

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 28 January – 06 February 2022





Frei Station, King George Island

DAY 1 | Friday 28 January 2022

Position at 2100

Latitude: 62°12.130'S

Longitude: 058°55.893'W

Course: 065.9°

Speed: 0.1 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots light breeze from NW

Barometer: 1012 hPa

Air Temp: -1°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

What a beautiful day to welcome you aboard the *Greg Mortimer*! We had calm seas, clear skies, and even felt the heat of the sun as we met you all at the airstrip. After the plane, with its lovely chinstrap penguin design, touched down on the black gravel runway, we led you over the 2km path towards the beach. Here, a few Gentoo penguins splashed in the shallows and preened on the shore – a lovely beginning to our adventure.

Frei Station, King George Island is our first “taste” of Antarctica. Although much of King George Island is glaciated, this bay is an area of contrast, for here the terrain is stripped bare by the frequent high winds, revealing a stark volcanic landscape that has its own allure with small rocky towers and plugs. This will be the last time in over a week that we see anything in the way of civilised activity. It is a bustling little harbor, a small town really, with other ships going about their business, helicopters offloading supplies, and plenty of happenings on shore.

The South Shetland Islands and King George Island were the first to see human activity in the 1820's, not from exploration or scientific study, as many of the stations do now, but as an economic endeavor in sealing. Seal skins were hugely profitable, and as the common story goes, humans hunted the seals to near extinction and the industry went bust. Thankfully fur seals are in a full rebound today, and in the late Austral summer, are often seen in streams, making their way from South Georgia Island to the South Shetlands.

Once onboard and settled into our comfortable staterooms, the necessary briefings ensued. It was a busy afternoon, ensuring IAATO briefings, biosecurity checks, Zodiac briefings, jacket and boot swaps, were ticked off so that the coming days can be filled with outdoor adventure. Understandably it can take some days to become accustomed to ship life, but it took almost no time before there was a buzz of excitement.

We can only imagine what it took to reach the ship from your homes in this new age of travel. But finally, we were all together onboard, with those challenges behind. Together we total 54 passengers from 11 different countries, along with the 16 Expedition Team and 95 ship's crew from around the globe. We hope you are as excited as we are, about exploring this incredible environment together.



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Jimena Cardenas



Half Moon Island, Whalers Bay; Deception Island

DAY 2 | Saturday 29 January 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 62°35.420' S

Longitude: 059°54.297' W

Course: 236.8°

Speed: 0.2 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots light breeze from N

Barometer: 1016 hPa

Air Temp: -2° C

A wonderful feeling to be able to cast off and head for our goal at last.

—Roald Amundsen, The Amundsen Photographs, edited by Roland Huntford, 1987

After a lovely breakfast served by the best galley crew, the first Zodiac headed out with 4 Expedition Team members to set up for the landing and have a look around for wildlife. The kayakers and snorkellers were called down to the mudroom to don their drysuits and begin their adventure.

Halfmoon Island is aptly named as the island is shaped exactly like a halfmoon. John Kirkwood gave us instructions on where not to go, so not to disturb the wildlife. That meant giving space to the penguin colony, as well as any bird nesting grounds.

But we had plenty of space to walk around and enjoy watching chinstrap penguins, kelp gulls, brown skuas, Wilson's storm petrels, snowy sheathbills, fur seals and supposedly Antarctic terns (but they kept themselves well hidden).

And as we followed the path to the left for the landing site, we could even see a couple of gentoo penguins and quite a few youngish fur seals. But the best was a very good sighting of an adolescent elephant seal rolling around in the water near the beach. Part of the time he just looked like a very large rock, but suddenly a great big head popped up and yes, an elephant seal it was.

Just before midday, tummies were a-grumbling. Yet another delicious meal was served with lots of big smiles, followed by a very informative and well-presented lectures on penguins by John K.

Our afternoon landing was at Whalers Bay, on Deception Island - an Island full of history from seal, whaling and research stations. It was also the site of a UK base during 2nd World War, and finally evacuated during volcano eruption in 1967. A great place for a walk, and envisaging what life would have been like here all those years ago.

A few fur seals were hanging around on land and play-fighting in the water. A lonely gentoo penguin or two waddled along the shore, and a lazy leopard seal snoozed away at the end of the beach.

Back on the ship, we had Captain's drinks and were introduced to the Captain, Chief Engineer, Hotel Management and last, but not least, a very important person: the Chef.

Howard tried hard to introduce the Expedition Team, but word came from the Bridge that Orcas were spotted and that was the end of the introduction. Orcas won hands down.

What a first day of landings – it will be hard to follow.



Melchior Islands, Neko Harbour

DAY 3 | Sunday 30 January 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 64°30.498'S

Longitude: 062°48.373'W

Course: 298.9°

Speed: 10.5 knots

Wind Speed: 23 knots, strong breeze from E

Barometer: 1009 hPa

Air Temp: -2° 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

It was very Antarctic this morning, misty, overcast and a hint of precipitation, but the location was perfect for a Zodiac cruise. We donned our warm clothes, took 3 steps into the Zodiac and headed out on a mission of exploration around the Melchior Islands.

Fur seals lined the snowy slopes near the Chilean base and Antarctic terns sat high on icebergs in the channels between the islands. Glaciers reached down to the water's edge, and we caught a glimpse of a lone crabeater seal on ice as we navigated the narrow channels. It was a first real taste of Antarctica and the frozen landscape.

Heading down the Gerlache strait, we watched for whales while taking in the sheer magnitude of ice that blankets the continent. Inside the warm comfort of the ship, we learned about the whales that visit Antarctica from Isabelle but the lesson was abruptly interrupted by some humpback whales feeding off the port side of the ship.

Our next stop was stunning Neko Harbour, and our first continental landing. Hopefully ticking off number 7 for some of you. But what a magical place, gentoo penguins busy on the shore while Weddell and crabeater seals haul out on ice and whales making a quick appearance as we made our way back to the ship.

The snorkellers made the most of the clear water and icy underwater ice sculptures. As they put their head underwater, they had a glimpse of the 90 percent of the iceberg that hides below the surface. Deep blue and white dominate the icy structures enhanced by the light from above.

The brave few kayakers were treated to a beautiful experience exploring the shoreline as they weaved through icebergs and blue ice taking in ice carvings and the abundant wildlife as they paddled their way through the frozen oasis. At Melchior they were witness to a small ice carving from one of the nearby glaciers. Weddell seals passed by in the water and the frozen landscape surrounding them like an icy amphitheater.

Antarctica can inspire, and the one thing we all share is a sense of adventure. I think you will agree that each new day brings a new surprise and allows us step out of our comfort zones and really enjoy this stunning environment.



Lemaire Channel, Port Charcot

DAY 4 | Monday 31 January 2022

Position at 0600
Latitude: 65°03.223'S
Longitude: 063°54.626'W
Course: 220.1°
Speed: 4.0 knots

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

This morning dawned to a beautiful, slightly overcast day as we made our way down towards the Lemaire Channel. We reached the entrance at around 6am and slowly started making our way through. It did not disappoint.

We admired the majesty of the surrounding mountains as we glided effortlessly along on the *Greg Mortimer*, snow-capped peaks rising in contrast against a grey sky.

After breakfast, we dropped our Zodiacs in the water hoping to land on Petermann Island. With crabeater seals playing on a distant ice sheet we made our way to the island on the first Zodiac, visited by a weaner on the way. The ice was too thick and changing quickly, so we decided to up anchor and head over to Port Charcot. On the way, we enjoyed an amazing ship cruise though an icy Penola Straight, with the X-BOW® cutting through the pack ice, hoping conditions would allow a possible landing there.

As we sailed, Scott Portelli gave his fantastic and informative lecture on 'How to take better pictures with your smart phone/ipad' and then everyone enjoyed a delicious lunch ready for the afternoon ahead.

On Arrival at Port Charcot, conditions were perfect! Flat calm water reflected our snowy surroundings like a mirror.

At 13:30pm we started Zodiac operations, with some expeditioners landing at Port Charcot and enjoying the gentoo penguin colonies with stunning views. Zodiac cruises commenced and what an afternoon! Two minke whales feeding all afternoon about 600 metres from the ship followed by a humpback whale feeding!! We had amazing sightings.

Exploring deeper into the icebergs, crabeater seals relaxed on ice flows having the odd scratch, and flocks of gentoo penguins dived through the water in the sunshine.

Once everyone was back at the ship, the polar plunge commenced! With keen passengers and staff braving the icy dip. Conditions were perfect though, with the sun shining clearly in the sky and the water flat calm, reflecting

Wind Speed: 25knots strong breeze from NE
Barometer: 997 hPa
Air Temp: -1° C

the beauty of the area.

At 7.30pm it was barbecue time! A fantastic spread of food was presented, along with mulled wine from an authentic Austrian recipe. A perfect way to round off a perfect day, as everyone talked about the wildlife and sights they had seen.

With the sun setting against snow-capped peaks, some enjoyed drinks later into the evening, whilst others relaxed in their cabins anticipating the adventures tomorrow might bring.



Polar Plunge

DAY 4 | Monday 31 January 2022



Hydrurga Rocks, Spert Island

DAY 5 | Tuesday 01 February 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 64°13.676'S

Longitude: 061°35.905'W

Course: 041.2°

Speed: 5.2 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots Light breeze from SE

Barometer: 971 hPa

Air Temp: 0° C

Only about five per cent of Antarctica's coastline is composed of rock. The vast mass of the interior ice sheet meets the shore in the form of massive, awe-inspiring ice shelves and impregnable grounded ice cliffs.

—John May

What an amazing day of contrasts we had. After our morning rapid antigen tests, and a delicious breakfast, it was off to Hydrurga Rocks to see what wildlife lurked there. This tiny island hosts several chinstrap penguin rookeries and is a favourite haul-out site for Weddell and fur seals. The chinstrap chicks were about 4 weeks-old and were starting to enter the 'creche-stage' of their life, when they band together for protection while both parents go to sea to find food. It was a delight to watch these charming creatures going about their daily life with no concern about the human onlookers.

Every penguin colony has its attendant scavengers: the skuas and giant petrels that wait around hoping to feast on an unprotected egg or chick, and the sheathbills who appreciate the gourmet delight of fresh, warm penguin guano. There were a few extra wildlife treats at Hydrurga Rocks. A pair of skuas seemed unconcerned by our presence and allowed people to approach to 5 metres without their usual aggressive dive-bombing. It may be that they have become used to humans visiting their tiny island. We also spotted the second elephant seal of the trip as a young male came ashore to rest amongst the rocks at the southern end of the island.

Back on board and off we headed for Spert Island: named after a British mariner, Sir Thomas Spert and not for the spurts of water caused by the enormous waves that sometimes crash over its rocky pinnacles. The seas calmed to glassy-smooth in the early afternoon, so we eagerly anticipated a calm, relaxing Zodiac cruise amongst the spectacular rock cliffs and arches. That was not to be the case as the notoriously variable Antarctic weather turned on some wild seas for us. The northern side of the island was whipped into a maelstrom of colliding waves, which provided a thrill as they crashed into the cliffs or wrapped around the pillars of a huge rock arch to come crashing back into the following wave. There was wildlife there, but this cruise was all about the dramatic wildness that is Antarctica.

Before dinner, Howard called us to the lecture theatre for a briefing about our plan. The weather forecast for the Antarctic Peninsula is pretty nasty, with a prediction of 40knot + winds that would prevent any off-ship activities. The only solution was to throw out the existing plan and develop and a new one, in which we will head to the

northern tip of the Peninsula, where we anticipate calmer weather and maybe even sunshine. Ice conditions permitting, we may even be able to poke our noses into the Weddell Sea and attempt to land at some of the rarely-visited sites there.



Brown Bluff, Weddell Sea, Snow Hill Hut

DAY 6 | Wednesday 2 February 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 63°12.123'S

Longitude: 057°08.596'W

Course: 126.1°

Speed: 9.9 knots

Wind Speed: 20 knots fresh breeze from SE

Barometer: 978 hPa

Air Temp: -4°C

And so, our Weddell Sea adventure begins! We enjoyed a gentle rock throughout the night as the *Greg Mortimer* travelled 150km north to the East coast of Tabarin Peninsula on the South-Western coast of Antarctic Sound.

Towering red-brown tuff cliffs coated in fresh snow welcomed us on our first exploratory morning at Brown Bluff. Kayakers, snorkellers and Zodiacs were all quick to get into the water and head ashore. On the eastern side of the beach, an abundance of Adelie penguins and their energetic chicks welcomed us, along with some small colonies of gentoo penguins. John Kirkwood briefed us on the other bird species we may meet and which areas were closed off to human traffic. Isabelle led us safely along a cobble and ash beach passing large boulders and creches of gentoo chicks.

Not long after, we heard Howard on the radio mention that a leopard seal had caught a penguin for lunch which gave our kayakers and snorkellers a front row seat to the gory action.

On shore, two fur seals paid a visit and the permanent ice and tidewater glaciers became a favourite backdrop for photo opportunities.

As the tide began to fall, we set off on a Zodiac cruise. Icebergs housed juvenile penguins who had not long left the safety of the shore to find food and their new way of life. Hungry leopard seals lurked below the ice waiting for their next meal to slip, but it looked as though our cute feathered friends had out smarted them this time.

None of us knew what to expect for the afternoon – our plans rested completely in the hands of Antarctica. So we waited in suspense until the tell-tale moment when we poked our noses out of the Antarctic Sound, into the Weddell Sea. Would ice prevent our progress South?

Antarctica's luck was on our side, and we were met with a clear passage through the Weddell Sea. Not only had our Captain out-run the storm which was closing in on the East side of the Antarctic Peninsula, he taken us into the most glorious weather possible. The icebergs almost looked out of place with the beating sun and the desert-like landscape of the surrounding islands.

That evening, we took the rare opportunity to visit a site of arguably the most incredible Antarctic Exploration story of all time – Nordenskjöld's hut on Snow Hill Island. David re-told the story of the Swedish Antarctic Expedition, one of bravery and determination (with some luck thrown in) which unfolded almost 120 years ago to the day. It left us in awe of the early explorers, but equally glad that we had our comfy, warm *Greg Mortimer* to return to.



Icebergs

Up to 4 billion tonnes of ice is released from the icecap into the southern ocean every year. white, slab-like 'tabular' icebergs, which form from ice shelves, can be several hundred kilometres long. Bergs from valley glaciers are smaller, denser and contain ice that's flowed under pressure from distant inland sources, having taken many thousands of years to reach the sea. the age of air trapped in bergs when the ice formed can be calculated from the flow rate of the parent glacier. Scientists analyse this air to chronicle changes in atmospheric gases over the millennia



Devil Island, Vega Island

DAY 7 | Thursday 03 February 2022

Position at 0600
Latitude: 63°48.292'S Course: 275.8°
Longitude: 057°04.322'W Speed: 4.3 knots

The demand of science, that no part of the globe shall remain untouched by the hand of investigation was the force that drew our little band to the land of the farthest south.

—Otto Nordenskjöld

We woke to a perfect day in the Weddell Sea; blue skies, calm water and an amazing landscape. After our later-than-usual landing last evening, we slept in until 7.00 am. A breakfast buffet was enjoyed, then we were on our way for the morning's landing at Devil Island, located within a bay off Vega Island.

It was a short Zodiac transfer to the island and a landing onto a rocky beach. Once ashore, we were surrounded by hundreds upon hundreds of Adelie penguins, primarily chicks in the later stages of fledging. An uphill walk from the landing took us through the colony to a clearing where we could observe the mass of life along the coast, and penguin behaviour.

For those fearless few who wanted to stretch the legs and raise their heart rate, Howard led a walk to the top of one of the peaks on the island. From the top we were rewarded with views right across the bay to the Peninsula and Vega Island. We also saw Cape Well-Met, where the three men from the Swedish Antarctic Expedition who had walked from Hope Bay met those from Snow Hill Island.

Our snorkellers and kayakers had perfect conditions for these chosen activities including time to explore the landing site. Our kayak guide Wes even circumnavigated the island in his trusty kayak.

Whilst we ate lunch, the ship repositioned to the southern side of Vega Island hoping to make a landing on a spit of land known as 'The Naze' on James Ross Island, an area known for fossils that confirmed Antarctica was once part of the mega-continent Gondwana. Unfortunately, the wind got the better of us and this landing. We can operate in gusts up to thirty knots but by the time we were ready to launch the Zodiacs it was over thirty and rising!

We repositioned again to Cape Gordon on the eastern side of Vega Island for a successful late afternoon Zodiac cruise. Once on the water we received a message from the bridge that humpback whales were breaching in front of the ship. Three humpbacks were playing, breaching, fin slapping, cruising close to the Zodiacs.

Along the coast there was a large number of Antarctic fur seals, all males too young to mate this season. As the Zodiacs returned to the ship, one of the humpbacks appeared right alongside the *Greg Mortimer*, a perfect end to the afternoon.

Wind Speed: 15 knots moderate breeze from NE Air Temp: -3° C
Barometer: 990 hPa



Gourdin Island, Petrel Cove

DAY 8 | Friday 4 February 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 63°15.843' S

Longitude: 056°58.858' W

Course: 336.6°

Speed: 6.3 knots

Wind Speed: 30 knots near gale from SW

Barometer: 990 hpa

Air Temp: -2°

South of the Convergence there are only thirty-nine species of nesting birds – seven penguins, six albatrosses, eighteen petrels, one cormorant, two skuas, a gull, a tern, a sheathbill, a pintail and a pipit – fewer species than can be found in a small garden in Colombia or Costa Rica...

—David G. Campbell

It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood! Waking up to sunny skies was an early morning mark in the win column as we headed through the Antarctic Sound. Coffee was poured, noses were swabbed, and the stoke level got higher for our possible landing on Gourdin Island.

Our Expedition Team was deployed to assess just how "sporty" the conditions might be at the landing site and gangway — "it's a Level 404", as Howard said, "but nothing we can't handle". Although the swell and wind were significant, we persevered and took full advantage of the sunny skies and unique landing site. As we approached, we were greeted by three species of penguins and the start of a bad dad joke... a chinstrap, gentoo, and moulting Adelie walk onto some ice...(insert punchline here). Despite the comedic relief brought to us by the moulting hairdos, the spectacular views and abundance of wildlife made it hard to leave Gourdin Island without a sense of accomplishment and ready for whatever the afternoon would hold!

In true expedition style, we bagged Plan A in search of Plan B, hoping to take full advantage of the bluebird day and get into some lee for an afternoon excursion. Petrel Cove, a rarely visited Argentinian base, became our Plan C and last stop on the peninsula. With flowing tidewater glaciers and a beach littered with seals and icebergs, we went ashore hoping to get permission for a final landing on the continent. We probably should have brought a couple more bottles of wine, because after a long walk across the moraine, we were denied shore access by the base commander. No worries though... at this point we're seasoned explorers and used to adapting our plans, so a Zodiac cruise it shall be! Weaving through the icebergs, we saw penguins on ice and various species of seals swimming through the bay and asleep on the beach. Truly an epic way to end our time on the peninsula as we set our bearing for the Bransfield Straight and the South Shetland Islands.

Back on board, Steve Tillman, a geology extraordinaire, explained the geological history of Antarctica and the world over 400 million years ago! Gathering for dinner, we filled our bellies with Chef Paolo's amazing cuisine, sharing our stories and photos of the day's adventures. With visions of penguins waddling through our heads, we gathered at the bar for a drink to toast our extraordinary expedition!



Penguin Island, Ezcurra Inlet

DAY 9 | Saturday 5 February 2022

Position at 0600

Latitude: 62°14.839'S

Longitude: 057°47.909'W

Course: 336.7°

Speed: 6.3 knots

Wind Speed: 18 knots Fresh breeze from SW

Barometer: 1013 hpa

Air Temp: -2°C

Little do you know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

—Robert Louis Stevenson

After a foggy night crossing the Bransfield Strait we arrived at anchor off Penguin Island. A small island located close to King George Island in the South Shetland group. Calm seas, clear sky, perfect conditions for our final landing of this voyage.

0900 and we were on our way. Boots and jackets on in the mud room, Reza scans us off the ship and board the Zodiacs. A few minutes later we were disembarking onto the rocky coast of Penguin Island. Appropriately named for the colonies of chinstrap penguins, however this was paradise for all our budding naturalists. Antarctic fur seals and elephant seals hauled out along the coast and swimming in the water close to the island. Southern giant petrels, Antarctic terns and skuas nesting, skeletons of penguins, seals and whale bones littered the shoreline.

A large cinder cone from an extinct volcano dominates the island, the red color of the rocks formed by rust over what was once a completely black environment. Standing at 170 metres above sea level, Deacon Peak is the highest point on the crater rim. Several of us were ready for another heart starter and made our way to the top which offered amazing views of King George Island and inside the crater. Our walk was made even more exciting by following a worn path around the rim of the crater before we descended back to the coast.

Early afternoon and reality hits us all as we meet in the lecture theatre for details of our disembarkation formalities for tomorrow. Details regarding packing, luggage tags, flights and last minute RAT tests highlight the fact that this amazing journey to the Antarctic continent is coming to an end.

However, this is not the end, our exceptional Expedition Leader Howard has worked with our Captain to fit in one more Zodiac cruise in Ezcurra Inlet. Glaciers abound in this inlet as do waterfalls on the southern side showing how quickly some of these glaciers are receding. Others are still right at the waters edge occasionally carving leaving hundreds of bergy bits along the shoreline.

Our final formal activity, Captain's farewell in the theatre. Time to thank the wonderful crew who have taken us to so many amazing places in the short time we have been down south. Tomorrow we disembark but we go home richer for this experience. With us, we take the sights, sounds, memories and photos of incredible landscapes and wildlife from the beautiful continent Antarctica.



Frei Station, King George Island

DAY 10 | Sunday 6 February

Position at 0600

Latitude: 62°11.994'S

Longitude: 058°55.293'W

Course: 008.8°

Speed: 0.1 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots gentle breeze from W

Barometer: 1013 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

King George Island.

This is Admiralty Bay, a three fingered fjord that is one of the safest anchorages in all of Antarctica... The flanks of the bay were carved from timeless rock by the huge ice sheets of the Pleistocene ice ages, when sea levels were lower than they are today. Admiralty Bay may be a microcosm of all Antarctica. It is oceanic, it is terrestrial, and its heart is placated...

—David Campbell

Yesterday we anchored in Maxwell Bay across from Chile's Frei Station. This is the first time in over a week that we have seen anything in the way of civilised activity. Maxwell Bay is a bustling little harbour, a small town really, with other ships going about their business and plenty of happenings on shore.

Due to high winds, the flight from Punta Arenas was rescheduled to arrive at Frei Station at 1600 which meant our planned return flight departure back to Punta Arenas was delayed to the early evening. So we spent a relaxing few hours on the ship with RAT tests done for the passengers that needed this to board the flight home, a couple of movies and more good food from the restaurant.

Cabins were vacated at 1500, so our lovely housekeeping team could get the ship in shape for the incoming passengers. The luggage was then collected and taken down to the mud room to be transferred ahead of us. At 1600 we got the news that the flight from Punta Arenas had taken off, so shortly after we all got ready for our final Zodiac cruise to shore. This time it was our turn to wave to the newcomers coming off the plane as we trundled towards the airstrip.

So often the final days of an expedition are spent in a transitional space. We begin to move forward in our mind to the minutia, and the to-do lists of our normal lives. Yet we are still trying to hang on to the present moment in this magical environment in which we are immersed. We are also beginning the process of recalling our experiences to make sense of them and integrate them into who we are. We see in a number of peoples faces, that look, the desire to linger here a bit longer... to not let it end. To you, when you slumber, we wish you sweet vivid dreams and memories of this wonderful white, frozen landscape and the beings that inhabit it.

To all whom, with, we have shared this adventure, we wish you safe travels and a life filled with more wonderful experiences.



Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* to Antarctica. We hope to see you on the high seas again some day!



Kayaking Log

By Frank Witter

Kayak Masters: Frank Witter

Number of Paddlers: 8 Total Paddle Outings: 10 Total Distance Paddled: 33.3km

Paddlers:

Christopher Hsu	Teresa Creech	Lesley Herman	Howard Schwartz
Gregory Myers	Jason Wallace	Hendrika Van Schaik	Grace Schimmel

Day 1: Frei Station, King George Island

Arrival at Frei Station. Everyone walked down from the airstrip to the beach to meet Howard our Expedition Leader and hop on a Zodiac to get aboard the *Greg Mortimer*.

Our kayak crew received a late briefing outlining the program, get orientated on gear and safety matters.

Day 2 am: Half Moon Island, Whalers Bay; Deception Island Distance 3km

Half Moon Island, our first excursion and outing with the kayaks. The perfect spot to get used to all the gear and the process of launching from the ship. The water was flat and the winds calm. We paddled to the landing beach to look at an old water boat and spotted a fur seal on the beach. The team encountered chinstrap and gentoo penguins, a young elephant seal and more fur seals while paddling along the shore of the Island.

Day 2 pm: Deception Island: Distance 4.8km

Conditions were calm with a low cloudy ceiling and ~ 1 meter seas

After watching the passage into the caldera from the observation deck of the GM we decided it's time to get back out. This time lower to the water and closer to the majestic rock walls and sea stacks. Everyone noticed the change in sea conditions from within the caldera to the outside waters. Some sea swell and rebounding waves from the rock walls. Passing through the narrow passage with high walls on our left and a huge sea stack on our right is always a highlight while paddling. We made it all the way out front Neptune's Window before we had to paddle back into the more sheltered waters of the caldera.

Day 3 am: Melchior Islands Distance 3.6km

Surrounded by strong winds we found shelter within the island group and were able to go for our morning paddle. We launched off of the back marina and made our way across the anchorage towards a small iceberg that got washed in and got stuck in a little bay. Due to the winds outside Melchior Islands, we experienced a little swell even here. The iceberg we wanted to check out turned out to be shaped like the opera house in Sydney and gave

everyone a great opportunity for photos. The little bay near the iceberg had a little landing beach that we used to stretch our legs. Just as we landed a small chunk of ice and snow fell off of a nearby cliff and surprised everyone with a loud "boom" when it hit the water. We shared the little beach with our first Weddell seal.

Day 3 pm: Neko Harbour Distance 3.1km

An amazing place for a paddle and our first continental landing. Paddling in and around hundreds of small icebergs while seeing the tall glaciers surrounding us is always fascinating. One of the smaller, lower icebergs had a young elephant seal sleeping on it. Not bothered by the kayaks we were able to watch the seal while it yawned and scratched itself over and over. Going ashore here is a must and we made our way to the landing beach that had a gentoo penguin colony on it. Using our legs for a chance we hiked up to the lookout and part took in the bum sliding activities.

Day 4 am: Lemaire Channel, Penola Strait, Port Charcot

The captain took the ship through the spectacular Lemaire Channel in the early morning going towards Peterman Island. Our outing wasn't possible due to too much brash ice in the bay.

Day 4 pm: Plenau Bay, Distance 4.1km

Our afternoon paddle turned out to be one of the highlights of this trip in many of the paddler's opinion. Leaving the ship and looking at a calm and sunny bay was a real treat after having mostly overcast days. The scenery was absolutely stunning. We noticed a lot of penguins in the water. Not very far in the distance we saw a whale spout come up and paddled towards it to get a little closer and to see what kind of whales were sharing the bay with us. At first we saw only one minke whale that was closely followed by a second one. Minkes are usually very fast and don't stick around for very long. Not these two, the abundance of food made it possible for us to watch them feed. We watched for a good while and kept paddling to a little beach not too far away.

On our way back to the ship we spotted the two minke whales again we paddled closer and discovered that a humpback had joined the feeding frenzy. We spend the next hour or so watching these three whales. It seemed so unreal to be there with the whales in such close proximity just feeding unbothered by us floating and watching in awe. What a day!

Day 5 am: Hydrurga Rocks Distance 3.8km

We paddled straight from the ship to one of the many little bays on Hydrurga Rocks and were greeted by a sleepy fur seal. Coming around to the Zodiac landing spot we were able to see many penguins. We decided to land right away and go for a short walk and marvelling at the size of a footprint of a giant petrel in the snow. After checking out the penguin colony and seals we went ahead and circumnavigated the small island and headed back to the ship.

Day 5 pm: Spert Island: Distance 2.8km

The cloud ceiling started to drop just as we arrived in our anchorage. Leaving the ships in some swell we saw fog rolling in behind the islands. Spert Island is known for its amazing rock formations, rock channels and arches. The

swell on the far side was a bit too large for us to paddle in but the lee side offered enough amazing opportunity to still explore parts of it. We sat and watched big swell coming through the first open rock channel and saw the big waves funnel through. We continued on along the shore, now with big snowflakes and fog all around. Just ahead another channel with some icebergs stuck on the other side appeared and it looked fairly calm on the inside of it. We observed the water for a fair while and everyone was keen to give it a try to paddle into the channel and turn around on the far end to come back out the same way we came in.

It was an amazing experience for everyone to paddle through.

Day 6 am: Brown Bluff Distance 4.2

We stopped at Brown Bluff for our morning paddle and it did not disappoint. After only a few minutes in the kayaks we came upon two leopard seals hunting and eating Adele penguins. It was fascinating seeing these animals in their element.

Day 6 pm: Snow Hill Island, Weddell Sea

Due to strong currents and time restraints we opted for a Zodiac landing and cruise at the Swedish Hut on the Island.

Day 7 am: Devil Island, Weddell Sea Distance 3.9km

After an amazing first day in the Weddell Sea the previous day, we were granted another amazingly sunny day. Paddling towards Devil Island weaving in and out of bergy bits, sighting Weddell seals basking in the sun and following the shore of the island. The group decided they wanted to take advantage of the sunny clear day and head up to the lookout pointy of the island. On shore we were able to see Adele penguins and enjoy the spectacular view from up high. It was quite a good last day for the paddlers.



Snorkel Log

By Edwin Sargeant

Snorkel Guide: Edwin Sargeant & Liz MacNeil

Number of Snorkels: 9 Total Outings: 7

Snorkellers:

Simona Prochazka	Jane Medress	Pascal Janssen
Mark Golan	Anu Rangarajan	Amit Mahadevan
Bruce Burwick	Greg Delisle	Laurie Orman

Day 2 am: Half Moon Island

This was our 'check out dive' where everyone got to try out the gear in a relaxed environment. The dive was from the beach and everyone entered the water at their own pace. We saw an orange sea star and a 'rock' penguin egg!

Day 2 pm: Deception Island

Deception Island was an opportunity to snorkel with the whale bones, but, the on-land options proved to be too tempting and we did not end up going into the water, instead opting for a visit to the whaling processing plant remains, a hike up to Neptune's window where we were able to take some spectacular photos of the team. Once we were back at the beach, there was enough time to go out through the heads and visit the beach below Neptune's window where we were met with fur seals and a solitary leopard seal.

Day 3 am: Melchior Island

Our visit to the Melchior's provided the team the first opportunity to snorkel around an iceberg. It never fails to bring out the child in all of us when we are in the water, surrounded by icebergs and bergy bits to play with!

Day 3 pm: Neko harbour

Neko Harbour never fails to provide a spectacular backdrop to another amazing outing. We were lucky enough to be able to visit with two pods of humpback whales and hundreds of rafted up penguins, all vying for the same krill that were being hunted before our eyes.

Day 4 am: Lemaire Channel

We were woken up at 5.40am, by Howard's sultry tones, so that we could get ready to be on deck to witness the majestic Lemaire Channel. This was our first opportunity to see the ship crush its way through some sea ice.

Day 4 am: Port Charcot

We had the opportunity to swim on a gentoo penguin superhighway witnessing their in-water antics and

acrobatic skills. This was accompanied by a short walk amongst the rookery and a Zodiac cruise around the stranded icebergs. This was also the site of the 'polar plunge' and the BBQ outing looking at the icebergs and seals and then managed to swim around a floating iceberg.

Day 5 am: Hydrurga Rocks

Hydrurga Rocks gave us the opportunity to see some giant petrels feeding on their prey, chinstrap penguins and plenty of fur seals. We took the opportunity to walk on the island before snorkelling in the small bay close to the ship. Again, we had the opportunity to play with the ice and get some photos.

Day 5 pm: Spert Island

Spert Island was a challenging outing, whilst we decided not to snorkel because of the weather (we had a 1.5 – 2.0m swell rolling through), this did not stop us from taking the opportunity to Zodiac cruise through the channels – this was like a Disneyland ride! We poked our nose out the back of the islands where the seas were rough and took some photos of the famous hole in the rock!

Day 6 am: Brown Bluff

Brown Bluff was, so far, the largest penguin rookery we had seen since arriving in the deep south. We took some time Zodiac cruising, then landed and walked amongst them and then decided to snorkel out the front of the landing site where we saw a chick taken by a patrolling leopard seal. Whilst the snorkellers were in the water, one of them decided to jump into the Zodiac to take a look – he then hopped up on the bow, had a final look around and jumped back into the water, totally unphased by the whole ordeal! We were lucky enough to get the whole episode on film, from various vantage points!

Day 6 pm: Snow Hill Island

Snow Hill Island was a Zodiac cruise and landing only, we visited the remains of the Swedish Hut and did a Zodiac cruise amongst the eerie icebergs on our way back to the ship. The light provided us with an opportunity to take some magical photos.

Day 7 am: Devil Island

This was another opportunity to circumnavigate an island (and sing Happy Birthday to our Guide, Liz!) before going ashore. We spent some time ashore amongst the penguins and then had the opportunity to swim around another series of icebergs before going back to the ship.

Day 7 pm: Cape Gordon

Cape Gordon was the first time we had seen a clear sky and it gave us the opportunity to take some amazing photos of the icebergs and later in the evening – the sunset. We did not snorkel at this location but did see some humpbacks from the aft deck whilst we were taking the group photo.

Day 8 am: Gourdin Island

Gourdin Island was another location where we only Zodiac cruised and landed on the island to walk amongst the

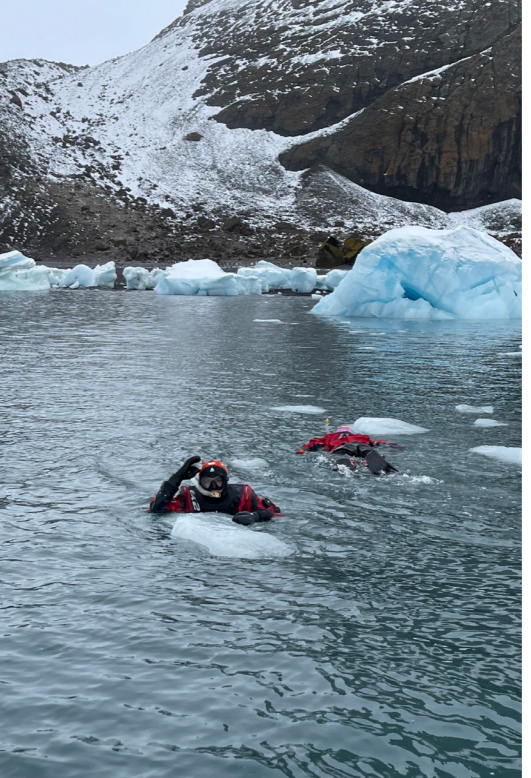
penguins. This is one of the only sites on the peninsular that has all three penguin types commonly found in the area. Gentoo, Adelie and chinstrap.

Day 8 pm: Petrel Cove

This was another Zodiac cruise where we got to look at the active military base from the water and take photos of the hauled out seals before going to the glacier to take a closer look.

Day 9 am: Penguin Island

We all decided that Penguin Island should be renamed 'Seal Island' as the seals outnumbered the penguins 10 to 1. This was another Zodiac cruise only where we were able to walk amongst the fur seals, elephant seals and penguins. Some of the more adventurous amongst us walked to the top of the crater to take in the magical views from that vantage point. On our way back to the ship we cruised by a wallow of elephant seals where the size of the 'beach master' made the others look like pups!



Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	28 January – 6 February 2022									
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
Gentoo Penguin	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Chinstrap Penguin	●	●		●	●			●	●	●
Adelie Penguin			●			●	●	●	●	
Macaroni Penguin										
Magellanic Penguin										
Unidentified Penguin (swimming)										
Wandering Albatross				●						
Royal Albatross										
Black-browed Albatross										
Grey-headed Albatross										
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross										
Giant Petrel sp. (Northern or Southern)		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Antarctic Petrel							●			
Cape Petrel		●	●			●	●	●		
Snow Petrel				●		●	●			
Antarctic Fulmar (=Southern)		●		●						
Blue Petrel										
Grey Petrel										
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)										
White-chinned Petrel										
Sooty Shearwater										
Great Shearwater								●		
Wilson's Storm-petrel		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Black-bellied Storm-petrel										
Imperial Cormorant (= South American)										
Antarctic Cormorant	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●

Bird Species	28 January – 6 February 2022									
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
American Sheathbill (Snowy)		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Chilean Skua										
Brown Skua	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
South Polar Skua				●						
Kelp Gull	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●
Dolphin Gull										
Tern (probably mostly Antarctic)	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●
South American Tern										



Mammal Species	28 January – 6 February 2022									
	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6
South American Fur Seal										
Antarctic Fur Seal		●	●		●		●	●	●	
Southern Elephant Seal					●				●	
Crabeater Seal			●	●		●	●			
Weddell Seal			●		●		●			
Leopard Seal		●	●	●		●				
Minke Whale			●	●						
Sei Whale										
Fin Whale		●								
Humpback Whale	●		●	●	●	●	●			
Southern Right Whale										
Orca		●								







Expeditioners:

Paul Baines	Jane Medress	Henriëtte Van schaik
Adrian Bass	Eileen Mentone	Carl Veikle
Bruce Burwick	Sebastian Modak	Jason Wallace
Jimena Cardenas Estandia	Greg Myers	Douglas Wayne
Terri Creech	Laurie Orman	Carol Wayne
Renata da Silva	Chris Peters	Claire Worster
Greg Delisle	Sue Peters	
Howard Dickman	Jeffrey Portnoy	
Martha Dickman	Lorraine Powers	
Mark Golan	Paola Prieto de Zorilla de San Martin	
Ricardo Guytingco	Simona Prochazka	
Lynn Harvey	Michael Prokosch	
Bill Harvey	Anu Rangarajan	
Lesley Herman	Dorothy Sander	
Ileen Herrero-Szostak	Jill Saperstein	
Maggie Hilgenberg	Lewis Saperstein	
Christopher Hsu	Grace Schimmel	
Pascal Janssen	Howard Schwartz	
Stephanie Krolick	Rebecca Sredni	
Maria Laynes	Ellen Sredni	
Tony Ledvina	Salo Sredni	
Bryan Lerdo	Mike Szostak	
Amit Mahadevan	Ravi Tijare	
Scott Mannis	Steve Tilmann	

Expedition Team:

- Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan
- Assistant Expedition Leader: David Berg
- Naturalist: John Kirkwood
- Kayaking Guide: Frank Witter
- Kayaking Guide: John Weir
- Kayaking Guide: Wes McNeil
- Snorkeling Guide: Edwin Sargeant
- Snorkeling Guide: Liz MacNeil
- Photography Guide: Scott Portelli
- Expedition Guide/Naturalist: Isabelle Howells
- Expedition Guide/Historian: Dot Robertson
- Medic: Scott Thompson
- Onboard Expedition Manager Trainer: Justine Bornholdt
- Onboard Expedition Manager : Rosie Leaney
- Onboard Expedition Manager Trainee: Anne Oeyasaeter
- Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu
- Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

- Master: Oleg Klaptenko
- Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi
- Safety Officer: Goran Goles
- Second Officer: Sergii Voina
- Bosun: Oscar Antonio Castejon Torres
- Deck Cadet: Sander Magi
- Deck Cadet: David Bote Martin
- Ship Doctor : Ivan Savic
- Ship Nurse: Susara Hendrika Mostert
- Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk
- First Engineer: Warlito B. Verzosa
- Hotel Director: Franz Wusits
- F&B Manager: Miguel Cabanillas Alvarez
- Chief Purser: Liza Merillo
- Executive Chef: Pierpaolo Fadda
- Sous Chef: Nellan Lewars
- Head Waiter: Narendra Seeram
- Hotel Controller: Rohmat Nurhidayat
- IT Officer : Ihor Yesmienieiev
- Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska
- Receptionist: Marie Annecy Reynoird
- Head Stateroom: Elieser Nunez Almendarez
- Spa Manager: Alena Antonova
- Able Seaman: Khenette Verzosa
- Able Seaman: Petko Vladimirov Petkov
- Able Seaman: Yevgen Kotuz
- Able Seaman: Maksym Khlivniuk
- Able Seaman: Joel Valdevieso Noble
- Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre

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Paul Baines	Jane Medress	Lewis Saperstein	Carol Wayne
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Greg Delisle	Sue Peters	Salo Sredni	Edwin Sargeant
Lesley Herman	Lorraine Powers	Steve Tilmann	John Weir
Tony Ledvina	Jill Saperstein	DouglasWayne	Frank Witter





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