

# Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 31 October – 10 November 2023



# Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Wednesday 01 November 2023

## Position at 0900 on Nov 1

Latitude: 54°53.6'S

Longitude: 067°45.3'W

Course: 090°

Speed: 13.3 knots

Wind Speed: 4-6 knots

Barometer: 1010

Air Temp: 9°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

Embarkation can be just as hectic and full of activities as any expedition day and today was no exception. The slightly delayed arrival of the *Sylvia Earle* meant an early morning embarkation and a rare day transit of the Beagle Channel.

After casting off we were treated to a calm and seasonable afternoon with no shortage of spectacular views. Along the Chilean and Argentinian coast we could see small "ranchos" on the rolling hillsides, cattle and sheep grazing on new spring grass.

From the outer decks we spied many seabirds including several magnificent black browed albatross and multitudes of rock shags gathering nesting material. Sea lions were spotted, albeit fleetingly, while a pod of bow-riding dusky dolphins led in the tender that carried off our Chilean pilot.

At 14:00 we gathered in the lecture lounge to meet our Expedition Team and to take in our first mandatory briefing. From our expedition leader, Flo, we learned about IAATO and our responsibilities as Antarctic Ambassadors.

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station to sample our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us up to the lifeboats to get us familiar with their whereabouts.

At 15:00, the *Sylvia Earle* turned due south with Isla Nueva on our starboard. To the south-west, Isla Deceit could just be seen in the lee of Isla Hornos, which features the historic and notorious Cape Horn, that marks the tempestuous northern border of the Drake Passage.

As we left Tierra del Fuego in the mist, the sea rose to meet us in long gentle swells, while the breeze kicked up, bringing with it more pelagic species, giant petrels, Antarctic prions and grey headed albatross.

The dinner hour found us rolling in a moderate but manageable Drake, tired from our long journeys to Ushuaia, but excited for the adventure to come.

Onboard we total 69 Expeditioners with nationalities representing Australia (33), Canada (2), France (1), Germany (1), Ireland (1), New Zealand (8), UK (8), USA (15), along with 20 Expedition Team and 84 Ship's crew from all over the world.



# Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Thursday 02 November 2023

Position at 1000 on Nov 02

Latitude: 58° 35.3' S

Longitude: 064° 05.9' W

Course: 160°

Speed: 13.1 knots

Wind Speed: 20 knots WNW

Barometer: 985

Air Temp: 6°C

"Thus they had just crept over the line separating the 'Raving Fifties' from the 'Screaming Sixties', so called because of the weather that prevails there. This then, was the Drake Passage, the most dreaded bit of ocean on the globe – and rightly so"

—Sir Ernest Shackleton

For those of us hoping to experience a little of the famous 'Drake shake', last night was certainly more than a taste. Although still only moderate, with six metre swells and a stiff 30 knot tailwind, it was enough to make life difficult for our galley and dining room teams. Fortunately, the seas calmed somewhat just after midnight and we sailed on, some of us with rather jumbled staterooms but none the worse for wear.

Our morning was spent continuing to familiarise ourselves with ship life and enjoying the views of the Southern Ocean. Albert introduced us to the several citizen science projects we will be participating in, including the popular Happy Whale program, cloud and bird surveys and a phytoplankton study. Next, our photographer, Alex, showed us how we can capture our journey on our smartphones.

The sea continued to roll under low overcast skies and ever-present albatrosses were joined by crowds of beautiful cape --petrels, one of the more common birds in the southern hemisphere.

After lunch we reconvened for our final mandatory briefing where Flo taught us about Zodiac "dos and don'ts". Afterward we brought our gear to the lounge to be made biosecure and then visited the mudroom to pick out our Muck Boots. We were now fully briefed and outfitted for our Antarctic adventure!

A short seabird lecture by Albert was followed by our first bird survey. The conditions were perfect, with the Sylvia Earle riding the much-reduced swell gracefully and the breeze holding aloft many varieties of albatross, prions, and petrels.

Our second night's dinner was much less dramatic than the first and we left not only full, but with a new appreciation for motionless tables and chairs! Afterwards, many of us retired to the Tektite Bar for entertainment by our musician, Kevin. Before we retired to our staterooms, we climbed to Deck 8 to see if we could spy our first iceberg. Then, grateful for a now calm Drake, we returned to our cabins, full of anticipation from our first day on the Antarctic Peninsula.



# Drake Passage; Whalers Bay, Deception Island

DAY 3 | Friday 03 November 2023

Position at 1200 on Nov 03

Latitude: 62° 58.9'S

Longitude: 060° 033.7'W

Course: Various

Speed: 12.3 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots WSW

Barometer: 981

Air Temp: 1°C

I felt as though I had been plumped upon another planet or into another geologic horizon of which man had no knowledge or memory.

—Admiral Richard E. Byrd, 1938, Alone

Waking up on November 3rd was very special. We had reached Antarctica with smooth waters; sun shining and then wow all those big icebergs. After a leisurely breakfast we got to sit back and listen to Albert's introductory lecture on Antarctica. We learned that it once had a temperate climate, which is wild to think about as we watched big tabular icebergs float by. We also learned about some of the animals that live here and some of the human endeavours. This was a great segue, introducing what was going to be our first landing this afternoon at Deception Island.

The first humans to come to this island were the American and British sealers who arrived in the 1820's. Once those animals were close to being depleted, they moved on and the whalers arrived in the 1890's. We learned that the early whalers often discarded huge amounts of the whale, leaving it to rot in the bay. It wasn't until around the beginning of the 1900's when the law changed, requiring whalers to process the whole whale. In 1912 the Norwegian Hektor Whaling Company arrived and built the first permanent buildings at Whalers Bay.

The British then came in 1914, calling it Operation Tabarin British Base B and used the buildings for research in geology and meteorology. The aircraft hangar arrived in 1960 just in time for the 1967 eruption of the volcano that made a heroic rescue of all personnel by the nearby Chileans. The Brits had one more go of it the following year, only to be rescued again by another volcanic eruption. Now this island is an Antarctic Specially Protected Area (ASPA). The Sylvia Earle entered the caldera through Neptune Bellows and into the safe anchorage.

Our scout team was the first to disembark from the ship to conduct a pre-landing assessment for signs of avian influenza or unusual wildlife behaviour. Once given the all-clear, our skiers were prioritised and transported to ensure they had sufficient time to reach the top of the ridge. Shortly after, the rest of us joined the Expedition Team onshore and enjoyed a wonderful first landing. To our right we visited Neptune's Window, and to our left explored the abandoned whaling station and old buildings left after the eruption. The snorkellers then left the beach to discover what lay beneath the icy shores of the caldera.

After experiencing a brief period of sunshine, the winds intensified and even brought a light snowfall. We were grateful to return to the ship, where we were welcomed with warm showers and the opportunity to enjoy drinks at the bar before recap. This evening, there were many content and cheerful faces. It was truly a memorable first day in Antarctica.





# Enterprise Island, Cuverville Island

DAY 4 | Saturday 04 November

Position at 1045 on Nov 04

Latitude: 64° 33.638'S

Longitude: 061° 59.222'W

Course: 216°

Speed: 1.1 knots

Wind Speed: 20 knots NE

Barometer: 952

Air Temp: 3°C

Believe me my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats... simply messing

—Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows

After what seemed like a whole year's worth of adventures, sailing through a depression in the Drake, making our first Antarctic port of call in Deception Island, as so many whalers before us, we finally reached the Antarctic Peninsula. And what a first experience this was. As we woke up to an amazing breakfast once again, the view around us seemed foreign, as if we'd landed on another planet, a light snowfall obscuring the high peaks surrounding us. We are now truly surrounded by giants. Icebergs bigger than our own ship, glaciers bigger than any we'd ever seen before and seabirds flying all around us.

It's with excited and sometimes intimidated minds that we got into our Zodiacs to cruise around Enterprise Island. Getting into the Zodiacs was already quite the adventure, as waves formed by the high winds made for a bumpy experience. But we all agree that the struggle was well worth it, as we started cruising around this gallery of icebergs of all shapes and sizes. Some might have been awed by the clarity of the water, allowing us to see all the way down to the sea floor a dozen metres below us. While cruising around this maze of icebergs, reefs, and islands, snow petrels patrolled and inspected our rubber boats, making sure we were enjoying ourselves enough. While getting deep into this maze, we were treated with some Weddell seals and the wreck of the *Guvernøren*, an old factory whaling ship that burned over a hundred years ago in 1915.

When coming back aboard our beloved *Sylvia Earle*, we all got to share stories about our adventure of the morning, and to hear from the skiers who had been up in the mountains experiencing a true Antarctic experience, dizzying flat light. We all warmed up, and our bellies filled up while we travelled to the site of our next destination, Cuverville Island.

As we sailed around the island to reach a protected harbour, we spotted our first large penguin congregations of the voyage. Thousands of penguins staining the pristine snow getting ready for the breeding season. As we explored the snowy wonders of Cuverville and met with the resident gentoos, we were welcomed to the full Antarctic experience with a full-on blizzard.

It was with wet bodies but bright smiles that we made it back to the ship, for an evening of entertainment with a beautiful song by Kevin, and a presentation from the Port Lockroy team. What a full day this was, Antarctica at its best.





# Lemaire Channel, Port Charcot, Back through Lemaire

DAY 5 | Sunday 05 November 2023

Position at 0600 on Nov 05

Latitude: 64° 57.4' S

Longitude: 063° 42.1' W

Course: 225°

Speed: 6.9 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots NE

Barometer: 973

Air Temp: 1°C

To dine with a glacier on a sunny day is a glorious thing and makes feasts of meat and wine ridiculous.

The glacier eats hills and drinks sunbeams.

—John Muir

What a day! In eager anticipation of transiting the Lemaire Channel from north to south, lots of Expeditioners had woken up early only to be met with low cloud, snow and very limited visibility. A disappointing but mystical start to the day.

The Captain then started the transit as promised but unfortunately, we were blocked by ice. The ship spent some time waiting in a bay area to see if the weather improved so we could continue our transit. During this time, Paulina gave us an excellent introduction to the glaciers of Antarctica. We were also treated to some fascinating bridge tours by the bridge team.

Around 11am we attempted to transit the Lemaire again – success! As we headed towards Pleneau and Port Charcot, the Expedition Team set up the polar plunge for those of us brave even to do it. With snow falling around us, it made for a very atmospheric polar plunge experience.

After lunch the weather had started to improve significantly and we managed a landing at Port Charcot, gentoo penguins greeted us in their dozens onshore. We had heard so much about this historical place, so it was fantastic to set foot and see it for ourselves. A short cruise afterwards for those of us on shore, as we enjoyed viewing crabeater seals on some sea ice. The stunning icebergs around this area are incredibly photogenic, and with some sunshine and mountain scenery, it was stunning. The kayakers, snorkellers and ski team were equally very happy with the calm conditions and sunshine. All of them came back to the ship with beaming smiles.

With such a great ending to the day, what could be better than to have an Antarctic BBQ! The chefs had outdone themselves with such a delicious feast, the smiling faces and general happy buzz in the restaurant and bar said it all about the day.







# Polar Plunge

DAY 5 | Sunday 05 November 2023

















# BBQ

DAY 5 | Sunday 05 November 2023



# Damoy Point, Port Lockroy

DAY 6 | Monday 06 November 2023

Position at 1630 on Nov 06

Latitude: 64° 49.832'S

Longitude: 061° 30.500'W

Course: 082.4°

Speed: Anchor Port Lockroy

Wind Speed: 5 knots NW

Barometer: 979

Air Temp: 3°C

I have often had the impression that, to penguins, man is just another penguin – different, less predictable, occasionally violent, but tolerable company when he sits still and minds his own business.

—Bernard Stonehouse, Penguins

We were awakened by Flo's melodic good morning greeting, "I hope all of you have opened your curtains and gazed out on this stunning Antarctic lcescape! We have some clouds, some sun, and some fresh snow. Luigi and the Seven Sisters are out in all their glory."

Truly another early season glorious day beckoned us to get out and explore this pristine setting. Our expectations for being in Antarctica this time of year had been far exceeded, thanks in part to the abundant fresh snow we received over the past couple of days. To be able to witness the arrival of hundreds of gentoo penguins (with the oddball chinstrap and adelie thrown in the mix), eagerly anticipating the mating rituals that will ensue, making fresh tracks as they seek out the prime nesting sites...wowzer! The face-plant imprints of those just attempting to get back their land-legs, hilarious!

Team Ski got dropped off early to make their own first tracks. They did a "Double Tap on Doumer", in the morning on the east side, afternoon on the west, enjoying a variable snowpack with consistently outstanding views.

Team Snork was entertained by curious gentoo penguins torpedo-ing past, as was Team Kayak seeing them porpoise-ing topsides. Underwater Eddie was bouncing off the ctenophores and sea angels with excitement as she pondered how to convey what cool critters they are later in a recap, "I loooooove the plankton!".

It is with sadness as well as joy that we say "au revoir" to Team Lockroy (Clare, Jerome, Bridie, Shabs and Laura) as they embark on their new adventure. Their enthusiasm and dedication to their new roles at Port Lockroy is contagious. They will be in all of our thoughts the next four and a half months as to their well-being, while we enjoy the creature comforts in our daily lives.

Some of the E-Team escorted them to Damoy Hut to open it for the season. With snow shovels in hand, they (and Jeb) set about to carve stairs and a path, their smiles telling the whole story. Fortunately, and surprisingly, there was way less snow than Clare had to navigate last season. Meanwhile the rest of the team broke trail from an alternate landing site on a meandering path around the newly arrived gentoos so we could experience life at Damoy 50 years ago.

The afternoon included a Zodiac cruise in the Port Lockroy area while the Lockroy team readied the station. The Citizen Science Zodiac was entertained by equipment challenges as Albert persevered to do the first complete CTD (conductivity, temperature, depth) drop, plankton tow, and water samples. Tarn later gave a talk and camping demonstration, which sadly (and possibly with relief) was cancelled at the 11th hour as the weather continued to deteriorate with fog, snow and wind.

During the recap, Max showed some pics of Port Lockroy from the start of last season with just the top of the roof showing, while Flo discussed plans D-Z for the remainder of the trip. What a fabulous, glorious day full of incredible lighting and Antarctic ice, mountain, snow and seascapes, many thanks Mother Nature!





# Portal Point, Drake Passage

DAY 7 | Tuesday 07 November 2023

Position at 1245 on Nov 07

Latitude: 64°29.918' S

Longitude: 061°44.045' W

Course: 159.1°

Speed: 0.3 knots

Wind Speed: 14.1 knots WSW

Barometer: 976

Air Temp: 2.5°C

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

—Hartford, after ten days aboard Nimrod, with Shackleton

Our day was a mix of surprises, education, and awe-inspiring encounters. We had initially planned a landing at Neko Harbour, but as we woke up in the morning and assessed the weather conditions, it became clear that the elements were not in our favour. Consequently, we had to change our plans. Instead, we sailed back from Neko Harbour, which offered us an incredible view of the majestic, towering glaciers that surrounded us, though we maintained a safe distance. The pristine, ice-covered landscapes were a sight to behold, even from the comfort of our ship.

During our voyage back, Paulina, shared her expertise through a lecture about glaciers, including their colours and the intricacies of sea ice. Her insights added depth to our understanding of the polar environment, giving us a new perspective on the icy wonders of Antarctica. Following Paulina's lecture, we gathered on Deck 8 for our first Citizen Science cloud survey. We delved into the world of cloud formations, learning about different cloud types and attempting to identify them. This educational experience was pleasantly interrupted when we spotted whales, offering a firsthand look at the rich wildlife that thrives in these frigid waters.

After an early lunch we embarked on Zodiacs for a continental landing at Portal Point. This was a momentous occasion for many of us, as we set foot on our seventh continent. The experience of walking up a small loop uphill, taking in the awe-inspiring landscape, was both humbling and exhilarating. The serene surroundings and beautifully shaped icebergs added to the magic of the moment.

Upon returning to the ship, we joined Albert's lecture, where he shared his knowledge about the penguins we had encountered in the past couple of days. His passion for these charismatic creatures enriched our understanding of their behaviours and role in the Antarctic ecosystem.

The day concluded with a recap and briefing session to ensure we were well-prepared for the upcoming Drake Passage crossing, a challenging yet essential part of our Antarctic exploration. As evening set in, we gathered for an early, delectable dinner, savouring the ship's cuisine and the company of our fellow adventurers. We began preparations for the Drake Passage, a significant part of our journey. Retiring to our cabins, we anticipated the unpredictable but exciting days that lay ahead, as we continued to explore the wonders of this pristine and remote wilderness in Antarctica.





# Drake Passage

DAY 8 | Wednesday 08 November 2023

Position at 1200 Nov 08

Latitude: 60°30.8'S

Longitude: 062°16.6'W

Course: 330°

Speed: 11.9 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots NW

Barometer: 992

Air Temp: 3°C

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding'

This morning many of us enjoyed a well-deserved sleep-in, with a late breakfast after a night of being gently rocked to sleep on our journey north across the Drake Passage. Today's schedule allowed for plenty of time to rest, enjoy the ship, catch up with new friends, share photos, and reflect on our time in Antarctica.

Crossing The Drake Passage is not for the faint of heart. That we learned for sure on our way down south. But the reward is an unforgettable experience surrounded by some of the most incredible wildlife on the planet.

Today we had a swell of about three metres and some strong winds coming up to about five metres or more in the evening, that seems like nothing compared to ten days ago. The perfect weather for the sea birds to come out and ride on the wind and swoop around the ship. We spotted a bunch of cape petrels and a black browed albatross. The Drake Passage is a haven for the sea birds playing in the wind.

Before lunch, Richard, our guest photographer, educated us on the many features of Photo Lightroom. How to edit photos and some great tips on storage and such. Catherine showed us what lies beneath the water.

In the afternoon, Dot presented an informative talk about whaling in Antarctica. There are actually only three preserved Norwegian whaling stations left in the world. One is located in Perth, Australia, one in Grytviken South Georgia, and one in a place called Við Áir on Streymoy, Faroe Islands.

Later in the afternoon our very own musician Kevin performed his "In Deep" concert. Songs and tunes Kevin composed, all inspired by time spent in Antarctica.

A favourite place on the ship today was the front of the Citizen Science Centre, where we found ourselves perched kneeling on the lounge, with faces against the windows, watching the bow rise and fall over the waves, with the occasional wave or spray hitting the windows.

After dinner the Expedition Team invited everyone to the lecture theatre for some fun and games.

As nighttime approached, the wind slowly picked up. Luckily for us, the Sylvia Earle is a very comfortable ship for such seas, and we were once again rocked to sleep with the comfort of knowing we have a competent skilled Captain and crew, navigating us safely through the night towards Ushuaia and beyond.



# Drake Passage towards Ushuaia

DAY 9 | Thursday 09 November 2023

Position at 1400 on Nov 09

Latitude: 55°36'498"S

Longitude: 064°41'516"W

Course: 301.7°

Speed: 11.4 knots

Wind Speed: 17.9 knots NW

Barometer: 996

Air Temp: 3°C

We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure.

There is no end to the adventures we can have, if only we seek them with our eyes open.

—Jawaharlal Nehru

After a pretty quiet night of rocking and rolling across the Drake, we woke to a high overcast sky, and a steady 20 knot Nor `Westerly. There was no view yet of Cape Horn, though the digital chart showed it was not too far away. The Captain and his crew had made good progress north and there was a feeling of relief of being ahead of the low-pressure system that threatened the crossing when leaving Antarctica.

We enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, accompanied by views of cape and giant petrels cruising past the dining room windows keeping an eye on us, followed by a briefing from Justine on all things required for a smooth disembarkation.

Megan gave an incredible personal account she called Power of the sea – Rounding Cape Horn. Wow, What a story! She captivated us by her firsthand account of crewing onboard the square-rigged tall ship Europa, built in 1911. They were challenged when sailing around Cape Horn, and then “all hell broke loose”. For when only three miles past the Cape there was a 110-degree wind change, plans were scuppered, the Captain trying to avoid starting the engine, turned down wind, crew bravely climbed the rigging to get the sails down, so as to be released from the grip of the relentless wind, which was driving them further south and eventually after many extra days to get back north.

A delicious lunch and then it was on to a Citizen Science E-Bird Survey lead by Albert and Hans, where 13 expeditioners braved the Deck 6 breeze and were treated to a fantastic display of acrobatics from the largest of sea birds. It was amazing to watch their mesmerising effortless rhythm. For 30 minutes, we recorded a head count of as many bird types as possible. It sure was tricky not doubling up! We got to see both great albatrosses, the royal and wandering.

At afternoon teatime we viewed the documentary 'Around Cape Horn'. Filmed in 1929, it shows some of the best footage of what it was like when all travel by sea was done by sail power, a glimpse of a bygone era. Four masts, 32 sails, a 3,000-ton ship carrying 5,300 tons of cargo. Handmade sails and sheer grunt to keep the ship running.

18:00 hours and the captain hosted cocktails and a farewell to Expeditioners and on to dinner with friends. A lovely evening ensued with the final slide show and announcement of the iceberg competition.

Our last day at sea, tomorrow we will wake in Ushuaia; it feels all too soon. Soon that we will be back to the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. Today we have had time to relax a little and reflect on our experiences and memories of the wilderness and untouched natural beauty of Antarctica. What a privilege it has been to visit. We will take these memories of new friends with us to share with family and friends.



# Ushuaia

DAY 10 | Friday 10 November 2023

Position at 0800 on Nov 10

Latitude: 54°48.608' S

Longitude: 068°17.884' W

Course: 1117°

Speed: At Anchor Ushuaia

Wind Speed: 3 knots NNW

Barometer: 984

Air Temp: 12°C

Hello Everyone!

Well, we're coming to the end of our adventure, and what a great adventure it has been! We've done incredible things, oftentimes pushing ourselves right to the brink of our physical limits, with our shared experiences bonding us together in friendship and comradery.

Most of our friendships will continue only in our memories, but some will continue to grow through phone calls, text, emails, visits, and new adventures.

After all, there are many more places to visit, and we all seem to love adventures, especially the types of adventures that have been brought to us by the Sylvia Earle's incredible Expedition Team!

Thank you all, every single one of you, for this unbelievable slice of life.

- Smiles and Hugs to all my new friends, Patti

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





# Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Sigurð Davidsen, Vanja Davidsen

Number of Paddlers: 10

Total Paddle Outings: 3

Total Distance Paddled: 15.45 km

Paddlers:	Gary Walker	Michelle Couch-Friedma	Jatinder Kaur
Kaye Manners	Yi-Wen Chin	Naomi Lawrance-Ried	Alex Fayen
Anthony Oaks	Lina Trimarchi	Wendy Boddison	

## Day 7 – Sunday November 5, 2023 PM: Port Charcout / Pleneau Island

First kayaking opportunity of the trip, and what a great place to start. It was so great to finally get on the water and get cracking. The Intrepid kayakers launched from the zodiac close to shore of Pleneau Island. The wind made the first few minutes of the paddle a bit challenging. Vanja led us all into the lee side of the island and we explored the bays and enjoyed the inquisitive gentoo penguins as they came close and investigated these strange yellow and red crafts on the water. Such a beautiful start to kayaking in Antarctica.

Distance: 3.63km

## Day 8 – Monday November 6, 2023 AM: Damoy Point

The kayak group launched from a Zodiac on back of the marina of Sylvia Earle. They paddled a route between all the amazing icebergs of all shapes and sizes, some blue and some white. The group paddled to the small islet outside the hut where they stopped in a small bay. Again the gentoo penguins were intrigued by the kayakers, swimming underneath the kayaks, then jumping up on land and studying the group. As the kayakers were about to leave, the snorkellers came to the bay and started snorkelling in the same lovely spot. We continued along the coast, and passing the rest of the Expeditioners who were on a landing, and getting a peek at the bay where Port Lockroy is located.

Distance: 5.88km

## Day 8 – Monday November 6, 2023 PM: Port Lockroy

After the Sylvia Earle dropped off the crew that were manning the base of Port Lockroy for the upcoming months, the kayaks were launched from a Zodiac attached to the marina. The group paddled west towards land and explored the icebergs in the bay. Again, our favourite penguins, the gentoos, came close in large groups. We paddled close to the base and observed the Port Lockroy crew clearing snow around the buildings, preparing the base for five months of operations. As we continued our journey, we encountered some Antarctic blue-eyed shags fighting for some seaweed for their nests. We watched them with interest, as it was fascinating to see how they fought to secure the material for their nests.

Distance: 5.94km





# Skiing/Snowboarding Log

Ski/Snowboard Guides: Tarn Pilkington, Marius Bron, Jane Morris

Number of Skiers: 8

Number of Snowboarders: 2

Number of Outings: 5

## Skiers/Snowboarders

Katrina Gardiner

Ali Russell

Hamish MacPherson

Nicky MacPherson

Kari Bodnarchuk

Melissa McGibbon

Jane Cameron

Vincent Le Jeune

Rob Bird

Lindsay Minck

## Day 4: Friday 3rd November 2023 – Deception Island/Whalers Bay

The weather cooperated enough to sail through Neptunes Bellows and into the caldera of Deception Island to the relative shelter of Whalers Bay.

Despite a brisk breeze, we were able to make our first landing onto the volcanic beach near the old whaling station. With the new avian flu protocols, we were using tarps to protect our equipment from the ground, and finding a new normal with not being able to put anything down on the snow.

After an initial avalanche safety briefing refresher, we set off up towards the ridge.

Increased elevation came with increased wind and a drop in visibility. Some of the group made the wise decision to stop below the ridge crest as snow and light conditions deteriorated.

The group that continued was rewarded with some blustery views out to sea and a slightly challenging first transition to downhill mode.

The return ski and ride was by braille initially, with improved conditions at lower elevations.

For everyone however, the reality of skiing and snowboarding in Antarctica had arrived, and the buzz from this overrode the questionable snow and light issues from the day.

On returning to ship, all equipment that had been on the snow was hosed down or had the appropriate biosecurity measures applied – cloths with bleach for skins, virkon for boots.

The snow programme was underway, and the hum of enthusiasm and stoke from the group carried on through the evening.

## Day 5: Saturday 4th 2023 – Enterprise Island

The beginning of the early starts; 6:30am became the new normal and 'light breakfast' time as we rallied to get off the ship early. With tarps covering our gear to protect it from the salt water, we had a damp Zodiac transit to our snow access point which was a narrow rib of snow leading down to the water, flanked on either side with

hanging glaciers providing a dramatic entry to the day's outing.

Wind and marginal light were our companions again as we skinned up through our snow highway to eventually stop at the cloud base. We transitioned whilst there was still some definition on the snow and conservatively traced our way downhill, aware of the cornices and seracs flanking our path.

There was time for one more quick lap back up the lower slope, with most folks taking the opportunity for another short burst of activity to stretch their legs.

The afternoon saw a long Zodiac transit as we tried for an outing to Spigot Bowls but alas no landing was possible.

We were however treated to a couple of minke whales cruising along the shore feeding, and both Zodiacs were able to get a glimpse of them as they glided through the water, occasionally coming up for air.

We headed back to Cuverville Island and joined the rest of the ship's passengers with a shore landing amongst the gentoo colony, thankful to have had the morning in the snow at Enterprise.

## Day 6: Sunday 5th November 2023 – Hovgaard Island

Everyone was dressed and ready like coiled springs for our usual 6:30am meeting time, anticipating another early exit.

But as snow fell heavily outside we were still a long way from our possible launch spot, so we relaxed into an extended breakfast with the rest of the ship as we carefully navigated the Lemaire Channel towards Port Charcot.

The forecast was due to improve during the day, and so the polar plunge was set up before lunch as snow continued to fall. Some of the team took the plunge, dried off, warmed up and made the afternoon's outing to Hovgaard, where we had dream conditions: the weather, light and snow all came together to provide a new high bar of perfection. There was time for another short lap at the end up the mellow shore slope in the evening light, as we returned to one lone gentoo penguin guarding our gear stash on the tarp.

A magical and memorable afternoon in Antarctica, which became the stand out day for most of the group.

## Day 7: Monday 6th November 2023 – Doumer Island

The 6:30am meeting time was becoming the norm as we were dressed ready for action again.

The weather was forecast to deteriorate as the day went on so we were hustling to make the most of our time.

A relatively clear morning Zodiac transit to the eastern part of Doumer Island, with moody cloudscapes indicating change was afoot.

After the initial pull up from the beach, the angle mellowed as we skinned along with the Seven Sisters mountain chain providing a backdrop to the surrounding sea and icescape. There was a long plateau towards the high point of the island, and as the first wave of snow showers approached us a short way up this slope, we transitioned to downhill mode.

For the snowboarders in the group, it was not so much downhill as it was poling and traversing, with some new techniques being utilised to negotiate the prolonged flatness.

On the Zodiac transition back to the ship, we drove by the landing that the rest of the ship passengers were doing that morning to Damoy Point. Despite hungry tummies and full bladders, everyone hopped off to enjoy the chance of taking part in a regular landing activity.

In the afternoon the ship repositioned closer to Port Lockroy and as the weather remained calm and benign, another outing was possible to the western rib of Doumer Island.

A landing was scouted and found workable, with another short but steep skin off the beach to the broader, mellower plateau of the main rib.

We were under a strict timeframe to be back on board the ship, and transitioned at a place that would enable all of those timings to work. At this point we did not realise this would be our last outing for the trip.

With a gentle angle for most of the downhill back to the beach, we were able to enjoy cruising along with the landscape slowly passing us by as we returned to the Zodiacs, and the 'Doumer double tap' day came to an end.

## Day 8: Tuesday 7th November 2023 – Portal Point

The fatigue of another early start was upon us as we rallied again our last possible outing.

Neko Harbour wasn't accessible due to wind so we relocated to Portal Point. The additional time to transit, along with marginal weather and problematic ice around the landing meant there was only time to 'touch and go' here, the final landing of the voyage.

Having completed five outings over the past five days, it felt like we had made the most of every opportunity to strap on our planks and glide amongst the Antarctic environment.

All too soon, we were bobbing our way back out into the Drake, bound for Ushuaia.

A final group dinner had us sharing our most challenging and enjoyable moments of the journey and reflecting on the unique experiences we'd all had individually and collectively in this amazing landscape.





# Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guides: Eddie Hauzer, Catherine Buckland & Freya Dooley

Number of Snorkellers: 10

Total Paddle Outings: 5

Snorkellers:	Spar Wong	Evan Metalios (Lucky)	Michael O'Brien
Vincent Wong	Emma Guerini	Mark Honig	Kim O'Brien
Yvonne Chan	Scott Buccholz	Sharon Mattern	

## Friday 3rd November 2023 - PM. Whalers Bay, Deception Island

Today we had our first day of snorkelling. After spending some time sorting out all our gear, we got into our drysuits and headed out. We were able to have a short landing and see the historical remains of the whaling stations that were here. Afterwards we drove to a different part of Whalers Bay and hopped in the water. Given that the bay seems desolate and devoid of life, it was astonishing to see how much there was underneath the water line. Old whale bones live on the bottom from the whaling era, and are used as small platforms in the dark sand for starfish to gather around. Once you get your eyes accustomed to looking you see that the seafloor is covered in brittle stars by the hundreds. Some snorkellers were even lucky enough to have penguins come over – a really great start to our snorkel program.

## Saturday 4th November 2023 - PM. Cuverville

After a morning Zodiac cruise around Enterprise Island, our snorkellers were geared up for an exciting wreck snorkel around the Governoren ship. Unfortunately the conditions were not on our side as the wreck was surrounded by so much sea ice we couldn't reach it! After a nice lunch, we set out again with hopes to be getting in the water to explore. After a snowy Zodiac cruise, we managed to land and explore the gentoo penguin colony that calls Cuverville home. After exploring the landing, back to the Zodiac we went to start gearing up for our snorkel. After jumping in the water, we were greeted with a beautiful sloping bottom with clear blue waters. This meant we could see down to the abundance of kelp living on the floor and spot some Nemertean worms. With a close eye, we were able to spot some sea stars and beautiful jellies, all with the breathtaking background of the penguin colony on the hill.

## Sunday 5th November 2023 - PM. Pleneau

We had an early start to the day with the hopes of catching the beauty of the Lemaire Channel. Unfortunately heavy snow and wind meant we didn't quite get the views we wanted. After a relaxing morning and some lunch, we started to get into our drysuits to head out for an afternoon of activities. Starting with a relaxing Zodiac cruise exploring the area, we landed to check it out. Once geared up back on the Zodiac, we headed for our lovely snorkel spot with a variety of things to see. Exploring icebergs made a perfect start to this snorkel and getting

to see the icebergs from below the surface really showed us the size and amazing blue colours. Along the rocky shore, the rocks and kelp made the perfect home for fish life and starfish. After heading back to the ship to warm up, we ended the day with a lovely BBQ cruising through the Lemaire Channel, which put on the perfect weather for us.

## Monday 6th November 2023 - AM. Casabianca Island

A nice early start for our snorkellers meant we were the first to be in the Zodiacs and to start cruising around Doumer island. The clear blue skies made the perfect background for the beautiful peaks that surround the area and really complemented the white of the icebergs. We found a nice bay tucked away from the wind with clear blue waters, perfect for snorkelling with Gentoo penguins. Gearing up is getting quicker and easier for everyone, meaning we have more time to explore the site. After jumping in, we discovered the shallow bay was full of life. The sea floor was home to starfish and lots of long kelp, and the curious penguins showed off their speed and agility in the water. Once too cold to continue, back to the ship we went for some warm lunch and to prepare for the afternoon's adventures.

## Monday 6th November - PM. Port Lockroy

After finally reaching Port Lockroy, it was time to drop off our lovely friends that would be running the hut for the season. While they were busy setting up their home for the coming months, we prepared for our afternoon activities. Only a few of our snorkellers were left with enough energy to join us for our last snorkel, and what a goodie it was! After a Zodiac cruise exploring the area, we settled in a bay next to the beautiful Port Lockroy hut. The hut was surrounded by gentoo penguins, who were entering the water as they pleased. The seafloor was highlighted with old whale bones that the starfish use as a home to gather around. Now our eyes are accustomed to looking in the water, we spot the beautiful sea butterflies dancing around throughout the bay. A busy day it was, and our tired snorkellers were ready to head back to the ship for a relaxing evening.

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

*We are very happy to have been able to share this trip with you all – you really rocked in improving your techniques and we hope that now you are going home as Antarctic Underwater Ambassadors. Keep snorkelling and finding new exciting and colourful creatures.*

*Thanks for letting us be part of your Antarctic Voyage.*



# Bird Sightings

Bird Species	November										
	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gentoo Penguin				•	•	•	•	•			
Chinstrap Penguin				•		•					
Adelie Penguin					•	•					
Wandering Albatross		•	•						•	•	
Royal Albatross										•	
Black-browed Albatross		•	•						•	•	
Grey-headed Albatross		•	•						•	•	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		•	•	•					•	•	
Giant Petrel		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Antarctic Petrel								•	•	•	
Cape Petrel		•	•	•	•			•	•	•	
Snow Petrel			•	•	•	•	•	•			
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)			•	•			•	•	•	•	
Blue Petrel		•	•						•	•	
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		•	•						•	•	
Wilson's Storm-petrel		•	•						•	•	
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)		•		•	•		•	•			
American Sheathbill (Snowy)				•	•	•	•	•			
Chilean Skua		•									
Skua (Brown and/or South Polar)				•	•	•	•	•			
Tern (probably mostly Antarctic)				•	•	•	•	•	•		
Dolphin Gull				•	•	•	•	•	•		





# Mammal Sightings

Mammal Species

November

	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Antarctic Fur Seal				•							
Crabeater Seal					•	•		•			
Weddell Seal						•		•			
Minke Whale						•		•	•		
Humpback Whale			•		•			•	•		



to Ushuaia

1 60°W

### Spirit of Antarctica 31 Oct – 10 Nov 2023

1. Ushuaia
2. Drake Passage
3. Whaler's Bay, Deception Island
4. Enterprise Island
5. Cuverville Island



# Citizen Science Log

Project                      How many times was this project done during this voyage?

Secchi Disk	1
Cloud Survey	3
Seabird Survey	2
Fjordphyto	1





# Expeditioners:

Shabir Alidina

Eric Andrews

Paul Austin

Clare Ballantyne

Sandy Bennett

Suzanne Bird

Robert Bird

Wendy Boddison

Julie Bowen

Scott Buchholz

Laura Büllsbach

Jane Cameron

Yvonne Chan

Leena Cherian

Wen Chin

Michelle Couch-Friedman

Helen Cross

Janet Demarbiex

Alexandra Fayan

Nora Fu

Katrina Gardiner

Emma Guerini

Mark Honig

Richard l'Anson

Jatinder Kaur

Laura Kennedy

Naomi Lawrence-Reid

Vincent Le Jeune

Lauren Mancini

Kaye Manners

Bridie Martin-West

Sharon Mattern

Melissa McGibbon

Nicola McPherson

Hamish McPherson

Menelaos Metalios

Juliet Milne

Jonathan Milne

Lindsay Minck

Heather Moult

Patrick Murray

Nicole Murray

Anthony Oakes

Michael OBrien

Kim O'Brien

Noah Patton

Brody Patton

Sam Patton

Paul Patton

Molly Pigott

Ali Russell

Alison Saunders

Neil Saunders

Kerri Stratford

Sally Sutherland-Fraser

Caroline Te Haara

Cherian Thomas

Patricia Tilson

Lina Trimarchi

Jerome Viard

Gary Walker

Linda Wall

Michael Wall

Shuchi Wang

Jenni Wilkins

Vincent Wong

Spar Wong

Kari Bodnarchuk Wright

Howard Wright Jr



## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Flo Kuijper

Assistant Expedition Leader: Dot Robertson

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Marine Biologist: Albert Michaud

Glaciologist/Geologist: Paulina Pierzak

Naturalist: Hans Bruning

Musician/Naturalist: Kevin Closs

Photography Guide: Max Seigal

Expedition Medic: Belinda Denchfield

Expedition Guide: Megan Frey

Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Vanja Davidsen

Ski Tour Guide: Tarn Pilkington

Ski Tour Guide: Jane Morris

Ski Tour Guide: Marius Bron

Snorkel Guide: Catherine Buckland

Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer

Snorkel Guide Trainee: Freya Dooley

Zodiac Master: Jeb Pearce

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Donaël Soto Hernandez

Chief Officer: Sergio Saldana Hernandez

Second Officer: Raymer Fernandes

Deck Cadet: Carlos Florido Carvalho Da Silva

Safety Officer: Matko Zagorac

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Ship Doctor: Gloria Gonzales Iraheta

Chief Engineer: Luis Edgardo Gil

First Engineer: Warlito Verzosa

IT Officer: Valentin Cojocarú

Hotel Director: Balvant Singh

F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram

Head Bartender: Lloyd Laylo

Chief Purser: Josephine Blanco

Executive Chef: Cristiand Carlos Minl Pineda

Sous Chef: Hubert Ramiro Barreto

Hotel Controller: Orlando Costa

Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Stateroom Attendant: Marthony Penalosa

Able Seaman: Lexter Fadriquela

Able Seaman: Rene Casipe

Able Seaman: Bahar Buhari

Able Seaman: Noel Reugia

Able Seaman: Ferdy Diaz Roque

Able Seaman: Rajiv Rauniyar

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Photographer: Max Seigal

Activity Guides: Sigurd Davidsen, Eddie Hauzer, Jane Morris

