

TERRITORIAL CLAIMS IN THE ANTARCTIC TREATY REGION

R. K. Headland, Scott Polar Research Institute <rk10@cam.ac.uk>, 12 IV 2019

The following definitions, in order of the earliest date, apply to national sovereign claims over territory below 60°S latitude; the region under the ægis of the Antarctic Treaty of 1959, which came into force in 1961. Article IV of the treaty concerns territorial claims. For the geographical data the area of Antarctica is 13.88×10^6 km², its coast is considered to be the edges of ice shelves and shores which meet the Southern Ocean (a place accessible to an ice-breaker). The areas and proportions are from most recent specification of the claims and areas of ice shelves.

BRITAIN

1908, 21 July, Royal Letters Patent consolidated claims as the Falkland Islands Dependencies: ... *South Georgia, the South Orkneys, the South Shetlands and the Sandwich Islands, and the territory known as Graham's Land, situated in the South Atlantic Ocean to the south of the 50th parallel of south latitude, and lying between the 20th and 80th degrees of west longitude, ...*

1917, 28 March, Royal Letters Patent amended the definition to: ... *all islands and territories whatsoever between the 20th degree west longitude and the 50th degree west longitude which are situated south of the 50th parallel of south latitude; and all islands and territories whatsoever between the 50th degree west longitude and the 80th degree west longitude which are situated south of the 60th parallel of south latitude.*

1962, 26 February, an Order in Council established British Antarctic Territory comprising: ... *all islands and territories whatsoever between the 20th degree of west longitude and 80th degree of west longitude which are situated south of the 60th parallel of south latitude.*

BRITISH ANTARCTIC TERRITORY (20°W to 80°W, south of 60°S) has a surface area of 1709×10^3 km² (12.3% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 60° arc (17% sector; 14% of which is counter-claimed by Argentina and 8% by Chile). It includes South Shetland Islands (3687 km²) and South Orkney Islands (622 km²). Its continental coast extends for 41% of that of Antarctica.

NEW ZEALAND

1923, 30 July, British Order in Council established the Ross Dependency: ... *the coasts of the Ross sea, with the islands and territories adjacent thereto, between the 160th degree of East Longitude and the 150th degree of West Longitude, which are situated south of the 60th degree of South Latitude, ...*

ROSS DEPENDENCY (160°E to 150°W, south of 60°S) has a surface area of 450×10^3 km² (3.2% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 50° arc (14% sector). It includes Balleny Islands (822 km²) and Scott Island (1 km²). Its continental coast extends for 12% of that of Antarctica. [This is the earliest application of the 60°S parallel that became the Antarctic Treaty limit in 1959.]

FRANCE

1924, 27 March, Décret du président [Presidential Decree] reserved rights in the Antarctic: *Dans l'archipel des Crozet et sur la terre Adélie ou Wilkes, les droits miniers, le droit de chasse et le droit de pêche dans les eaux territoriales sont réservés aux Français. [In the Crozet archipelago and south in Adélie or Wilkes Land mineral rights and rights for hunting and fishing are reserved for the French.]*

1938, 1 April, Décret du président [Presidential Decree] fixed the boundaries of Terre Adélie: *Les îles et territoires situés au sud du soixantième parallèle de latitude sud entre les cent trente-sixième et cent quarante-deuxième méridiens de longitude est de Greenwich ... [The islands and territories situated south of the 60-degree parallel of south latitude and between the 136-degree and 142-degree meridians of longitude east of Greenwich ...]*

TERRE ADÉLIE (136°E to 142°E, south of 60°S) has an area of 432×10^3 km² (3.1% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 6° arc (1.4% sector). Its coast extends for 0.8% of that of Antarctica.

NORWAY

1931, 1 May, a Kongeleg Resolusjon [Royal Proclamation] stated: *Peter I øy henlegges under norsk statshøilet [is placed under Norwegian sovereignty.]*

1939, 14 January, a Kongeleg Resolusjon [Royal Proclamation] annexed Dronning Maud Land: ... *om at den parten av fastlandsstranda i Antarktis som tøyser seg ifrå grensa for Falkland Islands Dependencies i vest (grensa for Coats Land) til grensa for Australian Antarctic Territory i aust (45° austleg lengd) med det landet som ligg innafør denne stranda og det havet som ligg innåt ... [... that portion of the Antarctic mainland coast which extends from the limits of the Falkland Islands Dependencies in the west (the limits of Coats land) to the limits of the Australian Antarctic Territory in the east (45°E long.) with the land lying inside this coast and the environing sea ...]*

1939, 3 October, a note from the Norwegian Legation to the British government specified that the western boundary of Dronning Maud Land should be defined as the 20th degree of west longitude.

2015, 12 June, Melding til Stortinget [Report to Parliament] from the Utenriksdepartement [Foreign Office] defined the southern limit of Dronning Maud Land as extending to the South Pole.

DRONNING MAUD LAND (25°W to 45°E, no northern limit) has an area of $2700 \times 10^3 \text{ km}^2$ (19.5% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 65° arc (18% sector). Its coast extends for 13% of that of Antarctica. **PETER I ØY**, area 157 km^2 , is in the sector claimed by Ecuador in 1967.

A U S T R A L I A

1933, 7 February, British Order in Council established Australian Antarctic Territory: ... *all the islands and territories other than Adélie Land situated south of the 60th degree South Latitude and lying between the 160th degree of East Longitude and the 45th degree of East Longitude* ...

1938, 1 April, France specified the extent of Adélie Land [Terre Adélie] consequently delimiting the division of both parts of Australian Antarctic Territory.

AUSTRALIAN ANTARCTIC TERRITORY (45°E to 136°E and 142°E to 160°E, south of 60°S) has a two sectors with a combined surface area of $5896 \times 10^3 \text{ km}^2$ (42.5% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 109° arc (30% sector). Its coast extends for 22% of that of Antarctica.

C H I L E

1940, 6 November, Decreto Supremo [Supreme Decree] by the President established Territorio Chileno Antártico: ... *todos las tierras, islas, islotes, arrecifes, glaciares (pack-ice), y demas, conocidos y por conocerse, y el mar territorial respectivo, existentes dentro de nos limites de casquete constituido por los meridianos 53° longitude Oeste de Greenwich y 90° longitude Oeste de Greenwich.* [... *all lands, islands, islets, reefs or rocks, glaciers (pack-ice), already known, or to be discovered, and their respective territorial waters, in the sector between longitudes 53 and 90 degrees West.*]

TERRITORIO CHILENO ANTÁRTICO (53°W to 90°W, no northern limit) has a surface area of $1251 \times 10^3 \text{ km}^2$ excluding the pack-ice (9.0% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 37° arc (10% sector; 7% of which is counter-claimed by Argentina, 8% by Britain, and 1.5% by Ecuador). It includes South Shetland Islands (3687 km^2). Its continental coast extends for 35% of that of Antarctica.

A R G E N T I N A

1943, 15 February, the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto [Ministry of Foreign Relations and Worship] sent a formal memorandum to the British Ambassador in Buenos Aires reaffirming Argentine sovereign rights over: ... *todos las tierras y dependencias antárticas situadas al sur del paralelo 60° de latitud sur, y entre los meridianos 25° y 68°34' de longitud oeste.* [... *all Antarctic lands and dependencias south of latitude 60°S and between 25°W and 68°34'W.*]

1947, 12 March, the Comisión Nacional del Antártico [National Antarctic Commission] extended the western boundary of the claim to 74°W proclaiming Antártida Argentina: ... *procedió a delimitar el sector antártico sobre el que la Argentina tiene derechos, situado entre los meridianos 25° y 74° de longitud oeste de Greenwich, al sur de los 60° de latitud sur.* [... *proceeds to delimit the Antarctic sector over which Argentina has rights, situated between 25°E and 74°E longitude and south of 60°S de latitude.*]

ANTÁRTIDA ARGENTINA (25°W to 74°W, south of 60°S) has a surface area of $1462 \times 10^3 \text{ km}^2$ (10.5% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 49° arc (14% sector; 7% of which is counter-claimed by Chile and 14% by Britain). It includes South Shetland Islands (3687 km^2) and South Orkney Islands (622 km^2). Its continental coast extends for 37% of that of Antarctica.

E C U A D O R

1967, 27 February, the Asamblea Nacional Constituyente [National Constituent Assembly] declared Territorio Antártico Ecuatoriano: ... *la parte de la Antártida interceptada por los meridianos 84°30' y 96°30' de longitud oeste de Greenwich.* [... *the part of Antarctica intercepted by the meridians 84°30' and 96°30' east longitude.*]

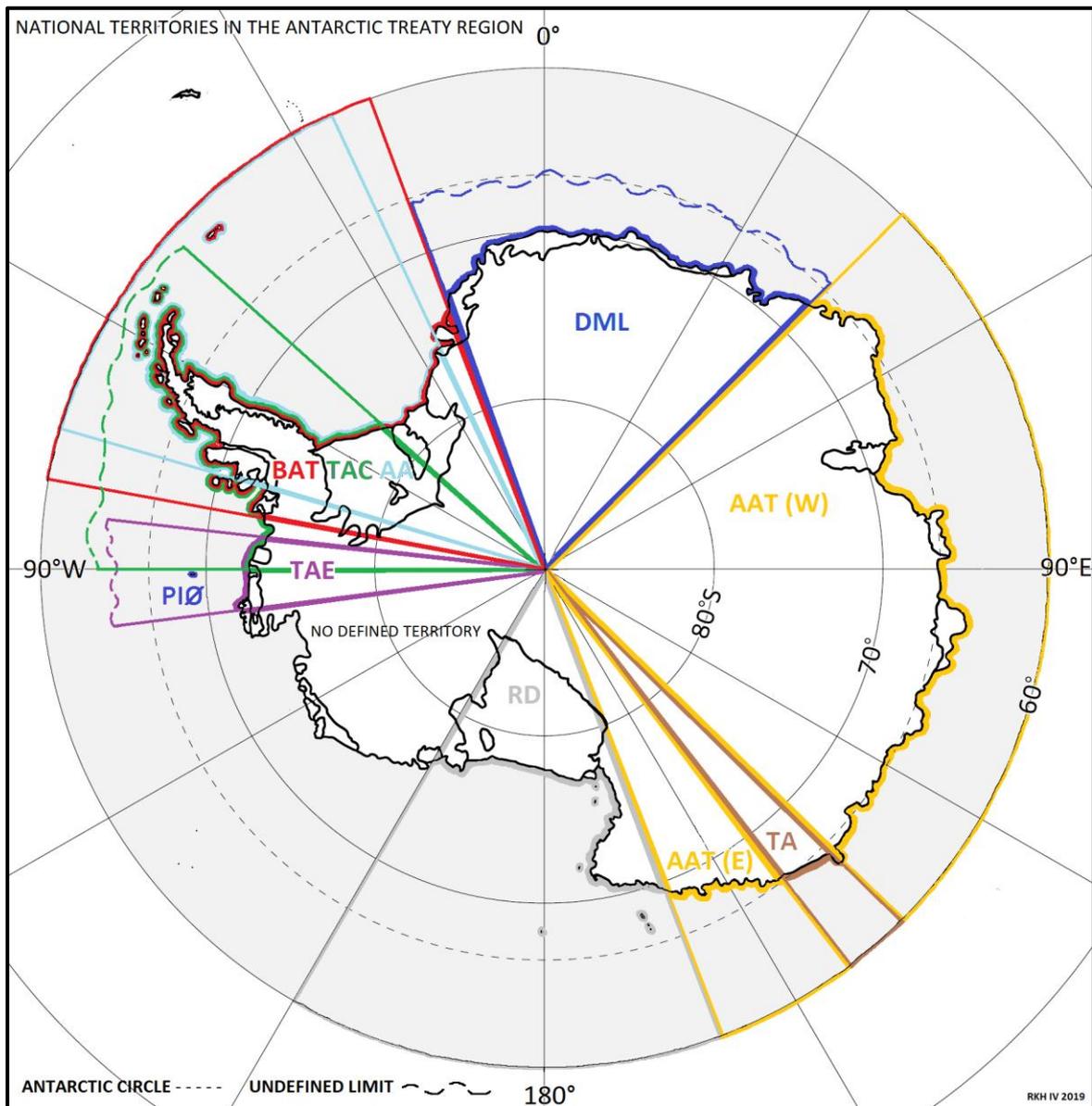
TERRITORIO ANTÁRTICO ECUATORIANO (83°30'W to 96°30'W, no northern limit) has a surface area of $323 \times 10^3 \text{ km}^2$ (2.3% of Antarctica), it encompasses a 10° arc (2.7% sector; 15% of which is counter-claimed by Chile, it includes Peter I øy of Norway [157 km^2]). The territory was declared two decades before Ecuador acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and became bound by Article IV on 15 September 1987.

U N D E F I N E D R E G I O N

The sector south of the Amundsen Sea, between the limits of the Ross Dependency and region west of the territories which include the Antarctic Peninsula region, has been subject to claims, in whole or part, by Britain, Japan, Norway, and United States. None of these has resulted in any formally defined sovereign claims. This region, with the overlapping claims, prevents summarising the data as total areas or proportions of coasts.

O T H E R C L A I M S

Theoretical claims to territory have been postulated over various parts of the area now defined by the Antarctic Treaty by, or on behalf of, several other countries. None of these have resulted in the practical specification of a formally defined sovereign claim.



TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OVER ANTARCTICA (IN ORDER OF INCEPTION)

British Antarctic Territory (20°W to 80°W, south of 60°S) [BAT]

Inception 1908, present form 1962

Ross Dependency, New Zealand (160°E to 150°W, south of 60°S) [RD]

Inception and present form 1923

Terre Adélie, France (136°E to 142°E, south of 60°S) [TA]

Inception 1924, present form 1938

Peter I øy, Norway (68°51'S, 90°37'W) [PIØ]

Inception and present form 1931

Australian Antarctic Territory (45°E to 136°E and 142°E to 160°E, south of 60°S) [AAT]

Inception 1933, present form 1938

Dronning Maud Land, Norway (25°W to 45°E, no northern limit) [DML]

Inception 1939, present form 2015

Territorio Antártico Chileno (53°W to 90°W, no northern limit) [TAC]

Inception and present form 1940

Antártida Argentina (25°W to 74°W, south of 60°S) [AA]

Inception 1943, present form 1947

Territorio Ecuatoriano Antártico (83°30'W to 96°30'W, no northern limit) [TAE]

Inception and present form 1967