



**Dive Log, MV Plancius**  
**Antarctic Explorers Voyage**  
**6<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> February 2020**



Divers: Kevin Mead, Pamela Hollich, Ruthmarie Conner, Donald McClelland, Gary Kieft, Colleen Wheeler, Lorne Sprackman, Robert Frank, Shari Brand, John Castracane, Arthur Vaccarino, Peter Alexander, Martin Wallis, Ryan DeSpain, Darrel Seale, Jeffrey Leech, Kitrina Godding, Ronald Levine, Caleb Leake, Paul Holbrook, Faith Ortins, Becky Schott, Charlotte Fentress, Chad Everson, Erika Everson, Connie Levine, Alexander Reznicek, Michael Williams, Caitlin Bailey, Christopher Eriksen, Kelly McGraw, Julie Brock, Kelly Pritchard, Debra Kennamer

Dive Staff: Henrik Enckell (Dive Team Leader), Michael Green, Peter Webster & Will Gilbertson

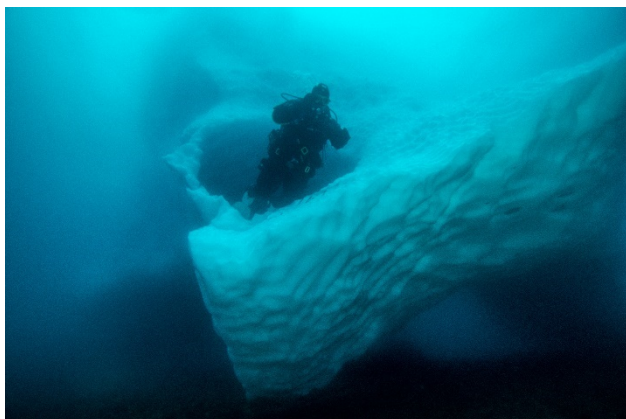
**Dive 1: 9<sup>th</sup> Feb PM, Brown Bluff, S 63°31.258, W 056°52.516**

After a morning of spectacular sunshine and penguins on land, we were excited to finally get in the water to see another side of Antarctica. For the first dive, we had to get used to the operation of diving from zodiacs off a ship which was new for many. It was also a good chance to check all our gear and weighting for the icy waters of Antarctica. The site we chose was a shelving rocky shore below the towering cliffs of Brown Bluff. Although the visibility wasn't great, there were some interesting critters to be found, including invertebrates such as salps, typical of the Antarctic environment. We were also lucky enough to see snoozing leopard seals on the ice floes nearby (unfortunately they were too lazy to come and play with divers today). Still in glorious sunshine, we made our way back to the ship and to the bar to toast our first dive in Antarctica!



**Dive 2: 10<sup>th</sup> Feb PM, Eckener Point, Ice dive S 62° 25.781, W 061°36.293**

After a morning watching Humpback Whales feeding, we stopped to make a dive. After kitting up we enjoyed a short zodiac ride to the site. The dive team chose an appropriate piece of ice for us to dive around. The visibility was around 60ft which helped us enjoy being on this majestic iceberg. The ice was grounded so it wasn't moving too much so we enjoyed the Cathedral like structures under the water. The little amount of light streaming into the water emphasized the blue of the ice. Soon it was time to return to the surface where we found it cold and windy but soon the drivers had us back at the ship. A great dive on a great berg.





**Dive 3: 11<sup>th</sup> Feb AM, Cuverville Island, S 64°40.886, W 062°36.911**

As we finished our breakfast, Plancius anchored just off the rocky cliffs of Cuverville Island. The diving boats found an excellent wall at the base of the cliffs with a wide variety of invertebrate and fish life, and also some beautiful bergy bits to enjoy near the surface. The snorkelers also enjoyed exploring the beautiful sculptures of ice before heading the shore and watching the penguins go to and from the beach in the shallows. With a lovely dive site, snorkeling and another spectacular landing spot in good weather, a great morning in Antarctica was had by all.



**Dive 4: 11<sup>th</sup> Feb PM, Stoney Point, S 64°54.661, W 062°55.772**

In the afternoon, we sailed into Paradise Bay anchored off Stoney Point. A small group of us dived off the rocks marked by an old beacon. The bottom was rocky and gently sloping down to beyond 20m. Visibility was again great, and there was plenty of life to be seen, probably fed by the swirling current that seemed to be moving around the rocky island. Sponges, shrimp and many drifting salps injected plenty of colour along the rocky slope. After the dive we got back the ship in good time for a BBQ on the back deck of Plancius.



**Dive 5: 12<sup>th</sup> Feb AM, Danco Island (Ice dive), S 62°43.483 W 062°35.295**

We woke to a beautifully calm morning in Antarctica, as we approached Danco Island. As we loaded the boats with gear, we watched large amounts of brash ice and small bergs drifting past the ship. A large group of divers and snorkelers went out to get some underwater views of this spectacular icy seascape.



On one of the floes that we were diving on, a large leopard seal appeared during the dive, checking out the zodiacs and divers. Eventually we had many people snorkeling and the seal curiously playing and investigating everyone and the boats. It remained with us for an unusually long time whilst remaining good tempered. An unusual and very special encounter with Antarctica's apex predator.





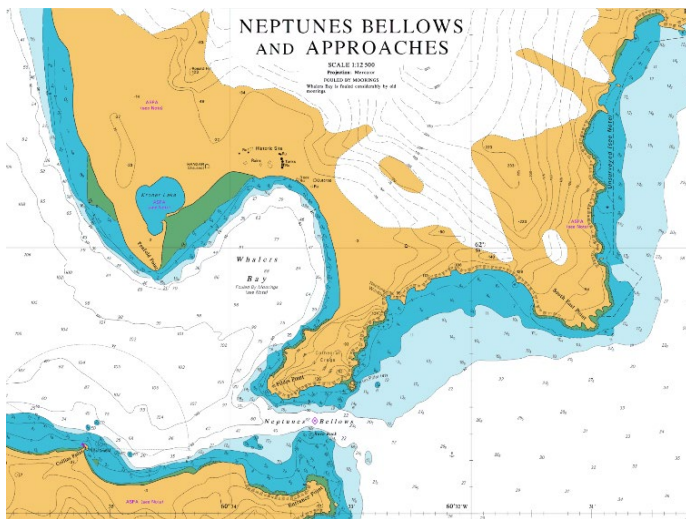
**Dive 6: 12<sup>th</sup> Feb PM, Orne Harbour Wall, S 64°37.580, W 062°33.116**

After lunch, we made our way into the sheltered bay of Orne Harbour. This fantastic peaceful spot made for a pleasant zodiac cruise and diving for those who were keen. We dropped in on an excellent, fairly steep wall under the towering cliffs near the entrance to the bay. On the cliffs there were penguins, and other seabirds, whilst under the water there was much life to be seen and once again, we were very lucky with the visibility. A slow cruise back to the ship through the ice rounded off a brilliant day in Antarctica.



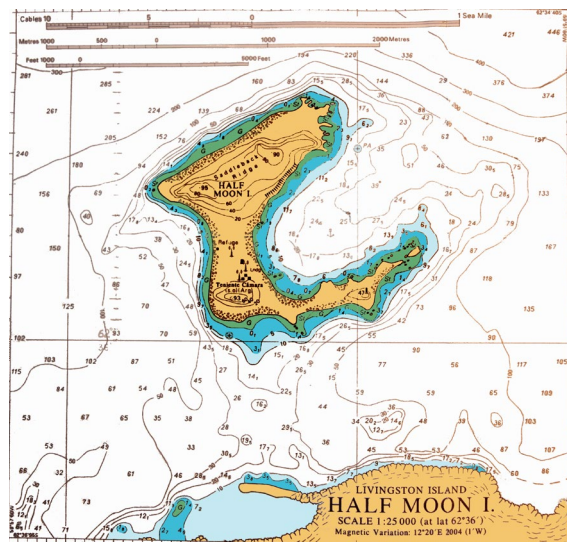
**Dive 7: 13<sup>th</sup> Feb AM, Whaler's Bay, Deception Island, S 62°59.325, W 060°33.443**

The morning began with Plancius sailing through the narrow gap of Neptune's Bellows into Whaler's Bay in the Deception Island caldera. We could immediately see the large scale remains of the whaling industry on the shore, but our objective was to find signs of this area's history underwater where many whale bones are known to be scattered. We dropped into the water near the entrance to the bay and unfortunately found that the visibility was poor which made this a challenging dive (but was also a reminder of how excellent the visibility had been at other sites!). Those who persevered with the low visibility did manage to find some of the whale bones scattered or half buried in the sediment, along with small anemones and tube worms living on and around them. On the surface, conditions were great with sunshine and light winds which made for a perfect post-dive trip ashore to look around this strange place.



**Dive 8: 13<sup>th</sup> Feb PM, Half Moon Island, S 62°35.878, W 059°53.689**

For our final afternoon, heavy rain set in as we prepared for our last dive of the trip. We anchored at Half Moon Island, a small low-lying rocky island with views across to the glaciated Livingston Island. We dropped in on the southern side of the island under some rocky outcrops with a penguin colony. Visibility was better than the morning dive, but still didn't match the excellent vis of earlier in the trip. The seabed here was quite flat, so we spent our time exploring looking for macro life in amongst the boulders. One group was buzzed briefly by a fur seal on the surface, but it wasn't interested in playing for longer, and the snorkellers also managed to see a fur seal. After the dive we went straight back to the ship to de-kit and secure all our gear in preparation for crossing the Drake Passage.







*Thank you to all the divers for making this trip in the Antarctic so entertaining and exciting for everyone. It has been a pleasure having you on-board and we hope to dive with you all again in the near future. All the best from Henrik, Michael, Peter and Will.*

