

## **GALAPAGOS OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN**

**on board HERITAGE ADVENTURER**

**22 November - 4 December 2024**



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### **Day 1**

**Friday 22 November 2024**

**Hobart/Nipaluna**

In 2023, Hobart, the state capital of Tasmania/Lutruwita, was designated a UNESCO City of Literature, giving a formal nod to its creative and eclectic culture. At this picturesque waterfront city, distinct for its purposeful absence of high-rise buildings, we adventurers gathered, some having explored Tasmania for several days, others recently arrived. After checking in with the Heritage Expeditions team, we enjoyed a relaxed afternoon exploring this wonderful capital before our first dinner together at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

Brothers Nathan and Aaron Russ, owners of Heritage Expeditions with hundreds of voyages under their belts, introduced the wonders of the Subantarctic Islands and gave an overview of our adventure ahead. Andrea from Tasmania Parks and Wildlife, Tasmania's government body responsible for managing Macquarie Island (Tasmania's southernmost island), has worked as the Ranger in Charge at Macquarie Island for several seasons and shared a photographic preview of the island.

## **Day 2**

**Saturday 23 November 2024**

**Hobart/Nipaluna; embark *Heritage Adventurer***

Today was an opportunity to immerse ourselves in the array of activities this quaint city has to offer: the iconic Salamanca Markets with local fresh produce and artisan wares such as scallops and locally distilled gins, the Maritime Museum with its Antarctic display, galleries along the Salamanca waterfront, and even the annual Christmas Parade which drew an eager crowd of families and closed city streets to traffic for the morning.

A large contingent caught the Mona Roma Ferry up the Derwent River to MONA, the Museum of Old and New Art, where we experienced a modern take on art, such is the eclectic weirdness of artworks and installations at MONA. One of the marvels of the museum, privately funded and run by local Hobart owner and professional gambler David Walsh, is the building's remarkable architecture and structural engineering. It is a multi-storey underground building that fills the site through metres of excavation of natural sandstone cliffs. At times it felt like walking through an Anasazi ruin.

Back in town, we made our way to the Macquarie 2 Wharf for a mid-afternoon embarkation of *Heritage Adventurer*. Soon we were settled into our beautifully appointed staterooms and suites and introduced to Expedition Leader Cheli Larsen and her team. With lifejackets in hand, we made our way up to our Muster Stations on Deck 7 for a lifeboat drill. With important safety measures completed, we cast off our lines and sailed south along the Derwent River and into Storm Bay. Rather than living up to its name, we enjoyed a calm, warm afternoon with a dramatic sky. *Heritage Adventurer* made her way down the eastern side of Bruny Island while in the distance the South East, South, and South-West Capes of Tasmania marked our final sight of land.

Our first delicious dinner was a chance to meet new acquaintances, before retiring to our cabins to be rocked asleep by a gentle Southern Ocean.



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**Day 3**  
**Sunday 24 November 2024**  
**Southern Ocean, en route to Macquarie Island**

The weather gods looked kindly upon us, with a gentle sea and an array of seabirds small and large tracking our course south. We seized the opportunity to launch our educational program and draw on the expertise of our on board specialists. Geologist Glenda began

the day with her insights into the geology of the Subantarctic islands. We learned that Macquarie Island, fondly dubbed 'Macca', was awarded UNESCO World Heritage Status, not because of its remarkable fauna and flora, but for its geo-heritage. In geological terms, Macquarie Island is 'new and shiny', being the only place on our earth where, through obduction, the oceanic crust has slid up over the top of an adjacent oceanic plate raised above sea level. This process occurred as recently as 600,000 to 700,000 years ago. In several places on the island, raised beach terraces are visible, along with 'toothpaste-like' pillow lavas from volcanic activity.

Later in the morning, our two Tasmanian Government representatives, Ashley Rushton and Noel Carmichael gave us an in-depth look at Macquarie Island's heritage past and present. Noel spent several years living and working here and was the ideal expert to walk us through the pest eradication project, an undertaking to eliminate the island of intentionally and accidentally introduced species: wekas, feral cats, rats, mice, and rabbits. From its funding announcement in 2007 to successful completion in 2011, the eradication program involved assistance from New Zealand experts, aerial baiting, the introduction of the calicivirus, then follow-up shooting and trapping, with the aid of rat and rabbit-detector dogs alongside their human rangers. By 2014, after two years of close monitoring, Macca was deemed clear of these introduced species, the largest island in the world to have succeeded with a program of such audacious magnitude. Ashley cautioned us, that biosecurity and climate change remain the two biggest threats to the island's conservation values.

Our kayakers met with kayaking guide Devin in preparation for their excursions, then our afternoon grew busy with a Zodiac briefing followed by an all-important biosecurity programme of cleaning shoes, clothing, gear and backpacks to ensure that we do not introduce seeds or pathogens to Macquarie Island.

Oscar finished the day helping us identifying seabirds, including penguins, that we may encounter over the coming weeks. Good luck identifying those different species of prions!

Early evening was our opportunity to share a celebratory drink and meet with Captain Jacek and his jolly troupe of senior officers and department heads. We are grateful to have such experience and willingness amongst the Captain and his officers, in what, by nature of the weather, can be an ever-changing expedition plan.



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## **Day 4**

**Monday 25 November 2024**

### **Southern Ocean, en route to Macquarie Island**

*Heritage Adventurer* glided southward to Macquarie Island, bringing our arrival time ahead by half a day. Ornithologist Oscar and the bird lovers were pinned to the stern deck with long lenses and binoculars homed in on albatross wheeling across our path, tiny petrels and prions skimming the waves.

Inside the lounge, cetacean expert Toby shared images and stories of the numerous whales that inhabit these frigid southerly waters, from the largest rorquals: Blue Whales, Fin Whales, and Sei Whales, through to smaller Southern Right and Humpback Whales. We learned about the ecology of toothed whales such as Sperm Whales with their ability to dive to depths of two kilometres on a single two-hour breath, and Long-finned Pilot Whales, known for their mass strandings that occur in hot spots around New Zealand and Tasmania.

Photographer Steve followed with a visual tutorial on travel photography, inviting us to 'see' in new ways and embrace spectacular wide-angle scenic photography.

The afternoon was busy with boot fittings, followed by a presentation from Robyn on The Sealing Islands, as they were once coined. Robyn took us through the discoveries of Macquarie and Campbell Islands in a drive to find new sealing grounds. Indiscriminate hunting in the early 1800s resulted in the decimation of New Zealand Fur Seals, Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions and Southern Elephant Seals, commercially valuable for their pelts, then oil. Thankfully with the sealing era behind us, many of these seal species are making a remarkable recovery, especially the Antarctic Fur Seal which has seen a population explosion in recent years.

Expedition Leader Cheli briefed us on plans for tomorrow, reminding us that our first expedition day comprises a vague plan of possibilities, fully dependent on weather, safety and shore conditions.



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## **Day 5**

**Tuesday 26 November 2024**

**Macquarie Island: Buckles Bay, Sandy Bay, Brothers Point**

Morning brought the silhouette of Macquarie Island into view, slowly sharpening from a hazy profile to emerald-green hills as we closed in on North Head and cruised around to Buckles Bay. The wind proved lively, the cloud cover opening to patches of blue sky, while the swell, though sizable, moved in a favourable direction for a morning landing.

Soon we were layered up and in lifejackets, stepping through Virkon baths and down the gangway to board Zodiacs. Ashore, a wonderland awaited us. The cobble beach teemed with Elephant Seal pups or weaners as they are also known, subadults and larger adults. King Penguins appeared, surfing in on a wave, shaking themselves off then marching away to conduct what we assume is important penguin business.

In small groups, we headed off to explore the length of the isthmus, down to Razorback Hill to gain elevation and experience marvellous 180° views. A walk to the rusted relics that were once penguin steam digesters was a sombre reminder of a bygone era when, after the seals had been decimated, King Penguins were boiled down for their oil. The pot-holed road led us over to Hasselborough Bay on the west side of the island, passing Gentoo Penguins nesting amongst the tussocks, and Skuas ever on the lookout for a

stolen meal to feed their young ones.

The west side of the island, without protection from the westerly wind, gave a sampler of turbulent conditions that this low-lying island is subject to, though by Macca standards, today was merely a blustery morning.

It was back to *Heritage Adventurer* for lunch while we repositioned to Sandy Bay, partway down the east coast. Our hopes of an afternoon landing at Sandy Bay were amended to a Zodiac cruise, with conditions at the shore proving unsafe; however, we enjoyed a fantastic cruise, with special permission to cruise south to Brothers Point, where we had views of a bustling Rockhopper Penguin colony. These small, robust penguins defy belief in their ability to scale rocks to giddy heights to build their nests. Along the coast, we encountered inquisitive King Penguins swimming around the Zodiacs, and Royal Penguins to-ing and fro-ing from their colony at Sandy Bay. All four penguin species of Macquarie Island in one day!

Our first day on Macca made for a cracking introduction to this jewel of an island. Following a late dinner, we heard from our True Young Explorers on the projects they are involved in, then it was off to bed in readiness for an early start to Day 2 of Macquarie Island.



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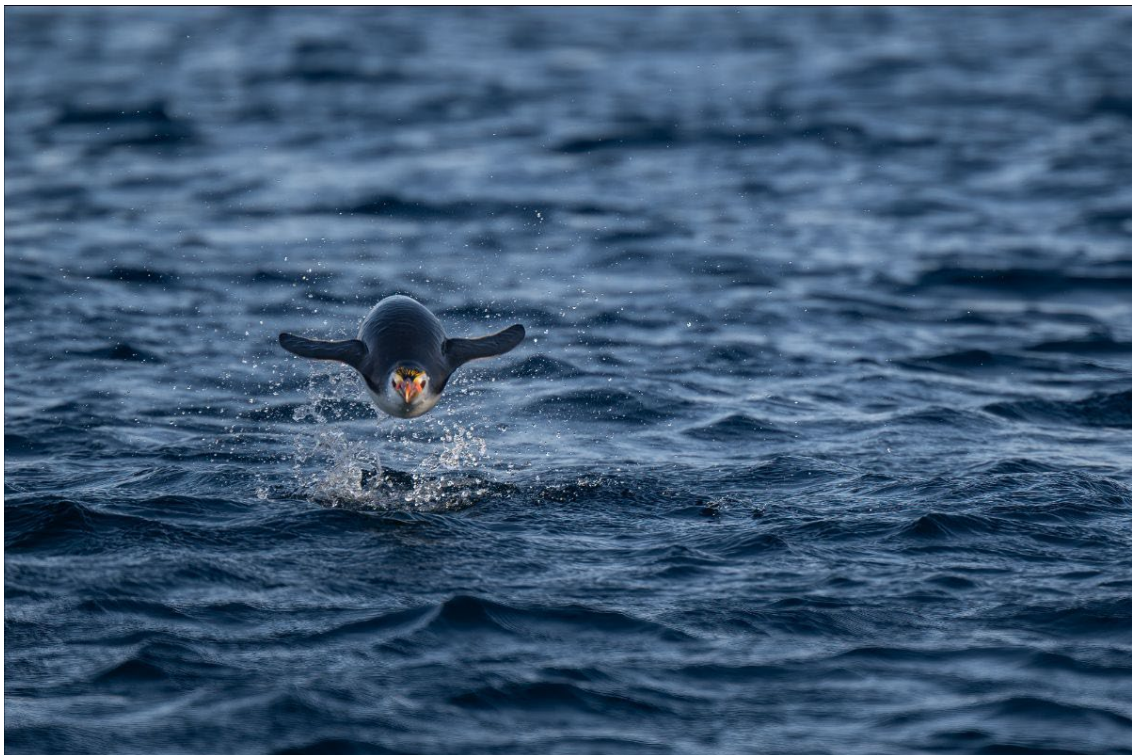


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## Day 6

Wednesday 27 November 2024

### Macquarie Island: Sandy Bay, Lusitania Bay, Hurd Point

This morning saw us arrive at Sandy Bay. The gravel beach crunched and crackled with waves and wildlife: inquisitive King Penguins greeted us on arrival, Royal Penguins sauntered by, Elephant Seal weaners galumphed along the beach searching for the right spot to snooze, and groups of subadult Elephant Seals, still petite at one tonne of weight, showed us their favourite thigmotactic behaviour, piling up one against the other. Along the beach we stopped to watch a parade of Royals march the penguin highway, heading out to sea from their colony, or returning to their nests after foraging at sea. Ranger Mel told us that the first Royal Penguin chicks had recently been hatched.

Mel, plus fellow scientists from the station, had hiked down from the isthmus to Sandy Bay to meet our group and assist with interpretation. Most of us, though, were too mesmerised for questions, giving in to the sensory overload of wall-to-wall wildlife: the aromas, the orchestra of trumpeting from King Penguins, the belches and blowing of snotty raspberries from weaners, the squawking of Royal Penguins and of course the visual spectacle of a remote and utterly remarkable wilderness.

We returned to our trusty expedition vessel with camera cards filled with images, our minds and hearts brimming with memories. *Heritage Adventurer* weighed anchor and Captain Jacek took us to the southern part of the east coast to witness the spectacle of the island's largest King Penguin colony at Lusitania Bay. If we count chicks alongside the 90,000 pairs of adults, the colony exceeds well over 200,000 birds. The elevated views from *Heritage Adventurer* gave expeditioners the chance to witness the density of penguins. The rusted penguin digesters amid the colony were a bleak reminder that in the early twentieth century when entrepreneur Joseph Hatch was producing his infamous "Sea Elephant Harness Oil", the penguin population at Lusitania was depleted to just 5,000 birds.

*Heritage Adventurer* continued south to Hurd Point at the island's extremity, home to its largest colony of Royal Penguins. It gave an extra heartbeat of wonder to see the wild ocean and wave-lashed reefs that these hardy seabirds navigate each day during their breeding months at Macquarie Island. The icing on the cake was a resident pod of Orcas cruising the coast, the male of the group distinct for its two-metre-tall dorsal fin. Above the waves we were treated to wandering, Black-browed and Grey-headed Albatross, and a pair of Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, dancers of the sky showcasing a dynamic display.

After a delicious dinner, it was on to our next chapter: Campbell Island, the southernmost of New Zealand's glorious Subantarctic Islands.



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## **Day 7**

**Thursday 28 November 2024**

### **At Sea**

After our high-octane days at Macquarie Island, this sea day was a chance to catch up, and to learn from our knowledgeable expedition team. First up was Noel, who shared his glorious images of Macquarie Island. Noel talked us through the island's heritage, from its discovery by sealing captain Frederick Hasselborough in July 1810, to the infamous Joseph Hatch era in the early 1900s.

Next came the Australasian Antarctic Expedition of 1911–1914, led by South Australian geologist Dr Douglas Mawson. En route to Antarctica, Mawson established a radio relay station and meteorological base at Macquarie. As well as a transmitter hut and engine room hut, his men erected two wooden masts on Wireless Hill in the hopes of making the very first radio contact between Antarctica and Hobart. While Mawson's radio officer Walter Hannam down in Antarctica was initially unaware of the success, he made the first audible radio transmission from Commonwealth Bay to Hobart via Macquarie Island in August 1912. We learned about subsequent expeditions that called into Macca and the creation of the 1948 ANARE Base at the isthmus, now the longest continually running Antarctic station.

Naturalist Murray delivered a presentation, showing us how albatross fly and penguins swim, or rather, how these seabirds 'fly' through the water. We learned about dynamic soaring, albatross taking advantage of troughs and uplift to navigate the powerful winds of the roaring forties and furious fifties latitudes. Just as remarkable is penguin adaptation in their ability to survey a depth suitable for foraging, to then return to the surface to either expel or take in more air, to achieve neutral buoyancy at their preferred foraging depth. High tea proved a highlight, our talented chefs baked an irresistible array of delicacies, and even a Thanksgiving Day creation to mark the American celebrations.

Lou Sanson completed the day's lectures with a compelling introduction to Campbell Island, a place close to Lou's heart as former Director of New Zealand's Department of Conservation (DOC). A recap followed from Glenda and Toby, and photographer Murphy, along with our final True Young Explorer to be introduced.

This evening, we closed in on Campbell Island and rounded its southern coast to enter Perseverance Harbour while we enjoyed dinner.

## **Day 8**

**Friday 29 November 2024**

### **Campbell Island**

The wind blew today. Throughout the day, 50 and 60-knot sustained winds brought squalls measuring 70 knots, screaming down the length of Perseverance Harbour. Unfortunately, not conditions to safely launch Zodiacs or hike a boardwalk.

We gathered in the lounge for two-morning presentations. Lindsay spoke to us about the magnificent megaherbs that grow on New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. Three species of *Pleurophyllum* are found on Campbell Island, *pleuro* meaning ribbed, and *phyllum* meaning leaf. *Pleurophyllum speciosum*, the Emperor Daisy with its brilliant purple flowers, even graces the New Zealand five-dollar note. *Bulbinella rossii*, or Ross's Lily with its tall yellow flowerhead, is another striking example. Fortunately for Campbell and the Auckland Islands, the plant proved unpalatable for the sheep and cattle that were introduced.

Toby educated us with his talk on Great White Sharks, showing how smaller, younger sharks inhabit the northern reaches of New Zealand, and then move south to colder waters as they mature from eating fish to sea mammals such as sea lions.

Expedition Leader Cheli and Captain Jacek decided upon a ship cruise, taking *Heritage Adventurer* out through Perseverance Harbour and up the east coast of Campbell Island. As our trusty expedition vessel experienced the strength of the wind, we experienced the full power of nature, with waves lashing the coastline and crests of waves scalped by squalls. North Cape is the breeding ground for 26,000 pairs of Campbell Island Albatross, and many Grey-headed Albatross. Along cliff shelves and the high slopes was the spectacle of countless nesting albatross, hunkered down amid tussock grass and Macquarie Island Cabbage.

Being out on deck for short periods, experiencing the wind while watching albatross and Cape Petrels at ease in the extreme conditions, was a humble reminder of what these birds endure.

The afternoon was a chance to learn from Tamzin about the successful chase by *Sea Shepherd* ships to apprehend six illegal fishing boats. A panel followed with Robyn moderating a compelling conservation discussion between Rose, Noel, Lindsay and Murray, who have a close personal connection with the Subantarctic Islands. Afterwards, we enjoyed dinner preparing for our adventure tomorrow on Campbell Island.



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## Day 9

**Saturday, 30 November 2024**

### **Campbell Island**

We woke up to a far gentler Campbell Island this morning and made the most of it! After an early breakfast, it was into Zodiacs to walk the boardwalk at Beeman Hill and up the slopes to Col Lyall. We passed New Zealand Sea Lions that commandeered the start of the walk on the way, using bags to help keep our distance. Some were lucky enough to spot the elusive Campbell Island Snipe, while others had their sights fixed on those magnificent Southern Royal Albatross, to be found in the higher reaches.

Around the meteorological stations, meadows of *Ranunculus* formed yellow carpets, while the tall yellow flower heads of *Bulbinella rossii* were just emerging. It was still too early in the season for the colourful purple flowers of the *Pleurophyllum*, but to see the massive size of the leaves was spectacular.

On leaving the protection of the *Dracophylla* for open terrain, we felt the wind as we carefully navigated the boardwalk. Soon, though, we had our first views of a Southern Royal Albatross with a bird nesting close to the boardwalk. Albatross not nesting among the tussocks were busy 'gamming', a social behaviour where juvenile adults hang out together and display to one another as part of a pre-courtship ritual. To understand the size and majesty of these birds' close-up is an experience that few are privileged to have. American naturalist Robert Cushman Murphy wrote in 1912, "I now belong to a high cult of mortals for I have seen the albatross."

Some of us went on a Zodiac cruise to see the *Guinness Book of Records* 'Loneliest Tree', the solitary specimen on Campbell Island being a Sitka Spruce planted at the head of Camp Cove in the 1920s.

New Zealand Sea Lions frolicking around the Zodiacs seemed far less daunting than on land. We also visited adjacent Tucker Cove where farm buildings once stood, and bushland cleared for flocks of sheep brought here in the early, optimistic days of pastoral leases. On the opposite side of Perseverance Harbour, a low-lying clearing was still evident from the 1874 French Expedition that spent months living and working in the area to prepare for the Transit of Venus. Alas, on the very day when Venus transited the sun, the sky remained thick with clouds and the French scientists were denied any accurate observations.

By late morning the wind had whipped up, so we farewelled Perseverance Harbour and turned north for an overnight transit to Auckland Islands. We enjoyed a series of lectures. John gave a fantastic introduction to the Auckland Islands, a place renowned for its early shipwrecks, then Steve shared his experience on the mainland of Auckland Island in setting up trials to assess the viability of baiting and eliminating pest species, being introduced pigs, cats and mice.



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## **Day 10**

**Sunday 1 December 2024**

### **Auckland Islands: Carnley Harbour, North Arm, Musgrave Inlet**

This morning saw us start our day with a ship cruise to North Arm to see historic sites: the *Grafton* wreck site, and the site where, in 1939 with war imminent, a German merchant ship, the *Erlangen*, low on coal, secretly diverted to the Auckland Islands to refuel their ship with timber. Behind Figure of Eight Island, the crew of *Erlangen* spent weeks cutting down Rātā trees, taking 235 tons to have sufficient fuel to carry on to Chile. It was this incident that prompted the creation of New Zealand's Coast Watch program for the Second World War.

By mid-morning, we were in Zodiacs for a delightful cruise around the coastline at the junction of North Arm and Carnley Harbour. We were treated to White-faced Herons, Kelp Gulls, Auckland Island Shags and Tūis flitting among the Rātā forest, feeding on the very first red flowers. New Zealand Sea Lions were also seen popping up amongst the kelp. At the entrance to Camp Cove, we saw one of the Castaway Huts which comprised a humble refuge and boatshed. A number of these were erected around the Auckland Island coast, with finger posts leading stricken sailors to the nearest hut. The huts were maintained by the New Zealand Government whose ship the *Hinemoa* made six-monthly visits to check on the huts and retrieve any castaways.

By afternoon *Heritage Adventurer* sailed up the east coast to Musgrave Inlet. The clouds parted and the sun looked down upon a scintillating ocean. Kayak Master Devin took our kayakers for a wondrous paddle, making the most of the protected inlets. They explored a deep, dark sea cave and then emerged through one arch to enter an exquisite grotto, serenaded by the songs of Tūi and Bellbird. The remainder of us savoured a leisurely Zodiac cruise to a small colony of Eastern Rockhopper Penguins. We crossed the bay to explore the opposite shoreline with its swirling band of Bull Kelp, where Light-mantled Sooty Albatross and Brown Skuas nested among tussocks and shags, terns and Kelp Gulls swept overhead. Some detoured to the southern shore to find the world's southernmost Tree Fern. A sensational day which we were all incredibly grateful for!



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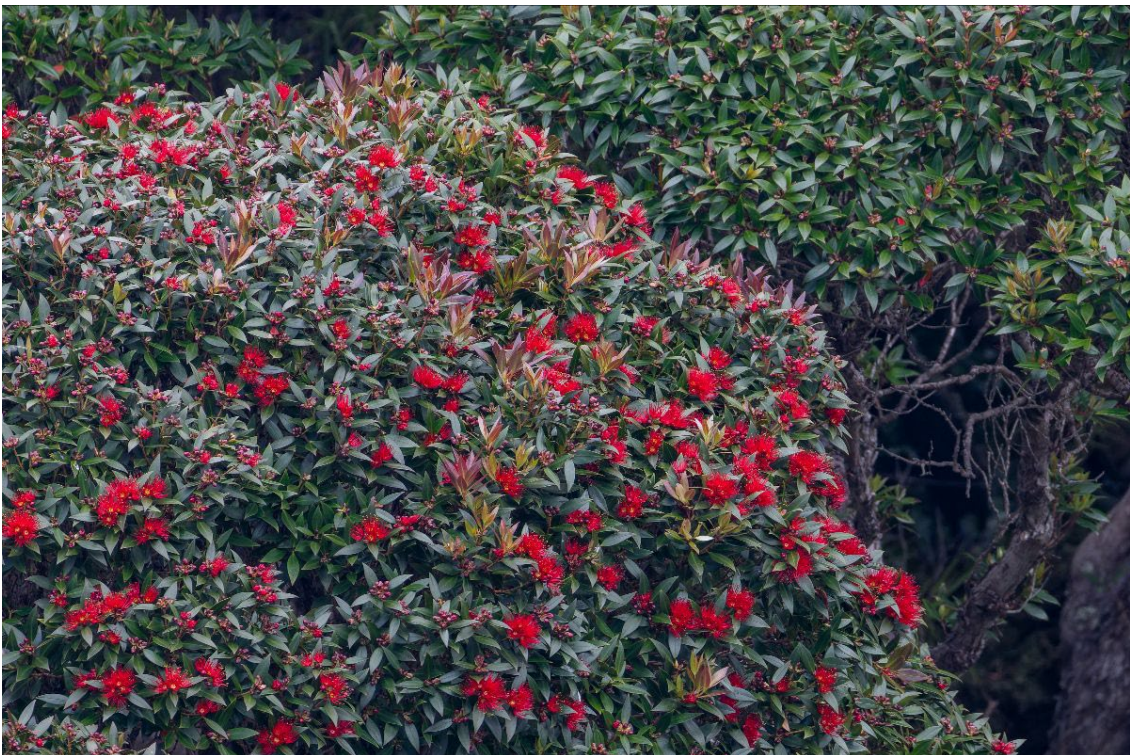


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## **Day 11**

**Monday 2 December 2024**

### **Auckland Islands: Enderby Island**

We had a range of spectacular choices on option today. The early birds who signed up for the full-day Enderby Island Circuit Walk headed off in the first wave of Zodiacs. Our all-day Northern Cliffs walkers followed, and last down the gangway was those opting for the Zodiac cruise in the morning, a delicious on board BBQ lunch, then a landing in the afternoon.

For the first arrivals onshore, we were met by a greeting party of male New Zealand Sea Lions. They had been waiting for the girls to arrive and were unimpressed at the arrival of an inferior species, being mere humans.

For our Zodiac cruisers, the weather was sublime: the wind dropped, and we relished calm seas as we explored the coast of Enderby Island and beyond. Several Hoiho (the Māori name for Yellow-eyed Penguins meaning 'noise makers') were out on the rocks enjoying the morning, while a nesting Light-mantled Sooty Albatross wowed onlookers. Auckland Island Shags were industriously collecting nesting materials, while pairs on nests engaged in elaborate courtship rituals. Just as remarkable was the southern Bull Kelp lining Enderby Island. Fronds and long tendrils swirled and twisted in the swell. Several Zodiacs headed to the north coast of the main Auckland Island to see the remains of the 1847–1850 Hardwicke Settlement, and the site where a German Expedition arrived in 1874 to observe the Transit of Venus.

Onshore our circuit and northern cliff walkers set off along the boardwalk with Lindsay walking through the Rātā forest, marvelling at megaherbs and being treated to Southern Royal Albatross that nest across the island. The afternoon was fantastic for the paddlers with tranquil conditions as they weaved their way along a coastline of basalt columns, Kelp Gulls, shags and even the flightless Auckland Island Teal. To be on the water in such a magical, sensory setting was a highlight.

Whichever activity people chose was exhilarating. In the early evening, we returned to *Heritage Adventurer* for a hot shower, a well-earned beverage and a delicious dinner as we all shared our experiences from the day.



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## Day 12

**Tuesday 3 December 2024**

### **The Snares**

After a leisurely sea-day breakfast, we gathered in the lounge to hear about New Zealand Sea Lions from Toby. With these sea mammals' main diet of squid being impacted by fishing, Sea Lions themselves inadvertently caught in fishing nets, and climate change affecting ocean temperatures and squid distribution, the news was not all good.

In preparation for arriving at the Snares, John, Lou and Glenda gave lively introductions to a speck of land tiny in scale, but grand in scope. We learned that it was discovered by two different captains on the very same day, and its smaller Broughton Island was home to castaway convicts for seven years. These men subsisted on seabirds, vegetation and potatoes they grew on the island. Lou and Glenda shared different aspects of the island — its standing as a nature reserve, its population of Sooty Shearwaters that migrate to the island to breed in August, departing for the northern Pacific once their chicks fledge in April.

Our first Zodiac cruisers rounded the bottom of the main island and explored the south-eastern quadrant where Snares Crested Penguins showed off their agility by scooting out of the ocean and scaling high rocky slopes. The island itself consists of granite, aged about 100 million years old.

Unfortunately, as we prepared for our second wave of cruising, conditions had deteriorated enough that it was no longer considered safe. Expedition Leader Cheli made the call, opting for a stunning ship cruise around the island. Cape Petrels followed our path, and we had clear views of the famous penguin slide where literally thousands of penguins launch themselves onto the rocks amid death-defying swells, clinging to the rocks like limpets, then marching up an impossible incline to reach their high-rise burrows in amongst the vegetations, consisting of Hebe and Olearia (two local species of daisy tree cover the island).

The Captain's Farewell was an opportunity to hear from our wonderful Captain Jacek and his officers, and to show our gratitude to the procession of crew who represent each of *Heritage Adventurer's* departments. A sumptuous final dinner followed as we reflected on our incredible adventure.



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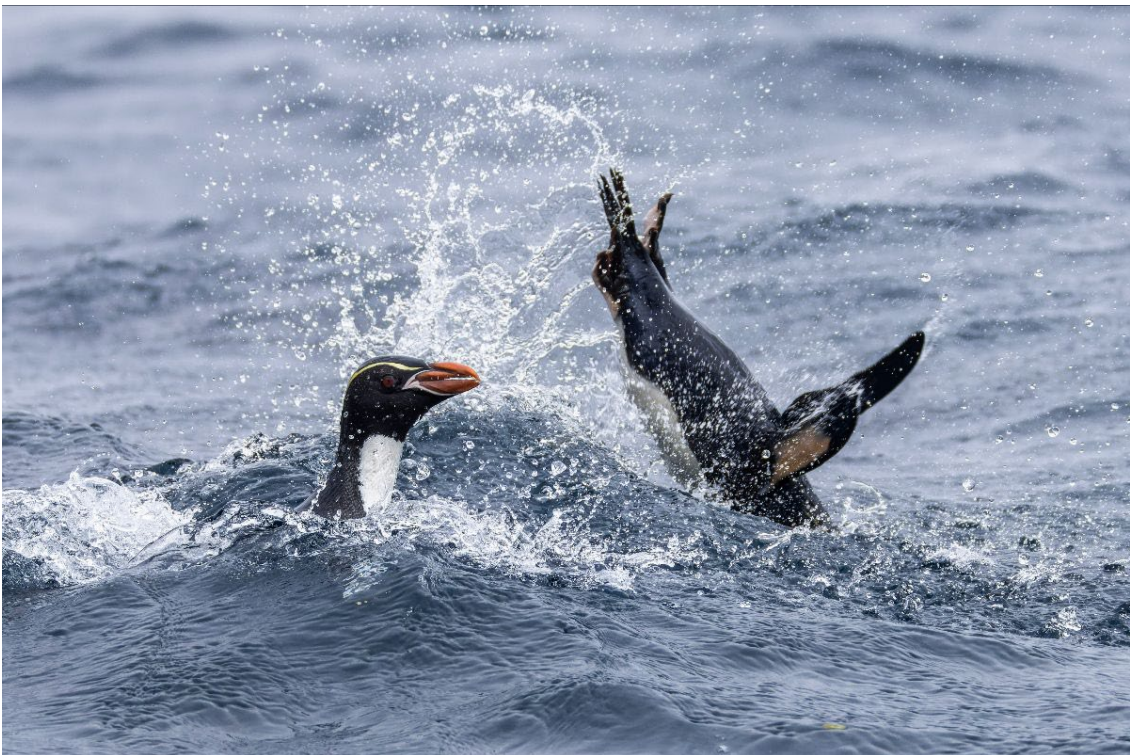


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### **Day 13**

**Wednesday 4 December 2024**

#### **Bluff**

Today was the moment to farewell staff, crew and fellow adventurers after a marvelous journey exploring these remote Subantarctic Islands. Sailing out of Hobart felt like a lifetime ago, with so many experiences and so much wildlife and wilderness. After saying our goodbyes, we headed on our next adventure with fond, shared memories that will last our lifetime.

We the Heritage Expeditions team have loved sharing our passion and knowledge with you. Thank you for travelling with Heritage Expeditions. We wish you safe onward travels and joyful homecomings. Stay safe and may we see you on the high seas again.



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