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	TITLE : 7		
ACTION	NAME	DATE	SIGNATURE
WRITTEN BY		August 10, 2024	

REVISION HISTORY

NUMBER	DATE	DESCRIPTION	NAME

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Chapter 1

7

1.1 7.guide

Texified version of data for Antarctica.

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Antarctica

1.2 7.guide/Antarctica

Antarctica

Geography (Antarctica)
 Geography (Antarctica 2. usage)
 People (Antarctica)
 Government (Antarctica)
 Government (Antarctica 2. usage)
 Economy (Antarctica)
 Communications (Antarctica)
 Defense Forces (Antarctica)

1.3 7.guide/Geography (Antarctica)

Geography (Antarctica)

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Location:
 continent mostly south of the Antarctic Circle
 Map references:
 Antarctic Region
 Area:
 total area:
 14 million km2 (est.)
 land area:
 14 million km2 (est.)
 comparative area:
 slightly less than 1.5 times the size of the US
 note:
 second-smallest continent (after Australia)
 Land boundaries:
 none, but see entry on International disputes
 Coastline:
 17,968 km
 Maritime claims:
 none, but see entry on International Disputes
 International disputes:
 Antarctic Treaty defers claims (see Antarctic Treaty Summary below);
 sections (some overlapping) claimed by Argentina, Australia, Chile, France
 (Adelie Land), New Zealand (Ross Dependency), Norway (Queen Maud Land), and
 UK; the US and most other nations do not recognize the territorial claims ←
 of
 other nations and have made no claims themselves (the US and Russia reserve
 the right to do so); no formal claims have been made in the sector between
 90 degrees west and 150 degrees west, where, because of floating ice,
 Antarctica is unapproachable from the sea
 Climate:
 severe low temperatures vary with latitude, elevation, and distance from ←
 the
 ocean; East Antarctica is colder than West Antarctica because of its higher
 elevation; Antarctic Peninsula has the most moderate climate; higher
 temperatures occur in January along the coast and average slightly below
 freezing
 Terrain:

about 98% thick continental ice sheet and 2% barren rock, with average elevations between 2,000 and 4,000 meters; mountain ranges up to 4,897 meters high; ice-free coastal areas include parts of southern Victoria Land ←

Wilkes Land, the Antarctic Peninsula area, and parts of Ross Island on McMurdo Sound; glaciers form ice shelves along about half of the coastline, and floating ice shelves constitute 11% of the area of the continent

Natural resources:

none presently exploited; iron ore, chromium, copper, gold, nickel, ←
platinum

and other minerals, and coal and hydrocarbons have been found in small, uncommercial quantities

Land use:

arable land:

0%

permanent crops:

0%

meadows and pastures:

0%

forest and woodland:

0%

other:

100% (ice 98%, barren rock 2%)

Irrigated land:

0 km²

1.4 7.guide/Geography (Antarctica 2. usage)

Geography (Antarctica 2. usage)

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Environment:

mostly uninhabitable; katabatic (gravity-driven) winds blow coastward from the high interior; frequent blizzards form near the foot of the plateau; a circumpolar ocean current flows clockwise along the coast as do cyclonic storms that form over the ocean; during summer more solar radiation reaches the surface at the South Pole than is received at the Equator in an equivalent period; in October 1991 it was reported that the ozone shield, which protects the Earth's surface from harmful ultraviolet radiation, had dwindled to the lowest level ever recorded over Antarctica; active ←

volcanism

on Deception Island and isolated areas of West Antarctica; other seismic activity rare and weak

Note:

the coldest, windiest, highest, and driest continent

1.5 7.guide/People (Antarctica)

People (Antarctica)

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Population:

no indigenous inhabitants; note - there are seasonally staffed research stations

Summer (January) population:

over 4,115 total; Argentina 207, Australia 268, Belgium 13, Brazil 80, ←
Chile

256, China NA, Ecuador NA, Finland 11, France 78, Germany 32, Greenpeace ←
12,

India 60, Italy 210, Japan 59, South Korea 14, Netherlands 10, NZ 264,

Norway 23, Peru 39, Poland NA, South Africa 79, Spain 43, Sweden 10, UK ←
116,

Uruguay NA, US 1,666, former USSR 565 (1989-90)

Winter (July) population:

over 1,046 total; Argentina 150, Australia 71, Brazil 12, Chile 73, China
NA, France 33, Germany 19, Greenpeace 5, India 1, Japan 38, South Korea 14,
NZ 11, Poland NA, South Africa 12, UK 69, Uruguay NA, US 225, former USSR
313 (1989-90)

Year-round stations:

42 total; Argentina 6, Australia 3, Brazil 1, Chile 3, China 2, Finland 1,
France 1, Germany 1, India 1, Japan 2, South Korea 1, NZ 1, Poland 1, South
Africa 3, UK 5, Uruguay 1, US 3, former USSR 6 (1990-91)

Summer only stations:

over 38 total; Argentina 7, Australia 3, Chile 5, Germany 3, India 1,
Italy 1, Japan 4, NZ 2, Norway 1, Peru 1, South Africa 1, Spain 1, Sweden ←
2,

UK 1, US numerous, former USSR 5 (1989-90); note - the disintegration of ←
the

former USSR has placed the status and future of its Antarctic facilities in
doubt; stations may be subject to closings at any time because of ongoing
economic difficulties

1.6 7.guide/Government (Antarctica)

Government (Antarctica)

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Names:

conventional long form:

none

conventional short form:

Antarctica

Digraph:

AY

Type:

Antarctic Treaty Summary:

The Antarctic Treaty, signed on 1 December 1959 and entered into force on ←
23

June 1961, establishes the legal framework for the management of Antarctica ←

Administration is carried out through consultative member meetings--the 17 ←
th

Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting was in Venice in November 1992.

Currently, there are 41 treaty member nations: 26 consultative and 15

acceding. Consultative (voting) members include the seven nations that ←
claim

portions of Antarctica as national territory (some claims overlap) and 19
nonclaimant nations. The US and some other nations that have made no claims
have reserved the right to do so. The US does not recognize the claims of
others. The year in parentheses indicates when an acceding nation was voted
to full consultative (voting) status, while no date indicates the country
was an original 1959 treaty signatory. Claimant nations are--Argentina,
Australia, Chile, France, New Zealand, Norway, and the UK. Nonclaimant
consultative nations are--Belgium, Brazil (1983), China (1985), Ecuador
(1990), Finland (1989), Germany (1981), India (1983), Italy (1987), Japan,
South Korea (1989), Netherlands (1990), Peru (1989), Poland (1977), South
Africa, Spain (1988), Sweden (1988), Uruguay (1985), the US, and Russia.
Acceding (nonvoting) members, with year of accession in parentheses,
are--Austria (1987), Bulgaria (1978), Canada (1988), Colombia (1988), Cuba
(1984), Czechoslovakia (1962), Denmark (1965), Greece (1987), Guatemala
(1991), Hungary (1984), North Korea (1987), Papua New Guinea (1981), ←

Romania

(1971), Switzerland (1990), and Ukraine (1992).

Article 1:

area to be used for peaceful purposes only; military activity, such as
weapons testing, is prohibited, but military personnel and equipment may be
used for scientific research or any other peaceful purpose

Article 2:

freedom of scientific investigation and cooperation shall continue

Article 3:

free exchange of information and personnel in cooperation with the UN and
other international agencies

Article 4:

does not recognize, dispute, or establish territorial claims and no new
claims shall be asserted while the treaty is in force

Article 5:

prohibits nuclear explosions or disposal of radioactive wastes

Article 6:

includes under the treaty all land and ice shelves south of 60 degrees 00
minutes south

Article 7:

treaty-state observers have free access, including aerial observation, to
any area and may inspect all stations, installations, and equipment; ←
advance

notice of all activities and of the introduction of military personnel must
be given

Article 8:

allows for jurisdiction over observers and scientists by their own states

Article 9:

frequent consultative meetings take place among member nations

1.7 7.guide/Government (Antarctica 2. usage)

Government (Antarctica 2. usage)

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Article 10:

treaty states will discourage activities by any country in Antarctica that are contrary to the treaty

Article 11:

disputes to be settled peacefully by the parties concerned or, ultimately, by the ICJ

Article 12, 13, 14:

deal with upholding, interpreting, and amending the treaty among involved nations

Other agreements:

more than 170 recommendations adopted at treaty consultative meetings and ratified by governments include – Agreed Measures for the Conservation of Antarctic Fauna and Flora (1964); Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Seals (1972); Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (1980); a mineral resources agreement was signed in 1988 but was subsequently rejected; in 1991 the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty was signed and awaits ratification; this agreement provides for the protection of the Antarctic environment through five specific annexes on marine pollution, fauna, and flora, environmental impact assessments, waste management, and protected areas; it also ← prohibits

all activities relating to mineral resources except scientific research; four parties have ratified Protocol as of June 1993

Legal system:

US law, including certain criminal offenses by or against US nationals, ← such

as murder, may apply to areas not under jurisdiction of other countries. Some US laws directly apply to Antarctica. For example, the Antarctic Conservation Act, 16 U.S.C. section 2401 et seq., provides civil and criminal penalties for the following activities, unless authorized by regulation of statute: The taking of native mammals or birds; the introduction of nonindigenous plants and animals; entry into specially protected or scientific areas; the discharge or disposal of pollutants; and the importation into the US of certain items from Antarctica. Violation of the Antarctic Conservation Act carries penalties of up to \$10,000 in fines and 1 year in prison. The Departments of Treasury, Commerce, Transportation ←

and Interior share enforcement responsibilities. Public Law 95-541, the US Antarctic Conservation Act of 1978, requires expeditions from the US to Antarctica to notify, in advance, the Office of Oceans and Polar Affairs, Room 5801, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520, which reports such plans to other nations as required by the Antarctic Treaty. For more information contact Permit Office, Office of Polar Programs, National Science Foundation, Washington, DC 20550.

1.8 7.guide/Economy (Antarctica)

Economy (Antarctica)

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Overview:

No economic activity at present except for fishing off the coast and small-scale tourism, both based abroad.

1.9 7.guide/Communications (Antarctica)

Communications (Antarctica)

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Ports:

none; offshore anchorage only at most coastal stations

Airports:

42 landing facilities at different locations operated by 15 national governments party to the Treaty; one additional air facility operated by commercial (nongovernmental) tourist organization; helicopter pads at 28 of these locations; runways at 10 locations are gravel, sea ice, glacier ice, or compacted snow surface suitable for wheeled fixed-wing aircraft; no ← paved

runways; 16 locations have snow-surface skiways limited to use by ski-equipped planes--11 runways/skiways 1,000 to 3,000 m, 3 runways/skiways less than 1,000 m, 5 runways/skiways greater than 3,000 m, and 7 of unspecified or variable length; airports generally subject to severe restrictions and limitations resulting from extreme seasonal and geographic conditions; airports do not meet ICAO standards; advance approval from governments required for landing

1.10 7.guide/Defense Forces (Antarctica)

Defense Forces (Antarctica)

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Note:

the Antarctic Treaty prohibits any measures of a military nature, such as the establishment of military bases and fortifications, the carrying out of military maneuvers, or the testing of any type of weapon; it permits the ← use of military personnel or equipment for scientific research or for any other peaceful purposes