

Spirit of Antarctica

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 23 November – 3 December 2024





Spirit of Antarctica

23 November – 3 December 2024

Ushuaia

DAY 1 | Saturday 23 November 2024

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

Wind Speed:
14 kts NNW
Barometer:
991 hPa

Course:
291.9°
Speed:
Alongside

Air Temp:
10°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 explore our new home-away-from-home, the *Sylvia Earle*.

On board we total 109 adventurers with nationalities representing Australia (29), Belgium (1), Canada (6), China (19), Germany (2), Malaysia (1), Netherlands (13), New Zealand (2), Qatar (2), Singapore (3), South Africa (1), Spain (1), UK (15), USA (19) along with 21 Expedition Team and 102 ship's crew from all over the world.

We had time to unpack, settle into cabins and enjoy a lovely afternoon tea before Expedition Leader, Flo, called us together to welcome us on board the *Sylvia Earle*.

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

The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations to sample our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us to the back deck where we learned the essential, but hopefully never used, safety operations on board.



At Sea

DAY 2 | Sunday 24 November 2024

Latitude:
56°26.0' S
Longitude:
065° 05.9' W

Wind Speed:
23 kts SW
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Course:
168.8°
Speed:
9.8 kts

Air Temp:
6°C

Although the Drake Passage is infamous for its turbulent waters, we seemed to have lucked out with a crossing more on the moderate side, though the occasional big roll or pitch of the ship reminded us that we are indeed on our way southward.

First up on our busy sea day was a buffet breakfast, followed by a navigation workshop with Ashley for all those interested in participating in the iceberg-spotting competition.

This was followed by a series of mandatory briefings on a number of topics, including being responsible visitors

to the Antarctic, the Zodiacs that we will use for our adventures, and on our onboard Citizen Science Program. Afterwards, we took the time to biosecure our equipment and to try on the Muck Boots that we will wear on most of our outings.

The rest of the afternoon was more educational in focus, with lectures from onboard photographer, Grant, on mobile phone photography, a cloud survey with Gaby on the outer decks, and a lecture on the seabirds of the Southern Ocean with Snowy.



At Sea

DAY 3 | Monday 25 November 2024

Latitude:
60° 57.5' S
Longitude:
064° 20.7' W

Course:
171
Speed:
11.9 kts

Wind Speed:
6 kts SW
Barometer:
1001 hPa

Air Temp:
2°C

We woke up surrounded by the endless sea slowly disappearing in a foggy distance. The Drake Passage was merciful to us – the ship was still rolling and moving a little bit, but not too bad, and the dining hall was full and buzzy every time there was a meal!

Historian, Jonathan, gave us an interesting lecture overviewing the history of Antarctic exploration. It was wonderful to learn about numerous adventurous expeditions carried out by amazing, brave people throughout many years – Jonathan made his talk very memorable and organised in a timeline, and shared some exciting details about some of the expeditions.

Shortly after that Gaby, our Citizen Science coordinator, carried out the cloud survey – numerous keen enthusiasts attended, and some cool clouds were spotted.

Right before lunch our marine biologist, Dani, gave us an informative lecture about her favourite topic – whales! She described a wide range of different species of cetaceans that inhabit these waters and shared some amazing facts about their lives.

After lunch our expedition photographer, Grant, gave a lecture about photography. It was a very informative and useful talk that started from covering the very basics of photography with various technical details, and then went deeper into the artistic and creative aspects.



Cuverville Island | Danco Island

DAY 4 | Tuesday 26 November 2024

Latitude:
64° 39.75' S
Longitude:
062° 37.30' W

Course:
214.3°
Speed:
4.2 kts

Wind Speed:
16 kts SSW
Barometer:
993 hPa

Air Temp:
4°C

The morning dawned bright and clear, perfect for our first landing at Cuverville Island. The sun shone brightly, casting a golden glow on the pristine landscape. We embarked on a variety of exciting activities, including snowshoeing across the icy terrain, kayaking through calm waters, and snorkelling in the frigid Antarctic waters. The underwater world was teeming with life, from colourful sea stars to curious penguins.

After a delicious buffet lunch, we set sail for Danco Island, our second landing of the day. The wind had picked up, but our spirits remained high as we embarked on our first FjordPhyto citizen science project, led by Gaby and Dani.

We collected valuable data on phytoplankton, microscopic organisms that form the base of the marine food chain. These data will contribute to our understanding of the Antarctic ecosystem and the impacts of climate change.

As the day drew to a close, we assessed the potential camping site. The conditions were favourable, and a group of 40 intrepid Expeditioners, led by Dan, Ashley, Thomas and Freya, embarked on an overnight camping adventure. They would spend the night under the Antarctic sky, surrounded by stunning scenery and unique wildlife.

The rest of us stayed on ship, eager to share stories and rest before the next day's adventures.







Lemaire Channel | Port Charcot

DAY 5 | Wednesday 27 November 2024

Latitude:
64° 38.9' S
Longitude:
062° 53.3' W

Course:
229°
Speed:
9.9 kts

Wind Speed:
4 kts WSW
Barometer:
990 hPa

Air Temp:
1°C

It was a very early morning for some. Forty-five brave souls stayed out overnight, sleeping on the ice, under the stars. That is, of course, just an expression, as there were no stars to be seen, or any heavenly bodies. The cloud was low and gently dropping snow on the 'campers' throughout the night. A memorable experience for all, even more so for the couples who had engagement proposals on the snow. Congratulations!

The Captain was keen to see if we could get the ship through the Lemaire Channel. At this time of year, the channel is often impassable. A ship had not been through the Lemaire in the past 10 days. The cloud was keeping the very tops of the giant rock walls a mystery, revealing them

only occasionally. Three big bergs blocked the channel at its narrow point near the end. It was not to be.

We turned and made our way to Port Charcot another way.

Once at anchor, we began an afternoon of busy operations. Snowshoers disappeared to the lofty heights of the island. Snorkellers explored the shallows along the shoreline. The kayakers glided past, watching the antics of the Adélie penguins. Citizen scientists took samples and made measurements offshore. Onshore people walked up to the memorial of the *Français* crew. It was great to walk in the footsteps of these French explorers. Three different penguin species were seen today.









Yalour Islands | Hidden Bay

DAY 6 | Thursday 28 November 2024

Latitude:
65° 12.17' S
Longitude:
064° 10.89' W

Wind Speed:
15 kts N
Barometer:
978 hPa

Course:
150°
Speed:
2.5 kts

Air Temp:
0°C

We were woken by Flo with news that we were traversing French Passage, heading to the Yalour Islands for our morning excursion. These low, rocky islets are part of the Wilhelm Archipelago. They were so named in honour of Lieutenant Jorge Yalour, an officer of the Argentine corvette *Uruguay*, which in November 1903 came to the rescue of Nordenskjöld's shipwrecked Swedish Antarctic Expedition.

This relatively small landing site is home to some 800 pairs of Adélie penguins and possibly the southernmost gentoo penguin colony on the peninsula.

With no more than 60 passengers allowed onshore any time one time the landing was staggered, which gave

others the opportunity to Zodiac cruise while the onshore party made a circuit of the Adélie colony. We also saw several 'penguin cams' Snowy had told us about.

Meanwhile the Zodiac cruisers learned about the different types of ice and icebergs that encircled the islands.

We were then treated to a wildlife bonanza, with several pairs of humpback whales surfacing and lung-feeding very close to the ship. They made several passes, giving everyone spectacular viewing and photography opportunities. It ranked as one of best wildlife encounters that many of us had ever seen.

The afternoon activity was our Zodiac cruise in the beautiful Hidden Bay just east of the Lemaire Channel.







Enterprise Island | Portal Point

DAY 7 | Friday 29 November 2024

Latitude:
64°31.5'S
Longitude:
061°56.7' W

Wind Speed:
Variable
Barometer:
976 hPa

Course:
170°
Speed:
2.1 kts

Air Temp:
2°C

The morning began with a visit to a historic whaling site along the Antarctic Peninsula on Enterprise Island. The rusting remains of an abandoned whaling vessel stood as a poignant reminder of an industry that once dominated these icy waters.

Out on the water, we were treated to a breathtaking display of humpback whales breaching amid a panorama of pristine, glistening icebergs. The sheer force and grace of these gentle giants as they propelled themselves skyward left us all in awe. As evening fell, a pod of orcas appeared, their synchronised movements cutting through the water with effortless precision. The beauty and vitality of these whales contrasted deeply with the earlier echoes of their troubled history, leaving us reflective and inspired.

A major milestone of the day was setting foot on the Antarctic mainland itself. While all of our landings so far have been on surrounding islands, today we stood on the continent itself on Portal Point! A humbling moment that underscored the vastness and remoteness of this frozen wilderness. Towering peaks and icy expanses surrounded us, offering a sense of scale and a rare connection to one of the most untouched places on earth.

For the boldest among us, the day's adventures included the famed polar plunge. Braving the frigid Antarctic waters is a rite of passage that combined exhilaration with adrenaline, a chilly dip into a surreal environment few will ever experience.







Half Moon Island | Yankee Harbour

DAY 8 | Saturday 30 November 2024

Latitude:
62°36.5'S
Longitude:
059°43.3' W

Course:
015°
Speed:
8.9 kts

Wind Speed:
2kts variable
Barometer:
977 hPa

Air Temp:
1°C

The morning's destination was the scenic Half Moon Island, which is home to a population of chinstrap penguins. Here, we spent time ashore enjoying the penguins and even some adorable seals. All the while, the kayakers and snorkellers among us took to the water for their morning adventure and the snowshoers went off on an exciting climb up to the high point on the north side of the island.

Soon enough, it was time to head back on board for a quick lunch as the ship repositioned to a nearby site known as Yankee Harbour. At Yankee Harbour, we enjoyed a bit of a leg stretch for our last landing, as well as the chance to appreciate some gentoo penguins on shore.

The kayakers, snorkellers, and snowshoers all also had a lovely afternoon to wrap up our amazing trip to the Antarctic.

As our trusty ship heaved up anchor and sailed away from Yankee Harbour, our Captain and his bridge team skilfully navigated the vessel through the scenic, albeit tricky waters of the English Strait.

Meanwhile, we gathered in the lecture room for a recap and briefing with our Expedition Team and then headed off to dinner, where we reminisced about the adventures of the last few days among friends, both new and old.





At Sea

DAY 9 | Sunday 1 December 2024

Latitude:
60°16.1' S
Longitude:
062°17.9' W

Course:
325°
Speed:
12.7 kts

Wind Speed:
5 kts SSW
Barometer:
988 hPa

Air Temp:
1°C

The expedition continues its northern journey aboard our vessel the *Sylvia Earle* with a consistent westerly swell of 2.5 metres. Out of the ice, our vessel could now deploy its stabilisers to dampen the ship's movement. The comment of needing our sea legs was heard again and again.

Mid-morning saw delivery of a fascinating in-depth presentation on *Sylvia Earle* outlining her ice capabilities, dimensions, onboard maintenance functions and galley outputs. It was a brief but thoroughly astounding sneak peek behind the curtain that has been our home for the expedition. Two personal favourites being the 200 freshly baked cookies per day to have with our tea and coffee, and

the capability of 80M³/day of fresh water being produced daily.

With the technical details of our ship taken care of it was time for the often-asked-for and much-anticipated bridge tour of the vessel. With five groups of around 20 guests venturing up to deck 7, some hosted by Captain Artem himself, and shown through what he described as the 'brain' of this 104-metre-long polar-class vessel. As we found out later that night, he carries his remote control for forwards, aft, port and starboard.



At Sea

DAY 10 | Monday 2 December 2024

Latitude:
56° 06.8' S
Longitude:
067°08.2' W

Course:
329°
Speed:
11 kts

Wind Speed:
7 kts SW
Barometer:
999 hPa

Air Temp:
5°C

There were great views of the legendary southernmost tip of South America as we made the turn east towards the Beagle Channel.

We watched the rollicking documentary *Around Cape Horn*, narrated by the seafarer who served aboard a massive four-masted barque the *Peking*, rounding the Horn in 1929.

Jonathan then gave us a lecture about Sir Ernest Shackleton's amazing life and the *Endurance* expedition. Dan followed up with his movie about the 2018 New Zealand skiing/climbing expedition, retracing the route Shackleton's epic crossing of the mountainous spine of South Georgia.

After lunch we picked up our pilot as we entered the Beagle Channel. Snowy and Gaby hosted an e-bird survey and then Gaby snuck in a cloud survey.

The activity groups then all met with their respective guides for farewell drinks and slideshows, reliving the highlights of kayaking, snorkelling, and snowshoeing.

The final group entertainment was Eamon's 'How Big Is It?' group guessing game, which was a lot of fun!

Ushuaia

DAY 11 | Tuesday 3 December 2024

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

Wind Speed:
20 kts SW
Barometer:
996 hPa

Course:
Alongside
Speed:
Alongside

Air Temp:
12°C

Aurora Expeditions 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.

We have travelled 1,647 nautical miles together.



BBQ







Polar Plunge



















Snorkelling Log

Snorkel Guides: Pete Shaw, Thomas Gov, Freya Dooley

25 November – Cuverville Island

The morning cleared and blue skies appeared, perfect for our first landing. The sun shone brightly, giving us all a false sense of Antarctica but allowing us to appreciate the pristine landscape.

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 are greeted at shore by Flo, who gives us a quick briefing on the do's and don'ts for this site, then we're off for a short walk to explore the island. The colony of gentoo penguins are

a highlight, and so adorable to watch walking around and starting to build their nests. After a very much-needed stretch of the legs, we head back to the Zodiacs to get into some real fun - snorkelling!

Struggling into our hoods, gloves, fins and masks, we slip into the water one-by-one, checking our drysuit seals as we go - no leaks so far! The chilly 1°C water hits our faces and we are pleasantly surprised with the level of life to see under the water. As we adjust to the cold we begin to look around and some are lucky enough to see some penguins playing in the shallows. After around 25 minutes, the cold has taken over and the warmth of the ship is sounding quite inviting.

Back on the ship we wiggle out of our drysuits and hang everything to dry for our afternoon of adventures. Time for lunch and a hot chocolate!

Number of Snorkellers: 14

Total Outings: 8

Snorkellers:

Jeroen Hagens

Joost Hagens

Juliette Hagens

Kevin Koojiman

Lude Krikke

Bernadette Ramm

Jocelyn Ramm

Lorna Ramm

Peter Ramm

Tessa Ramm

Jessica Roth

Roos Rutten

Maria Trapiello

Geert Van de Ridjt

26 November – Danco Island

We made our way to Danco Island, which sits slightly south of Cuverville. Here lives a gentoo colony and some stunning glacial scenery.

Being called down to the mudroom, extra layers are recommended for this morning. The wind has picked up, but our spirits are still high with anticipation! Back into our Zodiacs, we are shuttled to shore. A walk to visit a few gentoo colonies has been set up by the shore party and is appreciated to work off some of our delicious buffet lunch! The walk gave us some stunning views over the Errera Channel and the towering glaciers nearby.

After a good hour exploring land, back to the Zodiacs for our favourite part of the outing! Donning our hoods, gloves, fins and masks feels somewhat easier than this morning as we make our way to our chosen

snorkel spot. Some small bergs and the shallow shore are the perfect place to jump in and try to glimpse some of the gentoo penguins getting in and out of the water. Trying to remember to move as little as possible, a few of us are lucky enough to get a close-up on our favourite penguin friends!

After braving 30 minutes in the chilly water, back into the Zodiacs and to the ship. But the day isn't over... Camping for those crazy enough to sleep a night on the snow.

27 November – Port Charcot, Both Island

This afternoon we head to Port Charcot - a historic site of Charcot's first French Antarctic Expedition. On shore we go for a walk to observe all three species of brush-tailed penguins living on the same island!

Now back to the Zodiacs to explore

this site under the water! After gearing up we make a quick pit-stop at some sea ice, where we all sit along the edge making for a great group photo! Then faces down to see what life calls this island home. A variety of kelp, limpets and starfish are scattered among the rocky bottom, as well as some small bergs the wind has pushed into this small bay.

Another successful snorkel for the books, back to the ship to warm up and share stories with our fellow Expeditioners.

28 November – Hidden Islands

On track for Hidden Bay, a sheltered area just east of the Lemaire Channel. A Zodiac cruise offered us opportunities to explore the area, appreciating some of the glaciers and patches of sea ice the wind had forced into the bay. After a cold cruise, we found a nice little island with some stunningly clear waters. A

group decision that this would be the best spot for our in-water activities, meant it was time to gear up!

At this stage, we're like a well-oiled machine getting our gear on and slipping smoothly into the water. The rocky bottom was home to an abundance of limpets and starfish - both common creatures for the Antarctic waters. After navigating around the small island, back into the Zodiacs we got for a lovely surprise... hot chocolate!! A lovely way to wrap up another adventure-filled day in this surreal place.

29 November – Enterprise Island, *Governoren Wreck*

First, we Zodiac cruise around Enterprise Island, taking in the stunning views and icebergs in the area, reflecting on the history of whaling in these areas. There anticipation has built and the time for our Antarctic wreck snorkel has

arrived. Gearing up quickly and smoothly, we drop into the water close to the wreck. A surreal feeling swimming over this more than 100-year-old ship, which surprisingly is home to a lot of life.

The highlight of the snorkel has to be watching part of the reproduction cycle of the limpets, as we could see a white liquid coming out of them, assumed to be sperm. Still incredible to believe creatures are able to withstand the harsh conditions down here! After observing the wreck and playing on some more sea ice, the ship's Jacuzzis are calling us... or for the more brave - time for the famed polar plunge!!

29 November – Portal Point

The time has finally come to step onto the Continent, for some ticking off their 7th and final continent. This site consists of a narrow point in the northeast part of Reclus Peninsula and includes a high promontory with views across the entrance to Charlotte Bay.

The views from the top of the hill offering stunning 360° scenery of surrounding glaciers and islands, even a few seals hauled out on the

rocks scattered around the area. We had plenty of time to appreciate the scenery of the Antarctic Peninsula before heading further north to the South Shetland Islands overnight.

Only two eager snorkellers are getting in this afternoon... and once geared up and in the water they explore the shore's rocky coastline that they had just been viewing from above. The clear waters looked tropical although the life underneath contrasted that thought! Some more of our favourite limpets were spotted as well as some antarctic krill seen swimming around!

30 November – Half Moon Island

Waking up this morning we could appreciate the difference between the South Shetland Islands compared the peninsula itself. Lying slightly north, the few degrees warmer here meant far more snow had melted and the stench of the penguins was much stronger! Half Moon Island is a small island home to a chinstrap colony and often home to a variety of seals too.

First to the landing site, we got the opportunity to walk around and explore this island, enjoying the views of the nearby glacier. On land we saw

more penguins and a few Weddell seals, and even a baby elephant seal relaxing on the beach.

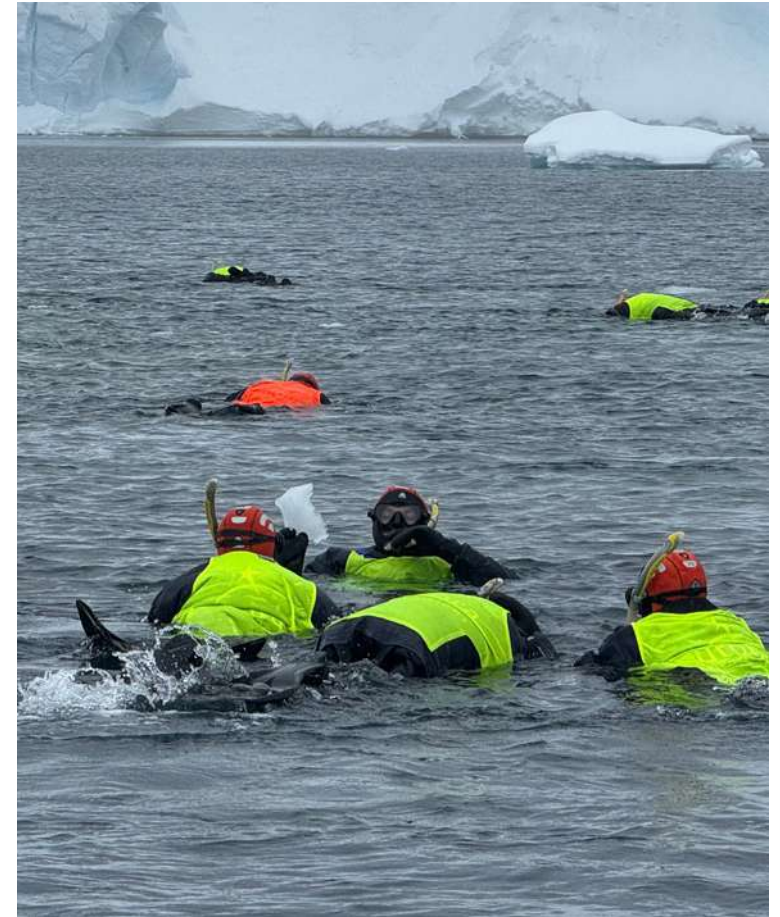
Once back on the Zodiac we headed to a sheltered little cove that had some curious penguins swimming about. In the water for those who were patient, we saw a few chinstraps jumping in to have their daily bath and clean their feathers. The bottom consisted of small rocks with kelp and again... more limpets and starfish! Another successful snorkel complete!

30 November – Yankee Harbour

Yankee Harbour is just a short trip from Half Moon Island and holds a strong history from the sealing and whaling eras. We got dropped towards the end of the spit, where Flo was ready to greet us. The walk along the spit was filled with gentoo penguins and even some seals lounging around. A much-needed stretch of the legs before we begin our journey back across the Drake Passage!

After plenty of photos were taken and lots of laughs were had on shore, the brave four who were snorkelling this afternoon started to get ready

as we headed to our snorkel area, directly opposite to the landing site. Along the way we stopped to look at the groups of elephant seals that were hauled out on a rocky shoreline. The snorkellers dropped in the water to explore a wall that was full of life. Limpets and starfish were in abundance and the water even felt a bit warmer! After around 20 minutes in the water, we began to head back to the ship, taking in the last views of Antarctica... a great ending to the trip of a lifetime!







Snowshoeing Log

Guides: Dan Phillips and Dave Stark

26 November, AM – Cuverville Island

Plan A for Danco suddenly changed when we had the opportunity to visit Cuverville Island. This beautiful steep island situated just east in the waters sheltered by Ronge Island is the home to an estimated 6,000 pairs of gentoo penguins. The sky was broken with sun and cloud, and we were greeted by the sight, sound and smell of the various colonies of gentoos. It was our first snowshoe of the trip and lots of nervous and eager anticipation for exploring. We headed up off the beaten track and tried for steeper ground but were turned back by hard snowpack conditions. This just meant more time for penguin viewing and we crossed the upper bench and turned back down the steep slope above the sea. A gentle walk back between the rookeries with spectacular backdrops of glacier ice bergs and berglets.

26 November, PM – Danco Island

Afternoon saw us motoring towards Danco for a landing on the west side of the island among the many penguins. Danco is a glaciated island, and this meant that harnesses were worn, and we had our first team travel on the rope. We veered off the track immediately onto the glacier and headed up into the cloud and white. Boldness of line and directness of purpose for the snowshoe mountaineers. Steady pace and route-finding soon put us 140 metres above the sea on the summit of Danco, where we met up with the boot track on the non-glaciated terrain. On the summit, love was in the air and some of us were blessed to witness the proposal on the summit. The response was 'Yes!' What a great day to experience the vastness and serenity of the Antarctic.



Number of Snowshoers: 12

Total Outings: 7

Snowshoers:

Shira Saks

Steven Lawford

Christine Schneider

Dana Price

Bradley Hosking

Trevor Builder

Emma Huffam

Anita Lala

Benjamin Bornstein

Jean-Augustine Limpens

Maria Willems

Jean Hart

27 November – Port Charcot

We landed in shallow waters with a bit of a wade at Port Charcot. It was a socked-in day with gentle snow falling and very little wind. The team geared up sans harness as we weren't on glaciated terrain, and began our climb to the Port Charcot cairn. It was a gradual but continual climb between gentoo rookeries with the odd Adélie penguin thrown into the mix. Soon we were on the summit and at the cairn. The rock cairn is the original cairn built in 1904 at the wintering site of the ship *Français* captained by Jean-Baptiste Charcot. The original post and signs inscribed with the names of the French expedition have disappeared and have been replaced with replicas. Beautiful views were to be had in all directions from this vantage. The group split up and Dan headed to the west with a group in tow and Dave headed back to the landing, where

people could wander up the trail to the magnetic hut and other rookeries. By the time it had come to leave the tide was up and the wade back to the Zodiac was quite a bit deeper.

29 November, AM – Enterprise Island

We woke to a promise of blue (ish) sky, no winds or still winds. At last a good weather day, which was much appreciated and well earned.

The snowshoe today was spectacular, with a gradual height gain of over 150 metres and about 2 kilometres round trip. The morning was finished off with a quick Zodiac ride to view the wreck.

29 November, PM – Portal Point

This afternoon, our team of 12 ventured up the first part of this route. The higher we got, the better the views became until the Zodiacs, sea kayakers and folks below were

dwarfed. We turned around at a high point among truck-swallowing-sized crevasses and made our way down to a pick-up at the remains of the old Portal Point hut.

The evening was a gift, with many whale sightings including a beautiful pod of orca putting on an amazing show off our bow.

November 30, AM – Half Moon Island

Half Moon Island in the South Shetlands is a beautiful sickle-shaped island with the Argentine base Camara located on it. The untethered party swarmed the slopes as we ascended the mountain to the west and topped out at 83 metres above the sea. A quick and steep wander back took us to the Zodiacs to go and explore the chinstrap colonies on the south end of the island.

30 November, PM – Yankee Harbour

After yet again a fine and filling lunch we headed out to new territory on the west side of Greenwich Island. This little glaciated island is situated between the Drake Passage to the north and the Bransfield Strait to the South. Yankee Harbour was known to American sealers since about 1820. We chose a new landing that none of the Aurora team had ever been on before. Beaching between basking seals, the team set out to the northeast, up and into the white. A never-ending horizon soon changed and for one team it opened up to a view down the other side of the island to the English Strait. This was the last excursion for the snowshoe team, and it was a memorable one.







Kayaking Log

Kayak Guides: Ivan Klocchkov, Eamon Larkin & Mark Grundy

26 November, AM – Cuverville Island 4.8 km

Our first stop in Antarctic waters. We were on deck in anticipation. It was a perfect first impression. We anchored away from the island as there was a lot of ice, so we towed the kayaks to a bay underneath a tall cliff. Blue-eyed shags like to hang around this area and I am sure some were aiming for us. The view all around was spectacular and we had our on-water safety briefs. Soon we were drifting with the breeze along the north side of the island. Gentoo penguins swam beside us and many more watched us go by from the shore. What must they be thinking? ... maybe not too much. The north of Cuverville was littered with medium and large icebergs that seemed to have come to rest here. At every turn and from all angles these bergs were beautiful, the shapes

and shades of blue captivating. We paddled on and eventually found a Weddell seal resting on the beach of the next island, Ronge Island. We were picked up there, very happy with our choice to join kayaking.

26 November, PM – Danco Island 4.35 km

After a quick lunch and a short reposition of the ship we were out and back on the water beside Danco Island. The wind was stronger here and we had to use the island for shelter. When we ran out of safe protection we headed out and went across and with the wind. A small group of rocky islets was our destination. These rock skerries are barely above sea level but home to many different birds and one lonely gentoo. We also saw two Weddell seals here, one fast asleep and the

Number of Kayakers: 22

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled:
34.14 km

Kayakers:

Eric Bornstein

Rebecca Bornstein

Ben Anderson

Tom Anderson

Sam Anderson

Drew Unsworth

Lyn Dod

Tony Dod

Tien Ling Chen

Ching Yen Chu

Marleen Hoex

Eduard Hagens

Luke Phillips

Melissa Phillips

Aggi Haig-Wisotzky

Jan-Dirk Muller-Seidler

Sabine Pfunstein

Ralph Schaus

Courtney Berben

Liz Oakley

Mohammed Alkuwari

Mohammed Alkaabi

other curious at us passing by. We battled the wind again to get back to Danco Island and then had a Zodiac pick us all up. On land, a short walk uphill gave us some sweeping views back to the ship.

27 November, PM – Port Charcot 4.7 km

This afternoon's outing had a touch of history involved. We would kayak on the northern side of Booth Island where Captain Jean-Baptiste Charcot and his crew spent a winter with their ship the *Français*. The ship is long since sailed away but the monument on land is very visible. Here we saw Adélie penguins for the first time side by side with gentoos. Ivan showed us how we can slide onto a piece of flat ice like a seal in our kayaks; good fun. The kayaking just got better and better as the wind dropped and the water became like glass. Everyone naturally went quiet, and it was

obvious that we were all soaking up the beauty of this place. A hard outing to stop today.

28 November, AM – Yalour Islands 3.46 km

An announcement warned us that it would be a cold paddle but that we would find some shelter among the maze of islands that are the Yalours. It was true, it was cold, and we did find some shelter, but cold is cold and it is hard to escape. It was gently snowing on us as we left the Zodiacs. Here we had gentoo and a few Adélie penguins, and we saw yet another sleepy Weddell seal. The channels through the islands were enjoyable to explore. Some led to dead ends and others brought us around in circles to where we had been. Some channels were chocked with ice. The whole group of small rocky islands was surrounded in thick bergy bits and growlers, with not much

space in between. With a few of us getting cold and time running out, we retreated to the zodiacs and the warmth of the ship.

29 November, AM – Enterprise Island 5.4 km

Perfect conditions for this outing, not sunny but calm and still. It was a very different scene to the Yalours. We had endless opportunities to explore as we left the ship. Our first stop was the old rusting whaling ship that lies wrecked in Foyn Harbour. The *Governoren* was a Norwegian whaler that caught fire and was abandoned in the middle of a party. It made a great structure to visit now. Moving away we saw a few small islands covered with icicles, and many impressive icebergs. They were like frozen sculptures. We saw one sizeable berg roll over in the distance. It really does happen. We reluctantly returned to the ship and a lot of our group then jumped into the water for the polar plunge, Brrr.

29 November, PM – Portal Point 4.2 km

Again we were blessed with an almost windless outing. We launched off the marina of the ship and headed to the nearest icebergs. These were further than they seemed, as they were pretty big bergs. We glided past a few and made our way to some rocky islands north of where everyone had landed. A couple of giant petrels looked like they had a nest on the snow here. More Icebergs with vibrant blues awaited us. Great photo opportunities in the calm channel. We circled a small island and saw yet another Weddell seal, this one very cute. Some people went to land from here and others continued on seeing more seals and penguins along the way. A perfect paddle day today.



30 November – Half Moon Island 3.73 km

Half Moon rarely disappoints and it did not today either. We towed our kayaks around to the southern side of the island and started under a tall cliff. There was plenty of ice and the water was calm. The first thing we saw were some Weddell seals lazing on the ice. As we cruised the shore, we saw many penguins in and out of the water. Mostly gentoos but as we progressed, we saw the colony of chinstraps on top of a rocky hill. These funny penguins will walk up steep, snowy slopes to get up to the colony, and they do make a lot of noise. We navigated the rock channels of the point and were soon back in view of the ship and landing site. We all took the chance to go to land briefly to see these penguins up close and stretch our legs. A great kayak outing.

30 November – Yankee Harbour 3.5 km

There was a little bit of wind and small swell as we launched from the ship but by now that was no issue at all. As we neared the rocky spit between us and an enormous glacier the wind died down and the water became clear and shallow. Eamon was pointing at some large round rocks on the spit, and then we heard it; a large, almost disturbing sound of an elephant seal. The rocks were in fact a group of decent-sized elephant seals cuddled together on the rocky beach. We could see the tail flippers lift up. Wow, they are huge compared to the seals we had seen so far. We paddled around a corner and saw more, from a better angle. Leaving them to rest we followed the coast towards another glacier; of course, we stayed a good distance away and absorbed the entire view. All but Tony went to land for our last steps. A brief but interesting outing.







Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	November–December										
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
Gentoo Penguin				●	●	●	●	●			
Adélie Penguin				●	●	●		●			
Chinstrap Penguin					●		●	●			
Magellanic Penguin	●									●	
Wandering Albatross		●							●	●	
Grey-headed Albatross		●	●								
Black-browed Albatross	●	●							●	●	
Light-mantled Sooty Albatross		●	●						●		
Southern Fulmar	●		●	●		●	●		●	●	
Northern Giant Petrel		●									
Southern Giant Petrel	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Antarctic Petrel			●		●						
Cape Petrel		●	●	●		●	●		●	●	
Snow Petrel				●							
Blue Petrel		●	●								
White-chinned Petrel		●							●		
Wilson's Storm Petrel				●	●	●	●		●		
Antarctic Prion		●	●						●		
Arctic Tern						●					
Antarctic Tern				●	●	●	●	●			

Bird Species	November–December										
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
South American Tern	●									●	
South Polar Skua					●						
Brown Skua			●	●	●	●	●	●			
Chilean Skua	●										
Kelp Gull	●			●	●	●	●	●	●		●
Snowy Sheathbill				●	●		●	●			
Antarctic Shag				●	●	●	●	●			
Imperial Shag	●									●	
Rock Shag	●									●	

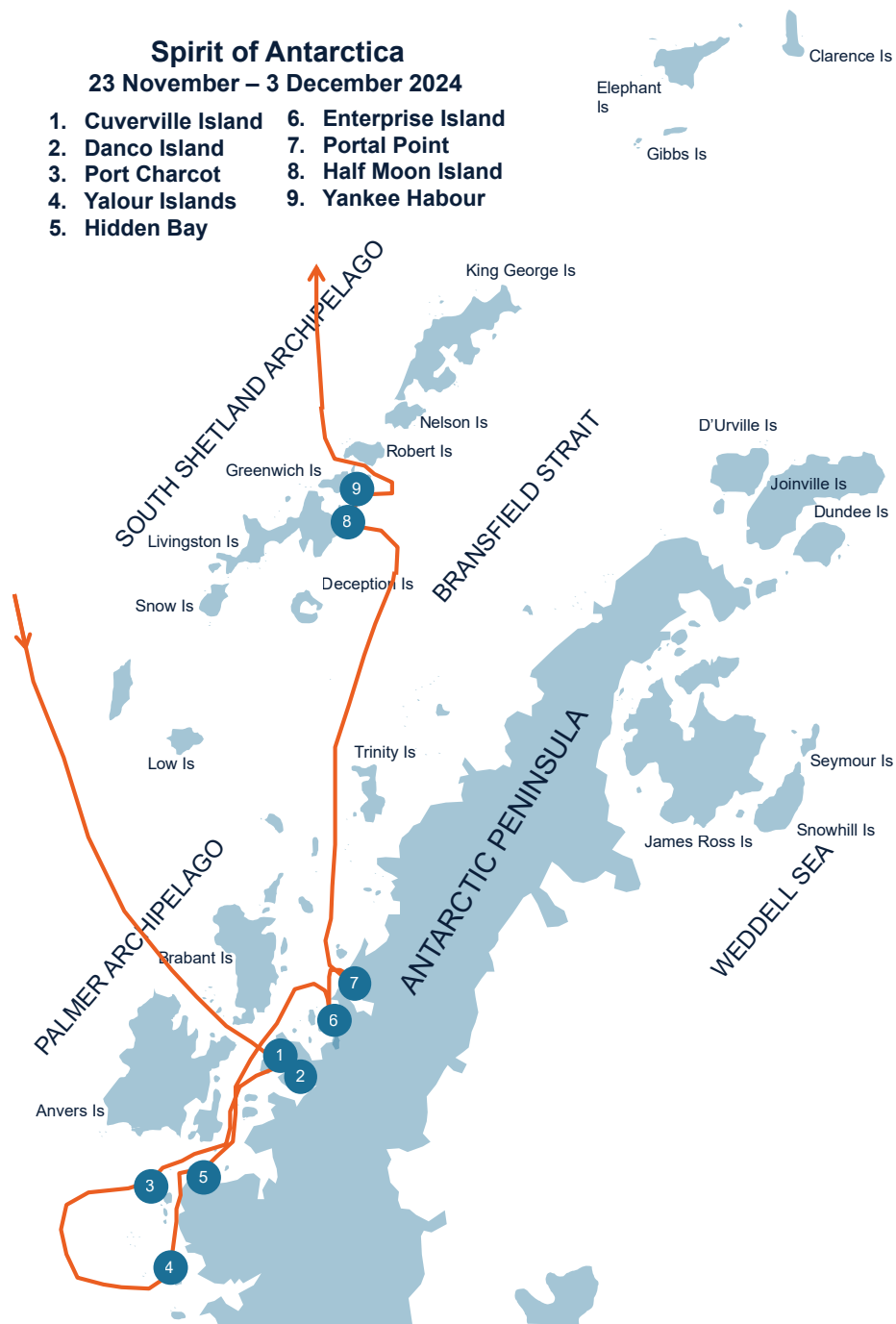
Mammal Species	November–December										
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	1	2	3
South American Sea Lion	●										
Crabeater Seal					●						
Weddell Seal				●	●	●	●	●			
Southern Elephant Seal									●		
Dusky Dolphin										●	
Killer Whale						●	●	●			
Humpback Whale				●	●	●	●	●			

Map

Spirit of Antarctica

23 November – 3 December 2024

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cuverville Island | 6. Enterprise Island |
| 2. Danco Island | 7. Portal Point |
| 3. Port Charcot | 8. Half Moon Island |
| 4. Yalour Islands | 9. Yankee Harbour |
| 5. Hidden Bay | |



Spirit of Antarctica

23 November – 03 December 2024



Our Expeditioners

Mohammed Al-Kaabi	Gregory Dean	Jonathan Huang	Sara Mi	Bernadette Ramm	Fan Wei
Mohammed Alkuwari	Lyn Dod	Emma Huffam	Patrick Mullen	Peter Ramm	Maria Willems
Ben Anderson	Tony Dod	Patrick Hutchison	Jean Mullen	Jessica Roth	Bev Willick
Tom Anderson	Yiwei Fang	Mary Hutchison	Jan-Dirk Muller-Seidler	Roos Rutten	Michael Wong
Sam Anderson	Ling Fang	Darrel Kingfield	Angie Nguyen	Shira Saks	Shuhua Wu
Lee Anderson	Julia Gilmour	Kevin Koojiman	Theresho Ntsoane	Ralph Schaus	Chunyan Xu
Bruce Bellinge	Stephen Gilmour	Lude Krikke	Liz Oakley	Christine Schneider	Rui Yan
Cortney Berben	Kim Greenwood	Anita Lala	Meabh O'Neill	Manon Schuurmans	Huiru Yang
Yewei Bing	Juliette Hagens	Rita Lancione	Paley Paley	Divyakumar Shah	Bin Zhang
Biris Biris	Joost Hagens	Allan Lane	Lanfang Peng	Eliza Sherlock	Yundi Zhang
Joan Blair	Jeroen Hagens	Karen Lane	Sabine Pfundstein	Nina Sun	Na Zhou
Eric Bornstein	Aggi Haig Wisotzky	Steve Lawford	Melissa Phillips	Alasdair Thomson	Linghui Zhu
Rebecca Bornstein	Hart Hart	Bob Lawrence	Luke Phillips	Anne Tiura	Junliang Zhu
Benjamin Borstein	Maria Hoex	Augustinus Limpens	Kalai Pillay	Maria Trapiello Gonzalez	
Graham Brown	Ian Holding	Yating Lin	Dana Price	Manasa Ujire	
Trevor Builder	Kathy Hope	Guy Martin	Xiaowen Qu	Andrew Unsworth	
Tien Ling Chen	Brad Hosking	Linda Martin	Jocelyn Ramm	Julie Unsworth	
Caroline Chong	Yimin Hua	Kaveri Mi	Tessa Ramm	Geert Van de Ridjt	
Ching Yen Chu	Weiyen Huang	Ilango Mi	Lorna Ramm	Hetal Vyas	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Flo Kuijper
Assistant Expedition Leader: Werner Kruse
Onboard Expedition Manager: Anne Oeyasaeter
Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado
Marine Biologist: Dani Abras
Glaciologist/Geologist CSC: Gaby Pilson
Ornithologist/Naturalist: Graham Snow
Historian: Jonathan Chester
Photography Guide: Grant Thomas
Expedition First Responder: Ashley Perrin
Mandarin Speaking Guide: Qing Qu
Mandarin Speaking Guide: Rose Luan
Lead Kayak Guide: Eamon Larkin
Senior Kayak Guide: Ivan Klocchkov
Kayak Guide: Mark Grundy
Alpine Guide: Dave Stark
Alpine Guide: Dan Phillips
Lead Snorkel Guide: Pete Shaw
Snorkel Guide: Thomas Gov
Snorkel Guide: Freya Dooley
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: Leo Francis Marzan
Ship Doctor: Jose Alejandro Muller San Juan
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 of Stateroom: Florante Lusong
Deck Cadet: Rodrigo Vigario Pinto
Able Seaman: Francisco Antonio Flores Gomez
Able Seaman/Carpenter: Lexter Fadriquela
Able Seaman: Anthony John Bros
Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Able Seaman: John Paul Sibug
Able Seaman: Rosendo Cruz

Photography thanks to: _____

Grant Thomas





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