

# Antarctic Peninsula in Depth

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 29 November – 12 Dec 2023



# Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Wednesday 29 November 2023

Position at 0600 on Nov 29

Latitude: 54°49.1'S

Longitude: 068°14.4'W

Course: 285°

Speed: 7.7 knots

Wind Speed: 16 knots SW

Barometer: 980 hPa

Air Temp: 7°C

Our embarkation day was as pleasant a day as can be had in Tierra del Fuego as the chilly spring rolled over into fragrant summer. Our adventure in the Southern Ocean began with a beautiful cruise into the Beagle Channel on a catamaran, sailing all the way out to a rocky islet called Faro Les Éclaireurs. The weather was mild, and the scenery was breathtaking.

At 16:00 we were dropped off on the pier where expedition staff were waiting to escort us to the *Sylvia Earle*, our home on the waves for the next 14 nights. We had just enough time to take some tea and find our cabins before we gathered in the lecture theatre to meet our Expedition Leader, Florence, as well as some of the staff including the Hotel Manager, Singh.

Soon we cast off and headed out into the Beagle. Along the Chilean and Argentinian coast, we could see small "ranchos" on the rolling hillsides, cattle and sheep grazing on new spring grass. From the outer decks we spied many seabirds including many rock shags busily gathering nesting material. A mandatory lifeboat drill was followed by our first marvelous dinner in the Gentoo restaurant.

As we passed Puerto Williams, the sea rose to meet us while the breeze kicked up, bringing with it more pelagic species.

Sometime around midnight the *Sylvia Earle* turned due south with Isla Nueva on our starboard.

Somewhere to the south-west in the falling dark, Isla Deceit hid in the lee of Isla Hornos, which features the historic and notorious Cape Horn, that marks the tempestuous northern border of the Drake Passage.

Our journey had begun!

Onboard we total 85 Expeditioners with nationalities representing Australia (45), Canada (4), Germany (1), Ireland (1), UK (10), USA (24), along with 20 Expedition Team and 87 ship's crew from all over the world.



# Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Thursday 30 November 2023

Position at 1115 on Nov 30

Latitude: 57° 45.120'S

Longitude: 065° 57.308'W

Course: 165°

Speed: 13 knots

Wind Speed: 25 knots S

Barometer: 976 hPa

Air Temp: 9°C

Sometime just before sunrise the Sylvia Earle left the shelter of Tierra del Fuego behind, and we began to gently sway in three metre seas. Perhaps we awoke to track down a rolling pen or battery or close a banging door. But if we also glanced out the window to the east, we caught a glimpse of the sun rising like a newly forged sword being thrust into black ice.

Breakfast was followed by the first of our mandatory briefings. From our Expedition Leader, Flo, we learned about our responsibilities as Antarctic ambassadors. Our visit to this remarkable wilderness must be as though we were never here, with nothing left but footprints and nothing removed but memories.

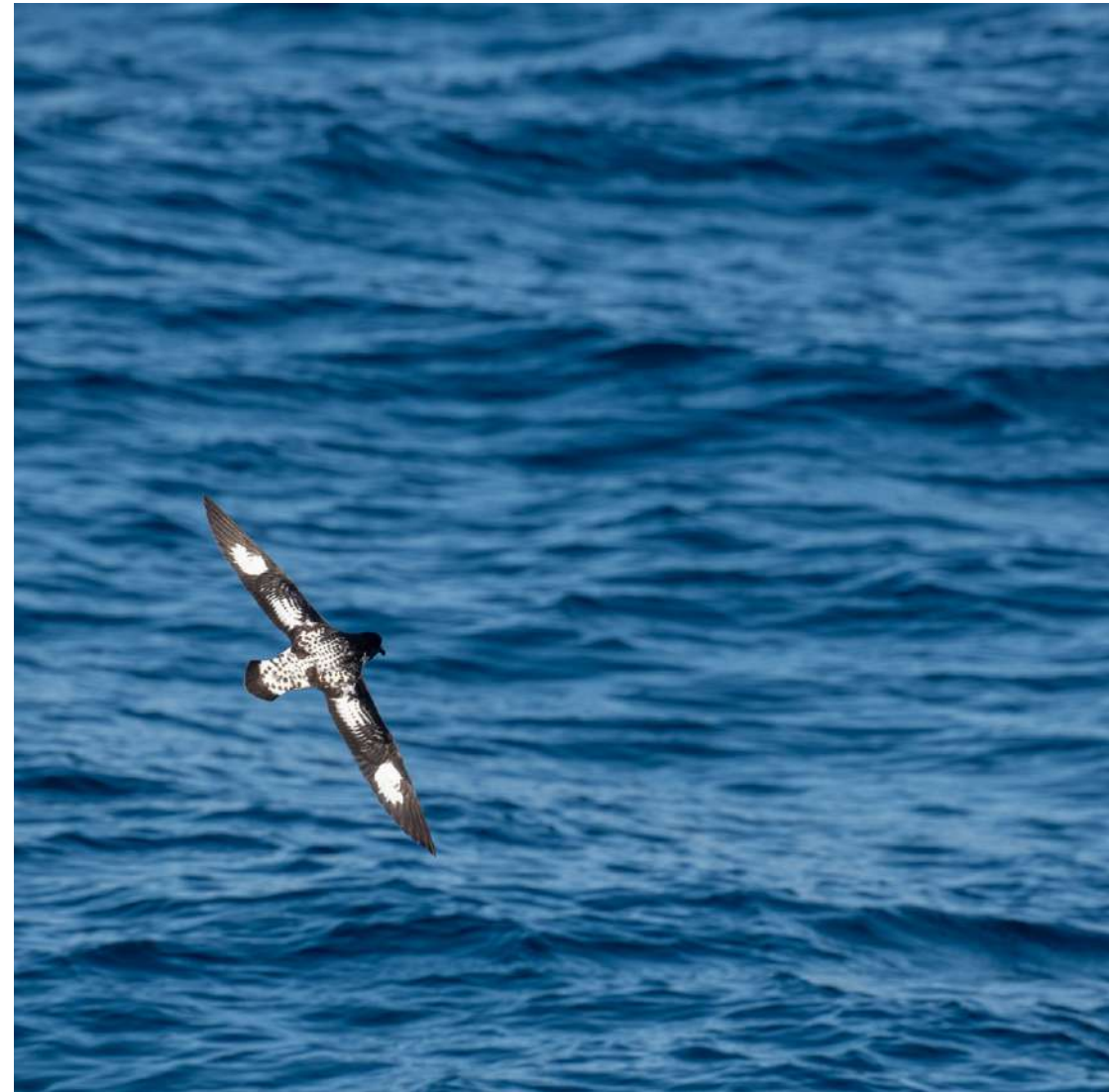
Next was our introduction to Aurora's onboard citizen science programs. Albert and Hans explained how we, as travellers, can help with research by collecting data using simple apps on the ship, or venturing out in the Zodiacs to help collect phytoplankton.

Immediately before lunch some of us ventured out to participate in our first E-bird survey. The sea was like steel flecked with the white wings of dozens of pelagic species. Clouds of cape petrels mixed with giant petrels, black-browed and sooty albatrosses, and even a rare, white-chinned petrel. An exciting day for birders!

Our expedition photographer, Max, reintroduced us to our phones with a lecture on smartphone photography. Most of us discovered some new feature hidden on our device which would help us capture our journey.

The seas continued to calm and the sun shone out stronger as tea was served in the lecture theatre. Then it was time to meet our captain and some of his officers and raise a glass to a successful voyage. After we drained our glasses, it was off to the Gentoo for another wonderful meal.

The day ended as it began with the sun slowly falling into calm seas, the cloudless sky blushing at the horizon and darkling above and behind. In the very heart of the Drake Passage, the Sylvia Earle rolled on toward the South Shetlands.



# Drake Passage; Whalers Bay, Deception Island

DAY 3 | Friday 01 December 2023

Position at 1315 on Dec 01

Latitude: 62° 56.4' S

Longitude: 061° 027.5' W

Course: 101.6°

Speed: 10.6 knots

Wind Speed: 7.5 knots N

Barometer: 986 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

The day kicked off with a surprisingly smooth sail across the usually tumultuous Drake Passage. Low-hanging fog added an otherworldly touch to the scene. The ship glided through the quiet waters, while flocks of petrels escorted us to our first sight of land.

Approaching the South Shetland Islands, the air became crisp as icebergs appeared, scattered in the frigid waters. These icy behemoths, remnants of distant glaciers, loomed around us, their irregular shapes obscured by the lingering mist. These first icebergs of our voyage a glimpse of the landscape to come and the surreal nature of the voyage we have embarked on.

Nature, in all its glory, made an unexpected entrance as whales gracefully welcomed us to their domain. Their dark forms emerged from the depths, their blows like beacons welcoming us to Antarctica. The presence of these marine giants added a touch of wild elegance to our journey, their majestic movements echoing through the stillness of the sea.

As the day progressed, the sun made its way through the fog, transforming the landscape. The icebergs, once shrouded in mystery, now stood stark against the blue sky. The South Shetland Islands revealed their true beauty, huge mountains covered in glaciers that shined in the afternoon sky.

Our day reached its peak with an unexpected landing at Deception Island, a place with a rich maritime history. Whalers Bay, home to remnants of a bygone whaling station, spoke of human endeavours in this harsh environment. Abandoned buildings stood as silent witnesses to the challenges faced by those who sought a living in these unforgiving conditions. Penguins and birds welcomed us to our first footsteps in this icy region and their comical stride got many oohs and aaahhs out of us.

Undeterred by the relics of the past, we strolled around the station, taking in the desolate beauty of the surroundings. After a few days at sea, it was good to stretch our legs and go for a hike up an unnamed hill, giving us an astounding view of the caldera in which we had sailed. The warm temperatures and lack of wind surprised many of us and left us sweating in our numerous layers. The still-active volcano, its caldera forming a natural amphitheatre, provided a unique backdrop to the remnants of the whaling industry.

As we left Whalers Bay and set sail for the heart of Antarctica, porpoising penguins and feeding whales accompanied our meal. An incredible first day that set the tone for a unique trip in one of the most remote parts of the world.





# Cuverville Island, Neko Harbour

DAY 4 | Saturday 02 November

Position at 1445 on Dec 02

Latitude: 64° 48.5'S

Longitude: 062° 39.8'W

Course: 123°

Speed: 7.2 knots

Wind Speed: 2 knots N

Barometer: 996 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

A day of many firsts... the morning started off with the sound of Flo's voice over the intercom system announcing that we were arriving at our first landing of the day, Cuverville Island. The mountaintops and glaciers surrounding the Sylvia Earle were covered with a layer of low-level clouds, stratus, the outside temperature was a balmy two degrees Celsius and there was barely a breath of wind. The makings for a very pleasant morning. After a lovely breakfast served in either the Rockhopper or Gentoo restaurants, we got ourselves ready for the adventure that lay ahead. Today would be the trip's first special activities operation which included 12 snowshoers, nine snorkellers and 19 kayakers. All other Expeditioners were shuttled in Zodiacs by the rest of the team to the landing site. Along the route we passed by large icebergs of all shapes and witnessed some of the 6,500 pairs of gentoos breeding on the island, meanwhile experiencing their unforgettable smell.

Cuverville Island was discovered by the Belgian Antarctic Expedition, 1897-1899, under Adrien de Gerlache, who named the island after Jules de Cuverville, a vice admiral of the French Navy. As the morning carried on, and all Expeditioners were ashore, the sun peaked out from behind the stratus clouds, highlighting the brilliance of the steep cliffs covered in snow, creating the dramatic background that Cuverville Island is known for. A chinstrap and an adélie penguin were spotted amongst the thousands of gentoos. The snorkellers had a successful first go at it, testing out their gear and admiring the playful penguins swimming under the water. The kayakers enjoyed an extremely calm sea state to paddle around the icebergs and take in their surroundings encompassed by magnificent mountains and glaciers. The snowshoers all roped together climbed up the mountain side and resembled tiny black dots on a white canvas sail, as seen from some of us observing from across the way on the island. Upon the snowshoers' return to their pickup landing, they saw not one, but two Weddell seals hauled out on the snow, basking in the warm sunlight.

After everyone enjoyed a well-earned lunch onboard, the afternoon unfolded into a memory that is challenging to put words to. Neko Harbour. The inlet located on the Antarctic Peninsula on Andvord Bay was also discovered by Gerlache and named after a Scottish whaling boat that operated in the area between 1911 and 1924. Today, the inlet was full of ice as the Captain and the officers navigated through it, finally arriving to the spot where we could launch the Zodiacs and make our first continental landing of the trip. Ice, glaciers, gentoos, more ice, sunshine, Weddell seals, snowshoers, an adventurous kayaker, more sunshine and finally witnessing a calving glacier and the aftermath such a force can create are only but just a few of the significant memories that will leave everlasting imprints on the minds, hearts, and souls of all who had their eyes open today. There truly are no words that can describe the magic experienced this afternoon. As the sun slowly set upon the Antarctic whiteness, the landscape turned a shade of gold as we watched in admiration and wonder for what tomorrow would bring.





# Aguirre Channel, Paradise Harbour

DAY 5 | Sunday 03 December 2023

Position at 1300 on Dec 03

Latitude: 64° 53.2'S

Longitude: 062° 52.2'W

Course: Dynamic Positioning

Speed: 0.0

Wind Speed: 2 knots S

Barometer: 983 hPa

Air Temp: 9°C

Today's Antarctic adventure took us on a morning exploration of the Aguirre Channel to Paradise Bay. Boarding Zodiacs for an unforgettable journey, our route included a cruise around the Chilean González Videla Base, an old research station on the Antarctic mainland. We even exchanged friendly waves with two people stationed there. In Leith Cove, we were treated to a natural spectacle—a halo encircling the sun. Surrounded by towering glaciers, we witnessed small calving events, a reminder of the ever-changing dynamics of this frozen landscape.

Our lunch on board prepared us for an afternoon around Brown Station and Skontorp Cove. Amidst these icy waters, we encountered leopard seals lounging on the ice and a lively colony of blue-eyed shags. The landscape surprised us with a touch of colour as we spotted malachite on the mountain, showcasing the geological wonders hidden in this remote region. After a 1.5-hour Zodiac cruise, we set foot on the continent for the second time during this voyage at Base Brown. The day unfolded with joy for kayakers, who paddled around icebergs, basking in the morning and afternoon wildlife sightings. The snorkellers, too, immersed themselves in the wonders of Antarctic marine life during the afternoon.

As evening fell, a hearty dinner fuelled our spirits for an adventurous night. A group of brave Expeditioners decided to camp in the Antarctic "darkness" on the small peninsula next to Base Brown Station, nestled in bivvy bags.

This unique experience allowed them to connect intimately with the serene and chilly Antarctic night. Today's escapade encapsulated the thrill of exploration, from friendly waves at old research stations to the majestic encounters with Antarctic wildlife. Whether kayaking, snorkelling, snowshoeing, Zodiac cruising or camping under the Antarctic night sky, each moment added a layer to the tapestry of our Antarctic journey, leaving indelible memories of the extraordinary landscapes and wildlife that define this remote part of the world.









# Peltier Channel, Port Lockroy

DAY 6 | Monday 04 December 2023

Position at 0800 on Dec 04

Latitude: 64° 57.4'S

Longitude: 063° 30.3'W

Course: 284°

Speed: 9.6 knots

Wind Speed: Calm

Barometer: 983 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

After an incredible night of camping for some under ideal conditions, our alarms sounded at 4am for an early return to the ship so we could set off towards our morning destination of the Peltier Channel.

Back onboard we snoozed for a few more hours, then woke up to Flo's announcement telling us that despite the arrival of fog and snow, we were still on for our morning Zodiac cruise! Everyone bundled up and we went out for an incredible morning cruise through a narrow channel filled with stunning landscapes, icebergs, and even an elephant seal. The waters were flat calm, which made for an enjoyable ride on the Zodiacs, and the kayakers were also able to get out and go for a lovely one-way paddle through the channel, while the ship repositioned and met everyone on the other side.

The day was still just getting started! When we got back on board, it was announced that we were doing the polar plunge, so a brave bunch stripped down to their bathing suits and headed out to the marina for a dip in the icy cold Antarctic water, followed by a shot of vodka to set the mind straight after the jolting experience.

After lunch, we gathered in the lecture theatre for a presentation by the Port Lockroy team, followed by a quick peruse through their onboard pop-up shop to buy souvenirs and stamps.

Before long we were back out for a Zodiac cruise around Port Lockroy, a British base and the southern-most post office in the world. We were lucky enough to step foot on the island and take tours of the museum where we got a real sense of what life was like working in a research station in the 50s and 60s.

We wrapped up one of the busiest days we've had here on the peninsula with yet another unforgettable evening, the onboard barbeque! The ship's crew put together one of the most incredible meals, with an amazing selection of BBQ and other options on the top deck. We dressed up in colorful hats and we all laughed and ate ourselves silly after the long and tiresome day, celebrating what an incredible journey we'd had so far and all the amazing days yet to come down here in Antarctica!







# Polar Plunge

DAY 6 | Monday 04 December 2022











# Lemaire Channel, Yalour Islands, Portal Point

DAY 7 | Tuesday 05 December 2023

Position at 0800 on Dec 05

Latitude: 65° 07.2'S

Longitude: 064° 01.4'W

Course: 227°

Speed: 4.3 knots

Wind Speed: 2 knots SW

Barometer: 970 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

Flo's nurturing wake-up notes drifted throughout the ship, her passion for this landscape melodiously bouncing down the halls and across the decks. Another ship was ahead of us, we would transit the Lemaire! Situated between Kyiv Peninsula in the mainland's Graham Land and Booth Island, 11 km (6.8 mi) long and a mere 600 meters (1,970 feet) wide at its narrowest point, the vertical cliffs funnelled us through the iceberg slalom course. Ominous vanilla ice-cream cornices threatened to come tumbling down and create a milkshake on the mirrored surface. Prior to departing the Channel, nature added her own exclamation point as a calving sent snow and ice and waves across the glassy reflections.

Our first stop later in the morning put a big smile on our faces as we recognised the Yalour Islands, home to an adélie penguin colony and one of the southernmost recorded gentoo penguin colonies.

Everybody seems to fall in love with the Adélie penguins, perhaps it's their white eye rings, or maybe the sense of purpose as they toboggan down the slope, or the height these torpedoes can propel themselves out of the water onto unsuspecting bergy bits. Rumours of a whale spread among the VHF ether-net and eventually we were all treated to a very accommodating humpback that worked the edge of the drift-ice back and forth, fluking up at regular intervals giving us a great show.

Encounters with both the penguins and the whale made us ponder what they must think of us, a bunch of colourfully clad semi-awkward spectators not intended to be in this unforgiving yet glorious land and seascape. The whale seemed nonplussed by the clicking of camera shutters and the imposter bait-ball silhouettes drifting overhead.

The afternoon humbled us all by the immense icebergs and the enormity of the rugged mountains and exposed rock faces in the background. You could imagine the tiny speck of our expedition on this peninsula plopped down on the globe as we weaved through the reflections of clouds and bergs and peaks. Our snowshoers went off on their own adventure, while some intrepid hikers made it to "Le Grand Cairn", a monument dedicated to the French explorer, Jean-Baptiste Charcot and the French Antarctic Expedition of 1903-1905. Others then played amongst the iceberg sculpture garden before we all started re-traipsing our route northbound through the Lemaire.

Paulina spoke of rusting rocks at recap, Albert geeked out describing the Fjord-Phyto Citizen Science project and CTD results, and Max showed us the darker side of life in a penguin colony. There was a calm on the ship in the evening as collectively we ran out of superlatives and drifted in this dreamy work of art.







# Enterprise Island, Portal Point

DAY 8 | Wednesday 06 December 2023

Position at 0800 on Dec 06

Latitude: 64° 32.6' S

Longitude: 061° 58.1' W

Course: Variable courses

Speed: 2 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots S

Barometer: 982 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

"Good morning dear Expeditioners, good morning, we have another beautiful sunny and calm day".

Who would have thought that we would wake up almost every day of our expedition in Antarctica with weather conditions like this?

After breakfast we arrived at Enterprise Island, ready for the first outing of the day.

We boarded Zodiacs for a closer look at the Governoren, a whaling ship that caught ablaze in the shallow waters here in 1915.

The story goes, as the 85 crew were wrapping up their season, they decided to throw a party (as was the standard practice aboard floating factories) to celebrate the success of a long and laborious mission hunting and processing whales, and the anticipated journey home. Because Governoren's working decks were designed for flensing, and not for dancing and partying, the celebration was held below decks.

Someone, perhaps while dancing too boisterously, knocked a lamp off a table and the ship caught fire. The Governoren was of course full of thousands of gallons of whale oil, ready and waiting to be hauled back to Norway. This oil fuelled the fire, causing it to quickly grow out of control.

Although resulting in the terrible loss of whale oil and of a historic ship, the captain set Governoren aground and the entire crew of 85 were able to escape, only to watch the blazing ship burn to ruin. None of the crew members were injured by the fire; all were rescued by another whaling vessel.

During the cruise, our snorkellers had an amazing experience close to the shipwreck, while the best views of the day were reserved for the snowshoers, who had a truly astonishing 360 degree view of the ocean, islands and mainland surrounding us from the summit of Enterprise Island.

Just when we thought we'd seen it all, we discovered cocoa bay. A Zodiac nestled in a calm bay serving delicious cups of hot chocolate. A welcome surprise from the hotel and e-team.

After a beautiful ship transfer to Portal Point, we were ready for our afternoon landing. The Sylvia Earle had to position quite far from the landing site due to the amount of ice. This made for a stunning Zodiac cruise, finding our way through this semi frozen labyrinth of growlers, icebergs, and sea ice, with mirrorlike calm seas in between.

Once on land in Portal Point, our third continental landing, temperatures felt like we could have been somewhere else on this planet instead of the cold harsh Antarctic. Walking around in the soft snow, we appreciated the tracks

the Expedition Team made for us, but still, some of us had a closer experience with the snow sinking in.

The kayakers had their first close and long encounter with a humpback whale, was this the start for more to come..?

To recap, one of our Expeditioners won the penguin sound challenge against Max, which led to him sacrifice his carefully grown moustache that he had been nurturing for two long months.

After a song about the last whales from Kevin, we enjoyed another delicious dinner, which was followed by more music by Kevin up at the observation lounge. What a fantastic way to end the day!





# Dallmann Bay, Fournier Bay, Patagonia Bay

DAY 9 | Thursday 07 December 2023

Position at 0920 on Dec 07

Latitude: 64° 30.2'S

Longitude: 063° 05.7'W

Course: 247°

Speed: 0.1 knot

Wind Speed: 1 knots SW

Barometer: 996 hPa

Air Temp: 9°C

Our extraordinary day commenced with a serene journey through what we had expected to be howling winds but turned out to be still. The sun, casting its golden glow over the icy expanse, rendered the waters of Dalman Bay as smooth as glass. Humpback whales treated us to a mesmerising display of bubble net feeding amidst the scattered ice as we made our approach to the site of our morning activities.

As we arrived deep into Fournier Bay, we descended into the glassy bay on board our Zodiacs, gliding effortlessly along the icy shores adorned by colossal icebergs, some standing a staggering 100 metres above the surface. The tranquility of the morning was punctuated by the surreal encounter with the whales, dozens of them, feeding in sight from our stationary Zodiacs. In a dance of elegance and power, they created a spectacle that left us in awe. Time stood still as we absorbed the magic of these moments, the silence broken only by the occasional spout and the whispers of the icy breeze. This was a moment to remember, whales working together to catch huge amounts of krill, creating a boiling sea with their bubbles.

After the excitement from the morning, afternoon unfolded as a needed blend of exploration and relaxation. Engaging in a cloud survey, we expanded our understanding of the Antarctic sky. An outdoor lecture on glaciology captivated our minds, while succulent teatime snacks nourished our bodies. Max, our photographer, curated the best photos capturing the essence of our morning whale encounters, weaving a narrative that spoke to the heart of our extraordinary journey, and giving us a deeper understanding of what had unfolded before our eyes.

As the day turned to evening, Kevin took centre stage on Deck 8, orchestrating a show that harmonised with the breaching whales around our ship. Cocktails in hand, we revelled in the warmth of the sun on this wind still afternoon, a rare gift in the icy embrace of Antarctica.

Retreating to our cabins tonight, the echoes of whale songs and the monumental icebergs will linger in our dreams. Dalman Bay unveiled its wonders, and we, the fortunate witnesses aboard the Sylvia Earle, are left humbled by the majesty of the Antarctic realm.







# Hydrurga Rocks, Mikkelsen Harbour

DAY 10 | Friday 08 December 2023

Position at 1330 on Dec 08

Latitude: 64° 00.9' S

Longitude: 061° 06.1' W

Course: 064°

Speed: 10.3 knot

Wind Speed: 8.7 knots W

Barometer: 995 hPa

Air Temp: 8°C

On our final day of Antarctic operations, we began the morning with a landing on Hydrurga Rocks, named after the leopard seal, *Hydrurga leptonyx*, in 1960. Although we didn't spot any leopard seals, the landscape was alive with the presence of Weddell seals and several colonies of chinstrap penguins, marking our first encounter with these charming creatures. The air was filled with the joyous company of penguins and the clicking of cameras capturing the cloudy sky. Kayakers and snorkelers revelled in their activities in the cool waters, while snowshoers strapped on their gear for another adventure, hiking the glacier and embracing the unique Antarctic terrain.

In the afternoon, our ship repositioned itself towards Mikkelsen Harbour, our final landing site. While kayakers had to stay ashore due to the brisk winds, other activities pressed on. Mikkelsen Harbour unfolded before us, revealing a tapestry of Antarctic wonders. Gazing upon the landscape, we marvelled at gentoo penguins going about their daily routines, a Weddell seal serenading the surroundings, and the sighting of our first elephant seal—a fitting climax to our Antarctic explorations.

This day was the finale to our Antarctic journey, a culmination of diverse experiences and wildlife encounters that have defined our time on this frozen continent. From the lively colonies of penguins to the singing Weddell seal and the majestic presence of the elephant seal, each moment etched a lasting memory of the unique beauty that thrives in this remote part of the world. As we bid farewell to Antarctica, our hearts were filled with gratitude for the extraordinary landscapes and wildlife that have made this expedition an unforgettable adventure.

The day finished with a recap and briefing session to ensure we were well-prepared for the upcoming Drake Passage crossing, a challenging yet essential part of our Antarctic exploration. As evening set in, we gathered for a dinner, savouring the ship's cuisine and the company of our fellow adventurers. We began preparations for the Drake Passage, a significant part of our journey. Retiring to our cabins, we anticipated the unpredictable but exciting days that lay ahead, as we continued to explore the wonders of this pristine and remote wilderness in Antarctica.





# Drake Passage

DAY 11 | Saturday 09 December 2023

Position at 1450 on Dec 09

Latitude: 60° 36.0' S

Longitude: 063° 24.1' W

Course: 344°

Speed: 10.9 knot

Wind Speed: 20 knots N

Barometer: 996 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

We woke up to the distant memory of being gently rocked in our beds, reminding us that we were back on the Drake Passage. Without Flo's voice to announce our immediate plans for the day, it was no surprise that we all entered breakfast a little late that day.

The skies had closed in with some low-level clouds as we started out across the Drake. In the morning, Albert's lecture helped us to distinguish between the three different types of penguins that we saw on the Peninsula, chinstrap being the smallest and most abundant penguin worldwide. Adélie penguins are the next size up and the only endemic penguin out of the three, meaning it is the only 'ice loving' one that is present in Antarctica itself rather than the outlying islands. Lastly is the gentoo penguin, which is the tallest and chunkiest of the three penguins.

We learnt the gentoos main breeding grounds have been the south Antarctic islands but are now seen moving towards mainland Antarctica as temperatures rise. Paulina finished off the morning with a lecture on rocks and the origin of Antarctica. We learned about tectonic plates and ocean crusts and how they moved and shaped this continent. We also learnt that Antarctica was once a supercontinent, Gondwana, and had a climate not unlike that of the United Kingdom!

After lunch Max's lecture introduced us to the benefits of using photo editing software Lightroom. He discussed topics such as vibrance versus saturation, and learning the likes of 'batch editing tools' 'healing brush' and 'dehaze'.

The teatime lecture was a fascinating recap of Mike's on his work as a mountaineering guide for scientists, over many years in central and western Antarctica. His video footage of the Fostick storm in 2006 gave us an example of the horrific winds this continent can produce that can actually lift up a snowmobile and send it flying!

After dinner, the day ended with a light-hearted trivia night about Antarctica and fun facts about our Expedition Team. One in particular acted as a stunt man in two movies! We all went to bed with the continuous rocking of the two to three metre swell of the Drake and fair weather.



# Drake Passage

DAY 12 | Sunday 10 December 2023

Position at 1255 Dec 10

Latitude: 56°43.8'S

Longitude: 065°46.9'W

Course: 320°

Speed: 11.7 knots

Wind Speed: 30 knots SW

Barometer: 990 hPa

Air Temp: 6°C

Another well-earned sleep in this morning as we made our way across the Drake Passage. A moderate swell of three metres and winds of 15-20 knots made the perfect playground for the abundant seabirds flying around the ship.

After a relaxing breakfast, Hans started the day with a lecture on the seals of Antarctica. We learnt more about the four types of seals we encountered during our time on the Peninsula (crabeater, Weddell, leopard and elephant seals) including their diets, identifying features and how seals developed to the creatures they are today. Hans finished his lecture with some of his own crazy whale stories that he has collected over his years.

Paulina's "50 Shades of Ice" lecture gave everyone an in-depth understanding of what we had really been seeing when looking at all those icebergs and glaciers.

After lunch, it was time for Bridge tours! Deck Cadet Carlos took the tours and explained what all the fancy technology does, including all the radars, depth sounders and electronic charts. It was very interesting to see that ships no longer have a big steering wheel these days - just a little knob that the captain and sailors use to make the adjustments.

This afternoon Albert gave us an enlightening lecture on Whales; much needed after all the whale action we had on this voyage! We learnt about how whales have adapted to dive to crazy depths and thrive in the ocean. An explanation behind 'bubble net' feeding by humpbacks really showed how intelligent these animals are.

Max followed Albert with his insightful photo critique workshop. Lots of good advice and feedback was given to the keen photographers who put their photos forward.

To end the day, we had the Captain's Farewell, a welcome excuse to dress up and have a drink with our fellow Expeditioners who we have come to know so well. To wrap up a lovely evening, we had Kevin and Megan playing music in the Tektite bar. Some crowd favourites included 'American Pie' and 'Country Roads'.



# Drake Passage, Ushuaia

DAY 13 | Monday 11 December 2023

Position at 1400 on Dec 11

Latitude: 54°56.8'S

Longitude: 066°57.7'W

Course: 284°

Speed: 11 knots

Wind Speed: 14 knots W

Barometer: 998 hPa

Air Temp: 10°C

Our last day aboard the Sylvia Earle was spent in a placid Beagle Channel. At first light, we could see to the south historic Isla Nueva, while to the north, the hills of the Mitre Peninsula climbed up to weathered peaks, all muted green and tan. The water was calm, and the air was warm without a breath of wind. Stepping outside, we gratefully breathed in the vibrant life of Tierra del Fuego, now in full and fecund summer. The tang of canelo and beech filled the air, even far out in the middle of the channel.

Pelagics were sparse but an occasional lone black-browed albatross circled the ship while the ever-present fulmars swept low over the steel-gray sea.

The day was filled with goodbyes as we met again in the lounge to share stories and pictures of our journey. Megan presented a gripping account of her voyage around Cape Horn on the historic Bark Europa. There were more opportunities to visit the bridge and a fascinating documentary about another, much earlier sea voyage. Around Cape Horn, narrated by the filmmaker Irving Johnson, was a window that looked back to a time when journeys like ours were powered not by diesel but by muscle and sheer will.

Just before two o'clock the pilot was brought aboard and we began our transit of the Beagle. Soon we were in the narrow passage between Gable Island and Chile. Glints of yellow could just be seen amidst the dense conifers, the beautiful calafate, now in full bloom. Puerto Williams passed by on our portside and as the channel widened, dolphin gulls could be seen feeding in rafts on the water.

A late afternoon concert by Kevin was followed by the final goodbyes from Flo and the Expedition Team. This was followed by a slide show made up of images shared by all of us. As we waited for our mooring, we gathered once more for a final dinner in the Gentoo.

Then the engines roared to life once again and slowly we came alongside. Out in the harbour we could see crafts of every size, from paddle boards to container vessels and, of course, cruise ships, large and small. The sun turned the hills a deeper shade of green and the last patches of winter's snow shone on the peaks above the tree line.

For most of us it was time to pack and pay our bills, but we silently promised to honour our captain's final words to us: "Not goodbye but farewell."

Aurora Expeditions sends 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

Kayak Masters: Sigurð Davidsen, Vanja Davidsen, Tim Vanhottengem

Number of Paddlers: 19

Total Paddle Outings: 10

Total Distance Paddled: 52 km

Paddlers:	Evan Johnson	Teresa Kraemer	Paul Freeman
John Cooper	Stephen Douglas	Julia Freeman	Julie Marie Robert
Lynne Cooper	Natasha Boddy	Alison Freeman	Jodie Burcham
Judith Gulikers	Glenn Searby	Cheryl Fernandes	Samuel Fong
Jeffrey Gulikers	Christopher Roland	Reeve Fernandes	David Doughty

## Day 4: 2 Dec 2023, AM. Cuverville 4.62 km

A sunny morning greeted us as we arrived at Cuverville Island. The island looked beautiful and foreboding with the sounds of avalanches in the distance. We paddled from the ship to the island and then traversed to the west, past penguin rookeries on the rocky shore. We found sheltered waters away from the wind in the lee of the island and had our first paddling lesson. We went in close to the shore with groups of penguins porpoising past us as the sun shone upon us. We continued through the brash ice cruising between the beautiful icebergs along the southern side of the island with beautiful rock formations.

## Day 4: 2 Dec 2023, PM. Neko Harbor 2.7 km

While we had a well-earned lunch, the ship moved to the beautiful and calm Neko Harbour. Most of the group went on land for the first continental landing, and we were greatly relieved to have a calm and relaxed afternoon paddle past beautiful icebergs and in the thick brash ice. We then found a tiny beach set against ice cliffs to celebrate our landing on the continent of Antarctica. Our paddle back to the ship led us past giant icebergs in the quiet waters of the stunning harbour.

## Day 5: 3 Dec 2023, AM. Aguirre channel to Paradise Bay 9 km

On this fresh, slightly breezy morning we launched from the ship and headed north towards the Chilean base Gonzales Videla, where we enjoyed watching large groups of penguins along the shoreline going into the water and porpoising between the kayaks. We started paddling southeast through the stranded growlers towards Paradise Bay. The group went further away from land because of active glacier fronts along the coast, out on the sound we got to see a few amazing icebergs. As we passed Leigh Cove, we were lucky enough to come across a leopard seal with a calf sleeping on an ice floe. Much of the Expedition Team had never experienced that sight, even after working in Antarctica for many seasons. After arriving in Paradise Bay, we returned to the warm ship.

## Day 5: 3 Dec 2023, PM. Paradise / Skontorp cove 7 km

After a beautiful morning paddle from the Aguirre channel finding a way through all the ice, we finally made our way into Paradise Bay. After launching from the Zodiac, we headed out with our kayaks past some beautiful

icebergs, a bit closer to the glacier front. With the low tide and a shallow coastline, there were some beautiful stable grounded growlers, which we decided to take a closer look at. Some of us even had a taste to determine whether it was sea or glacier ice. We then followed the coastline, passing Brown Station. The station was still closed, but seemed to be populated by a lot of gentoos instead! After this we followed the rocky shoreline towards Skontorp Cove, where we found a sleeping leopard seal on the ice. We then paddled through some brash ice before making our way back safely to the ship.

## Day 6: 4 Dec 2023, AM. Peltier channel 6.2 km

Arriving at the entrance of the Peltier Channel, we realised we would have to dress warmer for the day - the first with real Antarctic weather, some snow, but luckily not too much wind. After towing the kayaks into a more sheltered side of the channel, having a briefing on kayaking in the fog and a fun counting game, we entered our boats ready for the challenge of the morning: paddle to the other side of the Peltier Channel, close to Port Lockroy. We had a physical but rewarding kayak tour and were surprised with mirrorlike views when arriving to the north side of the channel.

## Day 7: 5 Dec 2023, AM. Yalour 3.9 km

After the captain and his bridge crew gave us a beautiful navigation through the Lemaire Channel, we arrived at the sunny and calm Yalour Islands. We launched from the Zodiac and went exploring in between the icebergs and brash ice before reaching the Yalour Islands. On the islands we came close to adélie rookeries, with the odd gentoo penguin in between. As we progressed through the narrow passages, we were able to practice our fine manoeuvring. We passed a few large icebergs on our paddle back towards the ship, and recovered in the return Zodiac when we spotted a humpback close to the ship. We all spent a good half hour together with the other Zodiacs enjoying this magnificent animal.

## Day 7: 5 Dec 2023, PM. Port Charcot 6.5km

What a great place to start the day, in the historic place of the overwintering site during the French Antarctic Expedition of 1903-1905, led by Jean-Baptiste Charcot. The intrepid kayakers launched from the Zodiac close to shore east of Booth Island. We paddled south and around the west side of the island, with the beautiful sight of the cairn on top of the island guiding us all the way around. We captured some nice group photos before paddling through the slightly challenging winds on the way back.

## Day 8: 6 Dec 2023, PM. Portal Point. 3.4 km

The ice conditions at the planned landing site were a bit challenging, so we paddled south-west from the ship towards the more open sea. The weather was perfect; glassy seas, some brash ice and a lot of large icebergs. Before launching from the Zodiac, Sigurð showed us his secret whale call with the paddle. As we cruised along the icebergs in perfect serenity, the whale call must have paid off as we heard two whale blows - our first humpback whales while in the kayaks! They came closer and we stopped to enjoy these amazing animals, what an experience. Just as the humpbacks left the group the wind started picking up, so we decided to go back to our warm ship.

### Day 9: 7 Dec 2023, AM. Fornier bay 4.5 km

Hiding from the storm further to the east in the Gerlache Strait, the captain found this scenic bay with glassy water.

We started paddling northeast from the ship. Seeing the enormous icebergs as we paddled along the bay, we came upon tens of humpbacks feeding in different groups. We stopped watched as they came closer, giving us the show of a lifetime. We stayed and enjoyed the display for quite a while. This was the most incredible, once in a lifetime encounter with humpback whales you could ever imagine. We were all (including expedition guides) totally mind blown!

### Day 10: 8 Dec 2023. Hydrurga Rocks 4.2 km

The low rocky islands of Hydrurga Rocks gave us an opportunity to practice our timing of our paddling through narrow gaps and between rocky outcrops. We waited and watched the swell roll in, then took our chance to paddle through a pass to the sheltered waters in the lee of the islands. Rounding the end of the islands, we found enclosed, sheltered bays and in one, an old and wise Weddell seal gazed at us from the shallows of a quiet lagoon.

We marvelled at nesting cormorants with dark downy chicks nesting on the seaside cliffs. Coming around closer to the landing spot, we were also able to see many chinstrap penguins. We went ahead and circumnavigated the small island, and picked up in the quiet bay.







# Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guides: Eddie Hauzer, Freya Dooley, Nicki Meharg

Number of Snorkellers: 12

Total Outings: 8

Snorkellers:	Emma	Marion	Jerry
Lea	Ruby	Amy	
Chris	Abbey	Howard	
Grigory	Oliver	Helen	

## DAY 4 02.12.23 - Cuverville Island 64°41'00"S, 62°38'00"W

Another blue-sky morning and our first chance to go out for a snorkel. The whole group was buzzing with excitement while getting into the drysuits for the first time.

Cuverville is a small, stunning island with gentoo penguins and continental mountain ranges as a backdrop, as well as small, sheltered bays with beautiful icebergs surrounding the island. We find a sheltered, shallow bay to have our first snorkelling outing.

It's beautiful, easy snorkelling, with a black, rocky bottom and plenty of curious gentoo penguins. What a way to start our exploration of Antarctica underwater.

## DAY 5 03.12.23 - Brown station - Shag Cliffs 64°53'00"S, 62°53'00"W

The morning starts with a wake up to humpbacks feeding off the starboard side of the ship for around three hours from 5am. Plenty of birds on the surface marking the bait balls.

We are just outside the mouth of the stunning harbour. We have blue, blue skies again today and we cannot wait to see more! To Paradise Bay we head, and the captain even put the ship through some ice for us, what a treat. Once at Paradise, we could see how it got its name. A scenic Zodiac cruise enjoying the stunning conditions before we landed at Brown Station.

In the afternoon, we snorkelled around shag cliffs just behind Brown base. A wall dive with algae and usual macro life below cliffs with birds dropping their nutrients into the water. Limpets, starfish and krill.

We saw our first leopard seal and some Wedell and crabeater seals lounging on bergs in the bay. A totally beautiful, flat calm day with a halo around the sun.

## Day 6 04.12.23 Port Lockroy 64°49'00"S, 63°30'00"W

First day of fog and bad visibility. We all had an atmospheric Zodiac cruise in the morning followed by a landing visit to the museum at Port Lockroy, it was amazing to see the history in there.

We then snorkelled at Port Lockroy behind the base, with the moody skies, the penguin colony and a glacial wall backdrop. The penguin calls surrounding us added to the atmosphere, and starfish were the critter of the day here, and we also saw some of the first penguin eggs of the season at Lockroy.

## Day 7 05.12.23 - Yalour Islands 65°14'00"S, 64°10'00"W & Port Charcot 65°04'00"S, 64°02'00"W

We woke to the incredibly stunning Lemaire Channel, which is 500 metres wide at its narrowest point.

The Yalour islands are beautiful, low lying islands and made for a great snorkel spot, where we spotted adelic penguins and Weddell seals while we snorkelled viewing the rocky, slabby bottom. A curious Weddell seal came to play with the group. We were also treated to gentoo penguins and lots of icebergs in the picturesque surroundings, as well as starfish, anemones, ctenophores, algae and sponges beneath the surface.

At Charcot Harbour we also experienced stunning blue skies and calm, flat waters and the iceberg graveyard provided a great playground for a snorkel.

## Day 8 06.12.23 Enterprise Island. 65°32'00"S, 62°00'00"W

We woke to another beautiful day down in Antarctica. Snorkelling the wreck of the Governoren,

the water was very green with plankton, so we had low visibility – but, the highlight of this outing was a hot chocolate snorkel treat!

Hot chocolates in hand, we Zodiac cruised around the island, spotting lots of Antarctic shags and a sole chinstrap penguin.

The island has a lot of unstable snow, so falls and calvings are possible everywhere. The morning was topped off by a beautiful humpback encounter on the way back to the boat.

## 08.12.23 Morning Hydrurga rocks 64°40'00"S, 60°80'00"W & Afternoon: Mikkelsen Harbour (63°54'S 60°47'W)

We woke to our first slightly overcast day in Antarctica, and snorkelled in our own little protected inlet surrounded by shags, chinstrap penguins and crabeater seals.

People saw limpets, starfish, krill, and the slightly overcast day didn't stop the group's enjoyment of the snorkel.

Mikkelsen Harbour is a small bay indenting the south side of Trinity Island between Skottsberg Point and Borge Point, in the Palmer Archipelago. It provides excellent anchorage for ships and was frequently used by sealing vessels in the first half of the 19th century and by Norwegian whaling vessels at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Zodiac cruise in was a hairy ride, with the reef shallowing up in unexpected places between the boat and the harbour. We were surrounded by glaciers and lots of calving sounds of the active falls.

The snorkellers were surrounded by penguins curiously investigating these funny big aliens in their environment. Some seal impressions were done by a few in the group, 'hauling out' on the just submerged rocks.





# Snowshoers Log

Guides: Dave Stark and Mike Roberts

Number of Snowshoers: 12      Total Outings: 9

Snowshoers:	Kim Philips	Liane Manley	Marion Brewer
Fay Mowbray	Ian Philips	Craig Murata	
Paul Mowbray	Steven Kraemer	Alan Paisley	
Nicholas McNaught	Stuart Manley	Patricia Beermier	

## 1 December: Whalers Bay, Deception Island

After making great time across the Drake Passage we had a bonus first landing late afternoon at Whalers Bay, Deception Island. How amazing for the Sylvia Earle to sail into the caldera through the gap in the island known as Neptune's Bellows. Deception Island is rich in history, with many artifacts and fascinating ruins, testimony to past whaling and the destruction of the research base by volcanic eruptions. Steam rising off the beach and the warm sand indicate the caldera is alive and well. It was also a great chance to stretch the legs and see a fur seal.

## 2 December: Georges Point, on Ronge Island

Excitement was high for our first snowshoe adventure. While the main team headed towards Cuverville Island, the 14 members of the snowshoe team took a Zodiac to Georges Point. Seas were calm as the Zodiacs zipped around floating ice to our landing, near a gentoo rookery. Beside our landing was a basking Weddell seal. Today was all about getting used to snowshoes, a first for most folks – a John Wayne stance helps – “walk like a cowboy but think like a sherpa” – and everybody did great. Our trip involved roping up for glacier travel as protection from crevasses. This required the patience to walk in unison, taking care not to trip on the rope – there were a few whoopsie moments! Some folks discovered unused muscles. This was a highly scenic location that offered great views towards the glaciers of high peaks cascading into the Errera Channel. What a great day to feel the vastness and serenity of Antarctica.

## 2 December: Neko Harbour in Andvord Bay

This was a fantastic blue sky day where sun hats and sunscreen were in high demand. After a short Zodiac trip, we started by trekking uphill around a gentoo rookery, then roped up for glacier travel. The hill offered a chance to burn calories from the amazing food we've been treated to. It was warmer than one would have imagined Antarctica would get. Folks were wearing a single upper body layer. Towards the upper part of the hill, Dave, who was leading, followed by Trish, experienced a snow settlement; a loud whoomph sound was followed by a perceptible drop in the snow surface, as an underlying snow layer collapsed. This is an indicator of avalanche instability, so we were glad not to be on a steep slope. All around us the views were stunning – a vivid white panorama of high peaks and glistening glaciers cascading towards Andvord Bay. Above Neko Harbour, ice teetered and occasionally crashed into the ocean, risking a tsunami wave. This was our first continental landing in Antarctica, ticking off the seventh continent – congratulations team.

## 3 December: Brown Base in Paradise Harbour.

Brown Base is located in Paradise Harbour, which is a paradise indeed, especially on a picture perfect blue sky day like we were treated to. Our trek started by zigzagging up a hill to a spectacular viewpoint. Not daring to venture too close to the cliff edge, we could see the kayakers and Zodiacs cruising below in Skontorp Cove. The bay contained a lot of brash ice, which included one growler that repeatedly rolled back and forth. On several occasions our gaze was drawn towards the sound of ice cracking and booming in the distance. Our route included traversing a snow ramp, which was exposed on both sides to the coast. On our return trek we experienced a sun halo, formed by ice crystals in high cirrus cloud. From below, the snowshoers looked like small penguins high above. And to cap off the day, that night Paul and Fay took up the challenge to camp. A day where great memories were made.

## 4 December: Jougla Point

This morning was dedicated to Zodiac cruising as dense clouds hugged the mountain tops. Slowly the cloud thinned and lifted in time for our snowshoe at Jougla Point, situated in the Port Lockroy area. There were the usual delicate moments during transition from ship to Zodiac to land, ensuring good foot placement and balance. All bags and gear were then chain ganged out of the boat to shore, a real team effort.

Our circuit started near a gentoo penguin rookery that had a lone elephant seal visiting and headed towards whale bones visible at the end of the point. The view encompassed the historic UK “Base A” that is operated as a living museum on Goudier Island. Our route then crossed to the Peltier Channel side of Jougla Point peninsula. On the skyline of Weineke Island, towering peaks called the seven sisters made brief appearances from the blanketing cloud. The trek then recrossed the peninsula to the sea ice, descending a steepish hill that tested knees and snowshoe traction. Given the prevalence of tidal cracks and nearby open water, we elected not to walk on the fast ice.

After our snowshoe, folks had a chance to visit the museum at Bransfield House on Goudier Island and to buy items from the Port Lockroy store, which was operating on the Sylvia Earle. This was an action packed day that included the polar plunge and a barbecue. Living the dream on a top rated day.

## 5 December: Hovgaard Island

We awoke to yet another fantastic sunny day with virtually no wind. This morning we joined the general landing and at our furthest south point, scenic Yalour Island, notable for the rich green moss and adélie penguins. In the afternoon we relocated to Point Charcot where we branched off to Hovgaard Island, situated beneath the vertically rising alpine terrain of Booth Island. On the Zodiac cruise the glassy ocean waters reflected spectacular icebergs. The team are all well into the groove of snowshoeing by now and enjoyed the walk up Hovgaard on this brochure day – a lot of camera action. What a ripper.

## 6 December: Enterprise Island

Everybody's faces are tanned after so much sun and it's with much gratitude that today was also going to require a maximum application of sunscreen. A fantastic blue sky day for snowshoeing to the top of Enterprise Island. The team is now well dialled in to the Zodiac and landing procedures for pack, unpack, gear-up and rope-up. We've become a well-oiled machine, unlike the wreck of the whaling ship Governoren, which is located near the

landing site. In 2015 the Governoren, a whaling factory boat caught fire after a crew member dancing at their end of season party knocked an oil lamp off a table. In order to save the 85 crew members the captain ran the ship aground.

The view from the top of Enterprise Island is a stunning 360 degree panorama. To finish our outing we had a Zodiac tour of the Governoren, and then much to our surprise a hot chocolate Zodiac turned up with a welcome tasty treat! Some of the 10-strong team thought it was our most spectacular outing to date, a big wow factor. Our snowshoe was approximately 2km with 160m elevation gain.

### 6 December: Portal Point

Thick brash ice meant the Sylvania Earle went into dynamic positioning about 4km off Portal point. This made for a fun Zodiac trip, playing dodgem around the sunlit floating ice, which ranged in size from miniscule to large icebergs. Portal Point is a historic continental site where a British Antarctic Survey base was located. To the hardy men of BAS and their dog teams, this location provided access to the main spine of the Antarctic Peninsula and beyond. This afternoon, our team of eight ventured up the first part of this route. The higher we got, the better the views became until the Zodiacs, sea kayakers and folks below were dwarfed. Snowshoe stats: 2.27km and 175 vertical metres. On the return Zodiac trip, we were treated to a humpback whale breaching. Yet another fantastic outing – living the dream!

### 7 December: Whale Watching Special

Strong winds and challenging seas meant that all landing sites were out and there would be no snowshoeing today. In search of calmer conditions, the Sylvania Earle headed to Dallmann and Fournier Bays, which turned out to be idyllic, so much so that the kayakers were able to launch, and we did Zodiac cruising in the sun. Lenticular clouds capped the high peaks of Anvers Island and snow could be seen pluming of the ridges, yet in our safe haven it was almost calm.

Today was one to remember, with everybody getting an extraordinary display of humpback whales. In multiple different locations humpbacks could be seen 'fishing', using a technique called bubble netting. The humpbacks, often acting in unison, blew bubbles to act like a corral or net and scare the fish upwards. Amazing to watch this happening repeatedly for an extended period of time. Later we were treated to a fantastic display of breaching humpbacks that circled around the Sylvania Earle. How fortunate were we all to witness this.

### 8 December: Two Hummock Island

As we sailed up Gerlache Strait, the mist parted and two large tandem snow domes were revealed, shining in a moody sky, called Bauche Peak and Modev Peak – a sight for early birds to revel in. In the foreground was Hydrurga Rocks, home to a rookery of chinstrap penguins. The four keen takers this morning were in the mudroom, amped to go first thing. Our Zodiac drive took us around Hydrurga Rocks to a landing site that provided access through the towering ice cliffs that surround Two Hummock Island like fortress walls. Our snowshoe started by boot packing up a steep snow slope for about 50 metres. After this we donned snowshoes, roped-up and fell into rhythm, hiking up the lower slopes. Our height gain was 175m, which revealed great

views. On the return Zodiac trip we called by Hydrurga Rocks to check-out the chinstrap penguins and kayakers paddling around floating ice blocks. Yet another great trip.

### 8 December: Mikkelsen Harbour

As we manoeuvred into Mikkelsen Harbour, a small bay on the south side of Trinity Island, dense cloud shrouded the high peaks and for a while hugged sea level. Our last snowshoe outing got to off a shaky start as we rejected the steep lower slopes of Skottsberg and Borge Peak as being too steep and feisty for current avalanche conditions. In search of a Plan C we went to a small island to the southeast of the Mikkelsen Harbour inlet called Tetrads Island. It turned out to be just the ticket; highly scenic, calm and with an interesting array of wildlife. About 20 Weddell seals had beached near our landing, with giant petrels watching on. Our snowshoe route spiralled around the island past a gentoo rookery and looked down to other rookeries on adjoining islands. An array of sea birds circled overhead. This short trip was spectacular and atmospheric; what a great way to finish this voyage. Soon after boarding we were enroute for the Drake Passage and the night skies of Ushuaia.

### 9-11 December: Return Passage

At about 6.00pm on December 10 our return transit across the Drake Passage was complete when we rounded Cape Horn and started heading into the Beagle Channel. By 7.00pm on December 11, we were alongside the dock.

A big thank you all from Dave and Mike for being such an enthusiastic, fun and organised team. We had a wide variety of spectacular "once in a lifetime" outings - fantastic stuff.







# Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	November - December													
	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Gentoo Penguin			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Chinstrap Penguin			•	•	•	•			•	•				
Adelie Penguin				•	•	•	•	•	•					
Wandering Albatross		•									•	•		
Royal Albatross		•									•			
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•								•	•	•	
Grey-headed Albatross	•	•										•	•	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		•	•								•	•		
Giant Petrel sp. (Northern and/or Southern)	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Antarctic Petrel		•	•							•	•	•		
Cape Petrel		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Snow Petrel				•		•		•	•		•			
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Blue Petrel		•	•								•	•	•	
Grey Petrel														
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		•	•									•	•	
White-chinned Petrel			•									•		
Wilson's Storm-petrel	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Black-bellied Storm-petrel		•												
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
American Sheathbill (Snowy)				•	•	•	•		•	•				
Skua (Brown and/or South Polar)			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Kelp Gull	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•
Dolphin Gull	•													•





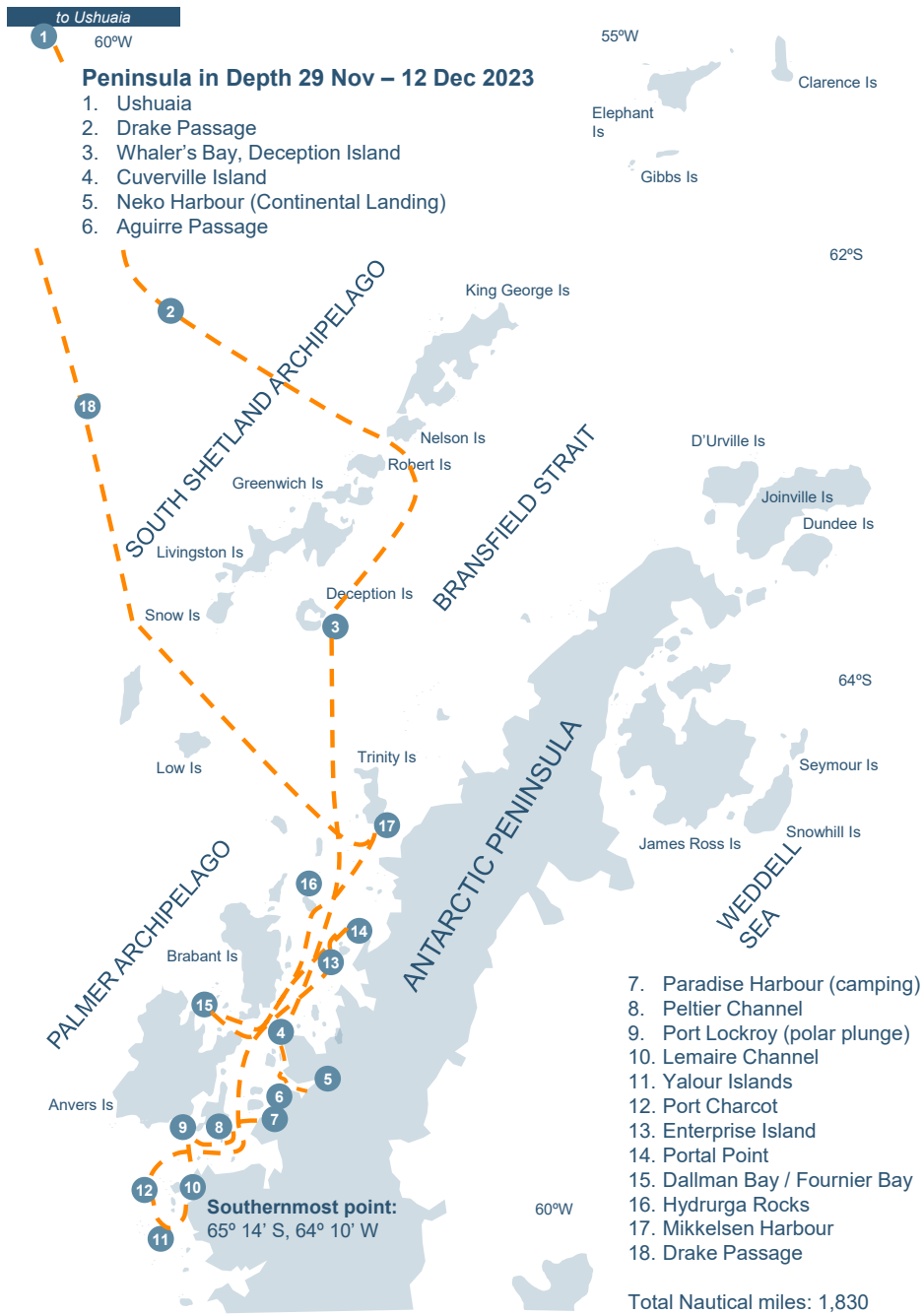
# Bird and Mammal Sightings

## Mammal Species

November - December

	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Antarctic Fur Seal			•											
Southern Elephant Seal							•			•	•			
Crabeater Seal						•	•	•						
Weddell Seal				•		•	•	•	•	•				
Leopard Seal			•			•								
Humpback Whale		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Dusky Dolphin	•													•
Hourglass Dolphin												•		







# Expeditioners:

Jeremy Allen

Christa Band

Jan Becke

Patricia Beermier

Natasha Boddy

Marion Brewer

Alison Budd

David Budd

Jodie Burcham

Lynne Cooper

John Cooper

Emma De Majnik

David Doughty

Danielle Doughty

Christine Douglas

Stephen Douglas

Leanne Dowling

Stephen Dowling

Gary Ephraim

Cheryl Fernandes

Reeve Fernandes

Samuel Fong

Alison Freeman

Julia Freeman

Paul Freeman

Helen Graves

Judy Gulikers

Jeff Gulikers

Amy Haselhuhn

Howard Haselhuhn Jr

Pam Hirst

John Hirst

Brianna Hore

Betty Horn

Evan Johnson

Anwarul Kadir

Sheikh Karim

Teresa Kraemer

Steven Kraemer

Philip Laurie

Sharon Lees

Jeremy Lees

Lea Lichtenberger

Marc Lombardi

Michael Longes

Stuart Manley

Lianne Manley

Oliver McNaughton

Abbey McNaughton

Ruby McNaughton

Nick McNaughton

Jackie Miller

Ariel Mitnick

Paul Mowbray

Fay Mowbray

Craig Murata

Pauline Murphy

Jennifer Ness

Michael Ochs

Ian Ochs

Alan Paisley

Helen Patterson

Stuart Patterson

Ian Phillips

Kim Phillips

Julie Robert

Christopher Rolland

Andrea Rolland

Joseph Schmaeling

Glenn Searby

David Searle

Greta Shamash Ephraim

Justine Smith

Chris Smith

Elise Spata

Craig Stevens

Marion Thomson

Leanne Treadwell

Gordon Treadwell

Keith Turner

Marian Turner

Grigory Vilinov

Gregory Westcott

Vicky Westcott

Peter Whitfeld



## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Flo Kuijper

Assistant Expedition Leader: Dot Robertson

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Marine Biologist: Albert Michaud

Glaciologist/Geologist: Paulina Pierzak

Naturalist: Hans Bruning

Musician/Naturalist: Kevin Closs

Photography Guide: Max Seigal

Expedition Medic: Belinda Denchfield

Expedition Guide: Megan Frey

Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Vanja Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Tim Vanhoutteghem

Snowshoe Guide: Mike Roberts

Snowshoe Guide: David Stark

Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer

Snorkel Guide: Freya Dooley

Snorkel Guide: Nichola Meharg

Zodiac Master: Jeb Pearce

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Donael Soto Hernandez

Chief Officer: Andrey Gilevskiy

Second Officer: Raymer Fernandes

Deck Cadet: Carlos Florido Carvalho Da Silva

Safety Officer: Matko Zagorac

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Ship Doctor: Gloria Gonzales Iraheta

Chief Engineer: Luis Edgardo Gil

First Engineer: Warlito Verzosa

IT Officer: Valentin Cojocar

Hotel Director: Balvant Singh

F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram

Head Bartender: Lloyd Laylo

Chief Purser: Josephine Blanco

Executive Chef: Cristiand Carlos Minl Pineda

Sous Chef: Hubert Ramiro Barreto

Hotel Controller: Orlando Costa

Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Stateroom Attendant: Marthony Penalosa

Able Seaman: Lexter Fadriquela

Able Seaman: Rene Casipe

Able Seaman: Bahar Buhari

Able Seaman: Noel Reugia

Able Seaman: Ferdyl Diaz Roque

Able Seaman: Rajiv Rauniyar

## Photography thanks to:

Diann Boyle

Daniel Boyle

