

# South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

(dependent territory of the UK)

## Geography

Location: Southern South America, islands in the South Atlantic Ocean, east of the tip of South America

Area:

total area: 4,066 sq km

land area: 4,066 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive fishing zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: variable, with mostly westerly winds throughout the year, interspersed with periods of calm; nearly all precipitation falls as snow

Terrain: most of the islands, rising steeply from the sea, are rugged and mountainous; South Georgia is largely barren and has steep, glacier-covered mountains; the South Sandwich Islands are of volcanic origin with some active volcanoes

Natural resources: fish

Land use:

arable land: 0%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 0%

forest and woodland: 0%

other: 100% (largely covered by permanent ice and snow with some sparse vegetation consisting of grass, moss, and lichen)

Environment:

natural hazards: the South Sandwich Islands have prevailing weather conditions that generally make them difficult to approach by ship; they are also subject to active volcanism

Note: the north coast of South Georgia has several large bays, which provide good anchorage; reindeer, introduced early in this century, live on South Georgia

## People

Population: no indigenous population; there is a small military garrison on South Georgia, and the British Antarctic Survey has a biological station on Bird Island; the South Sandwich Islands are uninhabited

## Government

Names:

conventional long form: South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands

Type: dependent territory of the UK

Capital: none; Grytviken on South Georgia is the garrison town

Independence: none (dependent territory of the UK)

National holiday: Liberation Day, 14 June (1982)

Constitution: 3 October 1985

## Economy

Overview: Some fishing takes place in adjacent waters. There is a potential source of income from harvesting fin fish and krill. The islands receive income from postage stamps produced in the UK.

Transportation

Highways:

total: NA

Ports: Grytviken

Airports: none

Defence Forces

Note: defence is the responsibility of the UK