

Antarctica, the Falklands & South Georgia

Naturetrek Tour Report

17 January - 8 February 2019



Gentoo Penguin by Tim Melling



Wilson's Storm Petrel by Peter Dunn



Neko Harbour by Ed Drewitt



Hourglass Dolphins by Tim Melling

Report & Images compiled by Ed Drewitt, Tim Melling & Peter Dunn



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Ship's Crew:

Ernesto Barria	Chile	Captain
and his international crew of 53 including:		
Tony Salo	Finland	First Officer
Diederik Scholten	The Netherlands	Second Officer
Igor Nazarov	Russia	Third Officer
Guntis Dizbite	Latvia	Chief Engineer
Sigi Penzenleitner	Austria	Hotel Manager
Melanie Penzenleitner	Austria	Assist. Hotel Manager
Heinz Hacker	Austria	Head Chef
Gaurav Bawa	India	Sous Chef
Veronique Verhoevan	Belgium	Ship's Physician

Oceanwide Expeditions:

Christian Genillard	Switzerland	Expedition Leader
Martin Berg	Sweden	Assist. Expedition Leader
Mark Vogler	USA	
Joselyn Fenstermacher	USA	
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Summary

Our 23-day adventure to the Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica was the trip of a lifetime to see huge colonies of penguins, many tens or hundreds of thousands strong, of King, Gentoo, Adelie, Rockhopper and Chinstrap Penguins, and large rookeries containing hundreds of Magellanic and Macaroni Penguins. In the productive waters of South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula we were rewarded with views of tens of whales all surfacing at once, with Fin and Humpback Whales dominating the cast alongside smaller numbers of Orcas, Sei, Antarctic Minke, Dwarf Minke, Southern Bottlenose and Gray's Beaked Whales. Dolphins came to join us at various locations between Ushuaia, the southern tip of Argentina and South Georgia, including Peale's and Hourglass Dolphins while several Commerson's Dolphins were seen at the Falklands. Rocky shores and beaches were full of Antarctic Fur Seals while Southern Elephant Seals were lounging on land at locations such as Gold Harbour and Grytviken.

The Antarctic Peninsula was magical landscape of ice, rock and sea with beautiful hanging glaciers, huge icebergs and thousands of penguins. Here we sailed in beautiful warm sunshine, encountering many pods of Orcas and resting Leopard, Weddell and Crabeater Seals on ice flows. The accompanying variety of birds during our two-day sea journeys between journeys made for constant entertainment with hundreds of albatrosses, prions, diving petrels, shearwaters, petrels and skuas. We also visited nesting Black-browed Albatrosses and Wandering Albatrosses, the longest-winged bird in the world. The expedition was topped and tailed with wildlife watching

around Ushuaia, and a visit to the Tierra del Fuego national park at the beginning. Both gave a chance to see the many birds, flowers, trees and landscapes that exist in this region which is the stepping stone further south to Antarctica.

Day 1

Thursday 17th January

Flying to Buenos Aires, Argentina

We were on the penultimate flight of the day out of Heathrow and, as the airport became quieter and quieter, we boarded the aircraft and took off at around 10.45pm (there was some delay due to earlier flights running late). The flight time was just under 14 hours.

Day 2

Friday 18th January

Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires and Ushuaia, Argentina

As we headed over Brazil, a crimson-orange sky announced the dawn. We arrived in Buenos Aires at just after 9am – it was pretty warm and bright after some earlier rain.

After a relatively straight forward security check we ticked off everybody as they received their luggage and boarded our coaches just outside the airport. A Chimango Caracara was perched up on the corner of a building and Brown-chested Martins fluttered overhead. A Chalk-browed Mockingbird was flying around the airport structures. We boarded our various coaches and headed to Costanera Sur, a nature reserve on the east side of the city. Along the journey we saw a few more Chimango Caracaras, several Southern Crested Caracaras and various pigeons including Eared, Feral and the Woodpigeon-size Picazuro Pigeon. Other birds included a Bare-faced Ibis, American Kestrel, and Southern Lapwings.

We arrived at Costanera Sur with Monk Parakeets and Feral Pigeons flying around as we exited the coaches. After lining up for our lunch bags and some delicious Argentinian savoury pastries, we explored the esplanade for wetland and parkland birds. Rufous Horneros and Bay-winged Cowbirds (Greyish Baywing) – similar and with ruddy-coloured wings – were amongst the pigeons and parakeets. The water was filled with a bewildering variety of waterbirds. Down by the marsh several Neotropic Cormorants were perched, while Common Gallinules and juvenile Wattled Jacanas foraged amongst the weeds. A few Rosybill Pochards were on the water while others rested on an area of soil on an island, alongside two Southern Lapwings, turtles and several Silver Teal. A pair of Ringed Teal rested on another island and Richard spotted a Speckled Teal, with a yellow bill, between them. Nearby, Guira Cuckoos were often in the bushes and trees; one even came down to some bread in front of us. Hidden in the watery vegetation a Southern Screamer was lurking and later two circled overhead. House Sparrows and Starlings were amongst the Shiny Cowbirds and pigeons. A Red-crested Cardinal also came down. Across the road several Rufous-breasted Thrushes were foraging alongside a few Rufous Horneros. As we headed back to the coach a Cattle Tyrant - very similar to a Tropical Kingbird - was perched by some statues; its colours were more washed out and it was a slighter bird. Other birds included a warm brown Rufescent Tiger Heron, Limpkins, Eared Doves, a close Picazuro Pigeon in a bush and a Brown-chested Martin perching on the iron fencing and visiting its nest – an old Rufous Hornero's nest!

We headed off at 1pm to the smaller local airport by the river, which was about 20 minutes away. They opened several more desks for us so they could process our group quickly, but as the flight was an hour later than originally scheduled we didn't need to rush.

At 5.30am we left the runway, heading over the city and then south over a patchwork countryside. Three hours later we began our descent and when we flew beneath the clouds we were presented with a spectacular landscape of mountains – many with patches of snow, forest, open water and a steppe-like habitat. It wasn't unlike Scotland's Western Isles. We arrived just after 9pm and after receiving our luggage we met our guides and boarded our buses. We had a 20-minute bus ride to our hotel which was a little way up a mountain. On the way we passed the harbour lagoon where Crested Ducks and Red Shovelers were feeding at low tide.

After the excitement of everyone arriving, getting their room cards and settling into their rooms, many came down to a three-course dinner (pre-booked) or some bar food, before heading for a late bedtime.

Day 3

Saturday 19th January

Tierra del Fuego and Ushuaia, Argentina

GPS position at 1600: 54°49'S, 068°17'W

Air Temp: 15°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: Light Sea state: 1

We awoke to a bright morning with a pair of Southern Crested Caracaras on the ground outside many of our rooms. Austral Thrushes, Black-chinned Siskins, Patagonian Sierra-finches, Rufous-collared Sparrows and a White-crested Elaenia were foraging around the hotel.

While Ed and Peter went with everyone's luggage to a safe location near the harbour, Tim took many of the group out birdwatching around the hotel grounds. The morning walk by the hotel gave us an opportunity to explore the nearby Southern Beech woodland and here we had some great views of some local specialties including Patagonian Sierra Finch, Chilean Swallow, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Austral Thrush and three different species of Caracara plus an Austral Parakeet. Nearby we found Dolphin Gull and Black-faced Ibises.

At 10am we boarded coaches with our guides and headed to the national park of Tierra del Fuego to explore the evergreen and deciduous woodlands. We rotated around the three locations mentioned below.

Ensenada Zaratiegui

Our first stop was a stunning location looking out across Ensenada Bay with a spectacular backdrop of mountains. It was quite windy here, but mild, as we walked a short way through the Southern Beech (*Nothofagus* spp) woodland, where the trees manage to entwine their roots in a rocky shoreline with very little soil. Out on the choppy water we made out several grebe-like Blue-eyed Shags and Rock Shags with very white underparts and heads, while Black-browed Albatross was also spotted. A few Giant Petrels were seen as we headed back. Dark-bellied Cinclodes and a Peregrine were spotted by some.

Roca Lake

At Roca Lake a distant pair of Great Grebes rested showing their chestnut breasts, while their occasionally raised heads revealed their black feathering. Along the beach tame Patagonian Sierra-finches were feeding along with numerous Rufous-collared Sparrows. A male Black-chinned Siskin was washing in the water with two juveniles

in tow. We slowly walked along the edge of the lake towards our lunch spot by the visitor centre, looking out across the mountainous landscape. Along the way we enjoyed spotting Green Orchids, striking (and tame) Thorn-tailed Rayaditos behaving like Treecreepers, a family of Upland Geese, a tame juvenile Black-crowned Night Heron and a pair of Black-necked Swans. A group of Yellow-billed Pintails were busy dabbling on the other side of the water and another Great Grebe was resting close to a nest. Other birds included two Austral Parakeets, Chilean Swallow and a House Wren.

At our lunch spot, two Flying Steamer Ducks were resting on the edge of an island and several Yellow-billed Pintails fed on the water's edge close to us. Some were lucky to see a snipe within feet of where they were walking and a tame Chimango Caracara was looking for scraps by the visitors centre. A family of Upland Geese were feeding nearby and giving great encounters before we had to move on. A condor-like bird soaring up above a mountain peak was in fact a Black-chested Buzzard-eagle, with a short tail and white underparts. However one group succeeded in seeing an Andean Condor and a Black-chested Buzzard-eagle flying together later on with good comparison of the size differences amongst other features.

Miradaor Lapataia and Bahia Lapataia

This was a walk through a woodland of Lenga trees, mostly covered in lichens, Feathery or False Mistletoe (*Misodendrum punctulatum*) and Indian Bread (*Cyttaria darwinii*) - tiny, ball-shaped fungi. Highlights included House Wrens, Tufted-tit Tyrant, Black-chinned Siskins, and a juvenile Austral Thrush (looked like a juvenile Blackbird). We looked out across Bahia Lapataia, with magnificent views of the lagoon which entered into the Beagle Channel. We walked down and along the boardwalks, passing a family of resting Upland Geese and a family of Crested Ducks. By the lagoon we saw a Coscoroba Swan (the first recorded here), a group of Rock Shags, a family of Flightless Steamer Ducks and a flyover pair of Ash-headed Geese, which circled overhead several times. Other birds included Dark-bellied Cinclodes, Magellanic Oystercatcher and Chilean Skua. We finished off with an obliging Austral Pygmy Owl perched in a dead bush.

After a beautiful day exploring the national park, we headed to the port of Ushuaia to board our ship, the Ortelius – here the sea was quite rough, and the odd Southern Giant Petrel glided past along with Kelp Gulls. South American Terns were common both in port and further out in the Beagle Channel. Boarding Ortelius started around 4pm and we were soon checked in by our Hotel Manager and his assistants (Siggy and Melany). Aboard Ortelius we settled into our rooms, had various briefings and a safety drill and met with the Oceanwide expedition team. Just after 6pm we were on our way, leaving Ushuaia and heading through the Beagle Channel towards the Falklands. Looking outside revealed Black-browed Albatrosses drifting past. Chilean Skuas and Blue-eyed Shags were common, with hundreds of the latter on one island. Several Magellanic Penguins were seen swimming on the sea amongst large waves. After dinner we were able to spend some time outside to enjoy the albatrosses, gulls and shags, before a well-earned rest.

Day 4

Sunday 20th January

Sailing to the Falklands

GPS position at 0800: 54°05'S, 064°09'W

Air Temp: 11°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: WNW 4 Sea state: 2

At first light there were lots of Sooty Shearwaters streaming past alongside the much larger Black-browed Albatrosses.

Christian's dulcet tones awakened us at 7.30 this morning with some information about weather and our progress towards the Falklands. After enjoying a buffet breakfast, many of us wrapped up warm and went outside to watch the seabirds which are in their element here. Pintados (Cape Petrels) skimmed the water close at hand, and further afield giant petrels and several species of albatross glided along, using the air currents to demonstrate their skill at dynamic soaring. At the other end of the scale there were tiny Wilson's Storm Petrels darting low over the waves – the smallest species to be seen here. Common Diving Petrels with fast, whirring wings were also common.

However, the real stars today were the dolphins. We had several encounters, first with Peale's Dolphins surfacing by the ship followed a short while later by Hourglass Dolphins, a less frequently encountered species. The Hourglass Dolphins were smaller, with much greater contrasting black and white (rather than diffuse grey colours), and an obvious white hourglass shape along their sides.

Peter did an excellent presentation on separating the many different seabirds at 10.30am, followed by further seawatching before lunch. Conditions were lovely – beautiful sunshine, warm temperatures (relative – 11 degrees Celsius) and a trickle of birds, despite being in a less productive area. Highlights included more Wilson's Storm Petrels, Slender-billed Prions, a Northern Giant Petrel (dark bill tip) and an adult Southern Royal Albatross, with its slow laboured wing beats and then free-gliding over the ocean! The prions were very light grey in the sunshine making their diagonal wing bars difficult to see at times.

After a delicious lunch Ed gave a cetacean identification presentation at 3pm. We then headed back out to see what was happening on the sea. Things had picked up, largely thanks to the wind dropping and a nearby fishing vessel. The birds were homing in on what the vessel was leaving behind and with the light winds many birds, especially the albatrosses, were sitting on the sea. There were hundreds of Black-browed Albatrosses, Wilson's Storm Petrels and Slender-billed Prions (and a few Antarctic Prions seen later on). The occasional White-chinned Petrel glided past – much blacker and larger than a Sooty Shearwater. In amongst the Black-browed Albatrosses we saw at least three Southern Royal Albatrosses (and another that glided past), the first just sleeping with its head hidden. Other wildlife included Magellanic Penguins, South American Fur Seals and South American Sealion.

Day 5

Monday 21st January

Falkland Islands: Carcass and Saunders Islands

0800 GPS position: 51°18'S, 060°38'W

Air Temp: 9°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: SW 4 Sea state: 3

During the night we sailed into the Falklands Islands which were on view out of our portholes as we woke. Overnight rain cleared, although low cloud lingered over the islands. Pre-breakfast we saw several Magellanic Diving Petrels, Brown Skuas, Blue-eyed Shags, Magellanic Penguins, Gentoo Penguin, a Cabot's Tern and Southern American Terns.

As soon as we finished breakfast we prepared for our first land trip, on Carcass Island. The first wildlife we spotted were Falkland Steamer Ducks on the sea, two yearling Southern Elephant Seals on the beach, tame Blackish Cinclodes and a Magellanic Oystercatcher. One fortunate Zodiac group had views of Commerson's Dolphins bow-riding. Amongst the grasses and on the beach several large sandy-brown Cobb's Wrens were

foraging. One even perched for a short while on a dead penguin. These wrens are endemic to the Falklands and are only found on rat-free islands such as this one. White-bridled or Black-throated Finches often popped out of the grasses, showing off their yellow tails. Some of the group saw one or two small and striking Grass Wrens. The area was covered in Diddle-dee heath (*Empetrum rubrum*), tussock grasses (*Poa flabellata*) and ferns.



Up on one steep grassy plateau a small group of Gentoo Penguins were nesting, while on another Magellanic Penguins were hanging out. As we headed out over the grassy terrain, we had views of two Magellanic or South American Snipe feet away as they fed or slept. As the area opened out, we came into a magnificent arena busy with geese, penguins and small passerines. The Gentoo Penguins were nesting out on the open, short grassland and had well-grown chicks. Adults were moving between the colony and the beach, while youngsters were sometimes following, and running after their parents. Spread out amongst burrows with some taller vegetation, the Magellanic Penguins were nesting, and often one parent with a half-grown chick or two were resting. We had lots of time to stop and simply watch the penguins as they went about their daily activities. Some adult Gentoo Penguins were in full moult, sitting on the grass with a ring of moulted feathers around them. On closer inspection of their red poo we could see the abundant remains of the crustaceans that they had been eating.

Across the open area groups of Upland Geese were grazing with pairs or threes of the smaller Ruddy-headed Geese amongst them. Kelp Geese were also seen. Black-chinned Siskins, Black-throated Finches and Long-tailed Meadowlarks were feeding in small flocks on the ground; the meadowlarks had variable red breasts and well-marked black and brown backs and wings. Austral Thrushes were often foraging amongst the penguins and out in the open. Upright Dark-faced Ground-tyrants were also foraging in the open areas, like a Wheatear would do. Along the beach Gentoo and Magellanic Penguins were entering the water and vanishing, while others were appearing and heading back to their young. Over a dozen Falkland Steamer Ducks, in pairs, were resting, washing or preening on the sand and in the clear sea water. Occasionally males chased after one another, using their strong wings to 'steam' across the water – bare yellow skin areas had developed on the bend of their wings. One female was preening while her five ducklings huddled together on the sand. Darkish Cinclodes were busy foraging along the shoreline with the odd ground-tyrant. A pair of Striated Caracaras rested up on a cliff of sand above the beach, sometimes tugging up some of the grasses growing there. Turkey Vultures rested on the rocks above, waiting for some carrion no doubt! Two Rufous-chested Dotterels were resting on the short grassland;

one took off while the other, a juvenile, stayed put. After two and a half hours we headed back to the Zodiacs and were all back on the *Ortelius* just after midday.

After a delicious lunch we got ready again at 2.30pm for another trip in the Zodiacs, this time heading to the island of Saunders. As we sailed towards the shore many people spotted a surfacing Sei Whale. Minding the penguins stood on the beach we had a quick briefing and some of us met the landowner who was there to meet us in her Landrover. They manage thousands of sheep across the island.

Hundreds of Gentoo Penguins were nesting across The Neck, the thin sandy part of the island which joins the two rocky areas on either side. Almost at sea level, this area has been very dry and had been burnt by fire earlier in the season. However, the flowering Sea Cabbage (*Senecio candicans*) was at its best and providing nest material for the penguins. Many adult Gentoos were being harassed by their hungry chicks. One chick was having success, pecking its parent's bill until it regurgitated food for it. Further along the colony, 28 King Penguins were resting in one particular area, many with chicks hidden in a pouch over their feet. A few were in heavy moult. Over to our right was a heavily grazed hill-side where a group of juvenile Striated Caracaras were keeping busy finding various dead morsels of lamb or penguin. One pulled at Peter's tripod knocking it over! Amongst the sheep, Magellanic Penguins were poking their heads out of burrows, usually with a half-grown chick or two in tow. Brown Skuas frequently flew low overhead, often very close to the penguins, while Southern Giant Petrels occasionally glided low over The Neck.

Heading further up the hillside, along the north-side of the island, we spent time with hundreds of Rockhopper Penguins with half-grown young amongst the adults. Down on the beach everyone was able to enjoy watching the adult Rockhoppers swimming into the shallows before standing up and hopping along to the rocks and up towards the colony. Many stopped for a rest and a preen before continuing up the rocky cliffs. The rock itself was smooth or striated in places where the penguins climb.

Back on the hillside, and further along, we spent time with several different colonies of Black-browed Albatrosses with beautifully made mud nests (similar to flamingo nests), often on grassy tussocks and built in shallow gullies within the muddy cliffs. There was a mix of adults and chicks; the chicks will take over four months to fledge and most of these were already six to eight weeks old. Some pairs had no eggs or chicks and they were courting with a range of sounds, tail splaying and exaggerated beak and head movements.

Further along, a mixed colony of albatrosses, Rockhopper Penguins and Blue-eyed Shags were all busy with chicks. One shag nest had three black fluffy, reptilian-like chicks, all stretching upwards and begging for food. In another nest a chick was sleeping, laid out flat, stretching its wide webbed feet over the edge of the nest. Some adult shags walked right passed us while several albatrosses walked up to our level or above to open their wings and take off.

Other birdlife included Dolphin Gulls foraging along the tideline and amongst the penguin colonies, Snowy Sheathbills (6+) feeding on dead crabs amongst the rocks and sand near the Rockhoppers, Dark-faced Ground-tyrants, Austral Blackbirds and Black-throated Finch. On our arrival on the beach a group of Kelp Gulls and Magellanic Oystercatchers were resting – a Blackish Oystercatcher was seen too. Alongside the juvenile caracaras, some adults were also on the hillsides, resting or feeding on the carcass or limb of a dead bird. The

whole area we visited was a remarkable experience, with such a variety of sounds, behaviour, scenery and wildlife.

We were all back just after 6pm and, after a short rest, met again at 6.45pm for a checklist covering the past 5 days followed by a recap by the Oceanwide team at 7pm; this included a brief on tomorrow's plans in Stanley, a short resume of the Black-browed Albatrosses by Ruben and some biology on the Sea Cabbage – a relative of the sunflower - that we saw in abundance today.

Day 6

Tuesday 22nd January

Stanley, Falkland Islands

GPS position at 0800: 51°41'S, 057°51'W

Air Temp: 8°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: S 4 Sea state: Slight

Before breakfast we headed towards Stanley, the main settlement on the Falklands, under very low cloud and rain. Groups of Magellanic Penguins, with the odd Gentoo and Rockhopper, were surfacing close to the ship. At one point we disturbed a dozen Falkland Steamer Ducks, flapping against the water to move away. Sooty Shearwaters were with the ship early on, including a large flock of 100 or so resting on the sea. Blue-eyed Shags were present in large numbers too, with at one point a long line of 100 plus flying along the coastline. Penguins were on the sandy beaches and dunes, joined by several South American Fur Seals.

As we came into Stanley at breakfast time the rain eased and by the time we were disembarking we had bright sunshine. Stanley's brightly coloured buildings was a welcoming sight and after the quick zodiac shuttle to shore, folks scattered in various directions to explore the 2,000 inhabitant settlement, correctly termed a city as we now know, due to the presence of a cathedral. We had three hours to explore the town, visit the maritime museum, buy souvenirs and have a British cuppa. Many of the group followed the coastal town path west, spotting groups of Upland Geese, a Magellanic Oystercatcher side by side with a single and larger Blackish Oystercatcher, and a pair of Kelp Geese – the male is all white while the female is a mix of greys, blacks and browns making her very cryptic. Gardens and verges were covered in flowering Antarctic Hawkweed (*Hieracium antarcticum*). Rock Shags were passing by with nest material, Blue-eyed Shags were resting on various platforms such as a wrecked wooden ship, and Southern Giant Petrels were picking on the water's surface. In the town House Sparrows were common, and at the museum chicks were being fed in the eaves of a building. In the sunshine Turkey Vultures were sunning themselves on the chimneys of a house and on a line of cypress trees, opening their wings like cormorants. Other birds included Dolphin Gulls, Kelp Gulls, Crested Ducks, Brown Skuas, South American Terns and pairs of steamer ducks. Some groups on the Zodiacs were lucky to see a single Commerson's Dolphin at the bow. After our morning ashore, and with rucksacks bulging with new souvenirs and gifts, it was back to the Zodiacs for a return ride to our floating home. A Peregrine was seen as we left the islands.

During lunch we left Stanley and headed south-east away from the Falklands, beginning our two and a half days sail to South Georgia. Despite some thundery clouds (and some spectacular lightning) we managed to stay in the sunny areas of the sea. The sea was relatively calm with no 'white horses', and during the early part of the voyage the tall columnar blow of a whale was seen, probably from a Blue Whale. Meanwhile, there was a definite sighting of a surfacing Sei Whale. Throughout the afternoon various small pods of Peale's Dolphins, including one with a calf, rode the ship's bow wave before disappearing again. Some of the dolphins were splashing around, often turning on their sides and backs. Many seabirds were seen during the afternoon including Southern

Royal Albatrosses, a few Wandering Albatrosses, a single Light-mantled Albatross, several Slender-billed Prions, fast and erratic Soft-plumaged Petrels, our first Black-bellied Storm Petrels, quite a few Grey-backed Storm Petrels and Northern and Southern Giant Petrels. During our evening recap, Martin's bird talk was interrupted by sightings of a Northern Royal Albatross and a rarer Grey Petrel – similar in size to a Soft-plumaged Petrel, this bird is whiter underneath, with a dark cap and a flight more like that of a shearwater rising and falling above the sea.

Day 7

Wednesday 23rd January

At Sea towards South Georgia

GPS position at 0800: 52°19'S, 052°02'W

Air Temp: 9°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: WSW 6 Sea state: 3

The day started early for a few of us, rising early and making the most of the long summer mornings to view the diverse wildlife of the South Atlantic. Waking to an impressive landscape of ocean waves those up before breakfast were treated to numerous Wandering Albatrosses, of various ages, following the ship. Great Shearwaters, Soft-plumaged Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters and Southern Giant Petrels were also common. Peter and those up early also had several sightings of Grey Petrel.

The rest of us were roused from our slumber by the now familiar voice of Christian, our expedition leader. He let us know our position (150 miles off the Falkland Islands), the weather (bright, breezy, and 8 degrees Celsius), and our plans for the day (onwards to South Georgia!). After a restful night, and rejuvenated by a hearty buffet breakfast, we headed into the lecture theatre for a briefing by Christian about the rules for visiting South Georgia and Antarctica. We learned that although South Georgia is not part of Antarctica, it also applies IAATO rules for visitors to the island. The rules are designed to minimise disturbance to the unique landscapes and wildlife; ensuring that we take nothing but photos and leave nothing but footsteps. The briefing was followed by a video about South Georgia which presented a lot of information mixed with beautiful shots from the island. Afterwards we donned our jackets, binoculars, and cameras and headed out onto the decks, hoping to spot seabirds and cetaceans. Just as our thoughts turned to food Siggi announced that it was lunch time, and we made our way to the dining room for soup and a variety of delicacies at the buffet table.

In the afternoon we headed to the bar where a variety of vacuum cleaners were laid out, as it was time to undertake a biosecurity check on our gear. We hoovered pockets, seams, and webbing and used paperclips to pick every single grain of sand and seed from the Velcro on our garments. The cleaning took most of the afternoon, but it was satisfying knowing that we could visit South Georgia without causing any harm to the environment.

Throughout the rest of the day we had the opportunity to watch Wandering Albatrosses, the odd Southern Royal Albatross, many Black-bellied Storm Petrels, Great Shearwaters, Soft-plumaged Petrels, and Northern and Southern Giant Petrels. The sea was moody and very rough at some points, although by early evening it had softened a little. Despite the 'white horses', Hourglass Dolphins were spotted on several occasions, one school visiting the bow of the ship. Some were fortunate to see two olive-green Southern Bottlenose Whales surface briefly in front of the ship on the starboard side, before disappearing under again. Close inspection of Tim's photos revealed the distinctive swirling teeth marks that another animal had made as part of fighting or sexual display.

Day 8

Thursday 24th January

At Sea towards South Georgia & Shag Rocks

GPS position at 0800: 53°11'S, 044°48'W

Air Temp: 10°C Sea Temp: 3°C Wind: SW 4 Sea state: 2

This morning we awoke to beautiful sunshine and light winds which continued throughout the day. Occasional Wandering Albatrosses glided past and throughout the day various Wilson's Storm Petrels, a Common Diving Petrel, Black-bellied Storm Petrels, White-chinned Petrels, Sooty Shearwaters and prions flew past. A new albatross also came close to the boat, a stunning Grey-headed Albatross, with a soft grey head and a black and yellow bill. A Light-mantled Albatross also glided past and a King Penguin was swimming on the sea's surface.

A few very early risers had seen several Sei Whales. Before breakfast many more people saw the blows of Fin Whales spread out across the sea, and caught occasional glimpses of their backs before they slipped away. Mid-morning a group of four Southern Bottlenose Whales, including one calf, passed in front of the bow and along the starboard side of the ship, giving excellent views. These deep diving cetaceans came up four or five times with large splashy blows, showing off their coffee-cream coloured scarred skin which whitened towards their heads, some individuals being darker than others. Some captured photos of the large melon and beak. Just before lunch was called at 12.30pm several Humpback and Fin Whales were spotted, including one Fin Whale which surfaced close to the ship before deep-diving.

After lunch the sea swell had increased and seabirds were suddenly everywhere, particularly mixed flocks of Slender-billed and Antarctic Prions, Blue Petrels (with white-tipped tails) and White-chinned Petrels. During the afternoon Christophe took everyone back in time with a historical account of the explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, his expedition and its relevance to South Georgia. He got everyone quite excited for the upcoming days.

We passed Shag Rocks at just after 4pm where thousands of South Georgia Shags were standing on the guano-covered peaks. These shark-fin shaped formations are the peaks of shallow underwater rocks made from green schist, a hard metamorphic rock from deep down in the Earth's crust. In the distance, clouds of white spray were a sign of waves breaking on the smaller Black Rock. The tilted rocks formed 150 million years ago have very slowly eroded to their current state. Although the rocks look isolated and a long distance from South Georgia, their undersea formations connect together. Shag Rocks, along with South Georgia, are lumps of South America and Antarctica which have been on a tectonic "conveyor belt", moving hundreds of kilometres from their original location.

All around there were tall, obvious whale blows; as we continued beyond the rocks we were surrounded by mainly Fin Whales blowing (30+) and lunge feeding close to the sea's surface. A small number of Humpbacks surfaced and dived too. At some points six to eight or more blows could be seen almost simultaneously! The low winds and relatively calm sea were ideal conditions for whale watching and spotting whale blows. Seabirds were swirling around the whale activity ready to pick off any food that the whales had left behind. Other animals included several more Grey-headed Albatrosses, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, Wilson's Storm Petrels, a single Fairy Prion, two Kelp Gulls, Hourglass Dolphins, Antarctic Fur Seal and Southern Elephant Seal. That night we closed up our portholes to keep the light in (to prevent bird strikes) and we eagerly anticipated arriving in South Georgia the coming morning.

Day 9

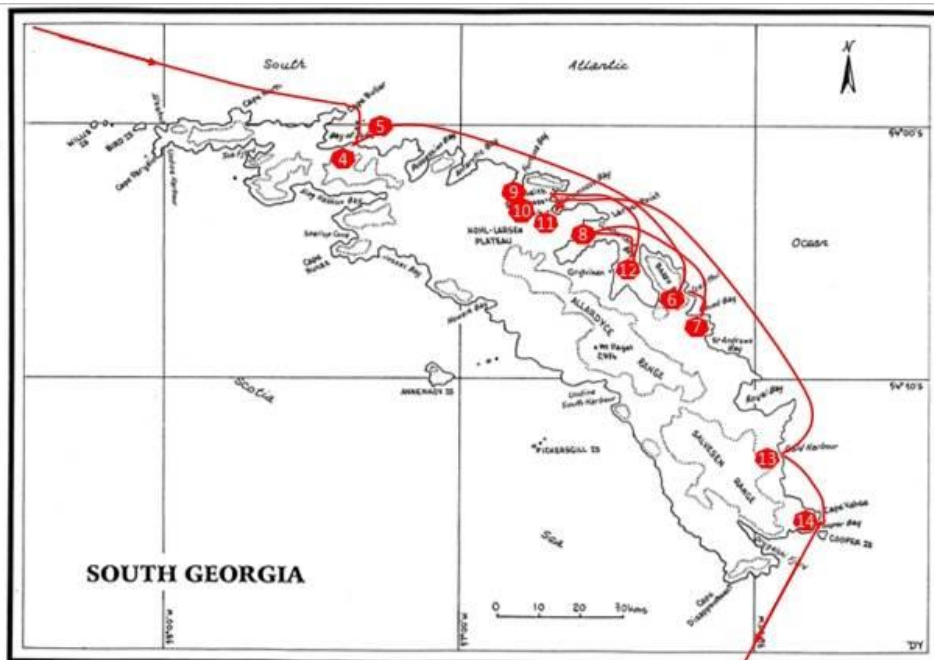
Friday 25th January

South Georgia: Salisbury Plain and Prion Island

GPS position at 0800: 54°02'S, 037°24'W

Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 3°C Wind: NW 6 Sea state: 2

- 4 Salisbury Plain
- 5 Prion Island
- 6 Godthul
- 7 Ocean Harbour
- 8 Cumberland West Bay
- 9 Leith Harbour
- 10 Stromness Harbour
- 11 Husvik Harbour
- 12 Grytviken
- 13 Gold Harbour
- 14 Cooper Bay



This morning we were greeted by very low cloud, mist and rain plus the odd iceberg. Two Humpbacks and a possible beaked whale were seen surfacing before breakfast. By 8.30am we headed into the Bay of Islands to tour the fjords and glaciers. As we passed by huge penguin colonies it quickly became clear that the forecast of strong winds and heavy rain wasn't as bad as first thought. A group of giant petrels, a dozen Wilson's Storm Petrels and two Cape Petrels were feeding on the floating corpse of a King Penguin.

After a check of the beach with the expedition guides, we had the all clear to disembark onto Salisbury Plain, the island's second largest rookery of 60,000 pairs of breeding King Penguins. They were everywhere, all across the pebbly beach, the low open grassy landscape and in huge concentrations east of the location where adults and half grown young were packed in, creeping all the way up the hillside – from a distance there was a faint yellow glow from their head and neck colouration. On the beach and shallow pools Antarctic Seal Pups were all over, usually sleeping and curled up, sometimes with their mother nearby.

Large groups of penguins were washing together in the sea close to the breaking waves. Some came right up to us for a closer look. Others, such as those moulting, just stood resting. The young penguins from this season were quite large and covered in coat of sooty-brown fluffy feathers, blowing when the breeze got up. Some older, juvenile penguins could be distinguished from the adults by having paler, washed out colours on their neck and head. Other birds on the island included South Georgia Pintails, South Georgia Pipits, Sub-Antarctic Skuas and Snowy Sheathbills. The wind suddenly increased to 30 knots, so everyone was encouraged back.

After lunch we sailed just a short distance to nearby Prion Island, where Wandering Albatrosses nest. The island had only recently re-opened after being closed for a few months to leave the female fur seals and newly born pups undisturbed. On the beach we were greeted by lots of fur seal pups amongst resting giant petrels and Gentoo Penguins. At low tide the pups were swimming and 'playing' in the nearby shallow waters. We passed tens of two-month old pups, often with their mothers nearby, resting on clumps of tussock grasses and often approaching us with all manner of seal-style barks and yelps. At the top we had remarkable views across to the mountains and nearby glaciers. Up to 11 Wandering Albatross nests were in view, with one very close by. Some groups spotted displaying pairs with bill clattering and opened wings. Sometimes the sleeping incubating adults raised their heads to look around or begin preening. Giant Petrels slept nearby, and a few were spotted on nests, including one occupied by a large, grey fluffy chick. Albatrosses glided low overhead, along with giant petrels and further away, White-chinned Petrels, which nest in burrows on the island. South Georgia Pipits were common and often flying over or washing in the fresh water puddles. Sub-antarctic Skuas were amongst the seal pups, with one pair right by the path for us to see close up. South Georgia Pintails were often seen flying past, including a group of eight.

Back on the sea, groups went out for Zodiac cruises to an area where a flock of first summer and juvenile Antarctic Terns were resting and flying around. Some boats spotted a pair of Light-mantled Albatross sitting cryptically beneath a slab of rock which was the same colour as them. Low tide revealed the beautiful green and red algae, followed by the kelp-type brown algae or sea weeds attached to the rocks. Above them bright yellow lichens covered the rocks. The water was filled with kelp, helping to absorb the sea's energy and provide a gentle sea. Gentoo Penguins, a few South Georgia Shags, South Georgia Pipits, and Sub-Antarctic Skuas were also seen.

At the evening recap, Tim reviewed the wildlife sightings for the day with folks diligently ticking their lists, followed by Ruben talking about the fabulous lives of White-chinned Petrels and the sighting of a colour-banded Wandering Albatross on the 23rd of January originating from research done by the British Antarctic Survey on Bird Island, South Georgia.

Day 10

Saturday 26th January

South Georgia: Godthul, Rookery Point & Cumberland West Bay Neumayer Glacier

GPS position at 0800: 54°17'S, 036°18'W

Air Temp: 11°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: light Sea state: smooth

Before breakfast at least 20 Humpback Whales were seen against the backdrop of South Georgia -a snow-clad mountainous coastline with tussock-covered coastal banks. Straight after breakfast we all headed out for a Zodiac Cruise at Godthul (Good Cove) looking for Macaroni Penguins. After a 20-minute ride up the coast to Rookery Point we entered into Rookery Bay with wide wave-cut rocky platforms, ideal for the penguins. We began to see our first Macaronis on the flat rocky platforms, while others porpoised in the sea close to the boats. We stopped further into the bay where waves crashed onto the rocks and penguins made their way out or into the wild waters. Further up the cliffs into the clumps of tussock we could see the Macaroni Penguins in their breeding areas. Nearby a Gentoo colony was also breeding on the higher vegetated ground. After spending some time with them we headed further into the bay where creches of Antarctica Fur Seals were swimming in the water or interacting on the beach; here several male fur seals with distinctive manes and an upright stance were looking over all the other animals. Small numbers of huge Southern Elephant Seals were resting on the beach while

Gentoo and King Penguins were here in small groups. Subantarctic Skuas were quartering overhead and a single Light-mantled Albatross soared in front of the grassy cliffs. Snowy Sheathbills, like white doves, were often on nearby cliffs or low-lying rocks while Kelp Gulls fed amongst the floating kelp. Tim spotted a small minke whale, probably a Dwarf Minke Whale.

We headed back into Godthul Bay where Ortelius was positioned, and the water was calm. Despite the rain which had now started, we hugged the coastline of this bay enjoying views of playing fur seal pups, sleeping elephant seals, male and female fur seals watching over the youngsters and small numbers of King Penguins. A Wilson's Storm Petrel foraged over the kelp close to our boats and South Georgia Pipits fed along the shoreline. South Georgia Pintail were spotted too.

The Southern Elephant Seals we were seeing were resting after many weeks at sea. While resting on the beaches their blood is allowed to flow close to the outer parts of their skin so they can moult and replace their fur. Research has revealed that elephant seals spend up to two hours underwater, diving down as deep as 2,200 metres, although more often 400 – 600 metres. Studies show that when foraging they spend very little time on the surface of the sea. They may make up to a dozen two-hour underwater trips in a day. While they are descending and ascending, they are able to sleep and conserve energy.

After lunch we headed south to Ocean Harbour, a beautiful area with a v-shaped valley (cut by a river), vegetated rocky slopes and a ship wreck. The Kelp Gulls were feeding amongst the kelp, and fur seals were resting on the shore, alongside small numbers of King Penguins. Just as we got ready for a launch to land, the winds picked up from land, and continued to do so. Our visit was aborted. In beautiful sunshine, strong winds and big waves, we headed north to Cumberland West Bay, with beautiful views of South Georgia on our port side.

Cumberland West Bay and Neumayer Glacier

We had an exhilarating sail north up the coast with incredible winds and waves. By 4pm we headed into Cumberland Bay and towards the west finger of Neumayer glacier, where icebergs and small blocks of ice were floating in the water. Neumayer was a 19th Century German geographer who in 1895 said Antarctica is last place left on the Earth that must be studied. We spent several hours working our way towards the calving glacier, which has retreated over many kilometres during the last 40 years. We passed all manner of interesting glacial features; this stagnating glacier has a smooth profile and has retreated back onto land where the ice melts much more slowly without water lapping away at it from beneath.

The gale got up to 48 knots, with gusts reaching force nine and ten on the Beaufort scale. Many people were out on the ship to safely experience the incredible winds. Over the icebergs many Snow Petrels were seen, with at one point 14 together over the whipping sea and ice. Peter and a lucky few saw a Leopard Seal pop its head up above the water many times. Colourful, bright rainbows spanned the fjord. White-chinned Petrels glided across the water, aided by the strong winds. Fur seals often popped their heads up and swam beneath the sea, visible in the clear water. The Ortelius stopped very close to the front of Neumayer Glacier where the view was stunning, with rays of sunlight piercing the clouds to reach the ice. The wind helped turn Ortelius and we headed back out with the wind behind us, the sunshine providing beautiful landscape views of the mountainous areas. On shore, small groups of King Penguins could occasionally be seen.

As we headed back out, we met for our recap and Laurence gave a brilliant presentation about glaciers and some of the features we saw this afternoon. Twenty-thousand years ago South Georgia was covered by a huge ice cap and today it is a glaciated landscape with areas that have been modified by glaciers. The first glacier we passed today was covered in debris and looked very black. Here the ice has been melting on the surface and rock sediment has become concentrated at the top. Once the rock sediment is five to ten centimetres thick it insulates the ice beneath and slows the melt. For glaciers to be covered like this there needs to be enough debris in the ice in the first place, and a lot of subsequent ice melt.

Day 11

Sunday 27th January

South Georgia: Stromness Bay & Grytviken

GPS position at 0800: 54°12'S, 036°33'W

Air Temp: 5°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: W 9 Sea state: 2

Strong winds continued overnight and we awoke to gusts of 40 knots. We were surrounded by a beautiful mountainous landscape, with the peaks covered in a fresh layer of snow. Snow Petrels flew close to shore and giant petrels and White-chinned Petrels glided past with such ease while fur seals popped their heads out of the sea. We closed in on Jason Harbour, where King Penguins nest amongst the tussock grasses. The winds remained strong so we continued a little south to Leigh Harbour and Stromness Harbour, the latter which Shackleton reached after his arduous journey.

The Endurance, in which Shackleton and his team sailed sank, in October 1915, 600 miles south of Elephant Island. They walked 600 miles across ice to the island and arrived in April 1916, 6 months later. Some of the team, including Shackleton then sailed 828 miles in an open boat and arrived on the west side of South Georgia 16 days later in hurricane force winds. Incredibly, they then travelled over the mountains and ended up at the whaling station in Stromness on the east coast. They got help and took a further four months and four attempts to sail a ship to rescue the remaining men on Elephant Island. From their ship sinking it was nearly a year until the whole team was rescued on the 30 August 1916.

We sailed into Leigh Harbour first, where South Georgia's largest whaling station still stands, dilapidated in many parts and rusting. This station even had a cinema, attracting whalers from all around to visit in the evening to watch films. South of the station a cemetery was easily visible where 57 men were buried between 1917 and 1961. Kelp Gulls, with recently fledged young in pristine plumage were flying and calling around the boat alongside several Northern Giant Petrels which the gulls quickly chased off. A small group of Snowy Shearwaters were on the rocks by the station itself. All along the rocky shorelines Antarctic Seal pups were resting and calling.

We then spent a little time looking towards the whaling station at Stromness, opened in 1913 and to which Shackleton trekked for help three years later. Although the expedition ship Fram, was also seeking shelter here, we were able to look across the site imagining the journey Shackleton and his two colleagues must have made. Despite being closed in 1961, scanning across the site revealed them any different buildings, storage containers and vehicles, such as tractors, used when the site was still in use. In its final 30 years it was used as a ship repair yard. Again, along the shore tens of fur seals were hauled out. Ruben spotted a pair of Light-mantled Albatross casually soaring together as part of their courtship display before settling on a vegetated hillside.

Before heading along the coast south to Grytviken, we peered into Husvik Bay, in a light snow flurry. During this time the wind dropped and continued to lighten throughout the afternoon. Husvik was home to another whaling station, opening in 1910 and closing 40 years later, much of the equipment then being transported to Grytviken. Again, many of the buildings and storage cylinders still remain. Further south we could see a better maintained building, the manager's villa, and the cemetery.

During lunch we arrived at Grytviken, a whaling station which can be visited since being made safe in the 1990's. This station was the first and longest-running station in South Georgia, operating between 1904 and 1965.

After lunch at 12.30pm we met with Sarah, director of Grytviken Museum who gave a brilliant short presentation about the area. Sarah gave an overview of Team Rat, a project that ran between 2011 and 2015 to eliminate the Brown Rat from South Georgia. Thanks to glaciers blocking different sections of the island the project has been a complete success and it is estimated South Georgia will become home to 100 million more birds including pipits, ducks, petrels and albatrosses. Sarah also talked about biosecurity using dogs to smell for rodents, an archaeological programme to record sites used by seal hunters in years gone by before the fur seals themselves erode them away, and research on Southern Right Whales including tracking individuals, taking biopsies and listening for their calls underwater using sonar buoys. For the latter, there are concerns that adults are returning to South Georgia in poor condition and, so far, 500 calves have stranded in South America; this current research may help to work out what is happening and how to stop it. Finally, Sarah revealed that Grey-headed Albatrosses have declined by 43% in 11 years. They nest mainly on Bird Island where there is a 200-mile no catch zone. However, tagging birds has revealed that are travelling to feeding areas off the coast of South Africa. Here they are succumbing to drowning from longline fishing, where the birds get caught on baited fish hooks. With this information, more work can be done directly with fishing vessels to encouraging them to modify their fishing equipment and techniques.

By 2.30pm we were ready to go ashore and visit. We gathered at the cemetery on the western side of the bay to pay our respects and raise a toast to Shackleton (the 'Boss') and his team at his grave. Some of the team had to act as marshals to keep an eye on the Southern Elephant Seals which were sleeping right by the path. Over 30 large seals were snorting, sneezing and burping as they laid side by side in small groups; the smell coming from them was like a farmyard! Many were three or four-year old animals, some males just beginning to develop a longer nose. They were in moult and very itchy, using their flippers to scratch the peeling fur. The individual 'fingers' on their flippers are dexterous to help them get to a particular itch. Occasionally one or two rose up and began challenging one another, making their loud, deep gurgling sounds. Antarctic Fur Seals were spread all across the grassland and amongst the sedges, mainly sleeping. There was a mix of dark chocolate brown young pups and two-year-olds with silver-cream coats. Down by the beach several maned males were around, including one 'playing' with a two-year old.

After the ceremony we walked along the track back to the whaling station and the museum. There was time to explore the original industrial equipment and interpretation panels to tell the stories of what was what. Fur seals were sleeping all over the area. South Georgia Pintails were common and tame, feeding in pools, a stream and dabbling through the grasses and foxtails. A pair of Antarctic Terns gave close views on a jetty. As we were leaving a pair of Light-mantled Albatrosses were flying together in display.

Some of the group had a short tour of the site and others met Joselyn for a walk behind the church and onto the hillside for a closer look at the plantlife and views. Amongst the grasses, sedges and lichens the group spotted Polar Foxtail, Antarctic Clubmoss, Subantarctic Buttercup, Magellanic Rush, Antarctic Brown Rush and Greater Burnet, plus non-natives such as Dandelion, Mouse-eared Chickweed and Annual Meadow Grass.

Others visited the church, the museum and the post office, all very well presented - the museum has recently been refurbished with excellent artefacts, displays and interpretation panels about Shackleton, wildlife, whaling and life on the island.

After dashing back a little earlier than planned due to increasing winds we then had stunning views of the snow-capped mountainous landscape. We spent the evening in East Cumberland Bay, having a BBQ (although inside due to the earlier winds) and enjoying the views. Other birdlife today included a white phase Southern Giant Petrel (like a Snow Petrel on steroids), Cape Petrels, several diving petrels and lots of White-chinned Petrels.

Day 12

Monday 28th January

South Georgia: Gold Harbour and Cooper Bay

GPS position at 0800: 54°37'S, 035°56'W

Air Temp: 9°C Sea Temp: 5°C Wind: NE 2 Sea state: 2

The morning began early to try to pack in as much as possible in the day in case the forecasted winds did indeed manifest themselves by mid-morning - and for the hardy majority, hearing Christian's "good morning, good morning" at 5:15am was worth it!

At Gold Harbour, a beach full of 25,000 pairs of King Penguins and Southern Elephant Seals, the sea was calm with a gentle swell. After an earlier 5am recce the all clear was given and most people headed onto the beach via the Zodiacs at 6am. A stunning, hanging glacier (Bertrab Glacier) loomed behind the beach. We spent up to two hours observing, photographing and, for some, drawing, the myriad of King Penguins including adults, juveniles and large, brown fluffy chicks. Many were curious and coming very close to us. Meanwhile, near the landing area, over 40 male elephant seals were resting. While not fully grown, many were jousting with each other, and practicing for if and when they become a Beachmaster overseeing a harem of females. Several male elephant seals decided to find an outlet for all that energy flowing through their systems and began to play joust, rearing up on their bellies and whacking each other—though rather half-heartedly—with their heads and teeth. A few smacks back and forth, then a small pause... "is that enough?"... and then they lay back down and just about instantly dropped back into a light snooze. A few moments later, as if a switch had been flipped, one perked up again and the pair were at it again—making the expedition staff continue to move the landing gear further and further away from the jousting grounds just in case the boys got carried away.

All the fighting and defending takes its toll - the two percent of males that breed (once they are six to eight years old) may only live for a further two or three years. For one male it was too much, and his skeleton lay on the beach, skull picked clean by the scavengers. And there were plenty of scavengers around including incredibly close views of giant petrels and Subantarctic Skuas. Several Gentoo Penguins were on the beach, amongst the Kings, and a single Chinstrap Penguin made an appearance by the breaking waves before going back in for swim. While the occasional elephant seal made its distinctive, resonating, gurgling call, some King Penguins stood tall, raised their head and made their long, drawn out display call. As this was all happening, many penguins were just

standing in the stream, and others were in and out of the sea. For those just entering it seemed a little daunting as they tested the water before finally taking the plunge. Many King Penguins were in full body moult, while many juvenile penguins still retained their fluffy feathers at the back of their head and above their eyes. Other birds included South Georgia Pipit, South Georgia Pintail and Snowy Sheathbills.

We headed back for breakfast from 8am and travelled south to Cooper Bay, where in the deeper water we watched whale blows all around. There was a mix of Fin and Humpback Whales surfacing, with several of the later doing deeper dives and showing their flukes. At one point a Blue Whale surfaced and was seen briefly by many.

By 10.30am we were disembarking into Zodiacs to explore Cooper Bay, named after Captain Cook's first Lieutenant, Robert Paliser Cooper, and which has three shallow coves. One set of Zodiacs headed off to see Chinstrap Penguins on their rookery beach while the other half went off to see Macaroni Penguins. With gentle smooth water we had a lovely cruise around the kelp covered rocks where Macaroni Penguins were confidently shuffling along the wet, slippery rocks, accompanied by a small group of Chinstrap Penguins. South Georgia Pipits and Pintail were very common, feeding amongst the seaweed. A line of Macaroni Penguins was making their way up and down a rocky scree that led to a rookery further up the hillside amongst the tussocks. Southern Giant Petrels were homing in on a dead penguin – one petrel in particular had first pickings and was defending its prize by mantling its wings like a falcon. Many had good views of a white phase individual, a 'white nellie' which also came down to join in the feast.

Antarctic Fur Seals were everywhere, with many different age groups all across the rocks, rockpools and the beaches. Males were easily spotted with their upright posture and pointed nose. Small groups of elephant seals were also spread across the beaches. South Georgia Shags began to appear and on the corner of the cliffs several families of three chicks and parents were in their nests. Adults perched on the rocks were showing off their bright pink feet. A pair of Light-mantled Albatrosses were displaying impressively overhead. Alongside the seals, the beaches were busy with tens of King Penguins, and the far south-east beach was full of Chinstrap Penguins; their calls and smell were distinctive as was the colour of their guano which had turned the beach pink! In the water, rafts of Macaroni and Chinstrap Penguins were surfacing and diving around the boats. By 12.30pm the first boats began to return and we headed for lunch to warm up.

The ship left Cooper Bay and cruised along the edge of a beautiful tabular iceberg, about three nautical miles long with 20 – 30 metres of ice above the water's surface and 200 – 300 metres beneath the sea. We passed by a bergy bit, a huge lump of ice floating on the sea with several dozen Chinstrap Penguins sat on it. There were more icebergs in view and as we rounded the southern end of South Georgia, Cape Disappointment, we found it did not live up to its name as there was a feeding frenzy of hundreds of seabirds all around as well as the blows of whales. Numerous giant petrels, White-chinned Petrels, Antarctic Prions, the odd Fairy Prion, Common and South Georgia Diving Petrels, Black-browed Albatrosses, several Wandering Albatrosses and a Southern Royal Albatross gathered together, some resting on the sea, many gliding their way through the increasing winds and others dipping or diving a short way into the water to feed. One or two Blue Whales were seen surfacing and diving, and many blows of Humpback Whales were seen around us, plus one breaching. One was tail slapping and fin slapping the water. One came particularly close to the ship amid a frenzy of seabird activity, surfacing sometimes right by the ship showing the barnacles and raised lumps or tubercles on its rostrum. At one point it was swimming upside down showing its long white flippers, and other times it showed off its fluke.

By 4pm we continued our way south as the sea became rougher and wild. While people relaxed in their cabins, the bar or seawatching outside, tens of diving petrels passed by the boat alongside Black-bellied Petrels, Wilson's Storm Petrels, Antarctic Prions and a few Blue Petrels. For a lucky few on the bridge a Sperm Whale surfaced in front of the bow of the ship and swam to the port side before shallow diving.

The predicted weather finally caught up with us, and as the ship fully entered open waters—no longer sheltered by the island of South Georgia—we were truly on our way south across the Scotia Sea, with Elephant Island in our sights for the next leg of our journey. We met at 6.30pm for a recap of where we had been, the checklist and more about King Penguins and some of the geology before heading to bed tired after today's early start.

Day 13

Tuesday 29th January

Scotia Sea, towards Antarctica

GPS position at 0800: 56°26'S, 040°18'W

Air Temp: 5°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: NE 5 Sea state: 2

We awoke to the familiar wake-up call of Christian as he let us know that overnight we had made good progress towards our next destination, Antarctica! Conditions in the Scotia Sea were good, Ortelius rose rhythmically over a gentle swell from the north-west and moderate winds only just ruffled the surface of the water into the occasional whitecap. We took our time to savour breakfast, the day at sea offering us a more relaxed pace of life.

For those spending time outside in the rain many different Fin and Humpback Whales were sighted (up to 25 combined), alongside Wilson's Storm Petrels, Antarctic Prions, Snow Petrels, Grey-headed Albatrosses, and Cape Petrels. Mid-morning Ruben gave a talk all about Antarctic food chains and his own work on the diet of Cape Petrels and Snow Petrels, revealing that fish are a very important part of their diet alongside krill when feeding chicks. When not breeding squid also become an important food. The rest of the day remained relatively quiet aside from numerous sightings of Blue Petrels, a few Black-bellied Storm Petrels, a Soft-plumaged Petrel and Antarctic Prions. In the evening it was Happy Hour in the bar with half price drinks followed by an auction to raise money for the wildlife projects on South Georgia. Our host was the superb and entertaining Mark, one of the expedition guides, and £1,500 was raised alongside hundreds of pounds pledged by many people towards each protecting a hectare of land on the island.

Day 14

Wednesday 30th January

Scotia Sea, towards Antarctica

GPS position at 0800: 58°48'S, 047°38'W

Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 3°C Wind: SW 5 Sea state: 2

Clocks were set back one hour, and despite a lie in, many people headed on deck before breakfast for close views of up to six Fin Whales just 20 metres from the ship. Their tall blows were seen in the far distance, so the ship was able to slow down as we approached them. We stayed with the whales for an hour, watching them surface and seeing their dorsal fins and bodies very well. A mother and calf were amongst them. We left them at 8am and continued our journey south-west.

The sea was very quiet throughout the morning aside from Antarctic Prions, Wilson's Storm Petrels and the odd giant petrel, Cape Petrel and White-chinned Petrel. More whale blows were seen here and there, including close views of two more Fin Whales just before lunch. Several Chinstrap Penguins were also seen surfacing, many tens of miles from land.

The morning lecture was given by Laurence - an introduction to Glaciers & Glaciology. Combining his vast knowledge and stunning photographs, the talk was fascinating and the questions kept coming for over 20 minutes after he had finished speaking.

At around 2.30pm we slowed down for some more feeding Fin Whales, perhaps a dozen or so, with six to eight blows all at once. They showed well with excellent views of their backs and dorsal fins. Flocks of prions surrounded some of the feeding whales in hope of a krill snack while several Cape Petrels, a Black-browed Albatross and a Grey-headed Albatross circled near the ship. Around an hour later we passed by a large school of Long-finned Pilot Whales and many people captured the light grey cape on the back of the surfacing whales in their photographs. Throughout the afternoon we encountered many more Fin Whales alongside flocks of prions and small numbers of Wilson's Petrels.

After lunch, it was time to go back to vacuuming our gear in order to comply with the biosecurity rules of IAATO in Antarctica this time. The whole operation went smoothly as everyone was now an expert in cleaning off seeds and mud. Most of us then headed to the bar for a presentation by Ruben on the migration of the Arctic Tern from the Netherlands to Antarctica, and how the Arctic Tern winters in eastern Antarctica while those from Greenland, Maine (USA) and Alaska winter off the Weddell Sea. With just a few slides to go, Tim ran in shouting 'ORCA!' The room emptied so fast that any fire marshal would have been proud. Ruben had to laugh and was able to finish his last slide later that evening at the recap.

Although really distant and almost on the horizon, several Orcas were seen including an obvious male and female, while seabirds circled above them. While everyone was trying to see them a Southern Bottlenose Whale suddenly appeared right by the port side of the ship! As things quietened down passengers took in the scenery as a dozen or so icebergs began to appear on the horizon. A Humpback Whale, Antarctic Fur Seals and a few Weddell Seals were seen, and Paul spotted a Leopard Seal.

Day 15

Thursday 31st January

South Shetland Islands: Point Wild, Elephant Island and Bransfield Strait crossing

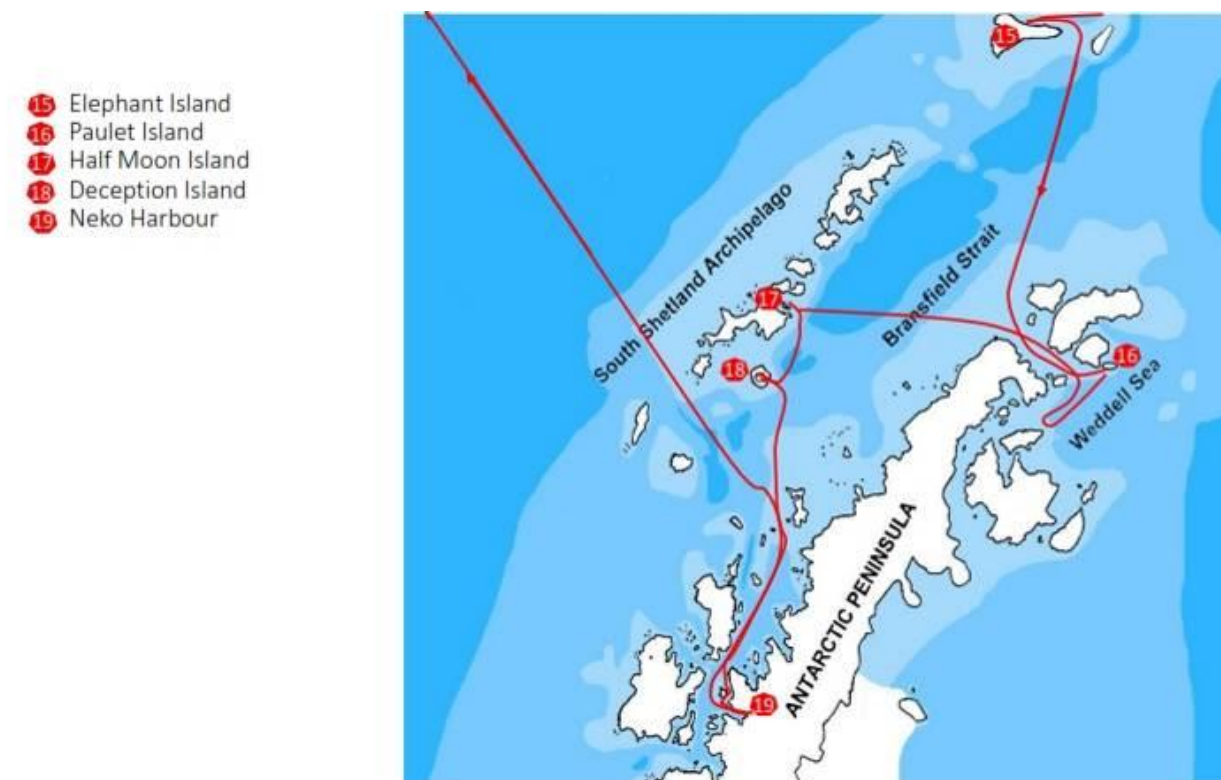
GPS position at 0800: 63°34'S, 055°49'W

Air Temp: 1°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: SE 2 Sea state: 1

Before breakfast we arrived at one of the most special historical sites in Antarctica - Point Wild on the northern shores of Elephant Island. This is an iconic place where most of Shackleton's crew spent 135 days surviving under the shelter of two wooden lifeboats on the rocky shore. It's named after Frank Wild, Shackleton's right-hand man, who stayed to lead the team while Shackleton went with two others to get help. Immediately adjacent to the sea is a small glacier which calved some ice as we anchored. Very unusually, the sea was relatively calm.

All around we saw icebergs and many Fin and Humpback Whales, some close to the ship. As we neared land the rugged, volcanic coastline revealed a pinkish tone which, through the binoculars, was the guano of thousands of

Chinstrap Penguins nesting. Various icebergs also had patches of pink, again where black dots were in fact the penguins. Many were porpoising through the water by the ship too. Half a dozen white-phase Southern Giant Petrels were flying around the ship while Cape Petrels flew up towards the cliffs, presumably where they were nesting.



After a good breakfast we got ourselves wrapped up warm for a Zodiac cruise at 8.30am. It was 1.5 degrees Celsius outside, and the cold wind was dropping in line with low tide at 9am. Visiting here in such calm conditions is rare – the weather was on our side. We headed over to see Chinstrap Penguins nesting on the rocks and cliffs - we were able to smell them first! Many were calling and displaying, holding their head high, flapping their wings and making a long, drawn out ‘neighing’ sound. Their dark grey fluffy chicks were amongst the adults. Many of the penguins coming down to the sea were covered in pink poo and we watched some gaining the confidence to dive in. Antarctic Fur Seals were dotted around the rocks, Cape Petrels were flying low heading towards nests in the rocks and the odd Wilson’s Storm Petrel flew low over the penguin colony. As we headed round the colony, we saw the monolith with a bust of the Chilean captain Luis Pardo, commander of the boat, the Yelcho, which rescued Shackleton’s crew at the end of August 1916. It is difficult to understand the hardship these men must have endured on this tiny bit of rock in amongst the majestic glaciers.

We continued onwards, admiring the cliffs and spotted yellow lichens and green mosses growing along their surfaces and cracks. We passed by an iceberg with eight penguins on it and several others attempting to jump onto it. One was leaping out of the water and just gripping the ice before sliding back down into the water! At one point it had landed on the ice and almost made it before slipping back in again. Whale blows were sighted and we headed out to see mainly Fin Whales surfacing closeby (and a Humpback) while Chinstrap Penguins swam and porpoised all around us. Heading to the west side of the glacier we watched more penguins and fur seals before sailing in front of the glacier where we spent a little time admiring its beauty. The occupants of a few lucky boats also saw two surfacing Dwarf Minke Whales.

During lunch we started our sail round Cape Valentine, the north-east tip of Elephant Island, past Clarence Island and south towards the Weddell Sea. Conditions were perfect for whale watching with an almost flat sea and some sunshine – many Fin Whales were still surfacing around us. As we headed away from the South Shetland Islands the wind whipped up a little more from the west. Wildlife remained quiet, although our first Southern Fulmars of the trip were seen. During and after Christian's presentation about the history of exploration of Antarctica, Fin Whales and some Humpback Whales were showing at a steady rate, including some close to the ship. A South Polar Skua, more uniform chocolate brown than the others we had seen, was soaring above the ship and following behind. A Black-bellied Storm Petrel was paddling the water, dipping up and down and touching the water with its feet on the dip down.

The day ended with a recap in the lounge with Christophe reciting the verses composed by Shackleton's physicist Reginald James about the place where we started this morning out of gratitude for Frank Wild's leadership

My name is Frankie Wild-o.
Me hut's on Elephant Isle.
The wall's without a single brick
And the roof's without a tile.
Nevertheless I must confess,
By many and many a mile,
It's the most palatial dwelling place
You'll find on Elephant Isle.

Day 16

Friday 1st February

Antarctic Peninsula: Paulet island & Weddell Sea

GPS position at 0800: 63°34'S, 055°48'W

Air Temp: 1°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: SE 2 Sea state: 1

What a day!! Truly a magical day that began for some at 4:30am for the sunrise in the sea ice filled waters of Antarctic Sound!

This morning we woke to a different scene; one of calm waters, floating ice and low cloud. Our first Adelie Penguins were stood or sat in small groups on the floating ice. The odd Wilson's Storm Petrel pattered its feet on the still water's surface while several Cape Petrels, skuas and Snow Petrels flew past. Just before 5am some had close views of a Humpback Whale diving.

At 5.45am Peter spotted a Leopard Seal resting on floating ice; it slowly undulated to the far side and slipped into the water, swimming a little like a small whale as its body almost came fully out of the water each time it surfaced. Its poo was pink suggesting it had been feeding on krill. Several more Leopard Seals were seen before breakfast, hauled out on their own small floating piece of ice. Occasional Weddell Seals were also seen resting on ice.

By 6am many people were on deck spotting Fin and Humpback Whales alongside huge rafts of Adelie penguins, numbering in the thousands, swimming, bathing and feeding as Ortelius sailed into the Weddell Sea! Suddenly the penguins were all porpoising together across the expanse of sea. Everywhere we looked there were surfacing

Humpback Whales, often blowing or diving, showing off their diatom-covered flukes. Several smaller Antarctic Minke Whales were joining in the feeding, surfacing just the once or twice. There were penguins and whales all over the sea! Peter suddenly shouted 'ORCA' and in the distance they were surfacing in front of ice bergs. We slowly sailed closer, watching at least eight Type A Orcas, including a young animal and one large male with a floppy dorsal fin; their grey saddles were clearly visible. Some people had seen one with a penguin in its mouth. While we watched them giant petrels were feeding on a nearby dead minke whale. Above the Orcas tens of Snow Petrels, Wilson's Storm Petrels and some Cape Petrels were circling round. As we headed towards Paulet Island the Orcas moved away. Over 100 Wilson's Storm Petrels were feeding on the water like ballerinas, dancing on the surface, using their feet to stabilise themselves while they pecked at the water's surface for food. Several Cape Petrels were feeding on flesh from a penguin or the dead whale.

Half an hour later we arrived at Paulet Island, an island with a 350 metre high volcanic cone with terraced or raised beaches which is home to 150,000 breeding pairs of Adelie Penguins. We went straight for breakfast and at 8.30am half the group began disembarking to the beach while the other half went for an incredible Zodiac cruise. On the island we were surrounded by thousands of adults and well-grown young – what a spectacle and a stimulation of all the senses! To avoid disturbing them we walked along a marked route to the remains of a stone building used by Captain Larsen (founder of the whaling station at Grytviken) and his men, who were forced to over-winter on Paulet Island after their ship, Antarctic, became stuck in sea ice, was crushed and sank in 1903.

During the morning we were able to observe all sorts of behaviours, from chicks being fed by a parent to displaying birds. Many had pinkish bellies from the krill-coloured poo covering the pebbly ground. Meanwhile, adults coming straight out of the sea had bright white breasts and clean, pink feet. Subantarctic Skuas and a few South Polar Skuas flew overhead like hawks, looking for any opportunity to feed on something dead; a Kelp Gull was feeding on a dead penguin on the beach. Occasional Wilson's Storm Petrels flew low over the colony.

Meanwhile, the Zodiac cruises allowed everyone to explore the beautiful ice floes bordering the small circular island, enjoying views of resting penguins and juvenile Antarctic Shags. Some of the ice was incredibly blue, and therefore very old ice, perhaps thousands of years old. The landscape was stunning. On the ice, most of the penguins were adults, although a few juveniles – still with fluff on the back of their heads – had left the colony and joined them. Some were jumping back into the sea, while others were jumping back out and sliding along the ice on their bellies. A large Weddell Seal and an Antarctic Fur Seal were also resting on ice floes – the Weddell Seal swam by the beach giving close views. Naomi spotted a Fin Whale and one boat crept close to two Leopard Seals. The volcanic cliffs were often orange and red from lichens and iron-rich rocks respectively.

The day went from spectacular to superlative, as Antarctica treated us to phenomenal clear blue, warm, sunny skies and almost no wind, with the reflections of icebergs looking spectacular in the mirror-flat sea. We had the most stunning, sunny, sparkling afternoon with calm waters, ultramarine icebergs and spectacular wildlife. We continued to see plenty of Adelie Penguins resting on ice floes and, rather surprisingly we saw eight different Leopard Seals, an animal usually seen in smaller numbers. These reptilian-like seals were all resting individually on ice, all in reasonably close proximity. Throughout the afternoon we continued to have beautiful views in warm sunshine. With the visibility so good the next seals to show themselves were three Crabeater Seals sleeping on an ice floe – they are more uniform coloured than the other species with sandy-coloured fur and a dog-like face. Two others were seen together a little later. The water was so clear and calm that ctenophores, or comb-jellies, were floating past flashing green and red as their cilia were reflecting light in different ways. The Antarctic

Peninsula was clearly in view as an unmistakable backdrop. In gorgeous sunshine an Antarctic Minke Whale surfaced several times in front of a blue iceberg and gradually we began to see more whales, Humpback and Fin. Several Humpbacks showed well, logging at the surface and one was waving its flippers around before showing off its fluke. Around 200 Snow Petrels were resting, both on an ice floe and along the ridge of an iceberg, while many more were flying around along with Cape Petrels and the odd Wilson's Storm Petrel. Further Orcas in three separate groups were sighted in the far distance. The first officer, Tony, turned Ortelius towards the ice, splitting sea ice or pushing it out of the way, as we rushed to find our second pod of Orca, this time of the Type B. It soon became clear that at least four male Orcas were keeping close to a mother Fin Whale and her calf, surfacing right by them simultaneously. They suddenly moved away from them and switched to harassing a female Humpback Whale and her calf. However, a further two adult Humpbacks appeared and saw the Orcas off which then headed away in a different direction. The whales continued to blow, showing off their yellowish-diatom stained and barnacle-clad flukes as they dived. After sailing west through the Weddell Sea it was time to head back into the Antarctic Sound, so we picked up speed and sailed north through further spectacular scenery and ice bergs. Before dinner a Humpback Whale and a very splashy Antarctic Minke Whale were spotted alongside two separate, lone Weddell Seals. Other birds included three South Polar Skuas. We spotted many objects that resembled creamy-coloured intestines or kelp stipes floating on the sea. They were in fact colonial tunicates known as *pyrosomes*.

After dinner, the evening sunshine was stunning and many people stayed outside on deck to see the sunset at 9.40pm, although it never completely went dark overnight. At just after 8.30pm a group of Orcas were seen on the Starboard side and a little later an Antarctic Minke, making quite a splash as it surfaced.

Day 17

Saturday 2nd February

South Shetland Islands: A57A ice berg; Half Moon Island and Deception Island

GPS position at 0800: 62°36'S, 059°54'W

Air Temp: 7°C Sea Temp: 1°C Wind: NW 4 Sea state: 1

Overnight we continued through the Antarctic Sounds and on to the South Shetland Islands and to Half Moon Island in particular. A lovely sunrise gave way to a bright day.

At breakfast we arrived in Half Moon Island, a huge crescent-shaped tombolo and terraced beaches connecting two rocky outcrops where Chinstrap Penguins nest and a derelict wooden boat lies on the beach. We disembarked on the Zodiacs at 8am with those going on a hike being the first off. Those who came second explored the penguin rookery where large chicks were at the nest and adults were often displaying to each other. Parents were busy walking on the scree to their nests, with others walking down to the sea, often covered in muck from the nesting area. Wildlife around the rookery and nearby beaches included two Weddell Seals, Southern Elephant Seals, Antarctic Fur Seals, Antarctic Terns, Kelp Gulls, Southern Giant Petrels (including a white-phase bird). The hiking group, with Ed, Joselyn and Christophe, followed the tombolo round from the rookery, past an Argentinian base (Cámara station) and up the rocky slopes and into the areas of snow. Over eight South Polar Skuas and a few Subantarctic Skuas were hanging out here; we saw a few empty nests, scrapes in the pebbles lined with greenery such as moss. The pebbles and scree were covered in black and grey lichens while light green-grey branching lichens were growing higher up alongside mosses. From our high position we were able to look out across the bay towards the impressive glaciers of Livingstone Island and lenticular clouds forming above the mountains. We were all back by 10.30am and we then sailed further west to Deception Island.

By lunchtime we were passing the impressive tabular iceberg A57A, which is 22km long and 10km wide. Tabular icebergs are almost unique to the Southern Ocean, having split from a glacier through rifting or cracking. Such a large iceberg is tracked by satellite and was an incredible part of the landscape.

We reached Deception Island at around 4pm and were greeted by porpoising Chinstrap Penguins and a flock of Southern Fulmars. The island was shrouded in very low cloud and we passed through the narrow entrance into Port Foster which has provided many ships with shelter from Antarctic storms. The volcanic rock at the entrance was covered in splashes of grey which on close inspection through the binoculars were in fact lichens. We sailed for an hour and gradually some of the cloud lifted revealing an incredible landscape of a moon-like landscape crossed with glaciation. We passed one glacier front where the volcanic material had mixed with the ice to give a marbled effect; the volcanic rock also acts as an insulator keeping the ice cold.

The island is a volcano which exploded 10, 000 years ago; the summit collapsed forming the flooded caldera we had been sailing round. It last erupted in 1969 and 1970 completely destroying a Chilean base and causing some damage to the British base where an old aircraft hangar and nearby whaling buildings still remain. The Argentinian base survived and is still active and we passed by the well-kept, painted buildings.

As we headed back towards the entrance the cloud had lifted further and a small group of Cape Petrels were around the boat. On a nearby beach giant petrels, fur seals and a Weddell Seal were very cryptic. Thousands of camouflaged Chinstrap Penguins were nesting on the rocky ledges and slopes, although their smell gave them away. Heading out of the caldera looking further west, green areas on the tops of the rocky mounds revealed thousands more Chinstrap Penguins, their guano providing fertiliser for moss.

Overnight we travelled south through the Gerlache Strait to the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula ready to be at Neko Harbour for the morning.

Day 18

Sunday 3rd February

Antarctic Peninsula: Neko Harbour (near Anvers Island) and Gerlache Strait

GPS position at 0800: 64°50'S, 062°32'W

Air Temp: 4°C Sea Temp: 2°C Wind: Light airs Sea state: 1

Our last day in Antarctica and we started with the most beautiful, sunny morning surrounded by snow-clad mountains, glaciers and ice bergs. As we headed towards Neko Harbour up to 50 Humpback Whales were sighted in the early morning (around 5.30am) while small numbers continued until breakfast, their blows hanging in the still air and glistening. A flock of 40 Snow Petrels flew off a nearby iceberg.

Neko Harbour has a small beach close to a glacier with a rocky outcrop where a rookery of Gentoo Penguins nest. One half of the group spent an hour strolling uphill through the snow to look down on the colony where four-week old chicks were being tended by their parents. Some had younger chicks, or just one chick and a single, unhatched egg. We were able to observe lots of behaviour from courtship to feeding. The Gentoos make a neat, raised nest made out of small stones and some non-breeding birds were moving stones into place, perhaps practicing for the future. Several pairs of Kelp Gulls also had young almost fully fledged – these are probably the most southerly breeding Kelp Gulls in this part of the world! At least two pairs of South Polar

Skuas were resting on the ice. Every so often ice carved off from the glacier creating an amazing crashing sound and a large wave that made it to shore. An Antarctic Minke Whale was surfacing just off shore.

The other half of the group headed out in Zodiacs, enjoying the sunshine, breath-taking views of the snow and mountains – the sunshine highlighting incredible patterns and textures. A Weddell Seal and a Crabeater Seal were resting up on the same piece of ice floe giving excellent comparison views – the Weddell Seal had a darker, olive-green coat with lighter splotches and a rounded face. Another Crabeater Seal, a female, was resting up on another area of ice further into the harbour. Ruben's Zodiac were fortunate enough to have an Antarctic Minke Whale approach the boat, swim under and reappear on the other side!

Before and during lunch we headed past beautiful hanging glaciers and mountain peaks of Ronge Island, Danco Island and Cuverville Island where various Humpbacks and four or five Antarctic Minke Whales were surfacing. A few more Crabeating Seals were resting on ice. We sailed for the rest of the afternoon into the Gerlache Strait where Humpback Whales were spotted every few minutes or so, usually diving and showing their flukes. One individual breached 17 times, an incredible feat for an animal that weighs somewhere between 23 and 35 tonnes.

During our early sailing red-green algae could be seen growing in large patches on the snow and ice. Known as snow algae it starts off green and then turns red. Where we saw really pink snow we soon smelled penguin poo and found their colonies. One colony began by the shore with clear penguin highways or tracks leading up the ice to a rocky plateau where the rest of the rookery was positioned. Birds included many skuas, Wilson's Storm Petrels and several Antarctic Shags. We continued past Wiencke Island, Anvers Island and Brabant Island on our port side, and by late afternoon left the Antarctic Peninsula on our starboard side. We continued west of the South Shetland Islands and headed north into the Drake Passage.

In the afternoon Joselyn gave an interesting talk about the world beneath our feet, introducing us to the diverse and special organisms that populate the seas around Antarctica. There is still much left to explore and scientists are only scratching the surface, but even our limited exploration has turned up some incredible lifeforms. High among these newly discovered creatures is *Edwardsiella andrillii*, a pale white Hydroid which makes its home in the base of ice shelves, boring into the ice for protection from predators.

Dinner time rolled around just as Ortelius made her way out from between the islands and as we retired for bed we were rocked to sleep by the increasing open ocean swells swept in from the Drake Passage.

Day 19

Monday 4th February

At sea in the Drake Passage.

GPS position at 0800: 61°30'S, 062°42'W

Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 4°C Wind: NW 5 Sea state: 4

This morning most people had a lie in as we headed north in Drake Passage. Compared to yesterday the sea was rough with a swell and more wind. Before breakfast a dozen Cape Petrels were following the ship and an immature Grey-headed Albatross glided by for a short while. Tim and a few others spotted several Hourglass Dolphins too.

Throughout the morning it was pretty foggy and the only birds were a lone Cape Petrel and the odd White-chinned Petrel. At 10am Rustyn gave a presentation about the Antarctica Treaty with some interesting things to ponder for the future. Is Antarctica going to remain a land of peace and science? What are the real intentions behind all the ice drilling and research projects currently happening there?

After a delicious meal and a bit of rest, the fog lifted up a little bit and it was time for Mark to tell us about his experience at the American base, McMurdo Station, near the Ross Sea where he spent a year. The day continued to be very quiet with poor visibility and rough seas, with a force of six or seven wind (reasonably calm for the Drake Passage!). During our recap Martin revealed more about the life of krill and its importance to life in Antarctica.

Day 20

Tuesday 5th February

Sailing back to Ushuaia: At sea in the Drake Passage

GPS position at 0800: 57°29'S, 06°-0'W

Air Temp: 9°C Sea Temp: 7°C Wind: N 4 Sea state: 3

After early morning fog we had a beautiful sunrise and while there was a swell, the waves had become gentle and low. There was an increasing number of birds, starting with Black-browed Albatrosses, Sooty Shearwaters, two juvenile Grey-headed Albatrosses, a Southern Royal Albatross and a Blue Petrel. Throughout the morning we sailed in glistening sunshine with many people on deck soaking up some rays. At 10am Christophe gave a presentation about the explorers Amundsen and Scott, and their race to the South Pole. During this talk a few people still outside sighted a Gray's Beaked Whale - Peter had sighted one earlier too - and several Peale's Dolphins. Gray's Beaked Whales are rarely seen and the calm conditions were helping us spot them as they surfaced for a brief moment. Several Fin Whales were also spotted by Naomi and Tim.

During the afternoon sailing conditions improved further and we had a bright, calm and very warm sail towards Argentina; we were now in the 'Drake Lake' as conditions were so good! On the horizon we saw what we thought was land. However, it was a Fata Morgana Mirage - the bending of light due to the warm air meeting the cold water and appearing to stretch the sea and glittery water to look like land. Ed spotted a pointed dark fin surface with a splash in front of the ship; the animal surfaced two or three times more, each time very brief and led to us identifying it as a Gray's Beaked Whale. A further Gray's Beaked Whale was seen a little later as we passed from the deep ocean into shallower water, alongside two separate Dwarf Minke Whales and a small group of probable Hourglass Dolphins. Along the journey small groups of Rockhopper Penguins were common alongside some Magellanic Penguins.

After a delicious lunch, we were invited to pay our bills and return boots and life jackets. Despite the sunshine, some came in to watch an old black and white film 'Around Cape Horn', about the last cargo sail boat operating around Cape Horn.

Later in the afternoon land was in sight ahead and to the west we could just make out the land near where Cape Horn is positioned. Throughout the day Sooty Shearwaters and Black-browed Albatrosses were frequent and sometimes sitting on the sea in large groups. The odd Southern Royal Albatross also glided past with occasional slow wingbeats and grace. Other birds included diving petrels, Dolphin Gulls and skuas, probably Chilean. We

learned the next day that Monday and today had been the hottest days Ushuaia had experienced for many years with temperatures reaching 25 and 27 degrees Celsius respectively.

At 6.00 pm, everyone gathered in the bar to get the final instructions for tomorrow morning's disembarkation. We watched a memorable photo album with music that Peter had put together about our very successful journey. It brought back memories of the earlier days on our very beautiful cruise. After the applause, the captain came for a last toast to bid everyone farewell.

As we neared the Beagle Channel it was time for our final meal together. During dinner we were able to cheer and clap to say thank you to the chef's team and the restaurant staff, who had provided us with wonderful food and excellent service over the past three weeks.

Day 21

Wednesday 6th February

Arrive Ushuaia, fly to Buenos Aires, Argentina

GPS position at 0800: 54°49'S, 068°17'W

Total Distance Sailed: 3725 Nautical Miles

All good things come to an end, as they say. Today was our last morning on the Ortelius. After a final night in our cabin, which had come to feel like home, it was time to move on to new adventures. At 2am a pilot had come on board Ortelius and the ship slowly made her way into Ushuaia. We watched on deck as she carefully docked, no doubt requiring remarkable skill and experience. South American Terns were flying in a large flock over the harbour.

We put our luggage in the corridors this morning as requested, so the crew could take it off the ship for us. After one last wakeup call from Christian and one last breakfast on board, it was time to say goodbye. Arrangements were made to stay in touch and farewells were said. We could look back on a wonderfully successful trip, and all of us had many memories of wildlife and spectacular scenery during our days at sea, Zodiac-cruising activities and shore landings.

We disembarked at 8.15am and after saying our farewells to the Oceanwide expedition team many people headed into Ushuaia and along the sea front – as we left a juvenile Black-chested Buzzard-eagle soared overhead. Our first birds along the coast included South American Terns, Dolphin Gulls, a pair of Kelp Geese and Brown-headed Gulls, losing their brown heads. Two Dark-bellied Cinclodes, which looked like very dark Redwings from afar, were feeding amongst the seaweed-clad rock using their tweezer-like bills. On the edge of the next lagoon a very tame Black-crowned Night Heron stood very still for photos. A whole variety of waterfowl were resting at high tide along the lagoon, many on the far side. Crested Ducks, some showing their crests, were by far the most common, including a few pairs with ducklings. Speckled Ducks were very common, the males were calling in a very similar way to Teal. Yellow-billed Pintails were also on the water in smaller numbers.

Amongst the resting Crested and Speckled ducks, and Brown-headed Gulls, there were several Red Shoveler, with rusty-orange bodies and three male Chiloe Wigeon on the bank. Familiar introduced European flowers such as Yarrow, White Clover, buttercups and grasses were growing along the pathways. We stopped at a muddy pool where many Speckled Ducks were displaying. A juvenile Rufous-chested Dotterel was feeding by walking and pausing, before changing direction. A very tame South American or Magellanic Snipe stood by a stream where

two Buff-winged Cinclodes flew past and around our heads! Further along the main lagoon over a dozen Red Shovelers and several Yellow-billed Pintail were feeding amongst the weed. Back in town Southern Lapwings were often resting in pairs on open green areas. A Chimango Caracara was stood on a lamppost and a male American Kestrel flew overhead. Another buzzard-eagle, an adult, flew overhead.

We met up again for 11am to collect our luggage and to board the buses to the airport. Once through security we didn't have too long to wait for our flight back to Buenos Aires. A few feet away outside a fresh juvenile Chimango Caracara was stood on railings giving amazing views, completely unphased.

We flew north towards Buenos Aires, stopping for 40 minutes at the town of Trelew, linked with Welsh settlements and an important hub for wool processing, before continuing to the big city. On the airfield tens of Southern Lapwings were feeding on the grassy areas. A few noticed one or two Southern Crested Caracaras also foraging. Once arrived we had a long delay with the buses arriving to take us to the hotel. While waiting more and more Shiny Cowbirds came in to roost in the trees just outside Arrivals. A Guira Cuckoo appeared briefly before disappearing into a green, vegetated wall. Brown-chested Martin flew low overhead and 20+ were circling close to the trees where the cowbirds were roosting at dusk. Three Chimango Caracaras glided overhead. Other birds included a singing Rufous Hornero, Eared Doves, Picazuro Pigeons, Starlings and House Sparrows.

Day 22

Thursday 7th February

Fly to London

Despite only 5 hours sleep for many, there was a small crowd at breakfast at 6.30am on what was to be a glorious day with temperatures up to 30 degrees Celsius. Hundreds of Starlings had been roosting in trees in the courtyard of the hotel and were busily singing and calling. There was a mix of moulting adults and juveniles.

At 7am just over 20 of us heading down the road to the nature reserve of Costanera Sur; it was lovely hot sunshine even this early. Looking out across the water and pondweed there was a different mix of waterbirds compared to a few weeks ago. With careful scanning we saw five Brazilian Teal, Silver Teal, over a dozen White-faced Whistling Ducks, Southern Lapwings, Wattled Jacanas with five young chicks (spotted by Margaret) and a Limpkin. Across the Azolla waterweed a family of Cattle Tyrants were foraging and using litter to perch. In the dead trees numerous Picazuro Pigeons were hanging out, including many scaly juveniles. Near to a pair of Brazilian Teal a Coypu was busy swimming in the water and resting on the shore. Overhead small groups of White-eyed Parakeets and several Monk Parakeets flew. A flock of 14 White-faced Ibis flew overhead onto the reserve and a Cocoi Heron and a Great Egret also appeared out of nowhere. The reserve gates opened at 8am and we headed in with closer views of the Limpkin. Several Glittering-bellied Emerald Hummingbirds were feeding on various flowering shrubs as were several huge carder bees. Rufous Horneos, Rufous-bellied Thrush, Greyish Baywings and Eared Doves were common. A Chivi Vireo (non-migratory Red-eyed Vireo) sang in a willow tree, looking like a warbler from a distance. Out on the open water over a dozen Black-necked Swans were feeding while Starlings flew around the reeds. Tim spotted one Yellow-winged Blackbird too. Other birds included a very pale-breasted Peregrine on one of the skyscrapers, Chimango and Southern Crested Caracaras flying overhead, Common Gallinules, Rosybill Pochards, two Black-crowned Night Herons, two Whistling Herons, two Rufescent Tiger Herons, Yellow-billed Cardinals, Great Kiskadees, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper and Chalk-browed Mockingbirds.

After getting back in time to finish any last-minute packing, we all met together at 10am for our buses back to the airport. It was a glorious sunny day and 40-minutes later we arrived at the airport. After a smooth check-in we boarded the plane and were leaving the runway at 2.35pm, just ten-minutes after our scheduled time.

Day 23

Friday 8th February

Arrive London

After a trip of a lifetime, we travelled just over 11, 000km, heading across Brazil and then the Atlantic in 12½ hours, arriving in London at 6.20am. Everyone headed off in various directions for other flights and to collect baggage, bidding farewells along the way.

A huge thanks to Oceanwide and their team on Ortelius for making this a very special adventure.

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The Naturetrek Group and Expedition Team by Martin Berg

Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																											
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7							
1	Southern Screamer	<i>Chauna torquata</i>	6																											
2	White-faced Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna viduata</i>																									30			
3	Coscoroba Swan	<i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i>		1																										
4	Black-necked Swan	<i>Cygnus melancoryphus</i>		1																							30			
5	Flying Steamer Duck	<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>		2																										
6	Fuegian (flightless) Steamer Duck	<i>Tachyeres pteneres</i>		6																						4				
7	Falkland Steamer Duck	<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>				50	20																							
8	Upland Goose	<i>Chloephaga picta</i>		20		40	✓																							
9	Kelp Goose	<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>				10	2																			10				
10	Ashy-headed Goose	<i>Chloephaga poliocephala</i>		3																										
11	Ruddy-headed Goose	<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>				20																								
12	Brazilian Teal	<i>Amazonetta brasiliensis</i>	2																								5			
13	Ringed Teal	<i>Callonetta leucophrys</i>	2																											
14	Crested Duck	<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>		30		10	10																			50				
15	Yellow-billed Pintail (South Georgia)	<i>Anas georgica georgica</i>								20	5	15	5																	
16	Yellow-billed Pintail	<i>Anas georgica spinicauda</i>		20																					20	2				
17	Silver Teal	<i>Spatulata versicolor</i>	12																							5				
18	Yellow-billed (Speckled) Teal	<i>Anas flavirostris</i>	3																						40					
19	Red Shoveler	<i>Spatulata platalea</i>		5																					20					
20	Chiloe Wigeon	<i>Mareca chilensis</i>																							3					
21	Rosy-billed Pochard	<i>Netta peposaca</i>	12																							2				
22	King Penguin	<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>				26			10	✓	✓	✓	✓	2																
23	Gentoo Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>				✓	20	10	10	✓	✓	✓	✓				10	2	✓											
24	Adelie Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis adeliae</i>															✓													
25	Chinstrap Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis antarcticus</i>								3			✓		3	✓	5	✓	2											
26	Southern Rockhopper Penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>				✓	10																	50						
27	Macaroni Penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>									✓		✓		1															
28	Magellanic Penguin	<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>		10	20	✓	20																	3	5					
29	Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30	✓	✓	✓	20	40				30							

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																								
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
30	Grey-backed Storm Petrel	<i>Garrodia nereis</i>			10		✓	✓					3														
31	Black-bellied Storm Petrel	<i>Fregetta tropica</i>					5	10	✓		10		2	1	20	✓					1						
32	Wandering Albatross	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>					5	✓	✓	✓	10				3	1					1						
33	Southern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>			5		20	✓	10					1								5					
34	Northern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea sanfordi</i>			1			1	1																		
35	Light-mantled Albatross	<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>					1	1	1	10	20	15	15		5	1											
36	Black-browed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>		10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	20	20	30	30	10					1	✓	10				
37	Grey-headed Albatross	<i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i>								10	40	10	5		2	3						2					
38	Southern Fulmar	<i>Pachyptila crassirostris</i>															✓		✓	1							
39	Southern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>		2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30			10	50	20	2	10	20				
40	Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>			4			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30	20	30					10					
41	Cape Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>									3	30	4	10	10	40	✓	✓	50	20	10	3					
42	Snow Petrel	<i>Pagodroma nivea</i>										30	2	2	10		2	✓		40							
43	Blue Petrel	<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>								20				50	50	20						1					
44	Antarctic Prion	<i>Pachyptila desolata</i>			20			10	✓	✓		20	✓	✓	✓				1								
45	Fulmar Prion	<i>Pachyptila crassirostris</i>												1													
46	Slender-billed Prion	<i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>			✓		20	✓	10													1					
47	Fairy Prion	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>								1				3													
48	Atlantic Petrel	<i>Pterodroma incerta</i>								1																	
49	Grey Petrel	<i>Procellaria cinerea</i>					1	6																			
50	Soft-plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>					20	✓	✓	2	20				1												
51	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>			30			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30	50							2				
52	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Ardenna grisea</i>			✓		✓	50	5													✓					
53	Great Shearwater	<i>Ardenna gravis</i>			20		40	✓	3		2																
54	Manx Shearwater	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>			1																						
55	Magellanic Diving-petrel	<i>Pelecanoides magellani</i>				5																					
56	South Georgia Diving Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides georgicus</i>								2				10	8												
57	Common Diving Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>			30		3	10	10	10	3	2	✓									5					
58	Great Grebe	<i>Podiceps major</i>		5																							
59	Black-faced Ibis	<i>Theristicus melanopsis</i>		7																							
60	White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	2																								15
61	Rufescent Tiger Heron	<i>Tigrisoma lineatum</i>	2																								2

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																								
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
62	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	3	1																		2	2				
63	Cocoi Heron	<i>Ardea cocoi</i>																					1				
64	Whistling Heron	<i>Syrigma sibilatrix</i>																					2				
65	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	1																				2				
66	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	1																								
67	Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	6																				2				
68	Rock Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>		20		5	20															10					
69	Imperial Shag (Blue-eyed)	<i>Leucocarbo atriceps</i>		10		✓	✓															20					
70	South Georgia Shag	<i>Leucocarbo georgianus</i>							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓														
71	Antarctic Shag	<i>Leucocarbo bransfieldensis</i>														2	✓	30	10								
72	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>				20	✓															2					
73	Andean Condor	<i>Vultur gryphus</i>		1																							
74	Black-chested Buzzard Eagle	<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>		2																		2					
75	Long-winged Harrier	<i>Circus buffoni</i>	1																								
76	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	10																				✓				
77	Limpkin	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>	1																				1				
78	Snowy Sheathbill	<i>Chionis albus</i>				6			10	20	2	5	✓			20	20	20	4								
79	Magellanic Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>		1		✓	5																				
80	Blackish Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ater</i>				10	4																				
81	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>	30	20																		2					
82	Rufous chested Dotterel	<i>Charadrius modesta</i>				2																1					
83	Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>	20																				10				
84	South American Snipe (Magellanic)	<i>Gallinago paraguayiae magellanica</i>				10																3					
85	Brown-hooded Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus maculipennis</i>				10	4															✓					
86	Dolphin Gull	<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>		20		✓	✓														2	✓					
87	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>		✓		✓	✓		10	✓	✓	✓	✓			10	20	50	10			✓					
88	South American Tern	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>		✓		20	✓															✓					
89	Cabot's Sandwich Tern	<i>Thalasseus acuflavidus</i>				2																					
90	Antarctic Tern	<i>Sterna vittata</i>								✓	✓	✓	✓			10	2	20	10								
91	Chilean Skua	<i>Stercorarius chilensis</i>		5	2															2	1						
92	South Polar Skua	<i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i>														1	20	10	50								
93	Brown Skua	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>							10	✓	10	10	50			10	10	10									

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																				
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
94	Brown Skua (Subantarctic)	<i>Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi</i>				30	10																
95	Rock Dove (Feral)	<i>Columba livia 'feral'</i>	✓																			10	✓
96	Picazuro Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas picazuro</i>	✓																				✓
97	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	✓																				✓
98	Guira Cuckoo	<i>Guira guira</i>	5																			1	1
99	Glittering-bellied Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon lucidus</i>	1																				10
100	Green-barred Woodpecker	<i>Colaptes melanochloris</i>	1																				1
101	White-throated Caracara	<i>Phalcoboenus albogularis</i>		1																			
102	Striated Caracara	<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>				50																2	
103	Southern Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>	10	10		1																10	2
104	Chimango Caracara	<i>Milvago chimango</i>	4	✓																		10	2
105	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	2																			2	
106	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>				1	1																1
107	Monk Parakeet	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	✓																				✓
108	Austral Parakeet	<i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>		2																			
109	Nanday Parakeet	<i>Aratinga nenday</i>	20																				1
110	White-eyed Parakeet	<i>Psittacara leucophthalmus</i>	10																				✓
111	Austral Pygmy Owl	<i>Glaucidium nanum</i>		4																			
112	Blackish Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>				✓	3																
113	Dark-bellied Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>		2																		2	
114	Buff-winged Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>																				2	
115	Rufous Hornero	<i>Furnarius rufus</i>	20																				✓
116	Thorn-tailed Rayadito	<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>		30																			
117	Narrow-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes angustirostris</i>																					1
118	White-throated Treerunner	<i>Pygarrhis albogularis</i>		1																			
119	White-crested Elaenia	<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>		✓																			
120	Tufted Tit-tyrant	<i>Anairetes parulus</i>		10																			
121	Dark-faced Ground Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola maclovianus</i>				20																	
122	Cattle Tyrant	<i>Machetornis rixosa</i>	8																				✓
123	Fire-eyed Diucon	<i>Xolpis pyrope</i>		2																			
124	Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	10																				✓
125	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	2																				

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
126	Red-eyed Vireo (migratory Chivi)	<i>Vireo olivaceus chivi</i>																					1			
127	Chilean Swallow	<i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>		✓																			✓			
128	Brown-chested Martin	<i>Progne tapera</i>	✓																			✓	✓			
129	Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	10																							
130	Sedge Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>				20																				
131	House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	1	8																		1	✓			
132	Cobb's Wren	<i>Troglodytes cobbi</i>				6																				
133	Chalk-browed Mockingbird	<i>Mimus saturninus</i>	✓																				6			
134	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	✓																			✓	✓			
135	Rufous-bellied Thrush	<i>Turdus rufiventris</i>	✓																				5			
136	Austral Thrush	<i>Turdus falklandii</i>		10		20	5																			
137	Creamy-bellied Thrush	<i>Turdus amaurochalinus</i>	2																							
138	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	✓				✓															✓	✓			
139	Correndera Pipit	<i>Anthus correndera</i>				2																4				
140	South Georgia Pipit	<i>Anthus antarcticus</i>								30	10	1	5													
141	Black-chinned Siskin	<i>Spinus barbatus</i>		20		50																				
142	Long-tailed Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella loyca</i>				30																1				
143	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	✓																			✓	✓			
144	Greyish Baywing	<i>Agelaioides badius</i>	10																				✓			
145	Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>	2	✓																		8				
146	Red-crested Cardinal	<i>Paroaria coronata</i>	5																				✓			
147	Yellow-billed Cardinal	<i>Paroaria capitata</i>																					2			

Mammals

1	South American Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus australis</i>			5	5	5																					
2	Antarctic Fur Seal	<i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>							20	✓	✓	✓	✓	20	5	✓	10	50	2									
3	South American Sea Lion	<i>Otaria flavescens</i>			5																							
4	Southern Elephant Seal	<i>Mirounga leonina</i>				3			1	6	30	50	✓															
5	Leopard Seal	<i>Hydrurga leptonyx</i>									1					1	1	25		1								
6	Weddell Seal	<i>Leptonychotes weddellii</i>														2	1	10	5	1								
7	Crabeater Seal	<i>Lobodon carcinophaga</i>																7		5								
8	Commerson's Dolphin	<i>Cephalorhynchus commersonii</i>				3	1																					

	Common name	Scientific name	January/February																							
			18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
9	Hourglass Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus cruciger</i>			9			12	2										2	2						
10	Peale's Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus australis</i>		10	20		8													2						
11	Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>												4		21										
12	Southern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon planifrons</i>						2	3						1											
13	Gray's Beaked Whale	<i>Mesoplodon grayi</i>																		5						
14	Long-finned Pilot Whale	<i>Globicephala melas</i>													20											
15	Dwarf Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>									1					2				2						
16	Antarctic Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>														10		5								
17	Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>				1	1		2																	
18	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>							30		3		20	20	50	50	20			2						
19	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>										2														
20	Sperm Whale	<i>Physalus macrocephalus</i>										1														
21	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaengliae</i>	2						6	2	30	2	40	5		30	40	50	80							
22	Coypu	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>																				2				

Plants (Courtesy of David Shaw)

English Name	Scientific Name	Location Recorded			
		Tierra del Fuego	Falkland Islands Carcass Island Saunders Island	South Georgia (Salisbury Plain & Prion Island) Grytviken (Gold Harbour)	Half Moon Island
	* indicates introduced species				
Tall Fern	<i>Blechnum magellanicum</i>		✓		
Small Fern	<i>Blechnum penna-marina</i>	✓	✓		
Clubmoss	<i>Lycopodium magellanicum</i>			✓	
Monterey Cypress	<i>Cupressus macrocarpa</i> *		✓		
Balsam Bog	<i>Bolax gummifera</i>		✓		
Wild Celery	<i>Osmorhiza chilensis</i>		✓		
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i> *		✓		
Christmas Bush	<i>Baccharis magellanicum</i>	✓			
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i> *	✓			
Fachine	<i>Chilotrichum diffusum</i>	✓			
Falkland Cudweed	<i>Gamochaeta affinis</i>		✓		
Orange Hawkweed	<i>Hieracium aurantiacum</i> *			✓	

English Name	Scientific Name	Location Recorded			
		Tierra del Fuego	Falkland Islands Carcass Island Saunders Island	South Georgia (Salisbury Plain & Prion Island) Grytviken (Gold Harbour)	Half Moon Island
	* indicates introduced species				
Coastal Nassauvia	<i>Nassauvia gaudichaudii</i>		✓		
Sea Cabbage	<i>Senecio candicans</i>		✓		
Ragwort	<i>Senecio</i> *		✓		
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> *	✓		✓	
Mouse-eared Chickweed	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i> *			✓	
Antarctic Pearlwort	<i>Colobanthus quitensis</i>		✓	✓	
Native Stonecrop	<i>Crassula moschata</i>		?		
Diddle-dee	<i>Empetrum rubrum</i>	✓	✓		
Prickly Heath	<i>Galutheria mucronata</i>	✓			
Mountain Berry	<i>Pernettya pumila</i> (<i>Gaultheria pumila</i>)		✓		
Birds Foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i> *		Port Stanley		
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i> *	✓			
Gorse	<i>Ulex europea</i> *		✓		
Magellanic Currant	<i>Ribes magellanicum</i>	✓			
Native Rush	<i>Juncus scheuzerioides</i>			✓	
Magellanic Rush	<i>Rostkovia magellanica</i>			✓	
Feathery Mistletoe	<i>Misodendrum punctulatum</i>	✓			
Antarctic Beech	<i>Nothofagus antarctica</i>	✓			
Lenga Beech	<i>Nothofagus pumilio</i>	✓			
Magellan's Beech	<i>Nothofagus betuloides</i>	✓			
Dog Orchid	<i>Codonorchis lessonii</i>	✓			
Green / White Orchid	<i>Gavilea araucana</i>	✓			
Yellow Orchid	<i>Gavilea lutea</i>	✓			
Native Boxwood	<i>Hebe elliptica</i>		✓		
Falkland Sea Thrift	<i>Armeria macloviana</i>		✓		
Sea Thrift	<i>Armeria maritima</i>	✓			
Marram Grass	<i>Ammophila arenaria</i>		✓		
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i> *	✓			
Antarctic Hair Grass	<i>Deschampsia antarctica</i>				✓
Tufted Fescue	<i>Festuca contracta</i>			✓	

English Name	Scientific Name	Location Recorded			
		Tierra del Fuego	Falkland Islands Carcass Island Saunders Island	South Georgia (Salisbury Plain & Prion Island) Grytviken (Gold Harbour)	Half Moon Island
	* indicates introduced species				
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus*</i>		✓		
Alpine Cats Tail	<i>Phleum alpinum</i>			✓	
Annual Meadow Grass	<i>Poa annua*</i>			✓	
Tussuck Grass	<i>Poa flabellata</i>		✓	✓	
Sheeps Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella*</i>		✓		
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>		✓	✓	
Arrow-leafed Marigold	<i>Caltha sagittata</i>		✓		
Sub-Antarctic Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus bitematus</i>			✓	
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens*</i>	✓			
Greater Burnet or Prickly-burr	<i>Acaena magellanica</i>		✓	✓	
Lesser Burnet	<i>Acaena tenera</i>			✓	
Hybrid Burnet	<i>Acaena magellanica x tenera</i>			✓	
Fuegian Violet	<i>Viola magellanica</i>	✓			
Antarctic bedstraw	<i>Galium antarcticum</i>			✓	
Native Woodrush	<i>Luzula alopecurus</i>		✓		
Robust sedge on Carcass	??		✓		
	<i>Primula sp (?magellanica?) flowers gone to seed</i>	✓			
Scented daisy	<i>Hypochoeris incana</i>	✓			
Common blue pereza	<i>Perezia recurvata</i>	✓			
Lichens					
	<i>Usnea antarctica</i>				✓
Fungi					
Indian Bread	<i>Cyttaria darwinii</i>	✓			

Full Map of Tour



Orca in the Weddell Sea by Peter Dunn