

Ice Station Antarctica

Information pack

Ice Station Antarctica

Information pack

Exhibition overview	3
Aims of the exhibition	4
Gallery plan: example	5
Scenes and storyline	6
Specifications	10
Press release	11

Touring Exhibitions
The Natural History Museum
Cromwell Road
London SW7 5BD
www.nhm.ac.uk/touringexhibitions

Email: touring@nhm.ac.uk
Tel: +44 (0)20 7942 6245

Exhibition Overview

Ice Station Antarctica

Have you got what it takes to survive in Antarctica?

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest and most remote continent on this planet. While terrifying, it is also beautiful. There is no doubt it takes a brave and tough person to live and work out here.

In this exhibition, under the guidance of the Ice Station Commander, visitors brave a variety of Antarctic challenges. From coping in sub-zero temperatures to riding a snowmobile, visitors explore the skills it takes to work in and preserve this frozen wilderness. A series of mini-environments helps them to learn about and explore this unique continent.

Challenge your visitors to survive the conditions scientists face when researching in Antarctica.

Target audience

The exhibition is aimed at school groups and families with children aged seven and older. However, many activities are also suitable for younger children.



Aim of the exhibition

Content aims

The exhibition communicates:

- fascinating facts about Antarctica, its wildlife, living and working conditions, scientific research and breathtaking beauty

Affective aims

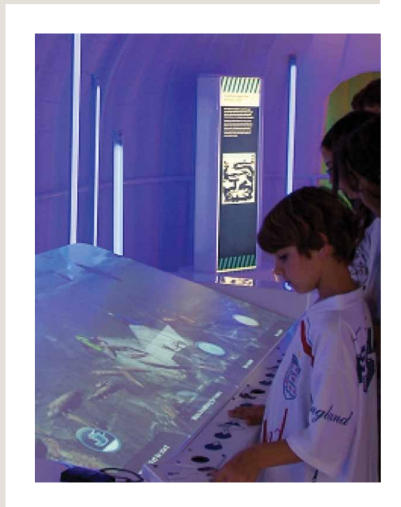
The overall atmosphere and design:

- makes science tangible by exploring the lives of scientists and their work
- creates a fun, enjoyable and educational atmosphere for families

Educational aims

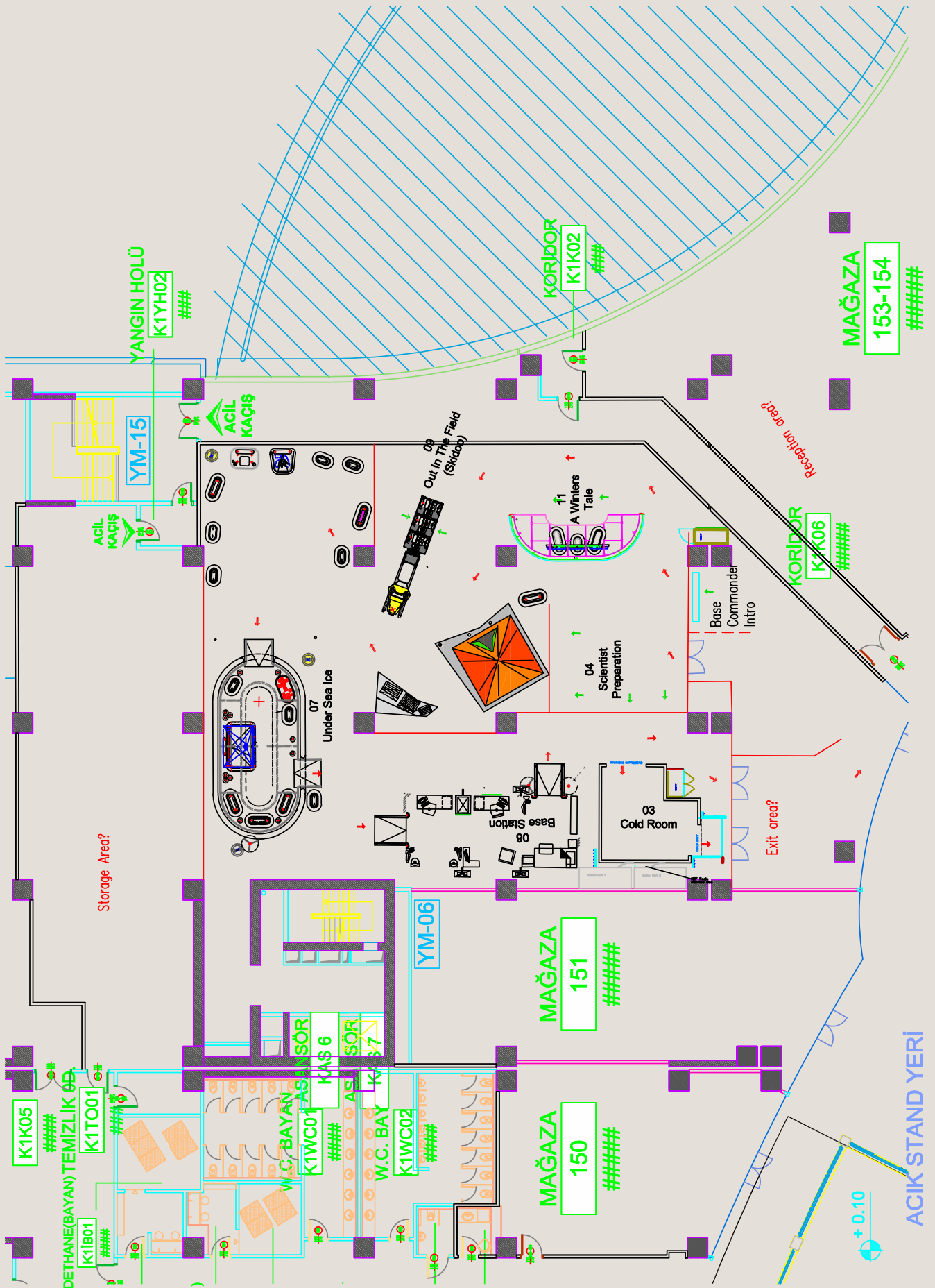
The exhibition encourages visitors to use skills and observations such as:

- being able to compare and contrast living in Antarctica with their own lives
- being able to compare and contrast the wildlife and plants in Antarctica with the wildlife and plants near where they live
- being able to have a more accurate picture of what it is like to live in Antarctica
- discovering the amazing terrestrial and marine biodiversity in Antarctica



Gallery plan

Please note: As the size and shape of the display area may vary from venue to venue, it is not always possible to show the exhibition in its original form and layout.



Scenes and storyline

Video footage is the easiest and most impressive tool to convey the extraordinary atmosphere of a remote place like Antarctica.

A three-screen audio-visual presentation shows incredible footage of the aurora australis, raging storms and scientists facing these harsh weather conditions.



The briefing

With the help of posters, visitors learn about Antarctic wildlife, different species of penguin, various transport options, and Antarctic plants, which are surprisingly varied. The briefing consists of a video introduction, in which Sanjit the Ice Station Commander briefs the visitors about the challenges they are about to experience.

Cold room and protective gear section

The cold room is a walk-in freezer of 10.5 m². Visitors can walk through this area and experience what it must feel like to be exposed to these temperatures.

The protective gear section is equipped with authentic life-saving clothing from Antarctica.

Other than allowing the visitors to warm up after the cold room, this part of the exhibition illustrates how essential it is to have the right protective gear. Visitors can try on different clothing and have their picture taken.

Facts about Antarctica

- after 30 minutes in the cold, your fingers will start freezing solid with frostbite, and after a couple of hours your body temperature will drop to a life-threatening level
- hard shell hats not only protect you from falling ice, but also from dive-bombing skuas
- thick boots prevent you from suffering cold injuries and make you feel like you're walking on clouds, as well as protecting you from ankle-pecking penguins

All of the above and more are highlighted in the exhibition.



Various interactive games motivate the visitors and guarantee that additional knowledge about Antarctica is acquired in a playful way.

Dress Sami

Dress Sami properly to save him from certain death. Players must choose appropriate clothing for Sami to go and work in a penguin colony.



Wildlife in Antarctica

Studying Antarctic wildlife is a vital part of the work done by some scientists. Living and working with these animals helps us protect them and the environment in which they live.

Beautiful video films show amazing footage of ice breakers and whales swimming along ice floes.

The daunting work of a researcher in a penguin colony can only be grasped by looking at the number of penguins living in one place. The video footage shows visitors how tough a scientist's job is in Antarctica.

Facts about Antarctica

- the albatross is the most threatened bird in the world
- by studying seal poo, scientists can gather information on the complex food chains of the Southern Ocean
- by measuring the size of penguins, scientists are able to draw conclusions about whether there are enough fish in the sea
- you have to tickle a seal's whiskers with a stick to calm it down and show your friendly intentions

All the above and more are highlighted in the exhibition.



Diving under sea ice

Icebergs and temperatures below zero are only a few of the dangers when scientists are diving under the sea ice in Antarctica.

Under the sea ice

This is an interactive game in which four players navigate a diver under the sea ice to identify and learn about the numerous sea creatures living in the Southern Ocean.

Facts about Antarctica

- scientists have to cut a hole in the ice with a chainsaw to be able to dive underneath it
- scientists should avoid diving near icebergs, as they move and might trap them
- icebergs are made of snow and are frozen fresh water, floating in the salt water of the ocean
- owing to the low temperature of the water, there is a higher oxygen content, which makes Antarctic animals grow much bigger than their European counterparts
- a slight change in temperature will change the oxygen content in the water, which will make breathing very difficult for those animals and endanger them

All the above and more are highlighted in the exhibition.



Snowmobiles and meteorites

In this section an authentic snowmobile offers visitors the opportunity to climb aboard a real snowmobile and have their picture taken.

Snowmobile meteorite hunt

Collect as many meteorites as you can but make sure you return safely to the camp before you run out of fuel. Avoid knocking over the penguins or driving over the edge of the ice into the sea.

Facts about Antarctica

- most meteorites found on Earth were made early in the solar system and only a few are from the moon or Mars
- meteorites help us understand what our planet is made of
- our planet must have been much warmer in previous years, as scientists have found fossil wood from ancient trees in Antarctica

All of the above and more are highlighted in the exhibition.



Daily life in Antarctica

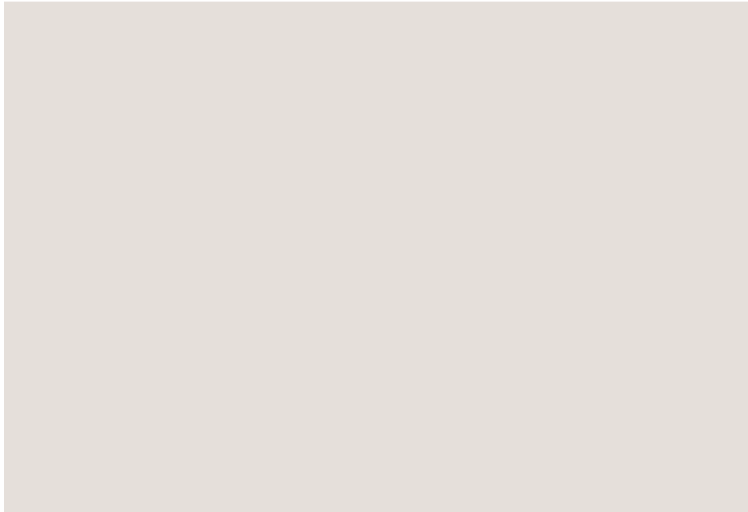
A replica base station shows the basic living conditions for scientists when they are working in Antarctica.

Some people live there for months, even years.

There are no fire brigades or rescue services in Antarctica, so it's essential that ice cadets are skilled and trained for a variety of roles and situations.

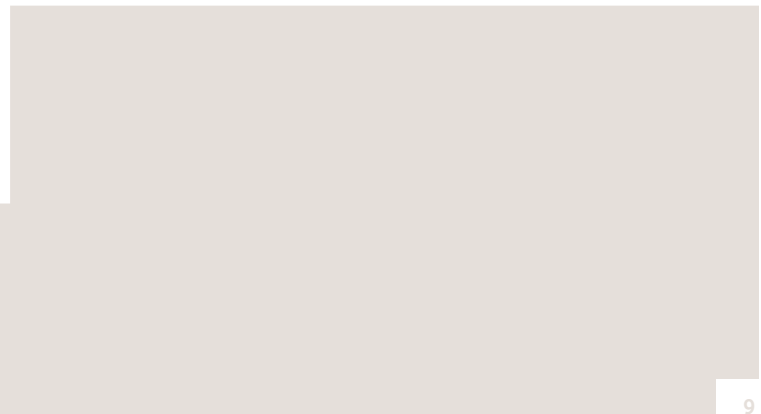
It takes a special person to live and work in Antarctica. Videos in the base station show excerpts of video diaries from scientists. They talk about how tough it is to spend Christmas away from friends and family and how much they miss fresh fruit and vegetables after a couple of months of tinned food. Would you mind having your teeth checked by a carpenter and electrician, rather than a dentist?

The stories are told in an entertaining and informative manner and were all recorded in base camps and stations in Antarctica.



Field research and camping

A real Antarctic campsite is set up to show visitors the conditions scientists live in when conducting field research. Dotted around the exhibition campsite are boxes containing food, first aid equipment and scientific instruments.



Specifications

We provide

- exhibition structure – cold room, tent structures, base station and field camp
- hands-on replicas and interactive displays
- video footage and video diaries
- exhibition graphics and text on CD
- marketing toolkit
- suggestions for educational events
- installation and dismantling service
- technical support services
- instructions for day-to-day supervision
- some exhibition lighting

Average installation/dismantling period

- 12 days

Minimum hire period

- three months

Venue requirements

- display area 450m²
- minimum doorway access: height 2.2 metres and width 1.7 metres
- minimum 3.5 metres ceiling height for assembly and display
- environmentally controlled conditions
- scenery, backdrops, lights and barriers
- transport costs from previous venue in four trailers (inbound only for European venues)
- storage facilities for transport cases
- translation of text and production of text panels, graphics and interactive games if translating out of English
- translation and production of text for digital interactives and subtitles for video footage
- skilled installation and dismantling support staff
- local refrigeration engineer to install/dismantle freezer unit
- site manager and one electrician to sign off exhibition
- (single-phase) electrical supply
- forklift including driver, crane or other equipment, as required
- hoists and other equipment required for access and installation
- additional exhibition lighting
- promotion and publicity
- insurance

Press release

Calling all ice cadets – are you up for the challenge? Ice Station Antarctica

25 May 2007 – 20 April 2008
the Natural History Museum, London

Antarctica is the coldest, windiest and most remote place on Earth. It takes an amazing person to work there – could that be you? Challenge yourself to survive the extreme conditions faced by scientists researching this fragile continent at the Natural History Museum's new family blockbuster experience, Ice Station Antarctica.

Enlist as an ice cadet and under the guidance of the Ice Station Commander brave a variety of exciting Antarctic challenges, from coping in sub-zero temperatures to riding a snowmobile. Explore the skills it takes to work in and preserve this frozen wilderness as you journey through the Ice Station Antarctica experience.

Alex Gaffikin, Ice Station Antarctica exhibition developer at the Natural History Museum, spent two and a half years working at the British Antarctic Survey's Halley research station. Alex comments, 'At Ice Station Antarctica we'll really see if you've got what it takes to brave Antarctica. Every year hundreds of scientists and staff travel to Antarctica, braving harsh conditions and freezing temperatures in order to carry out crucial scientific research. It's a tough job, I should know, having worked there myself.'

A series of mini-environments helps you learn about and explore this unique continent.

Zone 1 – Could you survive the cold?

Antarctica is one of the coldest places on Earth to endure. You'll be plunged into a freezer room set to -20°C. Try on some real Antarctic clothing and see what you need to keep yourself alive.

Zone 2 – Could you live with wild animals?

In the next zone you'll experience the noise and smell of working in animal colonies in Antarctica. Your challenge will be to sniff some penguin vomit and examine the contents to find bits of fish, squid and krill.

Zone 3 – Could you dive under sea ice?

It's the depth of winter and the sea has frozen over. In this zone, you'll play a game about the challenges of diving in Antarctic waters. However, like the divers who do it for real, you'll see some gigantic and unusual creatures.

Zone 4 – Could you live in Antarctica?

It's not all fun and games. In Antarctica there are no fire brigades or rescue services, and in an emergency we'll be looking to you. On our base station we'll be running some emergency scenarios. Will you keep your cool?

Zone 5 – Could you drive a snowmobile?

In this zone you play our snowmobile game to collect meteorites. Hold on tight as you race along on your snowmobile. However, there are pitfalls in Antarctica – wind scoops and crevasses waiting to swallow you up. We have a real snowmobile for you to try out.

Zone 6 – Could you camp in Antarctica?

Enter our field camp and see what it's like to camp at sub-zero temperatures. How do you keep alive during a storm, and how on earth will you go to the toilet in a blizzard? Dotted around are boxes containing food, camping equipment and scientific instruments.

Zone 7 – Could you spend two months in the dark?

This is the ultimate challenge. In Antarctica you might have to spend up to six months in darkness. So at Ice Station Antarctica we're giving you a taste of claustrophobia with a hint of paranoia thrown in; amazing video footage challenges you to find out if you can cope with sensory deprivation.

Designed for families, especially children aged seven and over, this unmissable new hands-on exhibition gives you the chance to become an Antarctic expert. Developed in partnership with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS), Ice Station Antarctica is one of the highlights of the UK's involvement in International Polar Year (2007/2008).

Notes for editors

- Eighteen countries operate year-round research stations in Antarctica that support up to 10,000 scientists in the Antarctic summer in carrying out vital research into topics such as climate change, the ozone hole, glaciology, space weather, wildlife and geology.
- Winner of the 2004 Large Visitor Attraction of the Year award, the Natural History Museum is also a world-leading science research centre. Through its collections and scientific expertise, the Museum is helping to conserve the extraordinary richness and diversity of the natural world, with groundbreaking projects in 68 countries. The Museum is committed to encouraging public engagement with science.
- After debuting at the Museum, the exhibition will tour extensively in Europe and beyond.
- The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) is a world leader in research into global issues in an Antarctic context. It is the UK's national Antarctic operator and is a component of the Natural Environment Research Council. It has an annual budget of around £40 million, runs nine research programmes and operates five research stations, two royal research ships and five aircraft in and around Antarctica. More information about the work of the survey is at www.antarctica.ac.uk.
- International Polar Year (IPY) 2007/2008 is the largest coordinated international scientific effort for 50 years. From ice sheets and space science to Arctic communities and the creatures of the Southern Ocean, IPY includes more than 200 Arctic and Antarctic projects and harnesses the skills of 50,000 people, including scientists, students and support staff from more than 60 nations. Hundreds of UK scientists from 65 universities and other institutions are taking part in 120 polar projects during IPY. Ice Station Antarctica is a major public engagement project for BAS during IPY.