



Proposal to grant Shackleton’s *Endurance* shipwreck with landmark protection gets full backing in preliminary report

18th August, 2025 - [The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust](#) (UKAHT) is one step closer to securing a historic first; the designation of Sir Ernest Shackleton’s *Endurance* shipwreck as the first ever underwater heritage site to be an Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA).

Discovered in 2022, *Endurance* lies in extraordinary condition at the bottom of the Weddell sea, over a century after it was lost. The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust was commissioned by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office to lead on the management of the site, which has included creating a Conservation Management Plan and now an ASPA proposal.

The ASPA proposal, drawn up by the charity, was presented by the UK delegation to the Committee for Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty at the annual Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. According to the preliminary report, all international parties committed their full support for the landmark protection and endorsed its passage to the next stage in the three-year process.

The wreck is currently a designated Historic Site and Monument (No.93) and has a protected area of 1500m radius in the Weddell Sea, but with warming temperatures, changing sea ice and advances in underwater technology, the wreck could become more accessible and vulnerable to harm. An ASPA would provide the wreck with the highest level of protection in the Antarctic Treaty system, a designation usually applied to areas of exceptional scientific interest or vulnerability. Such a designation would prohibit entry into the designated area unless certain conditions are satisfied in the ASPA management plan to enable a permit to be issued.

UK Antarctic Heritage Trust CEO Camilla Nichol explains; “*Shackleton’s Endurance shipwreck and the story of their captivating rescue mission is of international significance.*”

Securing full support from all parties for ASPA designation is a huge achievement, and demonstrates encouraging international cooperation to protect and preserve our shared human history for generations to come.”

The next stage in the process will see the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust draft an ASPA Management Plan for detailed scrutiny and consideration by a [special committee](#) for management plans at the next Antarctic Treaty Meeting. If this is approved, Shackleton’s *Endurance* will officially be the first ever underwater heritage site to receive full ASPA designation.

To find out more about the charity’s work and *Endurance*, please visit <https://www.enduranceshipwreck.org/>

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Image Bank:

[Endurance Image Bank](#) (please credit as per captions)

Notes to Editors

About UK Antarctic Heritage Trust

The UK Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT) is a UK based charity dedicated to preserving and promoting Britain’s fascinating history and legacy in Antarctica. UKAHT was born out of a small group’s passion to champion the legacy of all those who went before us in the Antarctic. Since 1993 the organisation has worked to protect this, from conserving the huts left by those first pioneers and managing the historic site of Port Lockroy, to collaborating with other groups to ensure science and tourism on the Antarctic Peninsula are sustainable.

Since 1993 the organisation has been pivotal in the protection of British heritage in Antarctica by looking after six designated historic sites and monuments on the Antarctic Peninsula and by working with Antarctic policy makers on heritage and conservation to ensure a sustainable future for heritage in Antarctica.

UKAHT delivers a range of public programming, educational activities and digital content to share these stories with as wide an audience as possible, including a highly rated podcast series *A Voyage to Antarctica*.

The Trust’s most famous historic site is Port Lockroy, known colloquially as the Penguin Post office, which was the first British scientific station in Antarctica, heralding the start of a formal British scientific programme in Antarctica which continues today as the British Antarctic Survey.

Today the Trust works with the government, the scientific community, the tourism industry and heritage partners to uphold the principles of the Antarctic Treaty and Protocol on Environmental protection in order to protect Antarctica for future generations.