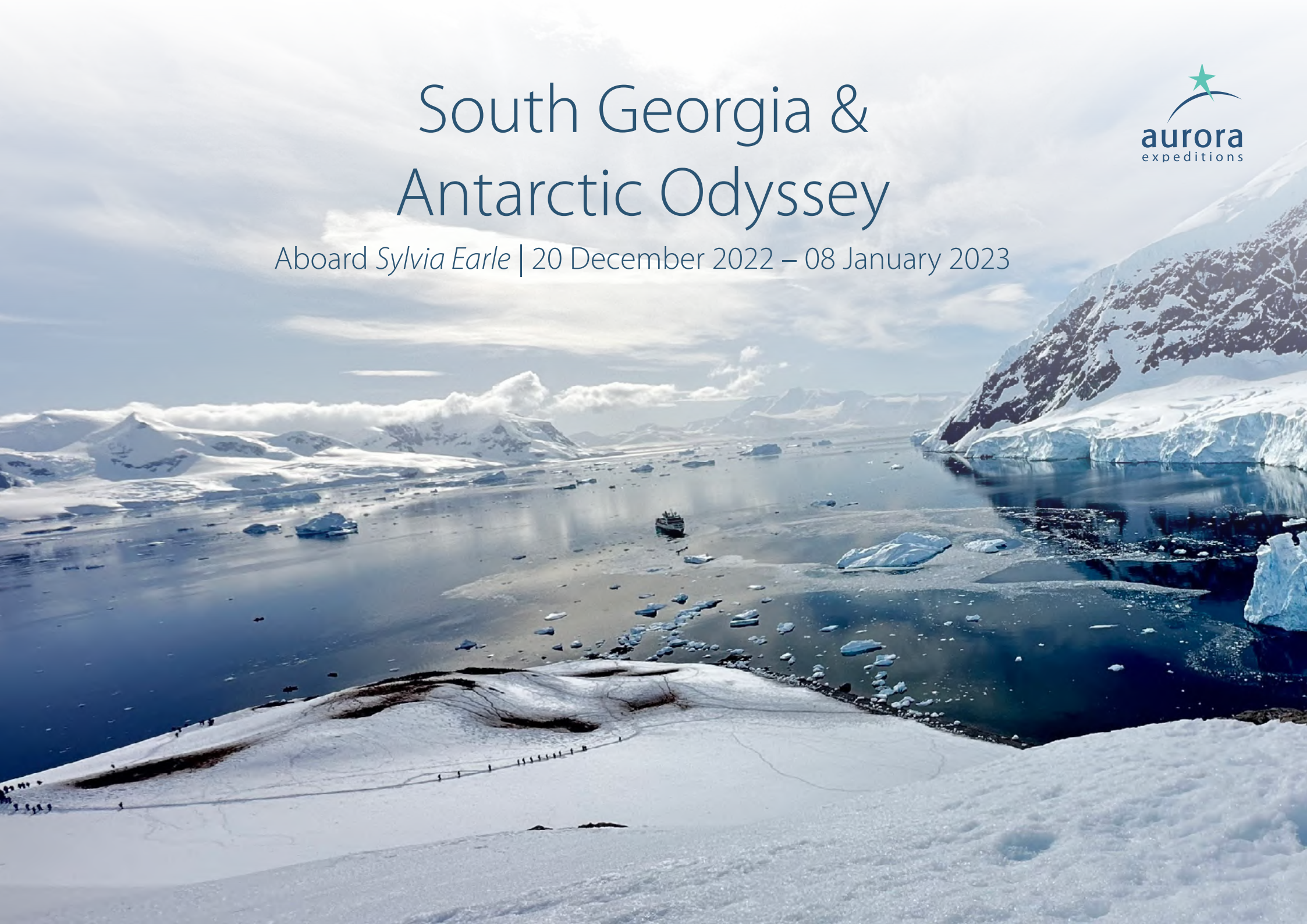


South Georgia & Antarctic Odyssey

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 20 December 2022 – 08 January 2023





Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Tuesday 20 December 2022

Position at 2100 on Dec 20

Latitude: 55°00'S

Longitude: 66°47'W

Course: 126°

Speed: 11 knots

Wind Speed: 9 knots SE

Barometer: 990

Air Temp: 9°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

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

At 4.00 pm, we climbed up the gangway where the Aurora team and onboard hotel staff showed us to our cabins. Then it was time to explore our new home-away-from-home, the *MV Sylvia Earle*.

Onboard we total 110 Expeditioner's with nationalities representing Australia (39), Canada (2), China (2), Israel (2), Italy (2), Macedonia (1), Netherlands (3), New Zealand (4), Sweden (1), Switzerland (8), UK (19), USA (26), Vietnam (1) along with 23 Expedition team and 85 Ship's crew from all over the world.

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

The sound of seven-short-one-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 sample our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us up to lifeboats to get us familiar with their whereabouts.

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

During our meal, we cast off our lines and steamed east along the beautiful Beagle Channel. The bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded as we made our way past beech and snowy slopes shining brilliantly in the steely light. To our portside the snow-capped peaks of Argentina, and 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, some of us wandered the outer decks while the rest of us made our way to cabins for a much-needed sleep.



Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Wednesday 21 December 2022

Position at 14:30 on Dec 21

Latitude: 56° 55.8' S

Longitude: 064° 53.2' W

Course: 155°

Speed: 12.3 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: 9°C

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

—Mark Twain, Tom Sawyer Abroad

Last night we entered the notorious Drake's Passage. The conditions were smoother than many of us expected, our ship rolling gently while we were asleep, most of us woke up feeling well in the morning. There's a festive atmosphere in the air, Christmas decorations and music make the bar area feel cosy, but it's the huge gingerbread house in front of the reception desk that steals the show.

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 our Expedition Leader, Howard, 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 important biosecurity information, and then our expedition team helped us to vacuum our clothes and gear to make sure we don't introduce any foreign organic materials to Antarctica. During our almost three-week voyage, we will not only visit the Antarctic Peninsula, but also the breathtaking island of South Georgia, abundant in wildlife, where the biosecurity measures are even more strict. Brushes, combs and tweezers were a common sight today: we feel privileged to visit these pristine environments and we want to protect them for future generations.

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

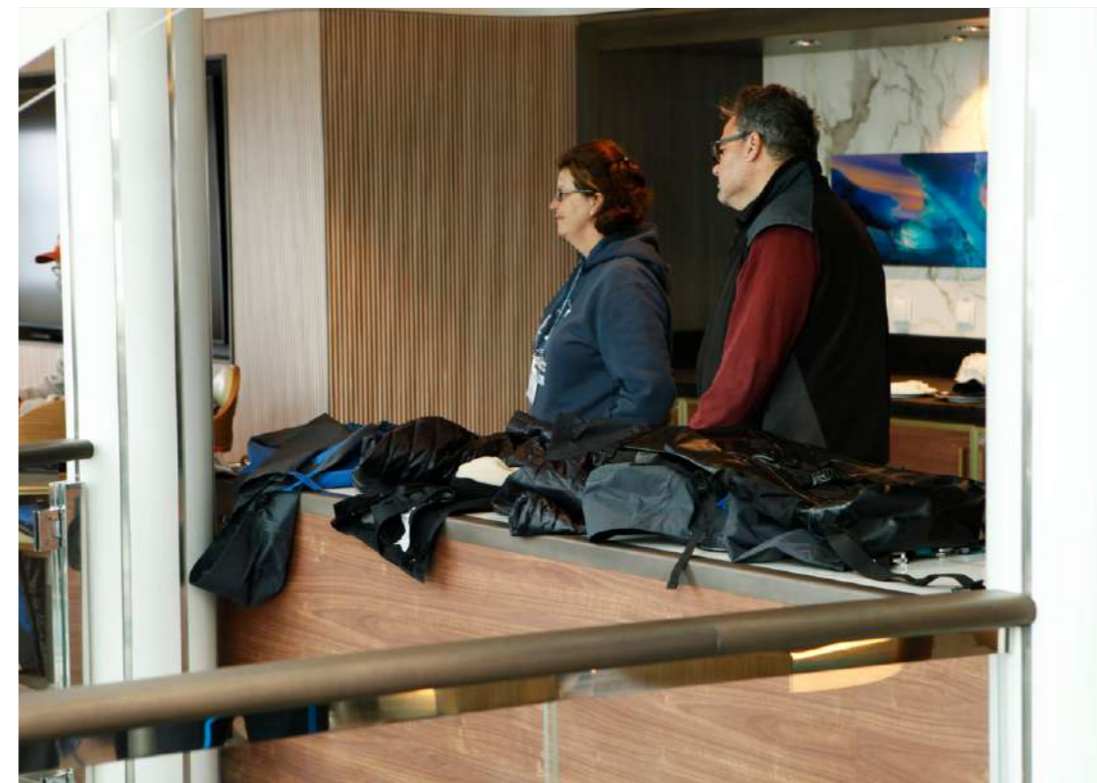
At 12:00 am, our fantastic Naturalist, Ian McCarthy, delivered a personal talk, "Ocean Wanderers", during which he told us about his time spent with some of the biggest birds in the world: wandering albatross, black-browed albatross, grey-headed albatross, and their place in the Southern Oceans, which are their home. Ian also talked about gentoo penguins on Cuverville Island, which we plan to visit tomorrow. At the time, Ian was filming a documentary piece, called "Life in the Freezer", for the BBC natural history unit. He told us a story of having his tent invaded by penguins, and how they made the tent and his sleeping bag smell like a fish processing plant for the rest of the expedition.

After the lecture, Ian went up to the Observation Lounge on Deck 8 to do a seabird survey for one of our Citizen Science projects. A group of about 15 expeditioners have joined him outdoors for birdwatching, and they were lucky to spot a few important bird species: a wandering albatross and a black-browed albatross, as well as a giant petrel and some white-chin petrels.

In the meantime, those of us who signed up for snorkelling, kayaking or snowshoeing programs were busy in the mudroom, where the activity guides distributed the equipment to be ready for our first outing tomorrow.

In the evening, we gathered in the Lecture Theatre for Aurora's traditional Captain's Welcome. It was a lively event, when we got to meet our skilled Captain Artem and his team.

Many of us stayed at the Observation Deck until late, some participating in our famous Iceberg Competition – one of Aurora's long-standing traditions, when we try to guess the time and location of the first iceberg sighting. Others admired a spectacular sunset (with a rainbow!) over the endless horizon of the Southern Ocean. A memorable moment, as it was the Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year.



Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Thursday 22 December 2022

Position at 1415 on Dec 22

Latitude: 62°22.676'S

Longitude: 063°29.888'W

Course: 174.1°

Speed: 10.7 knots

Wind Speed: 10.7 knots SE

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: 9°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

The day began as we steamed through an ocean of heavy mist. It brought to mind, to the imagination, what it must have been like for the early sailors that explored this remote area in the 1800s. The reason for this dense mist was that we had crossed the Antarctic Convergence. The Antarctic Convergence is the point at which the warm, northerly Southern Ocean meets the Antarctic Ocean. This results in a sea temperature drop of 5 degrees and is our first sign that we've crossed to Antarctica. How did the early explorers do it in their old sailing ships! We also woke to find smooth conditions on the Southern Ocean, thanks to calm winds – so much so, that a full house showed for breakfast! However, our second day transiting the Drake was anything but uneventful.

Beginning at 9.30 am, we started our mandatory briefings as we neared the Antarctic Peninsula. First up, Howard explained the correct procedures when embarking and disembarking Zodiacs. We learnt about the 'three step' system, first step Zodiac rubber using the seaman's grip, then onto the yellow step, then onto the Zodiac floor. Most important is we make sure we practice careful biosecurity measures by washing our boots before and after we embark/disembark the ship.

Nina delivered an animated presentation on three of the Peninsula's greatest explorers. De Gerlache, Charcot, Nordenskiöld! Nina led us through the grand history of Antarctic exploration. The complicated and precarious voyages and complex navigations along the Antarctic Peninsula.

A delicious lunch featured chocolate brownies and a surprisingly tasty sugar-free (yes, sugar free!) banana cream pie & was followed by a brief siesta, whilst others opted for more birdwatching up on the cosy Observation Lounge. As we ploughed our way further south, the myriad of bird life we had yesterday subsided to sightings of light mantled and wandering albatross and petrels – a reminder of how close we are to Antarctica.

Lizelle's presentation filled the better part of the afternoon. Lizelle led us through wildlife in Antarctica, the three brush-tail species, the five seal species and the myriad of whales that we hope to see on our voyage.

Antarctica's ahead of us, we gathered in the Tektite Bar to discuss the myriad of Citizen Science projects we're offering on our voyage. NASA's Cloud Survey, Happy Whale, Ebird Survey, South Georgia Seaweed Survey and our Secchi Disk that measures the concentration of phytoplankton in the oceans we explore.

Tomorrow, we'll spend our first full day on the Antarctic Peninsula!



Fournier Bay, Neko Harbour

DAY 4 | Friday 23 December 2022

Position at 1200 on Dec 23

Latitude: 64°29.662'S

Longitude: 063°04.259'W

Course: 091.9°

Speed: 0.4 knots

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

Expedition cruising always has to be weather dependant, and today was a lesson on this. High winds had been predicted for the morning around Cuverville Island, which was the planned landing. The *Sylvia Earle* moved down to the island through the night and arrived at about 5.30 am. After an assessment of all the options for landing options, it became obvious that it was not going to be possible in such gusty and high winds. Therefore the plans were changed.

The ship was manoeuvred away from Cuverville, with a course set for Fournier Bay. As we steamed past Cuverville the island looked absolutely beautiful in the early morning light. It has the biggest gentoo colony on the peninsula and we were treated to the sight of flock after flock of gentoo penguins, porpoising past the ship as they headed into the colony after fishing journeys out to sea.

When we arrived at Fournier Bay, we were relieved to see that the weather was far better than it had been at Cuverville. In fact, it was a stunning morning of sun, calm sea and gentle breezes. The ship had hardly stopped moving before the Zodiacs were in the water. A wonderful first Zodiac cruise followed through a magical world of ice and water. We pushed through the brash and bergy bits off ice and got as close as was safely possible to the glaciers that emptied into the sea.

Back onboard we had lunch while the ship repositioned to Neko Harbour, where the weather held into the afternoon and we were able to make a landing. There was still a lot of snow cover, although the rocky outcrops the gentoo penguins favour had mostly melted out from under the snow and many were incubating newly laid eggs.

Gentoo penguins return to the same nests year after year, and meet up with their mates they haven't seen all winter. There was a lot of courtship and pair bonding going on, which made the colony a very noisy place. Many birds seemed to be spending most of their time stealing stones from other nests to build up their own. The demand for stones always outstrips supply at this time of year, which can trigger fights and squabbles as they compete for this scarce resource.

Wind Speed: 8.7 knots

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 9°C

The snowshoe party climbed high up onto the ridge and got some amazing views of the landscape from up there. There was a small but impressive avalanche triggered by the warm temperatures, which rumbled down towards the sea and the glacier at the edge of the bay also calved which was pretty spectacular.

We ended the day with catch ups at the bar, our daily recap and another scrumptious dinner.

What a great introduction to Antarctica it was.



Portal Point, Hydrurga Rocks

DAY 5 | Saturday 24 December 2022

Position at 0800 on Dec 24

Latitude: 64°29.835'S

Longitude: 061°45.102'W

Course: 246.2°

Speed: 0.1 knot

Antarctica is a separate world. One can feel its presence in the approaches, sailing south from more temperate climes. 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

After enjoying yesterday's sunny outings, this morning welcomed us with completely different weather conditions, more typical of what we would usually expect Antarctica to be like: the air was cool, it was overcast and moody. The sea was calm, and the many surrounding icebergs displayed countless shades of blue. Our first landing of the day was at a rarely visited location of Portal Point. We enjoyed a short walk to an elevated viewpoint, where we could admire impressive glaciers. It was quiet and still, and very atmospheric. Snowshoers made their way up a snowy hill, looking like small black dots from a distance, and the snorkellers enjoyed a close encounter with a curious Weddell seal. The mirror-like water surface made it easy for our kayakers to cover an impressive 7.5 km distance in a short time.

After the morning outing, we decided to take advantage of the favourable sea conditions and organised Aurora's famous Polar Plunge at the ship's marina. Thirty-nine brave plungers participated, followed by an impromptu Expedition Team plunge, Santa hats included. Fluffy towels & warming shots of vodka were handed out to the tunes of 'Born to be Wild' and 'Light my fire' playing in the mudroom. We can't wait to see those photos artistically put together by our photographer, Bartosz, at the voyage's final slideshow.

It's always busy at Christmas time, and so was the rest of our day: we had a quick lunch, got changed and added on a few extra layers. Looking out the window, we could tell that the afternoon would welcome us with proper polar weather conditions. Another adventure awaits. Our expedition leader, Howard, told us we would make our way to Hydrurga Rocks, a small, rocky island where seals and chinstrap penguins are commonly seen.

It was a long Zodiac ride to the sheltered beach landing, where we started our afternoon outing. The swell picked up and it was snowing: not everyone's cup of tea, but we had a happy bunch of adventurous souls who embraced the Antarctic elements in full, with smiling faces and wind-swept cheeks blushing, as they enjoyed their very first white Christmas.

Wind Speed: 7.1 knots NW

Barometer: 995

Air Temp: 7°C

The plan for this evening was to have a Christmas Eve BBQ on the outdoor decks, but the weather was too wild due to weather conditions this was unable to happen. Therefore, we enjoyed a relaxed BBQ buffet dinner, spoilt for choice with roast meat selections, cheese platters and fancy Christmas desserts.

After dinner, we made our way to the bar area and watched our expedition team gather around the piano. The fact that no one could actually play, didn't deter them from starting a little Christmas carol sing-along. Fair to say, they're better at driving Zodiacs and checking out those ice charts, but we appreciated the efforts that went into bringing the Christmas spirit aboard. Special acknowledgments go to our Expedition Medic, Russell, who tried tirelessly to coordinate the "12 Days of Christmas" across the room. The team singing the part "five golden rings" saved the night. Can't wait to see what's next on Christmas Day!



Polar Plunge

DAY 5 | Saturday 24 December 2022





Weddell Sea: The Naze – Christmas Day!

DAY 6 | Sunday 25 December 2022

Position at 0800 on Dec 25

Latitude: 63°24.563'S

Longitude: 056°49.751'W

Course: 181.2°

Speed: 12.1 knots

Wind Speed: 11 knots from N

Barometer: 976

Air Temp: 5°C

Captain James Weddell

Captain James Weddell sailed to South Georgia with his two ships the Jane and the Beaufoy. They anchored at Adventure Bay (Udine Harbour in the north-west) on 12 March 1823. Although this journey was principally in search of seals, Weddell made an exceptional voyage of discovery at sea, travelling as far south as 74 degrees 15 minutes to the sea that now bears his name.

Christmas in Antarctica! We awoke to blustery conditions this morning with a ship full of cheer. As we all emerged for breakfast, holiday happiness was clearly all around with everyone smiling and excited for the lovely day ahead. The weather presented an opportunity to switch our course and head into the Weddell Sea for Christmas, which was super exciting! As we rounded the corner towards our morning destination of Brown Bluff we were confronted with the powerful beauty of the raw, remote, desolate power of this magnificent continent.

The E-Team was suited up and headed out into some seriously stiff wind and were hopeful to get everyone on land. After some serious contemplation as they bobbed around in the swell just offshore, Howard finally called it quits with too many hazards stacking up for this landing.

No one seemed too phased by this decision though as it was such a cosy morning on the ship, that everyone settled into a comfortable chair with a cup of coffee to just watch the beauty outside pass by. The morning flew by and before we knew it lunch was upon us where the Christmas sweaters started to appear. So good!

The early afternoon was filled with some Citizen Science as Russell and Paul led a cloud survey and Ian an E-bird survey on the outer decks.

Just when we thought we weren't getting off the ship on Christmas Day, Howard pulled off some last-minute magic and at 4.00 pm announced we were going for it!

We travelled to a spot called "The Naze" on James Ross Island. The wind had calmed right down, and the clouds were doing some incredible things. As we loaded up Zodiacs and headed to shore the clouds created this atmosphere, like we were heading off to another planet from a Sci-fi movie. On shore was just as cool. With eight Weddell Seals, a few penguins hanging around, and the rugged terrain it felt extra hostile and other worldly.

Once back onboard it was time to get festive! More and more folks appeared in Christmas jumpers and goofy hats, while some of us took the opportunity to get fancy! A quick pre-cap for the next days adventures in the Weddell Sea, then everyone was off to Christmas dinner! With Christmas poppers, an amazing menu, and the happiness you could feel flowing from everyone, it was an amazing vibe. Just when people thought that the festivities were over, none other than Santa Claus showed up to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas. Having just had a huge night delivering all his gifts around the world, no wonder he was a little late to the party down here, after all it's his very last stop.

After dinner, people gathered in the bar for a final Christmas drink to celebrate this incredible, unique, Christmas day.







Weddell Sea: Devil Island, Duse Bay

DAY 7 | Monday 26 December 2022

Position at 1300 on Dec 26

Latitude: 63°43.1'S

Longitude: 057°16.4'W

Course: 018°

Speed: 8.9 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 4°C

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

—Otto Nordenskjöld

After a great Christmas we woke up to Boxing Day in the Weddell Sea, not many people can say they have done that! What a great morning we had at Devil Island, a highlight of the trip so far! Unlike yesterday we woke up to no wind and a nice five-degree temperature. Adelie's, Adelie's, Adelie's! Porpoising all around us, resting on icebergs, landing at the beach next to us and even jumping in our Zodiacs!

Some lucky snorkel enthusiasts got to share their Zodiac with a curious Adelie! Devil Island contains a massive rookery that assaults the senses. The sounds, the smells, the sights of penguins! Some of us took the uphill jaunt to the top of the mountain to burn off our Christmas dinner and get a beautiful bird's eye view of the area.

A few fun facts about Adelie penguins are they have a varied diet, mainly krill as well as fish, cephalopods and amphipods. Their average dive is less than 100 metres but can dive up to 175 metres. Usually they don't travel far from the colony to hunt and are usually found close to pack ice. They nest in colonies and are known to walk over 60 km across sea ice to breeding sites at the beginning of the season. They lay 2 eggs between October and November and breeding duties are shared by both parents. Incubation is around 34 days; chicks fledge after around 53 days. Their lifespan is 15-25 years and these guys are the most southerly breeding penguin.

After a great visit we said goodbye to the Adelie's and repositioned to Duse Bay for a rare Weddell Sea continental landing.

We should all know how lucky we are as Howard, who has been working in Antarctica for 25 years mentioned, he has only ever had one other continental landing from the Weddell Seaside. Our Zodiac manager Sergei who's been working in Antarctica for 15 years has only been to the Weddell Sea twice and only had good weather once, so I'd say it's a Christmas miracle! At Duse Bay we visited a Chilean and Argentinian refuge hut and saw some elephant seals. The dramatic scenery felt like we were visiting another planet, what a fantastic day, how lucky we are to be here!

To top off the day, our enthusiastic Historian Nina gave a captivating rendition of Nordenskjöld's Weddell Sea Expedition.

What a day!



At Sea, Point Wild (Elephant Island)

DAY 8 | Tuesday 27 December 2022

Position at 1500 on Dec 27

Latitude: 61°05.726 'S

Longitude: 054°52.202 'W

Course: 233°

Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 18 knots from SSE

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 2°C

POINT WILD

The hut grows more grimy every day. Everything is sooty black. We have arrived at the limit where further increments from the smoking stove, blubber lamps, and cooking gear are unnoticed. It is at least comforting to feel that we can become no filthier... from time to time we have a spring cleaning, but a fresh supply of flooring materials is not always available, as all the shingle is frozen up and buried by deep drifts. Such is our Home Sweet Home.

—A crew member writing about living conditions at their Elephant Island camp

The ship was unusually quiet this morning, as everyone took the opportunity for a sleep in, a welcome catch-up on sleep after a busy but satisfying last four days on the Antarctic Peninsula.

By 10 am however, a crowd was developing in the Lecture Theatre for Nina's lecture 'Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition: Part 1'. Nina's lecture covered some of the background of Shackleton and his crew describing the expedition to the point of the ship being stuck and crushed by ice in the Weddell Sea. At the closing of Part 1, Elephant Island could be seen out the portside windows of the *Sylvia Earle*, and with a keen audience agreement. 'Part 2a' of Nina's lecture was presented, leaving us at lunch with an image of Shackleton's men stranded at Point Wild, on the hostile and isolated Elephant Island.

During lunch *Sylvia Earle* rounded Cape Valentine and was making its way along the northern shore of Elephant Island. In the early afternoon captain Artem, brought the ship into a bay directly to the west of Point Wild. Deck 8 was awash with everyone trying to view the beach at the point where a statue is erected. The statue on the lower rocky point is the bust of Luis Pardo Villalon, Captain of the *Yelcho*, the steam-powered cutter that on August 30, 1916, came to rescue the remaining *Endurance* crew on this very 'beach'.

Then the call came from Howard, that the expedition team were soon to attempt a Zodiac cruise. Seventy expeditioners entered the Zodiacs and got to witness up close, this wild, small area of rocky coast where 22 crew remained for 105 days. It was such an unlikely place to survive, living under two upturned lifeboats with sail roofs and seal pelt floor.

It was powerful to link Nina's retelling of the *Endurance* tale and experience the wild environment of this epic location.

Back on board the ship was buzzing, and not long after leaving Cape Valentine and moving towards the impressive mountainous Clarence Island, many whale blows were viewed on the horizon. We were entering a whale krill feeding frenzy, and many birds were also participating and benefitting from the feeding, swooping in great flocks at sea level. We witnessed Humpbacks, Fin and Blue whales all around the ship, accompanied above the ocean surface by Black Browed Albatross, Cape Petrels and Fulmars. It was a special way to end our time in this area of Antarctica. Leaving the South Shetlands and the Peninsula behind the ship headed northwest into the Scotia Sea and onwards towards South Georgia.

Today, really encapsulated the special moments that are unplanned and unexpected on an expedition. Being mostly a 'sea day' today, the morning schedule did not list many events, but by the end of the day it was full of wonderful memories and unforgettable events – these are the days that make being on an expedition ship so special.



South Scotia Sea

DAY 9 | Wednesday 28 December 2022

Position at 1200 on Dec 28

Latitude: 58°58.6'S

Longitude: 048°33.49'W

Course: 080°

Speed: 13.1 knots

Wind Speed: 21 knots from SE

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 5°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

This morning we awoke to the dulcet tones of our Expedition Leader, Howard, welcoming us to the Scotia Sea and informing us we were going to see the enormous tabular Iceberg A-76A.

As many of us started moving towards the smell of bacon and coffee, we saw the beginning of this gargantuan iceberg out of the port side windows.

A-76A is around 135 km long and 26 km wide and was once part of the world's largest iceberg, A-76, which was approximately 4320 km² – that's the size of Rhode Island. A-76 broke off from the western side of Antarctica's Ronne Ice Shelf in May 2021 and has since broken into three icebergs, A-76A, A-76B and A-76C.

To date, A-76A has travelled around 2,000 km since breaking off from the Antarctic Peninsula in 2021. The berg has managed to avoid substantial ice loss during its journey and from data collected by the U.S. National Ice Centre in June revealed that A-76A is almost the same size, as it was when it fractured from its parent berg more than a year ago.

However, the iceberg is unlikely to remain intact for much longer because of the Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC) - the only current that flows entirely around the globe and runs from west to east through the Drake Passage, transporting around 150 million cubic metres of water every second. As a result, any wandering bergs that enter the Drake Passage are swiftly dragged away from the Antarctic and dumped in warmer waters, where they soon melt away.

As we cruised along the edge of iceberg A-76A, the E-Team were debating the height of the iceberg, which was dubbed as "pretty tall" by our intrepid leader, later confirmed with some fancy mathematics by Jack to suggest the true height of the iceberg was 48.9 metres. Later, at the recap, it was suggested that only 20% of the iceberg's true height was visible above the water line, thus suggesting that the bottom of the iceberg was around 150 metres below the surface. Whatever the specifics of its scape, we were truly mesmerised by the marvellous A76A.

As we left A-76A to continue its journey in the Scotia Sea and into the Drakes Passage, we joined Ian in the Lecture Theatre to learn more about what to expect from our visit to the wild islands of South Georgia, while Ian shared some of his fascinating stories from his time filming the BBC production of Frozen Planet.

Afterwards, we migrated once again to the Gentoo dining room, to fill our bellies on the delicious food prepared by our very talented chefs. Once fed, we spread out throughout the ship – from the Observation Lounge to the Library to the privacy of our own cabins, to rest and relax, and truly enjoy the peacefulness of a day at sea.

Before long we were heading back to the Lecture Theatre to join Nina for "Shackleton – Part 2", where we re-joined Shackleton and his crew of 27 on their harrowing journey to safety.

Afterwards, we all ventured to our own separate areas around the ship to simply enjoy the motion of the ocean and the never-ending parade of smaller icebergs, while secretly hoping for a sighting of a whale. Until it was time to head to the Lecture Theatre to hear from our dedicated E-Team on what tomorrow's adventures would bring.

After another tasty meal, we headed to the Lecture Theatre, one last time, to test our newfound Antarctic knowledge with Tasmin and Russell hosting a hilarious Trivia Night!



Sea day, South Scotia Sea

DAY 10 | Thursday 29 December 2022

Position at 1730 on Dec 29

Latitude: 55°47.931'S

Longitude: 038°21.037'W

Course: 056.4°

Speed: 10.2 knots

Wind Speed: 18 knots from S

Barometer: 989

Air Temp: 6°C

This morning we woke up with a semi sunny sky, and relatively calm seas on our 2nd day in the South Scotia Sea, closing in with a steady 13 knots speed to our target: South-Georgia.

We started our day with a well-deserved breakfast, after some great efforts in yesterday's evening quiz!

After breakfast we migrated to the Lecture Theatre for our mandatory briefing about how to behave when landing in South-Georgia. Our Expedition Leader, Howard, informed us about the necessary biosecurity measurements we will have to follow when going ashore, and the precautions we need to be aware of, to respect all the unique wildlife on this Island. We then got to see the South-Georgia visitor video, which included some truly inspiring footage of the wildlife and scenery of this island.

After the briefing, we went to get our outdoor layers and backpacks we would be taking on our South Georgia landing and did another vacuum and inspecting session. By doing this we made sure we will not introduce any seeds, invasive species, or other problems to these pristine islands.

We enjoyed another good lunch, whereafter some of us decided to enjoy the views on the outside decks, and some of us took a relaxing afternoon, gathering energy for the busy days ahead.

Around tea-time, Nina gave us a great lecture about South-Georgia, and the rich history it has, even though it's an extremely remote and hard to access Island in the middle of the Scotia Sea. We got to learn about the first explorers, the sealing and whaling industry, the wildlife, and the Falklands war.

After a recap, we filled our bellies with a great dinner and some good drinks. Most of us went to bed, excited and ready for our early 4 am wakeup call by Howard and our first day in South-Georgia!

We had lived long amid the ice, and we half-unconsciously strove to see resemblances to human faces and living forms in the fantastic contours and massively uncouth shapes of berg and floe.

—Sir Ernest Shackleton, South, 1919



Gold Harbour & Cooper Bay, South Georgia

DAY 11 | Friday 30 December 2022

Position at 2000 on Dec 30

Latitude: 54°47 'S

Longitude: 035°48 'W

Course: At anchor

Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 7 knots

Barometer: 975

Air Temp: 8°C

What the ice gets, the ice keeps.

—Shackleton to Worsley and Wild in July 1915 as the *Endurance* was beset by the ice of the Weddell Sea.

The day began with another lovely wakeup call from Howard at 4 am. Time to get up as we sailed into the beginning of Drygalski Fjord. Good to see so many keen expeditioners making the most of their time in South Georgia and getting up to see the sights!

After breakfast we arrived at Gold Harbour. A questionable forecast on the windy app we were pleasantly surprised, to have a beautiful sunny morning with no wind and calm seas. What a stunning first landing site! A black sand beach, teeming with wildlife, surrounded by glaciers. As we landed, we walked around the snorting, farting elephant weaners, we love weaners! With 54% of Elephant seals mate on South Georgia. The male comes to shore between August and October, followed soon by females. The dominant male establishes a harem of most commonly up to 20 females. The female gives birth within 3 days of coming to shore and nurses for 3 weeks before mating and returning to sea, leaving the weaner pups. The weaners spend another 8-10 weeks ashore to moult and then head to sea themselves. Dispersed around the weaners were the 25,000 breeding pairs of King Penguins, accompanied by Gentoos, Giant Petrels, Skuas and Snowy Sheathbills scavenging around. A definite assault on all the senses! After a few hours spent with the wildlife we finished off the morning with a little Zodiac cruise along the beach to the hanging ice cliff of the Bertrab Glacier, a morning to remember!

After lunch we headed to Cooper Bay, named after Robert Palliser Cooper, a lieutenant on James Cook's HMS *Resolution*. Another beautiful spot packed full of wildlife, notably Macaroni penguins and fur seals!

Fun fact, the early English explorers named this penguin. In mid-18th century, a young man who wore flashy feathers in his hat was called a 'Macaroni'. This is also the origin for the words "Yankee Doodle" sung during the Revolutionary War to poke fun at the poorly dressed Continental Army. We started the landing with half the group hiking up the tussock grass to visit the Macaroni colony, whilst the others Zodiac cruised around the bay. Another wildlife frenzy! We saw lots of breeding fur seals, more elephant seals, a chinstrap colony, a macaroni colony, a few gentoos sprinkled in and even spotted a sooty albatross! Somehow we lucked out with no wind and calm seas again. Even without the wildlife this place is stunning and something to remember!

Some really special moments were had today, another day in paradise, how lucky are we?



Godthul, Grytviken

DAY 12 | Saturday 31 December 2022

Position at 1300 on Dec 31

Latitude: 54°13.3'S

Longitude: 036°21.9'W

Course: At anchor

Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 3 knots from N

Barometer: 986

Air Temp: 12°C

Shackleton's resting place

The graveyard is a simple little place. An ideal resting-place this for the great explorer who felt, more than most men, the glamour of such surroundings.

—Frank Wild, 1923

The morning's outing was at Godthul – a natural cliff amphitheatre Fur seal heaven! We're reaching the end of the breeding cycle of fur seals, but the bull's aggressive demeanours and their ferocious protection of their harems made it tricky walking along the beach. Over the next few weeks, bulls will return to sea and embark upon a long journey back to the Antarctic Peninsula; while the females will remain on South Georgia and the Subantarctic Islands the year round. Walking along the frisky beach was well worth the adrenaline rush though...at the end of the beach, sheltered in a narrow creek mouth was a fur seal nursery with over fifteen fur seal pups. Unbelievable! These pups would likely be around three weeks old and were merrily splashing around in the cool fresh water.

Nina gave us a visual history of the rusting oil barrels and a wooden shed, we found ashore into a fascinating tale of the whaling era. A floating factory ship – the Avimor, serviced by two whaling ships – the Edda and Smore from the Bryde & Dahl Hvalfangerselskab Company. They were stationed here each summer from 1908 to 1917 and again from 1922 to 1929. We walked around the small shore depot supporting the whaling operations. Ian spoke to us about the collection of whale and elephant seal bones scattered along the beach, remnants of the pre-industrial whaling era. Howard led a walk up to a small tarn above the beach and through the dense tussock grass for beautiful views across the valley.

No rest for the weary! Our hikers headed off during the afternoon for Grytviken, through an overland pass from Maiviken. Our hikers were spoilt by the range of environments and natural habitats of the Subantarctic Islands. A heavy fur seal presence on the landing beach, quickly gave way to an alpine environment complete with two high alpine tarns.

Across the pass, we were treated to a view of some of the highest mountains in South Georgia before winding our way down to Grytviken Harbor.

Meanwhile, the *Sylvia Earle* sailed over to Cumberland Bay and King Edward Point to pick up the South Georgian Government officers, before anchoring in Grytviken Harbour. Biosecurity checks done, it was time to go ashore



and explore the old whaling station. Landing next to the beached whaling ship Dias, we were transported back in time as we were led on whaling tours of the facility, visiting the Church, the museum featuring some of Frank Hurley's original photos. This writer always finds Grytviken very peculiar – a site of so much death and wildlife desecration with some of the largest marine mammals, has since been reclaimed by moulting elephant seals and the ever-present fur seals which have since made Grytviken their home. A toast to 'The Boss' at the Cemetery before heading back to the *Sylvia Earle* for New Year celebrations.

A late night accompanied by 70's hits in the Tektite Bar heralded us into 2023 in style. At midnight we toasted the New Year, before navigating back to our cabins for a few hours sleep.



Hercules Bay, Fortuna Bay, Stromness

DAY 13 | Sunday 01 January 2023

Position at 1200 on Jan 1st

Latitude: 54°054'S

Longitude: 036°41.9'W

Course: Variable

Speed: 11.6 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots from NW

Barometer: 1009

Air Temp: 10°C

Some of us are over the seasick stage and no longer want to die.

—Hartford, after ten days aboard Nimrod, with Shackleton

The first day of the New Year, welcomed us with an early start to the day and a misty morning at Hercules Bay, South Georgia. Some of us stayed up late for the NYE party which made getting up early not easy, but we knew we couldn't miss the opportunity to join the morning Zodiac cruise. The scenery around Hercules Bay was spectacular, the bay was surrounded by fantastic geological formations and impressive cliffs. We admired a beautiful waterfall flowing down to the ocean, and the beach underneath it was full of wildlife. Snorkellers enjoyed an outing and a dip playing around with fur seals. We even managed to spot some macaroni penguins, perhaps the last time on this voyage.

After the Zodiac cruise, the sun came out and Hercules Bay provided a perfect backdrop for a group photo to be taken by our ship's photographer, Bartosz.

At noon, we enjoyed a hearty New Year's Day lunch, that included a festive carved ham and other delicacies.

After lunch, the ship sailed to Fortuna Bay. The wind picked up, but it was sunny and the 360° views were spectacular. Fortuna Bay is surrounded by two big glaciers, and you could tell by the milky colour of the water that the glacier run was happening. The reason we came here was to drop off 68 intrepid walkers who decided to join a 6.5 km hike, a portion of the so-called Shackleton Walk: a mountain track across South Georgia that explorer Ernest Shackleton, Tom Crean and Frank Worsley walked in-order to save the Endurance expedition party stranded on Elephant Island over 100 years ago.

As the walkers started to make their way up the hills of Fortuna Bay, the ship sailed towards Stromness, an old whaling station, where the Shackleton walk ends.

It was a beautiful, 2-hour ship cruise along the rugged South Georgia's coast.

Stromness, once a busy ship town, played an important part in the whaling industry at the beginning of the last century. Abandoned today, only remains of the old cottages and machinery can be seen from afar. As the area surrounds the former whaling station it is not possible to visit the site due to hazardous asbestos still remaining.

The expeditioners that stayed onboard enjoyed a landing in Stromness, it was incredible to see the number of

seals onshore, they were literally everywhere! Big aggressive males competing for territory and attention, and tiny little seal pups amongst them. We were lucky to spot a rare, blonde pup in the nearby creek. Our Assistant Expedition Leader, Elena, led a short walk to the waterfall located at the end of the Shackleton Valley. Here we were re-joined by the group of walkers, who started the hike in Fortuna Bay impressed by the vastness of the surrounding landscapes. As the weather started to deteriorate and the wind picked up, we were safely shuttled back to the ship, where our Expedition Leader, Howard, gave us a quick update on what to expect over the next few days.

Tonight, we left South Georgia a little earlier than expected, due to a big weather system forming behind us. We set off for the Falkland Islands to avoid the storm.

We feel lucky to have had a chance to experience South Georgia, in such placid weather conditions over the past few days.



Short story

On a bright New Years Day, Marsha met me near the Shackleton Waterfall outside Stromness, an abandoned whaling station on South Georgia. It was here that Sir Ernest Shackleton completed his historic rescue mission by sailing in a 22 foot life boat, 1,300 km from Elephant Island off the coast of Antarctica to the west coast of South Georgia. He then had to trek over the mountains, to arrive at Stromness on the east coast of the island.

I joined a hardy group of hikers that followed the last part of the route that Shackleton took. I found the trek to be as arduous and frightening as summiting Mt. Kilimanjaro. During the 3^{1/2} hour hike, we climbed a total vertical distance of 550 metres and walked some 7.5 km. The last 1.5 km were flat, as we splashed through glacial streams and walked through swampy grasslands. Closer to town we passed through a field marked by hundreds of seals - lots of frolicking furry black pups, and sleeping mothers. Big male seals sat up nearby guarding their harem.

As I made my way through the field, one male barked at me. With teeth bared, he suddenly charged. I forgot everything that Howard, our expedition leader, told me to do. Instinct took over. I turned tail and ran. Another hiker stood up, raised his hands and the big male seal stopped his charge and backed off. A few minutes later, when a second male tried the same thing, I stood my ground and won the confrontation.

The hike was labeled difficult and with good reason. The vertical sections were challenging, literally breathtaking. I was nervous during the initial part of the climb through the tussock grass. I found myself hyperventilating as I worked hard to stay in the first half of our group. We had been divided into three groups: the fast walkers, the moderate walkers and the leisurely walkers. I was part of the moderate walkers and clearly the oldest walker in any of the groups.

The Shackleton Walk is over scree (tiny pebbles) and murrain (jumbled rocks that had been shattered, crushed and left behind by a glacier that has long disappeared). I used a ski pole to help me with my balance. Each step I took had to be plotted before being taken. From the top of the mountain, I could see the sea far below and the little dots of the leisurely walkers well behind us down the hill.

I found the descent into Stromness to be the hardest part of the trek. The pitch was steep and the path narrow — not more than two feet wide in most cases. One short switchback after another, always with the threat of tripping on the murrain or sliding on the scree. On one side is the mountain wall. On the other, a deep drop and an impossible-to-stop slide.

I kept my focus on the feet of the hiker in front of me. I never looked to the downhill side of the cliff. I feared that if I had done so, I would have been paralyzed or worse, yet lost my balance. Yes, it was with a deep sigh of relief and an exhilarating sense of accomplishment when I reached the bottom. Ten minutes later on the walk into Stromness, Marsha greeted me with a big hug.

I felt I earned dinner that night.

—Walter Arnheim

	Aurora	Charles Darwin and The Beagle	Charcot and The Francais	Ernest Shackleton and The Endurance
Ushuaia	12/20/2022	12/20/1832	1/9/1904	
LeMaire Strait	12/23/2022	12/17/1832	2/21/1904	
Continent	12/23/2022		3/1904	
Weddell Sea	12/25/2022			12/5/1914
Elephant Island	12/27/2022			4/4/1916
South Georgia Island	12/30/2023			11/1914 and 5/7/1917
Falkland Islands	1/5/2023	3/1/1833		



Day at Sea, towards the Falkland Islands

DAY 14 | Monday 02 January 2023

Position at 1200 on Jan 02

Latitude: 53°29.4'S

Longitude: 040°51.9'W

Course: 285°

Speed: 11.4 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots from NW

Barometer: 994

Air Temp: 7°C

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

—John Steinbeck

A day at sea! Many things went bump in the night as the *Sylvia Earle* sailed away from South Georgia.

The sea had calmed by breakfast, but it had been fun to feel the rock n' roll. Absent Howards' wake-up call, many of us got an extra lie-in as we rested and recovered from our jam-packed few days in South Georgia, as well as New Year's festivities.

Russell beckoned us to the Lecture Theatre to regale us with facts, stories and photos from the "Wonderful World of Plankton." Coming from the Greek word "wanderer" or "drifter" we learned how important plankton is in absorbing CO2 from the atmosphere as well as creating HALF of the oxygen we breathe! Zooplankton, meroplankton, holoplankton, were covered as well as the awesome world of ctenophores, cnidarians, siphonophores, nudibranchs, copepods, salps and more! We watched a video of a sea angel attempting to eat a sea butterfly, and other fascinating clips of the wild world of plankton. Most importantly to Antarctica, we learned about the all-important krill, an important keystone species in Antarctica, one that all animals in the Southern Ocean depend on as the base of the food-chain.

A delicious lunch was enjoyed by many, filled with the cozy comfort food of sea days: pasta, sweet potatoes and bread pudding. An afternoon shut-eye was taken by many, while others braved the back decks or Observation Lounge to watch our trusty ship cut through the waves as we pushed towards the Falkland Islands.

The afternoon brought us our culminating Shackleton experience with the two-part dramatized version of the Shackleton story, starring actor Kenneth Branagh. We have learned about the epic adventure story from Nina, we've followed in the footsteps of the men from the Weddell Sea to Point Wild to South Georgia, then with the monumental walk from Fortuna to Stromness Bay. A brave and phenomenal adventure to be sure. We can all feel a bit closer to the 'Boss' after sharing in this journey over 100 years later. We can be grateful for the comforts around us now and in awe of what they accomplished in their struggle and heroic effort for survival.

The rest of our leisurely afternoon was spent snoozing, re-living the dynamic and magnificent past 13 days



through reviewing our photos or simply gazing out the windows, watching the waves move the ship up and down. Our adventure is not over yet however!

We are heading towards the remote Falkland Islands, where we will be able to experience the unique landscape and wildlife of yet another sub-Antarctic Island.

Day at Sea, cruising towards Falkland Islands

DAY 15 | Tuesday 03 January 2023

Position at 20:46 on Jan 03

Latitude: 52° 18' S

Longitude: 50° 00' W

Course: 268°

Speed: 9 knots

Wind Speed: 27 knots from WSW

Barometer: 980

Air Temp: 8°C

Difficulties are just things to overcome...

—Sir Ernest Shackleton

Having left South Georgia, an island in the South Atlantic Ocean about 900 miles south-east of the Falkland Islands, one can only remember it as one of the world's most remarkable wildlife locations.

The motion of the ocean was a little bit uncomfortable during the night for some of us, as the wind had started to increase as well as the swell.

In the morning we were still being gently rocked in our beds, but it was time to get up and see what the day would bring.

Few of the early risers saw a wandering albatross fly through the mist, outside the Observation Lounge. Birds habitually follow ships at sea looking for food brought up to the surface by staff, as well as enjoying the uplift created by our passing. Traditionally they would follow fishing vessels for discarded food. Afterwards we all headed to the restaurant for a delicious breakfast.

At 10 am the lecture programme began with Ian, giving a talk on "A Thousand Wild Dawns." Ian filmed for the BBC in different locations all around the world. His lecture was about many of the places he visited and especially filmed in the early mornings, as sometimes that is the best time to see animals at dawn.

By the time Ian's lecture was finished we had some time for fresh air outside on deck, where conditions were still breezy, with high swells.

After Lunch, we had a lecture by Jack "Antarctic Governance". Since 1961 Antarctica has been governed by an international agreement known as the Antarctic Treaty System, which sets aside the far south as an area for peaceful, scientific endeavours. In five decades since the Antarctic Treaty was originally signed, a further 41 countries have joined the club, with a current total of 53 countries.

We are on our way to the Falkland Islands, which is a wildlife hotspot with over 700 islands. The two main islands are East Falkland and West Falkland, which have been an overseas territory of the UK since 1833. The most obvious wildlife in this region are the sea birds. Millions of petrels, albatrosses, penguins, gulls and cormorants inhabit the Falklands. These birds all feed at sea but need solid land on which to nest. Marine mammals are also plentiful along the coasts.

In the evening we gathered in the bar for drinks and a daily recap prior to dinner. Once again fantastic food was presented with great wine. Most of us had an early evening, wondering what adventures the next day might bring...



Day at Sea, almost at the Falkland Islands

DAY 16 | Wednesday 04 January 2023

Position at 1200 on Jan 04

Latitude: 52° 21'S

Longitude: 53° 21.9'W

Course: 265°

Speed: 11.13 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots from W

Barometer: 984

Air Temp: 10°C

An undulating land with a desolate and wretched aspect.

—Charles Darwin, 1834

Another day at sea and everyone is settling into this cosy ship of ours. People are sleeping in thanks to no wake-up call from Howard; they are finding their comfortable hangout spots; games are being played; and the sounds of piano and guitar are heard frequently. You can however tell people are getting a little antsy to get moving again out in the Zodiacs and onshore. Tomorrow we arrive at the amazing Falkland Islands and we'll move our bodies again!

Today was filled rather creatively by the expedition team, resulting in lots of fun and laughter. After breakfast we had a *Sylvia Earle* virtual tour, hosted by all sorts of great characters. First was our fearless leader Howard, our stylish rather witty Captain Artem, followed by our comedic Chief Engineer Praveen, and then finally the smooth-talking Elena. This was a fascination experience and included details such as how big our engines are and what they look like, our filtration system and how it works, how the ship is steered and the high-tech features on the bridge, and how many eggs are eaten on board every single day... Some mind-blowing stuff!

Next up was lunch followed by some unscheduled time for people to have a nap, read a book, roam the ship, or photograph birds among other things. We have enjoyed a steady appearance of at least one but usually multiple wandering albatross soaring up and down the ship the last couple days! This definitely does not happen during every voyage, so it really is a treat to have these giant birds with a 3 to 3.5 metre wingspan almost within arm's reach at all times. Ian hosted an E-Bird survey and Paul a Cloud Survey in the early afternoon for those people looking for an activity.

At 4 pm it was time for some fun and games in the Lecture Theatre with Tamsin and Russell! They hosted a game called 'How Big Is It' and it was great! With ropes strung all around the room, they would give everyone an animal, or an object, ask them how big they think it is, and then they put their little clamp on their piece of rope where they think. Some highlights were what is the circumference of snorkelling guide, Darren's head is (59 cm), how tall Captain Artem is (183 cm), and the length of the largest Blue Whales Penis has ever been recorded (5 meters!). Everyone had a ball, with so much laughter, and cheering it was really nice to see everyone so excited.

Dinner came quickly after with another lovely meal from the kitchen and dining staff, followed by a fascinating

talk from Naturalist Ian on his time spent filming in Afghanistan at a crazy time in the world.



Stanley, Falkland Islands

DAY 17 | Thursday 05 January 2023

Position at 1200 on Jan 05

Latitude: 51° 41.2'S

Longitude: 57° 51.2'W

Course: At anchor

Speed: At anchor

There is, one knows not what sweet mystery about this sea, whose gently awful stirrings seem to speak of some hidden soul beneath.

—Herman Melville

It was an exciting wakeup call from Howard over the p.a. this morning. After 3 days at sea covering ~800 Nautical miles (multiply by 1.852 for kms, or 1.15 for miles) from South Georgia to East Falkland Island. A balmy 8 degrees celsius and a 25 knots Southwest breeze greeted us as we approached Stanley harbour, in the hope to make landfall in the town of Stanley just before lunch time.

Our historian, Nina, squeezed in a lecture on the Falklands as we steamed up the harbour. We learnt that the British and French independently established settlements in different parts of the Falklands, unbeknown to each other. The French one at Port St Louis on East Falkland pre dated the British one at Port Egmont near Saunders island by a year. We were reminded about some causes and consequences of the tragic Falklands War, and finished with a chat about the Falklands today, including land mine removal, governance, and how the Falkland Island air taxi service helps minimize extra marital affairs.

Before we knew it, we were anchored off the city of Stanley. Having quickly cleared customs, we were free to Zodiac ashore, in the increasing southwest winds and showers and be blown to our respective callings around town. Museum and memorial visits, local crafts, fish 'n' chips, peak bagging, cosy pub visits and random wandering through this quaint town (now classified city!) were just some of this afternoon's activities. It can be easy to forget where you are sometimes.. until you wander down to the pier and walk past five sea lions piled on each other and then motor back to your ship in 45 knots winds with turkey vultures and albatross cruising above you.

After yet another elaborate dinner onboard, the Gentoo restaurant was left in suspense as we were treated to the sweetest rendition of "Que Sera Sera" by German, our head waiter. We couldn't just drift away to the sound of German's beautiful baritone voice however, because we needed to prepare for tomorrow!

Russell prepared a Falklands wildlife lecture ahead of our proposed landing at Saunders Island. What Cetaceans were we likely to see? Sei and Southern Right whales sounded possible, hopefully some Commersons dolphins

Wind Speed: 4 knots from NNW

Barometer: 1004

Air Temp: 10°C

on the way too. Flocks of up to hundreds of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters were possibly in the neighbourhood, some mating pairs of Macaroni penguins and the shy Magellanic penguin.

We all went to bed, eager to wake up to another day in the Falklands and hopefully see some of these amazing creatures.



Saunders Island, At Sea

DAY 18 | Friday 06 January 2023

Position at 2000 on Jan 06

Latitude: 51°18'S

Longitude: 060°14'W

Course: 272°

Speed: 8 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots NW

Barometer: 1002

Air Temp: 16°C

An Antarctic Expedition is the worst way to have the best time of your life.

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard

What a jam-packed final day of shore landings! It started with our wake-up call that made us aware that the ship was being accompanied by 50 fin whales. What an amazing start to the day!

As we loaded the Zodiacs into the water and the first passengers headed to our (presumed) final landing of the trip, there was word from the drivers that there was a Fin Whale in the bay, and some passengers had the chance to see it on the way in. As we stepped off the Zodiacs onto the squishy kelp strewn beach, we had a welcoming party waiting of David, Bifo, and Ant. And not to forget Elli the dog. It was wonderful and informative to have a chat with the owners of the island, and they answered many varied questions about life on the island, wildlife, farming life and Ant accompanied us to the Albatross and Rockhopper colonies. Elli the dog enjoyed a scratch behind the ear, a retired sheep dog who is reputedly scared of penguins but loved dolphins.

Saunders was an absolute treat. We had so much time to roam the island and saw so much varied wildlife. Gentoos with chicks, Kings incubating their eggs, and Rockhopper penguins also with fluffy young chicks. Magallenic penguins poked their heads out of their burrows, and we could view two black-browed albatross colonies, also with chicks. This wildlife came with an amazing backdrop of an azure blue ocean, where we watched Commerson's Dolphins playing and surfing in the waves. It really was amazing.

Eventually after much chick watching and beach strolling, we made our way back to the ship, satisfied with a fabulous 'last shore landing'.

Then we had word from Howard at lunch that we could 'squeak' in another landing. Woo hoo!!

Many of us opted to get dropped at Sandy Beach on Carcass Island, to walk across the spit and bay to meet the remaining passengers at the Homestead. Several of the walkers took a scenic detour via the ridge line above the bay. But the homestead, what an incredible place for birds! We saw Oyster Catchers, Striated Caracara (which the Falklanders call 'Johnny rooks'), Flightless Steamer Ducks with chicks, Upland Geese (some also with chicks), Kelp Geese and long tailed meadowlarks enjoying a dust bath. Even our final Zodiac back to the ship was beautiful today, across a calm bay in the soft afternoon light.

But it wasn't over yet! Our Captain made a scenic detour through a narrow passage between, West Point and West Falkland Island, and then we were on our way to Ushuaia.

This evening's auction was a hit. With Russell showing us yet more talent, this time as an auctioneer, accompanied by his most beautiful assistant 'Tim-ara'.

Thanks to the many generous contributions, we raised 2810 pounds for The South Georgia Heritage Trust, and many walked away with some unique souvenirs of from our voyage.



At Sea, Ushuaia Bound

DAY 19 | Saturday 07 January 2023

Position at 2000 on Jan 07

Latitude: 55°04' S

Longitude: 065°54' W

Course: 257°

Speed: 11.3 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots NNE

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 19°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

The last day of our great adventure South dawned – sunny and warm with smooth seas. The *Sylvia Earle* carved a gentle and blue sea, all memories of the long and bouncy crossing from South Georgia to the Falkland Islands just a few days ago were fading. We averaged a speed of over 12 knots as breakfast was served and the day began. After our time amongst the snow and ice of the Great White Continent, the warmth of these more northern latitudes was very pleasant. It was warm enough to wander on the decks in T-shirts without heavy windproof coats.

After breakfast there was a “Miscellaneous Antarctica” presentation in the Lecture Theatre where several of the expedition team members talked about their various responsibilities. Each of the Citizen Science champions summed up the results from the expedition and tried to summarise, the importance of the various projects they were involved with.

After lunch there was a showing of the 2006 computer generated musical comedy film Happy Feet. Set in Antarctica, the film follows Mumble, an Emperor Penguin who can't sing but is a brilliant tap dancer. After being rejected by his peers and his father Mumble departs on a journey, to learn what is causing the decline of the local fish population - and finds himself along the way.

In the evening we had the captains farewell drinks which was great fun. The captain gave a very funny speech. and the mood of the ships company was buoyant. Everyone was happy to have spent such a wonderful 3 weeks

down South and there was much talk of the things we had all seen and enjoyed - the magnificent snow covered beauty of the peninsula, the great adventure of sticking our nose into the Weddell Sea, the crowded Adélie Adélie penguin colony at Devil Island, the wonderful aggregation of Fin, Blue and Humpback whales as we left Elephant Island, the amazing landings and Zodiac cruises in South Georgia on beaches filled with King and Macaroni penguins. The herds of Elephant Seals snoozing the moult away, the more mobile and feisty Fur Seals still filling some of the beaches with their harems, the visit to the old whaling station of Grytviken with its fantastic museum, and our visit to Shackleton's lonely grave, a stark reminder of the far distant era of Antarctic exploration. There was an air of sadness on the ship as we watched Bartosz's brilliant slide show, which reminded us what a tremendous experience this last 3 weeks had been. Everyone knew that tomorrow so many of us would depart, scattering across the world once again, heading for home, and carrying so many memories in our hearts.



Ushuaia

DAY 20 | Sunday 08 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 unforgettable memories and friendships made. We will miss Antarctica, but that's exactly what the Voyage Logs are for: to bring back those good memories time and time 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 onboard and being able to share the pleasures that the icy south has to offer. May your memories live long and bright.



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Wesley McNeil, Vanja Davidsen, Sigurð Davidsen, Tim Vanhoutteghem

Number of Paddlers: 27 Total Paddle Outings: 10 Total Distance Paddled: 76.5 km

Paddlers:	Scott Baxter	Mark Davidson	Michael Alscher
Marie Andersson	Marc Leuzinger	Maarten den Ambtman	Sarah Dow
Peri Buckley	Philip Wooldridge	Anouck Wiggers	Harry Alscher
Christopher Bradley	Tien Nguyen	Gordon Johnston	Tom Alscher
Katherine Bradley	Andreas Leuzinger	Karen Helbrecht	Makayla Johnson
Linda Petrusa	Ulrika Haegle	Michael Isaac	Roderik Lamberts
Carmel Barbagallo	Frank Cervi	Betty Lau	Kate Byrne

23 December 2022, AM: Fournier Bay - Distance: 6.8 km

After spending a couple of days in the Drake we finally arrived in Antarctica, our first paddle was in the beautiful Fournier Bay, which is quite large, a 15 km long and 6 km wide bay. Our original plan was to paddle at Cuverville Island, but wind conditions made this impossible for all landings and activities. The captain and Howard were able to find this alternative location. We anchored up at the opening of the bay. The weather was perfect, glassy water, sunny and calm. We paddled south-west into the bay. We followed the edge of brash ice, with amazing views off glaciers on both sides and majestic blue castle like Icebergs in the bottom of the bay. On the way we turned into the brash ice to get a feeling of paddling in the ice. We saw a great skua on the paddle. On our way back the ship we were surrounded by brash ice, we formed a line, with a couple of icebreaker kayaks in the front. What an amazing first paddle.

23 December 2022, PM: Neko Harbour - Distance: 4.9 km

By late afternoon the winds down the Gerlache Strait had subsided and Neko Harbor became a viable choice for a nice paddle. A number of the kayakers decided to spend a longer period of time onshore, as this was our choice to enjoy a proper landing on the Antarctic Continent. Those of us who paddled also landed on the continent with everyone else, but for a shorter length of time. We paddled in mostly clear, calm waters with blue sky. We paddled in some light brash ice and had the opportunity to tour around a few larger icebergs, the backdrop to Neko is always stunning on good visibility days, and wow, did it deliver... looking out upon the Grubb, Rudolph and Moser Glaciers. We could hear distant calvings of the glacier, and at one point had a chance to witness an avalanche come off the Rudolph Glacier.

24 December 2022, AM: Portal Point - Distance: 8.4 km

Paddled southwest from the ship to shore, past a few growlers and bergy bits. as we approached the cove south of the landing site, we encountered a very inquisitive gentoo penguin, we stopped and the penguin stayed in the

area, playing amongst the kayaks, it seemed that it wanted to play or just investigate us.

We paddled into the cove, where we saw a few elephant seals on the shoreline, relaxing. After taking in the beautiful sight of the cove, we started paddling to the south, through a maze of Bergy bits and Icebergs in different size and shapes.

26 December 2022, AM: Devil Island - Distance: 7.7 km

Finally, we got to circumnavigate an island, all of us were excited and we headed off.

Paddling towards the island we started seeing Adélie penguins everywhere, on top of the ice in the sea and on land. We had small headwind and also the tides were working against us heading up on the southern side of the island. We turned west paddling on the northern side, the tides and wind were in our favour. We made our way to the landing site, getting closer we saw many more Adelie's on the Ice bits, on top of the Zodiacs and playing around the snorkelers on the coastline.

We landed with the main group and headed up the hill in between two Adélie rookeries and enjoyed the view over the thousands off Penguins with chicks and eggs.

We paddled back to the ship through a maze of icebergs.

26 December 2022, PM: Duse Bay - Distance: 7.5 km

At Duse Bay, we found a reprieve once more from the strong winds raging across the Erebus and Terror Gulf. We had a nice paddle in some mild waters within the Bay and then paddled north around the point and explored the rocky shoreline. There was the occasional stray snowflake as we made our way along. Wes rounded the next point to find a small bay with a number of seals lazily hauled out and resting on the beach They did not pay us much attention. Soon we reached our return time. The paddle was an out and back excursion, mostly to paddle steadily and get in some exercise knowing that soon we would be captive in the ship as we made our crossing towards South Georgia.

30 December 2022, AM: Gold Harbor - Distance: 9.3 km

After Spending 2 days on the Scotia Sea towards South-Georgia, spotting birds and whales, we were truly amazed by the breathtaking views at breakfast. Most of our kayakers decided to go for a landing on the crowded wildlife beach of Gold Harbor, so we headed out with a team of 4 strong paddlers. Although we were on the sheltered side the island, there was still quite some wind and swell. We headed out northwards from where the ship was anchored, and found some fun rock gardens to explore, surrounded by fur and elephant seals. After this we headed down to the main beach and managed to land with our kayaks since we were only a small group. We walked around between the countless king penguins, and seals, before we launched our kayaks. We found a passage through the surf and paddled into the inlet eastwards of the beach, next to the impressive Bertrab glacier. We could paddle close to the sheltered westside of the beach, were we had a unique chance of paddling next to king penguins, with glacier views in the backdrop. From there we navigated safely our way back through the surf zone and straight on to the ship. A beautiful paddle and introduction to the awe-inspiring landscapes and wildlife of South-Georgia.

30 December 2022, PM: Cooper Bay - Distance: 7.2 km

There was quite some swell coming around the outside of Cooper Bay, so we decided to take a paddle tour around the inside of the bay. Goal of the afternoon: getting a close-up view of the Macaroni penguins. We headed out northwards first, finding a passage through the kelp, and managed to paddle our way into the protected cove where the Macaroni penguins were. The tide was still low, so there was not that much space to get close. After this we decided to head out westwards, and paddle around the bay, following all the small inlets and beaches, where we had beautiful views and close experiences with fur and elephant seals. On the southern end of the bay, the swells were getting a bit too big, so we decided to head around and follow the same way back to the Macaroni colony. This time, we managed to paddle into the cove, and got a great paddlers view of these beautiful penguins. After the obligatory kayak-macaroni photos, we made our way back to the ship.

31 December 31 2022, AM: Godthul - Distance: 7.7 km

Godthul, a magical cove with historical remains, that we got to paddle, one of the trips highlights, we started to paddle the cove clockwise, and soon we saw the abundance of wildlife. First, we paddled to the waterfall in the bottom of the cove. There we witnessed how many fur seals where in the cove, the seals where so curious and came so close to the kayaks that we had to back up. Soon we passed the snorkellers that were snorkelling amongst the fur seals weaners and the penguins. The weather was amazing, calm and sunny. We crossed the cove entrance to the open sea, during the crossing we experienced the full swell of the sea, this was only for a short period of time, then we were back into the sheltered bay. Here we experienced a gentoo colony and fur seals on the same beach, the sounds that the seals made where echoed around the whole cove, and everyone was mesmerized. Finally, we took a group photo in front of the waterfall, before returning to the *Sylvia Earle*.

6 January , 2023, AM: Saunders Island - Distance: 7 km

Our paddle at Saunders Island in the Falklands turned out to be such a surprising treat. Especially after a number of sea days beating into stormy waters. The conditions were also contrasted by those we experienced in Stanley the day before. It was a nice sunny day with a little residual wind. Fortunately, we anchored on the south side of the neck where the swell was minimal and were able to stay out of the winds by hugging the shore and dancing around the kelp beds. We headed southeast and came across some classic examples of the stone runs we had heard so much about, which are so indicative of the Falkland's terrain. We kept paddling to a small outcropping of rock that looked interesting, to see a number of cormorants nesting there. We then returned the way we came hoping to get into a small cove near, The Neck, but the kelp was too dense to get in there. We continued to the beach at The Neck, where the guides took the kayaks back to the ship so the paddlers could also get quality time onshore to see the King Penguins, adielies and Rock hoppers, and most of all the nesting Albatrosses.

6 January , 2023, AM: Carcass Island - Distance: 10 km

The winds and swell were back in full swing for Carcass Island, so only a few paddlers went out. We drove our kayaks to shore by Zodiac and then launched from a landing beach, north of Needles Point, where the rest of the expeditioners went on a ridgeline hike. Were paddlers did a crossing, beating into the wind and some current to a small line of islets called Needles Rocks. We paddled in and around the islets, then headed northeast to Port Pattison and the Carcass Island settlement. The paddle was a focused, fast-paced, and energetic paddle in a beautiful setting.





Citizen Science Log

Project Name	How many times was this project done during this voyage?
eBird	6
Happywhale	2
NASA Globe Cloud Observer	9
Secchi Disk	6
SG Big Seaweed Survey	1
Zooplankton sampling	Many!
Zooplankton observation under microscope	2



Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: Anais Poulalion, Ania Baranek, Ilana Archer-Ebdon & Darren Clarke

Number of Snorkels: 12	Total Outings: 11	
Snorkellers:	Deborah Robertson	Daniel Kelmenson
Christine Wichems	Ellen Coenra	Shannon Wass
Desmond Wichems	Jen Davidson	Barbara Lau
Emma Larbalestier	Richard Close	
Robert Larbalestier	Jonathan Walker	

23 December 2022, AM: Fournier Harbour

After two days at sea, we had our first opportunity to snorkel in Antarctica! We piled into two Zodiacs and went in search for our morning snorkel site. As we zipped along, we were joined by a Brown Skua and a group of Chin-Strap penguins. Arriving at our snorkel site with Kelp Gull’s circling us and gentoo penguins peering at us, we bravely entered the water for the first time. As we grew accustomed to the dry suits, we slowly made our way along the rocky coastline, watching the mesmerising movement of seaweed and kelp. We quickly reached the end of our snorkel session, feeling more confident and comfortable in our gear. Once everyone was safely back in the Zodiacs, we made our way back to the *Sylvia Earle* bubbling with excitement and eager to jump back into the icy water this afternoon.

23 December 2022, PM: Neko Harbour

Antarctica has promised and Antarctica has delivered – what a glorious day! Neko Harbour is one of the most popular landing spots on the Peninsula, and we were incredibly lucky with the weather: the mirror-like waters of the bay were shimmering with the afternoon sun, white mountain peaks, glaciers and snow caps all around. The views were breathtaking. After our introductory snorkel this morning, donning our drysuits and the gear was quick and efficient. Before we went in the water, we walked up a little steep hill, admiring a big glacier wall on one side, and colonies of gentoo penguins on the other (over 250 breeding pairs live in Neko!). With this sunny weather, we felt like we were on a summer holiday and not in Antarctica for a moment. After the walk, our snorkel team took us to a nearby pebbly beach where we jumped in the water. It was a beautiful snorkel outing, penguins swimming all around us, and a few small icebergs that we could admire underwater. The cruise back to the ship delighted us with 360° panoramic views of the bay, our first day in Antarctica couldn’t have been any better!

24 December 2022 – Christmas Eve, AM: Portal Point

It’s incredible how quickly the weather conditions, and the surrounding landscapes can change in Antarctica. This morning we headed out to explore Portal Point, which looked nothing like the sunny bays of Fournier and Neko Harbour.

We were joined by five brave snorkellers as they made their second continental landing, before joining us back in the Zodiac in search for another spectacular snorkel site. After a short cruise, we found a secluded site surrounded by beautiful white rocks covered in chitons, bivalves, and sea-stars. Our fearless snorkellers were rewarded by a close encounter with a very curious Weddell Seal, while several gentoo and chin-strap penguins watched us.

24 December 2022 – Christmas Eve, PM: Hydruga Rocks

For some of us, it is the first white Christmas, and when we say white – it indeed is white all over - it’s snowing! Looking outside our ship’s windows, we knew immediately it’s time to rug up. Our expedition leader, Howard, advised us that it will be a long Zodiac ride to the landing spot, and that it may get windy. The swell also picked up significantly in the afternoon. That didn’t deter us from getting ready for another snorkelling adventure – everyone was excited to get out again, after this morning’s encounter with the Weddell Seal. We got dropped of at a sheltered beach and went for a short walk to have a look at a nearby Chinstrap penguin colony, while our snorkel team went scouting for a suitable snorkelling location. When we got back on the Zodiac, most of us were quite cold and called it a day, so we made a quick trip back to the ship. However, we had two brave girls, Emma and Ellen who, decided to go in the water, so we went to a sheltered bay for a quick swim.

25th December 2022 – Christmas Day, AM: Brown Bluff

One thing that is certain about Antarctica is that it’s unpredictable. During yesterday’s precap, our Expedition Leader, Howard, gave us a heads up about the expected change in the weather conditions today. At night, we diverted the ship from the planned itinerary and started to make our way towards the Weddell Sea to escape the storms, expected on the west side of the Peninsula. In the morning, we arrived at the impressive walls of the Brown Bluff, hoping that we could make a landing. Our Expedition Team went out scouting, while we waited in the mudroom. It was a long stand by, and we didn’t want to give up on a snorkelling opportunity in this part of Antarctica, but unfortunately, the wind proved to be too strong – gusting 45 knots at times. Howard made a call to cancel this morning’s outing. Although disappointed, we knew it was the right decision.

26th December 2022, AM: Devil Point, Vega Island

This morning we were at Vega Island and snorkelled along Devil Island - named for the two peaks located at either end of the island separated by a low-lying valley. We were welcome by an Adelie Penguin colony. We loved to see them on their iceberg, jumping in and out of the water. Lots of rock formations. The highlight of the morning was an Adelie Penguin jumping in one of our Zodiacs as we were heading back to the *Sylvia Earle*.

30th December 2022, AM: Drygalski Fjord and Gold Harbour, South Georgia

We have finally reached South Georgia! An exciting and long awaited destination for many of us. Our expedition leader, Howard, gave us a wakeup call at the brutal hour – it was 4am when we started gathering on the Observation Deck to admire the magnificent Drygalski Fjord, through which we were ship-cruising. Despite the hauling wind and the brutal wake up hour, the views were so well-worth the sleep deprivation, and we quickly felt awoken by the freezing cold air from the nearby glacier.

After an early breakfast, we set out for our first outing in South Georgia, and we landed at Gold Harbour. No snorkelling this morning, we decided to take in the surreal experience of being confronted eye-to-eye with hundreds of King penguins, fur seals and elephant seals roaming freely on the local beaches.

26th December 2022, PM: Cooper Bay, South Georgia

In the afternoon, we repositioned the ship to nearby Cooper Bay, taking advantage of the good-weather that provided shelter from the otherwise wind-smacked western part of South Georgia. With a group of eight intrepid kayakers, we set off for a short Zodiac cruise, mesmerised by the afternoon sun and the stormy sky, and we looked for the best place to dip our fins in the water. The challenge of South Georgia, when it comes to snorkelling, is that the abundance of glaciers, the melting fresh water runs into the ocean and makes it turbid, the visibility is usually not so great, but these waters are breaming with marine life. So, off we went, we dropped into the water in the proximity of some rock shelves, where small fur seals’ pups were playing around. It was an adorable view, and an unforgettable experience, to swim with the seals and admire the green hills of South Georgia from the water level perspective.

31st December 2022 – New Year’s Eve, AM: Gothul, South Georgia

This morning we awoke to the howling sounds of (the now familiar) Antarctic Fur Seals and knew that today’s snorkelling adventure would involve these very curious creatures. As we jumped into the Zodiacs, we cruised around the bay looking for a suitable site for our snorkelling, slowly cruising along soaking in the stunning landscape, playful fur-seal pups and the ginormous kelp forests that nearly engulfed the Zodiac.

The site we choose was in a sheltered area, close to a beach scattered with fur-seals, elephant seals and King Penguins – and as soon as we entered the water, the curious seals came and swam around with us. There were so many, we just didn’t know where to look and we couldn’t get enough of it.

It was AMAZING!

Hands down - one of the best highlights of the trip and maybe even the best snorkel of our lives.

1st January 2023 – New Year’s Day, AM: Hercules Bay, South Georgia

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! It’s 2023 and all we know for certain this year is going to bring – is some amazing snorkelling!

This morning – hungover or not - we jumped into the Zodiacs and headed to the heart of Hercules Bay - and like the demo-God it was amazing. The green and black cliffs - there peaks hidden by the clouds, with guests imagining the gods starting down at us from Olympus - and the stunning waterfalls made for a fantastic backdrop for our snorkelling adventure.

As we cruised around to find the perfect snorkel spot we saw macaroni penguin colony, Antarctic fur-seals and colossal kelp trees reaching up from the seabed below.

We found a stunning little cove with napping fur seals, laying on the yellow lichen rocks with a few adventurous seals joining us for our snorkel. With spectacular visibility the combination of giant kelp trees, seals and a few ctenophores we had an absolute blast.

6th January 2023, AM: Saunders, Falkland Islands

Today was our last day at the Falklands, before we head back to the open ocean again. Weather gods have gifted us with perfect conditions for snorkelling: it was a beautiful, sunny day, the water colours ranging from emerald, green to turquoise blue. The water was warm, and it felt almost tropical in comparison to our previous snorkelling outings in Antarctica. First, we got dropped at the landing spot – The Neck, famous for providing a rare opportunity to admire four different types of penguin species, and a large albatross colony nearby. We had an hour and half to ourselves, so we wandered around, admiring the unique Falklands wildlife.

Then, our snorkel guides picked us up and drove the Zodiacs along the rocky coastline, taking us to the snorkel spot they’ve chosen. The water was deep, and the visibility was surprisingly good. This part of Saunders coastline offers some amazing birdwatching opportunities, with imperial shags nesting deep inside the rock cracks and caverns. We also saw black crowned night herons and the local Falkland steamer duck. The highlight of the snorkel was definitely a playful sea lion that we spotted inside a small cave. It delighted us with a few jumps into the water. Thanks to the warmer water temperature, we were able to enjoy a long, 45-min snorkelling session. Everyone did so well jumping back in to the Zodiacs! It’s amazing how much we have progressed and bonded as a team during these three weeks..

6th January 2023, PM: Carcass Bay, Falkland Islands

SURPRISE! Our confident Captain Artem and fearless Expedition Leader Howard, found us another landing in the Falklands. After a little manoeuvring, our adventurous snorkellers climbed into a Zodiac for the last time and headed off to find the site of our last snorkel with Aurora. We jumped off the Zodiac into an underwater maze made up of bull kelp and giant kelp. As we made our way through the ginormous kelp forest, we were astonished at the magnitude of the brown seaweed, as it reached all the way to the surface - even asking ourselves whether we swam on the water or on the tops of kelp trees.

As we moved between the kelp and the sand, we noticed the stark contrast between the white sand and the deep green of the kelp forest was breath-taking, especially with the sun shining between the kelp fronds creating a spectacular light show.

Leaving the kelp behind, we could fully appreciate the crystal-clear water and bone white sand, which was full of vibrant colours: purple, pink, red. We were surrounded by krill and were even visited by the elusive Notothenid fish. We were amazed by the worm tracks left in the sand and were kept busy trying to find the worms accountable for these markings. As we ventured further away from the kelp and further into the sand environment, we saw two crab mating. Climbing back onto the Zodiacs, we saw some gentoo penguins swimming close by.

In the evening, we had a chance to play a short snorkelling video in the Lecture Theatre, it was put together by one of us (thank you Ellen!) and we could see it gave the rest of the passengers onboard a little bit of envy...

What a great way to finish our snorkelling adventures! Needless to say, the snorkel team, or ‘the snorks’, as they call us, are the cool kids of this voyage. We had so much fun. Thank you everyone for making this voyage so special!



Snowshoe Log

Snowshoe Guides: Bronwen Waters, Jimmy Armstrong, Paul Berntsen

Number of Snowshoers: 10

Total Outings: 2

Snowshoers:

Arleen Arnott

Kate Byrne

Rod Lamberts

Jaelyn Lim

James Tsui

Sili Liu

Tony Wu

Clive Shrubsole

Bianca Sison

Carla Wooldridge

23rd December 2022, PM: Neko Harbour - Distance: 1.8km

What an incredible first snowshoe outing this afternoon. Crisp blue skies, no wind, glassy smooth seas, and lots of icebergs and floes to look down on from our high vantage point. For many of our snowshoers it was their first time on the Antarctic continent, as well as the first time roped up and walking on a glacier.

We made our way up the hill high above Neko harbour, where we were able to gain an amazing view over Andvord Bay. While up high we got to witness some entertainment from nature via the loud rumblings and view of avalanches on the other side of the bay. We also witnessed one on the adjacent Deville Glacier, complete with a huge white powder cloud. Not long after this, the Deville glacier calved into the bay, another loud spectacle.

It was a warm day, and we were glad to be on snowshoes while descending back to the base of the glacier, so as not to sink into the snow. Once at the base we made a loop around the gentoo penguin colony, with great images of the penguins against the blue ice cliffs of the glacier behind.

24th December 24 2022, AM: Portal Point - Distance: 2.4km

We had another continental snowshoe today. Our landing at Portal Point placed us on an orange granite slabs, and on the snow ledge above us laid a lazy crabeater seal. We put our snowshoes on, clipped into the rope and headed up the ridge feature behind the main landing site. The shape of the narrow ridge makes the start of this snowshoe quite spectacular. We walk along a high snow covered spit that arches in a C-shape high up above ocean bays on either side. Looking down into the still ocean bays there are many grounded bergy bits in many unusual shapes, and in the quiet we can even hear the ocean gently lap around them. We also had a great view of the glacier wall, blue ice cliffs reflected in the water below. We then began an ascent, which gave us great views further down the bay to a large iceberg graveyard. Some of the large icebergs had huge arch shaped holes in them, we nicknamed the area 'the gothic glacier'. We took a break and spread out along our highpoint, taking in the vast view. We could see over the ridge into the Gerlache Strait from here, and towards mountains on the opposite side of the bay. Large icebergs in a dark inky ocean and a vast sky. The kayakers looked tiny, difficult to even make out on the ocean so far below. The trip down was rewarding, as it wasn't as physically difficult and allowed us to continue taking in the view as we walked.





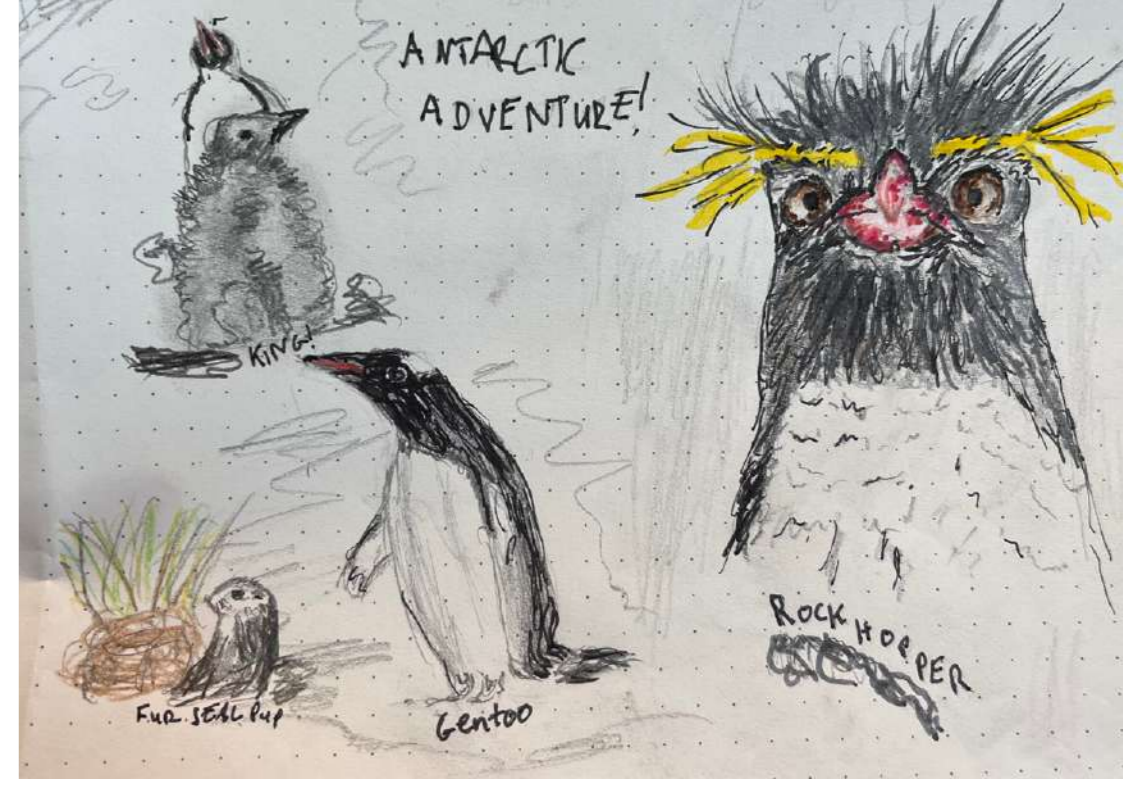
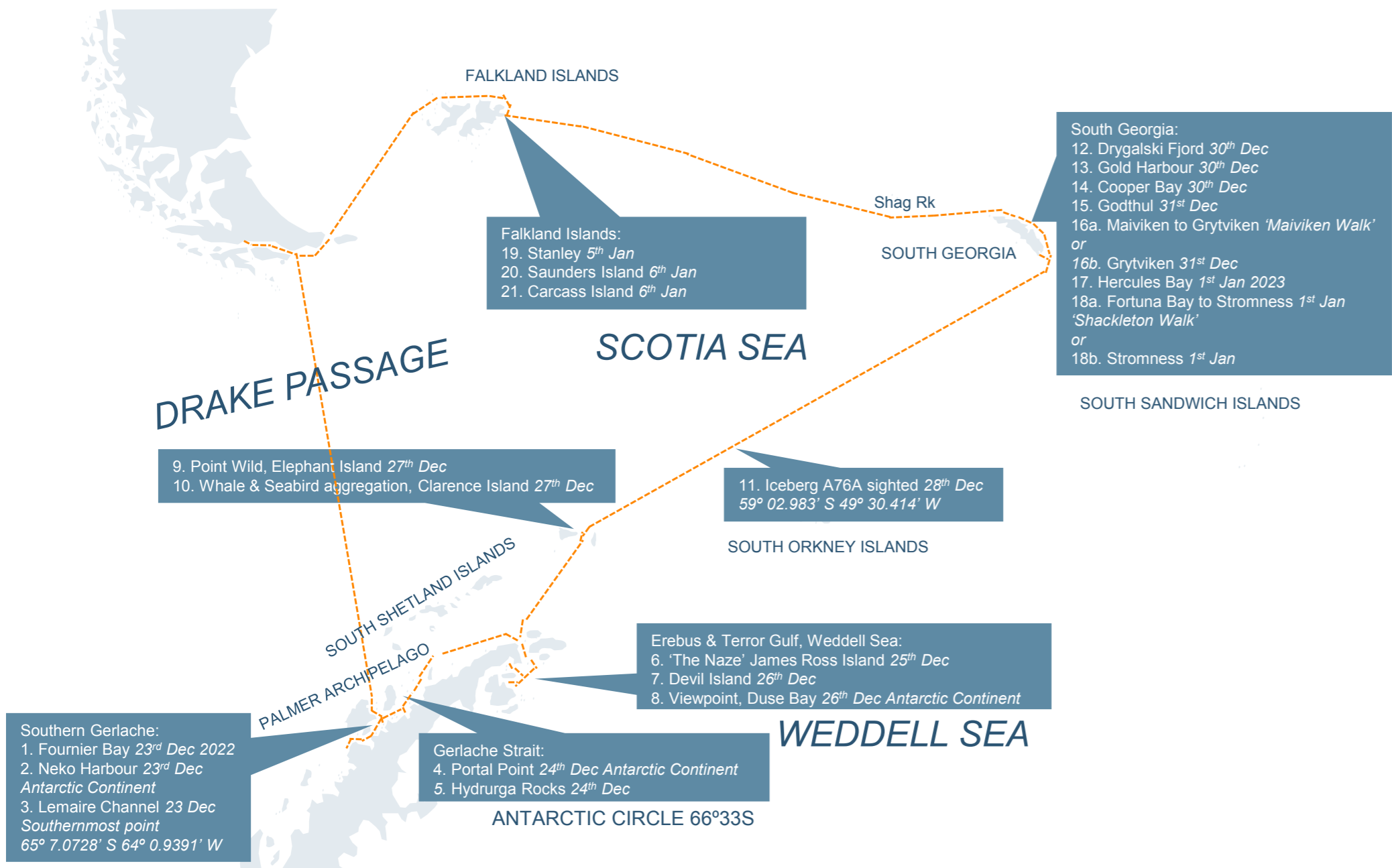
Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	December 2022 - January 2023																	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Gentoo Penguin			•	•	•		•				•	•						
Chinstrap Penguin			•	•	•		•											
Adelie Penguin			•		•	•												
Macaroni Penguin												•						
Magellanic Penguin														•	•			•
Wandering Albatross	•	•					•						•					•
Royal Albatross														•	•			
Black-browed Albatross	•	•					•							•	•	•	•	•
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		•																
Giant Petrel	•	•					•							•	•	•	•	•
Cape Petrel			•				•	•			•							
Snow Petrel			•						•					•				
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)		•					•	•										
Blue Petrel		•					•							•				
Grey Petrel																		
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)			•															
White-chinned Petrel	•						•						•					
Sooty Shearwater	•	•									•					•		
Wilson's Storm-petrel			•	•			•	•	•		•				•		•	•
Cormorant sp. (unidentified)																•		•
American Sheathbill (Snowy)							•											
Skua (Brown and/or South Polar)			•			•	•						•		•	•	•	•
Kelp Gull				•		•								•				
Tern (probably mostly Antarctic)		•																
Dolphin Gull														•	•		•	
Shag						•												
White-bridled Finch				•													•	



Mammal Species	December 2022 - January 2023																	
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Southern Elephant Seal						•												
Crabeater Seal					•	•											•	•
Leopard Seal							•											
Sei Whale							•											
Fin Whale			•				•				•						•	•
Humpback Whale	•	•					•						•			•		
Orca		•																
Southern Right Whale																	•	
Unidentified Whale		•	•															







Expeditioners:

Michael Alscher

Harry Alscher

Tom Alscher

Jack Alscher

Gail Andersson

Walter Arnheim

Arleen Arnott

Carmel Barbagallo

Scott Baxter

Don Berryann

Carla Berryann

Devendra Billimoria

Clair Billingham

Neil Billingham

Elisabeth Bossard

Martin Bossard

Cornelia Bossard Taennler

Shawn Bradley

Kate Bradley

Elizabeth Braman

Karen Branyan

Bill Branyan

Peri Buckley

Kate Byrne

Michele Callisaya

Frank Cervi

Margaret Chamberlain

Richard Close

Ellen Coenra

Julienne Coffey

David Coffey

Ian Colls

Megan Cook

Megan D'Arcy

Jennifer Davidson

Mark Davidson

Maarten den Ambtman

Lindsay Doig

Sarah Dow

Mark Green

Trudy Habner

Ulrika Haegle

Karen Helbrecht

Mike Herbert

Jacqui Hirsch

Michael Hirsch

Gerald Hueston

Michael Isaac

Pam Isaac

Liz Jackson

Carrie Jasso

Makayla Johnson

Gordon Johnston

Dan Kelmenson

Georgie Kemp

Rod Lamberts

Emma Larbalestier

Robert Larbalestier

John Larter

Betty Lau

Barbara Lau

Marc Leuzinger

Andreas Leuzinger

Jaclyn Lim

Sili Liu

John Longair

Jack Mackie

Sheryl Mackie

Nicki McQuilkin

Tony McQuilkin

Elizabeth McVie

David Mortimer

Tien Nguyen

Trish Nicholls

Barbara Percy

Gail Perdoch

Jennifer Perdoch

Linda Petrusa

Angie Pinto

Keith Rapp

Mary Pa Rapp

Joke Reek

Marsha Rehns

Raimondo Restelli

Roberto Restelli

Jenny Ridley

John Ridley

Phil Roberts

Deb Robertson

Cheryl Jean Robertson

Juliet Scrine

Peter Scrine

Clive Shrubsole

Bianca Sison

Jane Spencer

Chris Spencer

Magdalena Stojcheva

Dr Tännler

James Tsui

Andrew Van Dyk

Jonathan Walker

Shannon Wass

Jude Weel

Heather Wheat

Des Wichems

Chris Wichems

Anouck Wiggers

Susan Wilson

Aric Wong

Philip Wooldridge

Carla Wooldridge

Tony Wu

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Elena Wimberger

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Naturalist: Ian McCarthy

Naturalist: Lizelle Naudé

Historian: Nina Gallo

Photography Guide: Bartosz Stróżyński

Expedition Medic: Russell Henry

Expedition Guide: Jack Alscher

Expedition Guide: Tamsin Both

Kayaking Master: Wes McNeil

Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Vanja Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Tim Vanhoutteghem

Snowshoe Master: Bron Waters

Snowshoe Guide: Jimmy Armstrong

Snowshoe Guide: Paul Berntsen

Snorkel Guide: Darren Clarke

Snorkel Guide: Ana Poulalion

Snorkel Guide: Ania Baranek

Snorkel Guide: Ilana Archer-Ebdon

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

Able Seaman: Sendiri Alam

Able Seaman: Mangsur Fnu

Able Seaman: Imam Santuso

Able Seaman: Nestor Fernandez Arangorin

Able Seaman: Rene Balsomo Casipe

Able Seaman: Dragan Zivkovic

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