

Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 10 January 2024 – 20 January 2024



Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Wednesday 10 January 2024

Position at 1600 on 10 January

Latitude: 54°48.6'S

Longitude: 068°18.1'W

Course: Alongside

Speed: Alongside

Wind Speed: 7 knots SW

Barometer: 992 hPa

Air Temp: 14°C

Today we embarked the *Sylvia Earle*, our lovely home for the next few weeks. We decided to leave Ushuaia the following morning, a bit of a delayed departure, to make the Drake Passage as comfortable as possible. In proper expedition fashion, plans sometimes change!

Once everyone was on board, it was time to go through our safety briefing and lifeboat drill. We then met our Expedition Leader, Mario, and the rest of the Expedition Team, all coming from a variety of backgrounds and specialties. Mario showed us the wind and wave forecast from Windy, our trusty weather site, and the vibrant colours showed us that it was probably best to stay in the shelter of the Ushuaia port a few more hours.

It will be exciting to head through the Beagle Channel tomorrow, enjoying the end of the South American continent before making our way even further south. Today, we have plenty of time to get to know the ship and all the fine amenities on board. The atmosphere is buzzing with excitement for our coming journey, and the spirit of adventure is alive. Just like the earlier explorers who ventured into the unknown, we will soon head off on our own expedition.

Once leaving the Beagle, it will be time to start crossing the infamous Drake Passage in the evening and we will continue crossing over the next couple days. We are hoping for smooth sailing, but it is anyways exciting to cross over such a legendary body of water. What makes the Drake so dramatic? The strong Antarctic Circumpolar Current circles around the globe uninhibited, no landmass to slow it down. The heavy winds and currents funnel through this narrow passage between Tierra del Fuego and the Antarctic Peninsula, often causing enormous swells and waves.



Ushuaia | Beagle Channel

DAY 2 | Thursday 11 January 2024

Position at 1600 on 11 Jan

Latitude: 54°48.6'S

Longitude: 068°18.1'W

Course: Alongside

Speed: Alongside

Wind Speed: 20 knots SW

Barometer: 992 hPa

Air Temp: 14°C

Although it was an unexpected extra day in Ushuaia, it was a great day in Ushuaia! We had extremely high winds, which delayed our departure. In the morning we saw another ship trying to dock at the pier unsuccessfully because of the winds, breaking one of their lines and dropping an emergency anchor. The port even closed for a few hours because of the winds, so it was a good day to be exploring by bus.

Aurora arranged to keep us at the pier for an extra night and organised a tour for us.

The day was sunny with clear skies and the buses made way and explored the lake regions. Our tour guide told us these kinds of sunny days are very rare down here at the end of the world. We drove out of town through the windy mountains and ended up at a beautiful spot by Lake Fagnano, to go for a walk and soak up the beautiful views around us.

After a bit of sightseeing, we stopped for a delicious traditional Fuegian lamb lunch! The lamb had been roasted over the fire for hours before we arrived, and we ate lunch as we were serenaded by a lovely traditional guitar player.

A few guests remained on board and enjoyed the ship facilities and lunch with the option to head into Ushuaia if they wished to explore and walk around the waterfront, go shopping or also grab a bite to eat.

After we finished the tour everyone, on the bus got dropped back at the ship and with some great manoeuvres from the Captain and the Bridge team, we safely got off the pier and started on our way!

As we sailed through the Beagle Channel, we got our IAATO briefings and biosecurity out of the way so that we didn't have to do any of it during the Drake crossing, which was a good idea as our Drake crossing, in Mario's rating, would be a 7/10, more of a Drake Shake than Drake Lake

Some of us are excited to experience a rough Drake and some of us are not so sure. It is the price we must pay to get to one of the most beautiful places in the world, and well worth it!





Drake Passage

DAY 3 | Friday 12 January 2024

Position at 0800 on 12 Jan

Latitude: 54°53.255' S

Longitude: 067°52.130' W

Course: 137°

Speed: 12.5 knots

Wind Speed: 15 knots W

Barometer: 990 hPa

Air Temp: 8°C

As Mario had promised, the Drake Shake was in full swing by the time we woke up this morning. Whether rocked to sleep or rocked out of bed, we are all excited that the journey south has commenced and a whole new world is awaiting us.

Vicky, Kelsey and Andrea kept us in good spirits with intriguing lectures that we enjoyed from the spinning chairs in the lecture hall or from the comforts of our bed. Vicky covered the awe-inspiring seabirds. Looking out at the conditions, it is almost incomprehensible that albatross can spend up to eight years at sea before landing and returning to their breeding colony. Flying so effortlessly and never landing except maybe to sleep for a very short period. Conditions were so rough for us mere land mammals that Vicky even had to sit with the computer on the floor to finish her lecture.

Kelsey was up next and shared the lovely story of the Belgica Expedition. Again, looking outside it's hard to imagine anyone or anything surviving in these conditions. Let alone an expedition in the heroic age. This was Roald Amundsen's first major expedition. It was filled with ups and downs, including wintering over and using light therapy for the first recorded time, to help them through the long, dark conditions.

Andrea opened us up to the modern reality of Antarctic exploration and brought things closer to home. Discussing many psychological ramifications that come with the draw of working and exploring in Antarctica. Though we are not there yet, we have been warned of the emotions and feelings that Antarctica can elicit and the awe that will be hard to explain to family and friends we come back to.

The Expedition Team finished the evening with a wonderful recap. Mario ranked the seas a 4 to 5 /10 versus a 7/10 as predicted, and I think we were all glad the weather had mercy on us. Four-metre waves and 40-knot gusts were 'fun' enough. And those who could make it through dinner did. Though the dining area was half-empty, the clatters of plates rung out and wine glasses were held close.

As we go to bed and think of tomorrow, we look forward to passing the Antarctic Convergence, where warm and cold waters interact to lift enormous amounts of sustenance to the service.

We hope to see wildlife feasting and will go to sleep dreaming of spotting our first iceberg on the horizon.



Drake Passage

DAY 4 | Saturday 13 January 2024

Position at 1301 on 13 Jan

Latitude: 61°16.900'S

Longitude: 064°29.654'W

Course: 177°

Speed: 12.8 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots W

Barometer: 997 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

We woke up to noticeably calmer seas: the Drake is treating us better than it did yesterday! More of us managed to appear at breakfast, where we discussed not only the occasional majestic albatross and petrel that soared next to our ship, but also impressive (yet still distant) icebergs we spot in the distance. It is getting markedly more Antarctic out there!

Supporting Antarctic science through conducting on-board Citizen Science projects is a big part of every Aurora expedition. Our Citizen Science coordinators, Vicky and Leo, introduced the projects to us, including Happy Whale and Fjord Phyto. The data that is collected on each voyage gets sent to either a global database or PhD researchers who use it for their work – we make a real contribution to science by supporting on-board Citizen Science! We kicked this off by running a cloud survey on the deck of the ship.

To get us ready to take the best possible pictures of our impending Antarctic adventure, our photographer Pia gave us an introduction to polar photography and after the lecture, helped us with our individual camera settings.

After buffet lunch, we had time to kick back on the ship – for some, this took the form of a coffee, a book, a game with fellow passengers or simply a snooze in our cabins.

In the afternoon, Russell gave us an entertaining presentation on plankton, a keystone species of the Southern Ocean – who knew plankton could look so cute?

This was followed closely by a lecture by Leo, who introduced us to some of the many research projects he has conducted over the course of his 20 years as a researcher in Antarctica. We got treated to fascinating videos about, among others, emperor penguin chicks in their colonies and Weddell seals that were tagged for long-term tracking.

Time passes quickly when brain and belly are fed well – and yet, we can't wait for Antarctica to appear on the horizon! We finished the day with Mario giving us an overview of where the weather will be at tomorrow, and the Expedition Team introducing us to aliens in Antarctica and Adélie penguins. We went to bed content and in anticipation of adventures to come.



Yalour Islands, Port Charcot, Lemaire Channel

DAY 5 | Sunday 14 January 2024

Position at 0646 on 14 Jan

Latitude: 65°11.405' S

Longitude: 064°15.544' W

Course: 123°

Speed: 8.2 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots W

Barometer: 983 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

Mario woke up all with his lovely wake-up call and everyone got ready excited for their first landing in Antarctica after a very impressive Drake Passage.

What an absolutely stellar day it was, with our first stop the Yalour Islands. Expeditioners were lucky today as the wildlife and marine life put on quite the show. Adélie Penguins looking for the perfect pebble on their nests, a few fluffy chicks keeping close for warmth. A mumma and dad and a little chick skua were hanging around feeding on their prey just off to one side, giving guests an impressive view. Everyone enjoyed walking around a circuit onshore, checking out the penguin colonies and taking in the magnificent view around.

After the landing, the Zodiacs explored around, further sighting a leopard seal, and crabeater seal, and checking out the impressive ice and icebergs floating around. For some an impressive display by three humpback whales was seen; the kayakers also managing to get a close view. The perfect morning outing and welcome for everyone to the Southern Continent.

In the afternoon after lunch and a nibble, everyone joined back on the Zodiacs for another afternoon of exploration in Port Charcot. Here, we saw ice in so many forms: in deep crevasses, cascading down mountainsides, in sculptural icebergs that capture the imagination in their form, in the brash ice that crackles around our Zodiacs and kayaks. An exploration of these dramatic ice cliffs along with top-notch weather made it an afternoon to remember.

Back on board, over a few hard earned beverages, everyone listened to the briefing and recap with the Expedition Team and Mario in the Lecture Theatre, before all heading up top to the Observation Lounge Deck to watch the ship come through the Lemaire Channel. The channel is situated between Kyiv Peninsula in the mainland's Graham Land and Booth Island, 11 km (6.8 mi) long and a mere 600 meters (1,970 feet) wide at its narrowest point, and the vertical cliffs funnelled us through the iceberg slalom course.

Ominous vanilla ice-cream cornices threatened to come tumbling down and create a milkshake on the mirrored surface. Here we all gathered for a group photo taken by our wonderful photographer Pia – Name a better spot to capture the energy and the awe we all feel from the day just had.

To end the night with a bit of festivity, hats were handed out, music was played, mulled wine shared around as everyone made their way to the outer decks for the Aurora tradition: a BBQ dinner. People were happily chatting away, soaking up the beautiful world all around before retiring to their cabins ready for another exciting day planned tomorrow.















Peltier Channel, Port Lockroy, Neko Harbour

DAY 6 | Monday 15 January 2024

Position at 0646 on 15 Jan

Latitude: 65°11.405' S

Longitude: 064°15.544' W

Course: 123°

Speed: 8.2 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots W

Barometer: 983 hPa

Air Temp: 4°C

Early riser pastries were in demand today since the whole ship was up and about getting ready for our pre-breakfast exploration. The Peltier Channel awaited us, with the sun slowly coming up over the peaks of the mountain range. The morning's crisp air had us all bundled up in extra layers when we boarded the Zodiacs. But the early wake-up call was worth it: the still, glassy water, icebergs and curious penguins accompanied us when we started our Zodiac exploration through the narrows of the channel. Clear waters eventually gave way to thickening brash ice, through which our boats slowly but surely made way towards our finish line: Port Lockroy. Once, on the ship, the well-welcomed breakfast awaited us together with some new guests: the [human] residents of Base A located on Goudier Island. The team of Port Lockroy shared with us the history of the place, as well as their own stories of living on the tiny island surrounded by thousands of penguins. We also didn't miss the opportunity to do some shopping in their mobile gift shop, together with sending some postcards from the most southern post office in the world!

What a beautiful morning with our wonderful visitors.

After a yummy lunch prepared by our talented chefs guests had the opportunity to have a little nap and lie down before rejoining back in the afternoon in the mudroom for an afternoon of adventure in Neko Harbour! The Zodiacs shuttled everyone across and were greeted by the Expedition Team. Here there was a very decent hike up the side of a mountain till you get to the top looking down over the ice and glaciers. Stopping along the way up to let penguins go past on their little highway, this is so much fun to watch as they waddle up and down between the mountainside and shore - going in for a swim and feed.

A couple of Weddell seals were lazing about at the shore as well, giving guests a good view. The kayakers and snorkellers had a lovely time splashing in the water, checking out the underwater world.

To top it off the weather put on a show for us with bluebird conditions. Everyone went back on board with smiles ear to ear.

Rejoining in the evening for a few drinks, canapés, and another wonderful briefing from our Leader, Mario, and recap from the E-Team. Dinner was served in the Gentoo and Rockhopper and everyone retired to bed for another good night's rest before another day of exciting adventures planned.









Mikkelsen Harbour, Spert Island

DAY 7 | Tuesday 16 January 2024

Position at 0713 on 16 Jan

Latitude: 63°57.876'S

Longitude: 060°54.433'W

Course: 080°

Speed: 10.4 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots W

Barometer: 989 hPa

Air Temp: 5°C

These are the words that echo through my mind, looking out at the Argentine refuge hut in Mikkelsen Harbour this morning.

Our luck has held with the weather. We don't have a bluebird sunny day, as we've grown accustomed to; however, there is still sunshine and warmth that radiates through the soft layer of cloud that separates us from the vast blue sky beyond. We are greeted in the morning to an Antarctic silence: one that is characterised by the low growl of ice calving, and the brays of gentoo penguins. Our exploration of D'Hainaut Island featured Weddell seals and a single elephant seal weaner, all the while being surrounded by the little dramas of penguins as they pay us no mind, focusing on the more important tasks of squawking at neighbours and preening.

The calm of the morning, however, was not long-lasting, as some of the more delusional members of our family afloat were compelled to jump into the 2-degree Celsius waters of the Southern Ocean. The polar plunge was an outrageous success, with many participants - a small minority of whom even enjoyed themselves!

Our afternoon transit was short, and delivered us to one of the most dramatic sites on the Antarctic Peninsula: Spert Island. Towering sea stacks form a labyrinth of stone and ice, shooting out of the sea in incredible forms: arches, caves, sheer cliffs, amphitheatres of volcanic rock. We were dwarfed by their monumentality and their scale, zipping around on our Zodiacs in the bright sunlight. Massive icebergs had collected on the far side of the archipelago, and the waters are alight with the electric teal of underwater ice. Despite the apparent hostility of this place, we had many wildlife encounters, including leopard, crabeater, and Weddell seals, as well as chinstrap penguins, antarctic terns, skuas, and cape petrels.

It may take a day or two at sea for our afternoon at Spert Island to sink into our minds, and for it to feel more than surreal. Or perhaps such a place remains surreal in our minds forever.







Polar Plunge

DAY 7 | Tuesday 16 January 2024















Fort Point – South Shetland Islands

DAY 8 | Wednesday 17 January 2024

Position at 0800 on 17 Jan

Latitude: 62.32.6 S

Longitude: 59.34.5 W

Course: Anchored

Speed: Anchored

Wind Speed: 5 knots NW

Barometer: 997 hPa

This morning we awoke as we pulled into the stunning scenery at Fort Point in the South Shetland islands. As the island slowly revealed itself from the sea fog, we saw a huge glacier almost covering the peaks of the land in front of us.

Our landing spot at Fort Point was a beautiful pebble spit, with a cove on either side fanning out to a dragon's tail of small peaks that diminish as they reduce in size and end in the sea.

Mario wakes us from our beds with his usual dulcet tones and quote of the day. Operations are in full swing before we know it

Snorkellers, Kayakers and walkers are all ready for the last day of exploration before we set sail over the drake.

We have some mighty swells between the boat and the land, so the journey starts with a splashy rodeo where everyone earns their spurs!

As we approach the island, we are greeted by three humpback whales cruising around the point from the front bay to the landing bay on the lee side of the island.

The bay has sculptural icebergs topped with chinstrap and gentoo penguins. And a mighty glacier at the far end, kissing the beach that envelopes us as we round the point and out of the wind behind the shelter of the dragon's tail.

The explorations by land and sea are a phenomenal last experience of Antarctica with fur seals, elephant seals and plenty of penguins, as well as the chance to walk on the tip of the glacier where it met the beach.

To top all of this off, a very placid humpback whale joined us in the bay to watch what we were doing. It stayed relaxing on the surface and mingling with the kayakers.

Another rodeo ride takes us back to the boat to get warm and dry.

Lunch is followed by Andrea's 'Women in Antarctica' lecture.

A very informative and eye-opening hour taking us through the history of women working in Antarctica, from the first opportunities to the current day, and the issues women face in the workforce here.

As always, Andrea delivers the information with fierce intelligence and wry wit, and leaves us all with a lot to think about and continue to learn on the topic, which has now sparked thought and debate in our minds.

Cocktails and recaps blend into another delicious dinner, and then the evening is rounded off with Tamsin's great fun quiz. We all head off to bed to be rocked to sleep by the Drake.







Drake Passage

DAY 9 | Thursday 18 January 2024

Position at 0800 on 18 Jan

Latitude: 54°53.255' S

Longitude: 067°52.130' W

Course: 278°

Speed: 12.5 knots

Wind Speed: 13 knots W

Barometer: 992 hPa

Air Temp: 6°C

We woke to a gently rolling ship and moody skies, but no cheery wake-up call by our Expedition Leader. Somehow we still knew that we were in the most beautiful place in the world... today! We were at sea, steadfastly making our way towards Ushuaia. As we enjoyed breakfast, we could spot the occasional albatross soaring alongside the ship. These majestic birds glide on the slipstream of the ship.

Naturalist Leo gave a lecture about mummified seals that he accidentally discovered on Seymour Island while waiting for a flight back home from Antarctica in the early 2000s. In subsequent research undertaken, he and his team realised that they had discovered a natural trap that lured crabeater seals to their deaths.

After lunch, four members of the E-Team gathered to give us a mini-lecture marathon. Ana spoke about what snorkellers see underwater, Vicky answered questions from the question box and talked about what happens when whales die (also known as whalefall). Russell gave a lively presentation about his seven-month trip by kayak from Brazil to Florida, followed by Andrea who spoke about Ushuaia's informal settlements.

To complete the day's educational program, historian Kelsey then spoke to us about the race to the Pole – the famous Amundsen–Scott competition about who would be the first human to set foot on the South Pole, a hundred and thirteen years (almost) to the day today.

After this full-on feast for the brain, we gathered again for delicious canapés and drinks in the evening, just in time for recap, in which Expedition Leader Mario shared our ship's progress with us, spoke about what to expect from the next day, and answered our questions, including a request for another of his apparently very popular wake-up calls.

Following dinner, some of us could be found playing lively (competitive) games of cards in the Tektite Bar, the name of which, thanks to Anula's excellent recap earlier on, we now knew to connect with the fabulous Sylvia Earle. What better way to put another relaxing and educational sea day to rest than with a glass of something delicious?



Day at Sea

DAY 10 | Friday 19 January 2024

Position at 0600 on 19 Jan

Latitude: 62° 39.5' S

Longitude: 062° 00.0' W

Course: 300°

Speed: 13.2 knot

Wind Speed: 8 knots N

Barometer: 986 hPa

Air Temp: 2°C

Another day has come and the final part of the crossing back to Ushuaia in the Drake Passage.

In the morning, breakfast was enjoyed at a leisurely pace and not too early, as guests enjoyed the view over the ocean and watching the birds swirl round and dive for fish or hang in the thermals.

After a hearty meal, guests joined in the Lecture Theatre for a disembarkation briefing with Asha, running through all the logistics and information needed for the next morning. Shortly after, Peter did a talk and showed a video on some of his stunning photography work over the years, keeping everyone mesmerised. What a lovely addition to have him on board and sharing his passion with us once again.

For those who signed up, the first round of Bridge tours were had – everyone joined the Bridge team up in their ocean-view office, learning all things about what it is they do and asking plenty of questions about how the ship functions.

Before you know it, lunch rolls round and everyone meets again in the restaurants for another yummy meal. Nap time has arrived, and people make their way to their cabins for an hour or so of some peace and quiet. Another round of Bridge tours for those in the afternoon, before joining Andrea with another fascinating and interesting talk, this one all about 'Field Science and Waste Management in Antarctica'. Andrea always has a great way of capturing the audience with her witty sense of humour.

In the evening, Captain Soto joined us to bid farewell to the lovely new family we have all become acquainted with before a final briefing by our dearest Mario – getting a standing ovation from all the guests with his final words. And there you have it: a final dinner in the dining room and our hotel director also thanking all his department.

What a journey it has been, what fun we have had, and what beautiful memories and friends we have created. A trip not to forget for all.



Ushuaia

DAY 11 | Saturday 20 January 2024

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



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: Tim Vanhoutteghem, Anula Jochym and Matthew Barnes

Number of Kayakers: 19

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled: 30 km

Paddlers:	Peter Morris	William (Ross) Grayson	Helen Williams
Marie Hunter	Elizabeth Morris	Amanda Howe	Kristie Collins
Angus Hunter	Mark Seigel	Steven Howe	Nathalie Parent
Christopher Hunter	Jean Wilson	Michelle Crow	Danielle Segal
Henry Hunter	Helen Grayson	Bridget Lack	Louise Carpenter

14/01/2024, AM: Yalour Islands. Distance paddled: 8 kms

A spectacular, sunny and calm morning exploring this small, low-lying island and its numerous islets. We enjoyed the antics of the commuting Adélie penguins making their way to and from the main colony, then weaved into the 'rock garden' just south, where we got to observe a couple of mini-colonies and even a few chicks. Had to look close to distinguish a couple of snoozing Weddell seals from their smooth of rocky beds. Next we explored brash ice and beautiful icebergs, then returned to and completed our circumnavigation of the island, admiring moss and lichens, and a rolling berg. Paddling back towards the ship, we were treated to an incredible surprise when a humpback whale surfaced right between our kayak formation!

14/01/2024, PM: Port Charcot. Distance paddled: 5 kms

In more perfect weather, we dropped amongst and weaved cautiously between the huge, magnificent icebergs of Salpêtrière Bay, enjoying occasional porpoising gentoo penguins. Let the current pull us around Hervéou Point and peaked into Rallier channel, then followed by a shore landing to see the cairn overlook.

15/01/2024, AM: Peltier Channel. Distance paddled: 3 kms

A clear, calm, early morning. A before-breakfast operation in an amazing place. We launched and traversed a section of Peltier Channel, between Dourmer and Wienke islands. A humpback whale joined us early on, and another (or the same) passed going the other way later on. We pushed through some brash, before picking up and shuttling through thick brash back to the ship.

15/01/2024, PM: Neko Harbour. Distance paddled: 3 kms

Another bluebird outing in a massive, glacially lined bay, unusually ice-free, allowing us to take in the acoustics of calving glaciers, avalanches, and crackling brash ice. A lone minke whale passed by before splitting up, some going to shore for the gentoos and overlook. The rest of us stayed on the water a while, just long enough to find a moment of Zen out of view of the ship.

16/01/2024, AM: Mikkelsen Harbour. Distance paddled: 6 kms

Sun gave way to partially overcast skies, but the wind remained mild for this split exploration of the two outer stretches of the main cove. Those who went west would appreciate beautiful geology of a mushroom-shaped islet with an arch, a water encounter with a leopard seal, and some Weddell seals hanging with a gentoo colony, before paddling back to the main island-colony. The eastern party also found great wildlife: numerous Weddell seals, before going to shore for a walk around the island colony with its hut and whaling artifacts.

17/01/2024, AM: Fort Point. Distance paddled: 6 kms

This last kayak operation was an excellent venue with just the right conditions to challenge our now well-practised team. A decent katabatic wind coming off impressive Musala glacier chopped up the water north of the isthmus, leaving the outer pinnacles and cliffs protected for exploring nooks, crannies, and narrow channels, surrounded by rambunctious chinstrap penguins all the while — some hilariously launching and clumsily dismounting from bergy bits. As the winds picked up, we were then all treated to a lazy and cooperative humpback whale, most likely resting or 'logging'. A run in along the main beach would be our last experience of a proper, smelly penguin rookery in full swing, with both chinstraps and gentoos.





Snorkelling Log

Snorkel Guide: Nicki Meharg, Remi Ritchie, Ana Poulalion

Number of Snorkellers: 13

Total Outings: 5

Snorkellers:	Maria	Francisco	Karen
Tim	Elsa	Tamika	Sandrine
Joneen	Ricardo	Derek	
Anthony	Araceli	Emily	

14/01/2024, AM: Yalour Islands

The journey has begun for our fellow underwater Expeditioners. After braving the donning of dry suits we ventured out into the beautiful snowy terrains of Yalour island, scattered with Adélie penguin rookeries, and hatchlings learning the ways of the pebble. After finding a glassy, protected lagoon to snorkel in, the group is excited to take that first leap into the icy-cold waters of Antarctica! There are smiles on all faces as they appreciate there are no leaks in their dry suits, and even bigger smiles after they find themselves with penguins zooming through the water column in front of their very eyes! A Zodiac cruise amongst the labyrinth of icebergs then led us to a spectacle of nature: humpback whales surfacing close by that left everyone speechless!

14/01/2024 PM: Port Charcot

As we venture into the afternoon we find ourselves at the top of Port Charcot, with a breathtaking 360-degree view surreal wonder. With mountains on one side and an iceberg graveyard on the other, what more could you ask for? Did somebody say more penguins...? The gentoos have joined the party in flocks, porpoising through the water like mini torpedoes. After filling up our dry suits with sweat, another snorkel is in order! Krill, starfish, molluscs, sea urchins were all on the list of creatures to be seen, as well as our beloved penguins, making this a fantastic first day introduction to the most southern waters of the world. To finish it off with a ship cruise through the narrow and scenic Le Maire Channel, what a lucky experience this truly is!

15/01/2024: Neko Harbour

Once again, the snorkel team are ready for an exciting day full of adventures. Starting the day with an early Zodiac tour through Peltier Channel en route to Port Lockroy, with magical scenery pathed with picturesque icebergs and littered with brash ice, the channel seemed endless but eventually led us to Port Lockroy. After a decent glimpse of the bay, which was littered with penguins and a few leopard seals, it was time to leave Port Lockroy and face their next snorkel location.

Neko Harbour, in every direction were raised cliffs with glaciers wedged in between, icebergs and small amounts of brash ice covering the glassy waters. Beautiful, stony drop-offs can be seen in the depths, with the inviting kelp bringing the sea floor alive. A few penguins joining the ranks of the snorkellers leaving the team with bright faces and memories to share!

16/01/2024: D'Hainaut Island, Mikkelsen Harbour, Trinity Island

The new day has once again greeted us with calm seas and beautiful scenery. Arriving at D'Hainaut Island we see a colony of gentoo penguins waiting to be played with! Hopping on the island in dry suits, 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 lead to excited spirits on the Zodiac! Jumping into the fresh 2-degrees-Celsius water, the punters are on their way. Small invertebrates are scattered amongst the shallow, rocky bottom, with plenty of red and brown seaweeds to add colour! The gentoo penguins, with their speed and agility, are able to mysteriously pass us by in an instant, almost as if they are intentionally taunting us! But due to the mass of penguins this did not matter, and everyone was able to see plenty of penguins and have truly beautiful and memorable moments with the cheeky penguins. We were now sufficiently cold and ready to take on the plunge! And if that was not enough to finish the day, a sensational Zodiac cruise was had in the labyrinth we call Spert Island.

17/01/2024: Fort Point

The team is full of excitement and anticipation this morning as we venture into a brand-new day to Fort Point. Starting the day off strongly with a quick Zodiac mission, we are accompanied by a lone whale resting in the protected bay, side by side with icebergs. After saying goodbye to our cetacean friends, we found ourselves looking into the lives of the local gentoo penguins with their adorable chicks, as well as some sporadic chinstrap penguins. A quick walk on land to stretch the legs then it's time for a dip! The penguins are in full flock this morning, porpoising and zooming around in the beautiful calm waters. Some have made temporary accommodation on the floating icebergs, giving the snorkellers plenty to look at with a bit of comedic relief as the penguins struggle to stay out to the tipping iceberg! After having braved these cold waters for the last time, it is safe to say it was a successful trip and beautiful experiences were had by all.





Paddling Log

Paddle Guide: Russell Henry, Erin Scott

Number of Kayakers: 8

Total Paddle Outings: 5

Total Distance Paddled: 11.5 km

Paddlers:

Rob Nemeth

Kim Wolfe

Jenn Hannay

Ali Wolfe

Bryce Malsbary

Jeanette Burrell

Bobby Vanduren

Marika Witt

14/01/2024, AM: Yalour Island. Distance paddled: 3 kms

Our first paddle started off with a bang in the beautiful Yalour Islands, replete with Adélie penguins, Weddell seals, a humpback whale, and a mysterious tall ship, which we never quite confirmed wasn't a pirate ship! We all got a feel for our new boats and took off to weave around the main island and through the little skerries that surround it. We had amazing weather, with skies as vast and blue as the ocean beneath us, and hardly any wind. Icebergs floated around us, and we get to see for the first time their intricate patterns from the low angle of the water.

14/01/2024, PM: Port Charcot. Distance paddled: 3 kms

Port Charcot greeted us with sunny skies and a whole lot of ice! This area is famous for collecting large icebergs that get caught in the current and are grounded in the channel. Enormous bergs created a labyrinth for us to paddle through. We meandered our way to Hovgaard Island and followed the coastline, enjoying the brays of a few gentoo penguins, and a group of imperial shags that took off from the water and flew overhead. We continued on, exploring the ice, and held a small meditation with the sounds of brash ice crackling in our ears.

15/01/2024, PM: Neko Harbour. Distance paddled: 2 kms

After a cold morning with no paddling, everyone was excited to get out on the water and in the sunshine. Neko Harbour certainly delivered! A colosseum of ice-covered mountains, Neko is an absolutely spectacular place to be out on the water. Everyone came out for a short but stunning paddle along the glacier faces. Making sure to keep our distance from them, we listened to them crack and groan and eventually, saw a good chunk of ice fall off an iceberg! Once we reached the shoreline, we all jumped back in the Zodiac with Erin and the Wolfe pack's dad, Michael, and headed to shore.

16/01/2024, AM: Mikkelsen Harbour. Distance paddled: 2 kms

This morning we launched directly from the ship for the first time and paddled to our destination: D'Hainaut Island in Mikkelsen Harbour! We circumnavigated the island, getting a chance to get up close to the gentoo colony and witness their little dramas. When we rounded the corner, we also get to see our first elephant seal – a weaner sitting on the beach! There is a spectacular glaciated backdrop around the island, and we continue onto the landing site, passing a Weddell seal, and of course, more penguins. Russell picked us up in the Zodiac, and then we headed to land to see the whaling artefacts, the Argentine refuge hut, and the wildlife from another angle.

17/01/2024, AM: Fort Point. Distance paddled: 1.5 kms

You could tell this morning that the weather was shifting, and with this as our last operation in Antarctica, thankfully it held! We towed off the ship, but after having some trouble with the boats staying in line our solution was for Marika and Ali to jump in the last boat... and it worked great! Antarctic tubing for the win! Once on the water we picked our way around the rocky point until we heard reports of a whale being in the vicinity. We headed out into some gusty weather and arrived just in time. The whale was relaxing, and then showed us a perfect fluke as it headed out to deeper waters. What an amazing final paddle and experience in Antarctica!





Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species

January

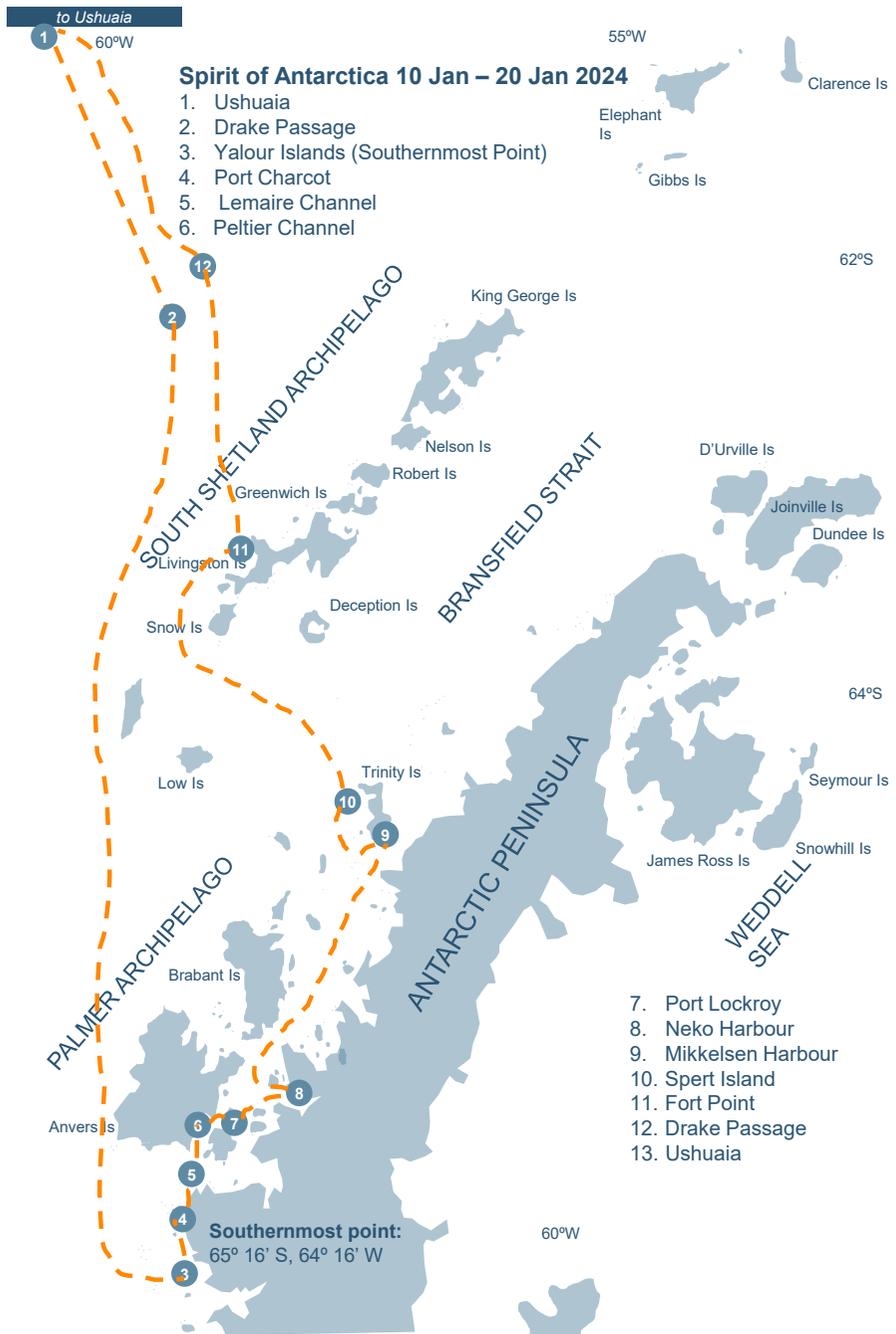
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Gentoo Penguin				●	●	●	●			
Chinstrap Penguin				●	●		●			
Adélie Penguin				●						
Magellanic Penguin		●								●
Wandering Albatross (Snowy)			●					●		
Black-browed Albatross			●					●	●	
Light-mantled Albatross								●		
Giant Petrel sp. (Northern or Southern)		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Cape Petrel		●	●			●	●	●		
Snow Petrel						●				
Antarctic Fulmar (Southern Fulmar)							●	●		
Prion sp. (most likely Antarctic)			●	●			●	●	●	
White-chinned Petrel			●	●				●	●	
Wilson's Storm-petrel		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Imperial Cormorant (Blue-eyed Shag)				●		●	●			
Cormorant sp. (unidentified)		●								●
Skua (Brown or South Polar)				●	●	●	●			
Kelp Gull	●	●		●	●	●	●			●
South American Tern		●								●
Snowy Sheathbill					●	●	●			
Dolphin Gull	●	●								●

Mammal Species

January

	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Antarctic Fur Seal							●			
Southern Elephant Seal							●			
Crabeater Seal				●						
Weddell Seal				●	●	●	●			
Leopard Seal				●	●					
Humpback Whale				●	●		●			
Peale's Dolphin		●								●







Expeditioners:

Vanduren Roberta Ann Beatrice

Mitchell Emily Phyllis

Witt Marika Teresa

Collins Kristie L

Parent Nathalie

Grayson William Ross

Grayson Helen Maree

Leadbitter Mark Robert

Leadbitter Bernadette Therese

Troup Anthony John

Troup Joneen Shirley

Gentry Anna Veronica

Gentry Cory Jason

Strong Clive James

Strong Martha Jane

Erwin-Rose Sandrine

Howe Steven James

Howe Amanda Elizabeth

Smith Ross Howard

Smith Mary Christine

McCarthy Nathan Eric

Neale Ailsa Eileen

Glauser Geoffrey P

Mc Kenna Karen Louise

Flynn Kelsey Maureen Aimata

Stevenson Karen Maureen

Mc Kenna Susan Kathleen

Carroll Thomas Joseph

Carroll Bernadette

Charvel Orozco Ricardo

Diaz De Charvel Elsa

Castro Salinas Francisco Javier

Martinez del Campo Alaman Araceli Maria

Fairleigh Kenneth F

Fairleigh Judith Gail

Dixon Sarah Louise

Dixon Clifford John

Blacket Gillian Ruth

Blacket Stuart Edmund

Papirnik Piers Andrew Michael

Papirnik Christine Mary

Holmes Helen Maree

Taylor Graham Robert

Saam Marisa Christine

Tiriveedhi Sumavamsi

Tiriveedhi Pavana Krishna

Willey Gabriel Lee

Main Denise Maillet

Main Elliott Kingwill

Rowan Michele Catherine

Rowan Geoffrey Charles Leacroft

Eastway Peter Anthony

Leydon Linda Diane

Leydon Alph Joseph

Powell Olivia Erin

Powell David William

Hunter Angus Frayne

Hunter Marie-Therese

Crow Michelle Lynn

Shchuka Maria Ivanna

Hirako Justin Kiyoshi

Lawler Karen

Lawler Thomas Michael

Morris Elizabeth Therese

Morris Peter John

Barnes Barry Joseph

Barnes Dinorah Flores

Slater Thomas Fitzpatrick

Slater Amy Austin

Lackie Matthew Callahan

Lackie Bridget Bangert

Botaya Paredes Maria Teresa

Fajer Flores Antonio

Brady Timothy Patrick

Filippi Donna Louise

Gieschen Cindy Anne

Gieschen Harry John

Lee Weng Keng

Lee Yen Ngo

Sheehan Cheryl Anne

Ringland Alan

Ringland Cathy Patricia

Heiden Derek Paul

Heiden Tamika Louise

Price Ilana Rachel

Price Alan Hayden

Blanco Prieto Marla

Perez Peraza Herbert

Narumi Shingo

Meyer Frederick John

Meyer Barbara Gae

Franklin Kristen Lynn

Nemeth Robert Joseph

Carpenter Louise Jane

Carpenter Susan Jane Stephenson

De La Rue Keith Alexander

De La Rue Marilyn Faye

Segal Danielle Sarita

Segal David

Peek Gregory Joseph

Peek Jillian Louise

Burrell Jeanette Alice

Malsbary Bryce Alan

Fernandes Melanie Afonso

Konstantopoulos David Paul

Siegel Mark William

Wilson Jean Marie

Allison Sheila Katherine

Allison Glenn Fraser Whyte

Williams Helen Elizabeth

Mag Harry Thomas

Mag Oliver James

Mag Miklos Zoltan

Hunter Christopher Angus

Hunter Henry Walter

Hannay Jennifer Lynn

Wolfe Michael Duke

Wolfe Kimberly Greer

Wolfe Allison Jeanne



Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Mario Placidi Spring

Assistant Expedition Leader: Jeff Nagel

Onboard Expedition Manager: Ashleigh Peters

Marine Biologist/Citizen Science Coordinator: Vicky Inglis

Naturalist: Leo Siobelzon

Historian: Kelsey Camacho

Anthropologist: Andrea Herbert

Photography Guide: Pia Harboure

Expedition Medic: Laura Boenish

Expedition Guide: Tamsin Both

Kayaking Guide: Russell Henry

Kayaking Guide: Anula Jochym

Kayaking Guide: Erin Scott

Kayaking Guide: Matthew Barnes

Kayaking Guide: Tim Vanhoutteghem

Snorkel Guide: Remi Ritchie

Snorkel Guide: Nichola Meharg

Snorkel Guide: Ana Poulalion

Zodiac Master: Jeb Pearce

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ari Benzo Ciria

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Donael Soto Hernandez

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: Balvant Singh

F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram

Head Bartender: Lloyd Laylo

Chief Purser: Josephine Blanco

Executive Chef: Cristiand Carlos Minl Pineda

Sous Chef: Hubert Ramiro Barreto

Hotel Controller: Orlando Costa

Receptionist: Kateryna Tauzhnianska

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Stateroom Attendant: Marthony Penalosa

Able Seaman: Lexter Fadriquela

Able Seaman: Rene Casipe

Able Seaman: Anthony John Brosas

Able Seaman: Noel Reugia

Able Seaman: Rossell Fernandez Araujo

Able Seaman: Rajiv Rauniyar

Photography thanks to:

Pia Harboure

Nichola Meharg

Russell Henry

Mike Roberts

