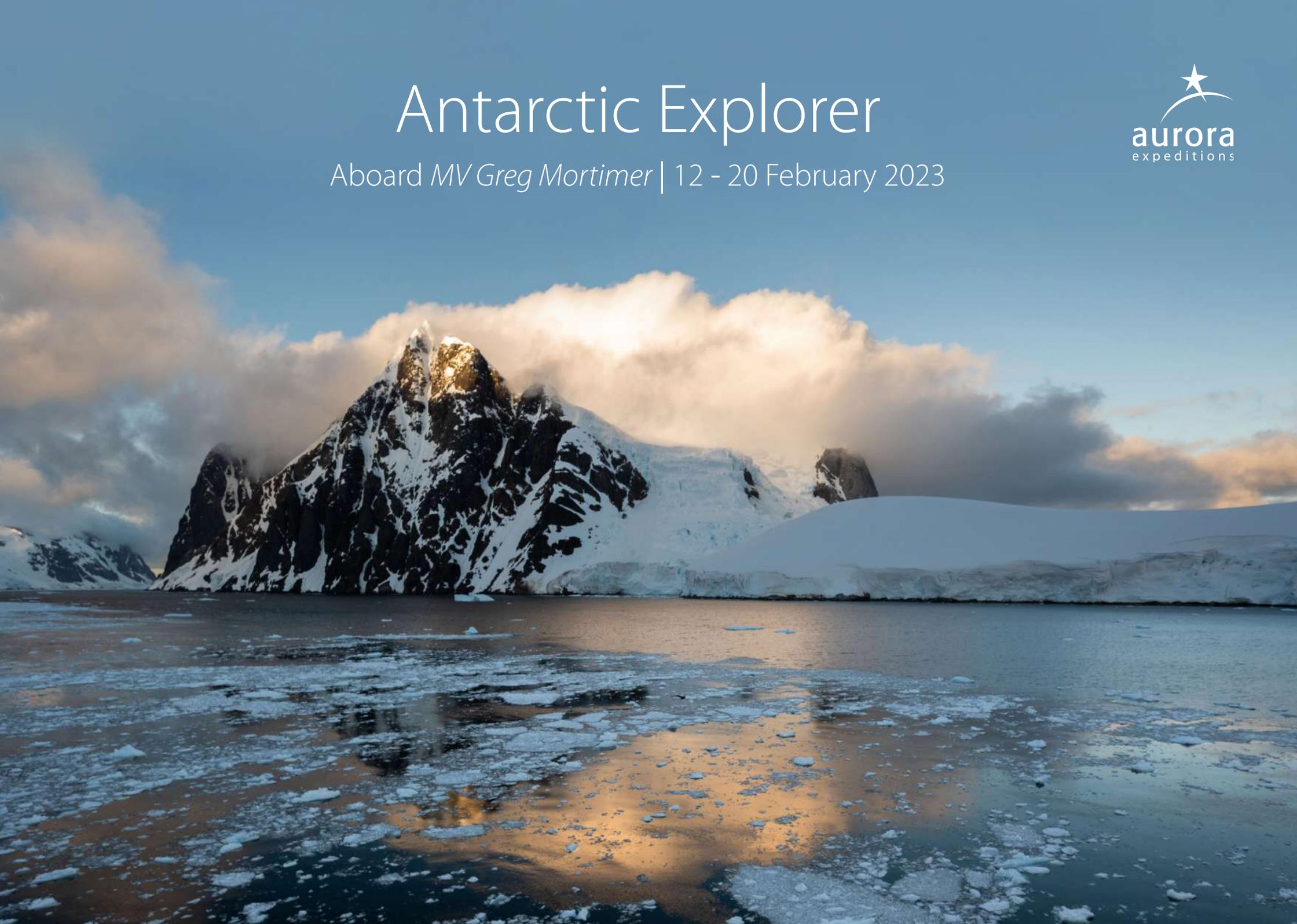


# Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 12 - 20 February 2023





# Ushuaia, Argentina

DAY 1 | Sunday 12th February 2023

Position at 1900 on 12th Feb

Latitude: 54°51.9'S

Longitude: 068°00.6'W

Course: 104°

Speed: 14.5 knots

Wind Speed: WSW 4

Barometer: 1003

Air Temp: 10°C

The demand of science, that no part of the globe shall remain untouched by the hand of investigation was the force that drew our little band to the land of the farthest south.

—Otto Nordenskjöld

Here we are in the stunning town of Ushuaia, "el fin del mundo" - the end of the world.

We arrived at the port of Ushuaia to be greeted on the quayside by some of our Expedition team and our onboard photographer, Renato who took our photo for our "photo board" to help us learn each other's names.

Drinks and a buffet awaited us in the Elephant Island Bar. After checking in, our hotel team helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our "home away from home". It had been a long couple of days of travelling, and many of us probably wanted to crawl into the comfort of our beds, but there was no time to rest just yet!

Announcements were then made for the all-important safety drill. The sound of the ship's horn signalled us to don bulky orange lifejackets and muster in the Lecture Theatre. We followed our crew up to Deck 7 where the polar class life vessels are kept (they can hold up to 136 people each, for 5 days).

With the safety drill completed, we were cleared to begin our journey.

We gathered outside to watch the *Greg Mortimer* cast off its lines and pull away from the dock, at last on our way to the Antarctic!

So, we'd had our last glimpse of town life, knowing that from now on we are more likely to see a colony of penguins than a crowd of people.

Next came our welcome briefing with our Expedition Leader, Daniel. He and some of his team gave important information, that would serve us well during our time onboard. Our 'Frenchie' Hotel Director Pascal, made sure we were 'au-fait' with life onboard from the hotel side, Reda gave us some handy hints about how to better navigate during our stay, and Dr. Anzor allowed us to ask questions 'free-of-charge'.

After having completed some domestic chores, such as setting up internet, and labelling water bottles, we made our way to the dining room to enjoy a delicious dinner, prepared by our talented galley team and served by our smiley and welcoming waiting staff.

The last task was a jacket exchange, so that we can cope with whatever weather the Southern Ocean decides to throw at us.

Together we total 103 passengers (28 Australians, 64 Americans, 4 Canadians, 1 Frenchman, 1 from Ireland, 5 from the UK) along with 80 crew from all around the globe.

Our 20-strong Expedition Team have a variety of specialties including polar exploration, mountaineering, geology, oceanography, history, marine biology, ornithology, photography, anthropology, kayaking and snorkelling.

After the many hours of travel to reach the *Greg Mortimer* it's time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and get excited for the next 9 days of adventure!



# At Sea (Drake Passage)

DAY 2 | Monday 13th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 13th Feb

Latitude: 56°30.8 S

Longitude: 065°38.9'W

Course: 162°

Speed: 12.8 knots

Wind Speed: SW 5

Barometer: 1000

Air Temp: 3°C

Drake Passage - Just about the time when things looked their very worst the sky was like ink and water was everywhere and everyone was as wet inside their oilskins, as the skins were wet without there came out a most perfect and brilliant rainbow for about half a minute or less and then suddenly and completely went out. If ever there was a moment when such a message was a comfort it was just then: it seemed to remove every shadow of doubt not only as to the present but as to the final issue of the whole expedition. And from that moment matters mended, and everything came all right.

—Edward Wilson

Last night we left the protected waters of the Beagle for the Drake Passage. With no significant land mass to impede wind or wave, the Drake Passage is infamously one of the most turbulent bodies of water on the planet, and invokes immediate respect among salty old sea dogs. But as it turns out, sometimes you just get lucky and experience the “Drake Lake”. We keep looking outside our windows in disbelief at how calm the ocean is.

After our buffet breakfast, we headed to the Lecture Theatre for our mandatory IAATO briefing, biosecurity checks, and then a “muckboot & lifejacket” party in the mudroom. We discovered there are a wide variety of ways to don a lifejacket, but only one of them is correct! This is all good practice for our first outing, and we’ll be able to do it with our eyes closed by the end of the trip.

The rapid antigen tests were next – not such a fun activity, but luckily the only positive thing onboard was our mood, especially after being given the all-clear.

Meanwhile, unbelievably, the sea kept getting calmer. Conditions proved ideal for cetacean watching, with Hans spotting pod of southern right whale dolphins heading away from the ship – a rare species, but unmistakable due to its beautiful colouring and lack of a dorsal fin. We also spotted a pod of long-finned pilot whales close to the ship, and flotillas of gentoo penguins on the glassy water surface.

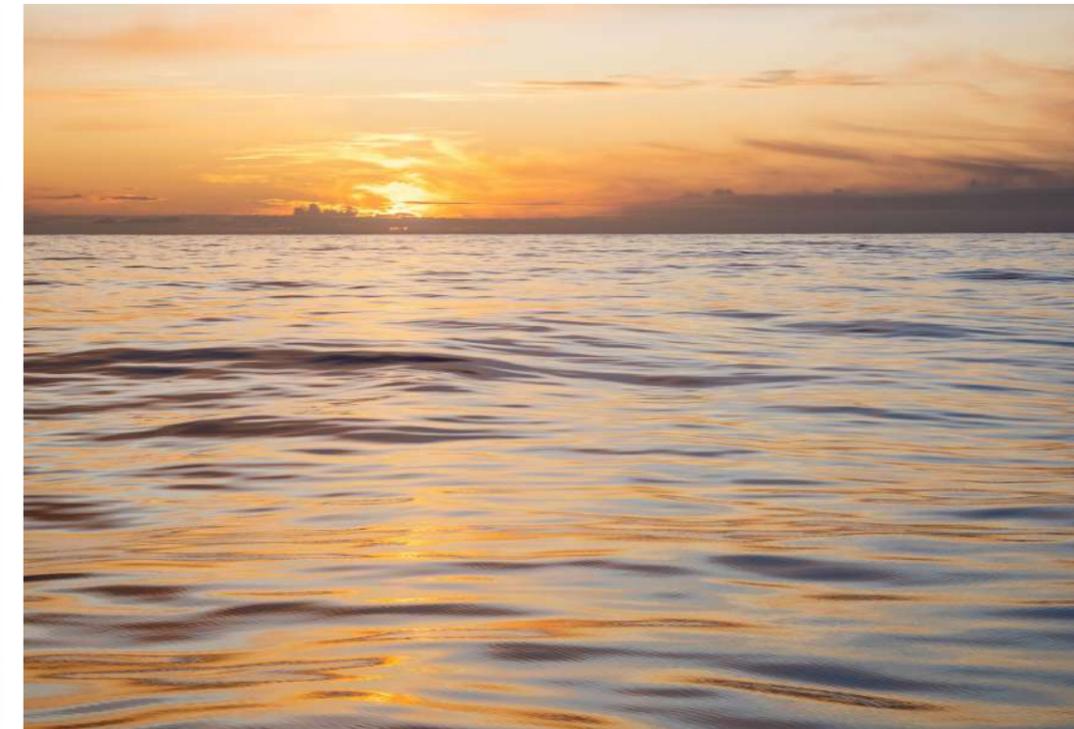
These sea days not only offer fantastic wildlife spotting, but also give us a chance to get prepared for what’s ahead. The snorkellers and kayakers gathered for briefings, to meet their guides and learn about the exciting activities in store. Bia, our Citizen Science co-ordinator explained how we can get involved in the many projects on board, and John helped us improve our bird identification skills.

With John’s knowledge freshly imparted, we headed out for our first Seabird surveys. Thanks to the Drake Lake, most were feeling pretty good so there was a great turn-out on the deck, and a great start to our bird survey. We

spotted black-browed albatross, Antarctic prions, northern giant petrels, cape petrels, a soft plumage petrel and of course the magnificent wandering albatross.

The snorkellers worked up a sweat in the mudroom, under the guidance of “Mumma Snork” Liz and the team. We squeezed in and out of drysuits, tight neoprene hoods & gloves, which will (I promise) feel much better once we are bobbing around in icy water, than they do inside the mudroom.

As we progressed further south, almost out of the “not-so furious fifties”, we toasted the beginning of our journey with Captain Vadym and his team of officers. Our evening finished with great food, great company, and a final venture out on deck to enjoy the serene sunset.



# At Sea (Drake Passage)

DAY 3 | Tuesday 14th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 14th Feb

Latitude: 61°04'8" S

Longitude: 063°02'7" W

Course: 165°

Speed: 11.4 knots

Wind Speed: LT AIR

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: 2°C

I now belong to the higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the albatross.

—Robert Cushman Murphy

What a beautiful Valentine's Day morning on the 'Drake Lake'. We had a pre-breakfast treat of hourglass dolphins riding the bow and a minke whale off the starboard side.

Isabella got us excited for the upcoming landings with our Zodiac briefing and afterwards our lovely E-Team took us on some bridge tours. A huge shoutout to our Captain and bridge team for being so welcoming and accommodating, six groups to explore the bridge and ask lots of questions.

Before lunch, our historian Jeff gave us a tale of friendship and early polar exploration on the Belgica Expedition. It made us very grateful for our warm ship and it was a fantastic insight into all aspects of life on the early polar expeditions.

After a delicious lunch, we headed to the Lecture Theatre to listen to our marine biologist John, talk all things ice and oceanography. Who knew that the average water molecule takes approximately 600 years to travel the global oceanic conveyor belt!? We're pretty keen to keep John on the microphone, because whales keep showing up when he talks!

To celebrate Valentine's Day, we were treated to an afternoon tea of Crepe Suzette with our very own Hotel Director, Pascal, making them and serving us in the Elephant Island Bar.

Post-snack, our photography guide Renato, introduced us to all things photo related to get us into shooting mode for our first excursions. Our plans (A, B and C) for the next day were laid out in our first pre-cap/re-cap as well as some fun facts and funny videos with Renato and Bia.

The incredible hospitality team put on a show for our Valentine's Day dinner. Ice sculptures, handmade flowers and decorations, as well as the ever-delicious food! It was a great day at sea all round.



# Portal Point | Enterprise Island

DAY 4 | Wednesday 15th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 15th Feb

Latitude: 64°27'8" S

Longitude: 061°42'8" W

Course: 180°

Speed: 6.1 knots

Wind Speed: NNW 2

Barometer: 1011

Air Temp: 3°C

There is only one short link in the food chain between a diatom and a one-hundred-ton blue whale – between one cell and the largest of all animals – and that link is the Antarctic krill.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

After a smooth night sailing, we woke up and had our very first sighting of the Antarctic continent. Soon after breakfast we geared up and started the operation. The location was Portal Point, historically a place where expeditions would depart for the South Pole.

What a great way to start by stepping foot on the continent! The snorkellers had their inaugural dip in the cold Antarctic Ocean, after a brief landing in Portal Point. The water activities continued, with the kayakers finding their groove as a solid team and stepping up the travel speed and distance. We spotted a few humpback whales feeding, Portal Point is a hotspot for marine wildlife.

Glorious weather, strong sunshine and no wind were the right ingredients to slot in an impromptu polar plunge. As if we were not blessed enough, the excitement reached its highest peak the moment we spotted an emperor penguin in the water. This was an incredible sighting of a juvenile that probably went off course; emperor penguins, the true Antarctic penguin, don't normally frequent the Western side of the Antarctic Peninsula; they are normally found on the Eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula, where they breed in Snowhill Island, or further South.

With all these amazing experiences cashed in, we had lunch and prepared for the afternoon activities. We reached Enterprise Islands and Zodiac cruised in Foyen Harbour exploring the wreck of the *Governoren*, a rusting relic of a whaling ship which caught fire and was run aground in 1915. The story is that an end of whaling season party had got a little raucous. The revelries led to an overturned lamp which set the ship on fire, in order to save his men, the captain drove the *Governor* to the shore, and they all abandoned ship. The crew were later rescued by another whaling ship heading north.

The water activities carried on in the afternoon with snorkellers and kayakers enjoying the calm waters and gentle breeze, that accompanied us for the entire day. The sight of a few humpbacks feeding was the happy ending to a magnificent first day of activities in the Antarctic Peninsula. During a recap our marine specialist Bia, introduced



# Polar Plunge

DAY 4 | Wednesday 15th February 2023



# Lemaire Channel | Port Charcot | Petermann Island

DAY 5 | Thursday, 16th February 2023

Position at 0600 on 16th Feb

Latitude: 65°01'3" S

Longitude: 063°51'2"W

Course: 219°

Speed: 6.7 knots

Wind Speed: SW 5

Barometer: 1020

Air Temp: -2°C

Its turreted top was no doubt once its bottom, the iceberg having turned over as the equilibrium of its mass shifted, melt drop by melt drop, calorie by calorie. It is striated blue and white: ice and air.

—David G. Campbell, *The Crystal Desert*, 1992

The days entertainment began early for us onboard the *Greg Mortimer* with a 6 am cruise through the Lemaire Channel. The channel is a thin body of water between the mainland and Booth Island to the west. Steep mountains rise from the water on both sides of the channel, that at its widest point measures 800 meters across. A dramatic start to the day to be sure.

Port Charcot lays at the southern end of the channel and was the destination for our morning operations. The area was used by explorer Jean-Baptist Charcot and his ship the *Français* as an overwintering location in 1904. The namesake is in fact in honour of his father and Jean-Baptist himself.

Many of us enjoyed a hike up to a high point with wonderful views of the surrounding area. The bay below is what is known as an iceberg graveyard. Big bergs find their way into the bay and eventually melt or break apart being trapped by the currents.

Just a short cruise away we found ourselves at Petermann Island, which was our afternoon destination. Petermann is home to a very large number of gentoo penguins and a small population of Adélie penguins as well. The opportunity to be absolutely surrounded by penguins is exactly what so many of us came for and this experience didn't disappoint.

The island was mostly covered in snow, with any high point of rocks that was exposed had penguins on them. A real treat was to see all the chicks with their fluffy feathers, roaming around their parent getting into trouble. If they got too far out on their own, they stood the chance of being swooped up by skuas that are constantly flying overhead looking for an easy meal.

A wonderfully curious Weddell seal bid many of the Zodiacs a farewell, as we left the island. The seal would slowly swim into the landing zone behind the boats and just as we left, quickly swim to the adjacent bay where it would calmly float staring at the boats as they cruised by. This was an intimate experience for sure.



# Cuverville | Paradise Harbour

DAY 6 | Friday, 17th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 17th Feb

Latitude: 64°38'4" S

Longitude: 062°37'5"W

Course: 135°

Speed: 6.7 knots

They are extraordinarily like children, these little people of the Antarctic world, either like children, or like old men, full of their own importance and late for dinner, in their black tail-coats and white shirt fronts - and rather portly withal.

—Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World*

Today was an outstanding day in Antarctica!

In the morning we arrived to the gorgeous Cuverville island, the largest known colony of gentoo penguins. After a short but bumpy and splashy Zodiac drive, we were able to land ashore and enjoy the beauty of the spot. Hundreds of gentoo penguins were welcoming our expeditioners!

Funny penguins showed us all types of the behaviours - from building the nests with pebbles to feeding their chicks with krill that they, as caring parents, brought from the sea. We managed to climb a steep slope and got to the very top of the island and observe the incredible surroundings.

At the same time, the snorkellers enjoyed the amazing underwater landscape on the eastern side on the island, and even managed to see some gentoo penguins underwater! The kayakers were paddling along the protected shore at the southern part of the island, observing massive icebergs grounded there.

In the afternoon, we anchored at Paradise Bay near the famous Argentinian Base, Brown Station. This place is known for amazing glacier and dense ice of all kinds - from brash to proper icebergs. Also, we hoped to find the famous white gentoo penguin, who lives nearby Base Brown. The weather was exceptionally calm, and we drove slowly so we could enjoy observing the reflection of the glacier and multiple growler in the mirror of the water. We turned off our engines and listened to the sound of ice.

We encountered a large pod of humpback whales, breathing loudly in the silence of ice bay and a couple of fast and elusive minke whales passed by our boat. We also saw a lazy sleepy leopard seal on the ice. This guy didn't even lift his head up to check us out!

At the end of the trip, the snorkellers were lucky enough to have an amazing encounter with a friendly huge crabeater seal, who played with them for almost 15 minutes! The seal stayed just a very short distance away, blowing air out of his nostrils and playing with the snorkellers. That was a really outstanding encounter! The water

Wind Speed: NE 7

Barometer: 1013

Air Temp: -3°C

was really cold in Paradise Harbour, so we got out of the water, freezing, but happy with this amazing experience. The afternoon trip was perfect for our kayakers, who paddled in between the ice on mirror-like water surface and enjoyed the outstandingly calm weather.

It was a long day, fully packed with amazing adventures. We are looking forward to continuing our trip tomorrow!



# Port Lockroy & Joula | Melchoir Islands

DAY 7 | Saturday 18th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 18th Feb

Latitude: 64°45'7" S

Longitude: 063°36'2" W

Course: 060°

Speed: 5.5 knots

Wind Speed: NNE 4

Barometer: 1011

Air Temp: 0°C

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

—Water Rat to Mole from Wind in the Willows

Dan-tastic's dulcet tones delivered us from our night-to-day dream-states as we gazed out our balcony windows and portholes upon a mysterious scene of mountains and glaciers enshrouded by low clouds. What will this day deliver? The temperature had climbed above freezing, as an ominous and foreboding feel to the Antarctic morning lurked all around us.

We arrived at Port Lockroy and Joula Point around breakfast time, as the curtains lifted to reveal the gorgeous landscape that inspired Charcot, captain of the Français during the first French Antarctic expedition in 1904, to use it as a safe anchorage. Back at Lockroy, we were transported to the 1940's as we explored the base operated by the British Antarctic Survey to conduct ionospheric research, which helped us to understand how high frequency radio waves interacted with the upper atmosphere. A fantastic restoration allowed us to time-travel to a way of life incomprehensible to our 21st century existence.

Meanwhile as the shore team set up at Point Joula a place used by the whaling industry from 1911-1931, we were humbled at the scale of the remaining bones that were reconfigured to approximate a very large baleen whale skeleton. There was also a blue whale jawbone, the largest animal ever to inhabit the planet. Sadly, I witnessed my first skua kill as it took off with a very small late-to-hatch gentoo chick. It probably did it a favour as the gentoo chicks should be in creches at this point of the season, but the abundant snows seem to have delayed the reproductive cycle. Ahhhh, the circle of life. A rare leucistic penguin, only one in 20,000, greeted us and posed for a photoshoot. Looking at the number of gentoos, it's hard to believe none were present when the base closed in 1962 and the first breeding pair was in the mid-1980's. Shag chicks (long-necked penguins... haha!) almost as big as their parents still resided on the nest, appearing to belong to the gentoo colony.

We bundled up once back on the ship for our group photo on Deck 7, with this lovely snowy backdrop. Calving glaciers and rolling icebergs could be heard in the distance during our visit. After lunch Renato helped us transfer photos to the library computer.

Bia gave an impassioned and apropos lecture on whaling in Antarctica. I was particularly struck by her photo while working for Sea Shepherd and witnessing modern day industrial whaling first-hand. I feel so fortunate to have had the whale encounters of the past week including pilot whales, minke and humpbacks galore!

A relaxing afternoon was had as we transited to the Melchior Islands, laughter and storytelling emanated from the Elephant Island lounge along with some well-earned dozing and snoozing by others in their cabins. A few intrepid folks climbed aboard the Zodiacs for a late afternoon tour in the blustery and misty conditions. We were rewarded with stately fur seals, crashing waves on the outer coast and a particularly inviting iceberg that formed a wave pool that sloshed with the breakers to and fro. On the way back to the *Greg Mortimer*, we had a close encounter with some very friendly and curious swimming fur seals as the winds backed off and the clouds lifted.

It was now time to "head out" into Bransfield Strait enroute to the South Shetland Islands, to rock ourselves to sleep. Liz emceed a spirited Trivia Night with Team South Polar Express reigning victorious. Yet another fantastic day, we are very fortunate to be so privileged to inhabit this planet! Let's do our best to be excellent stewards for future generations.



# Elephant Point | Fort Point

DAY 8 | Sunday 19th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 19th Feb

Latitude: 62°45'0" S

Longitude: 060°51'3" W

Course: 027°

Speed: 8.3 knots

Wind Speed: W 2/3

Barometer: 1001

Air Temp: 0°C

If Antarctica were music it would be Mozart. Art, and it would be Michelangelo. Literature, and it would be Shakespeare. And yet it is something even greater; the only place on earth that is still as it should be. May we never tame it.

—Andrew Denton

After some gentle rocking on our overnight crossing of the Bransfield Strait, it was a pleasant awakening to calm seas and light winds off the southern shores of Livingstone Island. The calm early morning conditions changed quickly while we enjoyed our breakfast, with 20-30 knot winds making conditions a little sporty for Zodiac boarding. Fortunately, our landing at Elephant Point was in a sheltered bay so getting ashore was less of a challenge.

Elephant Point was a wonderfully diverse landing site with jagged volcanic spires jutting out of the landscape. We watched some Elephant seals that lay along the beach, but they paid us little attention being more interested in either snuggling up to their neighbours or fighting with them; whatever took their fancy at the time. We also saw the remains of some sealers' huts and learned about the annihilation of the Antarctic fur seals in the early 1800's. It was reassuring to hear that their numbers have recovered over the past 60 years, and it was a joy to watch these charismatic seals cavorting on the beach and the hillside behind. There was plenty of bird life here as well. Hundreds of gentoo penguins had gathered to moult their feathers in the shelter of some rocky hills, from which nesting Giant petrels glowered at by-passers. Breeding season has now ended for these penguins, so they have deserted their nesting colonies and moved closer to the rocky hills for protection from the wind.

Our afternoon landing was to be at Fort Point on the adjacent Greenwich Island, but that plan was shelved because all possible landing sites had been claimed by Fur seals and moulting gentoo penguins. Instead, we opted for a Zodiac cruise, which turned out to be a great way to enjoy this stretch of dramatic coastline. We started out in a glaciated bay to the east of Fort Point and then cruised past a long glacier front, along a rocky beach covered with seals and penguins and around an enormous rocky promontory at the end of the beach. Some of us witnessed part of the glacial front collapsing into the sea and sending chunks of ice flying for up to 100 metres, reminding us of the danger of getting too close. As we cruised along the beach, we spied some Adelie and Chinstrap penguins amongst the gentoos and were also entertained by seals and penguins playing in the shallow water. The rocky promontory at the end of the cruise was prime Zodiac cruising territory, with many

small bays and channels to explore. There was wildlife there too, with Kelp gulls, Cormorants, Cape petrels, Giant petrels and Antarctic terns all either sitting on the rocks or flying above.

Our day was rounded off by end-of-voyage festivities, comprising Captain's drinks, a fantastic slideshow (thanks to Renato and all who contributed) and the awarding of certificates to the brave souls who plunged into the icy cold waters off Portal Point. We then moved into the bar to dance or sing along to Reba's wonderful singing while she played the ukulele. We then crawled off to our cabins to pack our stuff and prepare for disembarkation in the morning.



# Frei, King George Island

DAY 9 | Monday, 20th February 2023

Position at 0700 on 20th Feb

Latitude: 62°17'6" S

Longitude: 058°44'8" W

Course: 340°

Speed: 0 knots

The entire Aurora Team thanks you for joining us on this adventure, and we hope to see you on the high seas again!

Wind Speed: WSW 3

Barometer: 1002

Air Temp: 0°C



# Kayaking Log

**Kayak Masters:** Neri Grieve, Eloisa Berrier, Tim Vanhoutteghem, Peter Clarke

Number of Paddlers: 25      Total Paddle Outings: 6      Total Distance Paddled: 33 - 43.5km

<b>Paddlers:</b>	Richard Schneider	Julie Doyle	Robert Horrell
Michael Munier	Kathryn Schneider	Aleksey Milyavskiy	Mitchell Oswald
Nancy Munier	Christine Harter	Irina Milyavskaya	Rachel Oswald
Joseph Mirante	Edward Hazel	Eleanor Linnen	Kenz Hamden
Lisa Mirante	Oscar Morejon	Maria Linnen	John Gianaras
Kurt Schneider	Elizabeth Morejon	Sophia Tong	
Karis Schneider	Michael Doyle	Edward Tong	

## 15 February 2023, AM: Portal Point. Distance - 5.8km

Mother nature completely spoiled us today. Following an incredibly calm crossing of the 'Drake Lake', she turned it on again for our morning paddle at Portal Point. Portal Point is so-named as it has been used in the past as an access point for expeditions to traverse the Antarctic Peninsula, or access the great white heart of the South Pole. For us, it offered the opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic continent for the very first time.

This was our first mandatory sea kayak outing of the voyage, and we couldn't have asked for better conditions, with blue skies and calm winds for the entirety of our paddle.

After embarking our kayaks from the inflatable platform at the rear of the ship, we paddled past massive icebergs and wove our kayaks through some small sections of brash ice.

The sea was a mirror at times, and we marvelled at the mountain tops as the true scale of the Antarctic landscape came into our reckoning.

An amazing first experience of sea kayaking in Antarctica was topped off by a continental landing and a Zodiac ride back to the ship.

## 15 February 2023, PM: Enterprise Island/Foyn Harbour.

### Elo's Group: Distance - 5km

Enterprise Bay, that was our second kayak session, a bit more challenging than in the morning, but still nice conditions for paddling. We observed the blue-eyed shag colony, we spent some time with fur seals, young males that were resting in rocky areas and then we paddle around the Gouvenoren and on the way back to the ship we had a great encounter with two humpback whales very close to the kayaks.

## Tim & Peter's Group: Distance - 6.4km

After anchoring close to Enterprise island, we headed out paddling towards the southern shoreline of the island. We kayaked passed a beautiful big iceberg, and then spotted our first fur seals and penguins of the trip from our kayaks. We took some photos, and then made our way towards Gouvenoren wreck. We had a safety brief regarding ice cliffs and glaciers, and then paddled one after another to the Gouvenoren shipwreck, for a closer look. After this we had time to explore the coastline of the island more, watch more seals, and even found a hidden cove with Antarctic water dripping down from the moss covered rock walls. We made our way back safely to the ship, and finished our first amazing kayak day in Antarctica.

## 16 February 2023, AM: Port Charcot. Distance - 6.1km

Port Charcot offered us an unforgettable paddle for multiple reasons! After launching our kayaks from the inflatable platform at the stern of the ship, it wasn't long before copious amounts of brash ice started to move in, and we had to try and move fast to escape it's icy grasp. Some of us needed the assistance of Zodiacs to avoid over-wintering at Port Charcot. Despite Tim's best efforts in the safety Zodiac to create a pathway, some of our group had an 'Shackleton-esque' experience. Despite talk about 'over-wintering', their stay was cut short when they were able to escape and resume the paddle. Icebergs, mountains and penguins were the order of the remainder of the morning, and after enjoying a downwind down-current paddle past some beautiful icebergs and incredible mountain scenery. In the shelter of a calm bay, we boarded a Zodiac to make landfall at Port Charcot and enjoy a hike to a viewpoint to enjoy sweeping views of our surroundings.

## 16 February 2023, PM: Petermann Island.

### Elo's Group: Distance - 7.94km

Petermann Island, another great and long session, we paddle to the small island that was full of Weddell seals resting, then we had fun with quite big waves made by swell paddling through the channel and finally we enjoy calm waters close to the cost exploring few bays and observing Gentoo and Adelie pinguins from the water. We paddle all the way back to the ship.

## Neri & Peter's Group: Distance - 3.7km

A leisurely paddle from the ship to Petermann Island had us admiring the gentoo penguins along the shoreline in no time. Some of us marvelled as a humpback whale surfaced mere metres from our kayaks and the ship, before witnessing a small iceberg break up in a small cove of the island. The penguins were definitely the stars of the show for this outing however, entertaining us with their prowess at entering the ocean from treacherous rocks, seemingly levitating back out of the water upon returning, and just generally being the ridiculously cute flightless birds that we know and love.

## 17 February 2023, AM: Cuverville Island. Distance - 6km

Cuverville Island is a beautiful small island, only about 2km by 2.5km. It is home to the largest colony of gentoo penguins in the world, with about 6,500 breeding pairs. This morning, our weather was more like 'standard' Antarctic weather, with some wind and patches of snow. However, our anchorage was very protected, and we were able to Zodiac to a sheltered beach before beginning our paddle. This gave us the opportunity to quietly

observe the gentoos coming and going between the sea and the snow bank on their 'penguin highway'.

We launched our kayaks from the beach, and meandered past some small icebergs to watch some Antarctic fur seals on a rocky outcrop. We then paddled downwind past some more icebergs, penguins and Skuas before rounding the bottom of the island, and paddling past tall rocky cliffs alive with mosses and lichens. We observed some more gentoos on the rocks before we started to feel the wind gusting stronger, and we turned our kayaks to return to the same beach that we had launched from.

## 17 February 2023, PM: Paradise harbour.

### Elo's Group: Distance - 6.3km

Great ending for our kayak outings, perfect conditions, mirror waters, full icebergs around us that offer us the chance to make a great paddling close to Brown station, visiting the blue-eyed shags colony and exploring part of the coast of Paradise Harbour by kayak, and this time eight whales close to the kayaks swimming and breathing strong.

## Neri & Peter's Group

We arrived at Paradise Harbour and were greeted by beautiful, calm conditions. After embarking our kayaks from the inflatable platform, we paddled past icebergs and bergy bits towards the coast, and explored a beautiful, shallow cove near the Argentinian-run Brown Base. It was the perfect spot to raft up for a group photo in front of a small ice cliff. We then followed the coast around to find a high cliff of metamorphic rock, and marvelled at the striations and patterns created by layers of rock laid down over millions of years. A colony of blue-eyed shags delighted our paddlers by flying close overhead as they went to and from their nesting site amongst the cliffs. Further along, the glassy conditions and lifting clouds made for spectacular paddling amongst small icebergs and brash ice, as rays of sunlight filtered through the clouds and highlighted distant glaciers.

As we were returning to the ship, the silence was broken by the breath of a humpback whale in the distance. We paused and waited quietly, wondering where it would appear next. To our group's delight, a small pod of whales surfaced mere metres from our kayaks. Some of us rafted up to enjoy the experience, and we watched as they gently passed us by, and with an effortless dive presented their tail flukes, almost as if they were waving goodbye.





# Snorkel Log

Snorkel Guide: Liz MacNeil, Rosie Leaney, Ella Knobloch, Stas Zakharov

Number of Snorkels: 10

Total Outings: 6

## Snorkellers:

Marc Lippmann - Neubauer

Chuck Strawn

Zane Hamdan

Kai Hamdan

Anna Hayes

Scott Hittinger

Mei Ho

Paul Chen

Vladimir Sushko

Alex Tarekine

## 15 February 2023, AM: Portal Point

Amazing conditions this morning for our first snorkel! This is exactly what Antarctica looks like in the tourist brochures. We could not miss this opportunity to set foot on the Antarctic continent, so we first got dropped off to explore Portal Point. After a walk around, we Zodiaced to an adjacent bay, for our shake-down snorkel. We got ready very methodically, under the instruction of Liz & our guides, and had our buddies check our zippers, masks, and assist us with the dreaded second glove. We were briefly distracted from this process when a juvenile elephant seal swam over to investigate. We entered the water via a gentle sloping rocky shore, and submerged our faces in the icy water for the first time. Krill zipped around us, and Ella got excited about algae, but really this was just a quick snorkel to ensure we were happy with all our gear. We swam out to the Zodiac, where some practiced the "seal technique" of exiting the water (complete with seal sound effect by some), and others made a more graceful exit using the ladder.

## 15 February 2023, PM: Enterprise Island, Foyn Harbour

We Zodiaced around a spectacular large iceberg, then into some small bays where fur seals lolloped around growling at each other, and Weddell seals snoozed on the ice. We also spotted chinstrap penguins, gentoo penguins, Antarctic terns, and blue-eyed shags. Onwards to our snorkel site, the wreck of the Governoren. The stern is submerged, but the bow still towers above the water. Looking underwater along the hull, we could see large holes in the rusted metal, with lots of encrusting algae, kelp, and small swarms of krill buzzing around. Not far from the bow floated a "growler" which was the perfect dimension to snorkel around. We had some fun sitting on the ice and looking at the sculpted patterns below the waterline. Our return to the ship became an impromptu Zodiac cruise, when two humpback whales surfaced only 100 m away from us. We delayed our return to the ship to watch them for a while, and everyone was happy to soak up the sun for a little longer whilst watching these gentle giants.

## 16 February 2023, AM: Port Charcot

After a stunning cruise through the Lemaire Channel early this morning we anchored for our morning activities at Port Charcot. Starting with a cruise through the "Iceberg Graveyard" it was amazing weaving through all the different shapes and formations. After a walk to warmup and look at the view over the surroundings at the landing site, we headed for our snorkel. We had a lot of fun playing in the growlers, and especially enjoyed looking at the "clear" ice. There was even a ctenophore jelly! It was really cool to see underwater as they are covered in comb plates that act like tiny little prisms, which looks like little rainbows pulsating through the jelly. The visibility was great, which meant we got to see all the different algae species on the bottom, and even some little fish!

## 16 February 2023, PM: Petermann Island

Conditions were calm – low wind and barely any swell. After spending some time onshore to see the penguin colonies, we took a Zodiac ride through a beautiful rocky channel into a protected bay. Gentoo and Adelie lined the rocks, and a growler sat grounded 50m from the shore. First we entered the water next to the growler and had a good look at the submerged ice, then kicked over towards the shoreline and waited hopefully to see penguins underwater. Patience and determination (and cold extremities) paid off, as a few of us were rewarded with circling gentoos. We were amazed at how fast they move - like little black & white bullets! They move with much more efficiency underwater than they do on land.

## 17 February 2023, AM: Cuverville Island

What a morning! An amazing drift snorkel along the east side of Cuverville Island. Not only was the visibility 20+ metres, there was a friendly colony of gentoo penguins dancing around us as they jumped in and out of the water. We were loving watching the kelp sway back and forward with the tide and seeing the water full of krill too.

On our way back to the ship a lone humpback came up close to our Zodiac – we were stoked!

## 17 February 2023, PM: Paradise Harbour

In the afternoon, we anchored at Paradise Bay near famous Argentinian Base Brown. The weather was calm, and we drove slowly to enjoy observing the reflection of the glacier and multiple growler in the mirror of the water. We encountered a large pod of humpback whales, couple of fast and elusive minke whales and a lazy sleepy leopard seal on the ice.

Snorkelling was outstanding this time! Snorkellers were lucky to have an amazing encounter with a friendly huge crabeater seal, who played with them for almost 15 minutes! The seal was keeping a very short distance, blowing air out of his nostrils and playing with snorkellers. The water was really cold in Paradise harbour, so we got out of the water freezing, but happy with this amazing experience. It was a long day fully packed with amazing adventures!



# Bird and Mammal Sightings

## Bird Species 12 - 20 February 2023

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Gentoo Penguin		•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Chinstrap Penguin				•				•	•
Adelie Penguin							•		
Macaroni Penguin									
Magellanic Penguin	•								
Wandering Albatross		•	•						
Royal Albatross									
Black-browed Albatross	•	•	•						
Grey-headed Albatross		•							
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross				•					
Giant Petrel	•	•	•	•	•				•
Antarctic Petrel									
Cape Petrel				•					•
Snow Petrel									
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern)				•			•		
Blue Petrel									
Grey Petrel									
Prion sp. (probably mostly Antarctic)		•	•						
White-chinned Petrel		•	•						
Sooty Shearwater	•								
Wilson's Storm-petrel		•	•						•
Black-bellied Storm-petrel				•					
Imperial Cormorant (blue-eyed)	•								
Antarctic Cormorant				•	•	•	•		
American Sheathbill (Snowy)				•	•	•	•	•	
Chilean Skua	•								

## Bird Species 12 - 20 February 2023

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Brown Skua					•	•	•	•	•
Kelp Gull	•			•	•		•	•	•
Antarctic Tern				•	•	•	•	•	
South American Tern	•								
Dolphin Gull	•								
Great Shearwater									
Soft-plumaged Petrel		•							
Common Diving Petrel			•						



## Mammal Species 12 - 20 February 2023

	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Antarctic Fur Seal			•	•			•	•	
Southern Elephant Seal								•	
Crabeater Seal					•	•			
Weddell Seal				•					
Leopard Seal					•	•			
Minke Whale			•		•				
Sei Whale	•								
Fin Whale									
Humpback Whale			•	•	•	•	•		
Orca									
Long-finned Pilot Whale		•							
Southern Right Whale									
Unidentified Whale									
Hourglass Dolphin		•	•						
Southern Right Whale Dolphin		•							



**Antarctic Explorer**  
**12 - 20 February 2023**  
 Total distance travelled:  
 1136 Nautical Miles





## Expeditioners:

Danielle Adams	Susan Grieve	Marc Lippmann-Neubauer	Rachel Ostwald	Amitai Slepian
GINNA ALLMOND	Gregory Halac	Marion McIntosh	Karen Pentney	Eric Slepian
Jim Allmond	Sara Halac	Taylor Merrill	Edward Perl	Jess Sloan
Donna Baker-Breningstall	Kai Hamdan	Ronwyn Miller	Susan Perl	Kevin Sloan
Orvin Breningstall	Kenz Hamdan	Irena Milyavskaya	Anne Prestipino	Geoffrey Stein
James Burns	Zane Hamdan	Aleksey Milyavskiy	Ross Prestipino	Priscilla Stein
Paul Chen	Firas Hamdan	Joe Mirante	Ian Rhynehart	Brian Stratton
Tony Cousins	Mona Hamdan	Lisa Mirante	Jen Rhynehart	Chuck Strawn
Bruce Cowley	Firas Hamdan	Liz Morejon	Debi Rothstein	Tj Strawn
Helen Cowley	Chris Harter	Oscar Morejon	Ricky Rothstein	Vladimir Sushko
Eleanor Di Marino-Linnen	Anna Hayes	Gina Morris	Kerri-Ann Russo	Virginia Synadinos
Julie Doyle	Ed Hazel	Pam Morris	Jason Russo	Alex Tarelkine
Mick Doyle	Scott Hittinger	Margaret Muller	Jayantha Samaraweera	Daniel Teo
Phil Duddles	Mei Yun Ho	Michael Munier	Ramani Samaraweera	Penchan Teo
Lauren Eelson	Eula Horrell	Nancy Munier	Michael Sanders	Edward Tong
Vi Gianaras	Robert Horrell Jr	Betty Nelson	Sally Sanders	Sophia Tong
John Gianaras	Colette Johnston	Tom Nelson	Jason Sandquist	Chong Tong
Christine Gilbert	Bede King	Jane Noller	Karis Schneider	Lina Tong
Alexander Grant	Helen King	John Noller	Kurt Schneider	Paul West Jr
Catherine Grant	Chris Kintner	Sarah O'Dwyer	Kathy Schneider	Jack Wilson
Lisa Grieve	Maria Linnen	Mitchell Ostwald	Richard Schneider	

## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Daniel Stavert  
Assistant Expedition Leader: Isabelle Howells  
Onboard Expedition Manager: Reba Minett  
Historian: Jeff Nagal  
Oceanographer/ Citizen Science Coordinator: Bia Figueiredo  
Naturalist: John Kirkwood  
Naturalist: Hans Bruning  
Expedition Guide Trainee: Alexandra Anaviapik  
Lead Sea Kayak Guide: Neri Grieve  
Sea Kayak Guide: Pete Clarke  
Sea Kayak Guide: Elo Berrier  
Sea Kayak Guide: Tim Vanhoutteghem  
Lead Snorkel Guide: Liz MacNeil  
Snorkel Guide: Ella Knobloch  
Snorkel Guide: Stas Zakharov  
Snorkel Guide: Rosie Leaney  
Expedition Medic: Linda Steutel  
E-Team Photography Guide: Renato Granieri  
Zodiac Master: Serghei Hincu  
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Flor Torti

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Vadym Tavrovetsky  
Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi  
Safety Officer: Alexandru Chiriac  
Bosun: Giovanni Dela Torre  
Deck Cadet: Goncalo Alexandra Saraiva Aniceto Costa  
Ship Doctor: Gloria Saraiva Aniceto Costa  
Ship Doctor: Anzor Chomakhidze  
Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk  
Hotel Director: Pascal Joubin  
Chief Purser: Willie Lirio  
Executive Chef: Ronwaldo Reyes  
Head Waiter: Allan Liscaro

IT Officer: Ihor Yesmieniev  
Receptionist: Sean Akbar  
Receptionist: Jona Ecija  
Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia  
Able Seaman: Bobby Payumo  
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier  
Able Seaman: Tim Kitson  
Able Seaman: John Noble  
Able Seaman: Andrii Mezentsev

## Photography thanks to:

Renato Granieri





