

The International Council on Monuments and Sites
International Polar Heritage Committee (ICOMOS IPHC)
Antarctic Underwater Material Culture Guidelines, 2021

ACKNOWLEDGING that Antarctic underwater material culture, located in lakes, the intertidal zone and on the seabed, ranging from shipwrecks to general debris, can inform historical knowledge, may have heritage values and has the potential to provide data for environmental and other scientific research.

RESPECTFUL of the fact that some underwater material culture is associated with accidents in which lives were lost in the pursuit of peace and science in Antarctica.

RECALLING that the wreck of *Endurance*, in the Weddell Sea has been listed as HSM 93, although the wreck's exact location is yet to be confirmed; a shipwreck located on the shore and intertidal area of Elephant Island as HSM 74; the wreck of the *San Telmo* at Livingston Island is commemorated by an onshore cairn and plaque (HSM 59), and Spain has expressed its intention to invoke the Guidelines for pre-1958 Historic Remains (Resolution 5. 2001) if the shipwreck is located and to ‘... present a proposal to officially include the ship as a new Historic Site and Monument’.¹

AWARE that SCUBA diving technology and developments in underwater Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUV), Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROV), other robotic technologies, submersibles and submarines have enhanced access to Antarctic underwater material culture.

RECOGNISING that there may be some underwater material culture that has the potential to inform the public on Antarctic history and science, digitisation for online presentation and controlled access may be appropriate.

CONCERNED that inappropriate access to underwater material culture can disturb, damage or destroy the fragile historical record, potentially impact heritage and cultural values, and diminish scientific research potential.

RECOGNISING that the governance and management of underwater material culture are integral to Antarctica as a region of peace and science, the following are the ICOMOS International Polar Heritage Committee’s guidelines:

1. The Antarctic Guidelines for pre-1958 Historic Remains (Resolution 5. 2001) apply to Antarctic underwater material culture;
2. Environmental Impact Assessments and permitting of activity in underwater areas should, when relevant, include consideration of the potential impacts of wading, diving, snorkelling, underwater robotic systems, *e.g.* Autonomous Underwater Vehicles (AUVs), Remotely

¹ Spain. 2019. Notification of pre-1958 historic remains: The Spanish shipwreck “San Telmo”. CEP XLII WP 18 Rev.7.

- Operated Vehicles (ROVs), submersibles, submarines, dredging, net sampling, seabed coring, anchor deployment and construction in relationship to underwater material culture;
3. In the event of the accidental discovery of underwater material culture, the person or persons present or the operator of the robotic or other equipment should record the site of the discovery, retain any associated imagery and related data, and carefully withdraw from the immediate area of the discovery. Unpermitted surveying and examination is not acceptable;
 4. The discovery should be reported to the permitting Party and the presumed underwater material culture source Party or Parties who will then undertake further documentary research and, if necessary, permitting of onsite surveying and examination of the underwater material culture;
 5. In the event of the origin of the underwater material culture being unknown, a Party or Parties may propose that they assume responsibility to undertake further documentary research and, if necessary, permitting of an onsite investigation to survey and identify the underwater material culture;
 6. When the origin of the underwater material culture has been confirmed, and an archaeological survey has been conducted, the source Party or Parties shall consider its potential for inclusion into the heritage protection system under Annex V to the Protocol on Environmental Protection as an Historic Site or Monument (HSM), Antarctic Specially Protected Area (APSA) or Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA).
 7. In the event of the source of the underwater material culture not being identified, a Party or Parties may consider its potential for inclusion into the heritage protection system under Annex V to the Protocol on Environmental Protection as an HSM, APSA or ASMA;
 8. Only authorised archaeological surveying and investigation should be undertaken. The ongoing archaeological research plan may incorporate the scientific investigation of related environmental impacts and other research;
 9. Parties engaged with Antarctic underwater material culture are encouraged to consult with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) International Polar Heritage Committee, and the ICOMOS International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage;²
 10. Compliance with the ICOMOS International Committee on Underwater Cultural Heritage Committee's *Charter on the Protection and Management of Underwater Cultural Heritage*³ and other related international conventions and standards is recommended.

² ICOMOS International Polar Heritage Committee, <http://www.iphc-icomos.org/>; ICOMOS International Committee on the Underwater Cultural Heritage, <http://icuch.icomos.org>.

³ https://www.icomos.org/charters/underwater_e.pdf