COASTAL SEDIMENT POLLUTION AT SITES
FREQUENTLY VISITED BY TOURISM OPERATIONS

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Information Paper submitted by the Antarctic and Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC)
ASOC has commissioned chemical analyses of 34 coastal sediment samples from Deception Island, South Shetland Islands, by the laboratory of the Institute of Physical Chemistry of Materials, Environment and Energy (INQUIMAE, in Spanish), University of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The samples were collected during 2001-02 on the beach surface below the mean high water mark around the entire perimeter of Port Foster, the inner harbour of Deception Island, and in control sites on the outer shores.

The preliminary results suggest detectable hydrocarbon concentrations associated with shipping and related activities at a number of Deception Island sites. Hydrocarbon concentrations appear to be correlated with the level and location of human activities at Deception Island.

The highest hydrocarbon concentrations, in excess of ten times higher than background levels, are located in the eastern and northern part of Port Foster, where most tourism operations take place. Deception Island has some of the most visited tourism sites in the Antarctic Peninsula.

ASOC intends to undertake further analysis of the samples and, if appropriate, to inform the Deception Island Management Group. ASOC will of course be pleased to report back to the CEP on these matters.