

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 19 – 27 January 2023





Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Thursday 19 January 2023

Position at 1200 on 19 Jan

Latitude: 54°48.3'S

Longitude: 068°16.79'W

Course: 108°

Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 12 knots

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 18°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

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

At 4.45 pm, we were transferred via Catamaran to the *Sylvia Earle*. Upon arrival, we were greeted in the mudroom by some of Aurora's smiling Expedition Team who guided us toward more smiling Expedition Team for our first official photo of the voyage.

After refreshments and a smooth check-in at reception, we were escorted to our cabins by the wonderful hotel staff. Then it was time to explore our new home-away-from-home, the *Sylvia Earle*.

Onboard we total 120 Expeditioner's with nationalities representing Australia (33), Brazil (2), Canada (8), India (4), Ireland (1), New Zealand (5), South Africa (5), St. Kिल्ts and Nevis (1), UK (6), USA (55), along with 19 Expedition Team and 86 Ship's Crew from all over the world.

We had time to unpack, settle into our cabins and enjoy a delicious embarkation refreshment before Expedition Leader Roger, called everyone together to welcome us aboard the *Sylvia Earle*. Afterwards, we received our lifeboat and safety briefing and readied ourselves for the abandon ship drill.

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don our warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station to sample our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us up to the lifeboats, to get us familiar with their whereabouts.

By 7:30 pm it was time to head into the dining room where a delicious meal was served complete with a delectable dessert.

During our meal, we admired the stunning landscape of the Beagle Channel. The bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded as we made our way past rocky slopes shining brightly in the steely light. To our portside the mountain peaks of Argentina and Chile to our starboard. We saw a veritable spate of birds as we sailed closer to the Drake Passage.

While some enjoyed a nightcap at the Tektite Bar, some of us wandered to the outer decks while the rest of us made our way to cabins for a much-needed sleep.



Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Friday 20 January 2023

Position at 12:00 on 20 Jan

Latitude: 57° 53.9'S

Longitude: 064° 52.2'W

Course: 164°

Speed: 13.6 knots

Wind Speed: SW

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 10°C

The Antarctic Convergence is perhaps the longest and most important biological barrier on earth, as formidable as any mountain range or desert. It is an obstacle to the dispersion of birds, fish, and, most important, plankton.

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

As we started our journey south towards Antarctica, we were lucky enough to have a calm Drake Passage (sorry to say this to all those who were seasick). Not quite a Drake lake but not a Drake shake either!

We got through all our mandatory briefings, biosecurity and fittings to prepare us for Antarctica. Crossing the famous Drake Passage is quite the feat. From Cape Horn to the South Shetland Islands, the Drake connects the waters of the Pacific Ocean in the west to the South Atlantic Ocean, in the east and the Antarctic in the south. The passage, only 800 kilometres (500 miles) wide, is the shortest crossing from Antarctica to the other continents. The waters of the Drake Passage are known to be the roughest on the planet and are considered one of the most treacherous voyages a ship can make. Currents at its latitude meet no resistance from any landmass and in severe weather, waves can reach a height of over 10 metres (33 feet). It is here where the cold, humid sub-polar climate starts changing into a freezing, dry Antarctic climate. The Passage was named after Sir Francis Drake, the 16th century English privateer. In 1577 Sir Francis Drake became the second man to circumnavigate the world, after Ferdinand Magellan's expedition and is said to have sighted the Drake Passage. However, the Spanish navigator Francisco de Hoces was the first European to sight the passage in 1525.

That is why the Spanish Armada and some Latin-American natives call it Mar de Hoces (Sea of Hoces).

In the afternoon we had a great lecture from Annette, on oceanography and then got to meet our captain Artem and his wonderful officers.

Dinner was another delicious event accompanied by great conversation with new friends.

Now we have paid our dues crossing the Drake Passage, we are ready and excited for our first landing in the South Shetland Islands.



At Sea | Telefon Bay (Deception Island)

DAY 3 | Saturday 21 January 2023

Position at 0900 on 21 Jan

Latitude: 64°09. 26' S

Longitude: 061°36. 86' W

Course: 206°

Speed: 3.8 knots

Wind Speed: 11 knots W

Barometer: 981

Air Temp: 8°C

The first view of Antarctica is always an iceberg. It may be a monolith hovering on the horizon, a barely discernible spectre looming out of the mist, or perhaps a sun-spangled, dazzling icon marking the gateway to this new world. It will undoubtedly be icebergs that leave the most lasting impressions on the imagination of visitors.

—Mark Jones, Wild Ice

The day started with two lectures that were relevant to the place that we were about to visit later in the day.

Paulina gave us an informative lecture about volcanology and then Dot told us the history of whaling and how tough life was back in the day for both whalers and whales. How could volcanology and whaling be connected? The answer to that question can be found on Deception Island, which was our first landing site.

After a relatively calm Drake Passage, we finally approached this famous island. This island is the caldera of an active volcano and has been used by whalers for years dating back to the 20th century.

The narrow entrance (~500 metres wide) called Neptune's Bellows was magnificent – the *Sylvia Earle* passed by very steep cliffs, trying to stay away from the shallow rocks in the middle of the channel. Not every day can you sail into the caldera of an active volcano!

Today was the first time everyone practised getting in and out of the Zodiacs – everyone did great!

Our landing site was in Telefon Bay in the north-west part of the island. The bay got its name from the SS Telefon – a Norwegian cargo steamship that once was repaired here. The landscape is unlike other places we visit in Antarctica - flat volcanic fields with almost no snow and ice, with big hills in the background. Here we met our first penguins – chinstraps!

On land we split into different groups – some keen hikers made a long loop on top of the hills and others were walking along the coast admiring penguins and beautiful landscapes. At some point the site got covered with fog, which added more drama and mystery to the photographs.

On the way out we passed by Whalers Bay, where all the whaling stations were located – whalers needed a protected area with a source of fresh water – and they got plenty of both in this bay.

Back onboard it was time for another delicious dinner and a nightcap at the bar.

What a glorious first outing and great memories!



Hydrurga Rocks | Graham Passage

DAY 4 | Sunday 22 January 2023

Position at 0800 on 22 Jan

Latitude: 64° 09.26' S

Longitude: 061° 36.86' W

Course: 209°

Speed: 3.8 knots

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

—Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows

The day started with a lovely breakfast as usual. At 9 am we headed out for our second landing of the voyage.

Hydrurga Rocks is a small group of islets located east of Two Hummock Island, in the Palmer Archipelago. Did you know? These small islets are named after the Leopard Seal: Hydrurga Leptonyx.

We landed on the main island; a committee of Weddell seals welcomed us at the entrance of the island. We walked amongst chinstrap penguins and saw some snowy sheathbills, as well as cormorants with chicks. The highlight of the landing were the chinstrap chicks.

The snorkellers were in the water and the kayakers had 27 keen paddlers on the water. The weather was playing tricks on us, but that did not stop them. They all managed to paddle in the lee of the islets.

A big shout out to all the kayakers for their patience and commitment – you are amazing!

Back onboard for a short break and lunch followed by the highlight of the day, the rendezvous with Aurora Expeditions' flagship, the *Greg Mortimer*. They came prepared, dancing on the deck in funny hats. Their E-Team were well prepared for this moment, collecting and freezing snowballs days ahead.

The *Greg Mortimer* was built in 2019 and named in honour of the company's founder Greg Mortimer. The *Greg Mortimer* was the first passenger ship to feature the revolutionary Ulstein X-BOW®. These two incredible vessels the *Greg Mortimer* and the *Sylvia Earle* are nearly identical. Did you know that the location of our magnificent Citizen Science Centre is replaced with the impressive Hydraulic platforms, for viewing wildlife and feeling even closer to nature?

Luckily the wind calmed down in the afternoon and we all took off on a Zodiac cruise through Graham Passage, located between Murray Island and The Antarctic Peninsula.

What a magical place with glaciers and icebergs. The Zodiac cruise ended with us holding our breaths, while waiting for a humpback whale to return to the surface, and it did, just a few metres from Eddie's Zodiac.

The daily recap taught us about penguins, krill and seals. Annette told us how the penguins cleverly camouflage

Wind Speed: 11 knots W

Barometer: 981

Air Temp: 8°C

themselves from threats whilst swimming in the sea, and the importance of the krill for the survival of the wildlife. We learned about seals, how they move and heard the beautiful sound of a Weddell seal under water. As Annette was about to wrap up her part of the presentation, we heard Ana shouting "WHALE! WHALE!". We all ran to the starboard side of the ship and much to our delight we saw several humpback whales – three beautiful creatures.

Today's quote "Bloody amazing first paddle"

What an amazing day!!!



Lemaire Channel | Petermann Island | Port Charcot

DAY 5 | Monday 23 January 2023

Position at 0600 on 23 Jan

Latitude: 64°59'S

Longitude: 063°46.63'W

Course: 225°

Speed: 7.1 knots

Wind Speed: 16 knots from N

Barometer: 990

Air Temp: 6°C

In many ways, the Antarctic is a world of suspended animation. Suspended between outer space and the fertile continents. Suspended in time – without a local civilisation to make history.

—Diane Ackerman

The *Sylvia Earle's* expeditioners woke up at 6 am to witness one of the most beautiful sails in Antarctica: The Lemaire Channel. Lying between Booth Island and the Antarctic Peninsula, this spectacular channel is just 600 metres wide at its narrowest point, 11 kilometres long and 150 metres deep. Nicknamed "Kodak Alley", it is beautifully photogenic and wonderfully calm.

We started the crossing at 6.30 am, everybody was enjoying the views on the outside decks, surrounded by snow and ice amid rugged peaks raised up to 1,000 metres high. After 30 minutes sailing, we finished the crossing and started to get ready for another day of expeditions and adventure.

The morning activity brought us to Petermann Island and the history of the second French Antarctic expedition on Pourquoi-Pas? We landed in Port Circumcision, where gentoo penguins were welcoming us in our next adventure.

Highlight of the morning? Adélie penguins with chicks! The snorkellers found PP rock inscription made by the Charcot Expedition in 1908 and the kayakers achieved a 7 kilometre circumnavigation of the island!

The weather was stunning, no wind, the water was like glass. So, why not do... the POLAR PLUNGE! Back onboard the E-Team set up the platform at the marina and got the music playing as we all watched 54 brave plungers take the plunge into the icy water.

During lunch the *Sylvia Earle* repositioned to Port Charcot, a small bay at the north end of Booth Island, first mapped in 1904 when the French Antarctic Expedition led by Jean-Baptise Charcot over-wintered.

While on land there were two hikes on offer – one was a hike to the Charcot memorial, a "wooden column" with a plaque inscribed with the name of the first French Antarctic Expedition.

The other hike led us to a large gentoo penguin colony high up on the mountain. The wind stayed with us the entire afternoon, but did not stop us from having an incredible landing. Gusting up to 35 knots, the wind was

roaring around the hills in Port Charcot although could not defeat the expeditioners, who hiked all the way to visit the memorial and enjoy the stunning views from the top, overlooking the iceberg graveyard.

Time to go back to the ship had come and it was hard to leave, we must admit. Such a surreal place to be!

It is hard to find words to narrate everything we experienced during the day. Although Pourquoi-Pas? represents this team quite well. We are in Antarctica, so why not? Let's take advantage of every opportunity we have to explore the white continent, honouring the old explorers.

Today we honour the two French Antarctic expeditions lead by Jean-Baptise Charcot; known as the 'gentleman' explorer, he named many of the places in the northern peninsula, including Mt. Francais, the highest point in the region, located on Anvers Island. Charcot carried an immense number of scientific studies during the 'Heroic Age'.

As we settled into the Tektite Bar, Roger made the call to cancel the evening recap so we could enjoy another spectacular cruise through the Lemaire Channel as we made our way north.

Eat, sleep, explore, repeat!



Polar Plunge

DAY 5 | Monday 23 January 2023







Flanders Bay | Base Brown & Skontorp Cove (Paradise Bay)

DAY 6 | Tuesday 24 January 2023

Position at 1000 on 24 Jan

Latitude: 65°01.6'S

Longitude: 063°17.6'W

Course: Variable

Speed: 4.8 knots

Wind Speed: 35 knots from NE

Barometer: 982

Air Temp: 6°C

Antarctica is a separate world. One can feel its presence in the approaches, sailing south from more temperate climates. Standing on deck, one may follow the reeling albatross, feel the drop in temperature, the bite of the wind and the motion of the waves. Yet it is the presence of ice, from the first occasional fragments, escalating in shape, form, and frequency, and finally dominating all else, that brings assurance of arrival in Antarctica.

—Mark Jones, *Wild Ice: Antarctic Journeys*, 1990

What an interesting day!

As we opened our eyes, we witnessed strong winds and quite a swell outside. We looked for protection from the winds, sheltering ourselves in Flanders Bay, a large bay lying between Cape Renard and Cape Willems, along the west coast of Graham Land.

As we spent the morning onboard, Natalia and Annette prompted us to keep an eye out for wildlife outside. We saw leopard seals on ice floes and some snow petrels!

Later, we learnt about the incredible journey of Sir Ernest Shackleton and the doomed fate of the Imperial Trans-Antarctic Expedition on the Endurance ship, with our great historian Dot. Shortly afterwards Paulina presented the different types of glaciers in her lecture "50 shades of Ice".

In the afternoon we had better luck with the weather. We reached Paradise Bay and dropped the anchor close to Brown Station, an Argentinian Antarctic base and scientific research station named after Admiral William Brown, the father of the Argentine Navy. Here we had our first continental landing in Antarctica.

After a short walk on a rocky beach, we head off in Zodiacs toward Skontorp Cove. We saw blue-eyed shags with chicks in nests and a sunflower sea star. Such an amazing finding! As we were exploring, we heard another call on the radio. Snow petrels and skuas feeding. So much happening around us.

We continued towards Skontorp Cove, where we admired the glacial landscape with numerous calvings as we navigated through bergy bits and small growlers. We found two leopard seals and a Weddell seal peacefully resting on ice and shades of blue popping out against the grey backdrop sky.

In the meantime, a leopard seal curiously swam between kayakers, as they enjoyed a scenic paddle through icebergs followed by a beach landing on the continent. Some kayakers said it would be hard to top this experience!



Melchior Islands | Portal Point

DAY 7 | Wednesday 25 January 2023

Position at 0700 on 25 Jan

Latitude: 64°15.92'S

Longitude: 063°01.36'W

Course: 090°

Speed: 9.1 knots

Beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will sense them. The least we can do is try to be there.

—Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

After an early wake up we embarked on a Zodiac cruise around the Melchior Islands, a group of small ice-covered islands also called "The Venice of Antarctica". One of the islands hosts Melchior Base, one of Argentina's most important scientific bases in Antarctica. The four small buildings of the base host up to 15 people during the Antarctic summer studying a variety of research topics. On the day of our visit, a sailing boat was tied up in the protected channel next to the station, getting some rest from their adventures in the open Southern Ocean.

We cruised through the narrow channels between the islands, surrounded by steep cliffs of sheer rock and ice. The radiating ice blue was shining through the many crevasses, and countless meltwater waterfalls, ice cliffs and caves allowed for endless exploration along the way. Our exploration was a true expedition, and the fog moving in just contributed to the magical atmosphere. We encountered Weddell and fur seals, imperial cormorants, terns and kelp gulls, and some of us even witnessed the appearance of a minke whale in the middle of anchorage bay. Our Zodiac drivers navigated us safely back through the maze between the islands, and finally we saw the shape of our beautiful ship appearing back in the mist.

Back onboard we exchanged the exciting stories of our individual Zodiac expeditions, while we warmed up with hot tea and the famous chocolate chip cookies. During the repositioning of the ship to our next landing location, we got some well-deserved rest while enjoying the spectacular views of Antarctic mountains and icebergs around us.

In the afternoon we visited Portal Point, our second continental landing of the voyage. Portal Point was named by British explorers as it formed the gateway to the Antarctic Plateau. In 1956, a refuge hut was built here, although today only its foundations remain. After disembarking the Zodiacs between granite rocks and icebergs, we explored different routes through the deep snow, taking us to viewpoints with breathtaking panoramas. Near the landing site we encountered two fur seals, sitting well camouflaged on a dark rock. From a safe distance we admired their shapes against the blue sky and ocean.

Our kayakers and snorkellers explored the beautiful bay and icebergs around Portal Point, admiring the crystal-clear waters full of sea stars, limpets and different species of macroalgae.

Wind Speed: 10 knots SW

Barometer: 978

Air Temp: 4°C

Meanwhile, back onboard captain Artem and his officers navigated us into a calm bay surrounded by steep snow-covered mountains, to enjoy a barbecue under the late afternoon and evening sun of the Antarctic.

Between the Rockhopper restaurant, the outdoor bar and the jacuzzi, we danced into the spectacular sunset, accompanied by two groups of humpback whales slowly cruising around the ship.

What a beautiful end to an amazing day!



Walker Bay & Elephant Point (Livingston Island)

DAY 8 | Thursday 26 January 2023

Position at 0800 on 26 Jan

Latitude: 62° 50.21 'S

Longitude: 060° 53.8 'W

Course: 045°

Speed: 13.8 knots

Wind Speed: NNW

Barometer: 971

Air Temp: 6°C

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding'

Overnight we left the Antarctic Peninsula and cruised back across the Bransfield Strait to the South Shetland Islands, our destination, Livingstone Island.

Landing on the black volcanic sand beach took our minds back to our first landing at Telefon Bay. We had a beautiful morning to free-roam the wide expanse of this beach, with the Expedition Team members located at specific areas to give us even more insight into what we were seeing.

Gentoo penguins welcomed us as we roamed along, elephant seals were hauled out of the water resting but keeping a watchful eye on our movements and fur seals made themselves comfortable on the moss at one end of the beach.

Whale bones left from the whaling industry were scattered along the beach. Remnants of an industry that decimated the numbers of these beautiful creatures in Antarctic waters. Fortunately today, the number of most whale species are recovering, however not to the pre-whaling day numbers.

Fossils of ferns and wood, remnants of when this continent was part of the supercontinent Gondwana, were found and explained to us by Expedition Team member, Paulina.

Over lunch our ship relocated to Elephant Point, also on Livingstone Island. Although still volcanic it was covered by many rocks and pebbles and large amounts of kelp, quite different from our landing this morning. A large colony of gentoo penguins, many elephant and fur seals inhabited the beach. This was also the only landing where we were able to see the two plants that grow in Antarctica, Pearlwort and Hair Grass. Historically there are small coves within the rocky hills containing whale bones. Again, these were remnants of the time when whaling brought more humans to Antarctica than tourism.

Our Citizen Scientists carried out a microplastic search in a defined area of the beach. Fortunately no microplastics were found, however a couple of larger pieces were found and removed.

We were told that our flight tomorrow was cancelled due to low clouds preventing planes from landing at King George Island. However, to our surprise and maybe a little disappointment, a weather window opened and we were on standby to make our flight back to Punta Arenas.

So it is farewell to this beautiful continent. We will all take home beautiful memories, new friendships and a few thousand photos which will take us several months to process.

Happy Australia Day to all of the Australians onboard and for singing along with the Team!



Once a jolly swagman, camped by a billabong

Under the shade of a coolabah tree

And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me

And he sang as he watched and waited till his billy boiled

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Down came a jumbuck to drink at the billabong

Up jumped the swagman and grabbed him with glee

And he sang as he stowed that jumbuck in his tucker-bag

"You'll come a waltzing matilda with me"

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me

And he sang as he stuffed that jumbuck in his tucker-bag

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Down came the squatter, mounted on his thorough-bred

Up came the troopers one, two, three

Whose that jolly jumbuck you've got in your tucker-bag

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me

If that's a jolly jumbuck stuffed into your tucker-bag

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Up sprang the swagman and jumped into the billabong

"You'll never catch me alive" said he

And his ghost may be heard if you pass by that billabong

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

Waltzing Matilda, Waltzing Matilda

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me

And his ghost may be heard as you pass by that billabong

You'll come a waltzing matilda with me.

(chorus again)



Frei (King George Island)

DAY 9 | Friday 27 January 2023

Position at 1500 on 27 Jan

Latitude: 62°16.1'S

Longitude: 058°48'W

Course: 193°

Speed: 8.9 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots NE

Barometer: 981

Air Temp: 6°C

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

—Edwin Mickleburgh, *Beyond the Frozen Sea*

After being told there was a 90% chance we would not be flying out of King George Island due to cloud cover, it was with much delight that Roger announced that the flights are leaving Chile and are en route to Antarctica after all. We had heard all sorts of stories of the sister ship *Greg Mortimer*, having to wait three days at King George Island and then eventually sail back to Ushuaia. So minds were switched from making alternative plan B's back to plan A and packing our bags.

Packing our bags meant getting up early and having them outside our door by 6 am. Magically when we went down to breakfast at 6.30 am all of our bags were gone and loaded down in the mud room.

At 8 am we gathered in the Lecture Theatre to farewell our captain and watch the end of voyage slideshow. Some of us received the ever so deserving polar plunge certificate and to our surprise even a polar plunge t-shirt, which many of us wore on the flight.

When the ship got word the first flight had "wheels up", Justine called the first group down to the mudroom. For the last time we placed our Muck boots on and donned our lifejackets... a procedure we have learnt by now to do in our sleep. The Zodiac ride for the last time landed us on the beach where we said goodbye to those Muck boots. A short bus ride took us up to the 1278 metre-long runway.

After a start to the day where we thought all our plans were up in the air, the charter flight ran smoothly as we headed back to Punta Arenas and eventually our prospective homes. Wow, what a trip!

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



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Wesley McNeil, Vanja Davidsen, Sigurð Davidsen, Ivan Klochlov

Number of Paddlers: 27

Total Paddle Outings: 5

Total Distance Paddled: 41.5 km

Paddlers:	Jane Maher	Christopher Caparon	Susan Fredrickson
Andrew Hughes	Roland Thoms	Judy Caparon	Elmien De Kock
Liam Hughes	Nicole Thoms	Merrilyn Colussi	Charles De Kock
Pamela Hughes	Kenneth Kim	Ilona Dubinieć	Roddy Sparks
Richard Hughes	Johanna Kim	Peter Clinch	Adrienne Sparks
Robert Winstead	Tom Boehlke	Pamela Clinch	David Namerow
Marilynne Winstead	Sue Boehlke	Scott Fredrickson	Pearila Namerow

22 January 2023, AM: Hydrurga - Distance: 2-3 km

Our first day in Antarctica, although spectacular, brought with it heavy winds, cancelling the possibilities for our first paddle the day before. When we arrived at Hydrurga Rocks, a grouping of several small islands, with a number of cosy sheltered inlets and skerries, the wind was still very strong. This prevented the ship from being at anchor so we had to tow the kayaks to a small, sheltered cove and launch from the Zodiacs from there. The forecast was that the strong winds would dissipate over the next few hours. The first group out in the cove paddled a very small circuit and watched a leopard seal frolicking in the shallows, while staying in the small protected wind shadow.

As is often the way, Antarctica was not going to let us off all so easy. As we started to get more paddlers on the water in the Cove, the wind shadow shrunk, and the winds went from 25 knots to 35, to 40, to 45.

The kayakers struggled to get into their boats, a few of the first paddlers began getting blown further out of the cove and into the waves. As we continued to get paddlers in their kayaks and a few paddlers followed Ivan over to the next cove, but the winds were difficult enough that they soon returned. As the winds were so intense, we had to tow the kayaks back to the ship. In the end, this first paddle was very short and was as much of a shake-down and learning-the-systems exercise, than it was a paddle outing. I think we all learned a few things setting us up for a second successful paddle.

23 January 2023, AM: Petermann Island - Distance: 7.5 km

The storminess continued through the afternoon, as it had the day before and somewhat into this morning. Although we were well-sheltered through the Lemaire Channel, when we neared Petermann Island, we got a little worried that we might be weathered-out once more. Fortunately, we had just enough lee in the wind that the ship was able to anchor and soon after, the waters became almost glassy. The cloud ceiling lifted, to being high

overcast, and the spectacular backdrop, the small peaks and cliffs of the Lemaire Channel, leapt from the sea to our north.

We launched from the marina on the back of the ship. We paddled immediately to the eastern side of Petermann Island, through some bumpy swells and into a small protected cove to regroup. Here we watched a number of gentoo penguins with the occasional chinstrap mixed in, jockey for position on the shore and jump in to fish the rocky points in the cove. We proceeded as a large group to start out and meandered our way north through some small rock gardens, miniature islets and small icebergs. We continued north, to see if the western swells from the open ocean would shut us down, making it an out-and-back trip. As we rounded Liouville Point and Godfrey Point the swells got larger but remained relatively gentle. When we rounded Rouch Point it became apparent that we could truly make a complete circumnavigation of Petermann Island, but would have to beat into the wind and swells in order to do so. At this point, we broke into two groups. One would smell the roses a bit more (or should I say... smell the penguins) and take a slower, steady pace and the other group would paddle on ahead. We paddled by a small bay on the western side of Petermann that was jam-packed with large icebergs and waves, a very powerful and impressive sight. Once we rounded the southern end, the two groups ended up merging and we continued our paddle, following the gentle seas back to the ship. This was a formidable first paddle for our trip and was made more special by being able to circumnavigate Petermann Island.

24 January 2023, PM: Brown / Skontorp - Distance: 12.5 km

Today the stormy weather continued in the Gerlache Straight, yet we were able to duck into the Paradise Harbor area. The captain was able to get us very close to Brown Station so we could launch from the marina, on a drift, and in a calm area. This may have been our only option for a paddle today, given the wild storm clouds you could see all around. We ended up being in our own little globe of fair weather, glassy water and the occasional break in the clouds to see patches of blue sky.

We focused mainly on the paddle in Skontorp Cove, which is so often a highlight paddle due to the amazing glaciers surrounding it and typical iceberg gardens. Boy, did it deliver... We meandered our way along, first watching the nesting cormorants along the cliffs, most taking care of their still-fluffy fledgling chicks. As we paddled east, deeper into the cove (more like a huge bay) with its towering glaciers, we would often stop and listen to the silence, which would be constantly interrupted by the glacier's calving, the crackling of the brash ice and the small avalanches coming from the cliffs, with their newly fallen snow from the night before.

What a magical gift this paddle turned out to be. Along the way we came across a leopard seal, or maybe it came across us, which was extremely curious of us. Swimming directly under our kayaks and spy-hopping us. Soon enough, we were just too boring for the leopard seal and it moved on. We saw many interesting icebergs, a number of memorable ones with major arches.

We made our way across the entrance of Oscar Cove to make our own private little continental landing, on a small gravelly beach that was scattered with grounded bergy bits all around.

After stretching our legs, a few folks chose to get a Zodiac ride back across to the ship. The rest of us paddlers made a committed paddle back to the ship, since we had come a good distance. Along the way we meandered

through more icebergs, saw a number of various seals and negotiated some big lines of brash ice. Skontorp offered up a bit of everything. What a sweet paddle!

25 January 2023, AM: Melchior Islands - Distance: 10.5 km

Wow, another morning that looked like we could be weathered out. As we approached the Melchior Islands there were high winds and big swells all around. Once in the protection of Melchior Harbour, however, it was much calmer, with smooth swells and low winds. The main concern, for this paddle, was the very low cloud ceiling and there was a good likelihood that we would get caught out in the fog. We were able to launch from the ship to go explore this small archipelago. There was an air of mystery surrounding the islands, as we could not see them all. Plays of light and dark shadows faded in and out. We decided to just tour around to see what we could see, and maybe venture on the outside of the island if the waves and swells allowed.

After touring along the cliffs for a while, the group divided for a short period, while one group of more intrepid paddlers ventured out through a passage to explore the outside of one of the islands in the larger swells, winds and waves.

Afterwards, we all regrouped again, to continue paddling around the small island group. We would come across the occasional seal, lounging on the rocks.

The fog rolled in heavily, and we lost all sight of the ship. Soon we started heading back to the ship, with a bearing from the GPS. We proceeded for a short distance then took a 90-degree right-hand turn to follow the shoreline by braille, which was a good reference point for returning to the ship. Back on course, we soon saw the ship emerge from the mist. We continued past the ship and on to explore the Argentinean Weather Station and Base and popped into the mouth of a bay where a large sailboat was fixed in place by multiple anchoring and mooring points. This made it obvious how important this location of Melchior Harbour can be to seafarers.

After a bit more touring in our mystical harbour, we returned to the ship.

25 January 2023, PM Portal Point - Distance: 8 km

When we arrived at Portal Point, the wind was in full force. The captain was able to position the ship to keep us in a wind eddy at the marina for us to launch from. The guides frontloaded this particular paddle for paddlers who were comfortable in the winds and willing to put up with some rough water. Since Portal Point is a great landing, most of the kayak team went ashore for the landing. We concluded that a landing would be too rough for us kayaking, as the swell was right on the steep, rocky shore.

When we launched our kayaks, we hovered right in the lee of the ship, till everyone was ready. When we headed out, we beat seaward right into the strong wind and waves and actually had to paddle a non-direct ferry angle to make our way northeast up the coast. We chose to go to a small headland that was surrounded by some small, interesting looking icebergs. After beating into the weather, we turned southwest directly to the shore and surfed the following seas to the coastline. We had to be careful, as there were a lot of shallow areas and rock skerries. We then continued to paddle southeast back towards where we came from, except closer to the shore so we could round Portal Point to reach a bay which is often sheltered from the weather.

The bay turned out to be much calmer than anticipated, and we were able to be much more relaxed as we paddled around and checked out the shallow waters and the interesting colours of the large rocks in the area. We could see the groups from the landing, high on the ridge, being battered by the wind while we were completely sheltered. We continued out to see some small super colourful, blue, and sculpted icebergs and took a moment of silence before heading back to the ship, as we realised that this was most likely our last paddle of the trip. The winds tapered off from what they were before we exited the bay, and we headed peacefully toward the ship.





Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: Anais Poulalion and Eddie Hauzer

Number of Snorkels: 6

Total Outings: 6

Snorkellers:

Reagan Luntz

Redmond Mobbs

Jessica Curran

John Curran

Jobre Stassen

Frances Kerr

21 January 2023, PM: Telefon Bay, Deception Islands

This morning, we finally reached the South Shetland Islands. It's been a day and a half of quiet days at sea, and everyone was eager to get off the ship and put their feet on the frozen continent.

So excited today! Today we had the opportunity to 'check out' snorkelling in Telefon Bay, inside Deception Island's volcano which last erupted in the 1970s. Our captain, Artem, skilfully navigated the ship through the narrow Neptune Bellows, into the sheltered caldera of Deception Island – a natural harbour called Port Foster. Then, before we knew it, we were anchoring inside the caldera of Deception Island - an active volcano. Crazy!

This was our first landing. The E-Team made a beautiful path for us, we saw Weddell seals, penguins and some seagulls. We walked all the way to an older crater that was modified during an eruption in 1967, which broadened the valley itself.

In the meantime, our snorkelling guides Ana and Eddie went scouting for the best snorkelling site. Even when the wind sometimes increased, they found a calm bay nearby with a really nice sea floor.

Jumping out of the water and getting back on the Zodiacs was harder than we expected, but in the end, everyone made it, and there were a lot of laughs and happy faces on the way back to the ship. There is something special about being out there, pushing ourselves and fighting the elements. We were so proud of our 'snorks' team!

This is Antarctica: unpredictable and magical. We can't wait for the next adventures to come!

22 January 2023, AM: Hydrurga Rocks

This morning we experienced our second snorkel of the expedition at Hydrurga Rocks. The winds were high, at times picking up to 40 knots, however we found a beautiful little sheltered bay to snorkel in. A shallow but beautiful snorkel, we saw some orange starfish, some krill and a penguin swimming in the water, not too far from us. Next to our exit point, we saw a beautiful Weddell seal which was resting on the rocks. Another great day in Antarctica!

The afternoon was a lovely Zodiac cruise by a glacier, with a magnificent shade of blue and some whale watching!

23 of January 2023, AM: Petermann

Today we were very excited to go snorkelling and feel like explorers. Our mission was to find somewhere, under the waterline, the inscription "PP" from the "Pourquoi Pas" expedition, led by Jean-Baptiste Charcot during its overwinter at Petermann. The water was clear with a beautiful rocky bottom, after a few minutes, we found the engraving, it was a very special moment for us. As we kept on exploring our little bay, the extraordinary happened, dozens of penguins joined in and swam around us!

23 of January 2023, PM: Port Charcot / Pleneau Island

In the afternoon, we repositioned the ship and we went to Port Charcot for a walk, while our snorkelling guides scouted Pleneau Island for the best place to dip our fins in the water. The landing site had a beautiful view. We walked to the wreck of a cairn with a wooden pillar, where one of the first expedition members wrote down the names almost 120 years ago!

Unfortunately, the wind was up and our team decided to not go for a swim. Safety first, that is the main rule.

We headed back to the *Sylvia Earle* to take a hot shower and enjoy the facilities onboard while we pass through the Lemaire channel.

24 of January 2023, PM: Brown Station / Paradise Bay

This afternoon was really special; we went to Brown Station in Paradise Bay. The weather was nice, a little more cloudy and breezy than it was in the morning.

When we arrived at Brown Station, an Argentinean base, we found out a group of scientists had arrived there two days earlier, therefore we could not visit the site. Nevertheless, we did a short landing at another site in the opposite direction of the station, at the base camp in front of a massive glacier.

After a little walk, we went with Eddie, Ana and Justine for a Zodiac cruise, it was fantastic. We saw a Weddell seal, crabeater seal, leopard seal and amazing landscapes of icebergs all around us.

We found a beautiful spot for snorkelling, a wall of blue-eye shags nesting place, full of life. We jumped into the water and witnessed fish, starfish, sea angels, ctenophores, and much more.

This site provided us with good visibility, and we managed to have around 30 minutes of snorkelling in the frigid water.

Cannot wait for tomorrow – and whatever it may bring.

25 of January 2023, PM: Portal Point

This afternoon we arrived at Portal Point. As soon as Ana and Eddie appeared at the side door of the ship, we climbed into our Zodiacs and headed for shore, where several Weddell seals were snoozing on the snow. Portal Point is a narrow point in the northeast part of Reclus Peninsula and with a short climb, we witnessed stunning views across to Charlotte Bay.

On the landing site, we spotted the remains of a British hut that was established in 1956 and was occupied intermittently for survey work between 1957-58. This hut has since been removed and is currently on display at Port Lockroy. You could only see the concrete foundations that remain at Portal Point.

We didn't have to travel far to find this afternoon's snorkel site, we couldn't argue the spot our guides had chosen was perfect – sheltered from the prevailing wind and shallow, crystal-clear water. We saw so many starfish and limpets.

Back onboard it was time for a delicious BBQ and a night full of fun and dancing on Deck 7, with the entire E-Team boogieing with funny hats and Eddie dressed as a penguin.

What a great outing and great memories!

26 of January 2023, AM: Walker Bay / Hannah Point

Today was our last snorkel in Antarctica. First, we landed in Walker Bay where we could see elephant seals, penguins, skuas, fur seals and more.

Ana and Eddie went to scout the bay and found a smaller bay where we could jump in for the last time. Afterwards, our snorkel guides picked us up and drove the Zodiacs along the rocky coastline, to take us to their chosen snorkel spot in Hanna Point. The area was surrounded by gentoo penguins, huge elephant seals and giant petrels. Some of us could see penguins underwater.

What a great way to finish our snorkelling adventures! Needless to say, the snorkel team, or 'the snorks', as they call us, are the cool kids of this voyage. We had so much fun.

This trip has been a marvellous experience, one where we have not only improved our snorkelling techniques and been introduced to dry suits, but we have also made beautiful friendships.

Thank you everyone for making this voyage so special!





Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species

January

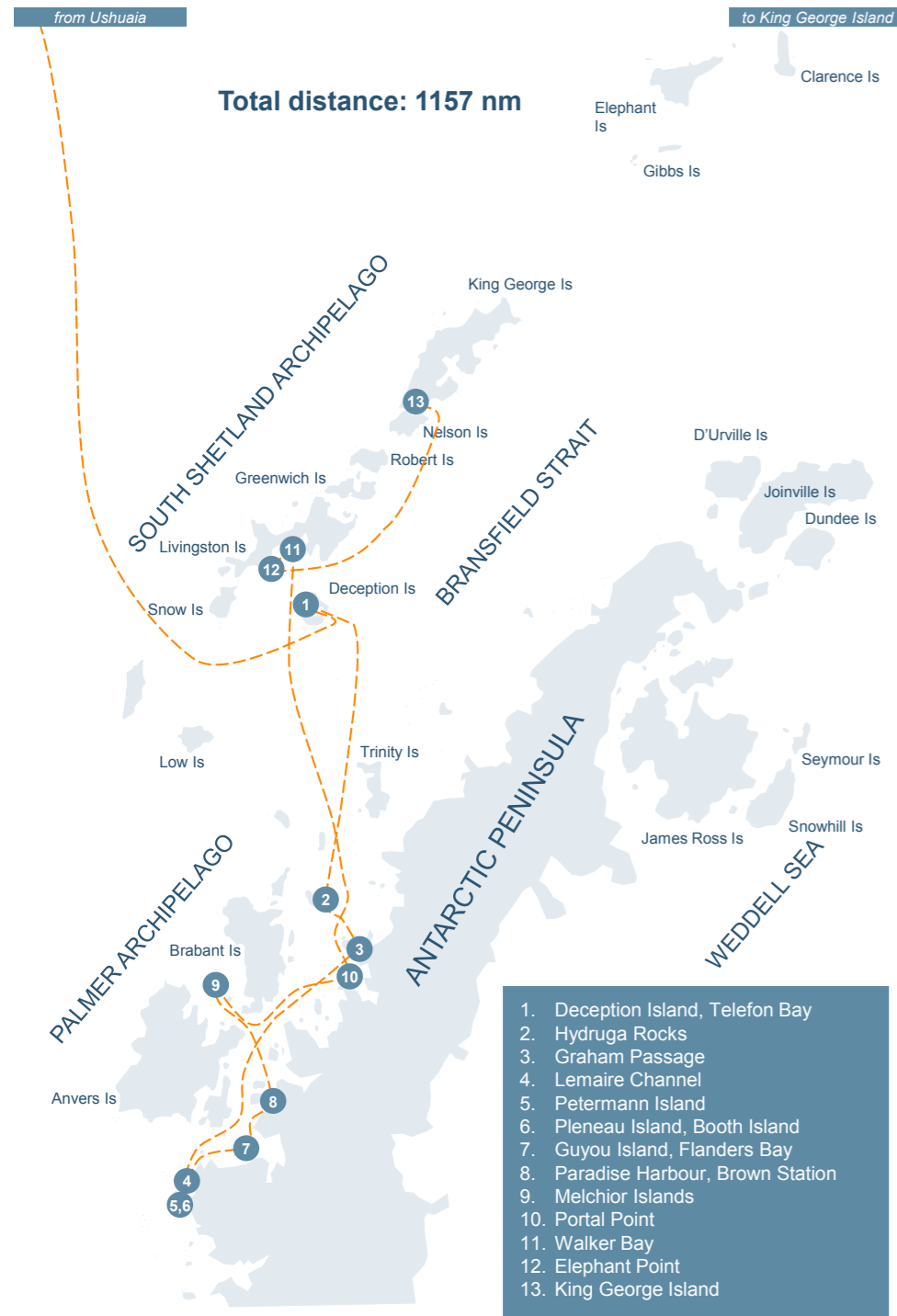
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Gentoo Penguin							•		
Chinstrap Penguin			•	•	•			•	
Adelie Penguin					•				
Wandering Albatross		•							
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•						
Giant Petrel	•		•	•	•	•	•		
Antarctic Petrel									
Cape Petrel		•	•						
Snow Petrel							•		
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)						•	•		
Blue Petrel		•							
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		•							
White-chinned Petrel		•	•						
Wilson's Storm-petrel			•	•	•				
Black-bellied Storm-petrel		•							
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)				•	•	•		•	
American Sheathbill (Snowy)				•	•			•	
Chilean Skua	•								
Skua (Brown and/or South Polar)			•	•	•	•			
Kelp Gull	•		•	•	•			•	•
Tern (probably mostly Antarctic)			•	•	•	•		•	
South American Tern	•								

Mammal Species

January

	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Antarctic Fur Seal								•	
Crabeater Seal				•		•	•		
Weddell Seal			•	•	•		•	•	
Leopard Seal						•	•		
Minke Whale			•						
Humpback Whale			•	•	•	•			
Unidentified Whale	•								







Expeditioners:

Walter Adoglio Junior	Evelyn Cunningham	Bertha Jacobson	Lynn Lockett	Jim Putnam	Nicole Thoms
Tim Agnew	Jessica Curran	Neil Jacobson	Reagan Luntz	Rodney Quibilan	Roland Thoms
Elaine Anderson	John Curran	Vikas Jain	Dodie Mac Auley	Robin Quibilan	Martin Tunnah
Javier Avila	Charles de Kock	Ritu Jain	Ian Mac Auley	Sue Rooks	Leslie Viens
Tina Avila	Elmien de Kock	Rich Johnson	Jane Maher	Stan Rowe	Larry Viens
Tom Boehlke	Ilona Dubinieć	Koji Katsumata	Daniel Mazur	Chiyo Rowe	Marylynne Winstead
Sue Boehlke	David Evans	Frances Kerr	Gerry Mazur	Carla Schmitzberger	Robert Winstead
Kathy Broska	Kerrie Evans	John Kerr	Heather Mckay	Manita Shah	Nancy Wong
Jay Broska Jr.	Ellen Fok	Kenneth Kim	Lisa Mobbs	Manish Shah	Patricia Woodberry
Dan Bryan	Scott Fredrickson	Johanna Kim	Red Mobbs	Patrizia Sinforosa	Richard Yang
Traci Bryan	Susan Fredrickson	Lenora Kwok	Paul Moldrich	Enzo Sinforosa	
Lynn Burns	Karen Gillespie	Eric Kwok	Jim Mussells	Geraldine Skinner	
Jim Burns Jr	Denis Goodwin	Audrey Kwok	Peri Namerow	Nee Ling Sniffen	
Judy Caparon	Rick Greer	Kerry Lamb	David Namerow	Darrell Sniffen	
Chris Caparon	Jan Greer	Jane Lee	Richard Nest	Roddy Sparks	
Richard Capp	Anne Hartnett	Simon Lee	Tara O'Connor	Addi Sparks	
Peter Clinch	Jim Hartnett Jr	Timothy L'Estrange	Arthur Ong	Jobre Stassen	
Pam Clinch	Tiffany Hornsten	Jill L'Estrange	Delene Osorio	Dean Stephanos	
Merrilyn Colussi	Andy Hughes	Ben Lo	Caitlin Pendleton	Jacqui Stewart	
Margaret Cowey	Liam Hughes	Adrian Lo	Christopher Pendleton	Ginger Sun	
Randy Crim	Sue Hughes	Clare Lo	Philip Phillips	Jing Sun	
Ellen Crim	Rick Hughes	David Lockett	Rochelle Putnam	Weiland Tang	

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Roger Kirkwood
Assistant Expedition Leader: Jean-Pierre Els
Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt
Naturalist: Annette Scheffer
Naturalist: Natalia Rosciano
Historian/Naturalist: Dot Robertson
Geologist/Naturalist: Paulina Pierzak
Photography Guide: Pia Harboure
Expedition Medic: Belinda Denchfield
Expedition Guide: Tamsin Both
Expedition Guide: Elena Wimberger
Kayaking Master: Wes McNeil
Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen
Kayaking Guide: Vanja Davidsen
Kayaking Guide: Ivan Klochkov
Snorkel Guide: Ana Poulalion
Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer
Zodiac Master: Nicole Genoud
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Artem Kolmykov	Executive Chef: Allan Estoque
Chief Officer: Gabriel Eduardo Centella Molina	Sous Chef: Vinay Kumar Singh
Second Officer: Annika Yaneth Bulgin Nuñez de Zinkovskyy	Hotel Controller: Reynaldo Hernandez Cañeda
Safety Officer: Sergio Enrique Saldana Hernandez	Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska
Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan	Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla
Ship Doctor: Sofia Cocunubo Castellanos	Head Stateroom Attendant: Sotero (Terry) Agtagma
Chief Engineer: Praveen Kumar Kaushal	Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan
First Engineer: Kristofer Al Carpio La Torre	Able Seaman: Raju Choudhary
IT Officer: Nathaniel Buhain Vibares	Able Seaman: Imam Santuso
Hotel Director: Osman Ozpolat	Able Seaman: Nestor Fernandez Arangorin
F&B Service Manager: Balvant Singh	Able Seaman: Rene Balsomo Casipe
Head Bartender: Rajesh Sugreev Murao	Able Seaman: Vladyslav Sinko
Chief Purser: Liza Merillo	Able Seaman: Dragan Zivkovic

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