

Bouvet Island

Bouvet Island (Norwegian: *Bouvetøya* [bu.ˈvɛ.øj.ɑ]^[*]^[1]^[2]) is an uninhabited subantarctic high island and dependency of Norway located in the South Atlantic Ocean at 54°25.8′S 3°22.8′E, thus putting it north of and outside the Antarctic Treaty System. It lies at the southern end of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and is the most remote island in the world, approximately 2,600 kilometres (1,600 mi) south-southwest of the coast of South Africa and approximately 1,700 kilometres (1,100 mi) north of the Princess Astrid Coast of Queen Maud Land, Antarctica.

The island has an area of 49 square kilometres (19 sq mi), of which 93 percent is covered by a glacier. The centre of the island is an ice-filled crater of an inactive volcano. Some skerries and one smaller island, Larsøya, lie along the coast. Nyrøysa, created by a rock slide in the late 1950s, is the only easy place to land and is the location of a weather station.

The island was first spotted on 1 January 1739 by Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier, after whom it was later named. He recorded inaccurate coordinates and the island was not sighted again until 1808, when the British whaler captain James Lindsay named it **Lindsay Island**.^[*] The first claim of landing, although disputed, was by American sailor Benjamin Morrell. In 1825, the island was claimed for the British Crown by George Norris, who named it **Liverpool Island**. He also reported Thompson Island as nearby, although this was later shown to be a phantom island. The first *Norvegia* expedition landed on the island in 1927 and claimed it for Norway. At this time the island was named *Bouvet Island*, or "Bouvetøya" in Norwegian.^[*] After a dispute with the United Kingdom, it was declared a Norwegian dependency in 1930. It became a nature reserve in 1971.

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Bouvet Island

Bouvetøya^[*]

Bouvet-øya^[*]



Flag



Location of Bouvet Island (circled in red, in the Atlantic Ocean)

Government	Dependent territory
Monarch	Harald V of Norway
Administration	Ministry of Justice and Public Security

Dependency of Norway

Claimed	1 December 1927
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- Annexed - Dependency - Nature reserve	23 January 1928 27 February 1930^[2] 17 December 1971^[1]
Area	
- Total - Glaciated	49 km² (19 sq mi) 93%
Population	
 • Census	0
ISO 3166 code	BV
Internet TLD	.bv ^a
a. Not in use.	

History

Discovery and early sightings

The island was discovered on 1 January 1739 by Jean-Baptiste Charles Bouvet de Lozier, commander of the French ships *Aigle* and *Marie*.^[5] Bouvet, who was searching for a presumed large southern continent, spotted the island through the fog and named the cape he saw Cap de la Circoncision. He was not able to land and did not circumnavigate his discovery, thus not clarifying if it was an island or part of a continent.^[6] His plotting of its position was inaccurate,^[7] leading several expeditions to fail to find the island again.^[8] James Cook's second voyage set off from Cape Verde on 22 November 1772 to find Cape Circoncision, but was unable to find the cape.^[9]

The next expedition to spot the island was in 1808 by James Lindsay, captain of the Samuel Enderby & Sons' (SE&S) whaler *Snow Swan*.^[10] They reached the island and recorded its position, though they were unable to land.^{[11][12]} Lindsay could confirm that the "cape" was indeed an island.^[6] The next expedition to arrive at the island was American Benjamin Morrell and his seal hunting ship *Wasp*. Morrell, by his own account, found the island without difficulty (with "improbable ease", in the words of historian William Mills)^[11] before landing and hunting 196 seals.^[6] In his subsequent lengthy description, Morrell does not mention the island's most obvious physical feature, its permanent ice cover.^[13] This has caused some commentators to doubt whether he actually visited the island.^{[11][14]}

On 10 December 1825, SE&S's George Norris, master of the *Sprightly*, landed on the island,^[6] named it Liverpool Island and claimed it for the British Crown and George IV on 16 December.^[15] The next expedition to spot the island was Joseph Fuller and his ship *Francis Allyn* in 1893, but he was not able to land on the island. German Carl Chun's *Valdivia* expedition arrived at the island in 1898. They were not able to land, but dredged the seabed for geological samples.^[16] They were also the first to accurately fix the island's position.^[15]



Southeast coast of Bouvet Island in 1898

Norris also spotted a second island in 1825, which he named Thompson Island, which he placed 72 kilometres (45 mi) north-northeast of Liverpool Island. Thompson Island was also reported in 1893 by Fuller, but in 1898 Chun did not report seeing such an island, nor has anyone since.^[16] However, Thompson Island continued to appear on maps as late as 1943.^[17] A 1967 paper suggested that the island might have disappeared in an undetected volcanic eruption, but in 1997 it was discovered that the ocean is more than 2,400 metres (7,900 ft) deep in the area.^[18]

Norwegian annexation

In 1927, the First *Norvegia Expedition* – led by Harald Horntvedt and financed by Lars Christensen – was the first to make an extended stay on the island. Observations and surveying were conducted on the islands and oceanographic measurements performed in the sea around it. At Ny Sandefjord, a small hut was erected and, on 1 December, the Norwegian flag was hoisted and the island claimed for Norway. The annexation was established by a royal decree on 23 January 1928.^[15] The claim was initially protested by the United Kingdom, on the basis of Norris's landing and annexation. However, the British position was weakened by Norris's sighting of two islands and the uncertainty as to whether he had been on Thompson or Liverpool (i.e. Bouvet) Island. Norris's positioning deviating from the correct location combined with the island's lack of a natural harbour and small size made the UK accept the Norwegian claim.^[19] This resulted in diplomatic negotiations between the two countries, and in November 1929, Britain renounced its claim to the island.^[15]



The annexation of the island on 1 December 1927

The Second *Norvegia Expedition* arrived in 1928 with the intent of establishing a manned meteorological radio station, but a suitable location could not be found.^[15] By then both the flagpole and hut from the previous year had been washed away. The Third *Norvegia Expedition*, led by Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, arrived the following year and built a new hut at Kapp Circoncision and on Larsøya. The expedition carried out aerial photography of the island and was the first Antarctic expedition to use aircraft.^[20] The *Dependency Act*, passed by the Parliament of Norway on 27 February 1930, established Bouvet Island as a dependency, along with Peter I Island and Queen Maud Land.^[2] The eared seal was protected on and around the island in 1929 and in 1935 all seals around the island were protected.^[21]



The first hut, built on Kapp Circoncision, in 1929

Recent history

In 1955, the South African frigate *Transvaal* visited the island.^[22] Nyrøysa, a rock-strewn ice-free area, the largest such on Bouvet, was created sometime between 1955 and 1958, probably by a landslide.^[23] In 1964 the island was visited by the British naval ship *HMS Protector*. On 17 December 1971, the entire island and its territorial waters were protected as a nature reserve.^[1] A scientific landing was made in 1978, during which the underground temperature was measured to be 25 °C (77 °F).^[24] In addition to scientific surveys,^[16] a lifeboat was recovered at Nyrøysa, although no people were found.^[24] The lifeboat belonged to a scientific reconnaissance vessel ("The scientific reconnaissance vessel "Slava-9" began his regular 13th cruise with the "Slava" Antarctic whaling fleet on 22 October 1958 ... On 27 November she got to Bouvet Island. A group of sailors landed which couldn't leave the island in time because of worsened weather and stayed on it about 3 days. The people were withdrawn only by helicopter on 29 November"^[25]).

The Vela Incident took place on 22 September 1979, on or above the sea between Bouvetøya and Prince Edward Islands, when the American Vela Hotel satellite 6911 registered an unexplained double flash. This observation has been variously interpreted as a nuclear test, meteor, or instrumentation glitch.^{[24][26][27][28]}

Since the 1970s, the island has been frequently visited by Norwegian Antarctic expeditions. In 1977, an automated weather station was constructed, and for two months in 1978 and 1979 a manned weather station was operated.^[20] In March 1985, a Norwegian expedition experienced sufficiently clear weather to allow the entire island to be photographed from the air, resulting in the first accurate map of the whole island, 247 years after its discovery.^[29] The Norwegian Polar Institute established a 36-square-metre (390 sq ft) research station, made of shipping containers, at Nyrøysa in 1996. On 23 February 2006, the island experienced a magnitude 6.2 earthquake whose epicentre was about 100 km (62 mi) away,^[30] weakening the station's foundation and causing it to be blown to sea during a winter storm.^[31] In 2014, a new research station was sent from Tromsø in Norway, via Cape Town, to Bouvet. The new station is designed to house six people for periods of two to four months.^[32]

The *Hanse Explorer* expedition ship visited Bouvet Island on 20 and 21 February 2012 as part of "Expédition pour le Futur". The expedition's goal was to land and summit the highest point on the island. The first four climbers (Aaron Halstead, Will Allen, Bruno Rodi and Jason Rodi) were the first humans to climb the highest peak. A time capsule containing the top visions of the future for 2062 was left behind. The next morning, Aaron Halstead led five other climbers (Sarto Blouin, Seth Sherman, Chakib Bouayed, Cindy Sampson, and Akos Hivekovics) to the top.^[33]

In the mid-1980s, Bouvetøya, Jan Mayen, and Svalbard were considered as locations for the new Norwegian International Ship Register, but the flag of convenience registry was ultimately established in Bergen, Norway in 1987.^[34] In 2007, the island was added to Norway's tentative list of nominations as a World Heritage Site as part of the transnational nomination of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge.^[35]

Krill fishing in the Southern Ocean is subject to the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, which defines maximum catch quotas for a sustainable exploitation of Antarctic krill.^[36] Surveys conducted in 2000 showed high concentration of krill around Bouvetøya. In 2004, Aker BioMarine was awarded a concession to fish krill, and additional quotas were awarded from 2008 for a total catch of 620,000 tonnes (610,000 long tons; 680,000 short tons).^[37] There is a controversy as to whether the fisheries are sustainable, particularly in relation to krill being important food for whales.^[38] In 2009, Norway filed with the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf to extend the outer limit of the continental shelf past 200 nautical miles (230 mi; 370 km) surrounding the island.^[39]

Amateur Radio DX-peditions

Several amateur radio DX-peditions have been conducted to the island.

Year	Expedition	Result
1977–79	3Y1VC, 3Y3CC, and 3Y5DQ	First serious activations
1989	Club Bouvet	47,000 QSOs during their stay on the island ^[40]
1990	3Y5X	In 16 days the operators made almost 50, 000 QSOs ^[41]
2008	3Y0E AN-002	ZS6GCM Petrus ^[42]
2018	3Y0Z	An international group organized and initiated a DX-pedition that arrived near Bouvet on January 31, 2018. On February 3, 2018, the DX-pedition was cancelled due to poor weather conditions and trouble with the ship's engines. ^{[43][44]}

Geography

Bouvetøya is a volcanic island constituting the top of a volcano located at the southern end of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge in the South Atlantic Ocean. The island measures 9.5 by 7 kilometres (5.9 by 4.3 mi) and covers an area of 49 square kilometres (19 sq mi),^[21] including a number of small rocks and skerries and one sizable island, Larsøya.^[45] It is located in the Subantarctic, south of the Antarctic Convergence,^[46] which, by some definitions, would place the island in the Southern Ocean.^[47] Bouvet Island is the most remote island in the world.^[48] The closest land is Queen Maud Land of Antarctica, which is 1,700 kilometres (1,100 mi) to the south,^[8] and Gough Island, 1,600 kilometres (990 mi) to the north.^[49] The closest inhabited location is Tristan da Cunha island, 2,250 kilometres (1,400 mi) to the northwest.^[21]

Nyrøysa is a 2-by-0.5-kilometre (1.2 by 0.3 mi) terrace located on the north-west coast of the island. Created by a rock slide sometime between 1955 and 1957, it is the island's easiest access point.^[29] It is the site of the automatic weather station.^[50] The north-west corner is the peninsula of Kapp Circoncision.^[51] From there, east to Kapp Valdivia, the coast is known as Morgenstiernekysten.^[52] Store Kari is an islet located 1.2 kilometres (0.75 mi) east of the cape.^[53] From Kapp Valdivia, southeast to Kapp Lollo, on the east side of the island, the coast is known as Victoria Terrasse.^[54] From there to Kapp Fie at the southeastern corner, the coast is known as Mowinckelkysten. Svartstranda is a section of black sand which runs 1.8 kilometres (1.1 mi) along the section from Kapp Meteor, south to Kapp Fie.^[55] After rounding Kapp Fie, the coast along the south side is known as Vogtkysten.^[56] The westernmost part of it is the 300 metres (980 ft) long shore of Sjøelefantstranda.^[57] Off Catoodden, on the south-western corner, lies Larsøya, the only island of any size off Bouvetøya.^[45] The western coast from Catoodden north to Nyrøysa, is known as Esmarchkysten. Midway up the coast lies Norvegiaodden (Kapp Norvegia)^[58] and 0.5 kilometres (0.31 mi) off it the skerries of Bennskjæra.^[59]

93 percent of the island is covered by glaciers, giving it a domed shape.^[29] The summit region of the island is Wilhelmplataet, slightly to the west of the island's center.^[16] The plateau is 3.5 kilometres (2.2 mi) across^[60] and surrounded by several peaks.^[16] The tallest is Olavtoppen, 780 metres (2,560 ft) above mean sea level (AMSL),^[29]



Bouvet Island



Glacier on Bouvet Island's west coast

followed by Lykketoppen (766 metres or 2,513 feet AMSL)^[61] and Mosbytoppane (670 metres or 2,200 feet AMSL).^[62] Below Wilhelmplatået is the main caldera responsible for creating the island.^[16] The last eruption took place 2000 BC, producing a lava flow at Kapp Meteor.^[60] The volcano is presumed to be in a declining state.^[16] The temperature 30 centimetres (12 in) below the surface is 25 °C (77 °F).^[29]

The island's total coastline is 29.6 kilometres (18.4 mi).^[63] Landing on the island is very difficult, as it normally experiences high seas and features a steep coast.^[29] During the winter, it is surrounded by pack ice.^[21] The Bouvet Triple Junction is located 275 kilometres (171 mi) west of Bouvet Island. It is a triple junction between the South American Plate, the African Plate and the Antarctic Plate, and of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge, the Southwest Indian Ridge and the American–Antarctic Ridge.^[64]



West coast of Bouvet Island

Climate

The island is located south of the Antarctic Convergence, giving it a marine Antarctic climate dominated by heavy clouds and fog. It experiences a mean temperature of −1 °C (30 °F),^[29] with January average of 1 °C (34 °F) and September average of −3 °C (27 °F).^[49] The monthly high mean temperatures fluctuate little through the year.^[65] The peak temperature of 14 °C (57 °F) was recorded in March 1980, caused by intense sun radiation. Spot temperatures as high as 20 °C (68 °F) have been recorded in sunny weather on rock faces.^[29] The island predominantly experiences a weak west wind.^[49]

Climate data for Bouvet Island													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Year
Average high °C (°F)	3 (37)	4 (39)	3 (37)	2 (36)	1 (34)	0 (32)	−1 (30)	−1 (30)	−1 (30)	0 (32)	1 (34)	3 (37)	1.2 (34)
Average low °C (°F)	0 (32)	0 (32)	0 (32)	0 (32)	−2 (28)	−4 (25)	−5 (23)	−5 (23)	−5 (23)	−3 (27)	−2 (28)	−1 (30)	−2.2 (27.9)
Source: ^[65]													

Nature

The harsh climate and ice-bound terrain limits vegetation to fungi (ascomycetes including lichens) and non-vascular plants (mosses and liverworts). The flora are representative for the maritime Antarctic and are phytogeographically similar to the South Sandwich Islands and South Shetland Islands. Vegetation is limited because of the ice cover, although snow algae are recorded. The remaining vegetation is located in snow-free areas such as nunatak ridges and other parts of the summit plateau, the coastal cliffs, capes and beaches. At Nyrøysa, five species of moss, six ascomycetes (including five lichens), and twenty algae have been recorded. Most snow-free areas are so steep and subject to frequent avalanches that only crustose lichens and algal formations are sustainable. There are six endemic ascomycetes, three of which are lichenized.^[50]



Cape Valdivia, Bouvet Island, 2009



NASA image of Bouvet Island from space

The island has been designated as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International because of its importance as a breeding ground for seabirds. In 1978–79 there were an estimated 117,000 breeding penguins on the island, consisting of macaroni penguin and, to a lesser extent, chinstrap penguin and Adélie penguin, although these were only estimated to be 62,000 in 1989–90. Nyrøysa is the most important colony for penguins, supplemented by Posadowskybreen, Kapp Circoncision, Norvegiaodden and across from Larsøya. Southern fulmar is by far the most common non-penguin bird with 100,000 individuals. Other breeding seabirds consist of Cape petrel, Antarctic prion, Wilson's storm petrel, black-bellied storm petrel, subantarctic skua, southern giant petrel, snow petrel, slender-billed prion and Antarctic tern. Kelp gull is thought to have bred on the island earlier. Non-breeding birds which can be found on the island include the king penguin, wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, Campbell albatross, Atlantic yellow-nosed albatross, sooty albatross, light-mantled albatross, northern giant petrel, Antarctic petrel, blue petrel, soft-plumaged petrel, Kerguelen petrel, white-headed petrel, fairy prion, white-chinned petrel, great shearwater, common diving petrel, south polar skua and parasitic jaeger.^[50]

The only non-bird vertebrates on the island are seals, specifically the southern elephant seal and Antarctic fur seal, which both breed on the island. In 1998–99, there were 88 elephant seal pups and 13,000 fur seal pups at Nyrøysa. Humpback whale and killer whale are seen in the surrounding waters.^[50]

Politics and government

Bouvetøya is one of three dependencies of Norway.^[66] Unlike Peter I Island and Queen Maud Land, which are subject to the Antarctic Treaty System,^[67] Bouvetøya is not disputed.^[63] The dependency status entails that the island is not part of the Kingdom of Norway, but is still under Norwegian sovereignty. This implies that the island can be ceded without violating the first article of the Constitution of Norway.^[66] Norwegian administration of the island is handled by the Polar Affairs Department of the Ministry of Justice and the Police, located in Oslo.^[68]

The annexation of the island is regulated by the Dependency Act of 24 March 1933. It establishes that Norwegian criminal law, private law and procedural law apply to the island, in addition to other laws that explicitly state they are valid on the island. It further establishes that all land belongs to the state, and prohibits the storage and detonation of nuclear products.^[2] Bouvet Island has been designated with the ISO 3166-2 code BV^[69] and was subsequently awarded the country code top-level domain .bv on 21 August 1997.^[70] The domain is managed by Norid but is not in use.^[71] The exclusive economic zone surrounding the island covers an area of 441,163 square kilometres (170,334 sq mi).^[72]

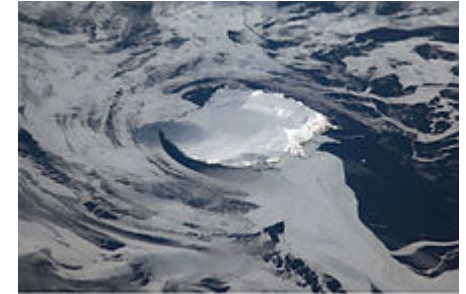


Image courtesy of the Image Science & Analysis Laboratory, NASA Johnson Space Center

Fiction

- The island figures prominently in the book *A Grue of Ice* (1962, published in the US as *The Disappearing Island*), an adventure novel based on Tristan da Cunha, Bouvet, and the mythical Thompson Island, by Geoffrey Jenkins.^[73]
- Bouvet is the setting of the 2004 movie *Alien vs. Predator*, in which it is referred to using its Norwegian name "Bouvetøya"^[74] even though in the unrated edition of the film, a satellite focuses in on the island which is geographically situated in the approximate location of Peter I Island.
- Bouvet features in the novel *Warhead* (2005) by Andy Remic.
- Bouvet features in the novel *Batmans Schönheit* (2010) by Heinrich Steinfest.

See also

- List of islands of Norway
- List of Antarctic and subantarctic islands

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- The Most Remote Island in the World (<http://sometimes-interesting.com/2012/01/11/the-most-remote-island-in-the-world/>) *Sometimes Interesting*. 11 November 2012
 - Amateur Radio DX Pediton to Bouvet Island 3Y0Z (<http://www.bouvetdx.org/>)
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