

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 22 Feb – 04 Mar 2023





Frei Station, King George Island

DAY 1 | Saturday 25 February 2023

Position at 1800 on Feb 25

Latitude: 62°14.54'S

Longitude: 058°48.67'W

Course: 322°

Speed: Anchor

Wind Speed: E 7

Barometer: 993

Air Temp: 2°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

Antarctica!

After months of planning, weeks of anticipation and long-haul flights from around the globe, we finally arrived at Punta Arenas, raring to begin our adventure.

We gathered at Hotel Dreams and were met by Tomas Holik – Aurora's Vice President of Operations and Lelia Cataldi – Ground Operation Coordinator.

We were told about our attempt to fly the following day to King George Island on the South Shetland Islands.

Unfortunately we had no luck with flying 23 or 24 February due to bad weather with a lot of snow which makes it unsafe to land on the gravel runway.

We had high hopes for Saturday and despite the early hour of 0600, the mood was high for flight #2. We had just done the final passenger count and were about to head to the airport when Tomas told us we had to abort the attempt due to technical issue with the plane. Off the buses we went and back to the hotel for a bit of a rest before we again drove to the airport about 3 hours later, and this time we were successful.

After landing on King George Island we were shuttled to the shoreline where we met the Aurora Expedition Team, climbed into our first Zodiacs and headed towards the ship. We entered through the mudroom where we found our lockers, had our photo taken and then the hotel staff showed us to our cabins. Then it was time to explore our new home-away-from-home, the *Sylvia Earle*.

The remaining flight arrived near dusk, and by dinner all passengers were on board. We completed the 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. Our safety officers and crew guided us up to lifeboats to get us familiar with their whereabouts.



Recess Cove

DAY 2 | Sunday 26 February 2023

Position at 0600 on Feb 26

Latitude: 63°25.46.99' S

Longitude: 060°45.18' W

Course: 212°

Speed: 13.2 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots NWN

Barometer: 998

Air Temp: 3°C

Birds have it better than we do, in many ways, and here are three. With wings they fly by day and night, and never have a cancelled flight, with feathers they have clothes that always fit, in styles that never change a bit, and what we envy most, I'd say, with bills they never have to pay.

—Anonymous

Welcome to the *Sylvia Earle*! We're glad you all made it on-board after the long days of waiting in Punta Arenas. Today started off with some mandatory briefings, including learning about Zodiac safety and the general guidelines for visiting Antarctica, as put forth by the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO).

Then it was onwards to the Aurora "boot camp", starting with getting swabbed for COVID (everyone tested negative!), then vacuuming clothes and equipment to make sure anything going onshore won't be detrimental to the environment and wildlife. Muck boot fittings and exchanges in the mudroom rounded out the morning. After a delicious buffet lunch, a call came over the PA announcing that whales had been spotted. Indeed, not just one or two, but at least half a dozen humpback whales were out feeding – what an incredible sight and a beautiful welcome to Antarctica!

Around 1500 in the afternoon, we made our first landing in Antarctica – a continental landing where celebrations abounded for those who stepped foot on their final continent. For the adventurous expeditioners, members of the Expedition Team with mountaineering experience opened a trail up onto the glacier, making sure to probe the terrain to avoid crevasses, the deep cracks that form as glaciers move over steep terrain.

From that vantage point, one could see a long distance where the horizon was dotted with peaks of varying height, coated with blankets of snow and ice.

Recess Cove, down below, was filled with large icebergs that had calved off nearby glaciers, impressing us with the various degrees of size, shape and beautiful blue colors. We even witnessed a few small calving events off the more active blue-walled glacier.

Once back on the ship, after some hot showers and hot drinks, it was time to hear the Captain's welcome and learn more about the staff working tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure a successful expedition.

Finally, it was off to dinner to enjoy delicious à la carte offerings to close out a tiring and exciting first day on the Antarctic Peninsula.



Lemaire Channel, Yalour & Peterman Islands

DAY 3 | Monday 27 February 2023

Position at 0600 on 27 Feb

Latitude: 64°59.61'S

Longitude: x 063°46.54'W

Course: 228°

Speed: 5.8 knots

Wind Speed: ENE 7 knots

Barometer: 992

Air Temp: 3°C

The three great elemental sounds in nature are the sound of rain, the sound of wind in a primeval wood, and the sound of outer ocean on a beach. I have heard them all, and of the three elemental voices, that of the ocean is the most awesome, beautiful and varied.

—Henry Beston

At last night's recap we were warned it would be a spectacular start to the day, today, and it was. In two words, Lemaire Channel. Such an amazing sight to wake up to, towering mountains capped with snow plunged down on either side of this famous channel. As the ship glided its way through the Lemaire many of us lined the decks in awe, and many a photo was taken. The faint light of the sunrise gave the backdrop a magic glow.

All this before breakfast.

Our destination this morning was The Yalour Islands. One smallish island with a scattering of smaller rocky islets nearby. All full of wildlife. We were expecting mostly gentoo penguins but were surprised to see many adelic penguins had taken over the main island. The poor adelic were in the moulting stage and mostly waiting it out until their new feathers come in.

The occasional chinstrap was spotted too, looking a little lost. Some of the Zodiacs saw a humpback out in the brash ice. The kayakers weaved in amongst the rock islets and cruised past resting Weddell seals, gentoos and many sea birds. The delicate icicles that formed under the edges of the snow were exceptionally beautiful. The Yalours were surrounded by a lot of icebergs and bergy bits that had come to rest in the shallow waters.

The afternoon at Peterman Island was blessed with clear weather and calm seas. This allowed the snorkellers to explore the sheltered coves and the kayakers to circumnavigate the island. Those on land were entertained by the antics of the gentoo penguins and sobered by the tale of the three British men who perished in sea ice near here in 1982.

Also of historic note was the German and French expeditions here, as far back as 1874 and 1909 respectively. We felt privileged and honoured to be here.

Peterman Island is one of the most colourful islands we have seen, with pink and green algae in the snow, rusty red in the rocks, a giant snow-white hill at it's centre and cliffsides of lush green moss.



Graham Passage, Sprightly Island

DAY 4 | Tuesday 28 February 2023

Position at 0700 on Feb 28

Latitude: 66°25.84'S

Longitude: 061°48.16'W

Course: 071°

Speed: 6.5 knots

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

—Otto Nordenskjöld

Grey skies, 10 knots wind and 3°C are the conditions we woke up to this morning. After a delicious breakfast, we were filled with energy and ready to get out in the Zodiacs to explore more of Antarctica's amazing beauty.

As the weather system around the Peninsula currently offers quite a bit of wind and swell, we felt fortunate seeing the nice, calm conditions upon arrival at Graham's Passage. It does not take long before the Zodiacs are lowered into the water and we set off to cruise this scenic passage.

Meanwhile, the kayakers created a colourful display in their yellow and red kayaks when paddling their way into the stunning natural scenery. The majesty surrounding us was simply breathtaking with 700-1000 meter high mountains, thousands of years old glaciers and beautiful icebergs in various sizes and shapes.

On top of that we soon encountered several humpback whales in the passage! The swell and current increased as we made our way north and did the number of whales! Feeding, resting, spy-hopping and even breaching humpback whales are seen from the Zodiacs. Such a whale of a morning we had!

Back on board our comfortable expedition ship *Sylvia Earle*, we welcomed a warm lunch and rest before it was time for the afternoon activity.

Sprightly Island is the name of the place we explored in the afternoon, and the exciting fact is that no one onboard on the ship had been to this location before! A true exploration and we all felt very excited to get out and experience this new place. Zodiacs are back in the water and off we went. The many icebergs were massive and impressive.

We made our way to Sprightly where we saw a colony of chinstrap penguins accompanied by Antarctic cormorants. We also saw Antarctic terns and kelp gulls.

As we continued our Zodiac cruise closer to the impressive glaciers, the water body surrounding us was filled with icebergs, bergy bits and brash ice. A couple of fur seals were seen on land and several Weddell seals are resting on the floating ice.

Wind Speed: NE 8 knots

Barometer: 993

Air Temp: 3°C

In addition to kelp, sea stars were seen on the bottom, the divers got to explore some very cool ice underwater, as do the snorkellers who snorkel around the grounded ice formations.

The kayakers were having a blast while circumnavigating Sprightly island. How exciting and so much fun it was to explore this new spot that turns out to be amazing!

After three hours of exploration, it was time to head back to the ship, where cocktails and canapés were served at the bar.

At recap Julia talked about humpback whales and Jonathan told us more about how Antarctic sites got their names, followed by Howard who briefed us on the next day's plan.

A delicious à la carte dinner concluded the day.

Yet another amazing day in wonderland!



Port Lockroy/Jougla Point, Borgen Bay

DAY 5 | Wednesday 01 March 2023

Position at 0700 on 01 Mar

Latitude: 64°44.88'S

Longitude: 063°16.91'W

Course: 224°

Speed: 9.8 knots

Wind Speed: NE 22 knots

Barometer: 973

Air Temp: 6°C

Making pikelets in force 9 gales can be quite a feat. I made hundreds of them to be devoured almost immediately by the waiting gannets (all male). I also made bread which I took to bed with me in my sleeping bag in a wobbly plastic basin for the dough to rise. It took about two hours and only once tipped upside-down.

—Dot Smith, in *Voyage to the Ice*, by David Lewis, 1979

Our day began quite early at 0630 when we were navigating through the narrow Neumayer Channel which separates Anvers Island from Wiencke and Doumer Islands.

The most spectacular view was on Deck 8, where keen early rising expeditioners gathered to admire numerous majestic cliffs and dramatic glacier faces.

It was a bit of a windy and rainy morning as our vessel was approaching the Goudier Island with famous British base Port Lockroy, also known as "Base A". Port Lockroy Bay is located on the coast of the Wiencke island.

It was discovered in 1904 by Jean-Baptiste Charcot and was named after Edouard Lockroy, a French politician and Vice President of the Chamber of Deputies, who supported government funding for the French Antarctic Expedition. During World War II, British Military established Base A in 1944 on tiny Goudier Island, which continued to operate as a research station till January 16, 1962.

In 1996 the Port Lockroy Base was renovated and now it is one of the most popular destinations for expedition ships, with the impressive museum that takes you back to the early days of Antarctic researchers. And it is the southernmost post-office in the world as well!

Before we landed, a lady from the base came on board to make a presentation about history of the base. Once we got off the ship, we visited the base and tiny island called Jougla Point – a spot well known for lots of whalebones and penguins. On Base A there were lots of penguin highways marked with road cones, so sometimes we had traffic jams, even here in Antarctica!

It was exciting to send postcards to our loved ones and buy some souvenirs. By the time we finished the landing, the weather got much better.

After a delicious lunch, the ship repositioned to spectacular Borgen Bay. It was first chartered by the Belgian Antarctic Expedition in 1897-1899 and named after Karl Borgen, the German astronomer. The bay is 7 kilometres wide and there are two massive glaciers being Hooper and William separated by Gateway Ridge.

It was an amazing Zodiac cruise where we admired ice of different sizes, shapes and colours. Cruising and paddling through brash ice was exciting! We could hear thousands of air bubbles popping out of the ice all around us making rustling sound like leaves shivering in the wind.

What an amazing and big day in Antarctica!



Cierva Cove, Hydrurga Rocks

DAY 6 | Thursday 02 March 2023

Position at 0700 on Mar 2

Latitude: 64°44.88'S

Longitude: 061°13.52'W

Course: 053°

Speed: 7.4 knots

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

Our morning paddle location was the magnificent Cierva Cove. Conditions were perfect with light winds from the Southeast at around 4 kts gusting to 15 kts.

The sky was overcast to start with, but during the paddle we were blessed with brilliant sunshine over the glacier and mountain ranges. The light was just out of this world! We moved as a group gently and quietly keeping a respectful distance from the ever rumbling walls in the amphitheatre around us.

We stopped to look at black ice and learn about how it is the oldest ice in the sea as all the oxygen has been forced out over thousands of years. We discovered some Salps as we drifted through the brash ice. We moved to clearer waters and took a wide berth around some enormous icebergs. As we chatted about why we keep our distance we were incredibly lucky to see one of these magnificent beauties calve right in front of us! We turned our bows to the wave as it rolled gently underneath.

Our timing was perfect. Just as we were thinking to head back to the ship, *Sylvia Earle* decided to come to us. The ship had to reposition and as we watched her appear from behind a huge ice monolith, we heard the blow of a nearby humpback! We saw the dorsal surface several times as we waited for Zodiac pickup, thinking how lucky we were to be here right now. An incredible paddle at Cierva Cove.

In the afternoon it was off to Hydruga Rocks. This small set of islands off the coast of Two Hammock Island are the home to Fur seals and a large group of chinstrap penguins. Winds remained light from the south at 7-8 kt gusting to 12-13 kt. There was some fun swell on the outside which was exciting. Waves crashed over the bombies and provided a playful environment to paddle. We weaved our way through some protected channels observing the chinstrap penguins and Fur seals lazing about.

From the waterline everything takes on a more intimate perspective. The water was crystal clear in the small

Wind Speed: NW 3 knots

Barometer: 983

Air Temp: 3°C

channels and the kayakers could sneak through some lovely shallow sections to observe the kelp and rock beneath. Some paddlers opted for the shore landing near the chinstrap colony to walk to the top of one of the larger islands for 360 degree views.

What an incredible day to be a kayaker!



Polar Plunge

DAY 6 | Thursday 02 March 2023





Whalers Bay, Elephant Point

DAY 7 | Friday 03 March 2023

Position at 0700 on Mar 3

Latitude: 63°04.55'S

Longitude: 060°34.40'W

Course: 023°

Speed: 5 knots

If it is possible to imagine a piece of beef, odiferous cod fish and a canvas-backed duck roasted together in a pot, with blood and cod liver oil, the illustrations would be complete.

—Dr Frederick Cook, Belgica Expedition, on eating penguins

The looming cliffs of Neptune's Bellows off the starboard bow were an commanding sight as we sailed through the very narrow opening into Port Foster, the sunken caldera of Deception Island. The panoramic vista of peaks of the caldera rim from Mount Kirkwood 352m on the port side to Mount Pond 539 m, the highest peak of the rim directly on our starboard side were all lightly dusted with fresh snow.

The steaming black volcanic sands on landing at Whalers Bay added to the forbidding appearance of the remnants of this rapidly decaying whaling station. We explored the rusting ruins of the Hector Whaling company's factory that operated from 1911 to 1931. Massive oil tanks, rusting pressure cookers, a dry dock and assorted crumbling buildings were stark testament to the rapacious history of whaling in Antarctica. We learnt that in 1912 nine factory ships were anchored stern on to the shore, taking on freshwater, much needed for the processing of the whole whale, its blubber meat, and bones. The one relic of Sir Hubert Wilkins first plane flight in Antarctica, from December 1928 was a heavy steel roller discovered just behind the old British Antarctic Survey hanger that housed their De Havilland otter sky planes in the 1960s. We learnt of the dramatic events surrounding the volcanic eruptions in 1967 and 1969 that led to the decimation of the Chilean and British bases and the evacuations through billowing ash clouds by a brave helicopter pilot. Some of us hiked up the hill behind the hanger to get a commanding view of Whaler's Bay while the kayakers made the most of their last paddle heading back out through Neptune's Bellows.

The afternoon's long Zodiac run to Elephant Point in the mist and falling snow gave us a taste of the vagaries of the South Shetland Island's weather. We were soon ashore, exploring the raised shingle beach with its abundance of wildlife from gentoo penguins, some moulters standing sentry like and others waddling to and fro. There were numerous southern giant petrels and fur seals. The biggest wildlife bonus literally were the massive Southern elephant seals we encountered in wallows and ponds as we hiked along the shore. At the far end of the beach a short climb up to the foot of a rocky outcrop took us to the remains of a primitive sealer's camp possibly dating back to the 1820s. It had three massive whalebone ribs that possibly could have supported a sailcloth roof and three whalebone vertebrae stools. This temporary home for a gang of men clubbing and skinning fur seals for the brief summer months over 200 years ago was highlight for the history buffs.

Wind Speed: NNE 4 knots

Barometer: 970

Air Temp: 4°C

For it's awesome craggy setting, abundance and variety of birds and seals and a chance to roam freely, Elephant Point had to be one of the best landings of our voyage, a fitting end to our Antarctic adventure.



Frei, King George Island

DAY 8 | Saturday 04 March 2023

Position at 0700 on Mar 4

Latitude: 62°12.52'S

Longitude: 058°42.32'W

Course: 320°

Speed: 5.6 knots

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*

What a memorable trip for expeditioners and crew alike! Although our journey has come to an end, today was a day of reflection and joy as we arrived back to King George Island with new experiences and perhaps new perspectives. Our transit back to King George Island was calm and scenic, as Fildes Peninsula and Frei Base came into view. Not only was King George Island a pivotal place for us, as it was our entry point into the beautiful white continent, but it is also an important place for research, as it is home to Frei Base, the most important Chilean base in Antarctica, as well as the Chilean Escudero Station and the Russian Bellingshausen Station.

After our final breakfast together, we gathered into the lecture hall for a fascinating virtual tour of the *Sylvia Earle*, the phenomenally comfortable and well-equipped ship that we have all called home for the past nine days.

Our Expedition leader Howard gave us the history of Aurora Expeditions from Greg Mortimer's first vision, the Polar Pioneer, to the new generation of expedition ships, known as the X-Bow, or the Infinity Class. We learned in detail how the X-Bow differs from classic ships in the way that it mimics cetaceans to gracefully cut into waves rather than to clumsily bounce over them as classic ships tend to do.

Our expert Captain, Artem then continued the virtual tour by guiding us through the state-of-the-art navigational equipment that the bridge is equipped with and described the wing-like stabilizers that gave us such a comfortable ride. Our virtual tour ended with the fascinating inner workings of the dual engine rooms and an intriguing look into how the ship produces water using reverse osmosis. After the tour, we gathered in the Gentoo Restaurant one final time for a delicious lunch prepared by our expert onboard culinary team and then piled into the lecture hall for one last time together with some fascinating history. Our trip would be incomplete without paying homage and respect to the centuries of deep maritime history that this area of the world is rich with, and we did so by viewing the magnificent 1929 documentary "Around Cape Horn" which documents the sailing (and I do mean sailing!) of the Peking around Cape Horn, known as one of the most treacherous passages in the world. What a way to end our cruise from South America to Antarctica!

Wind Speed: SW 3 knots

Barometer: 982

Air Temp: 4°C

Overall, this has been a thoroughly exciting, enriching, and thought-provoking journey and we are happy to have been able to share it with you!

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



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Martin, Tracy, Hodei, Eamon & Ivan

Number of Paddlers: 19

Total Paddle Outings: 9

Total Distance Paddled: 36.3 kms

Paddlers:

Steven Wharton

Nigel Warren

Manuela Zacharias & Carsten Buch

Marnie & Gregory Cervenka

Rainey Booth & Zoe Littlepage

Tom & Paula Patterson

Christine Bauman & Marian De Sumrak

Lisa Grainger

Ibrahim Faiz Naik

Megan & Stephen Mulva

Jacquelyn Henderson

Kai & Michael Heath

Sunday 26th Feb, PM: Recess Cove. Distance - 5.9 km

Our first paddle outing, the ship was at drift, so we worked fast to get everyone on the water. Recess Cove has an active glacier and a cluster of interesting icebergs to admire. Most of the group was on and paddling away when the ship had to reposition, and the last 6 paddlers had to wait until we were in position. Meanwhile the majority were exploring around the corner and kayaking amongst brash ice and icebergs. Eventually all of us converged onto a rocky beach that was almost the continent. A small island off the peninsula. From there we would Zodiac shuttle to the continent and claim our official landing.

Monday 27th Feb, AM: Yalour Islands. Distance - 7 km

Looking at the map the Yalour islands looks like a kayaking paradise. It did not disappoint. The Yalours are a scattering of small rocky islands that form maze like channels. There is a larger island which we could easily circumnavigate and view the penguins coming and going. We were expecting gentoos mostly here but were surprised to see many adelic penguins had taken over the main island. A few gentoos were on the smaller outer islands. A few Weddell seals were eventually spotted lazing on the rocks, looking like well camouflaged smooth boulders until they moved slightly. We weaved our way in and out of the island group. Gathered on the outside of it all were some big icebergs that were rocking back and forth.

We admired these giants from a distance as we paddled back to the ship. A very good morning on the water.

Monday 27th Feb, PM: Peterman Island. Distance - 8.2 km

We were blessed again with fantastic conditions this afternoon for Peterman Island. So, we decided to plan a circumnavigation. There would always be the option to turn back or jump into a Zodiac if the other side was not as calm. As we rounded the first rocky point it looked like everyone was in for the duration. Discovering the other side of the island with all the tiny coves and inlets was a joy. We had lost sight of the ship and the landing party,

and it was just us and the penguins and seals along the way. On the northern end of the island a cliff jutted up and was covered in green moss. One remarkable feature of Peterman is how colourful it is. Pink, green, and brown algae are streaked across a lot of the island. The rocks have a rusty red hue on them and the hill behind it all is bright white. We finished back near the landing sight watching the antics of the gentoos jumping in and out of the bay from the rocks. A great paddle.

Tuesday 28th Feb, AM: Graham Passage. Distance - 5.3 km

The ship found anchorage in a calm bay in the south end of the passage. We saw a large glacier in the distance and lots of ice glistening in the bay before us. By now we are getting efficient at launching out of the ship and onto the water. As we cruised up towards the north end of the passage, we encountered some humpback whales. Amazing to observe from our kayaks. The swell at this end of the passage was building. It was time to turn around. The current however was going against the swell and it was feeling like we were riding waves but not getting anywhere. We decided to call for an "Uber" Zodiac as we had by now paddled a fair way from the ship. An exciting start to our day in a beautiful passage.

Tuesday 28th Feb, PM: Sprightly Island. Distance - 4.5 km

New location. 3 km circumnavigation of the island plus some exploring through the bergs. Gentoo penguins (with the odd adelic and chinstrap) present on the northern end of the island. Really large bergs, lots of brash ice. Snow began to fall while paddling creating a surreal peaceful atmosphere. Small group of 4 in singles plus guides. We took our time exploring the shoreline of the island, observing the penguins and stunning shapes and colours of the ice. We launched from the ship and returned via Zodiac. The mist and snow gave the whole outing an eery but interesting feeling.

Wednesday 1st March, PM: Borgan Bay. Distance - 4.8 km

The ship left Port Lockroy and soon was in the shelter of the large Borgan Bay. This bay is surrounded by high mountains and almost continuous glacier faces. It was into this that we paddled out from the ship. Brash ice formed a barrier between us and the glaciers. We were at a safe distance but floating on the water we could see and hear the pieces falling off. One decent calving caused a slow gentle wave to lift us up and rattle the brash ice around us, it was cool. We spied a seal lazing on some ice. It was a crabeater resting alone. We paddled on past it and it did not stir; little did it know it will be in many photos.

We returned to the ship just in time as the clouds had closed in and the wind was building. Soup time.

Thursday 2nd March, AM: Cierva Cove. Distance - 5.9 km

A humpback whale was spotted on the way into Cierva Cove and we hoped it would join us on this morning's outing. The ship manoeuvred between some large icebergs and anchored in a spectacular setting. We left the marina with the awesome view of a huge glacier that was constantly grumbling and shedding ice. We paddled amongst some brash and watched it for a while before turning to admire the bergs. We were talking about ice and bergs and how unpredictable they can be when a large piece (bus size) off ice broke off the corner of an iceberg. It slid quickly into the water and created a wave. We watched from a safe distance and felt the wave lift us

gently up a meter or two. The icy debris instantly covered the area that a minute ago was clear water. We kayaked on amongst the sculptural giants and spotted the local humpback on our return to the ship via Zodiac. Cierva is a magic place to paddle.

Thursday 2nd March, PM: Hydruga Rocks. Distance - 8 km

Only a brave group of six paddlers ventured out this afternoon to Hydruga rocks. The rest would land. The weather was looking cold and there was a bit of swell as we departed the ship. We knew that we would roll with the swell and soon find some calmer waters once we rounded the first rocky corner of the island. We did. Hydruga rocks is a collection of a couple of larger rock islands with a few small rock islets on its northern tip. This created a shallow channel which we could kayak through easily. The shoreline was littered with many chinstrap penguins, some resting, moulting, and others jumping into the water to hunt for fish. Also, here we saw Giant Petrels, Fur seals, Terns, Gulls, Cormorants, a Snow Petrel and as at every penguin colony, Skuas and Sheathbills. The paddling was choppy outside the channels and protected bays but necessary to circumnavigate the whole island. In fact, we went around Hydruga 1.5 times exploring it in different directions. The swell calmed down and we jumped into a Zodiac to return to the ship.

Friday 3rd March, AM: Deception Island. Distance - 6.3 km

All of the kayak guides and some of the group were out on Deck 8 this morning as we sailed through the Bellows of Deception Island. We were excited because the sea was gentle today and we all agreed we could safely paddle back out through the entrance. It would be a great paddle but unfortunately heading away from the historic whaling station. So, we had options, and all decided to join us on this rare chance to paddle outside of Deception Island. The cliffs loomed above us in the Bellows. As calm as it was, a bit of rebound swell was unavoidable, but enjoyable. Our skills have come a long way in the last week. A giant sea-stack awaited us as we exited. A small beach below Neptune's window was littered with fur seals, so there was no landing there. We could see the expeditioners at the lookout, and they took some great photos from high above. We finished by paddling further away from the Island into the misty calm waters. A Zodiac was soon there to collect us and taxi us back to the ship. A magic outing.





Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: Edwin Sargeant & Eddie Hauzer

Number of Snorkels: 10 Total Outings: 9

Snorkellers:	Elena Neese	Mikel Ledford
Leslie Parker	Jacob Neese	Jen Hewett
Scott Parker	Leigh Morrison	Andrew Breckler
Raymond Hower	Connie Bertone	

Sunday 26th Feb, PM: Recess Cove.

Finally, we made it, yesterday we arrived to King George Island. Some of us during the afternoon, some during the evening, it was a long day and after we got our cabins and had a dinner in the beautiful Gentoo restaurant Howard, our expedition leader, introduced the team and we went to have our first sleep on the ship.

Today was a lot to process, IAATO briefing, Zodiac briefing, biosecurity procedure and of course, the snorkelling briefing. Edwin and Eddie were waiting for us in the Citizen Science Lab with their slideshow and paperwork to introduce us the program. After a nice chat about security and expectation of the program we were running to the mudroom to fit our gear before lunch.

Our first landing and it was a continental one! Our first step on Antarctica, what an incredible moment. After that, our snorkelling guides picked us up and took us to the snorkelling site where for the first time, we would feel the freezing Antarctic water at 2 degrees Celsius.

Monday 27th Feb, AM: Yalour Island

Fantastic place! The landing site was full of adelic penguins and snow algae! Edwin and Eddie drove us to the small island and showed us Weddell seals, crabeater seals and amazing icebergs. While snorkelling we saw sea stars and different kinds of seaweed. We started to practice your “back to the Zodiacs techniques” Edwin and Eddie said that we would become experts soon.

Monday 27th Feb, AM: Peterman Island

Just three of us decided to go on the water this afternoon but all of us could enjoyed of the landing site. We saw lot of gentoo and adelic penguins, cute chicks and shag nesting. The place is fantastic. There is an Argentinean hut and a commemorative cross for 3 British scientific that got lost in the sea ice during a winter in 1960s.

We snorkelled in a small bay around brash ice and near to P.P. inscription from the “Pourquoi Pas” expedition, led by Jean-Baptise Charcot during the overwinter at Petermann Island in 1820’s. They used the engraving to measure the tide. Such great idea!

After our snorkelling Edwin and Eddie took us for a Zodiac cruise around the island.

Tuesday 28th Feb, AM: Graham Passage – Zodiac cruising, whale watching

The day started early with Howard’s voice waking us up. We were going to have an explorer day. Our expectations were high and we wanted to explore new places. Graham passage is known for icebergs and whales, but of course wildlife is not predictable, at least whales aren’t.

So, we went to the mudroom to be ready for our Zodiac drivers and snorkelling guides. We were the first group to leave the ship and we started to explore the passage. Suddenly, whales were spotted breaching in the north part of the channel so there, we went. This morning might have been the most amazing morning ever. We did not snorkel but we enjoyed the whales feeding around us, jumping and popping up, showing us their splendour.

Tuesday 28th Feb, PM: Springtly Island

New place for us, new for all the e-team and for our expedition leader. We dropped Zodiacs and started the new adventure surrounded by brash ice while the snow fell. We spent some time cruising around the island, seeing cliffs and beautiful glacier faces. We found a marvelous arch iceberg and a leopard seal! What a lucky group.

Time to jump in the water. We swam with bergy bits and we could see the small air bubbles popping up from the ice in 0 Celsius degree water temperature!

Wednesday 1st Mar, AM: Port Lockroy

The excitement was high on this day as we had 2 landings planned and we were also going to be able to go snorkeling. After breakfast, the staff from Port Lockroy gave us a briefing about what they do and how they manage to spend the entire summer on the base taking care of the museum and the shop. Yes, there is a shop in Antarctica! They have many things on offer and they use the profits from the shop to keep the base running. There is also a post office on site, which is the southernmost post office in the world, where we could send post cards to our loved ones – finger crossed they will arrive in the next... 3 or 4 weeks haha.

Then, we stopped at Jougula Point, which is just in front of Port Lockroy. There, we found big whale bones, a gentoo penguin colony nesting, as well as nesting imperial cormorants.

To end our excursion day Eddie and Edwin took us to a little bay where we could swim protected from the wind! This was an amazing moment, with the whole place just for us.

Wednesday 1st Mar, PM: Borgen Bay - Zodiac cruising

Today we decided not to snorkel, but we suited up with our gear ready just in case we found something really cool to explore.

The afternoon was really relaxing, we navigated though brash ice, we found some Weddell and leopard Seals, we enjoyed of the sound of the ice and in our way back we found a crabeater seal that looked interested on us, it was so cute.

When we heard that we would have a BBQ in the evening, we couldn’t wait! Dancing night!

Thursday 2nd Mar, AM: Cierva Cove

This was our last day and we wanted to take advantage of it. We visited an amazing place call Cierva Cove or as Jacob said leopard seal country.

We start our Zodiac cruising with an amazing glacier, pretty active, we found 2 leopard seal, one male and one female and we could see a big calving! That was awesome!

After driving for a while in the brash ice Edwin and Eddie show us Primavera station, an Argentinean stationary station where Leo, one of the expedition staff spent some moth working with leopard seals.

Let’s go to snorkel said Eddie and we found a beautiful bay behind an enormous iceberg. The place was full of life. The water visibility was perfect and we could see salps; those creatures love CO2 and take it with them till they dive and go directly to the bottom of the sea, really cool plankton.

Thursday 2nd Mar, PM: Hydruga Rocks

Our last session of snorkelling was special. Before putting our fins in the water, we stopped by the landing site. Hydruga Rocks a small group of islets located east of Two Hummock island, in the Palmer Archipelago. Did you know, these small islets are named after the leopard seal - hydruga leptonyx? We landed on the main island, a committee of Weddell Seals welcomed us at the entrance of the island. We walked amongst chinstrap penguins and saw some snowy sheathbills as well as comorants with chicks.

We found orange starfish, some of us saw ctenophores and different types of seaweed flowing back and forth with the swell was magic to watch. We felt like we were part of the Southern Ocean.

This program went well above our expectations. We learnt how to use the dry suit, suit ourselves up on our own, feel the cold water on our faces and kick out of the water to get into the Zodiac. Now we know a little bit more about what is under the surface of Antarctica’s waters and all the small things that we can see when we focus our sight, train our eyes, relax, and simply enjoy the wonders of snorkelling.





Dive Log

Dive Guide: Darren Clarke and Catherine Buckland

Number of Divers: 7

Total Outings: 5

Divers:

Geoffrey Roberts

Maria Harwood

James Stamp

Allyson Dalton

Richard Neely

Jonathon Shaw

Sunday 26th Feb, PM: Recess Cove.

After a long day on Saturday and all of the mandatory Safety and information lectures on Sunday morning it was great to finally get out onto the boat.

Our introduction dive in Antarctica, in a sheltered bay off an island close to the landing point.

A gently sloping seabed with low kelp, limpets and some starfish awaited the divers while they tested their equipment and sampled the -1 degree water for the first time. On the surface were a few gentoo penguins and a lovely crabeater seal sleeping on the beach. A gentle but good first day.

Monday 27th Feb, AM: Yalour Island

A group of small islands where we found a great piece of ice to dive on and capture some great pictures. Wedged onto the seabed making it nice and safe. The iceberg filled the water from the surface down to the maximum depth we are allowed to dive in Antarctica of 20m. The film crew also tried out their full face mask. All in all a lovely dive in calm conditions enjoyed by all.

Monday 27th Feb, AM: Peterman Island

We did not dive but after a successful landing had a good cruise around the gullies and enjoyed seeing and photographing, crabeater, Weddell, fur seals and feeding penguins.

Tuesday 28th Feb, AM: Graham Passage

Well what a day! Spectacular scenery while we cruised around the bay searching for a potential dive site. We then spotted a humpback whale gently cruising around, then another and another, As we made our way slowly out towards our potential dive site the number of whales increased until they were everywhere we looked.

They were definitely giving us a show. Spy hopping, breaching and bubble netting all around us.

We may not have dived but a great day.

Tuesday 28th Feb, PM: Springtly Island

New place for us, new for all the e-team and for our expedition leader. We started to search for a sight and spotted a couple of Weddell seals on the ice and decided on a dive around a small island. It turned out to be a very pleasant dive , with sponges, sea stars, some small fish and even a sandy gully.

The rest of the time was filled with enjoying the landscape, brash ice and icebergs. An enjoyable afternoon.

Wednesday 1st Mar, AM: Casiabanca Island

Some opted to visit the historic Port Lockroy and the others went to an island situated just off Damoy.

What a treat! It was a lovely kelp covered wall descending from the surface to 19m. The kelp making a perfect habitat for wide range of life including star fish, sun stars, a variety of limpets, bivalves, shrimps and some small fish. A great start to the morning followed by a short trip ashore to visit the penguin colony along with the other visitors.

Thursday 2nd Mar, AM: Cierva Cove

A beautiful backdrop awaited us at the small island at the northern entrance to the bay, the icebergs and bergy bits left us some nice clear water so that we could have a last wall dive of the trip. Another good dive with good vis, staying on the ledge above the large drop off there was a lot of kelp, sea stars and a few bigger fish which is rare to see on the peninsula.

Another good dive for the Peninsula followed by a slow cruise back to the ship admiring the glacier, icebergs, seals on the ice and a nice humpback to top off a good morning.

Thursday 2nd Mar, PM: Hydrugra Rocks

Our last dive and landing and always a good chance to sea penguins and a variety of seals. We opted for a short landing to see the wildlife on land followed by a dive to see if we could see any of that same wildlife in the water. Unfortunately, the seals were too busy sleeping on the shore however a pleasant last dive was had by all.



Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	Feb			Mar			
	26	27	28	1	2	3	4
Black-browed Albatross			●		●		
Grey-headed Albatross			●				
Southern giant Petrel	●	●			●	●	●
Cape Petrel	●						
Blue Petrel							
Snow Petrel			●				●
Southern Fulmar	●	●					
White-chinned Petrel							
Wilson's Storm-petrel	●	●	●		●	●	
Gentoo Penguin	●		●	●	●	●	
Chinstrap Penguin	●		●		●		
Adélie Penguin		●					
Antarctic Cormorant	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Snowy (Pale-faced) Sheatbill		●			●		
Subantarctic Skua	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
South Polar Skua	●		●				
Kelp Gull	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Antarctic Tern	●	●	●	●	●		

Mammal Species	Feb			Mar			
	26	27	28	1	2	3	4
Antarctic Fur Seal	●		●	●	●	●	
Southern Elephant Seal							●
Crabeater Seal		●					
Weddel Seal	●		●	●			
Leopard Seal					●		
Humpback Whale		●	●		●	●	







Expeditioners:

Lloyd Anderson
Christine Bauman
Connie Bertone
Rainey Booth
Kai Boschmann
Andrew Breckler
Lisa Breckler
Carsten Buch
Alexis Burns
Greg Cervenka
Marnie Cervenka
Hazel Clasquin
Tony Clasquin
Anne Craig
David Craig
Allyson Dalton
Marian De Sumrak
Robert Fioretti
Tina Fioretti
B Fisher
Vann Fisher

Lisa Grainger
Barbara Hall
Maria Harwood
Kai Heath
Leilani Heath
Michael Heath
Simone Heath
Jacquelyn Henderson
Jen Hewett
Sue Hewett
Karina Holden
Raymond Hower
Raymond (Daniel) Hower
Sharlene Hower
Alan Kozica
Rocky Kozica
Mikel Ledford
Alex Li
Zoe Littlepage
Jianchuan Liu
Chi Yan Julian Lo

Alan Mendel
Rochelle Mendel
Bronwyn Morrison
Leigh Morrison
Xiaojing Mu
Megan Mulva
Stephen Mulva
Ibrahim Naik
Elena Nease
Jacob Nease
Richard Neely
Tania Nicholls
Hunada Nouss
Leslie Parker
Scott Parker
Leon Pasternak
Susan Pasternak
Paula Patterson
Tom Patterson
Karen Rees
Heather Rickard

Geoffrey Roberts
Annette Scheffer
Johanna Scheffer
Jennifer Schneider
Chris Schragner
Judith Scott
Jon Shaw
Carly Snyder
Jim Stamp
Jo Stamp
Christina Waldek
Stefanie Waldek
Xin Wang
Nigel Warren
Lisa Westaway
Tony Westaway
Steven Wharton
Manuela Zacharias
Xuan Zheng
Xiaohong Zhuang

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Dot Robertson

Assistant Expedition Leader Trainee: Leo Soibelzon

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oeyasaeter

Glaciologist: Ulyana Horodsky

Naturalist: Eirik Gronningsaeter

Marine Biologist/Citizen Science: Julia Benson

Historian: Jonathan Chester

Photography Guide: Matt Horspool

Expedition Medic: David Palmer

Expedition Guide: Lucas Handley

Expedition Guide: Birgitta Mueck

Kayaking Master: Eamon Larkin

Kayaking Guide: Martin Rickard

Kayaking Guide: Tracy Gibson

Kayaking Guide: Ivan Klochkov

Kayaking Guide: Hodei Orueta

Snorkel Master: Edwin Sargeant

Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer

Dive Master: Darren Clarke

Dive Guide: Catherine Buckland

Zodiac Master Trainer: Sergey Andronov

Zodiac Manager Trainee: Zak Hinkley

Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Artem Kolmykov

Chief Officer: Gabriel Eduardo Centella Molina

Second Officer: Fernandes Raymer Rosario

Safety Officer: Sergio Enrique Saldana Hernandez

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Ship Doctor: Sofia Cocunubo Castellanos

Chief Engineer: Praveen Kumar Kaushal

First Engineer: Lazar Alexandru

IT Officer: Nathaniel Buhain Vibares

Hotel Director: Osman Ozpolat

F&B Service Manager: Balvant Singh

Head Bartender: Rajesh Sugreev Murao

Chief Purser: Liza Merillo

Executive Chef: Allan Estoque

Sous Chef: Vinay Kumar Singh

Hotel Controller: Reynaldo Hernandez Cañeda

Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Stateroom Attendant: Sotero (Terry) Agtagma

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Able Seaman: Brosas Anthony John Narvaez

Able Seaman: Aloyan Eduardo Caranoo

Able Seaman: Nestor Fernandez Arangorin

Able Seaman: Rene Balsomo Casipe

Able Seaman: Alvarez Santos Luis Fernando

Able Seaman: Dragan Zivkovic

Photography thanks to:

Matt Horspool

Ivan Klochkov

Lucas Handley

Martin Rickard

Eamon Larkin

Tracy Gibson





