



# Spirit of Antarctica



19 – 30 November 2019 | *Greg Mortimer*





## About Us

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

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

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

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





DAY 1 | Wednesday 20 November 2019

# Ushuaia; Southward ho’ across the Drake Passage

**Position:** 18:00 hours

**Latitude:** 54°49’ S

**Longitude:** 68°18’ W

**Course:** 83°

**Wind Speed:** Calm

**Barometer:** 991 hPa & steady

**Air Temp:** 12° C

**Sea Temp:** 9° C

*Explore. Dream. Discover.* —Mark Twain

Finally we were here, in Ushuaia aboard our sparkling new ice-strengthened vessel. At the wharf Stephen, Robyn and Justine welcomed us and sent us off to Alexander and Massimo for a mug shot before boarding the *Greg Mortimer*.

Once all were aboard and our luggage accounted for, Expedition Leader Stephen called us together in the lecture room to welcome us, talk about the workings of the ship, outline our plans for coming days, and introduce us to the Aurora team.

Onboard we total 126 passengers with nationalities representing Australia (82), US (22), Germany (1), Italy (1), New Zealand (1), China (15), UK (2), Brazil (1), Netherlands (1), along with 20 Aurora Expeditions’ staff and 87 capable crew.

Captain’s announcement over the loudspeaker system was our cue to don bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations, there after making our way to our two Polar Class life vessels.

Our Argentinian pilot climbed aboard and at 1815 we cast off lines and eased away from the wharf. What a feeling! The thriving city of Ushuaia with its snow-capped mountains gradually receded as we motored eastward along the beautiful Beagle Channel with a running wind. The wildlife bonanza was off to a good start with sightings of black-browed albatross and southern giant petrels.

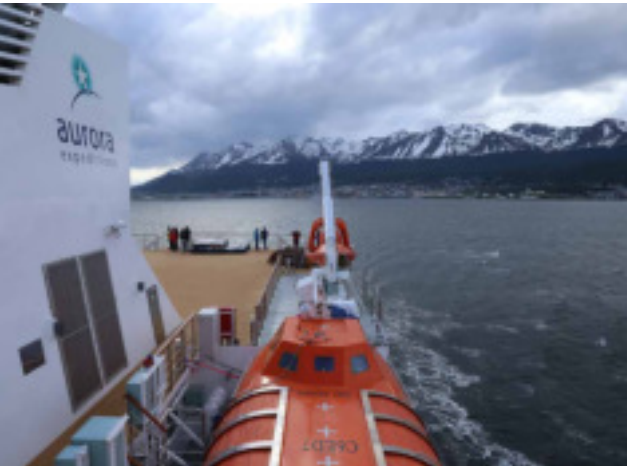


On our portside stretched the beech forested slopes of Argentina, while Chile, its mountain ranges dusted with snow, lay on our starboard side. The light upon the Beagle, sun gilding the clouds, was exquisite.

After a drink or two at Elephant Island bar we gathered in the dining room for our first delectable dinner together prepared by our hotel team. There was plenty of lively conversation we acquainted fellow travellers.

Kayaking guides Frank, Michael and Lisa met up with their 20 kayakers for a fit-out session and briefing, but for we weary travellers, we found our way to our cabins for a good night’s sleep.

Today, Thursday 21 November, we are on our own at sea. Be up on the observation deck and bridge to lookout for seabirds large and small which frequent this productive 1000-kilometre stretch of ocean. Naturalist Alexander and Photographic Guide Massimo kick off our educational series with talks on the remarkable seabirds we expect to encounter, along with helpful tips from Massimo on making the most of countless photographic opportunities.





# Drake Passage

**Position:** 06:15 hours      **Course:** 155°  
**Latitude:** 56°23'S      **Speed:** 11 knots  
**Longitude:** 65°21'W

*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*

Today was our first full day at sea! After starting to feel the movement of the waves during the night, after exiting Beagle’s Channel over dinner, we woke up to a gentle open ocean swell and fascinating wildlife in Drake Passage.

We were crossing Drake Passage today, heading straight southwards towards Antarctica. Drake Passage is the relatively narrow part of the ocean between the southern tip of South America, Cape Horn, and the South Shetland Islands of the Antarctic Peninsula. The 800 km-wide passage is the shortest crossing from Antarctica to another landmass. The entire Antarctic Circumpolar Current, a mighty ocean current circulating around the Antarctic Continent in a clockwise direction, squeezes through this passage. The different fronts of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, which play a crucial role for oceanic wildlife in the Southern Ocean, are at their closest distance when passing this natural bottleneck. This oceanographic setting makes Drake Passage a fantastic place for seabird and cetacean observations.

And yes, there was amazing wildlife around the ship! Albatrosses and petrels were gliding over the waves in majestic moves, and we even had our first cetacean sightings from a cabin window and the observation deck – from the lucky observers’ description it was most likely a Minke and Fin Whale.

Alexander’s seabird talk in the late morning was now perfectly timed to provide us with the necessary information to better understand seabird biology and conservation issues, and to identify the seabird species around the boat. The following photography talk by Massimo gave us some insights into how to improve our photography skills and take appealing pictures of the animals and scenery around us.

**Wind Speed:** 20 knots  
**Wind Direction:** NW

**Barometer:** 1003 hPa & rising  
**Air Temp:** 7°C  
**Sea Temp:** 6°C

The afternoon was dedicated to preparations for our upcoming Antarctic landings. Heidi gave an overview of IAATO, the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators, and its guidelines to safe and environmentally responsible tourism in Antarctica. We learned about how to minimise our impact on the Antarctic wildlife and landscapes, which is a crucial step in the conservation of this last great wilderness on Earth.

Expedition Leader Stephen followed on with instructions about Zodiac operations, which will be our crucial means of transport between the ship and landing sites from tomorrow. We also learned about biosecurity in Antarctica, another essential requirement to prevent the introduction of invasive species or diseases to these pristine sites.

A visit to the mudroom familiarised us with this important space for our landings – here we will store and put on our gumboots, jackets and life vests before embarking on Zodiacs for the landings. We also completed the first step of biosecurity for our landings by hoovering all our outdoor clothing and equipment to remove seeds that might be along for the ride. Step by step we are getting ready for disembarking on our first landing site tomorrow!

Despite Drake’s Passage’s reputation of being one of the roughest parts of the world’s ocean, we had an overall smooth crossing with relatively small waves and beautiful evening sunlight. Just before midnight we will have crossed 60° South, which marks the northern boundary of the Southern Ocean, and the political boundary of Antarctica. Icebergs ahead from here!

Today, Friday 22 November, we will complete the last part of our Drake Passage’s crossing and hope to reach the South Shetland islands just after lunch. We are also reaching iceberg territory after having crossed the Polar Front! Keep your eyes open and take part in Aurora’s iceberg competition; the sheet is out in the observation lounge.







DAY 3 | Friday 22 November 2019

## Drake Passage & Half Moon Island, South Shetland Islands

**Position:** 12:00 hours  
**Latitude:** 62°10'S  
**Longitude:** 60° 21°W

**Course:** 156°  
**Speed:** 13 knots

**Wind Speed:** 10 knots  
**Wind Direction:** N

**Barometer:** 1008 hPa & steady  
**Air Temp:** 0°C  
**Sea Temp:** 4°C

*A first walk in any new country is one of the things which makes life on this planet worth being grateful for. —Charles William Beebe*

This morning our smooth crossing of Drake Passage continued with a very light swell and sun shining between the banks of fog. Our Expedition Leader, Stephen, woke us for breakfast with the news that Humpback whales had been sighted. We were then on the alert for any future sightings. The temperature had dropped overnight, a sure sign that we had crossed the Antarctic Convergence. We were now in the true Antarctic marine ecosystem with fewer albatrosses and more Cape and Antarctic Petrels wheeling about the ship.

Our education series continued this morning with a presentation by Steve, our resident geologist and obvious lover of rocks. We learned about pyroclastic flows and basalt bombs on Deception Island, where we plan to visit tomorrow. Sounded deadly, but what are the odds that it will erupt while we are there? This was meant to be followed in short succession by Heidi's penguin talk so we would be primed for our first meeting of these fabulous, upright birds. But there was an announcement from the bridge that the navigation team had identified our first iceberg through the fog by radar. We made a small alteration to have a closer look and it wasn't until we were within a couple hundred meters that this beautiful berg appeared out of the mist. This wasn't just any iceberg.

As we passed it revealed its true nature with arches and spires separated by wave-washed turquoise channels. This was worth a longer look and Captain Oleg obligingly took the ship for a full circuit of the berg, which then allowed us to sight another humpback swimming past! We assembled back in the lecture room for a penguin primer and were ready to identify our brushtails and looking forward to watching stones-stealing antics.

Just before lunch that captain took us through the narrow and winding McFarlane Strait, but the nature of the surrounding islands was obscured by the returning fog bank. Antarctica would reveal herself slowly today. The ship was then anchored in the bay of Half Moon Island, inside the larger bay formed by the surrounding slopes of Livingstone Island.

We were ready for our first adventure in Antarctica! Skiers were sent in one direction to have their ascent of the snowy slopes on Livingstone; the snowshoers headed for a second landing in the head of the Half Moon crescent; the kayakers would head around the west end of the island for a third short beach, while the rest of us landed close to an old water-boat, left from the whaling era of a century ago.

The remains of an ancient volcano that erupted about 104 million years ago, this island has an active Chinstrap penguin colony. The inhabitants were busy making their squeaky calls, stealing stones for nests and guarding their newly laid white eggs. A few Brown Skuas were in attendance, stealing eggs and eyeing these new intruders to their island.

There was room to have a walk to investigate slumbering Weddell Seals on the snow and look at the buildings and radio towers of the Argentine Station, Cámara. The bands of fog dissipated and gave us glimpses of blue sky and the impressive glaciated peaks of the surrounding mountains on Livingstone Island. A wonderful introduction to Antarctica!







DAY 4 | Saturday 23rd November 2019

# Elephant Point, Whalers Bay

**Position:** 07:15 hours  
**Latitude:** 62° 41'S  
**Longitude:** 60° 50'W

**Course:** At anchor  
Elephant Point

**Wind Speed:** 15 knots  
**Wind Direction:** NW

**Barometer:** 1005 hPa & rising  
**Air Temp:** 1°C  
**Sea Temp:** 4°C

*With its coating of mud, urine and faeces, there are few things dead that smell as bad as a moulting elephant seal alive. —The Sierra Club Handbook of Seals and Sirenians*

After a cold and cloudy afternoon in Whalers Bay, Deception Island, the last Zodiac for the day full of Aurora Expeditions team members was returning to the ship. The team looked suitably windswept in their colourful jackets and cheerful banter. With the thought of writing today's edition of the Penguin Post dwelling on my mind, I asked them for their day's highlights.

Steve, our expedition geologist, was exceptionally stoked to have visited two volcanoes in one day. He sat high on the crater rim marvelling in the light, gaseous rocks of various hues – an indication of very recent ash eruptions on Deception island. Elephant point on Livingston Island was our first volcano – rocky columns of basalt slowly being covered in mosses and lichens.

Annette and Alexander reported that four species of seal had been spotted today: Weddell, Leopard, Elephant and Southern Fur. A notable event for our naturalists. The largest seals in the world, the elephant seals, entertained us with their belching, bellowing and farting. The young weaners cried for their mothers with their big sad eyes and were voted by all as totally cute. Like puppies, I silently wished they'd stay like that forever – instead of growing to become one of those grotesque, smelly, fighting five tonne beach masters.

The ever-energetic Heidi led Aurora's first ever Hash House Harriers run on Deception Island – there were a few takers fulfilling their ambition to run in Antarctica. Up and along and around again they jogged enthusiastically, while small gatherings of penguins looked on quizzically. The traditional post run beer was replaced with a can of fizz pop as they were whisked back to the ship to warm up. Silly songs and glass clinking completed the ritual later in the bar.

The pesky blustery winds meant that the kayakers ditched their kayaks and cruised in Zodiacs during the morning. They were rewarded with sightings of humpback whales, these fantastic creatures returning to Antarctic waters to feed on krill for the summer months.

The highlight for the skiers was linking some 'ash eights' in the dust-blackened snow slopes behind Whalers bay. These well-earned turns are possibly the last on the South Shetlands for this ski season. Ski touring in Antarctica is no easy feat as there are no chairlifts or helicopters to deliver you to the top of the mountain. Instead, you walk up with the help of synthetic skins stuck on the base of your ski and bindings that pivot at the toe.

For me the highlight was the nesting Giant Petrels at Elephant Point – these grand birds sitting on their nests made of pebbles and old feathers, located high on windswept rocky outcrops.

I listened to my colleagues' chat as we packed up in the mud room at the end of the day. The cold winds and cloudy skies were forgotten as we focussed on the highlights of working in this unique part of the world.





DAY 5 | Sunday 24th November

# Melchior Islands, Neko Harbor

Position:	06:00 hours	Course:	148°
Latitude:	64° 25' S	Speed:	7 knots
Longitude:	62° 57' W		

Wind Speed:	20 knots	Barometer:	1004 hPa & steady
Wind Direction:	SE	Air Temp:	-2°C
		Sea Temp:	4°C

*I have often had the impression that, to penguins, man is just another penguin – different, less predictable, occasionally violent, but tolerable company when he sits still and minds his own business.* —Bernard Stonehouse, *Penguins*

This morning we awoke to the news of a change of plans during the night. Our Expedition Leader had been in contact with Port Lockroy in the night and was informed that there was too much sea ice to approach the base. With the extremes of weather and conditions in Antarctica, flexibility is a necessity to our expedition and our Expedition Leader Stephen and Captain Oleg made some prompt decisions on a spectacular sheltered location to navigate to during the night, Melchior Islands.

The Expeditioners awoke to a spectacular approach to the Melchior Island group, with impressive mountains, glaciers and icebergs surrounding us. The high peaks of Brabant Island were visible to the west, with the steep sides of Mt Parry demanding attention, reaching 2,688 metres above sea level. The mountain ranges of Anvers Island jutted steeply out of the ocean to our south, giving us the impression of being in an ocean alpine cirque.

Following breakfast, passengers boarded Zodiacs for our expedition's first Zodiac Cruise. There were several small islands close to the ship, with many little passages and small harbours, perfect for cruising. Icebergs drift into these oceanic hamlets, and once grounded onto the ocean floor they spend their final days melting into unusual shapes, some even

having the appearance of precariously balanced giant mushrooms where the tide had hollowed out the base of the bergs.

The skiers headed out for Aurora's first ever ski outing in this area, with a couple of ski laps on Bremen Island. This is one of the highlights of being on a ski expedition on the Antarctic Peninsula, experiencing the excitement of exploring new terrain.

Following lunch (and perhaps an afternoon siesta!) the ship moved location to Neko Harbor, tucked away close to the end of Andvord Bay. It is relatively sheltered and surrounded by spectacular ice falls that drop into the dark inky water. This landing was particularly exciting as it was the first on the Antarctic continent. Whilst passengers photographed Gentoo penguins with a dramatic backdrop of ice cliffs and glaciers, the ice cliffs would periodically rumble and crack, and we could watch the chunks of ice and snow drop onto the glacier and down into the ocean.

This was also a very special occasion for two of our passengers and their family at Neko Harbor, as Natalie and Angus had a commitment ceremony, pledging their love and lives to one another. It was a beautiful and memorable continental landing for our lovely couple.

Heidi and Steve worked hard at Neko Harbor to obtain a big chunk of glacial ice for drinks at the bar in the evening. Cheers to all passengers for another fabulous day in Antarctica, and a special day for many of our passengers who have now reached all seven continents.





DAY 6 | Monday 25th November 2019

# Wilhelmina Bay, Portal Point

**Position:** 11:45 hours  
**Latitude:** 64°43'S  
**Longitude:** 62°03'W

**Course:** At drift,  
Wilhemina Bay

**Wind Speed:** 13 knots  
**Wind Direction:** NE

**Barometer:** 998 hPa & rising  
**Air Temp:** -2°C  
**Sea Temp:** -1.5°C

This morning we awoke deep in Wilhelmina Bay, encircled by an ever-changing icescape of bergs and dramatic glaciers tumbling from cloud shrouded summits into the ocean. The colour pallet was a thousand shades of misty grey, icy white, and ocean blue hues. Stormy skies, biting wind and horizontal snowfall greeted us, as we sipped coffee, taking in this atmospheric scene, wondering what the day held.

A big shout-out to Captain Oleg Klaptenko, his crew and Stephen, our expedition leader, for successfully dodging storm conditions ravaging Antarctic Peninsula these past forty-eight hours. Their vast experience, strategic planning and flexibility meant that once winds subsided in our relatively sheltered haven (gusts of forty knots), we were able to Zodiac cruise. Fantastic ice navigation skills!

Most folks saw the unusual sight of a sleeping Humpback whale, known technically as logging. This stunning giant, hanging on the ocean surface resembling a floating rock, occasionally lifted its rostrum enough to expose its blow hole to the surface.

Three species of seal were identified: the Leopard seal with its sleek reptilian head and huge mouth baring carnivorous teeth; Weddell seal with its short spotty cat-like face; and about six Crabeater seals that have a more pointed nose and what appears as a black eye mask making them look like a musketeer. According to Heidi, Crabeaters should more aptly be called a Krill-eater and are the most numerous seals on the planet. When all these varieties haul-out on ice, they are napping but what we need to remember is most of their life takes place in a stunning underwater environment, where they are masters of motion.

Bird sightings included six Snow petrels and the abundant Giant petrel.

Hey folks we are really in Antarctica! In the afternoon we relocated to Portal Point and right on cue, the wind dropped. Historically, Portal Point located on Reclus Peninsula, our second continental landing, provided access to the main spine of Antarctic Peninsula and the interior. Picture if you will this location in the 1950s when dog sledding teams working for the Falkland Island Dependency Survey (FIDS) run by the British, were based at Reclus Hut (now in a Falkland Islands/Malvinas museum) conducting a survey and science.

A two-meter swell kept the kayakers at bay, so they went Zodiac cruising. During a landing they lay down in the snow making a pyramid shape that resembled a Christmas tree when photographed from an outcrop above – great image!

The skiers and boarders enjoyed turns that were so good, they skinned up for a second run. The folks on snowshoes revelled in the challenge and views from their high point. A lot of bum sliding took place.

Beautiful evening light on distant peaks and icebergs concluded a magical day as the *Greg Mortimer* began a slow evening passage to Paradise Harbour and more adventures.



## How does snow become glacier ice?

Snowflakes are very light hexagonal crystals. Freshly fallen dry snow has a specific gravity as low as 0.1. Over periods of weeks or months the feathery crystals change to semi-round grains due to evaporation at the tips of the flakes. In the process, the snow gradually becomes more compact and is now termed ‘firn’. As more snow falls, the lowermost layers, at depths of 30 to 100 metres, are compressed into ice with a specific gravity of 0.9. This compressed ice is termed a glacier when it begins to flow downhill under the influence of gravity.





DAY 7 | Tuesday 26th November 2019

# Paradise Harbour, Orne Islands, Useful Island

<b>Position:</b>	06:30 hours	<b>Course:</b>	115°	<b>Wind Speed:</b>	5 knots	<b>Barometer:</b>	1008 hPa & steady
<b>Latitude:</b>	64°51'S	<b>Speed:</b>	6 knots	<b>Wind Direction:</b>	NE	<b>Air Temp:</b>	1°C
<b>Longitude:</b>	62°57'W					<b>Sea Temp:</b>	2°C

*The first thing I notice is the special clarity of light...The air has truly become invisible, a phenomenon that is unknown in the temperate and tropical realms of dust storms, humidity, pollen and pollution.* —David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert, 1992*

We started the morning in Paradise. The high winds of the last few days finally abated and by mid-morning blue skies were the backdrop to magnificent snow-covered mountains which engulf Paradise Harbour like a colosseum. The silky sea glittered with icebergs and bergy bits, occasionally behaving like fractured glass as penguins porpoised past. It felt almost balmy!

Our morning of activities began shortly after another sumptuous breakfast with a Zodiac cruise exploring our surrounds. Penguins harassed us, seals lounged on ice, and storm-petrels flitted past like butterflies. We turned the motor off in our Zodiac about two miles away from the ship and listened to the ice crack and the penguins honk and for a moment we were Zen in our surrounds. The calm that comes from being alone, silent, surrounded by wildness is soul food for any traveller – a form of meditation for others– and an unforgettable experience for all.

We broke our silence by cruising back to Brown Station via some Gentoo colonies. This Argentinian base was unmanned except by an army of penguins and we clambered up the wharf and through the station like professionals. A hike up the hill to a vantage point over Paradise Harbour produced magnificent views, which, naturally, was followed by a bobsled back down the hill. At first, the penguins looked on with alarm at our behaviour and then with mirth. What were these silly humans doing sliding down the hill? Antarctic hills are clearly penguins’ domain, as they then showed us how to sled down the slopes on

tummies, not backsides, before they then jumped into the sea to harass our Zodiacs and swim past our ship.

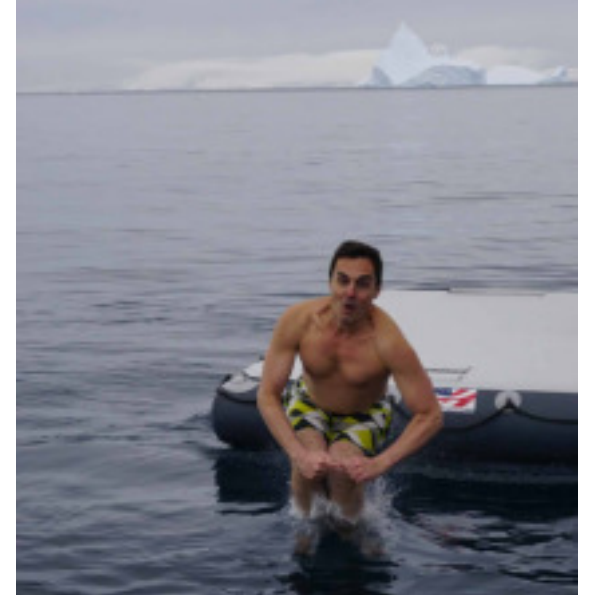
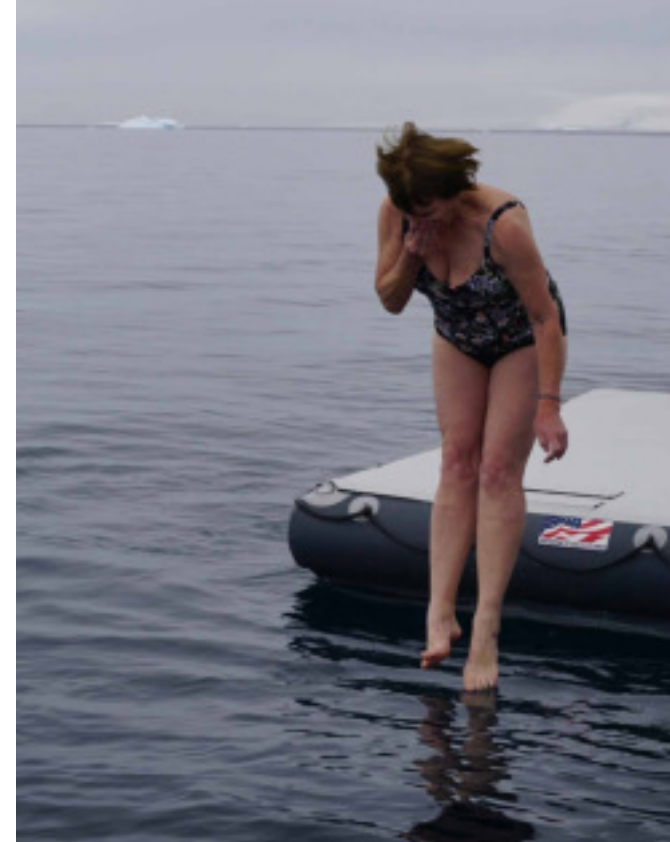
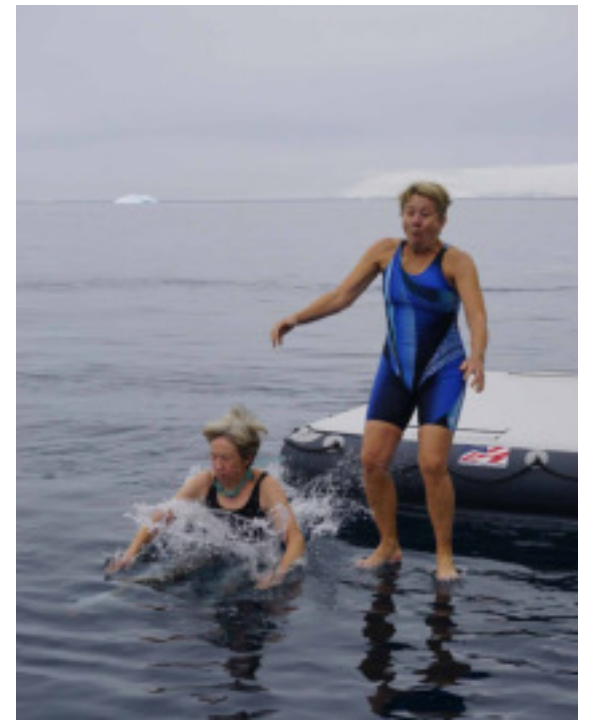
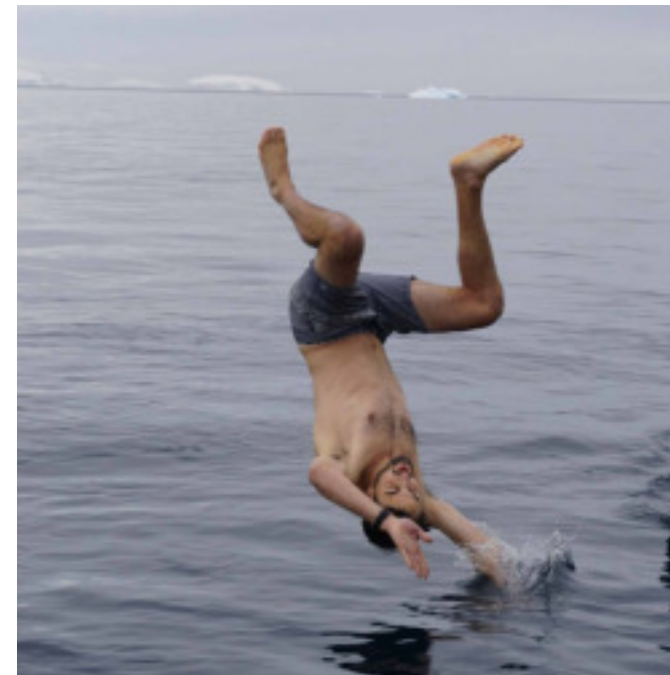
We headed off just before lunch and cruised through the glorious Errera channel. Mountain after mountain were divided up by enormous glaciers, each an ancient frozen river slowly making its way to the sea. Our afternoon was spent exploring Orne Islands, a small island group home to colonies of chinstrap and gentoos penguins and yet more surreal scenery. We got back to the ship just after 1700 where expedition leader Stephen decided it was time to get people wet and have a polar plunge.

Fifty odd crazed people flung themselves off the ship into -2-degree water, their mania increasing after they hit the near frozen water. Ice cream headaches that stretched from toe nails to the tips of ears were soothed by a tippie of vodka and jump into the sauna. The buzz at the bar afterwards was electric as people recounted the moment they went mad hitting that ice laden sea.

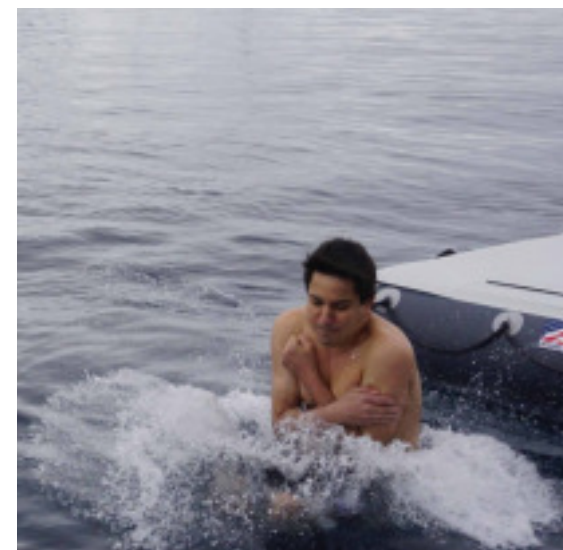
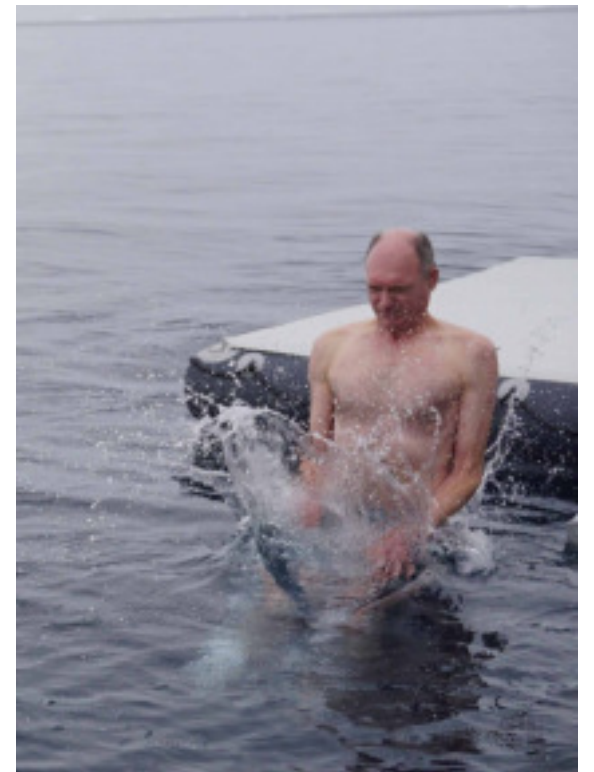
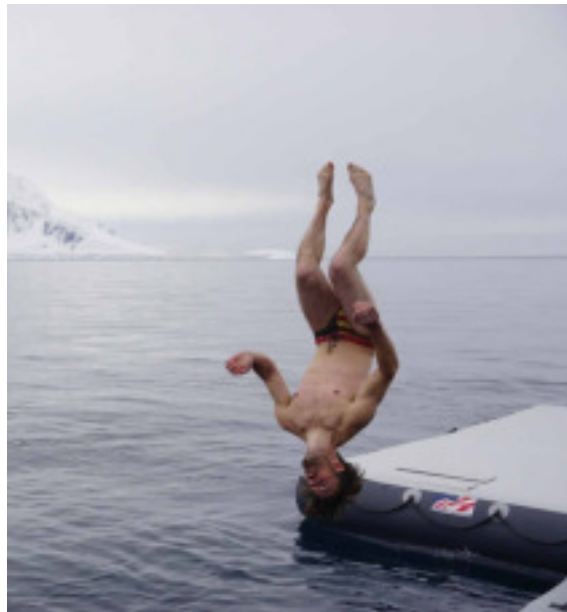
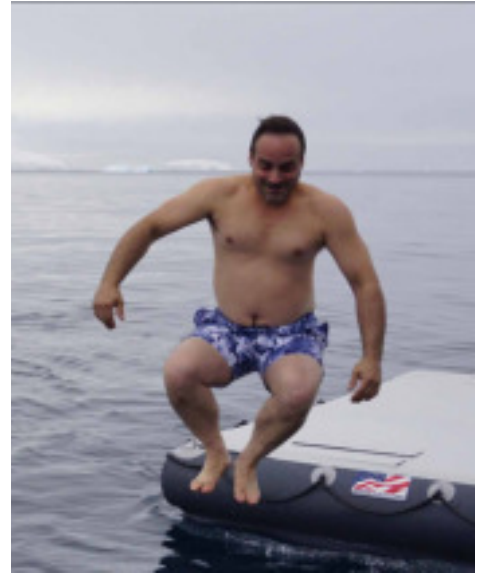
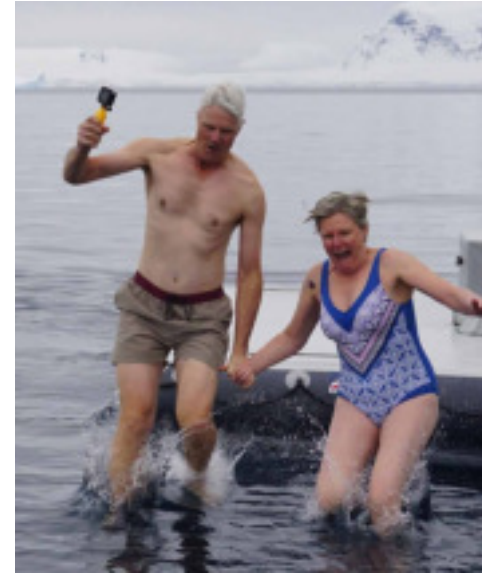
After the shenanigans of the plunge, we went up to the top deck and ate outside for the first-time courtesy of our world-famous BBQ. What a setup and what a meal! Swaying to the beats of Elvis and the Beatles, we watched Humpbacks swim by as we ate en route to Useful Island. After dinner, forty intrepid campers headed off the ship to try to get some shut eye under the (almost) setting sun while the rest of us crawled into our beds aboard exhausted. Another massive and amazing day!



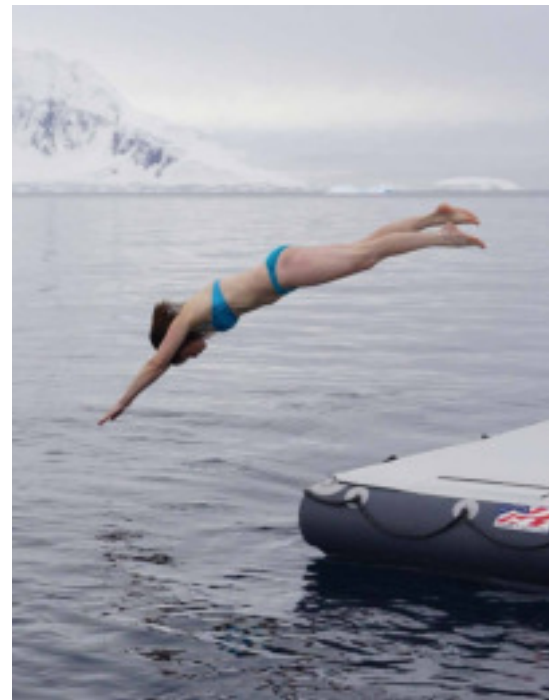














# Port Lockroy, Lemaire Channel

Position:	06:45 hours	Course:	218°
Latitude:	64°45'S	Speed:	6.5 knots
Longitude:	063°19'W		

Wind Speed:	8 knots	Barometer:	1003 mb & rising
Wind Direction:	NE	Air Temp:	-1°C
		Sea Temp:	2°C

*There is only one short link in the food chain between a diatom and a one-hundred-ton blue whale – between one cell and the largest of all animals – and that link is the Antarctic krill. —David G. Campbell, The Crystal Desert, 1992*

At 64 degrees south, the polar night in late November is very short, in fact - it never gets dark. Dawn is a very early affair; and sunrises are best described as elusive - luck with weather and a healthy dose of willpower are required to see one. On this morning, expeditioners bivouacing on an isolated island in the middle of the Gerlache Strait are stirred awake by the dulcet calls of hundreds of Gentoo penguins.

And each time they turn in their sleeping bags the sky has turned a different colour. Finally the sun crests above the mountain peaks and shafts of golden sunlight pierce the clouds, illuminating different icebergs in turn. As the expeditioners rise and take in the sight before them, a Weddell seal hauls out for an early morning nap on the ice. Two bemused and slightly curious Adelie penguins stop by to see us off as we load the Zodiacs back to the ship.

The anchor is raised and we are venturing further south still. The ship seems to be steering a course that will take us right into the mountains of Anvers Island but miraculously the winding Neumayer channel reveals itself just in time and Captain skillfully navigates a path, carving a line between towering ice and rock cliffs and tucks the boat into the shelter of Port Lockroy.

A Union Jack flaps in the wind, the flag mast protruding from a rock now firmly occupied by nesting Gentoos. We are treated to a constant array of courtship behaviour and rock thievery. Beside them, the black buildings with red trimmings of British ‘Base A’ preserve a slice of quintessential Britishness frozen in time from the wartime era. A cookbook lays open on the kitchen counter with a recipe for ‘Seal Brain Omelette’. Woolen longjohns hang drying above the aga. Jars of Marmite and tins of Brisket Beef and Golden Syrup line the pantry. Boxes of Ilford photographic paper sit on the darkroom table. The naval personnel and scientists might very well have left just yesterday.

We slip through the glassy waters of the Lemaire Channel - an impossibly narrow and seemingly un-navigable cleft of water between Booth island and the Peninsula. Loud cracks reverberate overhead as ice splits from hanging glaciers. Mesmerised, we watch the mirror-like reflections slide by and the brash ice separate as we slice through it. Suddenly the waters are broken by a tall rising dorsal fin and a male orca blows. Enraptured, we watch as the orca parallels the ship spy-hopping from floe to floe, relentlessly searching for unsuspecting seals. Such a fitting end to mark our most southerly point.

A most gorgeous evening unfolds as we turn the bow north; the mountains are bathed in enchanting golden sunlight, the sea is glassy smooth, only punctured by two humpbacks surfacing and fluking in front of the boat. You couldn't ask for a more perfect departing view of the Antarctic Peninsula awash in all its glory. We are left both buzzing and nostalgic.







DAY 9 | Thursday 28th November 2019

## Drake Passage

**Position:** 05:20 hours  
**Latitude:** 62°55'S  
**Longitude:** 63°39'W

**Course:** 350°  
**Speed:** 13 knots

**Wind Speed:** 5 knots  
**Wind Direction:** SW

**Barometer:** 1006 hPa  
**Air Temp:** -3°C  
**Sea Temp:** 4°C

***There are other places in the world where nature stuns, amazes or utterly dominates man's achievements, but there are few places where all these forces combine. Antarctica is a continent that continually humbles man and not least man's greed. —HRH Prince Edward, Foreword, *Wild Ice: Antarctic Journeys****

Drake Passage welcomed us with fairly gentle seas but still reminded us to take care while moving around the ship. Our day was spent watching an entourage of seabirds. Cape petrels, Storm petrels, Giant petrels, Light-mantled albatross and Antarctic petrels followed us on our way. With the choppy waters, only Annette our 'whale whisperer' managed to sight two Cuvier's Beaked whales and a Sperm whale.

In the morning we learned about oceanography and its connection with ocean ecology, a crucial factor in defining the locations of penguin and other seabird colonies. Sea ice formation in the northern hemisphere is a driving force of global ocean currents, specifically the 'Great Ocean Conveyor Belt', which distributes heat and nutrients around the planet.

As we navigate Drake Passage, we are also traversing the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, the mightiest ocean current of the planet which, at its narrowest extent is squeezed between Cape Horn and the Antarctic Peninsula. Some of us even checked the sea water temperature recordings to witness our crossing of the Polar Front, where we entered relatively warmer waters after leaving the cold nutrient-rich Antarctic waters.

Alexander's presentation outlined the historical context of whaling in the region where, in little over 100 years, 2million of the great whales were decimated for their oil, meat, baleen and skin. We realised how lucky we have been with our whale sightings during this voyage.

Alexander finished by talking about contemporary whaling: the low numbers of whales taken each year by first nations' people and the recent decision for Japan to follow Norway with commercial whaling in their waters. Thankfully, at last, whaling has ended in Antarctica!

The galley performed its magic, treating us with a delicious afternoon tea.

Rock Steve hosted the evening recap and sparked our memories on this adventure. There are just so many amazing moments and experiences, reminding us to slow down and let our minds wander. Sharing our feelings and memories gave our expeditioners a chance to appreciate each other's vastly different views and experiences during this voyage to the heart of nature.

Annette introduced us to Geolocation Journeys, a research project founded by Tasmanian seabird biologist and Aurora naturalist Dr Jamie Cleeland. This important collaboration between the University of Tasmania and other Antarctic research programs tracks seabirds and seals with small tracking devices, which measure distances travelled and locations. The result is a richer understanding of the extensive journeys these creatures undertake and the territory they cover. Our onboard shop stocks bird and seal brooches made from recycled road signs that incorporate in their design a used tracking device retrieved from the bird or animal. Each brooch comes with a map certificate showing the individual bird or animal's tracking path. Proceeds from these beautiful art pieces go directly to funding this important research.

We finished the day with 'Around Cape Horn', a black and white documentary filmed by Captain Irving Johnson aboard the bark Peking in 1928.





# Tierra Del Fuego, Beagle Channel

**Position:** 07:30 hours  
**Latitude:** 57°38'N  
**Longitude:** 65°33'W

**Course:** 350°  
**Speed:** 10.7 knots

**Wind Speed:** 15 knots  
**Wind Direction:** SE

**Barometer:** 985 hPa  
**Air Temp:** 1°C  
**Sea Temp:** 6°C

*A Journey is a person in itself, no two are alike, and all plans, safeguards, policies and coercion are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us.* —John Steinbeck

Our last day at sea, and once again we woke to the gentle rocking of the Drake Passage. After watching Irwin Johnston's 1929 film about sailing around Cape Horn in a barque, the more intrepid among us who were hoping for a 'grade A storm' were bound to be disappointed. But most of us were very relieved, and happy to make it to breakfast without needing to tightly grip the hand rails in the hallway! Through a combination of good timing and skilful navigation, our captain had once again given us a calm passage across what is often regarded as one of the most treacherous stretches of ocean on the planet.

After breakfast, Steve informed that 'The Drake' is a relatively recent phenomenon, having existed for only 35 million years, give or take a few million. Prior to this time, it was possible to walk from Buenos Aires to Brisbane, with land bridges connecting the Antarctic Peninsula to South America, and East Antarctica to Tasmania. These connections meant that warm, subtropical currents were able to circulate to much higher latitudes than they do today, and, like an insulating blanket, keep Antarctica warm and ice free.

We learnt of a time before the ice, when Antarctica was forested, and plesiosaurs and giant marine lizards called mosasaurs swam in a shallow sea in what would later become the James Ross Island area. We learnt how Steve and a team of palaeontologists from around the world spent weeks on end scouring the hills of Vega and James Ross islands in search

of elusive dinosaur fossils. It was only when they called on one of their pilots to use the spinning rotors of a helicopter as a 'snow blower' did some tiny fragments of a rhea-sized raptor eventually reveal themselves from a 70 million-year-old rocky tomb. And if any of us thought the biggest animals to have soared through the skies above Antarctica were the great wandering albatrosses, Steve reminded us these birds were dwarfed by the azdarchid pterosaurs of the Late Cretaceous, which had a wingspan of around 5 metres.

Although the plesiosaurs and ammonites are no longer with us, the waters of the Drake Passage are now swarming in shrimp-like crustaceans called krill. Heidi enthralled us with a talk about these charismatic little animals that sit at the centre of the Antarctic food chain, supporting everything from the giant whales, through to penguins, seals and even squid. New research has shown that Antarctic krill can live for up to ten years, and the enormous swarms that attract all the feeding whales, seals and penguins are comprised almost entirely of females. Where the males are, and how they spawn remains a mystery.

After lunch, we learnt about the process of disembarkation, and finally had to part with our trusty 'muck boots' and life jackets. The prospect of returning to life on land suddenly dawns on us. How will we all cope without the splendid food, table service and dulcet tones of our Expedition Leader Stephen gently waking us each day, reminding us that another mouth-watering breakfast will be ready in 30 minutes? All the more reason to savour our final breakfast when we awake in Ushuaia





# Ushuaia

**Position:** 07:00  
**Latitude:** 54°49'S  
**Longitude:** 68°18'W

**Course:** Docked at Ushuaia

**Wind Speed:** 8 knots  
**Wind Direction:** SW  
**Barometer:** 979.9 hPa  
**Air Temp:** 7°C  
**Sea Temp:** 5°C

*Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats...simply messing.* —Water Rat to Mole from *Wind in the Willows*

In soft evening light our Argentinian pilot stepped aboard the GM from his pilot boat and navigated the final leg of our course from the eastern end of Beagle Channel to the bustling port of Ushuaia. After breakfast we bid a sad farewell to fellow adventurers, the Aurora team and our ship's crew, reflecting, as we did, on 12 remarkable Antarctic days.

How utterly thrilling back then at the start to cross south over the Antarctic Convergence and enter a world of ice. Our first beautiful iceberg was something to treasure, along with our first penguins literally flying through the water. Our very first steps on land at Half Moon Island, amid penguins to-ing and fro-ing from the shoreline, and a humpback whale slowly cruising by, delivered a wondrous new reality.

After a morning landing at Elephant Point to make our acquaintance with elephant seals and gentoo penguins, we scooted across to Deception Island. The graphic starkness of this volcanic island, once a thriving whaling hub, brought a haunting feeling at the sight of those enormous rusted oil tanks once filled to the brim with whale oil. But soon we were making our way out through Neptune's Bellows and south along the spine of the Peninsula, marvelling at countless glaciers pouring down mountain valleys, while icebergs sailed by.

Our tranquil Zodiac cruise at the Melchior Islands, with its crystal-clear water and surrounds of ice, offered a glorious morning. Neko Harbor in the afternoon was our first continental landing and it was here that a young couple pledged their lives to one another in a simple

ceremony on the snow, while others hot-tailed it up the hill to look out over calving glaciers and thunderous avalanches.

We rugged up against bitter cold at Wilhelmina Bay for a Zodiac cruise and snow activities on what proved to be our chilliest day, small pancakes of sea ice forming around us. Never mind the cold: nothing could fully prepare us for the beauty of the ice.

At Portal Point our snowshoers roped up and set off, while our mighty skiers scaled the higher reaches for a brilliant downhill run. What a picture postcard.

Our day at Paradise Harbour saw clouds dissolve into sunshine and balmy conditions. Our colourful kayaking fleet looked sensational on the mirror calm bay, the paddlers soaking up the picturesque surrounds. It was activities all round with our skiers and snowshoers enjoying premium time ashore while the rest of us divided our morning scaling the snow slopes behind Brown Station, and Zodiac cruising along Skontorp Glacier.

Our visit to the friendly Brits at Port Lockroy's 'Base A' offered a flutter of retail therapy and a snapshot of Antarctic life in the 1950s and 60s. Outside the hut, gentoos and snowy sheathbills nested around the foundations. Our grand finale boasted a magnificent ship cruise down the famed Lemaire Channel with its 900-metre high mountains rising vertically on either side. Finally, sadly, unwillingly, we turned our good ship northward, Antarctica gilded in pastel evening light as we wound our way up the Peninsula and out into Drake Passage.

What a wealth of special memories to carry home.





# Kayaking Log

By Frank Witter

**Kayaking Masters:** Frank Witter, Lisa Deziel, Michael Gray

**Kayakers:**

Sajeela Cormack	David Bridger	Angus Donaldson
Kris Donagan	Mark Donagan	Jeremy Fernandez
Scott Hearnden	Brett Hearnden	Kris Honey
Geoff Jones	Barbara Jones	Andrew Jones
Natalie Jones	Stefanie Jones	Sue McPherson
Dominick Monteleone	Michael Peedom	Beth Peedom
Julia Reinspach	Ignacio Scopetta	

*The kayak is without comparison the best one-man vessel to be found.*  
—Fridtjof Nansen

**DAY 3: PM: Half Moon Island** – Distance: 6.8 km

Greyish skies with 10–15 knots of wind. Lunchtime arrival at Half Moon Island for first group kayak outing (all 20), first Gentoo penguins and one resting Humpback sighted. First big group outing getting used to drysuits and loading off the floating dock.

**DAY 4: AM: Elephant Point**

No Paddling due to 25–35 Knot winds, did a Zodiac cruise with lots of Gentoo Penguins and Elephant seal weaners up on a glacier to keep us all enthralled. Part of the group was able to follow a couple Humpbacks out in the fog for a bit.

**PM: Deception/Whalers Bay**

Still too windy to paddle, so group rode Zodiacs in with other passenger group to hike up to Neptune’s Window and check out remains of the old whaling station inside a live volcano. At the foot of Neptune’s Window we were able to spend some time with both a Fur seal and a Leopard seal snoozing on the shoreline.

**DAY 5: AM: Melchior Islands** – Distance: 7.4 km

Very windy most everywhere, but our captain very creatively tucked us into the Melchior Island group for a morning of sheltered paddling. After a bit of a swelly launch, it calmed nicely. Brilliant sunny paddle with lovely Weddell seals, a nice landing on an isolated island where some practiced their handstands. Paddling was amongst fantastic ice canyons and a labyrinth of icebergs. On the return paddle some took time to drift through the middle of the channel and take in the sheer scale of everything. Also incredible views of our antlike skiers ascending the snowfields.

**PM: Neko Harbour**

Windy (gusts from 5–40 knots) and too rough to launch at Neko Harbor, so Zodiac cruise and landing at the Gentoos with great opportunities to try bum sliding and getting some views while listening to glacial thunder rocking the harbour with some berg calvings. Part of our kayak group took a break to get married on the beach and took the calving in stride during their vows as a good omen.

**DAY 6: AM: Wilhelmina Bay: Blanchard Glacier**

Windy morning kept us off the water at Wilhelmina Bay, but went Zodiac cruising to watch whales: both a large and small Minke along with a lazy resting Humpback. Also saw some Weddell and Crabeater seals during our 90 minute Zodiac cruise.

**PM: Portal Point**

attempted a paddle, but too much swell to launch safely, much to everyone’s relief (two metre bounce at the floating dock). Zodiac cruised amongst the icebergs to (one with a very cool blue grotto), landed to climb to a great view and bum slid down. Part of the group landed in another spot amongst Weddells and team pyramid photo building against the snow.

**DAY 7: AM: Paradise Harbour/Brown Base** – Distance: 11 km

Gentoos in abundance, Blue eyed cormorants...fantastic paddle in beautiful sea ice, illuminated by brilliant sunshine and blue skies. Minke and Humpbacks in journey after a continental landing.

**PM: Orne Islands** – Distance: 4.6 km

Orne Islands paddle to see cormorants, Gentoos AND Chinstrap penguins, Crabeater seals, Snowy Sheathbills followed by a nice paddle back to ship in time for the polar plunge... kayakers very well represented! Topped off our day with a BBQ, camping on Useful Island.

**DAY 8: AM: Port Lockroy/Jougla** – Distance: 5.2 km

10 knots wind, mix of rain with spots of sun. Morning kayak paddle with no landing, around the Gentoo colonies and a very nice private viewing on of a lazy Leopard seal who left our group feeling very privileged to share its icy domain. We returned to the ship for a quick wardrobe change to go to Port Lockroy Museum.

**PM: Lemaire Channel**

Lemaire Channel cruise under amazing sunshine that went deep into the night, warming the outer decks of the ship and had passengers spellbound for the end of their Antarctic Peninsula experience





# Snow Shoeing Log

By Hilary Cave

**Snow Shoe Masters:** Hilary Cave, Bronwen Waters, Laetitia Campe, Peter Wainwright, Kevin Nicholas, Michael Roberts

<b>Snow Shoers:</b>		
Megan Alessandrini	Patrick Alessandrini	Allison Bayani
Felicity Bloom	Ross Brandon	Jose Vianello Netto
Denise Moore	Dianna Mitchell	Joycelyn Siew
Kathryn Thompson	Bruce King	Yulanie Harris
Michelle Kowalczyk	Jennifer Moore	Susan Beatty
Craig Pritchard	Michelle Pritchard	Cleat Watson
Marilena Watson	Janet White	

## November 22nd PM: Half Moon Island

This small island was our first outing after crossing Drake passage and for most of us the first visit to both Gentoo and Chinstrap penguin colonies. There was only a very light breeze and very low cloud, making for atmospheric conditions for our first outing. As we left the ship our Zodiac zoomed off in a different direction to the other passengers, as we headed to our own landing spot.

Getting off the Zodiacs we stepped over large stones in the shallow shore water, and with our first steps onto the snow immediately saw our first Weddell seal, just 15 metres from our landing. It occasionally lifted a head as we donned our snow shoes and sorted out our walking poles for the first time, but otherwise lay quite nonchalant to our presence.

We made our way up the most prominent hill on the island. It was a gradual climb and took us into the lower levels of cloud and we reached our high point after about 30 minutes of casual hiking. Nesting Antarctic skuas were well camouflaged on the exposed rocky ridgetop, and our track meandered around these rocky outcrops to give the skuas distance. At our high point the cloud would clear in windows, revealing high snowy mountains above, and patches of cracked sea ice in the bay below.

Coming back down the hill we got the hang of the snow shoes and stomped along the far beach to the abandoned Argentinian Camara base. As the wind scoured wind scoops around the buildings it seemed that new orange paint was all that was holding the old wooden buildings together.

As we walked from the base to our Zodiac pick-up and to join the other passengers, we came across more seals and penguins, culminating with a large group of rookeries right by the Zodiac pick-up point.

## November 24th PM Neko Harbor

This was our first landing on the Antarctic continent. Fittingly, it was a stormy afternoon! It was reasonably mild, but with a wind that took away the warmth if you exposed the skin. The very light snow that was falling on arrival soon transformed into rain as wind gusts picked up during our outing.

We separated into three groups depending on how high we wished to go on our trek, and we roped up for glacier travel and climbed high above the bay.

## November 25th PM Portal Point

This is a historic site of Cape Reclus hut used in 1956–7 by the British Antarctic Survey researchers and explorers. It was from here, using dog sled teams, that they accessed the high plateaus of the Antarctic Peninsula to traverse to Hope Bay.

Here we roped up for glacier travel and followed the skiers skinning track climbing high above the bay. Our big loop on the snow slopes gave us ample opportunity to take in the spectacular views of glaciers, icebergs and mountains forming the spine of the Peninsula.

## November 26th AM Brown Base, Paradise Bay

We landed at Brown Base, which had a scattering of freshly painted red buildings, with many Gentoo penguins wandering amongst the base. We made our way up a short but steep snow slope and reached a scenic snowy plateau. We made a circuit around the plateau, initially following a ridgeline where the hill dropped away to the ocean, giving us a constant view as we walked. We viewed the kayakers and Zodiacs amongst the ice in the harbour below – they looked so small! As we continued, the view changed from ocean to impressive glaciers and icefalls. Returning to Brown Base, some members took the opportunity to take off snow shoes and slide down the slope towards base.

## November 27th AM Jougla Point / Port Lockroy

We shared our landing with Gentoo penguins, many already sitting on rocky nests. Skuas were constantly present, no doubt looking for an opportunity to steal a penguin egg. We made a wandering loop of Jougla Point, with great views of Mt Luigi and the Seven Sisters on Weinke Island. We then stepped out over water-filled tide cracks and onto the sea ice. This enabled us to trace a route in front of the glowing blue glacier face. We kept our distance from the towering ice cliffs that threatened to tumble without warning.

After our loop on Jougla Point, we had a short Zodiac shuttle over to the Island of Port Lockroy and explored the historic British Antarctic Survey research hut and post office.





# Ski Touring Log

By Mike Roberts

<b>Snow Shoe Masters:</b>	Kevin Nicholas, Michael Roberts, Bronwen Waters, Laetitia Campe, Peter Wainwright, Hilary Cave		
<b>Ski Tour participants:</b>			
Todd Smith	Ryder Smith	Ashley Currie	
Michael Pearson	Scott Thompson	Amy Vogt	
Stephen Vogt			

**November 22nd (Kev)**  
**PM Livingstone Island**  
It was under a grey and foreboding sky that we came ashore on Livingstone Island. Within moments we encountered Gentoo and Chinstrap penguins, low flying Giant Petrels, and some slumbering Weddell seals further down the beach. To cap it off a Humpback whale was sighted just off the coast.

Apart from the wildlife, we were here for our skiing expedition shake down. We familiarised ourselves with our ski touring equipment, and spent some time practising our avalanche rescue techniques. We were ready to go up.

It was a little intimidating ascending into the low cloud from our small spit of land, but we made the most of finally being here to ski in Antarctica. We climbed up to a small rock buttress, carefully avoiding some nearby crevasses, and were soon ready to descend back to the beach. The poor visibility made skiing difficult, but it gave us good confidence for the coming days

**November 23rd**  
**PM Whalers Bay**  
As we cruised into Deception Island, the cloud hung onto the very tops of the peaks that make up the crater rim of the volcano above Whalers Bay. Our Zodiac pulled up on the black fine-pebbled sand beach, by the remains of buildings and tanks of the whaling station that operated here last century.

It was an eerie and atmospheric spot, and we made our way around the back of the tanks to get onto a tongue of snow where we could put our skins and skis on and make our way up the volcano slopes.

It was a gentle gradual climb, and the weather was mild with not too much wind for us to keep climbing to gain height for what looked like a great ski run in the corn snow. We climbed a little further into the cloud than we may have on another day, as the light coating of black ash on the snow surface gave great definition in the flat light!

We transitioned and enjoyed a great corn run. Steve, Amy and Bron attempted to coordinate their skiing to leave a line of ‘Ash-8’s’ in the snow. Looking back, you could see the white-washed ski lines drawn through the ash coasted snow.

We left it at one ski run today, as we wanted to have some time to walk amongst and take some photos of the station remains. A great and very unique ski outing.

**November 24th (Kev)**  
**AM Melchior Islands**

We awoke early before breakfast to discover that there had been a change of plans overnight. Our trusty EL Stephen had spent considerable time re-planning our schedule due to unfavourable weather and sea ice conditions. The Melchior Islands group is sandwiched between Anvers and Brabant Islands, and Aurora Expeditions had never skied there before, so it was a case of look out the bridge window and come up with an idea.

Directly after breakfast a Zodiac was dispatched to an island that looked promising. The word came back from the guides aboard that Bremen Island indeed had a safe landing and attractive ski slopes. The skiing group followed soon after and excitedly prepared for the ascent once ashore. It was an easy climb to the summit 100 metres above sea level, but the view of the islands all around us, and glimpses of the continent in the distance, kept us enthralled all the way. The ski and board down offered a beautiful run on perfect spring snow. Indeed, good enough to do again, so some went back to the summit for a second run, and the rest took a Zodiac cruise through some narrow channels just around the corner, where we found Weddell seals hauled out on sea ice directly in front a stunning blue glacier face.

So it was a first for all of us, guides included, and showed that when adventuring on the Antarctic Peninsula it’s important to keep your eyes open for new locations and adapt the plan; even small islands can offer very memorable outings.

**PM Neko Harbour (Laetitia)**  
The afternoon landing at Neko Harbor meant that we were with all the other passengers for a change. We ascended into the cloud once again, but this time, just as we prepared to ski down, we had a little bit of sunshine appear, which made for an excellent run down through all the hikers and snowshoers, all the way to the beach.

**November 25th (Pete)**  
**PM Portal Point**  
This morning there were still some strong SE winds in many areas of the Antarctic Peninsula region. Captain Oleg and EL Stephen had wisely sought shelter in a secluded glacial bay in the back of Wilhelmina Bay, where we were rewarded with some phenomenal Zodiac cruising, with a Humpback and several Minke whales in the area.

In the afternoon we were excited to get an area where skiing was a possibility. The spot is known as Portal Point on Reclus Peninsula. The wind had now dropped to a much more manageable 15kts or so, and we landed in a slight swell at low tide at the spot where the Reclus hut used to stand. Only the foundations remain but were still buried under snow at this time. Portal point is one of the few places with relatively easy access up to the Forbidden Plateau and the main spine of the Antarctic Peninsula and onwards to the interior, and the Falkland Island Dependency Survey (FIDS – now the British Antarctic Survey) launched many expeditions from here using dogsled teams.

Bronwen, Peter, Scott, Ryder, Ash and Mike skinned along the spine of Portal Point past Southern Giant petrels and Weddell seals, and onwards up the ramp between several heavily crevassed areas. We reached a high point at ~215m above sea level, ripped off the skins and transitioned. We had a few centimetres of fresh snow over firm surfaces that made for some very pleasant turns for about half the run followed by some good spring skiing. So good in fact that we decided to do a second lap on it. In no time at all we were

# Ski Touring Log

By Mike Roberts

back on top looking down again at the ocean on both sides of the peninsula. Feeling like we were the last of the expeditioners still on land, we transitioned rapidly and had another great run down, including a bit of poling, schushing and side-stepping/bootpacking to get back to the final slope above the landing. All in all a great outing!

**November 26th**  
**AM Paradise Bay / Leith Peak**  
There was moody high cloud in the sky over Paradise Bay as we took a Zodiac across the harbour from Brown Base, to a landing below Leith Peak. The water in Paradise Bay was a calm, still and deep inky blue, with a scattering of ‘bergys bits’.

As we started to make our way up from our landing site, we had a binding failure. This didn’t mean the end of this ski outing or trip for Scott though, as he had brought a spare binding part for his ski, and we soon had it brought to us by Zodiac and switched out and screwed it on in no time. This was definitely one of the fastest remote binding replacements we could think of!

It was very scenic looking down into the harbour as we skinned up, the light on the clearing clouds making beautiful reflections on the still water. We soon reached a saddle that overlooked Brown Station and looked down onto glaciers and ice falls that you could see slowly cracking and leaning towards the sea.

Keven and Mike led some of the party up a little higher up the slope, while Bronwen, Steve and Amy bagged a great ski run down on the flat of the glacier below. During this time the skies had gradually cleared to reveal sunshine for the first time on our trip. The shadows and relief of the glaciers and peaks was accentuated with this light, making for great photos, and a long ski run with the most amazing Antarctic backdrop.

Once back at the Zodiac pick-up, it was unanimously decided that this was the best ski outing of the voyage. The great snow, the nice long run, amazing views, and good company all combined for the kind of ski outing we’d all dreamed of on a ski expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula.



**November 27th (Peter)**  
**AM Doumer Peak / Port Lockroy**  
Our band of skiers was a bit smaller this morning, possibly from the big morning on Leith Peak the previous day, the overnight bivouacking on Useful Island, or due to the anticipation of spending a bit more time exploring Jougla Point on foot and visiting Goudier Island (home of the wonderfully restored ‘British Base A’ and it’s small shop and museum), or any combination of the above.

Nevertheless Ryder, Mike and Ash joined Hilary, Laetita and Peter on an outing on the slopes of Doumer Peak in Port Lockroy. We loaded the Zodiac very promptly with Robyn at the helm. We had an inquisitive Brown skua check us all out at the landing and in no time we were skiing up the steep slope above the landing. Consensus determined that rather than lapping the short-ish slope above the landing, we go for a proper scenic ski tour and head up towards the shoulder on Doumer Peak. We got great views of Mt Luigi and the Fief Range aka Snow white and the Seven Dwarves, the Wall Range to the north and the lower slopes of Mt Français and Agammemnon Peak. From about 300 metres on the shoulder of Doumer peak we could also look south past the Pelltier Channel towards the Lemaire Channel. Once transitioned and having taken a few obligatory highpoint shots we were able to ski and glide a surprisingly long way through the flats back towards the landing and Goudier Island. The final few turns provided some steep and very pleasant spring skiing turns.

Stephen kindly met us at the landing and swiftly loaded the Zodiac with an hour to spare affording us some quality time to check out the Gentoo rookery and British base on Goudier Island. We watched the various courtship behaviour of many pairs of Gentoos and explored around the museum before buying some souvenirs and sending postcards from the small gift shop.

Many of us will now have well deserved ‘Antarctic Ski Club’ stickers and badges on some of our gear! What a fantastic end to a great trip with a really lovely group of people.

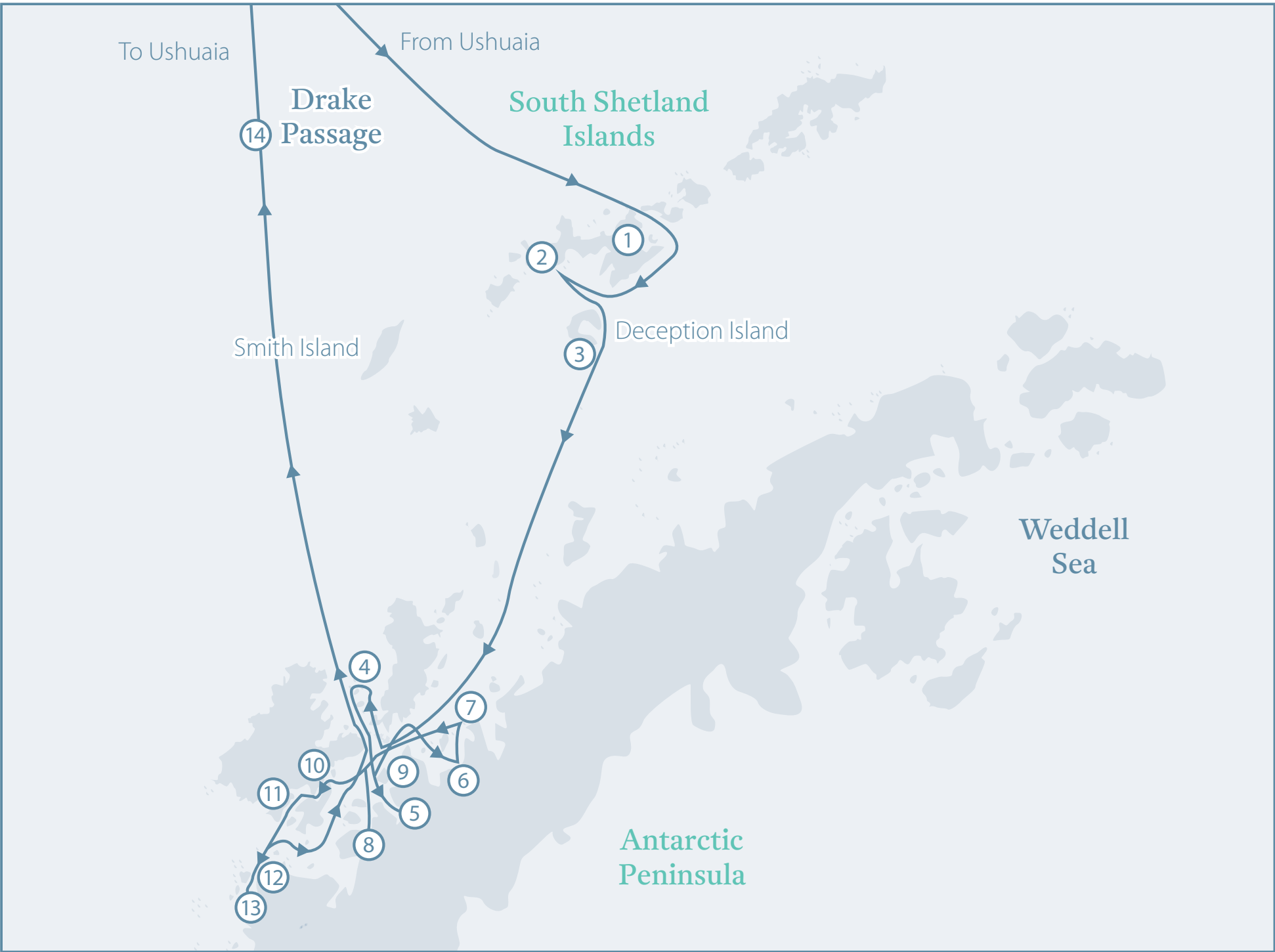






# Spirit of Antarctica

19 – 30 November 2019 | Distance Travelled: 1,390 nautical miles (2,575 kilometres)  
Southernmost point of voyage: 65° 7.3151 S, 64° 1.2717 W



## Destinations

- |                                     |                                   |                                |                       |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 01 Half Moon Bay (Livingston Is)    | 05 Neko Harbor                    | 09 Orne Island                 | 13 Southernmost point |
| 02 Elephant Point (Livingston Is)   | 06 Wilhelmina Bay (Zodiac cruise) | 10 Useful Island (camping)     | 14 Drake Passage      |
| 03 Whalers Bay (Deception Is)       | 07 Portal Point                   | 11 Port Lockroy & Jougla Point |                       |
| 04 Melchior Islands (Zodiac cruise) | 08 Brown Base, Paradise Harbour   | 12 Lemaire Channel             |                       |





# Bird Species Log

Bird Species	November									
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Gentoo Penguin			x	x	x	x	x	x		
Chinstrap Penguin			x		x		x	x		
Adelie Penguin								x		
Magellanic Penguin	x									
Wandering Albatross		x							x	
Southern Royal Albatross		x							x	x
Black-browed Albatross	x	x							x	x
Grey-headed Albatross		x							x	x
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		x							x	
Southern Giant Petrel	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x
Northern Giant Petrel										x
Antarctic Petrel									x	
Cape Petrel		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x
Snow Petrel					x	x		x	x	
Antarctic Fulmar		x	x		x		x	x	x	
Blue Petrel		x	x						x	
Soft-plumaged Petrel									x	
White-chinned Petrel	x	x							x	x
Sooty Shearwater	x	x								x
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		x							x	
Wilson's Storm-petrel		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)	x									
Antarctic Cormorant			x	x	x	x	x	x		
Snowy Sheathbill			x	x	x		x	x		
Chilean Skua	x									
Brown Skua			x	x			x	x	x	
South Polar Skua								x		
Kelp Gull	x		x	x	x		x	x		
Dolphin Gull	x									
South American Tern	x									
Antarctic Tern			x	x	x	x	x	x		



Antarctic Petrel



Blue Eyed Shag



Gentoo Penguins



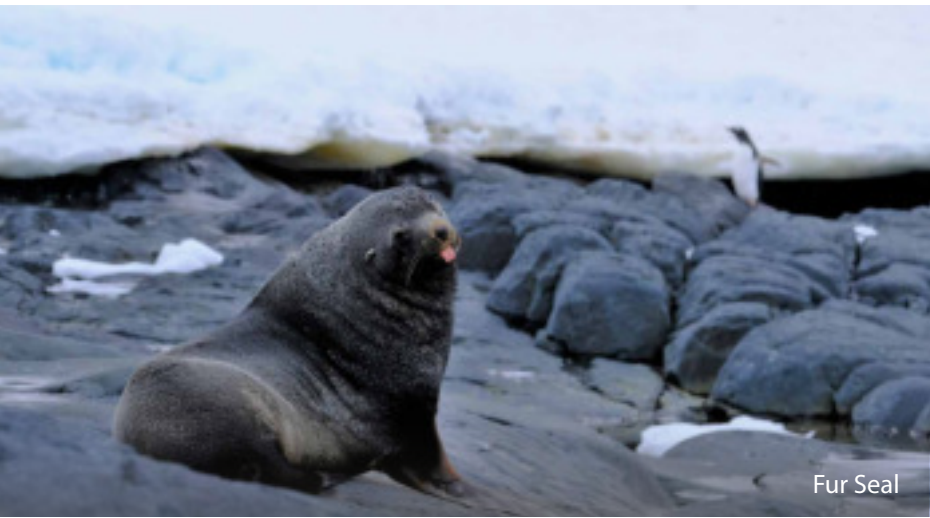
Cape Petrel

# Mammals Log

Mammals	November									
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Antarctic Fur Seal				x			x			
Southern Elephant Seal				x						
Crabeater Seal						x				
Weddell Seal			x	x	x	x	x	x		
Leopard Seal				x						
Antarctic Minke Whale						x	x			
Fin Whale		x	x		x					
Humpback Whale			x	x		x	x	x		
Orca								x		
Sperm Whale									x	
Unidentified Beaked Whale								x		
Peale's Dolphin										x



Humpback Whale



Fur Seal



Weddell Seal



Elephant Seals



Leopard Seal





Expeditioners

Megan Alessandrini	Ash Currie	Grace Hitchin	Hai Luo	Michael Peedom	Ivan Solomano	Steve Vogt
Pat Alessandrini	Jing Dai	Annette Honey	Shunshuo Luo	Elvi Porter	Ilya Speranza	John Vollrath
Michael Aw	Kris Donagan	Kristi Honey	Lili Ma	Craig Pritchard	Andy Squire	Sharon Vollrath
Swee Aw	Mark Donagan	Eileen Jensen	Sue McPherson	Michelle Pritchard	Jing Sun	Meng Wang
Allison Bayani	Angus Donaldson	George Jensen	Maggie McCafferty	Julia Reinspach	Caro Sutton	Tom Watkin
Susan Beatty	Xiyuan Du	Andrew Jones	Rod McInerney	Pamela Sanchez Zola	Ernest Tan	Cleat Watson
Felicity Bloom	Wendi Etherington	Barbara Jones	Trish McManus	Karen Schipper	Paul Teerman	Marie Watson
Elizabeth Boyce	Nick Evans	Geoff Jones	Ligen Mi	Roy Schipper	Shirley Teerman	AnneMarie White
Nancy Boyce	Tanya Fairleigh	Natalie Jones	Dianna Mitchell	Talia Schwartzman	Roger Thomas	Jannie White
Ross Brandon	Jeremy Fernandez	Stefanie Jones	Dominick Monteleone	Ignacio Scopetta	Ros Thomas	Liz Whyte
David Bridger	Angus Forrest	Maureen Kille	Denise Moore	Xiamin Shen	Katy Thompson	Xiaoming Wu
Tess Brown	Sally Forrest	Bruce King	Jenny Moore	Lucan Shortis	Scott Thompson	Rose Yolland
Sarah Burger	Ye Gao	Michelle Kowalczyk	Cinzia Mucciante	Melanie Shortis	Carol Triat	Ru Yuan
Alison Burgess	Trish Gibson	Claire Lawless	Airong Niu	Joycelyn Siew	Carol van der Lee	
Louise Chapman	Luke Glenday	Cho Hua Lee	Adrian O'Connor	Nina Slade	Philip van Dueren	
Yuebo Chen	Barbara Green	Zu You Lee	Judy O'Connor	Dan Slater	den Hollander	
Yonglun Cong	Yulanie Harris	Lihui Lin	Bedelia Paukovits	Carol Smith	Jose Vianello Netto	
Sajeela Cormack	Brett Hearnden	Margaret Lindsay	Mike Pearson	Ryder Smith	Marilyn Vincent	
Jie Cui	Scott Hearnden	Michael Lindsay	Beth Peedom	Todd Smith	Amy Vogt	



Expedition Team

Expedition Leader:	Stephen Anstee
Deputy Expedition Leader:	Robyn Mundy
Assistant Expedition Leader:	Justine Bornholdt
Naturalist & Lecturer:	Heidi Krajewsky
Naturalist & Lecturer:	Alexander Watson
Naturalist & Lecturer:	Annette Scheffer
Paleontologist/Glaciologist:	Steve Salisbury
Kayaking Master:	Michael Gray
Kayaking Guide:	Frank Witter
Kayaking Guide:	Lisa Deziel
Snowshoe/Ski Tour Guide:	Kevin Nicholas

Snowshoe Guide:	Hilary Cave
Snowshoe Guide:	Bronwen Waters
Snowshoe Guide:	Laetitia Campe
Head Ski Tour Guide:	Michael Roberts
Ski Tour Guide:	Peter Wainwright
Photography Guide:	Massimo Bassano
Expedition Doctor:	Mari Fleri
Chinese Guide/Translator	Zhenhuan Zhang (Darwin)
Zodiac Master:	Sergei Khynku
Mudroom/Shopkeeper:	Reza Rusooly

Greg Mortimer Crew

Master	Oleg Klaptenko	Hotel Controller	Allen Thomas
Chief Officer	Oleg Kapko	Receptionist	Mary Sarah Baldovino
Second Officer	Vishal Sharma	Receptionist	Mary Jane Lacerna
Deck Cadet	Lovelyn Yray	Head Stateroom	Irene Abania
Safety Officer	Lukasz Zuterek	Spa Manager	Grace Tembo
Bosun	Duglas Garay	Able Seaman	Samuel Ricafort
Ship Nurse	Sydney Grove	Able Seaman	Junar Gorecho
Chief Engineer	Dimitar Vasilev	Able Seaman	Leo Marzan
First Engineer	Ruslan Rotar	Able Seaman	Bobby Payumo
Hotel Director	Franz Wusits	Able Seaman	Khenette Verzosa
Chief Purser	Jane Saladaga	Able Seaman	Mickey Ledonio
Executive Chef	Przemyslaw Wisniewski	Ordinary Seaman	Alfredo Murillo
Sous Chef	Allan Estoque		

Photographs thanks to:

Massimo Bassano	The Snowshoers
Justine Bornholdt	The Skiers
Robyn Mundy	Peter Wainwright
Michael Roberts	Bronwen Waters
The Kayakers	

Ship's log written by members of the Expedition Team & compiled by Justine Bornholdt



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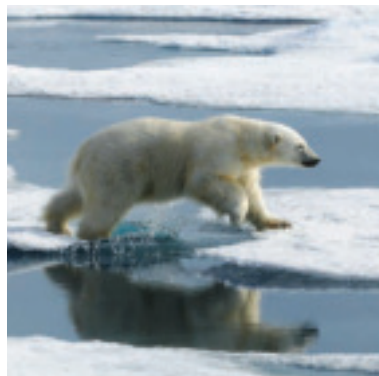


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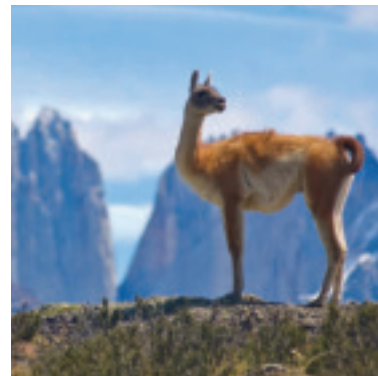
### The Arctic

*Polar bears roam pack ice for seals, walrus and whales. Deep fjords and towering icebergs meet colourful tundra and fossil-rich plains.*



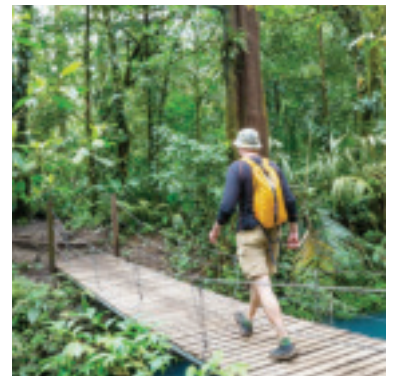
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