



Antarctic Explorer



17 – 26 January 2020 | *Greg Mortimer*



About Us

Aurora Expeditions embodies the spirit of adventure, travelling to some of the most wild and remote places on our planet. With over 28 years' experience, our small group voyages allow for a truly intimate experience with nature.

Our expeditions push the boundaries with flexible and innovative itineraries, exciting wildlife experiences and fascinating lectures. You'll share your adventure with a group of like-minded souls in a relaxed, casual atmosphere while making the most of every

opportunity for adventure and discovery. Our highly experienced expedition team of naturalists, historians and destination specialists are passionate and knowledgeable – they are the secret to a fulfilling and successful voyage.

Whilst we are dedicated to providing a 'trip of a lifetime', we are also deeply committed to education and preservation of the environment. Our aim is to travel respectfully, creating lifelong ambassadors for the protection of our destinations.



DAY 1 | Friday 17 January 2020

Ushuaia; Southward ho' across the Drake Passage

Position: 18:00 hours

Course: In port

Wind Speed: 15 knots

Barometer: 997 MB & steady

Latitude: 54°48' S

Speed: In port

Wind Direction: NW

Air Temp: 9° C

Longitude: 68°17' W

Sea Temp: 7° C

The land was gone, all but a little streak, away off on the edge of the water, and down under us was just ocean, ocean, ocean – millions of miles of it, heaving and pitching and squirming, and white sprays blowing from the wave-tops, and we had the sky and the ocean to ourselves, and the roomiest place I ever did see and the loneliest.

—Mark Twain, *Tom Sawyer Abroad*

After months of preparation, weeks of anticipation and long-haul flights from around the globe, we finally arrived at Ushuaia, known locally as el fin del mundo (the end of the world), ready and raring to begin our Antarctic adventure.

Following a brilliant tour of this bustling town; including stops at the Old Prison and Maritime Museum, we loaded onto buses headed for Ushuaia Port, and pulled alongside the *Greg Mortimer* waiting patiently for our arrival.

We smiled for the cameras, before heading onboard to meet our Expedition Team, Hotel Team and to become acquainted with our staterooms. Half unpacked and slightly settled in, it was time to meet our fellow adventurers down at the Elephant Island Bar for afternoon tea, while others headed to the outer decks to start exploring our home for the next few weeks. We returned to the Lecture Theatre when Expedition Leader Stephen called us together. Stephen gave us an update on weather conditions as we head down to Antarctica, before introducing the rest of the Aurora Expedition Team for this 10-day voyage to the Icy Continent.

Onboard we total 122 passengers with many nationalities represented, including Australia, Belgium, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, UK and the USA, along with 22 Aurora Expeditions' team members and 85 capable crew.

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don our new blue jackets, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations to run through an important safety briefing and drill, including making our way to our two Polar Class life vessels.

At 1930 we headed to the Restaurant on Deck 5 to enjoy a delicious first dinner, complete with panoramic views of the Beagle Channel shadowed with the mountain ranges of Tierra del Fuego. With Argentina to our starboard and Chile to our port; we were enchanted by the snow-capped peaks, diversity of seabirds and mountain ranges brilliant in the steely light.

The soft evening light enticed many of us out onto the outer decks. We encountered southern giant petrels, dolphin and kelp gulls and our first black-browed albatross as we made our way out into the unknown.

A few of our number remained up on deck to watch our pilot disembark at the edge of the Argentinian mainland, while others made their way to their cabins for much-needed sleep.



DAY 2 | Saturday 18 January 2020

Drake Passage

Position: 08:00 hours
Latitude: 56°32.66'S
Longitude: 064°42.70'W

Course: 145°
Speed: 13.3 knots

Wind Speed: 25 knots
Wind Direction: SW

Barometer: 995 MB & steady
Air Temp: 5°C
Sea Temp: 6°C

I now belong to the higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the albatross.

—Robert Cushman Murphy

We woke up to our first true sea day, with our ship charging across the waves, some found it easier than others to find their sea legs – though most agreed that the motion of the ship was noticeably smooth.

The day's programme kicked off with a fantastic lecture given by Naturalist Heidi, on the seabirds that can be found in this part of the world. People are often surprised by the variety of hardy birds that grace the waves around the Antarctic continent, and some of them look very similar, so it was very helpful to be given some pointers on identification. We had already seen some petrels and albatrosses from the deck of the ship, and were happy to learn that we have very good chances of seeing the bird with the longest wing span in the world, the wandering albatross.

The rest of the morning passed quickly, some attending bridge tours thanks to our very accommodating bridge officers. Many people were interested in the photography presentation and inspired by the beautiful photos that were shown. Lunch was a happy affair of getting to know each other a little more, and making new friends.

Antarctica and the surrounding islands have unique and fragile ecosystems that can easily be disrupted by human activity. In order to have the privilege of accessing this part of the world, we have to follow protocols concerning biosecurity, safety and wildlife watching guidelines. IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) is the organisation that oversees that cruise ship companies are operating respectfully in the area and educating their guests about the natural environment. We undertook a thorough biosecurity check on outdoor gear, checking all the time for pesky seeds that could be taken on land along with our clothing.

With Antarctica having such a rich and interesting history (despite being a relatively new history), some may find it a challenge to get their head around the series of events that have happened on the continent in the last 200 years. Thankfully Alasdair was here to bring us a fascinating lecture summarising the heroic expeditions that have occurred here.

As the evening went on, we enjoyed Captain's cocktails – that is we were introduced to Captain Joachim and his officers who put in so much work to keep the ship running along smoothly. Another great evening with the chance to have a drink with new friends and toast our upcoming expedition!





DAY 3 | Sunday 19 January 2020

Penguin Island

Position: 08.40 hours
Latitude: 61°08.85'S
Longitude: 058°26.51'W

Course: 140°
Speed: 13.5 knots

Wind Speed: 34 knots
Wind Direction: NE

Barometer: 973 hPa & steady
Air Temp: 3°C
Sea Temp: 3°C

To dine with a glacier on a sunny day is a glorious thing and makes feasts of meat and wine ridiculous. The glacier eats hills and drinks sunbeams.

—John Muir

Antarctica, you beauty! It was not long after our day started that our first icebergs were spied, and these impressive icy monoliths heralded our arrival in Antarctica. Together with the snow-capped, rugged islands that appeared from the distant horizon; and with the frolicking whales in the waters below, we were lured out onto the outer decks to marvel and muse.

Having previously enjoyed our morning presentations from Alexander and Pete to learn about some of the critters that inhabit these waters – the penguins and the whales – we were ready to put our newfound knowledge into practice.

Penguin Island was our playground for the afternoon. While some of us took to the Zodiacs to enjoy the busy beaches from the water, others scaled the peaks of this once-active volcano to take in the expansive views from above. Across the water we enjoyed views of more than 180 degrees of nearby King George Island and the expanse of glaciers upon it - made even more spectacular as the sun emerged and these rivers of ice were transformed into a sparkling backdrop. Brilliant and beautiful.

Along the shoreline we met our first gangs of penguins – large gatherings of chinstrap penguins, as well as the odd Adélie and gentoo penguin. We watched the penguin antics within the chinstrap rookery, as parents hopped, waddled and clambered their way to and from their nests; or paused to preen and preen and preen. Lazy Antarctic fur seals snoozed the afternoon away, occasionally raising their heads to see what the blue-jacketed visitors were up to. We soon learnt to keep a keen eye on the larger “boulders” about the beach, having become aware that fur seals are able to perform very convincing impersonations of such rocks! Southern giant petrels soared, while Antarctic terns flitted above us. Brown skuas loitered and lurked, patient and sure of their next opportunity for a penguin snack. Meanwhile, the large flotilla of hardy kayakers paddled their way into a steady breeze to enjoy their own wildlife bonanza at nearby Turret Point.

Smiles a’plenty were seen as we all gathered back on board, and the dining room buzzed with the chatter of first impressions and stories shared. It was clear that as our first Antarctic day came to a close and we headed off to bed, “sweet dreams” were most certainly going to be had by all.





DAY 4 | Monday 20 January 2020

Gourdin Island; Astrolabe Island

Position: 06:45 hours

Course: 256°

Wind Speed: Calm

Barometer: 992 MB & rising

Latitude: 63°11.61'S

Speed: 7.1 knots

Air Temp: 0°C

Longitude: 057°15.27'W

Sea Temp: 3°C

Who would believe in penguins unless someone had seen them?

—Connor O'Brien

The *Greg Mortimer* crossed the waters of Bransfield Strait through the night and dropped anchor near the very northern tip of the mainland Antarctic Peninsula. Just a short step from the mainland was Gourdin Island, named by Jules Sébastien César Dumont d'Urville during the French Expedition of 1837-40. This small island was surrounded by grounded tabular icebergs and provided a wonderful setting for a morning excursion. We took to the Zodiacs for a cruise among these colossal bergs and watched penguins porpoising through the water busily on their way between the island and their krill fishing grounds. There was evidence of nearby krill abundance, as the hills on the island were painted bright pink with the digested pigment spattered by prolific penguins. This island is special as it is one of the rare places where all three species of brushtail penguin breed in close proximity. There was a neighbourhood on shore of gentoos feeding their orange-billed fluffy chicks. The chinstraps had another area where their squeaky calls could be heard, and their paler fluffy chicks were also being fed. But the majority on the island were the black-faced Adélie penguin with its expressive white eye-ring. These chicks were all dark grey and perhaps not a photographer's favourite as they seemed to relish lying in the pink-orange krill-filled guano. The penguins often seemed to be in a hurry as they waddled to and from their nests, some at the very height of the island. The summit of this little island provided a great view across to the ice plateau of the peninsula.

We returned to the ship to warm up with a hearty lunch as the ship steamed further along the Bransfield Strait. The day was warm as the sun shone and there were occasional icebergs to dot our route. We had a presentation by Albert on landscape photography which we will surely put to use during this voyage among ice and mountains.

We made an afternoon visit to Astrolabe Island, another place named by Dumont d'Urville after his flag ship during the expedition. This outlier island had peaks covered in meringue-like snow and rocky islets named the "Dragon's Teeth". There was more swell at the gangway to negotiate, but we managed a Zodiac cruise along a section of coast on this island to see chinstrap penguins leaping to and from the sea on their way to steep colonies on the rocky headlands. There were also slumbering Weddell, crabeater and leopard seals sighted by various Zodiacs. Surge channels lured us onwards to explore a little further and several beautiful grounded icebergs glistened in the sunlight. Antarctic fulmars were nesting high on the cliffs above us and glided past on what felt like no wind at all.

Back on board, we all gathered in the lounge for a daily recap. We learned a few more Antarctic facts and stories and learned of our plans to explore further along the peninsula tomorrow.



DAY 5 | Tuesday 21 January 2020

Danco Island; Paradise Harbour

Position: 08.10 hours

Course: 188°

Wind Speed: 9 knots

Barometer: 994 MB & steady

Latitude: 64°38.41'S

Speed: 10.7 knots

Wind Direction: SW

Air Temp: 0°C

Longitude: 062°35.47'W

Sea Temp: 2°C

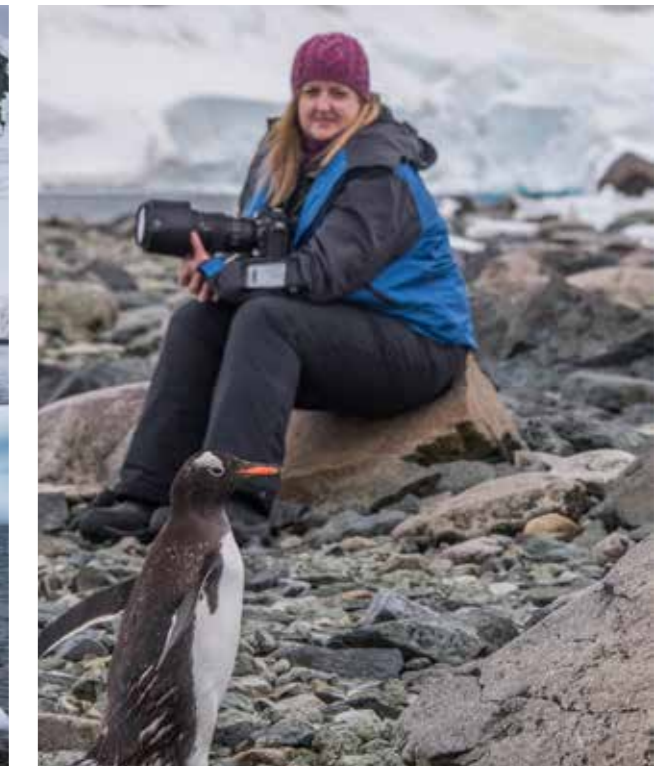
*The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!*
—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner'

The weather gods have certainly been shining on us this voyage, as we were blessed with another clear, windless day. A stroll up the hill was the exploration of choice for many aboard, with a good leg stretch up to the top of a nearby ridge, but not wandering too far as to avoid the risk of falling into a crevasse!

The views from the top were panoramic, with 360-degree views of the fissured glaciers with their exquisite turquoise blue cracks exposed, rocky peaks extending above the glaciers where they are too steep for the ice to cling, and mirror-calm waters studded with icebergs of all shapes and sizes. Taking a minute to listen to the sounds around us, we might have heard the roaring and crashing of a calving glacier, the sound reaching us long after the ice had hit the water, or the squawk of a gentoo penguin as a hungry skua passed too close for comfort. Others strolled along the rocky shore, admiring the macro world – the tiny icebergs lined up neatly along the high tide line, the pressure wave from the calving ice licking around the rocks, and the minute amphipods swarming in close to the shore, perhaps avoiding their whale predators.

It was hard to imagine the scenery could get better, but as we ventured into Paradise Harbour it did, and we could almost appreciate why two teenage boys chose to stay for the winter, living beneath an upturned whale boat! We were welcomed ashore at Brown Base by the Argentinians for our first continental landing of the voyage, given an interesting tour of their museum and walked to the top of the cliffs where we watched a humpback whale mooching around on the edge of the ice. We cruised along the cliffs, painted orange and red and green from the lichens encrusting the rocks. Antarctic cormorants, with their handsome blue and yellow face markings were nesting on the cliffs, and Antarctic terns flitted around in front of the boats. Some of us were lucky enough to witness nature in full force when a skua dragged a cormorant ashore, madly flapping its wings to pull the bird through the water, then deposited it on the rocks, using its beak to pluck away the feathers.

As we rounded the corner our breath was taken away by the immensity of the Bolten Glacier, cracking as it squeezed its way between the rocky peaks. We were surprised to find a yacht sheltering in its cover, having made its way safely across the mighty Drake Passage. Back on board we were treated to mulled wine to warm the cockles of our hearts, and a delicious barbecue spread, with the stunning backdrop of Paradise Harbour. Could there be a more spectacular view anywhere in the world?







DAY 6 | Wednesday 22 January 2020

Lemaire Channel; Petermann Island; Port Charcot

Position: 08:30 hours **Course:** At anchor
Latitude: 65°10'S
Longitude: 064°7 W

Wind Speed: 4.7 knots **Barometer:** 997 MB & rising
Wind Direction: SE **Air Temp:** 5°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats...simply messing.

—*Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows*

The 0530 wakeup call from Stephen was worth the pain of every bleary eye and caffeine starved brain aboard our ship. Around 0600 *Greg Mortimer* began its passage down one of Antarctica's most famous waterways – the spectacularly narrow, mountain-flanked passage between the mainland and Booth Island known as the Lemaire Channel.

The observation platforms on Deck 5 were lowered and were soon supporting an enthusiastic crowd of photographers keen to get close to crunch and bump of the ship's hull as she pushed through fields of brash ice and small floes.

With breakfast over, it was time to pile into the Zodiacs for a day that had everything – wildlife, sublime scenery, and fascinating human history. The first landing for the day was at Petermann Island, and in particular Port Circumcision, which Jean-Baptiste Charcot chose as the wintering spot for his French Antarctic Expedition in 1909. The expedition's ship, the *Pourquoi Pas?*, was frozen into this small inlet for the winter. Our normal landing spot appeared to be taken over by expanding colonies of gentoo penguins, so an alternative was found a little way further around the island. It was then a matter of a trudge through the soft snow and across a low saddle to the site of an Argentinian refuge hut surrounded by nesting

penguins. A memorial cross capped a nearby knoll close to the shore. It commemorated three men from the British Antarctic Survey, who in 1982 attempted to cross the sea ice between Petermann Island and Faraday (now Venadsky) Station. When the ice broke up they were tragically never seen again. While most of us were ashore, the kayakers revelled in threading their way through a maze of ice close inshore.

Petermann Island marked the southern extent of our travels. Before lunch, the ship turned north and retraced our morning's path through the Lemaire Channel, stopping adjacent Port Charcot at the northern end of Booth Island, the site of our afternoon's activities. It was here that Charcot's first expedition spent the winter of 1904 in the Français, again with the ship moored to the rocks of a snug little inlet. The wind was fresh, while light snow and sleet fell, giving us a small taste of an Antarctica quite different from the gentle moods of the previous few days. A group of 25 or us went for a hike to the top of a nearby hill and enjoyed panoramic views over the surrounding shallow waters where grounded icebergs had literally gone to die. The rest of the party took advantage of this iceberg graveyard and went on an extended Zodiac cruise, marvelling at the infinite variety and beauty of these most mysterious and alluring symbols of the polar regions. But it was not just ice that held us enthralled – a humpback and a minke whale or two, as well as large flotillas of gentoos, made for a thrilling, if chilly cruise. Recap, with everything from an explanation of the habits of the leopard seal, to Rachel's exposé on her relative, John Rymill, rounded out an Antarctic day that had us all abuzz.



DAY 7 | Thursday 23 January 2020

Foyn Harbour; Portal Point

Position: 05.16 hours
Latitude: 64°30.69'S
Longitude: 062°11.36'W

Course: 72.9°
Speed: 15 knots

Wind Speed: 11 knots
Wind Direction: SE

Barometer: 1000 MB & steady
Air Temp: 0°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

To anyone who goes to the Antarctic, there is a tremendous appeal, an unparalleled combination of grandeur, beauty, vastness, loneliness, and malevolence — all of which sound terribly melodramatic — but which truly convey the actual feeling of Antarctica. Where else in the world are all of these descriptions really true?

— Captain T.L.M. Sunter, ‘The Antarctic Century Newsletter’

Under grey early morning skies, we anchored in steel grey waters off Enterprise Island. The light of the misty overcast day highlighted the subtle colours of the surrounding landscape. Delicate, blue icebergs and pristine glacier fronts were set amongst a backdrop of dark rocks and cliffs hidden in the fog.

Enterprise Island is the site of the wreck of the *Governoren*. This ship was the largest whaling factory ship in the world prior to the First World War. It was considered by the Norwegians at the time, to be the epitome of technical sophistication. In early 1915 the ship was in full production when a fire broke out on board. Over 16,000 barrels of whale oil were lost but fortunately all eighty-five men onboard were saved.

Today the wreck provides a home for breeding Antarctic terns and an intriguing destination for our morning Zodiac excursion. As we boarded the Zodiacs there was a message from the Bridge that pods of humpback whales had been sighted out in the bay. It was a truly Antarctic experience with light snow falling on us while we watched, enthralled, as the whales rose and dived around us.

Along the shoreline of Enterprise Island with ice cliffs shrouded in mist, Antarctic terns welcomed us from their rocky perches. The wreck of the *Governoren* came into view in a



DAY 8 | Friday 24 January 2020

Hydrurga Rocks; Spert Island

Position: 05:10 hours
Latitude: 64°11.65'S
Longitude: 061° 31.60'W

Course: 290.2°
Speed: 0.2 knots

Wind Speed: 9.9 knots
Wind Direction: NE

Barometer: 995 MB & steady
Air Temp: 1°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

All the world loves a penguin: I think it is because in many respects they are like ourselves, and in some respects what we should like to be. Had we but half their physical courage, none could stand against us. Had we a hundredth part of their maternal instinct we should have to kill our children by the thousand. Their little bodies are so full of curiosity that they have no room for fear. They like mountaineering, and joy-riding on ice floes: they even like to drill.

—Apsley Cherry Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*

Chinese New Year's Eve was a cracking day for all on board. We left the falling snow and thick fog behind and sailed north overnight to wake to a beautiful morning. In contrast to the weather, our humpback whale friends had apparently followed us, with several spied circumnavigating the ship with our morning coffee. Many of us are now so used to the idea of enormous sea creatures frolicking next to the ship we didn't blink an eye. There were no mad dashes for cameras, no rushing out of the dining room to the outer deck and no intense gazing at the ocean for the next view of the mighty beast. This does not reflect disinterest; just the obvious: we have been very fortunate indeed over the last couple of days with our whale encounters!

After another fantastic breakfast, we headed for a landing on Hydrurga Rocks which is named for the leopard seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) we have encountered on many times so far on our expedition. Alas, another leopard wasn't added to the list although we did have close encounters with Weddell seals hauled out and lying lazily on the ice. There is nothing

more relaxed looking than a content Weddell seal. Big belly full of fish, eyes heavy, and body slug-like in every way except for her five-hundred-kilogram frame. Surrounding these lovely creatures were nesting chinstrap penguins and Imperial shags. The overpowering smell reflected an abundance of life. We noticed their chicks were smaller than those previously seen on the South Shetland Islands and this was attributed to us being further south. Our track over the island was hampered by cranky kelp gulls whose dive-bombing drew a line indicating we should go no further, so we spent the morning content observing the antics of penguins playing, skuas scouring and seals snoring.

After lunch, Heidi gave a brilliant lecture on all things krill. Heidi explained everything from ecology to conservation of this "kriller" species. Not just whale food, this small crustacean forms the basis of the food chain in the world's ocean. Her lecture gave us time to steam to Spert Island, a new location not many of the expedition team had been to before. A mud map was handed to the expedition team indicating where to explore and we headed off to discover what lay around the corner. It didn't disappoint - massive cliffs, huge caves, iceberg graveyards and fur seals bouncing around the rocks like bears.

At dinner, we feasted to boisterous chatter as we celebrated another great day. Once full, our masterful historian gave an epic lecture on Shackleton which was a great way to cap off the day. I don't know what species represents this Chinese year, but I hope it is the year of the penguin or seal or krill.....





DAY 9 | Saturday 25 January 2020

Hannah Point/Walker Bay; Whalers' Bay (Deception Island)

Position: 05.16 hours	Course: 17.3°	Wind Speed: 15.3 knots	Barometer: 1002 MB & steady
Latitude: 62° 50.73'S	Speed: 6.3 knots	Wind Direction: NE	Air Temp: 2°C
Longitude: 060° 44.61'W			Sea Temp: 2°C

We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures we can have, if only we seek them with our eyes open. —Jawaharlal Nehru

After a quiet night at sea we approached Livingston Island in the South Shetland Islands for the last full day of landings of our incident-packed voyage. After breakfast we landed at Hannah Point, a breeding site for chinstrap and gentoo penguins. Among the chinstraps was a single pair of macaroni penguins, endemic to South Georgia, their bright yellow crests setting them apart from their black and white neighbours. Nesting on the slopes above were giant petrels, never far from potential prey.

The chilly west wind brought fog that obscured our ship, testing Zodiac drivers' navigation skills. Around the slopes a large group of wallowing elephant seal bulls came into view. Their snoring, snarling and bellowing carried up the hill, as did their ripe smell. After their breeding season, these huge marine mammals haul out for a prolonged moult. Wallowing in mud and excrement might not be our cup of tea, but probably helps to ease the itching of moulting coats. As we moved along the black volcanic sand track that led along the side of the side of the hill above the beach, more elephant seals came into view, including some enormous mature males. On the beach younger males half-heartedly practiced their jousting skills, preparing for their future deadly earnest competition to be beachmasters with their own harems of breeding females. Some fern fossils and interesting geology capped off this interesting visit.

After lunch we moved to Whalers Bay, Deception Island. This amazing volcanic caldera, which has been periodically active in recent history, was a refuge for whaling fleets, and the site of the Hektor Whaling Company's whaling station during the early decades of the 20th century. Hubert Wilkins used it as a base for his pioneering aerial exploration of the Peninsula, and it was later an operations base for the British Antarctic Survey until it was largely destroyed by a volcanic eruption in 1969. A Spanish station currently monitors seismic activity here, so we could confidently enter without risking being parboiled, as were whaling ships during an eruption in the 1920s, when the sea temperature in Whalers Bay reached 70°C!

For those on board the ship, Dr Pete related the sorry history of Antarctic whaling, emphasised by the proximity of the historic whaling station. The abundance and trusting nature of humpbacks in recent days reminds us how easily the whalers must have captured their prey 100 years ago.

This evening, after the Captain's Farewell, we shared our final dinner together and celebrated the cheerful and hard-working staff who have looked after all our comforts with so little fuss. After dinner we gathered in the lounge for Photo Liz's wonderful slide show summary of the voyage. Thanks Liz and all who contributed their photos.





DAY 10 | Sunday 26 January 2020

Frei Station, King George Island

Position: 05:10 hours
Latitude: 62° 13.84'S
Longitude: 058° 51.06'W

Course: 327.9°
Speed: 5.9 knots

Wind Speed: 10.1 knots
Wind Direction: ESE

Barometer: 994 MB & falling
Air Temp: 1°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

Antarctica left a restless longing in my heart beckoning towards an incomprehensible perfection forever beyond the reach of mortal man. Its overwhelming beauty touches one so deeply that it is like a wound.
—Edwin Mickleburgh, *Beyond the Frozen Sea*

Aurora Expeditions' send out a big thank you to you all for your great humour, infectious enthusiasm and smiling faces. It was a pleasure having you all 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.

This morning we anchored in Maxwell Bay at King George Island for a rendezvous with the two BAE146-200 aircrafts that will whisk us north across Drake Passage, which we crossed in the good ship *Greg Mortimer* all those long days ago. It has been an amazing voyage.





Kayaking Log

By Alex Chavanne

Kayaking Guides: Alex Chavanne, Russell Henry, Danny O’Farrell, Tory Stewart, John Weir

Kayakers:

Brett Cobb-Clark	Deb Cobb-Clark	Tim Di Tomaso
Dave Di Tomaso	Paul Di Tomaso	Frank Di Tomaso
Peter King	Lukshmi King	Sarah Walmsley
John Linn	Dennis MacNamara	Claire MacNamara
Liz Mullineaux	Phil Scott	Pamela Lambert
David Phillips	Diane Phillips	Annalise Prowse
Jon Stanley	Cathy Stanley	Swathi Iyengar
Gabi Warner	Indi Warner	Mark Warner
Pip Warner		

DAY 3: PM: Penguin Island and Turret Point – Distance: 6 km

As the *Greg Mortimer* rounded the eastern point of King George Island the wind eased, and as the sun shined on the glaciated island all the paddlers gathered to kit out and fit their boats in the kayak room. Little by little the swell eased and by the time we came to anchorage off the dormant volcanic cone of Penguin Island we were in calm water. The platform was lowered and all the paddlers got suited up for a first outing where everyone was asked to attend. Once everyone was on the water, despite a few hiccups, we all headed off for the lee of Turret Point because a breeze had picked up. Kinks were worked out and partnerships were formed and broken as we paddled into the breeze and small waves. Once we were in the lee of land, we paddled down along shore watching out for our first penguins of the trip, along with elephant seals and fur seals. Finding a safe beach to land on, we all got ashore for a short walk around the wildlife of the South Shetland Islands. Those who were feeling strong and confident got back in their boats for a short paddle downwind back to the ship, while the remainder got a ride back by Zodiac.

DAY 4: AM: Gourdin Island – Distance: 9km – long, 4km – short

The sea was far more calm this morning as the ship sat at anchor off Gourdin Island. A small group of paddlers who signed up for a longer paddle set off first to circumnavigate the island, and amid hundreds of porpoising penguins we cruised among icebergs and watched penguins coming and going from their nesting sites. We set off and paddled around two large icebergs, and managed to paddle around a tabular iceberg, stunning in its enormity. The group who opted for a shorter paddle paddled to shore, and as penguins porpoised around the boats and sheathbills clouded the skies, we landed to walk amongst the birds unique to Antarctica. After picking up a strong native scent, we paddled back to the ship to set off for the afternoon’s destination.

PM: Astrolabe Island

Cancelled for anchorage conditions and short landing time.

DAY 5: AM: Danco Island – Distance: 9km – long, 5km – short

All 25 paddlers signed up for this morning’s paddle as they saw the calm conditions and towering icebergs presented themselves around the small island. Liz and Phil set off for a

slightly longer paddle, paddling around and through the maze of large grounded bergs at the south end of the Errera Channel. Rounding the end of the island, the light breeze dropped, and we were rewarded with a glacial amphitheatre and mirror calm conditions. Enjoying the quiet and solitude, we paddled along, feeling small compared to the surroundings. We finished up our 3-hour paddle with a stop by a mature leopard seal and humpback whales before heading back to the ship. The shorter paddles also got around the island, paddling in close to shore as penguins came and went. The humpbacks put on a brief display as they went about busily feeding along with the hundreds of penguins porpoising around. A fantastic morning paddle in Antarctica.

PM: Paradise Harbour – Distance: 7 km

The conditions, believe it or not, had improved over lunch, and as we pulled into our afternoon’s anchorage at Paradise Harbour, it looked a lot like paddling paradise. Nearly everyone rallied and got out for a second round of paddling this afternoon and we set out amongst the brash ice. Passing Base Brown, we left the sounds of the generators behind and into the calm conditions we went. Each kayak cutting through the glassy waters without a sound, only the occasional squawk of penguins of the deep breath of whales disturbed the peace. Underneath a cliff covered with mosses, grass and lichens we paddled into Skontorp Cove, and marvelled at the large glacier that dominates the bay. Huge pillars of ice hung precipitously, ready to fall, but we didn’t see any today and all paddled on to make a landing on the continent of Antarctica. A toast was made and we took a quick few group photos to celebrate some’s seventh continent, before getting back in the boats to paddle languorously back to the ship before barbeque night.

DAY 6: AM: Petermann Island – Distance: 5 km

We hopped off the boat as soon as it was anchored after a lovely transit south through the Lemaire Channel. Heading out, we heard the blow of a solitary humpback whale, and followed it around a little bit before realizing it was too busy feeding to be interested in us. We then took off and paddled towards Petermann Island, weaving amongst small and medium sized bergs and small islands covered in seals and penguins. There were several small iceberg graveyards and we paddled through them quietly, the only sound being the cracking of ice. Onwards, we paddled past the beaches where penguins were coming and going; and we stopped to see the “PP” engraved in the rock over 100 years ago when Charcot spent a winter here. We wrapped up our paddle and paddled back in the calm water and light snowfall for a fantastic morning out.

Extra: Petermann to Port Charcot – Distance: 16km

The ship was repositioning to a close landing site for the afternoons landing, so instead of lunch, several guides and two guests took off at the end of the Petermann Island landing to paddle to the next landing site. With icebergs and brash ice littering the channel, the ship sailed on and left the kayaks alone in the Antarctic. Low clouds hung over the high peaks, but the mood was positive as we paddled through some of the hundreds of islands that surround the southern end of the Lemaire Strait. Stopping for lunch on a floating piece of ice added to the ambiance, before continuing the paddle through what’s considered the “iceberg graveyard”. Only at the very end did the wind pick up and make for a bumpy return to the ship.

PM: Port Charcot – Distance 2km

We were on the water quickly, and racing downwind toward port circumcision before we knew it. A quick turn by a leopard seal and then out of the historic anchorage back into the wind. By this time, the wind speed had increased to 20 knots and we all decided that it was a better idea to view the iceberg graveyard in a Zodiac then paddle today.

DAY 7: AM: Enterprise Island – Distance 10km

The snow was falling in big clusters as the paddlers took off this morning at Foyn Harbor. All groups headed in first to see the shipwrecked *Guvernoren*, while the Zodiacs were buzzing around in the snow with little visibility. We decided to paddle around the island, and had a very relaxing paddle, watching icebergs and ice cliffs come in and out of visibility as the snow came and went. After rounding the farthest corner of the island, a call for whales came over the radio, and so all groups except the long paddled out to see a large group of humpbacks feeding. One group couldn’t keep up with the speedy whales, so returned to the ship to catch a Zodiac out to view them for a few minutes before returning for lunch.

PM: Portal Point – Distance 5km

Just a single paddler could be talked into paddling this evening, despite mirror calm conditions; enormous sculpted icebergs and whales lolling in bays surrounded by magnificent Antarctic scenery. It turned out to be a lovely calm paddle, focused primarily on the half dozen whales that were spotted early on near the landing site. Not a whole lot more to say about this paddle, it was lovely.

DAY 8: AM: Hydrurga Rocks – Distance 6km

The kayak room filled with the smell of penguin poo as we opened the shell door to launch kayaks this morning. Several paddlers got off for a long and short paddle option around this small island filled with chinstrap penguins. We made our way along shore, watching penguins come and go, and everyone got off on shore for a quick look around. The keen kayakers took off first and made a big spin around some of the large bergs in the area before looping back to the ship. The shorter paddle group took their time on shore and then paddled back along the island to wrap up a refreshing and pleasant morning, it was a good mix of shore time and paddling for most.

PM: Spert Island – Distance 15km – long, 6km – short

Spert Island is known for its maze of sea stacks that offer an excellent playground for kayakers when the weather permits. The day was grey, but calm nonetheless, and we got on the water for two options, a paddle around the island, or a shorter paddle amongst the stacks. Those paddling around took off first for an exciting and adventurous long paddle that barely got back before the ship left, while the shorter paddle took their time and enjoyed the narrow passages in the rocks. Large icebergs caught in the small bays lolled in light swell, and the narrow channels became a little bit bumpy with rebounding waves. Paddling through into the large bay formed to the west of the island we explored coves and some large caves that we were able to paddle in and through. It was an exciting paddle, with many people being pushed just to the edge of their comfort zone. The paddle finished with a few more impressive rock channels, a pass past an impressive iceberg graveyard and a whale swimming by. All a fitting end to a paddle that would turn out to be our last on this trip to Antarctica.

DAY 9: AM – Hannah Point Cancelled to wind

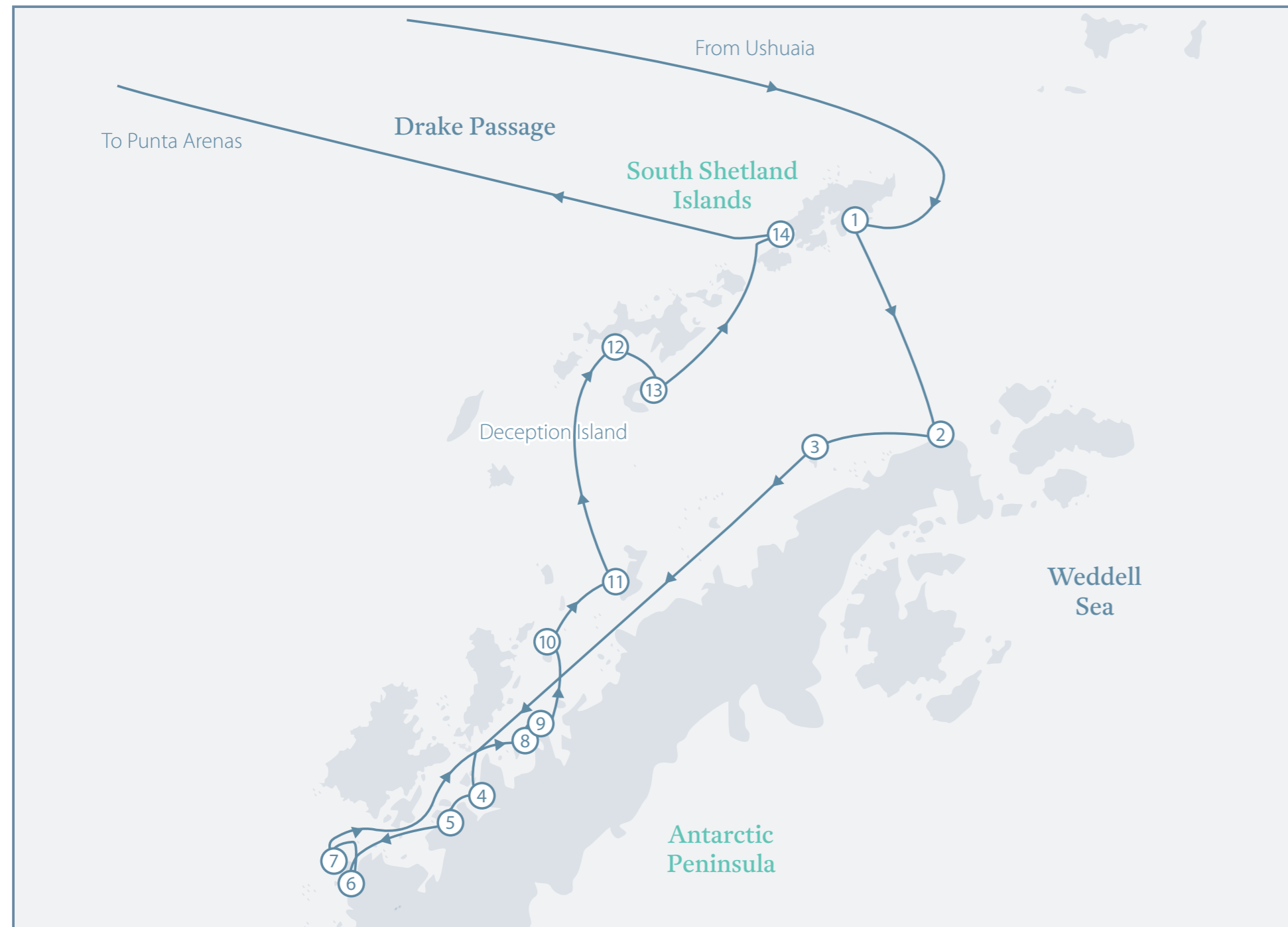
PM – Whalers Bay Gear cleanup



Antarctic Explorer

17 – 26 January 2020 | Distance Travelled: 1,290 nautical miles (2,389 kilometres)

Southernmost point of voyage: Petermann Island 65°11S, 64°07'W



Destinations

- | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 01 Penguin Island | 05 Brown Station, Paradise Harbour | 09 Portal Point | 13 Whalers Bay, Deception Island |
| 02 Gourdin Island | 06 Petermann Island | 10 Hydrurga Rocks | 14 Frei Station, King George Island |
| 03 Astrolabe Island | 07 Port Charcot | 11 Spert Island | |
| 04 Danco Island | 08 Foyn Harbour | 12 Hannah Point, Livingston Island | |



Bird Species Log

	January								
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Gentoo Penguin			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Chinstrap Penguin			X	X			X	X	X
Adelie Penguin			X	X		X	X		
Macaroni Penguin									X
Black-browed Albatross	X	X							
Grey-headed Albatross			X						
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross			X						
Southern Giant Petrel	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Giant Petrel	X	X							
Antarctic Petrel			X						
Cape Petrel			X						
Snow Petrel								X	
Antarctic Fulmar		X	X						
White-chinned Petrel			X						
Sooty Shearwater	X								
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		X	X						
Wilson's Storm-petrel			X	X	X	X		X	X
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)	X								
Antarctic Cormorant			X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Snowy Sheathbill			X	X	X		X	X	X
Chilean Skua	X								
Brown Skua			X	X	X		X	X	X
South Polar Skua						X			
Kelp Gull	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dolphin Gull	X								
South American Tern	X								
Antarctic Tern			X		X	X	X	X	X



Giant Petrel



Adelie Penguins



Brown Skua & Chinstrap Penguins



Kelp Gull

Mammals Species Log

	January								
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Antarctic Fur Seal			X	X			X	X	X
Southern Elephant Seal			X			X		X	X
Crabeater Seal				X		X	X		
Weddell Seal				X	X		X	X	X
Leopard Seal				X		X			
Antarctic Minke Whale				X	X				
Sei Whale			X						
Humpback Whale			X		X	X	X	X	



Fur Seals



Humpback Whale



Leopard Seal



Elephant Seal



Humpback Whales



Expeditioners

Gabriela Acra Lopez	Tim Di Tomaso	Cecilia Heinritz	Pamela Lambert	Dennis MacNamara	Luisa Ramirez Vargas	Sarah Walmsley
Christopher Antonioli	Dave Di Tomaso	Regina Herold	Suly Lan	Claire MacNamara	Scott Rashleigh	Suzanne Walstad
Lee Barnett	Paul Di Tomaso	Diane Herriott	Connie Lee	Pete McCulloch	Anne Rashleigh	Yaping Wang
Jurij Borscs	Frank Di Tomaso	Gordon Herriott	Phoebe Lee	Andonia McCulloch	Julius Rath	Gabi Warner
Barbara Boyd	Albert Dros	Annie Man Ha Ho	Carol Levy	Graham McDonald	Raimondo Restelli	Indi Warner
Christiane Brawerman	Max Dunlop	Raymond Hoffmann	Craig Levy	Barbara McDonald	Arianne Rose	Mark Warner
Jim Brodsky	Vivien Dunlop	Malcolm Hull	Russell Levy	Lida Mi	Saer Said	Pip Warner
Bob Bruskin	Cindy Edes	Swathi Iyengar	Ros Levy	Matthew Moniz	Phil Scott	Lorel Woodhouse
Mark Burge	Jeff Edes	Carole Jansen	Ming Li	Karen Moy	Christopher Siou	Jun Wu
Denny Chandra	Michael Edwards	Ray Jansen	Jianjun Li	Liz Mullineaux	Patrick Siu	Menghua Wu
Alan Chinnery-Brown	David Elliston	Peter King	Kah Wai Lin	Anne Neilen	Jon Stanley	Di Wen Zhang
David Chow	Kelly Fricks	Lukshmi King	Sasa Lin	Dave Neilen	Cathy Stanley	Hongbao Zhang
Mary Chow	Julie Gobbart	Sarah Klingbeil	John Linn	Lara Oberg-Stenson	Frank Stelter	Karl Ziegler
Brett Cobb-Clark	Dia Goldenfein	Daniel Korzhonov	Moon Liu	Marc Pélassier	Drema Swader	Leon Zwier
Deb Cobb-Clark	Debbie Grace	Jelena Kralic	Zeewa Lwin	David Phillips	Dianne Thomas	
Megan Codington	David Grace	John Kralic	Nawza Lwin	Diane Phillips	Richard Voninski	
James Codington	Robert Hacker	Sally Kroner	Guojun Ma	Annaleise Prowse	Steve Wachtel	
Andrew Coile	Peter Harris	Terry Lambert	Cynthia MacDonald	Jennie Radford	Yeung Chui Wah	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader	Stephen Anstee	Expedition Doctor	Dr Rachel Hawker
Deputy Expedition Leader	Ashley Perrin	Zodiac Master	Sergei Khynku
Assistant Expedition Leader	Dr Liz Pope	Mudroom/Shopkeeper	Reza Rusooly
Trainee AEL	Jack Alscher		
Expedition Coordinator	Justine Bornholdt		
Naturalist/Whale Expert	Dr Pete Gill		
Naturalist/Ecologist	Dr Laura Williams		
Naturalist	Heidi Krajewsky		
Naturalist	Dr Alexander Watson		
Historian	Alasdair McGregor		
Kayaking Master	Alex Chavanne		
Kayaking Guide	Russell Henry		
Kayaking Guide	John Weir		
Kayaking Guide	Danny O'Farrell		
Kayaking Guide	Tory Stewart		
Photography Guide	Liz Gifford		
Expedition Guide	Isabelle Howells		
Cultural Host/Expedition Guide	James Peng		
		Gabriela Acra	Claire MacNamara
		Chris Antonioli	Peter McCulloch
		Christiane Brawerman	Matthew Moniz
		Mark Burge	Marc Pelissier
		David Chow	Annaleise Prowse
		Andrew Coile	Raimondo Restelli
		Liz Gifford	Patrick Siu
		Robert Hacker	Frank Stelter
		Peter Harris	Lorel Woodhouse
		Jelena Kralic	
		John Kralic	
		Sally Kroner	

Photo Credits

Greg Mortimer Crew

Master	Joachim Saterskog	Hotel Controller	Rohmat Nurhidayat
Chief Officer	Oleg Kapko	Receptionist	Mary Sarah Baldovino
Second Officer	Andrei Valeahu	Receptionist	Mary Jane Lacerna
Deck Cadet	Genadi Hristov	Head Stateroom Attendant	Irene Abania
Safety Officer	Lukasz Zuterek	Spa Manager	Grace Tembo
Bosun	Duglas Garay	Able Seaman	Khennette Verzova
Ship Doctor	Mauricio Usme	Able Seaman	Samuel Ricafort
Chief Engineer	Marinko Hrabar	Able Seaman	Junar Gorecho
First Engineer	Warlito Verzosa	Able Seaman	Leo Marzan
IT Officer	Michael Reyes	Able Seaman	Bobby Payumo
Hotel Director	Franz Wusits	Able Seaman	Mickey Ledonio
F&B Service Manager	Miguel Cabanillas	Ordinary Seaman	Anatoli Kornichuk
Head Bartender	Vishal Nunkoo	Ordinary Seaman	Alfredo Murillo
Chief Purser	Jane Saladaga		
Executive Chef	Przemyslaw Wisniewski		
Sous Chef	Allan Estoque		

Ship's log written by members of the Expedition Team & compiled by Liz Pope & Jack Alscher



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