

Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 18-28 November 2022





Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 1 | Friday 18 November 2022

Position at 1900 on 18 Nov

Latitude: 54°52.0'S

Longitude: 067°59.9'W

Course: Docked

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: N F5

Barometer: 1007

Air Temp: 13° C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

Here we are in the stunning town of Ushuaia, “el fin del mundo”, the end of the world.

The wharf was abuzz this afternoon with arrivals, departures, fishing vessels unloading their catch, and all sorts of activity. Our expeditioners were met by the Aurora team and had their photos taken for our “photoboard” to help us learn each other’s names. Drinks and a buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar, then our hotel team helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our “home away from home”. It had been a long couple of days of travelling, and many of us probably wanted to crawl into the comfort of our beds, but there was no time to rest just yet!

After a welcome briefing from our Expedition Leader Flo and a quick intro from Dr Andres and Hotel Director Ulises, Rosie then gave us some handy hints about life onboard.

We gathered outside to watch the *Greg Mortimer* cast off her lines and pull away from the dock, at last on our way to Antarctica!

Finally, the all-important safety drill. The sound of the ship’s horn signalled us to don bulky orange lifejackets and muster in the lecture theatre. We followed our crew up to Deck 7 where the polar class life vessels sit (they can hold 136 people each, for five days!). With the safety drill completed, we were cleared to begin our journey.

The last task was a jacket swap, so that we can cope with whatever weather Antarctica decides to throw at us.

We made our way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious dinner, prepared by our talented galley team and served by our smiley and welcoming waiting staff.

So, we’d had our last glimpse of town life, knowing that from now on we are more likely to see a colony of penguins than a crowd of people.

Together we total 99 passengers (30 Americans, 47 Australians, 3 Canadians, 10 from the UK, 2 Germans, 1 Indian, 2 Dutch, 3 from Singapore, and 1 Swiss,) along with 78 crew from all around the globe.

Our 19 Expedition Team have variety of specialities including polar exploration, mountaineering, skiing, glaciology, geology, history, marine and terrestrial biology, ornithology, photography, medicine, and kayaking.

After the many hours of travel to reach the *Greg Mortimer*, it’s time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and get excited for the next 10 days of adventure!



Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Saturday 19 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 19 Nov

Latitude: 56°52.4'S

Longitude: 064°56.7'W

Course: 154°

Speed: 13.8 knots

Wind Speed: F5 W

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: 4°C

The demand of science, that no part of the globe shall remain untouched by the hand of investigation was the force that drew our little band to the land of the farthest south.

—Otto Nordenskjöld

Hopefully most passengers barely noticed that overnight we dropped off the pilot and left the protected waters of the Beagle Channel; conditions in the Drake are very good and the gentle rocking might just have helped everyone's first sleep onboard. Around breakfast we are already 100 nautical miles south of Cape Horn and making excellent progress towards Antarctica.

After our first delicious breakfast onboard, we scan our Orca Cards for Flo and Cat's introduction to our trip itinerary and the mandatory IAATO Briefing. We immediately follow up the IAATO briefing by doing a biosecurity cleaning and vacuuming of our outdoor clothing and backpacks to ensure we do not introduce any foreign or invasive species into the pristine Antarctic ecosystem. In preparation for our anticipated first landing in the coming days we tried on our Muck boots and fitted our lifejackets.

The highlight of the day, (and likely a highlight for the trip) came shortly before lunch when Jill, one of our multi-talented onboard naturalists, spotted a very large spout a.k.a whale breath off the bow of the ship. Fortunately, when not working onboard Jill is a blue whale researcher and knew immediately what she was looking at, wasting no-time in alerting the passengers. But there was not just one large spout, but also a much smaller one alongside - we were being treated to a sighting of two blue whales - a female with her calf!!! The calf was probably just 4 months or so old. We cannot believe our luck - these are two out of an estimated population of just 2,280 blue whales in the Southern Ocean. These behemoths were hunted almost to extinction, but this mother and calf demonstrate that move given the chance these populations can revive.

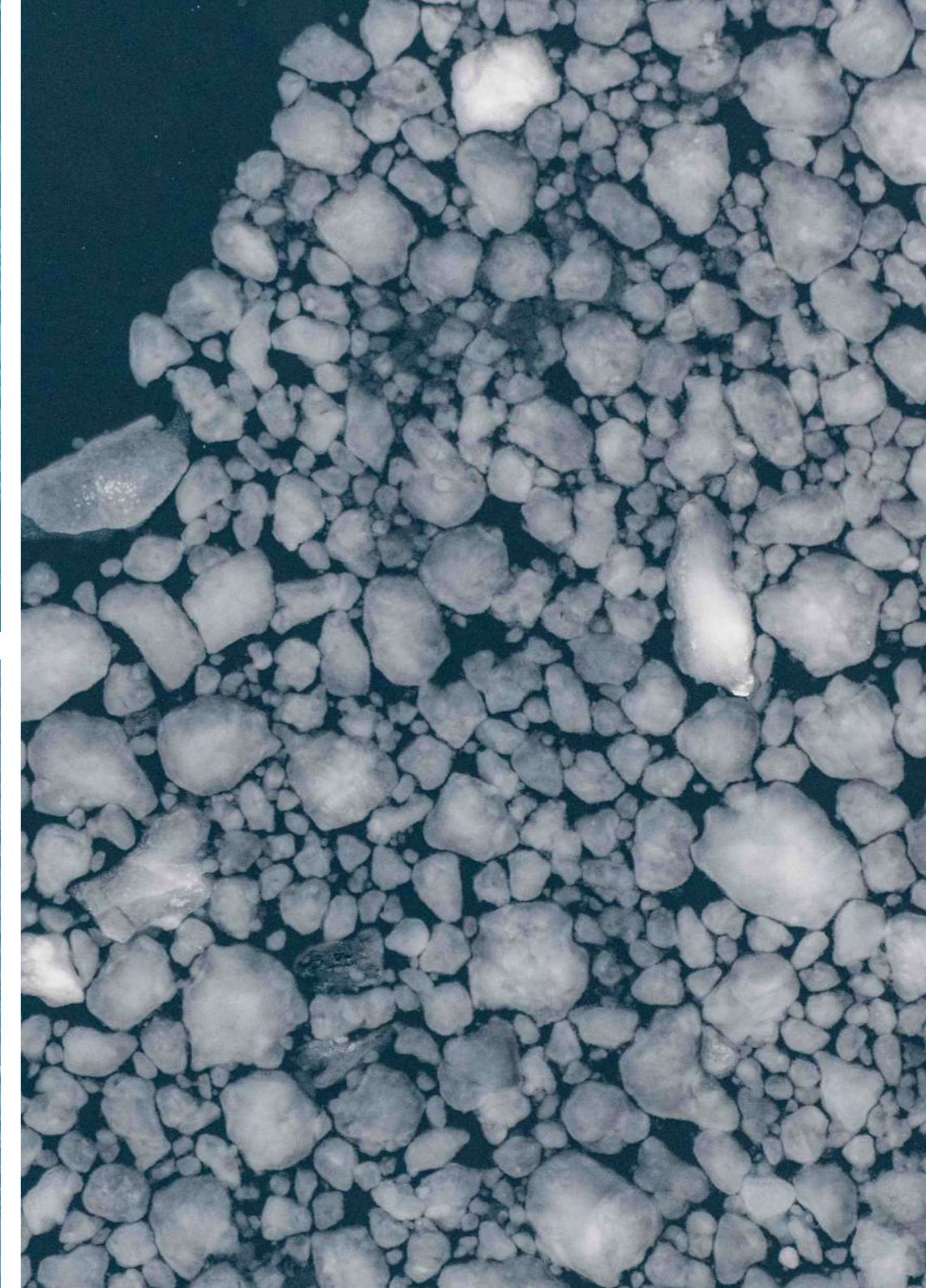
Just when we thought they had disappeared they popped up right alongside the ship. We could see the giant light blue outline of their grey-speckled bodies under the water - the light blue colour being the reason they got their name. It is incredible to see these whales, growing up to 29 metres in length, so close to the ship. To put in

context just how lucky we are, John 'the Dude' is a veteran of 56 Antarctic seasons and this was only his second ever confirmed sighting! For the next most experienced member of the E-Team, Snowy, with 30 years coming down here, it was his first sighting of blue whales in the Drake Passage. Simply fantastic.

After a delicious lunch, our expert photographer, Max kicked off our lecture program with a very informative workshop on iPhone photography. Attendees learnt some inventive phone photography tricks and techniques including taking photos through binoculars. Max also taught us about the potential of 'live photo' mode, long exposure, slo-mo and timelapse, and how to retain better quality images by using the crop function rather than the digital zoom.

For the afternoon, our marine biologist and baleen whale specialist, Dani gave us a pertinent talk on the "Whales of the Southern Ocean" and how to identify the different species of baleen whales. It was fascinating to learn about the evolution of their anatomy and their adaptations to thrive in this environment.

Finally, to celebrate our first full day aboard we had the honour of being introduced to our wonderful and very modest Captain Oleg Klaptenko and his team of senior officers, who toasted to our ship - the *Greg Mortimer* - and a safe and very successful expedition. Cheers!



At Sea, Melchior Islands

DAY 3 | Monday 20 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 20 Nov

Latitude: 61°44'8" S

Longitude: 063°46'3" W

Course: 178°

Speed: 13.5 knots

Wind Speed: NW6

Barometer: 992

Air Temp: -1° 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

We awoke to our second day on the Drake Passage, but with the expectation of landfall in Antarctica by evening time. Our passage continued to be somewhere between "Drake Lake" and "Drake Shake", not too bouncy but enough movement to know that the ship is on a big ocean. We are constantly greeted to this wild southern land by wheeling seabirds effortlessly riding the waves.

We had a full day of presentations with the "Dude" kicking it off by sharing his knowledge of the last two and half centuries of human activity in and around the Antarctic Peninsula. This started with the slaughter of the fur seals for their fur, first at South Georgia and then extending to the South Shetland Islands and into the Peninsula itself. It was probably a fur sealer who first sighted the mainland, but either didn't bother to say so or kept it to himself for commercial reasons. But the accepted first sighting is attributed to Edward Bransfield of the Royal Navy who mapped the north-west tip of the Peninsula on 30 January 1820. The first recorded landing on the continent took place on 7 February 1821 at 64°S in Hughes Bay when the American seal John Davies of the Cecilia sent a party ashore looking for fur seals. Interestingly, his logbook entry indicates that he knew what he had done: I think this Southern Land to be a Continent.

Peter then gave us interesting and valuable insights into the art of polar photography. In the afternoon Snowy introduced us to the real inhabitants of this land with his presentation on penguins. We finished off the day of presentations with a mandatory briefing on making landings using the Zodiacs and on what the plans were for the evening and tomorrow. Finally, we had a bit of fun with Jill at our first recap using human chains to demonstrate just how large the sea birds and whales of the Antarctic actually are.

Then came landfall as we entered Dallmann Bay which lies between Anvers Island and Brabant Island, passing the Melchior Islands (64°19'S, 62°57'W). As we learnt from the Dude, these islands were named after Vice Admiral Jules Melchior of the French Navy by Jean Baptiste Charcot on his first expedition (1903 -05). But the islands have their place in the political history of Antarctica because Argentine territorial claims made there in 1942 and 1943 spurred the British into launching Operation Tabarin in 1944 whose aim was to establish permanent occupation of the Peninsula. And the British have been here ever since.



Cuverville Island, Neko Harbour

DAY 4 | Monday 21 November 2022

Position at x 0600 on 21 Nov

Latitude: 64°41'8" S

Longitude: 062°37.2" W

Course: 173°

Speed: 7.6 knots

Wind Speed: N4

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: -1°C

There is only one short link in the food chain between a diatom and a one-hundred-ton blue whale – between one cell and the largest of all animals – and that link is the Antarctic krill.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

After two full days at sea, we were all very excited for our first Antarctic landing this morning. Anchoring in beautiful Errera Channel, the first off the ship were the skiers, hoping to make a landing on Ronge Island. For the standard landing, we got into Zodiacs a little later than planned, due to an incredible amount of snow at our destination – Cuverville Island. The first steps out of the Zodiacs were quite adventurous; over a rocky beach where gentoo penguins were snorkelling in small puddles of water, we then climbed up rather daunting “stairs” carved into the snow by the Expedition Team. Walking up the path on the island, we saw hundreds of gentoo penguins settling into their colonies, as well as an incredible “graveyard” of icebergs that had been grounded along the northern coastline of the island. Kayakers navigated through that maze of ice in a full circumnavigation of Cuverville.

With humpback whales guiding us into Andvord Bay, we anchored after lunch for a continental landing. First people off the ship were the skiers and snowshoers, helping to make a path in the pristine snow for the rest of the expeditioners. With equipment that enabled passage on top of the snow (rather than down into it, like the rest of us in muck boots) they climbed up into the clouds to enjoy some peace above all the excitement at the shore. Down below, we spent hours watching our gentoo friends walking back and forth through the snow to create “penguin highways”. It was quite validating to see even the penguins falling over while walking through the snow – one step outside of our path had us sinking into snow all the way up to our hips. Because of this dense snow, these penguins won't be able to make their nests, but there was plenty of entertaining courting and mating to witness. Kayakers left the ship and headed deeper into the bay and brash ice; two minke whales surfaced and snow crashed down from mountaintops in – safely distanced, yet incredible – avalanches. At the very end of our time on shore, two humpback whales swam into the bay! They were so close to the landing that we could hear their incredible exhalations as they surfaced. This geyser of air is so forceful that mist shoots 4-5 metres into the air, and 80-90% of the whales' lung volume is exchanged to enable their marine lifestyle.



Petermann Island, Port Charcot

DAY 5 | Tuesday 22 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 22 Nov

Latitude: 65°03'1" S

Longitude: 063°54'5"W

Course: 206°

Speed: 2.6 knots

The cold, dry climate and dust-free air of Antarctica mean that there is a complete lack of haze. In such conditions, as many explorers have discovered to their cost, distant objects seem close and mirages are common.

—John May, *The Greenpeace Book of Antarctica*, 1988

The *Greg Mortimer* sailed slowly and quietly through the night, as we did not have much farther south to go for our destination this morning. An early wakeup call alerted us to our arrival at the northern entrance of Lemaire Channel. Those eager and ready rushed up to Deck 8 for the best views; known as Kodak Alley, it is almost 11 kilometres long between Booth Island and the Peninsula and has spectacular scenery that is best viewed from the outside decks. Today there was great visibility of mountaintops.

Soon we were at our southernmost anchorage for our expedition. At Petermann Island, we went ashore at Port Circumcision (named after a Catholic holiday during the second Charcot expedition). Walking around gentoo colonies, we saw a small Adelie colony isolated on a small cliff peak nearby. Kayakers cruised the south side of the island, an interesting paddle with beautiful icebergs, and a little too much swell to venture far from shore. When it started to snow sideways, we all headed back to the ship to warm up with coffee or tea, then a good feed at the buffet.

Our afternoon had us landing on the west side of Booth Island at Port Charcot – the location of Jean-Baptiste Charcot's first overwintering expedition in 1904. We landed at the same time as a few gentoo penguins heading towards their snow-covered nesting sites. Snowshoers made it to the top of a peak with a cairn dedicated to the first Charcot expedition, and skiers headed south to Hovgaard Island for a morning of exploration on pristine slopes. After the landing was over, we got into Zodiacs for a mesmerising cruise through an "iceberg graveyard" near the anchorage. Because the water is shallow enough for large icebergs to get stuck, we were able to weave our way through a maze of white and blue to discover incredible shapes that are amazingly all made by nature. As a surprise, Rosie announced once we were all back onboard that we were in the perfect place for a Polar Plunge! Forty people jumped off the kayaking platform into the icy water, including a large group of the Expedition Team (we think this might be a new record!). Smiles all around – no matter how bad the pre-plunge nerves are, and that moment when you question this "life decision", it's always worth it.

Wind Speed: F3 N

Barometer: 986

Air Temp: -2°C

Snow flurried around us as we ate dinner, preventing the campers from their night ashore. Fingers crossed for another chance to camp out tomorrow.

Those who stayed up a little later to either photograph the Antarctic sunset or enjoy a nightcap on Deck 8, were treated to an incredible display. A group of humpback whales started bubble-net feeding in the distance, and it was so easy to spot their giant mouths breaking the surface of the glassy calm waters.



Polar Plunge

DAY 5 | Tuesday 22 November 2022





Paradise Harbour & Port Lockroy

DAY 6 | Wednesday 23 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 23 Nov

Latitude: 65°08'1"S

Longitude: 063°54'6"W

Course: 206°

Speed: 2.6 knots

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

Today we woke up to beautiful blue skies and sunshine. It was the first clear morning of the trip after several days of fog and overcast, and a welcome sight as we made our way into Paradise Harbour. We were surrounded by icebergs, glaciers, and huge mountain peaks in every direction we looked, an amazing opportunity for photographers to get on deck and shoot pictures with the early morning light. After anchoring, the Zodiacs were lowered and several outings were offered including kayaking, snowshoeing, skiing and Zodiac cruises. The conditions were perfect – flat calm waters, light winds, and amazing visibility. The kayakers weaved around icebergs in the bay, listening to the sounds of porpoising penguins and distant whale blows while the Zodiac cruises got a closer look at the glaciers and an amazing tour of this incredible location. Peter and Max offered special photo Zodiacs which focused on getting those special shots, improving our camera angles, and talking through other photo elements for those who were interested in photography.

We all made it back to the ship in time for another delicious lunch served by our incredible dining team as we repositioned the ship towards the afternoon destination of Port Lockroy. The weather changed from blue sunny skies to snow flurries as we travelled west, but when we arrived at our anchorage the snow stopped and we had beautiful views of the massive mountain peaks that surround Port Lockroy. We were welcomed by the team of women who spend the summer at the British base, and several of us took the opportunity to mail postcards here at the southernmost post office in the world. They have a wonderful museum which we all enjoyed, and we also had a mini Zodiac cruise around the island before heading back to the ship. This evening we had a BBQ on the top deck with incredible food, music and dancing, definitely one of the highlights of the trip so far! And finally, for those very brave souls on board, we had a weather window good enough for a night of camping off the ship. After dinner, we shuttled all the campers to a nearby area where we dug out bed sites in the snow, laid out sleeping pads and sleeping bags, and slept the night away under the open Antarctic sky. It was a magical evening as we fell asleep to the sounds of waves crashing on the beach and nearby glaciers calving.

Wind Speed: F ENE

Barometer: 986

Air Temp: -2° C



Orne Harbour

DAY 7 | Thursday 24 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 24 Nov

Latitude: 64°38'1"S

Longitude: 062°32'4"W

Course: 043°

Speed: 13.3 knots

Wind Speed: NE 2

Barometer: 988

Air Temp: 0°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'

For 33 brave souls, the day started extra early when they awoke at 4:30 am in the snow! The campers had a great night with a few highlights including a massive glacier calve right next to the landing site and a marriage proposal. (Congratulations David and Maria!) The snow began early in the morning, so everyone packed up and were whisked back to the ship for another nap or a cozs early morning with lots of coffee.

We had a lovely transit to Orne Harbour through the Neumayer Channel with the sun popping through the clouds and a magnificent mountainous backdrop. With a big storm coming in around noon, Flo did her magic and got everyone off the ship for a quick Zodiac cruise just in time. Exploring around Orne Harbour people found Weddell Seals, lots of cool ice, and jagged peaks all around. With the wind gusts the kayakers did their best by hopping from the shelter of one iceberg to the next until things got a little too spicy so they headed back on the ship. The skiers had a short but lovely run in some high-quality snow but then when they tried to get back to the ship ran into some thick ice that had blown in! The E-Team did some quick thinking and got everyone and everything back to the ship. The wind picked up to be quite the blow and took any form of afternoon operations off the cards.

The afternoon was filled with some lectures and a good chance for everyone to get some much needed R and R. First up was The Dude presenting on Who Owns & Who Governs Antarctica. He went through some super interesting personal experiences and an overview of the complexities of countries laying claim to a wild, remote continent that's virtually ungovernable. Next was our special guest, Vicky who we picked up at Port Lockroy. She presented on the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust and what her interesting life is like down on Goudier Island.

As always recap was full of fascinating facts that filled everyone's brains just like the whales "poonami" fills the southern ocean with nutrients!



Enterprise Island/ Buls Bay

DAY 8 | Friday 25 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 25 Nov

Latitude: 64°30'6" S

Longitude: 061°57'3"W

Course: 243°

Speed: 4.4 knots

Wind Speed: NW F5

Barometer: 974

Air Temp: -2°C

Nothing is weaker than water. Yet nothing overcomes immovable objects as water does. There is no substitute. Thus weakness overcomes strength and gentleness overcomes rigidity. No one denies it and no one tries it.

—Lao-tse, The Book of Tao

We spent the morning at Enterprise Islands in Foyr harbour exploring the wreck of the *Governor*, a rusting relic of a whaling ship which caught on fire and was damaged in 1915. The story is that an end of whaling season party had got a little raucous. The revelries led to an overturned lamp which set the ship on fire, in order to save his men the captain drove the *Governor* to the shore, and they all abandoned ship. The crew were later rescued by another whaling ship heading north

Our visit was somewhat more subdued. We Zodiac cruised to see the ship wreck, the bow and wheel house still sitting well out of the water surrounded by bergy bits in a secluded bay. Twenty keen kayakers had a final paddle amongst the bergs, the increasing gusty winds creating challenging sea conditions. Snowshoers and skiers ascended Enterprise Island, with eerie glimpses of crevasses and views into the Gerlache straight. The spindrift stung our cheeks, tugged on our safety rope and quickly obscured our tracks. The sun came out momentarily brightening the land and seascape. Once again, the photographers were rewarded, clicking away with gusto, searching for the perfect shot.

During the afternoon we sought sheltered water in Buls Harbour on the south-east coast of Brabant Island. Tempted by the historic visit by de Gerlache on his expedition in 1898 on the ship *Belgica* we headed into the bay. Amundsen, Cook, Arctowski and de Gerlache made the first recorded landing on Brabant Island, spending five days camping and exploring (it was Amundsen's first camp in Antarctica). Aurora Expeditions does not often visit this area and the entire team were keen to check out new landings and adventure spots. Instead, we were rewarded with winds gusting to 59 knots and angry grey waves. Ideas of all activities were shelved as we watched the skill of the *Greg Mortimer* crew on the bridge navigate the waters using only paper charts, protractors and compasses. There are no current GPS routes to follow in this bay. This was true Antarctic exploring.

The seas continued to pick up as we crossed the Gerlache and headed north into the Bransfield. The ship fell silent as we listened to Alex the Chief Officer read a safety briefing over the PA warning of rough sea and big swells for tonight and tomorrow. He warned us to secure our cabins to prevent loose items from breaking, to take

care moving about the ship and informed us that the crew had locked the balcony doors to prevent flooding in our cabins if a wave accidentally knocked them open! A stark reminder that we are still a small ship at the mercy of the great Southern Ocean.

At recap we learnt the names of all the Zodiacs. After yesterday's antics in Orne harbour we had all become fond of Zodiac 17 'BooBoo'.

Here is BooBoo's story:

BooBoo was a sledge dog on the British Hally base in Antarctica who in the decade from 1961 until 1971 sledged over 16,737 kilometres for BAS scientists. When he retired he stayed on at Hally base and was rarely chained up, allowed to wander around the base at will. He made a name for himself by taking pieces of seal meat to his "girlfriends", some of whom ended up with significant piles of meat. The men of the base named a mountain after BooBoo whose location remains a secret, it is remembered as "BooBoo's Lost Mountain".



Drake Passage

DAY 9 | Saturday 26 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 26 Nov

Latitude: 61°31'6" S

Longitude: 62°39'8" W

Course: 344°

Speed: 12.7 knots

Wind Speed: F8 WSW

Barometer: 996

Air Temp: -4°C

I must go down to the sea again, to the vagrant gypsy life,

To the gulls way and the whales way where the wind's like a whetted knife...

—John Mansfield

We woke up in a relatively calm Drake Passage and it was a bit surprising because we expected rough conditions due to the weather forecast from the previous day. Before a delicious breakfast, we could observe sunshine and almost clear sky, the colour of the waves was astonishing. Lots of different seabirds accompanied us on our way towards Cape Horn, the southern tip of South America.

Even though we spent the day at sea, it was full of events thanks to our lecturers and naturalists.

Breakfast was followed by Jill's lecture about seals of Antarctica. We saw lots of seals down at the peninsula – fur seals, crabeaters, Weddell seals - and now we have discovered so many new things about them.

We all were so excited to listen to John Dudeney's lecture Footsteps in the Snow, where he told us about his amazing story about working in Antarctica. John is a real living legend with so many stories from 'good old days', when he was a leader of British Antarctic Base to modern times. Things were different back in those days for sure – it is hard to imagine how young people managed to spend so much time in such rough conditions without modern technologies. Overwintering, melting water in coal stoves, using dog sledges, hunting seals to feed dogs – and much more! All this is so hard for us to imagine, but here he stands – the man who went through it. And this is just a small part of John's stories.

Antarctica is not only about icebergs and glaciers. There are more things hidden underneath – and that was a topic of Melina's lecture, Geology of Antarctica. It appears that Antarctica used to be a part of a single large continent called Gondwana – there was no ice sheet, and trees and large animals flourished!

Meanwhile, despite the strong wind, dedicated birdwatchers gathered on Deck 7 aft with Snowy to observe birds following our ship. Cape petrels, prions, southern giant petrels and blackbrow albatrosses were spotted.

And of course, it would not be fair to forget to mention the Cloud Survey run by Russell! It is a part of our Citizen Science program where you can help NASA to analyze the satellite shots of our planet – sometimes it is hard for

the algorithms to distinguish, for example, a cloud from an iceberg and that's where field volunteers like us can be super helpful.

Going back to South America takes some time and the Drake Passage might be not the most welcoming place on earth, but it is so nice to have a little break and just reflect on the amazing experience gained in recent days.



Drake Passage

DAY 10 | Sunday 27 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 27 Nov

Latitude: 57°03.9'6" S

Longitude: 65°23'3"W

Course: 344°

Speed: 12 knots

Wind Speed: F8 W

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 3°C

I must go down to the seas again, to the lovely sea and the sky...for the call of the running tide is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied.

—John Mansfield

We woke this morning to dull, grey skies, but thankfully slightly calmer conditions for our second full day on the Drake. And with our track taking us closer to the southern islands of South America through the course of the day, things were only likely to get calmer and calmer, to the relief of many expeditioners.

First up in the morning was a presentation by Peter Eastway about how to bring out the best of your photos with Lightroom. It was interesting to see how much can change from what your camera captures to the final image, as you turn it into that masterpiece you envisaged when pressing the shutter button. Plenty of food for thought about the philosophy of photography too, with the purist's view versus that of the unconstrained artist.

Just as we were finishing our last delicious lunch on board, Flo announced that a group of killer whales had been spotted just ahead of the ship. Naturally that caused a mass exodus from the restaurant as people headed to the outer decks to see a pod of five orcas - one male with the tell-tale very tall dorsal fin and four females. The captain slowed the ship and turned so that everyone had a good chance to see them at reasonably close range and take photos in the calm and sunny conditions. After fifteen to twenty minutes, we continued on our way and the killer whales did the same.

Later, The Dude told us the story of Shackleton's Endurance Expedition and about some of his own investigations into lesser known or forgotten documents relating to the end of the expedition and the rescue mission at Elephant Island.

Not long afterwards, when a small group of expeditioners were up on the outer decks conducting a Citizen Science eBird survey, we were visited by another group of cetaceans. Around a dozen long-finned pilot whales were spotted heading towards the ship and eventually approached to within just 50 metres or so, right alongside the ship. Those who rushed outside managed to get some amazing close views of the animals, with their white saddle patches and spotted flanks.

Before dinner we gathered for drinks and to say thank you and farewell to the Captain Oleg and his officers, as well as the Expedition Team. We were in the mouth of the Beagle Channel and the waters were glassy calm and the sun was shining for the first time in a few days, which made for a memorable evening.

After dinner there was just one last event as Max presented his slide show of everyone's photos from throughout the trip. It really showed what an amazing and varied journey we had, and just how much of Antarctica we managed to explore over the past ten days.



Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 11 | Monday 28 November 2022

Position at 0700 on 28 Nov

Latitude: 54°50.1'6" S

Longitude: 68°10'4"W

Course: Docked

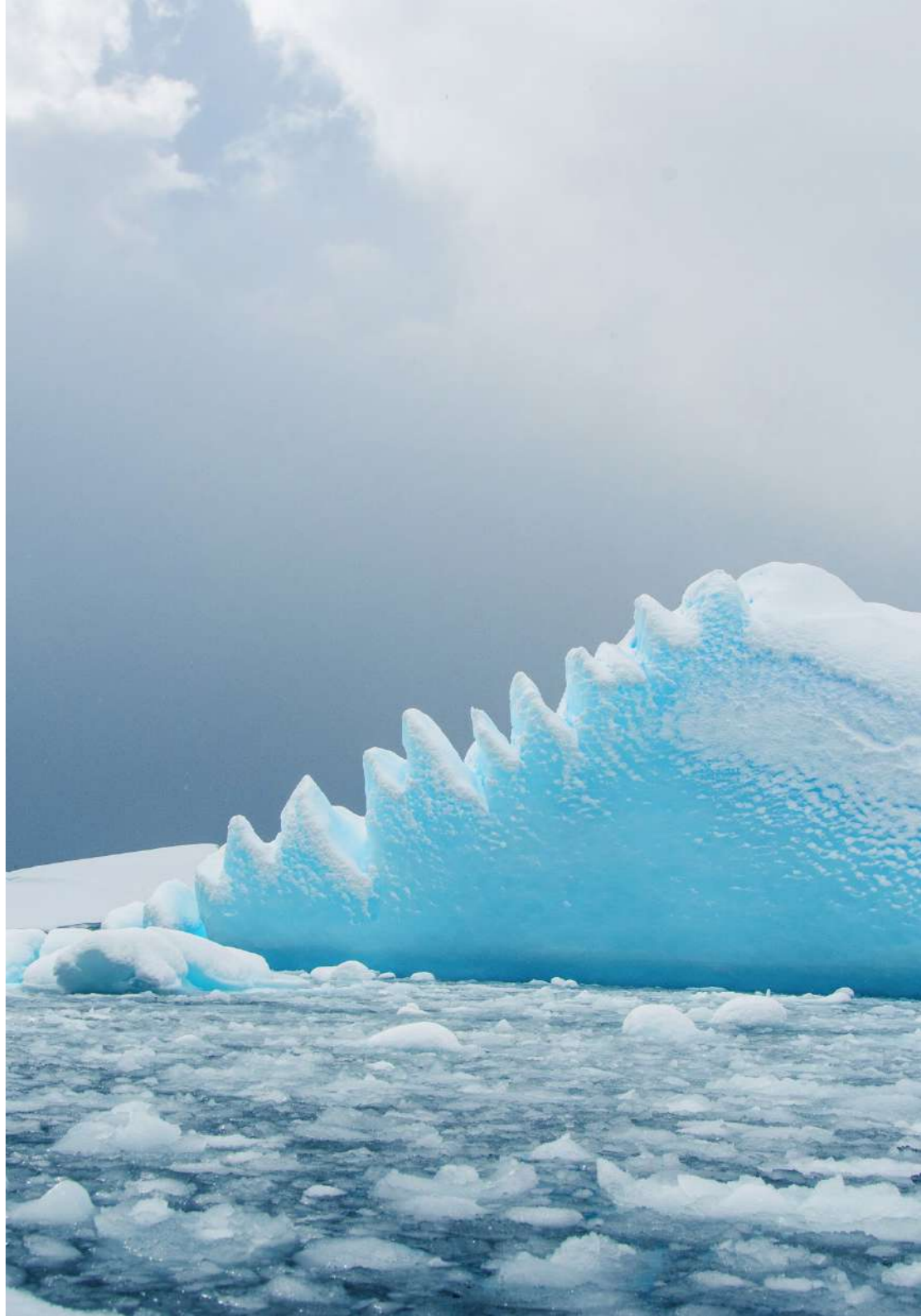
Speed: Docked

Wind Speed: ENE 1.5

Barometer: 1014

Air Temp: 12°C

The entire Aurora Team thanks you for joining us on this adventure, and we hope to see you on the high seas again!



Kayaking Log

By Peter Wainright

Kayak Guides: Peter Wainright, Russell Henry, Ivan Klochkov

Number of Paddlers: 6 Total Paddle Outings: 7 Total Distance Paddled: 29.2kms

Paddlers:

Kerstin Boodee	Joanna Mobed	Bob Varga
Eric Muller	Ron Mobed	Tracey Varga

Day 4 | Tuesday 11 January

PM Melchoir Islands. 3.3 kms

Running ahead of a big southern storm in the Drake Passage, we made good time and despite some heavy seas, arrived early enough in the Melchior Islands for a quick shakedown paddle. MV *Greg Mortimer* looked stunning against a white island archipelago backdrop. We slipped our kayaks away from the floating platform and we paddled through cold Antarctic waters. Small islands surrounded us as we saw our first penguins perched on the ice far above a rocky shoreline. We paddled past an Argentinean Base Station on our way back to the ship.

Day 5 | Wednesday 12 January

AM: Cuverville Island. 5.5 kms

A snowy morning greeted us as we arrived at Cuverville Island. The island looked dark and foreboding with mist swirling around the peak. We paddled from the ship to the island and then traversed to the east, past penguin rookeries on the rocky shore. We found sheltered waters away from the wind in the lee of the island and had our first paddling lesson. We landed briefly on the shore with groups of penguins parading past us as the snow continued to fall. We made a quick visit to an icy beach with the Zodiacs. Our paddle back to the ship was in misty conditions, which made it difficult to navigate and we were glad to be back on our warm ship.

PM: Neko Harbour 2.8 kms

While we had a well-earned lunch the ship moved to the beautiful and calm Neko Harbour. We were greatly relieved to have a more calm and relaxed afternoon paddle past beautiful icebergs and found a tiny beach set against ice cliffs to celebrate our landing on the continent of Antarctica. We celebrated in true Antarctic kayaker traditions with a cup of hot chocolate and some group photographs. Our paddle back to the ship led us past giant icebergs in quiet waters of the stunning harbour.

Day 6 | Thursday 13 January

PM: Pleneau Island 2.3 kms

Departing from the ship after lunch we picked our way through a landscape of ice. Brash ice and growlers blocked any easy passage and a helpful lesson on turning and steering our kayaks make it a little easier to navigate narrow ice passageways past beautiful blue and white grounded bergs. We found a small rocky island to clamber out of our boats and stretch out legs. Our guides led the way to a rocky knoll and we gazed across the ice fields through which we had paddled. Our ship looked tiny as it sat in the passageway, dwarfed by mountains and icebergs all around. We had a tricky paddle back to the ship, returning through a myriad of waterways between the ice. As we arrived at the ship, some strong currents moved the ice around us and our safety Zodiac led us thought the ice back to the ship. What an exciting paddle it was.

Day 7 | Friday 14 January

AM: Portal Point 2.2 kms

The morning found us dropping anchor in another ice choaked landscape. Portal Point, another continental landing site, was covered with snow and ice and maze of iceberg led us to crystal clear waters by the rocky shoreline. We were transfixed as we gazed down into the cold blue depths of the water at the boulders and seafloor beneath us. A quick break and a rest from paddling saw us making out way back to the ship again. We found all manner of beautiful shapes and colours amongst the icebergs on our return paddle.

PM: Hydruga Rocks 8.1 kms

The low rocky islands of Hydruga rocks gave us an opportunity to practice timing our paddling through narrow gaps between rocky outcrops. We waited and watched the swell roll in then took our chance to paddle through a pass to the sheltered waters in the lee of the islands. Rounding the end of the islands we found enclosed sheltered bays and in one an old and wise Weddell seal gazed at us from the shallows of a quiet lagoon. We marvelled at nesting cormorants with dark downy chicks nesting on the sea side cliffs.

Day 8 | Saturday 15 January

AM: Whalers Bay, Deception Island 5 kms

We entered the starkly contrasting Caldera of Deception Island and anchored in the calm waters of Whaler's Bay. Well practiced now, we slipped our kayaks into the water and paddled a short distance to the cliffs lining the bay. It was not far back to its entrance and we decided to cross the passage to a black beach set against ochre cliffs. Here curious penguins regarded our kayaks as a mere inconvenience on their beach and we had the feeling that we were uninvited guests in their home. We paddled back and walked on the steaming shore, reminding us that we were visiting an active volcano. Wandering amongst the ruins of the whaling factory gave us pause to reflect on our impact on this fragile landscape.





Skiers Log

By Kevin Nicholas

Alpine Guides: Kevin Nicholas, Marius Bron, Dan Phillips

Number of Skiers: 9

Total Ski Outings: 7

Skiers:

Marco Curti

Beatrix Purchart

Carol Russell

Theodore Malik

Annelies Verbeek de Weerd

Clay Babers

Mark Haydoutov

Lucy Haydoutov

Day 2 | Saturday 19 November

Drake Passage

Our first get together in the lecture room gave us an opportunity to introduce ourselves and discuss the coming days. What we could expect, and what we needed to prepare to be ready to go as a team when we set foot on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Day 4 | Monday 21 November

Ronge Island | Neko Harbour

Our first landing was at Georges Point on Ronge Island, a boulder beach that can sometimes be tricky. Today we had a good conditions, and we were soon ashore with all our equipment, looking over at hundreds of gentoo penguins. Skins on and we were away, weaving up and around the penguins coming ashore. Once past the colony we spent half an hour practicing with our avalanche rescue equipment to ensure we could all contribute to any unforeseen incidents. Shovels, probes, and transceivers were then packed away and we ascended further up the slopes to a beautiful view point. Some good turns were had on the way back to the landing site. The wind had picked up a little so getting people and gear back on the Zodiac was interesting.

In the afternoon we had a continental landing at Neko Harbour. The slopes there offer a great ski run, and the snow was good enough for two laps for some.

Day 5 | Tuesday 22 November

Hovgaard Island

We took a 15 minute Zodiac ride to Hovgaard Island in the afternoon. The summit at 320 metres was cloud free, and we eagerly landed and started skinning up the broad ridge to the top. Just below the summit cloud quickly engulfed us so we decide to head down from there. The first part of the ski down was slow going in the cloud but once we got lower the visibility was good and we had some great sweeping turns all the way to the shore.

Day 6 | Wednesday 23 November

Paradise Harbour | Doumer Island

We arrived in Paradise Harbour at 7am. An early breakfast and we were off the ship and heading to Leith Peak. The snow proved to be a little crunchy so we decided heading too high up the slopes wouldn't be the best idea. We spent some time practicing some ski touring techniques and just marveling at our incredible setting looking out over the bay.

The afternoon ski outing was on to Doumer Island, just over from Port Lockroy. There was a nice layer of fresh snow on top, and once again the keenest in the group did a second lap.

Day 7 | Thursday 24 November

Orne Harbour

The weather had been difficult at times over the preceding days, and this morning we headed into Orne Harbour to seek some shelter. The sun came out and the slopes above looked incredible. We bumped and pushed our way through brash ice to get to a beautiful landing site. A short ascent on the skis had us at the ridge top, with a stunning view down the other side and across the Gerlache Strait. The wind picked up very quickly so we didn't linger too long, but before skiing down we checked out the chinstrap penguins nesting right up there on incredibly exposed ridge top ledges that were snow free and wind battered. The short ski down was really nice and a Zodiac was soon on its way to pick us up. The wind had blown the brash ice in to shore while we were away skiing and the Zodiac couldn't push through the last 10 metres. We quickly decided the best solution was to walk around the shore to an ice free area where another Zodiac retrieved us.

Day 8 | Friday 25 November

Enterprise Island

Everyone came out to enjoy our last outing to Enterprise Island. It was a beautiful ascent up a broad ridge guarded by huge cornices that had built up over the last few weeks of heavy snow fall. Once again it was windy on top but all the group had become comfortable with those sorts of conditions. The easy skin up proved to be a really good slope for some nice turns in fresh snow all the way back to shore, which was a great way to finish our skiing expedition in Antarctica.



Snowshoeing Log

By Hilary Cave

Alpine Guides: Hilary Cave, Dan Phillips

Number of Snowshoers: 9

Total Outings: 6

Snowshoers:

Kapila Patel

Willy Chung

Karen Chung

Chhaya Patel

Satish Patel

Rajni Patel

Bronwyn Kingwell

Andrew Plant

Paul McGahan

Annie Jean

Michel Bisson

Day 2 | Saturday 19 November

Drake Passage

The briefing in the library gave us an idea of what we were about to experience – snowshoes, harnesses, ropes and crevasses.

Day 4 | Monday 21 November

Rongé Island | Neko Harbour

We began our Antarctic snow shoeing adventure at Georges Point on Rongé Island. A rocky beach landing, fiddling with snowshoe lacing straps, pole lengths and gloves, a lot of information to take in. We wove gently up between the gentoo penguins making their nests on rocky outcrops. We transitioned to glacier travel mode and we began our understanding of using the harnesses and 'roping up' trying to stay 10 metres away from the person in front of us without tripping over the rope. We divided into a 'forge to the top' group and a 'more gentle start' group. Both rewarded with glacier and sea views. The tide had dropped and our Zodiac drivers negotiated a bouldery beach and small swell as they collected us. An exciting start to our snowshoeing adventure.

In the afternoon we ascended to a glacier viewpoint at Neko Harbour, our first continental landing. Back at our landing site we were rewarded with the site and sound of humpback whales feeding in the water only 50 metres from shore.

Day 5 | Tuesday 22 November

Peterman Island | Booth Island

After an early sail through the Lemaire channel, day two saw us explore both Peterman Island then the Charcot cairn on Booth Island. Both trips allowing us the freedom of no glacier safety ropes. On Peterman Island we saw Adelie penguins then wound our way over to a secluded cove with grounded icebergs and flying sheathbills nesting in the cliffs. At Port Charcot we sidled up and around the western flanks of the headland to the summit cairn built by Charcot to commemorate his over winter their expedition in 1905.

Day 6 | Wednesday 23 November

Paradise Harbour | Port Lockroy

We visited Brown station, Paradise Harbour. Some of us climbed an atmospheric, glacier topped headland circuit. The photographers in their Zodiacs way below us marveling at our ridgetop viewpoints. Different ice types were the theme of the day. At one stage we could see: sea ice, glacier ice, brash ice, grease ice, fast ice and ice bergs all in one shot.

In the afternoon we Zodiac cruised and then visited the historic huts at Port Lockroy. After dinner some of us headed out to camp on Doumier Island.

Day 8 | Friday 25 November

Enterprise Island

This was our final snowshoe outing. We climbed an airy, snowy Enterprise Island, our group of intrepid explorers alone in Antarctica. We were treated to views across the choppy Gerlache strait and to the kayakers, tiny dots down in the bay. This was milestone for some of us. We were buffeted by a true Antarctic storm, the glacier rope lifted by the wind, arced between us.



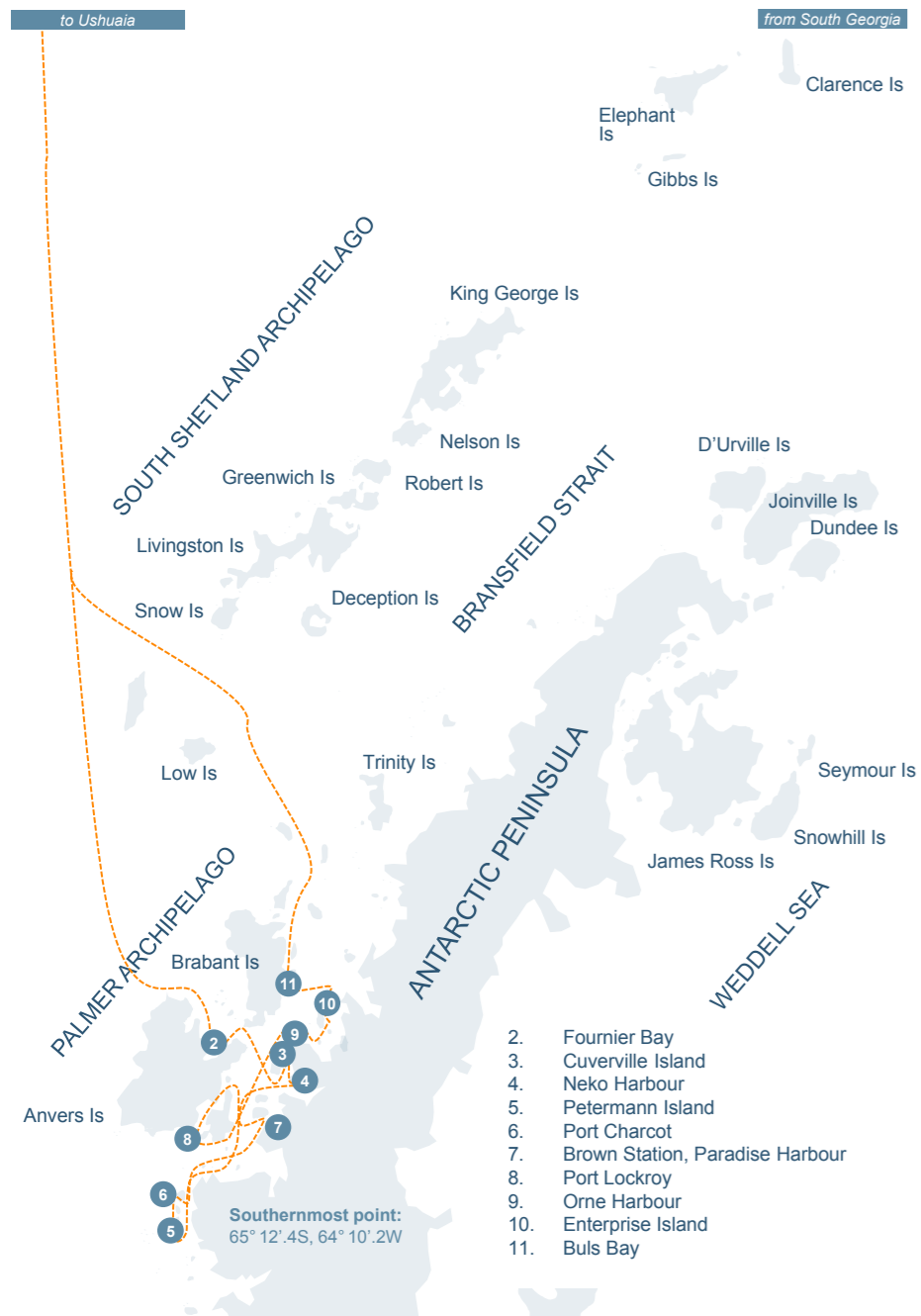
Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	November										
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Ist penguin			•								
Gentoo Penguin				•	•	•	•	•			
Adelie Penguin			•	•	•						
Chinstrap Penguin				•	•		•				
Wandering Albatross		•	•						•	•	
Royal Albatross											•
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•					•	•	•	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		•	•							•	
Southern Fulmar			•	•			•	•	•		
Northern Giant Petrel											
Southern Giant Petrel	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	
Antarctic Petrel			•								
Cape Petrel		•	•			•		•	•	•	
Snow Petrel			•		•		•				
Blue Petrel		•							•		
White-chinned Petrel		•									
Wilson's Storm Petrel		•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•
Antarctic Prion		•	•							•	
Antarctic Tern			•	•	•	•	•	•			
South American Tern	•										
Brown Skua				•	•	•	•	•			
Chilean Skua	•										
Dolphin Gull	•										•
Kelp Gull	•			•	•	•	•	•			•
Snowy Sheathbill					•	•	•				
Antarctic Shag			•	•	•	•	•	•			•
Imperial Shag	•										



Mammal Species	November										
	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Antarctic Fur Seal				•							
South American Sea Lion											•
Crabeater Seal			•	•							
Weddell Seal				•	•	•	•				
Leopard Seal			•								
Hourglass Dolphin											•
Long-finned Pilot Whale											•
Killer Whale											•
Antarctic Minke Whale					•	•					
Humpback Whale			•	•	•	•		•			
Blue Whale		•									
Spectacled Porpoise											•







Expeditioners:

Vijay Anand	Annelies Verbeek de Weerd	Te Shan Liang	Malini Patel	Carol Russell
Clay Babers	Jeanette Evans	Philippa Lund	Bhanu Patel	Anne-Maree Schweitzer
Anjana Bhagavan	Leigh Evans	David Lund	Kirit Patel	Trevor Schweitzer
Michel Bisson	Bob Fisher	Theodore Malik	Kapila Patel	Stephen Scourfield
Ellen Blanchfield	Faye Fitzpatrick	Mariana Marino	Jayant Patel	John Scrivener
Dennis Borel	Rob Forslund III	Rhonda Mayberry	Chhaya Patel	Robert Shepherd
Sebastian Boring	Anne Fraser	Paul McGahan	Satish Patel	Rita Shepherd
Marion Brown	Mikki Friedman	Shaun McGiffin	Rajni Patel	Maria Simkin
Terry Budge	Rachel Friedman	Lynette McGiffin	Kokila Patel	Alan Soutar
Peter Bulloch	Lynda Frost	Anne McMillan	Janine Pickard	Lynda Spangler
Daniel Buse	Gordon McMillan	Geoffrey Pickard	Sherrie Staley	
Steven Buse	David McPhee	Andrew Plant	Daniel Thompsen	
Peter Buse	Donna McPhee	Derek Porter	Caroline Tower	
Caroline Chee	Dusty Millar	Fiona Porter	Geert Hein Verbeek	
Willy Chung	Janet Millar	Anna Powell	Carol Vogel	
Karen Chung	Annie Jean	Beth Moore	Brett Powell	Daniel Wilson
Laura Churchman	Rob Kiernan	Alan Moore	Beatrix Purchart	Kerrie Wilson
Craig Churchman	Cindy Kilgore	Ian Moore	David Radcliff	Elliott Wilson
Sandra Cooper	Bronwyn Kingwell	Pippa Naivasha	Jane Radcliff	Jasper Wilson
William Cooper	Martin Klyne	David Newton	Aditi Rasquinha	
Marco Curti	Jeannette La-Thompson	Ramanbhai Patel	Ben Rowley	

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Flo Kuiiper
Assistant Expedition Leader: Cat Ardagh
Onboard Expedition Manager: Rosie Leaney
Onboard Expedition Manager Trainee: Anne Oeyasaeter
Historian: John "The Dude" Dudeney
Marine Biologist / Citizen Science Coordinator: Dani Abras
Naturalist: Graham "Snowie" Snow
Naturalist: Jill Niederberger
Geologist: Melina Pelzmajer
Lead Sea Kayak Guide: Peter Wainwright
Sea Kayak Guide: Ivan Klochkov
Sea Kayak Guide: Russell Henry
Lead Alpine Guide: Kevin Nicholas
Alpine Guide: Hilary Cave
Alpine Guide: Dan Phillips
Alpine Guide: Marius Bron
Expedition Medic: David Palmer
Photography Guide: Peter Eastway
Photography Guide: Max Seigal
Zodiac Master: Ignacio "Nacho" Marino
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Gabriel Hernandez

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Oleg Klaptenko	Head Stateroom: Tyron Cayasso Hodgson
Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi	Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Safety Officer: Sergeii Voina	Able Seaman: Ramanda Vitrian
Bosun: Giovanni Dela Torre	Able Seaman: Hardik Rao
Deck Cadet: Miguel Delgado	Able Seaman: Ajay Fnu
Deck Cadet: Goncalo Saraiva Aniceto Costa	Able Seaman: Andrii Mezentsev
Ship Doctor: Andres Peralta	Able Seaman: John Noble
Chief Engineer: Dimitar Vasilev	
Hotel Director: Ulises Cantillo	
Chief Purser: Willie Lirio	
Executive Chef: Ron Reyes	
Head Waiter: Allan Liscaro	
IT Officer: Ihor Yesmieniev	
Receptionist: Jeremiah Castillo	
Receptionist: Jelyn Merilo	

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Max Seigal



