



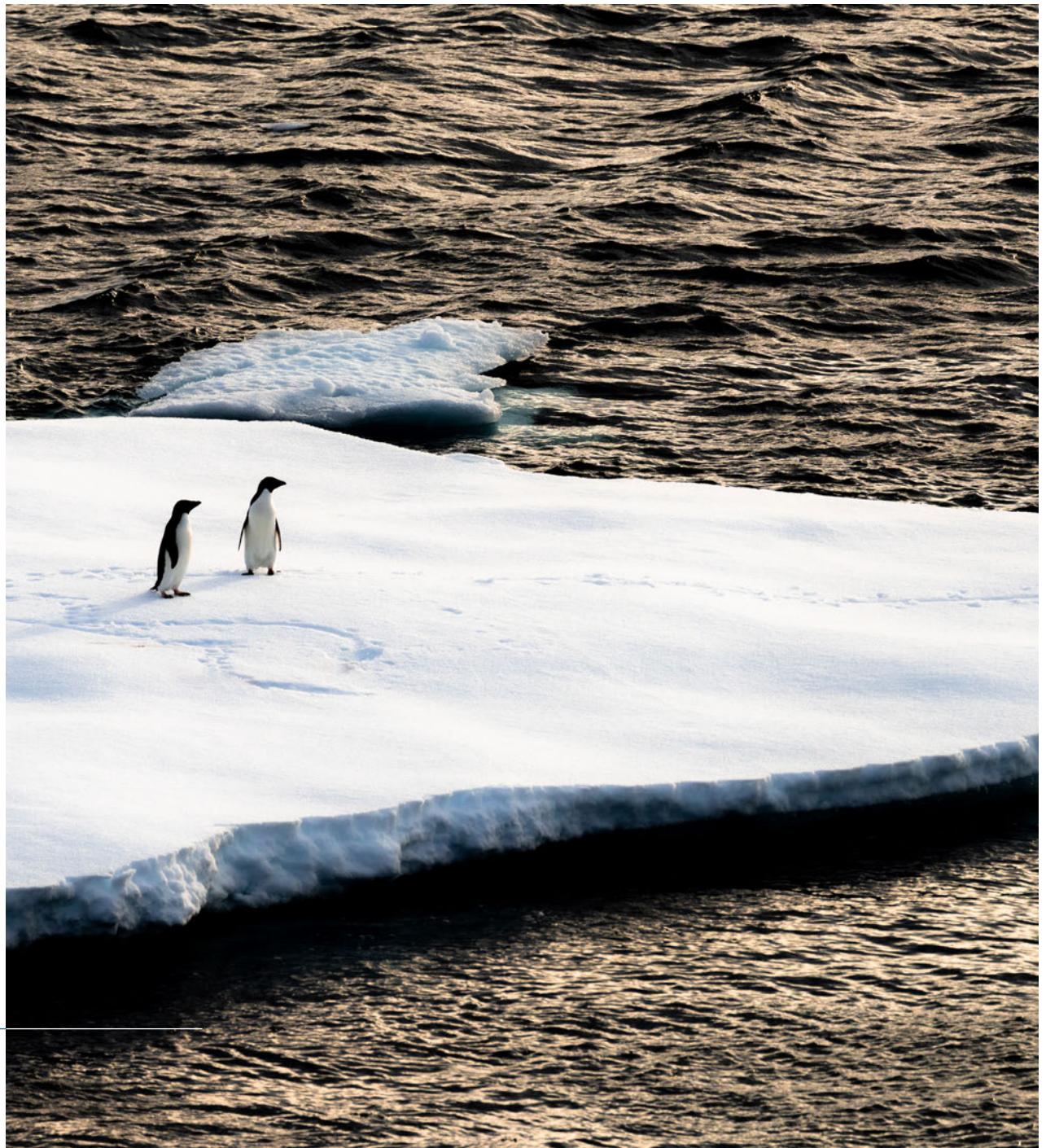
Across the Antarctic Circle

Aboard *Greg Mortimer* | 17 December – 28 December 2025



Across the Antarctic Circle

17 December – 28 December 2025



Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Wednesday 17 December 2025

Latitude:

54°53.7' S

Longitude:

67°38.6' W

Speed:

15 knots

Wind Speed:

18 knots NNW

Barometer:

1025 hPa

Air Temp:

9°C

Here we are in the picturesque town of Ushuaia, the end of the world. Our day began with breakfast at the hotel, overlooking the Beagle Channel and the pier, where the beautiful *Greg Mortimer* was alongside, preparing to welcome us on board.

Early in the morning, we set out from Ushuaia and crossed the southernmost foothills of the Andes toward Lake Fagnano, surrounded by forests and dramatic mountain views. After enjoying the scenery and taking photos, we continued to Las Cotorras, a rustic lodge where we savoured a traditional Argentinian BBQ lunch. Warm hospitality and the wild beauty of Tierra del Fuego made for a perfect start to our adventure.

Later, we headed to the pier and finally stood before the *Greg Mortimer*. Leo, our Expedition Leader, photographer Jarryd, Onboard Expedition Manager Alesha, and other members of

the Expedition Team greeted us warmly, checked us in and took a photo for the expedition board.

An embarkation buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar before the Hotel Team guided us to our cabins. Soon after, Expedition Leader Leo welcomed everyone in the lecture theatre with a short video featuring Greg Mortimer, speaking about the X-Bow design, Aurora's spirit of adventure and the days ahead, before introducing our multi-skilled Expedition Team. Alesha and Hotel Director Oliver outlined life on board, and Dr Pranav gave a brief talk on staying healthy during the voyage.

Altogether, we are 125 Expeditioners from around the world, joined by 81 crew members and 24 Expedition Team members. After many hours of travel, it is time to relax, breathe in the sea air, and look forward to the adventures ahead.





Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Thursday 18 December 2025

Latitude: 56°38.5' S
Longitude: 66°83.5' W
Course: 178°
Speed: 10.6 knots

Wind Speed: 25 knots SSW
Barometer: 1009 hPa
Air Temp: 0°C

The first full day of our expedition began with Leo waking us to news that we were now well and truly in the much-anticipated Drake Passage. With the sea state livelier than forecast, moving around the ship felt challenging at times, though the stabilisers and wave-piercing X-Bow design made for a far more comfortable ride than it otherwise would have been.

For those who found their sea legs early, it was exciting to explore the breakfast buffet. For others, a lie-in was far more appealing and completely understandable. Our morning briefings on biosecurity and Zodiacs were postponed so we could all attend when feeling less sleepy from sea-sickness medication.

To begin our lecture program, Jarryd gave a helpful presentation on polar photography. He shared tips for making the most of our gear, from smartphones to professional

cameras, and encouraged us to keep equipment ready at all times. Many were surprised to learn that holding the photo button on a smartphone switches it to video mode. Jarryd also reminded us that sometimes the best thing we can do is put the camera down and simply take it all in.

By afternoon, the sea state had eased, allowing the snorkel and kayak teams to begin preparations. Outside, albatrosses soared everywhere. T-A introduced the Southern Ocean seabirds, from the tiny Wilson's storm petrel to the snowy and royal albatrosses with wingspans of 3.5 metres. More than 40 of us then headed to deck 7 for an eBird Citizen Science survey, a first close encounter with albatrosses for many.

The Captain's Welcome rounded off our first full day, and we raised a glass to the adventures ahead.





Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Friday 19 December 2025

Latitude: 61°21.4' S
Longitude: 65°28.0' W
Course: 175°
Speed: 10.8 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots W
Barometer: 1009 hPa
Air Temp: 0°C

As the morning revealed itself on our second day at sea, it told a tale of calmer conditions than yesterday, with only a light breeze. Some black-browed albatross danced around the ship, displaying their aeronautical and acrobatic skills as a welcome to the day. The morning also brought our mandatory briefings, delayed from yesterday due to rougher seas. IAATO rules and regulations were presented and discussed, followed by the do's and don'ts of Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation.

These were followed by a biosecurity session in the lecture theatre, where every piece of Velcro received a thorough inspection for seeds or biological material to prevent the transfer of organisms to Antarctica. Clothing was put away and we completed Muck Boot sizing and life-jacket fitting in the mud room. It was unclear who won the wrestle with the red jackets, but everyone survived.

Those wrestling matches were only the precursor for the special activity groups, who were introduced to their snorkelling and kayaking drysuits. The faces pulled as they stretched through rubber seals and cuffs were priceless.

In the afternoon, Will delivered a detailed lecture on Antarctic history. More than a few people glanced around our ship, grateful for conditions far more comfortable than those faced by early explorers. Clouds were next on the agenda as forty of us conducted a survey in conjunction with NASA data.

Antarctica crept closer as we sat down for dinner. Almost as if to mark the end of our Drake crossing, humpback whales surfaced toward the aft of the ship, while light-mantled albatross circled in numbers, emphasising our arrival and the promise of our first operation in the morning.





Access Point, Lemaire Channel, Pleneau Island

DAY 4 | Saturday 20 December 2025

Latitude:

65°06.41' S

Longitude:

63°59.94' W

Course:

variable

Speed:

7.6 knots

Wind Speed:

5 knots SW

Barometer:

1001 hPa

Air Temp:

4°C

The day dawned beneath open skies, a deep blue broken only by scattered clouds drifting without urgency. The unusually calm sea mirrored the stillness, allowing us to proceed smoothly with a sense of harmony rarely found at these southern latitudes. Antarctica, generous today, revealed itself without resistance.

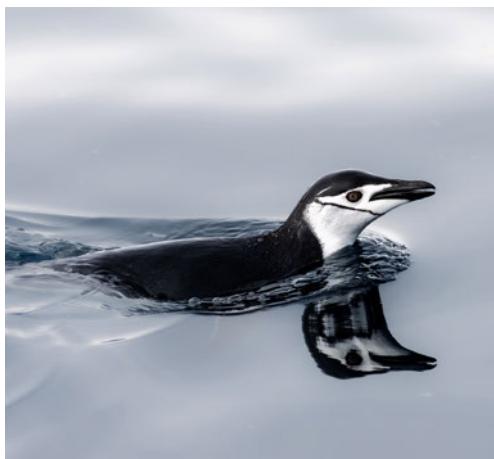
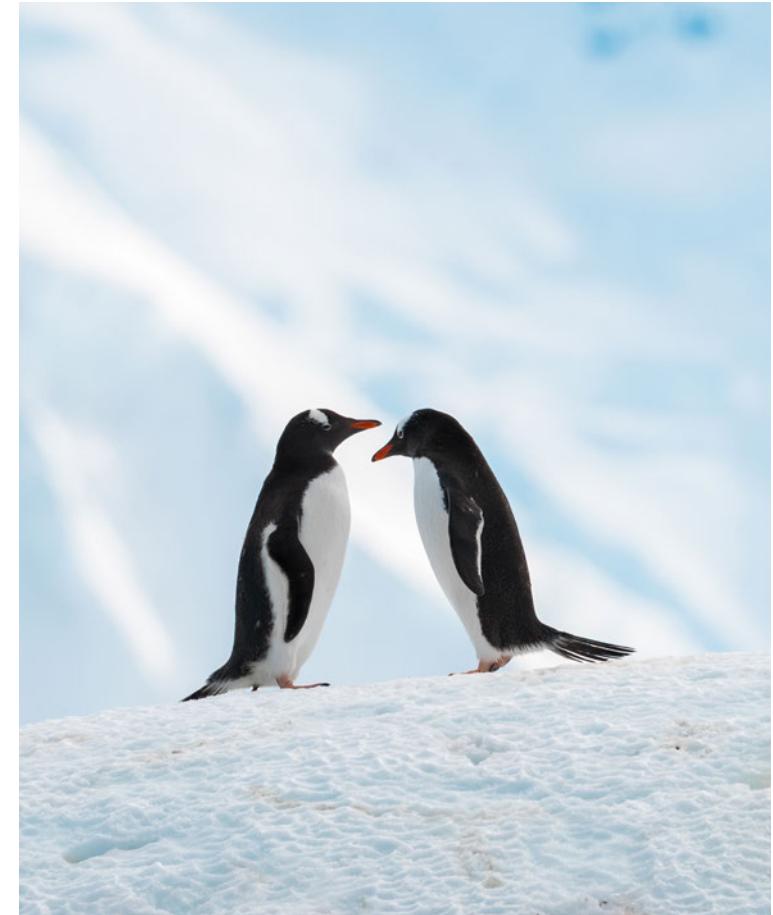
During the Zodiac cruise at Access Point on Anvers Island, we navigated among ice fields that appeared suspended in time. The silence, broken only by the soft hum of the Zodiac and the cracking of ice, compelled us to lower our voices and sharpen our gaze. Facing this vast white and blue expanse, any sense of human scale diminished. Exploring this environment became an exercise in humility, a reminder that we are brief visitors in a land governed by different rhythms.

Our landing at Pleneau Island was alive with movement as Adélie, chinstrap and gentoo penguins bustled along the shore, some with their first downy chicks. It was a vivid reminder of renewal in this extreme environment. We stepped carefully, knowing that to observe is also to respect.

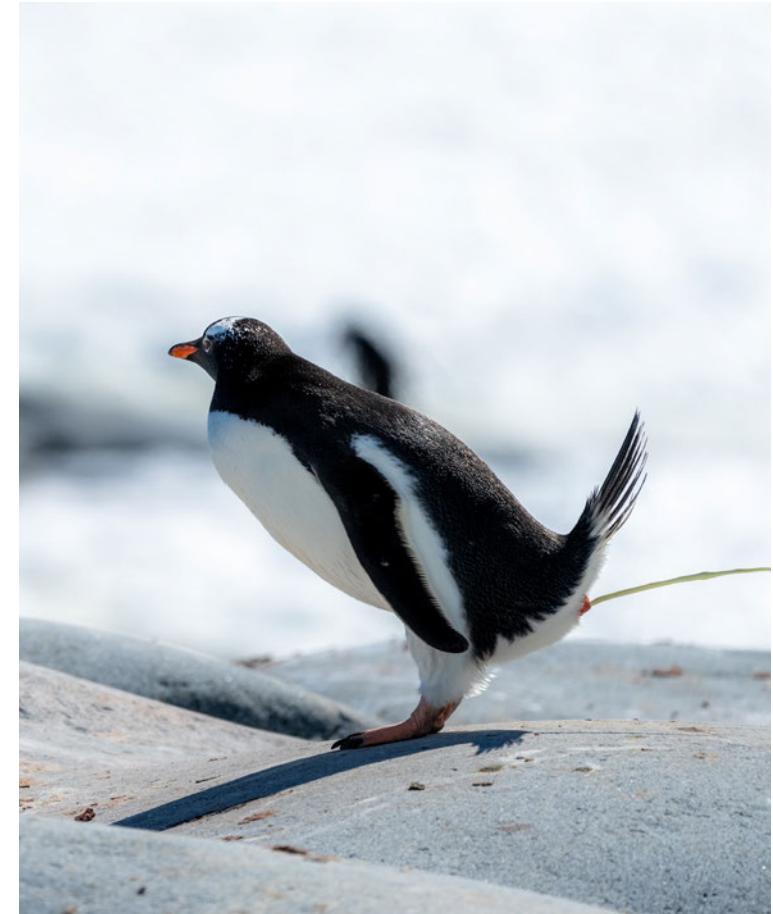
As the afternoon progressed, the ocean once again became the stage. A festival of humpback whales accompanied us, surfacing repeatedly and breathing deeply, setting the rhythm of the closing day. Their movements, calm yet powerful, reminded us that life here is abundant, though fragile.

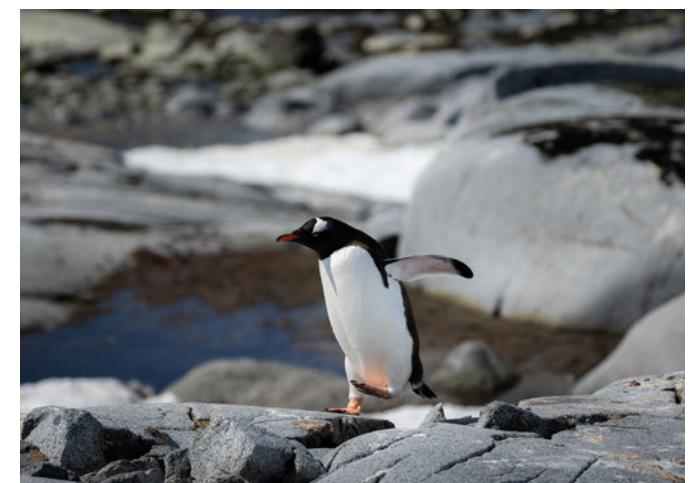
As the sun descended, the ship turned south once more. The day ended in gratitude and wonder, each mile drawing us deeper into Antarctica and an experience beyond measure.

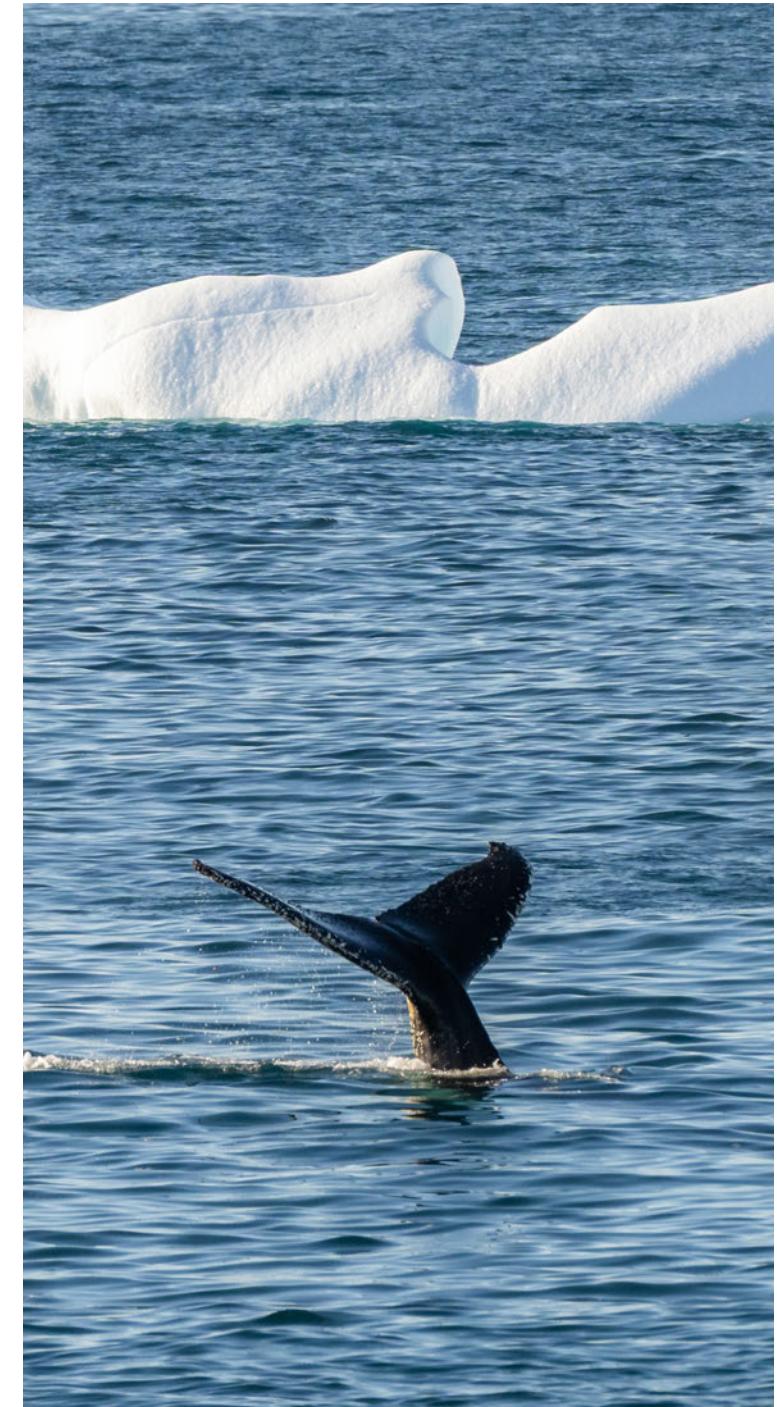












Prospect Point, Crossing the Antarctic Circle

DAY 5 | Sunday 21 December 2025

Latitude:

66°33.50' S

Wind Speed:

11 knots SW

Longitude:

67°64.4' W

Barometer:

992 hPa

Course:

237°

Speed:

3.7 knots

Air Temp:

3°C

After yesterday's excitement and with sunlight flooding the windows, it was easy to think we had overslept. But Leo's gentle wake-up call confirmed it was only 0600, and the breathtaking dreamscape outside was real. We continued south through calm waters along the lower Graham Coast, sheltered by Renaud Island. With mild breezes and perfect visibility, the vast panorama dwarfed us, our passage wrapped in stillness and quiet.

Light clouds moved in to soften our morning excursion at remote Prospect Point, where we made our first continental landing. The muted sunlight brought out vivid blues and turquoises in the glacial scenery, and from many viewpoints we absorbed its quiet serenity.

Paramount was taking our first steps on the Antarctic mainland. Past the remnants of an old British base, we trudged

to a snow-covered, crevassed promontory where a pair of skua guarded their perch, a glacier calved nearby and a curious Adélie penguin inspected us before tobogganing back to the sea.

With one milestone achieved, the clouds parted and we celebrated with a BBQ on the top decks before settling into a gentle cruise south. We transited into the surreal Crystal Sound under bluebird skies, amongst enormous icebergs and feeding whales. Our target was an imaginary line of latitude marking the doorstep to the lands of the midnight sun. Thanks to the foresight of our expedition leaders, we found ourselves here on this singular night, the austral summer solstice.

At 0800, *Greg Mortimer* attained 66°33'50" S | 67°64'4" W and crossed the Antarctic Circle. Many lingered late on the top decks, like the sun, unwilling to part with this unforgettable day.













Jenny Island, Bongrain Point

DAY 6 | Monday 22 December 2025

Latitude:

67°43.42' S

Longitude:

65°25.85' W

Course:

48°

Speed:

3.6 knots

Wind Speed:

17 knots E

Barometer:

992 hPa

Air Temp:

1°C

After our fun-filled crossing of the Antarctic Circle late the previous night, we awoke on the morning of 22 December with much excitement for the day ahead.

The day began under stunning sunshine and glassy waters as far as the eye could see. With incredible views of mountainous Adelaide Island to the east, we sailed southward into Marguerite Bay and toward our afternoon destination of Jenny Island.

Before the afternoon arrived, we still had a full schedule on board. Following breakfast, we gathered in the lecture room for the first of two morning talks. We began with an excellent session on penguins with our on board ornithologist T-A, followed by an engaging introduction to glaciology with Gaby.

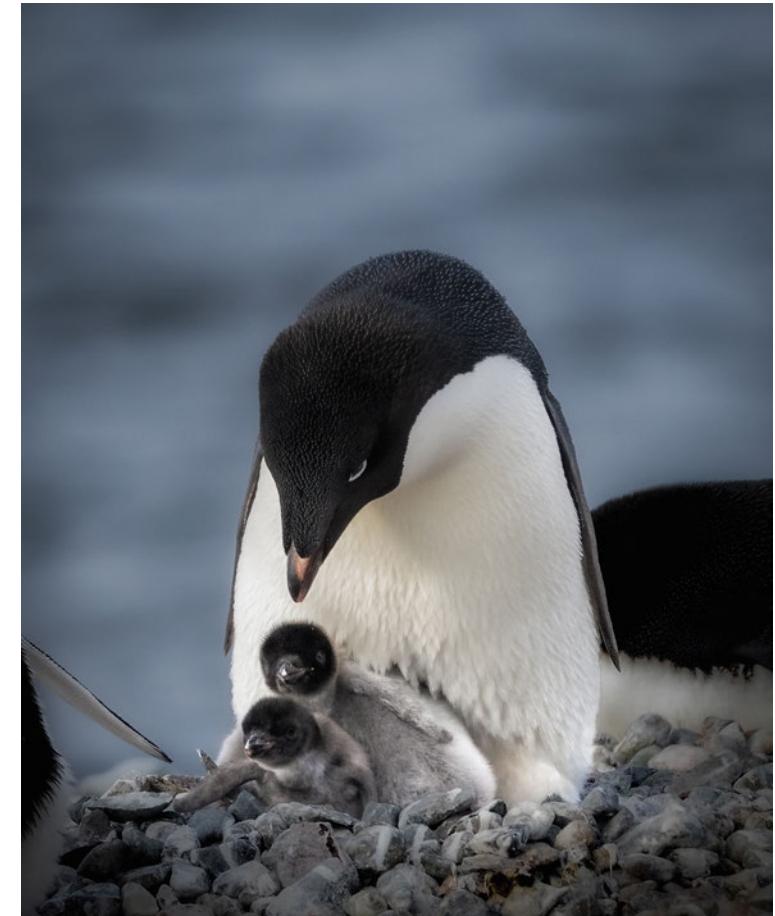
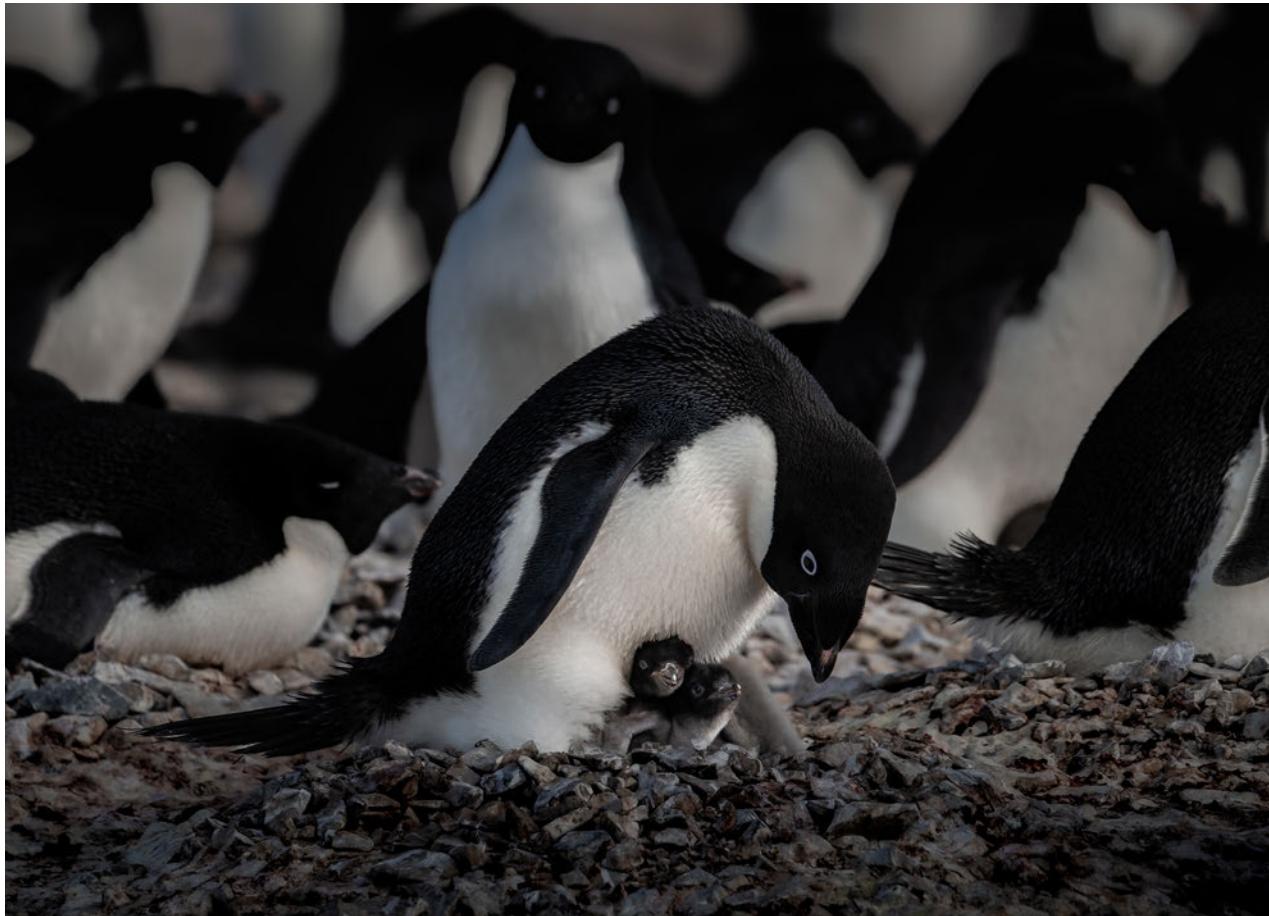
By midday we enjoyed a delicious lunch before boarding our Zodiacs for Jenny Island. Sadly, the landing was cancelled

due to possible avian influenza. Fortunately, our Expedition Team had a back-up plan, and at recap we learned the *Greg Mortimer* would reposition during dinner to Pourquoi-Pas Island, named after Jean-Baptiste Charcot's expedition vessel.

After a tasty dinner, we ventured out in our Zodiacs once more, this time to Bongrain Point. Here, we enjoyed excellent views of Adélie penguins, including some very tiny chicks, and even had the chance to see a glacier up close.

Although it was windy and splashy, we made the most of the midnight sun south of the Antarctic Circle. A quick Zodiac ride returned us to the ship to relax for the evening. After a drink at the bar among friends, both new and old, we headed to bed to rest before tomorrow's adventure.









At Sea South of the Antarctic Circle

DAY 7 | Tuesday 23 December 2025

Latitude:	Wind Speed:
65°14.2' S	7 knots SW
Longitude:	Barometer:
64°08.6' W	998 hPa
Course:	Air Temp:
At anchor	4°C
Speed:	
At anchor	

Today captured the essence of expedition cruising, where flexibility and respect for the elements are essential. Winds climbed above 35 knots and waves broke over the scout Zodiac, soaking the shore party and confirming that conditions were unsuitable. After thoughtful discussion, the Expedition Leader, Leo, and the Captain made the sensible call to cancel the morning's operations and turn north toward calmer waters.

Just before lunch, however, we reached a major milestone: the furthest south point of our voyage at 68°12' South. Only a tiny number of people ever visit Antarctica; of every million international tourists, only about 80 reach the Great White Continent, and even fewer cross the Antarctic Circle. Being here felt incredibly special, and we were also the furthest ship south, an achievement in itself.

An earlier recap and briefing delivered a series of engaging stories. Gaby introduced Antarctic research stations, Vicky charmed everyone with the tale of Steve the sledging dog who found his way home, and our medic Allan shared his experiences at the UK's Rothera Research Station, complete with photos of sledging dogs and climbing trips. After lunch, Antarctic historian Will took us back in time with a lecture on Sir Ernest Shackleton and the Endurance expedition. What began as a bold plan to cross the continent became an extraordinary fight for survival.

The afternoon wrapped up with hot chocolates, afternoon tea, a group photo outside on deck 7 and a lively pub quiz hosted by T-A and Vicky. A day of shifting plans and great stories proved Shackleton right: 'Difficulties are just things to overcome, after all.'

Yalour Archipelago | Petermann Island

DAY 8 | Wednesday 24 December 2025

Latitude:

65°14.2' S

Longitude:

64°08.6' W

Course:

at anchor

Speed:

at anchor

Wind Speed:

7 knots SW

Barometer:

998 hPa

Air Temp:

4°C

As day eight of our Antarctic Circle voyage dawned, we cruised north into the Yalour Archipelago. Its low-lying rocky islands, busy with nesting penguins and sunbaking seals, offered a welcome shift from the strong winds that had pushed us back the day before, and we were delighted to wake to calm seas and sunshine.

Excitement rippled through the ship as everyone prepared to step ashore. We spent the morning exploring rocky islets, weaving among nesting penguins and absorbing the raw beauty of the landscape. After returning to the *Greg Mortimer*, we gathered for the polar plunge, where many passengers braved the icy Antarctic Sea, cheered on by those watching from the deck.

That afternoon we travelled to Winter Island and historic Wordie House, one of the best-preserved huts on the

peninsula. We cruised past Vernadsky Research Station, then threaded through a maze of narrow channels by Zodiac, exploring the coastline in detail. Inside Wordie House, the preserved tools and living spaces offered a fascinating glimpse into the daily lives of early Antarctic explorers.

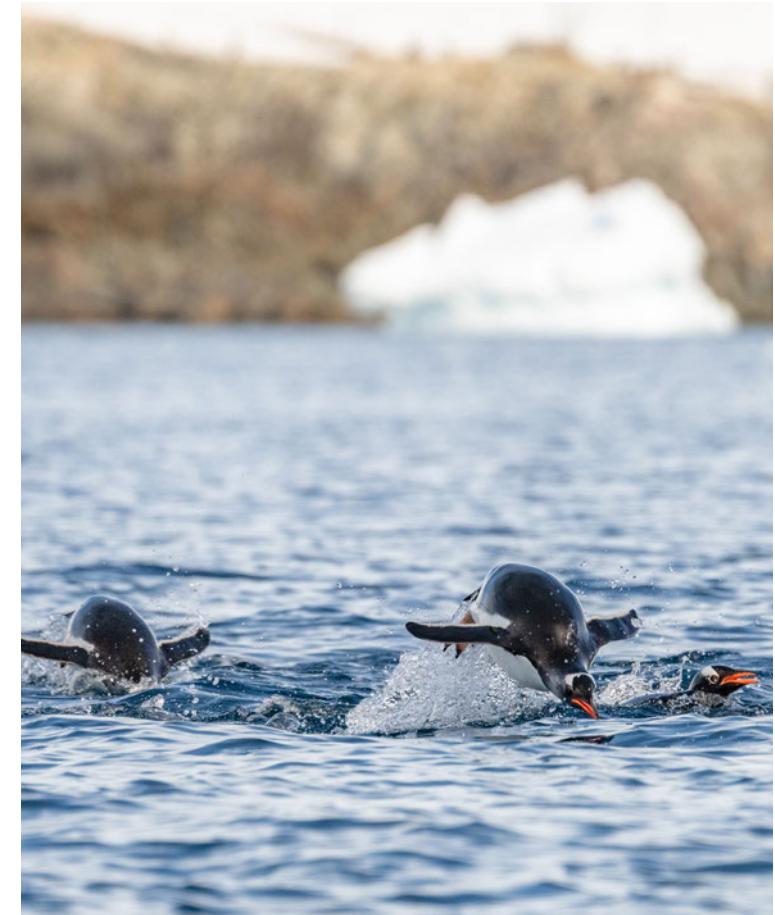
With the weather still holding beautifully, a spontaneous after-dinner excursion took us to Petermann Island. We visited more nesting penguins before hiking uphill to admire the evening views and savour our last moments on the continent. Bathed in the warm glow of Antarctic twilight, with a silky calm sea surrounding us, the scene felt almost unreal, as if nature had paused to reveal her gentler side.

As we leave this extraordinary place, Christmas Eve 2025 will remain a privileged moment shared with friends aboard the *Greg Mortimer* on the edge of the world.









Drake Passage

DAY 9 | Thursday 25 December 2025

Latitude:

63°17.9' S

Longitude:

65°02.1' W

Course:

356°

Wind Speed:

10 knots E

Barometer:

992 hPa

Air Temp:

0°C

Christmas morning arrived with rolling seas as we began our northbound crossing of the Drake Passage, easing out of Antarctica's icy embrace. After an exceptionally full final day that included three operations ashore and a spirited polar plunge, the ship stirred to a quieter and more thoughtful atmosphere. It had been a grand farewell that pushed our energy yet rewarded us with memories worthy of such an extraordinary voyage.

With the previous day so full, many guests welcomed a slower start to Christmas. The ship settled into a calm rhythm as tired adventurers slept in or relaxed in their cabins. For some, the morning became a chance to call home and share Christmas wishes from one of the most remote places on Earth.

By mid-morning the holiday spirit brought everyone together again. A festive Christmas brunch filled the dining room with

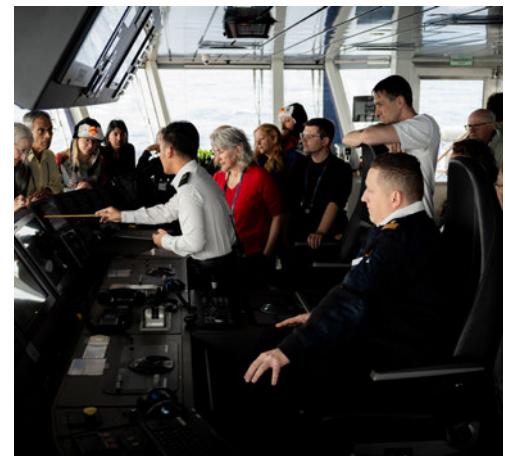
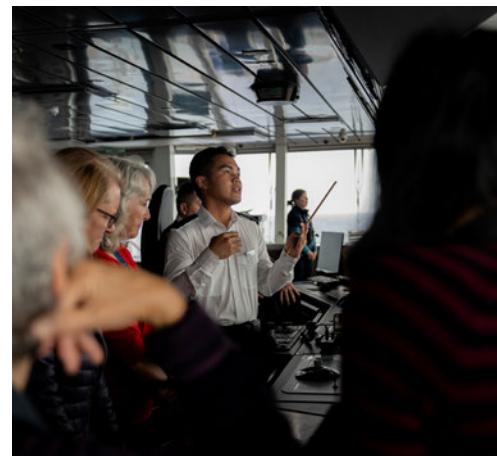
good food and cheerful conversation, and even the lively Drake could not dampen the smiles.

As we continued north, the conditions encouraged many to rest and recharge. The ocean's movement kept some indoors, and the afternoon slipped by in peaceful silence, with guests watching waves or simply taking time to unwind.

For guests keen to stay curious, several bridge tours were offered during the afternoon. These visits revealed the ship's technology and operations and highlighted the skill and teamwork required to navigate such challenging waters.

Later in the day, Vicky delivered an engaging and thought-provoking lecture on whales and climate change, offering valuable perspective on the broader environmental stories connected to our Antarctic experiences.





Drake Passage

DAY 10 | Friday 26 December 2025

Latitude:

56°13.85' S

Longitude:

66°14.6' W

Course:

327°

Speed:

13.3 knots

Wind Speed:

46 knots WSW

Barometer:

996 hPa

Air Temp:

5°C

The *Greg Mortimer* powered steadily ahead across the Drake Passage, a bruised steel sky to the west warning of a storm gathering strength. Rather than meet it head on, we sailed fast and direct toward the shelter of Cape Horn and the Beagle Channel. Wind and waves set the ship into a steady sway, a reminder of where we were, yet even at its wildest it felt measured compared with the raw exposure endured by the pioneers who first challenged these waters.

Five centuries earlier, sailors such as Ferdinand Magellan, Francis Drake and James Cook faced this ocean in wooden ships, guided by stars and resolve. Drake, blown south of Tierra del Fuego in 1578, discovered open sea where land had been assumed. Cook called the Southern Ocean 'the most horrible sea that can be imagined', while Charles Darwin wrote of waves 'like mountains moving on'. Compared with

their trials, our crossing felt almost indulgent, cushioned by stabilisers, warm decks and hot coffee.

The morning began with historian Will's lecture, Race for the South Pole, contrasting Roald Amundsen's meticulous planning with Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition. Amundsen reached the Pole in December 1911 and returned safely; Scott arrived weeks later and perished on the return.

Later, glaciologist Gaby revealed Earth's climate history through Antarctic ice cores, from the 450,000-year Vostok record to newer cores extending beyond one million years.

By afternoon, we gathered for a rocky afternoon tea in the Mawson Bar on deck 8. Land soon appeared on the horizon, and the day concluded with the voyage auction, raising over US\$5,000 for Polar Collective and Oceanites.

Beagle Channel

DAY 11 | Saturday 27 December 2025

Latitude:

54°59.2' S

Longitude:

66°5.1' W

Course:

304°

Speed:

2.8 knots

Wind Speed:

47 knots WSW

Barometer:

1003 hPa

Air Temp:

5°C

Our final full day unfolded gently as we cruised the Beagle Channel. The morning began with a relaxed breakfast buffet where guests gathered over warm coffee and shared stories while the Patagonian landscape slipped by outside. At 0915 we gathered for the disembarkation briefing with Alesha. The clear instructions helped everyone feel ready for the journey home.

The morning then divided into two engaging activities. The much anticipated bridge tours offered a behind the scenes look at ship operations and navigation, deepening appreciation for the crew who guided us through remote waters. At the same time, Leo presented his lecture titled 'Mummified seals', captivating guests with a remarkable blend of science and history as he explained how crabeater seals became trapped in the Quebrada Larga Valley, a story shaped by storms, starvation and frozen remains.

By noon everyone reconvened for a leisurely lunch buffet, the dining room filled with conversation and growing friendships. The afternoon featured Keeping the Magic Alive, an Antarctic Ambassador session that invited guests to honour their experience through storytelling, advocacy and thoughtful travel.

As the day transitioned into evening, anticipation built for the farewell celebrations. Guests gathered at the bar for the Captain's Farewell cocktails and canapés, followed by a moving voyage slideshow in the lecture theatre. Smiles, applause and a few misty eyes accompanied the images that captured our shared adventure.

The day concluded in elegant style with the Captain's Farewell dinner à la carte, a final memorable meal marking the end of an extraordinary journey through some of the world's most remarkable waters.

Ushuaia

DAY 12 | Monday 28 December 2025

Latitude:

54°53.7' S

Longitude:

67°38.6' W

Course:

Alongside

Speed:

Alongside

Disembarkation at 0800 am

Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard *Greg Mortimer*. We hope to see you on the high seas again someday!

BBQ





Polar Plunge

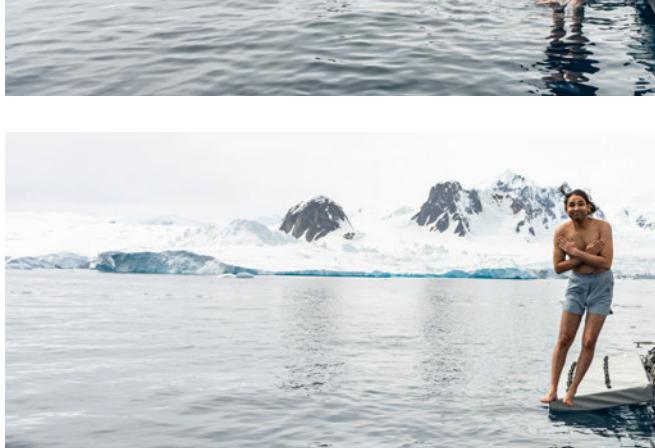
















Citizen Science







Kayaking Log

Elo Berrier, Gabriel Wackernagel, James Thorp, Robin Baths, Matthew Barnes

20 December 2025, AM: Access Point – 4km

For our first outing in Antarctica, we had the most ideal conditions we could ask for. After days of talking about kayaking it was finally time to get out there. We took it slow and steady to get in and get used to the boats but once everyone was paddling well, we got straight into it.

There is nothing that screams kayaking in Antarctica more than paddling through brash ice, so that is a great way to start. After clearing the ice, we managed to tick off seeing gentoo and chinstrap penguins with a sight of humpback whales cruising right past. A great intro to kayaking in Antarctica.

20 December 2025, PM: Pleneau Island – 5km

Our second kayaking excursion started in idyllic low wind and sunny conditions. We paddled from near the Greg Mortimer's anchorage towards

Pleneau Island and into the island chain to explore.

We began by tracking south along the rocky coast to observe the activities of the shoreline penguins as they jumped in and out of the water. We then turned west and into a bay full of bergy bits that led through a tight channel into a labyrinth of channels between the low-lying rocky islands. Eventually we popped out into a bigger bay where we saw several Weddell seals basking as we continued through to the outside of the island group and into the iceberg graveyard. There were many grounded icebergs, all unique formations, which we sat and admired for a while before retracing our route through the rocky islands.

On the return paddle we found a small bay full of sea ice with Weddell seals lying upon it. Once clear of the rocky islands and bergy bits we hailed our Zodiac and loaded up for the return to the ship.

Number of Kayakers: 20
Total Paddle Outings: 7
Total Distance Paddled:
28.6 km

Kayakers:
Austin Wang
Maureen Bell
Paul Cooper
Matthew Weagle
Susan Pavlansky
Benjamin Bylsma

Karen Maase
Russell Mac William
Beverley Mac William
Stephen Long
Martin Gardner
Keith Stadtmaier
Susan Stadtmaier

Roxanne Betts
Christian Glantz
V Ehninger
Colleen Delaney
Patrick Binetti
Simon Lugo
Lynn Lugo

21 December 2025, AM: Prospect Point, Antarctic Peninsula – 4.3km

Our kayak outing at Prospect Point unfolded in a rare state of calm. The sea was a perfect mirror, and the light soft and luminous created endless reflections on the water and ice. As we moved forward, it felt as if we were floating rather than paddling, gliding gently and effortlessly between sculpted pieces of ice.

We departed in two heats in a large brash mix, weaving between and busting through growlers, bergy bits and a few towering icebergs. We headed to the shoreline of Perch Island and hand railed right up on the interesting geology.

After grabbing some photos by a colourful berg, we joined a flock of Wilson's storm petrels dancing and surface feeding, while listening to an elusive pair of humpback whales exhaling in the distance. We finished off

with a look at a couple of sleepy Weddell seals on an islet before getting scooped up in the Zodiac and ferried through thick ice floe to the continental landing.

22 December 2025, PM: Jenny Island, Marguerite Bay – 1.6km

It was a choppy ride out to the southwest point, where the magnificently cratered island seemed to provide the best lee. A group of Antarctic shags had set up shop on the rock ledges there. Wind and swell wrapping around from the east side made conditions clapotic, however it was as protected a spot as we were going to get. During a slow and careful disembark from Zodiac to yaks, the group did a solid job of paddling close, keeping momentum and finding their balance until all were on the water. We explored east a short way against current and wind before circling back to the western side for a closer look at the shag hangout. Unfortunately, it was there when we were informed that the entire operation was being called back to the ship due to likely avian flu on shore.

22 December 2025, Evening: Bongrain Point, Pourquoi Pas Island – 3km

Nearing Bongrain Point, the katabatic blew strong with gusts of up to 30 knots. It did not look likely to kayak, but just south of the point, beyond the glacier, we spied calm conditions. So, with ten keen kayakers aboard the Zodiac, we towed the kayaks into the protection of the bay. A glacier loomed to our right with low rocky shag colony islets to our left.

On the water together, we put in power strokes crossing the bay. Entering a small cove, Adélie penguins had created a small idyllic colony with resting Weddell seals as neighbours who lay hauled out on the beach. The sea here was glass calm with mirror reflections of the grounded icebergs that we began to weave through. Great soaring cliffs rose sharply out of the bay, showcasing a timeline of Andean and Antarctic mountains.

Stratified layers of stunning reds, greens, browns, greys and purples. The evening light illuminated all, making for fantastic magic hour photographs, making this evening one of the most wonderful paddles thus far.

24 December 2025, AM: Yalour Island, Penola Strait – 4km

After two windy days, we were very grateful for the glassy, calm conditions at the Yalour Islands. Most of our kayak team joined us for a circuit of the bay, looking over the glaciated landscape and the mountains Scott, Shackleton and Peary, all peaks named after polar explorers who had poles as goals.

We paused several times to take photographs and to simply watch and listen. In the stillness, the sound of the ice became audible, a delicate crackle as trapped air bubbles were released from within the ice, a reminder that even in apparent stillness, everything is alive. We continued paddling through the ice, heading for the islands.



The blow of a humpback whale announced its greetings. Following the sounds of the exhaling puffs, we watched as its back arched, followed by the fluke dipping silently into the water, gesturing its departure into the depths. Continuing our circumnavigation of the Yalour Islands, Adélie penguins surfaced, preening their feathers nearby, while others porpoised past, approaching the landing site to jump out of the water and land carefully on their feet. They waddled up to meet their partner and to feed their young chicks.

The shallow islets made for great sea kayaking, weaving amongst penguins and whales and great sculpted icebergs.

24 December 2025, PM: Vernadsky Station and Wordie House, Argentine Islands – 6.5km

We launched the kayaks in the sheltered waters surrounding Vernadsky Station under calm and stable conditions. The flat sea allowed for smooth paddling as we navigated through narrow channels and between small islands that characterise the Argentine Islands archipelago.

Throughout the paddle, we observed numerous penguins at different stages of their breeding cycle. Many were seen on their nests, carefully guarding and feeding their chicks, while others moved actively along well-defined penguin highways, travelling back and forth between the colonies and the sea. From the water, these natural routes were

clearly visible and offered an intimate perspective into daily penguin life.

We paddled past the historic Wordie House, now preserved as a museum. Originally built in 1947 by the British Antarctic Survey, it served as the first permanent research station in this area and later became the foundation for what is today Vernadsky Station. Passing quietly in front of the house provided a unique connection between the region's human history and its surrounding wildlife.

The route continued through sheltered channels before reaching a small bay filled with sea ice. Here, we slowed our pace, manoeuvring carefully among the ice floes and taking time to observe the quiet, frozen landscape. The combination of calm conditions, abundant wildlife, historic landmarks

and ice-filled waters made this kayak outing a varied and memorable experience in one of the most iconic areas of the Antarctic Peninsula.

This final paddle carried a special meaning for both guests and guides, as it marked our last time kayaking in Antarctica. Moving quietly through these calm waters, surrounded by ice, wildlife and history, felt like a moment of gratitude and farewell. It was an opportunity to slow down, reflect on the experiences shared throughout the voyage and say goodbye to the Antarctic landscape from the most intimate perspective possible, at water level, in silence and in harmony with the environment. A fitting and memorable farewell to an extraordinary place.





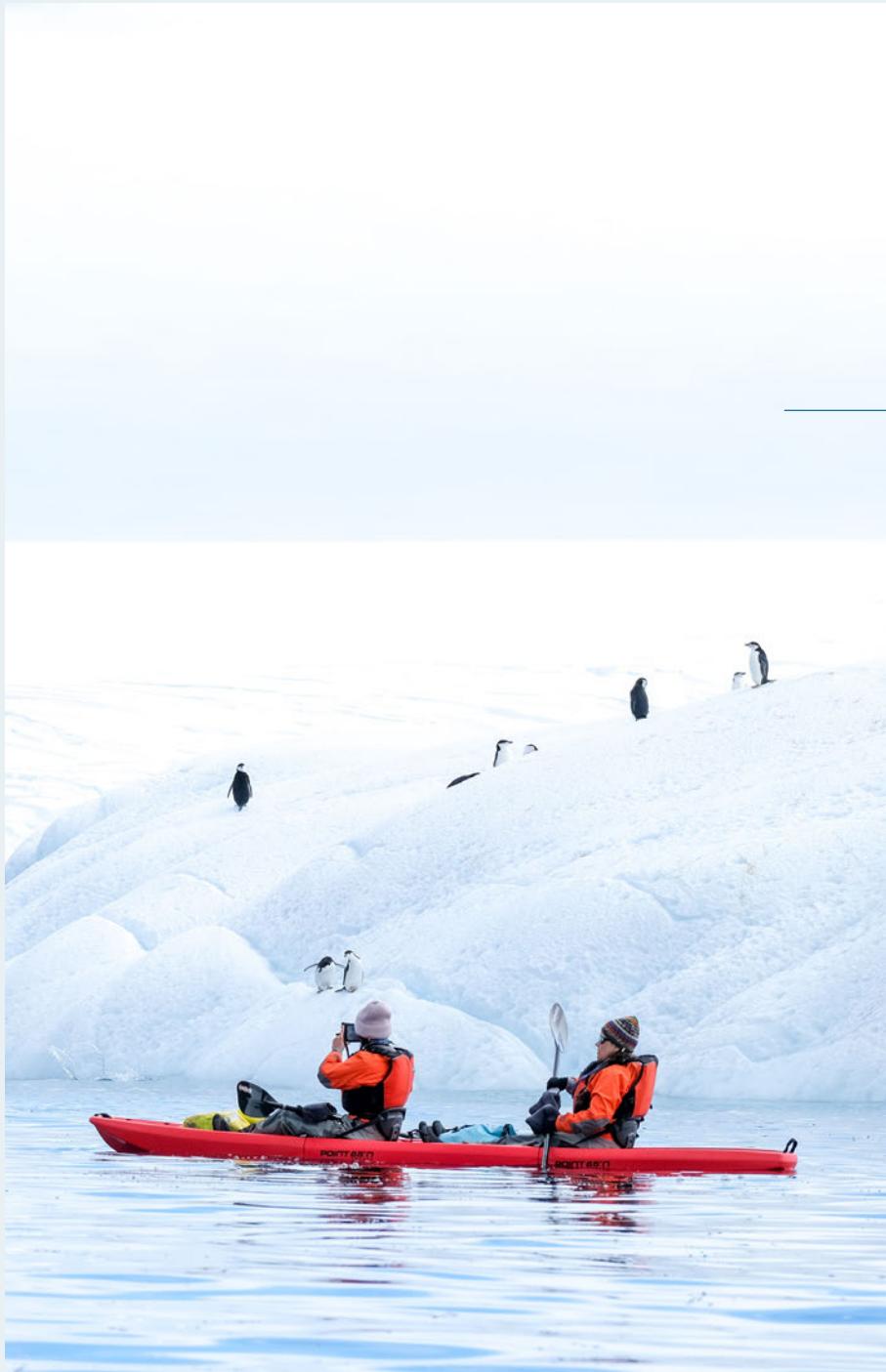












Paddle Log

Guides: Elo Berrier, Gabriel Wackernagel, James Thorp, Robin Baths, Matthew Barnes

20 December 2025, AM: Access Point, Anvers Island – 2.4km

We started in slushy brash and interspersed basic instruction with ice breaking. After working our way into more open water, we practised manoeuvring, as swimming gentoo penguins seemed keen to join in. We then crossed an open stretch to a wide iceberg for a visit from more gentoo and chinstrap penguins right alongside, and watched a few comically come and go from the iceberg. After a group photo, we were blessed with looks at a few humpbacks transiting the area.

20 December 2025, PM: Pleneau Island – 1km

Near the southern entrance of the Lemaire Channel which we sailed through just after lunch. At 65°06'00"S, Pleneau Island is surrounded by huge icebergs and spectacular glacial

scenery where rock terraces have had thousands of years of glacial advance weathering the granite features round and smooth.

The paddle began with exploring the amazing sculptures of ice. An ice floe with a dark shape was spotted, paddling over to look at a suspected seal. Sure enough, as we neared, the seal raised its head and looked at us. You could easily distinguish the species, a large head with long jaw line, a leopard seal. It noticed our presence, scenting and looking around at us warily.

Heading for the rocky shore of Pleneau Island, home to thousands of breeding gentoo penguins whose eggs have started cracking open, chicks hatching in the last week. We cruised along to see if we could spot baby gentoos. Watching parents' behaviour is always so much fun, waddling up highways, hopping from rock to rock and best of all, thieving



Number of Paddlers: 8

Total Outings: 5

Total distance paddled: 10.8 km

Paddlers:

Cindy Greenwood

Rachel Wang

Emily Metzger

Jennifer Stone

Alan Cartwright

Danielle Cisler

Daphnie Jolly

Rick Metzger Jr

rocks from each other's nests or chasing each other around. With an hour to spare, the team landed to observe the penguins from within the colony. Amazing excursion, surrounded by the magnificence of the Antarctic Peninsula.

[21 December 2025, AM: Prospect Point – 2km](#)

Conditions were glassy for us as we explored the gallery of icebergs on the way to the Fish Islands. Paddling through the ice we managed to come across all kinds of new wildlife with Antarctic shags flying overhead and a few Adélie penguins popping up for a visit too. We even got the occasional visit from some humpback whales playing peekaboo in the ice. After exploring it all we made our way back onto the Zodiac so we could have more time watching the Adélie colony on the Fish Islands. Then to tick all the boxes it was time to head to shore for a continental landing.

[24 December 2025, AM: Yalour Islands, Penola Strait – 2.2km](#)

We launched the kayaks directly from the Zodiac under perfect conditions, with a mirror flat sea reflecting the surrounding icebergs. The paddle began gently, weaving our way between beautifully sculpted ice, allowing the group to settle into a relaxed and steady rhythm.

In the distance, we were able to hear and briefly observe a humpback whale surfacing, its blows visible against the calm horizon, a powerful reminder of the rich marine life surrounding the island. We continued by circumnavigating Yalour Island, paddling close to shore where we observed several Weddell seals resting quietly on the rocks. Numerous Adélie penguins were seen both on land and in the water, moving between their colonies and feeding grounds.

Towards the end of the outing, we explored the nearby islets, discovering more seals hauled out along the shoreline. The kayak session concluded with a landing, giving us the opportunity to observe the penguin colonies from land and search for chicks, completing a varied and rewarding Antarctic experience that truly offered a bit of everything.

[24 December 2025, PM: Vernadsky, Winter Island \(Wordie Hut\) – 3.2km](#)

Dropped off inside the north channel of Winter Island (just past Vernadsky Station) to witness the goings on of some nesting gentoos. Had a nice look at a few small chicks, but most adults appeared to be on nest or just hanging about. One swam out and chased a skua off nearby sea ice while another skua harassed another gentoo high up on a nest. We meandered through

the narrow channel, admiring bright green mosses, old man's beard and orange lichens on the vertical cliffs and spotting limpets and a few sea urchins below the surface.

Our route took us around Wordie Hut so we did a drive by. There were several sleeping Weddell seals that allowed us a close look. Exiting the south (skua) channel, we got amongst some great icebergs along with a few swimming gentoos. We then found a couple of small islets surrounded by shallow waters, no go zones for Zodiacs but perfect for zero draught, sit on top kayaks. The islets must have been nesting grounds for kelp gulls and Antarctic terns because we watched them fuss and flock defensively.

We finished off with a surprise juvenile Weddell seal out cold on the rocks before ferrying back to the ship.















Snorkelling Log

Guides: Thomas Gov, Freya Dooley, Remi Ritchie

20 December 2025, AM: Access Point

After days of briefings and drysuit fittings, we finally woke to breathtaking scenery and whale-filled waters. The weather is perfect for our first morning, calm seas and no wind. Antarctica is welcoming us with open arms.

Our first outing takes us to Access Point, where we will do a Zodiac cruise followed by our first snorkel. We squeezed into our drysuits, easier than yesterday, and boarded the Zodiacs, eager to explore.

The scenery is stunning, towering peaks and blue icebergs calved from glaciers. We cruised through brash ice, spotting penguins on an iceberg, and even saw all three brush tailed penguin species. Next, we headed to some islands that seemed like the perfect spot to snorkel.

With a mix of nerves and excitement, we geared up and slowly slipped

into the freezing water. The cold hit immediately, but we were quickly amazed by the life beneath the surface. The ocean floor was dotted with invertebrates, and colourful algae swayed in the current. As we swam, planktonic species drifted around us, adding to the sense of wonder. The water was clear, but the cold soon made it hard to stay too long. After about 20 minutes, we climbed back into the Zodiacs, shivering but exhilarated, and headed back to the ship for a warm lunch.

20 December 2025, PM: Pleneau Island

After warming up back on board, we made our way to Pleneau Island through the stunning Lemaire Channel, flanked by towering peaks and glaciers, with icebergs scattered along the way. The views were incredible, and everyone was out on deck to admire the scenery. After a few changes to the plan, we reached Pleneau Island.

Number of Snorkellers: 16

Total Snorkel Outings: 6

Snorkellers:

Carla Catteral
Karen Schnurbus
Andrea Hipeco
Scott Schildt
Leah Billet
Mallory Orme

Kimberly Wetzler

Mary Ann Billet
Royden Hobbs
Venkatesv Pingali
Rasmi MuKapuganti
Joshua Turpen
Caroline Turpen

Derek Huang

Christina Huang
Raymond Robie

We headed to the mudroom to slip into our drysuits, much easier now. Once suited up, we took the Zodiacs ashore and explored the island, home to a gentoo penguin colony. We even spotted some chicks hidden in the nests. Afterward, it was time for the snorkel.

We set off from the landing site, passing some fast ice and spotting a few sleepy female elephant seals lounging nearby. Once again, we wrestled into our wet gloves, fins, masks and snorkels before sliding into the cold water. Beneath the surface, the ocean was alive with limpets, red and green algae, and even a few penguins swimming past on their way to or from the colony. The water was brimming with life, and it felt like we were in another world.

After about 30 minutes, we quickly climbed back into the Zodiacs when a leopard seal appeared, gliding gracefully under our boats to check us out. With its sleek movements, it

was an incredible sight. We returned to the ship, eager to warm up and share stories of our unforgettable first day of Antarctic adventures.

21 December 2025, AM: Prospect Point

Today's snorkelling outing felt like a true Antarctic milestone from start to finish.

We began with around 30 minutes on land at Prospect Point, marking our first continental landing in Antarctica. Standing on solid ground, surrounded by impressive glaciers and icebergs drifting quietly in the bay, was a powerful moment. The vastness of the landscape was humbling, with ice filled waters stretching in every direction and creating a stunning backdrop for our first steps on the continent.

We then returned to the Zodiacs and headed toward the Fish Islands, carefully navigating between ice and rock. Here we observed Adélie penguins actively nesting, moving back and

forth with purpose and energy. Wildlife encounters continued when we spotted a crabeater seal resting on the ice, a new species for our trip and an exciting discovery for everyone on board.

After scouting the area, we selected a calm snorkelling site beneath nesting Adélie and blue-eyed shags. Once in the water, we explored the underwater world around small icebergs, their shapes extending below the surface in beautiful shades of blue and white. Several curious cormorants joined us underwater, swimming close to the group and even attempting to nip at snorkellers, adding a playful and memorable element to the dive.

After about 40 minutes in the water, we made our way back to the Zodiacs and navigated a maze of icebergs toward the ship. Along the way we passed and collected a large fishing buoy trapped in the ice and finished the outing with sightings of a couple of Weddell seals, providing a perfect end to an

unforgettable Antarctic experience.

25 December 2025, AM: Yalour Islands

The new day has once again greeted us with calm seas and beautiful scenery. Arriving at the Yalour Islands lies sporadic colonies of Adélie penguins waiting to be played with, and as we approach we are lucky enough to have a humpback whale introduce us to their magical group of islands.

Hopping on the island in drysuits and hiking up the hill is one way to keep warm and work up a sweat, ready for the cold waters to come. Sleeping Weddell seals on the shores and Adélie penguins skirting around the place leads to excited spirits on the Zodiac.

Jumping into the fresh two degrees Celsius water, the punters are on their way. Small invertebrates are scattered amongst the shallow rocky bottom with plenty of red and brown seaweeds to add colour. The penguins



occasionally tease us with their presence as they mysteriously speed past us within an instant, almost as if they are intentionally taunting us, but nonetheless it was a good taste of what was to come in the afternoon.

But before that moment is to come, we must plunge into the icy waters of Antarctica without the protection of a drysuit, yet another fun way to freeze with a smile.

25 December 2025, PM: Wordie House, Argentine Islands

As we move on for an afternoon adventure, we find ourselves in the stunning Argentine Islands. A graveyard of picturesque icebergs littered with brash ice gives a feeling of true Antarctica. With penguins porpoising in rafts and the crackles and pops of ice music to our ears, we are left in awe.

We find ourselves navigating amongst a labyrinth of channels, each of them harbouring a different vantage point,

whether it is more icebergs or a glacier front rising steadily on either side.

We are temporarily blocked by sea ice, but with a little perseverance and a push we break through and continue our journey. We make our way to Wordie House and travel back through time in the footsteps of explorers before us in the hopes of understanding just how harsh and difficult it was to be in their shoes.

Hopping back on the Zodiacs, we continue to explore this maze of islands until we reach our snorkel destination, littered with penguins. Hundreds of penguins torpedo past, the underwater Expeditioners not knowing which way to look, straining neck muscles and numb fingertips completely worth every second. Each face filled with joy as these little flippered gentoo penguins zip and zap past effortlessly, leaving nothing but a trail of bubbles. A fantastic way to finish a full day of activities, or so we thought.



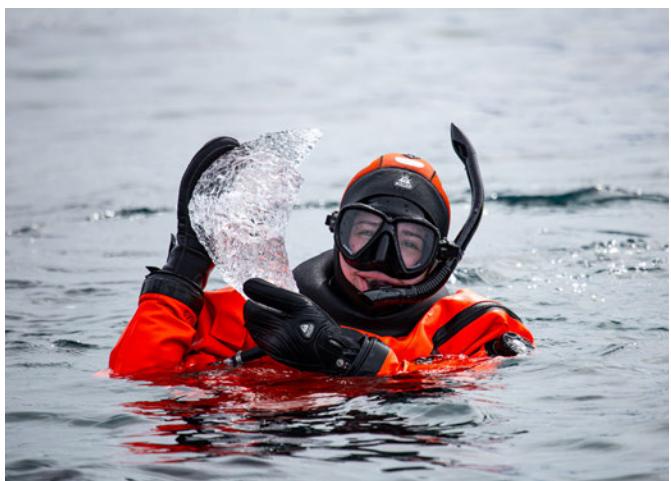
25 December 2025, Evening: Petermann Island

This evening began with mixed emotions during the daily briefing. We learned that we would need to leave Antarctica one day earlier than planned to avoid a large storm system developing on our route back toward South America. While the news was disappointing, it came with a wonderful surprise. To celebrate Christmas Eve in Antarctica, we were offered one final outing after dinner.

As the evening light settled over the ice, we boarded the Zodiacs and headed to Petermann Island. The island greeted us with a lively colony of gentoo penguins and an impressive setting steeped in history, known as the second wintering site of Jean Baptiste Charcot in the early twentieth century. We spent about 45 minutes on land, enjoying the wildlife, the scenery and the quiet significance of standing in such a historic place.

Back on the Zodiacs, we searched for the perfect snorkelling spot and found a beautiful piece of ice floating in deep, dark, yet remarkably clear water. We debated whether to explore this new iceberg environment or stay closer to shore in hopes of penguin encounters. In the end, we were rewarded with both. A single curious penguin approached first, followed soon by several more, circling us with speed and elegance as they flew effortlessly through the water around the blue ice.

After returning to the Zodiacs, the outing took an unexpected and joyful turn with a spontaneous session of back-flip jumps into the water. In the sunshine, the cold felt surprisingly mild. We ended the evening heading back to the ship, smiling and grateful for a truly unforgettable Christmas Eve in Antarctica.







Snowshoe Log

Guides: Dan Phillips, Bronwen Waters

20 December 2025, PM: Hovgaard Island North

We had our very own landing and island for our first snowshoe outing. It was a beautiful day and we made our way on the Zodiacs into a small bay between Hovgaard and Pleneau Island. We landed on Hovgaard Island and clipped into the ropes for our first outing that would take us up onto a glacier. We had a great view over the iceberg graveyard in the bay as we made our way up to the main ridgeline that led to Hovgaard summit. Once we reached the ridge we had awesome views down into the channel below. An awesome, sunny, scenic view to start off our Antarctic adventure.

21 December 2025, AM: Perch Island | Prospect Point

The Zodiac dodged and swerved through brash ice to get to our snowshoe landing site on Perch Island this morning. The water was so clear and calm we could see down to the rocky bottom deep below. We roped up and made our way up to the top of Perch Island for an extensive view across to the mainland and surrounding ocean, filled with many icebergs. We could watch the tidal flow between Perch Island and the continent by observing the bergy bits swiftly move with the current. We completed a circuit around the island and got a Zodiac transfer over to Prospect Point, our first time walking on continental Antarctica.



Number of Snowshoers: 12
Total Snowshoe Outings: 5

Snowshoers:
Geraldine Goh
Jon Kenfield
Sara Kenfield
Debra Kimpton
Alexey Kodubets
Cathy Pak-Poy

Shimon (Senya) Pertsel
Stefanie Ratzel
Tim Roncevich
Kimberly Roncevich
Sammi Roncevich
Bailey Roncevich

22 December 2025, PM: Jenny Island

We had an adventurous, bumpy and splashy Zodiac trip around Jenny Island to get to our snowshoe landing site. We had a little rock step to climb to get onto the snow, and once snowshoes were donned, we made our way up a large, wide snowfield. As we climbed, we gained great views over Marguerite Bay, including peaks over 2000 metres high on Adelaide Island. We reached the very end of the snow slope and took in the view and had a long, fun snowshoe downhill to our pickup site.

24 December 2025, PM: Snow Island | Vernadsky Base

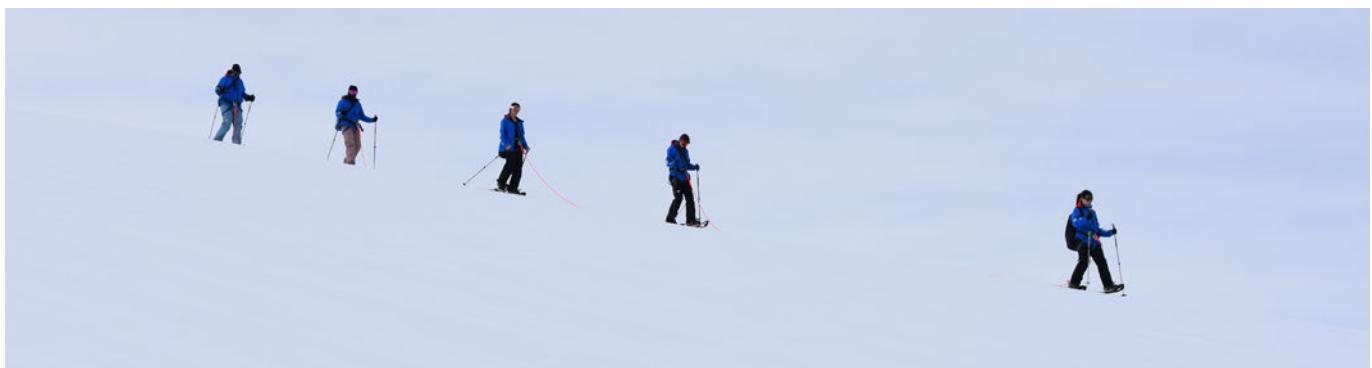
This afternoon the ship was anchored off the active Ukrainian research station, Vernadsky Base. It was interesting to look at the colourful base buildings and facilities, where gentoo penguin colonies were interspersed around the facilities. We landed on Winter Island, across the channel from the base. We did a short but scenic loop around the island, keeping our distance from some rocky outcrops where skuas were nesting. Once we had completed our route, we got back into the Zodiac to go down one of the narrow channels to visit Wordie House.

Wordie House is a historic hut that was originally developed by the British Antarctic Survey and has now been left as a museum site, giving a view of hut life as it was back in the day. Bunks, kitchen implements, stoves, tables, books and games have been left in situ, giving a great snapshot. After visiting Wordie House, we returned to the Zodiac to take yet another narrow channel back to the ship.

24 December 2025, PM: Hovgaard Island South

It was Christmas Eve and our last snowshoe in Antarctica. It was a stunning evening as we headed out after dinner for our third landing of the day and a snowshoe to end our Antarctic adventure. The Zodiac could move fast across the flat seas and past icebergs and bergy bits as we approached our own landing site on the south coast of Hovgaard Island. We roped up and headed uphill to the top of a rounded summit. The light and views over the channel were amazing. A perfect way to finish off our snowshoeing experience in Antarctica.









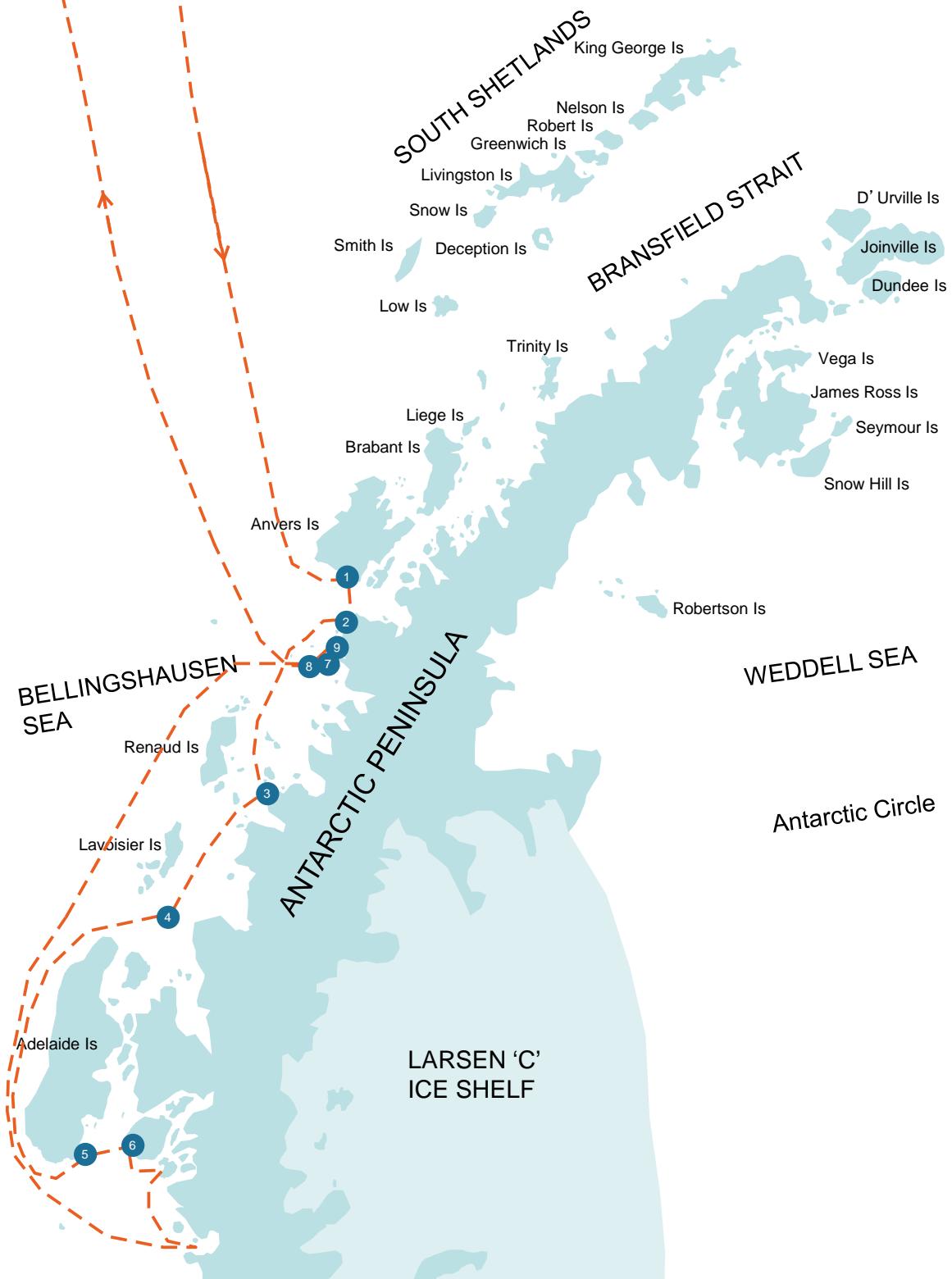
Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	December											
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
Snowy Sheathbill								●				
Chilean Skua											●	
South Polar Skua					●	●		●				
Brown Skua				●		●						
Skua (Unidentified)		●		●				●				
Kelp Gull	●			●		●		●			●	
Antarctic Tern				●	●	●		●				
South American Tern	●								●	●	●	
Arctic Tern									●			
Gentoo Penguin				●		●			●			
Chinstrap Penguin				●		●			●			
Adélie Penguin				●		●	●	●	●	●		
Magellanic Penguin	●											
Snowy Albatross		●							●	●		
Black Browed Albatross	●	●	●						●	●	●	
Grey-Headed Albatross				●								
Light-Mantled Albatross	●		●									
Northern Giant Petrel		●							●			
Southern Giant Petrel	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	
Southern Fulmar			●	●	●		●		●	●		
Pintado (Cape) Petrel		●	●	●	●				●	●		
Snow Petrel					●	●						

Map

- 1. Access Point
- 2. Pleneau Island
- 3. Prospect Point
- 4. Antarctic Circle
- 5. Jenny Island
- 6. Bongrain Point
- 7. Yalour Islands
- 8. Wordie House
- 9. Petermann Island

Across the Antarctic Circle
17 December – 28 December 2025





— Our Expeditioners

Maureen Bell	Sue Freeman	Carl Johnson	Adela Mao	Rafael Ratzel	Trish Volker
Roxie Betts	Martin Gardner	Daphnie Jolly	Edith Matthai	Alexander Ratzel	Rick Volker
Leah Billet	Stuart Gibbons	Rasmi Kapuganti	Giulia Mazzarini	Stefanie Ratzel	Austin Wang
Mary Ann Billet	Lina Gilmour	Sara Kenfield	Milton McColl	Raymond Robie	Wang Wang
Patrick Binetti	Steve Gilmour	Jon Kenfield	Rapti Mendis	Tim Roncevich	Hongxin Wang
Alex Borowicz	Chris Glantz	Debra Kimpton	Upul Mendis	Bailey Roncevich	Xianhua Wang
Jesse Boulerice	Geraldine Goh	Andy Klein	Emily Metzger Metzger	Sammi Roncevich	Rachel Wang
Benjamin Bylsma	Cindy Greenwood	Alexey Kodubets	Rick Metzger Jr	Kimberly Roncevich	Qin Wang
Alan Cartwright	Udayan Gupta	Mary Liu	Raj Muchhala	Karen Schnurbusch	Matt Weagle
Carla Catterall	Andrea Hipeco	Xiaochen Liu	Megha Muchhala	Quyang Shang	Kimberly Wetzler
Wenjia Chen	Roy Hobbs	Yali Liu	Savi Narayanan	Jianhui Shi	Ling Wu
Alice Chiu	Huang Huang	Tongxu Liu	Kandan Narayanan	Scott Shildt	Baiwei Xia
Danielle Cisler	Christina Huang	Lauren Liu	Bhasker Natarajan	Michael Smaje	Linlin Xie
Mason Cole	Derek Huang	Steve Long	Audrey Niu	Keith Stadtmiller	Weifeng Yang
Helen Coles	Qingshou Huang	Zi Zhen Lu	Mallory Orme	Susan Stadtmiller	Victoria Yang
Paul Cooper	Ginger Huang	Liyun Lu	Cathy Pak-Poy	Jen Stone	Jie Yang
Beth Davidow	Xd Huang	Simon Lugo	Susan Pavlansky	Anita Sutton	Sabrina Zhang
Colleen Delaney	Kayla Hudak	Lynn Lugo	Shimon Pertsel	Anne Trussell	Yang Zhang
Mary Delany	Kurt Hudak	Karen Maase	Kalyan Pingali	Paula Tunison	Sara Zou
V Ehninger	Rachel Johnson	Beverley Mac William	Marsha Pritchard	Josh Turpen	Zuo Er Zuo
Michael Freedman	Karen Johnson	Russell Mac William	Robyn Quigley	Caroline Turpen	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Leopoldo Soibelzon

Assistant Expedition Leader: Nicole Genoud

Onboard Expedition Manager: Alesha Bradford

Marine Biologist/Citizen Science Coordinator:
Victoria Inglis

Historian: Will Versluis

Geologist / Glaciologist: Antoine Viot

Ornithologist / Naturalist: Tracey-Ann Hooley

Photography Guide: Jarryd Salem

Medic: Alan McPherson

Zodiac Manager: Thomas Marks

Shop Manager: Reza Rusooly

Lead Kayak Guide: Elo Berrier

Senior Kayak Guide: Gabriel Wackernagel

Senior Kayak Guide: James Thorp

Kayak Guide: Robin Baths

Kayak Guide: Matthew Barnes

Lead Alpine Guide: Dan Phillips

Alpine Guide: Bronwen Waters

Lead Snorkel Guide: Thomas Gov

Snorkel Guide: Freya Dooley

Snorkel Guide: Remi Ritchie

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Alexandru Taraoi

Chief Officer: Vladimir Kolesnikov

Safety Officer: Sergei Abramov

Bosun: Francis Marvin Linga

Ship Doctor: Javier Martinez Rodriguez

Chief Engineer: Denys Odrynskyy

First Engineer: Dmytro Matviyenko

IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev

Hotel Director: Oliver Sevilla

F&B Service Manager: German Orlando
Cayasso Wilson

Chief Purser: Pia Blanca Bangug

Executive Chef: Vinod Kumar

Head Waiter: James Andrew Refina

Hotel Controller: Cheryl Ann Dela Torre

Receptionist: Maria Nympha Abuda

Receptionist: Liberty Joy Acelar

Head Stateroom Attendant: Roniel Garcia

AB Seaman: Joel Noble

AB Seaman: Roberto Ixtan Mejia

AB Seaman: Junar Gorecho

AB Seaman: Noel Refugia

AB Seaman: Jay Belaguin

AB Seaman: Khenette Versoza

Photography thanks to:

Photography Guide: Jarryd Salem

Kayak Guides: Elo Berrier, Gabriel Wackernagel, James Thorp, Matthew Barnes

Alpine Guides: Dan Phillips, Bronwen Waters

Snorkel Guide: Thomas Gov, Freya Dooley, Remi Ritchie





 facebook.com/auroraex

 [@aurora_expeditions](https://instagram.com/aurora_expeditions)

 youtube.com/auroraexpeditions

 Aurora Expeditions
(@Polar_Experts)