



# OCEANWIDE

EXPEDITIONS

## Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctica

30 November – 18 December 2019

*M/V Plancius*



*MV Plancius* was named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geologist and vicar Petrus Plancius (1552-1622). *Plancius* was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named *Hr. Ms. Tydeman*. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions and completely refit in 2007, being converted into a 114-passenger expedition vessel. *Plancius* is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, with an Ice Strength rating of 1D, top speed of 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.



# Captain Evgeny Levakov

and your international crew of 38

Chief Officer:	Francois Kwekkeboom	[Netherlands]
Second Officer:	Sven Holzhausen	[Germany]
Third Officer:	Nino Cizmic	[Croatia]
Chief Engineer:	Sebastian Alexandru	[Romania]
Hotel Manager:	Zsuzsanna Varga	[Hungary]
Asst. Hotel Manager:	Ana Sirbu Gomez	[Romania]
Chef:	Mario Hribernik	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	Ferenc Beranyay	[Hungary]
Ship's Physician:	Nick Bennet	[Australia]

and

Expedition Leader:	Ali Liddle	[UK]
Asst. Expedition Leader:	Daniel Hohne	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Sara Jenner	[UK]
Expedition Guide:	Jerry Zhao	[China]
Expedition Guide:	Katja Riedel	[Germany/ New Zealand]
Expedition Guide:	Jochem Braakhekke	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Marie Manceau	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Rustyn Mesdag	[US/Chile]
Dive master:	Jeremy Sutton	[UK]
Dive Guide:	Catherine Buckland	[UK]
Dive Guide	Chris Booker	[UK]
Dive Guide	Chloe Marechal	[France]

# Day 1 - Saturday November 30, 2019

## Embarkation – Ushuaia, Argentina

8h00 GPS Position: Ushuaia Port

We spent days dreaming about our voyage to come, hours shopping, reading, preparing logistics, excitedly chatting with family, friends, colleagues and neighbours about our atypical trip choice, then spent hours, days, traveling by planes, cars, buses... We thus each had our own little scenario as to how our arrival onboard Plancius would look like... but certainly none of us had imagined this one. Neither had **Ali**, our Expedition Leader. Her slick, blond figure welcomed us at **Ushuaia's** pier...with bad news: due to a medical issue that had occurred during the previous cruise, departure will be delayed... or perhaps even worse, cancelled! At this point, our cruise was in the hands of Argentinian authorities, and all we could do was wait.

But thankfully and after a pretty stressful hour, we were authorized to enter the pier. Feeling relieved, we got our first glimpse of Plancius. She awaited us quietly amongst other expedition ships –smallest, but fiercest. Her bright blue hull contrasted with the grey waters of the Beagle channel, and we proudly boarded the ship, greeted by a warm “welcome onboard!” of crewmembers that took care of our luggage and showed us the way to our cabins.



We readily started exploring the ship, striding along corridors and decks, excited like kids discovering a new playground. We rapidly found our way to the restaurant, the reception, the bridge, or the observatory lounge. We gathered in the latter for a mandatory security briefing given by our chief officer, **François**, and a brief presentation of the expedition team. Our expedition leader Ali is from the UK. Before working onboard expedition ships, she used to be a schoolteacher and member of the conservation department in the Falkland Islands for 15 years! **Daniel**, from Germany, is Ali's assistant. Mainly based in Iceland, Daniel spends most of his time working as a naturalist guide all over the world. The rest of the team is composed of **Joachim**, glaciologist from the Netherlands, **Katja**, German researcher and guide specialised in atmospheric chemistry, who will have the difficult task of translating all documents and lectures into

German, **Jerry** from China, former international travel consultant gone rogue to become international travel guide, **Sara**, wild life photographer extraordinaire originally from the UK, **Marie**, French researcher in developmental and evolutionary biology, and **Rustyn**, from the US, but based in Patagonia where he runs a backpacker's hostel. The team is completed by specialised divers who will accompany some of us to discover polar submarine life, namely **Jerry, Catherine, Chris** (all three from the UK) and **Chloé** (from France). What an international team! All its members are "bipolar": these passionate fellows, badly infected by the infamous polar virus, spend most of their time hopping from one pole to the other!

A drill, necessary simulation of the ship's evacuation in case of an emergency, follows François's presentation. Because of the delayed departure, the presentation of life onboard by our hotel manager **Zsuzsanna** is reported and we are informed that **Nick**, the ship's doctor, will stick around after dinner to distribute sea sickness pills. Debates ensue: to take medicine, or not to take medicine? That is the question.

## Day 2 – Sunday December 01, 2019

### At Sea towards the Falkland Islands

**12h00 GPS Position:** 53° 45.25'S / 063° 45.6' W

**Wind:** W **Sea State:** Slight **Weather:** Clear Sky **Air Temp:** 12°C **Sea Temp:** 8°C **Visibility:** Good

The keen ones of us were already up and around when Ali made the first wake-up call of the voyage, but for those of us still being gently rocked in our beds it was time to get up and see what the day would bring. It was a bright sunny morning and there was just a gentle breeze pushing us along, so we had made good progress over night. After breakfast many of us headed out on deck to enjoy the sunshine and gaze at the birds that were flying around the Plancius. We found lots of Cape Petrels skimming the water close to the ship, and slightly further afield Giant Petrels and several species of albatross glided, using the air currents to demonstrate their skill at dynamic soaring. Birds habitually follow ships at sea looking for food brought up to the surface by the wake, but also to enjoy the uplift created by our passing ship.

At 10:30am we were invited to the lounge for the mandatory Zodiac briefing from Ali, which gave an overview of our Zodiac operations and how we should embark and disembark the small rubber boats both at the ship and shore. After which we headed downstairs to collect our rubber boots ready for our wet landing. The staff were on hand to ensure that the system ran with the utmost efficiency, with boots of all sizes being passed along the line to ensure everyone got the correct size ready to go ashore in the morning.



Most people headed back outside after lunch to continue enjoying the sunshine we were being blessed with and we were rewarded with our first whale sighting - a Fin Whale. Although it was some way off, you could clearly see its large blow hanging in the air as it came to the surface to breathe and its small dorsal fin. At this time of year, it is not uncommon to see Fin Whales in this stretch of water as they head south to feed in the cold, nutrient-rich waters of Antarctica.



Just as Ali was about to start her presentation about the Falkland Islands, a call came over the radio that a pod of Orcas had been spotted, of course we all dashed outside once more. The pod of orcas consisted of 7-8 individuals, two of which came quite close to the ship, enabling most people to get some wonderful views of these magnificent black and white creatures. Despite being commonly known as Killer Whales, they are in fact the largest member of the Dolphin family and not a type of whale. We stayed with them for about 20 minutes before heading back inside to watch Ali's presentation.



Ali lived and worked in the Falkland Islands for almost 15 years so was the perfect person to give us an introduction into this isolated archipelago that many of us knew little about. She spoke about the history and economy of the islands and some of the flora and fauna we could expect to see over the forthcoming days. She also told us about what took her to the islands in the first place and some of her 'character-building' experiences as a travelling teacher on the remote farms of the Falkland Islands.

The last official event of the day was our first daily Recap & Briefing session. Due to the late departure from Ushuaia the previous evening Captain Levakov hadn't been able to formally introduce himself as he was busy navigating the Beagle Channel, so he took his chance this evening to say a few words and wish us a successful voyage. As Ali explained our plans for tomorrow you could feel the excitement growing in the lounge. This was followed by a little bit of 'Falkland Trivia' from Sara and a short presentation about Falkland Geology from Jochem. There was a lot of enthusiastic chatter as we descended to the Dining Room afterwards, as people shared their hopes and expectations for the forthcoming days with one another.





# Day 3 – Monday December 02, 2019

## Falkland Islands

12h00 GPS Position: 51° 18.3'S / 060° 33.2' W

Wind: NW Sea State: Rippled Weather: Overcast Air Temp: 15°C Sea Temp: 9°C Visibility: Good

Today we were woken up by the lovely voice of Ali, and the scenery was spectacular as we were getting close to our morning destination [Carcass island](#). This is the first landing in the Falkland Islands; the first of our trip! We were all excited to get off the ship and enjoy a leg stretch after one day at sea. Ali announced we could be ready to go ashore at 8:30 am, and yet a lot of fully geared passengers were already at the gangway at 8:07.

After the expedition staff's set up was ready on shore, zodiac operations were finally started. We were given two options this morning, and most of us chose the first, which was a 3 miles hike from a beach to the settlement. Five of us instead opted for the second, landing at the jetty very close to the settlement. There were many species of Falkland Islands birds along the way including Caracaras, oystercatchers, upland geese, crested ducks, snipes, and Magellanic penguins nesting in their burrows.



Upland goose



Crested duck



Magellanic penguins



Snipe



The island owner had prepared a variety of sweets, English tea, and coffee for those who had arrived at the settlement. We spent around three hours on the island with blue sky and sunshine, which is the best of the Falkland Islands weather. A Commerson's dolphin was playing with our zodiacs, following us from the shore to the ship. It almost seemed it wouldn't want us to leave.



**Commerson's dolphin**

During lunch time, the ship set sail to our afternoon destination, **Saunders Island**, another unique island of the Falkland Islands. The land owner Bob was at the landing site welcoming us upon our arrival, marking a route for us to follow. Along the way to the top of the hill, we saw Gentoo penguins nesting, some of them having had chicks already, little feather balls. We had such good times observing them. A group of king penguins was also present on the beach!



**King penguin**



Rockhopper penguins nested on the rocks next to the cliff. These smaller penguins were jumping between rocks, going up and down the hill into the ocean or back to their nest. This behavior is how they got their name.

Further up, black-browed albatross nested on the top the cliff. These giant sea birds only come back to land to mate and breed once in a couple of years. We have all enjoyed our time with such amazing wildlife on the beach or up the hill.



Rockhopper penguins

## Day 4 – Tuesday December 03, 2019

### Stanley

**12h00 GPS Position:** 51° 41.3'S / 057° 50.92' W

**Wind:** SW **Sea State:** Slight **Weather:** Overcast **Air Temp:** 7° **Sea Temp:** 8° **Visibility:** Good

When Ali woke us this morning, **Stanley** was in sight... or at least, at a short distance: the small town was indeed barely visible, imprisoned in a thick fog. We boarded zodiacs and were shuttled to the shore. Our landing is a small pier, where Katja and Daniel briefed us. After dropping our life jackets, going through the small customs office, and collecting maps from the small visitor information center, we set off into the village. This settlement is truly unique, and for such a small village, packs many a thing to do.



We strolled the main street, Ross road, flanked by the sea. Most of us successively visited a small distillery and entered souvenir shops, indulging in locally crafted woollen scarves or jewellery, or collecting penguin magnets and t-shirts “for the kids”. We visited Christ Church Cathedral, the southerly most cathedral in the world. At the church’s entrance, a sign welcomed Plancius! Beautiful stained-glass windows allowed

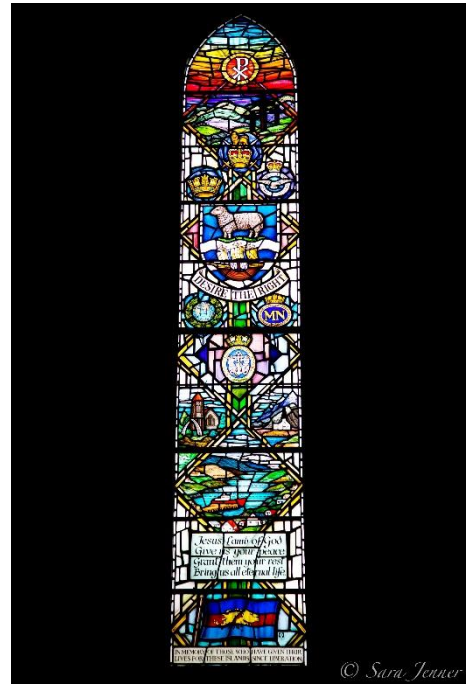


lightening the interior part of its wooden structure, furnished with classic prayer benches but also kid's drawing tables and toys nicely set in a corner, which leaved visitors with a sense of the community that must unite Stanley's people at mass. Alongside was the iconic Whalebone Arch, an impressive construction from the jawbones of blue whales.

Further up the street, the mizzen mast of the SS Great Britain and its canons guard the port of Stanley, opposite to historic buildings such as



the Government House, whose beautiful gardens are much-photographed, Stanley House, Stanley Cottage or Marmont Row. A memorial to the Falkland war in 1982 also features on the seafront, along with a surprising statue of Margaret Thatcher and the severe looking stone building sheltering most of the Falkland Islands Government administration.



For most of us, a "must-see" was the Historic Dockyard Museum, providing insights into Falkland's life, past and present, with exhibits of social and maritime interest as well as displays of natural history (including a curiosity corner with whale and seals foetuses!). Some of us decided to venture a little further afield to explore the hills, while others chilled outside drinking coffee and writing postcards to friends a family (the weather slowly cleared up during this low-key afternoon).

We departed around 1pm, Stanley's colourful roofs contrasting with the dull, colourless surroundings dominated by Mount Longdon and Mount Tumbledown lying north and south of the town, respectively. After lunch, Ali beautifully presented the amazing natural history of the blacked browed albatross, while Plancius started to roll gently on her way to South Georgia. Just before diner, at recap, we learned more about Falkland birds thanks to Sara, and Catherine told us a moving story about Stanley's shipwreck, the Lady Liz. Finally, Jerry detailed what can be found in the barrels that guides take ashore every landing (survival gear, and even a little bit of English tea!).

## Day 5 – Wednesday December 04, 2019

### At Sea

**12h00 GPS Position:** 52° 31.8' S / 50° 27.5' W

**Wind:** W **Sea State:** Rough **Weather:** Clear Sky **Air Temp:** 11° **Sea Temp:** 7° **Visibility:** Good

Although still in wonder of our visit to the Falkland Islands, we maintained our course to South Georgia in a consistent swell and amongst breaking waves of up to 4 meters. During the day we had time for lectures and pleasure to keep us entertained on an otherwise quiet day. Sara started the day with a talk on Whale Identification; including detailed information on the types of whales we can expect to see on our trip.

For a treat on our quiet morning before lunch we all enjoyed a showing of the BBC Frozen Planet to pass some time and filling our heads with beautiful images of nature. After lunch, Ali presented us with a lecture



on the penguins we saw in the Falklands and other species we hope to see in South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. The lecture ran long due to the many penguin questions, but no one seemed to mind.

Black-browed albatross, snow petrels and numerous prions were seen darting amongst the breaking waves in search of their planktonic prey, in addition to the odd Antarctic fur seal bobbing about the surface watching the Plancius pass at a safe distance. At recap, we reviewed our plans for the coming days, including our cruise by Shag Rocks the next day.

## Day 6 – Thursday December 05, 2019

### At Sea

**12h00 GPS Position:** 53° 26.7' S / 42° 43.3' W

**Wind:** N **Sea State:** Moderate **Weather:** Overcast **Air Temp:** 5°C **Sea Temp:** 4°C **Visibility:** Good

After a rock and roll night, it seems like most of us were getting our sea legs but many of us had had a bit of a disturbed night of sleep as the ship rolled on the ocean swells so many of us were already wide awake when Ali made the wake-up call in the morning. The outside decks were reopened after breakfast so some headed outside to get some much-needed fresh air and observe the assortment of seabirds that could be seen flying around the ship, a lucky few had a lovely sighting of a humpback whale that surfaced close to the ship. Zsuzsanna also opened the shop in the Reception offering a chance for some retail therapy and some Christmas shopping time!



At 9:30, Ali invited us to the lounge for a presentation about South Georgia, as well as spending 15 years living in the Falkland Islands, she also overwintered on South Georgia so had plenty of firsthand experiences to share with us. She took us on a historic journey from the evolution of Grytviken as a whaling station, to the current fisheries industry and the recently completed rat and reindeer eradication programs. She also prepared us for the wildlife spectacle that we would experience during our time on the island and briefly mentioned a few of the sites we might be fortunate to visit over the forthcoming days.

After the presentation we were invited deck by deck to vacuum our outer clothing and backpacks, ensuring they were free from grass, seeds and other potential contaminants in order to prevent the transmission of invasive species from other



regions of the world. Deck 2 and 3 completed this after lunch while others either took the opportunity to have a little siesta or catch up with editing and sorting out photos.

Although it was pretty foggy and wet outside, we got reasonable views of Shag Rocks named after the Blue-Eyed Shags that reside on these isolate islands. The surrounding waters are extremely productive and attract all sorts of birdlife and marine mammals, so it was no surprise to encounter a small group of feeding humpback whales, lots of fur seals and array of petrels, prions and shearwaters.



At 4pm there was a BBC documentary, with commentary by the legendary David Attenborough, shown in the lounge, about Antarctica and the Sub Antarctic Islands, which only added to the excitement about the forthcoming days. Finally, the usual daily briefing started at 6:15pm where Ali explained the plans for the

following day, after which we watched a Government documentary about our responsibility as visitors to the island. Jochem concluded the recap with a short presentation about the glaciers of South Georgia.

Dinner was served at 7.00 pm, which finished the day's formal programme, afterwards some passengers and staff met up at the bar for a more informal chat before bed. However, not many people stayed up late since we were all keen to be fresh and prepared for our first South Georgia landing tomorrow.

## Day 7 – Friday December 06, 2019

### Salisbury Plain - Prince Olav Harbour

**12h00 GPS Position:** 54° 03.1 S / 37° 19.6' W

**Wind:** N **Sea State:** Rippled / Good **Weather:** Few clouds **Air Temp:** 3°C **Sea Temp:** 5°C

**Visibility:** Good

Those of us who woke up early could see that Captain and Ali were worried at the bridge. 25 knots of wind, swell on the beach... and thousands of fur seals spread out in the beach: although the sky was clear, conditions were far from optimal for a landing at [Salisbury Plain](#). Those of us who woke up later were never aware of Ali and Captain's discussion, because together, they took the decision to go with the plan, and we boarded zodiacs at 8h30, landing safely on this beautiful, black sandy beach.

There, many of us couldn't hide a few tears of joy. Salisbury Plain is beyond beautiful: it is mind-blowing. Thousands of fur seals covered the land. Though their nasty, aggressive behaviour created a messy, loud environment, these animals were actually neatly spatially organised. Closest to the shore: big bulls, jealously guarding their harem. A few meters up: females, much smaller than males, their fur displaying a lighter colour, together with their pups. The latter caused several cases of cuteness overload amongst us. "awww" factor at its maximum: no one was immune to the clumsiness of these fluffy black wannabe(s). Finally, farther up, one can find young males. Frustrated they could not breed yet, they jostled fiercely, many of them bearing scars or bloody injuries. These guys can be quite dangerous, and expedition guides, armed with walking sticks, took us in small groups through this minefield.





A few hundred meters later, we watched in awe tens of thousands of breeding king penguins, one of the biggest colonies of the island,



and the reason many of us chose this voyage. Adults, white-bellied and dark on the back, bright yellow patches across the chest and face (which we would learn later, comes from a unique pigment synthesized only by this bird group), roam around like queens in larges dresses: magnificent... and stumbling around from time to time. Chicks, fatter than adults, shout for food, buried in their brown plumage. Noise, smell, sight: all senses were in red alert in South Georgia, and it is both tired and excited that we got back on board.



In the afternoon, we cruised in a small bay called **Prince Olav Harbour**. This whaling station where hunted penguins, whales, and fur seals were being "processed" closed in 1912, its houses and machines slowly accumulating rust since. Amongst the reddish remains, fur seals take their revenge, breeding, fighting, and running all over the place. Their howls together with the black waters of the bay made for a daunting atmosphere. The smell of kelp was overwhelming. Near the station, the

hulk of Brutus, former storage ship now serving as nesting shelter for terns and kelp gulls, completed this ghost, Jurrassic Park-like landscape. We entered a cove packed with fur seals and elephant seals, and as our guides switched off the engine of their zodiacs, we listened to the sounds of South Georgia's wild, overwhelming fauna.

We went to bed that night thinking it could not get any better. We were wrong.





# Day 8 – Saturday December 07, 2019

## St. Andrews - Godthul

12h00 GPS Position: 54° 26.5' S / 36° 10.5' W

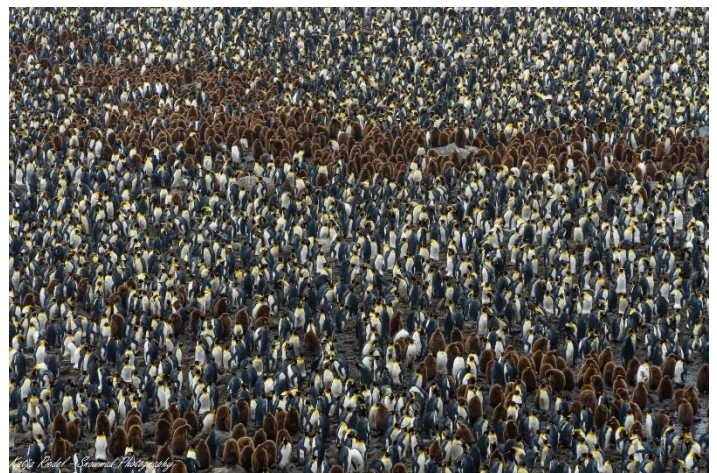
Wind: Calm Sea State: Calm Weather: Overcast Air Temp: 6°C Sea Temp: 3°C Visibility: Good

We were woken not long after 7am to be greeted with an incredible sun rise over the incredible mountains of South Georgia. As Plancius dropped anchor off [St. Andrews Bay](#), we were all relieved to hear from Ali that the landings would go ahead, with near perfect conditions. The beach can be notoriously difficult to land on as big swells often create huge surf onto the beach and katabatic winds from the glaciers and mountains are common. However, with less than 10 knots of wind, the sea was calm and beautiful.



As we made our way ashore, we could hear the wildlife before seeing it; the penguin calls were background noise, with the roar of the Elephant seals echoed over the bay. As we arrived on the beach and disembarked the zodiacs, there were penguins, Fur Seals and Elephant seals spreading as far as the eye could see; over rolling moraines and interspersed with glacier melt rivers – a truly magnificent sight.

Sara led a route along the back of the beach, out manoeuvring various curious Fur seals until we reached the river. With help from Jochem in the deeper, fast flowing parts - we were all able to cross the small melt river. From here we followed a flagged route up to the moraines overlooking the main colony of King penguins. As we made our way up the last slope to the viewpoint the noise of the penguins increased and as we reached the top it was an orchestra of trumpeting adults and whistling chicks that met us along with a view that will stay with many of us for the rest of our lives. Along the beach were thousands of penguins and chicks stretching





out as far as the eye could see. Everyone sat in wonder and took in this view that was almost too vast to understand.



**Macaroni penguins**

We enjoyed lunch and sailed Plancius around to **Godthul**. We were unable to land due to thick fur seals parked in all directions on the beach. We decided to explore the coastline via zodiac. We visited Cobblers Cove and Rookery Point, where we observed our first Macaroni penguins playing in the swell. We even entered a cave where we could hear the

waves of the ocean beat the stone far back in the darkness. The swell did not cause us too many problems, but we got a good taste of what type of ocean conditions South Georgia could dish out. Before heading back to the ship we spotted a Humpback what in the distance, a nice added bonus before a well-deserved dinner on Plancius.



## **Day 9 – Sunday December 08, 2019**

### **Ocean Harbour - Grytviken**

**12h00 GPS Position:** 54° 20.2' S / 36° 16.6' W

**Wind:** NW **Sea State:** Smooth **Weather:** Cloudy **Air Temp:** 8°C **Sea Temp:** 3°C **Visibility:** Good



“What, how?” The wake-up call, almost an hour before the announced time... “Hmngrrrrmbllll, why so early...” Well, for a very valid reason! The low clouds that had been blocking our mountain views on the previous days had largely disappeared, opening up a grand panorama, a vista on the true South Georgia. Majestic, snowy peaks forming the backdrop to green untouched valleys around **Ocean Harbour**. Complementary to the stunning landscape, a multitude of humpbacks was served. Breaching, fluking and approaching Plancius, there for all early risers to see up close – simply fantastic!



After breakfast – a landing at Ocean Harbour. A proper swell, fitting our exposed anchorage position, made for cautious embarkation of the Zodiacs. On the beach and in the tussock grasslands a significant number of furry and elephanty seals was awaiting us, but magically there appeared to be a seal free avenue, allowing a route towards the graves. From there, the expedition staff opened an overwhelming amount of trails option: an extended hike along the creek to the



higher ridge, a walk towards the remains of the whaling station and a short tippie to the higher viewpoint enabling magnificent views on the wreck of the Bayard steamer down in the bay.

If possible at all, the skies cleared up even more and several layers of clothing could be stored in our backpacks. What a morning, with the quicksilver easily hitting double digits



in sheltered areas. Whether relaxed or active, everybody seemed to have had a happy time on shore and with a visit of the South Georgia Pipit to the beach, the morning was complete.



On to [Grytviken](#), South Georgia's first whaling station and hosting a museum, post office and tourist shop at present. But hang on, Grytviken is also home to the Government Officer of South Georgia and seat of the South Georgia Heritage Trust. This meant a short visit and briefing by their respective representants and a bio-security check on 63 passengers before going ashore. After several reprimands regarding organic matter on Velcro and between boot logos, everybody was finally allowed to visit this truly special décor made of old oil and blubber tanks, several factories and a neat white church, brought in from mainland Norway. However, the mandatory first stop was Shackleton's grave, with Frank Wild resting on Ernest his left-hand side. Ali happily coordinated the whisky toast, commemorating the incredible endurance and adventurous mindsets of both these men.

With the air getting colder, most staff members and passengers alike sought comfort in the post office and museum/shop, resulting in the acquisition of many kilograms of merchandise, dominantly penguin-themed. Indeed, the cold air actually preceded proper snow fall! For many passengers, this was the final kick needed







to realise we are celebrating summer in the (Sub)Antarctic. And after such a day, what better thing to do then to eat out on deck, feasting on delicious BBQ-food and accompanying salads and



mould whine! Grytviken had turned white by the time we set sail to Gold Harbour and with the exception of the usual suspects (Sara), most people found their blankets rather earlyish – the next wake-up call would soon be there...

## Day 10 – Monday December 09, 2019

### Gold Harbour – Cooper Bay – At sea

12h00 GPS Position: 54° 47.3' S / 35° 48.6' W

Wind: SE Sea State: Slight Weather: Overcast Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 2°C Visibility: Good



Today we were woken up very early by Expedition Leader Ali, for our morning landing at **Gold Harbour**. The name comes from the scene when the morning light shine on the glacier back to the beach. Although we did not have the morning light, but it is still a very spectacular place to visit. The swell made the operation challenging at the gangway and at the landing site. Ali with other 2 guides had to turn the boats around performing stern landing in order to land the passengers dry and safely, which is very physically challenging, but it was worth the effort. The landing beach was not a

large area like St. Andrew's bay, but it was full of life. Hundreds of king penguins, gentoo penguins, fur seals, and elephant seal pups. Although the expedition guides asked the passengers to follow the IAATO wild life guidelines, but it was really hard to keep 5m distance with penguins and 15m distance with seals, simply because they were so interested in us, especially the elephant seal pups. All passengers had great fun spending time with the king penguins and elephant seals.



During the breakfast we have sailed to **Cooper Bay**, we had a split zodiac cruise at Cooper bay. The wind speed was dropped, but the swell reminded at the gangway and at the beach. Although we were not planning on landing, all zodiac drivers had to take extra caution when they get close to the beach. On one side the bay there were many fur



seals and Gentoo penguins resting on the beach, on the other side the bay, there was a macaroni penguin colony on the hill, this would be our second macaroni penguin on this trip. The fur seals had dominated the caves under the hill. During one of the two cruises, people had witnessed an adult male fur seal on top of an elephant seal pup, and thinking it might be a female fur seal. That was not something we see every day.

The ship sailed toward to South Orkneys Islands after everyone was back on. After lunch, Jerry gave a presentation on famous explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, told the stories of him tried many times to conquer this frozen continent at the end of the world, and how he tried to save his men after their ship was blocked and destroy by sea ice in the Weddell sea.





# Day 11 – Tuesday December 10, 2019

## At sea

12h00 GPS Position: 58° 22.4' S / 41° 17.7' W

Wind: SE Sea State: Smooth Weather: Overcast Air Temp: 1°C Sea Temp: 2°C Visibility: Good

After some exciting yet long days in South Georgia we started our way south towards the Antarctic Peninsula. We had set our clocks forward one hour when arriving to South Georgia, but now had the luxury of setting them back again - giving us all one extra well deserved hour of sleep. We woke up to calm seas, well rested.



At 9.30am Sara gave one of her wonderful lectures about the seals we had seen, and the ones hopefully yet to come. The lounge was full of guests enjoying the calm waters and Sara's beautiful images. At 11.00am Ali and Katja gave IAATO lectures to prepare everyone for the coming week in Antarctica. At 11.30am we started the bio-security process - vacuuming and searching for sand and seeds in our clothing again. By now we had all become experts in the process and it was a familiar exercise. Needs to say, our clothing and camera bags had never been so clean.

Yeah - lunch time!



After lunch we finished a little more bio-security but by 15.30pm it was time for the South Georgia Museum



auction. A change to bid on some great items that can't be found in the standard shops. The proceeds go the rat eradication fund - so all going to a great cause! After some cocktails at the bar the bidding became quite fun and mini-battles broke out all in the good name of clarity. It was a very fun afternoon. 1355 Pounds was raised in the end. I good day for the South Georgia Heritage Fund. At recap Ali explained the upcoming weather and plans for the following day. The evening was beautiful and during dinner very large tabular icebergs seemed to float by the dining room windows with a backdrop of blue sky. The seas were as calm as one could hope for and the mood on the ship was light, friendly and full of smiles. It had been a good day.



## Day 12 – Wednesday December 11, 2019

### At sea

**12h00 GPS Position:** 60° 39.9' S / 45° 3.25' W

**Wind:** Calm **Sea State:** Calm **Weather:** Clouded **Air Temp:** 2°C **Sea Temp:** 0°C **Visibility:** Good

Ali warned us yesterday that the [Orkneys Islands](#) would look much more “polar”. When we opened our curtains this morning, we indeed discovered white, icy landscapes, typical of Antarctica.

Only the name of the isolated archipelago is British: being part of the Antarctic treaty, Orkney Islands are not owned by any nation –despite Argentina having established a research station called Orcadas, and the Orkneys being located at the edge of the area claimed by the UK. Ali's initial plan was to visit Orcadas station,



but much to our delight, she decided to go for a landing instead. Plancius was however running late as she had to zigzag between massive pieces of ice on her approach of the coast, and Ali changed plans again, thereby perfectly illustrating what expedition style cruising entails (and again, much to our delight). We thus boarded zodiacs for an exploration of frozen labyrinths created by a mixture of land ice, which likely originates from glaciers surrounding the Weddell sea and are characterized by blue coloration and intricate shapes, and sea ice, which results from the freezing of sea waters, and forms

flatter pieces called floes. The latter was sometimes bearing yellowish coloration due to the presence of phytoplankton. Water was crystal-clear and we could measure with our own eyes what Jerry explained the day before, namely the volumetric difference between immersed and emerged parts of icebergs.

Each zodiac driver however cautiously stayed away from the biggest ones: even vibrations from engines may cause perturbations of ice structure and cause cracks, potentially leading to icy bits falling off. Not only are these dangerous but also their loss can modify the centre of gravity of an iceberg, which would roll over, ejecting ice bombs and creating treacherous waves. Adelie penguins do not reason like drivers though. These emblematic birds, neatly dressed in tuxedo plumages, complacently jump on and off of icebergs and floes. This is our first sighting of this species, and many individuals greet us by opening their wings to let the air cool down their internal organs and vascular systems after long dives. We also observed a crab eater seal basking on a floe.



Back on board, we enjoyed lunch and another quiet, beautiful afternoon at sea. The first hours were spent on decks as Plancius strolled through amazing icebergs lit by a beautiful sun, on her way out of the bay. Later, we listened to a conference by Jerry on the polar explorer Ernest Shackleton. While it was impossible by now not to have heard about this man while visiting South Georgia, Jerry provided us with many an unexpected detail on the story of his

life and of his fabulous expeditions, in particular that of the famous Endurance ship, its men, and their incredible adventure... from Antarctica to South Georgia.

Later at recap, Rustyn added more intel to Shackleton's story, with that of Luis Pardo, second in command of the Yaco, the ship that rescued Shackleton's men from Wild point on Elephant Island (after two other failed attempts). Will we be able to repeat Luis Pardo's exploit? Ali explained that given the great weather conditions, we would give it a try, as a bonus to our expedition! Marie then talked about coloration in polar birds



and mammals, explaining the genetics behind some of the colour mutants (such as blond fur seals and leucistic giant petrels) that we had observed a few days ago.



# Day 13 – Thursday December 12, 2019

## Elephant Island

**12h00 GPS Position:** 61° 03.9' S / 54° 38.1' W

**Wind:** S **Sea State:** Smooth **Weather:** Overcast / Snow **Air Temp:** 2°C **Sea Temp:** 1°C

**Visibility:** Moderate

“In front of our ship you’ll see Clarence Island and behind that, our destination of today – [Elephant Island](#). Good morning everybody!”

Alors, what news! The words ‘Elephant Island’ alone might have been enough to send shivers down the spine of many of our passengers. More specifically, Point Wilde, a rocky outcrop on the island’s coast, is forever carved in the annals of Antarctic exploration, as the haul out for 22 of Shackleton’s men, patiently awaiting



the return of their boss - a chapter in what is arguably one of the most incredible stories about endurance and comradeship. In order to get there though, Plancius had to first make its way through a superb nutritional patch of ocean in front of Clarence Island. Plenty of humpbacks, fin whales, thousands of gentoos and hundreds of gulls and albatrosses were feasting close to and on the water’s surface. Spectacle pure and reason enough for our Captain to circle around the area one more time.

Enfin, with the winds picking up we anchored in front of Point Wilde. Our voices dimmed out of sheer respect for the unfathomable story that took scene here. The heavy swell didn’t allow for a landing, but we managed to get all passengers into ten zodiacs, split up in two convoys of five boats and cruised along both sides of the Point. It was there, in front of the statue commemorating Piloto Pardo, were two very inquisitive leopard seals took hold of



our attention. Reptilian looking seals, seemingly as long as our zodiacs, showed up as quick as they would disappear. For two boats however, the proof of leopard seals’ presence remained. For those two boats namely, got tested by the massive jaws, resulting in leakages and inoperable zodiacs for the remainder of the voyage. These seals sure demonstrated why we, visitors to their habitats, better be respect- and careful.



With a long mileage to go towards the Antarctic Sound, we spend most of the afternoon and evening on board. Marie gave us fascinating and completely new insights into her research field of genetics, embryonic development and environmental constraints regarding the growth of polar mammals and birds.



A loud round of applause for this expedition day symbolized the satisfaction of our passengers, potentially fed by the outlook towards true Antarctica!



## Day 14 – Friday December 13, 2019

### Paulet Island – Brown Bluff

12h00 GPS Position: 63° 34.25'S / 55° 46.9' W

Wind: SW Sea State: Rippled Weather: Clear Sky Air Temp: 4°C Sea Temp: 01°C Visibility: Good



In the morning, we were woken up in a very calm and peaceful weather by the voice of Ali. Our morning activity was an island that linked to several famous expeditions during the heroic age of Antarctic exploration. The name of the island is **Paulet Island**. The most famous expedition related to this island was



the Swedish expedition led by Nordenskjöld. They have been trapped on the sea ice, built a stone hut, and overwintered on this small island. The hut had fallen apart but the foundation is still visible.

Not only the history is rich here, but also the Adelie penguins. There are over 20,000 breeding pairs of Adelie penguins' nest on this island and there were even chicks under their parents' belly. After we passed the historical hut, the route ended at a frozen lake, the scenery was spectacular especially with the penguins



**Adelie penguin with its chick**



**Antarctic shag family**

travelling on their belly on the ice of this frozen lake. Ali then opened the route along the beach, and we found out that it is not only the penguins are having chicks at this time of the year, also the blue eye shags.



During lunch time, we were on our way to our afternoon destination Brown Bluff, it is at the north-eastern tip of the Antarctic peninsula, it is truly a continental landing. Some of the passenger had completed their seventh continent after landing at **Brown Bluff**. When we arrived the landing site, we started to walk to the Adelie and Gentoo penguin colony. On the way, there were gentoo penguins nesting just next to the rocks



© Sara Jenner

and close to shore. Marching bands of Adelie penguins were coming out and jumping into the sea. At around 16:45, a guided walk that goes up to the glacier started, many people joined this interesting walk, along the



way, Jochem explained the geology of this part of the peninsula. The sun came out and put beautiful colours on the surroundings as we ascent. At the end of our track, people enjoyed themselves by taking photos and sitting down in this amazing environment. At the end the landing, more than 10 brave souls plunged themselves into the freezing cold water.

This afternoon was just too beautiful and peaceful to leave, but our journey has to

continue. During the recap, Ali announced the next day would be an exploration day, and Jochem explained we would be going to see the largest iceberg on the planet and possibly Emperor penguins.

## Day 15 – Saturday December 14, 2019

### Weddell Sea and Devil Island

12h00 GPS Position: 64° 18.05'S / 56° 34.5' W

Wind: Calm Sea State: Calm / Rippled Weather: Partly Clouded Air Temp: 3°C Sea Temp: 0°C Visibility: Good

Overnight we had traversed South West, further in to the [Weddell Sea](#). Ali woke us earlier than planned as we had made good progress and by 6 am we were sat just 1 nautical mile of the edge of iceberg A-68A.



This enormous iceberg carved from the Larsen C Ice Shelf in July 2017, with a surface area of 5,800 square kilometres and weighing one trillion tonnes is one of the largest recorded icebergs, the largest being B-15 which measured 11,000

square kilometres before breaking up. The calving of A-68 reduced the overall size of the Larsen C shelf by 12 percent which gives a sense as to the enormity to the chunk of ice that was just ahead of the Plancius. We wrapped up warm and took our cameras outside to try and capture something that would remind us of this incredible sighting, however it was virtually impossible to do it justice or convey its sheer size. During breakfast we cruised a part of the 150km wall of ice, before heading out towards some fast ice in order to begin our search for a special large type of penguin we hoped to see, the Emperor.

As we approached the edge of the fast ice the expedition team went to the bridge, binoculars in hand, to begin the search. Finding penguins on the ice was easy, but double checking each one methodically to ensure what type of penguin we were looking at was far more challenging. There were countless Adelie Penguins, but this was not our target species for this morning. While the Expedition team strained their eyes, most guests headed outside to enjoy the spectacular scenery, there were towering tabular icebergs in every direction and every so often a seal was spotted resting on the smaller ice floes.



Eventually Ali made the call from the bridge that we had all been waiting for, an Emperor Penguin had been spotted! We hurried outside, camera and phones in hand to get a better view of this lonely adult perched on a small iceberg, Captain navigated the Plancius beautifully, enabling us wonderful views of the penguin.



No sooner had we returned inside to warm up, a second Emperor was sighted and we scuttled outside once more to take more pictures of this majestic creature.

Zsuzanna and **Anna** her assistant kindly served a boozy rum hot chocolate in the lounge on our return, the perfect warming tippie on this cold expedition day. We continued to cruise towards Snow Hill Island, the home to a well-known Emperor Penguin Colony, in fact at one point we were less than 25 nautical miles from the colony which is only accessible by helicopter due to being surrounded by sea ice year round, but unfortunately no more Emperor Penguins were spotted, despite the Expedition Teams best efforts.



Over lunch we sailed North up the Erebus and Terror Gulf, past Seymour Island, on which Marambio Station, the Argentine station is located so as to be in position for our afternoon activity at **Devil Island**.



Shortly after 3:30pm the Expedition staff were ready to greet us ashore on this small volcanic island. The island is named for the two peaks located at either end of the island which are separated by a low-lying valley creating a horned effect. For those feeling energetic a guided walk was offered to one of the peaks which gave spectacular views down across the semi frozen Price Gustav Channel, whilst those wanting a more leisurely afternoon spent the time with the large Adelie Penguin colony located in the valley. The penguins were sitting on their pebble nests, either incubating eggs or nursing very small chicks, most the chicks were under a week old and extremely photogenic. Unfortunately for them, there were several Brown Skuas hovering above which see them as a tasty snack and were just biding their time till they saw an opportunistic moment to snatch one from beneath their parents. With so much to do and

see, the afternoon seemed to fly by and before we knew it it was time for the last zodiac of the day as dinner time was rapidly approaching. With a long, action packed afternoon and to avoid delaying dinner our daily recap was done at 8:45pm, Ali told us of the plan for our last expedition day, Sara spoke a little about

Emperor penguins and Marie concluded her three-part series on colour variations and mutations in birds and mammals.

Today was certainly a true expedition day and one we would remember for a long time to come, so most stayed in the bar to have a celebratory night cap before heading to bed.



## Day 16 – Sunday December 15, 2019

### Half Moon bay and Yankee Harbour

12h00 GPS Position: 62° 35.5'S / 59° 54.5' W

Wind: SW Sea State: Rippled Weather: Clear Sky Air Temp: 4°C Sea Temp: 0°C Visibility: Good



**Chinstrap penguin**

touch and have creates many small niches and plateaus to host chinstrap-penguins (including one resilient Macaroni penguin, called Marcel), shags and gulls. The long-hikers took on the peak behind the Argentinian research station, enabling them a breezy 360 degrees panoramic view over the surrounding

A bright blue sky to start the day, brilliant. As Plancius anchored just off the coast of **Half Moon Island**, we woke up surrounded by the magnificent, glacier blanketed peaks of Livingston Island.

Half-moon, half groups, meaning a split landing – many divers took the opportunity to dive one more time, whereas all non-divers could choose between doing or not doing a longer hike. Rough rock-formations give the island a very characteristic



**Antarctic skua**





*Katja Redel - Snowmad Photography*

mountains, land spits and glaciers. Meanwhile, the few passengers that had landed close to the penguin colony, could scatter and enjoy the new-found tranquillity. A little later on, a route towards surprisingly large and beach-rock-like Weddell seals was opened up. The sleepy slugs didn't really show of, but just like us, these seals took great joy in the warmth of the bright, shining sun. A fantastic morning!

And still, there was more to come. One final landing. How to worthily wrap up a 19-day trip that took us to so many different surroundings and to literally millions of animals? Exactly, by contemplation. And **Yankee Harbour** turned out to do just that to many of us. Triggered by offshore breaching humpback whales, many got lured to the far side beach, sat down and remained seated. Silent. Smiling. Sunbathing. The walk back to our landing zone led past yet another penguin colony, a last glimpse on quibbling and kleptomaniac gentoos. Mission completed.



*© Susan Lutz*



Salp 'on the rocks'

Due to an earlier-than-normal return to our steamer and with doctor Nick making house in the lounge, everybody knew what time it truly was: time to head home, time to hit the Drake. That evening's recap taught us a few things. Outdoor gear has evolved into fashionable wear, salp lives its life truly non-conform to human standards and most importantly, the weather forecast shows a green Drake – with a sigh of relief all passengers happily made their way to the restaurant. Bon Appetit and Good Night.

## Day 17 – Monday December 16, 2019

### At Sea- Drake Passage

**12h00 GPS Position:** 60° 00.85'S / 063° 30.3' W

**Wind:** SSW **Sea State:** Moderate **Weather:** Overcast **Air Temp:** 7°C **Sea Temp:** 4°C **Visibility:** Good

Our good luck continued overnight, we woke to a gentle rolling motion and a mild 20 knots of wind, it wasn't quite a 'Drake Lake' but not far from it. It was a leisurely start to the day with no formal wake-up call from Ali so breakfast was a staggered affair as we woke from our slumber.

It was quite a subdued atmosphere on board, as people perused their photos and quietly chattered and reflected over what an incredible trip they had had and how lucky we had been with weather and sightings, there was definitely a few heavy hearts amongst us to be leaving Antarctica.

Shortly after breakfast Ali announced that

we would make a small detour to our journey so as to traverse through the waters where a Chilean aircraft had come down a few days earlier to assist with the search operation. It wasn't expected to delay our arrival in Ushuaia and of course there is a moral obligation to help in such a disastrous situation, so we fully supported this decision.

The first lecture of the day was given by Jerry, entitled 'The Race to the Poles', which told the story of Scott and Amundsen's race to be the first to reach the South Pole. This was the golden era of polar exploration with numerous attempts in both the Arctic and Antarctica at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century to be the first to reach a certain point or traverse a particular route.





Shortly after Jerrys presentation, we had a viewing of another episode of the amazing BBC documentary Frozen Planet, with its impressive footage of both Antarctica and the Arctic. As we finished lunch the expedition team headed up to the bridge and outside decks, with binoculars in hand, to search for potential debris from the plane crash as we had reached the co-ordinates the Chilean authorities had requested we searched, but despite their best efforts, unfortunately nothing was found.

Mid-afternoon, we gathered in the lounge to listen to Katjas' presentation entitled 'Life at a Base', detailing her time working at Neumayr Station as an atmospheric chemist. She has countless funny and inciteful anecdotes to tell, it was certainly eye opening to understand what overwintering at an Antarctic Base really involves, it was definitely far from the comfort we had become accustomed to on the Plancius the last couple of weeks.

At 16:30 Ali gave her presentation Ice Maidens, about the women behind the heroic explorers and how

despite their very different personalities they each provided the foundation for the success of their partners. She also shed some light on the transition of Antarctica from being a men's only domain to one where researchers and explorers of both sexes pursue their dreams and passions.

The day concluded with the usual daily recap and plans for the tomorrow from Ali, and concluded with an interesting short presentation from Marie which discussed how



mathematical equations explain patterns in nature.

## Day 18 – Tuesday December 17, 2019

### At Sea- Drake Passage

**12h00 GPS Position:** 55° 47.75'S / 66° 01.0' W

**Wind:** NE **Sea State:** Moderate **Weather:** Overcast / Rain **Air Temp:** 4°C **Sea Temp:** 7°C

**Visibility:** Good

Our second day on the Drake Passage was yet another pleasant surprise. The 20 kts winds gave the ship a slight roll, but nothing that interfered with our daily routine too much. After breakfast we started our lecture program with Daniel giving us a virtual tour of Plancius. Everything from the kitchen to the engine room. Details and facts about the ship that we otherwise would not have any chance to see.

We had time before lunch to enjoy a short documentary from the BBC about our frozen planet, but soon Zsuzsanna was already calling us in for lunch. It was a very nice leisurely morning.

After lunch we continued our lecture series with Chloé presenting her topic of 'Drifting Life' - an in-depth view of life above and below the surface of the ocean. With everything from amazing, colourful sponges to tiny but so important krill, it was another reminder of the complexities and variety that lay directly under us on this amazing voyage. Complementary to Chloé's presentation, dive guides then presented a slideshow of

all they had experienced below the surface on this very expedition. The stories we had been hearing all these days together at sea now came to life with amazing photography submitted by all the divers on the team. For all of us non-divers it was a rare treat to see what only the underwater explorers normally get to witness.

By the afternoon it was time to think about some of the 'real' tasks at hand, before getting to Ushuaia. We were all called down to return our rubber boots that we had used and cared for these last three weeks. It was strange to hand them back - as they had been so important to us every step of the way.

Before dinner, for our last recap, we all raised our glasses of champagne with the Captain in the lounge, for one last toast to our great adventure. Daniel had created a slideshow, built day by day, of all of our unique experiences in the Falklands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula.



It was almost sad to be called to our last dinner, but Szuzsanna had a special surprise dessert for us, and we had a chance to see all of the hotel staff, in the dining room: all of the hardworking crew that had made each of our mealtimes so special. It was an unforgettable last dinner.

## **Day 17 – Wednesday December 18, 2019**

### **Ushuaia- Disembarkation**

**8h00 GPS Position:** Ushuaia Port.

Today we were woken by the last wake-up call from our Expedition Leader Ali and got ready to disembark in Ushuaia. The last 18 days have taken us on an eye-opening journey to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and the frozen continent and allowed us a short glimpse into an environment that most will never see. We all had slightly different experiences but whatever the memories, whether it was our first-time onboard zodiacs, hiking in rubber boots, seeing massive ice cliffs or making new friends, they are memories that will stay with us for the rest of our lives.



**Total distance sailed on our voyage:**

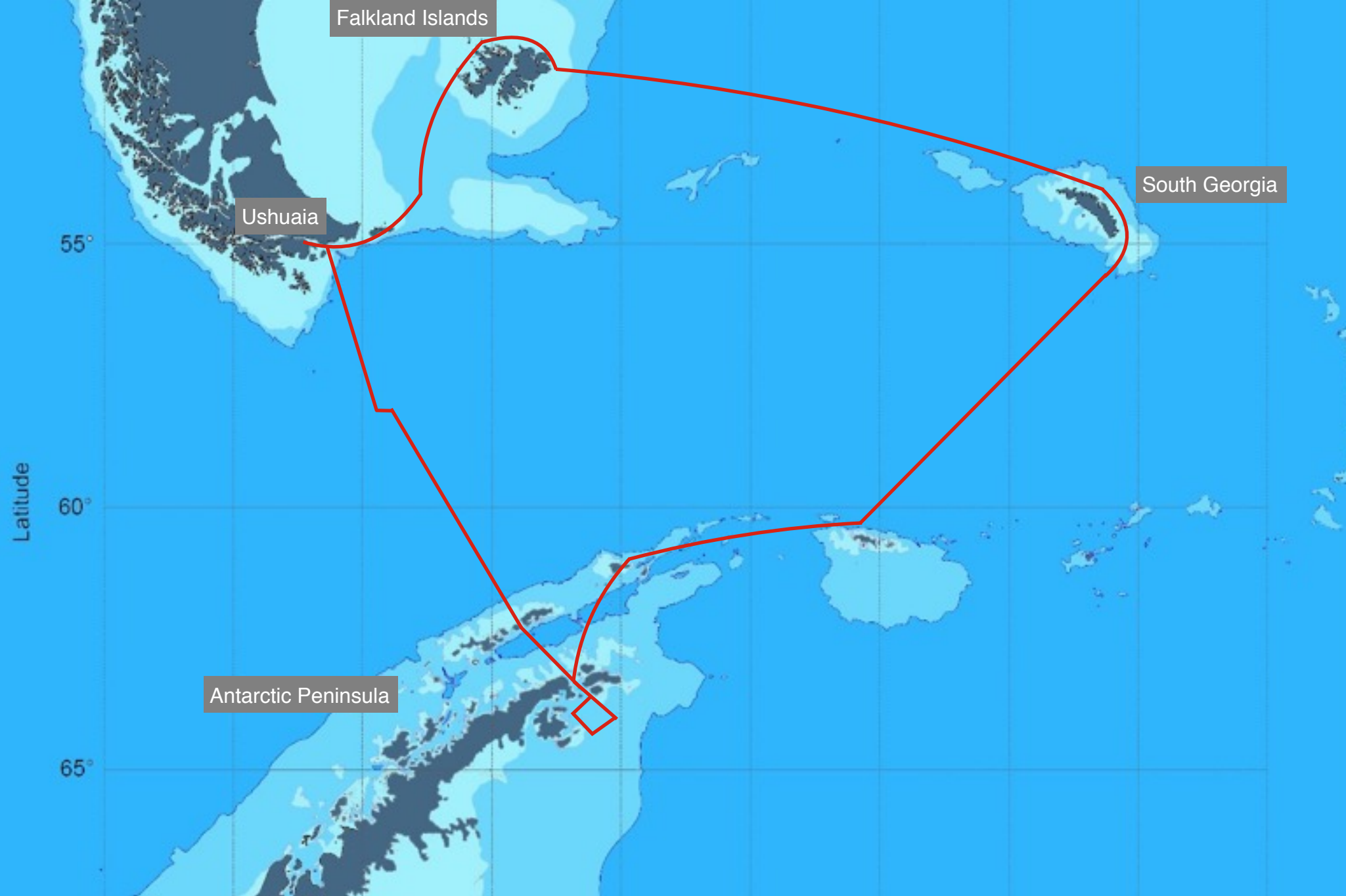
Nautical miles: **3456**



On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Evgeny Levakov, Expedition Leader Ali Liddle and all the crew and staff, we thank you for travelling with us and wish you a safe journey home.



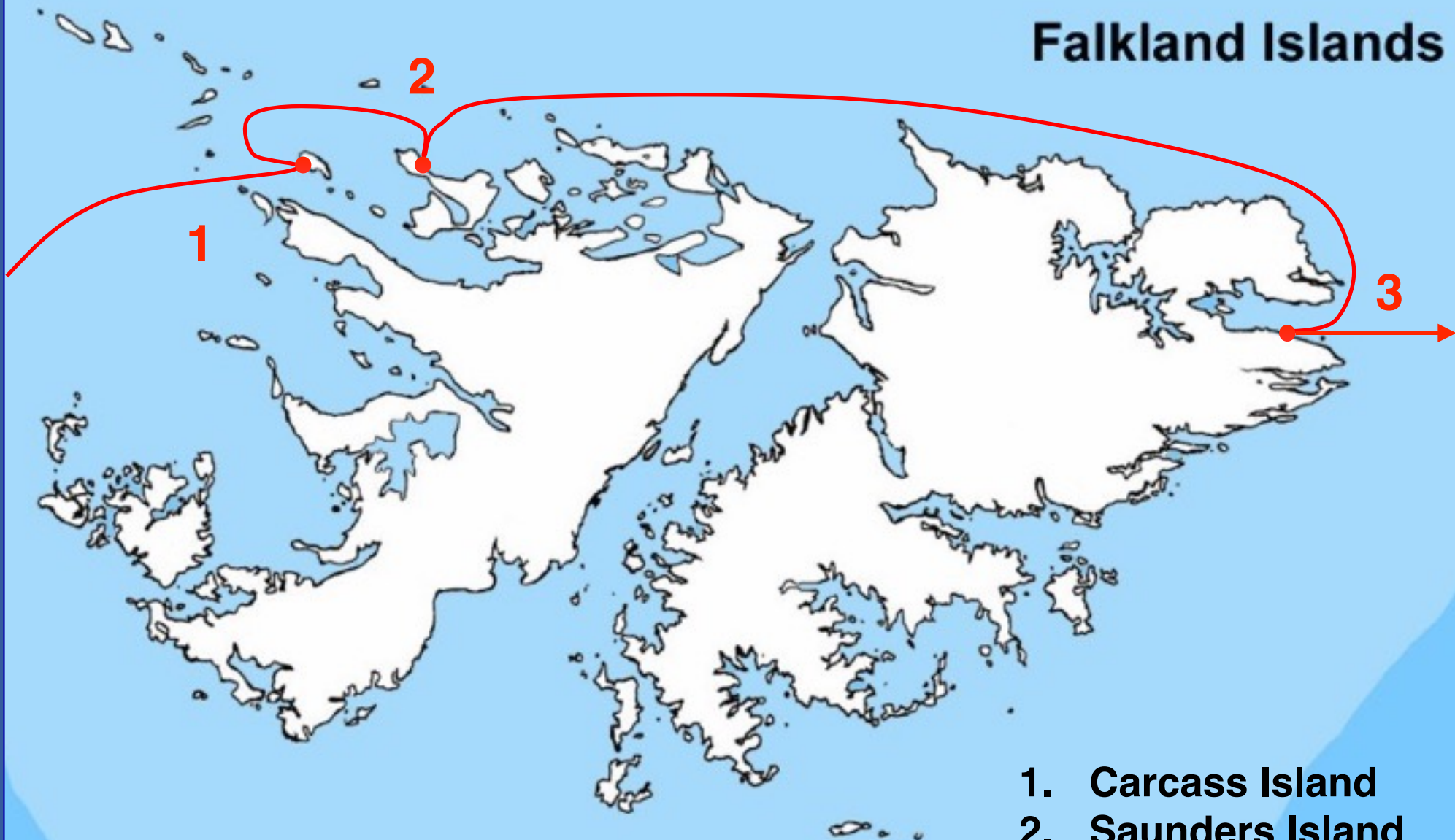
**OCEANWIDE**  
EXPEDITIONS



PLA 23-17 • Falklands - South Georgia - Peninsula • November 30 - December 18, 2019



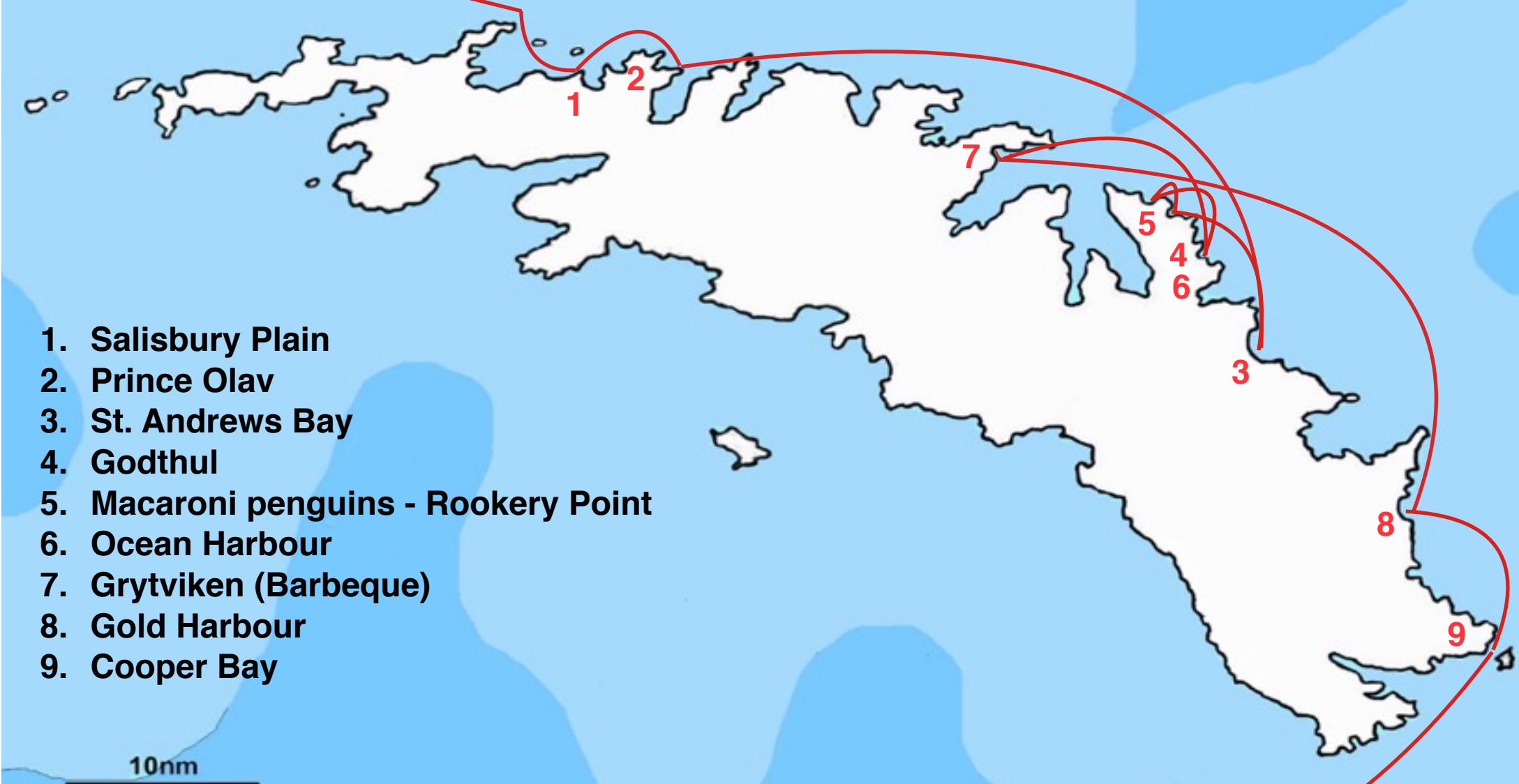
# Falkland Islands



1. Carcass Island
2. Saunders Island
3. Stanley

10nm

# South Georgia

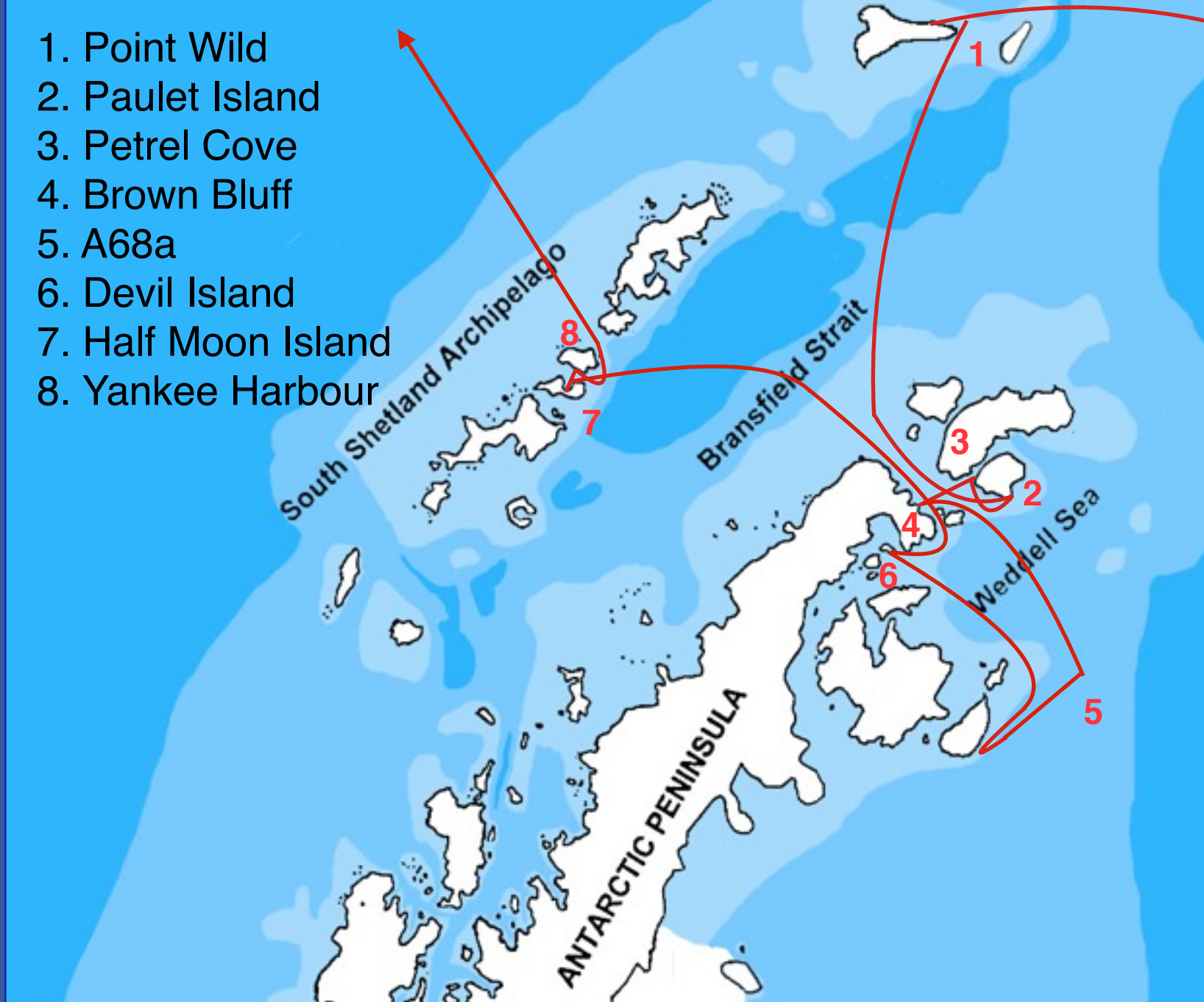


1. Salisbury Plain
2. Prince Olav
3. St. Andrews Bay
4. Godthul
5. Macaroni penguins - Rookery Point
6. Ocean Harbour
7. Grytviken (Barbeque)
8. Gold Harbour
9. Cooper Bay

10nm



1. Point Wild
2. Paulet Island
3. Petrel Cove
4. Brown Bluff
5. A68a
6. Devil Island
7. Half Moon Island
8. Yankee Harbour









**Dive Log, MV Plancius**  
**Falklands, South Georgia and Antarctic Peninsula**  
**30<sup>th</sup> November – 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019**



**Dive Team:** Raf Jah, Francisca Jah, David Sutton, Stephanie Sutton, Kevin Posser, Elmar Schanz, Jan Nilsson, Elaine Le Claire, Mark Orland, Thomas Penn, Timothy Morin, Jozef Koppelman, Jeffery Bozanic, Michael Smith, Nicolas Lecomte, Steven Macleod, Godwin Lai, Petra Walker, Gavin Walker, Bastiaan Antonius Vriesema.

**Dive Staff:** Jerry Sutton (Dive Team Leader) Catherine Buckland, Chris Booker & Chloe Marechal

## **Dive 1: AM 2<sup>nd</sup> December, Needle Point, Carcass Island, The Falklands**

**S 51°18'49.55**

**W 60°31'51.40**

After leaving Ushuaia and a gentle crossing of the South Atlantic, the 21 members of the diving group arrived in warm sunshine to the sheltered waters off Carcass Island eager for their first dive of the voyage. Dive Expedition leader Jerry gave a quick briefing then it was all action on the front decks of Plancius where dive gear was checked then stowed in zodiacs before being lowered over the side by Bosun Lauren.

Once the divers had boarded their respective zodiacs, we headed off to a sheltered shallow spot away from the rest of the boat traffic for a “kit check /shakedown dive” to run through drills, check weighting and get to grips with expedition diving operations for the first time.

All went well with divers enjoying 10 degrees water temperature, great visibility, plenty of life in the extensive kelp and even a swim past from some Commerson’s dolphins. One of the divers who shall remain nameless enjoyed it so much he decided to leave a fin behind – perhaps hoping to return one day like the people who leave their boots on “Boot Hill”.....

Fortunately the fin was the only thing left behind that morning and all divers emerged unscathed from their morning dip with enough time left for a quick run ashore to sample the delights of the cakes and tea at the settlement before heading back to the ship for lunch – diving is hungry work after all!



## **Dive 2: PM 2<sup>nd</sup> December, ‘The Neck’, Saunders Island, The Falklands.**

**S 51°18'50.70**

**W 60°31'53.05**

After a hearty lunch whilst underway, 13 divers were still eager for some more Falklands diving so we loaded up the zodiacs and headed away from the rest of the expedition to the West of the “Neck” of Saunders Island.



The dive site here is well protected from the wind and waves and drops gently down from the cliffs on the shore which are home to a great number of seabirds. Beneath the surface, the native kelp beds are also full of life with the divers discovering Octopus, Squat Lobsters, Long Nosed Spider Crabs, Painted Shrimp and numerous Squid eggs hiding amongst the kelp fronds.

The dive looked so inviting that two of the dive staff, Jerry and Chloe both decided to jump in with the divers to have a look for themselves – both surfacing with big smiles and thumbs up – always a good sign!

Once the happy divers were recovered from the water, they were lucky to still have enough time to go ashore and stretch their legs with the rest of the expedition to see the resident populations of Gentoo, Rockhopper and King Penguins. As it was now getting late, it was all too soon time to jump in a zodiac for the trip back to Plancius for a quick re-cap and then dinner, whilst swapping stories of the day's adventures.



### **Dive 3: AM 6<sup>th</sup> December, Tern Island, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia**

**S 54°2'41.499**

**W 37°19'54.38**

This was going to be our first dive in South Georgia, and although people were keen to dive there was also quite a number who wanted to enjoy what this stunning beach had to offer, and with a beach full of life it was easy to see why. So only a couple of boats decided to have a quick dive before joining those on shore.

We headed off to a dive spot known to be good,



kelp and fur seals waited for us with most divers enjoying an encounter with seals in the water. There was lots of life to greet us, with the usual suspects of star fish, a wealth of sponges, kelp limpets, and top shells. Most of the divers though only had eyes for the seals that buzzed around them, showing their agility in the water.

South Georgia lies below the convergence, which marks the biological boundary for 'Antarctica', this also means that the temperatures drop, so this was our divers first experience of true polar cold waters. The temperature was around 3°C, with a lot of divers finding the cold drove them out of the water first!

#### **Dive 4: PM 6<sup>th</sup> December, Prince Olav Harbour, South Georgia**

**S 54°2'41.080**

**W 37°19'54.041**

This afternoon we found a steep side of this natural harbour, with kelp and lots of fur seals surrounding us this looked like a promising dive site.

Twenty divers jumped in to explore this site. They were met with a steepish wall covered in life. The more they looked the more there seemed to be!

The usual cold water suspects of cold water limpets, starfish and anemones were found in abundance on this wall. There was plenty of light down at 15-20m and space to move between the kelp forest. Lots of young nemertean worms of the Hopolonemertea variety were seen by one of the dive guides which was nice to



see a different variety of these worms in South Georgia. After a successful dive for all we cruised the bay's deserted whaling station which was a very atmospheric end to a diving afternoon.

#### **Dive 5: PM 7<sup>th</sup> December, Godthul, South Georgia**

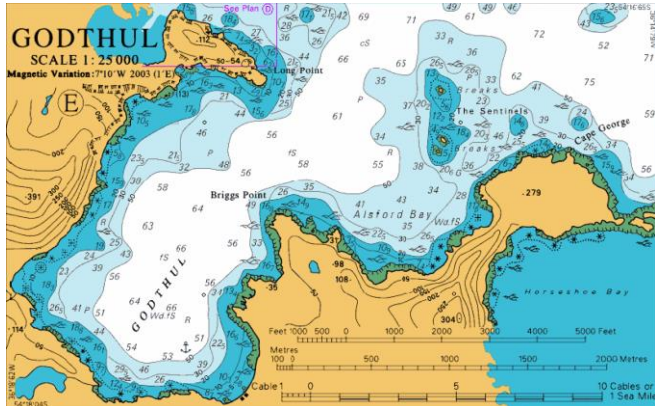
**S 54°17'34.51**

**W 36°17'10.65**

This afternoon's dive was in a stunning setting, the natural harbour had lots of fur seals and a few penguins jumping around. We found a suitable place to drop the divers in and 9 intrepid divers braved the cold again. Unfortunately the underwater visibility was poor, made worse by the slightly overcast afternoon. There were lots of particulates in the water which seem to clear up a little deeper but still wasn't the best we could've hoped for. Jerry



our dive team leader jumped in to have look for himself! A couple of our divers, deciding that the view was better on the surface, snorkelled or 'kelped' with a couple of seals after their dive and were rewarded with some very close encounters with the ever inquisitive fur seals. One very brave diver, whose dry glove had flooded, managed 25 minutes without a glove on in the 2°C water.... proving that divers really are a different breed! After a short dive, we caught up with the rest of the expedition and zodiac cruised round to Cobblers bay to see the new-born fur seal pups and were also joined by some young humpback whales that had joined us in the bay for the ride home.

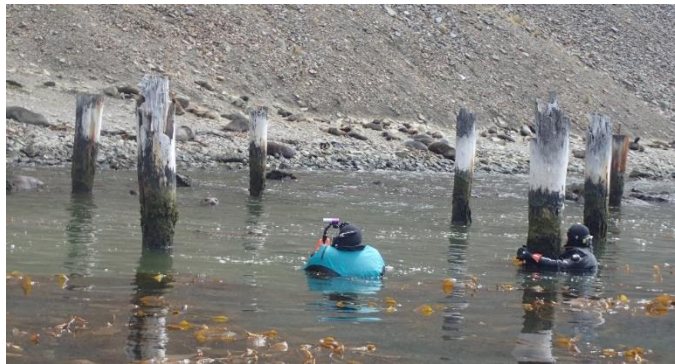


## Dive 6: AM 8<sup>th</sup> December, Ocean Harbour, South Georgia

**S 54°20'9.73**

**W 36°15'54.99**

This morning's dive was an unknown site for the staff, we were hoping for better visibility compared to the previous day but unfortunately with the large ground swell outside of the bay making diving impossible, we were forced to dive inside the bay in the calmer waters. The whole bay was only 10-15m deep and was unfortunately murky for the dive. Our resident scientist (Jeff) still enjoyed collecting some samples, so



there was enough visibility for that! Most of our divers had a relatively short dive and some enjoyed snorkelling at the end trying to see the local seals. This was where Mark and Elaine were treated to a close encounter with a couple of curious elephant seal weaners, certainly a treat! The backdrop of our dive was the picturesque whaling station and the wreck of the Bayard, standing proudly above water.

## **Dive 7: AM 9<sup>th</sup> December, Cooper Island, South Georgia**

**S 54°47'17.16**

**W 35°48'37.26**

The team had dived here a few times before and had enjoyed good dives, so all fingers were crossed that the visibility would improve from the last couple of dives. With a big ground swell pushing in to the bay, we had to head to other side of the channel that we usually dive and find some more shelter. The divers dropped in to around 15m and were treated to a very reasonable 2-3m visibility (Practically



Caribbean compared to the last couple of dives!). A sparse kelp forest made for easier diving at this site, and one of our divers became a snorkeller for this session and enjoyed a mini iceberg and visits from a couple of fur seals whilst the divers explored below. All in all, a great expedition dive session at a previously unexplored site to finish on in South Georgia. Once safely back onboard the Plancius with the sound of the faithful compressor filling cylinders in the background, thoughts now turned to diving in Antarctica and what adventures lie ahead....

## **Dive 8: AM 11<sup>th</sup> December, Shingle Cove, South Orkney Islands**

**S 60°40'26.35**

**W45°32'51.0**

The morning had dawned grey, snowy and quite windy, with a much more Antarctic feel in the air, with the divers maybe feeling a bit reluctant to get in... but as we arrived in Shingle Cove the wind dropped, the skies cleared and the decision to dive some ice was made. This was to be most of our divers first taste of diving icebergs, a very special and magical experience.





A suitable ice berg was selected, although no ice is completely safe the dive team try to pick one that looks a little safer than the rest. This particular ice berg was a very old ice berg, it was very blue and clear meaning it had been compacted at the bottom of the glacier, it also had some earth and sediment stuck in it as well.

After another quick reminder about diving around ice and telling the divers that it was over 100m deep at this point (!) the divers were thrown in. All the divers realised quite how cold it could be around an ice berg and what an incredible experience this was. Every diver arrived on surface with beaming smiles at having achieved diving around an ice berg in Antarctica! After the dive we got the diving team to clamber onto an iceberg. It was at this point that most of the divers had turned into children and were gleefully enjoying being able to stand on an actual ice berg. Photos taken, the divers were reluctantly taken back off the ice to head back to the ship for hot drinks and lunch to warm up. A truly Antarctic diving experience, and one that the group certainly will not forget for a while.

### **Dive 9: AM 13<sup>th</sup> December, Paulet Island, Antarctica**

**S63°34'25.34**

**W 55°48'9.62**

For the mornings dive we tried to look for a steeper wall to be able to see some more life thriving in this cold environment. As we approached our planned dive site the dive team noticed some current opposing the wind direction. The visibility looked good and we dropped our divers in for what looked like it was going to be a drift dive! Just above where we dropped in the divers was some interesting basalt formations, formed when this volcanic island had been active. All of the divers enjoyed a drift dive, with the topography dropping off quite quickly from where they had been dropped in. The visibility was around 4m and lots of life was spotted, including large nudibranchs, starfish, and giant isopods.

Despite having a penguin colony nearby there was no visiting leopard seal just yet, although after witnessing a leopard seal puncture two boats recently, some of the divers might have felt it was perhaps a good thing!



## **Dive 10: PM 13<sup>th</sup> December, Brown Bluff, Antarctica**

**S 63°30'37.68**

**W 56°54'27.01**

A few of the dive team had been here before but had always been blown out by high winds, however this afternoon we were in luck, the sea was calm with barely a breath of wind, the sun was trying to come out and conditions seemed perfect for a dive.

We found two grounded icebergs in fairly shallow water, with a curious adelic penguin on top. Fifteen divers and Jerry our dive team leader kitted up and rolled into the clear water, with visibility of around 6m the divers could see that the iceberg was mostly grounded on a ridge or mound of the sea floor. This ridge then dropped away with some divers exploring down to 16m. They could see the areas where iceberg scour had occurred with some parts of brittle starfish showing the danger for marine life when heavy ice comes along scraping the floor. This scouring action (sometimes referred to as “Darwin’s Lawnmower”) is important for the maintenance of ecological diversity in the shallow sites as no single species can become dominant as there is a constant flux of communities as new areas for colonisation are periodically opened up. Along with the usual invertebrate inhabitants, the divers were able to see swarms of krill around the icebergs – something that is rarely seen on these dive trips so they were exceptionally lucky! Brown Bluff is prone to ice getting pushed in from the Weddell Sea, so to be able to dive this site and see what was underneath was a real treat.



## **Dive 11: PM 14<sup>th</sup> December, Devil Island, Antarctica**

**S 63°47'24.83**

**W 57°18'11.54**

This afternoon's dive was at a new location for most of the dive team and expedition team – yet another first for the expedition! A shallow bay with a hazardous outlying reef was the challenge to find this drop off, it was around 300m off shore. With a bit of looking at the charts and using the depth sounder the dive team found the drop off and duly deployed their divers in to discover this site.

This impressive wall below was covered in life, with reasonable visibility despite some plankton bloom in the first few metres. Once the divers dropped below this layer, they dropped out of it and were able to see the abundance of life that was awaiting them with large sponges and cold water whip corals being reported by some divers.



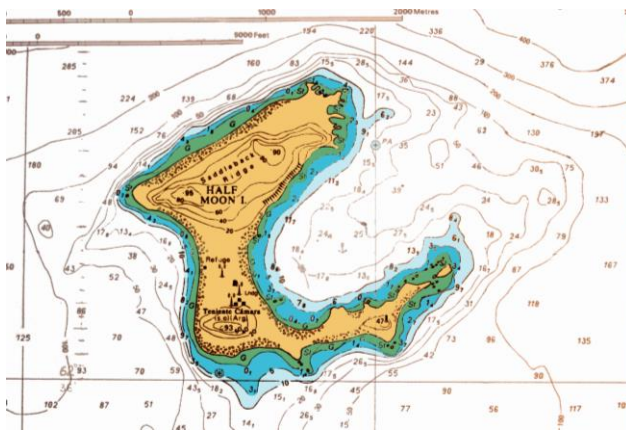
Two snorkelers were taken to the outlying reef and dropped in a very shallow area, it had almost become a walk rather than a snorkel – giving rise to the new sport of “walkelling”! They were able to enjoy some adelic penguins from a very different view point, and one was even bumped by a penguin! The shallow nature of the snorkel site meant that a lot of icebergs had grounded giving some great sculptures for the snorkellers to enjoy.



## Dive 12: AM 15<sup>th</sup> December, Half Moon, Antarctica

S 62°35'32.36

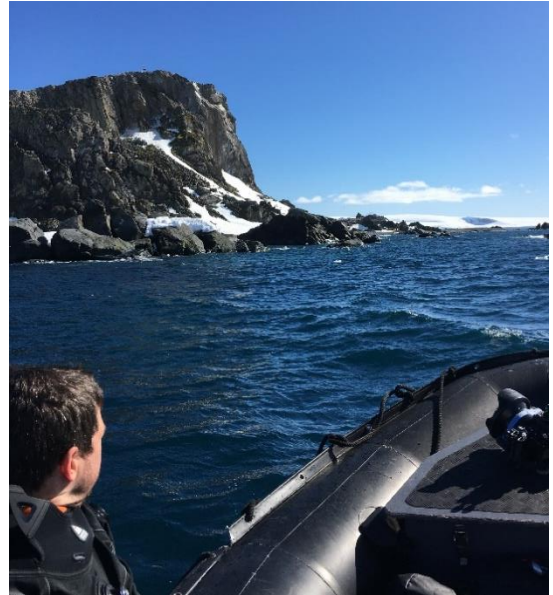
W 59°54'23.00



A known and much enjoyed dive site by the dive team, in the past there have been some good dives here, so fingers were crossed that this site delivered again. Unfortunately no leopard seal turned up today, but instead, the divers were rewarded with the best visibility so far on the trip, and a steep slope covered in life and kelp. The windy conditions on top didn't put off one keen snorkeller who enjoyed seeing the life from the shallows. With the

nearby ice capped Livingston Island the water temperature certainly felt colder but that

added to the icy blue waters allure (or maybe not and divers were dreaming of hot showers!) All enjoyed this site and were then able to head ashore to see the chinstrap penguins.



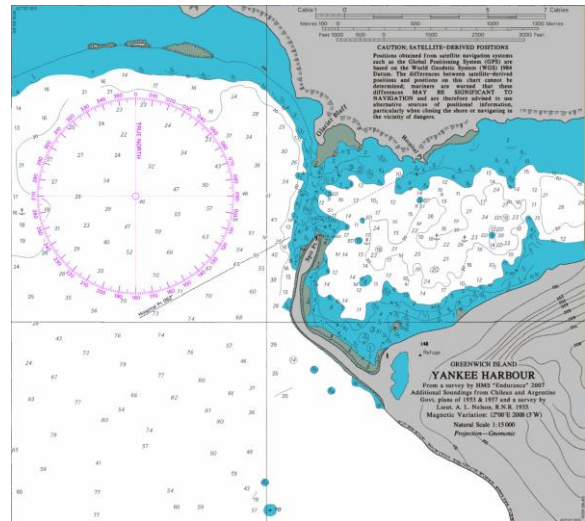
### Dive 13: PM 15<sup>th</sup> December, Yankee Harbour, Antarctica

S 62°31'38.26

W 59°47'33.27

It had to happen - our final dive had arrived, and this was to be on a previously unexplored area, but which promised a steep site with potential for a good amount of life. The nearby glacier was looking like it might cause issues with visibility but thankfully as the divers dropped underneath around 4m the visibility opened up.

With large boulders, silt and sand greeting the divers lots of life including sea urchins were in abundance. It's quite likely that this wall may escape some iceberg scour owing to the direction of the localised prevailing winds and currents, which would lead to some life being able to establish itself. A brilliant final dive for those that chose it, all divers helped to strip down the kit and weight belts ready for our passage home over the Drake.







With special thanks to our deck crew team, who safely lowered and lifted every zodiac full of our precious diving equipment.

Left – right: Giovanni, Ferdie, and Bosun Lauren.



We would like to thank you for choosing Oceanwide and for diving with us on Plancius. We have really enjoyed helping you to experience this amazing and rarely seen underwater world and hope to see you again somewhere in the future.



# PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST 2019/20

**Your chance to win a € 1000 gift voucher for your next polar adventure.**

EVERYONE KNOWS A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS, BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT YOUR PHOTOS MIGHT NOW ALSO BE WORTH A **€ 1000 GIFT VOUCHER**?

## Share your experience!

Did you catch a rare seabird on the fly? Do you have a panorama of the Northern Lights filling the sky? Did you get up close and personal with a penguin? Did you capture a look of awe or wonder on a fellow passenger's face?

If you've been a passenger on any one of our past voyages we want to see your pictures.

You're free to send in as many pictures as you wish. The best pictures are the ones that capture what it's like to take one of our special expeditions to the remote and beautiful ends of the Earth.



## PRIZES



**€ 1000**

**GIFT VOUCHER**

for Oceanwide Expeditions



**€ 500 gift voucher**

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**€ 250 gift voucher**

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UPLOAD YOUR PHOTO AT

**[WWW.OCEANWIDE-EXPEDITIONS.COM/GALLERY](http://WWW.OCEANWIDE-EXPEDITIONS.COM/GALLERY)**

The size of your photo should be between 2MB and 8MB. Our lucky winners will be contacted by e-mail and Facebook by 02 June 2020. The photography contest runs from 03 November 2019 until 02 May 2020.

Read the terms and conditions of the contest on [www.oceanwide-expeditions.com/page/contest-terms](http://www.oceanwide-expeditions.com/page/contest-terms)



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## Ali Liddle - Expedition Leader

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Originally from the UK, Ali spent 15 years living in the Falkland Islands where she worked as a Primary school teacher both teaching out in 'camp' and at the school in Stanley.

Latterly, she was employed as Education Officer for Falklands Conservation and shared her time between classroom teaching and conservation. In 1997, she spent 9 months living on South Georgia where she ran the Post Office and took every opportunity to hike, ski and explore

the surrounding peaks and coastline.

She has published three books to date: *Plants of the Falkland Islands* and two art and craft books for children using penguins and albatross as the inspiration. Ali is a keen runner, having completed three marathons in the Falkland Islands and two in the UK, and she also enjoys cycling, hiking and camping. Ali has been working on Antarctic and Arctic expedition cruises with Oceanwide for more years than she cares to remember and works on all of the Oceanwide vessels at some point during the year. She has recently relocated from Northumberland to the Isle of Skye where she is renovating a cottage and enjoying the hiking opportunities of the island.

Her particular interest is natural history and the wildlife, and she enjoys sharing her knowledge of and passion for the polar regions.

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# Daniel Höhne -

## Assistant Expedition Leader

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A well photographed picture is more than just looking at it again and again. It is emotional and unforgettable passion and a story behind.

Most of the past years it was more my hobby to get outside and take nature photos. But today it is my profession and beside working as a fulltime guide I work also for newspapers and magazines.

Taking people hand by hand outside and show them what to see and what outside can be felt is one of the greatest things for me to do. It is even more important and necessary to understand our ecosystems and for that reason I try

to take people out in the wilderness. To understand why things in nature happen and what our part as humans is in different environments. We only can protect what we really know and love.

I studied Geography and Geology in the south of Germany, Tübingen. Since then I was fascinated by the power and sensibility of our white and cold ecosystems. Combined with nature photography I am self-employed within different kinds of guiding nature and photography journeys.

My hot spots are Iceland, Svalbard, Greenland, Antarctica and Germany. Most of my time I spend in Iceland for exploring and working in unique places and feel the strength of the old Viking land.



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# Sara Jenner - Expedition Guide

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For as long as Sara could remember she has had a passion for travel and searching for the wildest and most remote places on earth.

Back in the UK when she was only 10, she remembers trading in her favourite pink bicycle for the money to start her travel fund. Every birthday and Christmas she added a little more in the kitty and finally, at 18 she realised her dream of diving at the Great Barrier Reef! At that point the travel addiction was born!

Ever since Sara has been travelling the globe in search of wild and remote places and has spent many months volunteering on wildlife conservation projects in a bid to help some of our most iconic and endangered species.

Sara's love of wildlife and the great outdoors has taken her to all seven continents and she has travelled extensively in the polar regions including the Antarctic Peninsula, Falklands, South Georgia, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Iceland, Baffin Island and Canadian High Arctic. Returning to the UK, Sara used this knowledge to work in the travel industry as a polar specialist for several years, until the travel bug hit again, when she decided to swap life on the land for a life at sea and joined the Oceanwide Expedition Team in 2016.

Sara is a keen wildlife photographer and when she is not wrapped up warm in the polar regions she enjoys working as a photographic guide in Botswana, on the beautiful Chobe River and Okavango Delta, so really has a life of two halves.

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# Jerry Zhao - Expedition Guide

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Jerry has been in love with nature and wild life and traveling all his life. Soon after completing his degree in Business Administration at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Jerry began a career in the travel industry. Jerry first started as an international travel consultant and tour leader and led exclusive small high-end guests throughout Europe.

He then became partner in an international traveling consulting firm and focused on route planning and employee training. Searching for more adventure, He travelled around the world to collect all the skills that

he needed and joined Oceanwide Expeditions as Expeditions Guides in 2015. He has set foot on all seven continent and four oceans. He has travelled to the North Pole, Spitsbergen, and Antarctic regions several times along the way he has studied the geography, wildlife and Environment of the Polar regions. He loves nature, wild life, and he loves to share all that he knows to everyone who comes across.



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# Katja Riedel - Expedition Guide

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Katja Riedel grew up in Germany where she studied and completed a Phd in Atmospheric Chemistry. For her research she overwintered 1997 at the German Antarctic Base Neumayer where she was responsible for the Atmospheric Observatory.

Since then she has been on several scientific expeditions to Antarctica, for example measuring ozone at Scott Base, drilling ice cores at Law Dome and taking samples of 120,000 years old ice on Taylor Glacier in the Dry Valleys.

She completed a course in Antarctic studies and worked for more than 12 years as a research scientist in Wellington, New Zealand. Her research interests were greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and in ice cores. Since 2011 she works as a guide and lecturer on expedition cruises in the Arctic and Antarctic.

The Polar Regions have always fascinated Katja. On private adventures she skied over 220 km through Svalbard, sailed in a small yacht to Antarctica, kayaked icy waters and worked as a science assistance in Western Greenland. Her fondest memories of Antarctica are building a 24h sundial and sledging from Hut Point to the Erebus Ice Tongue. Most recently she skated 250 km across the frozen Lake Baikal in Siberia. Life is an adventure for Katja and whenever she can she travels, hikes, cycles, sea-kayaks and skis to the remote and beautiful places on earth.

When not traveling Katja lives in New Zealand and works as a freelance guide, science communicator and photographer. She speaks fluently English and German.

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# Jochem Braakhekke - Expedition Guide

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Being born in one of the more mountainous regions of the Netherlands, with hills up to impressive heights of almost 100 m a.s.l., young Jochem was naturally attracted to alpine environments and the extreme importance of ice ages.

As a 2-year-old, still covered in baby seal blubber, he got introduced to hut life in the Austrian Alps. The black and white pictures exhibited in those huts, depicting huge glacier tongues and impressive ice-falls with noble men wearing hats posing on them, left a lasting impression. What in the world has happened to those glaciers since

then!

It wasn't until two decades later, that Jochem got reinjected with the glaciology virus; during his Bachelor's in Earth Sciences at the University of Amsterdam, Jochem spend a semester in Longyearbyen, studying Arctic and Marine Geology. In order to be a little bit closer to the tiny remnants of the Last Ice Age, he moved to Switzerland and continued studying geology and glaciology at the ETH Zürich.

Jochem is particularly interested in the interplay between glaciers and bedrock, the so-called field of Glacial Geology. He has extensive knowledge about the past ice ages and the related tools and clues presented to us by the current landscape; silent witnesses of the incredible power of ice.

In contrary to popular believe, glaciology is not a dying field: the cryosphere is a big box of discoveries yet to be made and it is Jochem's goal to get as many people involved in unboxing those.



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## Marie Manceau – Expedition guide

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After a PhD in genetics and embryology in Marseille, in the south of France, Marie moved to Boston in the United States to study at Harvard University the adaptation of small mammals to arid environments such as great plains of Nebraska or deserts of New Mexico.

Marie leads a CNRS research team at the Biology Institute of the Collège de France (Paris) that focuses on uncovering embryonic development in extreme conditions, in particular in Australian songbirds and penguins.

Her interest for the latter and taste for wild regions brought her to visit Antarctica for the first time onboard Plancius in 2013. Ever since, Marie is infected by the polar bug. Her research projects on penguins involve collaborations with the Paul-Emile Victor French Polar Institute (for which she is part of the scientific advisory board) and the Government of the Falkland Islands (where members of her team regularly perform field work). Marie joins expedition teams in Antarctica and the arctic (Spitzbergen, Greenland) to share, a few weeks per year, her knowledge of the incredible adaptive biology of polar animals.

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# Rustyn Mesdag - Expedition Guide

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Rustyn was born in Seattle, Washington where grew up in the mountains of the Pacific Northwest.

He quickly discovered his love for snow and ice which led to climbing and then travelling abroad. After working as an alpine guide in the United States, in 2004 he relocated to Patagonia where he started a guide service outside of Torres del Paine National Park.

For 15 years he has been leading climbers, travellers and trekkers through the most extreme terrains of Southern Chile.

Aside from the guide service, he operates an equipment rental centre, backpackers' hostel and conducts daily lectures to eager Patagonian backpackers looking for tips and pointers about trekking in the wild. He also moonlighted as a travel writer, focusing on Southern Chile, and for many years he published an English-speaking travellers newspaper in Patagonia and this led to his first trip to Antarctica - writing about his experiences there.

Always looking for the next adventure, Rustyn now finds himself working for Oceanwide Expeditions and helping others explore this incredible region. When Rustyn isn't travelling or working in the outdoors, his other passion is his love for old motorcycles and long rides through Southern Chile and Argentina.

Rustyn is fluent in English, Dutch and Spanish and is more than happy to sit and spend time discussing world travels, alpine climbing and the in's & out's of cold weather equipment management



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# Jerry Sutton - Dive Team Leader

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Jerry grew up running around the country side, reading Tintin & Famous Five and watching Jacques Cousteau on the TV, all of which spawned a taste for outdoor adventure.

University was the springboard into many activities that involved leaving the safety net of modern society, and he's just as happy rummaging through a wreck, squeezing through a cave, scaling a mountain cliff or jumping out of a perfectly serviceable aeroplane.

In real life, when not guiding, Jerry is an engineer with the oil and gas industry, living in the granite city of Aberdeen. Always hankering for adventure and something a bit different, a love for extremes has lead from bug infested rain forests, to the high dry deserts, and on to the ice of the polar regions.

Jerry has also been lucky enough to work on several expeditions over the years. He has built bridges & cut trails in the Bornean rain forests, carried out coral reef surveys in the South China Sea, and worked directly and indirectly with the BBC natural History Unit in such things as trekking in search of various seeds & plants in Borneo, fixing ropes, platforms and cameramen into the forest canopy whilst filming the elusive mandrill in Gabon, or ice diving with the Frozen Planet 2 team.

Jerry has taught scuba diving since university, just for fun, and holds instructor ratings through the British Sub Aqua Club across many diving related activities.

Diving has led to many interesting activities from hacking through solid ice, to supervising music videos and even snorting vodka in remote Scottish bars with well known TV personalities.

Back at home, Jerry has a young family who in no way take the constant wish to leave home personally (yet!).

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## Catherine Buckland - Dive Guide

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Although born inland in the UK this didn't stop Catherine from developing a love for the water and sea. She began sailing at an early age and completed longer sea voyages as she got older. Her maritime interests meant it wasn't a huge leap to start scuba diving. Predominantly Catherine is a commercial diving instructor and diver medic based in Plymouth, on the south coast of England. Diving year-round, she trains commercial divers, including teams from the British Antarctic Survey and some work with the UK military. In between time she enjoys working for

Oceanwide on their dive trips, helping experienced tourist divers to explore these frigid waters. Land guiding for Oceanwide in the Antarctic and Arctic has enabled Catherine to really enjoy working above the water and appreciating the wildlife in these fascinating environments.



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# Chris Booker - Dive Guide

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Growing up on the small Island of Anglesey in the UK it was perhaps inevitable that Chris would end up with an innate love for the sea and spend most of his adult life either on it or beneath it's surface, becoming passionate about the marine environment.

Working as a Marine Biologist, Commercial Diver and Diving Supervisor, he has worked all over the world - from repairing the oil rigs of the North Sea to leading scientific surveys on the tropical reefs of the Caribbean and working with expeditions to

Antarctica during a career spanning over 20 years.

He is both a commercial diving and recreational diving instructor, a commercially endorsed boat skipper and instructor for the Royal Yachting Association and an Offshore Diver Medic.

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## Chloé Maréchal - Dive Guide

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Chloé is a passionate diver fascinated by marine life and exploration. She earned a European master degree in Marine biodiversity and conservation and loves to share her expertise for the marine environment. In April 2013, she was selected as the 2013-14 European Rolex our world underwater scholar. She spent a year working side by side with current leaders in underwater fields, getting very different experiences in marine science and in the diving industry. Diving and science are not her only passion; she enjoys exploring new countries and discovering new cultures. She has been diving on all continents and living

in more than 20 countries.

Chloe now lives in northern Norway just above the polar circle. When she is not onboard, she can be found underwater: observing the ocean's inhabitants, searching for forgotten wrecks or mapping and exploring undiscovered underwater cave passages.



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## Nick Bennett - Ship's Doctor

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Nick is an Australian emergency doctor. This is his first Antarctic season and beneath that cool and calm exterior he's at least as excited as you are.

Ever since he was a child, Nick has been fascinated by exploration and the sea. His dad's garage is cluttered with boxes full of books and model ships that attest to this. These days his other interests include hiking, SCUBA diving (in warm water), wildlife and eating and drinking well. He will obsessively read about news and current affairs whenever he has an internet connection.

Nick usually works in a public emergency department but he has experience in many other fields of medicine, especially intensive care, diving and hyperbaric medicine and medical education. He's studying a Master of Public Health specialising in remote and polar medicine and has more adventures planned now that he's realised he can use his medical degree as a licence to work in wild places.

Nick lives with his girlfriend next to the Great Barrier Reef in tropical far north Queensland.



# Falkland Islands, South Georgia and Antarctica

Ushuaia

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019

**Your luggage should already be in your cabin. Please check that you are not missing any luggage and if there is luggage in your cabin that does NOT belong to you or your cabin mate please tell a member of staff or crew.**

**Feel free to explore the ship. Tea and coffee are always available in the Lounge on Deck 5**

~1815 **Mandatory Safety and Lifeboat Briefing in the Lounge. ALL passengers are required** to attend this very important safety briefing. After the briefing we will conduct our practical safety drill. Please listen for alarms and announcements.

~1910 After the drill, we ask you to please come back to the **Lounge** (Deck 5) for a welcome from Expedition Leader **Ali Liddle** and a short introduction to the ship by Hotel Manager **Zsuzsanna Varga** followed by the Captain's Cocktail!

1930 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room located on Deck 3 behind reception. Bon appétit!

*Please ensure your valuables (cameras, computers, etc.) are secure in your cabin to prevent any accidents. Always keep at least one hand free to hold on to the ship.  
Thank you.*



0730 First Wake Up call from your Expedition Leader Ali. Good Morning!

0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

After breakfast we encourage you to spend some time on deck to see some of the seabirds that can be found in this area and maybe spot some whales or dolphins. It is also a chance to get your 'Sea Legs' and get used to life on board Plancius.

1030 **Zodiac Briefing.** This is a mandatory briefing for all passengers who wish to go ashore during this voyage. It will outline our Zodiac operations on board Plancius. Please come to the **Lounge**.

1130 **Rubber Boots.** At this time we invite you to the boot room to collect your rubber boots. We will do this by deck so please listen for announcements on the PA system. Bring your socks!

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1530 **The Falkland Islands.** Ali, your Expedition Leader is a Falklands Islands local and would like to introduce you to these special islands. Please join her in the **Lounge** for a presentation about the life in the Falklands Islands.

1815 Please join **Captain Levakov, Ali** and the Expedition team in the **Lounge** for the Daily Briefing. This is where we look back upon our day and find out our plans for the coming days.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

0645 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

At this time, we will be sailing through the Wooley Gut, a narrow channel between West Point Island and the main island of West Falkland. It is a good area for seeing birds and marine mammals.

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

0830 **Carcass Island.** At this time, we hope to be able to take you ashore on Carcass Island. If the weather allows, we would like to offer a long hike, approx. 5 km from Dyke Bay and Leopard which will take us to the settlement for a delicious (complementary) morning tea. For those not wanting to walk we will take you to the settlement where you can explore the beach and nearby area and enjoy morning tea. Long hikers will disembark first. Please listen for announcements.

1300 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1500 **Saunders Island.** This afternoon we hope to land at The Neck on Saunders Island where we will find 4 species of penguins, including King Penguins. There is an opportunity to walk along the coast to a Black browed albatross colony and more Rockhopper penguins. There is a white sand beach with plenty of penguins! Please follow the marker poles and keep your distance from the penguins – 5m please.

1900 Please join **Ali** and the Expedition team in the **Lounge** for the Daily Briefing. This is where we look back upon our day and towards our plans for tomorrow in Stanley.

1930 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



0700 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 Stanley is the capital of the Falkland Islands and is a vibrant little town. We will take you to shore to land at a small jetty and from there you may explore the town yourselves. Maps are available at the Visitor Centre by the jetty. The shops accept Pounds sterling, Euros and Dollars as well as major credit/debit cards. There is a bank but no ATM.

During the morning shuttles will be available from the jetty if you would like to return to the ship.

**Shuttles will run on the half hour beginning at 1100. Last Zodiac back to the ship will be at 1245.**

1300 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

During the afternoon we will start sailing towards South Georgia.

1500 **Albatross and Seabird Conservation.** Please join Ali in the Lounge for a presentation about the Black browed albatross of the Falklands Islands.

1815 Please join **Ali** and the Expedition team in the **Lounge** for a Falkland Island re-cap and Daily Briefing. This is where we look back upon our day and towards our plans for tomorrow.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

- 0745 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!
- 0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1000 **Whale Identification.** We've already seen some whales on our voyage but if you'd like to find out more about identifying them at sea then please join **Sara in the Lounge.**
- 1130 **Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the first episode of this award winning BBC documentary series which takes us to both the northern and southern polar regions. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 1500 **Penguins.** We saw lots of penguins in the Falkland Islands so please join **Ali in the Dining Room** for a look at the different species we have seen and hope to see during our voyage
- 1645 **Photography.** How to take pictures you are happy with. You will all take many photos on this voyage so if you'd like to learn more about photography then please join **Sara in the Lounge.**
- 1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap and plans the coming days.
- 1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



0745 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

0930 **Introduction to South Georgia.** As well as living on the Falkland Islands, Ali spent some time living on South Georgia. Please join her in the Lounge for an introduction to our next destination. She will also give you information about Bio-security measures on South Georgia.

**Bio-security.** We will set up vacuuming stations in the Lounge in order for you to start cleaning your outer gear prior to arrival in South Georgia. You will need to sign a Declaration Form after this. We will call you by deck so please listen for announcements.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

**Vacuuming will continue after lunch. We will open the Dining Room as a 'quiet space' after lunch service and clean up.**

1600 **Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the next episode of this award winning BBC documentary series which takes us to both the northern and southern polar regions. This will be in the Lounge.

1815 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



**Falkland Islands, South Georgia and  
Antarctica  
South Georgia  
Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018**

0700 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 **Salisbury Plain.** We hope to be able to take you ashore on Salisbury Plain where there is large King penguin colony. There will also be Fur seals and Elephant seals on the beach. From the landing site we will guide you to the penguin colony to view 70,000 pairs of King penguins including chicks.

**Please be aware of the Fur seals on the beach and listen to the instructions of your guides.**

1230 Buffet Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

**Expedition Afternoon!**

**During the afternoon we will choose our destination according to the weather conditions.**

**Please listen for announcements over the PA system.**

1900 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1930 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



**Falkland Islands, South Georgia and  
Antarctica  
South Georgia  
Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

0645 Wake Up call. Good Morning!

0700 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

0800 **St Andrew's Bay.** We hope to start taking you ashore at St Andrew's Bay. Here we find the largest King penguin colony on South Georgia with over 300,000 penguins. You will also find plenty of Elephant seals and Fur seals! We will walk from the landing site to a viewpoint over the colony and there will be plenty to see along the way. Please follow the red poles to and from the colony.

1230 Buffet Lunch is available in the Dining Room.

~1500 **Godthul.** This means 'Good Cove' so we hope to find some shelter in this bay for our afternoon landing. If conditions are good, we may offer an extended hike to the top of a nearby hill for views down the coast and inland and a medium walk to the penguins and lake. It is a steep climb through tussock grass to reach the penguin colonies so if you feel this is not for you, we will offer a zodiac cruise.

**Long hikers please come to the gangway first to go ashore.**

1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



0700 Wake Up call. Good Morning!

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 **Ocean Harbour.** We hope to be able to take you ashore at Ocean Harbour where we will try to offer an extended walk to a view point as well as along the coast. You can explore the old whaling station relics, including the train!

1230 Buffet Lunch is available in the Dining Room.

~1500 **Grytviken.** On arrival we have to clear customs with the Government Officer and during this time we will have a presentation about the work of South Georgia Heritage Trust. We then hope to go ashore and land near to the Cemetery. Here you can visit the grave of 'The Boss', Sir Ernest Shackleton. You can roam freely and visit the Church, museum, post office, and gallery. Zodiacs back to the ship will leave from the two ship wrecks in front of the museum.

You can use Pounds, Euros and Dollars as well as credit cards.

1900 **Special South Georgia Dinner** is served. Dress Warmly! Bon appétit.

**Our arrival at Gold Harbour will depend on our progress overnight and weather in the morning.**

**PLAN A**

0530 Wake Up call. Good Morning!

*There will be cookies and coffee and tea available in the Lounge*

0600 **Gold Harbour.** We hope to start taking you ashore at Gold Harbour. On shore we will be able to get close to a King penguin colony once more and will, of course find Elephant seals on the beach. Please walk slowly amongst the seals and penguins. Just sit and enjoy South Georgia.

0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

**TBA Cooper Bay.** We hope to be able to take you out on a Zodiac cruise in Cooper Bay to see some more Macaroni penguins and maybe some Chinstrap penguins. For this we will do 2 groups of cruising and each group will be out for around 1 hour.

**Deck 4 Guests will go out first.** Please listen for announcements regarding timings.

**Deck 6, 5, 3 and 2 will go afterwards.** Please listen for announcements regarding timings.

1300 Buffet Lunch is available in the Dining Room.

1600 **Frozen Planet Documentary. Part 2.** This will be screened in the Lounge.

1800 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for an extended daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

*There will be no Wake-up call this morning! Enjoy!*

0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

0930 **Seals.** We saw plenty of Fur seals and Elephant seals on South Georgia but if you would like to find out more about them and some of the Antarctic species, please join **Sara in the Lounge**. Katja will translate this into German.

1100 **IAATO Briefing.** This is a mandatory briefing for all passengers prior to arrival in Antarctica. It gives an overview of some of the regulations about our visit. This will be followed by another vacuuming session after our time on South Georgia..... We will call you by deck and you will have to sign again..... In English in the Lounge.

**When vacuuming please check your jacket pockets, Velcro fastenings and your back packs and camera bags. Thank you!**

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

**We will continue with the vacuuming in the Lounge. Please listen for announcements.**

1530 **Ice.** We will be seeing lots of different forms of ice as we reach the continent of Antarctica. If you would like to find out more about icebergs and glaciers then please join **Jerry in the Lounge**.

1730 South Georgia Heritage Auction! This charity has funded the rat eradication project on South Georgia and is continuing to raise money for monitoring and future protection of the island. We will have an auction on board with some exclusive items available for the highest bidder. Join the Expedition team in the Lounge.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



- 0700 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!
- 0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- ~0845 **Shingle Cove.** We hope to be able take you ashore in a scenic cove where there are Adélie penguins and Chinstrap penguins. There may also be some elephant seals and fur seals.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 1500 **Sir Ernest Shackleton.** The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was known as the Golden Age of Exploration. Please join **Jerry in the Lounge** to hear more about the expeditions of Shackleton.
- 1645 **Afternoon Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the next episode of this award winning BBC documentary series which takes us to both the northern and southern polar regions. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap and plans for tomorrow.
- 1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

- 0745 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!
- 0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1000 **Antarctic Treaty.** If you would like to find out more about the management of Antarctica by the Treaty nations then please join **Rustyn in the Dining Room.**
- 1130 **Growing in Antarctica.** Marie will give you an insight into how polar animals are adapted to the harsh environment of the polar regions both before and after birth. This will be in **English in the Lounge.**
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

## **Elephant Island.**

**We hope to be around Point Wild at Elephant Island after lunch. Our timing will depend on our progress during the night and in the morning.**

- 1630 **Afternoon Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the next episode of this award winning BBC documentary series which takes us to both the northern and southern polar regions. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap and our plans for tomorrow in Antarctica.
- 1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

**During the early morning we will be sailing through Antarctic Sound. It is worth getting up early for your first views of the continent!**

0700 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 **Paulet Island.** We hope to be able to take you ashore at Paulet Island, which is home to over 100,000 Adélie penguins. There is also a historic hut that was used by the Nordenskjold Expedition over 100 years ago. Please follow the red poles to the colony. Please remember the 5 metre rule with penguins.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

~1500 **Brown Bluff.** This will be our first Continental landing on Antarctica! The beach is backed by high, volcanic 'tuff' cliffs creating a spectacular back drop to the landing site. We hope to be able to take you ashore to visit the Adélie penguins and also a small colony of Gentoo penguins.

At the end of the landing we will offer you the chance to do a **Polar Plunge**, an Antarctic swim. We'll bring the towels, you bring the insanity!

1845 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.



## Expedition Day in the Weddell Sea

**All Activities will depend on wildlife, ice and  
weather!  
Enjoy your day!**

**I will wake you at some point in the morning!**

0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

0700 Wake Up call from Ali. Good Morning!

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

~0830 **Half Moon Island.** We hope to be able to take you ashore at Half Moon Island where there are colonies of Chinstrap penguins and some beautiful glaciers on the nearby Livingston Island. Please follow the marked route and give penguins right of way at the penguin highways.

1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.

1400 **Yankee Harbour.** This is a narrow shingle beach where we find Gentoo penguins and often Elephant seals and Weddell seals. As always, respect the distance from wildlife and enjoy your time on shore.

**After we leave Yankee Harbour we will head out into the Drake Passage. Please make you secure your cabins and valuables such as cameras and computers.**

1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for our daily re-cap.

1900 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon appétit.

***There will be no wake up call this morning!! But Zsuzsanna will wake you up for breakfast!***

- 0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1000 **The Race to the Poles.** The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was known as the Golden Age of Exploration. Please join Jerry in the Lounge to find out more about the expeditions of Scott and Amundsen in their race to be first to reach the South Pole. This will be in English in the Lounge.
- 1130 **Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the next episode of this award winning BBC documentary series which takes us to both the northern and southern polar regions. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 1500 **Life at Base.** Katja worked as a scientist overwintering in Antarctica. She would like to share some stories of her time at Neumayr Station. Please join her in the Lounge.
- 1630 **Ice Maidens.** Ali will give a presentation about women in Antarctica, some of the women behind the famous explorers and women who have made their mark on the continent. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1830 Please join Ali and the Expedition team in the Lounge for the **Daily Recap**. This is where we look back upon our day and towards future plans.
- 1900 Dinner is served. Bon appétit.



- 0745 Wake up call from Ali. Good Morning!
- 0800 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 1000 **Plancius: Behind the scenes.** If you would like to find out more about the 'Little Blue Ship' Plancius, your home for the last 18 days, then please join Daniel in the **Lounge**.
- 1130 **Documentary: Frozen Planet.** We will screen the next episode of this award winning BBC documentary series. This will be in the Lounge.
- 1230 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 1430 **Drifting Life.** Chloe would like to tell you all about the small life beneath the oceans including krill. Please join her in the **Lounge**.
- 1600 **Diving in the Polar Regions.** If you would like to find out more about what the divers saw during this voyage please join the Dive Team in the **Lounge**.
- 1700 **Rubber Boots.** It is now time to return your rubber boots to the boot room. We will call you by deck so please listen for announcements.
- 1815 **Captain's Cocktails.** Please join your Captain, Evgeny Levakov and the Expedition Team for a celebratory drink to toast our successful voyage.
- 1845 Dinner is served. Bon appétit.

After dinner Zsuzsanna would like you to settle your accounts at Reception. Please listen for announcements over the PA system.

0700 Your final Wake-up call on Plancius from Ali.

As you leave for breakfast please place your large **check-in luggage** outside your cabin door and return your key rings and card holders to Reception. You may leave your hand luggage in your room but please place it on the floor so the hotel staff can start to change the bed linen.

0730 Breakfast Buffet is served in the Dining Room for one hour.

**Your luggage will be moved from the Ship to the pier. Please ensure you collect it from the pier prior to leaving!**

~0830 All passengers leave the ship. Please make sure you have all your belongings

- If you are catching the airport bus: please collect your luggage and place it on the bus.
- If you have an afternoon flight: You can have your luggage stored. Please bring it to the luggage truck on the pier and it will be taken to **Avenida Maipú 1226**. This building is located past the service station and approximately 350 m to the left as you leave the pier. ***You will need to pick up your luggage before 1400.***
- If you are staying in Ushuaia: You are free to leave the pier on foot with your luggage by the customs control entrance. Taxis can be found opposite the entrance to the pier.

***On behalf of all the Staff and Crew on board Plancius we thank you for travelling with us. We wish you a safe, easy journey home and a very Merry Christmas and Peaceful New Year.***



# Captain Evgeny Levakov

and your international crew of 38

Chief Officer:	Francois Kwekkeboom	[Netherlands]
Second Officer:	Sven Holzhausen	[Germany]
Third Officer:	Nino Cizmic	[Croatia]
Chief Engineer:	Sebastian Alexandru	[Romania]
Hotel Manager:	Zsuzsanna Varga	[Hungary]
Asst. Hotel Manager:	Ana Sirbu Gomez	[Romania]
Chef:	Mario Hribernik	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	Ferenc Beranyay	[Hungary]
Ship's Physician:	Nick Bennet	[Australia]

and

Expedition Leader:	Ali Liddle	[UK]
Asst. Expedition Leader:	Daniel Hohne	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Sara Jenner	[UK]
Expedition Guide:	Jerry Zhao	[China]
Expedition Guide:	Katja Riedel	[Germany/ New Zealand]
Expedition Guide:	Jochem Braakhekke	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Marie Manceau	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Rustyn Mesdag	[US/Chile]
Dive master:	Jeremy Sutton	[UK]
Dive Guide:	Catherine Buckland	[UK]
Dive Guide:	Chris Booker	[UK]
Dive Guide:	Chloe Marechal	[France]