

Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 13 – 23 November 2024





Spirit of Antarctica

13–23 November 2024

Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Wednesday 13 November 2024

Latitude:
54°80.9.' S
Longitude:
68°29.1' W

Course:
Alongside
Speed:
Alongside

Wind Speed:
3 knots S
Barometer:
996 hPa

Air Temp:
7°C

At 4pm, we clambered up the gangway where the Aurora team and onboard hotel staff showed us to our cabins. Then it was time to be the very first passengers to explore our new home-away-from-home, the *Sylvia Earle*.

On board we total 82 adventurers with nationalities representing Australia (17), Canada (2), Chile (1), France (1), Mexico (2), Singapore (3), Spain (1), UK (6), USA (49) along with 21 Expedition Team and 86 ship's crew from all over the world.

We had time to unpack, settle into cabins and enjoy a lovely Welcome Buffet before Expedition Leader, Flo, called us together to welcome us aboard the *Sylvia Earle*.

Afterwards we received our lifeboat and safety briefing and readied ourselves for the abandon ship drill.

During the Welcome Briefing we cast off our lines and steamed east along the beautiful Beagle Channel. The bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded as we made our way past slopes forested with beech, and snowy slopes brilliant in the steely light. To our portside the snow-capped peaks of Argentina; Chile to our starboard. We saw a veritable spate of birds as we sailed closer to the Drake Passage.



At Sea

DAY 2 | Thursday 14 November 2024

Latitude:
56°55.6' S

Longitude:
064°41.2' W

Course:
158°

Speed:
14.2 knots

Wind Speed:
5 NW

Barometer:
994 hPa

Air Temp:
8°C

The day began with a buffet breakfast in our onboard restaurants, courtesy of our talented galley team.

Afterward, some of us joined expedition medic, Ashley, in the observation lounge to learn a bit about chartwork and to enter our guesses in the iceberg-spotting competition.

By mid-morning, we all found ourselves gathered in the lecture room for a set of mandatory briefings hosted by our Expedition Team. During this session, we learned all about how to be a responsible and respectful visitor to the Antarctic. We also heard about the Citizen Science Program on board and learned about the Zodiacs that we will use during our adventure.

By mid-afternoon, many of us found ourselves back in the lecture room for a talk with our onboard ornithologist, Snowy, about the many seabirds of the Southern Ocean. This was followed by a quick bird survey on the outer decks before a lecture on mobile phone photography with our expedition photographer, DJ. During the afternoon, many of us were also kept busy with some mandatory activity briefings to get us prepared for snorkelling, kayaking, and snowshoeing in the Antarctic.



At Sea | Deception Island

DAY 3 | Friday 15 November 2024

Latitude:
62°25' S
Longitude:
062°03' W

Course:
165°
Speed:
9.6 knots

Wind Speed:
NNW
Barometer:
978 hPa

Air Temp:
8°C

The morning kicked off with an informative and very entertaining lecture from Dani on the types of whales we might encounter down here in the Southern Ocean.

Next was a great workshop on how to photograph wildlife by guest speaker, Amos Nachoum. His amazing photos inspired us, his passion was infectious, and we left keen to try to capture some Antarctic animals with our cameras.

Before lunch we had a short briefing about our afternoon plans. The ship had made good time, and we would be making a landing this afternoon in Whalers Bay on Deception Island. More accurately inside the island. Deception is a huge sea-filled caldera that is an active

volcano. The last big eruption was in 1970.

After lunch, the elusive entrance to Deception Island was in our sights. Neptune's Bellows was a narrow entrance with steep cliffs on both sides that funnelled the wind. As we left the ship for our first outing, gentoo penguins greeted us, swimming to shore.

The old rusting and splintered ruins had an eerie presence, all that remained of a different time, when whales were used as a precious resource. Some of us hiked up to the lookout, a few brave souls snorkelled and dived in the frigid waters, while a group of kayakers paddled under the cliffs we had passed by.





Sprightly Island | Recess Cove

DAY 4 | Saturday 16 November 2024

Latitude:
64°15'0 S

Longitude:
061°18'.5 W

Wind Speed:
4 S

Barometer:
965 hPa

Course:
Ice Navigation

Speed:
6 knots

Air Temp:
1°C

After breakfast we realised that the ice was way too dense around the ship, so we decided to head towards Graham Passage, seeking for openings in the ice and hoping to get through that narrow channel.

Before lunch we had a briefing about camping in Antarctica that was given by Dave and Monika. Some of us were keen to spend a night outside if conditions would allow, so we had to put together all the necessary gear and be ready for that exciting experience.

Meanwhile, Gaby, our Citizen Science coordinator, was carrying out the cloud survey – 15 keen enthusiasts attended, and some cool clouds were spotted.

Our vessel arrived at Recess Cove, the ice opened, and the sun was shining – the conditions were just marvellous! Everyone enjoyed the Zodiac cruise among the spectacular icebergs, with an amazing backdrop all around.

Straight after the outing more than half of the Expeditioners did the polar plunge – a glorious tradition and true challenge both for body and mind!

After dinner, the campers headed to a tiny island in the cove to spend a refreshing night in the snow after the camping ground had to be moved, as 30 to 40 penguins decided that the intended site was to their liking and took it over! The rest of us wished them luck from the warmth of our cabins...





Charlotte Bay | Portal Point

DAY 5 | Sunday 17 November 2024

Latitude:
64°31'32 S
Longitude:
061°38'76 W

Wind Speed:
8 knots
Barometer:
982 hPa

Course:
180°
Speed:
1 knots

Air Temp:
3°C

After a hearty breakfast on board, it was time to head out for a Zodiac cruise in Charlotte Bay. The air was crisp, the water still, and the landscape around us was a surreal mix of icy cliffs and snow-covered peaks.

As we cruised, we spotted groups of gentoo penguins, their tuxedo-like coats a striking contrast against the white ice. Further along, an Adélie penguin waddled on the shore, its black-and-white form popping against the cold, grey rocks. But the highlight came when we spotted a crabeater seal lounging lazily on an ice floe, its sleek body a rare treat for everyone.

By midday we were ready for more adventure. The good

ship *Sylvia Earle* moved on to Portal Point, a windswept shore that promised new sights. As the Zodiacs grounded on the icy shore, we all scrambled to our feet, eager to explore.

Three Weddell seals lay basking on the ice, their large bodies undisturbed by the human presence.

A handful of gentoo penguins waddled by, barely acknowledging the visitors.

Afterwards, we returned to the warmth of the ship, where Chief Scientist, Gaby, led them through a fascinating cloud survey, pointing out various atmospheric phenomena in the chilly sky.







Damoy Point | Port Lockroy

DAY 6 | Monday 18 November 2024

Latitude:
64°44':1 S
Longitude:
063°15':7 W

Course:
213.6°
Speed:
9.6 knots

Wind Speed:
5.8 knots NNE
Barometer:
996 hPa

Air Temp:
3°C

Our plan for the morning was to visit Damoy Point, on Wiencke Island.

The Expedition Team renovated steps in the fresh snow so we could visit Damoy Hut, constructed by the British Antarctic Service (BAS) in the mid-1970s, as well as the Argentinian Refugio Bahia Dorian hut dating back to 1953.

We were allowed access to the Damoy Hut, a historic site set up as it was several decades ago with antique tins of old foodstuffs... well before use-by dates.

The Argentinian hut is on the verge of dereliction, with snow pushing in the front door.

Immediately under the Damoy Hut we were able to have a close view of the antics of a pair of breeding gentoos.

The snowshoers covered a lot of ground and most of us completed a circuit of the point.

After lunch we had a visit from the BAS team at Port Lockroy.

We then visited their post office, shop and museum, as well as the resident gentoo penguins. Many of us had bought postcards and stamps to post from this southernmost post office in the world.

Also at Port Lockroy we saw a gentoo nesting on one of the first eggs of the season.

There was also a Zodiac cruise around Goudier Island, with one Zodiac doing an impromptu spot of Citizen Science.







Neko Harbour | Cuverville Island

DAY 7 | Tuesday 19 November 2024

Latitude:
64°46'.49S
Longitude:
062°46'.16 W

Course:
167°
Speed:
8.2 knots

Wind Speed:
30 N
Barometer:
984 hPa

Air Temp:
2°C

The Antarctic welcomed us with a flurry of snowflakes as we set out for Neko Harbour in the morning, our hearts pounding with anticipation.

Upon landing, we hiked to the viewpoint, where the panoramic glacier views took our breath away. The sight of these ancient giants calving into the sea was a sight to behold, and the penguins, unfazed by the snow, waddled about, adding a touch of whimsy to the scene.

After a warm lunch, we ventured to Cuverville Island in the afternoon, where the gentoo penguins outnumbered us significantly. Their colonies sprawled across the island, a testament to the resilience of life in this harsh environment.

The snowfall continued, but it only seemed to heighten the beauty of the landscape, transforming it into a winter wonderland.

Before dinner, historian, Tim, regaled us with the tale of explorer Gerlache, whose intrepid spirit mirrored our own journey.

Gaby shared her sighting of lenticular clouds, a phenomenon as mesmerising as it is rare. Dani enlightened us on the importance of krill, the tiny crustaceans that form the base of the Antarctic food chain. And photographer, DJ, offered a masterclass on editing photos with an iPhone, turning our digital snapshots into masterpieces.







Curtiss Bay | Mikkelsen Harbour

DAY 8 | Wednesday 20 November 2024

Latitude:
64°09.7' S
Longitude:
061°21.6' W

Course:
057°
Speed:
6.7 knots

Wind Speed:
23.1 knots NNW
Barometer:
996 hPa

Air Temp:
2°C

After breakfast, Snowy presented a much-anticipated lecture on the lives and behaviours of the various penguins that occur in the Southern Ocean.

Following the penguin lecture, and assessment of the conditions by the Expedition Leader and the Captain, a short Zodiac cruise was deemed unfeasible.

So, instead, we had the next best thing: HOT CHOCOLATE up on deck 8, looking out towards the beautiful landscape that was slowly revealing itself through the clearing cloud cover.

After the hot chocolate, Dani delivered a wonderfully informative lecture on the seals of the Southern Ocean.

The wind and swell subsided and we were able to disembark for a landing in Mikkelsen Harbour. This destination is perfect for a final destination: it is the site of a gentoo penguin colony, an Argentinian refuge hut, and has remains of the whaling industry. There is also an 'Automatic Weather Station' on land, completing the package of natural and cultural history. There is always something of interest to see and discuss. Typically, there is at least one Weddell seal, often more. Today was no exception.





At Sea

DAY 9 | Thursday 21 November 2024

Latitude:
62°03'99 S
Longitude:
059°24'10 W

Course:
012.2°
Speed:
9.9 knots

Wind Speed:
62.9 knots NNW
Barometer:
998 hPa

Air Temp:
2°C

In the wee hours of the morning, as we sailed ever northward from the Antarctic Peninsula and out of the lee of the South Shetland Islands, the *Sylvia Earle* began to roll and pitch in the turbulent waters of the Drake Passage. Although we enjoyed relatively calm waters overnight, the swell had certainly grown in the hours since our departure and there was no mistaking that we were on our northward journey at last.

Our first sea day of the return trip to Ushuaia began with a buffet breakfast as usual, followed by a series of lectures. First on the list was Dani, who gave us a fantastic overview of the changing nature of the relationship between whales and humans over the centuries.

The second lecture of the morning was an excellent talk on the glaciology of the Antarctic with Gaby.

Following this educational morning, we enjoyed a buffet lunch, then a talk from historian, Tim, on his experiences and learnings through writing a book centred on Frank Hurley's time in the Antarctic.

Afterward, many of us gathered back in the lecture room for a rollicking edition of the fun game 'How Big Is It?!' hosted by Eamon with the assistance of Rose, Qing, and Monika. The game gave us the chance to test our knowledge of the Antarctic in a light-hearted and entertaining format.



At Sea

DAY 10 | Friday 22 November 2024

Latitude:
57° 44.3' S
Longitude:
062°46.3' W

Course:
323°
Speed:
13.4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots NNW
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Air Temp:
5°C

Following breakfast, Ashley delivered an insightful lecture on the ship's inner workings, delving into the intricacies of its engine, power systems, and ice navigation capabilities. We were amazed by the sheer power and precision that allowed us to traverse the icy waters of the Antarctic.

While some were captivated by the bridge tour, others were busy contributing to Citizen Science. Gaby, our knowledgeable glaciologist, successfully completed the final eBird and cloud surveys earning the hooray of our fellow NASA citizen scientists. These valuable data will contribute to our understanding of biodiversity and climate models.

Bridge tours offered a unique opportunity to learn firsthand how the ship navigates through challenging icefields and tumultuous waves. The experienced bridge crew shared

their knowledge and expertise, providing us with a deeper appreciation for the remote paradise we can sail to.

Later, the Knots Workshop, led by the talented trio of Eamon, Ryan, and Ivan, challenged our dexterity and patience. Despite the difficulty, the group's energy remained high, fuelled by camaraderie and a shared sense of accomplishment.

After a satisfying lunch buffet and a potential power nap, our friend Amos delivered another inspiring lecture 'In the company of Ocean Giants.' The visual experience awakened and connected all of us to the mystery of this blue planet with reverence and gratitude for life. 'Be the force of nature. Be kind and mindful of our environment, of the oceans and each other'.

Ushuaia

DAY 11 | Saturday 23 November 2024

Latitude:
54° 48.3' S
Longitude:
068° 17.5' W

Course:
291.9°
Speed:
Alongside

Wind Speed:
14 knots NNW
Barometer:
991 hPa

Air Temp:
10°C

Aurora Expeditions send 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.

We have travelled 1677 Nautical Miles together.



BBQ



Polar Plunge













Kayaking Log

Kayak Guides: Ivan Klochkov, Eamon Larkin, Mark Grundy

15 November 2024 – Whalers Bay | Deception Island 2.6 km

Our first stop in Antarctic waters. We were on deck in anticipation, as we entered Deception Island. The entrance is narrow and steep. The ship anchored in front of Whalers Bay, an old whaling and then research station. We launched directly off the rear of the ship and pointed our noses into the wind. After battling some small waves and wind we turned around and drifted to the base of the cliffs. Cormorants and snowy sheathbills watched us from above. We hugged the shoreline, saw some small frozen waterfalls. The rock here was tall and steep. As we rounded the last corner, we felt the wind and swell again. The Zodiac was ready to collect us and we headed to shore to check out the historic site. A short but enjoyable first outing.

16 November 2024 – Recess Cove Peninsular 5.6 km

After a very windy ship cruise through Graham Passage, we sailed for Recess Cove. The difference was incredible. The wind was light, but the current was moving some ice past the ship. We left the ship, and it was much easier to navigate in the open water. It was a sunny day and with ice sculptures as far as we could see, it was a kayaking wonderland. What makes a kayak outing great is a bit of mystery and views revealing themselves. This had it all; the icebergs would change shape as we passed, and the mountains and glaciers appeared, looming as we rounded each big berg. As Ivan said, it was the real, perfect brochure day.



Number of Kayakers: 12

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled:
27.6 km

Kayakers:

Choo Wai Yee

Scott Christiana

Dave Christiana

Lou Verrill

John Verrill

Peri Chickering

Andrew Shier

Claire Wood

Niamh Wood

Lyndy Lee

Alison Twemlow

Penelope Twemlow

17 November 2024 – Charlotte Bay 5 km

A number of our group had camped out last night. Some needed sleep more than a paddle this morning. Those who did join us were spoiled by a fantastic outing. We took the Zodiac a far distance to find a sheltered and interesting start point. From there everything was beautiful. We started our journey next to two gentoo penguins, curious at our arrival. We picked our way through sea-ice floes and the occasional iceberg. Our destination was an enormous iceberg in the distance. It was imposing and it was hard to gauge how big it actually was. The ice became thicker, so we headed for open water and back towards the ship. Two penguins swam with us, the same two from the start? Maybe; they looked similar.

18 November 2024, AM – Damoy Point 4.1 km

You haven't paddled kayaked properly in Antarctica unless you get some snow on your kayak. Today we did just that. The penguins did not seem to mind the cold, swimming around us and waddling up to the water's edge to jump in. The antics of the funny seabirds never fails to entertain. We glided along the shoreline until we reached a sheltered bay below the bright-orange Damoy Hut. The group decided to kayak back to the ship, quickly change and visit the hut on land. The best of both and a great outing.

18 November 2024, PM – Port Lockroy | Goudier Island 3.6 km

The sea was calm in among this small group of islands; so calm in fact that it looked like the surface had started

to ice over. We were lucky to visit the Port Lockroy Museum and Post Office first, while we were warm and dry. It was into the kayaks after that to explore the rocky islands around this historic base. The snow that had just fallen onto this still bay was not melting, it was slowly turning to frazzle. The kayaks sliced through it gently. It sounded like we were gliding over fine sand. The water here was very clear, as we weaved through rocks and small grounded bergs. After hugging the rocky shore we heard on the radio that there was a whale in the neighbourhood. A humpback, feeding literally around the corner from us. Magical. It circled around, a hundred penguins in its wake. Two or three breaths, and it would dive down, tail fluke in the air. We had somehow paddled into a kayaker's paradise. Hard to forget this outing.

20 November 2024 – Mikkelsen Harbour | Tetrad Islands 6.7 km

It almost did not happen. It seemed out of nowhere a strong wind swept the large bay we were in. The guides were on deck looking for some sheltered shoreline. In theory, around the western headland should be protected, but they needed to scout it before heading into the unknown. The message came back. It was ideal there. The Zodiac bounced in the swell until we rounded the corner, then calm.

The water was shallow and there was a very tall glacier in front of us. The amount of snow and ice hanging precariously there was hard to fathom. Then a big piece calved off. We were well clear, but it was still exciting. There was a strip of land between us and the glacier, and it absorbed the wave that formed. In front of us many small bergs or bergy bits had been stranded in the shallow passage.









Snowshoeing Log

Guides: Dave Stark, Monika Bischof

15 November 2024, PM – Whalers Bay, Deception Island.

Our Captain, Artem, and his crew made up some good time sailing through the Drake Passage. Therefore, we got a bonus landing at Whalers Bay this afternoon. It was a short Zodiac ride to the landing where our guides, Dave and Monika, and a few gentoo penguins waited for our arrival. It was a short walk from the beach to the snow, where Dave gave us some instructions on snowshoeing techniques, which we all got the hang of fast. We snowshoed past rusty tanks, fallen-in buildings and the cemetery; this was taking us back in times of whaling. The landscape had a different feeling with all volcanic rock. Our short snowshoe route took us to the hangar and near the air strip. This was our turnaround point to get back to the landing and

drop off our snowshoes to join the other Expeditioners and hike up to Neptune's Window. On the way to Neptune's Window, we saw many gentoo penguins along the beach or coming out of the water. What a great first day and warm up to the snowshoeing and Antarctic Peninsula.

16 November 2024 – Recess Cove

Tonight, all the snowshoe team (including other Expeditioners) spent the night out on the ice in our Bivvy Bags. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that nobody wanted to miss. The weather was good and temperatures were mild. Some of us didn't sleep much with the lack of darkness, excitement, or fear of missing out on penguin spotting. Our skilled Zodiac drivers got us safely through the sea ice and back on board for a delicious breakfast.



Number of Snowshoers: 11

Total Outings: 5

Snowshoers:

James Crawford

Lachlan Wood

Tim Donovan

Eric Sussman

Emily Marthaler

Celeste Branscomb

Corinna Andrews-McMullen

Andrew Mellen

Daniela Cesar Rosales

Levi Mellen

Lana Mellen

18 November 2024, AM – Damoy Point

Our first snowshoe experience on the glacier. We roped up in two rope parties. This was a different experience as we all had to walk at the same pace. Making sure the rope tension between us stays the same. It was a wintry feeling with the snow falling. The sky moody with clouds and limited visibility. After reaching the upper ridge we turned around and snowshoed back to the Damoy Hut (UK base). We also had the opportunity to have a look inside the hut and Ashley from the Expedition Team explained to us about her experience living in the hut.

18 November 2024, PM – Jougla Point and Port Lockroy

Sergei drove us to the landing with the Zodiac. This is where Dave was waiting for us. This time we didn't need our harnesses as we weren't

travelling on the glaciated terrain. As all the other Expeditioners went to Port Lockroy, we felt fortunate to have our own private island, only to share with lots of gentoo penguins. There were also reminders from the past with whalebones sticking up into the sky. We did a loop track, and had the scenery of glaciers, icebergs, wildlife, the sea and Port Lockroy. After our snowshoe excursion we got a Zodiac ride to Port Lockroy. Due to our Zodiac detour, we saw humpback whales and swimming penguins. Bransfield House, with its shop and museum, was definitely worth a visit as the nostalgia took you right back in time.

19 November 2024, PM – Cuverville Island

After lunch we had the opportunity for another snowshoe outing. With the snowy weather it felt like we were definitely in the Antarctic. The

landing was spectacular with its small, stranded iceberg in low tide. We started on the hikers track on the general landing and continued along. Dave was leading the way along many gentoo penguin rookeries and one solo chinstrap penguin. The route took us over the hill and back down a short, steep section to get back to the landing. The view to the ocean with the *Sylvia Earle* and icebergs were very enjoyable. A few lucky snowshoers saw a solo Adélie penguin before getting back on board.

20 November 2024 PM – Tetrad Islands | Mikkelsen Harbour

Today was the last chance to get out on our snowshoes. With the strong swell we didn't know till the last minute if we could pull off another landing. We finally got the green light for our last outing. A Zodiac driver dropped us off at a different island to the general landing spot, where our

guides, Dave and Monika, greeted us. As it was low tide, we had the chance to see different types of seaweed on rocks right in front of our feet. After gearing up, we snowshoed a loop track around the small island. Dave made sure we were not getting too close to the edge, as there was a cornice (overhanging snow feature) that could break off with added weight. Our views were again stunning even with the cloud cover. The glacier calvings and wildlife like cormorants and Weddell seals didn't disappoint. Once we returned to the *Sylvia Earle*, we had a recap followed by a recap and dinner at the Gentoo restaurant.





Snorkelling Log

Guides: Pete Shaw & Richard Devanney

15 November 2024 – Whalers Bay, Deception Island

The weather is overcast with some rain and sleet, the cold wind blowing at approximately 10 knots. Once the ship is in position, we go to the mudroom for our first (apart from our practice) session of dressing into our thermals and drysuits – we were the first team to be ready! We board the Zodiac with a degree of elegance and head to land. A few gentoo penguins greet us as we disembark the Zodiac.

We go ashore to explore the remains of the buildings and industrial structures that dot the volcanic beach, walking around the remnants of the whaling station and up to the aircraft hangar. As we explore, we take in the old fuel tanks and pressure vessels used for oil extraction, imagining how it must have felt to work in such a desolate location,

before returning to our Zodiac – time to get wet.

Today is our check-out snorkel expedition. Donning our gloves, hoods, and fins, we slip one-by-one into the water, checking the seals on our drysuits, making any final adjustments and head out along the rocky shoreline near Neptune's Bellows. We spend some time looking at the shallow rocks near to shore, spotting some krill and various seaweeds. It is good to get familiar with how the snorkelling is done, and useful for checking that the equipment is all working well.

After about 20 minutes we start to feel chilly and returned to the Zodiac; no-one has experienced any leaks, and everyone wants to do it again – after we have warmed up and have had some dinner.



Number of Snorkellers: 4

Total Outings: 5

Snorkellers:

Robert

Eliza

Nick

Hooda

16 November 2024 – Recess Cove

Recess Cove is approximately 2.5 miles wide and lies in the eastern side of Charlotte Bay, along the western coast of Graham Land.

We cruise into the tranquil bay between small islands and grounded ice; much of the surface of the sea is covered with smaller pieces of ice, probably from a recent calving event. In the background, ice-covered mountains reach up and disappear into the clouds high above us. The scenery is spectacular, the sea calm, the sky is blue and the water is clear – perfect conditions for a Zodiac cruise.

We decide to snorkel in front of a rocky outcrop with many small bergy bits of ice in the water. Experienced now, we put on our snorkel equipment, slip into the water and explore the ice, the myriad shades

of blue and the underwater textures of the ice are captivating. The water feels warmer here than it did on our previous adventures, but everyone is becoming acclimatised, and the visibility is at least 16 metres. We all manage to enjoy ourselves for an easy 25 minutes spotting some fish, molluscs and penguins, with cormorants watching us from their rookery on the rocks above.

17 November 2024 – Recess Cove

Yesterday was so good, we decide to do it again! There is also the small matter of the fact that we left some hardy campers in the snow overnight last night and needed to pick them up again this morning.

The weather is still beautiful as we head out in the Zodiac for a cruise. Yesterday's icy shoreline now extends further out into the bay and the water is covered with smaller low-lying

pieces of ice that have broken off from the solid mass that envelops the shoreline.

In the distance, we see a humpback whale, gently cruising, the sounds of its breath each time it surfaces reaching us across the water.

We cannot reach yesterday's snorkel location, so instead decide to explore the floating ice in the bay. It feels colder today, the ice is making a difference, but we spend 25 minutes moving from floe to floe before deciding that we'd better get back into the Zodiac and return to the ship.

It's too beautiful to hurry; no-one wants to leave the spectacular scenery behind, the light is so clear and the mountainous backdrop so imposing, but leave we must. Not just yet, though, because we are suddenly surrounded by a raft of gentoo penguins, flashing below the Zodiac, surfacing and diving around us again and again.

Eventually the penguins leave us and we must leave too; our ship is waiting and the adventure continues.

18 November 2024 – Port Lockroy | Jougla Point

Port Lockroy has been known as a safe anchorage since its use by the whaling fleets of the early 20th century and for this reason it was selected for the first continuously occupied British base to establish a year-round British presence in Antarctica. Base A, Port Lockroy was established on 11 February 1944 as part of a wartime mission code-named Operation Tabarin.

The bay forms a natural harbour on the northwestern shore of Wiencke Island in the Palmer Archipelago. The Antarctic base is situated on Goudier Island in this bay and has located upon it the most southerly operational post office in the world.

Jougla Point is a rocky peninsula



with many small coves. It was first mapped in 1903 by a French Antarctic Expedition and forms the entrance to Alice Creek.

We commence our exploration from the *Sylvia Earle*, cruising across the icy waters towards Goudier Island, the snow stinging our faces and the misty clouds parting to reveal glimpses of the mountains in the distance before closing out our views once more. We land and go ashore to look around the museum and visit the small shop, managed by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust. We have already written our postcards; they will be franked here and will make it to their destinations probably some time after we are all back home.

Back into our Zodiac, we navigate between Goudier Island and Jougla Point into a bay created by the raft of sea ice that prevents us from circumnavigating the island. Along

the shoreline and among the ice is where we decide to snorkel. The water is cold, 0 degrees Celsius, but we manage a 35-minute excursion, our longest yet. Brittle stars and limpets can be found on the rocks and several giant isopods can be seen – other-worldly creatures that are relatives to woodlice or pillbugs. The local gentoo penguins glance our way, then ignore us as they pass.

A lovely day of new experiences and history; we wonder what tomorrow will bring.

20 November 2024 – D'Hainaut Island

As we climb into the snorkel Zodiac and head for D'Hainaut Island, the first thing we notice is a hut that stands in stark contrast to the icy landscape. The hut is known as the Refuge Caillet-Bois, which was inaugurated by the Argentine Navy in 1954. Although it was abandoned in

1977, it was inspected and renovated in 2017.

D'Hainaut Island is a flat, ice-covered rock of approximately 1 kilometre in length, situated in Mikkelsen Harbour, which spans 3 kilometres along the southern coast of Trinity Island. Mikkelsen Harbour was discovered by the Swedish Antarctic Expedition of 1901–1904, and D'Hainaut Island was charted by the Charcot Expedition of 1908–1910.

The island has a long history of whaling and sealing; this is evident immediately upon setting foot on the island. We walk to a gentoo penguin colony on the top of the hill and see the remains of a water transport boat. Nearby, there is a pile of whalebones that showcases the dark chapter of Antarctic history in this location.

After stepping back onto the Zodiac, we slowly make our way around the

northwest of the Island. The tide is low, so our guides must be careful of low-lying rocks below the surface. Once we arrive in a very calm bay, we slide into the water and spend time swimming around a small grounded iceberg.

It doesn't take us long to find a large whalebone lying on the bottom, more than 2 metres long. It was fascinating to speculate on how long it had been there. As we floated on the surface, a couple of penguins gracefully swam past us, before jumping onto the rocks.

Given that the water was only 1 degree Celsius, we manage to snorkel for 35 minutes, but then the ship's sauna was calling, and we head back to the ship. What a great way to end the trip.



Map

Spirit of Antarctica 13 – 23 November 2024

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Whalers Bay | 7. Port Lockroy |
| 2. Graham Passage | 8. Neko Harbour |
| 3. Recess Cove | 9. Cuverville Island |
| 4. Charlotte Bay | 10. Curtiss Bay |
| 5. Portal Point | 11. Mikkelsen Harbor |
| 6. Damoy Point | |



Spirit of Antarctica

13–23 November 2024

Our Expeditioners

Cori Andrews-McMullen

Paul Armstrong

Jill Armstrong

Celeste Branscomb

Craig Bryant

Judith Bryant

Daniela Cesar Rosales

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Jackie Charles

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David Christiana

Scott Christiana

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Jenifer Costello

Anthony Crawford

Amy Crocker

Corhonda Dawson

Nick Day

Robert Dicks

Timothy Donovan

Christine Drew

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Raghu Gollapudi

Wayne Hedrick

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Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Flo Kuijper
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Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oeyasaeter
Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado
Marine Biologist: Dani Abras
Glaciologist/Geologist CSC: Gaby Pilson
Ornithologist/Naturalist: Graham Snow
Historian: Tim Griffiths
Photography Guide: David Jaffe
Expedition First Responder: Ashley Perrin
Expedition Guide: Ryan Kaempfe
Expedition Guide: Qing Qu
Expedition Guide: Rose Luan
Lead Kayak Guide: Eamon Larkin
Senior Kayak Guide: Ivan Klochkov
Kayak Guide: Mark Grundy
Alpine Guide: Dave Stark
Alpine Guide: Monica Bischof
Dive Team Leader: Pete Shaw
Dive Guide: Richard Devanney
Zodiac Master: Serghei Hinchu

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Artem Kolmykov
Chief Officer: Sergio Saldana Hernandez
Second Officer: Vlad Nicolescu
Safety Officer: Yevhenii Zolotarov
Bosun: Francisco Antonio Flores Gomez
Ship Doctor: Gloria Gonzales Iraheta
Chief Engineer: Luis Edgardo Gil
First Engineer: Warlito Verzosa
IT Officer: Mikhail Volkov
Hotel Director: Balvant Singh
F&B Service Manager: Narendra Seeram
Head Bartender: Irene Gayta
Executive Chef: Rosauro Soriano

Sous Chef: I Gusti Ketur Purnawirawan
Hotel Controller: Romat Nurhidayat
Receptionist: Angela Manuel
Receptionist: Erliza Mae Balagot
Head Stateroom Attendant: Florante Lusong
Deck Cadet: Goncalo Marques
Able Seaman: Leo Francis Marzan
Able Seaman: Anthony John Brosas
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Able Seaman: John Paul Sibug
Able Seaman: Rosendo Cruz

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