe a range of birdlife and spot the Falklands' only butterfly. The walking is initially on easy ground but the return is partially through tussac with undulating surfaces, unless returning via the same outward route.

Main route

Leave the settlement by the gate in the southern corner. Follow the fence-line along Beach Paddock, either by walking closely alongside the fence itself or using the vehicle track. Where the vehicle track splits, always use the left-hand option and keep the fence in sight.

A stile can be seen where the fence turns sharp left. Climb over the stile, then walk around the left side of the small cove, keeping to the right of the tussac grass. Following the low cliff and after passing 2 small rocky islands, look downwards to see sea lions and perhaps some elephant seals. Head further left through the tussac to a sheltered bay. From here it is possible to sit and enjoy viewing the animal activities. There is also a lovely view along the coastline to the north.

Return to the stile. To walk back via a small, pretty bay (Hunter's Bay), then Pebbly Bay, stay on the same side of the fence and walk along the western edge of the tussac. Stay close to the tussac to find a route down to Hunter's Bay and then on to Pebbly Bay itself. There are two fences to climb en-route. The southern-most houses of the



Tips:

To avoid undue disturbance, approach the area with the sea lions very carefully; take local advice about the best method to do this and take care too in the tussac grass in case mammals are concealed

Enjoy the flowers as they bloom in their location; please do not pick them

settlement will be in view; walk along this line-of-sight to the southern side of Pebbly Bay. Shorebirds and songbirds can be seen and heard along this stretch.

Walk around to the western side of Pebbly Bay. Tiny yellow violet and lady's slipper grow on the raised beach here; sometimes the Queen of the Falklands fritillary butterfly is seen. Aim towards the house "The Outlook" up the slope and through some low gorse to a small stile which leads back to the main settlement.

Walk shorter

If the concept of walking through the tussac and climbing fences is not appealing, this can be a simple out-and-back route from the sea lion colony. On returning to the stile, climb back to the original side to take the same track home.



Tips:

Take binoculars to make the most of wildlife watching opportunities.

From September to mid-January, the eggs and chicks of giant petrels are very vulnerable to predator attack; please ask for advice before setting out to determine locations and stay well inland.



3 SEA LIONS, DOLPHINS & RAM PADDOCK POND

This delightful walk takes in the main sea lion colony on the island, Dolphin Bay and the lovely Ram Paddock Pond along with some attractive stretches of coastline. Southern sea lions are guaranteed at certain times of year, dolphins can never be promised but are frequently seen and Ram Paddock Pond is a pretty sight to behold. There are many places to stop for a snack and enjoy beautiful views. The outward walking is on easy ground and although the return route requires walking across slightly more challenging terrain, there are no very difficult sections.

Main route

Follow the opening instructions for the walk "Sea lions and Pebbly Bay" to reach and explore the sea lion colony. Return to the same stile and climb back over it, then cut across the open ground, almost straight across (south-westerly direction) to a gate; it can be seen in the near distance. Go through the gate and walk along the fence-line to the south-south-west. (The fence should be to the left.) At the end of the fence is a large, open bay.

From this point the most rewarding route is to hug the coastline but there are vehicle tracks running in much the same direction which provide easier walking. There are charming small cliffs and much birdlife to observe. The ground is quite eroded in parts but with some pleasant green areas. Dolphin Bay is just over 1km from the gate. As the name suggests, Peale's dolphins are often seen here.

Walk around or along the bay until a fence comes into view at the top of a hill. Continue in the direction of the fence but look to the right; Ram Paddock Pond is easily seen. Turn right and pick up a vehicle track heading towards it. Stay on the north side of the pond to then turn right and return to the settlement by walking along the coastline.

This is a straightforward route to follow, though walking can be a little challenging over diddle-dee heath. Make use of sheep tracks as much as possible and the occasional vehicle track; again there are vehicle tracks which will return to the settlement but the coastal route is much nicer. The settlement can often be seen but the coastal path takes several turns, running first north-east, then south-east and finally north-east again. There is a particularly lovely bluff with views to Second Island to the left, First Island to the right and the settlement in between.

The final section is over a shingle and grey-sand beach. There is a fence; easy to negotiate then the vehicle track is joined to return to the settlement by the south gate.

Walk shorter

This is an enjoyable walk in winter months but as there are no sea lions to see, the opening can be shortened by heading directly for the gate noted in the first paragraph. To do this, leave the settlement by the southern gate, follow the track or fenceline, keeping mainly left. After about 1km the gate can be seen at the top of a rise (hill) – walk straight to it.

