



Across the Antarctic Circle



15 – 25 February 2020 | *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.



Ushuaia

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------|---------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Position: | 07:15 hours | Course: | At Anchor | Wind Speed: | 9 knots | Barometer: | 982 MB & steady |
| Latitude: | 54°48'S | | | Wind Direction: | S | Air Temp: | 9° C |
| Longitude: | 068°18'W | | | | | Sea Temp: | 7° C |

The land was gone, all but a little streak, away off on the edge of the water, and down under us was just ocean, ocean, ocean – millions of miles of it, heaving and pitching and squirming, and white sprays blowing from the wave-tops, and we had the sky and the ocean to ourselves, and the roomiest place I ever did see and the lonest. — Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer Abroad

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

Following a brilliant tour of this bustling town; including stops at the Old Prison and Maritime Museum, we loaded onto buses headed for Ushuaia Port, and pulled alongside the *Greg Mortimer* waiting patiently for our arrival.

We smiled for the cameras, before heading onboard to meet our Expedition Team, Hotel Team and to become acquainted with our cabins. Half unpacked and slightly settled in, it was time to meet our fellow adventurers down at the Elephant Island Bar for afternoon tea, while others headed to the outer decks to start exploring our home for the next few weeks. We returned to the Lecture Theatre when Expedition Leader Christian called us together. Christian gave us an update on weather conditions as we head down to Antarctica, before introducing the rest of the Aurora Expedition Team for this 10-day voyage to the Icy Continent.

Onboard we total 127 passengers with many nationalities represented, including Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, United Kingdom, Slovakia, Germany, Malaysia, Moldova, Pakistan, Ukraine, and the USA, along with 20 Aurora Expeditions’ team members and 85 capable crew.

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship’s signal system was our cue to don our new blue jackets, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations to run through an important safety briefing and drill, including making our way to our two Polar Class life vessels.

At 1900 we headed to the Restaurant on Deck 5 to enjoy a delicious first dinner, complete with panoramic views of the Beagle Channel shadowed with the mountain ranges of Tierra del Fuego. With Argentina to our starboard and Chile to our port; we were enchanted by the snow-capped peaks, diversity of seabirds and mountain ranges brilliant in the steely light.

The soft evening light enticed many of us out onto the outer decks. We encountered southern giant petrels, dolphin and kelp gulls and our first black-browed albatross as we made our way out into the unknown.

A few of our number remained up on deck to watch our pilot disembark at the edge of the Argentinean mainland, while others made their way to their cabins for much-needed sleep.





DAY 2 | Sunday 16 February 2020

Drake Passage

Position: 07:00 hours
Latitude: 56°20'S
Longitude: 065°46'W

Course: 161°
Speed: 13.1 knots

Wind Speed: 12 knots
Wind Direction: S

Barometer: 986 MB & steady
Air Temp: 8 °C
Sea Temp: 7°C

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

We awoke to our first day of our grand adventure, at sea on the notorious Drake Passage! But for us it was more of a Drake Lake with the ship gently moving to a low ocean swell on a bright but overcast day. Early risers were quickly in the gym or grazing on the fine pre-breakfast pastries at the coffee station, according to their taste!

A comprehensive buffet breakfast was followed by the start of the lecture programme. Ulyana, our resident scientist, gave us a very interesting presentation on “citizen science” and the opportunities that were available, if we so wanted to volunteer to participate in one or more of several science studies that could be undertaken during and after the voyage. These range from studies of cloud formations for NASA to calibrate orbiting spacecraft monitoring clouds, to studies of the behaviour of whales, and measuring the quantity of phytoplankton in the sea. Ulyana brought home to us that we are all scientists one way or another in our daily lives and that we could if we wished contribute to really worthwhile scientific studies.

Chris, one of our naturalists gave us a fine introduction to the sea birds would encounter in the Southern Ocean, some of which (Wandering and Black Browed albatrosses, white chinned petrels and Southern Giant petrels) had already entertained us riding the wake of the ship.

In the afternoon, to keep us awake after a fine buffet lunch Florence our DEL gave us all the mandatory briefing from the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO) which gave us the guidance we needed to land in Antarctica with minimum environmental impact and with safety. After that we split into groups to enjoy the wonders of the mudroom where we got to try on our boots and PFDs, and to bio-secure our personal gear with the great vacuum party in the lounge. The latter is crucial to ensure that we do not pack a pest or take any alien seeds to shore.

We rounded off the day with the Captain’s reception, with our Swedish Viking Captain Ulf-Peter Lindstrom, who introduced his senior team to us, and with whom we toasted the success of our forthcoming Antarctic Adventure!



DAY 3 | Monday 17 February 2020

Drake Passage, Deception Island; Whaler’s Bay

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------|------------|-----------------|----------|------------|-----------------|
| Position: | 07:00 hours | Course: | 161° | Wind Speed: | 12 knots | Barometer: | 986 MB & steady |
| Latitude: | 56°20'S | Speed: | 13.1 knots | Wind Direction: | S | Air Temp: | 8°C |
| Longitude: | 065°46'W | | | | | Sea Temp: | 7°C |

The interior of the Peninsula is a spine of volcanos one hundred and fifty million years old. In their youth, these peaks were magma cores, the hot ooziings of heat generated by the collisions and subduction of tectonic plates. — The Crystal Desert, 1992

Today started off gray and overcast, with a slight chill in the air. But, excitement abounded as we had crossed 60 degrees South latitude overnight and thus, were officially in Antarctic waters! After a nice early breakfast, we heard from resident photographer, Jared, who gave a mini-workshop in technical photography – to make the most of our cameras and capture excellent pictures of the scenery and wildlife. Then, it was onto a mandatory briefing on Zodiacs. In order to land in Antarctica, we need to know how to board and off-load from these motorized rubber rafts. Just before lunch, a pod of pilot whales was spotted! They are highly social animals and joined along the ship, welcoming us to the continent.

In the afternoon, we heard a lecture on the history of the Antarctic Peninsula from the one and only Dude, who’s made a career out of working in this icy continent.

Then we had our daily recap and briefing, learning about the Antarctic convergence from Scuba Steve, more on pilot whales (including how they sound in the water) from Brigitta, the history of Deception Island by the Dude, and how scientists monitor volcanos by Ulyana. We learned that Deception is currently at the “green” alert level, meaning it’s in a dormant state with no increased volcanic activity, indicative of an eruption.

We next learned from Christian and Flo about the updated weather forecast and the plans for tomorrow’s outings, including seeing a shipwreck up close and personal. After an early buffet dinner, we cruised through Deception Island’s narrow opening and set anchor in Whaler’s Bay. We had an incredible first landing in this volcanic caldera! The Dude took some of us on a historic walk amongst the ruins of the British scientific station, while Chris led a hike to the “Neptune’s Window” overlook out to the sea. Upon returning to the ship after the sun had set, we had warm soup, sandwiches and drinks awaiting us, helping us celebrate our first experience in Antarctica!





DAY 4 | Tuesday 18 February 2020

Portal Point, Enterprise Island

Position: 06:30 hours
Latitude: 064°19.9'S
Longitude: 061°40'W

Course: 190°
Speed: 8.4 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots
Wind Direction: NE

Barometer: 1000 MB & steady
Air Temp: 3°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

I watched the sky a long time, concluding that such beauty was reserved for distant, dangerous places, and nature has good reason for exacting her own special sacrifice from those determined to witness them. — Admiral Richard E Byrd, Alone, 1938

The day started early, with a wake-up call to remind us to head out on deck to enjoy the early morning light as it played upon the surrounding islands, icebergs, glaciers and cliffs. We were lucky to see several pods of humpback whales as we travelled south towards towards our two scheduled outings. Our first destination for the day was at Prospect Point, and by 9 AM we had arrived, excited for our continental landing. For most passengers on board this represented a milestone, and a long-time goal, to set foot on the seventh continent: Antarctica!

The landing at Prospect Point was fun for all, with beautiful granite boulder and cobble beaches that quickly ascended to a domed snow-covered hilltop. This landing was our first contact with the continent and provided a great photo-opportunity for passengers to have their pictures taken atop the hill, with a backdrop of sheer glacier-glad peaks plunging into the frigid waters of Charlotte Bay. With that milestone under our belts we moved on to our next outing for the day: Foyn Harbour.

At Foyn Harbour we enjoyed a magical Zodiac cruise, where we were blessed by overcast skies providing soft light for some fantastic photography as we explored the coastline in search of bergy-bits and wildlife to photograph. Our first treat was a close encounter with a humpback whale, foraging near the shore along Enterprise Island. After several displays we

moved off to find the Governoren ship-wreck. In its time the Governoren was a state-of-art whaling factory ship, built to process whale oil and guano brought in by a fleet of hunting ships. On the last night of the season, in 1915, a raucous celebration went awry, causing a fire to start amidships. With over 16,624 barrels of whale oil on board the blaze quickly consumed the ship, so to save crew the captain intentionally ran the ship aground in Foyn Harbour. Today its remnant rusty hull serves as an anchor point for yachts, proving safe and secure harbour for smaller vessels; a more appropriate purpose for a ship originally built for what would today only be viewed as a lamentable intent. Fortunately, the whales and seals seem to have forgiven our earlier indiscretions.

On our Zodiac cruise around Enterprise Island we enjoyed seeing a group of chinstrap penguins, accompanied by two gentoo penguins before lucking upon several Weddell's seals, a crabeater Seal and a leopard seal. Antarctic fur seals were also plentiful, their sounds mixed with the calls of Antarctic and Arctic terns flitting overhead. Apart from the penguins notable birds included several Wilson's storm petrels, south polar skuas, Antarctic shags and the ubiquitous kelp gull. The kayakers enjoyed an adventurous 16 km paddle around Enterprise Island while divers and snorkelers enjoyed finding nudibranchs around the rusted remains of the Governoren.

We returned to the MV *Greg Mortimer* for a recap before dinner, before enjoying another amazing meal served by the fantastic hotel/kitchen staff. As we dined in comfort the setting sun cast long golden shadows on the glaciers and peaks that surrounded us as we continued our journey southwards towards the Antarctic circle.



DAY 5 | Wednesday 19 February 2020

Fish Islands, Antarctic Circle

Position: 06:30 hours **Course:** 190°
Latitude: 065°42.9'S **Speed:** 11 knots
Longitude: 064°53'W

Sea-ice, which covers seven per cent of the world's oceans, has a considerable influence on the global atmospheric and oceanic circulation. It reduces significantly the amount of solar radiation absorbed at the Earth's surface, and it restricts the amount of heat transferred from ocean to atmosphere.
— John May, The Greenpeace Book of Antarctica, 1988

The day dawned bright if not a bit fishy. The *Greg Mortimer* was headed for the lovely and calm waters around the Fish Islands, a small collection of rocky islets off Portal Point, an imPORTAL continental stop for explorers of the past looking to adventure in the wilds of Antarctica. Rather than FLOUNDER-ing elsewhere, it was decided that Fish Islands would be a beautiful PLAICE to PERCH our ship for a morning excursion of Zodiac cruising and kayaking. And no TROUT about it, it was SALMON of our best wildlife viewing to date!

Because it was the ICEST of mornings our arrival was slowed as the Captain and his officers safely navigated us into just the right anchorage between prismatic icebergs, supine sea ice and foreboding glacial fronts. The excitement was palpable as we loaded into the rubber dinghies and each took off on our own epic search of all things Antarctic when close to 66.33 degrees south. We were hoping to encounter any locals who could make a go of surviving in these frosty climes. First, we found the unfortunately named crabeater seals, a misnomer when there is nothing crabby about them. They would prefer to be allowed to chill and krill on their FLOE-ting ice beds as they digest the freshest of omega 3s and ponder their next krill. As we got deeper into the ice and our Zodiacs bounced between bergy bits we couldn't help but think that despite the early morning hour, we were already thirsty for one of Richard's delicious shaken and stirred happy hour specials. We eventually came upon the mowhawked sentries of the southern latitudes, the brush-tailed Adelie Penguins. A scrappy species who thrive in the snow and ice proper of continental Antarctica. Does that make them INCONTINENT? Let's just say this morning, we KRILLED it when searching for life just north of the Antarctic Circle.





DAY 6 | Thursday 20 February 2020

Horseshoe Island, Pourquoi Pas Ship Cruise

| | | | | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|------------|------------------|
| Position: | 06:30 hours | Course: | In Port | Wind Speed: | 2 knots | Barometer: | 1011 MB & steady |
| Latitude: | 67°48'S | | | Wind Direction: | W | Air Temp: | 0°C |
| Longitude: | 067°25'W | | | | | Sea Temp: | 0°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

We awoke in a truly southern land, having sailed across the Antarctic circle the night prior, south through the notorious Gullet and steamed yet further south. We found ourselves anchored in front of Horseshoe Island upon awakening.

Mountains rose steeply around Marguerite Bay, hanging glaciers cascading down to the ocean. Anchored in Sally Bay in front of British Base Y we could see the dark outline of the cylindrical cone above the island in front of us. Though conditions proved to be a bit windy, we persevered and loaded the Zodiacs in somewhat bumpy, though doable conditions. Onshore there was so much to see! Many joined Uly and Jared to climb the hill towards a cairn built in the 1950's. Incredible to witness how the man-made concrete and metal withstand the test of time in an environment as cold and dry as Antarctica. A highlight of the walk was the vivid and intricate designs that geology had created. Neon green veins of copper highlighted every other rock. Flecks of quartz dotted the smoothed over glaciated hillside.

Inside the hut the Dudes and Flo took us on a walk through the time-capsule of Base Y where British scientists stayed between 1955 – 1960. Rusted tins of sauerkraut and grated

carrots made up the store closets inside. The musty smell reminiscent of a history untold. We enjoyed the travel through time, especially with Dude's and Flo's personal experiences at British bases along the peninsula that they were able to share.

A windy trip back to the ship where we were warmed by hot chocolate, coffee and tea before yet another scrumptious afternoon meal.

Our afternoon's sail around Pourquoi Pas island show-cased precipitous peaks and flowing glaciers. Upon reaching a calm channel, expedition leader Christian thought this might just be the perfect place to put on a Polar Plunge. Amongst whoops and calls of delight, or shock, 47 brave polar plungers took an icy dip in the southern polar waters. The sauna was chock-a-block full afterwards where we warmed our chilled noses and toes.

We meandered our way back north throughout the afternoon, relishing the remoteness of our location, knowing how few people come this far south. The Dude regaled us with the infamous tale of Shackleton's Trans-Antarctic Expedition, with an exciting new twist in the reveal of Shackleton's character.

The evening we spent dining and chatting with new friends as we sailed past the marvelous icebergs and landscape outside.





DAY 7 | Friday 21 February 2020

Petermann Island

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Position: | 06:15 hours | Course: | 082° |
| Latitude: | 65°55'S | Speed: | 11.6 knots |
| Longitude: | 65°17'W | | |

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

We awoke this morning to the now familiar and dulcet tones of our expedition leader, Christian informing us that the dreaded change in the fine weather we've had up to now had arrived. The daily schedule had already been updated to Plan B, having sailed past Prospect Point in the early morning with the wind at 25 knots gusting to thirty . Those who were up early were lucky enough to have seen the accompanying precipitation falling as snow around the ship – this having turned to rain by the wake-up call at 0730. A late 8 o'clock breakfast allowed those who were exhausted from the activity of the last days a welcome sleep in.

After our late start to the day we were informed by Ulyana – our expert glaciologist - about ice. We learned about her developing love of ice and glaciers and subsequent career leading her to some of the most interesting ice-covered places on earth. She shared with us her knowledge of different ice formations that we have encountered on our voyage to Antarctica. We were educated regarding the reality of climate change and the manner in which it is contributing to the melting of the ice sheets in the polar regions as well as the potential consequences of this for our planet.

This was closely followed with a lecture by the ever-informative Dude who gave us more first hand history about the British involvement in Antarctica through Operation Tabarin. He exploded the myths surrounding the formulation and execution of the operation. His presentation as always was informative and engaging as he tells us about events that involved him personally as well as the results of his research in the British archives of the era.

After yet another amazing buffet lunch prepared and served by our hotel chefs and staff we were ready for afternoon adventures at Petermann Island. The rain and mist had somehow

| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Wind Speed: | 22 knots | Barometer: | 998 MB & steady |
| Wind Direction: | E | Air Temp: | -1°C |
| | | Sea Temp: | 1°C |

cleared, we were sheltered from the strong winds and had a delightful two hours to explore the island. Here we had close encounters with gentoo and adolie penguins who entertained us with their peculiar noises, antics and unforgettable smell. There were humpback whales visible offshore, and our snorkelers and divers were lucky enough to enjoy some close encounters with these magnificent creatures.

Petermann Island provided shelter for the Porquois-Pais on the second French Antarctic expedition with Charcot who wintered there in 1909. The cairn commemorating this event is still visible on the distant hill, out of bounds due to the concentrated number of nesting gentoo penguins surrounding it. We were able to view the Argentine refuge hut on the island and a commemorative cross for three members of the British Antarctic Survey in 1982 who lost their lives while travelling in the area from the British station Faraday in the Argentine islands.

In our daily recap John, The Dude recounted his memories of travels over sea ice with husky teams and shared some photos of Petermann taken when he was wintering in the 1950's. Chris our naturalist gave us some more information about penguins of the Antarctic and we learned more about the brushtail species including the Adelie and gentoo which we had seen today.

Florence outlined Plan A for tomorrow and gave us some history about the two landings we are hoping to do including some personal insights about her summer at Port Lockroy.

After our delicious dinner we sailed back through the Lemaire channel, clouded from view by the now encompassing mist which hid the delights of the spectacular peaks on either side rising over 1000 feet above our ship.

We sleep deeply looking forward to waking refreshed to take on the activity packed day tomorrow.



DAY 8 | Saturday 22 February 2020

Danco Island, Port Lockroy, Jougla Point

Position: 06:10 hours
Latitude: 64°38.3' S
Longitude: 62°37' W

Course: 145°
Speed: 2.6 knots

Wind Speed: 17 knots
Wind Direction: S

Barometer: 1000 MB & steady
Air Temp: 0°C
Sea Temp: 2°C

All the world loves a penguin: I think it is because in many respects they are like ourselves, and in some respects what we should like to be. Had we but half their physical courage, none could stand against us. Had we a hundredth part of their maternal instinct we should have to kill our children by the thousand. Their little bodies are so full of curiosity that they have no room for fear. They like mountaineering, and joy-riding on ice floes: they even like to drill. — Apsley Cherry Garrard, The Worst Journey in the World

Bright, blue skies and a warm, smiling sun is what we wake up to this beautiful Saturday morning. Already during the first few hours of daylight, we can see porpoising gentoo penguins, playful fur seals and resting humpback whales from our floating home, *Greg Mortimer*. After the tasty breakfast buffet, we are all very excited to soon get out in the sun to explore this morning's landing site, Danco Island. With sunglasses and sun cream on we head over to the stony beach, situated just a short Zodiac ride away from ship. The many gentoo penguins welcome us with their endless charm while we hike up the hill to enjoy the stunning scenery we are surrounded by.

Meanwhile both snorkelers and divers have a scenic underwater experience next to the impressive icebergs, the kayakers fully enjoy their peaceful paddle in the beautiful, calm sea conditions. On the water is also the Citizen Science Zodiac, which is accompanied by two curious leopard seals. They also check the water visibility with help of the Secchi disk and get the result of 12 meters of visibility.

How wonderful it is to spend time on Danco island, to simply be and feel the place and its majestic, mountainous surrounding. Two hours fly by very quickly when spent in such

scenery! Very thankful for such a picturesque morning, we head back to the ship to eat lunch and to continue our voyage further north to our next destination.

Some few hours later, when we all are fed, rested and filled with new energy, it is time to get dressed for the afternoon activity. Time to visit the most southern public post office in the world, Port Lockroy on Goudier Island! With postcards in our backpacks, we get the chance to post a little message from Antarctica to our beloved ones back home. How cool is that, to receive a postcard from Antarctica!

Port Lockroy is not only a post office, but a former British scientific research station, that today operate by collecting data of the effect of tourism on penguins. The friendly staff also takes care of both the museum and the little shop where nice souvenirs, books and warm hats are sold. Outside the buildings the adorable gentoo penguins again keep us company, many of them apparently not aware of the 5 meter rule as they often walk up to us only some few centimeters away to soon start to peck on both our boots and clothing. A short zodiac shuttle away, we also visit Jougla point, where we get impressed by the huge whale skeletons on the beach. When feeling small, standing next to the whale's huge jaw bones it is an indicator how impressively big these amazing creatures truly are! Penguin heaven it is again as this landing site also offers great numbers of gentoo penguins. A super curious leopard seal gives the kayakers a beyond thrilling experience. Underwater, the divers find more whale bones, while the snorkelers get close encounters from many shags and some gentoo penguins. The scenery surrounding us this beautiful evening is out of this world, a more perfect evening for an Antarctic barbecue is hard to get! Recap, barbecue and dance sums up another day in our Antarctic paradise.





DAY 9 | Sunday 23 February 2020

Paradise Harbour, Cuverville Island

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Position: | 06:05 hours | Course: | 145° | Wind Speed: | 22 knots | Barometer: | 987 MB & steady |
| Latitude: | 64°49.3'S | Speed: | 2.6 knots | Wind Direction: | NNE | Air Temp: | 1°C |
| Longitude: | 63°02'W | | | | | 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

Little did we know, as we awoke this morning to the thought of Paradise, just how idyllic a setting was in store for us.

Just before 9am the *Greg Mortimer* arrived at our anchorage near Admiralty Brown Station. Soon Zodiacs were lowered, and the excitement began. Before we could even disembark passengers an extremely curious minke whale began spy hopping at the marina. It checked out every Zodiac and driver on the water. Soon the kayakers were boarding their boats and the minke was enthralled to have something new to play with.

Christian called the Zodiac drivers to begin loading guests from the side doors, which was not easy with a five metre long minke whale zooming in and out between the boats. But we managed, and it was great to have all the guests out witnessing such a spectacle.

The minke stayed with us for at least twenty minutes and we thought it time to slowly move away and let it rest. But apparently it had other ideas, when the snorkellers were ready to enter the water near the bow of the ship the minke whale stayed with them and played for another thirty minutes. It seemed to be really enjoying the company, even rubbing up against them in the water.

The cruising Zodiacs by this stage had moved on to viewing the station and learning the interesting history behind it. It was not long however before wildlife muscled in on the history in the form of Humpback whales this time. Up to five Humpbacks were seen in different stages of alertness. Some in a resting phase, while others were actively feeding.

Moving on from the whales it was then time for a very curious Leopard seal to make an appearance and it began swimming between two zodiacs preforming underwater acrobatics and giving everyone a great show. Other seals were here too, Weddell and crabeater were seen resting on ice.

All this action was punctuated now and again by the crack of the glaciers carving, with several large falls creating sizable waves in the otherwise mirror-like waters.

It was an effort to drag ourselves away from the fun and return to the ship for lunch, but it was necessary as we had yet more adventures in store for the afternoon.

We arrived at the island of Cuverville a bit later than scheduled, due to weather, but still with plenty of time to enjoy both a short Zodiac cruise and landing. Not far from the marina, yet again, a leopard seal was found on ice and another in the water. Near the landing site another was found eating a penguin and yet another floating on ice while kelp gulls and their chicks looked on.

Ashore we had the chance to walk amongst more gentoo penguins and there were several Antarctic fur seals on the rocky shoreline.

During recap & briefing, Ulyana shared her thoughts on climate change and Peter presented a photo diary of the snorkellers and divers exploits thus far.

After a wonderful dinner tonight's evening entertainment was a movie entitled "A Year on Ice". This feature length film reveals what it is like to live in Antarctica for a full year, including winters isolated from the rest of the world, and enduring months of darkness in the coldest place on Earth. Filmed over 15 years by Frozen Planet photographer Anthony Powell.



DAY 10 | Monday 24 February 2020

Linblad Cove, Astrolabe Island

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|---------|
| Position: | 06:15 hours | Course: | 175° |
| Latitude: | 63°50.3'S | Speed: | 4 knots |
| Longitude: | 59°30'W | | |

Our ability to perceive quality in nature begins, as in art, with the pretty. It expands through successive stages of the beautiful to values as yet uncaptured by language. — Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac

We woke to the news that the catabatic winds had whipped up around in Linblad Cove in Charcot Bay. So a little sleep in, a delicious breakfast, and a ship cruise around the bay was a pleasant way to enjoy the dramatic and strong winds.

After breakfast, the ship began its journey to Astrolabe Island, our afternoons location. Elena lead us through the Disembarkation briefing, and as unbelievable as it is that our trip to Antarctica is almost over, we start preparing for our departure.

The morning was filled with a lecture from Judy, and her year-long stay in Antarctica at Davis Station – the profound silence, and the beauty of it. It was followed by The Dudes' lecture on who does in fact, Govern Antarctica?

The kayakers took the opportunity to organise and clean their equipment and share a last special group moment together celebrating their journey together.

The winds continued to buffet the ship as we travelled towards Astrolabe Island. It was unclear how protected the landing site would be as we approached, however with careful planning and solid crew driving us to shore, we landed on its epic cobble-stoned beaches.



| | | | |
|------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Wind Speed: | 40 knots | Barometer: | 982 MB & steady |
| Wind Direction: | SE | Air Temp: | 3°C |
| | | Sea Temp: | 2°C |

Veterans at using zodiacs now, the landing was smooth and controlled. Well done everyone!

As we walked along the rocky shore, the sound of the waves crashing would drag the cobble stones down and over themselves, crashing and rumbling like thunder. The Antarctic Fur Seals feigned annoyance at our presence, but then shortly resumed their sleepy states. Gentoo penguins surrounded us, and the dramatic rocks of the dragons teeth framed our short walk.

The winds started to pick up to 25 knots, and so it was time to return to the ship. We saved our sportiest Zodiac exit until last, and we all had a chance to “Jump aboard” the *Greg Mortimer*.

Now safe and warm, our Captain welcomed us for departure drinks to say goodbye to our Expeditions Staff and Ships Crew. A happy and social atmosphere all through dinner and then into the amazing slide show put together by our very talented photographers Jared, Liz and Peter. An amazing collaboration of pictures, music and memories which perfectly bookmarks the trip.



DAY 11 | Tuesday 25 February 2020

King George Island, Punta Arenas

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Position: | 07:00 hours | Course: | 335° | Wind Speed: | 29 knots | Barometer: | 987 MB & steady |
| Latitude: | 57°01.4'S | Speed: | 10 knots | Wind Direction: | W | Air Temp: | 7°C |
| Longitude: | 64°56.6'W | | | | | Sea Temp: | 5°C |

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

This morning we woke after a peaceful slumber in Maxwell Bay after our pleasant crossing of the Bransfield Strait on our good ship *Greg Mortimer*. Time for the last leg of our voyage back to Punta Arenas on mainland South America. It has been an amazing voyage.

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

Kayaking Log

| | | |
|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Kayaking Masters: | Toby Story, Tory Stewart, Eamon Larkin, Liz Gifford, Zet Freiburghaus | |
| Total Distance Paddled: | 56 km | |
| Kayakers: | | |
| Ayden Nicoll | Gavin Shaw | Di Shaw |
| Phil Dewing | Jamie O'Neill | Sue O'Neill |
| Eva Trskova | Villo Trska | Mariette Maclurcan |
| John Carpenter | Jonathan Hunt | Sara Hunt |
| Edwin Kirk | Sue O'Regan | Anita Carter |
| Bill Carter | Michael Street | Wendy Street |
| Ant Shubitz | David Berman | Anastasia Posrednikova |
| Sergy Kondakova | Debbie Freeman | Jiri Krivnakev |
| Nada Krivanek | Lenka Vecerova | |

DAY 3: PM – Whalers Bay, Deception Island – Distance: 3 km
There was much excitement as we launched in windy conditions on our inaugural outing in Antarctica, which just so happened to be in an active volcanic caldera. We split into two smaller groups on the water. The first group paddled directly to calmer waters to view the playful fur seals on land and in the sea as well as a solitary chinstrap penguin resting on the volcanic sands. We made our way down wind along the cliff edge for a short distance and practiced rafting up before returning to the main landing site to wander amongst the remnants of the old whaling station. The second group made their way to the bellows, the narrow entrance to the sea, before enjoying the wildlife along the coast as they paddled along the shore and back to the ship.

DAY 4: AM – Portal Point – Distance: 5 km
Our second paddle for the trip had us heading into gentle waves towards a collection of beautiful icebergs off a rocky coast. Weaving in between the ice, we found some Antarctic fur seals sleeping amongst the rocks and drifting glacial ice. In the distance, we spotted the flukes of Humpback whales and some of us poked our kayaks out for a closer look. Alas, the whales did not know our plan and stayed at a distance. We paddled downwind and took shelter behind Portal Point, where we made our first continental landing! A short walk up to a high point allowed us to take in the amazing view of the bay, surrounded by countless glaciers meeting the water. The clouds hung low over the tops of the mountains and created a moody backdrop as we paddled back to the ship. Awesome effort from all in some more challenging conditions.

PM – Enterprise Island, Foyu Harbor – Distance: Long Paddle: 10km Short Paddle: 4 km
For our afternoon outing our kayak team split into two groups. One group took a shorter paddle close to Foyu Harbor, while the second group took a longer paddle and circumnavigated Enterprise Island, completing 10km! While the relaxed paddlers played about the smaller islands and beside the wreck of the Governor, even making a short landing while receiving lots of wildlife interpretation from guide Zet, the long trip paddlers paddled steadily past the wreck and around the Island. We saw stunning ice formations and diverse shaped icebergs along with a wide collection of wildlife including blue eyed

shags, Antarctic fur and Weddell seals in addition to a sprinkling of chinstrap and Gentoo penguins. A beautiful location to explore from all angles with quite different paddles for both groups.

DAY 5: AM – Fish Islands – Distance: 4 km
Fortunately, the captain was willing to anchor in an ice filled channel between two of the larger fish islands putting us in the perfect location to explore the nearby archipelago. From there we set out in two groups to explore the small islands surrounded by many icebergs and chunks of sea-ice in well protected and calm conditions. With Crab-eater seals in abundance, both paddle parties made a landing on a small but solid ice floe near a few crab eaters, a Shag and a curious Adelia penguin. After our ice landing, we slid the kayaks off the ice like seals and explored the nearby icebergs. One group saw swimming seals multiply from 1 to 2 then 4 seals in just a few minutes, quick breeders perhaps? They swam in the waters around the kayaks becoming braver the longer we watched until it was time to return to the ship. A magic morning on the water.

DAY 6: AM – Horseshoe Island – Distance: 7 km
The *Greg Mortimer* and her adventurous passengers woke up to steely grey skies south of our voyage goal - The Antarctic Circle. The captain found us a sheltered anchorage off of Horseshoe Island in Marguerite Bay. The protection gave us just enough lee to put our trusty, plastic boats onto the water and make our way downwind to a nice protected cove. The scenery was astounding with giant bergs standing as sentries as we paddled south. But Aunt Arctica can be a sassy relative and the winds picked up to show her frosty side. The nineteen hearty kayakers and their team of steadfast guides rallied in the winds and put their strongest paddle forward. With near gale force winds pushing at our backs we surfed past Beacon Head to the western point of Horseshoe Island, cut through a narrow gap and found peace and calm in a lovely bay with a backdrop of the Shoesmith Glacier. Our sporty paddle was well earned and we enjoyed a few placid moments amongst feisty Antarctic fur seals, wallowing Weddell seals and attractive Adelia penguins. We then left our fleet of human powered boats on the shore guarded by a few of our burly guides and enjoyed the power of 60 horses pushing us into Sally Cove where the British Antarctic Survey hut has been standing as a monument to explorers past. Whether it was Type One Fun or Type Two Fun that was had today, it was nonetheless a wildly fun Antarctic adventure and all could agree we appreciated having the hot showers and endless buffet of the *Greg Mortimer* waiting for us versus a can of 50 year old beans and a hard mat in a drafty Antarctic hut.

DAY 7: AM – Peterman Island – Distance: 5 km
After a windy morning, we arrived to more protected waters at Petermann Island. With the wind forecast to decrease, the guides delayed our outing for 30 minutes with the hope that the winds would drop. As we departed from the *Greg Mortimer* toward Petermann Island, we did in fact have lovely conditions and the wind decreased as we paddled. We all started by going south to the most southern point of Petermann Island where we could see the swell of the Southern Ocean hitting the stranded icebergs close to shore. Slowly, we made our way along the coast beside Gentoo penguins near snow dyed blood-red from ice algae. The penguins were in moult, so we watched some very bored penguins waiting for their new feathers to grow and some very happy ones that are back in the

water feeding for the first time in weeks. A little later we saw two humpback whales in the distance along with a young calf practicing breaching. On the northern side of the island we found a protected little bay where we enjoyed a Baily's and hot chocolate before making a short landing. Cheers to another fantastic day!

DAY 8: AM – Danco Island – Distance: Long Paddle: 7 km Short Paddle: 4 km
We were blessed with calm weather as we set out for a paddle beside Danco Island. We paddled in two groups, the short group which stayed close to the ship and the long group which circumnavigated Danco Island. The short group paddled beside the Gentoo penguin colony on Danco Island then past small rock outcrops with some resting Weddell seals while skuas occasionally swooped in for a closer look. They then found some brash ice to crunch through and attracted the attention of a curious Leopard Seal before heading back to the ship. Meanwhile, the circumnavigators paddled past sleepy weddells then found a moment's silence on the backside of the island before slipping past some mammoth icebergs on their way back to the ship. A very rewarding outing for the kayak team.

PM – Port Lockroy – Distance: Long Paddle: 8 km Short Paddle: 3 km
It was the best of both worlds for the kayak group as they were first off, the ship to visit the historic Port Lockroy base & shop then back to ship to jump into the kayaks. There was an option to go for a longer explore paddle or a shorter (distance) photography focused tour. The explorers covered a lot of coastline and were rewarded with views of massive mountains poking through the high clouds. The photographers cruised around Goudier Island and were rewarded with Weddell seals, Antarctic shags and many Gentoos . A highlight was a local Leopard Seal who got a little too interested in our kayaks, giving some boats a playful nibble to see if they tasted as good as they looked.

Unsurprisingly, nobody was keen to get into the water. Not even the snorkelers could be coaxed to jump in to distract it so the kayakers could make a getaway. Overall a stellar day.

DAY 9: AM: Paradise Bay – Distance: 8 km
As the kayaks launched from the pontoon into Paradise Harbor, an extremely social Minke whale greeted us at the water's edge. She played amongst the kayaks and zodiacs, making sure to investigate each boat. Christian, our expedition leader, described the interaction as one of the best he has ever had in 17yrs in Antarctica. As we paddled away from the curious minke whale, an enormous carving occurred. All the kayaks and zodiacs were over a kilometer away but it was humbling to watch the massive piece of ice as it bobbed and settled, sending shock waves which crashed onto the nearby beach. Two humpbacks, a mother and calf, drew one group of kayaks into the bay and while one group watched them hang on the surface and gently dive together another group made a final continental landing. Paddling on, the kayak groups passed Weddell seals on ice and blue eyed shags on the cliffs until we regrouped beside another humpback whale calmly skirting the shoreline. As the solitary humpback paused and rested in the water, the kayakers followed suit and paused and silently watched as the mammoth cetacean took deep breaths as it rested on the surface of the water. As the sun came out, the kayak team began reluctantly making their way back to the ship in small groups. A stunning outing of active wildlife ice.

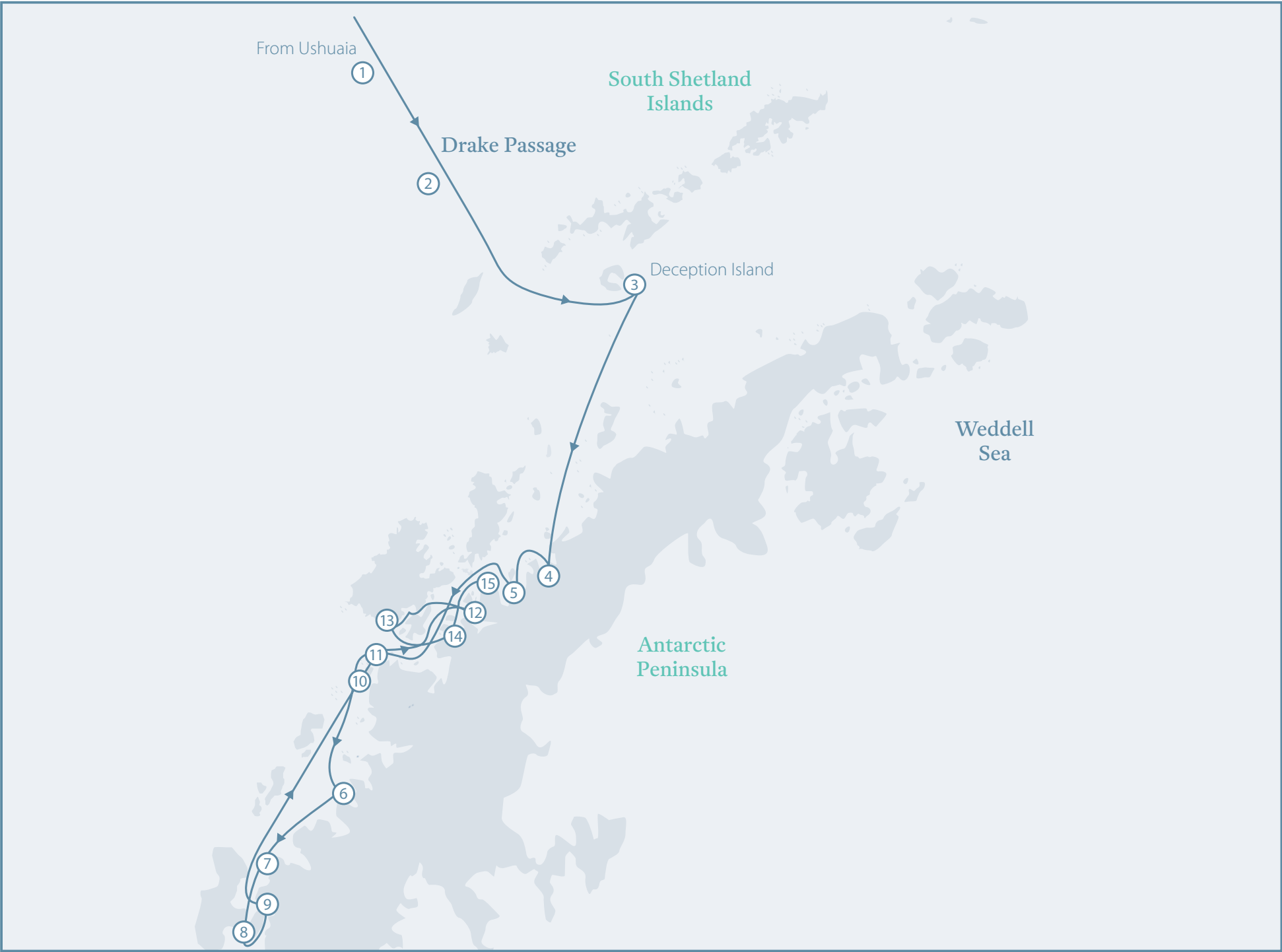
PM – Cuverville Island – Distance: Long Paddle: 7 km Short Paddle: 5 km
As the two kayak groups set off on what would be our last outing, a curious leopard seal lifted its head high out of the water for a better look. After leaving the curious leopard, both groups paddled north, weaving through a collection of bergy-bits grounded in the shallow channel between Cuverville and Ronge Islands. The long paddle group continued around the island, paddling through challenging rebound swell to a sheltered section beside towering moss and lichen covered cliffs while passing Gentoo penguins, shags and bergy-bits a plenty. The relaxed paddle group had time to enjoy some up close and personal interactions ashore amongst the Gentoo penguins, before we all headed back to the ship. A big day of excellent conditions for paddling, many incredible wildlife moments and some very happy paddlers on our final day of paddling. Thanks all!

DAY 10: No Paddle due to 50knot gusts in Lindblad Bay



Across the Antarctic Circle

15 – 25 February 2020 | Southernmost point of voyage: 67°49.3’ S, 67°31’ W



Destinations

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 01. Ushuaia (Argentina). | 05. Enterprise Island. | 09. Polar Plunge. | 13. Port Lockroy. |
| 02. Drake Passage. | 06. Fish Islands. | 10. Peterman Island. | 14. Paradise Harbour. |
| 03. Deception Island. | 07. The Gullet. | 11. Lemaire Channel. | 15. Cuverville Island. |
| 04. Portal Point. | 08. Horseshoe Island. | 12. Danco Island. | |



Bird Species Log

| Bird Species | February | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Gentoo Penguin | | | | x | | | x | x | x | |
| Chinstrap Penguin | | | | x | | x | | | x | |
| Adelie Penguin | | | | | x | x | x | | | |
| Unidentified Penguin (swimming) | | x | x | | | | | | | x |
| Wandering Albatross | | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Black-browed Albatross | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Light-mantled Sooty Albatross | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Giant Petrel sp. (Northern and/or Southern) | | x | x | x | | | | | | x |
| Cape Petrel | | | x | | | | x | | | |
| Snow Petrel | | | | | x | x | x | | | |
| Antarctic Fulmar | | | | | | | | | | |
| Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic) | | | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| White-chinned Petrel | x | x | | | | | | | | |
| Wilson's Storm-petrel | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed) | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | |
| American Sheathbill (Snowy) | | | | | | | x | x | x | |
| Skua (Brown and/or South Polar) | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Kelp Gull | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Tern (probably mostly Antarctic) | | | | | x | | x | x | x | x |



Gentoo Penguins



Skua



Adelie Penguin



Cormorants

Mammal Species Log

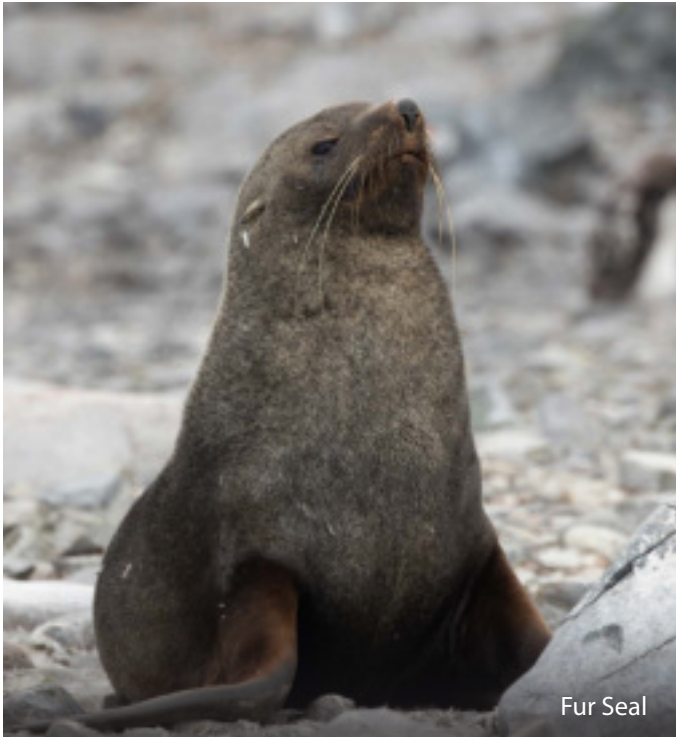
| Mammal Species | February | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| Antarctic Fur Seal | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Crabeater Seal | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Weddell Seal | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Leopard Seal | | | | | x | | | x | x | |
| Minke Whale | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Fin Whale | | | x | | | | | | | |
| Humpback Whale | | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | |
| Orca | | | | | x | | | | | |
| Long-finned Pilot Whale | | | x | | | | | | | |



Leopard Seal



Crabeater Seal



Fur Seal



Minke Whale



Expeditioners

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Elisabeth Antony | Lisa Cohen | Elena Dragalin | Rosemary Hillard | Leah Marks | Annette Power | Kate Troup |
| Andreas Antony | Graeme Conley | Vlad Dragalin | John Hillard | Carl May | Andrew Ralph | Vilo Trska |
| Richard Aumann | Pam Conley | Dominic Elfer | Lyn Howard | Caren McCormack | Tanya Ralph | Eva Trskova |
| Robyn Aumann | Alvenia Cottingham | Edwin Enfield Kirk | JJ Hunt | Jon McCormack | Kathy Reid | Julia Ussher |
| Audrey Balla | Alva Cottingham | Duane Faber | Sarah Hunt | Dave Meakin | Kerrie Reitano | Anthony Ussher |
| Sue Belk | Peter Couture | Gavin Fabinyi | CE Kealley | Rob Micheli | Dianne Ross | Standa Vecera |
| Stewart Bell | Craig Curtis | Evan Fenning | Phillip King | Jenny Micheli | Michael Rossignoli | Lenka Vecerova |
| Perry Benjamin | Karyn Curtis | Rowena Flower | Doug King | Robert Mitchell | Maria Rossignoli | Erika Vogt |
| David Berman | Richard Davey | Eileen Forbes | Fred Kingston | Sandy Mulcahy | Cameron Shaw | Russell Willmer |
| Peter Berman | Phillipa Davey | Bryan Forley | Ron Kingston | John Mulcahy | Di Shaw | Joanne Wilson |
| Lorraine Blomfield | John De Vries | Carolyn Francis | Serge Kondakov | Ayden Nicoll | Gavin Shaw | Diane Woods |
| Wayne Blomfield | Karen De Vries | Debbie Freeman | Jiri Krivanek | Helen Nilpayack | Ant Shubitiz | Don Woods |
| Geraldine Breedon | David Dennis | Phil Gall | Nada Krivankova | Sue O'Neill | Julie Skiba | |
| Mandy Burton | Marg Derry | Margaret Gall | Lorna Lanford | Jamie O'Neill | Mark Skiba | |
| John Carpenter | Bill Devins | Scott Gardner | Col Lawson | Sue O'Regan | Janet Smith | |
| Anita Carter | Phil Dewing | Kelly Gardner | Sandra Levenston | Cheryl O'Sullivan | Pam Snelson | |
| Bill Carter Jr | Heather Dewing | Dawn Gobbo | Jon Levenston | Chris O'Sullivan | Wendy Street | |
| Christine Chan | Gail Dillion | Mohni Gujral | Bob Lock | Lesley Paton | Michael Street | |
| Marla Clayton | Denise Dinsdale | Alan Henderson | Mariette Maclurcan | Anastasiia Posrednikova | Greg Taggart | |



Expedition Team

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Expedition Leader: | Christian Genillard | Kayaking Guide: | Tory Stewart |
| Deputy Expedition Leader: | Florence Kuyper | Kayaking Guide: | Liz Gifford |
| Assistant Expedition Leader: | Elena Wimberger | Photography Guide: | Jared Hobbs |
| Expedition Coordinator: | Justine Bornholdt | Expedition Doctor: | Judy Braga |
| Naturalist: | Birgitta Mueck | Snorkel Guide: | Pete Szyszka |
| Naturalist/Glaciologist: | Dr Ulyana Horodyskyj | Snorkel Guide: | Edwin Sargeant |
| Naturalist: | Chris Todd | Dive Guide: | Steve Traynor |
| Historian: | John Dudeney | Zodiac Master: | Sergei Andronov |
| Kayaking Master: | Toby Story | Mudroom/Shopkeeper: | Reza Rusooly |
| Kayaking Guide: | Eamon Larkin | | |
| Kayaking Guide: | Zet Freiburghaus | | |

Photograph Thanks

| | | |
|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Jon McCormack | Carl May | Jo Wilson |
| Sue Belk | Steve Traynor | David Berman |
| Ross Hansen | Andreas Antony | Peter Berman |
| Ayden Nicoll | Marla Clayton | |

Greg Mortimer Crew

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Master | Joachim Saterskog | Sous Chef | Allan Estoque |
| Chief Officer | Arsen Aystev | Hotel Controller | Rohmat Nurhidayat |
| Second Officer | Andrei Valeahu | Receptionist | Mary Sarah Baldovino |
| Deck Cadet | Genadi Hristov | Receptionist | Mary Jane Lacerna |
| Safety Officer | Lukasz Zuterek | Head Stateroom Attendant | Irene Abania |
| Bosun | Duglas Garay | Spa Manager | Grace Tembo |
| Ship Doctor | Mauricio Usme | Able Seaman | Khennette Verzova |
| Chief Engineer | Marinko Hrabar | Able Seaman | Samuel Ricafort |
| First Engineer | Warlito Verzosa | Able Seaman | Junar Gorecho |
| IT Officer | Michael Reyes | Able Seaman | Leo Marzan |
| Hotel Director | Franz Wusits | Able Seaman | Bobby Payumo |
| F&B Service Manager | Miguel Cabanillas | Able Seaman | Mickey Ledonio |
| Head Bartender | Vishal Nunkoo | Ordinary Seaman | Anatoli Kornichuk |
| Chief Purser | Jane Saladaga | Ordinary Seaman | Alfredo Murillo |
| Executive Chef | Przemyslaw Wisniewski | | |

Ship's log written by Expedition Team members & compiled by Elena Wimberger



Paper made from 100% recycled material.

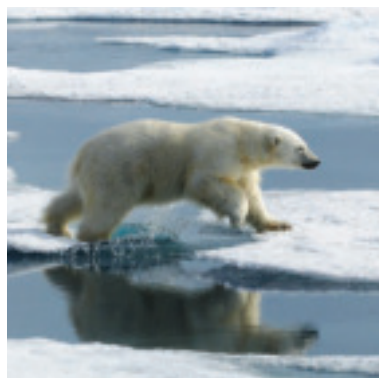


Explore our unique itineraries to these amazing destinations...



Adventure With Us

Intimate, educational, small group voyages to some of the world's wildest and most remote destinations, aboard quality expedition vessels.



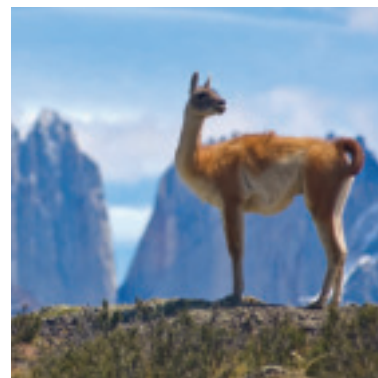
The Arctic

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



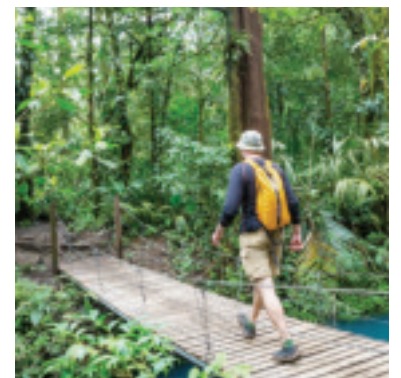
Scotland

Abandoned castles, exquisite abbeys, stone age villages and haunting Neolithic relics. Breeding seals and Europe's largest seabird colonies.



Patagonia & Chile

Wild and isolated, Patagonia's wind-swept plains and glaciated peaks are the ultimate playground for intrepid travellers.



Costa Rica & Panama

Filled with remote national parks and biological reserves brimming with colourful wildlife. Traverse the Panama Canal on a guaranteed daylight crossing.

Our other destinations include: Iceland, Ireland, Sweden and Norway