



# Christmas in Antarctica



18 – 29 December 2018 | Polar Pioneer





# About Us

Aurora Expeditions embodies the spirit of adventure, travelling to some of the most wild and remote places on our planet. With over 27 years' experience, our small group voyages allow for a truly intimate experience with nature.

Our expeditions push the boundaries with flexible and innovative itineraries, exciting wildlife experiences and fascinating lectures. You'll share your adventure with a group of like-minded souls in a relaxed, casual atmosphere while making the most of every opportunity for

adventure and discovery. Our highly experienced expedition team of naturalists, historians and destination specialists are passionate and knowledgeable – they are the secret to a fulfilling and successful voyage.

Whilst we are dedicated to providing a 'trip of a lifetime', we are also deeply committed to education and preservation of the environment. Our aim is to travel respectfully, creating lifelong ambassadors for the protection of our destinations.





DAY 1 | Tuesday, 18 December 2018

## Ushuaia; Beagle Channel

**Position:** 21:25 hours

**Course:** 83.7°

**Latitude:** 54°55'S

**Speed:** 10.9 knots

**Longitude:** 67°24'W

**Wind Speed:** 5 knots

**Barometer:** 1009.3 hPa & rising

**Wind Direction:** W

**Air Temp:** 9°C

**Sea Temp:** 8°C

After months of preparation, weeks of anticipation and long-haul flights from around the globe, we finally arrived at Ushuaia, known locally as *el fin del mundo* (the end of the world), raring to begin our Antarctic adventure. At 1600 we walked along the dock to find our ice strengthened ship Polar Pioneer waiting patiently for our arrival. With no hesitation we handed our passports over to Stephen and Justine, followed by a smile to the camera for Toby and Kathrine. The rest of the Aurora team were onboard ready to show us to our cabins, our cosy new home for the next 12 days. Onboard we total 52 adventurers with nationalities representing Australia (33), China (1), Canada (1), United States (8) United Kingdom (6), Poland (1), Germany (1), India (1) along with 10 Aurora Expeditions staff, 22 Russian crew and 3 Filipino hotel staff. Half unpacked and slightly settled in, it was time to investigate the ship's many staircases. Some ventured down to the dining rooms for afternoon tea, others aimed skyward for the flying bridge, returning to the Bar when Expedition Leader Stephen called us together to introduce the Aurora team and give a lifeboat and safety briefing. The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations to sample the ambience of a Polar Class life vessel. Even without a full complement of Russian crew, the seating arrangements in the two lifeboats proved cosy. At 1800 we cast off our lines and steamed east along the beautiful Beagle Channel. The bustling town of Ushuaia gradually receded as we made our way past mountain ranges brilliant in the steely light. To our portside the snow-capped peaks of Argentina; Chile to our starboard. We saw a veritable spate of birds: black-browed albatross, dolphin gulls, kelp gulls, South American terns and giant petrels. Before dinner Toby gathered our twelve kayakers in the lecture room for their first fitting of kayak gear. Dry suit, bootys, life jackets, the works! After a tasty dinner prepared by our chefs Al and Bert, the evening light enticed several up onto the fly bridge. Next was the infamous

gumboot giveaway. With thick socks in hand it was off to the lecture room where the team were ready to fit us with our stylish and comfortable footwear. A few stayed up late to watch our pilot clamber down the rope ladder and step across to his waiting vessel. Most of us made our way to cabins for much-needed sleep.

Today, 19th December, we are on our own at sea, motoring southward across the Drake Passage. The bridge on Deck 6, via the internal or external stairs, is open 24 hours a day and offers a premium viewing spot as we encounter an array of seabirds. Kick back and enjoy the day as the wonders of this vast stretch of Southern Ocean unfurls.



DAY 2 | Wednesday, 19 December 2018

## Drake Passage

**Position:** 18:00 hours

**Course:** 142.8°

**Latitude:** 57°56'S

**Speed:** 12 knots

**Longitude:** 64°02'W

**Wind Speed:** 25 knots

**Barometer:** 999.9 hPa & steady

**Wind Direction:** SW

**Air Temp:** 7°C

**Sea Temp:** 3°C

Overnight we began to cross the notorious 'Drake Shake'. Thankfully Dr Judy was out and about, making sure that everyone had enough seasickness medication for the next few days. Those who had found their sea legs clambered down to the dining rooms and were treated to a hearty breakfast cooked by Al and Bert of fruit, porridge, eggs & bacon. The first order of business was a lecture delivered by naturalist Heidi on seabirds in the Lecture Room. We were treated to her incredible wealth of knowledge in identifying the differences between the wandering albatross, black-browed albatross and the grey-headed albatross; in addition to explaining the different species of prions and storm-petrels. We found out that albatrosses spend their whole lives at sea & don't return to land except to reproduce, and that their wingspan can be up to 3.5 metres long! Heidi's lecture proved especially timely as seabirds began to circle the Polar Pioneer. Whilst some braved the cold and ventured outside & onto the 'fly bridge', others remained in the comfort of inside the Bridge. Everyone enjoyed spotting and recognising the different species of seabirds, and (perhaps more importantly!) reported some incredible photo opportunities of albatrosses and storm-petrels. The rolling swell also paved way to some intense action-shots of waves crashing against the Polar Pioneer, as our trusty ship endured the full force of the inhospitable Southern Ocean. After a much-needed nap and a lunch of spaghetti with meatballs, we found our way to the Bar for Heidi's second talk on cetaceans and marine mammals of the Southern Ocean. Despite the increasing swell, Heidi led

the charge and taught us about the two main different types of whales: baleen and toothed - distinguished by whether or not they have teeth. Heidi then walked us through some of the different species that we could potentially see in the coming days: ranging from the killer whale/orca, the humpback whale, and the southern right whale. The afternoon passed by for some, who watched a documentary called Ice and the Sky, whilst others opted for more time up on the Bridge and tracking the Polar Pioneer's progress as we inch ever-closer to Antarctica passing the Antarctic Convergence. From now on, the sea and land temperature will drop significantly as we approach the Antarctic Peninsula. At 1830 we gathered in the Bar for our first recap of the voyage. We introduced Kasper - one of our Expedition Guides while Steven gave us an update on our progress with the good news that the winds will be dropping and the swell decreasing as we keep heading south. Before heading to a delicious dinner of roast pork, Justine officially launched our Great Iceberg Competition and challenged us to list the expected time, latitude and longitude that we'll sight our first iceberg tomorrow.

Spokonye Noche Shipmates!







DAY 3 | Thursday, 20 December 2018

## Drake Passage & Barrientos Island (Aitcho Island Group)

**Position:** 16:30 hours

**Course:** 159.4°

**Latitude:** 61°55'S

**Speed:** 12.8 knots

**Longitude:** 67°24'W

**Wind Speed:** 12 knots

**Barometer:** 982.6 hPa & falling

**Wind Direction:** NNE

**Air Temp:** 2°C

**Sea Temp:** 0°C

Despite the roughness of the previous few days, we woke to find much more smoother conditions on the Southern Ocean thanks to a declining swell and calmer winds – so much so that a full house showed for breakfast! However, our second day transiting the Drake was anything but uneventful.

Beginning at 0930 we started our mandatory briefings as we neared the South Shetland Islands. First up, Stephen explained to those living on deck 3 the correct procedures when embarking and disembarking zodiacs. We learnt about the 'three step' system, first step zodiac rubber using the seaman's grip, then onto the red step then onto the zodiac floor. Most important is we make sure we practice careful biosecurity measures by washing our boots before and after we embark/disembark the ship. During this time Heidi was in the lecture room giving an animated presentation to Decks 4 and 5 about IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) and the guidelines ratified by the ATCM (Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting) that we need to follow. Heidi also spoke about careful measures to make sure that we're able to maximise our experience in Antarctica whilst also making sure that we give wildlife the right of way. A delicious lunch followed by a brief siesta was on the cards for some, whilst others opted for more birdwatching up on the cosy Bridge. As we ploughed our way further south, the myriad of bird life we had yesterday subsided to sightings of light mantled and wandering albatross and petrels – a reminder of how close we are to Antarctica. Biosecurity procedures filled the better part of the afternoon, as a requirement before our first landing. As the Antarctic Peninsula is a pristine region of the world, the importance of biosecurity is becoming even more significant. So, with vacuum cleaner and paperclip in hand we extracted seed and dirt from Velcro on our clothes and emptied our backpacks to be sure we're able to keep Antarctica

a safe haven for endemic animals and plants. At 1640 the call was made by Stephen from the ship's Bridge as we spotted our first iceberg at 62.02.9S 60.03.2W. Everyone rushed to the Bridge and onto the outside decks and marvelled at the enormity and majesty of the massive icebergs. Flurries of snow made for some perfect iceberg shots. Now with

Antarctica in our sights, it was time for Heidi to educate us on three different penguins we are likely to encounter on our voyage. Known in the animal kingdom as brushtails they go by the names of gentoo, chinstrap and Adelie. After dinner thanks to Captain Vladimir and Stephen the announcement was made that we were heading ashore. With excited anticipation we donned our layers, turned our tags and washed our boots for our first experience of Antarctica. We hadn't even stepped foot on to land before we saw penguins porpoising beside our Zodiacs. Like a true winter wonderland, we were greeted with two colonies of penguins, gentoo and chinstrap at a time in the season where there is a hype of activity going on. Chicks hatching, eggs being turned, stones being stolen, pairs mating and the cacophony of courtship calls. Heidi and staff were on hand to answer those pressing questions and identify different behaviours. Our kayakers reported their first paddle was a resounding success and enjoyed both coming ashore and a calm paddle back to the ship.

Today we will spend our first full day on the Antarctic Peninsula!





DAY 4 | Friday, 21 December 2018

## Cierva Cove; Hydrurga Rocks

**Position:** 19:25 hours

**Course:** 160.2°

**Latitude:** 64°08' S

**Location:** At anchor Hydruga Rocks

**Longitude:** 61°36' W

**Wind:** calm

**Air Temp:** 8°C

**Barometer:** 971.9 hPa & falling

**Sea Temp:** 1°C

As the Polar Pioneer made her way south along the Davis Coast of the Antarctic Peninsula, there were cliffs covered in glacier ice as far as the snow flurries allowed us to see. Icebergs were floating on all sides. At the breakfast table, while enjoying our pancakes and eggs we could hear small floes bump and slide along the ship's hull. Outside the wind had died and the sea was glassy. There were blue icebergs calved from the surrounding glaciers and small ice floes, remnants of the frozen sea ice in a maze before us. The captain carefully navigated the ship in a zig zag course between the ice as we approached Cierva Cove. The cove itself was so full of ice that we barely made it past Cierva Point. It was time to explore this wonderland of Antarctic ice, so we took to the boats, both Zodiacs and kayaks. Large towering cathedral-like grounded icebergs with bash and growlers everywhere in between, it was a feast for the eyes, with sculptures and beautiful hues of blue. A few gentoo penguins were seen porpoising in the water or lounging on ice or rocks. A Weddell Seal was nearly hidden on the back side of leopard Islet, silently snoozing on the rocky shore. Then the word went out on the radio, Kasper had spotted a leopard seal reposing on ice, deeper into the cove. All the boats eventually snaked their way past the beautiful ice to have a look at this seal lying serpentine-like on its little floe. The snow continued to fall as we made our way back to the ship for warming cups of hot drink.

After a hearty lunch of fish and chips, it was time to explore once again. This time we went in different directions. The snow-shoe and skiers made a landing on Two Hummock Island, while the kayakers crossed the strait in between and the landing party went to Hydrurga Rocks, a small islet named for the genus of the leopard seal. Here we found several Weddell seals sleeping serenely on the snow, while we watched a colony of chinstrap penguins going about their nesting business. They were stealing stones from each other's nests, some for hours at a time, others were simply sitting patiently on the eggs, waiting for hatching day. These penguins had obviously started breeding a little later than those we visited yesterday on Aitcho Island, not a single little chick was seen among them. Antarctic shags or cormorants on the other hand had some rather large chicks and were busy flying overhead with pieces of seaweed streaming from their bills to add to their own nest structures. After we were satisfied with watching the penguin antics the last Zodiac to leave Hydrurga Rocks had a special showing of a pair of humpback whales surfacing next to the boat. Once all parties had returned to the ship we joined in the bar for Captain's cocktail and toasted the Polar Pioneer and her crew and the positive success of our voyage!











DAY 5 | Saturday, 22 December 2018

## Goudier Island, Jougla Point, Cuverville

**Position:** 20:50 hours

**Course:** 66.2°

**Wind Speed:** 30 knots

**Barometer:** 970.6 hpa & steady

**Latitude:** 64 31'S

**Speed:** 6.1 knots

**Wind Direction:** NE

**Air Temp:** 1°C

**Longitude:** 62 23'W

**Sea Temp:** 0°C

Our second full day of exploring the Antarctic Peninsula began early. Some rose to see our first crossing of Neumayer Channel – a narrow passage of water beneath snow-covered peaks, whilst others opted for a sleep in. Christmas was undoubtedly in the air as we awoke to a decorated ship which had been transformed overnight by our wonderful hotel manager Kathrine and her elves. Port Lockroy, an active English scientific station founded in WW2 was our first stop. Hannah came onboard to brief us before we headed off down the gangway. At Port Lockroy, we wandered up to the museum and made sure to give way to the many gentoo penguins as they meandered up and down their unmissable highways. The museum was a vivid remnant of the past, with rooms maintained as they would have appeared in the 1940s – cupboards full of bully beef, bedrooms with old and creaky floors – it was easy to imagine how inhospitable it would have been during winter. With the sun out, layers had to be abandoned and we were treated to breathtaking vistas of jagged mountain peaks swirling out of the clouds. The first group journeyed to Port Lockroy, the others ventured to Jougla Point, in the shadow of a looming glacier. The snowshoers headed off with Tarn and Hilary and were lucky enough to be able to walk on sea ice. The kayakers were also able to take a stroll on the ice, and reported an excellent paddle complete with crystal clear waters and a smooth swell. The skiers returned from their early morning runs commenting on the lightness of the snow at Doumer Island. With the anchor lifted and us feasting on a delicious lunch of lamb curry, we set sail to Cuverville Island. Transiting the Neumayer Channel, this time treated to panoramic views of the breathtakingly high mountains which we watched from the bow. In typical Antarctic fashion, snow flurries began to fall, and soon heavy cloud had obscured the Polar Pioneer. The snow hadn't dampened our spirits as we arrived at Cuverville Island. The snowshoers and skiers took off first for George's Point and the rest of us took a short shuttle through towering icebergs

to our landing beach. Onshore we were greeted by an extremely friendly baby elephant seal. Known as a weaner once mum heads back to sea, it seemed to be as interested in us as we were of it. Heidi was able to get up close and personal! Cuverville Island was undoubtedly a birdwatcher's paradise too, and whilst some decided to hike to the gentoo colonies up high, others chose a stroll along the beach where porpoising penguins made for a perfect Antarctic afternoon. We even spotted our first Adelie penguin! With the weather closing in, we wove our way back through the brash ice, bouncing on top of the swell and perhaps a little damp. Back on board we were greeted with the aroma of a sumptuous home cooked meal before making our way to the bar for the today's daily recap. Stephen gave us an update of Plan A and Kasper shared his knowledge of Port Charcot to prepare us for today's landing.



DAY 6 | Sunday, 23 December 2018

# Lemaire Channel, Petermann Island, Planeau Island

**Position:** 22:20 hours

**Course:** 169.7°

**Wind Speed:** 8 knots

**Barometer:** 977.3 hPa & rising

**Latitude:** 65°05'S

**Speed:** 8.3 knots

**Wind Direction:** NE

**Air Temp:** 1°C

**Longitude:** 64°01'W

**Sea Temp:** 0°C

*To anyone who goes to the Antarctic, there is a tremendous appeal, an unparalleled combination of grandeur, beauty, vastness, loneliness, and malevolence — all of which sound terribly melodramatic — but which truly convey the actual feeling of Antarctica. Where else in the world are all of these descriptions really true? — Captain T.L.M. Sunter, 'The Antarctic Century Newsletter'*

Once upon a time there was a pig called Toby. He was very proud to be part of The Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration in the early 1900's, an era filled with so many stories of adventure, science, and heroism. It is doubtful that Toby could be regarded as a hero, but that minor fact can be ignored for the time being. We woke early on the third day of voyaging on the Antarctic Peninsula. The Lemaire Channel is a landscape not to be missed, and there was a good turnout on the decks to witness the Polar Pioneer come into its own as a small, strong ship. The channel is narrow, deep and had a considerable amount of ice in its narrowest part, making navigation difficult. The weather for the morning landing on Peterman Island was taxing, but the penguins barely seemed to notice the conditions as we battled our way through soft snow and wind to some hardy Adelies nesting amongst the ever-present Gentoos. The snowshoers had it easy on the short hike, whilst the gumboot footed folk were up to their knees at times. The afternoon excursion was delayed due to very inclement conditions. Large snowflakes blown by gusts of up to 40 knots had us put proceedings on hold until 4pm, but our gallant Expedition Leader Stephen was determined to get us ashore at some stage. Sure enough, the wind eased

a little, but the snow was still horizontal. Port Charcot on Booth Island is the site of the French Antarctic Expedition of 1903-1905, led by Jean-Baptiste Charcot. His expedition aboard the Francais charted large parts of the Antarctic Peninsula region, which was to be of great importance to navigators in the years to come. Charcot was a visionary explorer. He tested a lot of new equipment, such as electric lamps, anti-snow blindness goggles, a petrol-engine motor boat, and new clothing. Perhaps his most significant statement was pointing out the dangers of over-harvesting whales, which still resonates today. Stephen's optimism had some 26 hardy souls head ashore in Port Charcot for a hike to a significant cairn at the high point, certainly the most prominent feature remaining of this important early exploration expedition. The snow storm was unrelenting, but it was a fun climb to the top. Apparently, Toby the mascot pig is buried not far from this point, with a magnificent outlook over the surrounding ocean. Toby the Brave Sea Kayak Guide made the trek to the cairn, to pay homage to his namesake and one somewhat less heroic than himself. We met in the bar for a short recap and briefing before being asked to slowly make our way to the dining rooms for a good old fashion BBQ. Like musical chairs, we were each greeted with a silly hat on our seats, complimentary gluhwein, esky treats and a dinner of champions. Before long we made our way up to the bar to continue the party and sing like no one was watching. A big thank you to our captain and his officers for their exceptional navigation skills and for Stephens determination to get us ashore. This leadership combined allowed us to experience a part of Antarctica that only a few lucky people get too.













DAY 7 | Monday, 24 December 2018

## Neko Harbour, Waterboat Point, Leith Cove

**Position:** 19:10 hours

**Latitude:** 64°51'S

**Longitude:** 6362°49'W

**Course:** 210°

**Location:** At anchor Leith Cove

**Wind Speed:** 10 knots

**Wind Direction:** SW

**Barometer:** 974.6 hPa & steady

**Air Temp:** 7°C

**Sea Temp:** 0°C

There was a festive feel about the ship this morning as we woke to the Polar Pioneer covered in snow, a quick reminder of how cold the last few days have been. Thankfully, it turned into a beautiful day, just in time for our first continental landing at Neko Harbor. With today's breathtaking landscape it's hard to imagine that over a century ago the site was home to a floating whale factory ship which processed each whale for overseas export. Tarn and the skiers, eagerly headed off early to maximize their time on the slopes; whilst the rest of us donned our layers, stepped into a kayak or Zodiac and set off for the landing beach. Surrounded by towering glaciers, we clambered onto a rocky shore before following Heidi up towards a colony of gentoos, stopping midway to admire the incredible views. Whilst this colony had evidently mated much later than other colonies there were no eggs to be seen; nonetheless there was plenty of activity. Hilary & Kevin our fearless snowshoeing guides, set off with the snowshoers for a challenging hike overlooking the whole bay, with the rest of the group following suit on an alternative path. The Antarctic gods clearly had us in their good books as we witnessed a massive glacier carving, sending a wave surge along the width of the bay. It was enticing to sit on the rocks overlooking the harbor, watching the blue hue radiating from the enormous blocks of ice. Some were even lucky enough to witness two avalanches crashing into the ocean. As if that wasn't enough, humpback whales were then sighted amongst the ice not far off shore. Following our highways back down to the beach, we jumped in the Zodiacs and went for a cruise to explore. The paddlers gained the best view as a humpback surfaced right next to their kayaks. What a morning! Almost immediately after lunch came the call for the afternoon's outing to Waterboat Point and the Chilean station there. The snowshoers and skiers were dropped off first at their landings, while the rest of us were welcomed by the stations officers and given a brief introduction to the base. Kindly they had prepared refreshments for us and allowed a

visit inside their communal living quarters. A museum of old photos of the Cope Expedition of 1920 was also open where we purchased wonderful souvenirs, stamps and postcards. The kayakers enjoyed an easy paddle around some impressive icebergs before coming ashore to join us. Back onboard Justine surprised us by announcing the Christmas Eve Polar Plunge. Before braving the chilled air out on deck, keen plungers were lining the corridors/stairwells eager to get the show on the road. A brave 36 took to the icy waters as Justine captured each priceless expression while going in. After a quick sauna and delicious dinner, the time for our evening outing had finally come. A record breaking 46 campers plus staff agreed to give up their warm beds, a decent night sleep, a midnight snack all for a chance to camp in Antarctica. And why wouldn't you! To our warm six who stayed with us few onboard, we thank you for keeping us company Merry Christmas everyone!

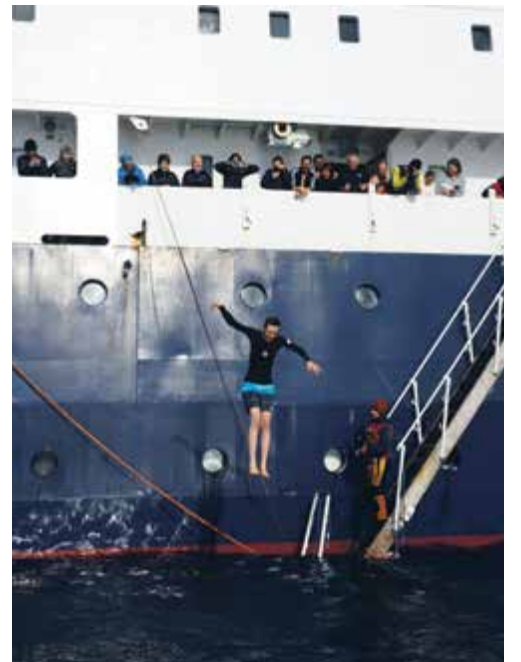












DAY 8 | Tuesday 25 December 2018

# Leith Cove, Danco Island, Portal Point

**Position:** 22:10 hours

**Course:** 29°

**Wind Speed:** 8 knots

**Barometer:** 983.9hPa & rising

**Latitude:** 64°11'S

**Speed:** 8.2 knots

**Wind Direction:** NW

**Air Temp:** 5°C

**Longitude:** 61°33'W

**Sea Temp:** 1°C

## Ho Ho Ho! Merrrrrry Christmasssss!

Who would have believed that Santa would make it all the way south from the North Pole in time for Christmas morning! Just like us, he crossed the Drake Passage, sleighed through the ice of the Lemaire Channel and dropped off a postcard at Port Lockroy all before landing at Polar Pioneer. Given he had our coordinates he was confused to find empty cabins and no sign of children. Down the gangway and into his penguin sleigh he cruised forth to Leith Cove where he'd heard of 44 campers overnighing in Antarctica's frozen conditions. With a sack full of Christmas stockings, he went ashore to extend the festive cheer. Our lucky campers despite the cold had a fortunate encounter with a humpback whale and her calf who kept them company as they snuggled into their sleeping bags. With morning awaking around us, it was time to get our shore party back to the comforts of the ship. By breakfast the yawns had turned into a chorus of Christmas wishes as we greeted one another across the breakfast table. Our first landing at Danco Island was a perfect way to spend Christmas morning. 12 intrepid hikers and eight snowshoers summited the mountain and were treated to panoramic views and a Gentoo colony. Tarn and the skiers took off in the opposite direction till they found their slope of the day. Once returning to the ship we had some time to prepare ourselves Christmas lunch – a sumptuous five course menu, what a feast! Course after course of delicious food crafted by our wonderful chefs Al and Bert and served with smiles by our lovely Russian waitresses. Wine,

bon-bons and oreo shakes made by Kathrine spread more joyful cheer, along with a terrific Christmas playlist to sing along to. Before we knew it, we were heading through Wilhelmina bay, the unmissable beauty instantly blew us away. The sun's warm rays, bright blue sky and spectacular landscape turned each minute into an unforgettable memory. Someone onboard definitely had karma owed to them as some of the best wildlife came out to play right before our eyes. An orca here, two orcas over there, then humpbacks, suddenly we were surrounded by pods of these beautiful animals. Cameras didn't know where to look as the sounds of each blow came from every angle.

It was a truly majestic farewell to the Antarctic peninsula and there couldn't have been a better way to spend Christmas day. Once the excitement had settled it was time for our ship to continue on its journey north again. After such a satisfying lunch it was hard to believe we had room to eat again but our chefs had prepared a delicious ploughman's platter complete with king prawns, cheeses and cuts of cold meats. During dinner our amazing Kathrine was busy in the bar prepping our Christmas dessert and punch, yummy! Heidi kicked us off with a poem by Frank Hurley from Mawson's sledging diary, following her was our fellow ship mate/bush poet Bob who entertained us with a dose of good old-fashioned Aussie humour. Carols led by Yvette rounded off the evening before Santa joined us to handout presents. A festive day from start to finish. Santa, we hope you made it home ok



On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me  
A polar pioneer floating in the sea  
On the second day of Christmas my true love gave to me

- 2 Leopard seals
- 3 Chinstrap chicks
- 4 skuas flying
- 5 elephant seal pups
- 6 Adelle penguins
- 7 days of Antarctica
- 8 Weddell sea lions
- 9 Snowy Sheathbills
- 10 Gentoo penguins
- 11 Whales a diving
- 12 Icebergs drifting

by Yvette Turner













DAY 9 | Wednesday, 26 December 2018

## Yankee Harbour

**Position:** 21:50 hours

**Course:** 330°

**Latitude:** 62°13'S

**Speed:** 11.8 knots

**Longitude:** 59°51'W

**Wind Speed:** 20 knots

**Barometer:** 983.9hPa & steady

**Wind Direction:** NE

**Air Temp:** 4°C

**Sea Temp:** 1°C

Not an average Boxing Day as we woke bright eyed and bushy tailed after yesterday's festivities. Deception Island is an active volcano, a dark desolate place which is the opposite of what we experienced on the peninsula. Its caldera is one of the few in the world that is navigable by ships, Port Foster is 11 nautical miles across and access is via a narrow channel called Neptune's Bellows. The last eruption was in 1969 and caused major devastation to British and Chilean scientific stations located inside the caldera. Once the sight of a large Norwegian whaling station, a hundred years ago several ships would have been anchored in the bay to have their whale catches processed into valuable oil. Today we wandered between the tumbling and half buried buildings and the pressure cookers which were now a nesting site for kelp gulls. A stroll along the black beach and up to Neptune's Window was just the spot to sit and listen to the nesting Cape Petrels chattering on the cliffs. As the tide dropped steam started to rise from the geothermal activity at the water's edge. As we put our hands through the sand we could feel the heat. Bright kayakers added color to this otherwise monochromatic world. A few of our skiers headed up to the snow slopes which were dusted in a fine layer of volcanic ash. Then we were all back on board for the captain to transit Neptune's Bellows once again. Polar Pioneer headed further north along the chain of the South Shetland Islands towards our last landing in Antarctica. En route there was a large tabular ice berg, once calved from an Ice Shelf, perhaps in the Weddell Sea? The captain measured its longest dimensions on the navigation radar, at nearly 3 kilometers long, it was an impressive piece of ice! Greenwich Island has a small natural harbour which was also used in years past for industry. Yankee Harbor would have sheltered ships over many years including whalers and sealers. A very old, rusting try pot can still be seen on shore above the beach, a relic of these past pursuits. The gentoo penguins nesting along the shelf of the beach had week-old fluffy chicks. These chicks were squeaking and feeding

on regurgitated krill from their very attendant parents. The sun came out to shine on the surrounding mountains which were sugar-coated in glaciers and snow. The snow-shoe team headed off up the slopes to overlook the harbor and the ski team made it up to a high peak for a final last Antarctic run. It was hard to tear ourselves away from the scenery and penguins to return to the ship. Our spectacular day in the South Shetland Islands had come to an end. Back on the Polar Pioneer we enjoyed another delicious dinner by our favourite chefs. Ice & the sky, back by popular demand was played in the lecture room before we prepared ourselves for our return to the open sea. Drake Passage here we come!





DAY 10 | Thursday, 27 December 2018

# Drake Passage

**Position:** 19:30 hours

**Course:** 324°

**Wind Speed:** 14 knots

**Barometer:** 985.3 hPa & falling

**Latitude:** 58°37'S

**Speed:** 11.2 knots

**Wind Direction:** NNW

**Air Temp:** 4°C

**Longitude:** 64°12'W

**Sea Temp:** 1°C

As we woke to the unsteady rocking of the Polar Pioneer, it was an all-too-familiar reminder that we'd begun our journey north across Drake Passage. With a reasonably mild swell, the dining rooms were abuzz with activity enjoying Al and Bert's usual hearty breakfast. Expecting an easier day, many retired to their cabins to catch up on some much-needed R&R. But whoever said that sea days were lazy days? Beginning at 0930 Heidi delivered an animated lecture "A Whale of a Time", providing us with more information on our sightings of killer whales and humpbacks that we've been lucky to witness throughout our voyage. We learnt about the different types of killer whales, which can be classified by the size of their eye patch and their diet. Heidi informed us that the pods we observed on Christmas Day were Type B orcas, which eat seals and penguins. Particularly interesting was her explanation of the coordinated attack strategies of killer whales, which can outwit and catch their prey by causing wave surges and by attacking from all sides. Heidi also provided detail on new research concerning the matriarchal hierarchy of their pods. A quick trip up to the Bar was then in order to begin the long process of sorting through our hundreds of photos for the voyage log; before long we hurried back for Kasper's talk in the lecture room "Antarctica Discovered." Kasper brought the era of Antarctic exploration to life as he filled us in on past polar expeditions. For many of us, hearing of the hardships faced by expeditions such as those led by Captain Scott and Ernest Shackleton, it was fascinating to understand the reasons for both success and failure. As we've now experienced first-hand

some of the harshness of the Antarctic weather (who could forget the sideways snow!), we were able to appreciate the mammoth tasks faced by explorers who had to battle through such conditions on a daily basis. Particularly thought provoking was Kasper's observation of the importance of technology in the 20th century linking to the outcome of polar expeditions. Whilst Roald Amundsen made it to the South Pole using Norwegian skiing techniques and by adapting modern nutrition methods to survive, others – such as Captain Scott's - failed, due to severe malnutrition resulting from a poor diet & Scott's refusal to use skis as a means of transportation.

A delicious lunch followed by a brief siesta was on the cards for most, before we waddled to the lecture room once again for Dr Judy's interesting presentation on her year living at Antarctica's Davis Base. An experience like no other as she walked us through daily life on the station, the conditions and the fun! Who's keen to apply! A drink in Kathrine's cosy bar, followed by a quick recap. Stephen announced that we had made excellent progress across the Drake, meaning that tomorrow we're planning to land at Cape Horn for a final landing – the most southern point on the South American coastline!







DAY 11 | Tuesday, 28 December 2018

## Drake Passage, Cape Horn, Beagle channel

**Position:** 20:00 hours

**Course:** 324°

**Wind Speed:** 16 knots

**Barometer:** 986.6 hPa & falling

**Latitude:** 55°02'S

**Speed:** 12.9 knots

**Wind Direction:** N

**Air Temp:** 8°C

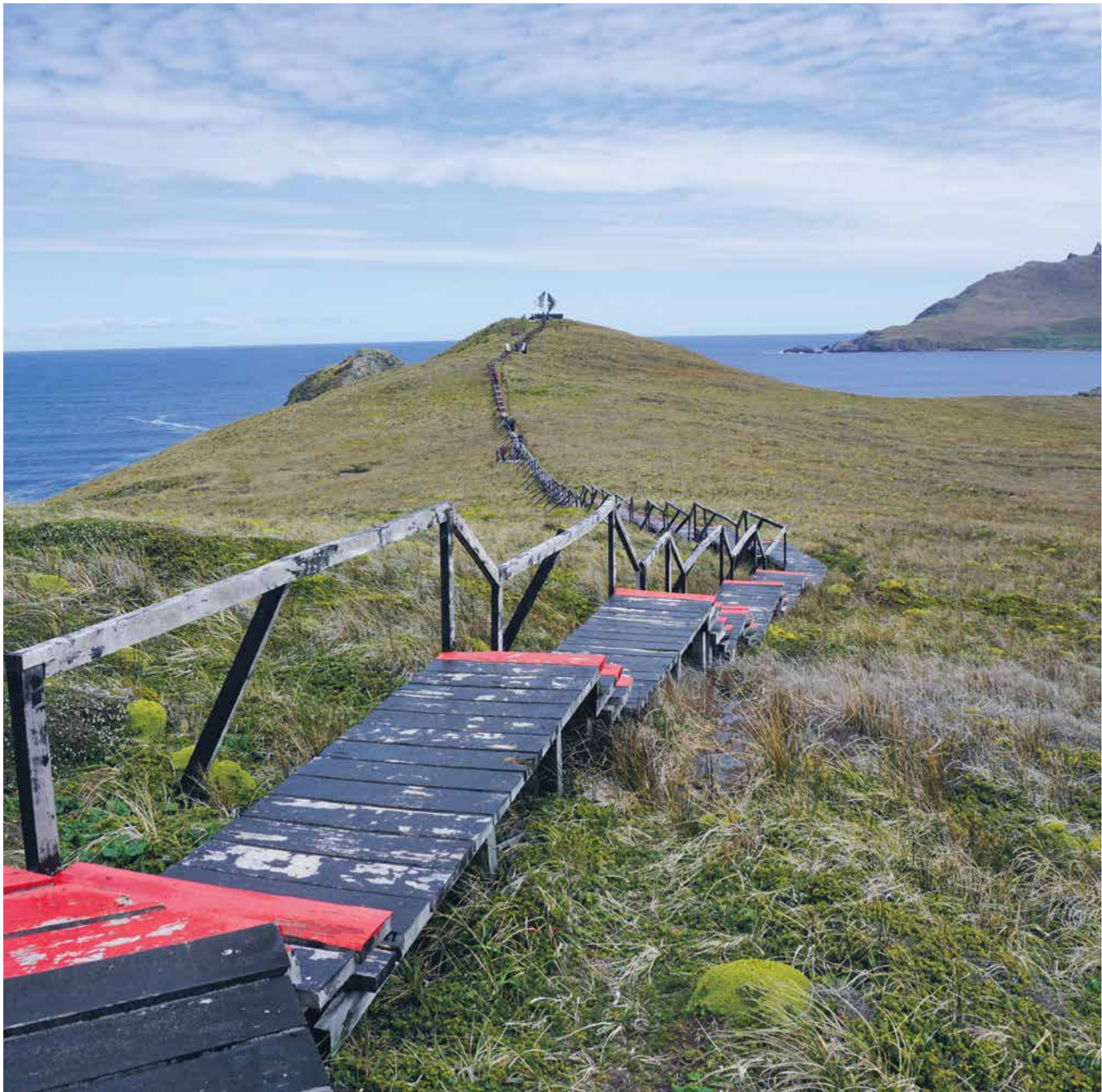
**Longitude:** 67°03'W

**Sea Temp:** 9°C

Thanks to a following wind, Stephen announced that we'd made excellent progress across the Drake Passage. This meant that we were able to schedule an afternoon landing at Cape Horn, the most southern point of the Chilean mainland! As, this was also our final day aboard the Polar Pioneer, we began the long process of searching for clothing and gear hidden in the nooks and crannies around our cabins. Kicking off the morning was Justine's disembarkation briefing. She talked us through our last few days and some of the highlights of the Puerto Williams tour. A quick trip up to the Bar was then in order to settle our shipboard accounts with Kathrine, check our addresses with Jack and adding our emails to the exchange list with Kasper. Before long, land was in sight as we neared Cape Horn. After another delicious lunch of beef stew cooked by Al and Bert, it was time for some to rest, whilst others watched from the vantage points out on deck. A Chilean pilot (literally) climbed onboard our ship to steer us in to anchorage. We are required to carry a Chilean pilot with us through the narrow islets and the Beagle Channel. Mid-afternoon the call came from Stephen that we were headed ashore to the Cape Horn lighthouse. One of the windiest places on earth, and a beacon for past epic Antarctic and Pacific expeditions, it was both a naturalist's and historian's dream. Usually inaccessible due to strong winds and swells, we were lucky to be able to visit. We donned our layers and Zodiaced in, admiring the rock-hopper penguins and the masses of kelp, before clambouring up a precarious set of stairs. We needn't have worried about the weather as we discarded layers immediately, sweltering underneath fair skies and little wind. Some headed off to the lighthouse and were able to gain a panoramic view of this Antarctic gateway; whilst others walked to the memorial dedicated to mariners who've died at sea. It was a poignant experience, made more so by an eloquent poem carved into stone both mourning the death of past sailors while suggesting their spirits now lay with the albatross which soar above the waves. Back to the ship for our last

tag turn, it was time for that final bit of packing. We headed once more to Kathrine's cosy bar for her tasty punch and Al and Bert's delicious canapes. We thanked Captain Vladimir and his crew for their seamanship and adventurous attitude, and the Expedition staff. Certificates were then handed out to our campers, polar plungers, kayakers, snowshoers and skiers before one last dinner in the dining rooms. Last but not least we were then invited to the lecture room to enjoy our voyage slideshow. Thanks to everyone's photo contributions, we were taken back through the last 11 days; of adventure and good times spent travelling around the Antarctica Peninsula. What a trip!







DAY 12 | Wednesday, 29th December 2018

## Puerto Williams

**Position:** 06:30 hours

**Latitude:** 54°55'S

**Longitude:** 67°36'W

**Location:** At anchor Puerto Williams

**Wind:** calm

**Barometer:** 979.9 hPa & falling

**Air Temp:** 10°C

**Sea Temp:** 9°C

It's not over until it's over. An early morning wake-up call by Stephen was appreciated as we woke to the beautiful surroundings of Chile's southernmost town Puerto Williams. A simply stunning landscape of infinite mountains with a stillness both in the air and on the water's surface. Before breakfast we left luggage outside our cabins and went to the dining rooms as normal. Once our stomachs were full we made our way to the bar to collect our passports from Heidi and Judy.

The announcement then came to bid farewell to our beloved Polar Pioneer. We said our good-byes to the team on the wharf with thanks by all for an unforgettable trip.

On behalf of all of the team aboard Polar Pioneer, thank you for choosing Aurora Expeditions for your voyage to Antarctica this Christmas. We hope you've enjoyed visiting Antarctica as much as we have! We bid you safe and enjoyable onward travels.



# White Christmas

*We sailed out the Beagle Passage  
With our expedition planned  
For a Twenty-Eighten Christmas  
Down in Cold Antarctic Land.*

*With our jolly crew of Russians  
We all braved the ocean deep,  
Plus our tour guides, mostly Kiwi's,  
Who were pining for their sheep.*

*Then we hit the famed Drake Passage  
Where ships in the past were lost.  
Just like sailing in a blender  
As our boat was rolled and tossed.*

*Fellow passengers were sailing  
Under many countless flags.  
Now they mostly chose their cabins  
Growing into paper bags.*

*And with Doctor Judy stressing  
With sick passengers in bed  
She might change to undertaker  
With some patients feeling dead.*

*There was chaos in the bathrooms  
Pointing Percy at the loo.  
For the blokes were power waltzing  
With their aim no longer true.*

*We found eating now quite tricky  
Lining mouths up with our fork  
And returning to our cabins  
We hugged handrails just to walk.*

*Then behind South Shetland Islands  
We weren't rocking any more  
So we donned our thermal layers  
Heading shoreward to explore.*

*Noisy gentoos and the chinstraps  
Had their rookeries on high.  
Interlaced with penguin highways  
Underneath the frigid sky.*

*Though they weren't all picture postcards  
With their white fronts stained with slime:  
But they took turns heading seaward  
For a bath to clear their grime.*

*Stealing rocks was their obsession  
Reinforcing stony nests.  
All awaiting incubation  
Fending off the skua pests.*

*Then we broached the Lemaire Channel  
For the crew had nerves of steel.  
Through the barricade of sea ice  
Captain Vlad behind the wheel.*

*Mother Nature sent a blizzard  
Carried by an icy blast  
Which made trekking rather dicey  
But the danger quickly passed.*

*Till one morning it was noted  
Our life vests were getting tight  
And we had a funny feeling  
That the chefs had caused the plight.*

*For their menus were amazing –  
Gourmet feasts for one and all.  
As we waddled round like penguins  
We gave Jenny Craig a call.*

*Then the trip turned fairly festive  
Thanks to Kathrine and her elves  
With their Christmas trees and baubles  
And bright tinsel on the shelves.*

*'Polar Plunges' and snow camping  
Put most travellers to the test  
Though the smart chose bar and cabins  
And they got a decent rest.*

*Father Christmas and his reindeers  
Dropped off presents Christmas Day.  
Through the snow and wind and icebergs  
Somehow Santa found his way.*

*Once again, the chefs did wonders  
In the galley on the boat.  
We embraced the gourmet cruising  
With the best cruising afloat.*

*Santa left us one last present –  
A spectacular display.  
Pods of humpback whales and orcas  
Finished off our Christmas Day.*

*So we left the snow clad silence  
Of this land that lured us south.  
Where her bounty left us speechless  
With huge smiles upon our mouth.*

*We thank Stephen and his experts  
And the Polar Pioneer.  
Who showed us the pristine grandeur  
Of this frozen last frontier.*

--- Bob Magor 2018

# Kayaking Log

By Toby Story

**Kayaking Guide:** Toby Story

## Kayakers:

Melissa Braden	Jen Scott	Ania Baranek
Kristyna Dillon	Kate Van Der Vaart	Brett Ladd
Michael Kearney	Peter Van Der Vaart	Kaysan Verma
Sam Kearney	Allison Van Der Vaart	Kapil Verma
Megan O'Reilly	Scott Varker	
Mike Schetzel	Karen Varker	

## DAYS 1-2: At Sea

### DAY 3: Aitcho Islands – Barrientos Island – Distance: 3.7 km

Despite the winds gusting over 20 knots in the open sea, Aitcho Island provided just enough shelter for us to launch kayaks for our first paddle in Antarctica! As the snow eased, we slipped over the side of the Polar Pioneer and into the calm waters. We paddled towards the coast, finding our steering and adjusting our rudders then paused in front of a Gentoo colony to watch as penguins cavorted in the water and on shore before making a landing. After walking to view some chicks and watching some penguins “massaging” each other, we relaunched our kayaks and made a final pass of the beach on our way back to the ship.

### DAY 4: Cierva Cove – Distance: 6.7 km

It was a perfectly calm morning as we launched into Cierva Cove, the ice bobbing and swaying on the swells. We made our way carefully past icy chunks both large and small and shared a mix of surprise and delight as some crashed and or rolled as we passed. Picking our way through the thick brash ice, we made our way to a small island and paddled with the swells along the shore. Behind the island we came across a towering iceberg that blocked our path. Keeping a safe distance, we paddled deeper into the bay to join the zodiacs beside a leopard seal on the ice. On our way home, we followed the path of the zodiacs through the ice until it clamped shut and we were required to fall back on kayak power to break through the dense pack and back to the ship.

### Hydrurga Rocks – Distance: 10 km

After launching paddled to the nearby coast of Hydrurga Island and began exploring the many small passages and rocky gulches. As our path was blocked by both tide and swell, we began paddling slowly towards a distant point on Two Hummock Island, pausing occasionally to catch our breath and rest by the drifting ice. Finding a secluded gulch, we made a technical rock landing to view the lazing Weddell seals sleeping on the snow. As we turned for home we paddled along the ice cliff of Two Hummock Island and back towards Hydrurga. As we neared our landing site the call came out that whales had been sighted! The temptation to follow the whales only just outweighed the temptation to return to the ship and we gave chase. Despite our enthusiasm, the whales managed to keep just out of site and we turned back for a well-earned cup of tea!

### DAY 5: Port Lockroy – Distance: 5 km

After a quick visit to Port Lockroy historic site, the kayakers returned to the ship to change clothes and jump in kayaks. Conditions were mirror calm as we slipped over the side of the ship.

After a quick photo shoot beside a lazy crab-eater seal on a tiny ice-flow, the kayakers set out for the Peltier Channel. The remnants of the previous evenings snow sat on top of the drifting ice and were quickly capitalized on by the younger members of the party to start a snowball fight, the first sea level snowball fight from kayaks in recorded history! \*. After waving to the snowshoers on high we paddled back into the bay, past penguins on the rocks and in the water to make our first landing on sea ice. After a short stroll, more snowball fights ensued before our seal launch and short paddle in the sun back to the ship. \*This statement may not be true.

### Cuverville Island – Distance: 5.5 km

The waters were anything but mirror calm as we launched from the back of the Polar Pioneer. As the group departed the back of the ship the winds picked up and the waves, refracting between the icebergs, made for unstable conditions on the water. We used the support of the group to make our way behind the ice and into calmer waters. We played Shackleton for a time by finding a small patch of brash ice to jam ourselves in before paddling for more open waters. With the winds still strong we stayed on the sheltered side of the island and opted for a landing instead of a circumnavigation. After a short walk up the hill and a bum slide descent, we found our path blocked by a lone wiener elephant seal. He was mighty curious of the group, and we had to adopt innovative evasion tactics to avoid the salivating lonely beast and returned to our boats by rolling down the hill. It was a short paddle back to the ship and another exciting return as the Polar Pioneer drifted on the wind amongst the ice and swell.

### DAY 6: No paddling due to high winds.

### DAY 7: Neko Harbour – Distance: 7.5 km

The waters were mirror calm in Neko Harbour and the bay was choked with jagged icebergs and thick with brash ice. We launched and began our paddle with a search for whales deep in the bay. Paddling quietly, we could hear their breath and blows as the ice cracked and grumbled in the distance. After winding our way through towering icebergs of rich blue and pastel white, we made our first landing on the Antarctic continent! Some chose the hike to a view point while others simply sat and watched the world and the penguins go by close to the shore. As the time drew to a close, whales were spotted in the bay. We lunched and hoped for a lucky sighting on our paddle back to the ship. As we waited to re-load back onto the ship, the ice drifted in and blocked our return and the ship just as the whales appeared. The delay pushed lunch back a good 15 minutes while we happily sat and watched the whales feed instead.

### Waterboat Point – Distance: 4.5 km

We launched quickly as the ship drifted on swift currents beside Waterboat Point, the site of the first observations of penguin breeding habits by Lester and Bagshaw in the early days of observation and exploration of the Antarctic and now the site of a Chilean naval base. Finding our way to shore we paddled amongst the gems of ice stranded by the receding tide beside the Chilean station. Moving further down the coast, we moved past high walls of ice and into a shallow sheltered bay watching as the snowshoers plodded away on gentle slope. Making our way back we made landfall at the Chillan base to explore the buildings and penguin colony before paddling back to the ship.





# Kayaking Log Continued

## **DAY 8: Danco Island** – Distance: 8.4 km

Only a hardy few joined for the Christmas morning circumnavigation of Danco Island after a night out camping on the snow. We launched and paddled to a small island and then on past a towering berg on our way to the icy edge of Danko Island. We had to work hard against the wind to reach the Southern tip of Danko but were rewarded with a little downwind paddling on our final section of our circumnavigation. Feeling satisfied, we opted to enjoy the views from sea level rather than climb to the peak of Danko Island. As we made our way slowly through the ice on our way back to the ship, even the sound of a breathing whale was not enough to tempt the sleepy paddlers onwards and we returned to nap before a big Christmas lunch.

## **DAY 9: Deception Island** – Distance: 2 km

The winds were low as we entered the mouth of the Caldera and prepared to paddle in the active volcano of Deception Island. As we launched kayaks the wind suddenly increased and we huddled behind the ship to revise our paddling plan. Shifting objectives from an open sea paddle to a short hop to the shelter of shore, we did a quick paddle tour past along the coast before landing and stretching out legs amongst the many historical objects ashore. The winds dissipated as suddenly as they arrived and we managed to paddle back to the ship on calm waters.

## **Yankee Harbour** – Distance: 6 km

The winds were up again as we launched for our final Antarctic paddle. Riding the wind into the bay was easy but made for a little extra work on the “uphill” side of the bay. We made a landing on the cobbled beach and wandered past an old try-pot from the earliest days of whaling before stopping to view the Gentoo’s with chicks on their nests. As the temperature dropped we made our way back to the boats and enjoyed a short, sheltered section of paddling before a bumpy crossing back to the ship.

## **DAY 10: At Sea**

## **DAY 11: Cape Horn** – Distance: 5 km

Surprisingly the weather was calm enough at Cape Horn for us to launch kayaks. We paddled directly for the coast to explore and quickly found an unmissable rock arch to paddle through. With the wind at our backs we approached the southern end of the island that forms the boundary between the Southern and Pacific oceans. The surging waves heaved in the distance, an indication of the size of the swells but with the winds low we pushed on past the collection of South American sea lions on the rocks and into the Pacific Ocean. Finding a line between the heaving rocks, we came to the Southern tip and paused for a photo with nothing but the ocean between us and Antarctica before turning back. We made land and celebrated the first recorded group paddle on Cape Horn. A fantastic way to finish the trip!

**DISTANCE PADDLED: 60 KILOMETRES IN 10 PADDLES**





# Ski Touring Log

by Tarn Pilkington

**Ski Touring Guides:** Tarn Pilkington and Kevin Nicholas

## **Skiers:**

Thomas Buchanan	April Lipson
Bernadette Lipson	Holly Lipson

## **DAYS 1-2: At Sea**

We meet on board the *Polar Pioneer*. The next days at sea are rough and there is a mix of people moving around or hunkering down in their cabins. There was a brief catch up on the first night before heading to bed. Over the next two days Tarn and Kevin moved from cabin to cabin doing gear checks and getting the equipment ready for the first day.

## **DAY 3: Aitcho Islands**

Good seas meant a landing in the South Shetlands was possible and we explore Aitcho and Barrientos Islands on our third evening. This was the first Gentoo penguin sightings for many.

**DAY 4: Cierva Cove** – Zodiac Cruise in the morning.

### **Two Hummock Island**

Our first foray onto a glacier - a steep initial slope in soft snow led to some broad glacial basins affording some fantastic views of the Bransfield Strait and the ship below at Hydurga Rocks. The descent was fantastic although the snow was a tad sticky but it was a great first day for the exercise and the views. On the return zodiac ride we were treated to some humpback whales showing off their tails.

## **DAY 5: Doumer Island**

The weather was overcast but the spirits were high and Kevin led the group ashore for a few laps on the lower slopes of Doumer Island. We then raced across to Port Lockroy to visit the historic English base before returning to the ship for lunch.

### **Georges Point – Ronge Island**

Inclement conditions saw the group battle onto a look out point below Tennant Spire. We had a quick foray around the saddle but the views were limited as the cloud and snow flew past.

## **DAY 6: Peterman Island**

Everyone snow shoed to the Adelie penguin colony in blustery weather.

### **Port Charcot**

A very blustery, snowy walk to the ridge top monument with variable visibility. The skiers joined the march for a quick round trip that everyone on the ship after a couple of hours.

## **DAY 7: Neko Harbour**

With better weather the group took a long Zodiac transit with Kasper to scope a new run further out in Andvord Bay. After a short steep slope, the glacier slopes above made for easy skinning with fantastic views. After an hour of ascent, the highpoint was reached and we descended to our start point. A new run was named – “Roscos”.

### **Waterboat Point**

Kevin took another long Zodiac ride with the skiers to Leith Cove for a tour on Leith Peak. Duchess Island – Overnight camping

## **DAY 8: Selvic Cove** – Christmas Day

It was an absolutely beautiful day for Christmas 2018. Justine took us on an 8km zodiac cruise to Selvic Cove. The skiers ascended to the ridge line where chinstraps were perched over-looking Orne Harbour. Two descents into the harbour and a cruise back to the ship for Xmas lunch.

**Wilhelmina Bay** – Ship Cruise – Killer Whale encounter on a stunningly calm day

## **DAY 9: Deception Island** – Box Day

April, Holly and Tarn race ashore and up to just below the summit of Mt Pond. The ash and rock of the volcano contrast with the white snow and makes for a very good (and fast) descent.

**Yankee Harbour** – It was an absolutely beautiful afternoon for our final tour. From the stony beach we skinned through an open basin up to a magnificent summit over looking Yankee Harbour to Livingston Island. The snow was good for a steep descent for several turns before opening out into the basin. All the way to the beach – a fantastic way to finish our last day in Antarctica.





# Snowshoeing Log

By Tarn Pilkington, Hilary Cave, Kevin Nicholas

**Snowshoe Guides:** Tarn Pilkington, Hilary Cave, Kevin Nicholas

## Snowshoers:

Jo Chambers	Marie O'Reilly	Paula Shepherd
Leigh Chambers	Angela Porter	Kaysan Verma
Aila Malik	Chris Rodgers	Kapil Verma
Alissa Oliveto	Jenny Rodgers	

## DAYS 1-2: At Sea

We meet on board the Polar Pioneer. The next days at sea are rough and there is a mix of people moving around or hunkering down in their cabins. We held a briefing on the third night to learn about snowshoeing, what to bring and what was in store for the following days.

## DAY 3: Aitcho Island

Good seas meant a landing in the South Shetlands was possible and we explore Aitcho and Barrientos Islands on our third evening. This was the first Gentoo penguin sighting for many.

## DAY 4: Two Hummock Island

Our first snow shoeing experience - a steep initial slope in soft snow led to some broad glacial basins affording some fantastic views of the Bransfield Strait and the ship below at Hydrurga Rocks. The first whales were sighted from above and the zodiac ride back to the ship gave some people an enchanting, close up encounter with Humpbacks.

## DAY 5: Jougla Point

An hour and a half lap through undulating terrain around Jougla Point. The improving weather enabled spectacular views of the Peltior Channel and mountains beyond. We finished our walk on the fast ice stepping across ice cracks to view some snoozing seals. We zodiaced across to Port Lockroy to visit the historic English base before returning to the ship for lunch.

Georges Point – Ronge Island (9 People). Windy conditions with wet snow saw the group have a quick foray out to the saddle above the glacier.



## DAY 6: Peterman Island

We snow shoed to the Adelie penguin colony in blustery weather.

## Port Charcot

A very blustery, snowy walk to the ridge top monument with variable visibility up. Some people commented that it was a personal highlight to venture out in stormy conditions.

## DAY 7: Neko Harbour

With better weather the group did a one - hour loop high above the harbour with some active icefall action keeping us entertained. Swimming Humpbacks as we returned to the awaiting ship were a highlight.

## Waterboat Point

A beautiful day unfolded for a wonderful walk to the glacier above the Chilean base Gabriel Gonzalez Videla. We were rewarded with spectacular views of Paradise Harbour and Lemaire Island. We watched the Chilean navy ship resupply the base here.

## DAY 8: Duchess Island – Overnight camping

### Danco Island

It was an absolutely beautiful day for Christmas 2018. Gentoos tended their chicks on the stony island top. We completed a nice loop to an alternative pick up was a highlight.

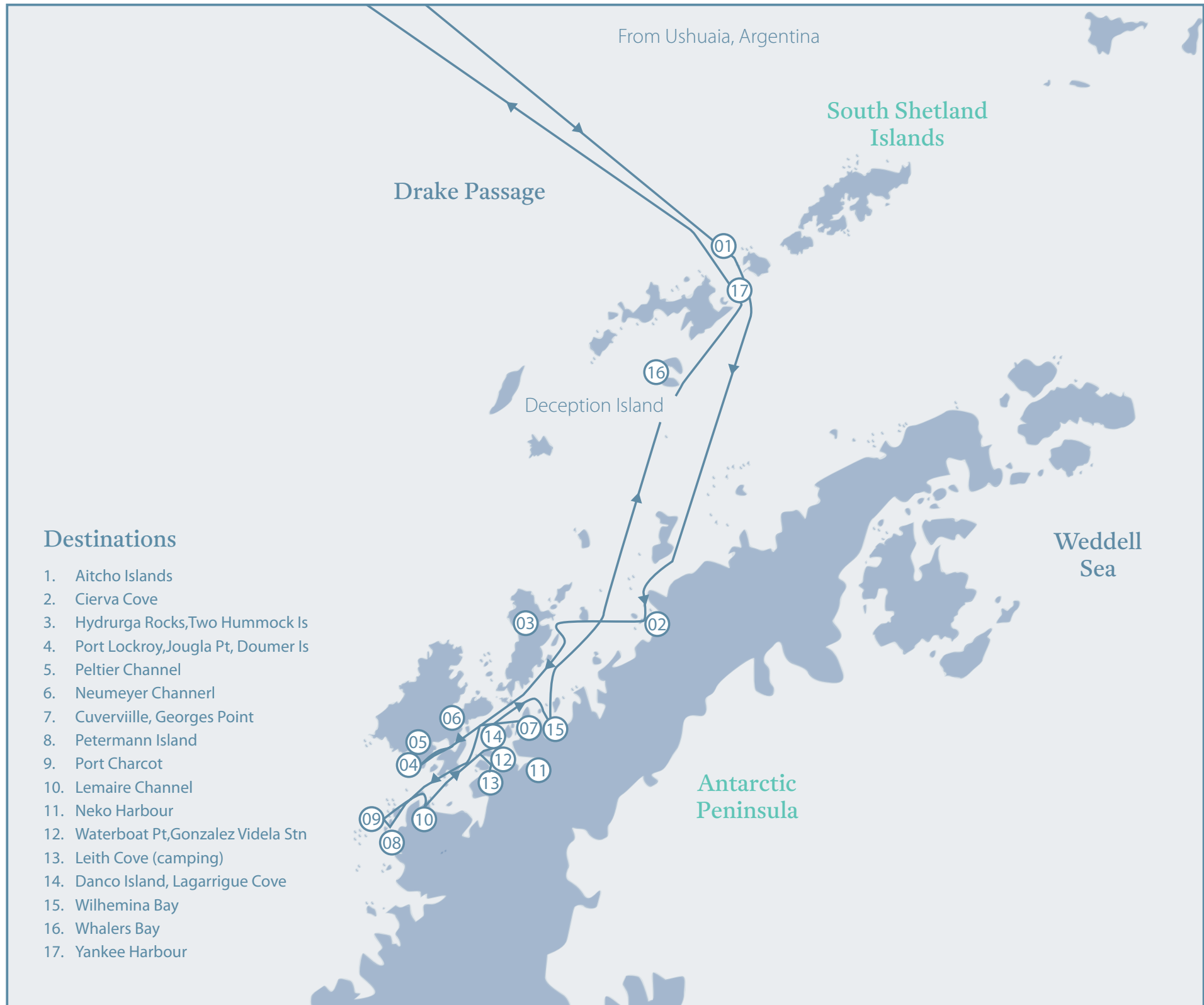
### Wilhelmina Bay – ship cruise





# Christmas in Antarctica Map

18 - 29 December 2018 | Distance Travelled: 1,763 nautical miles  
Southernmost point of voyage: Petermann Island 65°11', 64°07.2W











Brown Skua



Adelie penguin and chicks



Chinstrap penguin



Wandering Albatross



Adelie penguin and chicks



Giant Petrel



Gentoo penguin and chicks



Chinstrap penguin



Gentoo chick



Gentoo penguin



Chinstrap penguins



Light mantled Albatross





Humpback whales



Leopard seal



Humpback whale



Gentoo penguins



Elephant seal



Weddell seal



Crabeater seal



Gentoo penguins



Chinstrap penguins



## Expeditioners

Ania Baranek

Maree Bennie

Damian Bennie

Melissa Braden

Thomas Buchanan

Melissa Cavender

Jo Chambers

Leigh Chambers

Kristyna Dillon

Nick Evans

Kenny Huynh

Barb Jensen

Steve Jensen

Ian Jones

David Kaye

Michael Kearney

Rebecca Kearney

Julia Kearney

Sam Kearney

Alice Kearney

Brett Ladd

April Lipson

Bernadette Lipson

Holly Lipson

Bob Magor

Beryl Magor

Aila Malik

Alissa Oliveto

Marie O'Reilly

Megan O'Reilly

Angela Porter

Chris Rodgers

Jenny Rodgers

Mike Schetzel

Jen Scott

Tracey Seabrook

Paula Shepherd

Judy Simpson

David Simpson

Yvette Turner

Bill Turner

Anne Umbach

Kate Van Der Vaart

Peter Van Der Vaart

Allison Van der Vaart

Scott Varker

Karen Varker

Kapil Verma

Zayan Verma

Kenza Verma

Kaysan Verma

Sharon Zhang



## Expedition Team

Expedition Leader:	Stephen Anstee
Assistant E. Leader:	Justine Bornholdt
Naturalist:	Heidi Krajewsky
Doctor:	Judy Braga
Chef:	Allan Estoque
Second Chef:	Herbert Cruz
Hotel Manager:	Kathrine Ersando
Kayaking Guide:	Toby Story
Expedition Guide	Kasper Jaeger
Head Snowshoe & Ski Guide	Tarn Pilkington
Snowshoe & Ski Guide	Kevin Nicholas
Snowshoe Guide	Hilary Cave
Bar Tender & General Hand	Jack Alscher

## Polar Pioneer Crew

Captain	Vladimir Zimin
Chief Mate	Maxim Makarovskiy
Second Mate	Evgenii Aleksandrov
Second Mate	Anton Bogdanov
Radio Operator	Ilia Liamzin
Chief Engineer	Evgeny Pavlov
Second Engineer	Pavel Voronov
Third Engineer	Evgeny Petukhov
Fourth Engineer	Yurii Horobets
Electrical Engineer	Valentin Lomachenko
Boatswain	Alexandr Agafonov
Able Seaman	Vasilii Berlizev
Able Seaman	Igor Popp
Able Seaman	Aleksandr Litvinov
Able Seaman	Aleksei Okunkov

Head Stewardess	Natalia Pustovalova
Stewardess	Evgeniya Chemiris
Stewardess	Alena Antonova
Stewardess	Anastasiia Peregontseva
Stewardess	Iliana Koval
Stewardess	Roman Trushin
Russian Crew Chef	Petr Pustovalov

## Photo Credits

Stephen Anstee	Holly Lipson
Maree Bennie	Tarn Pilkington
Damian Bennie	Chris Rodgers
Justine Bornholdt	Judy Simpson
Thomas Buchanan	Paula Shepherd
Nick Evans	Toby Story
Kasper Jaeger	Yvette Turner
David Kaye	Bill Turner
Alice Kearney	Scott Varker
Michael Kearney	
Heidi Krajewsky	
Bernadette Lipson	

Ship's log compiled by Justine Bornholdt



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