

Antarctic Explorer Express Aboard Greg Mortimer 7-13 February 2025





Antarctic Explorer Express

7 – 13 February 2025

Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Friday 7 February 2025

Latitude: 54° 51.9′ S Longitude:

067° 59.4′ W

Course: 099°

Speed:

14.4 knots

Wind Speed: 25 knots WNW Barometer:

1019 hPa

Air Temp: 10°C

Today we are in the charming town of Ushuaia, 'the end of the world'. Some of us spent our morning leisurely exploring before making our way to the optional catamaran cruise in the afternoon. Many of us enjoyed sailing through the Beagle Channel towards the city's iconic Les Eclaireurs Lighthouse, where we observed local wildlife against panoramic views of the surrounding mountain range.

When we arrived at the *Greg Mortimer*, we met our Onboard Expedition Manager, Samantha, and Expedition Photographer, Fiona, who checked us off and took a memorable photo for the photo board.

Once on board, welcome refreshments awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar, then our hotel team helped us to navigate the decks to our cabins and settle us into our 'home away from home' for the next seven days.

Together we total 71 Expeditioners from Australia (35), Canada (3), China (1), Chile (1), France (1), Latvia (1), Sweden (1) UK (2), USA (25), New Zealand (1), along with 84 crew from all around the globe.

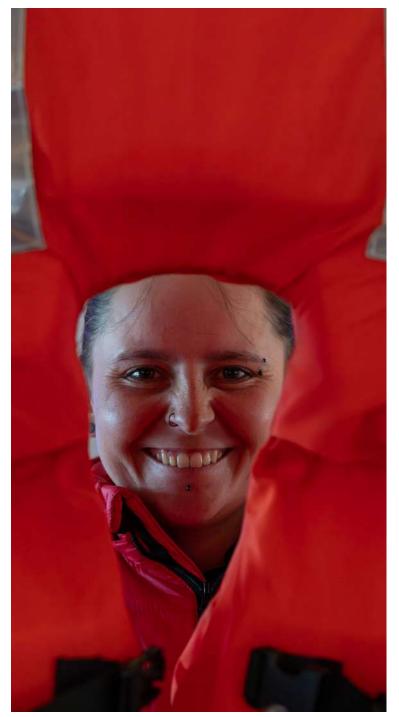
Our 22 Expedition Team members have a variety of specialities, including polar exploration, marine mammals, mountaineering, geology, history, ornithology, photography, medicine, snorkelling and kayaking.











Drake Passage

DAY 2 | Saturday 8 February 2025

Latitude:

56° 35.75′ S Longitude:

065° 56.9′ W

Course: 175°

Speed:

12.6 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots W
Barometer:

Baromete 1018 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

Today we are 'one day closer' to Antarctica. The Drake Passage, so far, has not lived up to its fearsome reputation, and so the good vibes from our Pride Expeditioners continue aboard the rainbow-filled *Greg Mortimer*.

Sea days are our chance to prepare for our imminent adventure, so Mario kicked off this morning's program with the IAATO briefing, explaining the rules we must follow to protect Antarctica and its wildlife.

After lunch, we joined Ed in the lecture theatre for a passionate presentation about seabirds. Ed demonstrated

the jaw-dropping 3.5-metre wingspan of the wandering albatross and explained how albatrosses can soar thousands of kilometres without consuming too much energy.

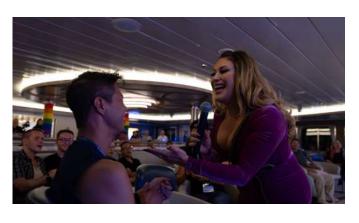
While the bird enthusiasm was pumping, we headed out onto deck 7 to do our first bird survey, and it seemed some Expeditioners uncovered an interest in birds they didn't know they had!

As we steamed ever closer to the icy continent, Fi gathered us in the lecture theatre to share some photography tips.





















Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Sunday 9 February 2025

Latitude:

61° 28.1′ S Longitude:

064° 18.7′ W

Course: 170°

Speed:

12.9 knots

Wind Speed: 5-6 knots WNW

Barometer: 1004 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

The sea conditions were much the same as the day before, but there was a noticeable shift in energy. We were all eager for what lay ahead.

Kyle's lecture on the whales of Antarctica drew a great crowd, fuelling our excitement about what we might soon see with our own eyes.

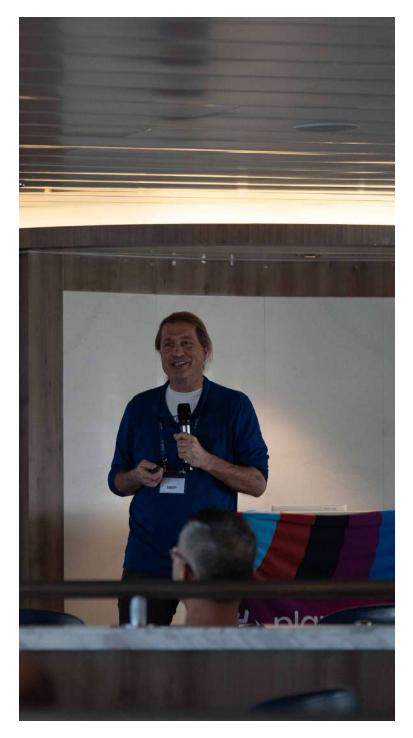
Later, Hannah, our resident historian, took to the stage and transported us back in time with stories of the early explorers – their triumphs, their hardships, and the relentless spirit that carried them across these very same waters. Hearing about their challenges made us appreciate just how remarkable it was to be following in their wake, soon to set foot on this icy continent ourselves.

The conversation flowed seamlessly into Meli's cloud survey on deck 7, where we had the chance to contribute to the onboard Citizen Science Program.

Ed, our bird enthusiast, was up next and answered all our burning penguin-related questions, setting the stage for tomorrow's potential highlight—a continental landing at an active penguin colony (fingers crossed!).

Then, just as the day was winding down, the moment we had all been waiting for... land! After 48 hours at sea, a ripple of excitement ran through the lecture theatre during the evening's recap as we caught our very first glimpse of Antarctica!











Neko Harbour & Paradise Bay

DAY 4 | Monday 10 February 2025

Latitude: 64° 47.36′ S Longitude:

62° 44.99′ W

Course: 125°

Speed: 4.3 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots E

Barometer: 999 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

Finally, after a pretty smooth crossing of the infamous Drake Passage, the first icebergs were spotted and we had reached the Antarctic Peninsula.

The mirror-like waters of Neko Harbour, dotted with ice of all shapes and sizes, as well as a couple of humpback whales and some gentoo penguins, greeted the big crowd that had gathered on the upper viewing decks to soak in what was the very best welcome to Antarctica for all of us aboard the *Greg Mortimer*.

The morning continued, with many Expeditioners landing on the Antarctic continent and getting acquainted with gentoo penguins, their 'highways', their cute waddle, the chaotic busyness and, of course, the unmistakable smell of a penguin colony! The smiles and excited whoops of joy and amazement continued as the Zodiacs, paddlers and kayakers crunched through the brash ice on their respective adventures.

There was more to come, though, with the polar plunge scheduled to commence once everyone was back on board. What a great turnout of plungers it was, with 44 intrepid people readying themselves to leap off the platform at the stern of the ship – some with trepidation, some with gusto, some hand in hand and some, well, leaving not a lot to the imagination.





























































Spert Island & Cierva Cove

DAY 5 | Tuesday 11 February 2025

Latitude: 64° 01.81′ S Longitude: 61° 18.96′ W

Course: 032° Speed:

7.5 knots

Wind Speed: 5.3 knots E
Barometer: 1005 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

Today we eagerly embarked on a thrilling journey, navigating through narrow, ice-filled channels around Spert Island. Along the way, we encountered a variety of wildlife, including chinstrap penguins, Weddell seals, fur seals, sheathbills, terns and petrels. The scenery was breathtaking, with massive swells and towering icebergs adding an extra level of excitement to our adventure.

After two hours on the Zodiac, we returned to the *Greg Mortimer* for a well-earned lunch. Calm seas and sunny weather made for a relaxing atmosphere, allowing us to enjoy our meal and recharge. However, the day's excitement didn't end there. The bridge crew spotted a group of feeding humpback whales, which gave us a rare

and unforgettable opportunity to observe these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat. The sight of these gentle giants was certainly a highlight of the day.

Later, after a refreshing siesta, we arrived at Cierva Cove, with the Argentine Primavera Research Station nearby, for our afternoon adventure. We launched the Zodiacs again, with kayakers and snorkellers going out on their own while the rest of us explored the wildlife-rich area. Chinstrap penguin colonies dotted the coastline, and humpback whales frequently made appearances, captivating us with their graceful movements. Some Expeditioners even spotted leopard seals basking lazily on the ice, adding to the diversity of wildlife we have encountered.

























































Fort Point & Deception Island

DAY 6 | Wednesday 12 February 2025

Latitude: 62° 47.4′ S Longitude:

059° 51.3′ W

Course: 027°

Speed: 9.9 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots NE Barometer: 1014 hPa

Air Temp: -2°C

After a hearty breakfast, we set off for a landing at Fort Point, eager to explore. However, we were met by an unexpected surprise – there were so many penguins and seals gathered on the shores that landing was impossible! Instead, we opted for a Zodiac exploration, gliding through the chilly waters and taking in the stunning views of rocky outcrops and glaciers tumbling down into the sea.

Afterwards, we returned to the ship for a well-deserved lunch as the *Greg Mortimer* repositioned to Deception Island. As we approached the island, we sailed through the dramatic Neptune's Bellows, entering the caldera of this active volcano. The air was charged with excitement as we

disembarked to explore the fascinating ruins of Whalers Bay and the remnants of the historic whaling station. Some of us hiked up to Neptune's Window, a natural rock formation that offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape. The weather was absolutely perfect, with clear skies and sunshine, making every moment feel even more magical.

Back on board, we gathered for a farewell with the Captain, his bridge team, our Expedition Leader, Mario, and the entire team.







































King George Island

DAY 7 | Thursday 13 February 2025

Latitude: 62° 12.3′ S Longitude:

Longitude: 58° 52.7′ W

Course:
Drifting
Speed:
0.5 knots

Wind Speed: 3 knots SE Barometer:

1012 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C

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



BBQ

















Polar Plunge









































































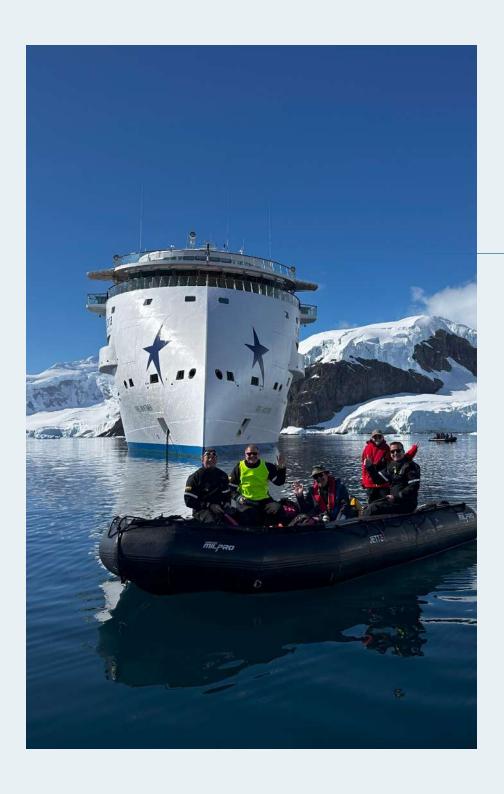












Snorkelling Log

Guides: Thomas Gov, Rosie Leaney

10 February 2025, AM: Neko Harbour

The conditions were perfect for our first snorkel, with glassy water, not a breath of wind, and stunning scenery in every direction. We started with our continental landing, entertained by the gentoo penguins waddling up and down their highways.

After being picked up by Zodiac, we had a short exploration of the brash ice and bergy bits before preparing for a snorkel just next to the landing site. Having donned our gear, we slipped into the lovely clear water for our first ever Antarctic snorkel.

Drysuits take a while to get used to, but everyone seemed to take it in their stride. Gentoo penguins zipped around us, much speedier and more effortlessly than on the land. We spotted some krill and other small copepods, as well as the mysterious

looking salps (which are a colony of animals called tunicates, all stuck together in a row). We also had the chance to inspect a small ice floe from underneath.

10 February 2025, PM: Paradise Bay

The perfect weather continued into the afternoon.

As we drifted in the Zodiacs, we enjoyed the presence of two humpback whales who every now and then would surface with a mighty blow, then show their flukes as they dived.

We cruised past the Argentinian Base Brown, which is the summer home to a colony of gentoo penguins, as well as some human scientists. We continued along to a towering wall, where cormorants had built their muddy nests between the bright colours of the mosses and lichens



Number of Snorkellers: 8
Total Outings: 3

Snorkellers:
Alan Eisen
Timothy Stretton
Morgan Price
Keshav Khanijow
Nicholas Christopher
Johnathan Stake

Matthew Webster
John Windisman

on the cliff face. It was there that we began our second snorkel of the day, following this wall back along to Brown Station.

Krill and copepods were plentiful, which would explain why the whales were here too. The rocky wall plunged into unimaginable depths, but the visible part was dotted with kelp, pinkish coralline algae and limpets. Matt had a brief encounter with a Weddell seal, who was resting in the shallows.

11 February 2025, PM: Cierva Cove

After an exciting morning exploring the rugged Spert Islands by Zodiac, we made our way back towards the Antarctic continent. The journey was anything but quiet; we were treated to an unforgettable show as numerous whales surfaced around us, feeding

in the icy waters.

In the afternoon, we launched the Zodiacs once more, this time in Cierva Cove, a breathtaking glacier bay and home to the Argentine research station Primavera. The surrounding cliffs and rocky shores were alive with gentoo penguins, while a lone leopard seal lounged on a floating piece of ice, seemingly unbothered by our presence.

Our goal was to find the perfect iceberg to snorkel around, and after a bit of scouting, we discovered two stunning, flat-topped icebergs. Slipping into the frigid water, we were immediately struck by the sheer clarity of our surroundings. Beneath the surface, the ice took on an intense blue hue, its intricate shapes sculpted by time and the elements. Each snorkel session lasted between 5 to 15 minutes, allowing us to fully appreciate the surreal beauty of these floating ice formations.

We returned to the ship, exhilarated and in awe of the Antarctic's wonders. The perfect way to end an extraordinary day.

12 February 2025, AM: Fort Point, South Shetland Islands

This morning at Fort Point, on Greenwich Island in the South Shetlands, we were met with a stark contrast to the beautiful weather we had enjoyed so far. The sky was completely overcast, and the wind carried an icy bite, reminding us just how unforgiving these remote waters can be.

Our adventure began with a Zodiac exploration along the rugged shoreline. Inside the bay, the waters were relatively calm, offering a perfect opportunity to observe the abundant wildlife. Gentoo and chinstrap penguins darted along the rocky coast, while fur seals lounged on the shore. A lone elephant seal made a brief appearance, and a

handful of seabirds soared overhead, adding to the scene's raw, Antarctic beauty.

After an hour of exploring, we slipped into the water in a sheltered corner of the bay. Despite a gentle swell, the underwater world was mesmerising, with long strands of kelp swaying gracefully in the current. Then, an unexpected and thrilling encounter, three giant petrels glided towards us, their large, imposing forms skimming just above the surface. Were they simply curious, or did they mistake us for a potential meal? Either way, having such formidable seabirds come so close was a rare and unforgettable experience.

With the cold beginning to seep in, we climbed back into the Zodiac and made our way to the warmth and comfort of our ship. Another extraordinary day in the wild, unpredictable waters of Antarctica.



















Paddling Log

Guides: Elo Berrier, Erin Scott, Anula Jochym, Tim Stredwick, Hodei Orueta Ruibal

10 February 2025, AM: Neko Harbour 4.5km

An absolute glorious morning welcomed us to Neko Harbour for our first time on the water. Despite it being all new and unfamiliar, all paddlers had donned their gear and were ready for a short Zodiac ride to our launch spot, southeast of the Greg Mortimer. All paddlers settled comfortably into their sit-on-tops without any problems and we were off among the brash ice. There was a quiet moment as we drifted silently past a Weddell seal snoozing on a small iceberg. All too soon though, having looped back on our outward track, we were heading towards the Greg Mortimer, to be picked up by our Zodiac and were back on board ready for another adventure tomorrow.

10 February 2025, PM: Paradise Bay 3.4km

Another incredible opportunity to go paddling on the sit-on-tops! The calm sea and lack of wind allowed us to explore the entire area near the scientific station with our kayaks. We paddled all the way to the cliff, where blue-eyed shags were nesting, and enjoyed the company of two scientists from the base who joined us, sharing insights about their research in the area. We paddled through brash ice and along the way spotted several Weddell seals and gentoo penguins.



Number of Paddlers: 8

Total Paddle Outings: 5

Total Distance Paddled: 16.1 km

Paddlers:

Jeff Perla

Jen DiLandro

Charles Bland

Edward Braun

Michael Griffiths

Nick Christopher

Jonathon Stake David Du

11 February 2025, PM: Cierva Cove 2.5km

Sunny patches dotted the mountains around us as we set off from the *Greg Mortimer*. Setting off through the brash ice and small bergs towards the rocky island northwest of the Argentinian Primavera station, chinstraps and gentoos dived and swam around us. Closing in on the island, the penguin rookeries were obvious from the guano stains streaking the rocks. All too soon though it was time to return to calling Erin and the safety Zodiac and return to the *Greg Mortimer*.

12 February 2025, AM: Fort Point 3.5km

A new morning in Antarctica greeted us with snow showers and bigger waves, but that did not deter our paddlers. Our small group of adventurers set out in single sit-ontop kayaks, braving the elements with excitement. The chilly air was fresh, and the energy was high as we paddled across the icy waters, covering 3.5 kilometres. Along the way, we marvelled at the jagged. rocky peaks and majestic glaciers of Fort Point. Penguins and fur seals playfully surfaced around us. The salty, musky scent of their presence filled the air, completing our unforgettable Antarctic adventure.

12 February 2025, PM: Whalers Bay 1.2km

We could hardly believe our eyes as we sailed through Neptune's Bellows on our approach to Deception Island - the weather, the glassy waters... could this be the famously windy and miserable Deception Island? But indeed, the weather was absolutely spectacular: bluebird skies, radiant sunshine, and not a breath of wind. We disembarked onto the Zodiacs, and drove back up towards the Bellows to do what few people have ever successfully done: paddled outside the caldera. We floated leisurely, enjoying the shags that occupied the rocks, demonstrating their little avian dramas, and

marvelling at the fur seals that dotted the shoreline and also writhed playfully in the water around us. We rounded the corner of the Bellows, only to receive a radio call from the bridge, saying there was another ship due to sail into the Bellows in 15 minutes! We high-tailed it out of there before the *Resolution* came through, and got our pick-up relatively quickly so that we had the chance to go exploring on land. It was a glorious last paddle, and one that will not soon be forgotten.





















Kayaking Log

Guides: Elo Berrier, Erin Scott, Anula Jochym, Tim Stredwick, Hodei Orueta Ruibal

10 February 2025, AM: Neko Harbour 3km

Our first morning in Antarctica was absolutely thrilling! The sun was shining, and the conditions couldn't have been better at Neko Harbour. We hopped on our kayaks and paddled out, surrounded by icebergs that glistened in the light. The excitement grew as we spotted whales in all directions, their tails splashing gracefully. We paddled nearly 4 kilometres, our hearts racing with the adventure of it all. Afterwards, we set foot on the Antarctic continent itself, a dream come true! The frozen landscape stretched endlessly around us, and the sheer beauty of it all left us speechless. What a magical start to our journey!

10 February 2025, PM: Paradise Bay 3.2km

The weather continued to be absolutely spectacular for us in the afternoon, as we set out in the dazzling sunshine into the glassy waters of Paradise Bay! We were still getting into our kayaks when a humpback whale surfaced nearby, surprising all of us. We started our paddle by hugging the tall cliffs beside the Argentinian station, Almirante Brown, and enjoying the prolific seabirds nesting on the rocks. We could hear the peeping of imperial shag chicks and the screeching of the antarctic terns, flying overhead. At this point, the whale resurfaced, and spent so long feeding and fluking that we eventually had to paddle around the whale, otherwise we never would have moved! After this incredible sighting, we continued to paddle into the bay, around the icebergs, until we



Number of Kayakers: 6
Total Paddle Outings: 5
Total Distance Kayaked: 16.8 km

Kayakers:
Tim Little
Ryan Smith
Chris Schultz
John Windisman
Ricky Steyer
James Hsu

encountered a leopard seal hauled out on an ice floe! Not far away, we also saw a crabeater seal, and we were graced with one last, extremely close surprise encounter with the humpback whale!

11 February 2025, PM: Cierva Cove 2km

Our third outing in our sea kayaks was very special again. Surrounded by impressive glaciers and calm waters, we started paddling towards the Argentinian Primavera station. We paddled for a bit less than an hour, exploring the bay among huge icebergs and a bit of brash ice. We saw some penguins in the water and a big leopard seal resting on top of an iceberg. Also during this kayak session, we made a stop for five minutes to feel the place and to listen to the silence. These moments are important, considering that in our

regular lives, this is something quite difficult to find. After kayaking, we used our Zodiacs to go back to the ship.

12 February 2025, AM: Fort Point 4km

A short Zodiac ride to our launch spot just northeast of Sartorious Point, southwest of Fort Point itself. There was a low swell, which two of the kayakers did not find comfortable, so they returned to the Zodiac for a boat-based excursion. We followed the coastline back towards the Greg Mortimer, the white ship contrasting vividly against the dark crenellated skyline rocks of Fort Point. We avoiding a bommie offshore, then closing in to the beach west of the point. The beach was busy with fur seals, penguins, skuas, and giant petrels. All too soon, our kayak trip was over and we returned to the ship.

11 February 2025, PM: Whalers Bay 4.6km

Our last paddle couldn't have been better!!! The wonderful weather, with no wind and calm seas, allowed us to start paddling from Whalers Bay and make our way to Neptune's Bellows, crossing the entrance to the caldera. We had the incredible opportunity to paddle inside the caldera of an active volcano. Then, we turned around and returned to the bay where we disembarked using the Zodiacs to visit the landing site and explore its historical area. Great way to end our adventure together; well done, kayak team!

















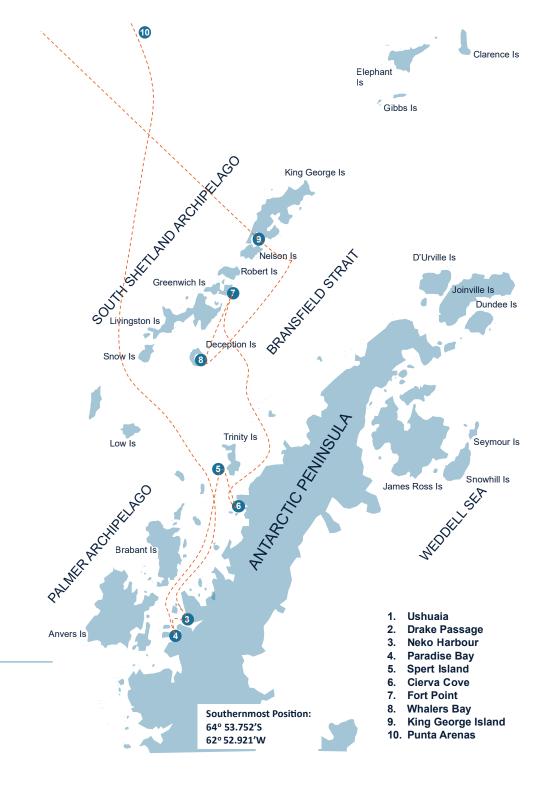


Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	February								
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
Snowy Sheathbill				•	•	•			
South Polar Skua					•	•	•		
Brown Skua			•	•					
Kelp Gull	•	•							
Antarctic Tern			•	•	•	•	•		
Gentoo Penguin				•	•	•	•		
Chinstrap Penguin					•	•			
Magellanic Penguin	•								
Southern Royal Albatross		•	•						
Black-browed Albatross	•	•							
Grey-headed Albatross		•							
Light-mantled Albatross		•	•						
Southern Giant Petrel	•			•	•	•	•		
Southern Fulmar			•	•					
Cape Petrel	•			•	•	•	•		
Snow Petrel				•					
Blue Petrel			•						
Prion (unidentified)		•	•						

Bird Species	Febr	February						
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
White-chinned Petrel		•	•					
Wilson's Storm Petrel		•	•	•	•	•	•	
Antarctic Shag	•				•	•	•	
Mammal Species	February							
	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Antarctic Fur Seal			•		•	•		
Southern Elephant Seal				•		•		
Crabeater Seal				•	•			
Weddell Seal				•	•			
Leopard Seal				•	•			
Humpback Whale			•	•	•	•		
Antarctic Minke Whale				•	•			
Dusky Dolphin	•							

Map



Antarctic Explorer Express

7 – 13 February 2025



Our Expeditioners

James Adcock

Ivan Aguero

Catherine Alcorn

Fay Andrews

Roger Atkins

Terry Bartlett

Christopher Bevitt

William Bird

Matthew Blackmore

Charles Bland

Edward Braun

Larissa Briedis

Matthew Briggs

Ross Briggs

Jake Caerlang

Sandra Cameron

Adrienne Carruth

Adrian Chan

Nicholas Christopher

Kendrick Clack

Rachael Cosgrove-

White

Russell Cotton

Michael D'Andrea

Benjamin Develey

Todd Dibben

Jennifer DiLandro

David Du

Alan Eisen

Kee Foong

Dane Grams

Michael Griffiths

Jason Haynes

Simon Hirtzel

Patrick Hofmann

James Hsu

Merryn Johns

Keshav Khanijow

Luke Knights

Mark Kruep

Adrian Lim

Tommy Lindblad

Timothy Little

Wendyl Luna

MJ Mattoon

Adam Mcilrick

Steven McLaughlin

Rodney Mcrae

John Nguyen

Mario Paez

Caitlyn Paris

Jeffrey Perla

Uzenzile Poindexter

Tommy Portelli

Morgan Price

Jamie Price

Jason Reimuller

Constantine Rozakis

Peter Salwan

Christopher Schultz

Tracy Lynn Sims

Ryan Smith

Alexandra Sparr

Jonathan Stake

Ricky Steyer

Timothy Stretton

James Suits

Francis Voon

Barry Warner

Matthew Webster

John Windisman

Christopher Zerbst

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Mario Placidi Spring

Assistant Expedition Leader: Tamsin Both

Onboard Expedition Manager: Samantha Deer Field Operations & Activities Manager: JP Els

Ornithologist/Naturalist: Ed Nolan

Geologist & Citizen Science Coordinator: Meli Pelzmajer

Historian: Hannah Johns

Expedition First Responder: Piotr Damski

Photography Guide: Fi Wardle

Marine Biologist: Kyle Smith

Expedition Team Trainer: Ashley Perrin

Zodiac Master: Sergei Andronov

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado

Expedition Guide: Rose Luan

Expedition Guide: Qing Qu

Lead Kayak Guide: Elo Berrier

Kayak Guide: Tim Stredwick

Kayak Guide: Anula Jochym

Kayak Guide: Erin Scott

Kayak Guide: Hodei Orueta

Lead Snorkel Guide: Thomas Gov

Snorkel Guide: Rosie Leaney

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Oleg Kapko

Chief Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk

Safety Officer: Sergii Voina

Bosun: Marvin Linga

Deck Cadet: Joao Varlos De Souza Lima Filho

Ship Doctor: Javier Martinez Rodriguez

Ship Doctor: Nicolas Diaz Rodriguez

Chief Engineer: Branimir Ujević

First Engineer: Denys Odrynskyy

Hotel Director: Alex Barkar

F&B Manager: Rajesh Murao

Chief Purser: Pia Blanca

Executive Chef: Edgar Mangalinao

Sous Chef: Edgar Agnelo Xavier Pereira

Head Waiter: Neelam (James) Lopes Hotel Controller: Christopher Santos

IT Officer: Ihor Yesmienieiev

Receptionist: Jaica Puyod

Receptionist: Jonathan Valdez

Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia

Spa Manager: Venila Vythilingum

Able Seaman: Angelo San Antonio

Able Seaman: Roberto Ixtan Mejia

Able Seaman: Nikola Georgiev

Able Seaman: Noel Refugia

Able Seaman: Joel Noble

Able Seaman: Roberth Herman Presida Enitencio

Photography thanks to:

Fiona Wardle

Special Activity Guides





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