

# The World Factbook



## Antarctica :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands (territory of Australia)

### Introduction :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands

#### Background:

The United Kingdom transferred these uninhabited, barren, sub-Antarctic islands to Australia in 1947. Populated by large numbers of seal and bird species, the islands have been designated a nature preserve.

### Geography :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands

#### Location:

islands in the Indian Ocean, about two-thirds of the way from Madagascar to Antarctica

#### Geographic coordinates:

53 06 S, 72 31 E

#### Map references:

Antarctic Region

#### Area:

**total:** 412 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 203

**land:** 412 sq km

**water:** 0 sq km

#### Area - comparative:

slightly more than two times the size of Washington, DC

#### Land boundaries:

0 km

#### Coastline:

101.9 km

#### **Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**exclusive fishing zone:** 200 nm

#### **Climate:**

antarctic

#### **Terrain:**

Heard Island - 80% ice-covered, bleak and mountainous, dominated by a large massif (Big Ben) and an active volcano (Mawson Peak); McDonald Islands - small and rocky

#### **Elevation extremes:**

**lowest point:** Indian Ocean 0 m

**highest point:** Mawson Peak on Big Ben volcano 2,745 m

#### **Natural resources:**

fish

#### **Land use:**

**arable land:** 0%

**permanent crops:** 0%

**other:** 100% (2011)

#### **Irrigated land:**

0 sq km (2011)

#### **Natural hazards:**

Mawson Peak, an active volcano, is on Heard Island

#### **Environment - current issues:**

NA

#### **Geography - note:**

Mawson Peak on Heard Island is the highest Australian mountain (at 2,745 meters, it is taller than Mt. Kosciuszko in Australia proper), and one of only two active volcanoes located in Australian territory, the other being McDonald Island; in 1992, McDonald Island broke its dormancy and began erupting; it has erupted several times since, most recently in 2005

### **People and Society :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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#### **Population:**

uninhabited

### **Government :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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#### **Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Territory of Heard Island and McDonald Islands

**conventional short form:** Heard Island and McDonald Islands

**abbreviation:** HIMI

**Dependency status:**

territory of Australia; administered from Canberra by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (Australian Antarctic Division)

**Legal system:**

the laws of Australia, where applicable, apply

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

none (territory of Australia)

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

none (territory of Australia)

**Flag description:**

the flag of Australia is used

**Economy :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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**Economy - overview:**

The islands have no indigenous economic activity, but the Australian Government allows limited fishing in the surrounding waters. Visits to Heard Island typically focus on terrestrial and marine research and infrequent private expeditions.

**Communications :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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**Internet country code:**

.hm

**Internet hosts:**

102 (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 208

**Transportation :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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**Ports and terminals:**

none; offshore anchorage only

**Military :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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**Military - note:**

defense is the responsibility of Australia; Australia conducts fisheries patrols

**Transnational Issues :: Heard Island and McDonald Islands**

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**Disputes - international:**

none