

# BEYOND FIORDLAND

## on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

28<sup>th</sup> December 2022 - 8<sup>th</sup> January 2023



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### Day 1

**28 December 2022**

Queenstown

Arriving at Queenstown we met at our hotel for the night, gathering for the start of our Subantarctic and Fiordland adventures. We spent part of the day exploring Queenstown, and preparing for our voyage and meeting our Expedition Leader Aaron.

### Day 2

**29 December 2022**

Queenstown – Bluff – Stewart Island

Spending the morning in Queenstown and waking to The Remarkables mountain range, excitement was high as we prepared to meet the *Heritage Adventurer* in the port of Bluff. Travelling from the mountainous Central Otago into the rolling farmland of Southland, we boarded *Heritage Adventurer* meeting our guides and crew. Before sailing we joined a lifeboat drill and eased into ship life, before sitting down to dinner while crossing Foveaux Strait and passing Stewart Island.



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### **Day 3**

**30 December 2022**

At sea to Campbell Island

After our first night at sea we woke to overcast conditions with the wind easing through the day.

The birders out on the aft deck early were rewarded with a fair number of birds following the ship and riding the air currents around us. Within the first hour or two we had 5 albatross species (Southern Royal, Campbell, White-capped, Salvin's and Light-mantled Sooty), as well as the ever-present Cape Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters. We also spotted White-chinned, Mottled and Northern Giant Petrels.

After breakfast, Andy gave an interesting and enlightening presentation titled 'An introduction to the Birds of the Subantarctic'. Later on, award-winning wildlife photographer Doug Gimesy educated us all on 'Getting Better Travel Photos', followed by Glenda giving an insight into the 'Geology of the Subantarctic Islands'.

We took pause to enjoy a delicious lunch before Aaron gave us an introduction to Campbell Island as well as a Zodiac briefing. Then the whole expedition team and guests went through the bio-security screening for our landing the following day.

Robert gave a presentation in the late afternoon on 'An Introduction to the Plants of the Subantarctic' after which we were off to the main lounge for the Captain's welcome cocktails followed by a sumptuous welcome dinner.



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**Day 4**  
**31 December 2022**  
 Campbell Island

What a spectacular way to see out 2022. Anchored in Perseverance Harbour, we had our first taste of Zodiac transport into our various drop off points for the day with 3 walking options.

Some of us were dropped off at the MetService station for a walk out to North West Bay while others were dropped at Garden Cove to climb Mt. Honey. The rest of us enjoyed a Zodiac exploration of Perseverance Harbour before walking up to Col Lyall.

On the Mt. Honey walk we were greeted by curious Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions before stashing our lifejackets and gumboots for the return journey – we then began our explorations. Fortunately, the track had good dry conditions as we pushed through *dracophyllum coprosma* and fern forest making our way gently up the hillside. We could see the volcanic and glacial landscapes introduced to us by Glenda and, at the micro scale, spotted two different orchids and our first glimpses of megaherbs.

Before long we were above the scrubline and observing our first Southern Royal Albatross. Here you can appreciate their scale; they seem big from the ship but something else altogether sitting alongside the track. Pristine white albatross dotted the tussock-laden hillside as far as the eye could see, calmly sheltering their eggs or chicks from the wind.

With lots of different interests we split into three groups – one explored around locally, getting the chance to photograph and observe the resident albatross and soak up the views looking south over Monument Harbour and Jacquemart Island. Another group headed up higher into the rocky megaherb fields and were rewarded with the whole suite of megaherbs, a flax weevil sighting by Jennovive, and several of the group summited Mt. Honey. The final group headed to the “Albatross Disco”, where juvenile birds were engaged in the early dating game known as gamming as part of their efforts to find

a mate.

On the Zodiac cruise we passed the site of old farming settlements, the World's Loneliest Tree, and were greeted by playful Hooker's/New Zealand/Sea Lions. Campbell Island Shag and the occasional wheeling Light-mantled Sooty and Southern Royal Albatross. Before heading up the boardwalk to Col Lyall, we passed a variety of megaherbs enjoying breathtaking views down Perseverance Harbour and marvelling at nesting, displaying and wheeling Southern Royal Albatross.

Those of us on the North West Bay track encountered spectacular views alongside varying terrain, megaherbs, and having several encounters with sea lions.

Once everyone had soaked up the unique experience that is Campbell Island, we made our way down in small groups back to the pick-up spot and back to the splendid surrounds of *Heritage Adventurer* for a warm cuppa, a recap of the day's adventures, an introduction to the True Young Explorers on board and dinner while cruising alongside the stunning basalt cliffs and albatross colonies of the island. For an even stronger finish to the year there was cake, bubbles and many guests pulling their best moves on the dance floor all the way to the start of 2023.



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## Day 5

**1 January 2023**

Auckland Islands – Carnley Harbour – Musgrave Inlet

January 1, 2023 aboard *Heritage Adventurer* started with the Zero of the end of year countdown in the Deck 5 lounge. Perhaps half of us were there to toast the new year with champagne and other beverages provided by the hotel staff. As the toasts were completed, the music started and the dance floor filled. Clearly the walks during the day had not taken all of our energy as there was plenty of singing and even a conga line or two!

We were pleased to get a slightly later start as our ship entered Carnley Harbour just as breakfast finished. The day was sunny and the sea remarkably calm – a good omen for 2023. We enjoyed a leisurely tour of the harbour including a chance to view the site of the wreck of the *Grafton* before dropping anchor and lowering the Zodiacs. With 13 Zodiacs in the water, all of us zipped out to the dramatic Victoria Passage and its surging seas and towering rocks, with the kayakers joining us there too.

The cruise back along the shore featured Southern Rata in bloom, megaherbs, Auckland Island Teal, Black-backed Gulls, Auckland Island Shags, lots and lots of Bull Kelp, Yellow-crowned Parakeets, a fleeting glimpse of a New Zealand Falcon, and the ubiquitous Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions.

Over lunch *Heritage Adventurer* repositioned with a scenic cruise north along the coast and into Musgrave Inlet. Upon arrival some of us chose the walk to Lake Hinemoa and earned the dramatic views over the glacial cirque lake while Light-mantled Sooty Albatross soared overhead. The rest took a Zodiac cruise to visit the Rockhopper Penguin colony and the spectacular coastal geology. We glided through a narrow cave entrance into a remarkably colourful stone cavern open to the sky. On the other side of the Inlet, we rode the swell along the rocky shore to see the Rockhopper Penguins coming and going from their nests to the sea.

Even this set of adventures was not enough for the True Young Explorers, and many of the rest of us, so a Subantarctic Plunge into the pristine blue waters was provided. Admittedly it was the perfect day for it with warm sunshine, plus enthusiasm keeping the participants warm too. The rest of us just had a good laugh as we watched.

A short recap from John about shipwrecks, a briefing from Aaron on the plans for Enderby Island, and another delicious dinner ended a super day. What a wonderful start to 2023!



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Day 6  
2 January 2023

## Auckland Islands – Port Ross – Enderby Island

Enderby – A Jewel in the Subantarctic Crown. We woke to another beautiful day and found ourselves anchored in Port Ross. We looked out to the site of the failed Enderby Settlement, Hardwicke. Established in 1849, at its peak 300 people could be found here – but now all has been returned to bush and rocky coastline. This was to be our first exploration of the morning.

The kayakers set off to explore the bays while the rest of us took the Zodiacs to shore where we could see the boatshed and remains of a castaway depot. The local cemetery is maintained, making for sombre viewing and a visual reminder of the hardships of the times. Our highlight for this landing was the Victoria Tree – a carved message by Musgrave who having spent his time as a castaway wanted to ensure others with a similar fate were regularly searched for and had 'crowdfunded' the resource for rescue ships to periodically visit the area as a precaution.

There was noticeable pig rooting and damage in the understory – a stark contrast with Enderby Island which we visited in the afternoon. Also of note were the few flaxes we saw along the 'main road' of the Hardwicke settlement – not naturally occurring this far south. Genetics have identified two source populations, one from Taranaki and one from Southern South Island.

Back on board we were treated to a personal introduction to the ground-breaking research and discovery of mammalian fossils in the Southern Hemisphere presented by Tim Flannery. This fascinating work is at the forefront of a change in the way we understand the evolution and dispersal of mammals, our own forebearers. You heard it here first!

After lunch our Zodiacs headed to the shores of Enderby Island. Introduced species (cattle, mice and rabbits) were all eradicated by 1994 allowing the regeneration of native species of flora and fauna. We landed on a rock shelf covered in kelp, walked by sleeping bull Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions, and left our gumboots and life jackets on the 'lawn' of the Department of Conservation research station – ensuring we didn't touch the native stinging nettle in the vicinity (*Urtica spp.*). Enderby is the primary breeding spot for the Yellow-eyed Penguin/Hoiho and our first steps took us across the 'Penguin Highway' – an area we would have to cross in groups and without stopping to minimise our impact on penguin movements between land nests and ocean feeding grounds. On our way back we watched many of these magnificent birds crossing – sadly their population is currently declining on the mainland with Enderby being an important stronghold.

The Long Walk party was the first to depart, heading around the eastern side of the island and up to the northern coast. These explorers crossed megaherb fields, encountered sea lions, and the memorial to those who tragically drowned at the site of the *Derry Castle* wreck. The second party walked along the boardwalk through rata and *dracophyllum* forests directly to the Northern cliffs. There they settled into the megaherb fields (*Bulbinella* and *Anisotome spp.*) for magnificent viewing of Southern Royal Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, and Auckland Island Shags. Last but not least the third party explored the coasts of Enderby – observing plenty Auckland Island Teal and Shags before joining those already on the Northern cliff boardwalk.

By the end of the day all groups had congregated back on the banks above Sandy Bay where we watched, with endless fascination, the antics of the Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lion colony on the beach before us. The large Beachmaster males protecting their harems of females and their status as dominant males with aggressive displays and fights consisting of bashing and biting. Pups were in abundance and among the females present on the beach – still drinking milk and doing their best to avoid the scuffles around them. Among it all the Skuas looked opportunistically for the chance to

scavenge a meal. We were lucky enough to enjoy an extended stay on Enderby Island with the last of us leaving Sandy Bay at 2130, by which time a thick mist had descended upon the beach and bay, obscuring sight of our ship and shore.

A thoroughly rewarding day, we wrapped up with a recap and wonderful meal before heading satisfied to bed as *Heritage Adventurer* sailed towards the Snares Islands.



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## **Day 7**

**3 January 2023**

At Sea – Snares Islands

We continued our journey north from the Auckland Islands and in the early morning were in sight of the Snares Islands. After breakfast we enjoyed a great lecture by Em on 'Pest Free Auckland Island', detailing what the plans are for eradicating pigs, cats and mice from the island we had just visited.

As we arrived at the Snares, Aaron introduced the island group. Conditions were assessed and we set anchor at the southern side of North East Island. After lunch, Zodiacs were deployed and we made our way around the South Promontory, in challenging seas. Heading north, we arrived at the more sheltered waters of Ho Ho Bay and Station Cove. This allowed for close encounters with the masses of Snares Crested Penguins with birds in great numbers on the rocky outcrops around the coves. Rafts formed as penguins arrived back near shore after feeding. We also enjoyed good views of Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions and New Zealand Fur Seals on the rocks and swimming near shore. Cruising close to shore allowed good viewing of the forest environment and several Snares Island Tomtit were spotted. After cruising the eastern coast of North East Island for about two hours we started the journey back to the ship arriving mid-afternoon. It had been an awesome few hours exploring the Snares and after the final Zodiac was on board, we pulled anchor and began the journey north to Stewart Island.

Late in the afternoon Tim Flannery gave a great presentation on 'The Southern Ocean – a 33 million year long natural history' talking about some of the incredible ocean life that existed back in time, including the incredible Megalodon shark.

Our final biosecurity task of cleaning clothing, boots and gear was completed before an 'Introduction to Rakiura/Stewart Island'. Glenda gave an overview of the island, Dave introduced the birds we would likely see during our excursion to Ulva Island and then Aaron went over the complicated logistics of the

day, which for some guests would be their final day of the expedition, with others continuing to Fiordland.

Dinner was followed by a spectacular sunset as we sailed around the southern end of Stewart Island. The final event of the night was an expedition slideshow, put together by Steve. We were reminded of the incredible adventure of the past five days with stunning images of wildlife, landscapes and some of the incredible moments we had been privileged to experience.



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**Day 8**  
**4 January 2023**  
Stewart Island

We awoke to the sunny skies and clear waters of Stewart Island. It was a bluebird day with those of us on the deck soaking in the sights, remarking how strange it was to see boats, cars, and people after wandering the uninhabited Subantarctic Islands.

Everyone on board was then treated to a trip to the pest free sanctuary of Ulva Island, the guides there keeping us entertained with their passion and knowledge, picking up the faintest bird call or movement in the bush. We saw an incredible range of native New Zealand birds - Weka, Kaka, Kākāriki, Titipounamu (Rifleman), Pīwakawaka (Fantails), Tīeke (South Island Saddleback) Riroriro (Grey Warbler), and Korimako (Bellbirds). Some of us travelled over to the main town of Oban and enjoyed the comforts of a refreshing drink at the South Sea Hotel or a coffee at some of the local cafes.

It was a bittersweet day as we bid farewell to a number of friends we had made on the voyage who departed the vessel, but we soon had a new group of explorers join the expedition ready to chart Fiordland.

We heard from conservation icon Rod Morris and our special guest Tim Flannery about New Zealand's intriguing bat fauna, and the potential that the presumed extinct Greater Short-tailed Bat may still be out there somewhere. We learned the plans for tomorrow and as we went to bed *Heritage Adventurer* steamed through the unusually calm Foveaux Strait bound for Dusky Sound.



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## Day 9

**5 January 2023**

Dusky Sound

Awaking to a classic rainy Fiordland day in Dusky Sound we headed off to Pigeon Island and Facile Harbour for a Zodiac cruise to explore the site of New Zealand's first conservationist – Richard Henry.

Cruising around Facile Harbour we passed the site of New Zealand's first shipwreck that of the *Endeavour* (not Captain Cook's *Endeavour*), we also observed bonsai-like beech trees, flowering coastal daisies or *olearia* and sheer gneiss cliff faces. Heading over to Pigeon Island we explored Richard Henry's old house site observing the remnants of the chimney, pieces of crockery and some old glass shards, before heading out to a beautiful misty look out over Anchor Island.

Warming up on board we enjoyed a lecture by Em who told us the stories of conservation and predator control projects in Fiordland, then we headed off to Anchor Island for our afternoon activities. On Anchor Island some of us opted for a long walk, getting well acquainted with Fiordland mud and the local birdlife such as South Island Saddleback, Mohua/Yellowhead and Kaka while walking alongside Lake Kirirua. On the other side of the island, we explored the many islands and Luncheon Cove named by Captain Cook.

Heading through the many islands we spotted New Zealand Fur Seals, fishing boats and barges before exploring the historical site of Luncheon Cove where Captain Raven's sealing party built the first European houses and boat in New Zealand. Back on board we made our way through Acheron Passage and Breaksea Sound on our way to Milford Sound.



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## **Day 10**

**6 January 2023**

Milford Sound - Thompson Sound – Doubtful Sound - Breaksea Sound

Awaking to a mystical morning at Milford Sound we cruised the steep-sided fiord to its head at Freshwater Basin, viewing the spectacular Bowen Falls. Continuing our ship cruise we passed towering cliffs and spectacular waterfalls before heading out past Anita Bay where greenstone or pounamu is found, sailing by the start of New Zealand's Southern Alps and Alpine Fault/Plate Boundary.

Making our way down the Fiordland coast we heard a lecture from Tim Flannery about climate change. We made our way down Thompson Sound to Deas Cove where we walked to a hut but also along the base of a landslide triggered by a large local earthquake in 2002. Along the beach we marvelled at bluebottle coastal daisies and small sea shells, cruising back through a gap between a small island on crystal clear water.

In the afternoon some did a walk from Grono Bay to Gut Hut on Secretary Island, exploring alpine forest and encountering species such as celery pine and yellow silver pine, along with native orchids, fungi and mistletoe – crossing streams and climbing over roots and mud. Others enjoyed a Zodiac cruise around Bauza Island and the Shelter Islands observing Weka, kelp beds and, for some of us, a New Zealand Falcon attacking a Variable Oystercatcher chick. Climbing back on board we started to make our way down into Breaksea Sound for the night, greeted with a spectacular sunset and even a triple rainbow!



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## Day 11

**7 January 2023**

Breaksea Sound - Dusky Sound

We awoke to another scene of mist-covered mountains as we made our way out of Breaksea Sound into the Acheron Passage. Returning into Dusky Sound we anchored off Resolution Island to start our first activity of the morning – a walk up a pest trapping line where we were greeted with stunning views over Resolution Island, lake Henry, and back over Dusky to Cascade Cove and its waterfall. Robert and Rod also showed us various plants along the way including in flower Lantern Berry and the rare Pink Swamp heath that only occurs in selected places in Fiordland. Heading back down, climbing over logs and through a good amount of Fiordland mud, some of us went for a swim before returning back to *Heritage Adventurer* to enjoy lunch.

After lunch some of us headed up on a helicopter to Mount Pender for more stunning views and to get a closer view of the alpine environment. Leaving the ship, we all spent a rather splashy and bumpy afternoon exploring Indian Island and Pickersgill Harbour. At Indian Island we ventured into Waka Harbour where the first Māori family that Captain Cook had contact with lived and site of the famous William Hodges painting of Maru and his family on the rock was painted. We then followed the wind and came into the sheltered waters of Pickersgill Harbour where we marvelled at how Cook brought his ship through the tiny gap between Crayfish Island and mainland Dusky, sailing his ship into the tiny bay at Pickersgill Harbour. Hopping out of the Zodiacs we explored Astronomer's Point, walking by faint remnants of Cook's time here and awed by his navigational feats as we saw where he put New Zealand's first survey peg – long since replaced by the New Zealand Navy.

Bumping back to the *Heritage Adventurer* we said our final farewells to Dusky Sound as we pointed our bow towards Bluff. Aaron told us the story of Heritage Expeditions so far. We then enjoyed a final dinner, Captain's drinks, and a wonderful slideshow put together by Steve before catching a final

glimpse of the sunset against Solander Island as we made our way past Puysegur Point into Foveaux Strait.



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**Day 12**  
**8 January 2023**  
Bluff

Waking to a beautiful Bluff sunrise, we had our final breakfast together on *Heritage Adventurer*, said our final farewells to our wonderful Expedition Team, Crew and new-found friends and disembarked bound for our next destinations.



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