

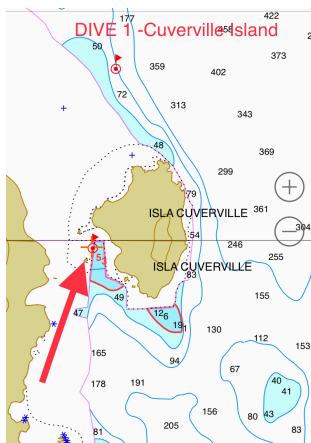
Ortelius 33 Dive Log March 18th to March 31st 2019



**Dive Team Leader Michael Green, Dive Guide Chloe Marechal,
Dive Guide Johan Petersson, Diveguide Tanja Bayer
Divers: Alan Kindrex, Britta Siegers, Coco Yan Ken, Du Jinen, He
Jiasnhua, Inkeri Hyytia, Lin Kai, Luo Xiaojie, Marina Vitozhenz,
Mikhail Alexandrov, Oliver Zhan, Penny Vermeulen, Roger Bollinger,
Sarah Gauthier, Seppo Poha, Warren Pritchard**

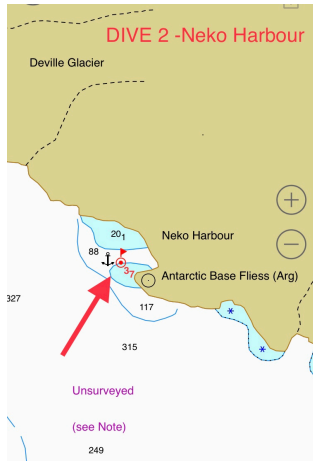


We enjoyed a fairly smooth passage across the Drake and used the time to do our mandatory Dive Briefing and to get our kit ready and loaded onto the Zodiacs the night before arriving Cuverville Island. The ship had been surrounded by seabirds most of the way across. After crossing the Bransfield Strait and sailing along the Gerlach Strait we arrived in the Errera Channel in front of Cuverville Island.



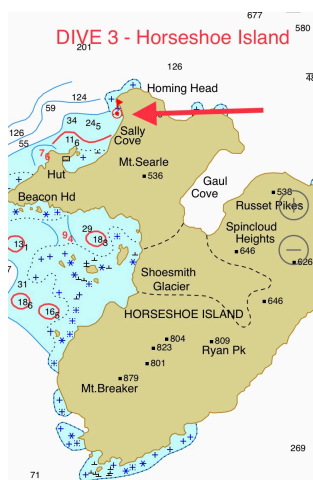
DIVE 1: Cuverville Island Thursday 21st March 2019 64° 41.287' S - 062° 38.012' W

Wow! Humpbacks, Seals, Penguins, Leopard Seals and Ice. What a perfect start to the day. After all the divers were placed with their gear in the 4 zodiacs, we went between the icebergs in front of the landing site to the southwest corner of the small island. Even before entering the water a humpback just beside our zodiacs and a leopard seal playing around with a penguin were spotted. So we started our Check Dive in the shallow part surrounded by 2 leopard seals. Some divers were lucky enough to see the leopard seal also under water. After the dive the wind picked up, so we decided to go back to the ship.



DIVE 2: Neko Harbour Thursday 21st March 2019
6° 50.725' S - 062° 31.983' W

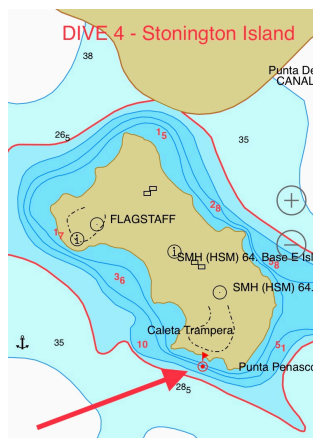
During lunchtime we sailed through the Errera Channel and turned into Andvord Bay. Sailing slowly forward, because of some ice around, we saw that a landing is possible. So some divers decided to take the chance for a continental landing and quit the dive. The divers found calm and shallow spot just around the corner of the landing site. They found some kelp around with a lot of hidden seastars and sea urchins. If you had a good look at the rocks there were also some rockcod fish to see. After the dive the divers also had the chance to land on the continent. What a great way to end the first day of diving!



DIVE 3: Horseshoe Island Saturday 23rd March 2019
67° 47.794' S - 067° 15.602' W

After a full day sailing south and the spectacular cruise through „The Gullet“, we arrived in the evening in front of the British Station „Rothera“. In the morning the captain brought our ship in front of the northern bay Sally Cove at Horseshoe Island. To get some shelter from the wind, the divers went to the northeastern end of the bay. Just in front of a group of fur seals and some Adelie Pinguins. Starting in the shallow part and slowly going deeper over the rocks, we found a lot of limpets, seastars and bridle stars on the rocks. Small fish were sitting well camouflaged between small rocks. Afterwards the divers went ashore and visited the historic British Base „Y“ surrounded by some Adelie Pinguins, fur seals and a sleeping Weddell Seal.

In the afternoon we planned an exploration dive at Bongrain Point at the southern entrance of Dalgliesh Bay. This bay is on the western side of Pourquoi Pas Island. Due to heavy winds, we entered the bay, but did not have soundings for the sheltered area. So a Zodiac with an echo sounder went out to get the soundings for the ship. In front of Moider Glacier we found a calmer spot for the ship. But visibility was bad because of the glacier. So we decided to call the dive and the divers had the chance to join the Polar Plunge.

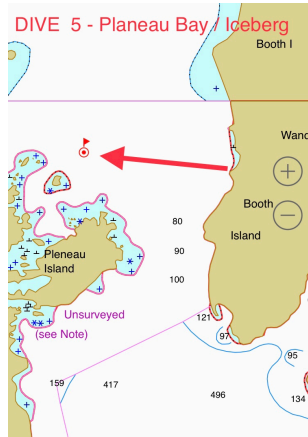


DIVE 4: Stonington Island Sunday 24th March 2019
68° 11.304' S - 066° 59.656' W

Arriving early in the morning at Stonington Island, we could already see the Historic Base „E“ Stonington (UK). Divers were ready at 8:00 a.m. and we went out to the southern corner, hiding from the wind. Many happy faces showed up after the dive. This wall is full of anemones, sea stars, sea urchins, sea cucumbers, nudibranches, worms and really big tunicates! „So many colours, I cannot believe it at this place on earth!“ It is going to take some time to edit the pictures that were taken on this dive. After the dive some divers went ashore or did a circumnavigation of Stonington Island with the Zodiac.

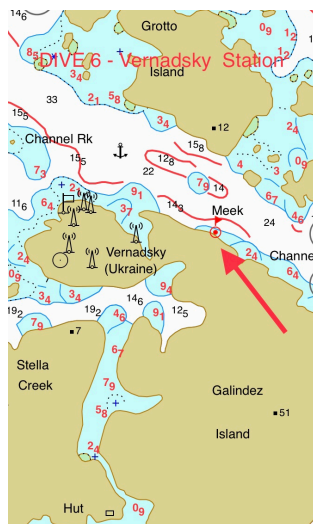
After this early dive we planned to cover a lot of nautical miles and arrive at Vernadsky Station in the afternoon of the 25th March. In the night captain had to slow down the ship due to strong winds and quite a big swell. So we decided to do a short landing and zodiac cruise at the Fish Islands.

DIVE 5: Planeau Bay, Tuesday 26th March 2019
65° 05.515' S - 064 03.193' W



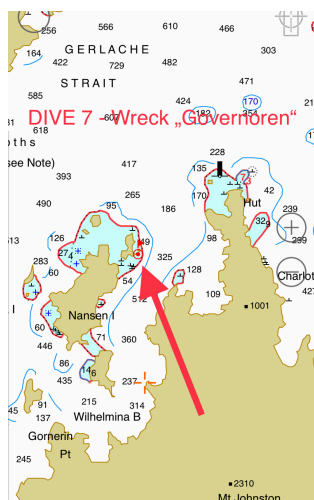
This morning we woke up surrounded by icebergs between Booth Island and Planeau Island. A perfect place to look for an iceberg for the divers. After surrounding 2 icebergs decision was made for a nice approx. 6m high iceberg. Visibility was perfect and the shadows of the 80% iceberg underwater were stunning. The divers surrounded the iceberg from both sides and had a lot of fun with the patterns of the iceberg and the funny buoyancy. The melting iceberg makes the diver sink and if you like to have an overview and move a little bit away, the saltwater lifts you up! A crabbeater also came along. After the dive we had a look at a huge Leopard Seal on an ice flow and took some pictures on the ice. Cruising back to the ship we enjoyed the icebergs and 2 humpback whales. In a second wave the snorkelers had some fun on a berry bit.

DIVE 6: Vernadsky Station - Meek Channel, Tuesday 26th March 2019
65° 14.720' S - 064° 14.936' W



Starting in front of one of the buildings of the research station, a beautiful wall went down to about 25m. The rocks were covered with algae and kelp and many different nudibranchs, seastars, tunicates, sea cucumbers and limpets were seen. What a great dive spot to work on for the marine biologists of the Vernadsky Station. This is definitely one of the best dives in Antarctica. After 40 min. we climbed back into the Zodiacs, just to get off and on an icebergs a few minutes later. There was also a short visit to the Ukraine Station before we had to go back very quick, because the wind and the swell had increased.

DIVE 7: Governoron Wreck Foyne Harbour, Wednesday 27th March 2019
64° 32.656' S - 061° 58.942' W



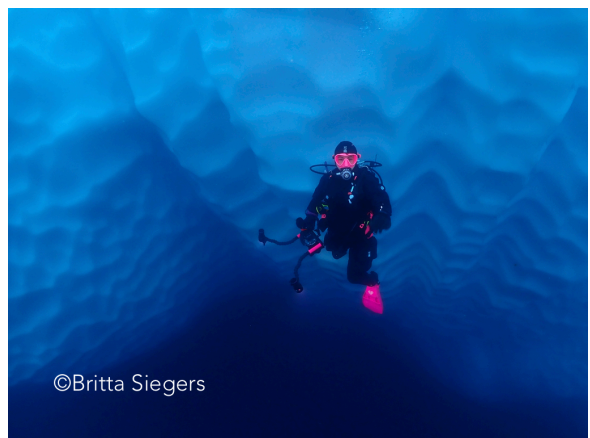
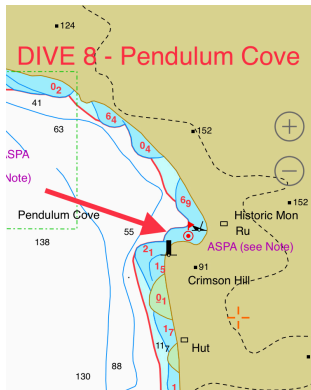
On our approach to Foyne Harbour we saw a lot of feeding and logging around this area. Interesting coincidence that the wreck we dived on this afternoon was a whaling factory ship. The ship was transporting whale oil when it caught on fire. To quench the fire and save the cargo the ship was wrecked in Foyne in November 1915. 1/3 of the wreck is above sea level so it is easy to find. We had a tour around the metal structure then made a dive to see what is left under the water. The underwater scenery was amazing with lots of the structure being intact. But also the yellow sponges, huge seastars and nudibranchs have taken over the ship as an artificial reef. We came back to the surface and went on a zodiac cruise around the bay. We saw the Lifeboats, Barrels and finished with Humpback Whales just beside the Zodiac.

DIVE 8 Pendulum Cove, Thursday 28th March 2019

62° 56.214' S - 060° 35.936' W

At 7:00 a.m. the captain sailed us safely through Neptunes Bellows into the Caldera of Deception Island. Our first stop was in front of the buildings of the old whaling station and the British Research Station. Bi

But the wind was blowing with more than 30 knots. So captain decided to reposition to Pendulum Cove, where we had a little more shelter. The dive was on the eastern end of the beach. Visibility was 2-3m, but the divers were happy about the small stuff, mainly krill, they saw and enjoyed the last 30 min. of diving in Antarctica!



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