

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 20–31 January 2025





Antarctic Explorer

20-31 January 2025

King George Island

DAY 1 | Monday 20 January 2025

Latitude:
62°12.0' S
Longitude:
058°56.3' W

Course:
At Frei
Speed:
0

Wind Speed:
5 knots NW
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Air Temp:
5°C

It was a relief to touch down on the gravel airstrip at Frei Station. That meant there was only one final leg of the epic journey to go – the Zodiac ride from shore to ship. Luckily, the weather was kind to us and we arrived warm and dry onto the *Sylvia Earle*. After getting our photos taken, our hotel team awaited us with cocktails and a welcome lunch buffet. Finally, we could relax and look forward to exploring and photographing Antarctica.

After lunch, it was time for a welcome briefing where we met some of our Expedition Staff, and learnt the all-important safety drill.

There are 22 Expedition Team in total, with various

specialities including: photography, conservation, oceanography, ornithology, marine biology, cetaceans, geology, glaciology, history and medicine.

In addition to our Expedition Team, we have 85 wonderful ship's crew, from all corners of the world, here to look after everything from your cocktail order to keeping the engines running.

We had a total of 123 Expeditioners, representing: China (27), Australia (15), India (2), Japan (1), United States (49), United Kingdom (7), Canada (11) and France (2).

Graham Passage & Recess Cove

DAY 2 | Tuesday 21 January 2025

Latitude:
64°23.8' S
Longitude:
061°23.8' W

Course:
185°
Speed:
5.2 knots

Wind Speed:
Calm
Barometer:
1005 hPa

Air Temp:
8°C

On the first full day in Antarctica, the tedious but necessary process of biosecurity cleaning offered little insight into the spectacular afternoon ahead. While each guest came to diligently check their gear for seeds and other potentially harmful elements, the team explained just how important it is to protect this most singular of environments.

The Graham Passage was named after an 1800s British lord who never visited these distant lands, but who would have surely been as delighted as we were to experience the narrow channel that bears his name. A brilliant white-and-blue world provided a dazzling landscape, with glacial cliffs, icebergs and penguins spotted from the ship.

After lunch, it was time to get outside in Recess Cove. Not only was it a first landing for the majority of *Sylvia Earle* passengers, it was also a chance to step onto the continent proper.

Time was spent on shore hiking, then Zodiac cruising around the icy bay, spotting leopard, Weddell and crabeater seals, two stray chinstrap penguins, and eventually, a couple of humpback whales. These felt spectacular in the moment, but much more was to come.





Palaver Point & Portal Point

DAY 3 | Wednesday 22 January 2025

Latitude:
64°08.7' S
Longitude:
061°45.7' W

Course:
At Anchor
Speed:
0 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots S
Barometer:
1004 hPa

Air Temp:
12° C

The winds were calm again today. Whales, once again, made their presence known as we disembarked the *Sylvia Earle* to ride to shore. On shore, we spent time with the chattering chinstrap penguins and also hiked to a high point, which gave us an overlook of the island and glacial faces.

The odd gentoo penguin was also spotted, awkwardly trying to fit in or maybe lost on a journey of personal self-discovery. The kayakers paddled around the bay, watching the penguins hop and waddle around.

While we ate, napped and watched the icy world around us, the Captain took us south once again. We pulled into Portal Point in the afternoon, with ice all around but not

enough to block access to land. Portal Point is the site of an old British survey hut established in 1956 and used between 1957 and 1958.

It was also the ending point of a four-person party that traversed, by dog team, from Hope Bay to Portal Point in 1957. While the hut has been relocated elsewhere for historical value, its foundations remained to remind us of the past. Seals dotted the ice floes around the landing site. Through clouds, the sun softly illuminated the cracked enormity of Brabant Island and the peninsula.





Chiriguano Bay & Neko Harbour

DAY 4 | Thursday 23 January 2025

Latitude:
64°28.1' S
Longitude:
062°31.9' W

Course:
199°
Speed:
8 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots N
Barometer:
998 hPa

Air Temp:
10°C

After filling our bellies, we hopped into the Zodiacs for a cruise around the bay. Though just out of view in the mystic misty air, we could hear the thunder of ice relenting to gravity. Although the sun was beginning to shine through to the water, it sounded as if we were in the centre of a great storm. We witnessed Picasso-like bergy bits and thick brash ice before returning like Pavlov's dog to the ship, expecting to eat.

We transited through lunch and the early afternoon to Neko Harbour, a harbour farther south from Chiriguano Bay but similarly glaciated on all sides, a common Antarctic theme.

On shore, we encountered our first gentoo colony. The

quintessential penguin goofed around the shore, and purposefully transiting its guano-laden highways. We were able to stretch our legs for a walk up to a great overlook of the harbour too.

After such a full day, one may have been expecting to wind down at recap and go to dinner, but no! The Antarctic summer sunshine was shining brightly and warmly, inviting us all to wonder what it would be like to submerge ourselves in the ice-covered water.

Thankfully for those curious among us, it was time for the polar plunge. All in all, a record 70 of us bravely chose to walk the plank at the stern of the ship and plunge into the cold abyss.





Pléneau Island & Yalour Islands

DAY 5 | Friday 24 January 2025

Latitude:
65°06.5' S
Longitude:
064°01.5' W

Course:
Adrift
Speed:
0 knots

Wind Speed:
Calm
Barometer:
983 hPa

Air Temp:
8°C

At Pléneau Island, we walked around the gentoo colony and watched the bigger babies begin to walk around on their own and the little chicks still being nurtured and protected by their parents. It was a super pretty day, as the sea mist swirled around the island, creating atmospheric conditions for a hike along the rock face.

Elena came on to the microphone over lunch to say there were orcas outside! Everyone in the dining room sprang from their seats, neglecting their desserts for the thrill of Antarctica's apex predator. On deck 8, together, we watched five to six orcas through our binoculars, surfacing around the brash ice. We were hoping that the orcas were

also looking for lunch, but alas, they were most likely transiting northwards towards the Lemaire Channel.

At the Yalour Islands in the afternoon, the fog closed in, suffocating the ship. This excursion included citizen science, photography, snorkelling, kayaking and Adélie penguins! The Adélie penguins were in their angsty teenage phase. The young ones who were half-moulted, half-fuzzy, were busy chasing after their parents for food. Imagine being so hungry that you'd eat puke!





Port Lockroy, Jougla Point & Danco Island

DAY 6 | Saturday 25 January 2025

Latitude:
64°49.6' S
Longitude:
063°30.1' W

Course:
At anchor
Speed:
0 knots

Wind Speed:
Calm
Barometer:
990 hPa

Air Temp:
10°C

Port Lockroy is the southernmost post office in the world! Postcards, books and souvenirs can all be found in the tiny shop. It sends over 70,000 pieces of mail each season.

Round the corner, a nice stop at Jougla Point to see more penguins and the antarctic cormorant colony. There are just over 1,500 pairs of breeding gentoo penguins, as well as around 25 breeding pairs of antarctic shag.

There are also whalebones, which make great photographic subjects when exposed by melting snow later in the season. Views are spectacular.

In the afternoon, the *Sylvia Earle* arrived in Danco Island, a 1.6-kilometre-long island, where we had the chance to see gentoo penguins and make a hike to the top with great views of the surrounding Errera Channel.

Charted by explorer Adrien de Gerlache and his crew during the Belgian Antarctic Expedition of 1897–1899, Danco Island was named after Belgian geophysicist and magnetician Émile Danco, who died in 1898 during the expedition.





Spert Island & Mikkelsen Harbour

DAY 7 | Sunday 26 January 2025

Latitude:
63°52.1' S
Longitude:
060°59.2' W

Course:
217°
Speed:
6.3 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots NE
Barometer:
994 hPa

Air Temp:
6°C

Before long, we felt lost in the labyrinth of narrow channels and islets of Spert Island. These rock formations are remnants of volcanic activity in the Jurassic period, 200-145 million years ago.

As the Zodiacs approached the exposed westerly coastline, sounds of the sea echoed through the narrow channels. Swell surged through swaying us back and forth, but not too much for our Expedition Team, who navigated through a stone archway, across the choppy bay and around the exposed isles. Despite the thick fog, the icebergs shone bright white – and some deep blue – their frozen forms shifting as they rocked with the wash of

waves. Some were massive monuments, others sculpted into delicate shapes by the wind and waves. The largest among them had an arch so perfect it seemed almost carved by hand.

After thawing in the sauna and Jacuzzi, we sailed for Mikkelsen Harbour. We landed on the smooth pebbly beach finding ourselves surrounded by a bustling colony of gentoo penguins. The air was filled with their calls, their small, sturdy bodies undeterred by the fresh breeze. Some tended carefully to their nests, home to six-week-old chicks; others shuffled past us with comical determination, focused on heading to sea or returning with a full belly to swap out their partner.





Cierva Cove & Hydrurga Rocks

DAY 8 | Monday 27 January 2025

Latitude:
64°08.2' S
Longitude:
060°53.1' W

Course:
Adrift
Speed:
0 knots

Wind Speed:
Light
Barometer:
983 hPa

Air Temp:
6°C

Cierva Cove never disappoints and this morning was particularly magical as our calm weather continued. The rocky slopes near the Argentine summer base have lost their coating of snow to reveal hummocks coated with green moss, giving the area a hopeful, spring-like feeling – no wonder the base is named 'Primavera'.

Kayakers and paddlers explored the coastline near the base, enjoying the antics of the local gentoos and getting a close-up look at some spectacular geology. The citizen science boat carried out its sampling agenda amid swirls of brash ice and bergy bits.

Our afternoon at the small contained site that is Hydrurga Rocks, allowed us to experience chinstraps up close as well as some beautiful Weddell seals conveniently napping nearby our walking route. As the winds picked up, we were reminded about how lucky we have been this trip with such calm conditions up until now. The ride home was brisk and a bit choppy, but once out of the bucking bronco ride we settled back in to the warmth of the *Sylvia Earle*. A special treat tonight was hearing a chapter of Jamie's forthcoming book, *An Inconvenience of Penguins* – complete with accents, footnotes and insights into Antarctic history as well as the life of a travel writer.





Deception Island & Edinburgh Hill

DAY 9 | Tuesday 28 January 2025

Latitude:
62°55.9' S
Longitude:
060°22.6' W

Course:
043°
Speed:
10 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots W
Barometer:
968 hPa

Air Temp:
4°C

Unusually, on this last day of expedition activities, the sun was nowhere to be seen and a cold wind was blowing strongly, putting paid to any kayaking or snorkelling. Over 100 guests left the ship to come and explore the black-sand beach, sulphur-smelling hot springs; relics and buildings from a number of sealing and whaling operations, and the runway for Sir Hubert Wilkins' first South Pole flight. A Weddell seal and fur seals (just for Leo!) were down at the end of the beach. Then it was a short walk up to Neptune's Window and a longer expedition to Ronald Hill with Howard.

Expeditioners returned to the *Sylvia Earle* via a final Zodiac

ride, and filed in to the dining room where a delicious lunch awaited. Slowly, bodies refuelled, minds cleared and conversation turned to the bigger picture...what next? Where next? And...is there time to have a nap?

Sydney's informative Antarctic geology lecture truly 'rocked' and was timely as the ship next cruised past the 'sick' basaltic columns of Edinburgh Hill.

After dinner, the documentary, *Endurance* was screened in the lecture theatre. A popular choice...especially the popcorn!





Drake Passage

DAY 10 | Wednesday 29 January 2025

Latitude:
60°25.6' S
Longitude:
061°18.4' W

Course:
332°
Speed:
12.8 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots ENE
Barometer:
981 hPa

Air Temp:
3°C

Our first sea day! After a bumpy night with a couple of eight-metre monster waves, and a few things thrown around in cabins, we made it to breakfast. As it's a sea day there is no wake-up announcement, so those who wish to have extended dreams about the amazing landscapes and wildlife that we have encountered on the Antarctic Peninsula get to sleep in.

This morning, Howard gave us a great presentation on the making of *Happy Feet* and his role in the expedition to the Antarctic to set the scene. It was enthralling to hear how he worked with George Miller who directed and produced this award-winning animation. The movie is a story of an emperor penguin called Mumble, who can't sing but can tap dance!

This was followed up later in the evening with *Happy Feet* the movie being shown after dinner with popcorn to snack on!

In the afternoon, Mark gave a very informative lecture on seabirds of the Southern Ocean.

Later in the afternoon the Captain and his officers gave a very interesting and in-depth presentation on the *Sylvia Earle*. This included lots of information from the bridge, engineering and housekeeping. This was followed by bridge tours, which were a great opportunity for guests to see the bridge and have an overview on the technology and navigational aids that the officers use daily.



At Sea | Ushuaia

DAY 11 | Thursday 30 January 2025

Latitude:
54° 56.91' S
Longitude:
066° 57.57' W

Course:
285
Speed:
12.7 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots NE
Barometer:
988 hPa

Air Temp:
10°C

On the morning of our last full day of this epic expedition, we woke to calmer seas. As Expedition Leader Elena had promised the night before, the waves had reached their peak sometime in the previous night. This made for a more gentle seafaring experience for today, which in turn translated to a fuller lecture theatre for Jack's excellent deep-dive into Antarctic history.

Following this, our Onboard Expedition Manager Kerry walked us through the details of disembarkation logistics for tomorrow. Beyond being thrilling and adventurous experiences for guests and E-Team, expeditions are complex beasts of logistical organisation and

administration, most of which happens quietly in the background.

E-Team members Jos and Sophia, accompanied by Ryan and Leo, told stories from the field in the next lecture: Overwintering in Antarctica. After our last lunch aboard the *Sylvia Earle*, Andrea talked to us about Antarctic governance and the central legal instrument of Antarctic management: the Antarctic Treaty System. This was followed by a workshop on how to keep the Antarctic magic alive in our everyday lives, where both E-Team and guests discussed ways to bring what we have learned and what we aspire to do into our lives beyond this expedition.



Ushuaia

DAY 12 | Friday 31 January 2025

Latitude:

54° 48.6' S

Longitude:

068° 17.8' W

Course:

Alongside

Speed:

At anchor

Wind Speed:

4 knots SW

Barometer:

1002 hPa

Air Temp:

15°C

Aurora Expeditions extends a big thank you to you all for your great humour, infectious enthusiasm and smiling faces. It was a pleasure having you on board and being able to share some of the pleasures that the icy south has to offer. May your memories live long and bright.

We have travelled 1,395 nautical miles together.

BBQ





Polar Plunge















Kayaking Log

Guides: Gabby, Vanja, Gabriel, Gus and Garath

21 January 2025, PM – Recess Cove 4.5 km

Wow! What weather conditions for our first outing! All dressed in our colourful kayaking equipment, we climbed off the Zodiacs into the kayaks. Garath and Vanja had all kayaks raft together to discuss paddling techniques and signals, along with a safety reminder now that we were on the water. Then we set off together, paddling into a beautiful glaciated bay and around a small rocky island, which was home to a few penguins, seals and hundreds of blue-eyed cormorants. Gabe kindly offered to take a team photo, with soaring white Antarctic peaks as a backdrop. Heading deeper into the bay, we soon found ourselves paddling through krill and in a humpback feeding ground. The whales were surfacing for a breath and a lunch of krill. It was a once-in-a-lifetime paddling experience today, and having all these whales around

us had our team smiling and chatting away excitedly long after we were back aboard the *Sylvia Earle*.

22 January 2025, AM – Palaver Point 6.2 km

Paddling out across glassy, calm conditions, with clear skies and humpback whales, felt too good to be true. Splitting into two groups, some stretched their arms paddling north past glaciated cliffs and the two hummock hills that give the island its name. Palaver Point is home to a chinstrap penguin and Antarctic blue-eyed shag colonies, which we spent time observing. Very able climbers, sometimes grumpy at launching into the water, and just so cute! The fluffy brown juvenile shags walked around flapping wings, preparing for their first flight, only weeks away. Around the corner, Gus pointed out four Antarctic fur seals lazing on the rocks.



Number of Kayakers: 20	Kayakers: David Schofield	Anisah Giansiracusa	Terry Giannakopoulos
Total Paddle Outings: 11	Susan Dickson	Yusuf Giansiracusa	Kim Hahn
Total Distance Paddled: 53.4 km	Sorcha Flett	Amy Infelt	Lei Ge
	John Allison	Doug Infelt	Dongmei Zhu
	Pam Turner	Christine Alea	Brad Fuller
	Rob Townsend	Ronald Martin	Dina Carter
		Hoda Al Zubaidi	Kimberly Roberts

22 January 2025, PM – Portal Point, Reclus Peninsula 5.6 km

Embarking from the ship, we rafted together. Gabby and Gabe shared the history of the area: 'Imagine yourselves here 70 years ago, a small British scientific team huddled into an even smaller black tin hut to undertake geological and meteorological studies. They used the Reclus Peninsula as a gateway to the peninsula proper.' Today, our plan was to explore this bay. We discovered cathedrals, small sculptures, drydock icebergs and large sea ice floes, which today, are wrestling grounds for crabeater seals. A puff from a nearby humpback, a thunderous crack from a calving glacier face followed by the 'whumpf' as it impacted the sea surface, kelp gulls squawking in flight to berg perches.

23 January 2025, AM – Chiriguano Bay, Brabant Island 3.5 km

Ringed by glacial walls, we launched the Zodiacs from the ship and found a relatively ice-free place to launch our kayaks. There were a few large bergy bits seemingly grounded in Chiriguano Bay, but the bay was deep enough to keep them afloat. The angular edges of the ice's face resembled a Picasso. Moving on from the sculptures, we paddled towards the glacial face as the water became more and more dense with brash ice. We paddled in single file through the ice. A quiet moment amid the crackling brash ice was sublime and allowed us to listen to the calm movement of water in its various forms.

23 January 2025, PM – Neko Harbour, Andvord Bay 4.5 km

Two lucky kayakers, Sorcha and John, joined Gabby for an ultimate experience in Neko Harbour. Yet again, perfect sunny skies with mountain views all around us, ice spewing out of every corner. There was not a breath of wind, the sunshine highlighting every peak around us, which Gabby had said she'd never seen before! We had two very special people join us on the kayaking journey as well, Johno and Yevhenii (Able Seaman and Safety Officer!). They were very appreciative to get out and enjoy kayaking with us, with lots of giggles and enjoyment all around. We explored the bay, taking in the magnificent scenery and incredible amount of ice. Gentoo penguins posed around us as we circled the bay, enjoying the amazing sunshine.

24 January 2025, AM – Pléneau Island 4 km

Icebergs everywhere stopped the ship in her tracks, but didn't stop us kayakers. No, we geared up and took to the water just after nine. With Garath at the helm of our pod, we rounded the tip of Pléneau Island to find sheltered rocky coves where reflections of the morning light had us all slow down to take it all in. We watched gentoos doing their thing, with the most dramatic mountain landscape as a backdrop! Fog began to roll in, announcing a good time to loop around, which we did, detouring via stunning bergs contrasted against the thick grey fog and dark waters, deep and blue. Continuing Gabriel's iceberg tour, we saw a triceratops, a tabular, drydocks and best of all, an ancient black ice cathedral.



24 January 2025, PM – Yalour Islands, Penola Strait 5.6 km

Our first real foggy day. Everyone welcomed it, enjoying the mystic, mysterious feel surrounding us. The Yalour Islands loomed in the distance as we paddled closer. We were greeted by Adélie penguins! We watched as these entertaining and energetic little guys slid around on their bellies, stole rocks from one another and hopped around, slipping and sliding. They might be small in size, but they make up for it in character, making them the most entertaining birds. We circumnavigated the island, enjoying the only Adélie penguin colony we would see. Then, we darted out into the mist. We found magnificent icebergs to marvel at: towers, arches and holes. The glassy, calm conditions allowed for amazing photos. We decided to have a zen moment on the water... about a minute

or two of still silence, enjoying the scenery and engaging all our senses as we listened to the world around us. What a peaceful way to end the morning's journey before making our way through the mist back to the ship.

25 January 2025, AM – Port Lockroy and Jougla Point 3 km

What a magical morning of kayaking at Port Lockroy! The winds were calm, as usual, as we paddled out towards a little crop of rocks called Boogie Woogie Island. As we rounded the corner, some type of animal flitted to the surface of the water before disappearing. This occurred a couple more times before we were able to ascertain its shape and identify it. It was a leopard seal! A first for the whole team, we grouped together as the massive, serpentine-looking seal barrel-rolled around us and playfully checked us out. It poked its head out of the water and looked as

if it was standing. It followed us for a while as we meandered around Port Lockroy. We saw many gentoos and a few more seals before rounding the corner towards the Peltier Channel.

25 January 2025, PM – Danco Island, Errera Channel 6.5 km

The 2025 Aurora Danco Island circumnavigation was an epic! It had it all...great weather again, basking leopard seals, porpoising penguins, climbing penguins, sliding penguins, a Weddell seal, rocky shallows, paddling through brash ice, massive tabular icebergs, towering rocky cliffs, the regular thunder of calving glaciers, high mountains encircling the bay...and even the hint of a humpback whale right at the very end for a lucky couple of kayakers!

27 January 2025, AM – Cierva Cove 5.5 km

We paddled off the stern of the ship

towards the nearby Argentine base, Primavera. We navigated some sparse brash ice and growlers as we cruised to the swelly point. Once at the base, we regrouped and began to curl along the coast towards the nearby glacial face. A fascinating landscape greeted us. Mossy greens, rocky greys and gentoo oranges all speckled the nearby hills and outcrops. We paddled past many waterfalls, including one with a penguin highway practically going down the stream! We took turns standing in our kayaks for a cheeky photo shoot and continued on to meet the paddlers. Once all together, Gabby surprised us with her hot chocolate Zodiac! It was the first time that the paddlers and kayakers had all hung out together on the water. We continued our paddle to an impressive glacial face before towing back to the ship.

27 January 2025, PM –
Hydrurga Rocks, Two Hummock
Island 4.5 km

The wind and waves to our starboard made for a more exciting crossing from the ship to Hydrurga Rocks. We slowed to listen to Jocelyn about the FjordPhyto citizen science project they were doing. With the shelter of the islands and a light breeze behind us, we floated along, checking out the cool igneous extrusive landscape. Granite with basalt inclusions created a speckled appearance. We came across protected bays with small grounded icebergs that were fun to weave in and out of. Another bay had heaps of chinstrap penguins and their nearly fully grown chicks. There were also imperial shags and a Weddell seal. Rounding the northern point of the archipelago, we had a taster of the wind and wave conditions on the westerly side. Then, with a plan in mind and game faces on, we paddled

into the 15-knot winds back to the ship, where Gus and Garath helped us out of the kayaks—one last paddle before heading across the Drake Passage.







Paddling Log

Guides: Gabby, Vanja, Gabriel, Gus and Garath

21 January 2025, PM – Recess Cove 4.5 km

Our first day in Antarctica started with a bang! The conditions could not have been better—sunshine with mountain and glacial views as far as the eye could see. To top it off, we saw whales! Gabby shared some paddle tips and we set off exploring the ice—shiny bits, blue bits, white bits and fun-shaped bits! We were greeted by two gentoo penguins resting on a small island, with a few crabeater seals also soaking in the sunshine. The water was crystal clear and we observed many limpets and kelp and algae in the water. Nesting shags watched us as we paddled by. As we made our way around, we suddenly found ourselves swarmed by thousands of krill—jumping and moving lightning fast. Before we knew it, we were surrounded by

feeding humpback whales! What an unexpected surprise! We hung out with these magnificent whales for about an hour before we had to make our way back to the ship. What an epic way to kick off the journey!

22 January 2025, AM – Palaver Point 3 km

We paddled from the ship and back again on another beautiful sunny day with glassy waters. We spent our time on the water exploring the coastline and the rocks along the shoreline of Two Hummock Island. Some of us paddled into some 'baby caves' – not real caves, but the beginning of one. In a few hundred thousand years, it might become a cave! We could smell the chinstrap penguin colony living at Palaver Point, and a few of them came down to greet us at the shoreline.



Number of Kayakers: 8

Total Paddle Outings: 9

Total Distance Paddled: 44.7 km

Kayakers:

Carolyn Gorga

Caroline Elizabeth Gorga

Robert Jenkins

Anne Jenkins

Ole Sorenson

Nicholas Sorenson

Erin Enright

Stuart Essig

22 January 2025, PM – Portal Point, Reclus Peninsula 3 km

What a wonderful, calm paddle we had today! From the ship, we paddled through the calm, ice-filled waters towards the landing site at Portal Point. Before reaching the point, we spied a large seal while paddling around a small ice floe. As it lifted its head to look at us, we realised it was a leopard seal—its distinctive, large head resembling a prehistoric creature's. In awe, we cautiously paddled away towards the local glacial face. We also found some Weddell seals on more ice floes and encountered incredible ice archways. Nearby, we paddled in a shallow intertidal zone with friendly gentoo penguins getting ready for a feeding swim. We followed the blowing sound of a nearby whale before realising it had eluded us, and decided to head back to the ship.

23 January 2025, AM – Chiriguano Bay 6 km

A stunning, short-and-sweet paddle in an ice-filled bay this morning! As we paddled around the bay, the cloud started low, but the sun slowly burnt it off, revealing impressive mountains and glaciers coming down to the water's edge. We passed very large, intricately sculpted icebergs that looked freshly detached. There were 'submarines, battleships, Devil's Tower, shark fins, a map of Australia, Māori, koru carvings'—our imaginations were running wild, especially Guide Garath's.

24 January 2025, AM – Pléneau Island, Hovgard 2.8 km

Plan A was to paddle at Port Charcot, but ice blocked the route. We instead enjoyed a wonderful paddle at Pléneau Island. A massive bergy bit sat behind the ship as we loaded into our boats and paddled towards the

island. Many gentoos inhabited the island and we watched them hop, waddle and flop in and out of the water. We also spotted a somewhat rare creature in these southern areas—an elephant seal! After leaving the island, we navigated around the ice wall that had blocked the ship and paddled towards Booth Island, towering about 650 metres above us. On our way back, we encountered quickly approaching dense fog, which changed the entire feel of the paddle.

24 January 2025, PM – Yalour Islands, Penola Strait 5.6 km

Fog clouded all but a hazy outline of the Yalour Islands, a low-lying archipelago of igneous islets and stranded icebergs. It is home to an Adélie penguin colony, and as Gus drove us closer to shore, we saw our first Adélie's porpoising along in the direction of their landing site. The

smallest of the brush-tailed species, they are so cute with their big white-rimmed googly eyes. Gabe took us on a paddle through a mystical maze of bluey-white icebergs. We kept the islands on our left and were always in earshot of squeaking and squawking penguin colonies.

25 January 2025, AM – Port Lockroy and Jougla Point 4 km

Once again, we were blessed with absolutely no wind! We set off, launching from the ship and paddling over to hang out with more penguins! We skirted the edge of the rocks, watching the gentoos nest and do their gentoo things. As we neared the end of our journey, we encountered a leopard seal and paddled away as he was very curious, which wasn't ideal given our inflatable kayaks. After that, we paddled back to the ship to head to Port Lockroy and send some postcards.



25 January 2025, PM – Danco Island, Errera Channel 4 km

A calm, grey afternoon greeted us for our arrival at Danco Island. Although the island's penguin inhabitants were beckoning, we turned away from the island towards some large bergy bits. A large raft of gentoo penguins met us while we were navigating towards an interesting ice arch. It looked as if the water was alive as the surfacing birds moved in a synchronised manner. We reached a massive bergy bit with an impressive arch and sat in our boats, mesmerised, listening to the water stream off the berg and fall from the archway onto the surface. Deep blue lines of ice cut through the otherwise white berg. We rounded Rongé Island and followed its sharp shores back to the *Sylvia Earle*, where we spotted a leopard seal at the end.

26 January 2025, PM – Mikkelsen Harbour 2.8 km

We towed our boats from the ship to start at Mikkelsen, but the wind picked up. After a rocky start, we quickly got control. We paddled along the island and said hi to a few gentoo penguins and enjoyed a flock of snowy sheathbill resting on the rocks. We continued our journey downwind and after we rested for a few minutes in the lee of the wind, we fought our way back to the ship with 15 knots of challenging wind against us.

27 January 2025, AM – Cierva Cove 5 km

Eight keen paddlers set out from the *Sylvia Earle* into another magical setting and morning. We were fortunate again to get mirror-calm waters and the low cloud lifted to reveal big glaciers and mountains encircling us. We paddled slowly around an impressive tabular iceberg

and then headed for the Argentine flag, marking Base Primavera. A colony of gentoo penguins occupied us briefly with their antics as we turned and headed along the rocky coast. The coastline became increasingly more impressive with cliffs, waterfalls, rocky beaches, islets and pools. There were colonies of black-backed gulls with fluffy young chicks squawking for food. We joined the kayakers for hot chocolate with Baileys, celebrated with a photo shoot, and paddled on (minus Ole and Nicholas, who stayed behind for extra exercise) before being safely transferred back to the ship by Gabby.

27 January 2025, PM – Hydrurga Rocks, Two Hummock Island 4 km

Today we explored the winding, weaving Hydrurga Rocks. Chinstrap penguins were scattered across the available open areas, nesting and chirping away. A slight tail breeze

pushed us down the island, where we observed many chinstraps squabbling and porpoising around us. We paddled into every available gap, finding nice calm areas to hang out. As we neared the bottom of the island, we spotted a sleeping Weddell seal tucked up enjoying an afternoon nap. Gabby gave us a brief about the conditions we might encounter around the corner, and everyone prepared for some wind in our faces. As we turned the corner, the wind and waves were splashing and everyone was giggling, having a great time! We battled into the wind and waves. The whole team had great spirits and high energy to get us home! We edged ever so close to the ship before finally taking a break and finding shelter in the lee of some ice. Everyone was stoked; and Gabby felt like a proud mum. We had conquered an epic, challenging paddle, and everyone smashed it!





Snorkelling Log

Guides: Katia and Rick

21 January 2025, PM – Recess Cove, Antarctic Peninsula

Our first snorkelling experience of the trip in Recess Cove was a truly unforgettable experience. We boarded the Zodiacs and headed out for a little cruise around to see a leopard seal hauled out on ice! It was hard to move away as being close to this amazing animal is extraordinary. We made our way through icebergs and the rugged rocky shoreline to our snorkel spot around a small island that had a colony of antarctic shags.

The underwater world was nothing short of breathtaking, with inquisitive shags coming close to the snorkellers. Their agile movement flying through the water was mesmerising to watch. There was a grounded iceberg perfect to swim around, with unique patterns and shapes underwater and the sounds of

the ice cracking and bubbles running up to the surface.

This first snorkelling adventure wasn't just about discovering Antarctica's pristine waters, it was a celebration of stepping out of our comfort zones and connecting deeply with the wild untamed beauty of this extraordinary place. It left us eager for more, setting the stage for the incredible experiences to come.

22 January 2025, PM – Palaver Point, Antarctic Peninsula

Not a breath of wind as the ship glided and finally rested at anchorage. The bubbles of feeding humpback whales decorated the passage. It was a very easy decision to make, opening the snorkelling program as the morning activity. A chinstrap colony beginning at the sea's edge and continuing up the



Number of Snorkellers: 8

Total Paddle Outings: 9

Snorkellers:

Gillian

Sarah

Lauren

Sharon

Meagan

Chris

Scott

Andre

steep slope, framed the crystal-clear, algae-fringed cove. As it was still a new experience with drysuits for our team and we had gained another snorkeller since the evening, the lack of current and wind—with a touch of penguins cheekily darting behind the team—made it easier. Between limpets and various seaweeds, small bits of drifting ice, and the shining sun, our snorkellers were mesmerised for over half an hour.

23 January 2025, AM – Chiriguano Bay, Antarctic Peninsula

A thick fog lined the smooth sea. The ship navigated many stupendous icebergs as anchorage in the glaciated cul-de-sac simultaneously timed with the lifting fog. At first, the coastline appeared unsuitable for snorkelling, but the clear blue waters offered excellent opportunities for ice snorkelling among salps. Listening to

cracks and pops part of the wonder of cloud gazing in a vast frozen world. The snorkel lasted around 20 minutes and was followed by a zodiac-cruise tour of the bay. The sculpted ice structures and never-ending glacier were a wonderful start to the morning.

23 January 2025, PM – Neko Harbour, Antarctic Peninsula

Around the corner from the landing on the left side of the rocky point, the termination of numerous gentoo penguin highways erupted into the shoreline of the sea. A thick halocline of melting freshwater mixing with the sea's salt warranted a mystical viewing in the shallows. The gentoo penguins kept their distance at first, but the patient snorkellers were soon in the thick of many penguins whizzing by! Brash ice cleared when the snorkellers got into the water, and with a passing Weddell seal and the charming acrobatics of gentoo rafts leaving or returning to the shore.

24 January 2025, AM – Pléneau Island, Antarctic Peninsula

After a short landing, we headed out to the south of the Island. We had good visibility and it was amazing to see the lightning-fast gentoo penguins darting around the snorkellers. We listened to the shrieks of delight as the gentoos made quick changes in direction and the snorkellers' heads turned quickly to keep them in sight. There was lots of marine life to see on the bottom, which was amazing considering the area is constantly scoured by icebergs. There were areas of encrusting algae, a pink colour; lots of limpets, red starfish, kelp, and also salps in the water column. There were some large icebergs but they were passing far enough away not to disrupt our interactions with the gentoos.

The snorkellers are very supportive of each other. It's great to see the

confidence growing in the group.

24 January 2025, PM – Yalour Islands, Antarctic Peninsula

The fog returned for the navigation to Adélie-dominated rocky outcrops, around the islands. We found crabeater seals and copious bundles of Adélie chicks and antarctic shags. We dropped the snorkellers off 200 metres from the landing site. Hopeful for some Adélie underwater splendour, the snorkellers were enthralled with the clear and sheer drop-off, kelp, pink encrusting algae, and the small wonders the nutrient-rich waters of Antarctica host. It was a nice swim beside the wall of the main island of the archipelago. Seaweeds of all shapes and colours danced below the group.



25 January 2025, PM – Port Lockroy, Jougla Point, Antarctic Peninsula

We continued to venture onwards to Port Lockroy. First we had a little shopping spree in the gift shop, then wandered through the museum exploring all the history this tiny island has to offer. Back in the Zodiacs, we helped each other into our gear. The snorkellers slid into the water near the Jougla Point landing site, swimming over whale bones, the remnants of the past whaling days. The snorkellers continued along the coast and were met by a Weddell seal. After early reports of a leopard seal in another bay, we were quick to inform the snorkellers that this was safe and to enjoy the experience. The seal was very inquisitive, and the snorkellers again made happy noises through their snorkels as they had an amazing close encounter with this incredible

animal. Lots of happy smiling and cold faces greeted us as we picked up everyone and headed back to the ship. What an experience!

27 January 2025, AM – Cierva Cove, Antarctic Peninsula

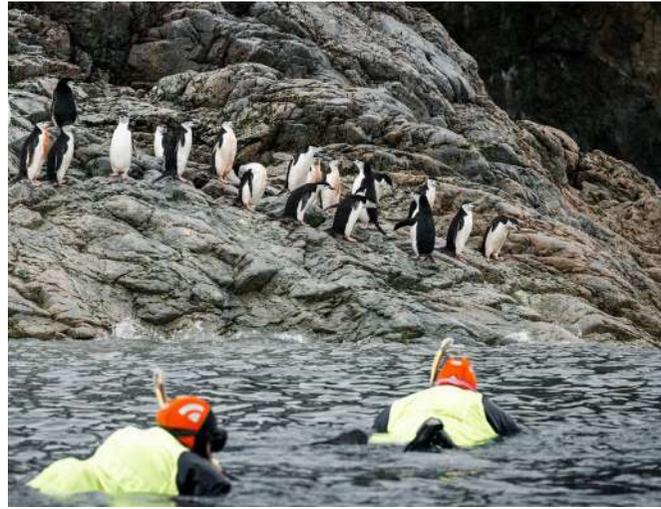
We awoke to a glorious day in Cierva Cove, an amazing panoramic bay of glaciers and huge icebergs and brash ice. We had a Zodiac cruise, zipping through a maze of ice. We cruised by the Argentine summer research base Primavera with its dark red buildings. Scientists here are studying the penguin colonies and leopard seals. We continued our cruise and were met by Sophia on a Zodiac serving hot chocolate! We explored the small Penguin Island before heading across the bay. We spotted a huge leopard seal on the ice. It was resting and paid us no attention. After a whirlwind of camera shutters, we returned to

Penguin Island to a spot where there was a lot of penguin activity and soon kitted up and entered the water. The snorkellers were surrounded by penguins in crystal-clear waters. They could see the steep slope of the island descending to the depths! But the main event was the hundreds of delightful penguins that darted all over the place, circling the snorkellers. A truly beautiful and memorable moment with the agile penguins.

27 January 2025, PM – Hydrurga Rocks, Antarctic Peninsula

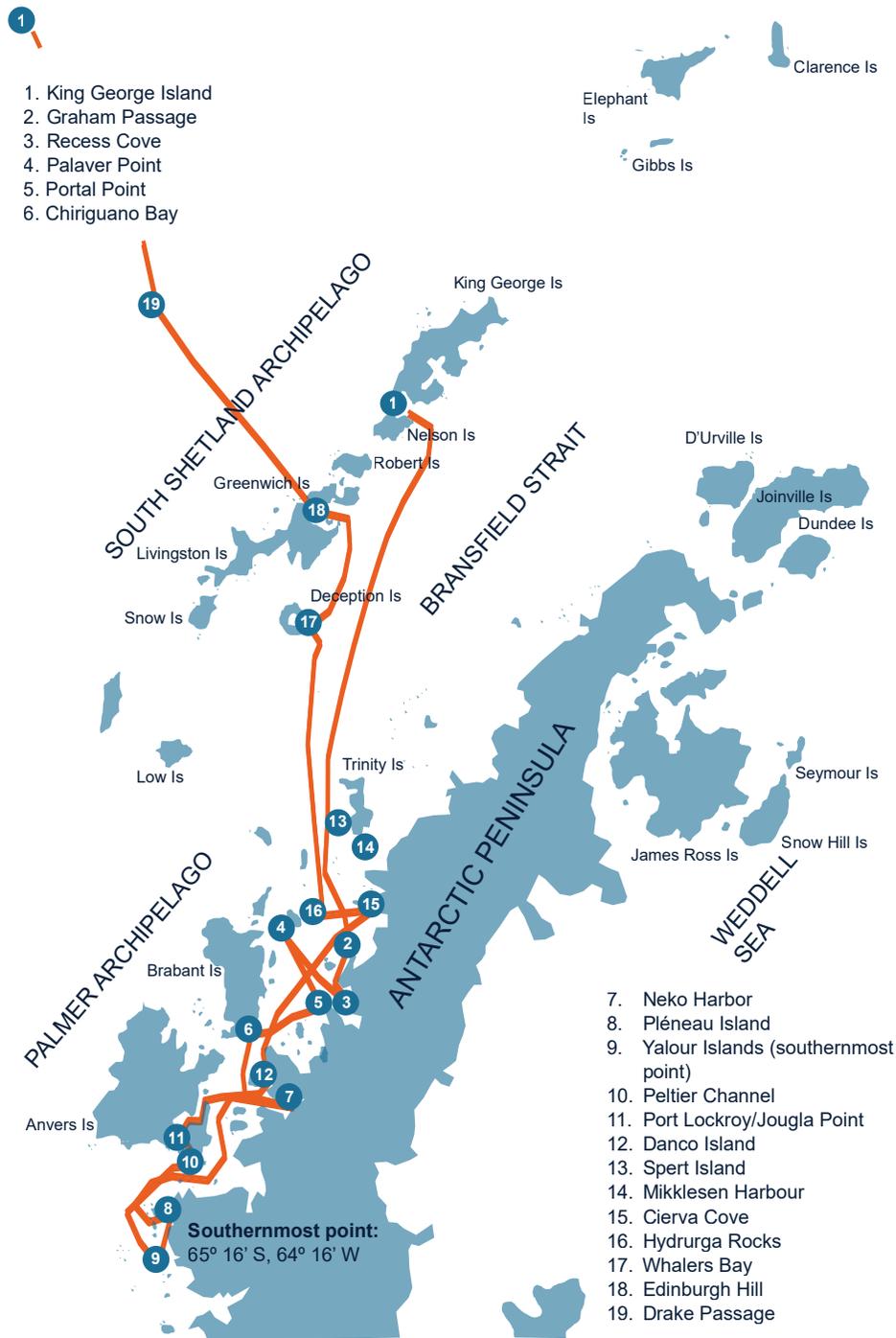
After an exciting time in Cierva Cove, lunch and rewarming in the sauna, we continued to venture onwards to Hydrurga Rocks. The weather had taken a turn; the temperature had dropped and the wind had increased. The conditions were closer to what we would have expected being in

Antarctica. The snorkellers had a short 30-minute landing while we scouted for a good snorkel site. There were lots of rocky shallow areas, which we had to navigate through until we found a small inlet containing a Weddell seal. There was a chinstrap colony on the rocks and they were nearby in the water too. Soon the snorkellers were back on the Zodiac and gearing up for their final snorkel. After a briefing to go over safety points and to ensure the Weddell seal always has space and not to be backed up against the shore, we entered the water. The Weddell seal was as inquisitive as the snorkellers, ducking in and out and around the small pieces of ice that were around the shoreline. Hearing noises of delight coming from the snorkellers was fantastic. The experiences and interactions with wildlife in their natural habitat are something to behold and to be remembered for a lifetime.





Map



Antarctic Explorer

20–31 January 2025



Our Expeditioners

Duncan Adams	Pete Dabrowski	Yusuf Giansiracusa	Jack Jones	David Schofield	Ziyi Wang
Jeanette Adams	Maria De Mucha De Vila	Amit Goel	Sharon Langlotz	Sarah Sharratt	Ryan Ward
Hoda Al Zubaidi	John Dewan	Caroline Gorga	Meredith Levine	Jingyan Shi	Eileen Wenckus
Christine Alea	Susan Dewan	Carolyn Gorga	Yue Liu	Jinghong Shi	Mark Wenckus
John Allison	Susan Dickson	Hong Gu	Zhiying Liu	Jinghuan Shi	Scott Wilson
Robert Baca	Andre Dupuis	Herve Guillou	Ashish Mahajan	Gary Silver	Chris Woodforde
Mujon Baghai	Erin Enright	Amit Gupta	Chuck Mahoney	Lauren Sloan	Sally Woodforde
Aaron Bird	Stuart Essig	Kim Hahn	Barb Mahoney	Ellen Smith-Israelson	Yushi Wu
Donald Boger	Adrian Falkov	Gill Hardy	Stephen Markowitz	Yang Song	Leyao Xiao
Diane Boger	Katherine Feeney	Alan Hayes	Ronald Martin	Nicholas Sorenson	Yiyao Xiao
Sarah Bradshaw	Sorcha Flett	Larry Hersh	Judy Mather	Ole Sorenson	Zhenlan Xiao
Stephen Bradshaw	Kim Francis Pester	Kathy Hersh	Scott Mather	Chris Stanley	Zhiyong Xiong
Karen Buros	Jia Fu	Doug Infelt	Shingo Narumi	Meagan Stewart	Jing Yang
Bill Buros	Brad Fuller	Amy Infelt	Ian Poole	Jo Taylor	Ruihua Yu
Gang Cao	Catie Gallagher	Paul Israelson	Yasmine Poole	Kirk Taylor	Suisheng Zeng
Dina Carter	Shenzhi Gao	Anne Jenkins	Stacy Puente	Chen Tian	Min Zhang
Marion Charpin Guillou	Lei Ge	Robert Jenkins	Linchen Qian	Rob Townsend	Mingxia Zhong
Greg Cormier	Terry Giannakopoulos	Wenmei Jin	Jenni Riberdy	Pam Turner	Dongmei Zhu
Rob Crawford	Anisah Giansiracusa	Grace Jones	Kimberly Roberts	Artem Vyshnevskyi	
Kim Crawford		Meribeth Jones	Jeanne Saunders	Weiying Wang	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Elena Wimberger
Assistant Expedition Leader: Mark Brophy
Onboard Expedition Manager: Kerry Lorimer
Onboard Expedition Assistant: Reza Rusooly
Marine Biologist/Naturalist: Jocelyn Fenstermacher
EL Trainer: Howard Whelan
Geologist/Glaciologist: Sydney Carste
Anthropologist: Andrea Herbert
Marine Biologist CSC: Joselyn Fenstermacher
Mandarin Speaking Guide: Kovey Chen
Photography Guide: Jamie Lafferty
Expedition First Responder: Sophia Plowman
Expedition Guide: Samira Drissi
Expedition Guide: Leo Soibelzon
Expedition Guide/AEL Trainee: Jack Alscher
Lead Kayak Guide: Gabriel Vink Wackernagel
Kayak Guide: Gabby Bruce
Kayak Guide: Garath Wheeler
Kayak Guide: Gus Wimberger
Lead Snorkel Guide: Rick Gannon
Snorkel Guide: Katia Benini
Zodiac Master: Ryan Kampf

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Jorge Alexis Ferdinez
Chief Officer: Andrey Gilevskiy
Second Officer: Joseph Bryan Salem
Safety Officer: Yevhenii Zolotarov
Bosun: Leo Francis Marzan
Ship Doctor: Jose Alejandro Muller San Juan
Chief Engineer: Luis Edgardo Gil
First Engineer: Warlito Verzosa
IT Officer: Mikhail Volkov
Hotel Director: Balvant Singh
Chief Purser: Caroline Sabrina Papenfuss
F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram
Head Bartender: Irene Gayta
Executive Chef: Rosauro Soriano
Sous Chef: I Gusti Ketur Purnawirawan
Hotel Controller: Romat Nurhidayat
Receptionist: Angela Manuel
Receptionist: Erliza Mae Balagot
Head of Stateroom: Florante Lusong
Deck Cadet: Rodrigo Vigario Pinto
Able Seaman/Carpenter: Lexter Fadriquela
Able Seaman: Anthony John Brosas
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Able Seaman: John Paul Sibug
Able Seaman: Eduardo Aloyan

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Jamie Lafferty





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