

Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

Aboard *Douglas Mawson* | 09 February – 12 March 2026





Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

09 February to 12 March 2026

Dunedin

DAY 1 | 09 February 2026

Latitude:
45°52.7' S
Longitude:
170°30.8' E

Wind Speed:
4 knots SE
Barometer:
1024 hPa

Course:
Alongside
Speed:
Alongside

Air Temp:
15°C

Here we are in the picturesque town of Dunedin, known to Ngāi Tahu, the local iwi, as Ōtepoti — “the place of the bracket.”

Our morning was spent leisurely in Dunedin at an easy pace, with some last-minute purchases for some of us. From there, we set off to discover the area in two small groups by bus for a city tour of Dunedin to enjoy the charm and character of this lovely southern New Zealand town.

As we arrived at the wharf, Expedition Leader Howard, Assistant Expedition Leader Ashley, photographer Adrian and historian Avi greeted us warmly, checked us in, and captured a memorable photo for the photo board. Before we knew it, we

were stepping onboard the *Douglas Mawson*, ready to begin our adventure at sea.

First, we completed the necessary New Zealand immigration formalities and checked in at Reception with an inviting buffet awaiting us in the S/Y Aurora Bar. The hotel team led us across the decks to our cabins, where we quickly settled into our cozy “home away from home.”

Expedition Leader Howard then invited us into the Lecture Theatre for the official welcome aboard and a brief introductory briefing. We were introduced to Anne and Hotel Director Vill who walked us through life onboard, while the capable Ship Doctor team of two and Medic Judy ensured we



Dunedin

DAY 1 | 09 February 2026

Latitude:
45°52.7' S
Longitude:
170°30.8' E

Wind Speed:
4 knots SE
Barometer:
1024 hPa

Course:
Alongside
Speed:
Alongside

Air Temp:
15°C

knew how to stay healthy throughout the voyage.

With the all-important jacket exchange out of the way, we had a bit of time to admire the lovely scenery out on deck as we sailed out of Dunedin before the mandatory safety drill.

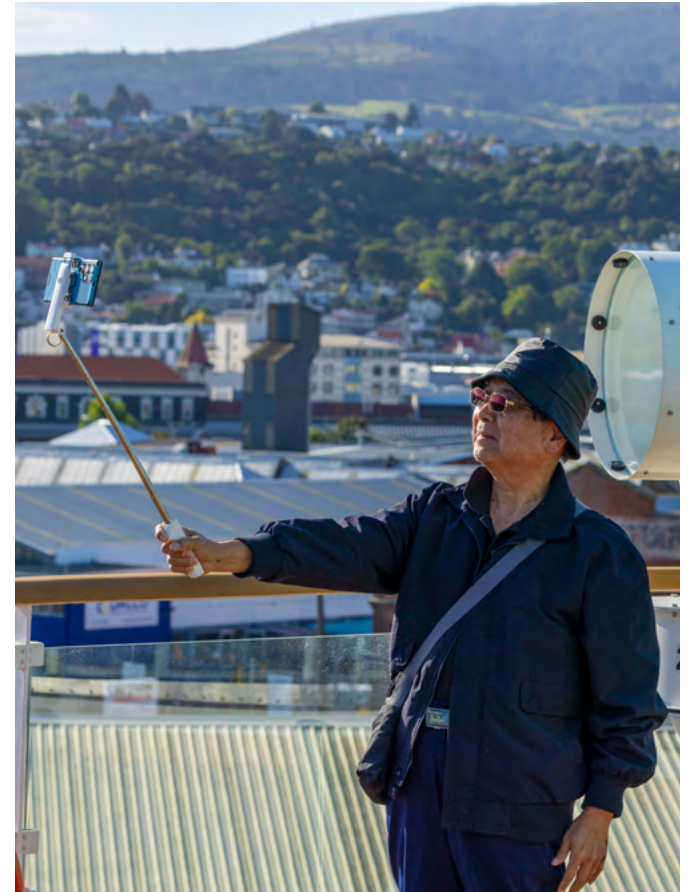
After that, we made our way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious dinner, prepared by our talented galley team and served by our friendly waiting staff.

Together, we number 84 Expeditioners from Australia (26), Belgium (2), Canada (5), France (1), Germany (3), New Zealand (3), Singapore (1), Switzerland (2), Taiwan (4), UK (13) and USA (24) along with 89 crew members from all around the globe and 20 Expedition Team members.

This team brings a wide range of expertise, including polar exploration, marine mammals, glaciology, geology, history, ornithology, photography, medicine, and kayaking.

After many hours of travel to reach the *Douglas Mawson*, it's time to relax, breathe in the sea air, and get excited for the next 33 days of adventure!













At Sea | The Snares Islands

DAY 2 | 10 February 2026

Latitude:
47°07.0' S

Longitude:
165°44.0' E

Course:
233°

Speed:
11 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots WE

Barometer:
1015 hPa

Air Temp:
15°C

Our Epic Adventure Begins!

The first full day of our expedition, and Howard woke us with the encouraging news that we had made great progress steaming southwards overnight and were now well on our way to the New Zealand subantarctic islands.

The sun was shining and our little ship was surrounded by seabirds, so it was lovely to start the day out on deck before heading inside to make the acquaintance of the coffee machine and to try out the breakfast buffet (so many choices!).

Fuelled for the day, we then joined Ashley and Howard in the lecture theatre for our mandatory biosecurity and Zodiac

briefings. And we heard from Dani about all the Citizen Science opportunities onboard – sounds like we'll be busy over the coming month!

Then it was time to break out the magnifying glasses and vacuum cleaners as we checked and biosecured all our outdoor gear, ready for our first landings. And the kayak team also began their preparations for getting out on the water.

After lunch, Ben, Dani and T-A gave us an introduction to the natural history of the Auckland Islands (tomorrow's 'Plan A' destination) and enormous flocks of Sooty Shearwaters raced past the lecture room window, flashing their silver underwings as they banked away from us.



At Sea | The Snares Islands

DAY 2 | 10 February 2026

Latitude:
47°07.0' S
Longitude:
165°44.0' E

Course:
233°
Speed:
11 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots WE
Barometer:
1015 hPa

Air Temp:
15°C

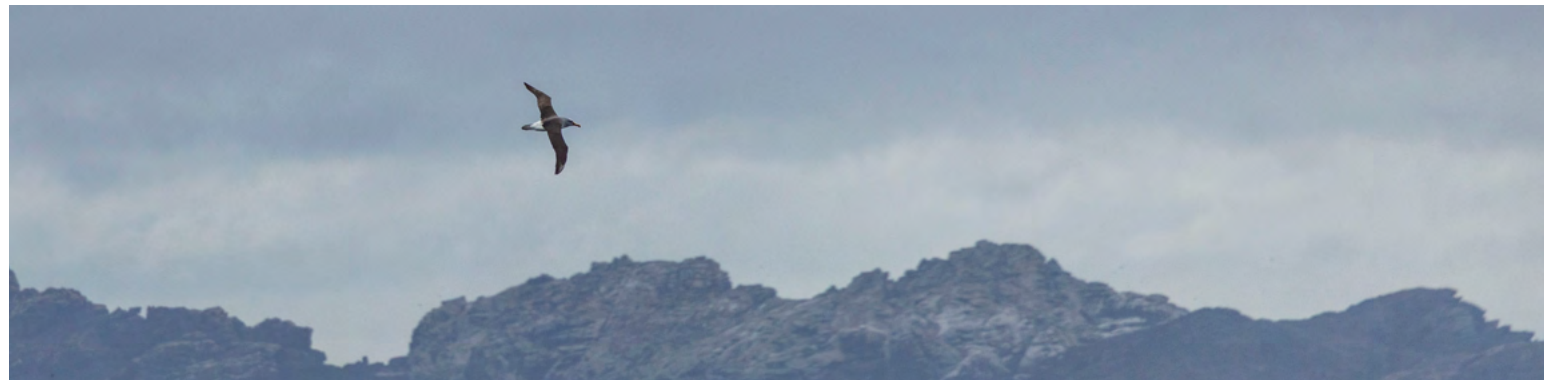
Then – the Snares! This group of tiny, uninhabited, pest-free islands supports globally important breeding colonies of Snares Penguins and other seabirds.

Having donned our Muck Boots and lifejackets, the excitement in the mudroom was palpable and we were just about to try out the three-step into the Zodiac when the swell became too lively for safe Zodiac operations.

Was there a Plan B? Yes! The E-Team raced off to find another area of the islands to operate in, the Bridge team kindly repositioned the ship and before long we were out on the water, completely surrounded by preening penguins and with huge flotillas of Cape Petrels zooming overhead. Buller's Albatrosses, Snares Tomtits and fur seals jostled for our

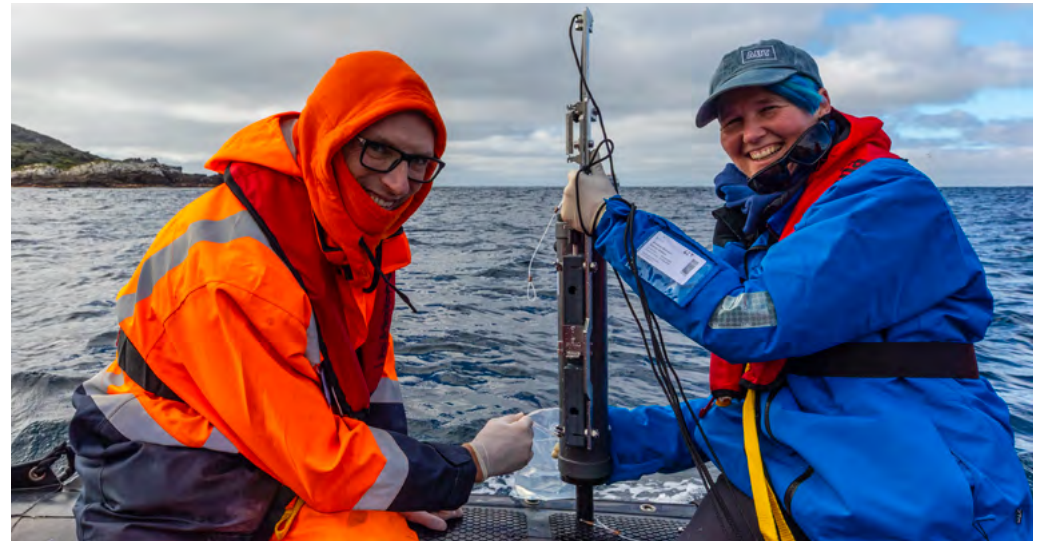
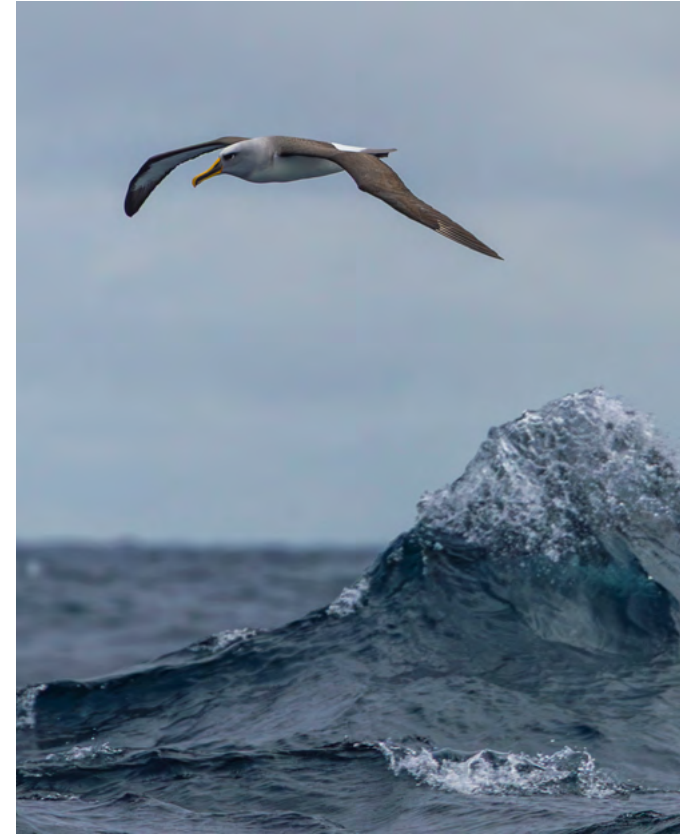
attention and the sheer abundance of life was nothing short of overwhelming.

What a wild, remote, extraordinary place. And what an epic start to our adventure!















Mōtū Mata - Enderby Island | Hardwicke, Auckland Island

DAY 3 | 11 February 2026

Latitude:
49°59'1" S
Longitude:
166°25'9" E

Wind Speed:
4 knots SW
Barometer:
1019

Course:
184°
Speed:
811.9 knots

Air Temp:
11°C

We began our day with an amazing breakfast aboard, spirits high and full of anticipation for our long-awaited adventure at the Auckland Islands. The promise of wild landscapes and rare wildlife lay just beyond the horizon.

Our morning commenced with a captivating history lecture from Jonathan, who painted a vivid picture of the islands' rugged past—tales of exploration, hardship, and resilience that deepened our appreciation for the remote sanctuary we were about to explore.

What a welcome Enderby Island gave us! Hooker sea lions lounged and lunged across the beach and dunes, offering encounters far closer than many of us expected. Their curious gazes and overconfidence reminded us that we were guests

in their realm.

Above and around us, the air was alive with movement—brilliant kākārīki flashing through the trees, giant petrels gliding overhead, and the unmistakable hoiho (yellow-eyed penguin) hiding in the fields of mega herbs and tussock. It was also amazing to see some Southern royal albatross soaring effortlessly on the ocean winds.

Many of us trekked to the northern cliffs, where seabirds wheeled and soared over the vast Southern Ocean. A smaller, intrepid group ventured off the beaten track, learning the art of route-finding through the mega herbs and tussock grass—occasionally pausing as a hooker sea lion or two decided we should take a different path.



Mōtū Mata - Enderby Island | Hardwicke, Auckland Island

DAY 3 | 11 February 2026

Latitude:
49°59'1" S
Longitude:
166°25'9" E

Course:
184°
Speed:
811.9 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots SW
Barometer:
1019

Air Temp:
11°C

The morning brought our first kayaking outing of the voyage, a peaceful glide along the coastline that revealed even more of the islands' wild character.

This group even spotted wild pigs in the afternoon—reminders of a different chapter in the islands' history and of the ongoing efforts required to restore this precious refuge to its natural state.

Our day concluded at historic Hardwicke, once the site of a hopeful settlement, where we admired the famous Victoria tree. Yet for many, the true highlight was simpler—the joyful

chorus of tūi and korimako (bellbird) singing above us in the southern rātā tree.

We returned to the ship enriched and inspired, gathering for the Captain's Welcome and an exciting briefing about tomorrow's adventure at Campbell Island.

A remarkable continuation on our journey south.



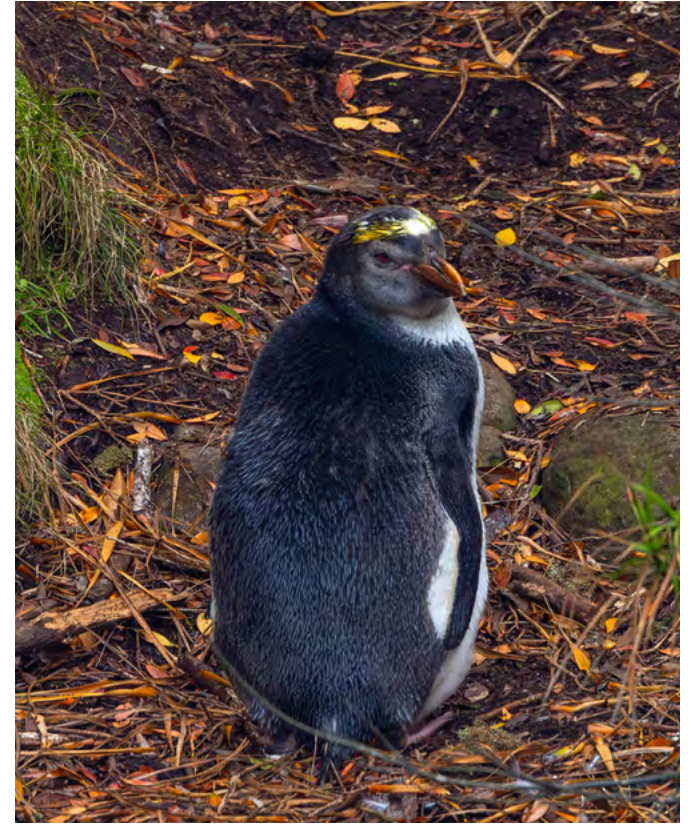














Motu Ihupuku - Campbell Island

DAY 4 | 12 February 2026

Latitude:
52°11'1" S
Longitude:
169°00'36"E

Wind Speed:
7 knots NNE
Barometer:
1007 hPa

Course:
130°
Speed:
11 knots

Air Temp:
12°C

Today we stepped ashore on magnificent Campbell Island — and she greeted us in true form: windy, misty, and wonderfully wild. A proper Campbell day.

With some shelter inside Perseverance Harbour, we were able to land and begin our hike up Coll Lyall. The landscape here never disappoints — rolling tussock hills, dramatic cliffs, and those iconic megaherbs bursting defiantly from the ground. Seeing the thriving birdlife and vegetation, the result of the island's successful pest eradication program, left us genuinely in awe.

Pipits flitted across the track, sea lions lounged like they owned the place (which, let's be honest, they do), and life felt abundant in this remote corner of the Southern Ocean.

The boardwalk kept us mostly dry but certainly kept us alert — narrow in places and a little slippery, it demanded focus. Still, every pause to catch our breath rewarded us with sweeping views over the harbour as clouds drifted in and out like a slow-moving theatre curtain.

At the summit, Campbell reminded us who's boss. Strong gusts had us bracing, laughing, and occasionally grabbing onto one another to stay upright. It was the kind of shared challenge that turns into instant team bonding — windswept hair, flushed cheeks, and a good sweat earned together.

And then sitting on their nests, the magnificent Southern Royal Albatross. Watching these masters of the wind riding out every wind gust was unforgettable.



Motu Ihupuku - Campbell Island

DAY 4 | 12 February 2026

Latitude:
52°11'1" S
Longitude:
169°00'36"E

Wind Speed:
7 knots NNE
Barometer:
1007 hPa

We returned to the ship hungry and happy, ready for lunch as we slowly left Perseverance Harbour and pointed our bow south. Albatrosses escorted us out as we set course for Macquarie Island.

through the meal as the swell reminded us that we're truly at sea.

Macquarie, here we come.

Course:
130°
Speed:
11 knots

Air Temp:
12°C

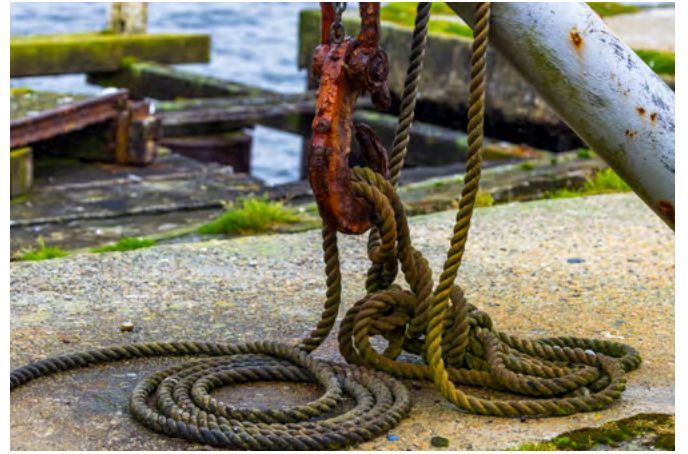
The afternoon kept us busy with Citizen Science hour, Kevin's iceberg competition (complete with latitude and longitude guesswork), and Adrian's engaging talk on adventure photography.

Recap and briefing wrapped it all together before dinner — which came with an added feature: a healthy Southern Ocean roll.

Wine glasses firmly in hand, we rocked and laughed our way









At Sea – Southern Ocean

DAY 5 | 13 February 2026

Latitude:

53°22.2' S

Longitude:

164°22.0'E

Course:

258°

Speed:

11.8 kts

Wind Speed:

5 knots S

Barometer:

989 hPa

Air Temp:

9°C

The day began gently. Breakfast, coffee, ocean rolling past the windows — and that shared feeling onboard that something special is coming.

We gathered for our Macquarie Island briefing, a reminder that visiting a place like Macquarie is a privilege, not a given. That feeling settled in during biosecurity, as everyone carefully cleaned boots and outer gear. It's a small ritual, but it connects us to the place beforehand — arriving as respectful visitors, not accidental disruptors.

Later in the morning, Adrian took us deeper into the world of adventure photography. Building on yesterday's foundations, today focused on creativity — storytelling, emotion, and learning to really see what's in front of us. Using powerful

examples, from king penguins to northern polar wildlife imagery, he showed how patience and perspective can transform a moment into something that lasts far beyond the shutter click. You could feel people starting to look at this voyage differently.

After lunch, Snowy showed us the World of Penguins, and it's hard not to fall a little more in love with them each time. The species we've already met, and those we still hope to meet, are each uniquely adapted to survive in environments that look impossible from the outside.

In the afternoon, Jonathan spoke about sealing and penguin on Macquarie Island — a confronting and often deeply sad chapter of human history. It's a reminder of how



At Sea – Southern Ocean

DAY 5 | 13 February 2026

Latitude:

53°22.2' S

Longitude:

164°22.0'E

Course:

258°

Speed:

11.8 kts

Wind Speed:

5 knots S

Barometer:

989 hPa

Air Temp:

9°C

quickly abundance can be lost when exploitation replaces respect. It also shows why places like “Macca” matter so much today — protected, studied, and slowly healing.

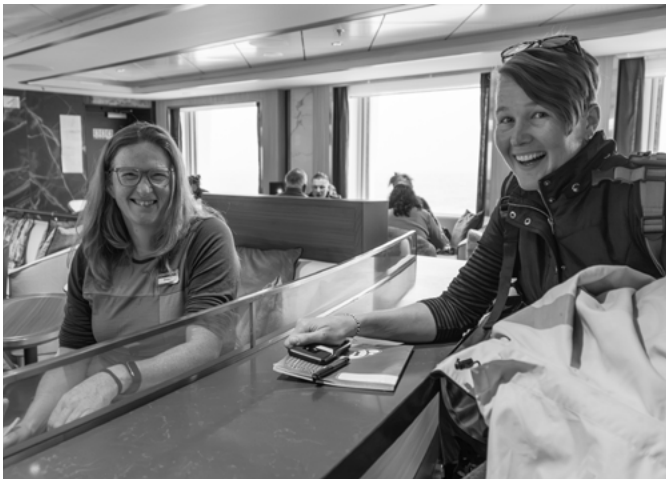
Later, guests and team joined T.A. on deck to assist with a seabird survey. At least five Shy Albatross followed the ship at eye level near the stern — a truly special encounter. Prions, a White-headed Petrel, and a magnificent Southern Royal Albatross were also spotted.

Excitement built as we looked ahead to tomorrow — with the possibility of Isthmus in the morning and Sandy Bay in the afternoon. Briefings, geology insights, polar dog stories, and Southern Ocean life recaps rounded out the afternoon.

After dinner, we watched the story of Macquarie’s recovery — the eradication of rabbits, rats, and mice. Proof that when people decide something is worth saving, recovery is possible.

Tonight, we sail in blackout once again, protecting the birds that share these skies with us.





Isthmus | Sandy Bay | Lusitania Bay - Macquarie Island

DAY 6 | 14 February 2026

Latitude:
54°30.2' S
Longitude:
158°57.9' E

Course:
202°
Speed:
3 knots

Wind Speed:
4 kts W
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Air Temp:
7°C

The day dawned cool and calm, the vastness of the Southern Ocean interrupted by a ribbon of green on the horizon. As we approached, the island revealed itself: rugged cliffs and crescent beaches rising to slopes of tussock (*Poa foliosa*) and Macquarie Island cabbage (*Stilbocarpa polaris*). We had arrived!

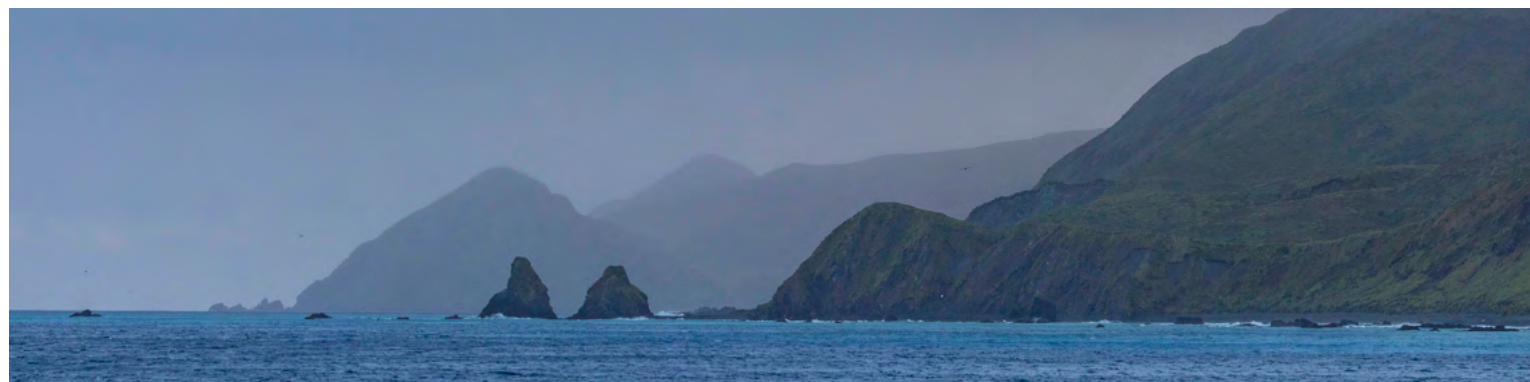
After a delicious breakfast (thanks chef and team!), the expedition team scouted a possible landing at the Isthmus. The swell that had followed us from Campbell Island was rolling into the bay making landing impossible, and the team soon returned with the news that we were switching to Plan B.

Geared up and ready to go, many of us joined T-A on deck for a seabird survey, where we met endemic Macquarie Island

shags (*Leucocarbo purpurascens*), southern giant petrels, kelp gulls (eternal underdogs of the seabird world), and more penguins than we could possibly count!

Sandy Bay announced itself before we landed. King penguins (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*) followed the Zodiacs, porpoising playfully and ushering us towards the beach in raucous rafts. Several elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) lazily guarded the landing, releasing the occasional belch of welcome.

Sandy Bay is home to the largest colony of royal penguins (*Eudyptes schlegeli*) in the world, and the walk to a viewing platform where we could observe their preening, squabbling and nest-building antics was a highlight for many.



Isthmus | Sandy Bay | Lusitania Bay - Macquarie Island

DAY 6 | 14 February 2026

Latitude:
54°30.2' S
Longitude:
158°57.9' E

Wind Speed:
4 kts W
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Course:
202°
Speed:
3 knots

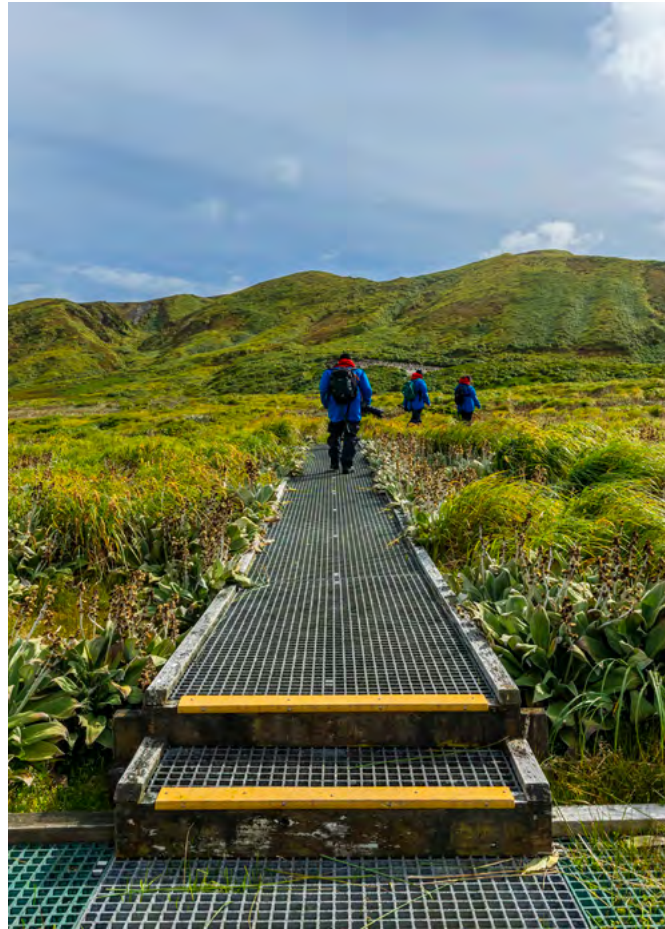
Air Temp:
7°C

At the other end of the beach, witnessing a colony of king penguins - some with small brown chicks - was a genuine delight.

As we tucked into a tasty lunch we continued south to Lusitania Bay, where 80% of Macca's king penguin population congregates. Some of us opted to view the spectacle from the ship, while others rugged up and braved the elements - rain, swell, and winds gusting to 35 knots - to see the colony up close. Our guides spoke of the island's layered past: of penguin gangs who once scoured these shores, of remarkable population recoveries, and of the World Heritage status that now protects this fragile realm.

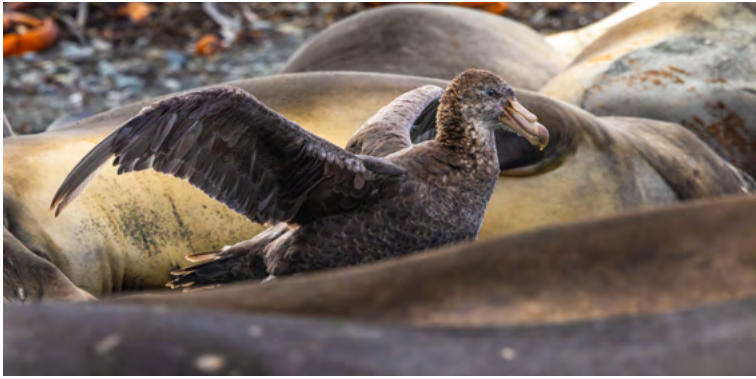
When Australian geologist and explorer *Douglas Mawson* visited Macquarie Island in 1922, he wrote that it was "the very soul of the tempestuous south". Macca certainly stirred a few souls on board our little ship. With gratitude in our hearts we turn now to the south: to Antarctica!













At Sea

DAY 7 | 15 February 2026

Latitude:

57°00.7' S

Longitude:

160°01.7' E

Course:

168°

Speed:

10 knots

Wind Speed:

7 knots W

Barometer:

1006 hPa

Air Temp:

4°C

The first of four sea days on our journey to the continent was blessedly calm, giving us a chance to rest from our successful visit to the subantarctic islands.

Between lectures and Citizen Science, we spent the day editing photos and touching base with family and friends at home.

Following breakfast, Dom told us of his adventures with Elephant seals on Macquarie Island. We learned about the challenges of studying these enormous and fascinating animals.

After a short break, Dani capped off the morning with an introduction to the many species of whales in the Southern

Ocean.

Once lunch was out of the way, T.A. gave a talk on seabirds, and we learned more about the special adaptations that allow these animals to thrive in such a harsh environment. The calm weather held allowing us to venture out on deck for another seabird survey. There were far fewer now that we are sailing south, beyond the nesting sights of the petrels, albatrosses, and prion, but a few Giant petrels made an appearance. Our hotel team pulled out the stops for afternoon tea, laying out a spread of sandwiches, cakes, ice cream, and crepe suzette.

Liam and Kevin helped us work off our teatime indulgences with two trips to deck 8, Liam with a cloud survey and Kevin



At Sea

DAY 7 | 15 February 2026

Latitude:

57°00.7' S

Longitude:

160°01.7' E

Course:

168°

Speed:

10 knots

Wind Speed:

7 knots W

Barometer:

1006 hPa

Air Temp:

4°C

with a quick lesson on how to read a nautical map to help us make our guesses for the iceberg competition.

At our daily briefing, Howard laid out the plan for the days to come when we finally reach the Ross Sea and beyond.

Then Snowy, Dani and Bia each gave a short recap on some of the highlights of the past days, Snowy with an update on Stay and Stay 2 (who had come out to greet us at the cancelled Macquarie landing), Dani with a brief look at the amazing variety of Killer whales and Bia with an interesting talk on the Patagonian Toothfish and the threats faced by illegal fishing.

After dinner we enjoyed a fun game of Sounds of the Subantarctic with Liam before retiring to our cabins for another night in the gentle Southern Ocean.





At Sea – Southern Ocean

DAY 8 | 16 February 2026

Latitude:
60°48.6' S
Longitude:
161°31.3' E

Course:
170°
Speed:
10.1 knots

Wind Speed:
6 knots W
Barometer:
1007 hPa

Air Temp:
4°C

Our second day at sea arrived, with only the mildest of motion, which is somewhat of a luxury given we're amidst the Southern Ocean;

Whispers of confusion as Honolulu time would make it Sunday, but when Howard woke us up this morning, he told us it was Monday....

Our lives are usually structured around the former or the latter, however in our now normal ship world bubble, does it really matter?

Finding our groove as we continue on, Day 2 of 3 at sea, watching ice charts, studying weather systems and wondering what will be.

The morning programme began with IAATO and Biosecurity compliance, and a reminder that Antarctica is a place for 'peace and science'.

Stringent cleaning episodes prior to this, had everyone very well trained, Bio-securing all our gear has now been well engrained.

The 'Squid Squad' team of Kat and Thom, entertained us for an hour, with ESCA, the undercover squid, and its high-tech battery power.

An engaging story of gathering info, where not much has been done, Cutting edge science here onboard that can involve everyone.



At Sea – Southern Ocean

DAY 8 | 16 February 2026

Latitude:
60°48.6' S
Longitude:
161°31.3' E

Course:
170°
Speed:
10.1 knots

Wind Speed:
6 knots W
Barometer:
1007 hPa

Air Temp:
4°C

The afternoon was all about the illegal toothfish trade, and the fantastic documentary that a while ago was made. Thanks to Bia for taking us on an epic ride, by showing 'Chasing (the) Thunder', that eventually saw them end their fight, as the ship was going under.

An impressive commitment by Sea Shepherd and all those folks aboard, that had us hooked from start to finish, and then we finally could applaud. The remarkable human dedication to the illegal fishing world, as the story of this elusive vessel was finally unfurled.

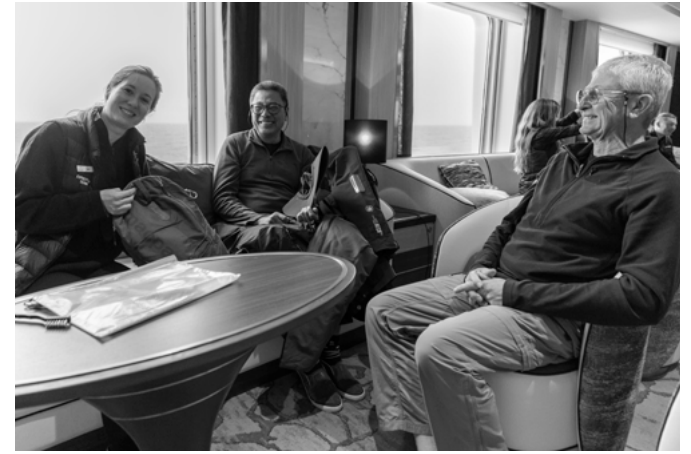
The final session of the day was hosted by kayak guide Liz, organising us in groups of 5 for her entertaining trivia quiz.

Recap focused on the Balleny's, and these islands we may stop by, as dinner rounded out the day, with albatross on the fly.

A whale blow was also seen, although so very fleeting, but as we head into the krill filled waters, many more we may be meeting.

Enjoy the gentle roll of the ocean, and all its abundant wealth, as we settle into life on board for our amazing adventure south.

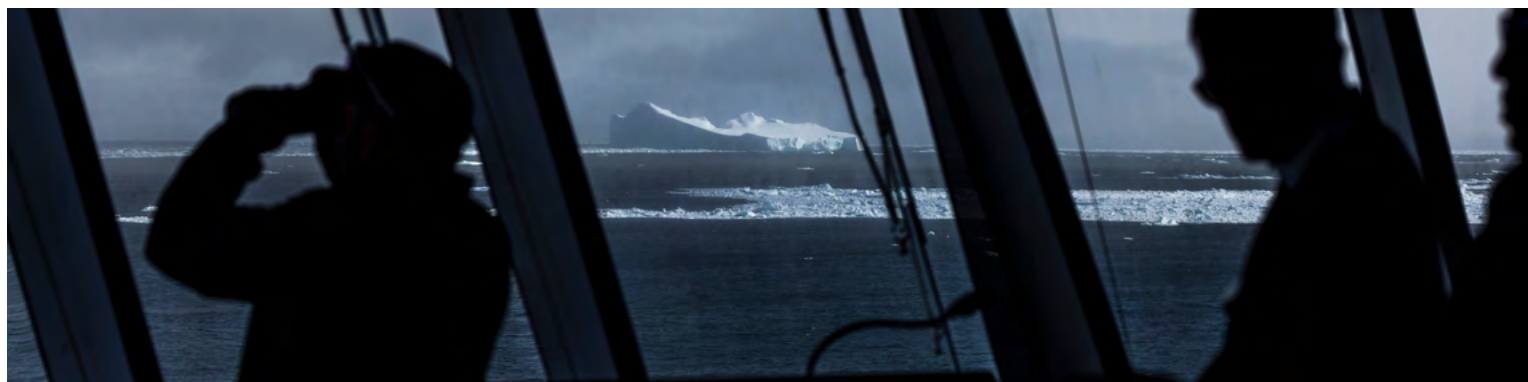




At Sea | Crossing Antarctic Circle | Balleny Islands

DAY 9 | 17 February 2026

Latitude: 65°02.5' S	Wind Speed: 6 knts W	We began the morning with Howard's dulcet tones informing us of our location, the sea state and the chilly temperatures of air and water confirming that we were now well and truly below the Antarctic Convergence.	Later kayak guide Liz's comprehensive presentation The Frozen World of Antarctica added to our growing understanding of this fascinating, white world we are entering. Liz shared detail on many facets of our frozen surroundings, from sea to glacier ice and much, much more.
Longitude: 163°54.6' E	Barometer: 1001 hPa		
Course: 186°	Air Temp: 0°C	Avi began our morning's educational program with a comprehensive overview titled The Hunt For Antarctica. She began with human's first perceptions, through to the progressive unveiling of the nature of Terra Australis Incognita. She then detailed the "Heroic Era's Race for the South Pole" followed by fascinating details of the various subsequent early visits to the pole. The scientific collaborations fostered during the 1957-58 International Geophysical Year which led to the creation of the Antarctic Treaty completed her summary. It was an excellent overview.	The afternoon progressed with Avi conducting a "creative workshop" in the observation lounge followed by mountain guide Jane's well attended inaugural "power hour" guided workout in the mudroom. TA squeezed in an E bird survey on the aft deck.
Speed: 10.4 knots			
			As the Balleny Islands began to appear through layers of cloud we encountered bands of pack ice...our first taste of this signature of the polar navigation.



At Sea | Crossing Antarctic Circle | Balleny Islands

DAY 9 | 17 February 2026

Latitude:
65°02.5' S
Longitude:
163°54.6' E

Course:
186°
Speed:
10.4 knots

Wind Speed:
6 knts W
Barometer:
1001 hPa

Air Temp:
0°C

The highlight of the afternoon was the crossing the Antarctic Circle 66°33'.50.8 S celebrated with a blast on the ship's horn, Jonathan's recitation of Captain Cook's Oath and a champagne toast. The crossing was further celebrated with photographs through the beautifully decorated "Antarctic Circle" plus receiving an individual polar name and blessing from King Neptune a.k.a. E-Team guide Kevin ably assisted by Bia, Judy, Nina, Jane, Jonathan, Adrian and TA.

Throughout the afternoon numerous humpback whales were sighted.

The evening was capped off with an after dinner Zodiac cruise to Buckle Island in very damp conditions. For some the payoff was an exciting 20 minutes viewing a pair of humpback's

feeding accompanied by thousands of sea birds feasting on the krill by catch.

Others made it all the way to the south eastern coast of Buckle Island. There they were rewarded with sightings of chinstrap and Adélie penguin colonies, plus several Weddell seals. What a great Aurora Expedition Day!













At Sea

DAY 10 | 18 February 2026

Latitude:
67°36.6' S
Longitude:
167°28.9' E

Wind Speed:
3 knots N
Barometer:
986 hPa

Course:
129°
Speed:
10.7 knots

Air Temp:
-1°C

We started the morning with Ben's intro to Antarctic geology. Rocks, tectonics, deep time, all the good stuff. It is wild to think that the continent we are heading toward holds some of the oldest geological stories on the planet.

Later, Jonathan gave a lecture on Borchgrevink and the early days of Antarctic exploration. Hearing those stories while actually sailing south makes everything feel more real, like we are slowly entering the same pages of history.

After lunch we gathered for a very special movie session. Today marks the 38th anniversary of the first successful summit of Mount Minto, so Jonathan screened the film he produced about The World's Loneliest Mountain. He is one of the climbers in it, which makes it even better. Watching

someone you share daily briefings with hauling sleds across ice is surreal. The plot twist none of us saw coming: he lost the skidoo.

In the afternoon, Bia and Avi ran a clay workshop. Let's just say taxonomy took a creative turn. The penguins were adorable, but accuracy was not the goal. Entirely new species were born in that lounge, shaped by enthusiastic hands and big imaginations. At the same time, we also have some very talented guests who have been drawing penguins beautifully throughout the voyage, and those are impressively precise. A nice balance between art and science.

Citizen Science continued even out here in the middle of nowhere. We logged seabirds for an eBird survey and



At Sea

DAY 10 | 18 February 2026

Latitude:
67°36.6' S
Longitude:
167°28.9' E

Course:
129°
Speed:
10.7 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots N
Barometer:
986 hPa

Air Temp:
-1°C

contributed to a cloud survey as well. I love that even during long sea days we are still adding small pieces to much bigger datasets.

Cocktail hour came with Kevin playing some of his amazing songs, followed by recap and briefing for tomorrow. We are all excited about visiting the hut and hopefully heading out on Zodiac cruises in the afternoon.

Dinner by Chef Pratik was delicious as always.

A few of us ended the night on deck 8, watching the waves roll by and feeling Antarctica continent getting closer.





Cape Adare | Colbeck Bay

DAY 11 | 19 February 2026

Latitude:

70°54.6' S

Longitude:

170°16.9' E

Course:

195°

Speed:

10.9 knots

Wind Speed:

3 knots NE

Barometer:

1001 hPa

Air Temp:

-1°C

First thing this morning deck eight was full of people admiring the colours in the sky and on the surrounding icebergs between us and our landing site at Cape Adare.

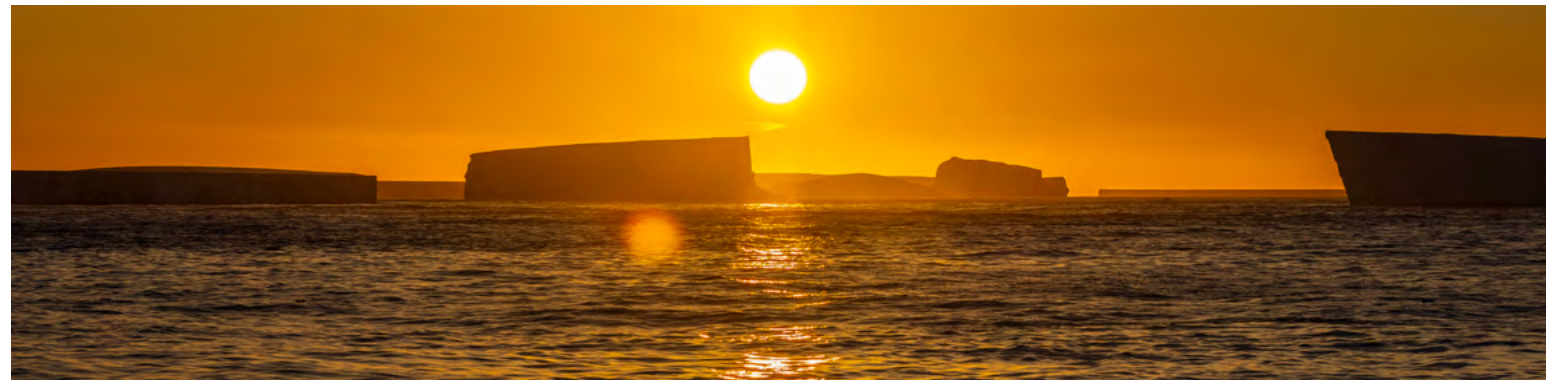
Then, as an unexpected bonus, we had visits from a group of Killer whales quite close to the ship. Although it was quite cold for most, the scenery and wildlife was so good that it didn't seem to deter anyone from spending time out on the decks.

We reached the landing site to find boulders of ice and a bit of a surge from the sea along the shore, which had the potential to spoil our plans, but we managed to find a gently sloping beach quite near to the old huts which was mostly clear of ice where we could get everyone ashore for our first landing on the Antarctic continent. For some it was the chance to finally

have set foot on all seven continents, and what a place to do it.

In our small groups, everyone had time to experience the cozy living conditions of Borchgrevink's party of over 125 years ago. It's remarkable to find it in such great condition after that long in such a harsh environment. We also had time for a short Zodiac cruise and spotted some Crabeater and Weddell seals resting up on icebergs or snoozing along the shoreline.

During lunch we headed further south into Colbeck Bay and with such calm, sunny conditions, crossed paths with whales, both Minkes and what were possibly Arnoux's Beaked whales, a very rare sighting.



Cape Adare | Colbeck Bay

DAY 11 | 19 February 2026

Latitude:

70°54.6' S

Longitude:

170°16.9' E

Course:

195°

Speed:

10.9 knots

Wind Speed:

3 knots NE

Barometer:

1001 hPa

Air Temp:

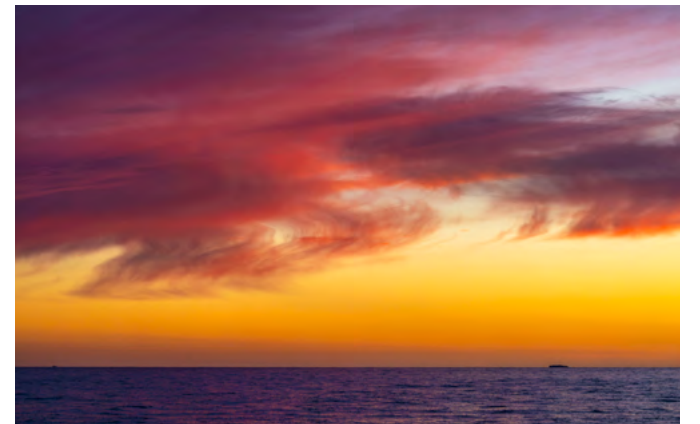
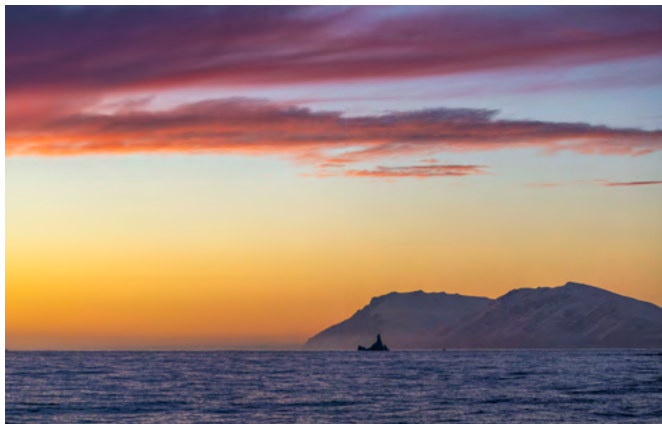
-1°C

Our planned Zodiac cruise morphed into a combination landing and cruise as Howard managed to find a landing spot down near a glacier front where a moulting Emperor penguin had taken up residence.

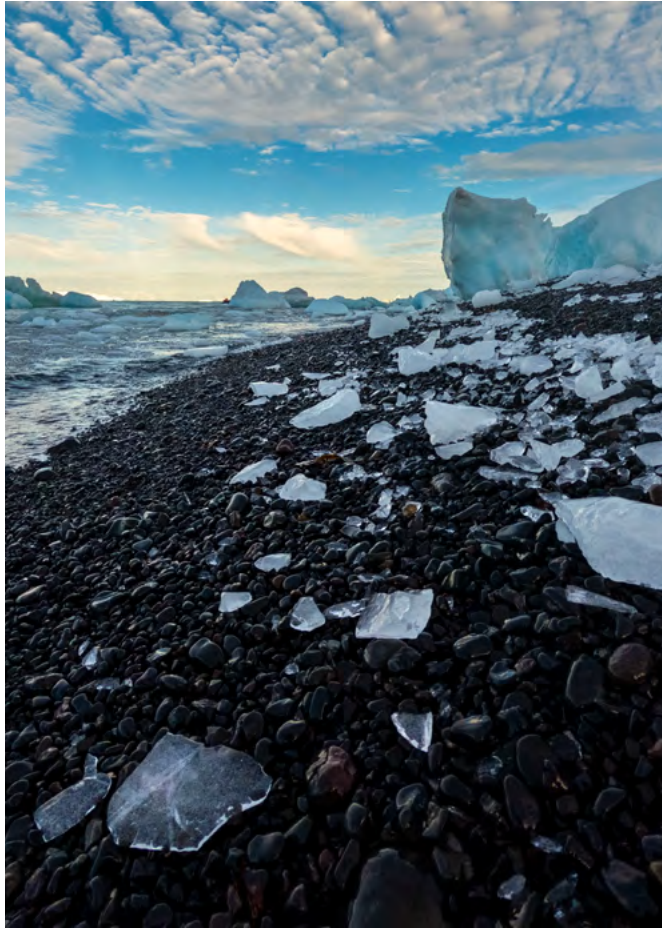
So, as well as cruising between some of the icebergs, we also had a close look at the Emperor and quite a few got to stretch their legs and enjoy the spectacular view from a bit higher elevation as well.

So it was an amazing day from start to finish and as we head back around Cape Adare and further south into the Ross Sea tomorrow, hopes are high for more of the same.





















Possession Island | Cape Hallett | Sea & Ice Day

DAY 12 | 20 February 2026

Latitude:
70°54.6' S
Longitude:
170°16.9' E

Course:
195°
Speed:
10.9 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots NE
Barometer:
1001 hPa

Air Temp:
-1°C

We were greeted nice and early at the Possession Islands with a glowing sky of yellow and orange from behind the major peak on the island. Pastel pinks and purples bounced off the snowcapped mountain range on the mainland, giving the morning a colourful glow.

The wind was up however, so was the swell and the surf on the beach. It became quickly apparent that getting off the ship and onto the shore at this location was going to present too great a risk that we were willing to take.

The decision was made to sail onward towards Cape Hallett, via Foyn Island as we headed south.

The day may have been windy and temperatures very cold

indeed, however skies were clear and visibility was amazing. As we sailed past Foyn Island, seabirds including snow petrels, skua and giant petrels flew around the ship, trying to distract us from the magnificence of Mt Sabine and Mt Herschel standing tall in the sunlight, covered in ice and snow while they towered over everything else in the area.

Along the way, Jonathan presented a lecture on Shackleton's Nimrod Expedition which was well received. It was poignant that Jonathan delivered a lecture as we neared Cape Hallett, as this was the landing site that he, Greg Mortimer and others used all those years ago on the expedition to climb Mt Minto.

Cape Hallett extended a welcome that included glass-like ocean conditions dotted with tabular and many smaller



Possession Island | Cape Hallett | Sea & Ice Day

DAY 12 | 20 February 2026

Latitude:
70°54.6' S
Longitude:
170°16.9' E

Wind Speed:
3 knots NE
Barometer:
1001 hPa

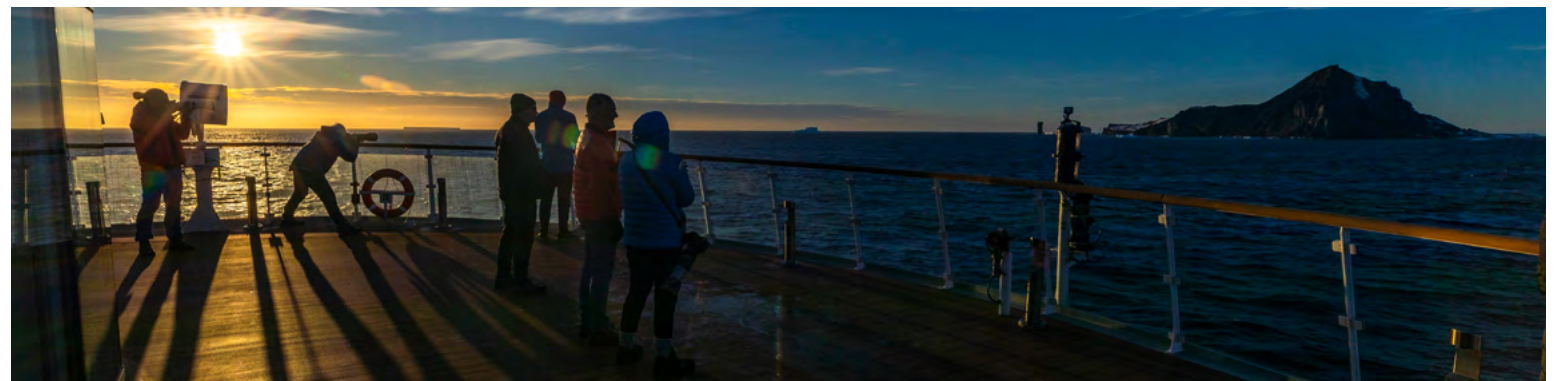
icebergs. Most of the penguins had gone to sea from the colony, but the moulters were still active and attracted a few leopard seals that provided great viewing while we Zodiac cruised the area.

Course:
195°
Speed:
10.9 knots

Air Temp:
-1°C

Protected by the reddish-brown covered cliffs of the headland, Crabeater and Weddell seals also graced us with their presence as the sun shone all afternoon.

Following dinner, we made our way to the ice pack that encapsulated Coulman Island as we steamed further south. Running adjacent to the ice edge, we gathered in the observation lounge enjoying the pristine conditions, and the sight of one or two emperor penguins along the way.



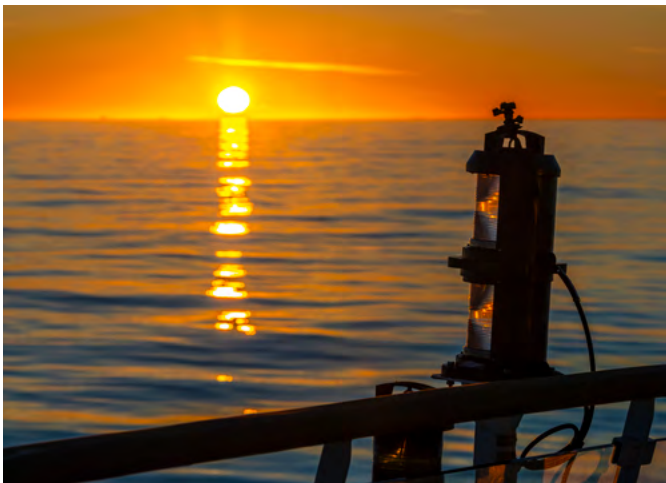












Sea & Ice Day

DAY 13 | 21 February 2026

Latitude:
74°25.1' S

Longitude:
170°48.0' E

Course:
174°

Speed:
8.4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots SW

Barometer:
1005 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

Another amazing day and the weather Gods continue to smile on us.

The seas remained smooth and we're beginning to wonder what all the fuss is about travelling to Antarctica. Breakfast was back to the respectable time of 8am and a number of us took the opportunity for a sleep in.

We continue our passage south motoring through the deep, dark blue Ross Sea towards our next destination on Ross island at the edge of the Ross Ice Shelf.

There is little ice to be seen around the ship although we can make out a line of white on the horizon – the remnants of the

fearsome sea ice that has interfered with the early explorers passage to the continent.

There were three lectures and two workshops organised for today to fit in around our other activities of shipboard life.

Firstly, Avi gave us a summation of the Terra Nova Expedition under the guidance of Captain Robert F Scott. Her lecture was delivered from a neutral perspective and still managed to capture the moods of the expedition. She held our attention as she described the party of 65 men, their roles, trials and achievements. And ultimately the demise of Scott, Evans, Oates, Wilson and Bowers.



Sea & Ice Day

DAY 13 | 21 February 2026

Latitude:
74°25.1' S

Longitude:
170°48.0' E

Course:
174°

Speed:
8.4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots SW

Barometer:
1005 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

The second lecture of the day was from Dani with an entertaining look at Seals of the Great White. She took us through the taxonomy of pinnipeds around the world and then focused on the species we have encountered on our voyage: Phocidae (true seals) and Otariidae (eared seals). We learnt about the mobility, features, habitat and breeding behaviours that distinguishes them. And feel well equipped to identify them from here on.

We had a choice of workshops after lunch, knot tying with T-A or Art with Avi and Bia. Some of us chose to return to our cabins to rest or sort photos.

There followed a rare and captivating talk from Ben "In Their Footsteps" in which he recounted his personal experience including two traverses of the continent thus explaining his connection to Antarctica, the Plateau and interest in the early explorers.

The day was rounded out with a Precap about our proposed activities for tomorrow prior to another delicious dinner.





Cape Bird | Cape Royds | Cape Chocolate

DAY 14 | 22 February 2026

Latitude:
77°11.1' S

Longitude:
166°21.5' E

Wind Speed:
2 knots S

Barometer:
990 hPa

Course:
212°

Speed:
anchor

Air Temp:
-1°C

We began the day in the long shadows cast by the mountains of Ross Island, the light low and cold as we prepared to land at Cape Bird.

The stillness of the morning was broken only by the distant calls of Adélie penguins, some of the last of the colony lingering ashore to complete their molt. Feathers lay scattered across the black volcanic rock and sand as these hardy birds, newly clad in sleek waterproof plumage, readied themselves for their winter departure to sea. It felt a privilege to witness this seasonal turning point in their lives.

Several of us stretched our legs with a brisk walk along the beach toward the glacier at its far end.

The landscape was a study in contrasts — dark volcanic rock shaped by fire and white ice sculpted by time. Underfoot, the ground told the story of eruptions and moving ice, a reminder that this island lives at the meeting point of elemental forces.

Repositioning the ship, we continued along the coast and were rewarded with the unforgettable sight of a pod of feeding orca. Their powerful dorsal fins cut clean lines through the water as they worked together with precision and grace.

After lunch, we loaded into Zodiacs at Cape Royds. With Mount Erebus towering in the background, we walked across a stark, otherworldly landscape to Shackleton's Hut, built during Nimrod Expedition. Stepping inside was like crossing a threshold in time. The preserved provisions, bunks, and sleds



Cape Bird | Cape Royds | Cape Chocolate

DAY 14 | 22 February 2026

Latitude:
77°11.1' S

Longitude:
166°21.5' E

Course:
212°

Speed:
anchor

Wind Speed:
2 knots S

Barometer:
990 hPa

Air Temp:
-1°C

evoked the spirit and courage of the Heroic Age. To stand where Shackleton and his men once wintered was deeply moving.

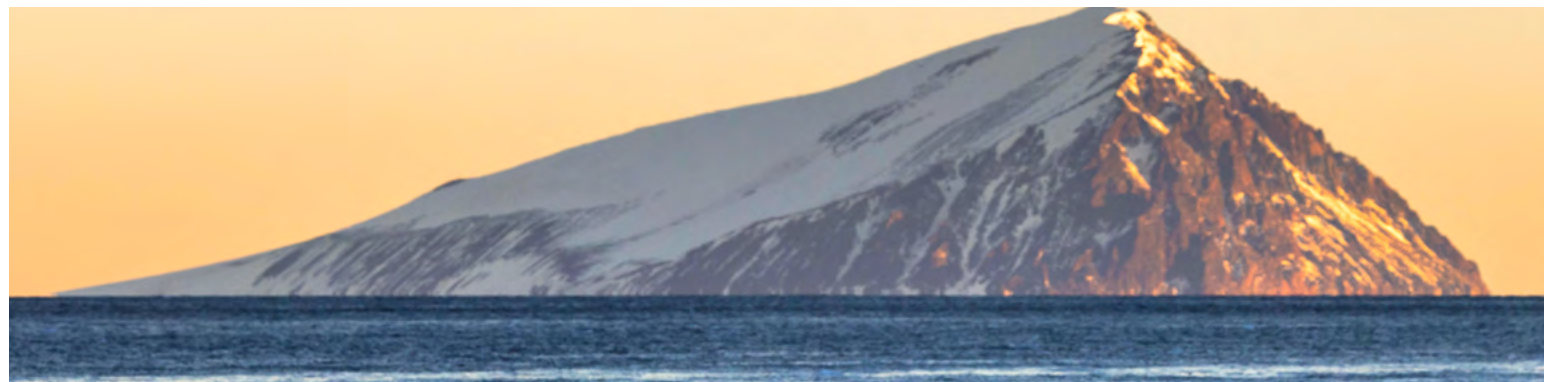
The day, however, was far from over. With endless daylight on our side, we set a course for Cape Chocolate.

Late in the evening, we ventured out again and were fortunate to encounter two emperor penguins poised regally on an ice floe. We lingered quietly, observing one another in mutual curiosity.

As a final surprise, the expedition team orchestrated our first ice floe landing. Above waters more than 120 meters deep, we stood atop frozen sea ice — an extraordinary and humbling

experience.

Tonight, as we rest aboard the *Douglas Mawson*, we reflect that no ship sails farther south than ours today in this vast Antarctic wilderness.





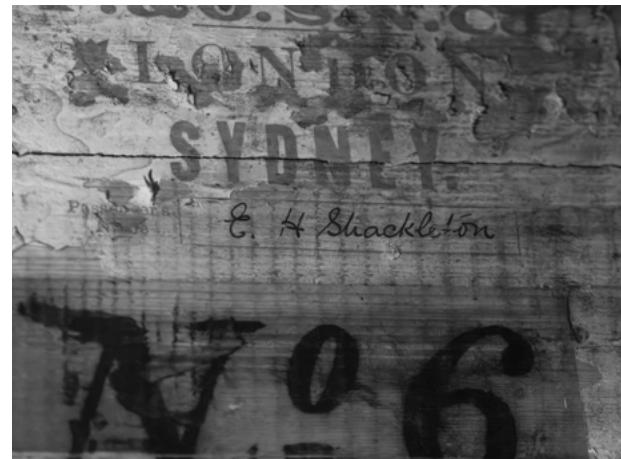
















Cape Evans | Hut Point | McMurdo Sound

DAY 15 | 23 February 2026

Latitude:
77°37.1' S

Longitude:
166°77.0' E

Course:
121°

Speed:
6.8 knots

Wind Speed:
1 knot S

Barometer:
980 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

As we woke aboard the MV *Douglas Mawson* to another bluebird morning, Antarctica was in high definition. Alpenglow lit Mount Erebus, the wind blew cold enough to freeze anything wet on contact, and in the shadows of the shoreline, we could see Scott's Hut.

Landing at Cape Evans, some groups explored the hut, whilst others hiked toward a glacial viewpoint at the foot of Mount Erebus where the scale of this landscape is incomprehensible. And then, stepping inside the hut, the scale shifts entirely – from vast and elemental to intimate and human.

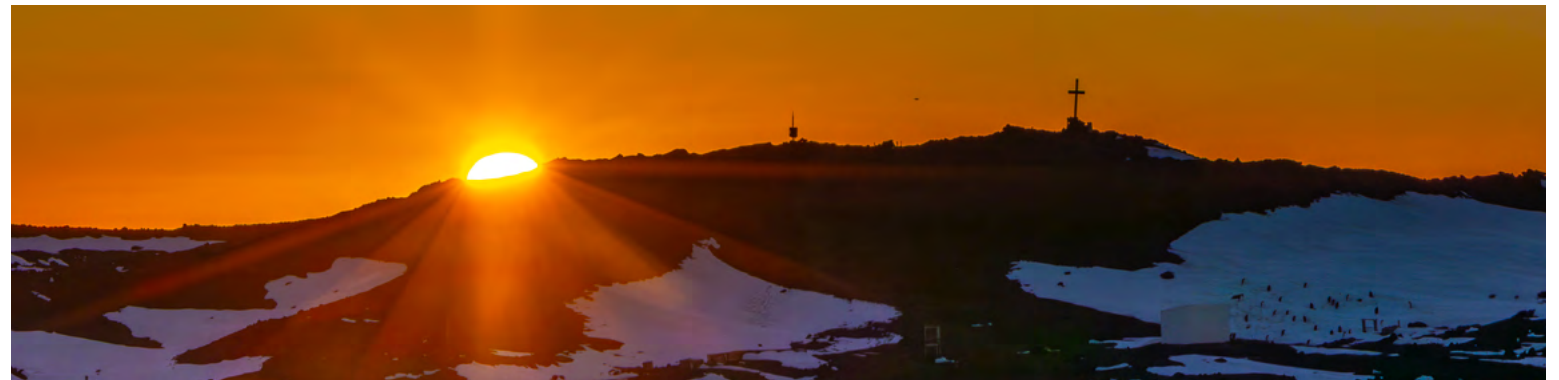
Restored by the Antarctic Heritage Trust, Scott's Hut was base camp for the Terra Nova Expedition (1910-1913) – a scientific and geographic expedition led by Captain Robert Falcon Scott

in pursuit of the South Pole. Greeted by Avi & Jonathan, we took full advantage of our time inside. The table where Scott wrote. Narrow, lived-in bunks. Tins in careful order. The stables. Seal blubber by the wall. Solace. Shelter. Silence.

Above the hut, on Wind Vane Hill, we visited a simple cross honouring Shackleton's Ross Sea Party — Mackintosh, Hayward, and Spencer-Smith — loyal men who ventured from this coast into the vast frozen continent to fulfill a duty and never returned. Like Scott's Party, they became a part of its enduring story.

Near the end, Scott wrote:

"Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell..." Today, we do. After lunch we transited south hoping to land at Hut Point.



Cape Evans | Hut Point | McMurdo Sound

DAY 15 | 23 February 2026

Latitude:
77°37.1' S

Longitude:
166°77.0' E

Course:
121°

Speed:
6.8 knots

Wind Speed:
1 knot S

Barometer:
980 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

Wind and ice held firm, reminding us that Antarctica still answers to weather before intention and decided not to grant us access.

Like true polar explorers, we shifted from shore to ship cruising through the sea ice along the face of the Ross Ice Shelf past McMurdo Station and Scott Base. Sightseeing from the Observation Lounge, we took photos, shared stories, and graced by the occasional presence of minke whales and emperor penguins.

Seizing the moment, we gathered for our traditional group photo. With wind-burned cheeks and wide smiles, we captured our own polar party in the same sea ice, the same wind, and the same pull south as the explorers before us

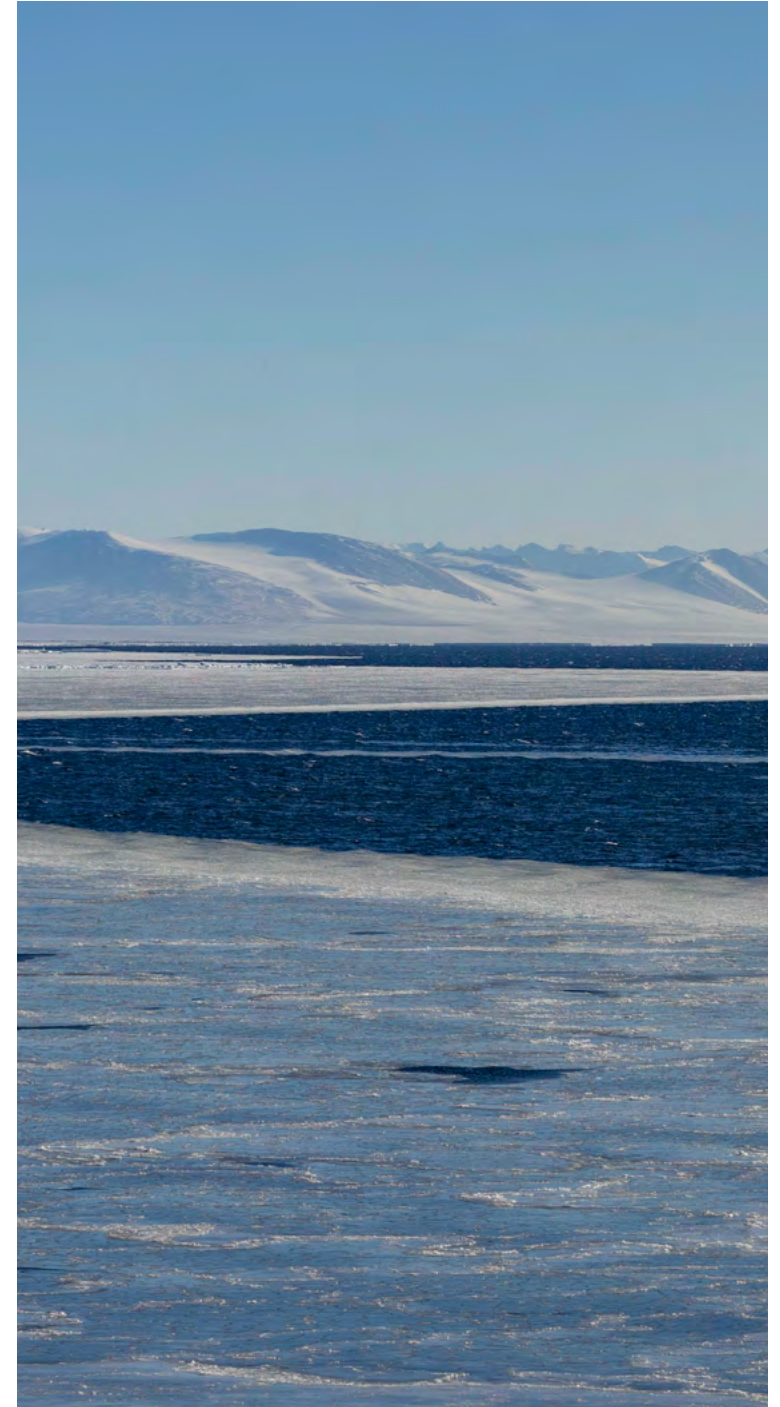














Cape Crozier | Ross Sea Ice Shelf

DAY 16 | 24 February 2026

Latitude:
77°26.4' S
Longitude:
169°13.0' E

Course:
202°
Speed:
anchor

Wind Speed:
5 knots SE
Barometer:
988 hPa

Air Temp:
-7°C

The day started with our usual lovely Buffet Breakfast at 8 AM.

Our morning excursion was a Zodiac cruise at Cape Crozier located at the eastern edge of the Ross Island where the volcanic Mount Terror slope meets the massive Ross Ice Shelf. The temperature was minus 7 degrees Celsius plus wind, the wind chill must have been somewhere around minus 20 to 25 degrees, but that didn't hold us back.

The kayakers went out as well, the best description heard by the expedition desk was: Spicy, magical and epic.

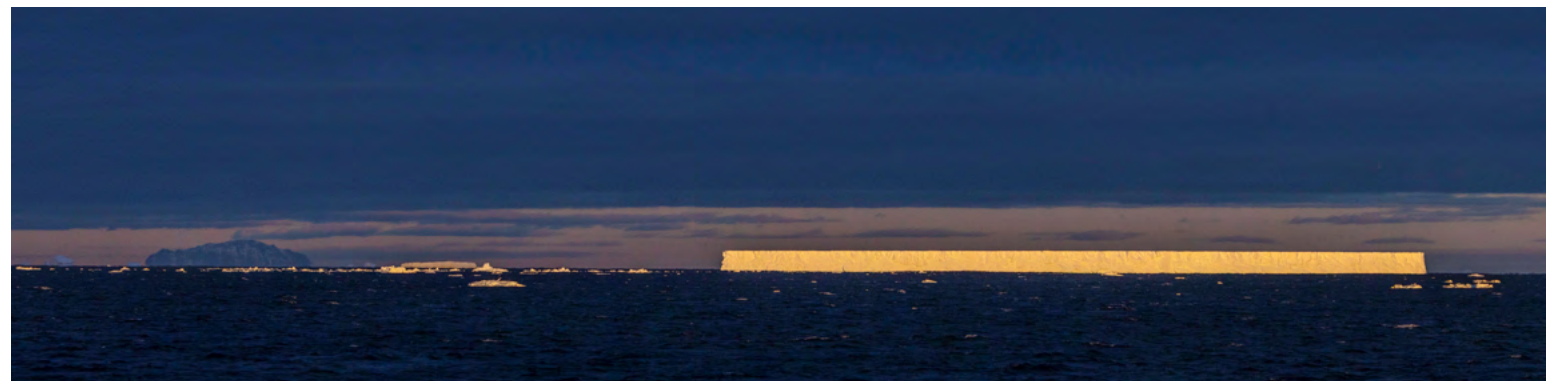
This is the place "The Worst Journey of the World" took place. Dr. Edward Wilson and his team collected 5 Emperor penguin eggs. Two of them broke in a fall, now the three remaining

eggs are in the Natural History Museum in London.

Back onboard we headed straight to the warm drink station. Aiden earns the best kayaker of the day award as he brought his freezing guides hot chocolate just as they were finishing the clean up after the operation.

Time to head for our next location, Bay of Whales. We spent the rest of the day ship cruising alongside the magnificent, nearly endless Ross Ice shelf, a frozen wall of history and power. Even for those who visit places like this often, it never becomes ordinary.

By late afternoon, a few of us gathered in the Observation Lounge for a Cloud Survey led by Liam.



Cape Crozier | Ross Sea Ice Shelf

DAY 16 | 24 February 2026

Latitude:
77°26.4' S
Longitude:
169°13.0' E

Wind Speed:
5 knots SE
Barometer:
988 hPa

Course:
202°
Speed:
anchor

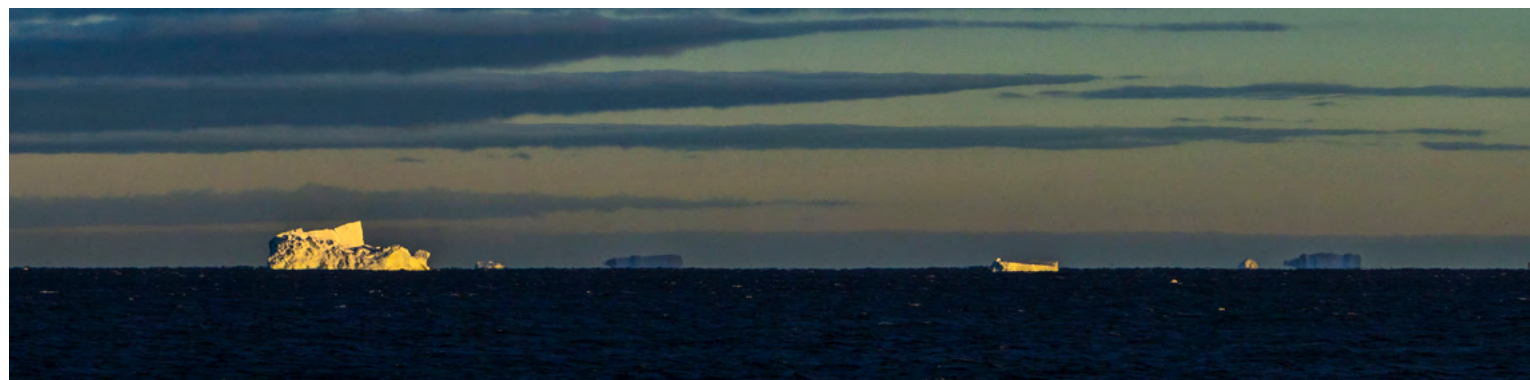
Air Temp:
-7°C

Before Recap and Briefing Liz hosted our Bar Trivia. We were just about to finish up when we heard Howard on the bong "Orcas surrounding the ship" What a sight it was.

Recap and briefing grounded us once more. Amazing story from Avi about the researchers trapped on the ice for five days. Don telling us about his nephews passion and story. Ben presenting the status of the race to the pole - what team are you betting on? Adrian encouraged us to observe, to learn, to respect.

Reminder of the day: adjusted our clocks forward one hour, backward one day.

Another Ross Sea day completed.











Southern Ocean

DAY 17 | 24 February (AGAIN!!)

Latitude:
77°28.0' S
Longitude:
179°10.3' W

Course:
114°
Speed:
9.1 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots S
Barometer:
993 hPa

Air Temp:
-12°C

A day as long and lovely as the Ross Ice Shelf

Today we enjoyed 24 February all over again, having sailed across the International Date Line at the 180° meridian overnight. From the early dawn to the late dusk, we traced the length of the ice shelf in dream-like conditions, wondering at our luck and marvelling at the planning that had brought us here now for this bonus day.

Those up (very) early witnessed the sun rising through sea-smoke – a shimmering vision of fire in ice, warming and exhilarating at once. Then Howard woke the rest of us with the news that it was -13° Celsius outside – quite nippy then!

Dom kicked off today's activities by sharing his research on

Orcas. He revealed their complex social lives and ingenious feeding techniques, and explained how our human activities impact their underwater acoustic world. We might wonder what they wonder about us as our paths cross in this icy sea.

As we nudged eastwards towards the Bay of Whales, Avi shared the first part of her story of Amundsen's epic journey to the South Pole, revealing that his Plan A was actually the North Pole. And we discovered that Polar Bears and penguins don't make good sledge drawers – an incredible idea in the first place!

Outside, the perfect white ice shelf layer was sandwiched between thick blue layers of sea and sky, an endless Smurf-themed birthday cake. Or perhaps something a little more



Southern Ocean

DAY 17 | 24 February (AGAIN!!)

Latitude:
77°28.0' S
Longitude:
179°10.3' W

Wind Speed:
5 knots S
Barometer:
993 hPa

Course:
114°
Speed:
9.1 knots

Air Temp:
-12°C

profound!

This afternoon we enjoyed Byrd's 1930 adventure documentary about his exploits in Antarctica. A different time, but the same sense of a vast icy unknown that many of us are experiencing today.

Then T-A, Snowy and Bia brought out the field guides for a wildlife photo ID session, and Kevin regaled us with some pre-dinner songs in the bar.

At dinner, over ice-cream, we sailed past small icebergs topped with Emperors and Adélies - another perfect dessert.

For those bookending the day on deck, the sky fell the softest Southern Fulmar grey and pink tonight. The bridge team spotted penguins on a gently sloping iceberg and carefully brought the *Douglas Mawson* a little closer for a look.

Whoever gets to see the world like this? Can this be real? Was today really real?



Bay of Whales | At Sea heading North

DAY 18 | 25 February 2026

Latitude:
78°42.9' S
Longitude:
163°42.0' W

Wind Speed:
2 knots SE
Barometer:
988 hPa

Course:
172°
Speed:
7 knots

Air Temp:
-18°C

Our morning began shrouded in deep sea fog rising from the ocean in billowing torrents. The early sun peeped in from the ship's port side, glinting off thousands of pieces of pancake ice scattered across the water.

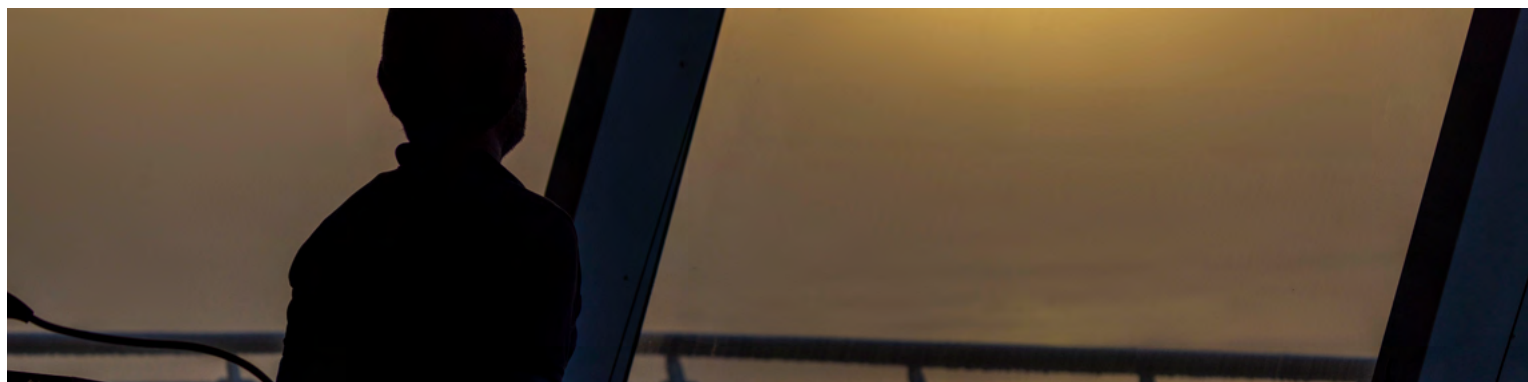
The *Douglas Mawson* sailed steadily south, deep into the Bay of Whales, intent on breaking one remarkable record.

This was no day for sleeping in. Even as the early birds rose for coffee, excitement gathered at the bow. Captain Jorge and his team guided us masterfully through the ice. Howard's bing-bong announcement urged everyone on deck to witness the Ross Ice Shelf. As it emerged through the fog, silhouetted in golden light, it stood as a vast monolith of ice and snow.

Those brave enough to face the -18°C cold were rewarded with a remarkable scene. Emperor penguins huddled together atop the shelf. Adélie penguins sheltered in cracks in the ice. Two leopard seals patrolled the water, keeping most penguins at bay. A few attempted the crossing, only to leap back out seconds later, drawing laughter and awe.

Fog swirled endlessly, hiding the shelf's distant edges. Soon, our cameras shut down from the cold, forcing us to simply stand and take in the moment. Howard announced our coordinates, and a cheer erupted before we retreated inside for hot chocolate.

Turning north, the ship buzzed with excitement. Then came the news: the heating system had been damaged by the



Bay of Whales | At Sea heading North

DAY 18 | 25 February 2026

Latitude:
78°42.9' S

Longitude:
163°42.0' W

Course:
172°

Speed:
7 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots SE

Barometer:
988 hPa

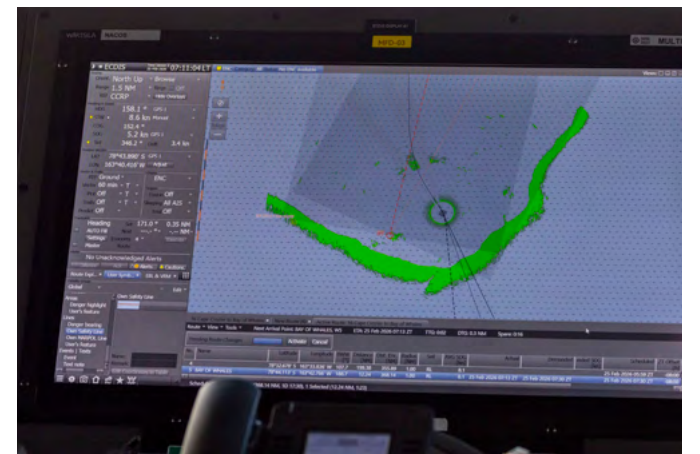
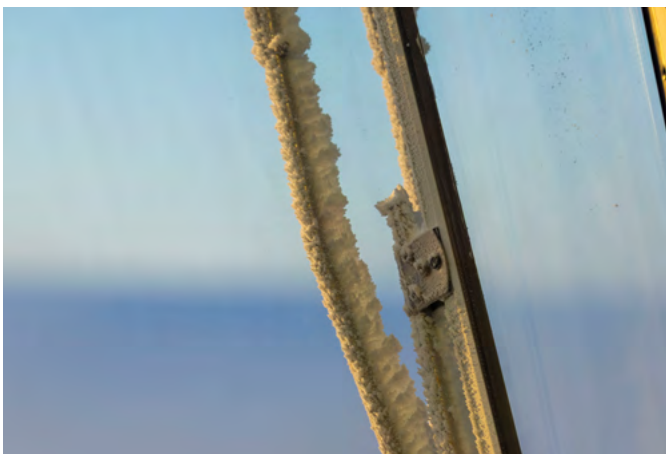
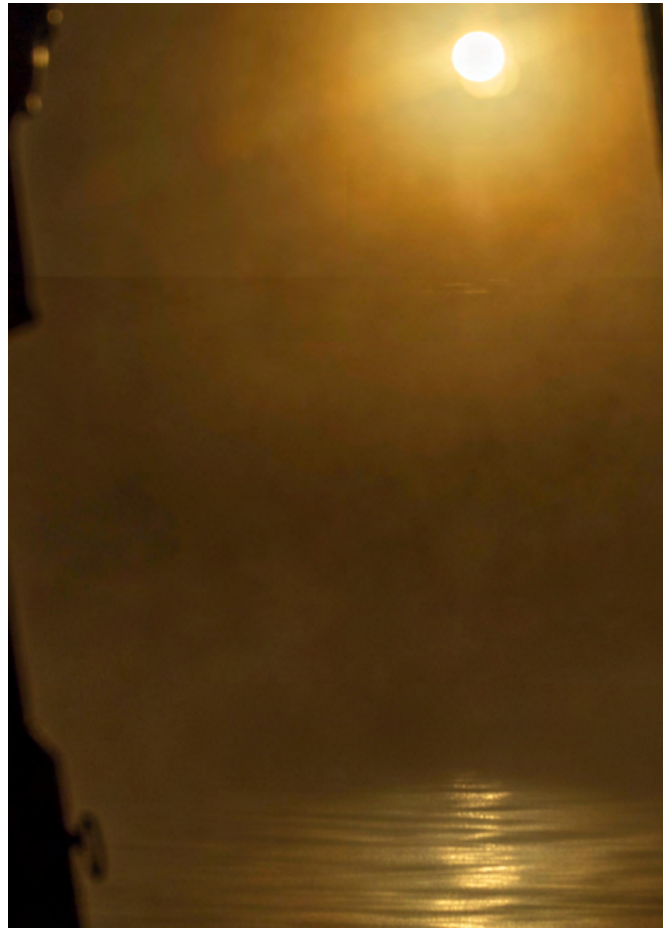
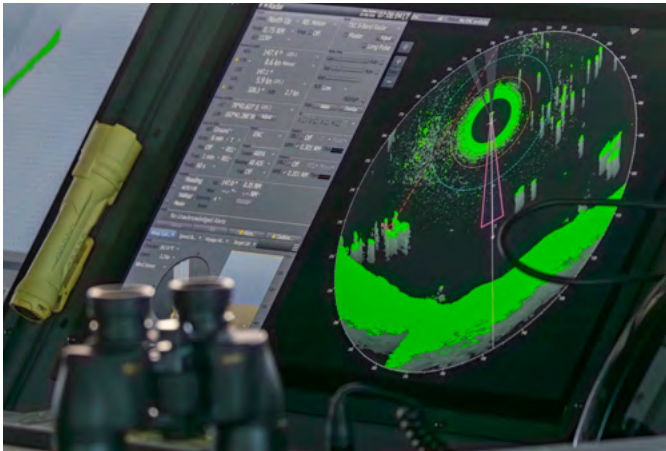
Air Temp:
-18°C

extreme cold and moisture. We sealed doors, bundled in layers, and prepared for a colder journey.

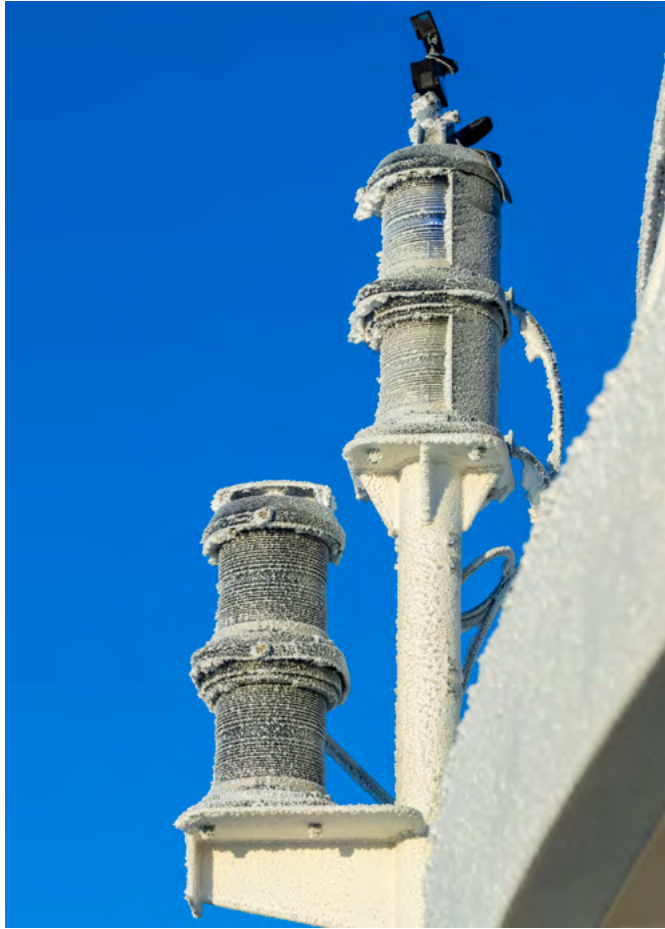
Yet spirits remained high. Laughter filled the lunch tables. Aviaaja's presentation on Amundsen carried us to another time. At recap, we learned we had reached 222.24 meters farther south than anyone before.

That evening, during a great documentary of the Last Husky, three blue whales appeared off our port side. Their towering blows rose into the golden light. For half an hour they stayed with us, one gliding past our bow before vanishing into the vast Antarctica











At Sea Northbound

DAY 19 | 26 February 2026

Latitude:
74°50.5' S
Longitude:
156°18.8' W

Course:
024
Speed:
8 kts

Wind Speed:
3 knots SW
Barometer:
980 hPa

Air Temp:
-4°C

A settled Southern Ocean sea day

Steaming northeast, our path today takes us up and around a congestion of sea ice, yet in waters so calm we find ourselves imagining once more that this must be a dream.

What of the raging Southern Ocean, the Heroic Age of ice in the rigging, frozen fingers, gales in all directions, pemmican for tea?...

Here we are, snuggled up in the lecture room or the bar, reading of explorers, knitting a scarf, chatting over coffee, watching for whales.

Some of us are 'Racing to the South Pole' in the gym challenge, others are writing, editing photos, painting a

Colossal Squid.

And today, more than any day so far, many of us settle in and find time to just stare out the window. There are more icebergs to look at now. And the pancake ice is mesmerizing - a loosely woven blanket of circles draping across the sea, calming the waves. It is exquisite. Snow Petrels fly past.

And, of course, there are plenty of organised lectures and activities today as well. This morning, we join Bia for her deeply insightful talk called 'Whaling in Antarctica from Industrial Harvest to Sanctuary'. This is a tale of horror and hope and is especially poignant after our meeting with Blue Whales last night.

Kevin wraps up the presentation with a beautiful song for us.



At Sea Northbound

DAY 19 | 26 February 2026

Latitude:
74°50.5' S

Longitude:
156°18.8' W

Course:
024

Speed:
8 kts

Wind Speed:
3 knots SW

Barometer:
980 hPa

Air Temp:
-4°C

Later we get to 'overwinter with Snowy' even though we can't find the sign-up sheet! We hear about life at Australian Antarctic research bases, including what it's really like to stay on when the summer crews head home and the sun sinks below the horizon.

For an earlier perspective of life on the ice, this afternoon's movie is "The Great White Silence", where Adélie Penguins are the undisputed stars of the show.

Before recap and dinner, there's a chance to stretch and warm up some muscles in Jane's 'Power Hour' class, and then we join Liz for another lively round of sea day bar trivia.

A few more sightings of Minke Whales, Emperor Penguins and iceberg castles keep our attention over dinner, and then, with another time change looming, we drift off to our cabins as the ship nudges forward through the night.



At Sea Northbound

DAY 20 | 27 February 2026

Latitude:
71°58.2' S
Longitude:
151°50.3' W

Course:
069°
Speed:
9.4 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots SSE
Barometer:
977 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

The morning began gently at sea, with the ship rolling easily beneath a calm sky.

Some of us rose early and gathered for a relaxed breakfast, enjoying the quiet rhythm of a day without landings. Others slept longer than expected, surprised to discover they had missed the familiar soft wake-up call from Howard — an unusual start that became the subject of good-natured conversation throughout the morning.

Our day soon settled into a rewarding series of lectures and workshops. Judy opened the program with a fascinating account of her winter at Davis Station, offering a rare glimpse into life on an Antarctic base during the long dark months. Her stories of isolation, routine, and resilience helped us imagine

what it must be like to remain behind when the last ship departs and winter closes in.

Later, Howard and Jonathan shared the remarkable story behind the making of *Happy Feet*. Their presentation revealed the extraordinary expeditions and fieldwork required to bring the life of a dancing penguin to the screen. Seeing the lengths taken to capture authentic Antarctic landscapes and wildlife gave us a new appreciation for the film and the environment that inspired it.

Workshop hour followed, offering something for everyone. Kevin demonstrated the use of a sextant, guiding us through the traditional art of celestial navigation. Nearby, TA led a session on photo identification techniques, while Jane



At Sea Northbound

DAY 20 | 27 February 2026

Latitude:
71°58.2' S
Longitude:
151°50.3' W

Course:
069°
Speed:
9.4 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots SSE
Barometer:
977 hPa

Air Temp:
-3°C

energized participants with Polar Power Hour, keeping both minds and bodies engaged as the ship carried us steadily southward.

In the evening, we gathered for one of the most entertaining recaps of the voyage so far. We were introduced to the mysterious giant squid, learned that Ben must now be formally addressed as “the Duke,” and witnessed a lively demonstration of the Beaufort wind scale brought vividly to life on stage.

After a pleasant dinner, the day concluded with a screening of Happy Feet.

Watching the film after hearing the stories behind its creation allowed us to see it in an entirely new way, a fitting end to a rich and memorable day at sea.







At Sea Northbound

DAY 21 | 28 February 2026

Latitude:
70°29.3' S
Longitude:
141°27.7' W

Course:
068°
Speed:
11.5 kts

Wind Speed:
3 kts SW
Barometer:
997

Air Temp:
-3°

Today was one of those days where your brain feels pleasantly full by dinner time.

The morning kicked off with Liam's brilliantly titled presentation: "Freaking Laser Beams." And yes — it was as cool as it sounds. Liam took us into a world of light, rainbows, and the surprising ways these beams help us understand the environment around us. From a variety of eyes in the animal kingdom to natural phenomena, he opened our eyes to aspects we rarely think about but rely on constantly. It definitely gave us a new lens through which to look at the world.

Hot on his heels, Dr. Thom delivered an incredible talk, "A Peek Under the Ice." He shared stories from a scientific

expedition to the Bellingshausen Sea, where researchers had a rare opportunity to explore the deep sea after a massive ice shelf break-off. Using cameras and remote equipment, they captured images and footage of a thriving ecosystem hidden beneath the ice. It was fascinating — and humbling — to realise just how much life exists in places we once assumed were barren and lifeless.

The afternoon shifted into workshop mode. Adrian guided photographers through the finer points of Lightroom, helping us bring out the best in our expedition shots.

The Squid Squad dove into the weird and wonderful world of the colossal squid drawing, and Deck 8 transformed into a creative hub with art sessions in full swing.



At Sea Northbound

DAY 21 | 28 February 2026

Latitude:
70°29.3' S

Longitude:
141°27.7' W

Course:
068°

Speed:
11.5 kts

Wind Speed:
3 kts SW

Barometer:
997

Air Temp:
-3°

Energy levels ramped up again when Liz hosted her famously lively quiz, "How Big Is It?" The room was full of laughter, enthusiastic guesses, and plenty of toe-tapping to her catchy soundtrack. We debated the size of everything from snow petrels to colossal squid — and perhaps even tried to calculate what a krillion might be!

As if the day hadn't delivered enough, dinner came with a show. Just as plates were served, we spotted numerous whale blows — followed by several magnificent flukes lifting high above the water. There's something pretty special about enjoying a delicious meal while whales perform outside the window.





At Sea Northbound

DAY 22 | 2 March 2026

Latitude:
68°25.4' S
Longitude:
115° 06.1' W

Course:
086°
Speed:
12.2 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots NW
Barometer:
985

Air Temp:
-1°

It was a strange day. As I concluded my feasting in the weightless upper waters and prepared to return to the comfortable abyss, a remarkable shadow passed overhead. Eerily quiet and propelled by neither fluke nor wing, its intrigued me; despite the sunlight's sting in my sensitive eyes, I resolved to keep pace and observe.

Faint sounds could be heard through its belly, like the distant cries of delicious newborn whale calves. An occasional ringing of chimes; then one voice (the pod leader?); then many. I crept closer.

Small blue sea-lice with red heads could be seen scurrying over its flanks at times; wary of such parasites, I resisted a curious nibble. They seemed to swarm in pulses, swivelling

long black telescopic eyes toward the floating ice clouds that drift across the ocean's ceiling. They seemed peculiarly energised when the winged air swimmers swooped low; little did they know I'd consumed an entire flock for dessert, leaving one lonely survivor to tell the tale with its imposturous beak!

As the light hours wore on, I believe I became delirious; although far from the dry deserted shores, it seemed I could hear the calls of my childhood enemies, the flippered fur-fish and sharp-faced feathered divers.

There were rhythmic pulses like the drumming of enormous deep-sea fishes; scattered bursts of static like heavy rainfall on the sea surface; an eerie whine that unaccountably called to mind tales of a bizarre, disembodied eye that my cousins



At Sea Northbound

DAY 22 | 2 March 2026

Latitude:
68°25.4' S

Longitude:
115° 06.1' W

Course:
086°

Speed:
12.2 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots NW

Barometer:
985

Air Temp:
-1°

spied in the far eastern waters last summer.

Unsettled and hungry once again, I snatched the last air swimmer as a snack to tide me over until nightfall and prepared to return to the beloved depths.

A pod of the odious black and white warm-bloods approached; weary of their infernal clicking, I swatted a few (leaving only the faintest of scratches; very lenient, I felt) and descended home once more. I do not think the lice or their host noticed me; I am too wily, too wise. But if such strange beasts persist here, they shall fear us, for a colossal legion stands ready for any call to arms.





At Sea Northbound

DAY 23 | 03 March 2026

Latitude:
68°23.9' S
Longitude:
103°29.9' W

Course:
090
Speed:
11.2 knots

Wind Speed:
6 kts NE
Barometer:
969

Air Temp:
1°

After weeks of unusually calm waters, we peeked through our curtains this morning to spy a more charismatic Antarctica. The wind had picked up overnight and the ceiling had come down so that all we could observe was the slate grey and dirty white of a storm-tossed Bellingshausen Sea.

Now, less than four days out from the peninsula, this was the Southern Ocean we had been hearing about in the many stories told by our expedition team.

After breakfast Jonathan enthralled us with another tale of Antarctic exploration. We were properly introduced to Sir *Douglas Mawson* and the troubled and ultimately tragic Australasian Antarctic Expedition that nonetheless made a national hero of its leader.



This was followed by Kat with a presentation on squids. We learned of their secretive lives, their legendary battles with Sperm whales, and the current science on these mysterious deep-sea giants. As Kat said, these fantastic creatures are rightfully considered the “poster children for ocean conservation.”

Over lunch the seas remained moderate with one-to-two-meter swells. The skies began to clear however and soon the sun was breaking through the clouds. Seabirds began to appear again including a gorgeous Light-mantled albatross spotted by T.A.

After lunch there were plenty of activities to keep us engaged. Jonathan once again brought history to vivid life with a



At Sea Northbound

DAY 23 | 03 March 2026

Latitude:
68°23.9' S
Longitude:
103°29.9' W

Course:
090
Speed:
11.2 knots

Wind Speed:
6 kts NE
Barometer:
969

Air Temp:
1°

walking tour of the many historic photos displayed throughout the *Douglas Mawson*. Judy offered another refresher course on first aid and CPR. The squid mural was rolled out again on which many of our talented artist added their flourish. Jane returned with her popular "power hour" in the lecture theatre. Finally, just before recap and briefing, Liam invited us all out on deck for a cloud survey.

Dinner was followed by a rousing trivia game hosted by Kat where everyone was tested on their knowledge of squids and the many other deep-sea creatures the Squid Squad has introduced us to.

As the evening wound down, so did the seas, and we

continued our journey east toward the Antarctic peninsula with only the gentlest of rolls to rock us to sleep



Peter 1st Island | At Sea

DAY 24 | 4 March 2026

Latitude:
68°50.7' S
Longitude:
091°55.0' W

Course:
082
Speed:
11.5 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots NW
Barometer:
975

Air Temp:
0°

For a while now there has not been the morning wake up call, but at 6:45 Howards dulcet tones reverberated through the wall.

As finally after a week at sea, we glimpsed a piece of land, shrouded in cloud, overcast and grey, it wasn't looking all that grand.

We nudged into the western side, hoping to get ashore, But conditions were not that favourable, for us to go explore.

So on we cruised along and soon Peter the 1st, showed us all its glory. However trying to get from ship to shore became another story.

Around onto the eastern side we found a potential spot, but the katabatics rolled on down, and the swell...? there was a lot.

So in the end a Zodiac cruise was all that we could muster. But amongst towering icebergs and volcanic shades it was a true blockbuster.

Some chinstraps penguins and male fur seals, perched amongst the rock, and not far off a big large berg, named for its unique 'drydock'; Some humpback whales cruised on by, including a calf and mum. Then the wind backed off as the Zodiacs returned, as our departure time had come.

Back on board and the afternoon was once again at sea.



Peter 1st Island | At Sea

DAY 24 | 4 March 2026

Latitude:
68°50.7' S
Longitude:
091°55.0' W

Course:
082
Speed:
11.5 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots NW
Barometer:
975

Air Temp:
0°

With an entertaining talk of her days with BAS, thanks to AEL Ashley.

Recounting her adventures of all the diving, climbing, flying... And apparently amongst it all, there was some science they were trying.

A few keen folks then headed off for some additional activity, The Power Hour workout session, great for those days at sea.

Recap time and Snowy told us about the ongoing Penguin Count, where from photos we can identify the actual penguin amount.

Dani talked of seals, which we know must have been hard.

Liam gave us a great recount of myths and old sea tales, the meanings tethered to a time when ships were run with sails;

Whistling, banana's, freezing balls, shaving and 'Son of a Gun', it was well received around the room, served with a dose of fun.

And so Eastwards we'll keep heading, to the Peninsula we are bound, Stonington our next stop, if a landing can be found.

Another 24hours, give or take, will see us planning to arrive,

And to all those Murder Mystery players, good luck with staying alive!







At Sea towards Peninsula

DAY 25 | 5 March 2026

Latitude:
68°42.5 S
Longitude:
081°01.8' W

Wind Speed:
5 knots N
Barometer:
997

Today we sailed east towards the Antarctic Peninsula. The overcast conditions did not deter the photographers and birders from enjoying the juvenile light mantled albatrosses circling the vessel.

Course:
084°
Speed:
11.4 knots

Air Temp:
2°

We began the day with two rounds of "The Humans of The *Douglas Mawson*". These exceptional talks began with Susan presenting her research on mixed gas deep diving which led to years of research with rats and pigs. When the Navy mothballed her program, she channelled her energy into writing a thriller novel, *Operation Second Starfish*, A tale of Submarine Rescue Science and Friendship.

This was followed by Ev and Geoff's account of pioneering

caving expeditions to Papua New Guinea, that established records for the then longest caves in the Southern Hemisphere and which culminated in romance.

This session was wrapped up with Nathalie's Little People Travelling Big about her HO size miniature companions' journeys around the world enjoying classic tourist destinations from the Taj Mahal to the pyramids, and the Opera House. Seeing her spread eagled on the ground to capture the right perspective was priceless.

Then Will, whose career spanned a PhD in mathematics, theatre design, and researching for a British TV quiz shared his alphabet of Antarctic Trivia quiz.



At Sea towards Peninsula

DAY 25 | 5 March 2026

Latitude:
68°42.5 S
Longitude:
081°01.8' W

Course:
084°
Speed:
11.4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots N
Barometer:
997

Air Temp:
2°

This ranged from Antarctica's seven poles to "B" for blood falls, the largest land animal, a tiny midge and why so many lands in Antarctica are named for European dynasties.

Then Leah gave us a moving exposition of her Antarctic art with images of melting ice culminating in moving recitation of her poem I Am Antarctica backed by Kevin on guitar.

An Introduction to Indian music culminated in a Bollywood "pretty woman" video that had us rocking in our seats.

The day progressed with Jonathan conducting another walking tour of the ship's historical photographs and artefacts.

The afternoon rolled on with Jane's Power Hour, plus Dani's Penguin Watchers workshop.

Then Simon shared his story of 2+ years at Britain's Halley Base.

After dinner we were treated to a movie about Britain's Base Y on Horseshoe Island. It was another very complete "Expedition Day".



Stonington Island

DAY 26 | 6 March 2026

Latitude:
68°16.3' S
Longitude:
069° 27.4' W

Course:
087°
Speed:
10.6 knots

Wind Speed:
3 SE
Barometer:
1016

Air Temp:
0°

Our first glimpse of the Antarctic Peninsula appeared this morning as sharp mountains slowly emerged from behind a curtain of low dark clouds. The landscape ahead looked completely different from the open ocean we had been sailing through for days. Peaks rose straight from the sea like giant pieces of Toblerone chocolate scattered along the horizon.

The day started with Avi's lecture Women on Ice about the first women connected to Antarctica and the long fight they faced simply to be allowed on the continent. It felt fitting to hear those stories while finally seeing the Peninsula ourselves.

Between lectures we headed outside for bird survey and whale watching from the outer decks.

These quiet moments scanning the horizon are often the best parts of the day with seabirds gliding past the ship and everyone hoping for the distant blow of a whale.

Before lunch we gathered for our daily briefing. Howard, our Expedition Leader, walked us through the plans for tomorrow. By lunchtime the sun broke through the clouds revealing blue sky and calm seas as we approached our afternoon landing.

Stonington island was surrounded by blue icebergs and we watched some nice glacier calving. Several Adélie penguins stood nearby moulting and looking wonderfully scruffy.

We also visited the abandoned research station whose buildings look far more modern than the historic huts we



Stonington Island

DAY 26 | 6 March 2026

Latitude:
68°16.3' S
Longitude:
069° 27.4' W

Course:
087°
Speed:
10.6 knots

Wind Speed:
3 SE
Barometer:
1016

Air Temp:
0°

explored earlier in the Ross Sea which made the place feel very different, but equally fascinating.

Later in the afternoon came the polar plunge from a platform at the marina on the stern. Brave guests jumped quickly into the freezing water while our team danced around helping them out. Adrian captured the shocked faces and the inevitable shouted curse words that made everyone laugh.

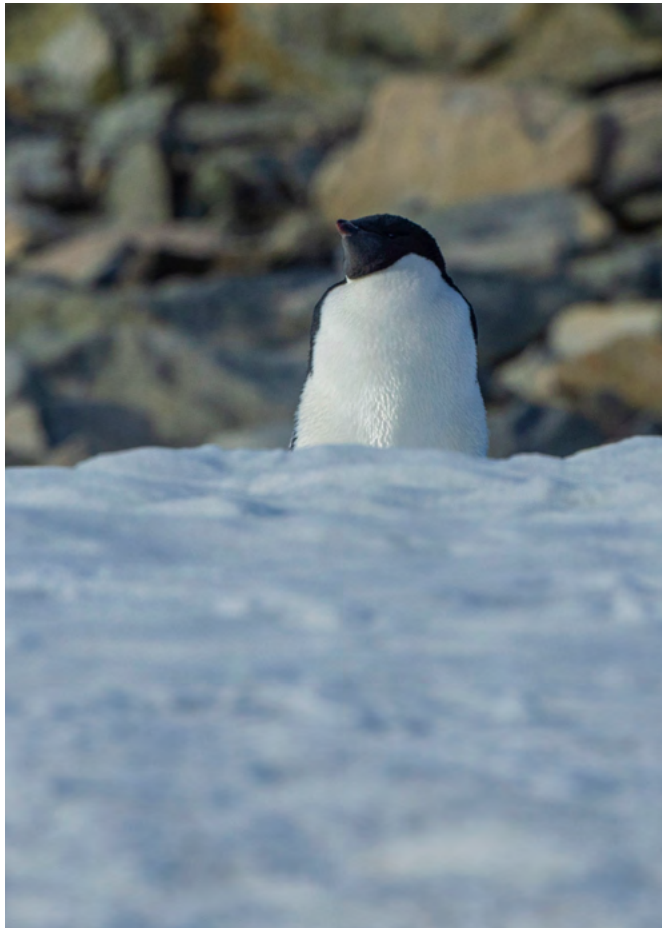
To finish the day, we had one of the most expected traditions of our voyages, the barbecue. Chef Pratik and his team prepared dinner outside on Deck 7 with music, funny hats and a relaxed atmosphere.

The evening light made everything even better. Pink

reflections on the mountains, a bright orange sunset behind Neny Island, and the moon slowly rising above the calm sea.











Jones Channel | The Gullet

DAY 27 | 7 March 2026

Latitude:
67°35.9' S
Longitude:
066°56.5' W

Course:
051°
Speed:
8.5 knots

Wind Speed:
2 N
Barometer:
1019

Air Temp:
2°

Another bright, sunny, blue sky day greeted us in the morning as we sailed into the Jones Channel, with Blaiklock Island's incredible rock spires towering above us on our port side. It was initially quite calm and smooth on the water, but by the time we embarked the Zodiacs to begin our cruise, the wind was quite cold and whipping up the waves. A local katabatic wind was rolling down the glacier right to where the ship was positioned, which resulted in a bit of a wet and bumpy ride.

Fortunately though, everyone was able to find an area which was out of the wind and the glassy sea conditions we've become accustomed to were restored. It proved to be a blessing, as we were able to admire in comfort, the snow-capped peaks surrounding us and numerous seals on the ice near the shore.

After returning to the ship, we continued our transit through the Jones Channel in glorious sunshine, with most people enjoying the magnificent scenery and warm sunshine out on deck as the Captain skillfully dodged ice to navigate our way through the full length of the channel and out to the west, which would take us north through The Gullet.

The afternoon was more of the same, with spectacular mountain scenery in all directions and treacherous looking glaciers flowing down from the peaks to the sea.

We even managed to get a glimpse of the British year-round base, Rothera, off in the distance. To add to the spectacle, we then encountered several groups of Killer Whales, swimming



Jones Channel | The Gullet

DAY 27 | 7 March 2026

Latitude:
67°35.9' S
Longitude:
066°56.5' W

Course:
051°
Speed:
8.5 knots

Wind Speed:
2 N
Barometer:
1019

Air Temp:
2°

in tight formation quite close to the ship. The biggest was around 12-15 individuals and overall we saw around 30 of what appeared to be Type B2 Orcas.

The transit through The Gullet was again skillfully handled by Captain Jorge and we were lucky not to have too much ice to block our way north. Most people gathered in the Observation Lounge for hot chocolate and Baileys as the scenery changed from blue to brooding overcast skies, duller but no less beautiful.

The day was rounded out by numerous Humpback Whales, which we could see all around, feeding and showing their tails to the delight of everyone.















Argentine Islands | Port Charcot

DAY 28 | 8 March 2026

Latitude:
65°17.4' S
Longitude:
065° 34.2'W

Course:
075
Speed:
11.5 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots N
Barometer:
1019

Air Temp:
2°

As dawn broke, we were still hurtling toward the northern part of the peninsula after heading north and crossing the Antarctic Circle overnight.

Our intended target for the morning's operation was Petermann Island, however a slower than intended speed night due to ice conditions ruled that out.

We were aiming for the Argentine Islands and Wordie Hut, a historical hut from the pre-Operation Tabarin era that had been restored. Named after James Wordie, the chief scientist aboard Shackleton's infamous Endurance expedition, the hut was built in 1935 but destroyed in 1946 after which it was rebuilt as an emergency hut.

The fog grew thick as we approached but Zodiacs were filled, and we were on our way. We entered the channel that led to Wordie Hut and were greeted by two separate leopard seals that were intrigued by the Zodiac activity. Playing coy around the boats, the second one even had a freshly killed penguin that it wanted to show off.

We passed Vernadsky Base (Ukraine), famous for previously being Faraday Base which was owned by Great Britain and sold to the Ukrainians for one dollar in the mid-nineties on the condition that they continue the long-standing task of meteorological monitoring.

We landed and visited the hut, admiring the fact the old tins of Marmite and Ovaltine represented a diet that we didn't have to



Argentine Islands | Port Charcot

DAY 28 | 8 March 2026

Latitude:
65°17.4' S
Longitude:
065° 34.2'W

Course:
075
Speed:
11.5 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots N
Barometer:
1019

Air Temp:
2°

stick to.

Returning to the ship, we encountered another leopard seal and his penguin lunch, with Wilson's storm petrels and giant petrels getting in on the act.

Post lunch, we made our way to Port Charcot for a hike to the cairn and a Zodiac cruise among the giant icebergs. Gentoo penguins rafted as humpback whales fed in the open water areas, while in and among the icebergs, leopard seals once again lounged and hid, waiting on a lazy penguin or, as Snowy found out, a passing Zodiac after one had a little nip at his Zodiac and punctured a pontoon.

Once back aboard we gathered in the observation lounge

pre-dinner to watch as the Captain navigated the Lemaire Channel from south to north. Passing a massive iceberg at the entrance, the foggy evening gave our days' finale an atmospheric end.

















Cuverville Island | Fournier Bay

DAY 29 | 9 March 2026

Latitude:
64°37.6' S
Longitude:
062°43.3' W

Course:
075°
Speed:
5.7 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots NE
Barometer:
1011

Air Temp:
0°

The day dawned with fog shrouding the surrounding mountains. We breakfasted early to allow maximum time to cram in the most activity possible.

Today was our last opportunity to get off the ship before we turn towards Ushuaia.

First stop was Cuverville Island in the Errera Channel off the west coast of Graham land. It is designated as an Important Bird Area – supporting a breeding colony of about 6500 breeding pairs of Gentoo penguins. And that was evident to all who made a shore landing with busy penguin activities limiting our free roam range. At this stage of the season the chicks are almost fully fledged, some adults are having their catastrophic moult, some still going off to gather krill to feed the chicks,

some making the chicks work for the food by taking them on a game of chasey towards the sea. Some chicks were getting their feet wet for the first time at the waters edge discovering that land is not their natural habitat.

Meanwhile the kayakers were busy doing a circumnavigation of the island. And we had the opportunity to board the Zodiacs for a cruise before returning to the ship. with the now familiar sight of leopard seals making a meal of penguins, icebergs and the occasional fur seal hauled out on ice floes.

Then back on board for a quick lunch while the ship repositioned to Fournier Bay for our last Zodiac cruise.

The morning fog lifted, and we had a brilliant afternoon



Cuverville Island | Fournier Bay

DAY 29 | 9 March 2026

Latitude:
64°37.6' S
Longitude:
062°43.3' W

Course:
075°
Speed:
5.7 knots

Wind Speed:
2 knots NE
Barometer:
1011

Air Temp:
0°

surrounded by majestic snow covered mountains and glaciers. We soon discovered that the bay is a favourite spot for humpback whales and their calves. Every direction we went we encountered whales lazily resting on the surface and intermittently diving. Our cameras were busy snapping whale blows and flukes.

There was also the odd seal hauled out on an ice flow and some very impressive icebergs for those who still needed more iceberg photos.

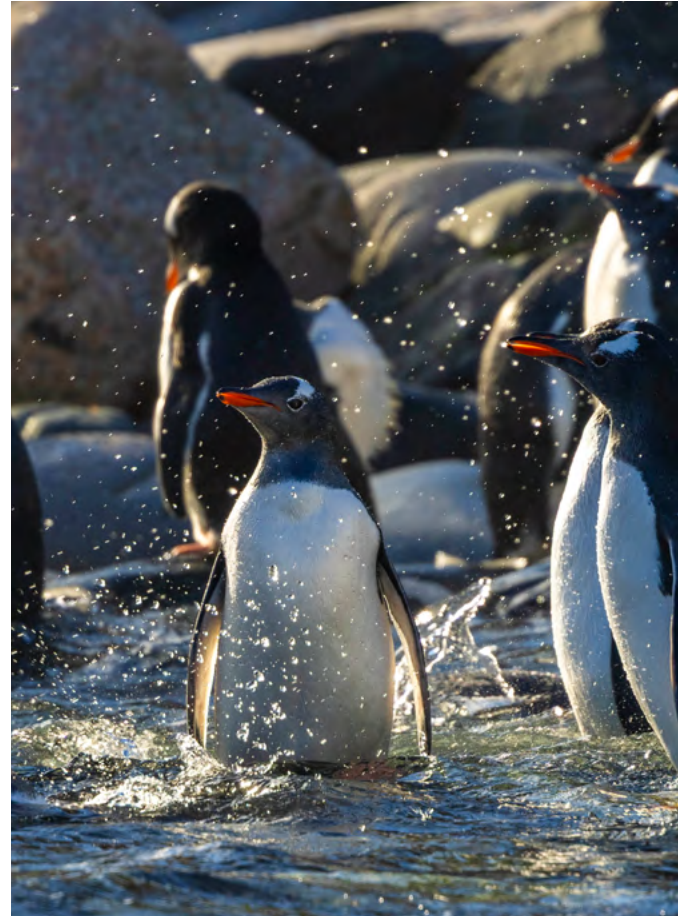
What a magnificent way to round out an Epic cruise.







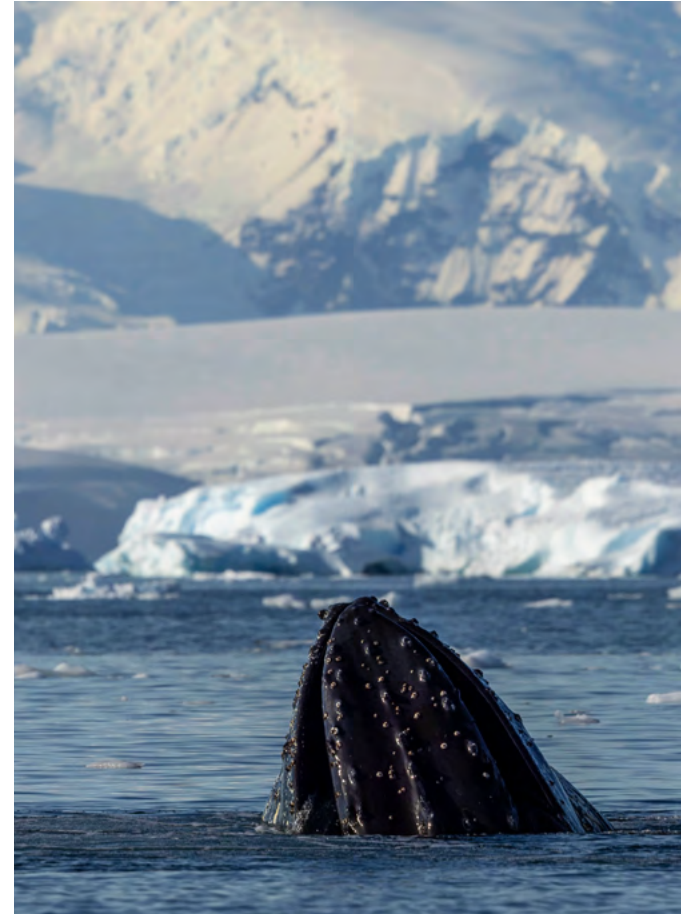














At Sea

DAY 30 | 10 March 2026

Latitude:
62°17.1' S
Longitude:
063°32.3' W

Wind Speed:
5 knots NE
Barometer:
1000

Course:
350°
Speed:
11.3 knots

Air Temp:
2°

With a wake-up call, we slowly made our way to breakfast while the *Douglas Mawson* rolled steadily through the Drake Passage.

The first activity of the day took us somewhere we don't usually get to visit — the ship's bridge. Small groups joined the officer of the watch for a behind-the-scenes look at where navigation decisions are made and where the ship's course is carefully monitored as we continue our journey north.

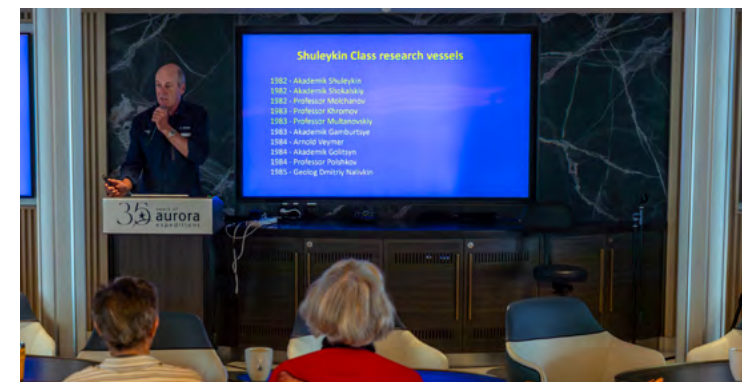
Later in the morning, the lecture theatre filled for a look at another important part of life onboard: the ship and galley operations. From provisioning and food preparation to the daily rhythm that keeps everyone well fed at sea, it was a chance to appreciate the teamwork that quietly keeps the

expedition running. The highlight? We discovered that a total of 9000 eggs were consumed during this voyage. The challenge? Only one chicken to lay them all, according to the chef.

Following that, Snowy took us on a “behind the scenes” journey on the construction of the X-bow Ulstein ships. Following nature's lead, technology is finally finding a path to excellency and better vessel performances.

More bridge tours continued through the morning, giving additional guests the chance to step into the heart of the ship before lunch.

After lunch, T-A invited us to a presentation called 'Birding at



At Sea

DAY 30 | 10 March 2026

Latitude:
62°17.1' S
Longitude:
063°32.3' W

Course:
350°
Speed:
11.3 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots NE
Barometer:
1000

Air Temp:
2°

Home – the journey continues'. She introduced us to some apps (Merlin and eBird) that make learning and recording birdlife super-simple and help us contribute high quality data the world's biggest Citizen Science project. Then 'team bird-survey' headed to the back of Deck 7 in search of albatrosses but instead met a beautiful Kerguelen Petrel tracing high-speed arcs across the sky.

Because we hadn't eaten for at least three hours, we then gathered in the bar for a huge and delicious afternoon tea, except for the more virtuous amongst us who headed to Jane's Polar Power Hour grand finale.

We all then exercised our laughing muscles in Liz's very fun bar quiz ahead of our final recap and briefing.



At Sea

DAY 31 | 11 March 2026

Latitude:
58°17.5 S
Longitude:
063°09.7 W
Course:
348°
Speed:
10.9 kts

Wind Speed:
8 kts NE
Barometer:
989
Air Temp:
6°

And so it ends as it began. Yet not as it began.

Thirty-two days, 6530 nautical miles, and an astonishing catalogue of adventures ago, we set sail from the port of Dunedin. Today, our last full day together, is a chance to reflect on and celebrate all that has happened since then. A day to tie up loose ends, swap photos, loiter a little in our favourite corner of the ship, and find many creative ways to avoid packing! We sit with a feeling of change ahead, yet still with an eye on the sea.

The morning begins with a 'Keeping the Magic Alive' workshop with Bia and T-A. We reflect on personal highlights from the voyage, and chat about how we might draw on the inspiration Antarctica has given us to work for its protection.



Then we join Anne O to find out about the disembarkation process. And Ana shares her top tips for things to do in Ushuaia for those of us lingering a little longer in port.

After lunch, we watch the intriguing Cape Horn movie and finally have the chance to see what a big stormy sea looks like! Then we meet Dani for a Happy Whale workshop to discover if more of the whales we've met on our travels are new to science.

Kayakers have their wrap-up and celebration this afternoon – plenty of kudos for kayaking in those seldom-paddled waters! Then we do a final seabird survey with land in sight. Thanks albatrosses, you've been great!



At Sea

DAY 31 | 11 March 2026

Latitude:
58°17.5 S
Longitude:
063°09.7 W
Course:
348°
Speed:
10.9 kts

Wind Speed:
8 kts NE
Barometer:
989
Air Temp:
6°

This evening we join Captain Jorge and his team to raise a glass to our truly epic adventure. After dinner, we gather in the lecture theatre, dim the lights and settle in for Adrian's slide show, our trip so long it is almost feature-length! As we watch, we know and feel that there can never be another adventure like this one. Over the past month, we have come together as a band of shipmates to shape and share something incredible. It has shaped us too.

Our pilot meets us in the Beagle Channel at 2am and coaxes the MV *Douglas Mawson* towards Ushuaia, literally half a world away from where we began. A channel, a port, a ship, a ship's company. As we began, yet not as we began.

Fair winds ahead.



Ushuaia

DAY 32 | 12 March 2026

Latitude:
54°48.5 S
Longitude:
068°18.7' W

Wind Speed:
2 knots S
Barometer:
994

After a wonderful last day onboard, we woke from a solid night's sleep to find our mighty vessel, the *Douglas Mawson*, nearly alongside in the port of Ushuaia. We enjoyed one last breakfast together before disembarking.

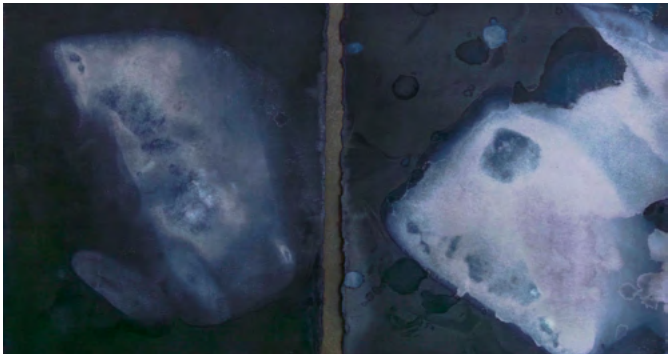
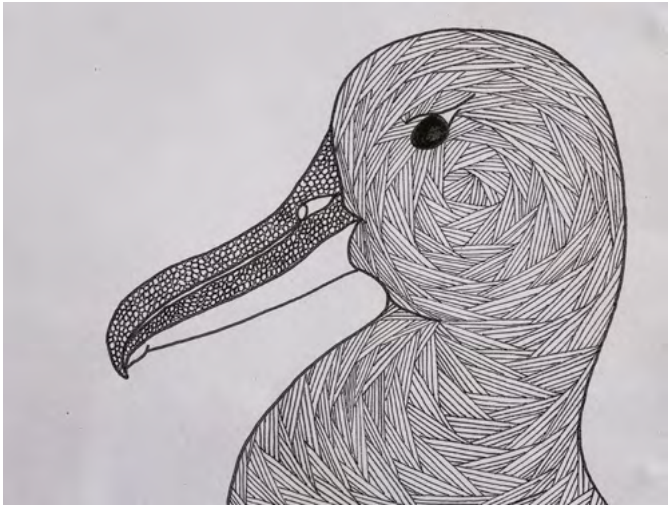
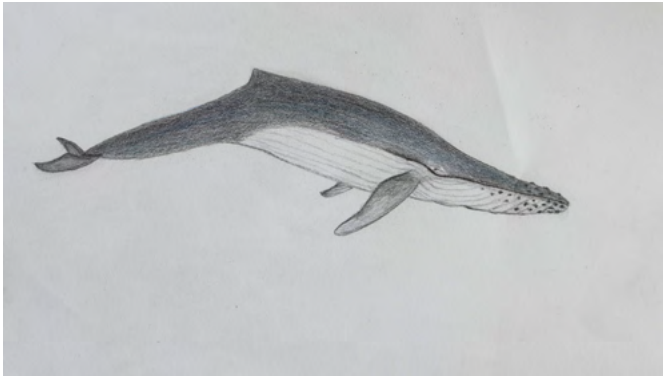
Course:
Alongside
Speed:
Alongside

Air Temp:
9°

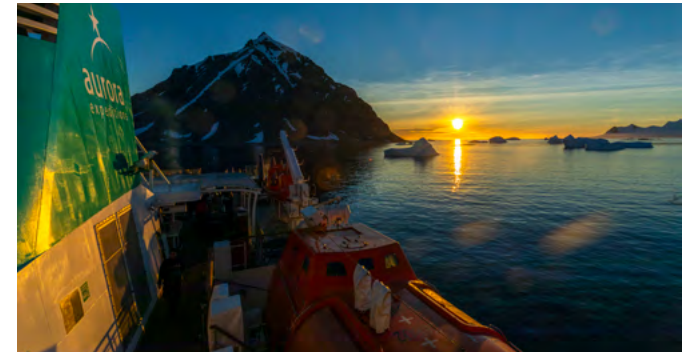
With bags packed and farewells said, our journey to the New Zealand & Antarctic Sub-Antarctic Islands, the Ross Sea & Antarctic Peninsula came to an end. We stepped ashore with great memories of incredible wildlife, wild landscapes, and the friendships made along the way. Wishing everyone safe onward travels and hoping our paths cross again soon.

We travelled 6530 nautical miles together

Artwork

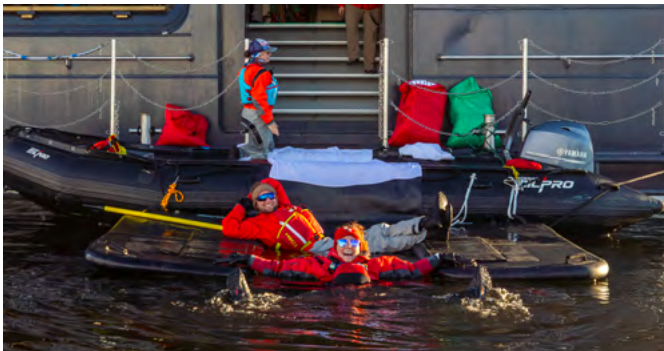


BBQ





Polar Plunge

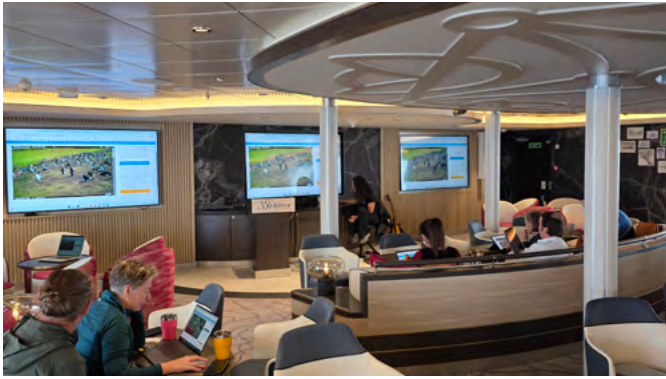






Citizen Science









Kayaking Log

Guides: Liz MacNeil, Vanja Davidsen, Liam Hopkinson

11 February, 2026

AM: Enderby Island, New Zealand

3.86 km

We began the first paddle of the trip in style. Enderby's columnar basalt cliffs framed the horizon around us, rising dark and dramatic from the sea. After a short introduction to paddle strokes, we set off in search of the Hoiho (yellow-eyed penguin). It didn't take long before we spotted them, moving between land and water on their daily journeys.

We continued along the volcanic coastline, gliding past towering cliffs before visiting the interior of a beautiful sea cave carved into the rock. Not long after, part of the team went ashore to explore, while the rest of us carried on down the coast. We paddled quietly, taking in the rugged scenery and enjoying more encounters with penguins and lounging sea lions.

It was a memorable first outing—an easy rhythm on the water, remarkable wildlife, and the striking landscape of Enderby surrounding us at every turn.

PM: Enderby Island to Hardwicke Bay, New Zealand

6.0 km

Almost immediately, we were rewarded with a rare sight: a single erect-crested penguin, the only one seen on the entire voyage. It stood proudly among the rocks, its bright crest feathers glowing in the light—a special moment for everyone watching.

From there we continued island hopping, weaving between rocky shores and kelp-lined edges. A curious sea lion soon appeared, slipping quietly through the water and following along as if escorting us on our journey.

The landscape around us was lush and dramatic, dominated by the megaf flora that makes these islands so unique. The scale of the plants, so large and vibrant against the rugged subantarctic backdrop, made the whole place feel wild and enchanted. Midway through the outing we paused for a moment of silence, simply listening. The forest came alive with birdsong echoing through the trees, and just ahead of us we spotted a small group of Auckland Island teals quietly moving along the shoreline.

Number of Kayakers:18

Total Paddle Outings: 14

Total Distance Paddled:
67 km

Kayakers:

John Ascinar

Sally Ascinar

Will Bowen

Judith Brecklingham

Melissa Chapman

Steve Chapman

Rob Crompton

Percy Davis

Lucille Franklin

Margaret Garnett

Aidan Harrison

Gary Hogge

Michele Libonati

Steve Loffman

Joe Lucas

Dave Mason

Keith Piper

Parisa Vakili

As we rounded the final headland and approached the end of our excursion, one last surprise appeared—a beautiful sea cave carved into the rock, glowing softly in the light. Making our way in we paddled into the depths of the island and came out with smiles on our faces. What an incredible way to end the day!

19 February, 2026

AM: Cape Adare, East Antarctica
4.5 km

After many sea days travelling down from Macquarie Island and the Subantarctics, our team held its breath in anticipation of our first paddle. It was clear that many in the group had chosen kayaking for the chance to paddle among ice, and at last the day had arrived.

The kayakers first went ashore ahead of the rest of the ship to visit Borchgrevink's Hut. Entering the ASPA together, we listened as Avi and Jonathan shared incredible stories of the site's history, all while we were surrounded by curious Adélie penguins gathering around us.

Soon we returned to shore and hitched

a ride with the guides, driving the kayaks far south of the landing. We weaved between mammoth icebergs until we found a good place to launch. With a bit of swell rolling in, we slipped into the water and headed out among the looming giants of ice.

As it had been a while since our last paddle, we worked through a few outfitting adjustments before finding our rhythm. A steady swell and scattered ice kept us focused as we navigated the obstacle course. Keeping a safe distance, we paddled along the base of a towering volcanic cliff layered with volcanic tuff and basalt.

The sun had been hidden behind the cape since we left the ship, but we gradually paddled north toward the light. Just as we reached that welcome patch of warmth, our time on the water came to an end and Vanja arrived to pick us up.

PM: Colbeck Bay, East Antarctica
5 km

We had planned to paddle the bay where Jonathan began his expedition toward Mount Minto. However, the day turned out to be colder than expected,

and just as we were preparing to launch, the wind began to pick up. Rather than start the paddle with a headwind in our faces, we adjusted our plan and set off along the coastline to the southwest.

The change of course proved rewarding. Along the way we passed beautiful icebergs scattered across the bay and spotted several seals resting on the ice, quietly watching us drift by. It was a simple paddle, but one filled with the quiet beauty that makes this part of Antarctica so special.

20 February, 2026

PM: Cape Hallett, East Antarctica
5.8km

The sun blazed overhead, hardly a cloud in the sky. Peaks stretched endlessly before us, with Mt. Minto etched sharply on the horizon, while icebergs, brash, and growlers drifted in every direction. It was the paddle many of us had been waiting for. Our first encounter: a leopard seal draped across an ice floe, utterly at ease, basking in the afternoon sun. Following Liz and Vanja, we slipped into the stillness, weaving carefully through brash and growlers. For many of us, it

was our first true kayak excursion in ice — a real test of edging, awareness, and boat control in a dynamic environment.

As we neared the cliffs, Liam scouted the sea caves. Conditions made them a no-go, but the reward came quickly — four Adélie penguins perched on the ice, watching us with equal curiosity. We paddled on and paused for a moment of quiet reflection, letting the vastness settle in. That calm was short-lived as larger ice pieces began drifting into our space. We navigated onward, threading through brash for a quick photo session before picking up the pace toward Liam and concluding the excursion.

A magical day on the water — Antarctic light, wildlife, and wild ice — the kind of experience that etches itself into memory forever.

22 February, 2026

AM: Cape Bird, East Antarctica
4.87 km

We started our paddle early this morning with an RTG time of 7:30 a.m., immediately greeted by stunning morning light and flat-calm seas. After driving out, we loaded south of our



landing site, passing several towering, beautiful icebergs along the way. Once on the water, we agreed to keep the paddle quiet and relaxed to match the peaceful stillness of the early morning. We moved in close to shore to see how near we could get to the last of the penguins milling about on land. Almost immediately we were met by a Weddell seal resting in the water, sending up big puffs of breath each time it lifted its head.

Continuing between the shoreline and several grounded icebergs, we soon spotted three Adélie penguins standing on shore, curiously watching us, with a couple of large Weddell seals fast asleep behind them. Later, we paused to discuss the shield volcano forming Mount Bird rising to our right, before finishing in front of a stunning glacier face.

PM: McMurdo Sound, East Antarctica
2.2km

On the lookout for orca and emperor penguins, the ship pushed south into McMurdo Sound. After dinner, a last-minute kayak outing was added to the schedule — and the conditions couldn't

have been better. Clear skies, calm water, and Mt. Erebus standing sharp behind us, perfectly framed for photos as we slipped into our kayaks.

The sea ice was young and glassy, a thin layer of nilas stretching across the surface. We could see Zodiacs in the distance near emperors and, naturally, we wanted a closer look too. The difference? We were running on manual engines. We paddled along the edge of the sea floe while Liam went ahead to scout a possible lead. When he found an opening, we made our way over — only to realize the nilas was just thick enough to stall our progress. It flexed and cracked but wouldn't quite give way.

They say if you have the resources, use them — so we did. Liam brought the Zodiac around and carefully pressed a narrow path through the nilas, creating a clean line for us to follow. One by one, we moved through the lead toward the emperors. Standing tall on the ice, they watched us calmly — a call here, a shuffle there — completely at ease in their world. Seeing emperors at water level, from a kayak, feels different. Quieter. More personal.

As we continued on, Ashley and Jane

found a solid floe we could use for a landing. With a few strong strokes and Liam directing the approach, our bows met the floe and the kayaks slid up onto the ice. Hauled out on the floe, with late-night Antarctic light stretching across the Sound, we took photos, made snow angels, took a moment of zen, and soaked it all in at 77° 51.14' S. Our most southern paddle — simple, cold, and unforgettable.

24 February, 2026
AM: Cape Crozier, East Antarctica
4.23 km

Our very last paddle in the Ross Sea felt nothing short of magical. It began a little spicy, softened into something beautiful, and ended in a truly epic way.

The temperature sat at -7°C , but with the wind chill it felt closer to -20°C . Given the conditions, we expected a short and swift outing. Instead, the moment we launched, the sea seemed to invite us to stay a little longer. What was meant to be brief turned into a 90-minute journey on the water.

We paddled away from the glacier front toward the northeast, the landscape quiet and immense around us. New ice

was beginning to form on the surface — delicate slush ice gathering in soft patterns across the water. For a while we drifted slowly through it, sharing a special moment as the ocean quietly began its transformation into winter.

Then came the finale. We glided into a cathedral of towering icebergs, their blue walls glowing as the low sun backlit them from behind. The wind softened, the paddles slowed, and we sat together in silence between these enormous frozen sculptures.

It was the kind of moment Antarctica offers only rarely — still, luminous, and unforgettable — a perfect farewell paddle in the Ross Sea.

06 March, 2026
PM: Stonington, Antarctic Peninsula
5.32km

What a beautiful welcome to the Antarctic Peninsula. After seven days at sea, we arrived to sunny skies, calm seas, and a landscape surrounded by glaciers and icebergs. It felt like Antarctica had rolled out the red carpet for us.

We were delighted to have Captain Jorge and Nina join us on the paddle



this afternoon as we made our way along the glacier face, taking in the sights, sounds, and crunch of brash ice around our kayaks. As we navigated between the icebergs, their stories felt front of mind. They fall, roll, drift with the currents, melt, fracture, stand strong, crack, shine bright, ground themselves, shift in buoyancy, and slowly smooth with time — a beautiful metaphor for life itself.

Paddling quietly through the brash, we came upon an arch carved through an iceberg, perfectly framing the glacier in the distance. It felt like a natural cathedral — the perfect place to pause, breathe, and enjoy a moment of Antarctic Zen while taking in the beauty around us.

Afterward, some of us stepped ashore to explore Stonington Island and its historic hut, while others chose to remain on the water. Continuing our session, we played among the brash ice, explored Bear Island in search of seals, and finished with an exhilarating paddle through slightly more spirited conditions.

All in all, it was a beautiful day in the neighborhood — and one we won't soon forget.

07 March, 2026

**AM: Blaiklock, Antarctic Peninsula
3.21 km**

Short but sweet, this paddle made the most of a small pocket of calm we found in the lee to the north. Sheltered from the wind, we set out to explore the ice as much as possible — weaving our way through the brash and drifting bergy bits.

With the evening bar in mind, we also had a bit of a mission: finding some good glacier ice. A few of us happily took on the task, gently paddling through the ice and breaking apart promising pieces along the way. The chunks we gathered were clear, ancient, and full of character.

Holding the ice in our hands, we could feel the tiny bubbles of trapped air releasing as it slowly melted — faint crackles and pops from centuries of compressed snowfall returning to the atmosphere. We listened to the ice, felt its texture, and took a moment simply to enjoy it.

A simple paddle, but one filled with small Antarctic pleasures.

08 March, 2026

**AM: Argentine Islands, Antarctic Peninsula
3.8 km**

We split into two groups — one moving at a quicker pace and another taking it slower with longer stops along the way. Not long after launching, we came across our first concentration of Gentoo penguins. Most were in the middle of their annual molt, standing ashore looking a little scruffy and reluctant to enter the water, though a few brave ones were still swimming nearby.

We began in the southeast, paddling toward the Ukrainian station, Vernadsky Research Base. Along the way we paused several times to raft our kayaks together when a leopard seal became a bit too curious and playful around the group.

Continuing through the channel toward the historic hut, we were treated to the beautiful patterns of snow algae staining the ice wall ahead of us — soft pinks and reds streaked across the frozen surface.

On our way back to the ship, the afternoon took an unforgettable turn. We witnessed the raw drama of the Antarctic food web as a leopard seal

launched into an active hunt, chasing a penguin across the water in a burst of speed and splashing chaos.

It was a powerful reminder that this wild place is not only beautiful, but very much alive.

**PM: Port Charcot, Antarctic Peninsula
6.88km**

As the ship positioned on the west side of Booth Island, wildlife was already appearing throughout the bay. We launched the kayaks from the marina at the stern and set off in search of whales reported on the far side of the bay. Before long we caught several good glimpses and followed their path through a gap between towering icebergs. The bergs surrounded us with a striking variety of melt-carved shapes and arches.

In a more open area we encountered large rafts of 50–100 gentoo penguins, popping up beside the kayaks before porpoising away in search of food. After losing sight of the whales, we paddled past a leopard seal resting quietly on the ice. As the wind picked up and



the chill set in, we kept a steady pace through the maze of icebergs.

Returning toward *Douglas Mawson* near Port Charcot, a humpback whale surfaced in front of the kayakers before fluking perfectly beside the ship. We lingered quietly among penguins and distant whale blows.

09 March, 2026

AM: Cuverville Island, Antarctic Peninsula

7.02km

As the ship positioned on the west side of Booth Island, wildlife was already appearing throughout the bay. We launched the kayakers from the marina at the stern and set off in search of whales reported on the far side of the bay. Before long we caught several good glimpses and followed their path through a gap between towering icebergs. The bergs surrounded us with a striking variety of melt-carved shapes and arches.

In a more open area we encountered large rafts of 50–100 gentoo penguins, popping up beside the kayakers before porpoising away in search of food. After losing sight of the whales, we paddled past a leopard seal resting quietly on

the ice. As the wind picked up and the chill set in, we kept a steady pace through the maze of icebergs.

Returning toward *Douglas Mawson* near Port Charcot, a humpback whale surfaced in front of the kayakers before fluking perfectly beside the ship. We lingered quietly among penguins and distant whale blows.

PM: Fournier Bay, Antarctic Peninsula

4.39km

What a whale of a way to end our kayak program. A full community paddle with Liz, Liam, and Vanja on the water — and what a finale it turned out to be.

From sunny skies and glassy seas to the distant crack and roll of icebergs shifting and breaking, the afternoon already felt special. Then came the unmistakable sound of whales blowing. Soon after, flukes appeared on the horizon, and suddenly we didn't know which direction to look — beauty everywhere.

We tried to split into smaller groups, but it quickly became clear that everyone wanted to share in the same moment. There's something extraordinary about

seeing whales at kayak level. They know we're there. They feel us, hear us, and yet remain completely undisturbed by our presence.

Moving slowly and quietly, we edged a little closer and were rewarded with the magic of paddling among whales. They surfaced around us as they fed, lifted their pectoral fins as if waving hello, and raised their flukes before slipping gracefully beneath the surface again.

Then came the quiet moments — the ones you never forget. We drifted in silent anticipation, waiting to see where they would emerge next. Bubbles rising from below. The faint silhouette of enormous bodies gliding beneath our kayakers. The soft exhale of breath breaking the still air.

A perfect ending to our time on the water — one that will stay with us long after the paddles are put away.

A huge thank you to this incredible kayak team for making it such an epic ending to our epic journey. Paddling alongside all of you, sharing these moments, and finishing our adventure surrounded by whales, ice, and calm seas was something truly special. Grateful for the teamwork, the laughter, and the shared spirit that made this

program so memorable.







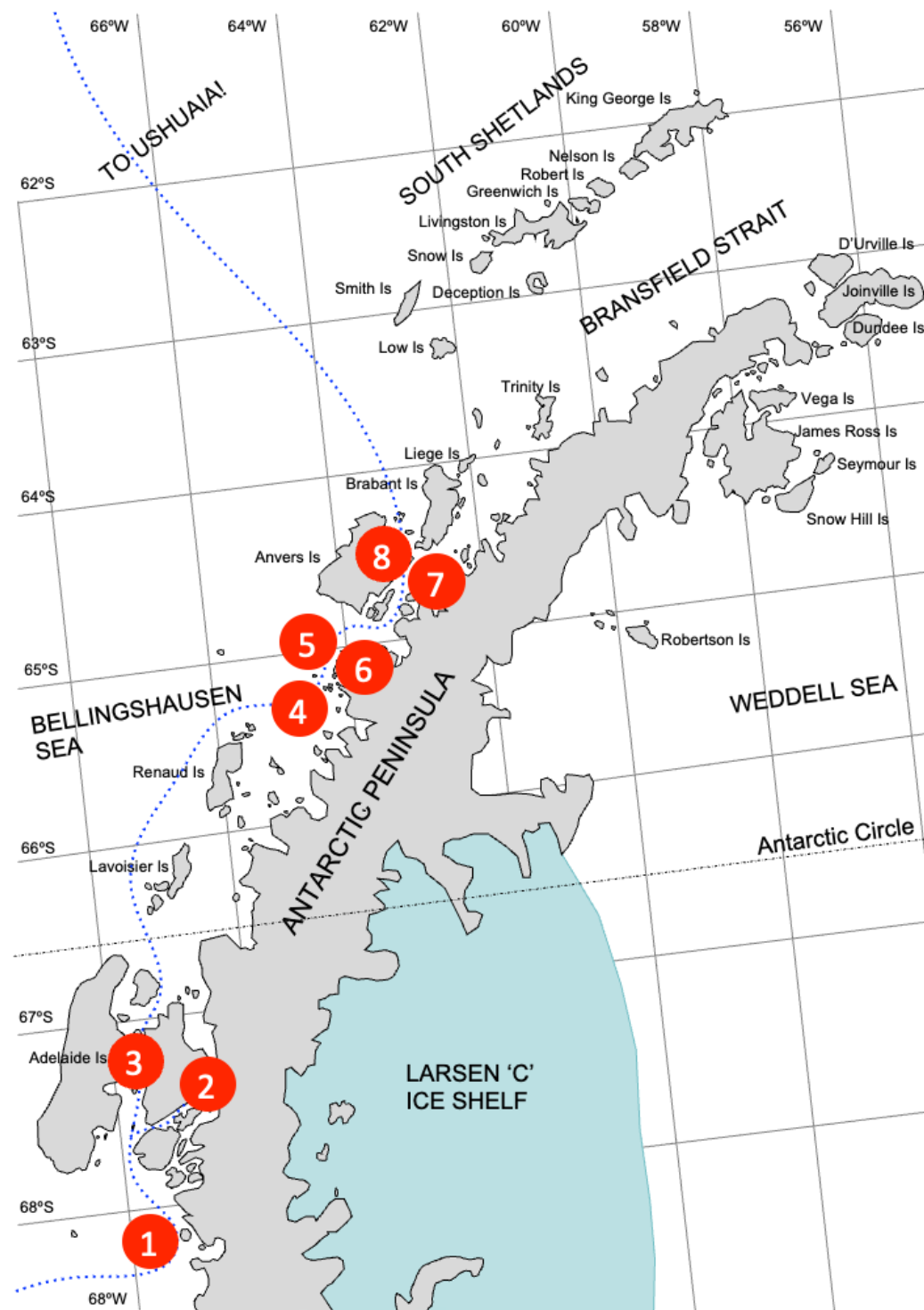






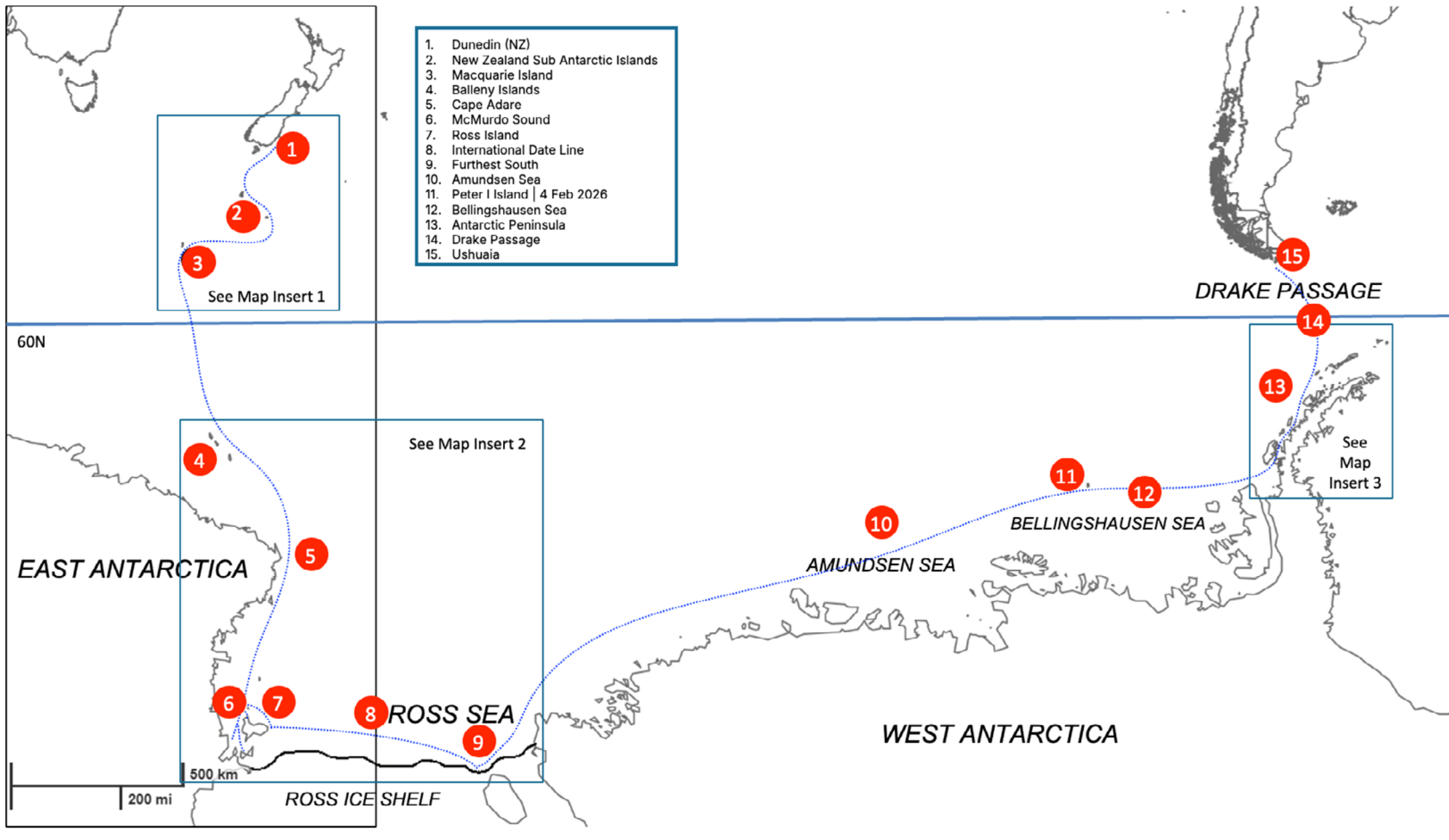
Map

1. Stonington Island & Polar Plunge!
2. Blaiklock Island & Jones Channel
3. The Gullet
4. Argentine Islands
5. Port Charcot
6. Lemaire Channel
7. Cuverville Island
8. Fournier Bay



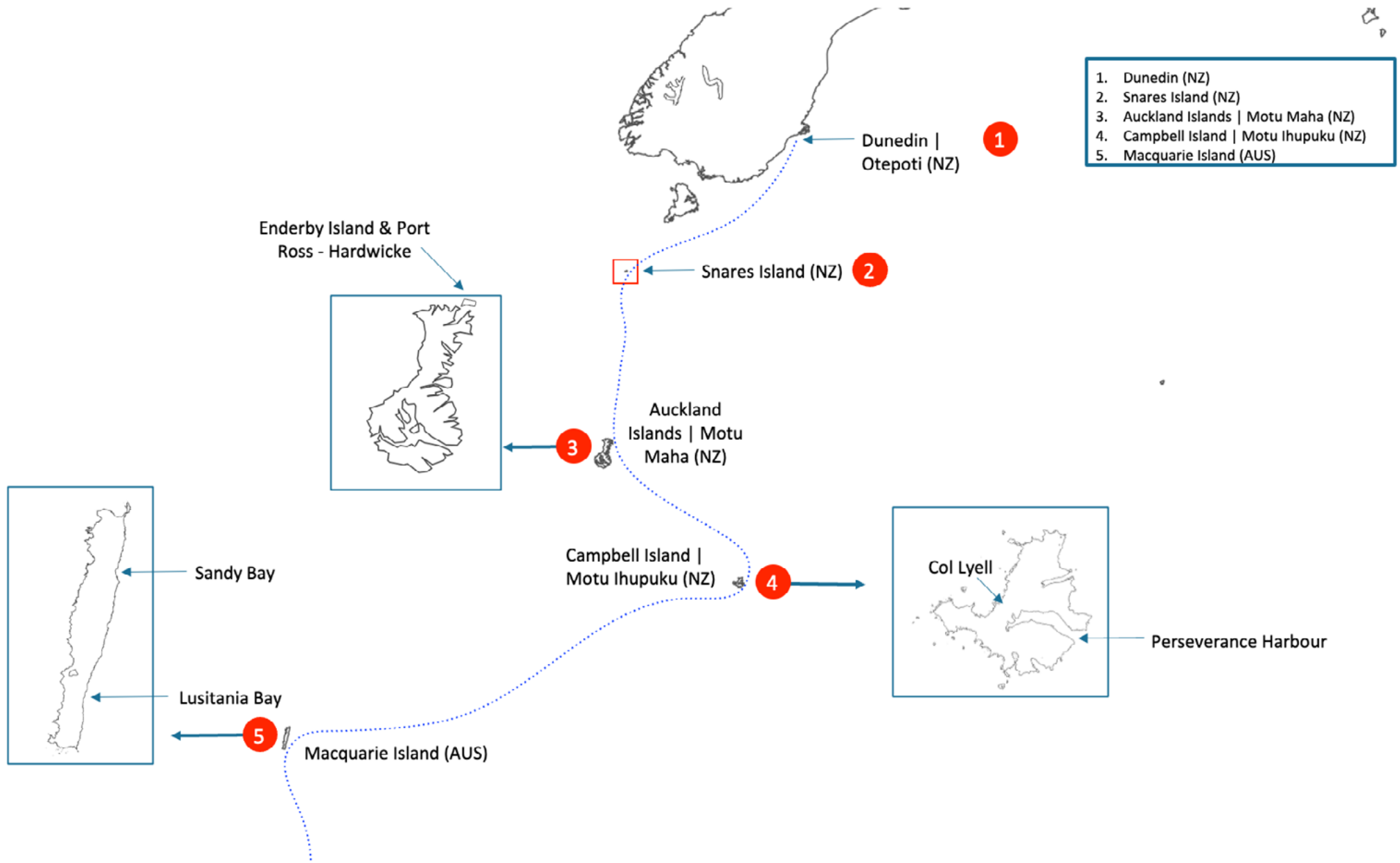
Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

09 February to 12 March 2026



Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

09 February to 12 March 2026



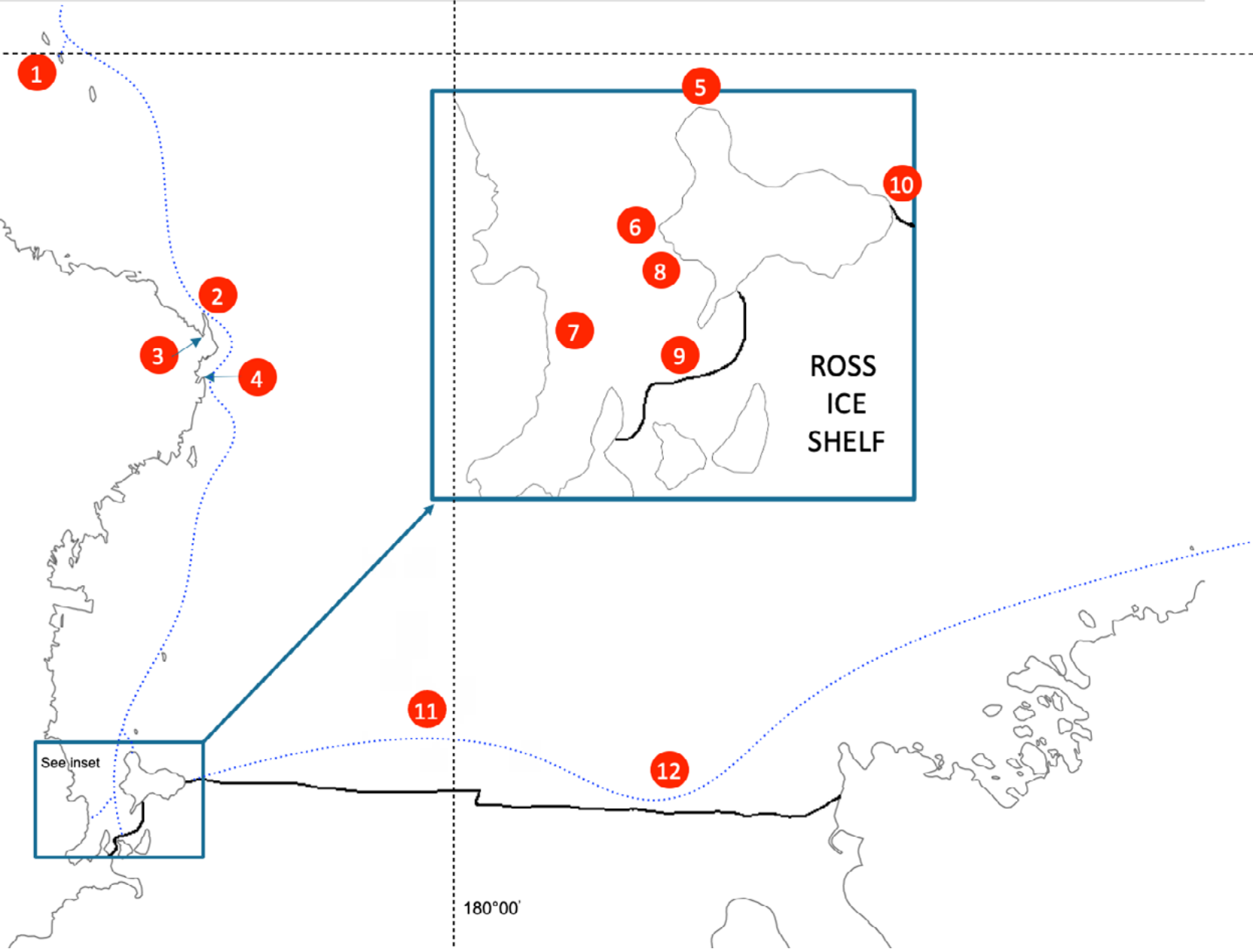
Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

09 February to 12 March 2026

66°33'S

Antarctic Circle

- 1. Buckle Islands, Balleny Islands
- 2. Cape Adare
- 3. Colbeck Bay
- 4. Cape Hallett
- 5. Cape Bird, Ross Island
- 6. Cape Royds, Ross Island
- 7. Towards Cape Chocolate, McMurdo Sound
- 8. Cape Evans, Ross Island
- 9. Ship cruise - Hut Point, McMurdo Station, Scott Base, Ross Ice Shelf
- 10. Cape Crozier, Ross Island
- 11. International Date Line | 24 Feb @ 06:23
- 12. Bay of Whales (Furthest South)
78°44.321' S, 163°40.076'' W
25 Feb @ 07:27
- 13. Peter I Island (off map)



Epic Antarctica – Crossing the 7th Continent

09 February to 12 March 2026



Our Expeditioners

Nathalie Ames

Sally Asnicar

John Asnicar

Pierre Bedard

Kat Bolstad

Will Bowen

Judith Brecklinghaus

Thalia Bruckner

Shou-Young Chang

Steve Chapman

Melissa Chapman

Ming-Chih Chuang

Robert Crompton

Percy Davis

Debbie Dicker

Emma Dolby

Jon Dolby

Amanda Downs

Emma Dunning

Jenny Durrant

Paul Durrant

Sandy Francis

Lucille Franklin

Mary Lee Fugina

Zac Garlick

Margare Garnett

Shraddha Gondkar

Bernhard Gravenkamp

Aidan Harrison

Julie Harrison

Gary Hogge

Caroline Holden

Pi-Hwa Huang

Geoff Innes

Ev Innes

Ian Jennings

Leslie Johnston

Teresa Jorgensen

Rick Jorgensen JR

Mayuresh Karanjkar

Susan Kayar

Joe Lehman

David Leyonhjelm

Michele Libonati

Lea Lichtenberger

David Lillywhite

ThomLinley

Steve Loffman

Joe Lucas

Fook Lye

Rachelle Mackintosh

Don MacLeod

Gabriel Maeckelbergh

David Mason

David McHugh

LeeannMcHugh

Lucy Meredith

Christopher Meredith

Ken Mitchell

Simei Ng

Louise Oliver

Erich Parker

KeithPiper

Lyn Regan

Sam Reif

Hein Reutlinger

Simon Salter

Diane Salter

David Sanati

Marek Sobocki

Paul Spillmann

Steven Stout

Terri Stout

Mark Stratton

Ku-San Su

Julie Sutton

Sarah Taylor

Dom Tollit

Jamie Tollit

Parisa Vakili

Huguette Viguet

Stefanie Waldek

Barb Wilson

Matthias Zoellner

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Howard Wheelan
Assistant Expedition Leader: Ashley Perrin
Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oeyasaeter
Shop Manager: Ana Prado
Geologist / Glaciologist: Ben Comeskey
Historian: Jonathan Chester
Marine Biologist & Citizen Science Coordinator:
Dani Abras
Marine Biologist: Bia Figueiredo
Ornithologist: T-A Hooley
Ornithologist: Graeme Snow (Snowy)
Naturalist: Kevin Closs
Historian & Education Coordinator: Avi Schlüter
Photographer: Adrian Wlodarczyk
Expedition Medic: Judy Curtis
Lead Senior Kayak Guide: Liz MacNeil
Senior Kayak Guide: Liam Hopkinson
Senior Kayak Guide: Vanja Davidsen
Zodiac Master: Sergei Androvov
PTGA Assessor & E-Team Trainer: Nina Gallo
Senior Alpine Specialist: Jane Morris

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Jorge Ferdinez
Staff Captain: Bogdan Shmalko
Ice Captain: Maxim Serkalev
Safety Officer: Sergey Abramov
Second Officer: Barbara Sylvine Clerc
Second Officer: Marc Vicent Yap Jalandoni
Ship Doctor: Alejandro Levin Viner
Ship Doctor: Jacobus Viljoen
Chief Engineer : Volodymyr Butsmai
Staff Chief Engineer: Denis Musaev
IT Officer: Ronaldo Jamero
Hotel Director: Villamor Ignacio
F & B Service Manager: Rajesh Murao
Chief Purser: Erliza Balagot
Executive Chef: Pratik Ekoskar
Hotel Controller: William Ajes

Sous Chef: Vinay Kumar Singh
Sous Chef: Gusti Purnawirawan
Head Bartender: Alan Fernandes
Head Waiter: Allan Liscano
Head Waiter: Wayan Widana
Head Steward: Sotero Agtagma
Receptionist: Johnny Valdez
Receptionist: Jelyn Merilo
Bosun: Aldus Brian Francis
Able Seaman: Christian Talavera
Able Seaman: Jovito Sagusay
Able Seaman: Joseph Lyndon Baid
Able Seaman: Jerome Mendez Castillo
Able Seaman: Joby Cheruparambil
Able Seaman: Jefferson Samiano Caluya

Photography thanks to:

Photographer: Adrian Wlodarczyk





 facebook.com/auroraex

 @aurora_expeditions

 youtube.com/auroraexpeditions

 Aurora Expeditions
(@Polar_Experts)