

Antarctic Explorer

Aboard *Greg Mortimer* | 13 February – 24 February 2025





Antarctic Explorer

13 February – 24 February 2025

King George Island

DAY 1 | Thursday 13 February 2025

Latitude:
62°54.9' S
Longitude:
54°44.9' W

Wind Speed:
3 knots NE
Barometer:
1011 hPa

Course:
215°
Speed:
11 knots

Air Temp:
2°C

After an early morning wake-up call in Punta Arenas, we prepared for our flights to King George Island – on our way to Antarctica! Upon arrival at the *Greg Mortimer*, we made our way upstairs to meet our Onboard Expedition Manager, Samantha, and Expedition Photographer, Fiona.

Our Expedition Leader, Mario, invited us into the lecture theatre to welcome us aboard and give us a safety briefing before we commenced a lifeboat safety drill. After lunch, we all took a moment to settle into our cabins and familiarise ourselves with the beautiful vessel.

We were then summoned back to the lecture theatre and were introduced to our multiskilled Expedition Team. Samantha and our Hotel Director, Alex, subsequently

walked us through life on board, and Doctor Javier ensured we knew how to stay healthy during our voyage.

After a relaxing afternoon, we were welcomed aboard by our Captain, Oleg, and introduced to key members of his team.

Together we total 84 Expeditioners from: Australia (15), Canada (4), China (30), Hong Kong (2), Argentina (1), UK (3), USA (22), Turkey (2), Greece (1), Italy (1), Netherlands (2), and Russia (1), along with 82 crew from around the globe. Our 19 Expedition Team members have a variety of specialities, including polar exploration, marine mammals, mountaineering, geology, history, ornithology, photography, medicine, snorkelling and kayaking.





Danco Island

DAY 2 | Friday 14 February 2025

Latitude:
64°05.7' S
Longitude:
61°51.2' W

Course:
195°
Speed:
7.6 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots W
Barometer:
1008 hPa

Air Temp:
-1°C

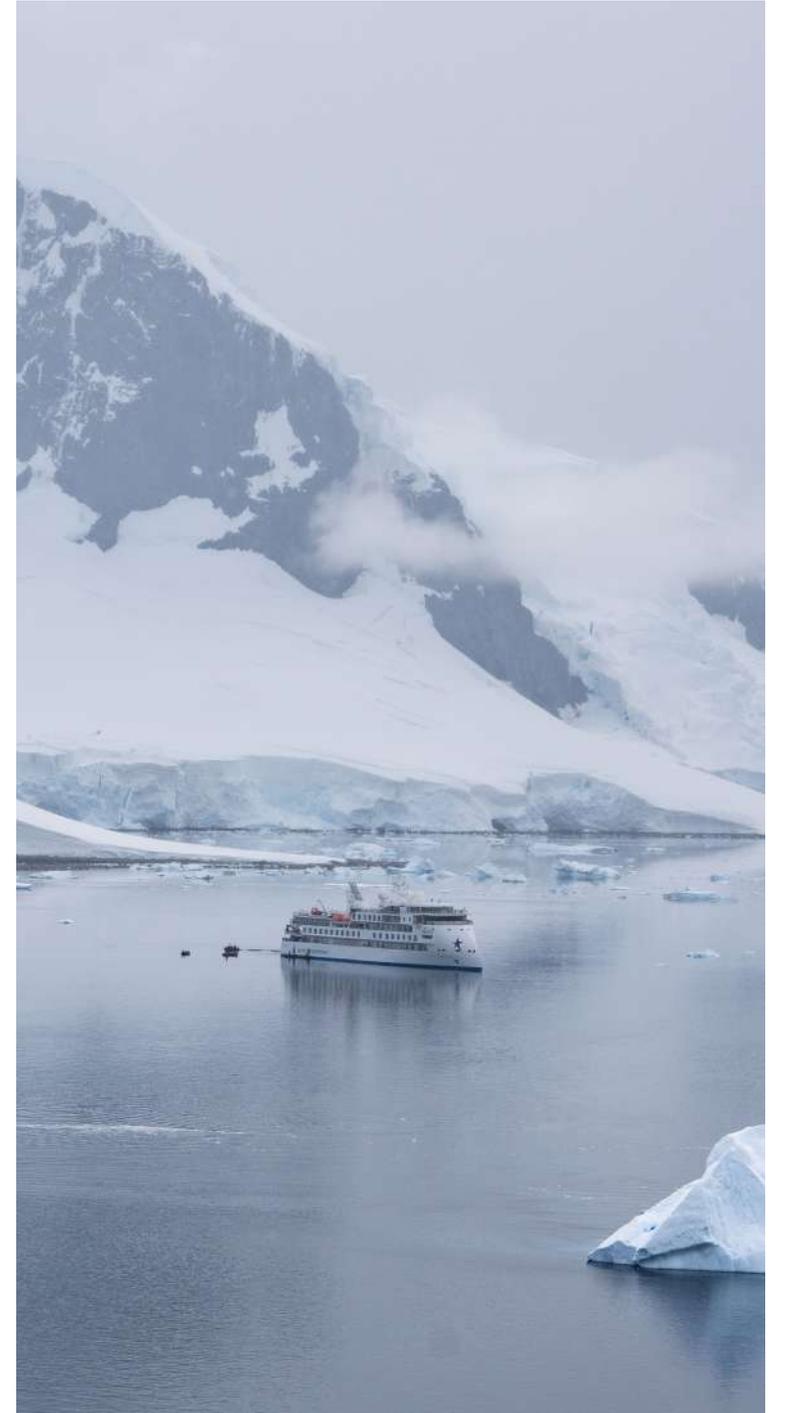
Our day began with incredible sightings of a group of humpbacks enjoying their morning meal as we watched them from the restaurant. Our mandatory IAATO and Zodiac briefings were followed by biosecurity, where we thoroughly inspected and vacuumed all of our outerwear and gear.

After lunch, we got ready for our first excursion, a landing at the amazing Danco Island, named after Émile Danco, a Belgian geophysicist and member of the Belgian Antarctic Expedition (1897–1899). The snorkellers, kayakers and paddlers had their first outings, and everyone enjoyed their first personal encounters with the gorgeous gentoo penguins. We enjoyed chicks chasing their parents for food, and funky feather-dos from the moulters.

A number of mountaineering Expeditioners made it to the top of Danco for the reward of another penguin rookery and magnificent views down over the Errera Channel. On the water, some people were lucky enough to see leopard seals and crabeater seals resting on the ice.

Back at the ship, we had our daily briefing with Mario. Kyle educated us on the highly complex behaviours of orcas – how they are only one of six animal species where females experience menopause, and how important matriarchal lineage and the role of the grandmother is in an orca family. There were yet more whale sightings throughout the evening as we continued sailing south.







Yalour Islands & Wordie House

DAY 3 | Saturday 15 February 2025

Latitude:

65°12.2' S

Longitude:

64°09.1' W

Course:

Adrift

Speed:

8.3 knots

Wind Speed:

2 knots E

Barometer:

1004 hPa

Air Temp:

0°C

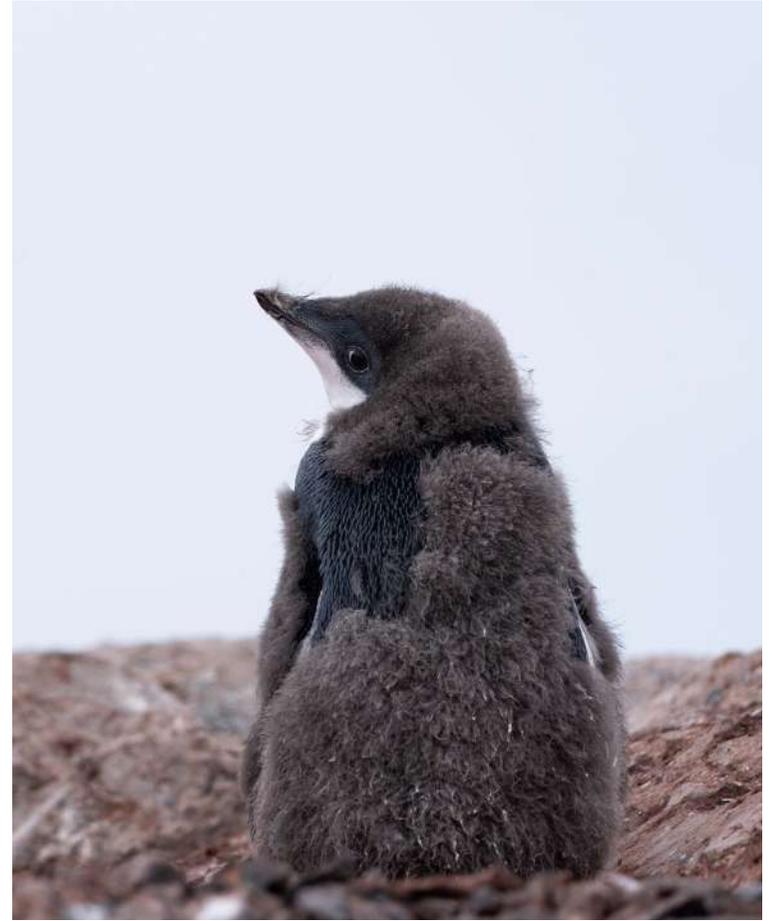
At the 7.15am wake-up call, we discovered we were already up to Plan C for the morning. The Lemaire Channel was blocked by large icebergs, so we shifted our original afternoon plans for the Yalour Islands to the morning, and got ready to enjoy a joint landing and Zodiac exploration among the Adélie penguin colonies of the area.

There were a number of humpback whales surfacing very close to the ship, and once we were out on the Zodiacs, the crabeater seals began to appear on pieces of ice dotted all around us. As a species, crabeaters make up half the seal population worldwide. Out on the ice, we relished our first encounters with Adélie penguins teaming up with a few

gentoo penguins. On land, we discovered one of the most southerly nesting sites for Adélie penguins in Antarctica. It was incredible to watch their interactions with each other and the chicks waddling around.

After lunch, we re-positioned the ship for a Zodiac exploration to Wordie House on Winter Island. First established in 1935, Wordie House has been managed by the UK Antarctic Heritage Trust since 2014. It was incredible to see inside how some of the first explorers and scientists in Antarctica lived so many years ago. On our way back to the ship, we passed by the Ukrainian Vernadsky Research Base, which was given to Ukraine in 1996 by Britain.







Detaille Island & Hanusse Bay

DAY 4 | Sunday 16 February 2025

Latitude:
66°38.5' S
Longitude:
67°15.1' W

Course:
136°
Speed:
10 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots W
Barometer:
1013 hPa

Air Temp:
-1°C

During the early hours of the morning, we crossed 66°33'50.3' S – we are now south of the Antarctic Circle! Bright sunshine lit up the flawless landscape, quite a change from yesterday's truly Antarctic blizzard conditions.

After breakfast, we embarked the Zodiacs for a slightly choppy ride to Detaille Island, the site of the remote and isolated Base W. A former research station established in 1956 as part of the British Antarctic Survey, the hut is relatively unchanged and remains like a time capsule from the 1950s.

Our snorkellers enjoyed pootling around the rocky shoreline of Detaille, having a great time playing with some chunks of ice. Kayakers and paddlers had a challenging yet exhilarating outing with views of fur and Weddell seals.

After lunch, Captain Oleg lowered the *Greg Mortimer's* special platforms to give us unobstructed views of the sea ice – and what a scene it was! A giant white jigsaw puzzle of ice scattered over the dark ocean surface, with seals resting on the floes and even a few passing minke whales visible through the gaps.

Next, Mario and the team scouted a massive ice floe before confirming an 'ice landing' was indeed possible. The ice floe was huge enough to hold over 60 Expeditioners as well as the Expedition Team, giving us lots of space to walk. We could hear the blows of a nearby minke whale and the thunderous calving of distant glaciers. We tied up the afternoon's activities before heading up to deck 8 for a special outdoor BBQ.









At Sea & Børgen Bay

DAY 5 | Monday 17 February 2025

Latitude:
65°22.3' S
Longitude:
66°07.5' W

Course:
34°
Speed:
14.4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots NNW
Barometer:
1011 hPa

Air Temp:
1°C

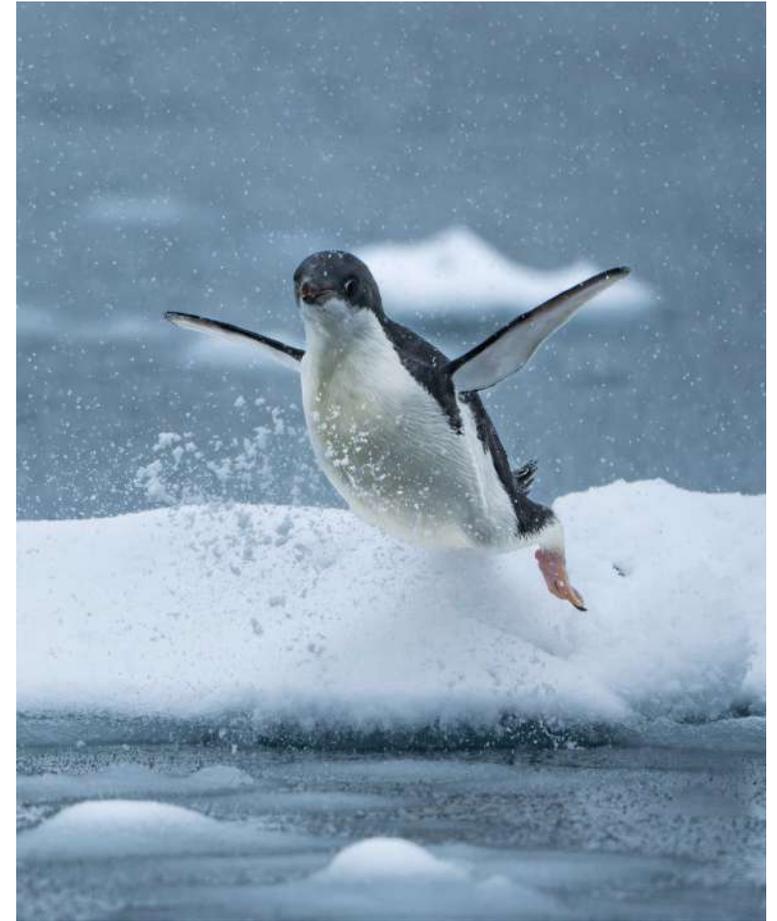
As the first half of the day was spent at sea, we all got to sleep in. We were heading north, where we were hoping to find better weather conditions. In the morning, some of us mastered the use of our smartphones in a photography workshop given by Fiona. A lecture by Ed, 'Your Penguin Questions Answered', left us feeling much more knowledgeable about those funny little creatures of the southern hemisphere.

The afternoon brought us to the narrow passage that is the Neumayer Channel, which happened to be a perfect spot for our post-lunch excursions. When we arrived in Børgen Bay, we could still see its surrounding glaciers towering over the inlet. The Antarctic weather did not disappoint

though – soon enough the only thing we could see was thickening fog accompanied by snowfall.

The moody aura made the exploration of brash and pancake ice quite unique. The landscape was covered by a thick veil of fog. We focused on the sound of snow falling onto the water's surface, of the Zodiacs pushing through the ice, and the occasional 'thunder' rumbling towards us from far off in the distance, reminding us that we are still surrounded by glaciers. Our outing wasn't only about the serenity of the place — we also exercised our sense of touch while forming endless number of snowballs. Needless to say, a snowball fight followed, with duels between multiple Zodiacs, snorkellers and kayakers ensuing.





Hydrurga Rocks, Palaver Point & Graham Passage

DAY 6 | Tuesday 18 February 2025

Latitude:
64°11.5' S

Longitude:
61°28.4' W

Course:
20°

Speed:
4 knots

Wind Speed:
5 knots SSW

Barometer:
993 hPa

Air Temp:
1°C

Today the dark clouds broke apart, revealing bright sunlight that lit up the icy landscape, making everything sparkle. We kicked off our adventures by heading to Hydrurga Rocks. As we got closer in the Zodiacs, we could see the rocky outcrops ahead.

On the shore, we were greeted by a group of chinstrap penguins. Their black-and-white feathers stood out against the snowy ground. They waddled around, chirping, and some even slid on their bellies. Not far from them, a group of fur seals were soaking up the sun – some relaxing, while others growled and sparred with each other. It was amazing to observe them in their natural habitat.

We spent the first part of the morning exploring the penguin colonies on land. We then hopped back into the

Zodiacs for an exploration around the area, getting up-close views of giant icebergs and rocky shores filled with wildlife. Kayakers paddled, and the snorkellers had an amazing experience: they saw a whale swimming beneath them, its huge body gliding through the water!

In the afternoon, we went on a hike to Palaver Point. The views were breathtaking with snow-covered mountains and glaciers stretching as far as we could see, sparkling in the sunlight.

Once we were back on board the ship, a pod of orcas was spotted in the distance. It was the perfect way to end such a wonderful day. To finish off the day, after dinner, the ship sailed through the narrow Graham Passage with its tall glaciers on both sides.







Recess Cove & Fournier Bay

DAY 7 | Wednesday 19 February 2025

Latitude:
64°28.0' S
Longitude:
61°42.2' W

Course:
118°
Speed:
3.6 knots

Wind Speed:
1 knots E
Barometer:
982 hPa

Air Temp:
– 1°C

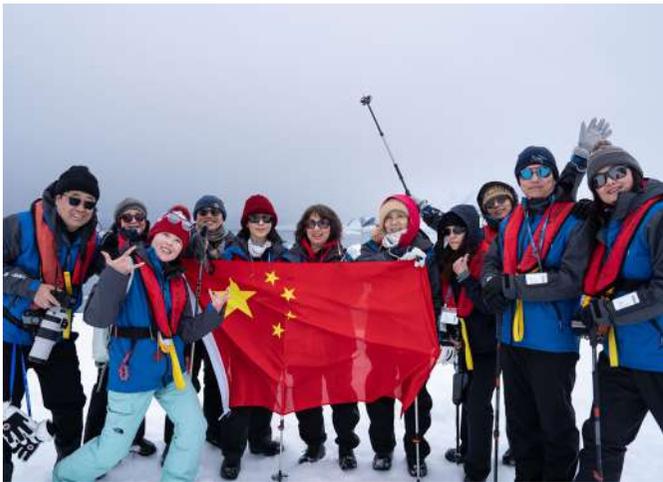
The day began early at Recess Cove, where we were greeted with overcast skies that lent a mysterious beauty to the landscape. Our Zodiac excursion in what could only be described as a 'whale soup' was extra special, and a rocky landing on the Antarctic Peninsula allowed for a hike up the glacier to a viewpoint that treated us to panoramic views of the surrounding glaciers and icebergs – a perfect spot to watch and listen to the whales in the bay below. The towering nunatak was slightly shrouded in cloud, and a pair of snow petrels circled overhead.

After exploring the landing, we embarked on an exhilarating Zodiac cruise. Gliding through the icy waters, we were soon surrounded by humpback whales. The experience

was truly magical and unforgettable; a rare moment of connection with the incredible wildlife of the region. The islands also hosted a well-populated cormorant colony, with seals flaked out across the rocky outcrops. We took in the stunning views of the surrounding glaciers, their vibrant blue hues and intricate patterns leaving us in awe.

In the afternoon, Kyle gathered the citizen scientists for a cloud survey, followed by a lecture on the whales of Antarctica. Our evening briefing and recap were enlightening, with discussions on the unique nature of this extraordinary continent. The day was a perfect blend of adventure, discovery and education, leaving us with a profound appreciation for the beauty and fragility of Antarctica.





Portal Point & at Sea

DAY 8 | Thursday 20 February 2025

Latitude:

64°21.1' S

Longitude:

61°43.9' W

Course:

Adrift

Speed:

5 knots

Wind Speed:

7 knots SW

Barometer:

984 hPa

Air Temp:

1°C

This morning, the *Greg Mortimer* arrived at Portal Point, the gateway to the peninsula. After a thorough scout, we all boarded the Zodiacs and made our way to shore for a lovely hike on the Antarctic continent, as well as to admire some beautiful granitic rocks polished by the ice!

The glacial scenery and the Antarctic Peninsula surrounding us were breathtaking. The foundations of the dismantled Reclus hut were visible near the landing site, sparking wonder about the early explorers of this area. We also had the opportunity to see some whales feeding and swimming close to the ship. Kayakers, paddlers, and snorkellers enjoyed an amazing morning as well. The snorkellers admired the colourful life on the sea floor and

played with some chunks of ice, while the kayakers and paddlers manoeuvred among majestic icebergs, with some seal and whale sightings in the distance.

Once on board, the time had come ... for the one and only polar plunge! By the afternoon, we were heading out towards the stunning South Shetland Islands. Hannah gave a lecture on the discovery of Antarctica, discussing the pioneers who surveyed these remote regions in years gone by. Meli offered a talk about glaciology, covering ice sheets, ice shelves, and glaciers. Just before the recap, Kyle held a Happywhale workshop to identify the 'soup' of whales we had been lucky enough to encounter throughout our voyage.







Penguin Island & at Sea

DAY 9 | Friday 21 February 2025

Latitude:
62°06.3' S
Longitude:
57°53.8' W

Course:
356°
Speed:
7.4 knots

Wind Speed:
4 knots W
Barometer:
1000 hPa

Air Temp:
2°C

Many describe me as a near-eternal force of lore, though in fairness, I'm a mere 20–50 million years old. I lost count around the mid-Eocene, what with the rapid atmospheric changes taking up quite a bit of my bandwidth. That said, I don't mind the reputation; it bolsters my confidence. I'm particularly flattered by humans. Many creatures inhabit my waters and thrive in my winds, yet I am feared by mariners: those vulnerable souls who trust in the hulls of their vessels to protect them from my fury.

Today, I observed a vessel sandwiched between me and the Bransfield Strait, on that pebble of an island, Penguin Island. Despite its precarious exposure, it's sheltered. I watched the humans, admiring their tenacity as they

danced with the swell in their little black boats, feeling the heartbeat of the earth.

The clouds closed in, and my attitude showed up in their forecasts – finally, some attention. As snow began to fall and the winds changed, the humans made haste to begin their journey across my waters, those of the Drake Passage, to avoid what I had brewing around Cape Horn.

I've observed many changes to this planet in my millions of years, but I believe in the power of formidable places to leave an indelible mark in the minds of those fortunate to experience them. Towards me they sailed, in the last crack of the Antarctic winds.







Drake Passage

DAY 10 | Saturday 22 February 2025

Latitude:
59°34.6' S
Longitude:
60°22.8' W

Course:
307°
Speed:
12.3 knots

Wind Speed:
12.3 knots
Barometer:
993 hPa

Air Temp:
5°C

Our day started in the Drake Passage with just under a three-metre swell. Ed's talk on the seabirds of Antarctica sparked some enthusiasm for the subsequent seabird survey. Although only a few soft-plumaged petrels and white-chinned petrels were spotted, smiles were seen all around. The bridge was open all morning to enjoy the epic view and observe the workings of the *Greg Mortimer* from behind the scenes. Fiona gave an interactive talk on how to edit smartphone pictures and videos, and everyone took home a few tips and tricks to wow their friends and families.

After lunch, something peculiar was afoot. Expedition Team members entered the space carrying kayak paddles, tarpaulins, tape measures, and rope. It turned out that they had built a fort – a life-size replica of the *James Caird*, the

lifeboat that Ernest Shackleton and Captain Frank Worsley sailed from Elephant Island to South Georgia to help rescue the surviving members of Shackleton's expedition.. Hannah then sprang from the fort in the most dramatic entrance to a presentation that was the highlight of the season. Ed also read a passage from Captain Frank Worsley's journal to bring the stage to life.

Next, Meli, Ashley and Hannah participated in a discussion panel on what life had been like during their time living in Antarctic camps and bases. Erin rounded off a knowledge-filled day with Antarctica trivia, which was enjoyed by all the lifeboat that Ernest Shackleton and Captain Frank Worsley sailed from Elephant Island to South Georgia to help rescue the surviving members of Shackleton's expedition.





Drake Passage

DAY 11 | Sunday 23 February 2025

Latitude:
55°39.0' S
Longitude:
64°23.8' W

Course:
356°
Speed:
10 knots

Wind Speed:
7 knots NW
Barometer:
999 hPa

Air Temp:
5°C

It was our final day on the Drake Passage as we steamed closer to the Beagle Channel. After breakfast, Elo kicked off with an informative talk about the importance of Antarctic krill as the base of the entire food chain.

Next, we joined Kyle in the library for a phytoplankton 'show & tell', A look through the microscope revealed the amazing geometrical shapes and forms of these tiny planktonic beings, which are so vital to life on earth.

Samantha gave us our disembarkation briefing, followed by another chance to visit the bridge. We viewed the sophisticated charts, radars and technology used to control the movements of the *Greg Mortimer*.

This afternoon's program kept our minds occupied with Hannah's 'Women in Antarctica', followed by Ashley's 'Behind the Scenes of the *Greg Mortimer*'.

Snorkellers and kayakers gathered to reminisce about their adventures and share photos, before we were all invited to the lecture theatre for the Captain's Farewell' Dinner Fiona's slideshow took us back on a journey that started 12 days ago and reminded us of the incredible moments we have shared together, the unique wildlife and the stunning scenery.

One last dinner together, then it was time to salsa the night away as we cruised towards Ushuaia on the calm Beagle Channel.

Ushuaia

DAY 12 | Monday 24 February 2025

Latitude:
54°50.08' S
Longitude:
60°06.2' W

Wind Speed:
4 knots SW
Barometer:
999 hPa

Disembarkation at 8.00am
Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard *Greg Mortimer* to Antarctica. We hope to see you on the high seas again some day!

Course:
271°
Speed:
10 knots

Air Temp:
4°C

BBQ





Polar Plunge









Citizen Science





Kayaking Log

Guides: Elo Berrier, Erin Scott, Anula Jochym, Hodei Orueta

14 February 2025, PM: Danco Island 4.9 km

Spectacular start to the journey! After a morning on board with all safety briefings completed, we kicked off our activities. The weather and ice conditions were perfect for our first kayaking outing in Antarctica. We paddled nearly 5 km, starting in an area with little ice and gradually making our way through the icebergs. We were incredibly lucky to spot some Weddell seals resting on one iceberg. Later, we approached the shore to watch gentoo penguins enter the sea. While paddling towards the glacier, a minke whale passed close to our kayaks, allowing us to observe it for a few minutes. We then disembarked onto the Zodiac and headed ashore to explore the landing site.

15 February 2025, AM: Yalour Islands 3.5 km

Day two of our operations brought us to Yalour Islands – a small archipelago just off Graham Land. It was hard to see the islands we were supposed to paddle around because the landscape was so heavily dotted with brash ice and icebergs, we couldn't tell what was land and what was not. We navigated through the natural ice sculptures carved by wind and waves. The islands turned out to be a wonderful playground, full of Adélie penguins, Weddell seals and gentoos playfully porpoising through the water. We managed to paddle through channels and bays that no Zodiac would get through without risking losing its propeller. Scruffy looking Adélie chicks and rockhopping between the islands – what a cool way to combine wildlife watching and sea kayaking!



Number of Kayakers: 9

Total Paddle Outings: 9

Total Distance Paddled:
39.9 km

Kayakers:

Reva Gupta

Peter Eden

Peter Bothe

Grace Nay

Kyrt Nay

Micki Miles

Jose Delgado-Forastieri

Nicki Clothier

Liam Clothier

15 February 2025, PM: Argentine Islands 5.0 km

A sporty paddle this afternoon in the labyrinthine Argentine Islands! We launched in a sea full of large icebergs and made our way into a channel, seeing the infrastructure of the Ukrainian Vernadsky Research Base in the distance. We encountered several seals in the water, including crabeater seals, and followed the coastline along a gentoo penguin colony, seeing one Adélie along the way! We headed over to Vernadsky, where we saw a few personnel in the heavy snowfall. We rounded the western headland of Isla Galíndez and sought shelter in the calm passageways between adjacent islands, then finished off at Wordie House, a British designated Historic Site and Monument. At this point, the snow was falling in big, fat flakes, and there were one or two snowballs thrown.

16 February 2025, AM: Detaille Island 2.8 km

We finally made it south of the Antarctic Circle, with the sun greeting us on that breathtaking day. The swell was bigger than we'd seen and the wind had picked up, making it our most challenging conditions yet. But we were ready! We kayaked through the channels, the sea choppy beneath us, and marvelled at the massive icebergs surrounding us. We spotted a fur seal – unexpected so far south – and a Weddell seal lounging nearby. Penguins dotted the top of the main island, posing for our photos, adding to the magic. As the morning wrapped up, we paddled to historic Base W, ending our adventure with a glimpse into the past.

17 February 2025, PM: Borgen Bay 2.9 km

This ended up being a rather special and memorable afternoon, despite the thick fog over Børgen Bay as we suspiciously eyed the chilly conditions! As we disembarked the Zodiac, it was snowing particularly hard and we couldn't see any of the glaciers that we knew surrounded us! The ship loomed, ghost-like in the distance as we began to paddle out into the white abyss. The snow fell so hard that it was coagulating on the ocean's surface, creating a thick layer of slush that made a faint whispering sound as we dipped our paddles through it. The water was dead calm, so we were paddling through what looked like a smooth blanket punctuated by growlers. The wintry scene was complete when Elo drove up in the safety Zodiac, offering hot chocolate! Snowballs were thrown, drinks were sipped, and we were alight with the magic of the afternoon.

18 February 2025, AM: Hydrurga Rocks 4.1 km

We were in for a sporty paddle this morning at Hydrurga Rocks, but we were up for the challenge! There was a bit of swell, but we were still able to navigate the low-lying islets and skerries, all while amid the cacophony of the chinstrap penguin colony – for some, the first chinstrap sightings of the trip! We saw several fur seals, a juvenile Weddell seal, many penguins, shags and snowy sheathbills, and a few southern giant petrels! We played around in the rock gardens, exploring narrow little channels and timing our transits with the swell. It was an exciting paddle and we were able to test out some new skills. After exploring many of the nooks and crannies of this beautiful place, we completed our circumnavigation and headed to shore!



18 February 2025, PM: Palaver Point 5.0 km

The little outcrop, which from a distance didn't look like much, was in fact filled with thousands of chinstraps, with fur seals scattered here and there along the shore. We paddled to the landing site, where we watched some playing in the water, before we continued on towards the high ice cliffs. It did indeed make one feel quite vulnerable when the only coastline available was the towering and overhanging glacial faces. After quickly checking out a Weddell seal on the only ice-free outcrop, we decided to head out into the open water. Navigating through massive icebergs of every possible shape, we got to enjoy the gentle swell rolling through the glassy waters of the vast Palmer Archipelago. As we were finishing and about to board the Zodiac, two humpbacks started breaching in the distance.

19 February 2025, AM: Recess Cove 5.4 km

We were left speechless after this one! After joking all the way out in the Zodiac about calling whales, we spent our entire morning surrounded by whales! Whether they were surfacing around us, or whether it was the sound of their breathing echoing off the glacial amphitheatre that surrounded us, we were bombarded by all things whale during our morning at Recess Cove. We paddled into brash ice, witnessing pods of whales including calves, juveniles and large adults – feeding, sleeping and playing. After spending about an hour with the whales, we turned towards the landing site and paddled at an excellent clip towards land. On our way, we saw a large iceberg calve and almost flip! It was a dramatic and spectacular morning, and one to be remembered.

20 February 2025, AM: Portal Point 6.3 km

Today we decided to explore an area that none of the guides have paddled before. The two islands west from the general landing site – Portal Point – seemed like a perfect spot to start our kayak outing. And we were not mistaken! The abundance of chinstrap penguins, blue-eyed shags and fur seals was the first thing that we noticed about the island that we were about to circumnavigate. Soon after, the main spotlight was taken by four whales that decided to head our way while surface feeding – what a surreal feeling having those gentle giants come so close to us. While they were passing by, we noticed four Weddell seals checking us out as they cruised along the rocky shore. As we continued circumnavigating the island, the whale frenzy continued too. One could say it was

quite hard to get away! Peter would probably agree, since he had one of them swim right below him without any idea where it would resurface. We finished our paddle by cruising past the iceberg graveyard, quite overwhelmed by the encounters we've had.









Paddling Log

Guides: Elo Berrier, Erin Scott, Anula Jochym, Hodei Orueta

14 February 2025, PM: Danco Island 1.7 km

Our first Antarctic paddle was granted glorious weather: glassy calm waters with only the lightest winds! We revelled in the experience of encountering light brash ice for the first time, and felt the bumping of it against the hulls of our boats while we navigated through some 'ice cube soup'. We saw a few different species of seabird: Wilson's storm petrels, skuas, shags and of course, our first penguins in the water, porpoising around us! We also approached a crabeater seal on an ice floe. We marvelled at the large icebergs that sat in the Errera Channel and saw some ice movement with the notorious currents of this region. After our paddle, we were picked up by our Antarctic Uber, also known as the safety Zodiac, and headed to shore to enjoy the penguin colony on land.

15 February 2025, AM: Yalour Islands 3.0 km

After a last-minute change of plans, our next adventure led us to the Yalour Islands. as we cruised in the Zodiac, we spotted a crabeater seal lounging lazily on an iceberg. We hopped onto our sit-on-top kayaks, hugging the rugged coastline as we drifted past curious Adélie penguins. We waited patiently, letting them grow accustomed to us before they happily hopped into the water. As we continued paddling through the channels, we marvelled at the teenage Adélies, sporting funky feathered hairstyles. To top it off, we spotted two Weddell seals! After 1.5 hours and 3 km, we finally got back into the Zodiac and then stepped ashore to observe the penguins up close – and all before lunch!



Number of Kayakers: 7

Total Paddle Outings: 6

Total Distance Paddled:
14.8 km

Kayakers:

Di Shen

John Collaga

Corinna Collaga

Ezgi Tekin

Asiye Tekin

Paula Temperilli

John Temperilli

16 February 2025, AM: Detaille Island 2.7 km

Probably our southernmost paddle of the entire trip! In the morning, we had the amazing opportunity to explore Detaille Island. We paddled through the channels, spotted several seals and some beautiful icebergs, and at the end of our journey, we were able to go ashore and visit Wordie House.

17 February 2025, PM: Borgen Bay 1.2 km

When we arrived in Børgen Bay we could still see its surrounding glaciers towering over the inlet, but soon enough, the only thing left to see was the thickening fog accompanied by snowfall. Hopefully, the brave few who decided to join us paddling did not regret their decision as the moody aura made paddling through brash and pancake ice quite unique. Instead of taking in the landscape, which was covered under the thick veil of fog, we could focus on our other senses. How quickly we warmed up by pushing through the ice, and how loud our surroundings turned out to be when we gave ourselves a moment to tune in. Our outing wasn't only about the serenity of the place though – we finished with a cup of hot chocolate followed by a snowball fight against our fellow kayakers and Zodiac drivers!

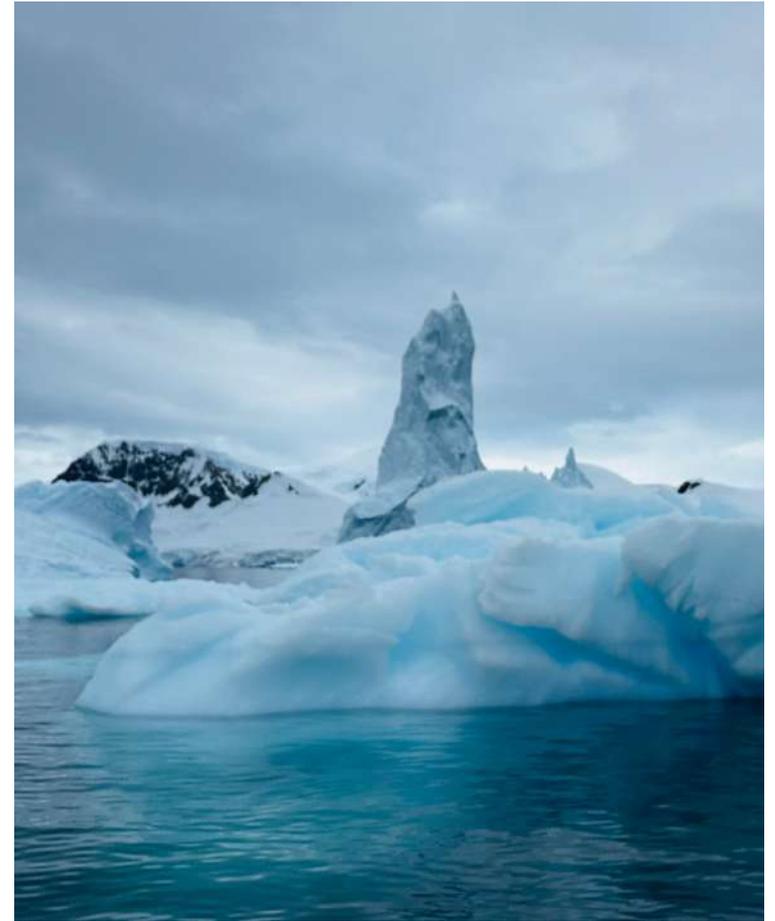
18 February 2025, PM: Palaver Point 3.6 km

The weather was totally different from the day before! The snowstorms cleared up, leaving behind the most gorgeous sunny day. While the morning winds kept us from paddling, by afternoon, we couldn't wait to hit the water. The waves were a little wilder than usual, but that only made the adventure even more exciting! We paddled along the coast of Two Hummock Island, drifting as chinstrap penguins zoomed by and fur seals lazily enjoyed the weather. Then, we made our way to the stunning glaciers that spilled right into the sea. To wrap it up, we hiked up to an amazing viewpoint, soaking in the panoramic views. What a perfect day of adventure!

20 February 2025, PM: Portal Point 2.6 km

Amid the stormy winds of the peninsula, our EL found us a peaceful pocket of calm where we launched our sit-on-top kayaks: Portal Point. Our Zodiac ride to shore took a delightful detour as we paused to watch feeding whales, their graceful movements captivating us. Once in the sit-on-tops, the water was serene, and we marvelled at the tiny krill with their biggest eyes, while playful fur seals swam by. One seal even surprised us with a grunt from beneath the water. Icebergs glittered around us, and whales dotted the background. Our outing ended with a peaceful walk on the Antarctic Peninsula.







Snorkling Log

Guides: Thomas Gov, Rosie Leaney

14 February 2025, PM: Danco Island

Our first Antarctic snorkel was at the stunning Danco Island, surrounded by sculpted icebergs and glaciers. Although overcast with occasional light snow, the water was as clear and blue as water could be. We spent 45 minutes onshore with a bustling gentoo penguin colony before heading out by Zodiac to the eastern side of the island, cruising through an 'iceberg graveyard' and spotting a few Weddell seals along the way.

After Rosie demonstrated how to gear up and enter the water from the Zodiac, we followed suit and slipped into the calm, crystal-clear shallows. We encountered krill, salps, algae, and even a few penguins zipping by – spotted by Ryan. A surreal and unforgettable introduction to Antarctic snorkelling.

15 February 2025, AM: Yalour Islands

This morning, we set out on a breathtaking adventure to the Yalour Islands, home to a thriving Adélie penguin colony. The weather was perfect – calm seas and clear skies – ideal for both wildlife encounters and snorkelling. Our excursion began on land, observing the Adélie penguins.

After an hour, it was time to enter the water. Slipping into the chilly Antarctic sea, we explored narrow channels between the islets, drifting among sculpted growlers and floating ice. The Adélie penguins remained onshore, but a shy Weddell seal surfaced briefly, offering a fleeting but special encounter.

As we returned to the ship, weaving between towering icebergs, we spotted crabeater seals resting on the ice.



Number of Snorkellers: 5
Total Snorkel Outings: 9

Snorkellers:
Ivy Kwan
Ryan Schwark
Gary Schwark
Renee Schwark
Nancy Ching

15 February 2025, PM: Argentine Islands/Wordie House

This afternoon's snorkelling adventure took us to the Argentine Islands. The weather had changed drastically overnight, bringing strong winds and heavy snowfall for a dramatic Antarctic scene. We departed the ship by Zodiac and visited the historic site, Wordie House. After exploring the site, we continued through the island to a well-sheltered bay. Beneath the surface, we discovered a mesmerising underwater world. Penguins darted gracefully through the icy blue water, and we also spotted vibrant starfish and other hardy marine life.

Returning to the ship through white-out conditions was an adventure in itself. Despite the low visibility and driving snow, the experience left us exhilarated.

16 February 2025, AM: Detaille Island

After a visit to Base W, we circled Detaille Island by Zodiac, stopping to photograph a group of Adélie penguins. The ocean was a little choppy, so we found a calm, enclosed bay to snorkel in.

Nancy, Ryan and Ivy snorkelled for quite some time, covering a lot of ground. They explored the rocky sea floor, which was dotted with algae, sea stars and urchins. A peaceful and productive session in a beautifully remote corner of the peninsula.

17 February 2025, PM: Børgen Bay

This afternoon's snorkel took place in Børgen Bay – a glacier-lined bay transformed by heavy snowfall. A delicate layer of snow settled on the sea's surface, blending seamlessly with the landscape to create an ethereal polar canvas.

We swam towards several icebergs, their brilliant blue formations extending below the surface, revealing a mesmerising world of ice.

A few penguins swam nearby, porpoising effortlessly through the water, their presence a joy to witness.

Back on board, warming drinks in hand, we reflected on the magic of Børgen Bay – a snorkel experience like no other.

18 February 2025, AM: Hydrurga Rocks

This morning's snorkel began with a visit to a chinstrap penguin colony on Hydrurga Rocks, just east of Two Hummock Island. We circumnavigated the islands by Zodiac, briefly pausing in open water to look for whales.

Just as we reached our snorkel site in a sheltered bay, Thomas spotted a humpback whale nearby. We quickly returned to the open water, where we were rewarded with an extraordinary encounter.

The whale swam beneath our Zodiacs, its pectoral fins glowing white in the blue depths. Ivy and Ryan quietly entered the water and were treated to a rare and breathtaking underwater view of the whale cruising past.

Afterwards, we returned to the bay and continued our snorkel.



18 February 2025, PM: Palaver Point

We snorkelled in a shallow bay near the landing site at Palaver Point. A juvenile elephant seal resting near the water's edge was joined by a number of fur seals.

Ivy and Ryan positioned themselves to view chinstrap penguins entering and exiting the water – no easy task, as the penguins' speed and agility make them difficult to spot underwater.

Ivy did manage to see a few penguins zooming by, and we also had a brief but close encounter with a fur seal that swam right up to the group. A fantastic day for wildlife!

19 February 2025, AM: Recess Cove

This morning's outing was truly unforgettable – a whale of a day!

We set off by Zodiac towards our first continental landing when a curious whale, affectionately named Spike, appeared. Ivy and Ryan slipped quietly into the water and were rewarded with an extraordinary experience – Spike approached three times, circling just metres in front of their masks.

We continued to the landing site for a short walk on the Antarctic continent. But the surprises weren't over. On the return, the bay came alive with more whales. Ivy and Ryan re-entered the water, witnessing five whales pass by in graceful formation.

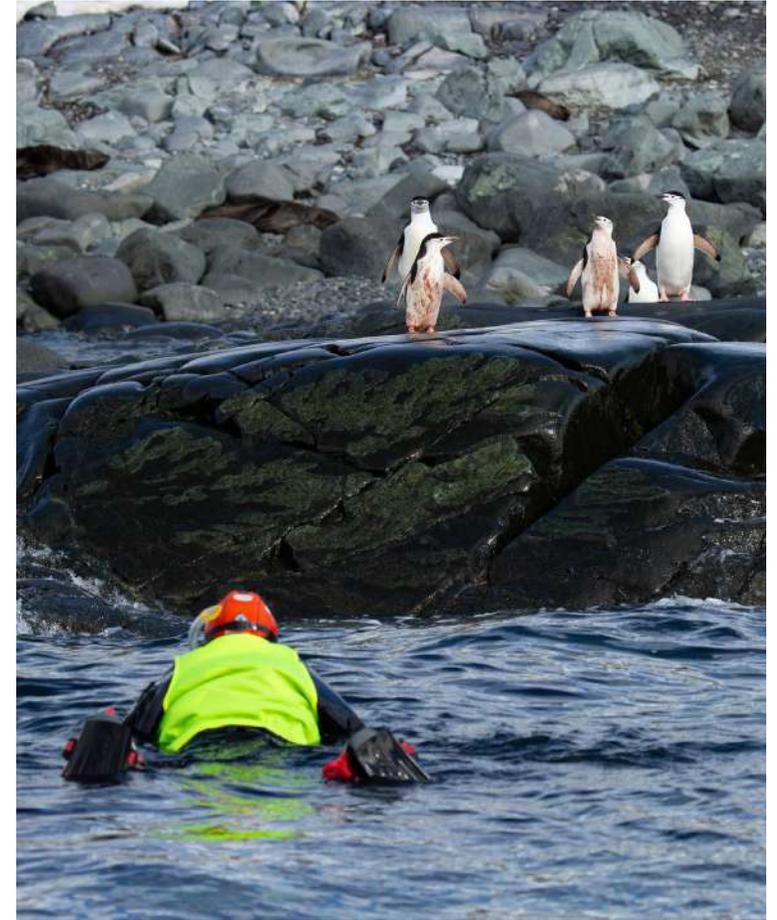
An awe-inspiring day! One we will remember for the rest of our lives.

20 February 2025: Portal Point

The action began right outside the ship. Just a few hundred metres from the mudroom, a humpback whale was feeding, lunging sideways with dramatic fluke and pectoral fin displays.

After watching the spectacle, we landed at Portal Point for a walk, then cruised north to a sheltered group of rocks. A few fur seals were hauled out and we waited hopefully for one to join us in the water, but they kept to themselves this time.

We snorkelled among krill and small marine life, and passed the time playing games with small chunks of ice – a light-hearted end to a beautiful morning.









Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	February										
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Snowy Sheathbill						●					
South Polar Skua		●	●	●	●	●		●			
Brown Skua	●		●	●	●		●		●		
Skua (unidentified)											●
Kelp Gull	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●
Antarctic Tern	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
South American Tern											●
Gentoo Penguin	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Chinstrap Penguin		●		●		●		●	●		
Adélie Penguin			●	●	●						
Northern Royal Albatross											●
Southern Royal Albatross											●
Black-browed Albatross	●							●	●	●	●
Grey-headed Albatross	●							●			
Southern Giant Petrel	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Southern Fulmar	●	●		●		●		●	●		
Cape Petrel	●			●				●			
Snow Petrel				●							
Soft-plumaged Petrel											●
Antarctic Prion											●

Bird Species	February										
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
White-chinned Petrel										●	●
Sooty Shearwater										●	
Diving Petrel (unidentified)										●	
Wilson's Storm Petrel		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Antarctic Shag	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		●

Mammal Species	February										
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Antarctic Fur Seal				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Southern Elephant Seal					●					●	
Crabeater Seal		●	●	●			●				
Weddell Seal		●	●	●	●	●		●			
Leopard Seal		●	●							●	
Humpback Whale	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Minke Whale	●										
Fin Whale	●										
Orca	●				●						

Map

- 1. Punta Arenas
- 2. King George Island
- 3. Danco Island
- 4. Yalour Islands
- 5. Wordie House/Winter Island
- 6. Detaille Island
- 7. Hanusse Bay
- 8. Børgen Bay
- 9. Hydrurga Rocks
- 10. Palaver Point
- 11. Graham Passage
- 12. Recess Cove
- 13. Fournier Bay
- 14. Melchior Islands
- 15. Portal Point
- 16. Penguin Island
- 17. Drake passage
- 18. Ushuaia



Antarctic Explorer

13 February – 24 February 2025



Our Expeditioners

Janelle Aird	Nancy Goodyear	Xianfei Meng	Gary Schwark	Zhenying Wang
Wayne Aird	Bob Goodyear	Margaret Meyer	Renee Schwark	Sanhao Xu
Peter Bothe	Zhongxian Guo	Sharon Meyer	Ming Shen	Zhihong Yang
Nancy Ching	Wei Guo	Rick Meyer Jr	Di Shen	Jianxin Yue
Liam Clothier	Reva Gupta	Micki Miles	Jian Shu	Faidra Zafeiropoulou
Nicola Clothier	Camil Haas	Caryn Miller	Hui Song	Hao Zeng
Corinna Collaga	Pam Handyside	Angie Natale	Marisa Strauss	Yunhao Zhang
John Collaga	Guomin He	Santo Natale	Darrell Strauss	Yuen Ki Zhang
Julie Cook	Dahua Jing	Kyrt Nay	Ying Tao	Chenjun Zhang
Claudia Corona	Yong Ju	Grace Nay	Asiye Tekin	Yinghe Zhang
Rachael Cosgrove-White	Thomas Kerr	Anders Paulson	Ezgi Tekin	Tongshun Zhao
Jose Delgado-Forastieri	Ingrid Kraan	Elena Podobed	Paula Temperilli	Minji Zhou
Qiuya Du	Ivy Kwan	Shiru Qin	John Temperilli	Yujing Zhu
Peter Eden	Taz Langman	Mary Rogers	Clara Tort	
Manxi Fan	Cynthia Lau	Don Rogers	Cam Trijbetz	
Yangling Ge	Yizhu Li	Yaron Saks	Christine Walsh	
Marg Gilbert	Weimin Lyu	Tamar Saks	Jing Wang	
	Rod McRae	Ryan Schwark	Congcong Wang	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Mario Placidi Spring

Assistant Expedition Leader: Tamsin Both

Onboard Expedition Manager: Samantha Deer

Ornithologist/Naturalist: Ed Nolan

Geologist & Citizen Science Coordinator: Meli Pelzmajer

Historian: Hannah Johns

Photography Guide: Fiona Wardle

Marine Biologist: Kyle Smith

Expedition Team Trainer: Ashley Perrin

Zodiac Master: Sergei Andronov

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ana Prado

Mandarin Speaking Guide: Rose Luan

Mandarin Speaking Guide: Qing Qu

Lead Kayak Guide: Elo Berrier

Kayak Guide: Anula Jochym

Kayak Guide: Erin Scott

Kayak Guide: Hodei Orueta

Lead Snorkel Guide: Thomas Gov

Snorkel Guide: Rosie Leaney

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Oleg Kapko

Chief Officer: Andrey Zakalashnyuk

Safety Officer: Sergii Voina

Bosun: Marvin Linga

Deck Cadet: Joao Varlos De Souza Lima Filho

Ship Doctor: Javier Martinez Rodriguez

Ship Doctor: Nicolas Diaz Rodriguez

Chief Engineer: Branimir Ujević

First Engineer: Denys Odrynsky

Hotel Director: Alex Barkar

F&B Manager: Rajesh Murao

Chief Purser: Pia Blanca

Executive Chef: Edgar Mangalinao

Sous Chef: Edgar Agnelo Xavier Pereira

Head Waiter: Neelam (James) Lopes

Hotel Controller: Christopher Santos

IT Officer: Ihor Yesmieniev

Receptionist: Jaica Puyod

Receptionist: Jonathan Valdez

Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia

Spa Manager: Venila Vythilingum

Able Seaman: Angelo San Antonio

Able Seaman: Roberto Ixtan Mejia

Able Seaman: Nikola Georgiev

Able Seaman: Noel Refugia

Able Seaman: Joel Noble

Able Seaman: Roberth Herman Presida Enitencio

Photography thanks to:

Fiona Wardle and Special Activities Guides





 facebook.com/auroraex

 @aurora_expeditions

 youtube.com/auroraexpeditions

 Aurora Expeditions
(@Polar_Experts) / Twitter