

South Georgia & Antarctic Odyssey

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 11th March to 30th March 2023





Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 1 | Saturday, 11th March 2023

Position at 1900 on 11th March

Latitude: 54°52.4'S

Longitude: 067°59.7'W

Course: 100°

Speed: 15.6 knots

Wind Speed: NW 5

Barometer: 1004

Air Temp: 11°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.

—Mark Twain

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

We arrived at the port of Ushuaia to be greeted on the quayside by some of our Expedition Team and our onboard photographer, Renato took our photo for our "photo board" to help us learn each other's names.

Drinks and a buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar. After checking in, 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!

We were invited into the lecture theatre for our welcome briefing with our Expedition Leader, Christian. He and some of the team gave important information that would serve us well during our time onboard. Our 'Frenchie' Hotel Director Pascal made sure we were 'au-fait' with life onboard from the hotel side, Reba gave us some handy hints about how to better navigate during our stay, and Dr. Anzor was on hand for some tips on staying healthy.

Announcements were then made for the all-important safety drill. The sound of the ship's horn signalled us to don bulky orange lifejackets and muster in the lecture theatre. We followed our crew up to Deck 7 where the polar class life vessels are kept (they can hold 136 people each, for 5 days).

With the safety drill completed, we left port while the Expedition Team gave us a little bit of information about themselves.

Binoculars at the ready for our last glimpse of town life, we headed out on deck, knowing that from now on we were more likely to see a colony of penguins than a crowd of people.

After having completed some domestic chores, such as setting up internet, and labelling water bottles, 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.

Together we total 81 expeditioners (39 Australians, 22 Americans, 3 from Ireland, 1 from South Africa, 1 from Sweden and 15 from the UK) along with 78 crew from all around the globe.

Our 18-strong Expedition Team have a variety of specialties including polar exploration, mountaineering, geology, oceanography, history, marine biology, ornithology, photography, anthropology, kayaking and snorkelling.

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 19 days of adventure!



At Sea (Drake Passage)

DAY 2 | Sunday 12th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 12th March

Latitude: 56°18'6 S

Longitude: 068°24.8'W

Course: 130°

Speed: 15 knots

Wind Speed: NW 6

Barometer: 1002

Air Temp: 4°C

There are many other beautiful sea-birds, but the most beautiful of all are the Snowy petrels, which approach nearer to the fairies than anything else on earth.

—Aspley Cherry-Garrard

What a wonderful day to spend at sea. The Drake Passage was kind and forgiving, with just a gentle roll, rocking us occasionally from side to side. The sun was shining bright over the ocean and the winds were light from the north.

It was a day of familiarisation, biosecurity of our outer wear and checking that jackets and boots all fit accordingly, so we are as comfortable as possible while out exploring Antarctica & South Georgia in the coming weeks. The IAATO briefing and trip overview had the crowd buzzing, learning about the incredible places we would be visiting and the adventure ahead, and how we can follow the guidelines to ensure our impacts on the environment and wildlife is minimal. From there we headed into biosecurity, where we used tweezers and paperclips, vacuum cleaners, and wire brushes to ensure any hitchhiking seeds or pests were removed from our gear. You really begin to understand the wild, untouched nature of the 7th continent and how important it is for it to remain pristine, when you find yourself with a magnifying glass picking out the tiniest of grass blades from your gloves!

When the afternoon came, it was time to delve into the educational and science elements of our voyage, and we were introduced to the Citizen Science Programme by our co-ordinator Bia. It was exciting to learn about how us, as passengers and expedition team alike, can be a part of Antarctic science, by contributing to NASA Globe cloud surveys, eBird surveys and Happy Whale just to name a few! John then took the stage in the lecture theatre and gave us a wonderful introduction to the seabirds of the region. It was so fascinating to learn about them from a seasoned polar scientist and follow up the lecture with a citizen science eBird survey shortly after with the team. A group of 12 of us spotted 4 species including the beautiful light mantled sooty albatross. If you didn't make it, come along to the next one, it was fantastic!

Our evening was then spent being officially welcomed on board by Captain Vadym and his wonderful crew. With champagne in hand, we toasted to an adventurous voyage ahead.

After dinner, we were treated to a show by the ship's special guest, Dr Karl where he presented 'Bizarre Moments

in Science', and shared some amazing tales, ranging from dolphins to stars, coffee to alcohol, he had the crowd enraptured, laughing along the way. We can't wait to see what he shares with us next!

All in all, a glorious day at sea and we look forward to what's in store tomorrow!



At Sea (Drake Passage)

DAY 3 | Monday 13th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 13th March

Latitude: 61°12'0" S

Longitude: 059°44'2" W

Course: 177°

Speed: 14.2 knots

Wind Speed: W 6

Barometer: 998

Air Temp: 0°C

The three great elemental sounds in nature are the sound of rain, the sound of wind in a primeval wood, and the sound of outer ocean on a beach. I have heard them all, and of the three elemental voices, that of the ocean is the most awesome, beautiful and varied.

—Henry Beston

Another beautiful sunrise to start our second day at sea. The Drake has been smooth so far and wow are we grateful!

The day started with our mandatory Zodiac briefing - a little bit of a taster for what we are in for. Here, we found out how to put our life jackets on properly, it's surprising how creative some can be with putting them on! We were also taught the sailor's grip for getting in and out of Zodiacs safely.

Jeff, our historian on board, gave us a lecture about the Belgica Expedition. Although the whole story is full of surprises, where we left the story was fascinating. In prison post-expedition, Dr Cook won the Kansas state crochet prize under a female alias. He later gifted his winning table runner to Amundsen.

Despite the wind, many of us spent a lot of the day out on deck making the most of the sunshine. It was a cool contrast as we came along into the South Shetland islands sailing into dark clouds and snow. It really feels like Antarctica when it snows like that!

Team Snork spent the morning learning how to put on all their cold-water snorkel gear. You always think you're too warm until you get outside into the ice! The more layers, the better.

Around lunchtime, we were called into the lecture theatre for our antigen tests to be carried out. Thankfully, we all tested negative.

Post lunch Renato gave us a photography 101 lesson. It was a great way help us learn how to properly capture memories to bring home.

We immediately got to test out our new photo tips as we did a ships cruise past Fort Point, Livingston Island. The dramatic rock forms and glacier faces were peeking through the grey day making for some great shots. Of course, this was all made that little bit sweeter with a cup of delicious hot chocolate in hand up in the Observation Lounge, along with a shot of Baileys for those who wanted. Now, this is a way to enjoy a ship cruise and give us a wonderful first glimpse at Antarctica.

At recap, alongside the plan for tomorrow, Christian gave us some history about Brown Station, our afternoon location. Renato introduced the slideshow and voyage log, and encouraged us to get creative with our submissions. Kayak guide Daniel taught us all about the convergence zone and why we have separate wildlife above and below this line. Finally, John, one of our marine biologists, did a lesson in penguins of Antarctica. Fingers crossed we will get to see lots of gentoos tomorrow!

It was a great final day at sea and we cannot wait to get into activities tomorrow.



Cuverville | Paradise Harbour

DAY 4 | Tuesday, 14th March 2023

Position at 700 on 14th Mar

Latitude: 64°36'5" S

Longitude: 062°34'5" W

Course: 197°

Speed: 10.1 knots

They are extraordinarily like children, these little people of the Antarctic world, either like children, or like old men, full of their own importance and late for dinner, in their black tail-coats and white shirt fronts - and rather portly withal.

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

Today marked our first day of outings on the Antarctic Peninsula, and what a day it was. The morning began with the ship cruising down the Gerlache Strait, with humpback whales surfacing in the early morning light and the white, snowy peaks of the Antarctic Peninsula and islands surrounding us.

Our morning outing was to Cuverville Island. We landed on Antarctic soil for the first time and were greeted by a beautiful colony of gentoo penguins. They were waddling along the shoreline, swimming in the shallows and resting all around the island. Amongst the penguins were also Antarctic fur seals, giant petrels and skuas. Some of our brave expeditioners tackled a steep (and somewhat icy and precarious) hike up to a fantastic viewpoint overlooking the Gerlache Strait to the north. This also gave us a great view of the massive icebergs surrounding the island, with the largest berg towering above the surface of the sea and dwarfing the Zodiac loads of people who went to have a closer look. The kayakers set out paddling on calm waters and the snorkellers entered the cold Antarctic waters for the first time. It was fun for all, and we experienced all kinds of weather from wind to snow to sun all in the mornings outing.

The morning ended with a lovely cruise south through the Errera Channel and onwards to Paradise Harbour in glassy waters, with icebergs, whales, penguins and a few seals spotted along the way. After lunch, as we passed the Chilean Gonzalez Videla Antarctic Base, we saw some helicopter action with supplies being transferred to the station, as well as a leopard seal calmly resting on an iceberg.

The afternoon saw us in Paradise Harbour, anchored near the Argentinian Antarctic Base Brown. We set off on a beautiful Zodiac cruise on glassy waters amongst brash ice and larger bergs. Humpback whales were spotted feeding and cruising around, with some nice action witnessed at sea level from the Zodiacs. Penguins swam by through the clear waters, cormorants were nesting on the cliff and some beautiful lichen and moss growth was seen over the exposed rock faces. Some of us were even lucky enough to spot the calving of the massive glaciers, which can sometimes be a hard thing to see. Often, we only hear the massive crack of the calving, which usually reaches us well after the calving occurs.

Wind Speed: NW 4

Barometer: 1003

Air Temp: -1°C

We sailed off from Paradise Harbour into the setting sun on still glassy waters and through more fantastic scenery. What a fantastic first day of activities in Antarctica. We were graced with absolutely perfect weather, fantastic wildlife encounters and scenery that we'll never forget. And the best thing is, we have plenty more amazing days ahead of us!



Yalour Islands | Petermann Island

DAY 5 | Wednesday, 15th March 2023

Position at 0600 on 15th Mar

Latitude: 64°59'1" S

Longitude: 063°46'1" W

Course: 225°

Speed: 7.4 knots

Wind Speed: LT AIR

Barometer: 1004

Air Temp: -1°C

Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort, Like a whale to starboard, a whale to port;
Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort, and the steamer steams thro' the sea, love!

—Sydney Thompson Dobell

We started the day very early with an announcement at 5:45 AM that we would soon enter into Lemaire Channel. We all jumped out of bed excited but still half asleep, grabbed a cup of coffee (or tea) and went to the outside decks.

As the first light of the day began to break through, we could already appreciate the impressive and wonderful landscape. During the next hour, we were all stunned and shaken by the beauty of the landscape, trying to take that perfect shot with our cameras that would only be possible to keep in our hearts. We can already see the arrival of autumn / winter as the outside deck of the ship was all frozen.

At around nine o'clock in the morning, we were ready in the mudroom for our activity on the Yalour Island. Half of us landed first on the island and the other half started with a Zodiac cruise and then we swapped. During our time on land, we had the chance to observe many Adélie penguins, several of them were in the moulting plumage stage.

During the Zodiac cruise, we enjoyed the wonderful opportunity to navigate among the small rocky islands, appreciating the swell and interacting with some very friendly leopard seals. We were also able to see a few humpback whales that were resting on the surface and others that were eating in the area. As we were sailing, there were many penguins porpoising close to the Zodiacs. We were also offered a great show of calving icebergs during our time here.

Right after lunch, we were ready for our third activity of the day, landing at Petermann Island. The sky was dark and slowly the wind pick up but we managed yet another landing and had some nice time exploring the gentoo penguin colony and seeing Weddell seals resting on shore. Just in front of the landing site, we caught two humpback whales breaching and lobtailing.

At our evening recap, Christian told us about the plans for the next day, Hannah gave us some great information on leopard seals, Patrick did a very interesting presentation about sea weed and Ella made a beautiful and clear presentation explaining the Antarctic ozone hole and its recovery.

Each day seems to be better than the last!



Goudier & Jougla Point | Orne Harbour

DAY 6 | Thursday, 16th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 16th Mar

Latitude: 64°34'5" S

Longitude: 063°34'9" W

Course: 084°

Speed: 5.9 knots

Wind Speed: LT AIR

Barometer: 1003

Air Temp: -1°C

Its turreted top was no doubt once its bottom, the iceberg having turned over as the equilibrium of its mass shifted, melt drop by melt drop, calorie by calorie. It is striated blue and white: ice and air.

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

The early hours of the morning found the *Greg Mortimer* in calm sheltered waters in front of Port Lockroy. The water was so calm in fact that a mirror like effect was displaying an upside-down image of the Fief Mountains which lay just beyond the port to the south-east.

In the middle of the port sits Goudier Island and home to the structures known as Base A. The buildings were built in 1944 as part of the secret operation known as Tabarin which put British buildings in strategic locations in order to survey German activities on the peninsula. This also served as a mode of establishing sovereignty. Scientific staff took over the base in 1948 and it remained in operation until 1962. It's now kept up as a museum and operated by the Antarctic Heritage Trust.

A stroll through the Bransfield House is like stepping back in time to the early sixties and gives one a good idea of what base life was like. Some of us even commented that we might have enjoyed an opportunity to have worked in such a station. The galley is of particular interest as it still has some old food stores from when the base was open.

On the other side of the bay, you find Jougla Point which was used as a location for flensing whales in the early 1900's. Bones of these giants of the past still line the bottom of the bay. Some bones from many different individuals have been put together to give the impression of it being one whole whale.

Port Lockroy is also home to a large penguin colony, and we all love visiting penguins. Someone else who loves to visit the penguins is the resident leopard seal known as Bertha! She could occasionally be spotted cruising in front of a Zodiac as they came in and out of the bay.

The afternoon plan was a hike in Orne Harbor up to a viewpoint for a continental landing. Ice and snow conditions would morph this plan into plan B. Sometimes Plan B out does Plan A and this was one of those times. We'd Zodiac cruise instead and it was marvellous! Leopard seals on ice, fur seals galore along the shore, crabeaters and Weddell's basking in the sun! This place had pinnipeds covered! We'd also still get to step foot on the continent which for many of us would make it all seven continents!



Polar Plunge

DAY 6 | Thursday, 16th March 2023





Hydruga Rocks | Cierva Cove

DAY 7 | Friday, 17th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 17th Mar

Latitude: 64°08'6" S

Longitude: 061°30'5"W

Course: 268°

Speed: 6 knots

Antarctica. You know, that giant continent at the bottom of the earth that's ruled by penguins and seals.

—C.B. Cook, Twinepathy

I don't know about you, but this morning I found myself still reeling from strangely lucid whale-dreams that somehow included: a chimeric skeleton in a snowstorm, elephantine trumpeting amplified within an amphitheatre of ice, and the graceful creation of Fibonacci circles via bubbles?! At dawn today, gazing groggily out a starboard window, my eyes found more whale spouts they weren't even looking for. The sun rose lazily too, revealing bluebird skies, and a more spacious waterway ahead. We were slowly exiting the Gerlache Strait, but not before making a stop off at one of its northernmost islands.

Despite a stiff breeze, the sunshine made our landing on Hydruga Rocks (just east of Two Hummock Island) quite pleasant. The infamously feisty and cacophonous chinstrap penguins there were moulting and relatively subdued. But the slack was taken up by numerous, late-visiting, juvenile fur seals growling, cheeping, and just being amusingly rambunctious. These low-lying islets derive their name from the Latin root for leopard seal, apparently a common sight here. Fortunately for our snorkellers, it wasn't until our afternoon outing that we'd get see these remarkable predators in action.

A short jaunt due east and we entered Hughes Bay. The subsiding wind and lack of swell allowed us to approach the headland of the gloriously icy, Cierva Cove. The reddish buildings of Primavera Station perch adjacent and amongst a surprising amount of exposed bedrock and an array of green hues. It turns out the cliffs and bluffs are a micro-climate of moss, lichen, algae, and the whopping 2 species of flowering plant found in Antarctica — all in all, about as much plant-life as can be seen growing anywhere on the mainland. High moraines and barren gulches hint at both this area's ancient glaciation and recent retreat.

By Zodiac and kayak, we weave through brash ice, growlers, and towering bergs, marvelling at their architecture. One in particular is reminiscent of a Greco-Roman arch. But indeed, the highlight for me, and perhaps many others, were the leopard seals actively prowling and ambushing schools of porpoising gentoo penguins coming and going from the shore. It was a short and sweet excursion to be sure. Yet necessity demanded we rally back onboard to initiate our re-transit of the Bransfield Strait as soon as possible in order to make landfall in the South Shetlands tomorrow.

Wind Speed: SW 5/6

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: -3°C

As the distance grows between our ship and the mountains of the peninsula, we gain a different vantage point of the vast ice plateaus spilling down to the sea. The calm evening continues cloudless and a slow sunset creates a lingering alpine glow, painting over all that white with pastels — pink, orange, and violet. A flat ocean surface shimmers metallic blue. I am left pondering: for an expedition meant to revolve around the subantarctic islands, the Antarctic Peninsula sure did do its best to steal the show. As night falls we round Trinity Island and head northeast.



At Sea / Elephant Point

DAY 8 | Saturday, 18th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 18th Mar

Latitude: 62°06'8" S

Longitude: 057°53'9"W

Course: 008°

Speed: 9 knots

Wind Speed: W 7

Barometer: 1007

Air Temp: -3°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

We woke up this morning with a very different view from our balconies. We have left the wonderful world of white mountains, massive glaciers, snowdomes, and icebergs behind and are now looking at the volcanic scenery of the South Shetland Islands. We can see dark reds and browns looming up on the horizon as we approach the stratovolcano that is Penguin Island. It is only the top third of the volcano that we can see above the surface of the ocean. It is capped by Deacon Peak, a basaltic scoria cone, and was last thought to be active about 300 years ago. Petrel Crater, a maar crater, is located on the east side of the island, and is thought to have last erupted in or around 1905. Although 'Plan A' was to go ashore this morning and to walk around the crater, the weather had other plans for us. We were facing strong winds with gusts up to 48 knots, large swell and water flooding the side gates. Therefore, the call was made to, unfortunately, cancel operations.

We quickly change into 'Plan B' which is to get ready for South Georgia. Biosecurity it is. Out came the tweezers, brushes, and vacuum cleaners. We rushed to the lecture room and started cleaning all our outer gear. And as this is not the first time we have done this, we are starting to feel like true biosecurity professionals.

The rest of the day was filled with activities on board. Bia enlightened us on the complex and extraordinary life of humpback whales with her lecture "From tropics to ice- and back again". And after lunch, Jeff took us back in time to the days of polar exploration and the greatest survival story of all times "Shackleton's Endurance". And what a perfect timing for this miraculous story, as around 5pm, the clouds lifted and we caught sights of Elephant Island. The island was the desolate refuge of Shackleton and his crew in 1916 following the loss of their ship Endurance in the pack ice of the Weddell Sea. A sight that a lot of us had been looking forward to seeing since the beginning of this expedition. Whilst drinking a mimosa to celebrate (and say goodbye to) our wonderful expedition to Antarctica, we took in the astonishing views that we are not likely to ever forget.

As the ship headed further east, we heard an announcement on the 'bing-bong' that the ship is surrounded by Fin Whales 'Balaenoptera physalus'. They were plentiful, relatively close to the ship and this magnificent sighting of the second largest whale in the world was just the perfect way for us to say goodbye to Antarctica.



At Sea (Scotia Sea)

DAY 9 | Sunday, 19th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 19th Mar

Latitude: 59°46'9" S

Longitude: 050°10'4" W

Course: 050°

Speed: 12.6 knots

Wind Speed: W 5

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: -2°C

All in the immediate vicinity of the ship, is the blackness of eternal night, and a chaos of foamless water; but, about a league on either side of us, may be seen, indistinctly and at intervals, stupendous ramparts of ice, towering away into the desolate sky, and looking like the walls of the universe.

—Edgar Allan Poe, *Ms. Found in a Bottle*

Today was our first sea day crossing the Scotia Sea towards South Georgia. It was a day to relax after the past week of landings in Antarctica, and to begin preparations for our visit to one of the great wildlife destinations on the planet. As an isolated Antarctic island, South Georgia is a rare and fragile environment: a breeding site for millions of seabirds and seals that also has its own unique wildlife. The Government of South Georgia and the South Shetland Islands (GSGSSI) is determined to protect all of this wildlife, so ensures that all visitors undergo strict biosecurity procedures to minimize the risk of introducing any alien species. Yesterday we inspected and cleaned all our outer clothing, backpacks and walking poles, today Christian briefed all passengers on biosecurity, and tomorrow we will inspect, clean and disinfect all gear in the mudroom.

Jeff's morning lecture on Otto van Nordenskjold's Swedish Antarctic Expedition was fascinating. Their survival story was every bit as harrowing and heroic as the more well-known self-rescue of Ernest Shackleton's ill-fated Trans-Antarctic Expedition. If somebody were to write a popular account of Nordenskjold's expedition it would probably become as revered amongst historic tales as Shackleton's epic. In the afternoon, Pat delivered an informative lecture on the Antarctic weather, explaining how the Southern Ocean's great cyclonic storms are generated and how Antarctic weather influences the climate of the whole planet.

Following Pat's lecture, we gathered in the Elephant Island Bar to enjoy some delicious Crepes Suzette prepared by sous chef Tim. The afternoon also featured some Citizen Science, with both a cloud survey and a seabird survey. It was a delight to watch some of the lesser-known seabirds of the Southern Ocean as they went about their normal lives amidst the chaotic maelstrom of the winds and seas. Kerguelen petrels soared and dived, Soft-plumaged petrels raced by on seemingly urgent missions and tiny Black-bellied storm petrels skimmed the waves.

Before dinner, Christian outlined our itinerary for South Georgia and explained the importance of all the biosecurity protocols that we conduct. Dr Karl then regaled us all with his entertaining account of how he came

to win the faux prestigious Ig-Nobel Prize for his research into the causes of bellybutton fluff and why it is blue. After dinner, we were entertained by the fabulous musicianship of Reba and her ukelele in the Elephant Island Bar. This was a great opportunity to unwind and sing along to some great songs from the past six decades.

Tomorrow, we will continue our journey across the Scotia Sea and continue our preparations to visit the wild and spectacular South Georgia.



At Sea (Scotia Sea)

DAY 10 | Monday, 20th March 2023

Position at x 0700 on 20th Mar

Latitude: 57°10'9" S

Longitude: 042°15'8" W

Course: 061°

Speed: 13.4 knots

Wind Speed: W 7

Barometer: 992

Air Temp: -2°C

Somewhere in the midst of the mammoth ocean; there exists the preposterously huge whale.

—Nikhil Parekh

Getting closer to South Georgia! And we can tell this by the new species of pelagic birds that we have been seeing throughout the day, like the white chinned petrels and the majestic wandering albatrosses, the largest flying bird in our planet that breeds in South Georgia.

The crossing has been very smooth so far, with strong winds but from the stern, pushing us towards our desired destination.

The day started, as usual, with a delicious breakfast and sunshine through the restaurant windows. After breakfast, Hannah was waiting for us in the lecture theatre for her super interesting talk about the seals of the Southern Ocean. Here, we learned many interesting facts of the different species that we have seen already and from the ones that are waiting for us in one of the most remote and wild islands of the world.

In the meantime, the expedition team took advantage of the quiet morning to do a thorough cleaning and disinfection of all your muck boots in order to avoid any potential contamination or exotic species that could affect the pristine nature of South Georgia.

The day continued smoothly, with great views from flying birds around the ship and the power of the vast and windy Southern Ocean. We may start getting used to it, but the privilege and the opportunity to experience this is so unique. How many more times in our lives will be possible to experience this, being so far away from civilization and the world's problems, just focusing on the present and trying to understand what those huge wind waves or wandering albatrosses are telling us, the nature down here is just outstanding.

After lunch and after a good nap, we were invited by one of our biologists, Bia, to her talk about whaling in the Southern Ocean, a good reminder why is so important to keep protecting these intelligent gentle giants. Incredibly, these long-lifespan mammals were hunted in the Southern Ocean almost to extinction. Luckily, most of the populations of different species are recovering slowly, but still the numbers are very low in comparison with the times before whaling.

During this third day of crossing in the Scotia Sea, we also witnessed how changeable the weather in this part of the world can be, changing from bright sun to snow storms in a second, for sure this makes our long days onboard more exciting!

We are almost there, South Georgia, get ready for the deep sounds of its nature, the smells, the cool air, the huge mountains raising up from the sea, its unique wildlife! South Georgia, here we come!



Drygalski Fjords | Cooper Bay

DAY 11 | Tuesday, 21st March 2023

Position at 0700 on 21st Mar

Latitude: 54°54'9" S

Longitude: 036°01'3" W

Course: 060°

Speed: 6.5 knots

Wind Speed: NE 4

Barometer: 994

Air Temp: 0°C

Visually and emotionally, the island of South Georgia overwhelms. At first glance, it resembles the far South Atlantic branch of Dr Doolittle's fantastic zoo: a profusion of captivating animals that quickly transforms even the most discriminating observer into a raving anthropomorphic.

—Ron Naveen, Wild Ice

Our first day in South Georgia could not have started any better. After two full days at sea, coming from the Antarctic peninsula, it was thrilling to wake up with a new view, the snow-capped peaks of the Southern-east side of this remote wildlife gem of the UK overseas territories.

Soon after breakfast, we entered into Drygalski Fjord, well ahead of our scheduled arrival. We spent most of the morning slowly cruising through the narrow channel edged with rock walls, ice cliffs, and towards the massive Risting Glacier. The Captain was able to reach the glacier at a safe distance, offering a spectacular first taste of South Georgia in glorious weather.

Mid-morning, our photographer Renato, delivered a lecture on "How to photograph birds in flight and the penguins of South Georgia", providing useful tips in preparation for our first activity in the afternoon, a Zodiac cruise. Drygalski fjord, a 14 km long fjord was named after Eric von Drygalski, leader of the German Antarctic expedition of 1901-03. The fjord sits above an important geological fault line, the mountains on the southern side are basalt and lava from underwater volcanic activity, while the northern shore is part of the ancient edge of the Gondwana continent.

After lunch, and a short ship relocation, we arrived in Cooper Bay. The greenness of Cooper Island with breaking waves presented a very different view from the whiteness of Antarctica that we got used to. We launched the Zodiacs in the water and started the first operation in South Georgia, a Zodiac cruise.

This site never disappoints. Cooper Bay is home to macaroni penguins, one of the most abundant penguin species of South Georgia. Their name comes from the colourful yellow feathers on their head which reminded people of the young men from the 18th century London who wore extreme fashions and were called "macaronis". The bay is also home to gentoo, chinstrap and king penguins. The abundance of wildlife is not limited to penguins. Giant petrels and kelp gulls also nest here. Numerous fur seals inhabit this beautiful bay and some



Gold Harbour | St. Andrew's Bay

DAY 12 | Wednesday, 22nd March 2023

Position at 0700 on 22nd Mar

Latitude: 54°37'5" S

Longitude: 035°50'5"W

Course: 242°

Speed: 7.7 knots

Wind Speed: SSE 7

Barometer: 1012

Air Temp: 0°C

The great hurrah about wild animals is that they exist at all, and the greater hurrah is the actual moment of seeing them. Because they have a nice dignity, and prefer to have nothing to do with me, not even as the simple objects of my vision. They show me by their very wariness what a prize it is simply to open my eyes and behold.

—Annie Dillard - Pilgrim at Tinker Creek.

Yesterday afternoon was a mild introduction to South Georgia and its wildlife with Zodiac cruises and kayakers afloat at Cooper Bay, overnight the ship relocated to Gold Harbour.

Weather was reasonably inclement first thing but seemed to improve enough over breakfast and Gold Harbour did not disappoint. The bay was overlooked by the 2196m high Mt. Patterson and fed by the Bertrab Glacier. The trip ashore for most passengers would have been their first experience of landing from a Zodiac on a surf beach. The Expedition Team had the safety systems in place for catching and spinning the boat and holding the bow to the waves while the expeditioners disembarked to be welcomed by Christian with a briefing on what to do where and how.

It was all worth it, for we were greeted by a large number of quite sizeable elephant seals napping, squabbling although there was the occasional skirmish which seemed to soon be forgotten. Sometimes we were watched as we strolled by, and other times slumber got the better of them.

Not to be out done as representatives of the seal species, the fur seals were much more active, especially the young ones who seemed to enjoy nothing more than seeing how much they could push their luck with the humans walking passed. Some of them soon learnt some human vocabulary along the lines of 'halt - return from whence you came', or something along like that.

Despite all being well wrapped for the sub-Antarctic conditions we felt under dressed by comparison to the king penguins who appeared dressed up ready to attend a black-tie function which we were not invited to. They mostly looked pristine and very photogenic and with 25,000 breeding pairs we were spoilt for choice. In case anyone was wondering about the breeding cycle of king penguins, in November after-moult finishes, the courtship begins for the early breeders. In December, one egg is laid and incubated on the bird's feet under a pouch, in late January the chick hatches and both parents share the feeding and protection duties. In February, at six weeks old, the chicks go to creches and both parents forage to help the chick accumulate adequate fat

reserves. The successful breeders then take a three month break before laying the next egg at the end of summer becoming "late breeders." Sadly, chicks of late breeders are usually too small to survive the winter, therefore king penguins are usually only able to rear two chicks every three years.

After lunch, the plan was to visit St Andrews Bay but unfortunately conditions got the better of us. Some Zodiacs were launched to recce the landing but with a large swell at the marina, it was too risky and we had to cancel.

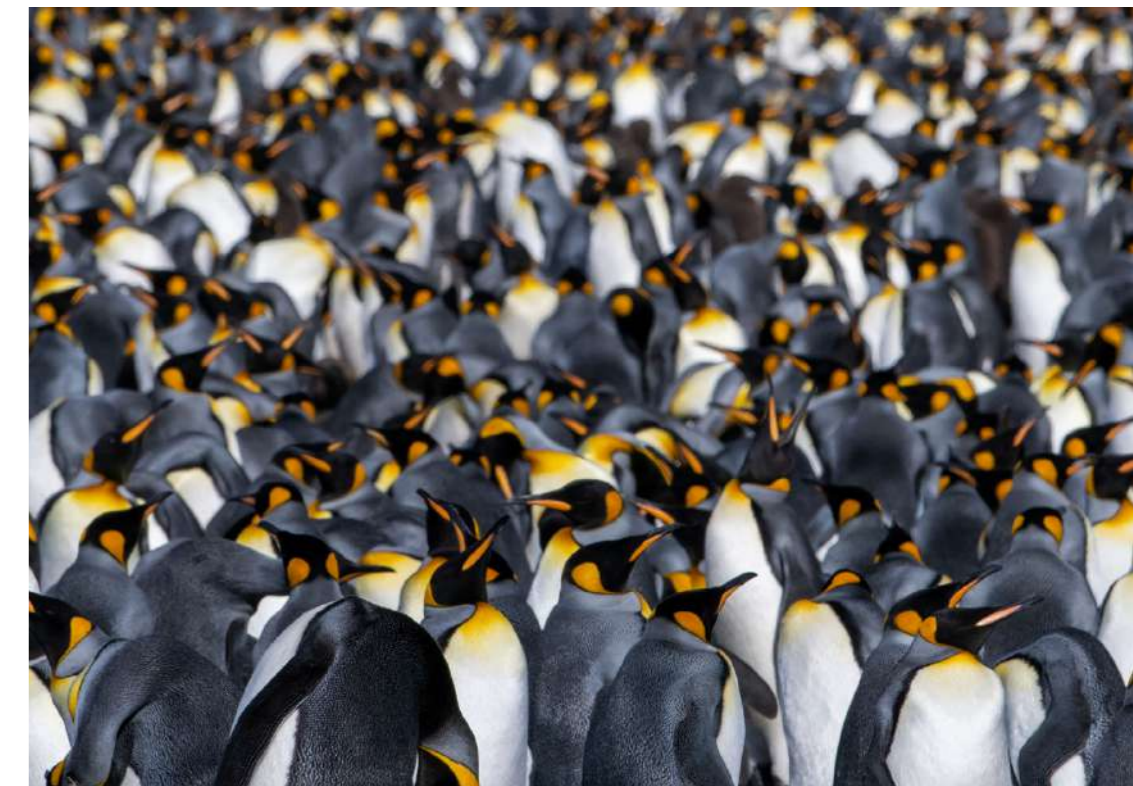
Fortunately, Pat was on hand to present a fascinating talk about the modifications that marine mammals have evolved and how their physiology has adapted for a life at sea.

Early evening, the ship provided a cruise by Sandebugten and Nordenskjold Glacier for which we thank the Captain and his team. The faint lights of Grytviken could be seen from our stern starboard quarter, the first signs of human habitation since Ushuaia. Canapes were available late afternoon in the Mawson Bar and an extensive recap with a timely and detailed lecture from Eduardo on king penguins was enjoyed by many, with information for and the preparation for Grytviken tomorrow...

For many of us, part of the attraction of these southern lands is how the wildlife accept our proximity, unlike in most parts of the world. These lines may ring a bell...

Quote, from "to a mouse" by Robbie Burns

I'm truly sorry man's dominion,
Has broken nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!



Grytviken

DAY 13 | Thursday, 23rd March 2023

Position at 1300 on 23rd Mar

Latitude: 54°11'1"S

Longitude: 036°26'0"W

Course: 335°

Speed: 10.4 knots

Wind Speed: W 3/4

Barometer: 1010

Air Temp: 3°C

He promised to write a book later about the trip. He sold the rights to the motion pictures and still photographs that would be taken, and he agreed to give a long lecture series on his return. In all these arrangements, there was one basic assumption - that Shackleton would survive.

—Alfred Lansing, *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*

Today, dawn brought a whole new way of pursuing the intricacies of South Georgia's landscapes.

The shores once pulsating with flora and fauna gave way to a dark era of machineries and profit. The shy sunlight from the early morning hours shone over the rusty tanks and furnaces, giving Grytviken Bay the eerie vibe, it so deserves.

Established at the early days into the 1900s, the once called "Pot Cove" by the Swedes was scenario to the largest baleen whale massacre of the 20th Century. Former captain and then whaler, Carl Anton Larsen, from Norway, saw the potential for whaling in the waters of South Georgia after an expedition to the Weddell Sea, and proposing partnership to a wealthy and influential group of Argentines, placed his very own dismantled house, his family and machinery into ships and started what was yet to become the most profitable whaling company in the Southern Hemisphere.

With factory ships being built in 1920s and pelagic whaling spreading thin far and wide, the shore based whaling stations slowly became obsolete, and Grytviken's golden days faded.

Today, the station is a living museum, home to hundreds (if not thousands!) of Antarctic fur seal pups, as well as elephant seals and varied bird species. Today, we've learned from the people of the past, and hopefully we will then avoid old mistakes, and re-write history prioritizing consciousness over convenience and profit.

Lunch time was replenishing, invigorating and indulgent – so hands down to an amazing restaurant/galley team!

The beautiful weather we were treated to in the morning rapidly changed to unpleasant winds and some swell.

Nevertheless, the E-Team was out there, lowering Zodiacs and giving luck a chance. Unfortunately, luck was a little too lazy to push for possibilities, so after an hour we acknowledged defeat and retreated, to then be gifted by some highly informative facts about diet and scurvy in previous eras expeditions by Linda.



Godthul | Jason Bay

DAY 14 | Friday, 24th March 2023

Position at 0600 on 24th Mar

Latitude: 54°16'2" S

Longitude: 036°15'6" W

Course: 222°

Speed: 10.8 knots

Wind Speed: N 3

Barometer: 996

Air Temp: 3°C

For scientific leadership give me Scott; for swift and efficient travel, Amundsen; but when you are in a hopeless situation, when there seems no way out, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton.

—Alfred Lansing, *Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage*

We were woken up by a very early morning wake-up call today at 06.00. As high winds and high swell were making its way towards South Georgia, our expedition leader Christian decided that the best chances of going out on shore were this very early morning. That way, we could make it back in time to the ship before the bad weather arrived. And that meant, no time for breakfast either, but a wonderful brunch after the morning operations.

And so, we all woke up at the break of dawn, ready in our outdoor gear, to go to shore at 'Godthul'. The name comes from the Norwegian language, meaning 'Good Cove'. It provided shelter for the Norwegian floating factory ship 'Aviomore' which was stationed here in the summers of 1908-1917 and 1922-1929. A small shore depot supporting the whaling operations was established on shore and the rusting barrels, wooden shed and boats are still visible to this day. Some of us went for a stroll along the beach which was full of super cute and curious fur seal pups, and we enjoyed a Zodiac cruise along the bay as well. And some of us went on a beautiful walk to the gentoo penguin colonies on the top of the hill, dodging fur seal pups hidden within the tussac grass along the way. It is a truly amazing and beautiful place.

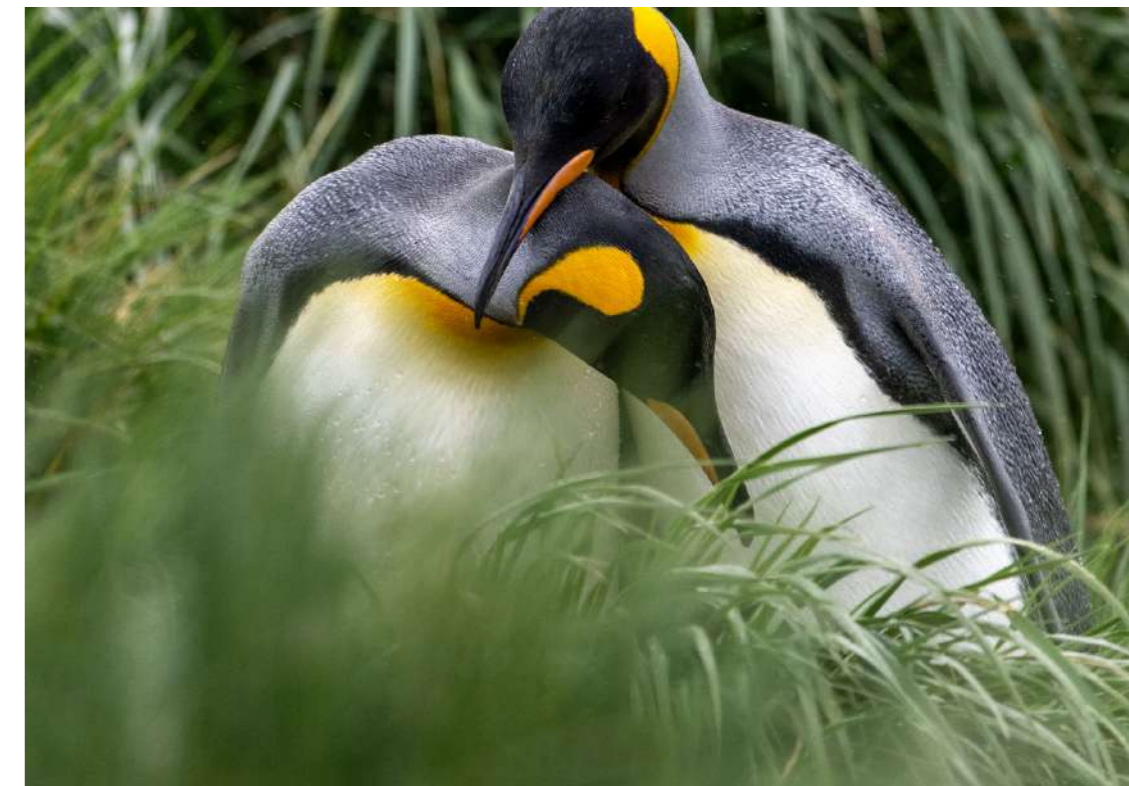
Content with new memories and experiences, we went back to the ship where the amazing crew had prepared a superb brunch for us. As we all worked up an appetite after the morning landing the taste of freshly baked eggs, pancakes, bacon, risotto, French toast and much more was more than we could have wished for, it was perfect.

After brunch, most of us enjoyed a little bit of down time, but not for long. Although we thought that the weather had interfered with our plans for the afternoon, the captain and the expedition leader managed to find a sheltered cove at 'Jason Harbour'. And not long after, we found ourselves standing on shore again. We enjoyed some nice walks along the pebbled beach and inland to beautiful viewpoints and we saw plenty of wildlife. Fur seals, elephant seals, king penguins and even a leopard seal. A bit of wet snow and rain, some wind and low clouds gave the harbour a mystical vibe.



In the afternoon, the ship stayed in 'Jason Harbour', sheltered and protected from the bad weather that finally arrived. Warm and safely inside, we all enjoyed a nice afternoon tea with cake, cookies and some more cake. Followed by interesting recaps on glaciology, honey-blonde fur seals (leucism) and seal breathing patterns and an evening lecture by Dr. Karl on "Absolutely fabulous moments in Science".

It was an excellent day, well planned by our expedition leader and captain, with a lot of luck with regards to the weather and some amazing wildlife encounters and beautiful sceneries.



Salisbury Plains | Elsehul

DAY 15 | Saturday, 25th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 25th Mar

Latitude: 54°01'1"S

Longitude: 037°17'0"W

Course: 226°

Speed: 7.3 knots

Wind Speed: SW 5

Barometer: 1016

Air Temp: 3°C

It is very difficult not to be excited by 10,000 king penguins.

—Sir David Attenborough

The sun peaked through the morning mist and we watched the water getting calmer as we approached Salisbury Plains. No one wanted to jinx it, but after the weather forecast, we were feeling surprised and hopeful. As we sipped our coffees there was a buzz of excited anticipation amongst the E-team. Ready to go by eight o'clock, we were super eager to get ashore. Approaching the vast landscape, a chorus of penguins filled our ears.

The landing started on the rocky beach where we could witness "seal pup soup" - there were hundreds! Along the shoreline king penguins were entering and exiting the water with various levels of grace. We wandered inland, dodging seals through the mud and tussock grass to the edge of the penguin colony. It was only then we could get a grasp on what 60,000 breeding pairs really looked (and smelled) like. It was pretty special to be able to see a few eggs and some fluffy little chicks.

To top off our final activity day in South Georgia, we made our way to Elsehul. A little cove with dramatic rock walls, tussock and the misty weather was like being in another world. The team planned a split landing and Zodiac cruise. At the landing site, we zigzagged up the hill only to be surprised by looking down on to a beach covered in seals. Around us there were baby seals far higher up than we had seen before, and we even got a view of a nesting albatross.

The bay was perfect for a Zodiac cruise, with the water being a deep turquoise green and full of kelp. Some of us were lucky enough to see a huge female leopard seal, some of us finally got to be up close with macaroni penguins and some of us just loved being surrounded by kelp. The weather started rolling in so we headed back to the ship to celebrate our final outing on this beautiful island.

After a hot shower, we tucked into the lecture theatre for recap. Christian started by giving us an awesome, interactive lesson on king penguin breeding cycles. We then head from John all about how to tell the difference between male and female krill. Finally, Hannah led us through a great memory sharing session. It was great to look back and realise just how many incredible, funny and magical moments we've had over the past couple of weeks. I think for a lot of us it feels like years since we were on the peninsula. It was a great way to sum up some super adventures.



At Sea

DAY 16 | Sunday, 26th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 26th Mar

Latitude: 53°27'0" S

Longitude: 042°27'0" W

Course: 283°

Speed: 11.8 knots

Wind Speed: SW 4

Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: 3°C

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the furrow followed free: we were the first that ever burst into that silent sea.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

We awoke to another morning at sea, the gentle rock and roll of the Scotia Sea slipping under the hull and Isabelle softly awakening us from our slumber.

Ah, days at sea, aren't they wonderful? It's a slower pace, a chance to roll back over and sleep another 20 minutes, to sit in the library and get lost in a book, whilst occasionally glancing up and instead getting lost watching an albatross soar amongst the mighty waves. Perhaps for your day at sea you attend a lecture or two, learning about our wonderous planet or you may head out on deck and participate in a citizen science survey. Possibly you're one of the crazy few who hit the treadmill and work off all those desserts in the gym; regardless, when you think about it, there are endless ways to spend a day at sea.

Between now and our arrival back to Ushuaia, we have some time to explore Stanley at the Falkland Islands and only two more sea-filled days. As the days of the Antarctic Peninsula and South Georgia all melt together, it is important to remember that each and every moment are so special, so unique and we are of a privileged few who have encountered such wonder, such beauty and incredible phenomena of our natural world. Special moments and memories range from our first glimpse of the Antarctic Peninsula and our first landing at Cuverville Island, to our BBQ in Orne Harbour, while Humpback whales bubble net fed on krill around us. There was the agile and inquisitive leopard seals of the Yalour Islands, and the mill-pond stillness when sailing into the breath-taking Drygalski Fjord, or the unforgettable moment of stepping ashore at Gold Harbour, surrounded by king penguins and elephant seals for the first time. As you can see, there were countless amazing, thought-provoking experiences over these past few weeks that were felt by us all... It is undeniably important that we take the time to reflect and note the significance of each and every small moment, including the time spent at sea, that makes this amazing expedition a whole so incredible.



At Sea

DAY 17 | Monday, 27th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 27th Mar

Latitude: 21°57'9" S

Longitude: 050°15'4" W

Course: 286°

Speed: 13.1 knots

Wind Speed: NW 6

Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: 4°C

Birds have it better than we do, in many ways, and here are three, with wings they fly by day and night, and never have a cancelled flight, with feathers they have clothes that always fit, in styles that never change a bit, and what we envy most, I'd say, with bills they never have to pay.

—Anonymous

Another day at sea, another day to relax and soak it all in. We awoke at a leisurely hour, with the rock and roll of the ship in the swell of the storm system we were cruising through. After a nice breakfast, it was time to attend John's lecture on oceanography. It was fascinating to learn how our oceans and the movement of water around the world helps to regulate global temperatures. Isn't it crazy to think that one molecule of water takes anywhere from 600 to 1000 years to circulate around the world's ocean conveyor belt!

Out on deck, the birdlife was amazing. For those that got out and spent the time, there was plenty of action to enjoy throughout the day. Species that we saw included wandering, black-browed and grey headed albatross, giant petrels, prions, greater shearwaters, grey petrels, and soft-plumaged petrels. It was some of the best at-sea birding for the trip. An eBird survey in the afternoon was a perfect activity to complement the abundance of birds for the day.

In the afternoon, Renato gave us a great lecture on photography and some excellent tips for taking those award-winning photos. Linda led a cloud survey on deck, while for many of us, it was a great time to relax and enjoy a bit of quiet time onboard the ship to re-energize for our visit to the Falkland/Malvinas Islands.

As the afternoon progressed, the swells increased as the wind picked up in intensity. Although uncomfortable, it is still an amazing experience to sail through these powerful Southern Ocean storms and to feel the blasts of wind and the rise and fall of the waves that they generate. Looking at the forecast on Windy, we were really lucky with our timing of visiting and then getting away from South Georgia, as the system that we were experiencing was

showing gusts of up to 80 knots further south of our position. As we move into the winter season in the southern hemisphere, these powerful storms become more frequent and even more intense as the jet stream racing way above our heads in the atmosphere also picks up in its speed and intensity.

To finish off the day, we enjoyed another entertaining recap, with a question-and-answer session with several of the ship's heads of departments. It's always great to find out the inner workings of the ship and how they manage to deliver such a wonderful experience around the ship. We also learned from John about some of the wildlife we would expect to see at the Falkland/Malvina Islands and had another entertaining session with Dr Karl learning about why we don't use only 10% of our brains!

We finished the evening steaming into the seas towards our final destination for the trip, the Falkland/Malvinas Islands!

Stanley

DAY 18 | Tuesday, 28th March 2023

Position at 0600 on 28th Mar

Latitude: 51°39'4" S

Longitude: 057°43'7" W

Course: 280°

Speed: 4.5 knots

Wind Speed: W 7

Barometer: 997

Air Temp: 6°C

My good friend the Governor said I could settle down at Port Stanley and take things quietly for a few weeks. The street of that port is about a mile and a half long. It has the slaughterhouse at one end and the graveyard at the other. The chief distraction is to walk from the slaughterhouse to the graveyard. For a change one may walk from the graveyard to the slaughterhouse.

—Ernest Shackleton

Many ships used to call into the Falkland Islands on trips around Cape Horn or on the journey to Antarctica. The *Greg Mortimer* found herself doing the same on this blustery morning. The islands are located 477 km east of southern Argentina. The Islands offer an odd mix of British culture and southern Atlantic wildlife. The archipelago is made up of 700 islands but only has a human population of 4000.

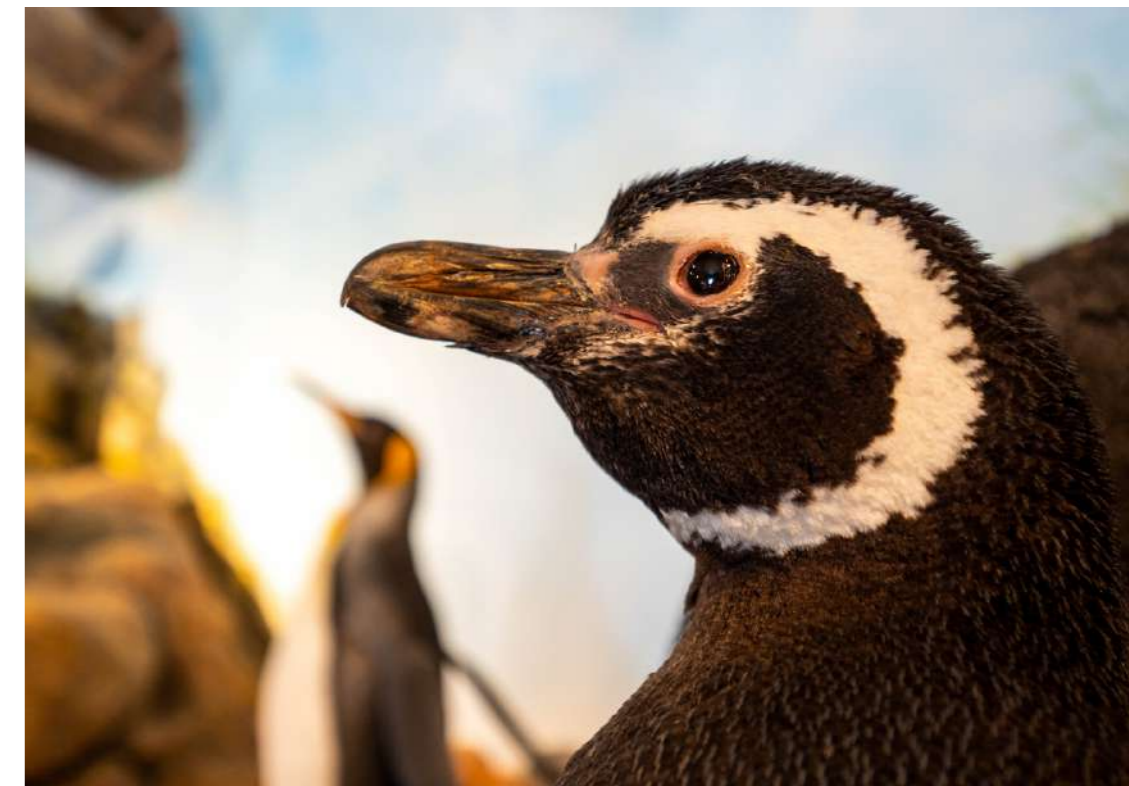
As the ship dropped anchor off the town of Stanley the winds raged! We had a consistent blow of 35 knots and it was gusting up to 55 knots. Even though the ship was in a sheltered anchorage the conditions outside were interesting. Anyone looking out a porthole could tell that we sat right on the edge of being able to pull off a landing.

Extra ballast was put into the bows of the Zodiacs to make them a bit more stable when they had no passengers and boats got lowered into the frothing bay. Luckily for us we are all old hands at getting in and out of Zodiacs during less than perfect conditions. That and the skill of our drivers made easy work of the journey to shore.

Upon landing, we had the whole town to explore, and everyone headed off in different directions. Most would pay a visit to the wonderful museum at the end of town. Displays on all topics about the Falklands could be studied. One of the largest was on the Falklands War between Great Britain and Argentina in 1982. During this event, Argentina invaded and occupied the Islands for 74 days before they were driven out again. This horrible affair would cost 910 lives and scar both nations permanently. It's still a touchy subject for many and must be navigated gently.

Some of us found very innocent activities to partake in such as taking a long walk to Gypsy Cove to do a little birding. Others strolled the streets of this funky little town with an ice cream cone in hand and went in search of the hidden gnome garden! This is the Falklands version of the world's largest ball of twine.

Good shopping and lunches could also be found in many locations. A favorite stop is going to visit Alice Clarke who is a local jeweller and a skilled one at that. She's more than happy to discuss her thought process and methods of her art and it's fascinating. For those looking for culinary delights, the Victory Bar in the middle of town serves up very traditional English fish and chips complete with mushy peas.



At Sea

DAY 19 | Wednesday, 29th March 2023

Position at 0700 on 29th Mar

Latitude: 53°43'6" S

Longitude: 061°53'6" W

Course: 233°

Speed: 13.5 knots

Wind Speed: W 4/5

Barometer: 1006

Air Temp: 2°C

There was great beauty here, in the way that things which are also terrible can be beautiful.

—Richard Byrd

The day started quite late, the ship was silent until 8:30 approx., as it seemed like everybody took the chance to sleep and rest.

Daniel introduced an amazing film from 1920 named Around Cape Horn, the last commercial sail ship going around the bottom of the continent.

Before lunch our historian, Jeff, gave us the last lecture of the entire Antarctic season from the E-Team. The discovery of the continent of Antarctica was the topic. It's a pretty complex story involving explorers from many different nations and the chance encounters and near misses. Jeff then added in what was a little bonus talk on Nathaniel Palmer who lived an incredible life full of wild adventures at sea.

It was our last lunch on board, and tomorrow we will be back to real life.

After lunch we attended Marcus' talk about conservation, photography and kindness, one of the best talks from our voyage, where we all felt inspired. This talk couldn't have been better to finish off the great and unique voyage that we all have had, because like Marcus, we are all here for one main reason, to admire wildlife and to see this unique part of the globe.

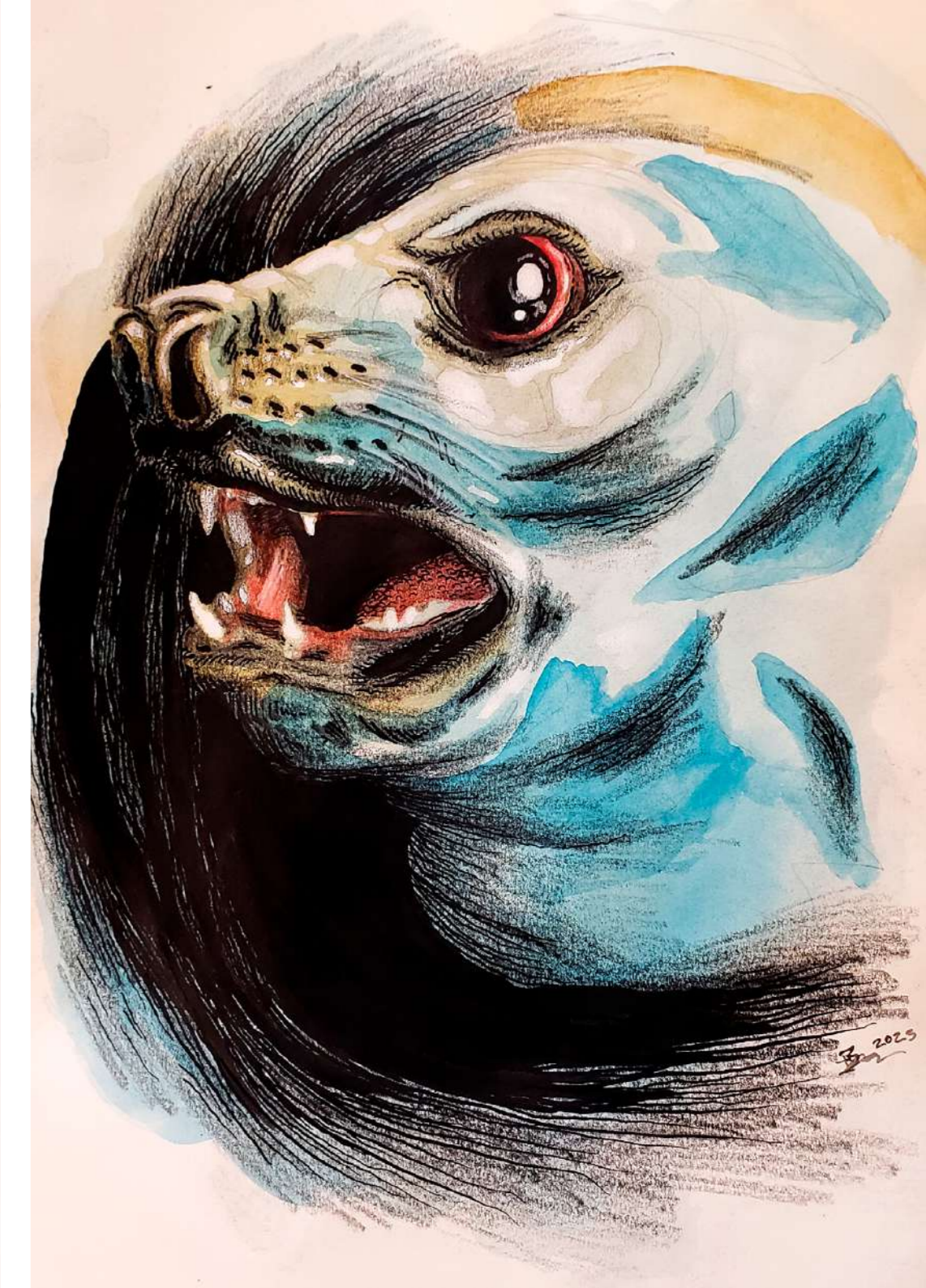
Coming to Antarctica, to the Southern Ocean and its islands is a privilege, and throughout these last 20 days we all have slowly become ambassadors of these fragile ecosystems. We also have learned that through education we can start doing things better in our wonderful world, and this could be our next task once we are back home: we can educate our beloved ones; our kids and grandchildren, about the overwhelming nature that has surrounded us all these days. We can now inspire them by talking to them and sharing our experiences with them, about the beautiful places that we have been visiting and about the specific wildlife that we have seen. And for this, the photos that we have taken are a great tool of education. To explain why krill is so important, why penguins are so amazing, why Antarctica always needs to be protected. Now you can share all that together with

your beautiful pictures and memories, so we keep inspiring our next generations through nature!

After so many days in spectacular scenery, amazing wildlife, extraordinary history... this journey reminded us how special our planet is and how important it is to protect this fragile environment.

In a world where many beautiful destinations have been irrevocably impacted, the protection of Antarctica is not an option it's a necessity. This place cannot wait - the moment to act is now.

In the afternoon we had our Captain's Farewell cocktails where we all were a bit emotional and realised that tomorrow we had to disembark and go back to our real life, but completely modified or reshaped by this trip with great experiences to share.



Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 20 | Thursday, 30th March 2023

Position at 0600 on 30th Mar

Latitude: 54°49'9" S

Longitude: 068°09'8" W

Course: 289°

Speed: 10.4 knots

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

We hope you've enjoyed the daily log of our voyage in Antarctica.

Thank you to our multi-talented expedition team for creating so eloquently a summary of each day we shared.

Thank you to our photographer Renato for capturing our special moments.

A BIG thank you to everyone onboard who shared their enthusiasm, knowledge, stories and adventurous spirit!

Wind Speed: WNW 4

Barometer: 1020

Air Temp: 2°C

Antarctic Poem

We breathe in the Antarctic dusk, dissolving us from the inside as if we were never there. The silver light, discrete and soft like uranium. Its metallic glow casting shadows that dwarf our comprehension, as unfathomable to us as giant rectangular facts. Yet we float on, a phase shift away from toxic algorithms and gods of war. To the present and the now. To clarity. The force of my personal revelation, thermo nuclear. South Georgia.

—Sean Rory Maguire



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Daniel Stavert, Pete Clarke, Elo Berrier, Matt Barnes

Number of Paddlers: 19 Total Paddle Outings: 10 Total Distance Paddled: 93km

Paddlers:	Dennis Hundscheidt	Graham Charles Parker	Robert Griffiths
Jeffrey Rudd	Bailey Robertson	Jane Parker	Timothy McKenna
Elizabeth Rudd	Jordan Robertson	Jean Maguire	Craig Mcconaghy
Kathy Kristof	Scott Robertson	Sean Maguire	Jill Webster
Jennifer Winsor	Simone Robertson	David Feldshon	Peter Gordon

14th March 2023, Cuverville Island. Distance: 4 km

The first kayakers started with Matt and Edu, launched from platform; familiarized with tandem kayak operation; pushed thru some minor brash ice; caught a great calving across the passage; smelled the penguins and connected the dots b/w their poo, nitrogen, and AA's only "plant-life"; investigated by a Leopard Seal!!!; paddled in some small, rolling swell; landed on a whalebone-littered beach and watched Gentoos up close; experienced a short snowfall; then the clouds parted for brilliant, sunny views of the mountains surrounding Errera Channel; landed back on platform

The second group of padders left the *Greg Mortimer* into a rising breeze. The first group was already vanishing beyond the eastern edge of the island so the team set their targets for the still waters on the southern side. Icebergs rolling in the swell, and the occasional boom of crevasses long distant reminding all that they were truly in Antarctica.

Rounding the point, the padders got their first whiff of a truly unique Antarctic smell; thousands of gentoo penguins on the shore line. Taking the chance to land, despite a brief flurry of snow, the group was able to walk for the first time on shore in Antarctica.

From a snow storm to glorious in sunshine in mere minutes. All the group were astonished at how quickly a landscape could change. Returning home to the ship with sun on their faces and a sense of gratitude in their hearts.

14th March 2023, Paradise Harbour. Distance: 11km

The morning's sunshine remained into the afternoon. With the brightening light and fresh snow on the dark peaks, Paradise Harbour truly lived up to its name. Paddling along the shoreline the group explored shallow pools of clear water, calling penguins, and swooping blue eyed shags, before finally arriving at Skontorp cove. There the incredible glacier face lay glowing in the light. A push through the brash ice lent a particularly percussive feeling to the experience, and a feeding humpback whale breathing into the cold air marked the turning point of a remarkable paddle in Antarctica. First kayakers started with Dan and Matt, fasters with Edu and at the end Elo's group.

That day we started our kayak session from the ship in two groups and paddle between icebergs and brash ice to the shoreline. There we observed a weddell seal that was resting on the snow and many gentoo penguins close to the shoreline going in and out of the sea.

We paddle in front of the Brown Station and we meet some marine biologist that were doing some research in the area, and very friendly they explain us about their job... they were capturing samples with fishing net at 8m deep trying to understand the new species that are there after the glaciers retreat and the ecosystem underwater is changing.

Few minutes after we heard a very strong breathing sound quite close to the kayaks, it was a humpback whale... we enjoy observing her from the calm and peaceful seat that kayaks offer and we keep kayaking across the brash ice to enjoy a few minutes of silence contemplating the magnificence of those glaciers, admiring the landscape around us and absorbing all this energy from a very special place.

On the way back to the ship we saw four penguins jumping in and out from a very small iceberg and we finish our kayaking session with this funny image.

15th March 2023, Yalours Island. Distance: 8.1 km

We started a great day with sun and no wind amazing conditions in special place to have fun and explore by kayak. It's like a rock garden.

The swell was quite big so we didn't start from the platform but we started from the Zodiac a few meters away from the ship.

We saw a few whales in the distance just before we jumped in the kayaks and Elo offered us the chance to focus and call the whales from the depths of our souls... we started the kayak session and after 10 minutes one whale stopped swimming and started resting in the surface. We were very lucky to have the chance to observe the animal so close to the kayaks and resting right next to us, of course we keep a safe distance and we did a raft, and then we decided to navigate close to the island. There we were surprised by a curious leopard seal that was playing around us and finally met three more leopard seals close to a small iceberg.

We paddled in front the landing site observing our first Adélie penguins and then we had fun kayaking between rocks and small Iceland full of Weddell seals resting.

We decided to enter in to the area with brash ice and cementery of big icebergs grounded, we paddled almost all the way back to the ship with a big smile after a long, flow and amazing morning kayak session.

At the same time Matt and Edu were guideing the second group. Zodiac launch; humpback whales in the distance as we rounded the southern part of Yalour; fur seal high on rocks; first Adeline group; leopard seal; weave thru some mini-islands; Weddell seals on rocks with a few gentoos; rock garden passage!; iceberg admiring; back to Yalour for a closer look at Adeline colony; out again for a playful leopard; Zodiac load and shore time; more whales go by

16th March 2023, Goudier Island. Distance: 6 km

A morning of incredible contrasts. Leaving the ship, three paddlers wanted to go a little further and a little faster. The sharp mountains above and the calm seas beckoned but no sooner had the team moved into the Peltier Channel than the clouds began to descend. By the time they were behind Jougla Point the visibility had dropped to twenty metres and the snow was falling thick and fast. A quick landing on Goudier island followed before it was time return to the ship and the miraculously returning blue skies and glorious sunshine.

On the other hand 8 more kayakers were in the same area with Edu and Elo, A great morning in the Neumayer Channel. We started from the ship on a beautiful and quite sunny morning. The sea was super calm and it was very smooth to paddle. We explored a bit the rocks on our way to the inner side of the coves behind Port Lockroy. Suddenly it started to snowy heavily but beautifully, an experience that none of the kayakers had had before. It kept on snowing for a long time, to the point that all the kayak decks had a huge amount of snow. On our quiet exploration of the coastline, a curious weddell seal approached us and then we stopped to take pictures of the cormorants before going back to the Zodiac where Matt was waiting to give us a hand out of the kayaks. After that we all went onshore to visit Port Lockroy and its beautiful museum. Great job team!

16th March 2023, Orne Harbour. Distance: 3.5 km

A beautiful sunny afternoon in this scenic harbour. It was a bit gusty and some gusts were quite strong, but the brash ice around us gave us a bit of shelter. At the beginning of our kayaking session we spotted a shiny silver crabearer seal on an ice flow and then we kept on paddling towards the coastline to find more shelter from the wind and for touching the Antarctic continent! We paddled very close to the shoreline admiring the impressive mountains and the huge glaciers. Right before finishing this beautiful kayaking session we stopped to observe a big leopard seal resting on an ice flow very close to the ship. From the water we could even smell the delicious barbecue that the hotel department was preparing for us!

Faster group was kayaking with Peter, for them the weather was fair with light winds and good visibility. There was a lot of brash ice around the ship. We saw several leopard seals on floes close to the ship, crabearers and humpback whales.

17th March 2023, Cierva Cove. Distance: 3.4 km

Great evening at Cierva Cove, sunshine, no wind some swell and lots of icebergs and brash ice.

We found one big leopard seal resting on top of the iceberg and many gentoo penguins on the shore line.

People from Primavera Station were working there preparing everything to close the station during the winter season.

At the same time the other group of kayakers were with Dan and Matt

21st March 2023, Cooper Bay. Distance: 4 km

After a spectacular morning in Drygalski Fjord, it was time to get kayaking in South Georgia. With a reasonable swell, the kayak team took Zodiacs into a sheltered bay and launched in glass calm waters.

Soon they were paddling amongst swirling kelp forests, the cry of young fur seal pups ringing around the cove. Following behind rocky islets, the kayak team was able to stay out of the most turbulent waters and explore each little cove. In every corner a new surprise waited. King penguins sedately entering the water, macaroni penguins less genteely calling for their mates, and fur seal pups every rolling and tumbling in the swell. Reaching the northern point of Cooper Bay the kayak pod left the shelter of the coves and felt the roll of open ocean. With a rising breeze and the sudden swell, the team turned their noses back in towards the ship after a wonderful first paddle in South Georgia.

22st March 2023, Gold Harbour. Distance: 2.88 km

One of the most spectacular places in South Georgia. Gold Harbour lies at the foot of the Salvensen Range, 20 km north of cape Vahsel.

A natural amphitheatre of hanging glaciers and vertical cliff rises straight out of the sea.

The place has an exceptional abundance of seabirds and seals. The king penguin colony is around 25,000 breeding pairs.

The swell was big, but the kayak team at this point of the trip was very well trained to go in and out of the kayaks and to paddle in swelly conditions, so we offer them the chance to explore the area by kayaks.

We started in the northern end of the beach but from Zodiacs because the swell was too big to start or end from the beach.

Then we took the chance to paddle on top of the kelp forest and observed some of the invertebrates that live in that amazing ecosystem.

One big leopard seal was swimming and very curious about our safety Zodiac, maybe playing between kelp, maybe looking for some food to prey on.

Next we paddled along the shoreline. The beach was full of wildlife and surrounded by many king penguins swimming around our kayaks. We finish the kayak session scoring each kayaker in your style to go out of the kayak in that swell and having fun all together.

23rd March 2023, Grytviken. Distance: 4.5 km

Smooth waters and sunshine greeted the team as they left the ship at Grytviken. The glowing green water and sheer rising mountains, their peaks shrouded in mist, lent an otherworldly feel to the morning. Combined with the extensive ruins of the whaling station ahead, it made for a morning with a great deal of feeling. Paddling into the shoreline, the first stop was to visit the graveyard and pay respects to 'the boss' Ernest Shackleton buried there. Back in the boats the kayak team cruised in mirrored waters around the shoreline of the station. Everywhere whaling equipment lay, rusting in the water, every component that could be reached possessed by a curious fur seal pup. Their big eyes watching as the kayaks glided past.

For most of the team, the whale catcher boats marked a beach zone where they could get out and exercise their shore legs, visiting museums and the station on foot. For a couple of paddlers, they chose to cruise home via kayak, adding a few extra kilometres to their morning.

24rd March 2023, Godthul. Distance: 8.3 km

Godthul Harbour is amazing! And this morning was perfect, especially with the not promising forecast that made us feel a bit hopeless the previous day. Luckily it was so accurate that we had the first morning hours with perfect conditions.

We started earlier than usual. We were already paddling exactly at 7:00. Godthul is a big and enclosed bay, and since the ship anchored right in the middle, we decided to start our kayaking session by aiming towards the entrance of the bay, next to the open Atlantic Ocean.

Faster kayakers started with Edu and Pater and entered into the kayaks first. What a surprise we got there, beautiful cliffs and rock gardens for an entertaining paddling. Slowly we discovered many beautiful little coves. One of them was full of gentoo penguins moulting and lots of cute little fur seal pups playing all around. After that we kept on paddling we felt like gliding with our kayaks on top of huge kelp forests. The water was crystal clear and we could see everything underneath the surface, perfect sea kayaking conditions with a glassy sea. After a while we made a stop to reconstruct in our minds how a glacier valley was formed, true impressive geology in this hidden and pristine harbour. Things got even better when we reached a little cove with a beautiful waterfall. So relaxing the sound of the running water. After spending more than 2 hours discovering this unique site by kayak, we took the chance to land and stretch our legs for a while. Some of you even went for a short power hike with beautiful views! Great job team!

The biggest part of the kayaking team decided to make a chill out kayak session that morning and went with Elo and Matt. We started from the ship as second group and we almost circumnavigated the all bay, exploring the waterfall and some caves.

The shore line was full of young fur seals and some elephant seals also.

When we started the crossing to the other side of the bay we found a gentoo penguin colony and during the crossing we got the chance to observe the amazing geology from the distance, and understand a bit better the formation of that area and the privilege that was to be there paddling. (distance 6 km)

Both groups finished our kayak session with some time on the landing site to hike up to the lake.



Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: Ella Knobloch & Stas Zakharov

Number of Snorkels: 4

Total Outings: 6

Snorkellers:

Rachael Yin Foo

Lina Stock

Marcus Westberg

David Stock

14th March 2023, Cuverville Island

After a magic first landing, we took the team for their shakedown snorkel. Not many people get to say they've snorkelled while it is snowing! We bobbed around and tested out our dry suits and cameras so we were ready for the afternoon ahead.

14th March 2023, Paradise Harbour

It was a glassy afternoon at Paradise Harbour. We headed out for a Zodiac cruise through the brash ice and around the glaciers taking in the scenes. We were fortunate enough to see a humpback logging in the bay too. 'Snork Club' jumped in the water near Brown Station, snorkelling through brash ice and looking at all the seaweed. Some of us even saw some gentoo penguins flitting past.

17th March 2023, Hydruga Rocks

A sunny and blustery morning at Hydruga Rocks provided all the kelpy goodness! After a great landing on the rocks, we tucked into a sheltered bay of the island to snorkel. We did a gentle drift along the shoreline where there was an abundance of seaweed. It was also an opportunity to see fur seals from a different view as they played in the shallows.

17th March 2023, Cierva Cove

Our afternoon was spent Zodiac cruising through icebergs in the glassy Cierva Cove. We finished off with Lina and David jumping into the brash for a snorkel. There's something pretty special about being surrounded by ice, especially while the sun is shining. It was the perfect way to end an awesome day on the water.

21st March 2023, Coopers' Bay

Our first outing in South Georgia! The mist was sitting over the hills making the dramatic landscape feel all the wilder. We spent the first half of the afternoon cruising and afterwards got to get into the water in the beautiful kelp of Coopers' Bay. Excitement levels were high as we got to see baby fur seal pups playing on the rocks near the water's edge.

24th March 2023, Godthul

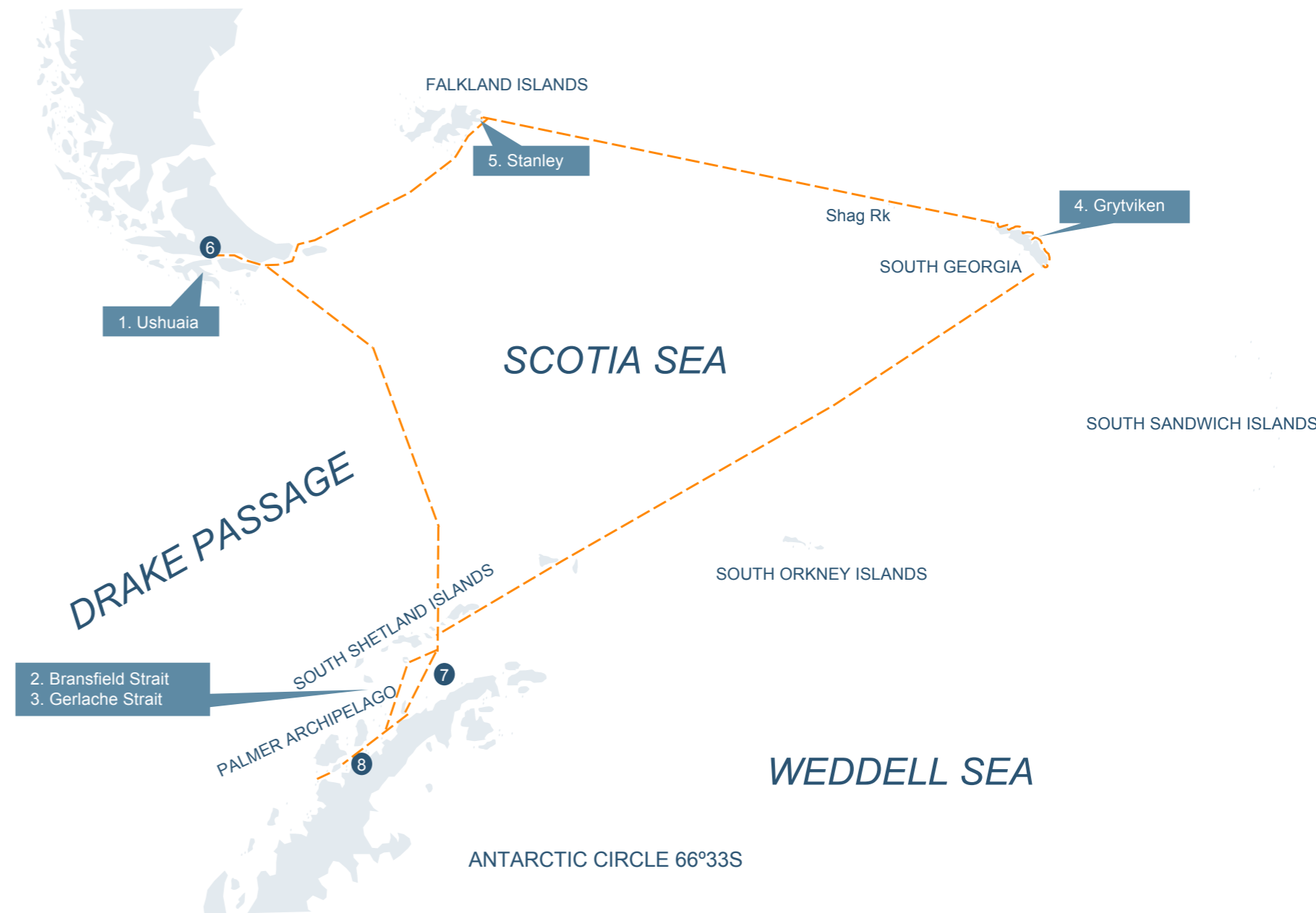
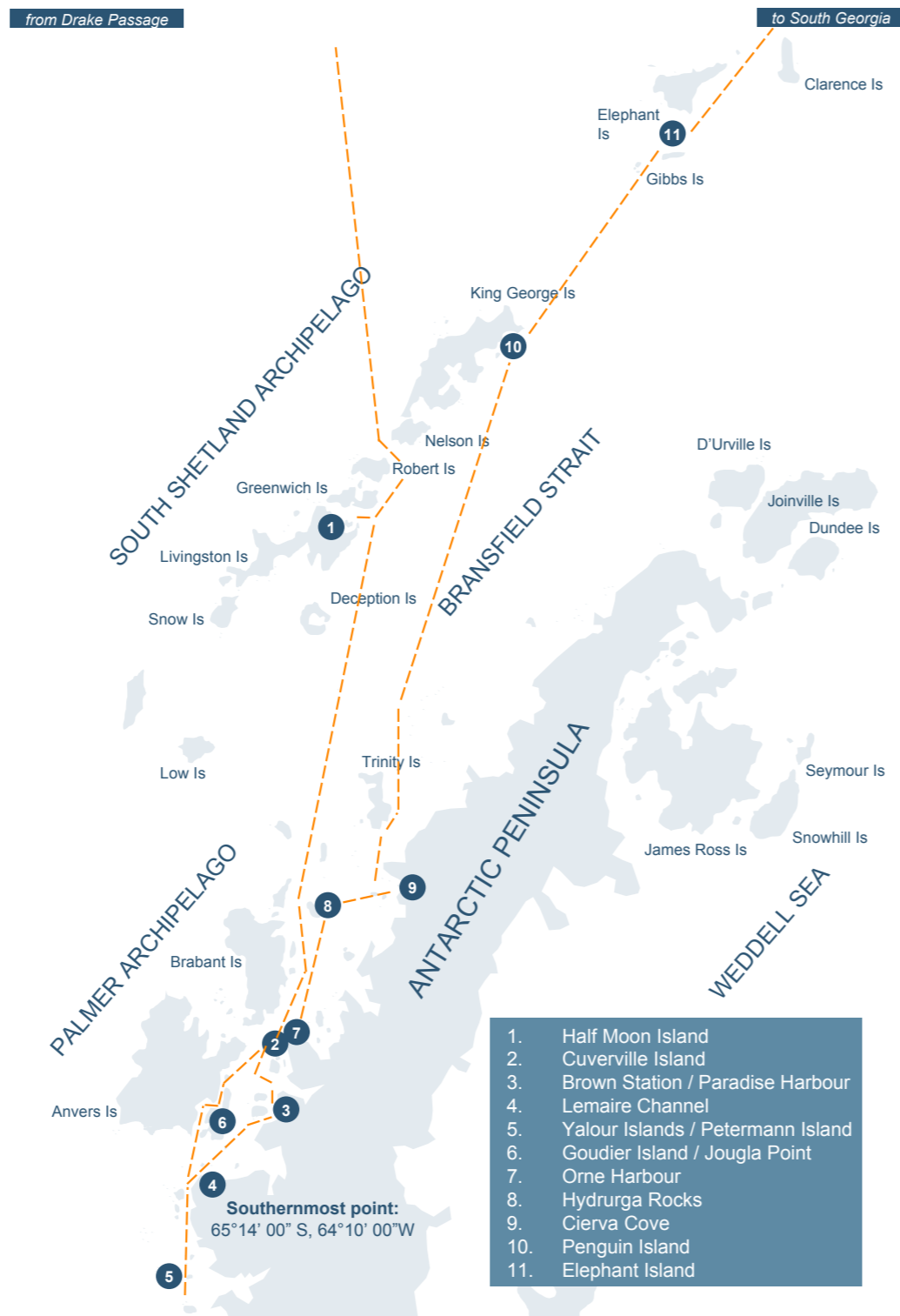
An early risers' activity this morning! After the team headed to the landing site to explore, Ella radioed to let everyone know it was definitely worth getting into their dry suits for this spot. It didn't take much convincing and we headed across the bay to immerse ourselves. As soon as we were in the water, curious seal pups came from every direction to check out what us funny red creatures were. The visibility was fantastic and gave us an incredible view of the scale of the kelp we were dancing around. It was a perfect final snorkel of the trip for the whole team.



Mammal Sightings

Mammal Species	March																			
	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Antarctic Fur Seal			•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•					
South American Fur Seal	•																			
South American Sea Lion	•																			
Southern Elephant Seal											•	•	•	•	•					
Crabeater Seal				•	•	•														
Weddell Seal			•	•	•	•														
Leopard Seal			•	•	•	•								•	•					
Minke Whale				•																
Sei Whale		•																		
Fin Whale								•	•		•									
Humpback Whale	•		•	•	•	•	•													
Orca (Killer Whale)								•												
Peale's Dolphin																			•	
Dusky Dolphin	•																			
Hourglass Dolphin																				•







Expeditioners:

Paul Bell

Matthew Bennett

Kerrie Bigsworth

Peter Black

David Bladen

Allen Blewitt

Julie Blewitt

Charles Booth

Heather Brown

Phillip Brown

Jordan Brun

Edda Courtney

James Courtney

Tanya Crosbie

Mary Dobbie

Leeonie Douglas

John Emmins

Georgio Feldshon

Archelle Feldshon

Gaynor Fox

Peter Gordon

Robert Griffiths

Hilary Griffiths

Ginger Hamilton

Donna Hauser

Finn Hauser-Westley

Sharon Heath

Celia Howat

Dennis Hundscheidt

Matt Iuliano

Robert Johnstone

Julie Jones

Fay Knibbs

Stu Knibbs

Michael Kristof

Kathy Kristof

Karl Kruszelnicki

Tanya Kurukulasuriya

Sean Maguire

Jean Maguire

Dave Maxted

Sharon Maxted

Heidi Mc Cluskey

Craig Mc Conaghy

Phil McCluskey

Heather McConaghy

Gavin McCormack

Timothy McKenna

Graeme Myburgh

Jane Parker

Graham Parker

Christine Rigden

Stephen Rigden

Larry Robbins

Renee Robbins

Simone Robertson

Scott Robertson

Bailey Robertson

Jordy Robertson

Jeff Rudd

Elizabeth Rudd

Claire Shepherd

Lina Stock

David Stock Jr

Mike Thurley

Cathy Thurley

Helen Trop-Zell

Neil Tyers

Jill Webster

Marcus Westberg

Ben Westley

Kalyan Westley

Jasmine Westley

Peter Westley

Mike Westley

Jessica Westley

Jenny Winsor

Red Wright

Brad Wright

Rachael Yin Foo

Jerrold Zell

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Christian Savigny
Assistant Expedition Leader: Isabelle Howells
Onboard Expedition Manager: Reba Minett
Historian: Jeff Nagel
Oceanographer/ Citizen Science Coordinator: Bia Figueiredo
Naturalist: John Kirkwood
Naturalist: Hannah Cowley
Lead Sea Kayak Guide: Daniel Stavert
Sea Kayak Guide: Pete Clarke
Sea Kayak Guide: Elo Berrier
Sea Kayak Guide: Matt Barnes
Snorkel Guide: Ella Knobloch
Snorkel Guide: Stas Zakharov
Expedition Medic: Linda Steutel
E-Team Photography Guide: Renato Granieri
Zodiac Master: Serghei Hincu
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Ana Prado

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Vadym Tavrovetsky
Chief Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk
Safety Officer: Alexandru Chiriac
Bosun: Giovanni Dela Torre
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: Edgar Mangalino

Head Waiter: Allan Liscaro
IT Officer: Yury Kovyrshin
Receptionist: Sean Akbar
Receptionist: Jona Ecija
Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia
Able Seaman: Bobby Payumo
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Able Seaman: Tim Kitson
Able Seaman: Joel Noble
Able Seaman: Andrii Mezentsev

Poetry thanks to:

Sean Rory Maguire

Photography thanks to:

Renato Granieri Lina Stock Marcus Westberg

Artwork thanks to:

Jordan Brun





