

South Georgia & Antarctica Odyssey featuring the South Sandwich Islands

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 20 January–11 February 2024



Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Saturday 20 January 2024

Position at 1600 on 20 Jan

Latitude: 54°48.576' S

Longitude: 068°18.021' W

Course: Alongside

Speed: Alongside

Wind Speed: 7 knots W

Barometer: 1002 hPa

Air Temp: 13°C

Today, our journey officially commenced. All strangers at the outset, with one common purpose—to embark on a new adventure exploring the Southern Ocean. We may not know each other yet, but the shared excitement in the air hints at the bonds that will soon unite us.

Our first encounter was the mandatory drill, followed by the welcome briefing where the Expedition Leader, Christian, along with the Expedition Team and crew, extended a warm welcome, setting the tone for the familial and adventurer atmosphere we aim to cultivate on this journey.

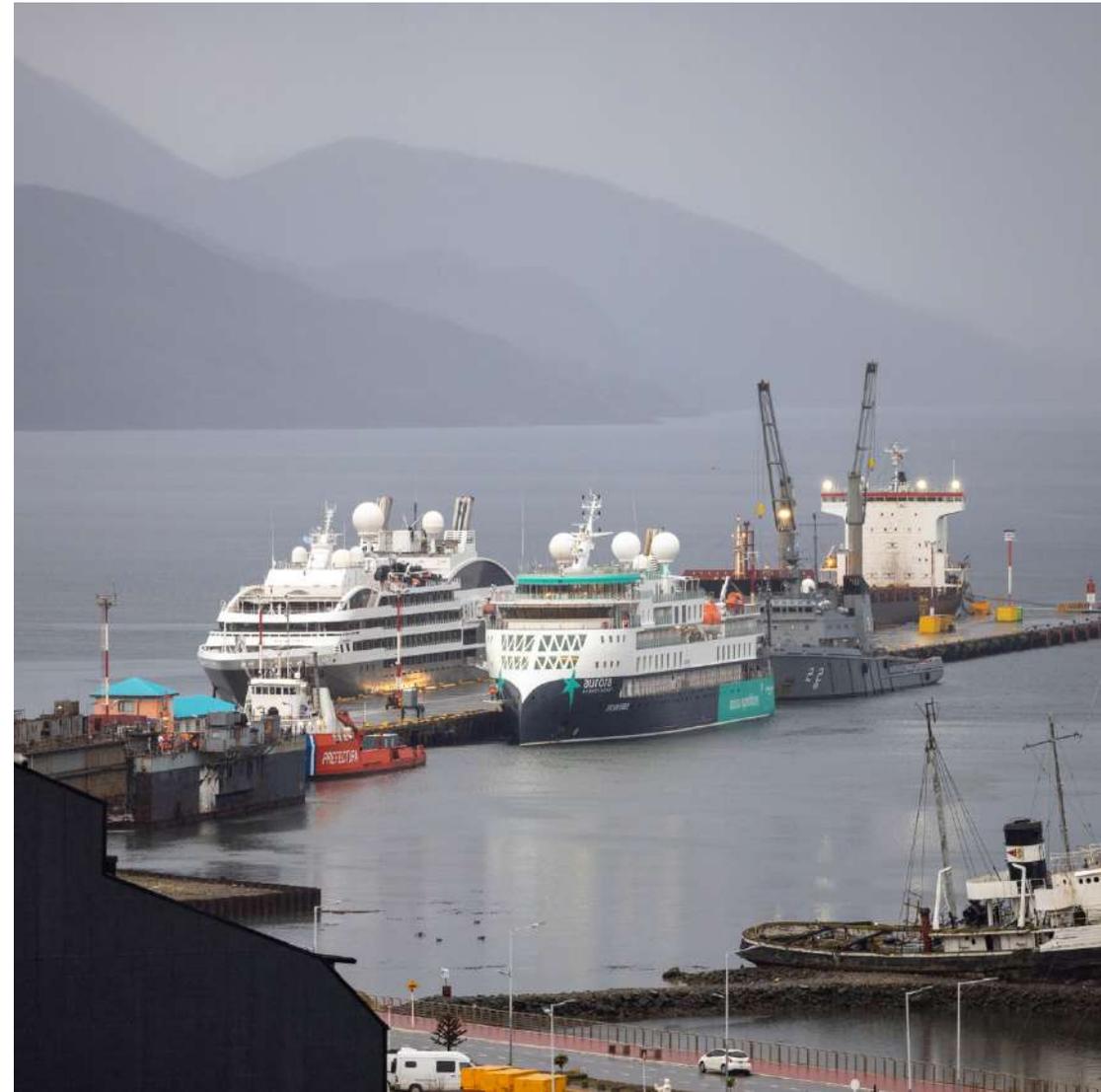
As we sat down for dinner on board the *Sylvia Earle*, the realisation of our shared quest to explore the unknown became palpable. Despite being strangers, there was a sense of unity among us, a collective spirit that would soon transform us into a team of explorers.

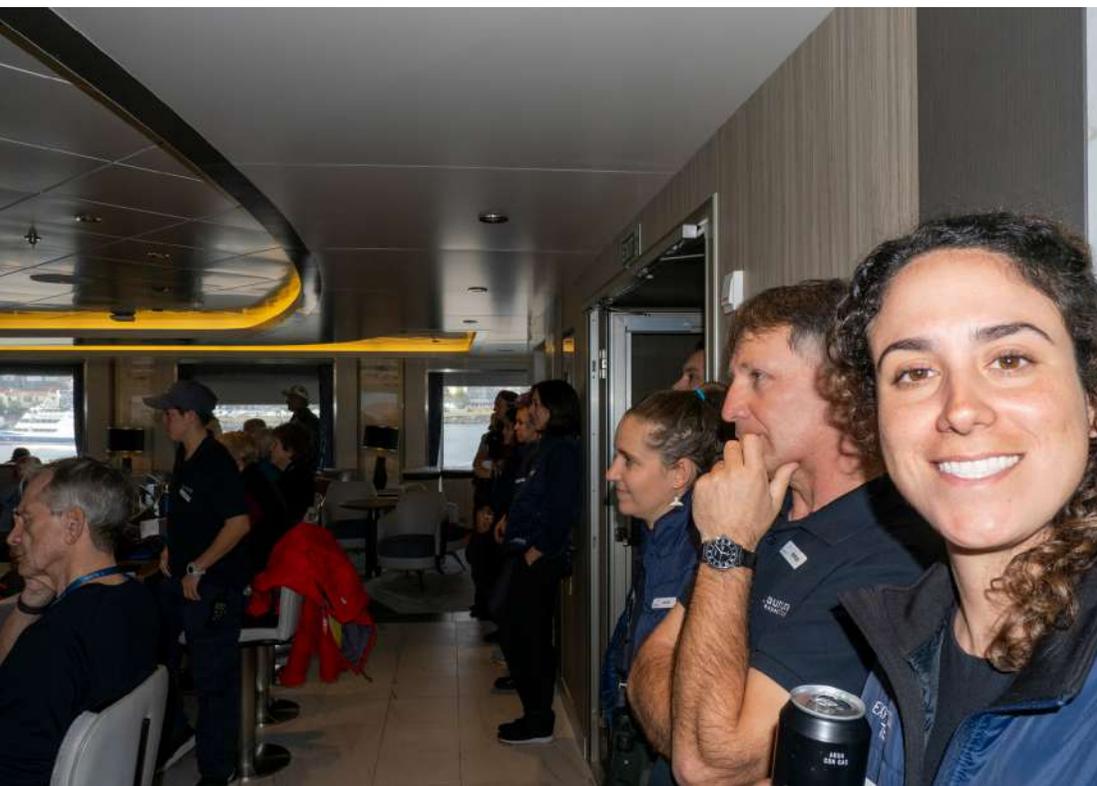
The Beagle Channel bade us farewell in a display of natural beauty—birds soaring, the Andes framing the horizon, and a breathtaking sunset. We now find ourselves en route to the Falkland Islands, the first destination in our itinerary. As we navigate towards uncharted territories, the anticipation grows.

In the days to come, we will traverse the Southern Ocean, visiting the Falklands, South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands, and finally, the Antarctic Peninsula. Each step of this journey will not only be a geographical exploration, but also a collective experience that binds us together.

What wonders of nature await us, and what unpredicted changes will shape our expedition? Together, we embark on this journey of discovery, eager to unravel the mysteries that the Southern Ocean and its captivating destinations have in store for us.

Onboard we total 119 Expeditioners with nationalities representing Australia (60), Austria (1), Canada (4), China (2), Germany (1), Malaysia (2), New Zealand (1), Philippines (2), Portugal (2), Singapore (3), Switzerland (4), Sweden (1), UK (9), USA (27) along with 20 Expedition Team and 85 ship's crew from all over the world.





Day at Sea

DAY 2 | Sunday 21 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 21 Jan

Latitude: 53°36.001'S

Course: 033

Longitude: 063°35.007'W

Speed: 11.8

Wind Speed: 7 knots W

Air Temp: 10°C

Barometer: 999 hPa

First morning on board. Our Expedition Leader, Christian, did the first wake-up call of our cruise to announce our position, the weather, and the fact that the sea will be moving a lot throughout the day. 'Be careful when moving around the ship!'

After breakfast, it was time for a mandatory IAATO and Zodiac briefing in the lecture theatre running through all the rules and regulations for the area. Christian also ran through the itinerary and plan for these three weeks ahead – passing by the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, South Sandwich Islands, and the Antarctica Peninsula! How exciting for everyone.

Soon after the Muck Boot and biosecurity were conducted, everyone either joined in the lecture theatre along with the Expedition Team for a good look through and vacuum of items, or into the mudroom to check if boots were a good size. Everyone is now ready for an adventure!

Some passengers were lucky to look outside with good timing and saw hourglass dolphins jumping out of the waves. This pretty dolphin is black with a white hourglass shape on both sides of its body. They are usually in small groups of three to six individuals, travelling offshore and they can come really close to our ship.

Time for lunch, followed by a nap for some and then a briefing for the kayakers and snorkellers in the lecture theatre! Getting ready for upcoming activities and fitted with gear!

At 4pm, it was Christian's lecture about the Falklands Islands and their habitants. Followed at 5pm by an introduction to our Citizen Science programs with Marcos, Olivia, Maude and Nicole. Here they ran through upcoming potential workshops during the voyage and projects they may conduct out on Zodiacs as well.

At 6pm, it was time to join the Captain for his Welcome Drinks and talk. Christian followed with an explanation about tomorrow and our different possibilities for two activities in the Falklands Islands. Another lovely dinner in the Gentoo, and then everyone retired to their cabins for a good night's sleep, getting rocked by the waves as we dream of what will come of tomorrow.





Carcass Island & Saunders Island

DAY 3 | Monday 22 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 22 Jan

Latitude: 61°41.2'S

Longitude: 57°51.007'W

Course: 270

Speed: 10.4

Wind Speed: 3 knots NW

Barometer: 1007 hPa

Air Temp: 12°C

A beautiful morning and joyous for all as the ship made its final approach to our first destination of the trip, Carcass Island - which lies northwest of West Falkland. Guests were all very eager to get the day started with breakfast in the restaurant. After breakfast, guests got ready in their cabins - donning layers ready for the Zodiacs across. Once ashore, guests had the option to go on a lovely guided walk across the island to look at birds and wildlife and check out the flora and fauna in the area. Those who did not wish to walk could hang down at the beach also looking at the gentoo and rockhopper penguins and the Falkland Island steamer ducks, which can only be found in the Falklands due to their inability to fly, and many other species. It was a rather greyish morning but still pleasant for all. Once the Expeditioners trudged back to the Zodiacs at the beach, the Zodiacs transferred them back to the ship with a little wild weather as they disembarked.

Lunch was enjoyed by everyone after freshening up in the restaurants as the ship relocated to Saunders Island. Everyone was chirping away talking among themselves about their first expedition, and then made their way to their cabins for a little kip and to get ready for another outing.

Saunders Island is the fourth largest of the islands lying northwest and is run as a sheep farm. Port Egmont on the island was the site of the first British settlement, established in 1765. Another very protected area for birds and well known for steamer ducks, penguins, ruddy-headed geese and other species. People come here from all around the world to tick these off their lists. Guests boarded the Zodiacs again and made their way over to the island for another morning of walks, history and looking at the birds and wildlife. Another great expedition with everyone coming back delighted with their first day!

Once back on board and all washed up, everyone gathered in the lecture theater to hear from our wonderful Expedition Leader, Christian, on the next day's activities, as well as the Expedition Team themselves with a few very interesting pre-caps!

Dinner was enjoyed by everyone, along with a few beautiful glasses of wine, and then it was time to retire to the cabins for a good night's rest before another big day ahead. Sweet dreams to all.





Port Stanley

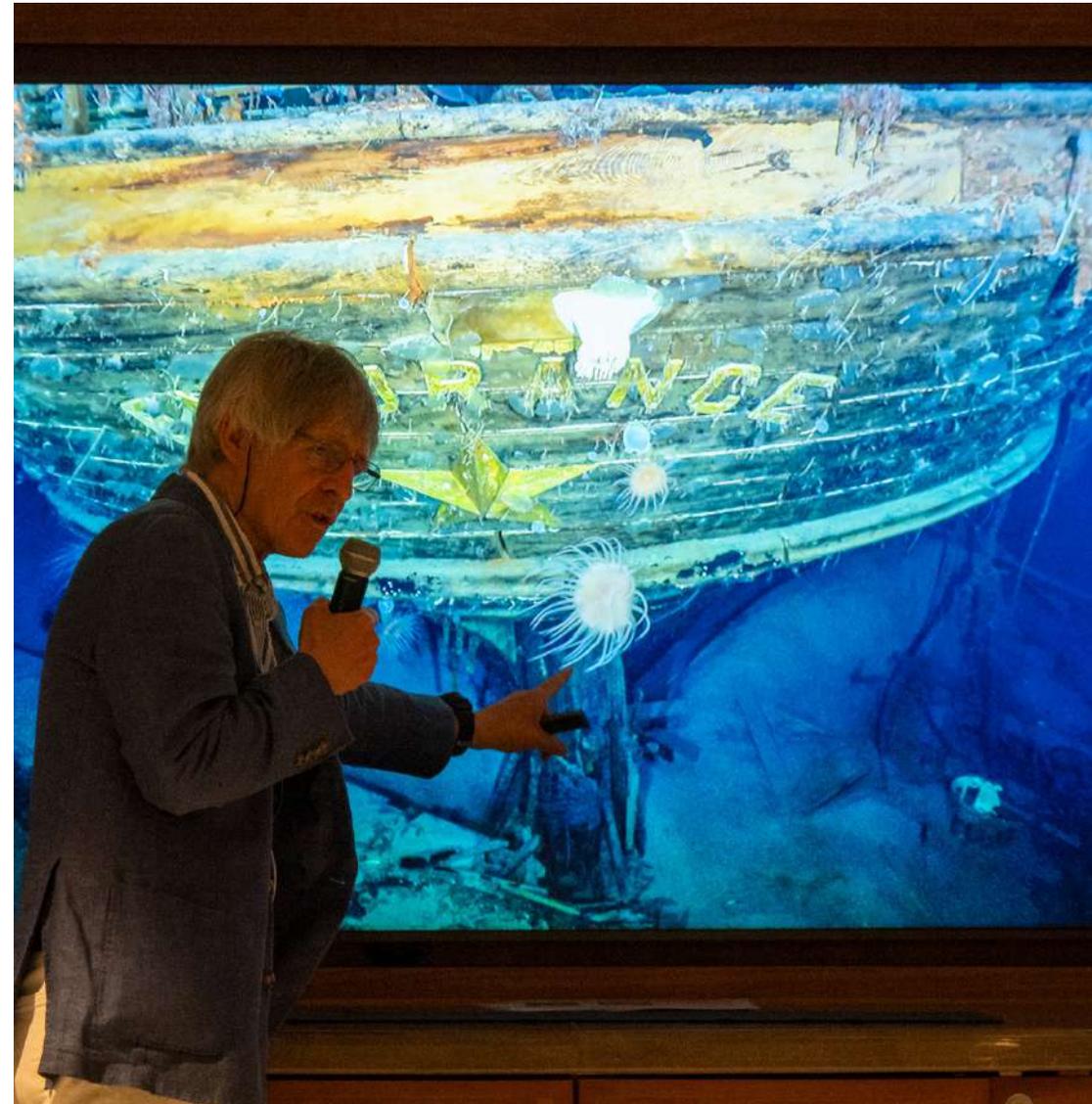
DAY 4 | Tuesday 23 January 2024

Before breakfast we sailed into Port William past Cape Pembroke, the easternmost point of East Falkland. In thankfully calm conditions the *Sylvia Earle* lined up on the navigation markers that ensured safe passage through 'the narrows' the very slim strait between Navy Point and Engineer Point. We entered Port Stanley and came to anchor not far off Government Jetty. This was to be our landing point in this far-flung capital of the British overseas Falklands Islands Territory, named by the then Governor Moody after Lord Stanley, Britain's Secretary of State for War and the Colonies at the time.

After breakfast, we were ferried ashore by Zodiacs, to spend the morning exploring Port Stanley. Some were lucky enough to see playful Commerson's dolphins on their brief ride ashore. Many of us joined a guided walk with our historian, Jonathan, along Ross Road. Along the way he pointed out various landmarks, including the impressive Anglican Christ Church Cathedral built in 1892, the adjacent whalebone arch, and Victory Green that commemorates the 'Great War'. Other highlights were the ancient cannons taken from the original settlement of Port St Louis, which was established by the noble French explorer Louis-Antoine de Bougainville in 1764. We finished the walk at the poignant memorial to the 1982 conflict, which honours the British soldiers and sailors and marines who lost their lives in the Falklands War. The highlight of the walk was a visit to the Dockyard Museum, with its evocative displays of the early eras of settlement in the Falklands, from the sealing to farming and fishing industries. Many also enjoyed the opportunity for some retail therapy at the several well-stocked souvenir shops.

We were back on board for lunch, after which we enjoyed the presentation by Jonathan, discovering the Falklands, in which outlined the history, geography, and unique aspects of this fascinating location. The highlight of the afternoon was a presentation by Menson Bound, the maritime archaeologist who led the team that discovered the wreck of Shackleton's ship the *Endurance* in the very deep waters of the Weddell Sea. Menson's lively anecdotes and dramatic photos and videos kept us spellbound. Learning how after a 10-year long quest, they located the wreck with an ROV, 100 years to the day that famed heroic era explorer Ernest Shackleton was buried in South Georgia, added to the amazing aspects of this discovery. Many of us also purchased his bestselling account of the expedition *The Ship Beneath the Ice*, which Menson generously autographed.

Soon after the presentation *Sylvia Earle* weighed anchor and headed back out to sea, and we were on our way to South Georgia.





Day at Sea

DAY 5 | Wednesday 24 January 2024

Position at 0800 on 24 Jan

Latitude: 52°21.567' S

Longitude: 053°37.501' W

Course: 110°

Speed: 9.9

Wind Speed: 4 knots NW

Barometer: 1010 hPa

Air Temp: 11°C

We awake to fair seas in the South Atlantic as we continue our journey to South Georgia. After breakfast, as part of our preparation before visiting South Georgia, we had a mandatory biosecurity lecture from our Expedition Leader.

Christian began by updating everyone on the restrictions for many sites due to HPAI – bird flu. The lecture also included a short film narrated by the enigmatic Sir David Attenborough *A Visitor's Guide to South Georgia*. The film highlighted the importance of the biosecurity requirements to ensure we follow the necessary measures, to safeguard South Georgia against the introduction and spread of invasive non-native species and pathogens.

This was followed by conducting biosecurity cleaning of outer clothing and bags with vacuum cleaners and brushes in the lecture room. Muck Boots and equipment were checked, cleaned and dipped in Virkon in the mudroom. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Marcos led our first Citizen Science session just before lunch. Expeditioners met on deck 7 to conduct a 20-minute bird survey, logging species and numbers of birds. The survey was very well attended; during the survey the vessel had covered 3.3 nautical miles with seven different species observed, totalling over 100 birds. Using the eBird app, the data contributes to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Our second Citizen Science session ran after lunch led by Marcos and Nicole. This again was very well attended and included how to identify and name a cloud according to its shape and height. The survey is conducted through the GLOBE Observer app. This data contributes to help NASA interpret their satellite data. The cloud survey will be conducted throughout the expedition, with more information on cloud formations and what information can be interpreted from them.

Our mid-afternoon lectures started with Marcos giving a detailed presentation on the geological overview of South Georgia. We will be there soon to set eyes on this rugged, beautiful landscape.

Maude completed the lectures today with a very informative and energetic presentation on seabirds.



At Sea

DAY 6 | Saturday 25 January 2024



At Sea; South Sandwich Islands

DAY 7 | Friday 26 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 26 Jan

Latitude: 53°04.612'S

Course: 105°

Longitude: 047°58.100'W

Speed: 9.7

Wind Speed: 4 knots SW

Air Temp: 10°C

Barometer: 1007 hPa

Ahoy, fellow adventurers! Believe it or not, all the following events unfolded during this Friday at sea aboard the *Sylvia Earle*. It was our last day at sea before finally reaching the alluring and majestic island of South Georgia, and it was a day full of wonder, discovery, and reflection on the boundless blue expanse.

The morning dawned with a promise of adventure, accompanied by clear skies and a gentle breeze. The day commenced with a thrilling spectacle - our very first sighting of an iceberg! Nature's grandeur greeted us in all its splendour, setting the tone for a day of remarkable encounters.

As we sailed further, the sea whispered tales of its inhabitants. Imagine our delight as majestic fin, sei, and humpback whales graced us with their presence! Their graceful dances beneath the waves left us in awe, reaffirming the majesty of the marine realm.

At around 10:30am, we approached the legendary Shag Rocks, a sight to behold. These rugged outcrops, teeming with vibrant birdlife, are a real testament to the wonders of the natural world. These are the only outcrops of a 1500-kilometre-long submarine mountain chain! We ventured closer, with a spectacle that will forever remain in our memories, and our cameras.

Our day was not merely one of sightseeing, but also one of education. Along with our very knowledgeable historian Jonathan, we delved into the dark chapters of whaling and sealing in the Southern Ocean. His poignant lecture stirred reflections on humanity's past transgressions and the imperative of conservation in the present. Following a delicious lunch, Christian captivated us with an illuminating workshop on seabird identification. With each species unveiled, we marvelled at the intricacies of nature's design. We started to grasp how complex and infinitely interesting birding can be! It made birders even more enthusiastic about their passion, and non-birders eager to investigate this subject further.

The day continued with a foray into uncharted territory - our first seaweed survey. Amid laughter, cold winds, and camaraderie, we found no seaweed rafts, but we sure were out there trying! We celebrated Australia Day with a lively quiz, Aussies and non-Aussies, a testament to the diverse tapestry of our onboard community.

As evening descended, we gathered for our daily recap and briefing, eager minds ablaze with newfound knowledge.

A sense of anticipation lingers. South Georgia beckons, its shores shrouded in mystery and allure. With hearts brimming with excitement, we eagerly await the dawn, ready to embrace the wonders that lie ahead. As the

night embraces the sea, we retire to our quarters, dreams alight with visions of the adventures that await. Tomorrow heralds a new chapter, a journey into the heart of South Georgia, where every moment promises to be an odyssey of discovery.

Until then, fair winds and following seas guide our course, as we sail ever onwards into the unknown horizon. Adventure beckons, and we answer its call with hearts full of wonder and souls ablaze with the spirit of exploration. Onward, towards new horizons!





Elsehul & Rosita Harbour

DAY 8 | Saturday 27 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 27 Jan

Latitude: 54°06.60'S

Longitude: 36°47.59'W

Course: 111°

Speed: 9.5

Wind Speed: 6 knots SW

Barometer: 992 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

First day of operations in South Georgia!

After three days at sea, we finally got to leave the ship and explore this amazing island in the middle of the ocean!

After waking up early to Leo's sweet voice and a delicious breakfast, it was time to get ready for our first Zodiac exploration – Elsehul in the northern tip of the island. This cove is one of the most impressive sites in terms of wildlife, where you can find most of the island's local birds, and many of them nest here too. Here it's not only about the birds – seal's like to call this place home as well. You can find a good amount of elephant seals, and many, many, many fur seals of all sizes - playing, napping, and checking out our Zodiacs.

And this time, not only did the wildlife not disappoint, but the weather played its part too! We got to see macaroni penguins hopping on the rocks, the awkward-by-nature gentoos and graceful king penguins moulting. While the adult fur seals were resting from the breeding season, the pups were playfully rolling in the shallow waters of the bay. Even the moulting elephant seals still found enough energy to jostle around; several kinds of albatrosses and petrels soared above. South Georgia did really put a great welcome show.

After lunch and a quick nap, we got on the Zodiacs again. This time the weather was a bit chillier and windier than the standard set by the morning outing. But that did not stop us from enjoying Rosita Harbour. We saw many kinds of birds flying and swimming around. We got surrounded by both southern and northern petrels (which finally put the discussion about which one is which to rest!) just as Wilson's petrels hovered over the water around us. We also got lucky enough to see three chinstrap penguins porpoising!

One of the highlights was the leucistic fur seal pups playing around, somehow not realising their uniqueness. Even though these blond seals really stood out in the crowd, they fit right into the bigger picture of Rosita Harbour.

After coming back to the ship and having enough time for a warm shower and a cocktail, Christian explained the plan for tomorrow, followed by Maude and Leo telling us a bit more about the animals that we saw during the day.

It was a beautiful day with lots of excitement – no wonder most people followed it by an early evening. And this is only the beginning of our exploration of South Georgia!





Fortuna Bay, Stromness Bay & Grytviken

DAY 9 | Sunday 28 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 28 Jan

Latitude: 54°16.90'S

Longitude: 36°30.11'W

Course: 186°

Speed: 9.1

Wind Speed: 7 knots SW

Barometer: 994 hPa

Air Temp: 7°C

It's the sweet voice of Christian, our Expedition Leader, who woke us up this morning. He had good news and less good news for us. Here, at the entrance of Fortuna Bay (South Georgia), the wind was blowing at roughly 60 knots, making the Zodiac operation impossible... But! On another hand, the bluebird sky was making the views from the *Sylvia Earle* incredible!

We enjoyed the landscape of this beautiful area for a while. The huge glacier was shining under the sun. And some beautiful white clouds low on the mountains were putting everything in perspective.

Then, the ship sailed west to a place called Stromness Bay... We had a perfect view of the old whaling station of Stromness and its current inhabitants, the fur seals, and the king penguins. The buildings are abandoned and have been since 1961. The explanation from Jonathan helped us all to imagine how it was and the history that was going on at this period. We also had a better idea of the incredible Shackleton journey that ended happily exactly there!

We arrived in King Edward Cove before lunch. And we welcomed part of the Grytviken team on board to join us for lunch. Many Antarctic terns were fishing all around the ship during the meal for everyone to enjoy watching.

In the afternoon operation, we did a false start because of the strong wind (up to 50 knots). But after a while, the conditions got better, and we managed to land for the first time in South Georgia!

We were all so happy to walk on land, and so glad to have a closer encounter with the wildlife here. The female antarctic fur seals and their cubs were all around us, nursing, running, calling and playing. It was so adorable to watch and witness! We also saw some king penguins moulting and the unique South Georgia pintail! We had a nice time in Grytviken Museum, in the post office, and the church as well.

In the evening after the recap, which ended with Jonathan, we gave a toast of whisky in honour of Ernest Shackleton. A lovely addition and great way to celebrate another beautiful day here in this beautiful part of the world.





Godthul Harbour & Ocean Harbour

DAY 10 | Monday 29 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 29 Jan

Latitude: 54°16.60'S

Longitude: 36°17.60'W

Course: At anchor

Speed: At anchor

Wind Speed: 7 knots SW

Barometer: 996 hPa

Air Temp: 12°C

We started with the sound of South Georgia through the PA system, reminding us of where we are, and how lucky we are to be here. Sunny outside with almost no wind, the day started in the dining room with the bright smiles of the whole crew wishing us a good day and good vibes while we were sailing on our way to Godthul Harbour.

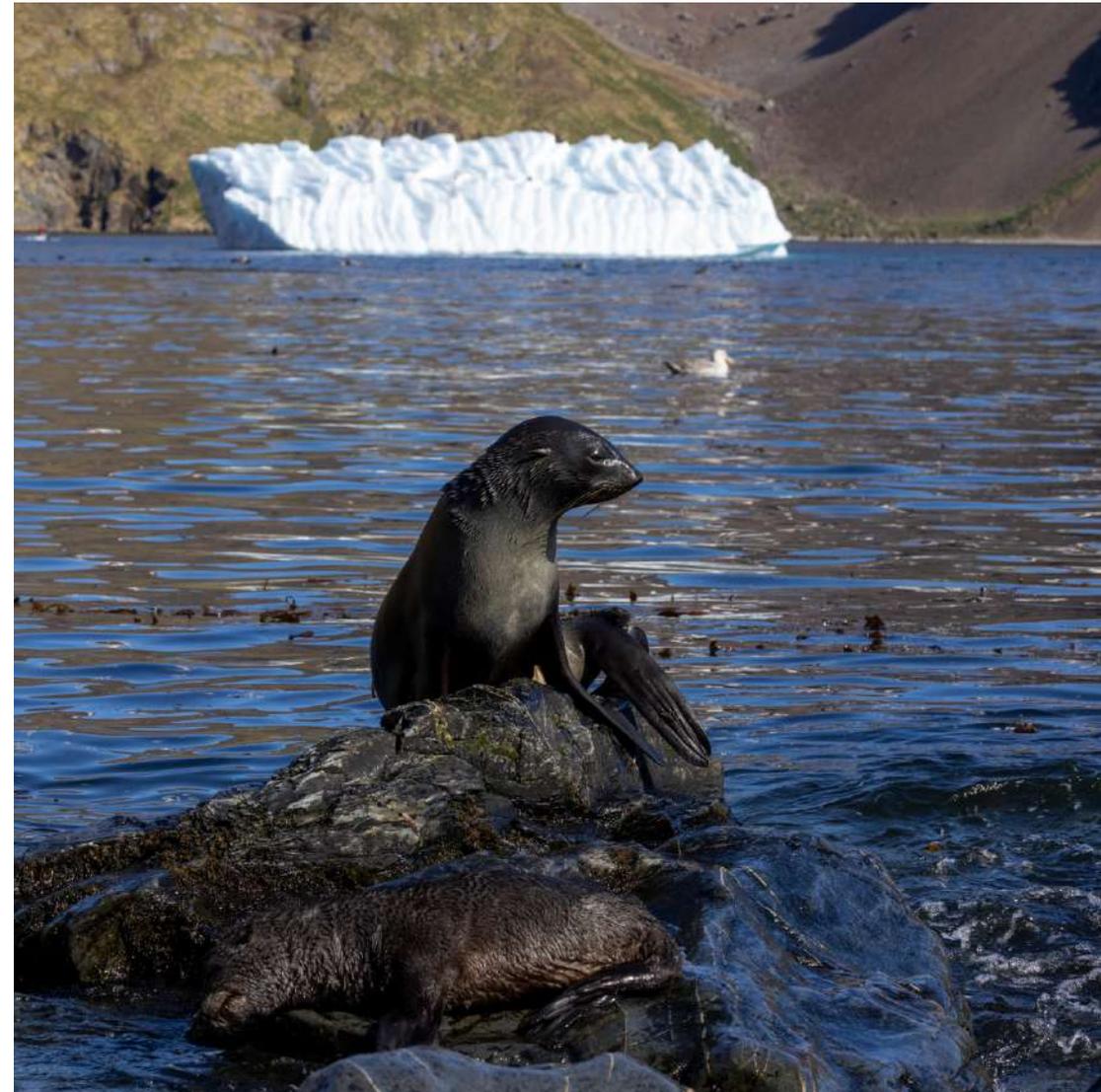
Little Bay, super protected, with one big iceberg and lots of giant petrels and fur seals in the water. The E-Team start their magic operations and set up everything for us. Then Asha's call: get ready to go to the mudroom to take Zodiacs to go for a landing. Yes, today we get to go on land and could stretch our legs. Some of us took a long hike, going through tussock grass, paying attention not to run into a fur seal along the way as you do not want to be bitten by these cute little fellows. Continuing up into the hill and at a stunning view of the bay below with our *Sylvia Earle* waiting for us.

We visited a lake, where at the right side there was a magnificent waterfall, with beautiful sounds breaking the silence of this place. Crossing rivers, trying not to get stuck in any hole we keep walking, we were lucky enough to see a giant petrel nesting with its chick! Such beautiful animals, they look so sweet before having that ferocious face in their adult life. At the very top we were greeted with a viewpoint where we could see not just the bay, but also beyond out to the sea with those gorgeous icebergs.

Those who did not do the long hike, enjoyed hanging out down at the water checking out all the amazing wildlife and finishing with a Zodiac exploration.

After a lunch with delicious broccoli gratin and spätzle, our next adventure was in view from the windows. Ocean Harbour, a nice small bay with only a few visible relics remains, among them a shed, the wreck of the *Bayard*, a steam locomotive and a handful of graves. We explored with Zodiacs for the afternoon, getting up close and personal; it was a magical day on the water with soft rolls from the ocean and kelp swaying with it. Full of kelp we took advantage to do some Citizen Science here and cloud observation, counting and classifying what we could see above. Today, some very impressive and spectacular lenticular clouds, which look like flying saucers above the mountain ranges. The kayakers paddled around the bay and snorkellers swam among the seaweed looking for some crazy planktonic creatures.

Guests had a wonderful day. Ending as per usual with another briefing and pre-cap and delicious dinner.



St Andrews Bay & Gold Harbour

DAY 11 | Tuesday 30 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 30 Jan

Latitude: 54°48.59'S

Longitude: 036°00.00'W

Course: At Anchor

Speed: At Anchor

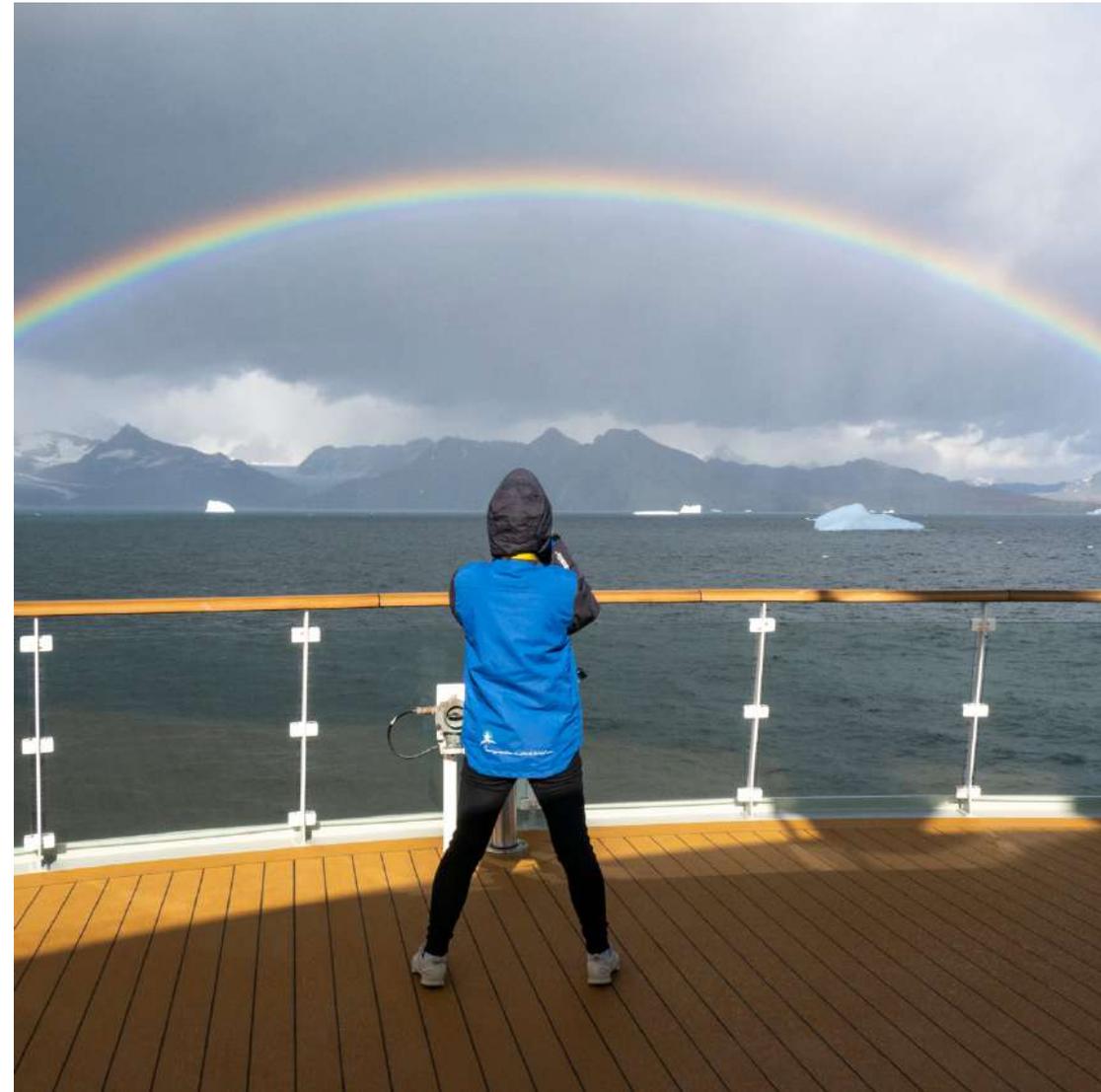
Wind Speed: 20 knots

Barometer: 1011 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

The morning started with us arriving at St Andrews Bay, the biggest king penguin colony in South Georgia. We were met with sunshine, a dash of katabatic winds coming down Cook Glacier, and rolling swell coming from the opposite direction. That obviously did not stop us from getting out on the Zodiacs, with no doubt quite spicy conditions at the side gates. We were very much committed to witness and experience the madness of the place – even the kayakers went out on their own little epic adventure. And there was plenty to see: the quarter of a million nesting king penguins (as far as the eye can see!), a mass of black and white with accents of yellow, dotted with the brown fuzz of their offspring. While the fledging and mottling was in full swing for these birds, the beach was also buzzing with fur and elephant seals going about their business. Occasional giant petrel and brown skua would yet remind us of the fragility of life in these places, as they preyed on the less lucky individuals. No doubt most of us would struggle to describe the place, but phrases like: 'absolute overwhelm', 'swarm of life' and 'positively traumatising' seem quite fitting.

The afternoon brought us to Gold Harbour – another stunning spot on the map of our expedition. Yet again the winds were coming down the glaciers with an impressive strength. The amphitheatre of hanging glaciers, towering cliffs and snowy peaks of Mount Paterson were something to see. The lenticular clouds were tightly layered on top of the mountains – another sign of high winds. The conditions indeed made putting Zodiacs down quite challenging. But that didn't stop our scouting team from getting into them and assessing the conditions from the water. Sure enough – as the boats were being pushed around by the strong gusts and their drivers absolutely drenched with incoming waves – the bridge reported the wind speed: 40 knots gusting up to 60! With that and the personal experience of the now soaking-wet E-Team, the decision was made to cancel the afternoon operation. We took that opportunity to explore the impressive stranded icebergs, beaded around the mouth of the bay. The ship cruised in the labyrinth of those frozen giants, giving us some incredible photo opportunities.





Drygalski Fjord

DAY 12 | Wednesday 31st January 2024

Position at 0600 on 31 Jan

Latitude: 54°48.59'S

Longitude: 036°00.00'W

Course: 110

Speed: 9.8

Wind Speed: 15 knots

Barometer: 1009 hPa

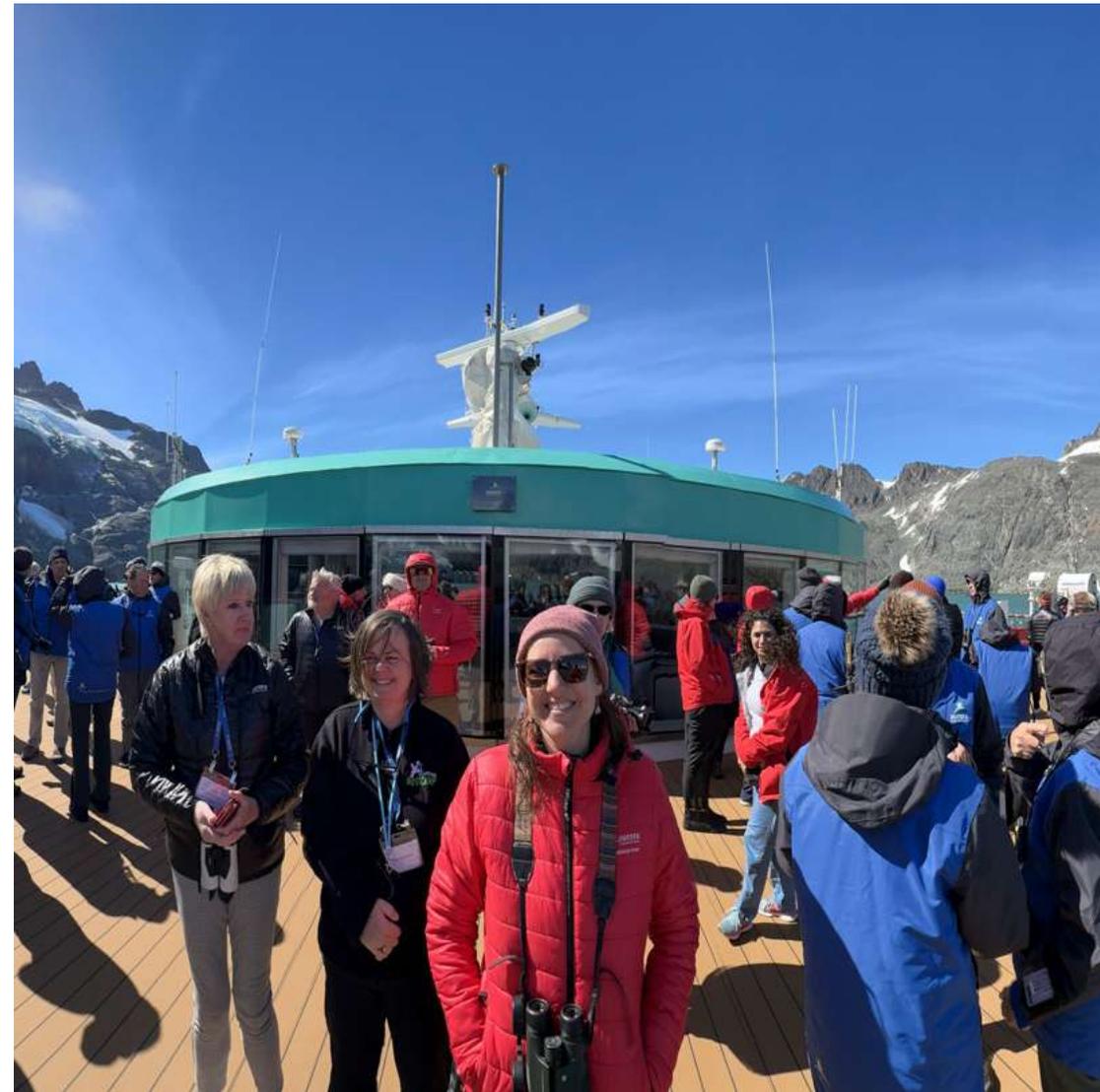
Air Temp: 3°C

Today was nothing short of extraordinary, a seamless blend of stunning landscapes and awe-inspiring experiences. Our morning began with the breathtaking spectacle of Drygalski Fjord. As we navigated through the icy waters, towering cliffs and majestic glaciers surrounded us, casting a spellbinding atmosphere over the entire fjord. The scenery was a testament to the raw, untouched beauty of Antarctica.

Drygalski Fjord's beauty was not only visual, but also auditory as we marvelled at the echoes of cracking ice and the distant calls of seabirds. The crisp Antarctic air heightened our senses, providing a truly immersive experience in this pristine environment.

In the afternoon, our journey continued as we set course for the South Sandwich Islands. The anticipation in the air was palpable as we embarked on this new leg of our expedition. The South Sandwich Islands, a remote and seldom-visited archipelago.

As we sailed toward the South Sandwich Islands, memories of our time in South Georgia lingered in our minds. The island, with its rugged terrains and abundant wildlife, had left an indelible mark on our expedition. From the historical sites that tell tales of explorers long past, to the vast colonies of penguins and seals, South Georgia had been a treasure trove of experiences. The journey to South Georgia was not merely a physical one; it was also a soul-stirring adventure that connected us with the untamed spirit of the Southern Ocean. Whether standing on the shores amid a cacophony of wildlife or navigating the icy waters, every moment was a brush with the raw forces of nature. Now, as we set our sights on the South Sandwich Islands, the anticipation of new discoveries and encounters with unique species fuels our excitement. Our voyage is a continuous narrative, each chapter unveiling a different facet of the Southern Ocean's wonders. With every passing day, we deepen our appreciation for the delicate balance of this ecosystem, understanding the need to safeguard these environments for the benefit of our planet. Each day brings us closer to nature, and with every experience, we engrave lasting memories of the Southern Ocean in our hearts. The journey is far from over, and as we sail into the unknown of the South Sandwich Islands, we carry the spirit of exploration, wonder, and reverence for the pristine wilderness that surrounds us.





Day at Sea

DAY 13 | Thursday 1st February 2024

Position at 0600 on 1 Feb

Latitude: 56°04.25'S

Longitude: 029°00.22'W

Course: 107.6°

Speed: 13 knots

Wind Speed: 17 knots

Barometer: 1003 hPa

Air Temp: 1°C

A sea day means we get to sleep in! but you never want to hit snooze for too long, as things in the Southern Ocean happen when you least expect it. But today was going to be special no matter what, as we were en route to the rarely seen South Sandwich Islands.

We kicked off the morning with a glimpse of fin whales followed by some acrobatic humpbacks breaching as the ship passed by. The usual suspects were seen flying around: albatross, cape petrels, prions to name a few, and a few cheeky fur seals hastily heading out to the open ocean. It was a wildlife spectacular, and all before breakfast was done.

Marcus took us through a journey to the centre of the earth, as he revealed the mysterious story of how the South Sandwich Islands were formed, why it is such an active area for volcanic activity, and how this is connected to the staggering wildlife populations that make this home.

But before long land was in sight, through a veil of thick fog and mist, but the excitement of reaching Zavodovski Island was building. Chinstrap penguins porpoise by the boat followed by groups of fur seals riding the waves. Life was emerging as we drew closer to the island.

The Citizen Science team were determined to keep the momentum going with our bird survey and, staying out on deck in some wet and windy conditions, they contributed to our ongoing bird count.

As we moved further south to Visokoi Island, the low clouds and mist lifted to reveal the sheer magnitude of the island. Thousands of nesting penguins on the edge of a steep cliff plateau could be seen in the distance. Glacial run-off from above creating impressive waterfalls and a rugged coastline indicative of the harsh conditions that surround this archipelago. It was a stunning sight in one of the most remote places on the planet.

Halfway through our adventure, we continue our expedition to explore what the South Sandwich Islands have to offer. We are exposed to new wonders every day, and this visual feast for the senses is truly extraordinary as we reach destinations very few have ever seen before. A privilege to say the least and one for the memory bank.







South Sandwich Islands

DAY 14 | Saturday 2 February 2024

Position at 0600 on 2 Feb

Latitude: 58° 26.01'S

Course: 263°

Longitude: 26° 12.00'W

Speed: 8.5

Wind Speed: 8.9 knots

Air Temp: 2°C

Barometer: 995 hPa

We woke up to stormy seas this morning, hypnotising waves with white caps and salt spray, moody clouds in a grey sky. The wind was gusting around 60 knots, so we spent the morning indoors. Our ship was sheltered in the lee of Montagu Island, which partially poked its head out of the low clouds. On this slow morning in the South Sandwich Islands, we truly felt remote. There wasn't another ship in sight; nothing on the horizon except icebergs and wheeling seabirds.

Our daily program was full of activities: a fitness class and crafting session with Thays, a wonderful lecture on the circle of life and the fragile Antarctic food chain by Nicole, a behind-the-scenes view of the making of *Happy Feet* by Jonathan. It's inspiring to be part of such a varied and experienced Expedition Team.

We had the opportunity to go out on deck and appreciate the volcanic views. A cold wind whipped around the ship, and the clouds briefly parted to reveal a sharp blue sky. The snow-covered top of Montagu Island peered back at us, and it was a powerful sight to witness as cape petrels glided across the sea and cut into the periphery.

During our daily recap, Russell announced an exciting event that will span the next several days: a ship-wide Rock-Paper-Scissors tournament. The bracket, which hangs near the voyage maps, will direct us to our opponents. Who will be the champion and take home the grand prize and trophy? The undefeated winner from last year, Ari, already won her first match before dinner. The anticipation builds, and the ship is buzzing with possibility.

This day ended with an ice-cream bar, displayed in the gleaming lights of the Tektite Bar. Before going into the *Happy Feet* showing, we were offered the chance to build our own ice-cream sundaes. The chef, Chris, smiled proudly as we filled our ice-cream bowls to our hearts' delights: sprinkles, strawberry sauce, chocolate sauce, ladyfingers. Standing in line, we chatted among ourselves and discussed our mutual love of ice cream: a treat that arouses both joy and nostalgia, transcending time and space.

What does it mean to decorate our own ice creams? Is it a representation of free will, or are we merely confined to the limits of the available toppings? Erin mused that we are products of our environments. Tim the kayak guide filled his bowl with four scoops of chocolate and extra crunchies, while Russell experienced the constraint of being vegan. A person who would like to remain anonymous grabbed the scoop and helped themselves while the ice-cream bar was unmanned, effectively taking their fate into their own hands.





South Sandwich Islands; At Sea

DAY 15 | Sunday 3 February 2024

Position at 0600 on 3 Feb

Latitude: 60° 35.49'S

Course: 249°

Longitude: 38° 36.05'W

Speed: 13kts

Wind Speed: 9 knots

Air Temp: 1°C

Barometer: 987 hPa

This morning, we woke to Christian's PA call announcing our arrival at Thule Island, the southernmost of the South Sandwich Islands. Our hope for a Zodiac cruise was cancelled due to strong winds; nonetheless, when we trooped up to the observation lounge, we were surprised and delighted to be greeted with a spectacular panorama. Thule Island lying off our bow and directly ahead there were steeply glaciated slopes falling away from Mount Larson (915 metres) which lay hidden in cloud. Chinstrap penguins and fur seals featured all along the peninsula that curved to the south to Hewson Point, while astern lay Cook Island.

It was named after James Cook, the original discoverer of the South Sandwich Islands, who first sighted eight of the 11 islands in 1775 aboard the brig the *Resolution*. Because the fog, gale-force winds, and heavy seas prevented a close approach, he was not able to chart the region properly, and believed his southernmost sighting was just one land mass which he named South Thule. The task of accurate charting was accomplished by Russian explorer Thaddeus Bellinghausen in 1820. Bellinghausen had great respect for James Cook and hence he bestowed the name of his hero on one of his newly discovered adjacent islands.

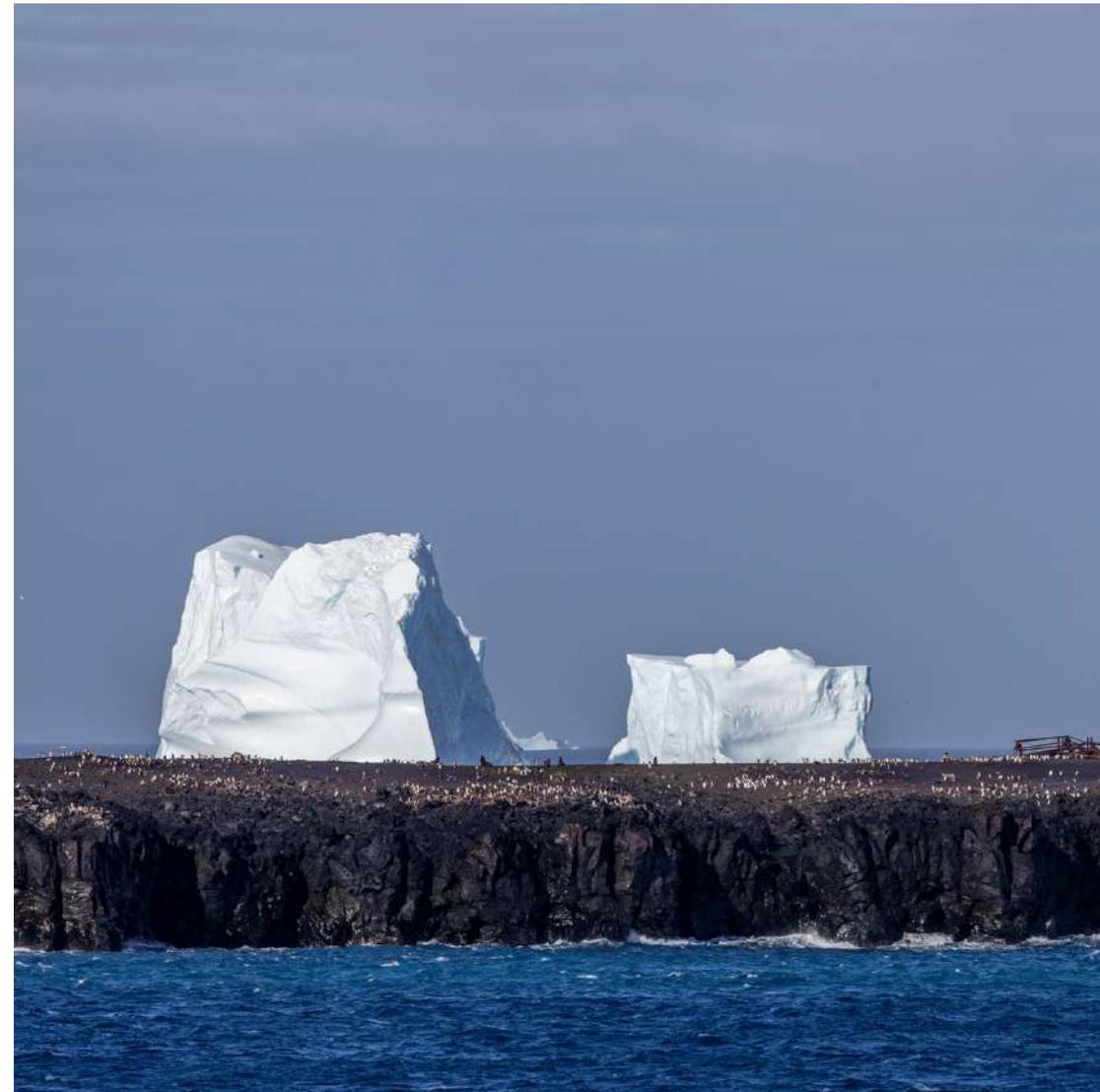
The rainbow of colours in the exposed rocky slopes was a visual treat. Layers of red, brown and black lavas, and ash deposits were complemented by vibrant green hues of lichens. It was sobering to learn that our ship on the edge of Davis Strait was in fact positioned in a giant flooded caldera that was over 600 metres deep.

Blue skies and enough sizeable icebergs glistening in the sun drew the eye of the photographers, and everyone was moving around the decks enjoying the dramatic island scenery and wildlife from all angles. The rusting remains of the Argentine weather station, Corbeta Uruguay, occupied from 1976 to 1982, were scattered along the long low arm of the south side of Thule Island. This substantial base was bombed to smithereens by the British in 1983 because of its role in the 1982 Falklands War.

After an hour of sightseeing, the *Sylvia Earle* set sail to the southwest bound for the Antarctic Peninsula and later, we were treated to a delicious brunch.

During the afternoon we were treated to Kelsey's fascinating lecture on Otto Nordenskjold's epic Swedish South Polar Expedition of 1901–1904. Later, Nicole gave a much-appreciated lecture on tips and tricks for identifying whales of which we saw in considerable number throughout the afternoon.

Jane's great after-dinner talk on Sustainability and ESG (Environment Social and Governance) coincided with the *Sylvia Earle* crossing latitude 60 degrees south, which meant we are now finally in 'Antarctica' proper as defined by the Antarctic Treaty.





Day At Sea

DAY 16 | Sunday 4 February 2024

Position at 0600 on 4 Feb

Latitude: 62° 02.429'S

Longitude: 49° 44.17'W

Course: 261°

Speed: 13.3kts

Wind Speed: 7 knots

Barometer: 981 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

A sea day! We continue our transit from the South Sandwich Islands heading east towards the Antarctic Peninsula. At 6am this morning we had an early morning treat, a visual encounter with three humpback whales close to the vessel on the starboard side! As it's a sea day we awake under our own steam. There is no wake-up announcement; for those who wish to sleep in they can have extended dreams about the amazing landscapes and wildlife that we may encounter on the Antarctic Peninsula.

This morning a Citizen Science cloud survey was conducted on deck 7. It's good to see Marcos being able to step back and let the cloud survey group take control and using the knowledge that has been learned over the last few weeks, to complete the survey information. The survey is conducted through the GLOBE Observer app. This survey contributes to help NASA interpret their satellite data. There will be a session with Marcos, who will inform us on how our completed surveys compare to the satellite data taken on those days.

Leo gave a very interesting and informative lecture on his deep field work in Antarctica. Leo's lecture included his discovery of mummified seals! This will be covered in more detail in a later lecture on this voyage.

Thay's arts and craft afternoons carried on with the penguin origami theme. So, Thay has hidden around the ship's 'public spaces only' 15 origami penguins to be found and to be coloured by the finder and handed back to Thay!

In the afternoon we met again on deck 7 for our second Citizen Science session of day. A 20-minute bird survey was conducted. During the survey, the vessel had covered 6 nautical miles with four different species observed, totalling over 20 birds. Using the eBird app, the data contributes to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

Later in the afternoon, the Captain and his officers gave a very interesting and in-depth presentation on the *Sylvia Earle*. This included lots of information from the bridge, engineering and housekeeping.





At Sea & Mikkelsen Harbour

DAY 17 | Tuesday 6 February 2024

Position at 0600 on 6 Feb

Latitude: 63°37.09'S

Longitude: 059°37.07'W

Course: 287°

Speed: 12 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots

Barometer: 975 hPa

Air Temp: 0°C



Portal Point & Foyn Harbour

DAY 18 | Wednesday 7 February

Position at 0600 on 7 Feb

Latitude: 64°29.01'S

Longitude: 061°43.007'W

Course: 9.2 knots

Speed: 260°

Wind Speed: 06 knots

Barometer: 980 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

In the vast expanse of the Southern Ocean, our sailing cruise ship forged ahead, navigating through the endless waves. Little did we know that after three days of claiming to have found our sea legs, a tempest awaited us, challenging even the most seasoned sailors among us.

As dawn broke, the ship danced upon waves reaching up to six metres in height. The prior night's disturbance left us in a state of negative gravity, a sensation of weightlessness, only to be followed by an opposing force that seemed to double our weight.

However, adversity could not deter our spirits, for the day held promise of knowledge and adventure. Jonathan, our onboard historian, captivated us with his lecture: 'Discovering Antarctica'. He gave us some fascinating insights into how perceptions, motivations and exploits of geographers, sailors, scientists, and explorers shaped the progressive unveiling of *Terra Incognita*, the Unknown Land. We heard about key figures in the 'golden age of exploration', the era of economic exploration through sealing, to the heroic era culminating in the quest for the South Pole.

Marcos followed suit, offering a geological journey through time, unravelling the intricate and diverse history that shaped the Antarctic Peninsula to its current shape. With the rare opportunity to travel back in time a million years, we learned how much a place can change given enough time. Antarctica is unique, and it took hundreds of millions of years to get it to its present state. We also reflected on how our planet (and all life in it) seeks for a constantly evolving balance, and how the future might hold important changes, and we humans are big actors in this future.

After a delicious lunch, Christian announced the moment we had all been waiting eagerly for - land ahead! A flurry of activity ensued as we prepared for an afternoon of exploration and Mikkelsen Harbour. Landing, kayaking, paddling, and snorkelling were hastily arranged, marking our long-awaited arrival on the pristine shores of Antarctica. The energy was palpable on board, as we all started to gear and dress up for our afternoon activities.

The Antarctic weather, true to its unpredictable nature, threw everything at us - rain, wind, clouds, and eventually, rays of sunshine breaking through the overcast sky. Nature, in all its glory, welcomed us to its icy embrace. As we returned to the ship, after a well-spent time outside, we hung our wet layers to dry, and took warm showers that helped us regain our heat.

Our daily pilgrimage to the lecture theatre unveiled Christian's plans for tomorrow - a continental landing at Portal

Point and, for the daring, the polar plunge and in the afternoon a Zodiac exploration around Enterprise Island.

After the day's whirlwind of activities, it was time to reflect and recharge for what lies ahead. As the ship sailed through the night, we embraced the memories of the day filled with discovery, and the indomitable spirit of exploration. We eagerly await the dawn of a new day, ready to embrace the wonders that Antarctica, with its untamed beauty, has in store for us. Rest well, fellow Expeditioners!





Polar Plunge

DAY 18 | Wednesday 7 February













Portal Point & Foyn Harbour

DAY 19 | Wednesday 7 February 2024

Position at 0711 on 7 Jan

Latitude: 51°41.235' S

Longitude: 057°50.979' W

Course: 277°

Speed: 0.1 knots

Wind Speed: 9 knots

Barometer: 1000 hPa

Air Temp: 10°C

Tim surprised everybody with a gentle wake-up call for the busiest day that we had scheduled, and everything went according to plan!

After an earlier breakfast than what we have been used to during the sea days, we kickstarted the day with a continental landing at Portal Point. A couple of options for hiking on the icy continent, and even all the activities went out! Kayakers kayaked, paddlers paddled, and snorkellers snorkelled. And if it was not enough to enjoy a very peaceful, snowy morning ... whales came to surprise us as we were coming back to the *Sylvia Earle*!

And before lunch we had one of the most intense activities on board, one that only the strongest willed with a dedication that very few have (and possibly a dash of lunacy) dared to ever consider... jumping into the frozen waters of Antarctica while it was snowing! Thankfully, there was some liquid fire being served afterwards to warm up the hearts and spirits of the polar plungers.

After a very tasty lunch it was time to come out to play again, this time a Zodiac exploration. The weather seemed to be a bit gloomy, but it stopped raining on time for us to go out, leaving behind some dramatic clouds, with views of the continent, the glaciers and the icebergs surrounding us.

The site for the afternoon activity was again another amazing place. Foyn Harbour at Enterprise Island. Where the birds love making their home, from kelp gulls noisily resting over the small islands, to the little antarctic terns trying to push away the intimidating brown skuas. Some curious fur seals checked out the Zodiacs and the kayaks, while a lonely, awkward gentoo looked confused about how it ended up there all by himself.

And among this amazing natural landscape, somehow melting perfectly in the serenity of it all, the wreck of the *Governoren*. An incredible scene, that reminds us of the tragic whaling past, with the hardships that these men endured to make a living.

And if all this was not enough, there was a barbecue for dinner. Great food, wonderful desserts, and music. At first, not that many people dared to hit the dance floor, but at the end it was the minority who didn't. And with probably a bit too much food in our bellies, tired from dancing and a full day of exploration, it was time to go rest, for we had yet another day of expedition.

What a day! From the wake-up call to the late-evening dancing, it has been a fantastic day!





Danco Island & Neko Harbour

DAY 20 | Thursday 8 February 2024

Position at 0600 on 8 Feb

Latitude: 64° 43.06'S

Longitude: 62° 35.3'W

Course: At Anchor

Speed: At Anchor

Wind Speed: 6 knots

Barometer: 980 hPa

Air Temp: 3°C

Everybody was in no hurry to enjoy this last day in Antarctic Peninsula! We open our curtains to discover the wonderful landscape of Errera Channel, with its great mountains covered by snow and ice.

We enjoyed the morning on Danco Island. It is an incredible place where the gentoo penguins are nesting very high on the hill. We met the penguins close to their highway, where our guides did the 'penguin police' to manage the streams of both humans and penguins! The beach was not only occupied by penguins, but also by the snowy sheathbills who were running everywhere on the place.

At the end of the operation, a leopard seal enters the action in the water and some of us had the chance to see its head appearing for a few seconds out of the water.

During lunchtime, we travelled not too far for the afternoon operation, visiting Neko Harbour. It is a beautiful site deep in a fjord surrounded by very active glaciers. The sea was full of icebergs of different shapes and sizes that were all coming from the glaciers around. During the afternoon, Neko glacier calved a few times, making a strong noise and generating some waves on the shore.

By stepping on Neko Harbour, we did our second continental landing. It is a sleepy Weddell seal who welcomed us on shore! We manage to approach the penguin colonies close enough to see the nests and the chicks. The babies were already big and some of them were already alone, waiting for both parents to come back to feed them.

Some of us managed to walk to the top of the hill to enjoy the view using walking sticks to help us on the slippery path.

On the way back to the ship, the amount of ice on the water was even more than before and everyone enjoyed this incredible experience, sailing through the brash ice on the Zodiac.

After dinner, the ship was already sailing out of the Antarctic Peninsula by passing around Melchior Islands, when we had the announcement that orcas have been spotted! We all rushed outside to meet the orcas. The encounter was great! The orcas were in a playful and social mood, and we saw incredible behaviours. We will never forget these individuals who came close to the ship. It was a crazy moment and the best goodbye we could have from the Antarctica inhabitants.





Day at Sea

DAY 21 | Friday 9 February 2024

First day back on the Drake passage, the magic portal that we need to pass through to get in and out of Antarctica. On our way to Ushuaia, our last destination. But sleeping was not easy after the cherry on top that Antarctica had given us. After all these days, numerous sea hours, many penguins and seabirds, gorgeous clouds and amazing scenery, we began saying goodbye to Antarctica after visiting Neko Harbour and its incredible glacier. The Captain decided to take us through the Gerlache strait between Anvers Island and Brabant Island during dinner, when suddenly we heard the call... the mysterious and fascinating killer whale... orcas around the ship!

Everyone made their way outside to watch them. Though we were trying to stick the plan to make our way out of Antarctica, all of the E-Team and Olivia, our specialist whale spotter, did her best and with Christian and the Captain, stopped the ship to take in the pleasure of this magical moment.

We were running from the bow to the aft of the ship, from port side to starboard side, from Deck 8 to Deck 7. They surrounded us, around 18 orcas playing, having fun, jumping, hopping, fluking. It was magic, but of course we needed to continue. We enjoyed the excitement and emotion of the moment by celebrating in the bar all together.

The next morning, Maude presented an outstanding lecture about penguins, where we learned about mating and other behaviours. The presentation included her own drawings and was infused with humour to present the topic in an accessible way.

During the afternoon Peter shared an overview of his career and how he came to work with Aurora. His presentation included beautiful images and a poetic explanation of how photography can touch people's lives. He also spoke about the inspiration he gained through the work of Frank Hurley, the photographer in the Endurance Expedition led by Ernest Shackleton.

Thais gathered us together with fun activities until it was time for the final recap in the Lecture Theatre. The semifinal battles of Paper, Rock, Scissor were followed by a wrap up with Nicole, who invited us to think about this trip, stirring emotions deep in our hearts and reminding us of the friendships that we had made during this voyage and our new place as a part of the Aurora family.



At Sea & Beagle Channel

DAY 22 | Saturday 10 February 2024



Ushuaia

DAY 23 | Sunday 11 February 2024

Disembarkation day

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



Kayaking Log

Kayak Guides: Russell Henry, Erin Scott, Tim Vanhoutteghem

Number of Paddlers: 19

Total Paddle Outings: 10

Total Distance Paddled: 40 kms

Paddlers:	Mark Allison	Steven Timmerman	Don Hall
George Weston	Stephanie Holmquist	Philip Bennet	Chris Bowers
Katherine Weston	Malati Gadgil	Janet Deisley	Emma Gregory
James Nathan	Vinay Awasthi	David Deisley	Lance Stibbs
Fiona Nathan	Aovana Timmerman	Desley Whisson	Roger Murray

27/01/2024, AM: Elsehul. Distance: 4 km

Our first paddle of the trip was sensational – quite literally, as our senses were bombarded by the magic of South Georgia. We departed from the marina and paddled into Joke Cove, which was full of curious giant petrels, whingeing fur seals, belching elephant seals, king and gentoo penguins vying for beach space, and black-browed albatross nesting on the cliffs. We continued up the eastern shore of the bay, and visited the macaroni penguin colony, which was full of busy birds including one conspicuous chinstrap penguin! Four penguin species in one excursion! We tested out our kayaks by poking into a small cave, before heading back to the ship with wide eyes and hearts full of anticipation for the paddling to come.

27/01/2024, PM: Rosita Harbour. Distance: 4 km

A moody afternoon with low-hanging clouds and calm winds met us at Rosita Harbour. We started off in two groups, paddling along the shoreline riddled with lively seals and pups. As we began to make our way down the rocky coastline to the south, we entered some massive kelp forests. While challenging to paddle in, they offered protection from some swell and wind that was beginning to pick up. Once we made it around the first point, we joined our two groups and had a fantastic paddle through some little rock channels and kelp, while watching a never-ending roll of seals around each corner.

29/01/2024, AM: Godthul. Distance: 3.5 km

We had calm conditions in the peaceful bay of Godthul, protected by the winds and swell of South Georgia. We started by visiting a waterfall, which was swarming with shags that were nesting nearby. We followed the coastline, looking for plankton in the water, and enjoying the cacophony of bird calls around us. We saw elephant seals, fur seals with pups, and king penguins along the water's edge, and we navigated through kelp beds that were thick with snails and, of course, fur seals. After our paddle, we headed to shore, passing a particularly spectacular iceberg that had only flipped an hour prior, with deep-blue fingers of ice exposed above the surface of the water.

29/01/2024, PM: Ocean Harbour. Distance: 4.5 km

Another beautiful day with sunny skies and calm seas, although we did feel some swell that reminded us that we are in a wild and exposed place. We departed from the marina and paddled into Ocean Harbour itself, finding a small cove replete with elephant seals, Wilson's storm petrels, and penguins trekking up and down the mountainside. We then paddled over to the wreck of the *Bayard*, which lost her mooring in 1911 and ran aground on the south coast of the bay. Now it has been taken over by the tussock, and the shags and terns that screech from her gunwales. Then our groups joined up with one another, and we paddled around the headland separating Ocean Harbour from Penguin Harbour to the south. There was some dynamic swell and interesting channels to play around in, and eventually we reaped the reward of making it to this other, lesser known bay, characterised by a neat penguin colony and divided by a river that separated gentoos on one side, and kings on another!

30/01/2024, AM: St Andrew's Bay. Distance: 3 km

What an EXCITING operation this was! Things started out with loads of anticipation and giddiness as we prepared to paddle along the shoreline of the famous St Andrew's Bay. The wind was gusting heavily, but the guide team decided that we could paddle in the lee of the cliffs to the west, and then get in the Zodiacs to check out the beach after. What a great call it was! Although somewhat challenging to get to the lee of the cliffs, and with one little swim from Malati and Vinay, once there it was spectacular. The mixture of the layers in the cliffs, with the green grasses and the waterfalls coming down, was simply stunning. Now is when things got really exciting. We all jumped into two Zodiacs to go cruise along the beach and check out the insane amount of wildlife. The weather, however, had different ideas. While we had been out in the sheltered lee behind the cliffs, the winds had picked up to a steady 35-40 knots and gusting much more. The kayaks began flipping as we towed them in the steep wind swell and eventually Leo and Christian came in their Zodiacs to our rescue. Once we had handed off the boats, one Zodiac driven by Russell zipped over to the beach to check it out while the others got changed on the ship. Tim then picked up his group and we had a wild last 20 minutes out on the water viewing the immense density of the St Andrew's king penguin colony.

06/02/2024, PM: Mikkelsen Harbour. Distance: 2 km

Our first paddle in Antarctica was in the spectacular, glaciated Mikkelsen Harbour: a part of Trinity Island. Punctuated by D'Hainaut Island in the middle of the bay, one group set off to circumnavigate the island and go to shore with the gentoo penguins and Weddell seals. We got to experience some surf conditions before making it to land! The other group paddled outside the bay, encountering our first patches of brash ice, Weddell seals, and penguin colonies from the water – not to mention some dynamic channels, too! The wind picked up, though the sun was peeking out and a rainbow met the ocean in the distance. It was another exciting Zodiac ride back to the ship, which culminated in Leo coming to the rescue with a line of kayaks in tow!

07/02/2024, AM: Portal Point. Distance: 4 km

This morning was blanketed in a low fog, while the surface of the water was dead calm, interrupted only by snowflakes. There were whales about as we sailed close to Portal Point, and they were still around by the time we got on the water! We navigated through large icebergs in the mist, and met two humpback whales: a mother and a calf who were logging at the surface of the water! We stayed with these beautiful creatures for quite a while, watching the calf roll around and show off its pectoral fins, and listening to the whistle of their blowholes opening as they relaxed around us.

07/02/2024, PM: Foyr Harbour. Distance: 5.5 km

After an amazing morning full of whales and good times, what more could one ask for this afternoon? How about MORE WHALES!? When we got on the water, both Erin's and Russell's groups set off in search of more whales. One group headed into the ice and then saw the *Governoren* shipwreck before finding themselves some humpbacks. The other group set off on a multiple-kilometre paddle to get themselves to a very active group of humpies. When we finally arrived, the whales were a way away and they dived down. The next thing we knew, they resurfaced directly among us! Chaos ensued for a couple minutes as we tried to get out of the way but not get flipped by them! It was wild. The group then hopped back in the Zodiac to save themselves the long paddle back and go check out the wreck.

08/02/2024, AM: Danco Island. Distance: 7 km

We had some more sprightly winds this morning; however, we were undaunted in our quest to paddle at Danco Island: one group aiming for a shorter paddle and a visit to shore, and the other aiming to circumnavigate the island. Group A found shelter in the lee of the island to launch, and made their way around the south side, all the way around to the landing site, where there was a leopard seal resting on an ice floe! Group B paddled around the reef on the north side of the island, and then spent time with two humpbacks passing by before heading to shore to spend time amid the gentoo penguin colony.

08/02/2024, PM: Neko Harbour. Distance: 2.5km

Our final paddle of the trip gave us a new experience: that of paddling through thick brash ice! In fact, the ice was dynamic and dense enough that it took some time to get off the ship, since the side gates became iced in. Once on our way however, we found a patch of water open enough to easily launch our boats, and set off into the seemingly endless fields of ice. We bashed our way through the brash ice, admiring the reflection of the surrounding mountains on the mirror-like surface of the water, and listening to the gentle crackling of ice around us. It was an incredibly peaceful paddle, and we finished it by checking out two crabeater seals on an ice floe before heading to shore.





Snorkelling Log

Snorkel Guides: Eddie, Rick

Number of Snorkels: 9

Total Outings: 8

Snorkellers:

Kathryn

Diana

Patricia

Pontus

Georgia

Nigel

Wendy

Dieter

Claudia

27/01/24: Joke Cove, Elsehul, South Georgia

We opened the marina doors to a beautiful sun-filled morning. The Captain positioned *Sylvia Earle* just off Pyramid Point. This was our first outing, and everyone was dressed in their drysuits on and ready with equipment in good time. We started a Zodiac cruise clockwise around the bay staying close by Pyramid Point first, looking at the beautiful macaroni penguins close to lots of fur seal pups. We navigated through and around the kelp being followed by giant petrels and fur seals popping up around the Zodiac. Continuing around the bay we could see the large elephant seals adding to the different noises, making lots of loud vocalisations, and king penguins close by moving in groups in and out of the water. All around the bay fur seals were playing in and around the waterline. We moved into Joke Cove, where we could see elephant seal, fur seals and king penguins, The snorkellers helped each other to get ready and kitted up and in small teams and entered the water, checking for leaks and moving off closer to shore. The bar was set high, with fur seal pups and juveniles whizzing past the snorkellers with king penguins joining the mix. This was a super-close encounter for our snorkellers, returning with lots of beaming smiles.

27/01/24: Rosita Harbour, South Georgia

After the Expeditioners warmed up and refueled at lunch, *Sylvia Earle* had now safely repositioned to start our afternoon activities. The team helped each other to get ready for the second snorkel of the day. Starting with a Zodiac tour along the coastline, lots of king penguins, elephant seals and fur seals pup playing in the water line. We were navigating through kelp, with giant petrels keeping their eye on us. After choosing a suitable site, the snorkelers soon kitted up and were itching to get in the water. Here the pups were really playful, and the snorkellers once again had a great interaction. The rocky parts of the snorkel site had most activity, with some fur seals mimicking some snorkellers nearby. This was a great snorkel to end the day, and what a day, with two great snorkel sites visited. The snorkel team will sleep well tonight!

29/01/24: Ocean Harbour, South Georgia

After a great landing and hike at Godthul, we relocated *Sylvia Earle* in Ocean Harbour. The scenery was breathtaking with the high mountain peaks and the lenticular cloud formations. These cloud formations are stationary clouds that form in the troposphere and can indicate an approaching weather front. After a short Zodiac cruise through a lot of giant kelp, we cruised past the shipwreck of the *Bayard*. Built in 1864, she was blown off her moorings in 1911 across the bay into the position she now lies. We had storm petrels dancing on the water around us and we also spotted a sea angel close to the surface in the kelp. Today we had some swell and the visibility in the water was reduced, but this didn't stop our explorers from kitting up and entering the water. There was a short swim through kelp to a small gully with fur seals nearby, but with the reduced visibility not everyone had an encounter. Having spotted a sea angel on the Zodiac cruise, another was seen below the water, the snorkellers wishing they had diving gear to follow it! Nevertheless, it was a great snorkel and the team enjoyed the freedom of moving through the water under their own steam. We had a 'guess the water temperature' competition; Wendy was the winner with 7 degrees Celsius.

06/02/24: Mikkelsen Harbour, Antarctic Peninsula

Arriving at D'Hainaut Island lies a colony of gentoo penguins waiting to be played with! Stepping on the island in drysuits and hiking up the hill is one way to keep warm and work up a sweat, ready for the cold waters to come! Sleeping Weddell seals on the shores and gentoo penguins skirting around the place leads to excited spirits on the Zodiac! Jumping into the fresh 2-degrees-Celsius water, the snorkellers are on their way, small invertebrates and limpets are scattered among the shallow rocky bottom with plenty of red and brown seaweeds to add colour! The gentoo penguins, with their speed and agility, pass us by in an instant! A keen eye on the Zodiac spotted a Weddell seal in the water nearby and called out to us. What an encounter; we were in the water with this amazing pinniped. It was huge, over 3 metres, and was as inquisitive about us as we were of it. It's big, wide eyes checking us out, so big and amazingly nimble as it spun and changed direction. It kept its distance from us, but with the good visibility we had a great view of this incredible animal. We are so fortunate to have this special time and have some great memories to share.

07/02/24: Portal Point, Antarctic Peninsula

It was a very still morning; barely a breath of wind with low cloud cover. Humpback whales were around to welcome us in as we loaded on to our Zodiac. We had a short detour to have a better look of these incredible rorqual whales. As it was so still outside you could hear their blows very distinctly; it was magical. This was to be our first continental landing, so we all jumped off the Zodiac to step foot on the Antarctic Peninsula. There were marked routes for us to follow to climb higher, to make the most of the vantage point. The water beckoned our snorkellers and soon we were back and heading over to a little bay near the landing area. We got ready for our first snorkel of the day. The snorkellers entered the water near a small iceberg, the volume of the ice, the different textures, shapes and colours, are an amazing site to behold. There were small protruding areas to search around, underwater, brown and green algae with copepods, and limpets. The scoured pebbly rocky area with good visibility was overlooked by the Expeditioners on the vantage point looking down. Forty minutes later and back in the Zodiac we were navigating through large icebergs as we made our way through low visibility back to the vessel to warm up.

07/02/24: Enterprise Island, Antarctic Peninsula

During lunch the *Sylvia Earle* had relocated for the afternoon's activities. The visibility had cleared and gave us great panoramic views. We loaded up for a Zodiac cruise and scout for a place to snorkel. Our first stop on the cruise was the wreck of the *Governoren* a floating whale-processing factory ship. The vessel was built in 1891, and in January 1915 she was destroyed by fire and now lies in her final resting place in Foyen Harbour, lying with her bow exposed facing into shore. We continued to cruise to the south of the island and found a site with glaciers nearby. After a quick briefing the snorkellers entered the crystal-clear waters. Lots of brown and green algae, limpets, encrusting algae, starfish and a lonely whale bone was spotted. Floating weightless in cold, clear water looking below the surface taking in all the different colours and features of the bottom, is a special feeling.

08/02/24: Danco Island, Antarctic Peninsula

Our final day on the peninsula with the first snorkel of the day at Danco Island. The island lies in Errera Channel off the Gerlache Strait. The Island was named after Emile Danco, who was a geophysicist onboard the *Belgica* expedition of 1897. The island is home to a gentoo penguin colony, with fur seals on a cobbled shoreline. There was a lot of penguin activity on the way to the island from the *Sylvia Earle*. This was a landing and the snorkelers had 40 minutes ashore before heading back to the Zodiac. We chose a site along the shoreline with penguins entering the water. The visibility was good and the water a balmy 4 degrees Celsius. Some gentoos were whizzing past the snorkellers so quickly that not everyone was able to view them underwater. Limpets, and brown and green algae were seen and just out of view by a good margin was a leopard seal. The seal was some distance away, its huge head looking over the top of the water. It started getting closer as we were getting snorkellers back into the Zodiac. After returning to the Zodiac, we went to look for the leopard seal, which was now hauled out on an iceberg. This amazing animal is an apex predator and to see it in its own habitat was fantastic.

08/02/24: Neko Harbour, Antarctic Peninsula

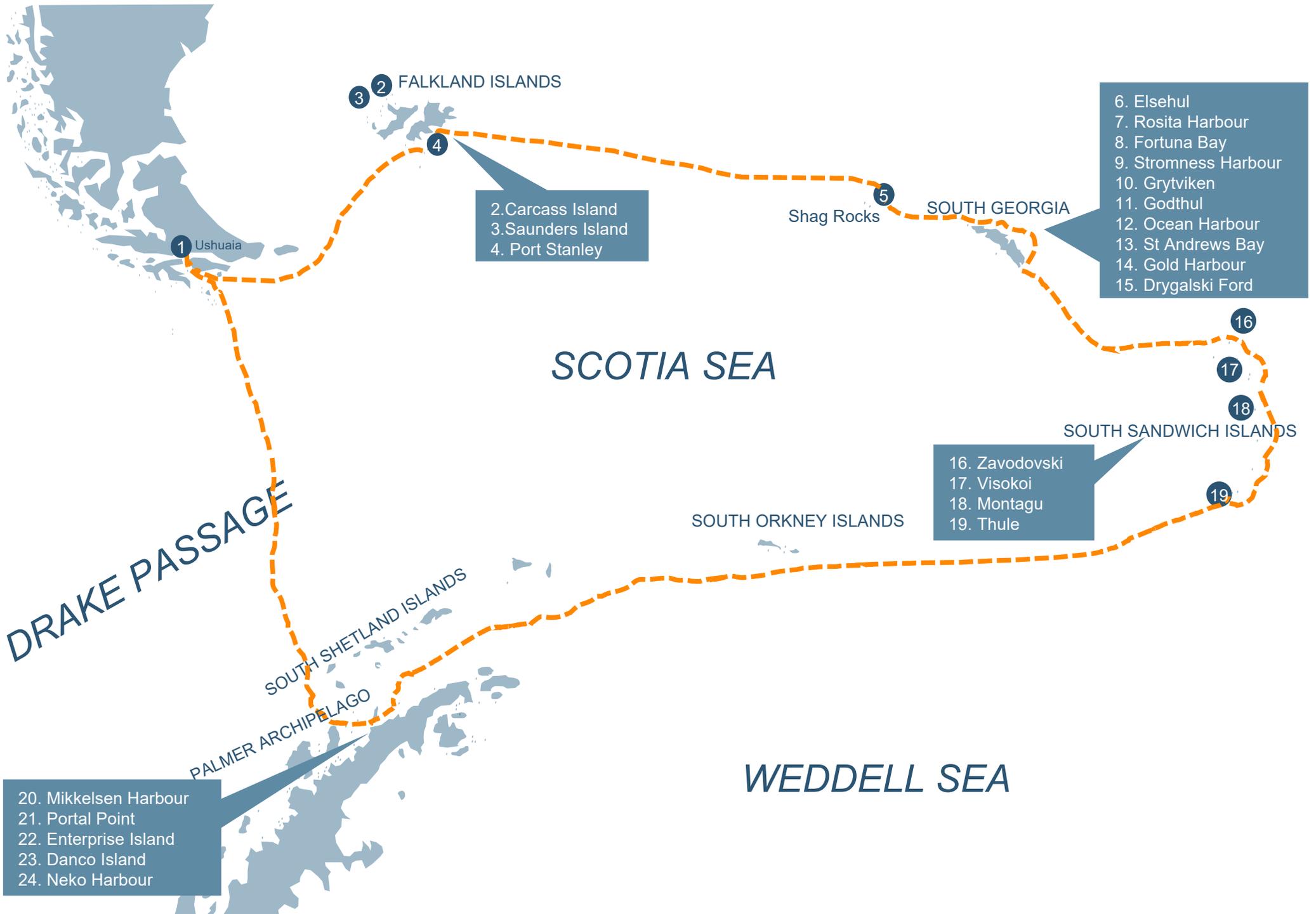
Sadly, our final snorkel but in a super place: Neko Harbour, with active beautiful glaciers close by. Neko Harbour is situated in the iceberg-filled Andvord Bay, surrounded by a glacier. This is our second and final continental landing of the expedition. Our snorkellers went ashore to view the gentoo penguin colony, and some ventured up the slopes, following the flags to a great viewpoint overlooking the glacier. On returning to the Zodiac, we saw a leopard seal close to the shore then lost sight of it. We headed further into the bay, searching for a suitable iceberg to swim round. On our way out we spotted two crabeater seals on an iceberg, who barely acknowledged our existence. It's amazing to see these great animals up close. After finding a suitable iceberg we got ready and checked each other out before entering the water. The 1-degree-Celsius water was clear around the iceberg. The view below the water was literally breathtaking. The colours and textures of the iceberg are unique, and to be in the water witnessing something that many will only see in a photograph is special. Out on the Zodiac they could hear a blow and informed us a minke was nearby. With hardly any notice we could see the large back of this streamlined rorqual heading towards us, then it went below the surface and zoomed past us! Wow, what a feeling: the minke was going so quick! The minke came round for one final encounter but was just too far away for us to see it fly through the water. We have been so fortunate to have had so many interactions with lots of animals, so this was a fitting finale. Lots of happy faces on the Zodiac as we cruised back across the mirror-like water to the *Sylvia Earle*.





Bird Sightings

Bird Species	January											February										
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gentoo Penguin			●					●	●	●		●			●			●	●	●		
Chinstrap Penguin								●			●	●	●	●	●			●	●	●		
Adélie Penguin															●							
King Penguin			●				●	●	●	●	●	●			●							
Macaroni Penguin								●				●	●		●							
Southern Rockhopper Penguin			●																			
Magellanic Penguin			●																			
Wandering Albatross (Snowy)					●	●	●	●														●
Royal Albatross																						●
Black-browed Albatross		●	●	●			●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●							●
Grey-headed Albatross								●														
Light-mantled Albatross						●		●								●	●					
Giant Petrel sp. (Northern or Southern)	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Antarctic Petrel																						
Cape Petrel								●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Snow Petrel												●	●	●	●	●					●	
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern Fulmar)													●	●	●	●	●	●			●	
Blue Petrel												●	●	●								
Grey Petrel					●	●																
Prion sp. (most likely Antarctic)		●				●	●					●	●	●	●	●	●	●			●	
White-chinned Petrel					●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●				
Sooty Shearwater	●		●	●	●	●																
Great Shearwater					●	●																
Soft-plumaged Petrel						●																●
Wilson's Storm Petrel		●			●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Black-bellied Storm Petrel					●	●						●	●									
Imperial Cormorant/Blue-eyed	●		●	●																		
Antarctic Cormorant/Shag																				●	●	





Expeditioners:

Richard Allen	Penelope Casey	Susan Gostick	Peter Moore	Benjamin Tidswell
Lisa Allen	Daniel Casey	James Gostick	Fiona Morgan	Andrea Tidswell
Mark Allison	Patricia Castellanos	Emma Gregory	Claudia Mund	Steven Timmerman
Scot Amedee	Ann Cochrane	Donald Hall	Roger Murray	Aovana Yi Ting Timmerman
Sally Amedee	Georgia Colegrave	Donna Hall	James Nathan	Dieter Toebben
Vinay Awasthi	Stephen Cox	Jane Harris	Fiona Nathan	Nina Tsilikas
Gregg Baker	Wendy Cox	David Harrison	Wendy Newbury	Julie Turner
Fiona Balfour	Joao Da Silva Raminhos Tome	Joanne Hawker	Jonathan Newbury	Gordon Turner
James Balfour	Giles Daubeney	Anthony Hawker	Lesley Patterson	Peter Tyson
Wendy Barker	Marilyn Day	Anni Hockemeyer	Ian Douglas Patterson	Joy Lim Uy
Nigel Barker	Penelope-Jayne Day	Stephanie Holmquist	Paula Petterson	Winston Uy
Ean Beh	Janet Deisley	John Hose	Robert Petterson II	Vivienne Wagstaff
Chai Beh	David Deisley	Godwin Kalb	Chio On Na Raminhos Tome	Berrick Wagstaff
Elesa Bennett	Michael Dickson	Xiaoquan Liu	Diana Scott-Waine	Stephen Weddell
Philip Bennett	David Dickson	Angela Mast	David Smith	John Weigel
Charles Betlach Ii	Corin Doregger	Roderic Mast	Elizabeth Snodgrass	Janet Weigel
Christopher Bowers	Peter Eastway	Hannah McCormick	John Snodgrass	George Weston
Peter Brändle	Richard Fay	John McCormick	Michael Southby	Katharine Weston
Karin Brändle	Michael Field	Joyce Millen	Kerry Southby	Desley Whisson
Robyn Brewer	Angela Field	Claire Mitchell	Lance Stibbs	Kathryn Willis
Mark Brewer	Malati Gadgil	Kenneth Moore	Silvia Taccani	Louis Wycisk
Jan Burén	Prudence Giddings	Kristen Moore	Li Tan	Motoyo Yamada
Anthony Burslem	Robert Giddings	Alexander Moore	Siok Tan	Lin Zhu
Megan Casey	Barbara Gonda	David Moore	Philippa Tarjan	



Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Christian Sauvigny
Assistant Expedition Leader: Leo Soibelzon
Onboard Expedition Manager: Ashleigh Peters
Naturalist: Olivia Laquebecoise
Naturalist: Maude Sill
Historian: Jonathan Chester
Geologist: Marcos Goldin
Photography Guide: Scott Portelli
Expedition Medic: Nicole Genoud
Expedition Guide: Kelsey Camacho
Kayaking Guide: Russell Henry
Kayaking Guide: Anula Jochym
Kayaking Guide: Erin Scott
Kayaking Guide: Hodei Orueta Ruibal
Kayaking Guide: Tim Vanhoutteghem
Snorkel Guide: Eddie Hauzer
Snorkel Guide: Richard Gannon
Zodiac Master: Serghei Hincu
Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ari Benzo Ciria

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Artem Kolmykov
Chief Officer: Andrey Gilevskiy
Second Officer: Raymer Fernandes
Deck Cadet: Carlos Florido Carvalho Da Silva
Safety Officer: Matko Zagorac
Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan
Ship Doctor: Gloria Gonzales Iraheta
Chief Engineer: Constantin Turmacu
Chief Engineer: Ujevic Branimir
First Engineer: Petr Alyenkov
IT Officer: Valentin Cojocar
Hotel Director: Alex Barker
F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram
Head Bartender: Lloyd Laylo
Chief Purser: Josephine Blanco
Executive Chef: Cristiand Carlos Minl Pineda
Sous Chef: Hubert Ramiro Barreto
Hotel Controller: Orlando Costa
Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska
Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla
Head Stateroom Attendant: Marthony Penalosa
Able Seaman: Lexter Fadriquela
Able Seaman: Rene Casipe
Able Seaman: Anthony John Brosas
Able Seaman: Noel Reugia
Able Seaman: Rossell Fernandez Araujo
Able Seaman: Rajiv Rauniyar

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