

IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER

9 January 2024 - 5 February 2024



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 1

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

Queenstown

Our voyage into the heart of Antarctica began in Queenstown, New Zealand's world-famous alpine resort town. We arrived from all over the world, with those that came in by air getting a bird's eye view of the mountain and lake scenery. Even from ground level, The Remarkables were indeed remarkable. As afternoon turned to evening, we began to meet fellow guests and some of our Expedition Team. Expedition Leader Nathan Russ gave us a warm welcome and we enjoyed a delicious dinner as the excitement built for the start of our expedition tomorrow.

Day 2

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

Queenstown to Bluff and departure

At breakfast, we had the chance to reconnect with our fellow adventurers before heading out to explore the town. Queenstown was abuzz with holidaymakers and we could be seen all over the waterfront, gardens and mall - doing last-minute shopping or checking the birdlife along the lake shore. Happily, the weather matched the warm mood.

After lunch we hopped on the coaches for the transfer through the pastoral countryside of Southland as we made our way to Bluff Harbour to board our beautiful new home, *Heritage Adventurer*. We scattered to explore, then came together for the lifeboat drill, and introductory briefings.

We cast off at 1930 while Expedition Leader Nathan told us what to expect on our voyage, and introduced the Expedition Team – more than 20 experts who would help us get the most out of this experience. Hotel Director Erik, introduced us to life aboard, and we then got our first chance to sample the delights provided by his kitchen and dining room staff.

The evening light over Stewart Island gave way to the Southern Ocean as we made ourselves comfortable in our staterooms. Luckily, the introduction *Heritage Adventurer* provided was relatively gentle, giving us time to acclimatise to the motion of the ocean.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 3

Thursday, January 11, 2024

The Snares Islands

As *Heritage Adventurer* approached, The Snares Islands were invisible behind a veil of sea fog. As we continued to get closer it lifted, revealing high granite cliffs lit by the morning sun and topped by white flowering Hebe shrubs and a canopy of silvery Tree Daisies. But the real stars today were the seabirds, who soared magnificently above and filled the water below.

The eastern side of the island was awash with a big swell – too big for Zodiac operations. Nathan and the Captain took us around the craggy east coast of Broughton Island where we entered a more sheltered bay between the southern arms of North East Island. In much calmer conditions, we launched Zodiacs and were soon exploring the lee of the island.

Between Broughton and North East Island, the waters were teeming: a tight school of orange Krill was being pursued underwater by schools of fish, in turn being hunted by Snares Crested Penguins. Above the water, a long raft of Cape Petrels snapped up the little Krill, their bills dipping and rising like so many sewing machine needles. Antarctic Terns, Red-billed Gulls, Buller's Albatross and Prions all joined the feeding frenzy. Further out a great procession of Titi/Sooty Shearwaters wheeled across the wind-driven waves, plunging suddenly into the sea en masse to feast upon the small fish and crustaceans - a fantastic start to our expedition and the day!

After a late lunch, our next activity was the business of bio-security. We were briefed on the techniques and requirements for cleaning all of our outerwear, boots, and bags to ensure that we were not “packing a pest” onto the Auckland Islands. After we had done our work, the Expedition Team inspected it, and we all passed. We were glad to have learned how to manage bio-security, as the cleanliness must be maintained between landings throughout the voyage. John helped us to understand what we will see tomorrow in his talk on The History of the Auckland Islands.

This exciting first day was not over yet, as we sipped bubbles, nibbled hors d'oeuvres and met the senior staff during the Captain's Cocktails before filling the dining room for a fabulous five-course meal. What a day.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions

Day 4

Friday, January 12, 2024

Port Ross, Auckland Islands

Flexibility was once again the key to a successful and very enjoyable day in the Auckland Islands. Although wind speeds were stronger than expected first thing in the morning, and the impressive volcanic cliffs surrounding Sandy Bay were barely visible through the clouds, we had an exciting and active day with everybody participating in their activity of choice.

First to disembark were the energetic long walkers for the 12-kilometre hike around Enderby Island, the northernmost island in the Auckland Islands. Followed by the short walkers who made a traverse across Enderby Island along the boardwalk to the Northern Cliffs. Both groups had ample time to enjoy the amazing wildlife starting with the action at the New Zealand/Hooker's Sea Lion colony.

The shy Yellow-eyed Penguins/Hoiho made an appearance at times, only to be upstaged by the sensational Southern Royal Albatross displays. For those with more botanical interest, the plateau full of flowering megaherbs, especially Anisotome, were a delight.

Heritage Adventurer relocated further into Port Ross, where the final group landed to investigate the remains of the Enderby Settlement including the cemetery and Victoria Tree, set amid the glorious flowering Southern Rātā forest. This group enjoyed a scenic Zodiac cruise back along the coast as we all enjoyed a superb sunny afternoon.

Back on board for a quick shower and refreshments, we learned a bit of background to the day and met the Ngāi Tahu team led by Ricky. We were now familiar with the delights of dinner, and the chance to share experiences with our new mates. We had certainly earned a sound sleep during this action-packed day.



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions



© K. Sutherland, Heritage Expeditions



Day 5

Saturday, January 13, 2024

At Sea en route to Macquarie Island

We had earned a sleep-in, and most of us didn't miss the opportunity of a day at sea to slumber a bit longer. Refreshed and ready for more, our first presentation was from Rodney for his review of Books of the Subantarctic Islands. Agnes followed with her introduction to Seabirds of the Southern Ocean.

During the lunch break, we took the opportunity for picture sorting, or perhaps a power nap. As we had all been ashore the previous day, it was time for a thorough cleaning of our gear – getting all the mud off the boots took some effort, and this was in preparation for our time at Macquarie Island. Murray whet our appetites further with his lecture, Introduction to Macquarie Island, and then Nathan supplied the details of our upcoming activities during the briefing.

Our appetites were satisfied as always by the kitchen and dining teams during dinner and in the lounge.

Day 6

Sunday, January 14, 2024

Macquarie Island

Our day at sea, through a rolling ocean with 30 knot winds, took us from the Auckland Islands to the Australian territory of Macquarie Island. We were now in the furious fifties, a latitude that has struck fear into many a mariner.

During the early morning hours, we entered the lee of Macquarie Island and enjoyed breakfast in calm seas. A dusting of snow on the hilltops promised cooler temperatures. The lack of trees, and unique geology, gave Macquarie Island a very different look and feel to the volcanic Auckland and granitic Snares Islands.

Our Captain anchored *Heritage Adventurer* in Lusitania Bay and we disembarked for a Zodiac cruise along the coast. Colonies of Rockhopper and King Penguins spread out along the coast. Ironically, and happily, the large King Penguin colony surrounded the Digester machinery that was used to render oil from the penguins at the turn of the last century. The birds have recovered, from being nearly wiped out, to reclaim their territory.

An afternoon landing at Sandy Bay provided a feast for the senses. We trekked to the end of the beach to the King Penguin colony where several were incubating eggs. Walking in the other direction took us past hauled-out juvenile male Southern Elephant Seals to the ladder for the boardwalk to the Royal Penguin colony. The viewing platform was a cacophony of calls and a pungent aroma and we loved observing the fat chicks and their busy parents.

We were lucky to have a day of very rare weather on Macquarie, light winds and sunshine, giving the perfect setting for viewing, and photographing, a wildlife spectacular that we will never forget.

To give us the maximum time ashore, dinner was pushed to a later hour. The delay only enhanced our enjoyment of the delicious feast. We were starting to get into the rhythm of the expedition now, with great food, adventurous activities, sharing with family and friends, and listening for announcements. Big smiles all around.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© H. Dohn, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 7

Monday, January 15, 2024

Macquarie Island

We were greeted by fresh snow on the mountain tops as we headed for shore in a stiff breeze, passing through a narrow gap in the bull-kelp to land on a rocky beach at the Isthmus.

The fierce wind at the viewing platform on Razorback Ridge encouraged a constant stream of fly-bys from Giant Petrels, Brown Skuas and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. On the beach far below the Elephant Seals seemed energised by the frigid wind, growling and roaring, flopping over each other and mock-fighting like so many giant caterpillars.

Over on the western coast, a huge surf pounded on the rocky reefs. The endemic blue-eyed Macquarie Island Shags shuttled back and forth to a rocky islet just offshore to feed their half-grown chicks. On the beach, a young Antarctic Fur Seal pup waited for its foraging mother to return. We added yet another penguin to our list; as we observed a dozen Gentoo Penguins loafing above the surf.

A series of snow flurries briefly whipped the sea into a frenzy and just as quickly blew through. We observed science in action when at midday the Station staff released the daily weather balloon, which surged into low clouds before disappearing seaward. It was a very invigorating morning!

Having had the best of conditions at "Macca" Nathan decided to maximise our time in Antarctica, so we headed south as lunch was served. The run south down the east coast was relatively sheltered, but the

sea built as *Heritage Adventurer* turned southeast to a waypoint at the entrance to the Ross Sea. Ian introduced The Cetaceans of the Southern Ocean before Rodney led a recap and Q&A session to wrap up Macquarie Island.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 8

Tuesday, January 16, 2024

At sea en route to the Ross Sea

We took our time today, settling in for the long run (1,300 nautical miles) to Cape Adare. The seas remained moderate as *Heritage Adventurer* continued to make good time. The next few days will be all about preparation for Antarctica.

Our education started with Bryan's presentation Antarctica: A Frozen Continent. Next up was Fi helping us to improve our photos with her interactive session on Smartphone Photography. We made sure to comply with bio-security regulations by cleaning our gear and getting it inspected by the Expedition Team. Samuel taught us all about ice charts – where they come from and how to read them. Nathan informed us about the current ice situation in the Ross Sea while warning that it could change. Heidi introduced the contest to guess the time of spotting the first iceberg – no bribing allowed. The first portion of the voyage was wrapped up with Andy challenging us with a Subantarctic Quiz and Regina showing the results of their drone mapping of Enderby Island.

We had plenty of time for leisurely meals, photo sorting, reading, napping and an after-dinner start to the docudrama *The Last Place on Earth*.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 9

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

At sea en route to the Ross Sea

We awoke to *Heritage Adventurer* gliding quietly forward – to the point that the first action for many of us was to look outside to make sure we were still moving. Those who did on the starboard side spotted our first iceberg – it had been sighted by the Bridge at 0440 and by our contest winner at 0530. This gave a bit of a buzz to breakfast despite many having a late start.

Even with the late start, most of us made it to Professor Steve Emslie's presentation on Antarctic Penguins and by mid-morning when Bryan talked about The Antarctic Treaty the day was fully underway, and we enjoyed a delicious lunch. Once back in our staterooms we saw that our blue Antarctic parkas had been delivered. We will be warm! Fortunately, we had an immediate chance to test the warmth as our Captain circumnavigated a sculptural tabular iceberg and we flooded to the outside decks and bow.

The afternoon continued with sunshine, bright blue skies, and not a whitecap in sight. John continued our education with an introduction to the history in Antarctica Unveiled. Kate helped us understand how we can contribute to the advancement of knowledge in her introduction to various citizen science projects on offer on our voyage. The afternoon was further enlivened by a High Tea on the High Seas and several impressive whale sightings.

Daylight hours were getting longer and longer, and the anticipation was building quickly.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 10

Thursday, January 18, 2024

At sea en route to the Ross Sea

What is the collective noun for icebergs? A flurry of icebergs? A flotilla of icebergs? An armada of icebergs? Whatever it is, we had one surrounding *Heritage Adventurer* on this special day.

We knew that we would cross the Antarctic Circle this morning, but we had no idea that it would be with blue skies, fluffy white clouds, glorious sunshine and no wind. As we assembled on the pool deck it was like a tropical beach party – made more so by all the people in bathing costumes ready to take the pool polar plunge.

251 years and 1 day after James Cook became the first European to cross the circle and 112 years and 1 day after Robert Scott reached the South Pole we took the pledge to become ambassadors for Antarctica and received the Mark of the Penguin.

In celebration, many of us took the plunge – some more than once as we scurried back and forth to the warm whirlpool bath. The hot chocolate (with optional spirits) warmed us further, but the warmth of the feeling of shared responsibility and camaraderie was best of all.

The rest of the day was spent in the afterglow with penguin marks on our foreheads. Bryan told us about geology in *The Past Life of Antarctica* – and then we rushed back outside for another encounter with a tabular iceberg. As we turned back to the south, the large flock of Antarctic and Snow Petrels roosting on top of it took flight – as if to wish us farewell.

Steve Emslie shared his research while describing Adélie Penguins: Past, Present and Future; Marcus told the story of the huts at Cape Adare in *The 125th Anniversary of the British Southern Cross Expedition*; Samuel introduced us to The Ross Sea; Kate got us caught up on the wildlife seen so far with the Species List review; and we learned about expectations for our behaviour in the IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) briefing.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 11

Friday, January 19, 2024

Cape Adare

We have had a remarkably smooth and easy four days at sea from Macquarie Island. The sun had now set for the last time until we leave the Ross Sea heading north. Thus, it was light when we encountered ice in the wee hours. As we slept, *Heritage Adventurer* made a slight backtrack which meant that land was just visible on the horizon at breakfast.

We watched through the morning as we approached the continent, and to kick off our time in Antarctica, Kate gave her presentation on Seabirds of the Ross Sea Region.

The afternoon was spent creeping tantalisingly closer to our Antarctic destination. *Heritage Adventurer* showed her ice-strengthened mettle as we pushed and sliced through the pack ice with Adélie penguins and Crabeater Seals seen on the ice floes. In the early evening, we reached open water and cruised closely past the grounded icebergs to round Cape Adare. We held our breath, and yes, a landing was possible. After a quick briefing, it was into the Zodiacs for the shuttle to the beach – the 7th continent for many of us.

Cape Adare is the home to more than 300,000 pairs of breeding Adélie Penguins. We were immediately enthralled with their antics and the huddles of grey downy chicks. It was so fun – lots of pebble stealing, sky-pointing, calling and watching them curiously watching us. Cape Adare is also the home to the first structure built in Antarctica, Borchgrevink's Hut. The hut built in 1899, for the British Southern Cross

Expedition led by Carsten Borchgrevink, was today having its 125th anniversary. Seeing the tiny space, with tiny bunks gave some insight into what it must have been like to spend that first winter here – but only some.

We wandered the beach and then returned to *Heritage Adventurer* for a late dinner, then loaded back into the Zodiacs for a cruise. The conditions remained perfect and we took a loop around the bay to see icebergs, the drifting sea ice floes, the beach and the black cliffs. The highlights were in the water with huge flocks of porpoising Adélies surrounding us. Also, in the water were the penguin's greatest fear – Leopard Seals. It seemed that our after-dinner cruise was at their dinner time and we saw several kills.

We returned to the comforts of *Heritage Adventurer* with the midnight sun knowing that we had had a magical first day in Antarctica. What will the rest of our days hold? Who knows, but we can't wait.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 12

Saturday, January 20, 2024

The Ross Sea and Coulman Island

Expedition Leader Nathan's wake-up call and a look at *Heritage Adventurer's* track on the map told us that the attempt to reach the Possession Islands had been turned back by heavy ice. *Heritage Adventurer* had done a U-turn to extract herself, so at breakfast we went south heading toward Coulman Island.

The morning was thus free for presentations. Chris got us started with Time to Krill on the role of this cornerstone species, and then Rodney told the story of the start of the family company in Heritage Expeditions from 1985 to 2018. We cruised south before turning west into the pack ice toward Coulman Island. Samuel helped us understand the history of exploration in this region with his talk on Sir James Clark Ross: British Antarctic Expedition 1839-1843.

Although there are few landing sites on Coulman Island, a large Emperor Penguin colony is present on the fast ice between Coulman Island and the Antarctic continent. Once again, the calm seas and spectacular ice floes kept us entertained in the hope that we might spot an Emperor Penguin. Adélie Penguins were ever-present until word went out, Emperor Penguin ahead. We were not disappointed as one lone Emperor posed for our keen photographers on board and a pod of distant Orcas/Killer Whales added to the excitement.

Although heavy pack ice prevented us from reaching the fast ice off Coulman Island, Zodiacs were launched after dinner to explore the ice floes. The evening sunlight provided very special conditions with

occasional Snow Petrels, South Polar Skuas and Wilson's Storm Petrels flitting. Another Emperor Penguin was sighted and we enjoyed a lovely encounter.

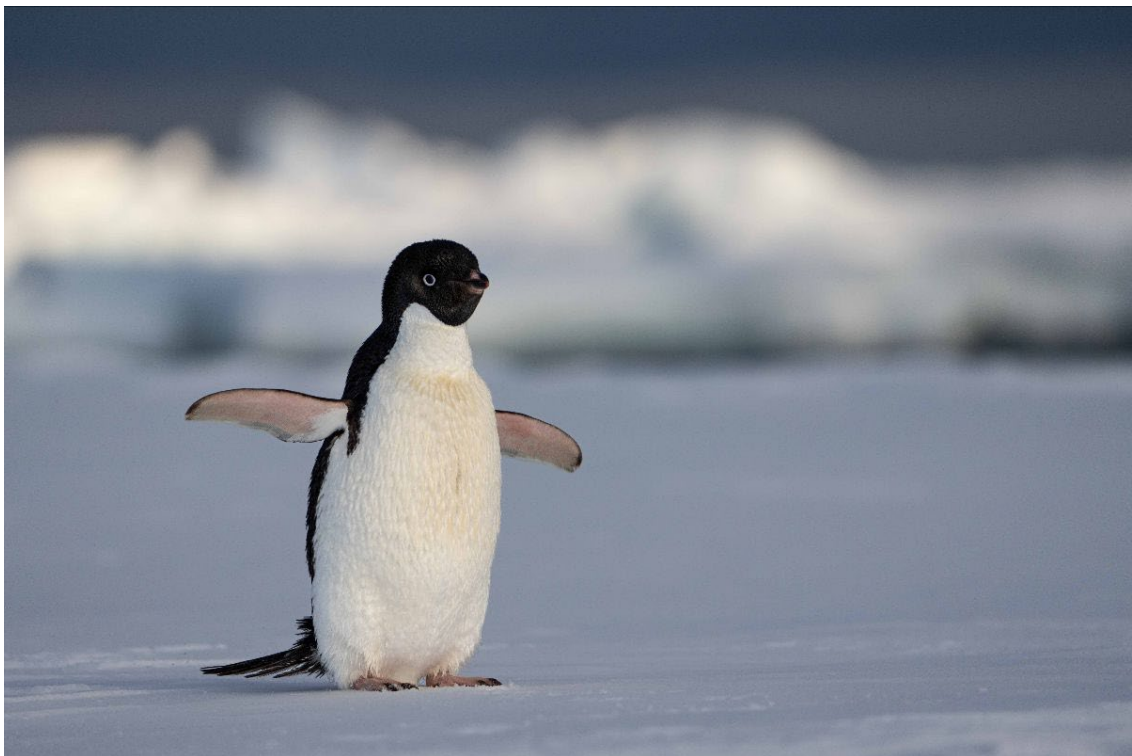
To our great surprise, and to finish off another special day in Antarctica, Nathan and the Hotel Team had set up a hot chocolate station on an ice floe. We were able to land and play on the ice while we enjoyed the refreshments before making our way back to *Heritage Adventurer*. Midnight glowed both in the sky and in ourselves.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 13
Sunday, January 21, 2024
Terra Nova Bay and Inexpressible Island

For most of us, the day started with the midnight sun. While we wound down and tried to sleep, our Captain took *Heritage Adventurer* back east through the pack ice and into the open sea. Those who made it to breakfast noted that we were well into the silent seventies with very smooth sailing.

The activities for the day started with John's presentation on the Discovery Expedition followed by Fi on Creative Photography. With another evening excursion looking likely, Nathan intentionally left the after-lunch period free so that we could try to catch a bit of sleep in preparation.

We dropped anchor in Terra Nova Bay, just off Inexpressible Island, late in the afternoon. Because flexibility is the key to making the most of Antarctica our landing was scheduled for after dinner. It was here on Inexpressible Island in 1912 that Scott's Northern Party survived an Antarctic winter living in a snow cave. Their ship, *Terra Nova*, was unable to pick them up as planned and they were forced to spend the winter living in horrendous conditions, surviving on seals and penguins. In the spring they finally made it back to the main expedition base on Ross Island where they learned the fate of Captain Scott and the polar party.

We walked along Inexpressible Island's shoreline to the site of the snow cave and with a few flakes of snow in our faces marvelled at the resilience of these Antarctic explorers. Most of us then made the trek over Harrowfield Hill, recently named in honour of New Zealand Antarctic Historian and retired Heritage Expeditions guide David Harrowfield.

In the pattern of this voyage, this operation again finished after midnight. However, in this case, it was not in the sun. While we were ashore the few flakes had intensified into a snowstorm. We enjoyed our first truly Antarctic weather, in the heart of Antarctica.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 14

Monday, January 22, 2024

Terra Nova Bay

During the night the snowstorm turned into a blizzard. We awoke to slippery, snowy decks and limited visibility. Nathan put any operation on hold, so John told the history of the Nimrod Expedition. The wind and snow abated over lunch, and we enjoyed views of the South Korean station, Jang Bogo. A Zodiac was launched to investigate and determined that the swell along the beach wouldn't allow a landing.

Reluctantly, our Captain weighed anchor and we made our way south. We called into a protected bay for a drone survey of the Weddell Seals before passing close offshore by the Italian station named for Mario Zucchelli. The afternoon was spent cruising toward the towering Drygalski Ice Tongue.

We reached the ice tongue and cruised along the impressive cliffs during dinner. As dessert arrived Nathan announced a Zodiac cruise and almost all of us took to the Zodiacs to get closer to this towering ice formation. The ice cliffs grew ever more dramatic, and the Zodiacs seemed to grow smaller and smaller, as we approached. Another highlight of the outing was the sighting of a Minke Whale and our evenings of excitement on this voyage continued.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 15

Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Cape Royds and Cape Evans

As we headed south overnight for Ross Island, heavy pack ice and rough seas slowed progress. During the transit, John advanced our knowledge of the heroic age with Race to the Pole. These were two talks describing expeditions of 1911-13. The British under Scott and the Norwegians under Amundsen who both reached the South Pole, but Scott and his party perished on the return journey.

We arrived off Ross Island to beautifully calm seas and blue skies. With the impressive active volcano of Mt Erebus dominating the skyline, it looked like conditions might be favourable to land at one of the historic huts. Nathan soon announced that we would try for the hut from Ernest Shackleton's 1907 expedition, the British Antarctic or Nimrod Hut at Cape Royds, the westernmost point on Ross Island.

We made our way round to Backdoor Bay to find a short stretch of fast ice blocking the landing beaches. However, we were not going to be put off. Our Expedition Team staked out a safe route across the sea ice to the landing beach from where a short walk across the impressive volcanic landscape provided access to the hut. Only a limited number were allowed in the hut simultaneously, so we took turns getting our boots cleaned before going inside. There we could appreciate the conservation and restoration that has been done by the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust. Everywhere we could see evidence of the 15 men who lived and worked here.

Meanwhile, the hut setting was adjacent to the Antarctic Special Protected Area (ASPA) of the world's southernmost Adélie Penguin colony. We followed the path to avoid the ASPA out to the lookout point over McMurdo Sound. Against the trend of this voyage, this operation was completed before dinner. When we returned to *Heritage Adventurer*, Nathan informed us that we would make the most of rare, perfect conditions to continue our adventures.

We sailed the short 10 kilometres south from Cape Royds, past the Barne Glacier, and dropped anchor at Cape Evans, the site of Captain Scott's 1910 – 1913 Terra Nova Expedition Hut, aptly named Scott's Hut. How stunning the hut looked, just off our bow, basking in golden sunlight. For many of us this was the stuff of legends, the tale we grew up with; Scott of the Antarctic and the famous race to the South Pole. The Cape was named after 'Teddy' Evans, Scott's second in command and a short Zodiac ride had us ashore and ready to explore this iconic heritage site. Our visit started in the late evening, but the 23rd soon passed into the 24th.

Day 16

Wednesday January 24, 2024

Cape Evans and McMurdo Sound

With only eight people allowed inside Scott's Hut at any one time, we had time to explore the surroundings. Among the snow several artefacts from the early explorers were visible: the anchor from the *Aurora*, the flagpole, the dog line chain, and supply boxes. Once inside the hut, everything demanded our attention from the annexe, the stables, the wardroom table, to Scott's den and Herbert Ponting's darkroom. With over 11,000 artefacts carefully conserved by the Antarctic Heritage Trust, everything was fascinating.

Scott's Hut has had many famous visitors over the years and one can only agree with Sir David Attenborough who said "It is a time warp without parallel. You walk into Scott's Hut, and you are transported to the year 1912 in a way that is quite impossible anywhere else in the world". Following the adventures of the early morning, we all managed some sleep – waking before or after a special champagne brunch. We cruised the edge of the sea ice with Hut Point visible six nautical miles away. After spotting Minke Whales, Emperor Penguins, Weddell Seals and Adélie Penguins along the ice edge we saw the mighty USA icebreaker *Polar Star* enter the brash ice-filled channel that she had cut to allow access to McMurdo station by the supply ships.

We were kept busy scurrying from port to starboard and bow to stern as the Expedition Team announced sightings of pods of Orcas/Killer Whales around *Heritage Adventurer*. Thus, the afternoon tea of sandwiches and sweets served in the lounge were well-earned. We had some magnificent encounters, none better than the large pod seen very close on the starboard side as we paced them along the sea ice edge.

The remainder of the afternoon and evening was spent in this sheltered location allowing the crew, and us, time to rest, recuperate and prepare for the next part of this adventure.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 17

Thursday, January 25, 2024

Ross Island

The deteriorating conditions overnight prompted a move to the east to observe the Ross Ice Shelf. There we found 50 knot winds, horizontal snow, and limited visibility. The outer decks were closed but from the library and lounge, we caught glimpses of the impressive 'Barrier' as our Captain took *Heritage Adventurer* in close.

We set course back to the west as Chris explained The Life and Times of Antarctic Seals. In the early afternoon, we reached the Adélie Penguin colony at Cape Bird on the northern tip of Ross Island. With Mount Erebus giving us lee, the conditions were much improved and a scout Zodiac was launched. The surf appeared to be crashing all along the coast, but Nathan returned and called a briefing for our landing. We were offered three choices for a 3+ hour landing: a long uphill hike to burn off all our chocolate desserts; a wander along the beach to the Adélie Penguin colony; or the opportunity to explore the landing site. Groups set off up the hill and along the beach. The climbers covered a large distance along the ridges to the snow and then spent some time in radio silence at the top. The beach walkers reached the colony near the South Polar Skua chicks while the adult Skuas performed aerial ballet. The penguin parade along the beach kept us all smiling.

We returned for a slightly delayed dinner during which the opening of the pool, pool bar, whirlpool and sauna was announced. We adjourned up to the pool deck for an unexpected end to an unexpected day.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 18

Friday, January 26, 2024

Ross Island and McMurdo Sound

The voyage that has featured many after-dinner activities had now included one before breakfast. We made a 0600 start to either return to Cape Evans Hut, or Zodiac cruise in the area. The hut visitors were able to spend a bit more time immersed in history, while the cruise in the morning light included a close encounter with a pair of Minke Whales and a Weddell Seal.

During breakfast *Heritage Adventurer* returned to the sea ice edge at the southern end of McMurdo Sound, the conditions warmer and clearer than our previous visit. A smoking Mount Erebus, Mount Discovery, the Transantarctic Mountains, and the sea ice itself all glistened in the bright sun and clear air and the Orcas/Killer Whales again came to greet us.

During lunch, our Captain pulled alongside the fast ice and we were treated to a barbeque on the aft deck. Well-fed as usual, an attempt was made to allow an excursion onto the ice, first down the gangway and then with Zodiacs. Many of us did make it onto the ice – but only briefly as the ice was breaking away too rapidly and retreat was required. It was a classic example of expedition travel.

Our Zodiac cruise of the sea ice edge resumed with multiple sightings of Emperor Penguins and spy-hopping Orcas/Killer Whales. The strength and manoeuvrability of the mighty *Heritage Adventurer* and the skill of the Captain and his crew were on display throughout. Mid-afternoon Nathan announced our departure to head north. This was not unexpected, and we have had a fabulous experience in this wild,

rugged, remote and historic region. We knew it had to end, but so full has been our programme that it seems like we just arrived.

After a bit of quiet time for reflection and recovery, we convened in the lounge for celebration, recap and briefing. More adventures awaited. These and our recent achievements made the dinner conversation lively.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 19

Saturday, January 27, 2024

Franklin Island

This morning we were able to depart *Heritage Adventurer* before breakfast for the second day running. The bing-bong announcement came at 0500 that conditions were suitable for our landing on Franklin Island. On this date, James Clark Ross discovered the island and made a landing during his 1841 expedition. Ross named the island in honour of Sir John Franklin (of Arctic fame) and situated some 75 nautical miles off the coast, it is seldom visited.

Our Penguin researcher, Steve Emslie, was thrilled as it allowed him to collect bone samples from the island's four-to-five-thousand-year-old Adélie Penguin colony. Two of us were the lucky volunteers to help him and Kate with this work among the pebble mounds that make up the 41,000 breeding pair colony. The mounds have been built up over the years by the accumulation of penguin pebble nests, guano and layer upon layer of dirt and sediment.

For the rest of us, it was an 800-metre snow walk in the early morning to observe the antics of the Adélies, especially the fluffy chicks chasing their parents in search of food. Adult penguins transported pebbles from one spot to another and the hopeful Skuas circled overhead. Landing on a seldom-visited Ross Sea island was exciting and to do so on the anniversary of its discovery made it extra special.

With the cold conditions beginning to set in, we Zodiac cruised back to the comforts of *Heritage Adventurer* for warm drinks, breakfast, and to set course north. Back on board we enjoyed a range of

lectures. Steve Emslie was up first with his talk on The History of Antarctic Research Stations. After a morning with the penguins, Murray helped us to understand them better with What do Penguins Stress About? We had spent a lot of time in, on and around the sea ice recently, so Agnes filled in the details of what we had seen with Sea Ice – the 8th Continent.

The final event of the afternoon was an auction of many interesting items to raise funds for three worthy causes. For the New Zealand Antarctic Heritage Trust, US\$2,700 was raised to be put directly into the work on the historic huts; for the New Zealand Antarctic Society US\$175 was raised to support their work on advocacy for Antarctica and the Southern Ocean; for the Crew Welfare Fund, US\$1,900 was raised to help provide support and assistance when needed to all of the fine people who have supported us on our voyage.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 20

Sunday, January 28, 2024

Cape Adare

We were expecting a welcome sleep-in before our anticipated arrival to Robertson Bay. Unfortunately, the pack ice allowed the sleep-in but did not allow *Heritage Adventurer* to approach the coast. This ice had foiled all other ships attempting this landing this season, so our remarkable day at Cape Adare at the start of the Ross Sea portion of this voyage became even more special.

After breakfast, Plan B was announced by Nathan, and we boarded the Zodiacs for a cruise through this same pack ice. We explored the frozen white sculptures on a brisk morning. It was nice to have one last chance to get out in the fresh air before leaving the Ross Sea. We had the rest of the morning to reflect and settle into our routine for the coming sea days. The afternoon lecture programme featured Rodney on The Exploitation of the Ross Sea and Nathan on Heritage Expeditions 2018 to the Present.

A sleepy atmosphere prevailed as we made the transition to watching the waves looking for sea birds and cetaceans, or perhaps playing games or sorting photos.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Days 21, 22, 23 & 24

Monday, January 29 - Thursday, February 1, 2024

At sea

When we checked the map in the morning we were still heading in a slightly easterly direction. As the morning progressed our course swung slowly to the west and just after lunch we crossed back over the Antarctic Circle. We knew that it would actually get dark that night.

During his journey to the South Pole, Roald Amundsen encountered several days of limited visibility and wrote in his log "fog, fog and more fog." We knew a bit how he felt as this morning also dawned in fog.

Happily, we had plenty to occupy us on board with lectures and a review of the species list. We had learned about the man-hauling efforts of the British expeditions, and their evening meal of Hoosh – a mixture of pemmican, biscuits and water. After the talk, we had the chance to put on the replica harnesses and haul loads ourselves. We could also fill a cup with Hoosh made by the galley team from Pemmican and biscuits created on board. It wasn't too bad, and certainly filling. It was still impossible to understand the obstacles overcome by the explorers of the heroic age – but at least we had a small taste.

We turned to a more serious note as Bryan outlined the issues of climate change as seen through an Antarctic perspective in *Melting Ice in a Warming World*. After our normal tasty and filling midday meal Moshe helped us to understand the bigger picture with his talk *From Frozen Antarctica to the Equator – Why We Have Different Climatic Zones*. With no ability to see icebergs out the window, Agnes showed us beautiful pictures and told interesting stories of Icebergs: *Cathedrals of Ice – Origin, Life, and Types of Icebergs*.

After dinner, John continued the Trans-Antarctic theme with a video presentation of the 1955-59 Commonwealth Trans-Antarctic Expedition voiced by the oral histories of Sir Edmund Hillary and George Lowe. As this finished our Captain announced a large iceberg off the starboard bow. A substantial chunk of the Ross Ice Shelf had travelled far north into the swells and wild surf of the Southern Ocean to bid us farewell.

Overnight *Heritage Adventurer* turned north setting course for Campbell Island. Our Captain warned us of increasing swell so we secured our cabins before tucking in. In the morning the fog was gone, however, the skies were still grey. The sea state had increased, but remained more than acceptable for the furious fifties.

As we enjoyed lunch there were more fascinating lectures to keep us entertained, and a quiz about our adventure in the Ross Sea. At dinner, our first Light-mantled Sooty Albatross was seen – welcoming us back from our trip south. Marcus kept the energy going after dinner with a slide show showing his achievements with his companions in Tierra del Fuego and circumnavigating South Georgia.

After a bumpy night we arose to bright sun, blue skies and whitecaps. The birders again able to see all the seabirds that they had missed while we were in the Ross Sea, with a range of incredible sightings taking place.

After breakfast Cornelia, the New Zealand Government representative told us about New Zealand's pledge to the Island-Ocean Challenge. This is an international effort to restore habitats with New Zealanders working to remove predators from the main Auckland Island, Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands. We then enjoyed more interesting lectures to prepare us for tomorrow's adventure at Campbell Island.

Day 25

Friday, February 2, 2024

Campbell Island

We approached Campbell Island around 0900. The predicted clearing weather had not arrived so the island appeared slowly through the clouds.

We were then treated to a fine example of the Heritage Expeditions attitude. Our chosen destination of Southeast Harbour was not well charted, so we made our own chart with Samuel and Yuri in the Zodiac recording depths. With this done, our Captain was able to find a safe anchorage and the Zodiacs were lowered. Off we went to explore a region that was new for everyone, even the Expedition Team. We found many birds, including the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, New Zealand Fur Seals and marvelled at majestic basaltic cliffs with deep caves at the waterline. Our run along the exposed coast and down to Monument Harbour saw us find a single vagrant Erect-crested Penguin (normally only seen on the Bounty and Antipodes Islands). The ride home was bumpy, enhancing our sense of achievement. To make it even better, we noticed a cruise ship from another operator leaving. They had only just arrived, but found the conditions not to their liking. They may share the blue/yellow livery, but clearly not the Heritage Expeditions sense of adventure.

As we refreshed ourselves after lunch, *Heritage Adventurer* relocated to the northeast corner of the island – to Bull Rock and the large Campbell Albatross colony on the adjacent cliffs. There we found life in abundance. Zodiac operations were not possible, but from the ship cruise we saw Hoiho/Yellow-eyed Penguins, Southern Royal Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Cape Petrels, and many, many more.

We retraced our course back to the entrance of Perseverance Harbour and into its sheltered waters. There we found the calm, clear conditions too good to be resisted and a Zodiac cruise back up the harbour was offered. Most hopped into their wet gear and were rewarded with a beautiful cruise along the coast to the sea. As we crossed the harbour the magic happened, dozens of Southern Royal Albatross filled the sky with hundreds of other sea birds in the mix. The Royals soared above and swooped down around us. It was an astounding, stupendous, majestic and magnificent moment. Indescribable – and good luck for the photographers.

The rest of the evening was spent in the afterglow, and celebrating Yuri's birthday. If Groundhog Day meant living this day over and over again, we wouldn't mind. Wow.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



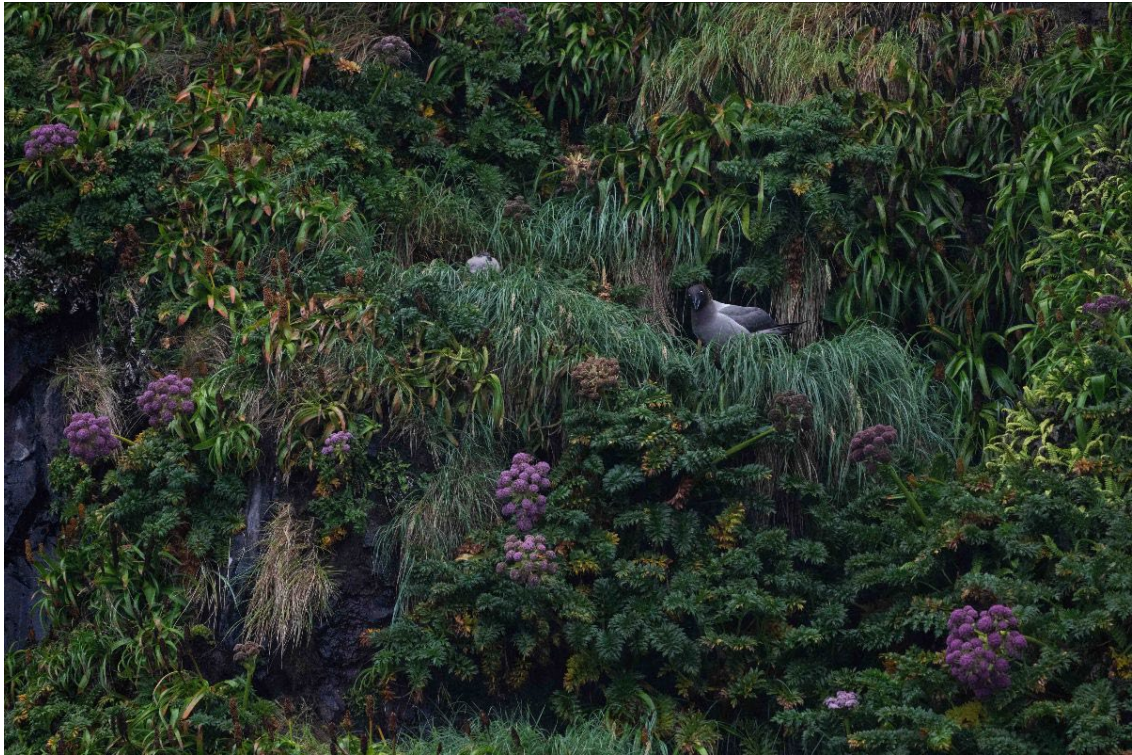
© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 26

Saturday, February 3, 2024

Campbell Island

After an excellent night's sleep in the shelter of Perseverance Harbour at Campbell Island, we were ready once again for an early start and a full day's activity. The landscape remained partially covered in cloud, but the weather was not going to spoil our final day off *Heritage Adventurer*.

We had a choice of three activities: a long walk to North West Bay for the most active; a full day ashore on the boardwalk to Col Lyall; or a Zodiac cruise in the morning followed by the boardwalk in the afternoon. The weather improved throughout the day allowing all activities to be successfully completed. A single King Penguin in North West Bay provided a pleasant surprise for the long walkers to complement the rugged terrain and endemic wildlife. The New Zealand/Hooker's Sea Lions and Fur Seals were particularly entertaining for the Zodiac cruisers with playful jumps, curious visits and roughhousing in the sea. The boardwalkers had Southern Royal Albatross nesting close by to allow excellent photo opportunities. All groups enjoyed the stunning megaherb gardens with all three of the *Pleurophyllum* species in peak flowering form. Purple like we had never seen it before.

The wind kicked up for our final Zodiac shuttle as we departed Perseverance Harbour. *Heritage Adventurer* stayed sheltered in the lee of the island during our early dinner before turning into the open ocean, and we were advised to make sure everything was secure in our cabins!



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



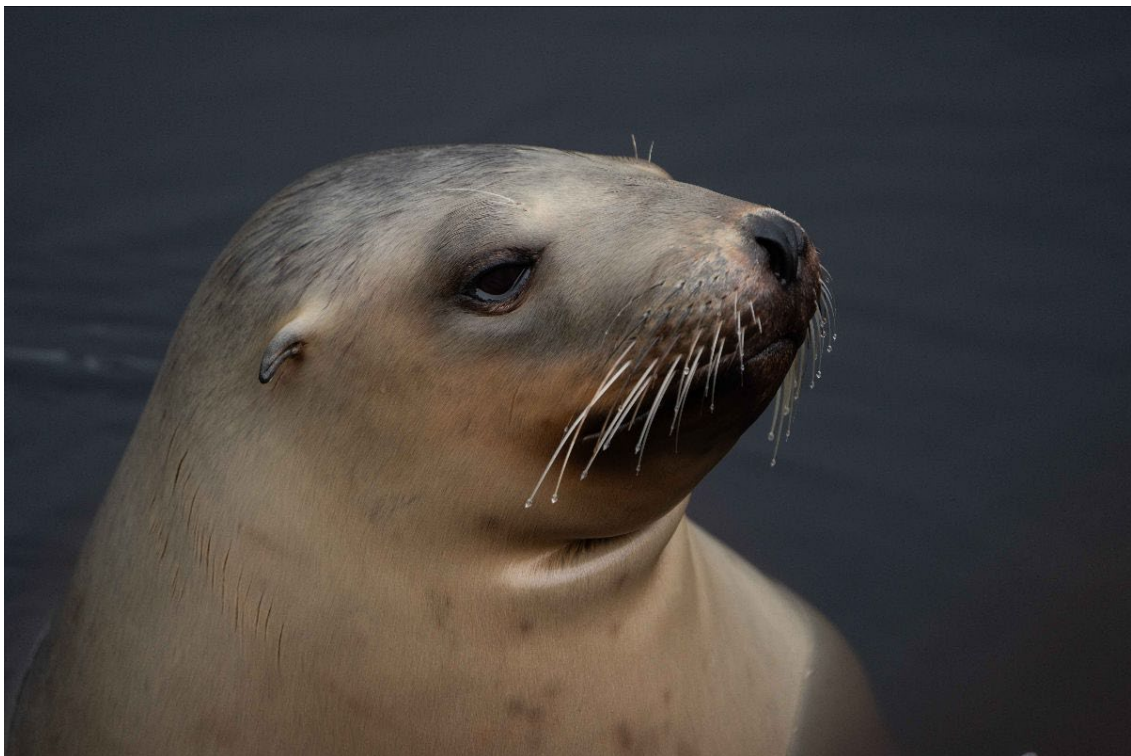
© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions

Day 27
Sunday, February 4, 2024
At sea

After two very active days at Campbell Island, we needed a rest, but it didn't come easily. The movement of *Heritage Adventurer* in the night had us tossing and turning. The good news was that all morning activities were cancelled and we were advised that staying in bed was a good idea. Still, a few gathered in the lounge to watch the whitecaps and surging seas out the windows. The birders who braved the aft deck had plenty to see. The dining room was remarkably well populated at lunch – testimony to *Heritage Adventurer's* smooth ride.

Conditions slowly eased through the afternoon and Chris was able to give a presentation on Māori and Moriori Guns, Pigs and Potatoes. The rest of the time was spent preparing for disembarkation and the evening's festivities.

The Captain's Farewell Cocktails were pushed back to a later start to try to make the most of any possible lee from Stewart Island. This strategy worked well and we were comfortable as we thanked all of the people who had made this voyage so wonderful as they paraded past. We were then thrilled to review our journey with Fi's slideshow.

Our final dinner aboard was one of the best, and the final laughs in the lounge were delightful.

Day 28

Monday, February 5, 2024

Bluff

It was a sad farewell as the luggage was moved to the passageway, one final breakfast together enjoyed, customs cleared, and contact information exchanged. Time then for a final walk down the gangway and one last wave to the Expedition Team as we headed off on new adventures, secure in the knowledge that this expedition, and our time together aboard *Heritage Adventurer*, will linger in our memories for a very long time.



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions



© F. Wardle, Heritage Expeditions