

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand & Australia

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1/2	Depart London/in flight.	Day 9/10	Macquarie Island.
Day 3	Queenstown.	Day 11	At Sea.
Day 4	Embark Heritage Adventurer.	Day 12	Campbell Islands.
Day 5	Snares Islands.	Day 13	At Sea.
Day 6/7	Auckland Islands.	Day 14	Disembark and fly Auckland.
Day 8	At Sea	Day 15/16	Depart Auckland & arrive London.

Cost

From £12,995 (London/London); Land-only: from £11,395

Cabin upgrades

Deck 5 upgrade: Extra £545 per person

Worsley Suite: Extra £2,995 per person

Please call the Naturetrek office for the 'Heritage Suite' upgrade costs and other cabin options.

Grading

Grade B - Day walks on rough terrain.

Focus

Birds, mammals, plants, cetaceans and scenery.



Courtesy of Mark Schofield



Courtesy of Heritage Expeditions



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Introduction

The remote Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand and Australia are home to the world's largest concentration of seabirds! The sheer abundance and diversity of wildlife in the Southern Ocean never ceases to amaze those few fortunate enough to visit. There are greater numbers and more species of seabird here than in any other comparable area on Earth. Literally millions of albatrosses, penguins, cormorants and petrels return to these windswept, isolated outposts each southern summer to breed, converging to create one of the world's most magnificent wildlife spectacles. The numbers are mind-boggling! Amongst Macquarie Island's four million penguins, an estimated 850,000 breeding pairs of Royal Penguin and 218,000 pairs of King Penguin may be seen, together with a further 19 species of breeding seabird and 150,000 Southern Elephant Seals. Scattered across Campbell island's hillsides are some 7,500 pairs of Southern Royal Albatross, whilst on Snares island, a rocky outpost covering no more than 243 hectares, it has been estimated that 60 million 'tubenoses' (petrels, shearwaters and albatrosses) breed which alone – and not counting the penguins, cormorants and other nesting birds – exceeds the total number of seabirds nesting around the entire British coastline!



This really is the wildlife holiday of a lifetime and what better way to explore these seabird havens than by spending 10 nights aboard the 'Heritage Adventurer'. This vessel is an expedition ship that carries a maximum of 140 passengers and is fully equipped with inflatable zodiacs and a highly skilled crew. Additional information on the Heritage Adventurer can be found on Page 8 of this tour itinerary.

Itinerary

Please note that the following itinerary should be treated as a guide only, not an exact program. Flexibility is the key to all expedition voyages and our exact route and program will depend on weather conditions, wildlife encounters, the experience of the expedition leader and the advice of the ship's captain and crew.

Days 1 - 2

In flight

Our scheduled flight departs from London Heathrow bound for Auckland in New Zealand (with a touch down on route). Day 2 quickly passes as we cross the various time zones.

Day 3

Queenstown

We arrive into Auckland airport this morning and transfer on an internal flight to Queenstown, on New Zealand's South Island. Queenstown is located on the shores of Lake Wakatipu, in the mountains of southern Otago. We transfer to a comfortable hotel and the remainder of the afternoon is free to rest after the long flight or to explore the city and its surrounds.

Day 4

Depart Port of Bluff

Following a morning in Queenstown, we will transfer to the Port of Bluff where we board the 'Heritage Adventurer', our home for the next 10-nights. From here we depart and head south towards the Snares. It won't take long before we start to see our first seabirds and start to hone our seabird ID skills for the journey ahead. Likely species here include Southern Royal, White-capped and Shy Albatrosses, Sooty Shearwater, White-chinned Petrel, Southern and Northern Giant Petrels, Cape Petrel, Common Diving Petrel and the trickiest to ID of them all, the prions.

Day 5

Snares Island

We will spend today exploring The Snares, the first Subantarctic Island on our cruise and a nature reserve of international importance. The Snares lie 200 kilometres to the south of New Zealand's South Island and consist of the main island, North East Island, and the smaller Broughton Island as well as the somewhat isolated Western Chain Islands. The total number of birds that breed here defies belief. In



addition to the aforementioned 60 million 'tubenoses' (including hundreds of thousands of pairs of Sooty Shearwaters which breed on the forested North East Island and form vast rafts offshore in the evening), Snares is home to 30,000 pairs of the endemic Snares Crested Penguin, plus Salvin's Albatross, Southern Giant Petrel, Broad-billed Prion and Antarctic Tern; all crammed onto a mere 3.5 square kilometres of land!

Since landings are not permitted on the Snares, we will explore the island's rocky headlands and sheltered bays by zodiac. The endemic Snares Fernbird and Snares Tomtit are often seen on the zodiac cruises along with Red-billed Gulls, White-fronted Tern, Pied Shag and a variety of other seabirds. We will also be on the lookout for mammals such as New Zealand Fur Seal and New Zealand (Hooker's) Sea Lion, whilst the botanists amongst us can enjoy the forests of *Olearia* and *Brachyglottis*. Late in the afternoon we set sail south bound for the Auckland Islands.

Day 6

Auckland Islands

This morning will find us at Enderby Island, a small island off the northern tip of Auckland Island, the main island in the archipelago. The Auckland Island group consists of the main Auckland Island, with Adams, Disappointment, Enderby, Ewing, Rose, Ocean and Dundas Islands, plus numerous small islets and stacks. They are volcanic in origin and lie 465 kilometres to the south of New Zealand. The islands have a combined land area of approximately 625 square kilometres (500 square kilometres of which belongs to Auckland Island itself) and today have no permanent human inhabitants. We make our first landing at Sandy Bay, the main breeding ground for the New Zealand (Hooker's) Sea Lion, and from there set off to explore the island's stunted Southern Ratta (*Metrosideros umbellata*) forest, tussock grass and megaherb meadows and open moorland.

This is an exciting place for birds and we hope to see a variety of endemic and commoner species during our time here. The majestic Southern Royal Albatross breed on the windswept slopes of Enderby Island along with the smaller - but even more beautiful - Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, perhaps one of the most soul stirring seabirds of them all and a true icon of the Southern Ocean. There are also Northern Giant Petrel to be found along with Auckland Island Shag, Auckland Island Teal, Auckland Island Banded Dotterel, Auckland Island Tomtit, Bellbird, Red-crowned Parakeet and the endearing Yellow-eyed Penguin which breed in the gnarled and twisted Ratta forests. We will also spend some time searching for the enigmatic Subantarctic Snipe which can be very elusive, but we have a very good chance of finding here. Other more familiar species that have set up home on the Auckland Islands include Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird and, of course, European Starling!



Southern Royal Albatross

Day 7

Auckland Islands

This morning we will cruise into Carnley Harbour in the south of the main Auckland Islands. Weather permitting we hope to make a landing at South-west Cape so the more energetic amongst us can climb up to the Shy Mollymawk colony located here. Gibson's Wandering Albatross nest above their smaller cousins amongst the tussock grasses and we hope to enjoy views of this magnificent bird displaying to one another; with the longest wings in the avian world outstretched. Those opting not to take this strenuous hike will enjoy a zodiac cruise along the coastal forests with a chance to see New Zealand Falcon and enjoy close encounters with other woodland and coastal birds. Around mid-afternoon we will depart the Auckland islands and head south-west towards Macquarie Island.

Day 8

At Sea

We will awake this morning to a 360 degree view of the open ocean. Today will be spent at sea, but there is plenty to entertain us during this time as the ship will be accompanied for much of the journey



Orca

by a wonderful variety of exciting seabirds ranging in size from the tiny Black-bellied Storm Petrel to the magnificent Wandering Albatross. Some of commoner species to look out for include the attractive White-headed Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Antarctic Prion, Shy, Southern Royal, White-capped, Campbell and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, White-chinned Petrel and Mottled Petrel. All these, and more, will test our seabird identification skills to the limit, but we must be sure to keep our eyes

down as well as up for any passing cetaceans such as Orca, Sperm Whale and Hourglass and Dusky Dolphins. For those wishing to warm up, the crew will also offer a series of interesting lectures and

videos on the biology and history of the Subantarctic Islands. This part of our voyage takes us in a south-westerly direction both into Australian waters and also directly into the rough seas of the 'Furious Fifties'!

Days 9 & 10

Macquarie Island

We have 2 days to explore Macquarie Island, for many the undoubted highlight of a highlight-packed cruise. The crossing may have been choppy, but the rewards are well worth the journey for this isolated outpost is home to one of the greatest concentrations of wildlife in the southern hemisphere!



Penguin Colony, Macquarie Island

Macquarie Island lies approximately half-way between Australia and Antarctica and has been recognized as part of the Australian state of Tasmania since 1900; becoming a State Reserve in 1978 and a World Heritage Site 10 years later. The island is approximately 34 kilometres long and 5 kilometres wide, volcanic in nature and lies astride the Indo-Australian and Pacific plate boundary. Macquarie Island, which has never been part of a continent, is geologically unusual. It emerged above sea level between 90,000 and 300,000 years ago and is a rare example of uplifted oceanic crust formed about 27 million years ago at depths of between 2,000 and 4,000 metres. An outstanding example of a major stage of the earth's evolutionary history, it is perhaps the best preserved fragment of deep oceanic crust known above sea level.

Since Macquarie lies further south and closer to Antarctica than the New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands,



Southern Elephant Seal

its ecology reflects this more southern latitude. Amongst the island's 4 million pairs of penguins, an estimated 850,000 pairs of Royal Penguins nest. This is the only breeding site for this attractive species which crowd the rocky coastline with equally large numbers of King, Gentoo and Rockhopper Penguins. Around 2,000 pairs of Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses also breed here along with smaller numbers of Wandering Albatross, plus Imperial (Macquarie) Shag, Brown Skua, Southern

Giant Petrels, Cape Petrel, Common Diving Petrel, Antarctic Prion and Antarctic Tern. Huge Elephant Seals crowd the beaches whilst offshore pods of Orcas are occasionally seen patrolling the coasts. Since much of the wildlife here is wonderfully confiding and has no fear of humans, the photographers amongst us will be in their element. We plan landings at both the ANARE research station and at Sandy Bay and enjoy a zodiac cruise around Lusitania Bay, home to the largest King Penguin colony on the island. Around mid to late afternoon of Day 10 we must leave Macquarie Island and begin our journey to the legendary Campbell Islands far to the north-east.



Day 11

At Sea

A day at sea on route to Campbell Island and time to relax, listen to lectures, edit your photographs or continue honing your seabird identification skills on the wealth of petrels, albatrosses and prions following the ship.

Day 12

Campbell Island

Arriving early in the morning we will spend the day exploring Campbell Island by foot from Perseverance Harbour. The Campbell Island group has also been designated a World Heritage Site, but has the additional honour of having been officially confirmed as 'rat free' in 2003 after a 3 year eradication programme totally eliminated the Brown Rats that had plagued the nesting birds for over 200 years. Today, these uninhabited islands are a haven for a wide variety of nesting seabirds and other wildlife, although the target of our visit here will be the albatrosses, in particular the Southern Royal Albatrosses that gather here each southern summer to breed. The opportunity to sit amongst these magnificent creatures is an experience never to be forgotten. We are sure to witness groups engaged in the so-called 'Gamming Ritual', the graceful display whereby two or three birds face each other, bow, bill fence and open their wings. Others will be sitting quietly on their nests or gliding past held aloft by two of the longest wings in the avian world.

Other species to look out for during our time on Campbell Island include Rockhopper Penguin, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Campbell Island Shag, Southern Skua, Red-billed Gull, Antarctic Tern, the elusive Campbell Island Teal, New Zealand Pipit and, for anyone missing the UK birds, Dunnock, Blackbird and Starling. The regeneration of the 'megaherbs' following the removal of the sheep in the 1970's and 1980's is also a spectacle to behold!



Day 13

At Sea



Fluttering Shearwater

Our final day at sea on route to the Port of Bluff. A chance to relax and reflect on what will have been an amazing experience or enjoy lecturers and other presentations. Others may choose to venture out on deck for a last session of seabird watching and a final look at the abundance of albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters that grace these southern seas or perhaps pick up a few new species such as Grey-faced Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel or Fluttering Shearwater.

Day 14

Disembark Port of Bluff and fly Auckland

We will awake to the familiar sights and sounds of Port of Bluff. We have now come full circle and following breakfast we will say our sad farewells to the ship's crew and expedition staff before disembarking and making our way to Invercargill or Queenstown Airport to catch a flight to Auckland.

Day 15

Depart Auckland

We will depart Auckland, starting on our long journey home.

Day 16

Depart Auckland

We are due to arrive at London's Heathrow Airport around late morning.

Tour grading

Grade B. Day walks only, but on rough terrain. Entering and leaving the zodiac craft can present a few difficulties on occasion (the sea is often choppy and beaches rocky/slippery), however there are always plenty of crew to lend a hand if necessary. Longer walks are occasionally offered for those who wish to stretch their legs but please be aware that there are very few footpaths on these islands and the terrain can be steep and rough. As such an average level of fitness is required to get the most out of this tour.

It is also important that you are able to get up and down the stepped gangway from the ship to the water level to board the zodiac craft. Should you require additional information on the above please give the Naturetrek office a call on 01962 733051.

Please remember that you are travelling in remote areas without access to sophisticated medical facilities, so we would ask you not to join the tour if you have a life-threatening condition, need daily medical treatment or have difficulty walking over rough terrain.

Weather

The Sub-Antarctic Islands have a predominantly cool and windy climate with temperatures in November to January around 4°C to 8°C. The occasional wet day is to be expected and should be packed for. The 'Heritage Adventurer' is air-conditioned and heated throughout with individual controls in each cabin. Sea conditions are often rough.

Group size

Naturetrek will take a limited number of cabins on this cruise. Groups of over 10 clients will be joined by a Naturetrek naturalist guide. Groups of under 10 will be guided during the voyage by the onboard expedition leaders and co-leaders. The 'Heritage Adventurer' carries a maximum of 140 passengers (plus crew).

Food & accommodation

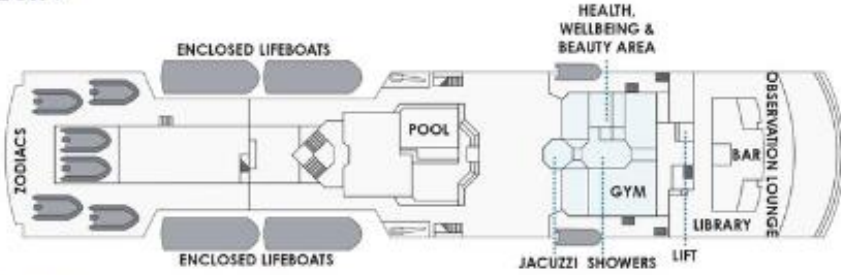
All food and accommodation is included in the cost, except for evening meals and lunches in Queenstown, Port of Bluff and on stopovers en-route. For our night in Queenstown we use a comfortable tourist hotel with private facilities.

For this holiday we will be joining the 'Heritage Adventurer' a pioneering expedition vessel that combines polar outfitting with stylish accommodation. She was built in 1991 in Finland, and although designed as an ice-strengthened research vessel, she has since been completely refurbished and refitted to provide comfortable passenger accommodation for a maximum of 140 guests. The 'Heritage Adventurer' has central heating and will be manned by an enthusiastic crew and staff (tour leaders, hotel managers and cook).

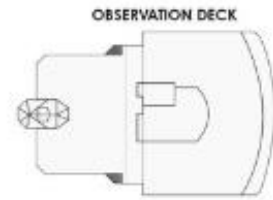
The ship is well suited for Expedition Cruising with a large bridge and good open deck viewing areas. She has a full compliment of Zodiac crafts (rubber inflatable landing craft) which will enable shore landings and wildlife viewing opportunities in otherwise inaccessible areas. Finally the ship has a lounge with bar, lecture room, library, pool, health suite and a small, on-board hospital and doctor.

All cabins have a desk, portholes/windows and ample storage. The tour cost is based on deck 4 superior cabins. There are 24 deck 4 superior double or twin cabins (coloured dark green on the following deck-plan) with lower berths with private facilities (toilet and shower), 12 main deck single cabins (yellow) with king beds and private facilities, 2 main deck triple cabins (orange) with upper and lower berths - ie bunks - with private facilities, 22 deck 5 superior double or twin cabins (light green) with private facilities, 2 superior triple cabins (light blue) with upper and lower berths, 8 Worsley Suites (dark blue) with twin or double berths and 4 Heritage Suites (red)) double, both suites with private facilities. A deck plan is outlined below but for more information please call the Naturetrek office on 01962 733051:

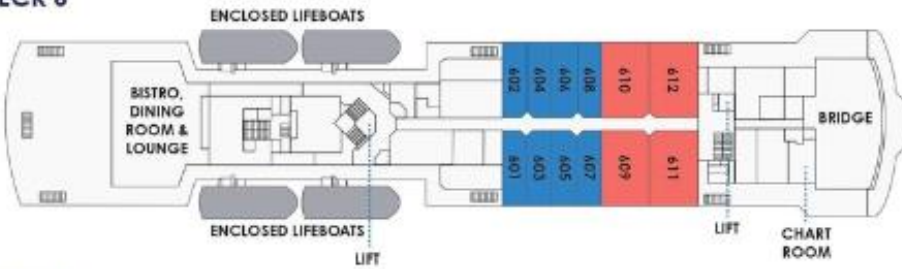
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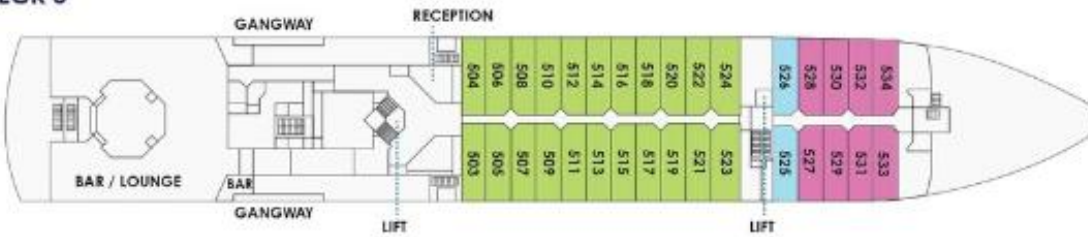
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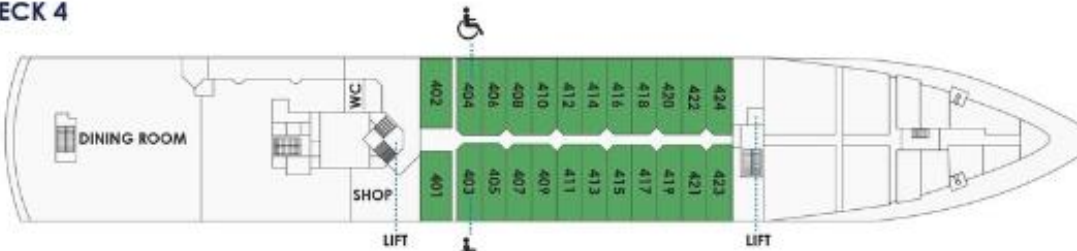
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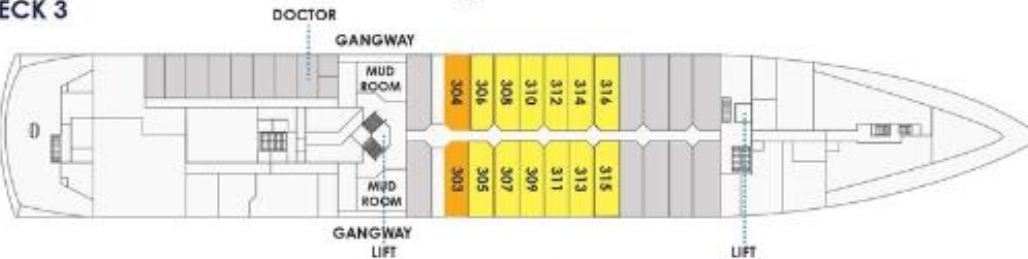
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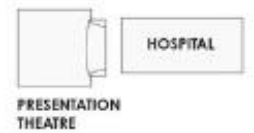
DECK 4



DECK 3



DECK 2



SUITE CATEGORIES

- HERITAGE SUITE
- SUPERIOR SINGLE
- DECK 4 SUPERIOR
- MAIN DECK SINGLE
- WORSLEY SUITE
- DECK 5 SUPERIOR
- MAIN DECK TRIPLE
- SUPERIOR TRIPLE

Extra expenses

All meals are included in the cost of this holiday with exception of lunches and dinners in Queenstown, Auckland and Port of Bluff. Additional expenses include tips (approx US\$10 per day), drinks, locally payable airport taxes, entrance fees to museums, visas (if required) excursions whilst in Queenstown, Auckland and Port of Bluff and all items of a personal nature.

Extensions

For anyone wishing to extend their holiday, please do contact the Naturetrek office for ideas and options.

Regional Flights

Some regional airports will have flights that either connect with the group flights, or allow for more direct connections to New Zealand, so please do ask if you would like us to look at flight options from a regional airport.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking.
