

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 16 January – 23rd January 2023





Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 1 | Monday 16 January 2023

Position at 1600 on 16 Jan

Latitude: 54°40.56'S

Longitude: 068°16.7'W

Course: Docked

Speed: Docked

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.

The all-important safety drill was next on the agenda. The sound of the ship’s horn signalled us to don 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 5 days!).

After a welcome briefing from our Expedition Leader Ashley and a quick intro from Medic Scott and Hotel Director Pascal, Rosie then gave us some handy hints about life onboard.

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.

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

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 119 passengers (73 Americans, 18 Australians, 4 Canadians, 13 from the UK, 1 German, 1 from Portugal, 2 from Belgium, 2 from Ireland, 4 from Netherlands, 1 from New Zealand) along with 80 crew from all around the globe.

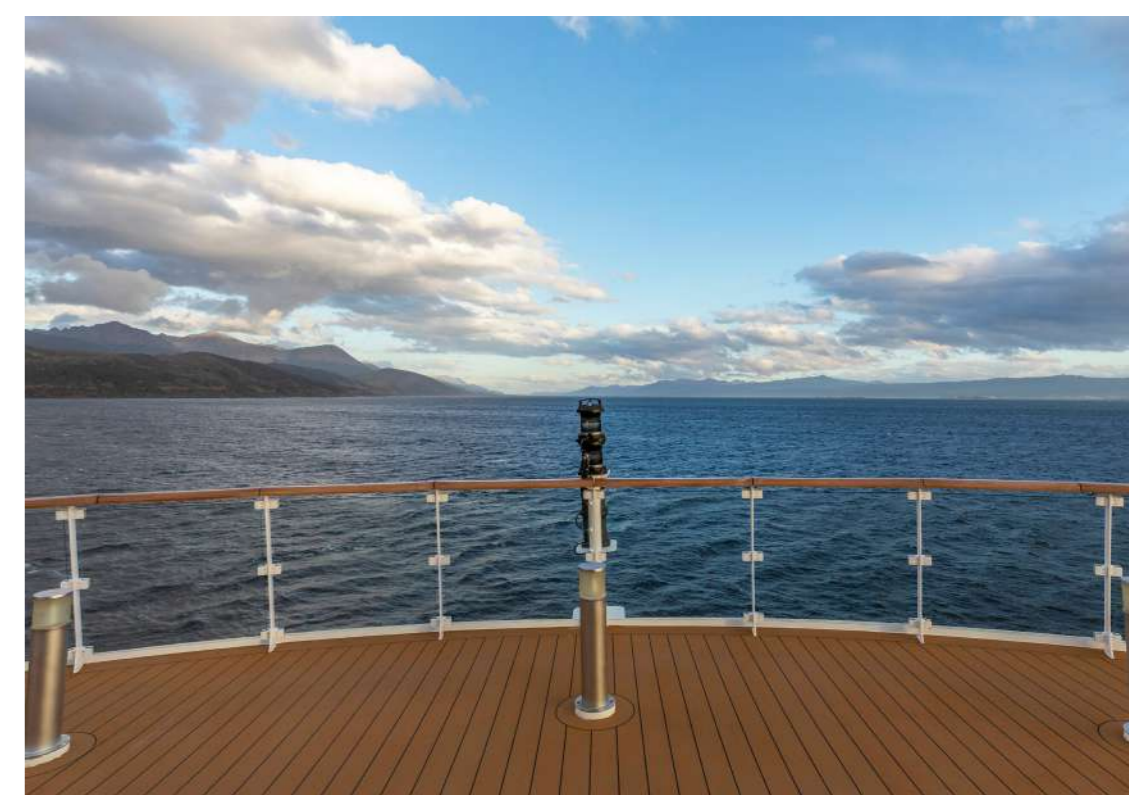
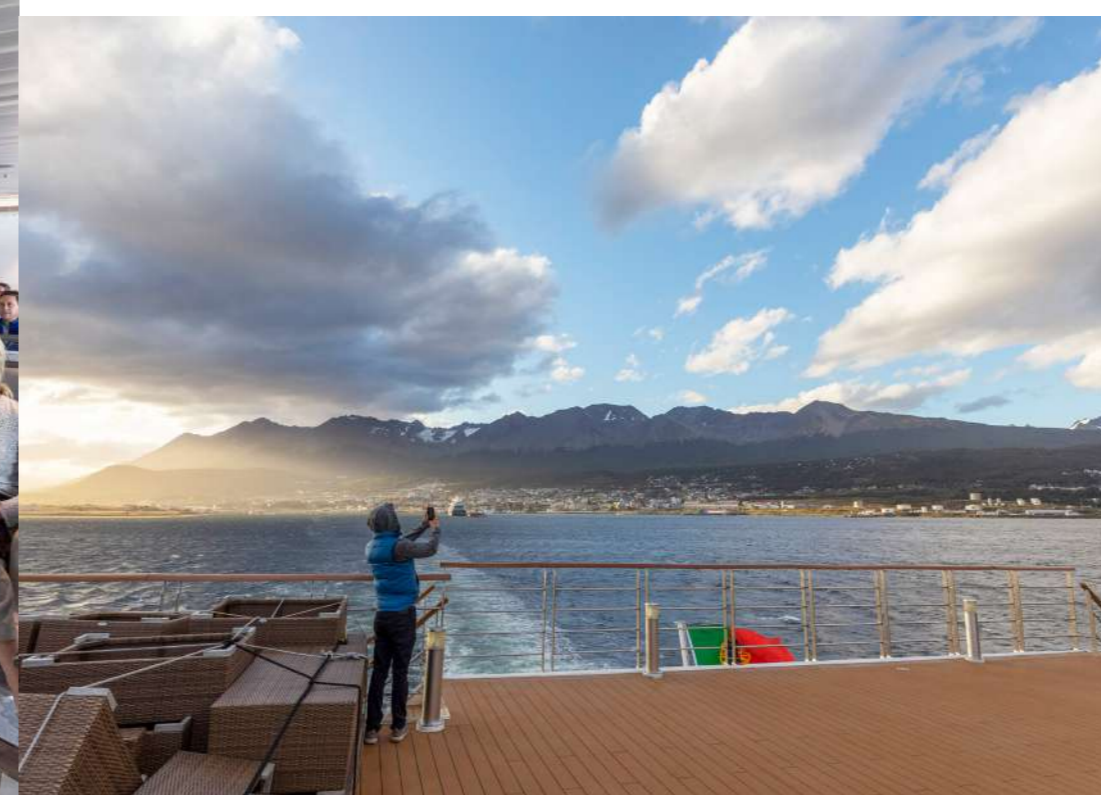
Our 24 Expedition Team have variety of specialities including polar exploration, mountaineering, skiing, glaciology, geology, history, marine and terrestrial biology, ornithology, photography, medicine, snorkelling and kayaking.

Wind Speed: SW 5

Barometer: 1013

Air Temp: 5°C

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!



At Sea

DAY 2 | Tuesday 17 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 17 Jan

Latitude: 57°13.2 S

Longitude: 065°23.3'W

Course: 166°

Speed: 11 knots

Wind Speed: WSW 8

Barometer: 1022

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

This morning dawned to a grey, overcast day as we made our way across the Drake Passage towards the Antarctic Peninsula. This was the start of our first sea day after departing Ushuaia yesterday evening.

For early risers, pastries and cereal were on offer in the Elephant Island Bar, and our first bird sightings of the day were already starting. Sooty shearwaters, a great shearwater and black browed albatross were seen as well as wandering and royal albatross off the ship, thanks to Christian's keen eye.

The first briefings were given at 9am by the snorkel team up in the observation lounge and in the lecture theatre by the kayak team. Followed by Marion and the team giving their Citizen Science briefing in the lecture theatre at 10am.

Thankfully the sun was making an appearance at times through the cloud and good visibility was available while we enjoyed brunch at 10:30am under a brightening sky. The sea state was challenging at times with the odd wave sending a good sway to one side every so often, showing about 5.1 metres on the scale.

At 12:30pm the mandatory Zodiac briefing was given by Ashley and the team. White-chinned petrels were seen off the ship along with slender-billed prions, and our first sightings of blue petrels and storm petrels as we steadily made our way through the surging waves.

As the afternoon progressed, sailing smoothly along at 2:30pm, Ade gave his excellent lecture on identifying seabirds. This was followed at 3:30pm by Marion doing the first cloud survey for the Citizen Science Project. Ade then held his first bird survey, putting into practice what everyone learned during his seabird identification lecture. Seeing more giant petrels, blue petrels and some beautiful wandering albatross, the bird with the largest wingspan.



At 5pm Alasdair gave his interesting lecture on early Antarctic exploration, which held a captive audience.

After cocktail hour in the Elephant Island Bar, a delicious dinner was served at 7pm by our fantastic restaurant team followed by a movie about rounding Cape Horn in the early 1900s by sailing ship, giving a chance to relax and have some fun, whilst enjoying an evening drink with fellow travellers and friends.

We sailed onward steadily towards our first destination on a very swell-laden sea and under a stormy-looking evening sky towards Antarctica.



At Sea

DAY 3 | Wednesday 18 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 18 Jan

Latitude: 61°03'8"S

Longitude: 063°03'4"W

Course: 164°

Speed: 12 knots

Wind Speed: W 8

Barometer: 1004

Air Temp: 2°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 lonest

—Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer Abroad

Oh yeah, Louis Baby, sing it to me, "What a wonderful world!", you can wake me up any day Louis!

Christian roused us out of slumber after a couple of days of rocking and rolling following our Sea Legs 101 Class.

Ade had quite a gaggle of bird watchers for his morning eBird survey which outnumbered the total birds observed: four white-chinned petrels, two prions and one Wilson storm petrel. The observers were all keen to put into practice Ade's handy tips on binocular usage and bird ID from his earlier talk.

This leads me to the improbable and (mostly) wonderful world of the penguin that Conrad waddled and porpoised and missed us through. His love for these wobbly and wacky wedge-shaped critters was humorously revealed to us, species by species, anecdote by anecdote.

Just when our sea-addled, crib-rocked brains thought we could absorb no more yummy tidbits of knowledge before lunch, Vic regaled us with "Everything you didn't know you thought you knew" (or something to that effect) about marine mammals. Whoa, mind blown!

Neptune seemed to be taking a liking to us as the seas gradually moderated throughout the day and yet another feast was enjoyed by all. Kudos to the food & beverage crew that keeps the galley going no matter what the sea state is, and so many delicious options (nobody will notice my third trip up to the buffet, will they?).

As the anticipation builds about what might unfold over the next few days, we must get real and have a penguin and skua show us how to behave as polite visitors to this mysterious land we are about to get to know. IAATO guidelines exist to keep this place as close to its pristine state as possible and it is our responsibility to respect the rules and be the best stewards we can possibly be. Let's leave Antarctica in even better shape than we are lucky enough to find it.

Just when you thought it was safe to grab a kip, Ade's sultry French accent comes across the PA, announcing cloud and bird surveys. A fine sky with low clouds mostly stratus and a few strato-cumulus and no precipitation greeted those intrepid Citizen Scientists, a quite proper turnout indeed.

Ade pivoted rapidly into the second E-bird survey of the day and was much more productive with greater numbers and species observed. Something has changed, but what? Well, we must have crossed the Antarctic Convergence and are nearing some land (upwelling and gyres), but the limited horizon refuses to lift the curtain and reveal the set around us.

In the lecture theatre, nervous faces awaited "the swab" while vacuums hummed. All were determined to tweezer, vacuum and brush all alien invaders. Thanks to you all for your sharp eyes and dedication.

A Scottish lilt was heard on the PA, announcing that all were negative...woohoo, great nasal-probing Scotty!

El Capitan struck a commanding presence at the Captain's Cocktail to introduce the crew and staff that keep this beautiful vessel going.

Following a well-deserved dinner, the dining room erupted in song and laughter as Tony belted out some shanty-esque tunes as the crowd joined in. Just in case you were still able to keep your eyes open, popcorn was popped for those to enjoy during the Frozen Planet movie.

"Yes, I think to myself, what a wonderful world" and a wonderful, complete day. Get a good night's rest for our big day tomorrow!

Keep your head in the clouds and keep reaching for the stars!



Graham Passage | Hunt Island

DAY 4 | Thursday 19 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 19 Jan

Latitude: 64°25'9" S

Longitude: 061°39'9" W

Course: 356°

Speed: 6.3 knots

Wind Speed: NNE 3

Barometer: 996

Air 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'

Our first activity day in Antarctica!

After a couple of days rocking and rolling across the infamous Drake, the day dawned with significantly less motion on the ocean in the relative calm of the Gerlache Strait.

For many of us on board, once we wiped the sleep from our eyes following a sultry wake-up call, it was our first awe-inspiring glimpse of Antarctica. Luminous icebergs drifted past the mighty *Greg Mortimer* and our jaws dropped in collective wonder as we marvelled at the majesty of this great white land.

Following yet another fine breakfast, many of us had our first opportunity to disembark and explore the white walls of Graham Passage. We yak'd and we snork'd and we cruis'd; we all took in the beauty with wide-eyed wonderment. Watching the *Greg Mortimer* as she cruised past us through the narrows was a highlight for many.

We devoured our lunch with gusto following our first Antarctic adventure, feeling like we well and truly deserved that extra helping of our delicacy of choice. Some even resorted to trickery, using some fake whale sightings to clear the buffet momentarily and seize the opportunity to sate their adventure-inspired appetite.

The trip from Graham Passage to Hunt Island provided us with some real whale-watching opportunities, with sightings of pods of humpback whales, some actively feeding, as well as a gutsy chinstrap penguin steadfastly holding its ground and staring the mighty *Greg Mortimer* down as we passed by within metres.

Chinstrap = 1, GM = 0.

The spirit of adventure was well and truly alive in the afternoon as we arrived at Hunt Island, a place that none of the Expedition Team had ever explored before, and the advance party loaded into their Zodiac, scouting for a landing site.

Hunt Island = 1, landing party = 0.

Zodiac cruising was the order of the afternoon, and Hunt came to the party with an incredible colony of chinstrap penguins scaling the ice to dizzying heights and porpoising around our boats as they headed to or returned from feeding forays. Ade's Zodiac saw some snow petrels, some sheathbills and emperor cormorants were also sighted, and Ade saw some snow petrels. Oh, and did you hear Ade's group saw some snow petrels!!

The contrast of iridescent blue icebergs against moody grey skies was striking, and as we leaned into the wind on our return to the mothership, we were happy to be back in her warm embrace.

During our evening recap before dinner, Vic showed some footage of the intrepid chinstraps and their epic journey to nest on an active volcano; Pat enlightened us about global weather cycles, and answered the question on everyone's lips: why is it sooo windy in Antarctica?

Our day was rounded up by a workshop with our in-house photography guru Adrian. All in all, our first activity day in Antarctica had all the elements of a remarkable adventure. Take a moment to stop, reflect, and take it all in, for it will be over before we know it.



Lemaire Channel | Wordie Hut & Argentine Islands | Petermann Island

DAY 5 | Friday 20 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 20 Jan

Latitude: 65°07'8" S

Longitude: 064°02' W

Course: 221°

Speed: 9.5 kts

Wind Speed: SSW 3

Barometer: 1006

Air Temp: -1°C

I do so wish sometimes, that I could just pop home for an hour or two as easily in the flesh as in the spirit. No doubt the explorers of 2015, if there is anything left to explore, will not only carry their pocket wireless telephones fitted with wireless telescopes but will also receive their nourishment & warmth by wireless ... and also their power to drive their motor sledges, but, of course, there will be an aerial daily excursion to both poles then, & it will be the bottom of the Atlantic, if not the centre of the earth that will form the goal in those days.

—Orde-Lees, a member of Shackleton's Endurance expedition, 10 January 1915

What a great way to start an Antarctic day!

Around 6am our trusty *Greg Mortimer* reached the northern end of the famous Lemaire Channel, having steamed overnight down the Gerlache Strait.

It's no wonder this narrow body of water between the Antarctic mainland and Booth Island has been nicknamed 'Kodak Gap'. But with film cameras now largely a thing of the past, perhaps now it might be more appropriately called Megapixel Gap, or some such. It's a certainty that many a terabit of computer storage is taken up these days in saving precious images of this famous waterway in all its moods.

Our passage found the Lemaire in a gentle and somewhat sombre mood. On each side, mighty peaks were brushed by a fresh dusting of snow, with their upper reaches shrouded in cloud. Always a place for spotting wildlife, porpoising penguins played their intriguing 'now you see me – now you don't' – game, while a humpback whale or two was also seen.

By breakfast time we were near Vernadsky Station, operated by Ukraine. Many of us must have felt for the men and women at the station, so far away from their loved ones living with the day-to-day horror of war.

We weren't going to visit a working Antarctic station on this occasion, but rather step back in time and see how the men (and yes, they were all men back then), lived and worked through an Antarctic winter in the years immediately after World War II.

Breakfast done with, we boarded Zodiacs and were ferried to Wordie House, a rather rustic-looking hut on Winter Island that was occupied by around seven men at a time between 1947 and 1954.

Rather dark and cramped, the hut – at least to us fleeting visitors – had a charm of its own, replete with tinned and packaged food from the era, kerosene lamps, old typewriters, and so on. And in a break from their own action, the kayakers and snorkellers also got to have a peek in the door.

And speaking of snorkelling, the shallow channels among the surrounding Argentine Islands afforded some of the snorkellers a unique glimpse of gentoo penguins in their hydrodynamic element.

Back on board for a delicious lunch, there was little time to relax before we made a landing on Petermann Island. Again, this was a place not only of spectacular natural beauty and wildlife, but also of great historical interest. This was where the fabled French explorer, Jean Baptiste Charcot, had his ship – the delightfully named *Pourquoi-Pas?* (Why Not?) – deliberately frozen into a deep natural quay that he named Port Circumcision (after the religious festival) for the winter of 1909.

After roaming freely over the site and observing both gentoo and adelic penguin colonies from a respectful distance it was time to move on to the next exciting activity.

Well – some might have deemed it madness, but it was time for the *Greg Mortimer* swim club to convene! Almost forty of us threw caution to the wind, along with our clothes, and braved the –0.9-degree water for the traditional polar plunge.

Dried off and warmed up it was then barbeque time, another *Greg Mortimer* tradition. Unfortunately, it was snowing and raining, so the barbeque came indoors to the restaurant. But judging by the noise level inside there was little disappointment at the change of venue, and we laughed and sang the evening away as a perfect Antarctic day came to an end.



Polar Plunge

DAY 5 | Friday 20 January 2023





Port Lockroy | Jougla Point | Buls Bay

DAY 6 | Saturday 21 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 21 Jan

Latitude: 64°49'5" S

Longitude: 063°34.1"W

Course: 107°

Speed: 6.3 knots

Wind Speed: NW 3

Barometer: 1007

Air Temp: -1°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?

—Aspley Cherry-Garrard

Starting early (as usual), we received the visit of Port Lockroy's personnel, we were briefed about the upcoming visit to the museum and post office (and gift shop), which the British Heritage Trust opens every summer to receive the IAATO vessels.

Due to the small size of the base, our landing activity was divided into two neighbouring places, Goudier Island and Jougla Point on Wiencke Island, home of gentoo penguins and Antarctic cormorants.

Amidst the intermittent snow and almost continuous rain, we launched our fleet of Zodiacs and kayaks to explore these places, while the snorkellers found a sheltered spot right behind Base A, finding that we were not the only visitors, as two yachts were at anchor in this spectacular harbour.

During our visit to Jougla Point, we were able to observe penguins and cormorants on their nests, most of them brooding chicks. Both species are in sync regarding their breeding seasons, yet the cormorant chicks will fledge before the young penguins dare to enter the ocean.

We also visited Goudier Island where the post office is located. This is a site with an interesting history, starting in circa 1852 when Luis Piedrabuena made the first recorded landing. He placed barrels here and claimed the island for the then-forming Argentine Nation.

Later, in 1904, Jean-Baptiste Charcot "rediscovered" the place, naming it Port Lockroy. The larger Wiencke Island was used before and after as a safe anchorage by whalers, until 1944, when the British government, as part of a secret wartime initiative to monitor German shipping movements, established Base A. This expedition was code-named Operation Tabarin, named after a well-known Paris night club, because team members would be staying there during the darkness of the Antarctic winter. After World War II the station continued in a civilian capacity until 1964, when it ceased operations. Who would have thought that many years later this top-secret base would become one of the hot spots of Antarctic tourism!

During the afternoon we navigated the Gerlache Strait northwards, while Leo offered a lecture based on his unique experiences as a field and lab researcher in Antarctica, working with mummified seals and emperor penguins.

Due to the weather, plans were changed and we continued on our way to Brabant Island, where we taken on a Zodiac cruise at Buls Bay. Right on arrival, a group of humpbacks was spotted, and the animals gave us some great views from the Zodiacs whilst they were feeding.

Later on, the *Greg Mortimer* proceeded into the bay to pick us up after a great excursion.

In the evening we had a recap by the Expedition Team, covering geopolitics and territorial claims, Weddell seals and scurvy in relation to the early explorers of Antarctica. This was followed by a briefing by Ashley about the activities for the following day.

Dinner was served and more whales were seen from the dining room windows, what a great way to finish an expedition day!



Recess Cove | Hydrurga Rocks

DAY 7 | Sunday 22 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 22 Jan

Latitude: 64°30'5" S

Longitude: 061°39'3"W

Course: 149°

Speed: 2.1 knots

We woke up to an atmospherically authentic Antarctic morning.

Expedition guide Hans treated us to a melodic wakeup song before we enjoyed breakfast. Then off it was to Recess Cove, a small cove 2.5 nautical miles wide, situated at the east of Charlotte Bay along the west coast of Graham Land.

We arrived very early in the morning, and our onboard "early birds" were delighted by the numerous humpback whales that were feeding around the vessel while enjoying a cup of coffee at the Elephant Bar.

We were the first expedition vessel to visit this cove which is actually almost unknown in the touristic industry. A zodiac with our shore team scouted the shore looking for an appropriate landing site for the rest of the Zodiacs and while the expeditioners were getting dressing.

The sea was very quiet and of full icebergs and brush ice as we set off to explore this area of the Antarctic Peninsula. Light conditions were fantastic for taking photos, and take photos we did – of the ethereal icebergs that littered the bays, blue eyed shags resting on a little rocky outcrop, a group of Weddell seals hauled out on snow on a little island, and a pod of humpback whales lazily feeding in the waters around the active glaciers. The kayakers were treated to a very close and personal view of these gentle giants, as did the Zodiac cruisers.

Another highlight of our morning was the continental landing our Expedition Leader, Ashley, had arranged for us. We were able to set foot onto the Antarctic mainland...and some of us were treated to a short but sweet 'sketching' opportunity by our onboard ornithologist-slash-artist Ade. For those of us with tick lists: continental landing, CHECK!

Back on board over lunch, we reminisced about the sun that made an appearance and the impressive and breathtaking sights we were able to observe. This was followed shortly after by a rare sighting of yet another ocean giant – our sister ship, the *Sylvia Earle*, meeting us for a quick exchange of goods between vessels. An emotional encounter involving two Zodiacs and a lot of snowballs, friendly waves and shouted greetings – a truly moving experience!

Our marine biologist Vic then gave an excellent presentation on the culture of whales – fantastic timing considering how many of them we've observed today!

After lunch we arrived at Hydrurga Rocks, a group of rocky islands situated to the east of Two Hummock Island. Hydrurga is the genus of the leopard seal whose scientific name is *Hydrurga leptonyx*. The name Hydrurga comes

Wind Speed: SE 2

Barometer: 998

Air Temp: -2°C

from Latin and means "water worker" and leptonyx is the Greek term for "thin-clawed".

Most of us landed at a well-protected and beautiful cove, some others did a short Zodiac cruise, and we saw fur seals for the first time in the trip. Nearly all the kayakers got out for a short and bouncy paddle amid the rocks, and had great encounters with chinstrap penguins. The weather was delightful and at the end of the visit nature gifted us an amazing clear sky and the sun gave us a warm hug.



Elephant Point

DAY 8 | Monday 23 January 2023

Position at 1100 on 23 Jan

Latitude: 62°44'8" S

Longitude: 060°81'5"W

Course: 1100°

Speed: 12 knots

With its coating of mud, urine and faeces, there are few things dead that smell as bad as a moulting elephant seal alive.

—The Sierra Club Handbook of Seals and Sirenians

This mornings wake up call was a reggae wake up!

Pat treated us with some good old Bob Marley, which made us all dream of warm, tropical beaches but then we were soon reminded of the colder climate of Antarctica as we got ready, put on our thermals and headed for a very early breakfast.

Ready for a landing at Elephant Point, famous for... wait for it... elephant seals!

There were quite a few waddles of ellies, as we often call them, unfortunately in some inaccessible parts of the beach. We could hear their deep, guttural sounds as we made our approach to the beach. The shore party went exploring and found some more ellies for us to admire. One lone male fur seal, a few penguins and some beautiful lichen and rocks made for a very diverse and beautiful landing site.

We came back onboard, everyone pleased with a great morning with an extra long landing because today is the day we have to part ways, due to the weather window that is closing.

After yet another delicious lunch, this time à la carte. We then spent the afternoon in and around the lecture theatre. We watched the slideshow from Adrian which brought back some great memories of our cruise.

With (what we think is) our last briefing from Ashley, we got to say goodbye to the Expedition Team. One by one, Ashley called everyone up on stage and read out notes that we had written about each other, things we love in our teammates. What a great team we have!

Smiles all around. At the end of the briefing, Ashley checks her phone for any updates and tell us she just got a new email, saying the plane will not be landing today. Plan C, they will try and land tomorrow. Stay tuned for more updates.

In the meantime, we get an extra day together and get to go out on one more landing together.

Wind Speed: NW 4

Barometer: 1009

Air Temp: 1°C

The afternoon continues with Andrea giving a lecture about "women in Antarctica", such a fascinating subject and yet so frustrating to see that even though there has been progress, we are still a long way from having gender equality, even in Antarctica.

We finished the afternoon with Leo telling us fascinating accounts about the time he dug up mummified seals, not far from Marambio station, where he used to work. We were hanging on to every word and were just fascinated about how these seals would get lost, pass away and then be preserved so well that there could be significant research done on them to find out what exactly happened.

After dinner, the captain took us to Deception Island, a beautiful volcanic caldera. Spirits are high as we gaze upon the beautiful glacier adorning the black, volcanic mountains and black sandy beaches. A few fur seals, penguins and nesting cape petrels were spotted. A lovely landscape that will accompany us in our dreams.



At Sea (South Shetland Islands) | Penguin Island

DAY 9 | Tuesday 24 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 24 Jan

Latitude: 62°34'6" S

Longitude: 059°49'3" W

Course: 272°

Speed: 3.4 knots

Wind Speed: N 8

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: 1°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

So here we are. What has been deemed to be our last day onboard the *Greg Mortimer*, we think!

We were woken by a rendition of "Here Comes the Sun" from Liz letting us know that the landing would not be happening, therefore, breakfast was a half-hour later.

Considering we were onboard today, it was jammed packed with activities to keep us busy and our minds active. We started the morning with Alasdair's lecture on "Conservation of the land of the blizzard", where we found out about the Mawson hut and his secret painting hobby.

Next, we waited with bated breath to hear the announcement from Ashley at 10am whether the flight was still on or not... so far, so good.

The morning continued with Ade and Alasdair in the Observation Lounge giving a sketching workshop where Ade gave a demonstration about how to paint with watercolour. We had a big group and learned a lot from both of them.

Lunch then followed à la carte which was delicious as always. Shortly after lunch, our resident E-Team Medic and former royal marine commando, Scott, gave us a talk about "my life in the commandos".

Marion and Hans took their cloud study to the outer decks and Ashley told us all about the technical information onboard the *Greg Mortimer*.

Unfortunately, Ashley received the news that the flight had again been cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, so we began contacting travel agents and family and friends at home to help change our flights.

The captain kindly opened the Bridge for us and we signed up to have a tour and ask all the questions that we have been chomping at the bite to know about during the cruise such as "can we drive the ship"?

As our stomachs began to rumble again (can we still be hungry after all this wonderful food?), the buffet dinner was served. We approached Penguin Island and were greeted by the unforgettable sights of red tones from the iron ore glistening out from the volcanic ash. Ashley organised a wonderful evening landing on Penguin Island where we hiked up the crater and enjoyed glorious panoramic views.



At Sea (South Shetland Islands)

DAY 10 | Wednesday 25 January 2023

Position at 1000 on 25 Jan

Latitude: 62°10'6" S

Longitude: 058°3'6" W

Course: 237°

Speed: 7.9 knots

Wind Speed: N 4

Barometer: 997

Air Temp: 4°C

Poem written by fellow passenger – Deb Lawson:

“Antarctica is like a frozen moonscape,
With mountains, glaciers, and icebergs

Penguins, seals, and whales.

With gratitude for brave explorers and scientists,

We have been able to touch this new horizon.”

Our early risers were up and about at a reasonable hour this morning for pastries as brunch was scheduled for mid-morning. At 9.00am, we arrived in Lions Rump for a ship’s cruise. The sun was shining, the weather was sweet, and we all crossed our fingers that today would be the day for our charter flight to get to King George Island.

The captain continued with the two remaining groups for the Bridge tour with Andrea, Hans and Conrad accompanying us up on Deck 7, whilst the rest of us began making our way into the dining room to enjoy the delights cooked up by our fantastic galley crew and served by our ever-smiling restaurant staff at brunch.

To end our morning, Pat gave a great lecture entitled “marine mammal physiology” which many of us attended. We also had the opportunity to visit Anne in the ship shop for some retail therapy.

As Ashley was organising an afternoon landing, because we had received news that the flight had been pushed back to this evening, another dreaded email came in to say the flight had, again, been cancelled for today. A mandatory meeting was called in the lecture theatre to explain the situation and how we would continue according to the contingency plan. Our expeditioners were fantastic at understanding the situation was out of the hands of the onboard E-Team and appreciated Ashley’s frankness and dedication to making sure everyone was well-informed.

The next activity was a landing at Turret Point. However, today was not our day and due to strong 37-knot winds, the landing was called off due to safety reasons.

As if we hadn’t eaten enough, our wonderful hotel team put together a tasty afternoon tea which we helped ourselves to as we headed into the lecture theatre to enjoy Marion’s interesting talk about “modern polar expeditions”.

Hans and Marion finished off the afternoon with a cloud survey up on deck and the E-Team did a recap with Ashley giving us the low-down on what tomorrow may (or may not) bring.

Food again! Dinner was served and then we headed into the lecture theatre for movie night to escape and take our minds off the day’s events – the popcorn definitely helped with that too!



Yankee Island | Half Moon Island

DAY 11 | Thursday 26 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 26 Jan

Latitude: 62°33'5" S

Longitude: 059°47'6" W

Course: 333°

Speed: 5 knots

Wind Speed: NW 4

Barometer: 992

Air Temp: 1°C

If Antarctica were music, it would be Mozart. Art, and it would be Michelangelo. Literature, and it would be Shakespeare. And yet it is something even greater; the only place on earth that is still as it should be. May we never tame it.

—Andrew Denton

Am I still dreaming? Did the boat make a wrong turn and we are in French Polynesia?

The sultry accent of Marion eases us into groundhog day 3...what do the weather (and airline) gods have in store for the good people on the good ship *Greg Mortimer*?

We found ourselves greeted by a seemingly lazy leopard seal on a bergie-bit at Yankee Harbour (sorry Doodle, no macaroni) early in the morning with fine conditions for a stroll ashore. Thousands of gentoo penguins and their chicks entertained one and all, as did the odd whalebone, skua and trypot. The latter was used to extract oil from whales, seals and penguins in the early 1900s. So nice that we have a more copacetic relationship these days as these critters grant us intimate glimpses into their lives. Meanwhile, we ponder, did the Cheshire cat grin and the bubblegum yawns on that leopard seal imply he/she(?) last feasted on krill, a penguin, fish, squid or even possibly a fellow pinniped while dozingly digesting and dreaming of the next course? And who knew that a regurgitated meal of fish and krill could be so anticipated by those gentoo chicks, some almost appearing drunk following the exchange of goods.

A delighted group of three pondered the clouds and the universe, which marvellously morphed moments after the survey. Kayakers drifted amongst the brash ice that bracketed the spit, all the while delighting in the aural (and olfactory) splendours of distant glaciers calving, fur seals whining and penguins pining.

We all gathered and breathed a sigh of relief as Ashley updated us on the master plan involving a dally across the Drake and a possibility of a Cape Horn visit en route to Puerto Williams.

In the afternoon we made a successful sortie of Half Moon Island as Neptune agreed with our new plans and allowed us to ice the cake. This time, chinstrap penguins and agreeable fur seals were our welcome party, leading our gazes to the old whaling dory on the beach. Shags and kelp gulls soared and flapped and added to the cacophony of more glacial calvings. A skua chick was sighted with its parents so we altered our path up and over to the south side of the peninsula where a massive, over 6-metres-long jawbone and skull remains from a great

whale (blue or finback?) rested. It was good to stretch our legs as we became even more intimate with the South Shetland Islands.

The citizen scientists gathered with Marion and Hans for an exquisite excursion to gather data about freshwater influences on phytoplankton and how that may impact krill populations. A curious minke whale accompanied us during most of our 45-minute-long Fjord-phyto survey. We were delighted with the favourable conditions that allowed for a successful 45-metre deep CTD cast, Secchi disc, water samples and a phytoplankton tow. We can't wait to see what microscopic gems await us tomorrow.

Andy and Paul gave an Australia Day quiz in the afternoon, illuminating us that we have ages onboard ranging from 11 to 86 years old! Later Le, Vic and Liz lavished us with leopard seal facts and fascinating (and unexpected) videos. Hannah joined in with more penguin facts and penguin-fail videos. Pascal brought out the hotel and restaurant team for a Q&A about the inner workings and magic they perform daily. They were all greeted by very curious and appreciative guests. Ashley awed us with her work with the British Antarctic Survey, many jaws dropped in astonishment.

May the Drake be kind as we reflect on our amazing life-transforming journey to Antarctica and the South Shetland Islands. Thank you, we chose a great planet to inhabit.



At Sea (Drake Passage)

DAY 12 | Friday 27 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 27 Jan

Latitude: 60°17'7" S

Longitude: 062°17'6" W

Course: 333°

Speed: 11.3 knots

Wind Speed: WSW 7

Barometer: 997

Air Temp: -1°C

What the ice gets, the ice keeps.

—Shackleton to Worsley and Wild in July 1915

You know what they say about the Drake: a passage so nice, you sail it twice! Off we embark again, into the infamously turbulent waters we thought we would never encounter, again. Alas, many people were out, fresh-faced and walking in great swoops down the hallways, unfazed. We have seemingly developed stronger stomachs since our first crossing, which seems as though it happened in another lifetime. Now we return, rich with experiences and memories, changed by our encounters with a place that will hold a special place in our hearts forever. There is a palpable tranquillity on board, as we individually processed the last week of our lives, looking through our pictures, and spending time with our new friends and fellow travellers. A tranquillity, at least, that extends everywhere except to Deck 8, where there is always seemingly a party going on – at the very least, a suspicious amount of ABBA is being played up there...

We were granted the opportunity for a sleep-in in the morning, awoken at the very civil hour of 8.30am to Adrian's dulcet tones as he recited fine poetry, speaking of the Drake lake shake and of kicking our hangovers – ah, the ship life.

Despite the day spent at sea, we had a day packed with activities. Marion busted out her microscope to inspect the phytoplankton collected throughout her Citizen Science Zodiac sessions. Ade gave a lecture on albatrosses, as we approach crossing the Convergence again and have the possibility of seeing more soaring seabirds. Alasdair also spoke about Shackleton's famous transantarctic expedition, reminding us that we're not the only Antarctic voyage to have experienced delays... at least we haven't been living under lifeboats on Elephant Island!

And the activity didn't end at lectures! Andrea hosted an E-Team quiz, wherein we all learned more than we signed up for about the crazy people with whom we've been sharing this ship. One or two people have blushed when seeing Scotty now, and I can't say I blame them... If you missed the quiz, make sure to ask him about it! Marion, Alasdair, and Conrad – a gameshow trio of whom the likes have never been seen – also hosted a quiz to see who has been paying attention in recaps and lectures. Following dinner, Reba brought out her baritone ukulele and her beautiful voice and put on a fantastic show for us, replete with duets, Dolly Parton, and dancing (and yes, more ABBA).

With our impending disembarkation, delayed though it may be, every remaining moment feels sweeter: dinner is especially delicious, conversations are deeper, and each seabird soaring overhead seems more special. Our experiences have brought us together, and we have one more day to savour the world in which we've been living for the past twelve days. The impending prospect of telling our family and friends about our travels can feel like an impossible task. An Antarctic surveyor, Wally Herbert, did his best to portray the indescribable: "We became aware how silent the night was, almost as if nature itself had stopped breathing – a snatch of breath which she held for a moment in her year-long cycle of roaring and screeching – a gasp and a pause as she looked with amazement at her own sublime beauty."



On Reaching Antarctica

Antarctica, the beautiful most southern continent "at the end of the world" the advertisements said and leaving Port Ushuaia the crew said it too.

It's the beginning not the end this land beyond wild expectations this land uninhabitable yet seven countries staked a claim.

It took 56 nations signing a pact to keep Antarctica intact.

One needs a new vocabulary once you cross Drake Passage set foot on glacial land see a line of penguins skim over the surface making arcs across the sea.

One needs new words to describe once you leave the ship in zodiacs land on rugged rocks explore firsthand the glaciers then sail farther southward in nature's unspoiled land.

It's simply inscrutable Antarctica, the beautiful.

Hanna Fox
January, 2023



At Sea | Beagle Channel | Puerto Williams

DAY 13 | Saturday 28 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 28 Jan

Latitude: 55°53'8" S

Longitude: 066°20'2" W

Course: 333°

Speed: 11.3 knots

Wind Speed: WSW 7

Barometer: 1005

Air Temp: 7°C

What the ice gets, the ice keeps.

—Shackleton to Worsley and Wild in July 1915

Today's wake-up call was by our charismatic Argentinian E-Team member Leo, who read us a poem in both Spanish and English about Cape Horn and all the sailors that have lost their lives here. Their memories are alive on the wings of the soaring albatross. He invited us to join him in the theatre where he told us all about how Antarctica became Antarctica. Once a green oasis with a biodiversity most of us can only dream about, that was still attached to South America, until 50 million years ago.

What was then known as Gondwana, was split into two, detaching South America and from what we now know as West Antarctica. He then continued to fascinate us with all the cool fossils that were found by researchers.

During another delicious brunch, E-Team members spotted some dusky dolphins surfacing close to the ship. We left our plates, grabbed our binoculars and ran to the bow. Sure enough, there they were, playing in the waves the ship was making! To entice everyone out, Vic announced this was too good an opportunity to miss. There must have been about 25 individuals, playing alongside, for about 20 minutes. We could see them clearly under the water, what a stunning sight!

Lectures continued, with Ashley's lecture on her sailing trip from Newfoundland to Greenland.

Just after her lecture we saw a dark cloud sitting on the water. Upon further inspection, Ade quickly announced on the PA for everyone to come on deck, as we were sailing directly towards a huge flock of sooty shearwaters resting on the water. As we got closer, they took off, in a stunning light, hearing their feet tapping the water. Ade counted about 25,000 individuals! A good thing we had a trained bird migration specialist on hand, who actually know how to count such a large number of birds!

Up next, we had the galley tours, a popular afternoon activity, where passengers were led through the galley and saw behind-the-scenes of where all our delicious food came from and who worked so hard to prepare it all. What most of us are still impressed by is how the kitchen staff can keep the salad fresh for this long. And most of us are still suspecting a plum and peach tree is hidden somewhere.

During the mid-afternoon, we began lowering our anchor at Puerto Williams. Land. We made it.

After four extra days together, we salute the sunshine and milder weather and to celebrated with a perfect ending: a BBQ on deck! Tonight, we raise our glasses to the extra time we got together and the extra landings we got to explore. The E-Team will for sure raise their glasses high to what we have baptised our Crisis Management Team: Rosie, Reba, Anne, Christian and Ashley, who have worked tirelessly to make things as smooth as possible once everyone gets off the ship and we fly home to our normal lives. Cheers everyone!



Puerto Williams

DAY 14 | Sunday 29 January 2023

Position at 0400 on 29 Jan

Latitude: 54°55'61"S

Longitude: 067°35'64"W

Course: 269°

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: W 3

Barometer: 1009

Air Temp: 9°C

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

*"Antarctica is like a frozen moonscape,
With mountains, glaciers, and icebergs
Penguins, seals, and whales.
With gratitude for brave explorers and scientists,
We have been able to touch this new horizon."*

– Deb Lawson



Paddling Log

Kayak Masters: Brooke Greene, Neri Grieve, Erin Scott

Number of Paddlers: 5

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled: 19.3km

Paddlers:

Steve MacFarlane

Lorna MacFarlane

Monica Simmons

Tom Azumbrado

Kevin Phelan

20 January 2023: Petermann Island - Distance: 2.3km

It was a bit overcast with a slight breeze, but you could still see the amazing snow-capped mountains to our east. We started our paddle from the ship's marina and headed toward Petermann Island. It was exciting because it was the first inflatable kayak trip ever done by Aurora in Antarctica. Once we got close to shore, we paddled south to the southern end of the island and floated around to check out the icebergs then paddled to the smaller rock islands on the southern end and found some Wedell seals on the shore. Unfortunately, we couldn't go further around because massive icebergs blocked our way, and it was a lot more windy and wavy on the backside. We then headed back toward the landing sight where the safety Zodiac picked us up from the water. Everyone did a great job on their first crawl back into the boats.

21 January 2023: Port Lockroy, Goudier Island and Jougla Point - Distance: 4.0 km

It was definitely a cold and wet paddle, but it was fun starting the trip from the kayak platform. Everyone easily slid into the boats, and we headed toward the furthest point to paddle along the shore and got very close views of the gentoo penguins. The wind was a bit gusty at times, but still really nice. We made our way around Goudier Island, paddling through thick brash ice with beautiful views of the glacier front and a couple of private boats anchored nearby. We had really great views of a leopard seal that was very curious about the larger double sea kayaks.

22 January 2023, AM: Recess Point - Distance: 2.8 km

This was the continental landing day! After setting foot on the mainland, we started our paddle from a small beach and headed toward the glacier front. Neri, our safety driver, informed us of the humpback whales near the glacier and we paddled closer to get some views. The sights and sounds were amazing. We could easily hear the whales coming up for air and the glacier calving in the background. We saw two really good calvings. The plan was to head further down, but two more humpbacks showed up and we were able to paddle in their direction and got a pretty close encounter as they continued to feed in the area.

22 January 2023, PM: Hydrurga Rocks - Distance: 2.7 km

We got to test the limits a bit on our final paddle. There was a decent swell at the marina, but everyone did a great job getting into the boats. It was great to see everyone feeling comfortable in the boats even with a bit of movement and wind. We paddled around some rocky swells to find this beautiful shallow inlet where a few random gentoo penguins were hanging out on the beach and feeding. There was even a sleeping Weddell seal. The water was so clear that you could see the krill that the penguins were feeding on. We paddled around the outside of the rock island and got amazing views of the glaciers and mountains on the backside. The sun had finally come out as well. It was a very nice final paddle of the trip!

26 January 2023, AM: Yankee Harbour - Distance: 4.0 km

And against the odds, we are back on the water! Everyone was keen to get back into their drysuits and kayaks in the wake of our crazy travel rearrangements – why not? The weather was cooperative: we were able to leave straight from the ship and paddled out into Yankee Harbour. Unlike many of our other paddles, we were able to follow the coastline closely, in the absence of glaciers and rough waves. We explored little coves, marvelling at rock formations and vivid mosses, sharing the space only with the odd fur seal. We crossed the bay to keep our distance from the glacier face, and paddled along the gentoo penguin colony, admiring the chicks. As we reached the spit, we were met with ice that had accumulated at the shoreline, upon which lay a beautiful male leopard seal. After appreciating the fantastic sighting, Brooke picked us up as the sun emerged from the cloudy sky.

26 January 2023, PM: Half Moon Island - Distance: 3.6 km

Upon first glance, Half Moon Island looked like a great place to explore by kayak. Towering igneous rock formations, large chinstrap penguin colonies, and fur seals hauled out on the beaches promised a great paddling location, and we weren't to be disappointed. As we paddled away from the *Greg Mortimer*, we felt the effects of a small swell, with bouncy but fun conditions. Once we reached the western side of the island, the sea conditions calmed down, and we were delighted to see chinstrap penguins perched high up on the towering rock formations, playful fur seals in the shallows doing their best meerkat impersonations, and a Weddell seal snoozing on the shoreline. Word came through that glacial ice was needed for cocktails that evening, so we dedicated ourselves to the task at hand and paddled out into some thin brash ice to do our bit. By this time we found ourselves in the lee of the island; the conditions were magical with little wind or swell and a glamorous glassy ocean. We watched a raft of 30 or more chinstrap penguins fishing on the surface and diving for krill and paddled over towards a massive iceberg tinged with blue to get some photos. This was an afternoon when we could have stayed out for many hours enjoying the glassy conditions, however, the Drake and our destination of Porto Williams beckoned. Brooke arrived to pick us up in the Zodiac, and we made one last graceful exit from our inflatable kayaks into the Zodiac, hitched the kayaks on tow and made our way back to the ship, with wonderful memories of our last outing.



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Liz MacNeil, Alex Chavanne, Brooke Greene, Neri Grieve, Anula Jochym, Erin Scott

Number of Paddlers: 22 Total Paddle Outings: 7 Total Distance Paddled: 39km

Paddlers:	Diana Casadevall	Katherine Marsh	Lourdes Punal
Mick Ash	Fern Casadevall	Anne McKeown	Frank Punal
Cath Betts	Sam Gallant	Ben McKeown	Leslie Tcheyan
Richard Betts	Dianne Heleno	Kathleen McNamara	Nancy Vettese
Christopher Bolen	Deb Homewood	Fish Montgomerie	Tony Vettese
Nancy Bolen	Catarina Lopes	Joanne O'Connell	

19 January 2023, AM: Graham Passage - Distance: 6.0 km

We start off our kayaking trip with a bang in the spectacular Graham Passage. The ship positioned itself at the mouth of the passage, at which point we were able to find a great landing beach, which also happened to land us on the Antarctic continent before anyone else. We hopped in our kayaks and quickly became accustomed to how they handle them, not to mention how we handle our kayak partners! Many broad smiles were seen as we crossed westward and navigated through brash ice – stabbing our paddles through a soup of ice, and coming out the other side into calm, glassy waters. Soaring ice cliffs dwarfed us, and we were able to appreciate the magnitude of the Antarctic landscape, especially when comparing the size of the ship to its surroundings. We huddled against the shoreline as the ship sailed through the narrowest constriction of the passage, and then went through, ourselves. On the other side, we were met with some swell, which reminded us that we lay tangent to big seas, and are only protected from the wild beyond by the land around us. We were picked up by zodiacs and brought back to the ship, exhilarated by the glimpse of the icy excursions to come!

20 January 2023, PM: Petermann Island - Distance: 3.0 km

After a morning Zodiac cruising through the channels of the Argentine Islands, we arrive at Petermann Island, ready to get back on the water. We were met with an expansive glacial backdrop and tall mountains to the east, with Petermann Island and its cacophony of penguins to the west. We paddled north, but didn't manage to pick up much speed because there were so many penguins porpoising around us! We took some fantastic pictures and videos and enjoyed hearing the rhythmic plopping of birds in the water around us. We rounded the northeastern headland of the island and got a glimpse into a vast area of open ocean, again reminding us of how small we are in the midst of such a large environment. One party continued to paddle for the entire outing, while the other went into shore to experience the Adelie colony from land. We landed in a protected (but icy) little cove, replete with pictures of this beautiful afternoon.

21 January 2023, PM: Port Lockroy, Goudier Island and Jougla Point - Distance: 5.5 km

This morning the day dawned damp and overcast, but that wasn't to deter our group of intrepid expeditioners. With the opportunity to visit Port Lockroy on Wienke Island today, the group was divided into two groups: a 'paddle-only' group and a group that was to Zodiac cruise to the island first to visit the hut, before returning to the ship to launch the kayaks.

Port Lockroy is situated in a beautiful natural harbour, and the building is a living museum staffed by the United Kingdom Antarctic Heritage Trust (UKAHT). With the allure of sending a postcard from the world's most southerly post office, a majority of our paddlers chose to go ashore first, with a small team opting to forego the landing to enjoy extra time sea kayaking with Alex.

The setting made for some spectacular kayaking, with over 1,000 gentoo penguins resting and nesting on the shoreline, and porpoising around our kayaks; brash ice and small bergy bits to weave through; and a couple of sailing boats anchored in the natural harbour. A highlight for many was a curious female leopard seal, named Bertha according to the UKAHT team, taking great interest in some of our kayaks. Bertha delighted some of our expeditioners by swimming under and around our kayaks, popping up periodically beside us to greet these new visitors to her icy realm.

22 January 2023, AM: Recess Point - Distance: 4.7 km

An absolutely spectacular morning at a new site for us all. Recess Point delivered calm seas, stunning glacial vistas, dramatic icebergs of varying shapes and sizes, and lots of whale activity! We shared a truly special paddle this morning, as we set off from the ship towards a little island off the point, which hosted several sleepy Weddell seals and a small population of gentoo penguins. As we paddled around the island, we started to hear the sound of whale blows – a humpback was feeding just offshore. The surrounding ice created a natural amphitheatre, echoing the whale's breaths and whistles as it exhaled and lunged for krill. The sound was stunning both in volume and clarity. As the whale dove, we sought to follow its bubbly 'footprint' to predict where it would next surface, but it was always a surprise and would pop up right behind us as we floated around in our little pod. Following this amazing whale experience, we continued on to explore the mouth of a bay which was filled with ice. The light shone at a low angle, illuminating some bergs seemingly from within. We admired their sculptural shapes, and marvelled at one particular bergy bit, which calved and completely turned over nearby, reminding us why we approach ice with great care. After landing, Zodiacs returned us to the ship, but the memory of this special place will remain with us in perpetuity.

22 January 2023, PM: Hydrurga Rocks - Distance: 4.7 km

We set out to explore the scattered Hydruga Rocks in the afternoon in decidedly more choppy seas than our serene morning paddle. This outing began with an adventurous entry into our kayaks from a Zodiac off the ship's marina, preparing us for the journey to come. We stayed in a tight formation through the shallows and the breaking waves and enjoyed these new features as we circled the chinstrap penguin colony on the rocks. Many other birds shared this habitat, including snowy sheathbills, imperial shags, and skuas, and we also saw several storm petrels flitting gracefully about us on the water. As we rounded the west side of the rocks, we were met

with an expansive glacier face and a few icebergs with dramatic lines, textures, and forms. We paddled close to shore, admiring the wildlife, and then set out to circle around a particularly interesting iceberg. As we turned to head back to the ship, we were graced with perhaps the most remarkable sighting of the day: the sun! The clouds parted and suddenly the day turned near-tropical with warmth and brightness; we will return from the trip with sun tans, after all. It was a pleasant paddle back, as we basked in the light and the view of the expansive sea. One last challenge was presented in exiting our kayaks back onto the Zodiacs, however, everyone managed with their own personal style – some even letting out a seal call as they flopped onto the pontoon! Adventurous spirits abound on our final paddle of this memorable trip.

26 January 2023, AM: Yankee Harbour - Distance: 7.5 km

How good to get back on the water today! Today we were able to launch our kayaks directly from the marina at the rear of the *Greg Mortimer*, and with overcast skies and light winds, we set off in the morning to explore Yankee Harbour. This sheltered natural harbour, enclosed by a gravel spit and rimmed by glaciers provided us with a beautiful paddling location. At the head of the sheltered bay, amongst the brash ice, we encountered a lazy leopard seal resting on the ice. As we followed the coastline around towards the glacier, gentoo penguins in their hundreds lined the shoreline, and as we stopped to watch their antics, we realised that we were looking at a creche: most of the penguins were sub-adult, with their downy fur still visible. We marvelled at the glacier as we crossed over the bay, listening to the thunderous booms of another glacier calving in the distance. It's an incredible, humbling experience being on the water in a kayak with such powerful nature all around. As we neared the end of our journey we noticed a massive male elephant seal resting on a gravel island – the biggest we have seen yet! His girth and sheer bulk were impressive, as he opened a lazy eye to bid us farewell, we turned and headed back towards the *Greg Mortimer*.

26 January 2023, PM: Half Moon Island - Distance: 7.7 km

Our last bonus kayak in Antarctica! Fortunately, though the weather was a bit grey, the sea was calm as we sailed into Half Moon Island. Most of the kayakers got off the ship for a wonderful paddle around and partially around the island. Chinstrap penguins were seen porpoising through the water, fur seals lounged on the rocky raised beaches and particularly snappy ice surrounded our kayaks as we enjoyed a typical Antarctic paddle before we sailed north.





Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: [Hannah Cowley & Patrick Horgan](#)

Number of Snorkels: 8

Total Outings: 8

Snorkellers:

Dick Mulders

Teun Hermsen

Errol Harper

Tai Strike

Adi Nell

Sarah McGiffert

Maddie Matthews

Allegra Kemp

19 January 2023, AM: Graham Passage

Today was our first day on the Antarctic Peninsula, and with much excitement, we were greeted by the beautiful Graham Passage for our first outing. We cruised along in the Zodiac, enjoying the wonderful icebergs and glacier faces while witnessing some calving events of the glacier itself. After passing through the narrowest part of the passage, it was time to find a spot for our shakedown snorkel. Conditions meant that we could not find a place for a land-based entry, so we instead opted for a boat-based entry along a beautiful slope with clear water. There were screams of joy as everyone entered the water for the first time and felt the buoyancy and comfort of the drysuit. We swam through a slushie of small bits of ice and viewed a beautiful bottom of seaweed and encrusting organisms. In the water column, we saw some small fish as well as ctenophores with their beautiful iridescent rows of cilia lighting up. Such a fantastic shakedown snorkel session to kick off our Antarctic adventure.

20 January 2023, AM: Argentine Islands

We departed the ship in some swelly conditions and headed into the sheltered archipelago of the Argentine Islands. Passing Vernadsky station, we saw gentoo penguins porpoising through the water and up onto the rocks. Weaving our way through the channels, we admired the clear water and snowy surroundings before arriving at Wordie Hut for a landing ashore. To greet us at the landing were several Weddell seals resting on the snow. After our landing, we hopped back in the Zodiac and had another cruise through the channels, before deciding to try our luck at snorkelling with penguins in a little bay near the radio towers of the station. We hopped in the water and in no time several members of our group caught glimpses of gentoo penguins shooting by underwater. Over time, more penguins came and many of us caught great glimpses of the action. Getting this underwater perspective of the penguins really shows how fast and agile these birds are in the water. Along the seafloor, we spotted anemones and the shells of some Antarctic clams. We even found the eggshell of a bird, which likely could have been a penguin eggshell. We got out of the water a little cold but stoked with our penguin encounters for the morning!

20 January 2023, PM: Petermann Island

For the afternoon, it was time to check out Petermann Island and the many penguins that call it home. On the Zodiac cruise to the island, we added our third penguin, the Adelie penguin to the list of penguins that we have seen on this trip. We weaved our way through icebergs and into a small bay to make our landing and enjoyed a

lovely walk amongst penguins and their chicks ashore. After a nice walk, having warmed ourselves up a bit, we jumped back in the Zodiac and zoomed around the corner to a lovely little bay with plenty of penguins around, and an iceberg in the middle. We entered the water and had some fantastic penguin encounters once again whilst also enjoying the seaweed and other marine life on the seafloor. After some fun with the penguins, we got to see our first iceberg up close and really get to appreciate its massive size under the water in relation to what is sticking above the surface. A few more penguins darted around us before we ended our session and headed back to the ship. But it wasn't the end of getting in the water for us as afterwards some of us took part in the Polar Plunge! What a big day of water fun, with three sessions in the water for some of our intrepid bunch.

21 January 2023, AM: Jougla Point

We awoke to a cold and snowy morning at Port Lockroy, but this didn't dismay many of us who still opted to get out for a snorkel session. We started our morning with a landing at Goudier Island and a visit to the Port Lockroy hut and postal office. For some of us, it was time to send a postcard home to our loved ones from what is the most remote outpost of the British postal service around the world. We admired the cute gentoo penguins on their stone nests beneath the hut and learned about the history of the place. The weather was damp, but our spirits remained high and several of us jumped in the water for a snorkel at Jougla Point. The seafloor was strewn with whalebones - some small, some large - and the water column was filled with planktonic life. We saw krill, shrimp and the beautiful little flapping sea butterflies, all swimming around in the water column. There were some great small icebergs around the snorkel site that gave us yet another chance to admire their beauty up close and under the water. We finished up this snorkel quite cold but very elated and a nice warm shower and a hot cuppa were the perfect way to finish the morning.

22 January 2023, AM: Recess Cove

The morning greeted us with a new site that none of the expedition team had ever been to and our first continental landing! Going to a new location is always exciting for all, as the allure of the unknown leaves us all on our toes wondering what we will find out there. And what a fantastic morning it was. We landed ashore for our first step on the mainland. Some nesting skuas prevented us from moving too far, but the rest of the morning made up for it. We hopped back in the Zodiac and cruised around in the beautiful bay past some big icebergs and a breathtaking glacier face. It didn't take long until we spotted some humpback whales, and what a show they gave us. We watched three beautiful individuals feeding on krill around the icebergs. We witnessed big lunges and some nice close encounters, which made for amazing viewing. After some quality time with the whales, we jumped in the water around an island in the bay with nice clear water. We rounded the island and were checking out an iceberg when all of a sudden, a large mass darted beneath us, which turned out to be a Weddell seal. What an awesome surprise encounter! Not something that happens too often but for the lucky few of us that were in the water today, we got to enjoy seeing this beautiful animal underwater.

22 January 2023, PM - Hydrurga Rocks

The afternoon saw us at Hydrurga Rocks, and we had a full complement of snorkellers keen to get in the water. We landed in a protected bay and were greeted with our first glimpse of an Antarctic fur seal. More penguin chicks abounded on the island and we also got to watch a Weddell seal emerge from the water and make its way up onto the shore. Watching this animal belly flop along like a giant slug was quite hilarious for us all. After a nice

group photo of us all in our drysuits, we hopped back in the Zodiac, before having to hop back out again because it was stuck on a rock! Second time lucky we made it off the shore and headed around to our snorkel site, passing a group of giant petrels and Wilson's storm petrels feeding on the surface. We jumped into a beautiful bay with super clear water and some more iridescent ctenophores, shimmering in the water column. A beautiful snorkel session saw us progressively making our way into the bay from deep to shallow water, watching the seaweed sway to and fro in the swell. At the end of the bay, we spotted gentoo penguins and a Weddell seal on shore, before hearing a yell that penguins were swimming into the bay. We all turned around and got in line and had the best penguin encounter of our trip. A group of gentoo penguins and one chinstrap penguin circled back and forth several times, getting nice and close and giving all of us a fantastic glimpse. This all happened again when a second group of penguins entered the bay and repeated the same thing. Getting out of the water was easy this session as we were in nice shallow water, and owing to how much fun we were having, we spent a total of 40 minutes in the water for this session! With the sun out and the wind calm, we all returned to the ship with big smiles on our faces.

26 January 2023, AM: Yankee Harbour

Before we had even left the ship this morning, we heard the news on the radio that a leopard seal had been spotted and could hamper our snorkel operations. Notwithstanding, several of us still geared up in the hope that we might still be able to get in the water for a nice dip. Thankfully, the leopard seal remained resting on ice the entire time and in an area where we could get an excellent view of it from shore. What a great encounter! Seeing the leopard seal yawn and show off its teeth and gape was awe-inspiring. They are such interesting creatures with their almost reptile-like snouts. On top of this amazing encounter, we wandered along the shore amongst penguins and some more Antarctic fur seals in yet another wildlife-dense location in the South Shetland Islands. We got back on the Zodiac and had a quick tour around the bay to a beautiful meltwater stream before hopping in the water on the outside shore of the rocky spit. We snorkelled above a cobblestone bottom, and although there was not a lot of marine life in this location, it was lovely to get in the water again and float around after a few days without snorkelling.

26 January 2023, PM - Half Moon Island

In the afternoon, we wrapped up our Antarctic adventure at the beautiful Half Moon Island. For some of us, it was time to just enjoy a nice landing ashore, whilst for others, the spirit of snorkelling still lived on! We were walking across the island, enjoying the views and the wildlife, when all of a sudden we were called down to the Zodiac from the other side of the island to come for a snorkel sooner than expected. Some playful Antarctic fur seals had been spotted, and the opportunity was too good to pass up. We geared up and hopped in the water, slowly approaching three fur seals playing on a rock. At first, they didn't pay too much attention to us, but in not much time we had caught their eye, and the fun began! Fur seals were swimming all around us, coming right up to our faces and jumping out of the water all around us. It was an amazing amount of fun and a beautiful encounter with these curious animals. After a while, two of the fur seals left, but one hung around, alternating between sitting on the rock and swimming with us. After some time, we moved to another spot, following some more fur seals. These ones were a bit less curious than the first group, but we still had some great encounters and even saw some penguins too! What a fantastic last snorkel for the trip and yet another unique experience that will be remembered by all.





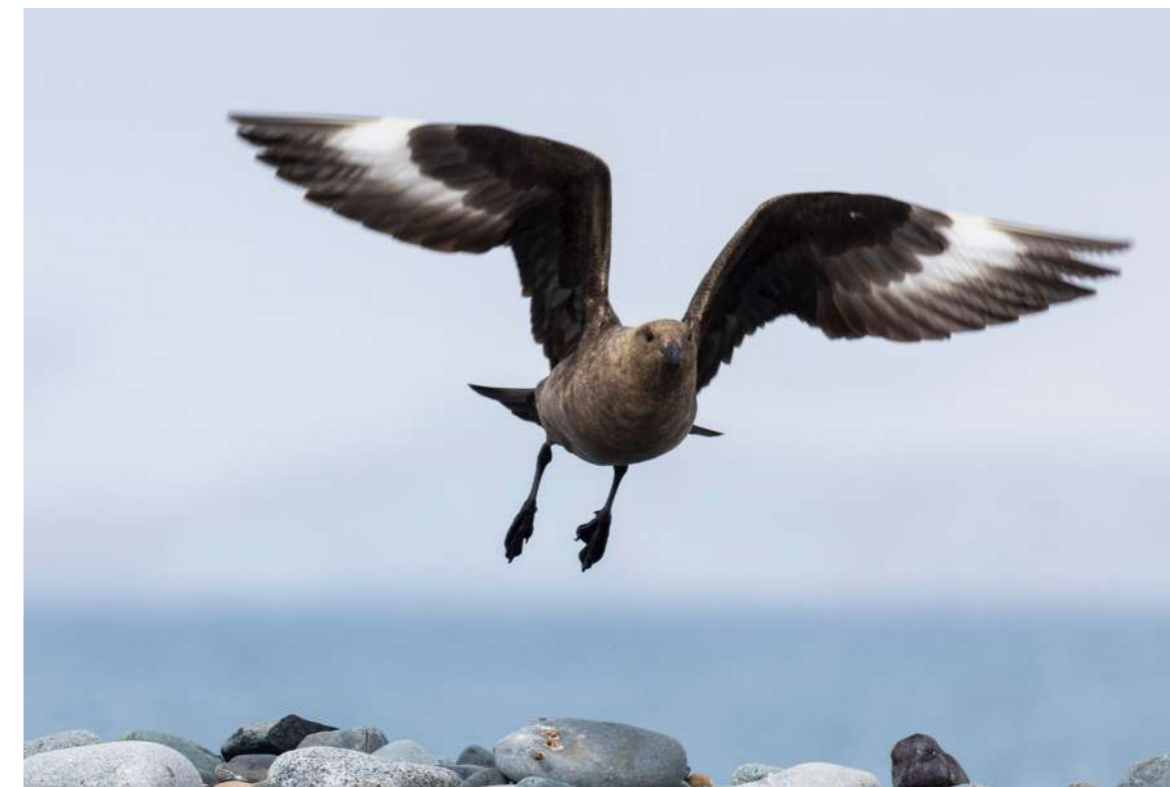


Bird Sightings

Bird Species	January												
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Gentoo Penguin					•	•	•	•	•		•		
Adelie Penguin				•	•		•						
Chinstrap Penguin	•			•		•	•	•	•			•	
Magellanic Penguin													•
Wandering Albatross		•											
Royal Albatross		•											
Grey-headed Albatross													•
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•							•		•	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross													•
Southern Fulmar			•	•		•	•	•	•				
Northern Giant Petrel	•	•	•							•			•
Southern Giant Petrel		•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•
Antarctic Petrel													
Cape Petrel			•		•			•		•			
Snow Petrel				•		•							
Blue Petrel		•	•										
Soft-plumaged Petrel													•
White-chinned Petrel		•	•	•									•
Black-bellied Storm Petrel			•	•									•
Wilson's Storm Petrel		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•
Common Diving Petrel													•
Antarctic Prion			•	•	•	•	•						•
Slender-billed Prion		•											
Antarctic Tern				•	•	•	•	•					
South American Tern	•												
South Polar Skua				•	•		•	•	•		•		
Brown Skua			•	•	•		•						



Bird Species	January												
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
Chilean Skua													•
Dolphin Gull		•											•
Kelp Gull		•			•	•							•
Great Shearwater							•						•
Sooty Shearwater							•						•
Snowy Sheathbill					•	•	•	•	•				
Antarctic Shag					•			•	•	•	•		
Imperial Shag		•											•
Rock Shag		•											•

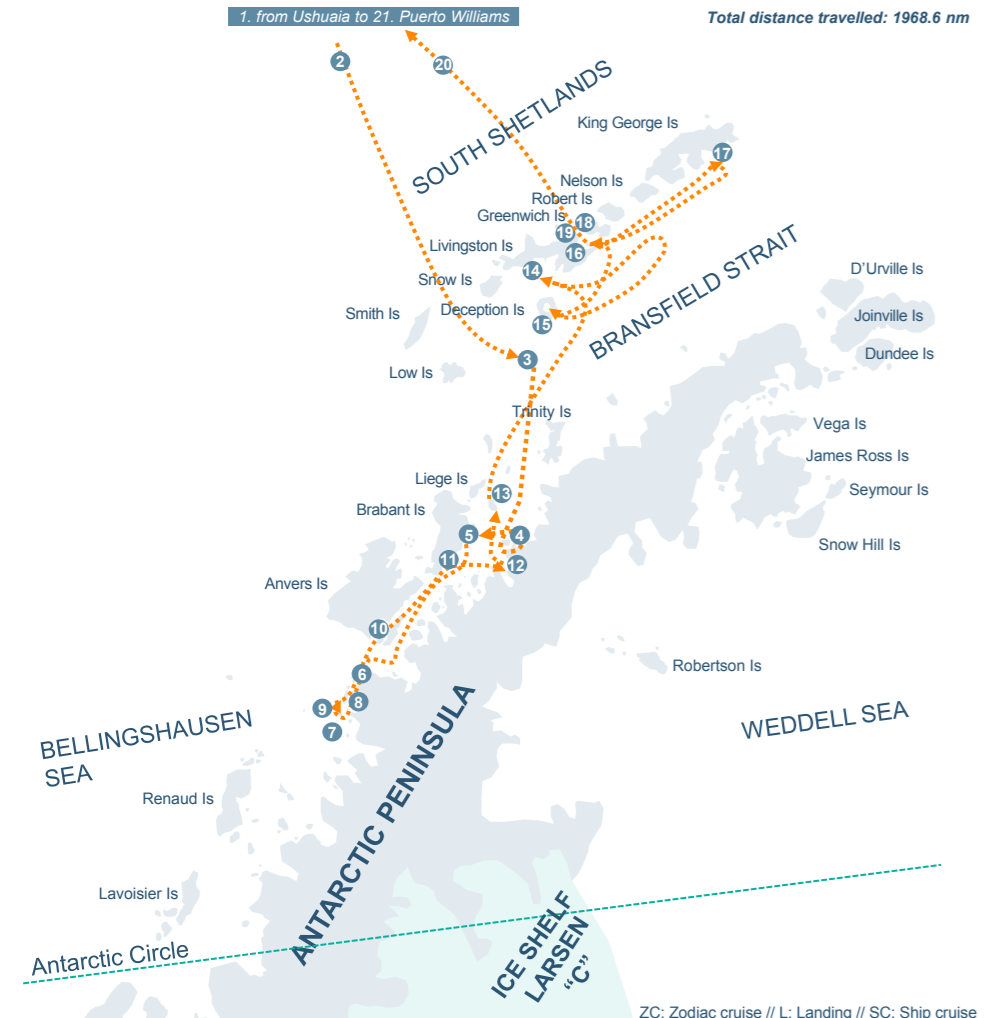




Mammal Sightings

Mammal Species	January												
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
South American Fur Seal							•	•					
Antarctic Fur Seal									•		•		
South American Sea Lion													•
Weddell Seal				•	•								
Leopard Seal						•					•		
Southern Elephant Seal								•	•		•		
Dusky Dolphin													•
Antarctic Minke Whale							•				•		
Humpback Whale				•		•	•	•					
Fin Whale										•			
Sei Whale		•											





- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. 16-Jan Ushuaia 54°48'51"S, 68°18'46"W | 11. 21-Jan Buls bay (ZC) 64°25'79"S, 62°18'26"W |
| 2. 17-Jan Drake passage (at sea) | 12. 22-Jan Recess cove (continental landing) |
| 3. 18-Jan Bransfield strait (at sea) | 64°31'34"S, 61°36'19"W |
| 4. 19-Jan Graham passage (ZC) 64°23'26"S, 61°30'42"W | 13. 22-Jan Hydrurga rocks (L) 64°08'44"S 61°37'33"W |
| 5. 19-Jan Hunt island (ZC) 64°19'89", 62°06'92"W | 14. 23-Jan Elephant point (L) 62°41'35"S, 60°51'28W |
| 6. 20-Jan Lemaire channel (CS) 65°06'02"S, 63°59'06"W | 15. 23-Jan Deception island (CS) 62°59'37"S, 60°33'90"W |
| 7. 20-Jan Wordie hut near Vernansky station (L) 65°10'25"S, 64°08'28"W | 16. 24-Jan Half moon (CS) 62°35'28"S, 59°54'31"W |
| 8. 20-Jan Petermann island (L) 65°10'25"S, 64°07'76"W | 17. 24-Jan Penguin Island (L) |
| 9. 20-Jan Polar plunge 65°19'36"S, 64°07'52"W | 18. 26-Jan Yankee Harbour (L) 62°31'43"S, 59°46'58"W |
| 10. 21-Jan Port Lockroy & Jougla point (L) 64°49'46"S, 63°29'36"W | 19. 26-Jan Half moon (L) 62°35'28"S, 59°54'31"W |
| | 20. 27-Jan Drake passage (at sea) |
| | 21. 28-Jan Puerto Williams 54°55'86"S, 67°36'29"W |





Expeditioners:

Tom Azumbrado

Lisa Bandola

Ani Banerjee

Amit Banerjee

Cecile Barral

Jon Berman

Alison Berman

Richard Betts

Cath Betts

Monty Blanchard Jr

John Bleidorn

Amy Bleidorn

Nancy Bolen

Christopher Bolen

John Byers

Fernando Casadevall

Diana Casadevall

Yen Chu

Jane Chu

David Chu

Meredith Clegg

Libby Conn

Melinda Couzens

John Couzens

Kelly Cress

Brian Curran

Rolf Dalhuisen

Dale Dryen

Eric Engel

Hanna Fox

Samantha Gallant

Jon Graff

Maryke Gray

Michael Grayer

Judie Grayer

Brian Greeves

Nicki Greeves

Michael Gruenthaler

Sandra Gruenthaler

Errel Harper

Katey Hartwell

Dianne Heleno

Teun Hermsen

Deb Homewood

Isabelle Hopkinson

John Hopkinson

David Horney

Jeane Houston

Harry Houston

Dana Johnson

José Kalpers

Elise Kalpers-Gray

Matthew Keeney

Allegra Kemp

Anne Kemp

Donna Kirby

Jim Lawson

Debbie Lawson

Richard Lipeles

Amy Lipeles

Deborah Lis

Paul Long

Matthews Madeline

Amy Maltz

Elliot Maltz

David Marsden

Pauline Marsden

Katherine Marsh

Kathleen Mc Namara

Chip Mc Namara III

Lorna McFarlane

Steve McFarlane

Ben McKeown

Anne McKeown

Dennis Menard

Jill Mitchell

Philip Montgomerie

Sandra Moss

Karen Moyle

Dick Mulders

Adi Nell

Alice Noe-Nordberg

Roseanne Nyczaj

Peter O'Connell

Tamara O'Brien

Joanne O'Connell

Judy Padar

Ed Padar

John Paderson

Kathy Paderson

Andy Palmer

Kevin Phelan

Catarina Pimienta Franco Lopes

Dan Powdermaker

Carla Powdermaker

Frank Punal

Lourdes Punal

Cecelia Radlowski

Mark Rinehimer

Cindy Rinehimer

Marjorie Robfogel

McGiffert Sarah

Dave Schafer

Monica Simmons

Bethany Smith

Adam Smith

Tai Strike

Chris Studach

Leslie Tcheyan

Robert Tessari

Anne Urquhart

Quentin Urquhart Jr

Riekje Van Kappen

Tony Vettese

Nancy Vettese

Lori Wilson

Laura Wright

Doug Wright

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Ashley Perrin
Assistant Expedition Leader: Andrea Herbert
Onboard Expedition Manager: Rosie Leaney
Onboard Expedition Manager in training: Reba Minett
Historian: Alasdair McGregor
Oceanographer/ Citizen Science Coordinator: Marion Fourquez
Marine Biologist: Vic Moens
Naturalist: Conrad Weston
Naturalist: Christian Savigny
Naturalist: Leo Soilbelzon
Lead Sea Kayak Guide: Liz MacNeil
Sea Kayak Guide: Erin Scot
Sea Kayak Guide: Anula Jochym
Sea Kayak Guide: Neri Grieve
Sea Kayak Guide: Alex Chavanne
Sea Kayak Guide (Paddling): Brooke Greene
Sea Kayak Guide (Paddling): Erin Scott
Lead Snorkel Guide: Hannah Cowley
Snorkel Guide: Pat Hogan
Expedition Medic: Scott Thompson
E-Team Photography Guide: Adrian Wlodarczyk
Zodiac Master: Serghei Hincu
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Anne Oeyasaeter

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Vadym Tavrovetsky
Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi
Safety Officer: Alexandru Chiriac
Bosun: Giovanni Dela Torre
Deck Cadet: Miguel Delgado
Deck Cadet: Goncalo Alexandra Saraiva Aniceto Costa
Ship Doctor: Gloria Saraiva Aniceto Costa
Ship Doctor: Anzor Chomakhidze
Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk
Hotel Director: Pascal Joubin
Chief Purser: Willie Lirio
Executive Chef: Ronwaldo Reyes
Head Waiter: Allan Liscaro
IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev
Receptionist: Jeremiah Castillo
Receptionist: Jona Ecija
Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia
Able Seaman: Ramanda Vitrian
Able Seaman: Hardik Rao
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Able Seaman: Ramada Vitrian
Able Seaman: John Noble
Able Seaman: Andrii Mezentsev

Photography thanks to:

Adrian Wlodarczyk

Poem thanks to:

Hanna Fox
Deb Lawson





