

# Across the Antarctic Circle

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 08 – 19 January 2023







# Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Sunday 08 January 2023

Position at 2100 on Jan 08

Latitude: 55°06'S

Longitude: 66°33'W

Course: 118°

Speed: 12 knots

Wind Speed: NNW

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: 18°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

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

At 4 pm, we walked up the gangway, where the Aurora team and onboard hotel staff welcomed us onboard and us to our cabins. Then it was time to explore our new home-away-from-home, the *Sylvia Earle*.

Onboard we total 117 Expeditioners from Australia (26), Belarus (3), Canada (1), China (3), New Zealand (1), Netherlands (1), Belgian (1), Sweden (1), UK (13), USA (65), along with 23 Expedition Team and 85 ship crew from all over the world.

We had time to unpack, settle into our cabins and enjoy a delicious embarkation refreshments, before Expedition Leader Howard called us together to welcome us aboard the *Sylvia Earle*. Afterwards we received the lifeboat and safety briefing and got ready for the abandon ship drill.

The sound of seven-short-one-second-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station to try on our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us up to the lifeboats, to get us familiar with their locations.

By 7:30 pm it was time to head into the dining room, where a delicious meal was served complete with a delectable dessert.

During our meal, we admired the stunning landscape of the Beagle Channel. The bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded as we made our way past rocky slopes brilliant in the steely light. To our portside the mountain peaks of Argentina; with Chile to our starboard. We saw a veritable spate of birds as we sailed closer to the Drake passage.

While some enjoyed a nightcap at the Tektite bar, others wandered the outer decks while the rest of us made our way to our cabins for a much-needed sleep.





# Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Monday 09 January 2023

Position at 14:06 on Jan 09

Latitude: 58° 47'S

Longitude: 067° 00'W

Course: 185.9°

Speed: 12 knots

Wind Speed: 33 knots SW

Barometer: 990

Air Temp: 8°C

The Antarctic Convergence is perhaps the longest and most important biological barrier on earth, as formidable as any mountain range or desert. It is an obstacle to the dispersion of birds, fish, and, most important, plankton.

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

Last night we entered the fabled Drake's Passage. The conditions were smoother than many of us expected, the ship rolling gently while we were asleep, most of us woke up feeling well in the morning.

Days at sea are far from boring aboard the ship! There is always a lot of information to take in, as we're preparing for our arrival in Antarctica.

After breakfast, we made our way to the beautifully fitted Lecture Theatre and paid attention as Naturalist Roger, ran us through the mandatory IAATO briefing. We learnt about the rules and regulations to obey when in Antarctica and appreciated the sensitive nature of the polar environments, and the wildlife we will be interacting with. The IAATO briefing was followed by an important biosecurity information session, and then our expedition team helped us vacuum our clothes and gear, making sure we don't introduce any foreign organic materials to Antarctica. Brushes, combs and tweezers were a common sight today: we feel privileged to visit these pristine environments and we want make sure we protect them for future generations.

In the meantime, the Expedition Team were busy in the mudroom, helping us try on life jackets and sturdy rubber muck boots, we'll be using on our Zodiac cruises and landings.

After lunch, a mandatory covid testing took place and we were very happy to find out that all the results were negative!

Later in the afternoon, our fantastic Naturalist, Ian McCarthy, delivered a personal talk, on "Ocean Wanderers", during which he told us about his time spent with some of the biggest birds in the world: wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, grey-headed albatross, and their place in the Southern Oceans, which are their home.

At the time, Ian was filming a documentary piece, called "Life in the Freezer", for the BBC natural history unit.

Those of us who signed up for snorkelling or kayaking programs met up with activity guide teams for briefings, during which we were introduced to our activity programs. A special shout out goes to the snorkellers, who

bravely endured the increasing swell attending the briefing in the Science Centre & Lounge, which is the rockiest part of the ship, being situated at the bow!

In the evening, we gathered in the Lecture Theatre for Aurora's traditional Captain's Welcome. It was a lively event, where we got to meet our skilled Captain Artem and his team. Everyone loved the captain's sense of humour, but also admired the wealth of seafaring experience he brings to this voyage. We know we're in good hands, and we're looking forward to hopefully crossing the Antarctic circle soon!

After a delicious dinner, some of us went to the Observation Deck until late, participating in the famous Iceberg competition – one of Aurora's long-standing traditions, when we try to guess the time and location of the first iceberg sighting.

Around midnight the sea was due to get rough, so most of us took it easy and had an early night in our cabins.





# Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Tuesday 10 January 2023

Position at 0800 on Jan 10

Latitude: 62°13. 86'S

Longitude: 067°48. 51'W

Course: 186°

Speed: 9 knots

Wind Speed: 40 knots SW

Barometer: 997

Air Temp: 6°C

The first view of Antarctica is always an iceberg. It may be a monolith hovering on the horizon, a barely discernible spectre looming out of the mist, or perhaps a sun-spangled, dazzling icon marking the gateway to this new world. It will undoubtedly be icebergs that leave the most lasting impressions on the imagination of visitors.

—Mark Jones, *Wild Ice*

This was the second sea day as we crossed the Drake Passage aboard *Sylvia Earle* and many of us had finally perfected the art of walking, on a ship when in rough waters. We were woken by the docile tones of our Expedition Leader Howard, before heading to the Gentoo restaurant to experience a scrumptious breakfast.

For those enjoying the motion of the ocean we headed toward the Lecture Theatre, for those a little more cautious they retreated to the comfort of their cabins to learn from one of our naturalists - Roger for an "Antarctica 101". Here Roger covered everything we needed to know to really understand the white, icy world we will be living in for the next six days.

Afterwards we headed to our cabins, to layer up before we risked a climb to the Observation Deck - right at the top of the ship - to join Ian, our bird enthusiast for some Citizen Science. While up there we helped Ian complete an E-bird survey, where we saw a grey headed albatross, several white chinned petrels and Wilson storm petrels.

We then joined our medic, Russell, and our glaciologist, Paulina, on the Pool Deck, Deck 7, to help NASA by completing a cloud survey. We saw an altostratus, stratus and some spectacular cumulus clouds.

They say time flies when you're having fun, and before we knew it, it was time for lunch. This time we chose to brave the movement and have lunch in the Rockhopper restaurant for a delicious lunch prepared by our excellent chefs.

Our snorkellers and kayakers quickly snuck in a gear fitting session between presentations down in the mudroom, before joining the rest of the group in the Lecture Theatre with Nina - our historian - for "The Belgian Antarctic Expedition" - where she told us about the first expedition to winter in the Antarctic region.

After being sent back in time with Nina to the time of De Gerlache's expedition in 1897-1899, we joined Paulina in the present day for "50 Shades of Ice". Here we learnt everything we needed to know about glaciers - the big, the small and the bizarre.

Then it was time to head to the bar and chat about everything we had learnt together throughout the day, in preparation for tonight's recap and precap. Tonight's recap starred Roger, who gave us a guide into how to identify and understand the three different brush trail penguins - Gentoo, Adelie, and Chinstrap - and the four seals - Antarctic Fur, Weddell, Leopard and Crabeater seals - we are most likely to encounter on our trip down south.

Roger was then followed by Howard, who explained what to expect for our first day of operations.

We then headed to dinner full of excitement for our first landing in Antarctica, but also for the possibility of our first continental landing.





# Prospect Point, Fish Islands

DAY 4 | Wednesday 11 January 2023

Position at 0800 on Jan 11

Latitude: 66° 00'S

Longitude: 065° 20.63'W

Course: Prospect Point

Speed: 0.0

Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats... simply messing.

—Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows

Antarctica! We made it!

People woke to icebergs and glacier faces all around the ship, as we made our way into Prospect Point and the Fish Islands. In classic Antarctic fashion however, we were welcomed to the great southern continent with some high winds and stormy weather. It was clear to everyone when you looked outside that the weather was not suitable to go out in the Zodiacs, so we hunkered down for a cozy morning on the ship to wait for things to settle down.

The morning was filled nicely with some really cool lectures. Nina had an interesting talk about the "Discovery of Antarctica" where we learnt about notable figures such as Magellan, Drake, and James Cook. We then peeked outside for another assessment and after seeing not much change in the sea state, rolled right into a lecture from Russell on the "Mind-blowing world of plankton". Who knew there were so many crazy planktonic creatures in the ocean! Also so crazy to think that plankton creates half the oxygen we breathe in our atmosphere, and is one of the largest contributors to the carbon cycle necessary for our survival on this planet. Wild.

As we were learning about plankton, a small scout team made up of Howard and other E-Team went to shore to assess how things were looking. They returned with good news... that we were going for it! The ice wasn't too bad, and the winds were easing so we would head out right after lunch to make a continental landing in Antarctica!

At lunch you could tell the atmosphere in the restaurant had changed from the sea sickness medicated state we had, to an excited energetic bunch of humans! We quickly had lunch and set out for an adventure!

Prospect Point was home to Base J, from the British Antarctic Survey which was built in 1957.

As you explored further south on the peninsula you could see the huts were not used for many years, which were then actually deconstructed and eventually removed. It was a fantastic location though for our first outing, first landing, and to get our feet on the Antarctic continent.

Once everyone touched shore and had a wander around, we hopped back in the Zodiacs, for what ended up

Wind Speed: 40 knots NE

Barometer: 990

Air Temp: 3°C

being an incredible Zodiac cruise. Some highlights were, a very friendly and inquisitive female leopard seal, baby Adelie penguins and shags, some crazy icebergs, and a few lucky people got to see glaciers calving and icebergs rolling! What a start to the trip!

Once back on board it felt like we were on a completely different ship. Everyone was buzzing, chatting, and just overall feeling good.

Recap was on at 7pm, but was rather short lived when some Humpback Whales came by for a visit! It was cool seeing everyone so excited looking through the triangular windows up in the Science Centre & Lounge at the beautiful cetaceans.

It was an overall AMAZING day, and we're excited for another one tomorrow as we journey further south!



## CAPTAIN COOK'S OATH

On the 17th January 1773, 250 years ago minus 5 days to this day, Thursday, January 12 2023, Captain James Cook pioneered the first crossing over the Antarctic Circle with his two trusty ships, Resolution and Adventure.

His profound and exceptional skill of navigation in the icebound waters of the Antarctic has given us the opportunity to follow in his footsteps and in the trails of his mighty comrades.

Not only are we celebrating Captain James Cook's feat, we are honouring a long and intrepid line of historic explorers: Englishmen Sir Ernest Shackleton and Robert Falcon Scott, Norwegian explorers Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen, and of course the great Australian Sir Douglas Mawson, to name a few.

With an ongoing thirst for more discovery, polar travel and scientific research, we now will take the pledge that all our fellow expeditioners here today, on our trusty steed Polar Pioneer, have become true ambassadors to the Antarctic Continent and its surrounding waters:

WE WILL KEEP ANTARCTICA PRISTINE AND UNTOUCHED FOR PEACE,  
HARMONY AND NATURE.

SO BE IT!



# The Gullet, Horseshoe Island

DAY 5 | Thursday 12 January

Position at 0800 on Jan 12

Latitude: 67°14'S

Longitude: 067°47.54'W

Course: 225°

Speed: 12.8 knots

Wind Speed: 30 knots from N

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 2°C

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

—Diane Ackerman

We had a plan, a plan A...

But with the weather not in our favour, we changed our plan A to a plan B and decided to head south to Horseshoe Island for our second landing of the voyage.

Before lunch Citizen Science was on the program. We are so happy for our involvement in each Citizen Science project. Russell and Paulina helped us participate in a cloud survey for NASA. Ian and Roger encouraging and telling us all there is to know about the E-bird survey. Ana and Nina guided us on how the Happy Whale project works.

After lunch the trip to Horseshoe Island showed us the most beautiful icebergs. The first thing we encountered were these beautiful stones in different shades of green. The green colour is the mineral Malachite, possibly the earliest ore of copper. Who knows, we might even find gold here.

On the island we visited a hut, which is a British Antarctica survey hut used from 1955 to 1960. There were four to 10 people living in the hut during this time, and was up and running – they had good taste in music too, there was an old Buddy Holly LP next to the Gramophone.

After visiting the hut, most of us went on a hike. We saw skuas with chicks and the mesmerising view from the top.

All the kayakers joined in on the first kayak adventure with 26 paddlers in total. The long train of kayaks were towed to the island, where we started our paddling journey.

Though struggling a little with the wind, the kayakers all made it through with flying colours.

The snorkellers (nine of them) made it into the water today, swimming amongst beached icebergs and meeting three Weddell seals on their journey.

The recap was about to start when we heard a shoutout “Whales! Whales!” shortly Howard made the announcement. “Gong!” We have whales in front of the ship. Meet us in the Observation Lounge on Deck 8 “What a fantastic view – wow! we saw numerous orcas and a few humpbacks.

After dinner we celebrated the crossing of the Antarctic circle on Deck 7 with a funny speech from Roger, champagne, stamped foreheads, dancing and singing to the lovely tunes like dancing queen. I wonder what the penguins were thinking.

Quotes of the day - on the dance floor on Deck 7 “I’m having soooo much fun – thank you!”



## John Moore – First Impressions

The Antarctic trip has turned out to be magical.

Just being in a place that very few people have seen was just so wonderful. And the scenery was full of glaciers, ice-bergs, and ice of all sizes and shapes. Although I spent a lot of time taking photos, I also caught myself just gazing out the windows at the magnificent view.

It was about then that it struck me that Antarctica is not just a snow-covered land (like where we usually ski) but it is an ice covered land, like nothing I had ever experienced before. Ice - huge blocks of ice, the land covered in ice, 10s-1000s of metres deep, the whole coastline was an ice cliff, with very few areas where you could land. I touched an iceberg from a Zodiac and it was as hard and unforgiving as steel.

We were told that the first landing we did was onto the Antarctica mainland. Every other landing we would make (and every landing that every other ship makes) is onto the islands that surround the mainland. This is because the mainlands coast are ice-cliffs as state before. So that landing (so far south where few ships go) means we were one of the few people to actually set foot on the actual continent.

I wrote those paragraphs just four days ago, and already it seems “quaint” - there are more ice-bergs around than you can count, ice cliffs just seem natural, and hard ice is just something to painfully break your fall. So I am glad I wrote what I did above before the “magic” disappeared, so that I can re-read it many years in the future to bring back that child-like wonder of those first days.





# Yalour Islands, Port Charcot

DAY 6 | Friday 13 January

Position at 0800 on Jan 13

Latitude: 65°40'8 S

Longitude: 065°83'11 W

Course: 032°

Speed: 13.6 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots from WNW

Barometer: 973

Air Temp: 4°C

Antarctica is a separate world. One can feel its presence in the approaches, sailing south from more temperate climates. Standing on deck, one may follow the reeling albatross, feel the drop in temperature, the bite of the wind and the motion of the waves. Yet it is the presence of ice, from the first occasional fragments, escalating in shape, form, and frequency, and finally dominating all else, that brings assurance of arrival in Antarctica.

—Mark Jones, *Wild Ice: Antarctic Journeys*, 1990

Early this morning, while heading towards Yalour Islands, during breakfast we spotted two gorgeous humpback whales traveling in the opposite direction – we even got the chance to photograph their magnificent flukes (tail).

As we cruised towards our morning landing site, the *Sylvia Earle* quickly disappeared into the fog, and we strained our eyes to find land, looking for the distinctive red coats – we felt like real explorers. At last, the island appeared in front of us, home to an Adélie penguin colony. Adélie Penguins were scattered all over – which is very unusual – and leads our guides to suggest that there were a lot of little Adélie penguin colonies on the islands. Dark brown fluffy chicks – estimated to be around three weeks old – mature Adélie penguins were seen tobogganing through the snow – much faster and much more energy efficient. Our local bird enthusiasts also spotted a few snowy sheathbills landing among the penguins, brown skuas and nesting giant petrels including a purely white one!

As some of us walked amongst the penguins, the kayakers had a wonderfully unexpected trip – as the mist started to clear enabled them to paddle around massive icebergs and little islands. The islands and icebergs were so beautiful the kayakers spent an hour and a half mesmerised by the different shades of blue and penguin activity. It was an incredible experience to paddle around these icebergs.

Our snorkellers navigated around the islands and icebergs finding a nice, sheltered area, where penguins rested on baby icebergs and seals lounged on the rocky islands. A few snorkellers even enjoyed a couple of close encounters with the penguins swimming around them.

Once everyone was back onboard for lunch, Howard informed us of the afternoon's adventures at the fabulous, Port Charcot. This place was incredible – partly for the history, but also the impressive number of penguin highways that scatter around the landing. While on land there were two hikes on offer – one was a hike to the Charcot memorial – with our historian Nina and Howard – a "wooden column" with a plaque inscribed with the name of the first French Antarctic Expedition.

We also saw three different species of penguin – all mingled together – chinstrap, gentoo and Adélie. The other

one, a longer hike, lead us to a large gentoo penguin colony high up on the mountain. As we moved around the site, we even spotted some Chinstraps were breeding and Gentoos where incubating there eggs.

From the science viewpoints, we looked down at the bay where Charcot's first expedition anchored their ship. With even a few of us spotting humpback and Minke whales from above.

When we reached the bottom, our guides took advantage of the perfect conditions – the ocean was glassy flat, and there was barely any wind – we climbed into Zodiacs and cruised through the giant icebergs in search of any wildlife. We were joined by our kayakers, as they slowly paddled around taking in the serenity and stillness of the site.

Our snorkellers were equally excited to enter and snorkel around in the deep blue water and see what it had to offer – and it was incredible! They could hear so many sounds, the ice cracking, the whales singing and the penguins talking to each other, and before they knew it – they were surrounded by a raft of penguins, hundreds of them, swimming all around them.

While cruising around, either on a Zodiac or in a kayak we spotted whales, several elusive leopard seals that were basking on the iceberg enjoying some sunshine, and rafts of Gentoo Penguins – what an afternoon.

Once back onboard it was time for "THE POLAR PLUNGE"! With ice floating around the back of the platform, and excitement building in the marina – a record number of guests took the plunge into the icy waters of Antarctica. Afterwards they gathered in the hot tub or jacuzzi.

Then it was time for a delicious dinner in the Gentoo or Rock Hopper restaurant, enjoying the spectacular scenery before heading to bed and getting some much needed sleep after yet another incredible day in Antarctica.





# Polar Plunge

DAY 6 | Friday 13 January













# Lemaire Channel, Port Lockroy/Jougla Point, Borgen Bay

DAY 7 | Saturday 14 January 2023

Position at 0700 on Jan 14

Latitude: 65° 02.76'S

Longitude: 063° 54.23'W

Course: 002°

Speed: 6.9 knots

Wind Speed: 21 knots from SW

Barometer: 978

Air Temp: 4°C

Beauty and grace are performed whether or not we will or sense them. The least we can do is try to be there.

—Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

Started the day off with an early morning transit through the stunning Lemaire Channel. We had a beautiful clear morning and could see the amazing peaks of Booth Island and Mt Scott!

After breakfast we landed at Port Lockroy & Jougla Point. Port Lockroy on the tiny Goudier Island was formally home to Operation Tabarin which was the code name for a secret British expedition to the Antarctic during World War II, the base later became a research station called Base A, whose buildings were restored by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust and is open to visitors during the Antarctic summer months. Many of us sent some snail mail through the southernmost British post office, the Penguin Post! In the words of our fearless leader Howard, our morning was "A perfect mix of history, wildlife and retail!"

After lunch we went to the beautiful and less visited Borgen Bay which had Mt Francais, the highest mountain on the peninsula (at 2,825 metres) peaking out at us between the clouds. Such a beautiful afternoon when the sun came out and lit up part of the mountains, the water was glassy, calm and as far as the eye could see was a stunning glacier front. We cruised amongst the ice, taking in the scenery and then at the very end of our Zodiac cruise out popped a friendly humpback whale!

It was amazing, watching it swim all around our Zodiac as it floated on the surface, feeding between us. Definitely a day to remember!

After the whale visit, we went back to the ship and finally got to have an evening recap that wasn't interrupted by whales! We heard the story about Toby the pig from Nina, and about how empathetic our whale friends are from Ian!

Then... as if the day couldn't get any better, we finished the evening with a delicious BBQ by the pool and a dance party in the snow!

How lucky we are to be in this awe inspiring, magical place!





# Portal Point, Hydrurga Rocks

DAY 8 | Sunday 15 January 2023

Position at 0700 on Jan 15

Latitude: 64° 27.2 'S

Longitude: 061° 44.5 'W

Course: 078°

Speed: 5.1 knots

Wind Speed: 21 knots from NW

Barometer: 969

Air Temp: 6°C

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding'

Another day in the giant continent at the bottom of the earth that is ruled by wind and ice.

The *Sylvia Earle's* explorers woke up with winds of up to 45 knots and were surrounded by typical Antarctic beauty.

Trying to escape the storm we changed course from Cierva Cove to Portal Point (located on the Reclus Peninsula), the entrance of the Polar Plateau. Named from the fact it was used by the British after they built a refuge hut at this site in 1956, enabling them to use a nearby snow slope as a gateway up unto the Peninsula plateau.

Right after breakfast we dropped Zodiacs in the water and the adventure began again! With wind gust up to 30 knots the E-team drove us safely to the landing site. We made it! Second continental landing. We set foot in a truly spectacular spot on the Antarctic Peninsula.

A group of Weddell Seals were welcoming us and a golden Crabeater seal was guarding the path that led us to a beautiful viewpoint from where we could appreciate the immensity of the Gerlache Strait. Some of us decided to have a quiet moment where the remains of Cape Reclus refuge laid. This hut was occupied between 1956 and 1958 and was used as a stopover point for overland travel along the peninsula, including trips to reprovision British bases further south. Cape Reclus refuge was dismantled in 1997 and taken to the Falkland Islands where it is now an exhibit in the museum at Stanley. Before getting back onboard we cruised around the huge icebergs surrounding the Reclus Peninsula.

Back to the *Sylvia Earle* for a short break and lunch, as the bridge team repositioned the ship to another incredible destination: Hydrurga Rocks!

A small group of rocks lying east of Two Hummock Island, in the Palmer Archipelago.

Did you know? These small islets are named after the Leopard Seal: Hydrurga Leptonyx.

The wind stayed with us the entire afternoon but didn't stop us to have an incredible landing! A committee of Weddell Seals welcomed us at the entrance of the island and the sound of chinstrap penguins called through the air.

We landed on the main island where kelp gulls, blue-eyed shags and chinstraps were in sight. While walking around we could see the kayakers making an incredible 5.5 kilometre circumnavigation of the island, well done team!

The highlight of this afternoon were the Chinstrap chicks!

The snorkel team succeeded both activities of the day. While swimming they saw star fish, penguins and much more!

Our last day at the Antarctic Peninsula was a complete success! Now the *Sylvia Earle* is ready to set sail north through the Bransfield Strait to Deception Island, where a completely different scenery is waiting for us, but yet stunning.

I think part of the appeal of Antarctica is experiencing some sort of power, the forces of the natural world.





# Whaler's Bay, Deception Island

DAY 9 | Monday 16 January

Position at 0900 on Jan 16

Latitude: 63°00.8'S

Longitude: 060°57.1'W

Course: 289°

Speed: 13.9 knots

Wind Speed: 30 knots W

Barometer: 978

Air Temp: 4°C

We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure.

There is no end to the adventures we can have, if only we seek them with our eyes open.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

What a morning!

We were woken up by Howard, just before 3 am to experience sailing through magnificent Neptunes Bellows – a narrow, 200 metre-wide entrance to a large lagoon that occupies the centre of the island - Port Foster. About an hour later we left the ship to enjoy our last landing at Whaler's Bay. During this refreshing morning we could see the remains of the Norwegian Hektor Whaling Station, the site of the whalers cemetery and other whaling remains along the beach. Some decided to take a longer walk along the black sand beach to Neptune's Window, a U-shaped gap in the caldera wall and/or hike up Ronald Hill. As we left the Zodiacs, we saw our first fur seal of the voyage! We also saw a couple of adorable chinstrap penguins. Who says that Deception Island doesn't have interesting wildlife?

We had one of the Citizen Science programs onshore – Paulina and Nicole with a couple of volunteers led mezo-plastic research on the beach, looking for small pieces of plastic buried in sand. Out of 25 samples we found one single piece of plastic. Our kayakers had an adventurous time. They paddled from the beach toward Neptunes Bellows as wind started to pick up. Battling with the wind, they found a calm bay to shelter from the forces of nature and return to the beach safely on a Zodiac. Our snorkellers ticked their last box as well! They spent an hour onshore exploring Whalers Bay and after a short Zodiac cruise, they hopped into the water next to Neptunes Window. Visibility in the water wasn't good unfortunately, so they swam back to the beach happy with the last experience of snorkelling on this voyage.

As soon as we got back on board, Bartosz took our group photo up on Deck 8. After a scrumptious and well deserved breakfast, Paulina gave a lecture about volcanoes 'A land of fire and ice'. We learnt about different types of volcanoes and in more detail about the eruption that brought Deception Island to its current state.

You'd think that as soon as we entered the Drake Passage the ship would go quiet? Not a chance !

Tamsin and Russell hosted the game 'How big is it' in the Lecture Theatre. The lounge filled with competitive teams that for the next hour and a half tried to figure out the various sizes of certain objects. Did you know that the wing span of a wandering albatross is 3.5 metres?





# Drake Passage

DAY 10 | Tuesday 17 January 2023

Position at 1100 on Jan 17

Latitude: 57°39.2'S

Longitude: 062°35.2'W

Course: 344°

Speed: 11.8 knots

Wind Speed: 24 knots from W

Barometer: 1005

Air Temp: 7°C

I am the albatross that waits for you  
at the end of the earth.

I am the forgotten soul of the dead sailors

who crossed Cape Horn

from all the seas of the world.

But they did not die

in the furious waves.

Today they fly in my wings

to eternity

in the last trough of the Antarctic winds

Today was a day spent at sea. We entered the fabled Drake's Passage the previous night, many of us wondering about the conditions. Our Expedition Leader Howard, had told us about the storm which was approaching, we needed to cross the Drake Passage as fast as we could to avoid it. Luckily our Captain is very experienced and the shape and design of the *Sylvia Earle* reduces the seas motion. Most of us had a relatively good night's sleep as the ship rolled and sometimes pitched while we made our way back to Ushuaia.

We woke up to Howard's wake-up call around 7.45 am and after a delicious breakfast we made our way to the fantastic Lecture Theatre to hear Nina's presentation: "Antarctic Governance" at 1000hs. Some of us watched the lecture from our cabins because of the movement of the ship, we learnt about the history of the Antarctic treaty system, it was really interesting.

At 11.30 am Citizen Science program started. First E-bird Survey with our fantastic Naturalist, Ian McCarthy. Sadly, there were not too many birds in our sight. We saw one black-browed Albatross, two southern/northern giant-petrels, one slender billed prion, and one white-chinned petrel. Then it was time to join Paulina on Deck 7, for the Nasa cloud survey. We uploaded the data we observed which demonstrated a fully overcast sky with low stratus.

Last but not least, we headed to the library to work on the Happy Whale with snorkel guide Ana. She has been working with this program since the beginning of December and we has received several good photos for the project.

At 3 pm we had the *Sylvia Earle* virtual tour hosted by all sorts of great characters. First was Expedition leader Howard, then our stylish witty Captain Artem, followed by our Chief Engineer Praveen, and then finally our Hotel Director Osman who showed us how the galley works. I think I can speak for everyone, we learned so much about how big our engines are, what they look like; how our sewage is filtered; how this magical ship is steered, and how high-tech everything on the bridge is including the coffee machine.

At 6.30 pm it was time for our capital farewell toast. He gave a lovely speech and shared a funny letter written by a 10 years-old British boy, about what it means to be a captain. With his great eam at his side, we toasted to a great voyage together, full of so many memories that we have made during these days.

During the morning we crossed the Antarctic Convergence, where the cold waters of the Antarctic meet the warmer waters of the northern oceans. That officially marked the moment we left Antarctica behind.

# Day at Sea, cruising the Drake Passage

DAY 11 | Wednesday 18 January 2023

I had a dream when I was 22, that someday I would go to the region of ice and snow and go on and on till I came to one of the poles of the earth...

—Sir Ernest Shackleton

The Drake Passage is named after the 16th century English explorer, Sir Frances Drake, known for having some of the roughest seas in the world. This passage is 600 miles/1,000 kilometres wide, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific oceans between Cape Horn and the South Shetland islands. It is the narrowest passage around Antarctica and plays an important role in the global mixing of ocean water. The presence of the Drake Passage allows the three main ocean basins Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans to be connected, via the strongest ocean current; Antarctic Circumpolar current. This is an oceanographic feature that marks the boundary between the warm water in the north and the colder waters from the south. The current at its latitude meets no resistance from any landmass and waves can reach 40 feet/12 metres. It has the reputation of the most powerful convergence of seas.

This morning started out a bit rocky... A few of us started our day watching from the Observation Lounge, for any kind of wildlife. The Drake passage is a paradise for seabirds.

We then went for a delicious breakfast.

After breakfast we had a briefing about the disembarkation plans for tomorrow, followed by Roger's talk: "Antarctic Stories", where he told us entertaining stories about living and working in Antarctica and surrounding islands close to the Argentina coast.

At lunch we were served with big smiles, from the dining room team.

The afternoon lecture programme had Ian, giving a talk: "A Thousand Wild Dawns". He filmed for BBC in different locations all around the world. His lecture was about many of the places he visited and especially filming in the early mornings, as sometimes that is the best time to see animals at dawn.

We then reached the Beagle channel, which is a strait in the Tierra del Fuego Archipelago, between Chile and Argentina. Named after the British research ship, Beagle in which a young naturalist by the name of Charles Darwin explored the area in 1833-1834. And it was recorded that this is where he saw his first glacier on 29th January 1833. The channel is between 400 metres - 674 metres deep, 240 kilometres in length and 5 kilometres wide at its narrowest point. Many of the region's resident animals can be observed here like sea-lions, seals,

penguins, and sometimes Minke whales and Peale's dolphins. Close to the point where the channel meets the ocean, stands the Les Eclaireurs lighthouse, with its distinctive red and white stripes. The western end of the channel is known as Darwin Sound.

Before dinner, we watched the Voyage slideshow made by Bartosz. What a fantastic way to enjoy a trip down memory lane.



# Ushuaia

DAY 12 | Thursday 19 January 2023

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

—Edwin Mickleburgh, *Beyond the Frozen Sea*

As we entered the Beagle Channel, the atmospheric landscapes of the Islas Fueguinas stood out as we sailed towards Ushuaia. So many memories and friendships made. We will miss Antarctica, but that's exactly what the Voyage Logs are for: to bring back those great memories again and again.

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





# Antarctic Circle Expeditioner

This is to certify that

All Expeditioners

have qualified as a true Antarctic Circle Expeditioner by braving the frigid conditions aboard the *Sylvia Earle* to cross the Antarctic Circle at 66° 33'S, 67° 08'W without regard for personal danger or frozen extremities, and have therefore been accepted as a life member of ACE on this day, 11 January 2023

Roger Kirkwood, Expedition Leader

Artem Kolymkov, Captain





# Citizen Science Log

Project Name	How many times was this project done during this voyage?
eBird Seabird Survey	4
Secchi Disk	4
Zooplankton Collection	1
NASA Globe Cloud Observations	5
Microplastics Survey	1
Zooplankton sampling	Many!
Zooplankton observation under microscope	2



Kris Sherman  
 Across the Antarctic Circle  
 8 January to 19 January, 2023

We gathered in Ushuaia, adventurers all. We came from many nations, 117 expeditioners, plus a combined 108 Aurora team members and *Sylvia Earle* crew.

Our departure point, as we left Tierra del Fuego and entered the Beagle Channel en route to Drake Passage, could well have been called Wish-why-ya, for we all packed along our wishes: strong desires and fervent hopes for a safe and wondrous journey into one of earth's most challenging and pristine places.

We were not disappointed.

From the very first moment of watching icebergs cross the *Sylvia Earle's* path, words like "awesome," "amazing," and "breathtaking" murmured from deck to deck, like whispers on a freshening sea breeze. We were awestruck already. Smitten. Hopelessly in love at first sight.

Soon, we were on land in Antarctica, at Prospect Point, bundled up in layers and parkas and muck boots, we must have looked a bit like the miners of the Gold Rush era in Alaska. But here, we were prospecting for perspective on this enormous continent, its critical place in the earth's ecosystem and our role in conserving it - while at the same time hunting for photos and friendships and memories that will shine, like golden nuggets, as treasures for a lifetime.

This magical, beautiful, untamed land filled our heads with new appreciation for the land and the sea and wildlife they support and infused our hearts with an even deeper love for this remote continent.

Every human sense was employed in the appreciation of Antarctica.

There were:

Sights of towering snow covered mountains and the seemingly impossible turquoise and deep blue hues of icebergs; penguins tobogganing down snowy slopes; great sea birds circling overhead; the fluke of a humpback whale rising from the sea and then dipping into the cold waters of the Southern Ocean.

Sounds of glaciers calving; an iceberg crashing into the waters of Borgen Bay; Chinstrap penguins squawking at Hydrurga Rocks to protect their chicks from predators; water slapping at the hulls of Zodiacs; seabirds cawing overhead; and the shocked-yet-delighted squeals of fellow passengers who threw themselves into the frigid waters of Port Charcot during the Polar Plunge.

Smells of the sea, the fresh air, and the unforgettable pungent aroma of penguin guano, its thick scent permeating the air at many of our landing sites.

Taste (in the head, not on the tongue) of a wild land that few people on earth ever get to visit. Oh, and delectable food in the Gentoo and Rockhopper restaurants, too.

Touch of helping hands, strong arms, solid shoulders of Aurora Expedition Team members as we made rocky landings, seeking purchase on large, slippery rocks and snowy floes; feeling the wind in our faces, the salt spray in our hair, the chill of the snow (should you fall in it as many of us did!), soaking in every bit of wet and wild atmosphere possible. All the while our souls deeply touched by this astonishing land and its inhabitants, who shared their home with us, without complaint, if only briefly.

There was the humpback whale circling and blowing and sounding and rising and diving with a flip of its massive fluke, almost as if it knew this human company craved glances at its barnacled flesh.

There were hilarious penguin antics, Adélies tobogganing down slopes, parading along penguin highways and striking poses so adorable it was easy to forget for a moment that these are wild animals. Chinstraps noisily protecting their chicks. And gentoos moving to and fro, then plunging into the sea and seemingly flying through the waves.

There were the laid-back Weddell and Leopard seals, lounging on ice floes and amidst penguin colonies, seemingly smiling in their slumber. Brrrrrrrrrr! They're accustomed to it, but it looks like an awfully cold way to snooze. They seemed to bask in the glacial blue glow, as if warmed by the sun.

And there were great birds of prey riding the air currents high, high, higher above the *Sylvia Earle*, then suddenly diving majestically toward land or ocean in an effort to snare their prey.

We all packed our curious, inquisitive natures on this trip - items as necessary as our passports. And we were rewarded with a deeply knowledgeable Expedition Team, informative lectures and patient answers to our endless stream of questions.

It has been an extraordinary journey. (And much easier than the voyages of adventurers like de Gerlache, Cook, Amundsen, Shackleton and others whose hardships and discoveries benefit us all.)

Just as the animal in each photograph we publish, post or share is an ambassador of the health and well-being of its species, it would be my hope to return home not just as an adventurer who took a really cool vacation to the end of the earth but as a passionate Citizen Scientist, rededicated to increasing understanding of our natural world where and however I am able, and as an Antarctic emissary enlightening others about the crucial role of this breathtaking, magical, wondrous place in the health and future of the planet.



# Kayaking Log

**Kayak Guides:** Wesley McNeil, Vanja Davidsen, Sigurð Davidsen, Ivan Klochlov

Number of Paddlers: 26

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled: 46 km

<b>Paddlers:</b>	Laurie Van Egeren	David Alexander	Vivian Yao
Mark Aesch	Alexander Haase	Stewart Thomson	James Daly
Raymond Melleady	Jacqueline O’Dea	Lauren Peggau	Lucretia Albulet
Shannon Melleady	Joel O’Dea	Jeffrey Reinke	Mihai Albulet
Sandra Underdown	Maya Alexander	David Briggs	Ken Mills
Ryan Blanchard	Kirin Alexander	Helen Briggs	Peter Mills
Army Blanchard	Hina Desai	Maricela Alaniz	

## 13 January 2023, AM : Yalour Islands - Distance: 5 km

Our first opportunities to paddle the day before were shattered by the often, harsh Antarctic conditions. The winds were upwards of 35 to 40 knots. Today was a new day however.

The captain and his team expertly sailed our ship northward through Crystal Sound and the Grandidier Channel in a complete white-out fog. At first, we were not even sure if a kayak would be possible due to poor visibility. Fortunately, as the guides scrambled to get GPS coordinates to the island, and we began to paddle in the proper direction, the fog began to lift to reveal a beautiful little archipelago of small rocky islets sprinkled with small Adélie and Gentoo penguin colonies.

Soon we could see the rest of the expeditioners at a landing on the edge of a small cove. The cloud ceiling lifted entirely, exposing clear blue sky. There were a few patches of brash ice in the cove for us to practice moving through the ice, by picking the gaps between the ice chunks, and wedging them wide. Beyond the cove we could see some impressive icebergs. The lure was too much. Penguins, or exploring the icebergs. We divided into two groups for a few paddlers to have a more relaxed time with the penguins, and the other group head out to the more open water and waves to explore the icebergs.

The group that focused on the icebergs picked out safe routes to move between some of the larger bergs and also circumnavigated one impressive berg that had a hollowed out pool in it, right under a huge arch. Waves would swirl around inside the pool to continue carving out a smooth bowl. We found this mesmerising, but soon realized we would have to make our way back towards the ship. The second group watched the penguins a little longer then moved on to circumnavigate the main island. The two groups’ timing worked out well and we merged together as a larger group on our last crossing to the ship.

## 13 January 2023, PM : Pleneau Island/ Port Charcot - Distance: 8 km

Following a beautiful first paddle at the Yalours, we continued north to the Pleneau Island area and Port Charcot. We were blessed once again as the nice weather held, keeping the cloud ceiling high, and the winds, relatively, calm.

We launched from the back of the ship using the Zodiacs as a platform to get into our kayaks. We then proceeded west out into the bay and immediately started catching glimpses of a Minke Whale rising. As we paddled along we could hear it catch breaths or make a blow, we would look in all directions, lose it from our sight, to see it rise again for just a moment. Soon, all was just calm again as we paddled more towards the south towards Pleneau Island and out into the grotto of icebergs.

There were many large and some absolute towering pillars of icebergs. However, it was a small little iceberg that drew us all in. It had a perfect little round window in it that actually had a channel of brilliant blue water through it. Every single one of us wanted to paddle through it – so tempting—alas, we had to all paddle through it in our imaginations (just too dangerous to do in real life!)

We circled back north again to happen across a perfect Leopard Seal haul out. There were some six Leopard Seals hauled out on some nice low-lying ice shelves where we could get a nice eye level look at them. They were at rest and paid us no real attention.

This turned out to be a nice, long and relaxing paddle. Upon our return, we were able to use our polar plunge platform to get out of our kayaks. This set us up for a quick turnaround so we could polar plunge before dinner.

## 14 January 2023, AM: Goudier Island (Port Lockroy)/ Jougla Point to Borgens Bay - Distance: 16 km

The day before, our Expedition Leader, Howard presented us with a great idea. He asked if we had any strong paddlers who might be interested in a longer than usual paddle. By doing a shorter landing at Port Lockroy, the time saved, could be used towards making the crossing to Borgen Bay, and meet the ship there for the afternoon excursion. Borgen Bay would be a new place for Aurora to explore and was within striking distance to do this longer paddle. Alex and Laurie were completely game to make the paddle with Ivan. Sigurd and Wes shadowed along in safety Zodiacs.

As it turned out, the weather conditions were great – we had a wind coming mostly from the southwest which allowed us to go downwind most of the passage. After the short landing in Port Lockroy our small team of dedicated paddlers hopped in kayaks and started paddling! It was great to surf small waves – we were moving with solid speed without huge efforts! We could not approach too close to the shore because of the glacier faces (you don’t want to come closer than 400 metres) so we stayed in the open water enjoying the beautiful scenery around us. Once we got to the narrowest point of the straight, we changed direction and paddled to Billie Peak –

a steep cliff standing out of masses of ice. At that point we could see our vessel moving towards the Borgen Bay, our destination. As we were making the final paddle strokes, we had a bright sun coming out of the clouds! It was great to hear cheers from the people waiting for us on the ship. Once we got onboard, we got sandwiches which guys from the restaurant carefully prepared for us – they knew that we would be hungry! A Great finale for a great adventure!

## 14 January 2023, PM: Borgen Bay - Distance: 8.5 km

As we arrived to Borgen bay, the wind that had been so dominant in the morning died off and as we sailed deeper into the bay, a quiet line could be seen on the surface of the water in the lee of the surrounding glaciers and cliffs. We were able to paddle in the bay, along the glacier front in a glassy and calm sea. We cruised between the bergy bits and small icebergs. We also had a few ventures into the dense, magical brash ice, we really got a feeling of how powerful the brash can be.

We were fortunate enough to witness a calving from the glacier, and enjoy the waves it generated, this made a bergy bit close by, roll, and break up into smaller pieces. We paddled on and saw a Humpback 20-30 metres in front of our kayaks, onward into the bay.

We paddled further to the south east and suddenly a Humpback whale came 30 metres in front of our kayaks, what an experience. it came up a couple of times and then travelled further into the bay. We continued our way and suddenly found a leopard seal on an ice flow, we enjoyed this magnificent animal for a few minutes and started heading back to the ship. On the way, we saw a humpback again, this time all the Zodiacs were hanging around in the same area. it came up a few times and then headed on its way. What an amazing surprise this paddle turned out to be, especially when a number of hours before as we entered the bay, how rough, windy, and exposed it appeared.

## 15 January 2023, PM: Hydrurga Rocks - Distance: 5.5 km

This was a great paddle, even though we had 19-30 knot winds coming from the north-west through the day. We were doubting that we would have the chance to, but our captain managed to anchor the ship in a sheltered area, so we could get in our kayaks straight from the marina at the aft of the ship!

Hydrurga Rocks is an amazing paddling destination – several small islands with a number of cozy sheltered inlets and skerries, some of them can be very shallow during the low tide so you can enter them only by kayak. The sea was quite choppy, so we had an adventurous time paddling along the rocky coastline. To take a break from the wind, we tucked our kayaks into the main landing site, located in a small protected bay and stretched our legs, walking among Chinstraps colonies and seals! We also saw a Cormorants nesting really close to the water!

When we finished the circumnavigation of the islands the ship was already in Dynamic Positioning which means that we couldn’t use the marina to get back to the ship, so we towed our kayaks back from the little bay in which we started our paddle. Right before we got into the Zodiac one of our kayakers, Alex, made an eskimo roll! What a glorious paddle!

## 16 January 2023, AM: Whalers Bay - Distance: 3 km

Given that we needed to run before a storm, across the Drake Passage. Our paddle had to be an early one. It was not even morning yet, night was still upon us, as we started at 3.30 am in the morning by actually making a landing. As it was too windy for the ship to remain at anchor we had to tow the kayaks to shore to launch them. The kayak group toured the whaler’s station and hiked up to Neptune’s window, to see the most amazing sunrise, and the beautiful cliffs on the outside of Deception Island.

After hiking back down, we launched from the volcanic cinder beach. The wind and waves kept increasing so paddling out from shore was slow and challenging. We hugged the cliffs to get some break from the wind and headed out to Neptune’s Bellows. We were able to exit out of Neptune’s Bellows towards the Bransfield Straight, only to be turned around by the large swells on the outside. Paddling back into Whaler’s Bay to the ship looked also not to be an option as the wind and swell increased even more. We paddled into a small protected cove to load everyone into Zodiacs to head back to the ship and the kayak guides towed the kayaks back to the ship. Although this was a short paddle the backdrop of this magnificent place and the intensity of the conditions made this last paddle a real adventure.









# Snorkel Log

**Snorkel Guide: Anais Poulalion, Ania Baranek, Ilana Archer-Ebdon & Eddie Hauzer**

Number of Snorkels: 14

Total Outings: 9

**Snorkellers:**

Danielle Whittaker

Colin Blackhall

Susan Cowan

Sarah Bueten

Taylor Tyson

Julanne Frater

Simon Lemin

Jessica Louise Adlington

Craig Adlington

Garry Link

Linda Link

Marion (MJ) Rawleigh

Jamie Kievit

Bradley Conner

## 11 January 2023: Prospect Point & Fish Islands (Graham Coast)

There were 13 of us snorkelling today, excited and ready to try our first snorkelling in Antarctica. We got into our drysuits swiftly: powder station, lubricants, zippers & flippers – all hands-on deck to help each other and get ready as efficiently as possible. Our snorkel guide team skilfully manoeuvred two Zodiacs through the many bergs, and in between the surrounding glaciers, and soon we landed at Prospect Point: our first continental landing! For some of us, it was the jewel in the crown of the seventh Continent and we couldn't be happier.

In the meantime, our guides went scouting and looking for the best snorkelling site. When they picked us up, we took the scenic route in between the icebergs that glowed with the most amazing shades of blue. Along the way, we spotted crabeater seals relaxing on the ice and a large colony of Adélie penguins: usually a rare sight during the Peninsula voyages, but soon we're about to cross the Antarctic Circle, knowing we had better chances of encountering these South-dwelling, gracious birds.

Jumping out of the water and getting back on the Zodiacs was harder than we expected, but in the end, everyone made it, and there were a lot of laugh and happy faces on the way back to the ship. There is something special about being out there, pushing ourselves and fighting the elements. We were so proud of our 'snorks' team! To top it up, a massive ice tower calved off a glacier that we could see in the distance on our way back to the ship. This is Antarctica: unpredictable and magical. We can't wait for next adventures to come!

## 12 January 2023: Horseshoe Island, Marguerite Bay

Once on the Zodiacs, we were glad for our drysuits as the sea spray didn't bother us, which enabled us to truly admire the ginormous, bright blue icebergs that welcomed us to Horseshoe Island. As we slomed through the corridor of ice bergs, our snorkel guides used this opportunity to explain why icebergs are blue, or white or even green – it's all about what colour of the light spectrum can penetrate the ice.

Then it was time to enter the polar waters – our very first-time snorkelling below the Antarctic Circle! In our colourful buddy teams – orange and yellow - we weaved our way through the baby bergs until we spotted three curious Weddell seals peering down at us from the ice-covered beach. While we took their photos and revelled in

our luck at such an encounter, we wondered what they thought of us bobbing about in the water.

As the cold slowly seeped in - one by one – we penguin-sealed (climbed) back into the Zodiacs bubbling with excitement and eager to share our adventure with the guides.. As we slowly meandered back to the *Sylvia Earle*, we enjoyed some truly spectacular, enormous icebergs. Although cold, we were ready for whatever adventures tomorrow was going to bring.

## 13 January 2023, AM: Yalour Islands

Our two snorkel boats followed Sergey, our Zodiac master and a skilled navigator, and after a short ride, we landed at the main island. We learnt that Yalour is a large Adélie penguin colony, but also one of the southernmost recorded gentoo penguin colonies in Antarctica.

We got ashore and started exploring, while our guides took off scouting for the most suitable snorkelling location. Fog dropped and the sun started to come out. After about an hour, we re-joined the boats, and we were taken to a smaller island, where we were briefed about the site: it was a tall rocky wall, and we could spot a few pingüinos jumping around. We thought today might be our chance. And so, we jumped in the water, and a few of us enjoyed close encounters with the penguins swimming around us, just as we hoped we would.

## 13 January 2023, PM: Port Charcot, Booth Island

With eight 'snorks' joining us on the snorkel boats, we headed for land to learn all about the French Antarctic Expedition – that overwintered here on Booth Island - onboard the Français under the command of Jean- Baptiste Charcot between 1903-1905.

Afterwards we regrouped and loaded into Zodiacs, where we were met with huge smiles and very excited guides. As we started towards our surprise snorkel site, we started gearing up, fins, hood, mask and snorkel, then gloves. We glided by an iceberg with a very relaxed leopard seal – the first on of the day – perched on it. Then we were told we would be heading into deep water for the chance to snorkel with penguins.

As we approached our location, we were briefed on how our entry into the water would differ from the normal and how best to act in the water around the penguins. As we slide quietly into the water and awaited our que to let go – the excitement was palpable. Then we saw them – what seemed like hundreds of penguins porpoising towards us. We let go of the Zodiac and floated at the surface where we are surrounded by curious gentoo penguins – wherever we looked there was a penguin - diving all around us, lying on their back, circling us – it was awe inspiring – best snorkel yet!

## 14 January 2023, AM: Port Lockroy, Groudier Island

We slipped into the icy water in a small bay just up from our Lougla Point landing point and were suddenly met with a very curious Weddell Seal in the water.

It was very curious about us and even decided to buddy up with a few of our snorkel teams to see what all the fuss was about. It was wonderful, seeing it under the water swimming, it spent nearly 10 minuets with us. Our avid snorkellers also spotted some orange sea stars, beautiful sea angels and sea butterfly and the rocks was covered in a bed of seaweed.

This site was so mesmerising, our intrepid "snorks" managed almost 30 minutes in the frigid - 2°C - water.

After another morning in the paradise, we are now heading to explore Börden Bay and we cannot wait to see what experience and adventures this next snorkel expedition will bring.

## 14 January 2023, PM: Börden Bay

Our sites were limited, due to the glaciers, but we dressed into our drysuits, willing to cruise around in the hope of seeing something amazing and jumping into the deep water to experience that.

We headed out of the brash ice for clearer water in search of the perfect location for snorkelling in the deep water. As we cruised, our snorkellers dressed and sat waiting for our drivers go ahead to plunge into the icy water. While we searched, we unfortunately found nothing, but water and baby icebergs – but this didn't deter our avid snorkellers and they slipped into the water and headed towards one of the baby icebergs. The crystal-clear water, sunlight and iceberg made for a mesmerising light show that kept our snorkellers entertained until the cold seeped in and they climbed back onto the Zodiac – with a lot more finesse than compared to our first outing, five days ago.

## 15 January 2023, AM: Portal Point

We didn't have to travel far to find this morning's snorkel site, but we couldn't argue that the spot our guides had chosen was perfect – sheltered from the prevailing wind and shallow, crystal-clear water.

As a group they briefed us, before we slipped into the water and slowly meandered around the rocks enjoying the ease and clarity of the water. As we swam, we spotted brightly coloured red seaweed, vivid orange starfish and a few of us even spotted several small fish darting between the rocks.

As we climbed back onto the Zodiacs, our huge smiles portrayed what a fantastic and enjoyable snorkel this had been. We slowly made our way back to the ship, glowing with excitement and even more ready for this afternoons' snorkel.

## 15 January 2023, PM; Hydruga Rocks

Quite a few of us signed up for this afternoon snorkelling, as we knew it would be our last chance to do it in a typical, snowy Antarctic scenery, before we start making our way back North. We got dropped off at a pretty, sheltered beach, and went for a short walk to have a look at Chinstrap penguins and Weddell seals, that are often spotted around here, while our guides went scouting for a suitable snorkelling location. One hour later, we got back to our Zodiacs, but before we dipped in the water, we heard a call on the radio: a whale has been spotted nearby. We couldn't miss that opportunity! Ana and Ania, the Zodiac drivers for the day, followed our Expedition Leader, Howard, into the open ocean, and after a few minutes of patient waiting, we saw a humpback whale in a close distance. It was a windy day, and the swell was increasing, but our guides knew about a pretty, hidden spot on Hydruga, which was a well-sheltered gully, surrounded by rocks where some blue-eyed shags were nesting: we even spotted a few fluffy chicks! The water visibility was good in this area, and we enjoyed the different geology of the site. It was a perfect Antarctic afternoon. We were a bit sad to wave farewell to the Peninsula today,

but we also felt the satisfaction of having experienced diverse wildlife and landscapes, and snorkel in challenging weather conditions on this voyage: we certainly took the most of what Antarctica had to offer!

## 16 January 2023: Whaler's Bay, Deception Island

Along the volcanic, black sand beach, we found discarded buildings and wooden boats left behind when the whaling industry ended, and whale bones are scattered along the beach and under the water's surface.

As some of the first to land, we wandered on our own, with some of us heading towards Neptune's Window for our final fantastic sun rise in Antarctica, as others walked the other way to get a closer look at the abandoned buildings. As the sun rose, it created a stunning image – especially our "snorks" walking towards us in their drysuits and the sun shining behind them.

We met our drivers running down the beach – enjoying some time on land – before we climbed back into our Zodiacs for our last snorkel in Antarctica.

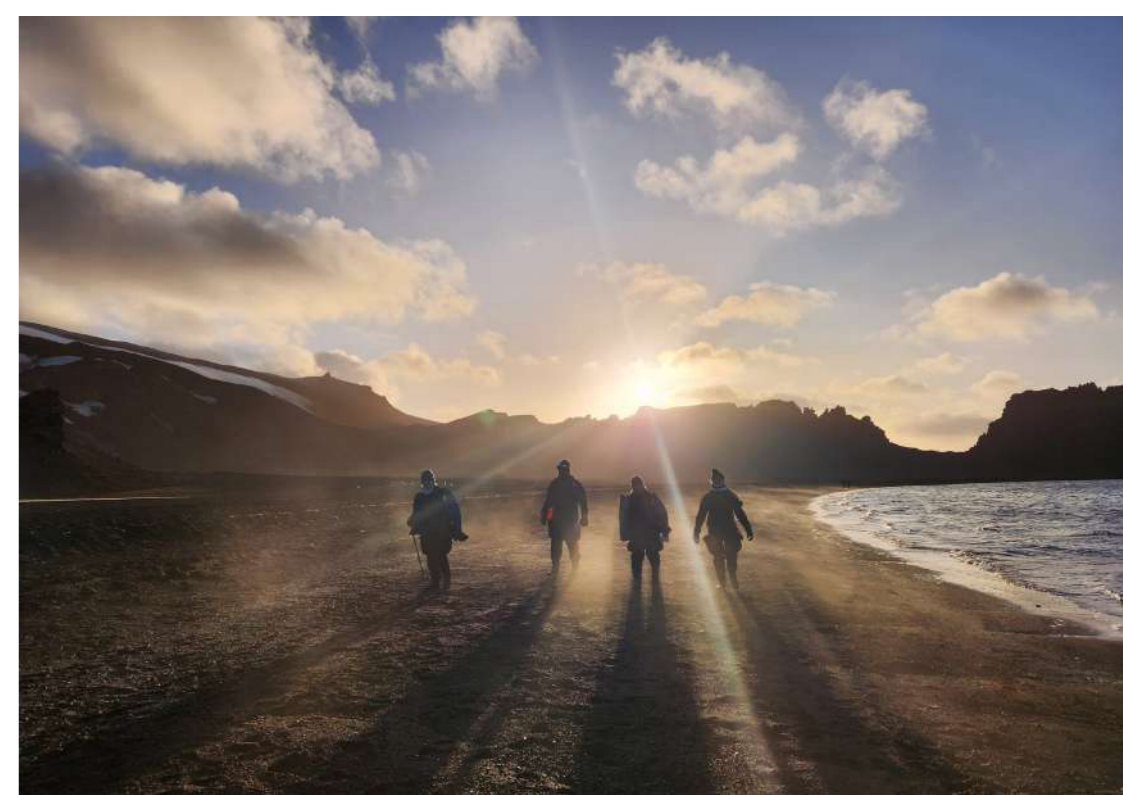
As we cruised one last time with our guides searching for our last spectacular snorkel site – a difficult task as the water visibility of the caldera was murky and the wind was making it a very chilly last snorkel.

We dressed quickly – now very familiar with the routine – and listened to our last snorkel brief. As we were assigned our buddy teams, and slide into the cold, murky water of whalers bay we made our way to the beach – the exit point.

We had this amazing feeling of accomplishment sitting on the beach with the cold water rushing around us, as our guides helped us remove our fins so we could easily climb back into the Zodiacs, and we headed back to the ship for one last time. This trip has been amazing, and we have snorkelled below the Antarctic circle - 62°59' – and all the way up to the South Shetland Islands - 67°39'. We have managed to snorkel at every landing this trip and it has been an adventure.

This trip has been a marvellous experience, one where we have not only improved our snorkelling techniques and been introduced to drysuits, but we have also made a beautiful group of friends. As proven, when we entered "How big is it. ...?" as the "Snorks Pengüinis" and won!







# Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	January											
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Gentoo Penguin						•	•	•				
Chinstrap Penguin						•		•				
Adelie Penguin				•	•	•	•					
Magellanic Penguin	•											•
Wandering Albatross		•	•									
Royal Albatross											•	•
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•									
Grey-headed Albatross				•								
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross				•								
Giant Petrel	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
Antarctic Petrel												
Cape Petrel		•	•							•	•	
Snow Petrel				•	•							
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)					•						•	
Blue Petrel		•									•	
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		•									•	•
White-chinned Petrel				•							•	•
Sooty Shearwater		•	•									
Wilson's Storm-petrel		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Black-bellied Storm-petrel		•										
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)	•			•	•	•	•	•				
Cormorant sp. (unidentified)												•
American Sheathbill (Snowy)					•	•	•	•				
Chilean Skua	•											•
Skua (Brown and/or South Polar)				•	•	•	•	•	•			

Bird Species	January											
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Kelp Gull	•			•	•	•		•	•		•	
Tern (probably mostly Antarctic)				•	•	•	•	•	•			
South American Tern	•											•
Dolphin Gull	•											
Slender-billed Prion										•		



Mammal Species	January											
	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Antarctic Fur Seal												•
Crabeater Seal				•	•	•		•				
Weddell Seal					•		•	•				
Leopard Seal				•		•	•	•				
Minke Whale					•	•	•					
Humpback Whale				•	•		•	•	•			
Orca					•							
Unidentified Whale				•								
South American Sea Lion		•										
Unidentified Dolphin		•										
Unidentified Seal				•								

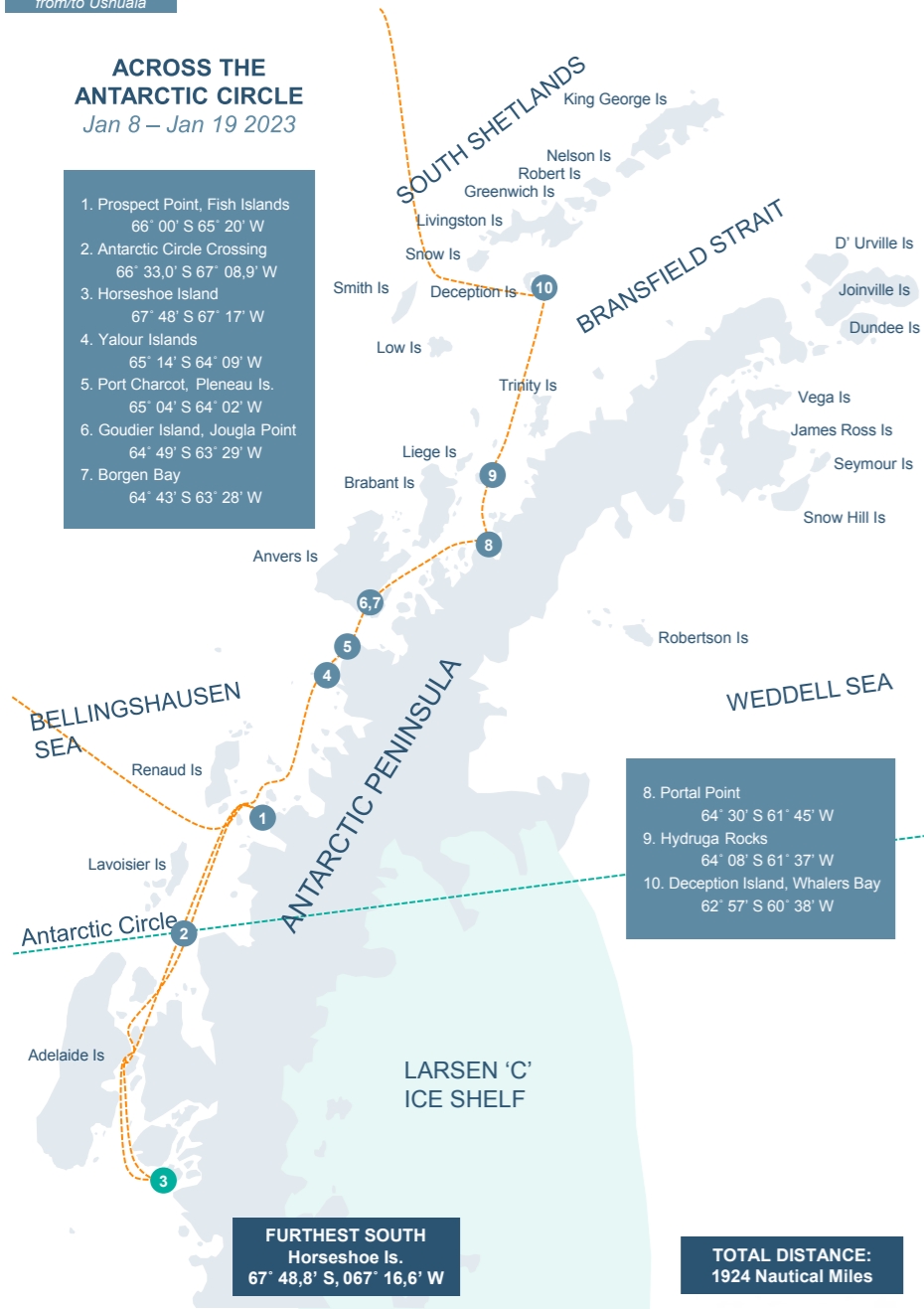




from/to Ushuaia

### ACROSS THE ANTARCTIC CIRCLE Jan 8 – Jan 19 2023

1. Prospect Point, Fish Islands  
66° 00' S 65° 20' W
2. Antarctic Circle Crossing  
66° 33,0' S 67° 08,9' W
3. Horseshoe Island  
67° 48' S 67° 17' W
4. Yalour Islands  
65° 14' S 64° 09' W
5. Port Charcot, Pleneau Is.  
65° 04' S 64° 02' W
6. Goudier Island, Jougla Point  
64° 49' S 63° 29' W
7. Borgen Bay  
64° 43' S 63° 28' W







## Expeditioners:

Jessica Adlington

Craig Adlington

Mark Aesch

Maricela Alaniz

Mihai Albulet

Lucretia Albulet

Kirin Alexander

Maya Alexander

Dave Alexander

Ruth Baldwin

Adonis Baldwin

Colin Blackhall

Army Blanchard

Ryan Blanchard

Kathy Briggs

David Briggs

Helen Briggs

Juliet Broadfield

John Broadfield

Sarah Bueter

Bob Buschman

John Buschman

Chen Chen

Belinda Cheney

Betsy Clancy

Tom Clancy

Liz Colarik

Brad Conner

Yvonne Cook

Jeffrey Cook

Sue Cowan

Jan Crook

Jim Cullumbine

Jim Daly

John Deberg

Hina Desai

Larry Ekberg

Jane Fischel

Dennis Fischel

Julanne Frater

Imelda Fruto

Mary Jane Fruto

Mich Fuller

Greg Gleeson

Rachel Gleeson

Robert Goosey

Debby Goosey

Andrew Guo

Renee Guthrie

Alex Haase

Alan Hinds

Robyn Hinds

Mary Hockaday

Yixing Hu

Jin-ling Hu

Tianyi Hu

Jamie Kievit

Jay Kirkwood

Emily Kirkwood

Becky Klein

Pavel Kosyak

Teodoro Kosyak Yafimava

Michael Laffin

Kathy Laffin

Jonathan Lang

Suzanne Lang

Simon Lemin

Garry Link

Linda Link

Barbara McLeod

Rob McLeod

Shannon Melleady

Raymond Melleady

Bingyuan Meng

Peter Mills

Ken Mills

John Moore

Jocelyn Moore

Tom Morris

Jackie O'Dea

Joel O'Dea

Dhvani Parikh

Lauren Peggau

Jeff Pine

Sarrah Pitman

Janet Pointer

David Pointer

Louise Quinn

Mary Jo Rawleigh

Jeff Reinke

Jill Ririe

Anwar Shaikh

Hamza Sheikh

Kris Sherman

Timothy Sieck

Brian Solomon

Stewart Thomson

Tomas Thorsell

Kathleen Tucker

Taylor Tyson

Sandee Underdown

Inez van der Maas

Laurie Van Egeren

Astrid Van Polanen Petel

Humphrey Van Polanen Petel

Nathalie Vandendries

Weizhen Wang

Xinxin Wang

Sam Weddle

Marianne Weddle

Danielle Whittaker

Elsa Wong

Jo-Ann Wood

Anastasiya Yafimava

Vivian Yao

Yutian Ye

Ian Young



## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Elena Wimberger

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Naturalist: Roger Kirkwood

Naturalist: Ian McCarthy

Naturalist: Lizelle Naudé

Historian: Nina Gallo

Photography Guide: Bartosz Stróżyński

Expedition Medic: Russell Henry

Expedition Medic/Guide: Nicole Genoud

Expedition Guide: Tamsin Both

Expedition Guide: Ignacio (Nacho) Marino

Kayaking Master: Wes McNeil

Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Vanja Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Ivan Klochkov

Snorkel Guide: Ana Poulalion

Snorkel Guide: Ania Baranek

Snorkel Guide: Ilana Archer-Ebdon

Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer

Zodiac Master: Sergei Andronov

Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Artem Kolmykov

Chief Officer: Gabriel Eduardo Centella Molina

Second Officer: Annika Yaneth Bulgin Nuñez de Zinkovskyy

Safety Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Ship Doctor: Sofia Cocunubo Castellanos

Chief Engineer: Praveen Kumar Kaushal

First Engineer: Kristofer Al Carpio La Torre

IT Officer: Nathaniel Buhain Vibares

Hotel Director: Osman Ozpolat

F&B Service Manager: Balvant Singh

Head Bartender: Rajesh Sugreev Murao

Chief Purser: Liza Merillo

Executive Chef: Allan Estoque

Sous Chef: Vinay Kumar Singh

Hotel Controller: Reynaldo Hernandez Cañeda

Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Stateroom Attendant: Sotero (Terry) Agtagma

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Able Seaman: Raju Choudhary

Able Seaman: Imam Santuso

Able Seaman: Nestor Fernandez Arangorin

Able Seaman: Rene Balsomo Casipe

Able Seaman: Dragan Zivkovic

## Photography thanks to:

Ania Baranek

Ana Poulalion

Bartosz Stróżyński

Sigurd Davidsen

Wes McNeil

## Artwork thanks to:

Shanhari Sivagnanasundaran









