



Expedition Log

## Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula

3<sup>rd</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009



*MV Grigoriy Mikheev was a research vessel used by the Russian Academy of Science, now under a long-term contract to Oceanwide Expeditions. The ship was built in Finland in 1990 and is an ice-strengthened vessel. The Mikheev is 210 feet (66 meters) long, has a draft of 12 feet (3.5 meters) and can reach a top cruising speed of 12.5 knots. The passenger capacity is 48, in addition there is a Russian crew of 19, three international hotel and catering staff, five international expedition guides and polar experts and one emergency doctor.*

With

**Captain Andrey Khoroshaylov  
and his Russian Crew of 18**

and

Expedition Leader – Rolf Stange (Germany)  
Guide/Lecturer – Maarten Loonen (Netherlands)  
Guide/Lecturer – Ditte Hendrichsen (Denmark)  
John Carruthers (UK)  
Robert Mileto (UK)  
Hotel Manager – Angel Quiroga-Iturralde (Spain)  
Head Chef – Marcelo Canel (Argentina)  
Sous Chef – Juan Almonaciel (Chile)  
Ship's Physician – Dr. Peter Thomas Nielsen (UK/Denmark)



And 43 of us from the UK and US

### 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 – Heathrow to Buenos Aires

Many of us met up at Heathrow early on New Years Day for what turned out to be an unremarkable couple of flights to Buenos Aires (via Madrid).

### 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 – Buenos Aires to Ushuaia

Grey with showers on arrival but brightening up later.

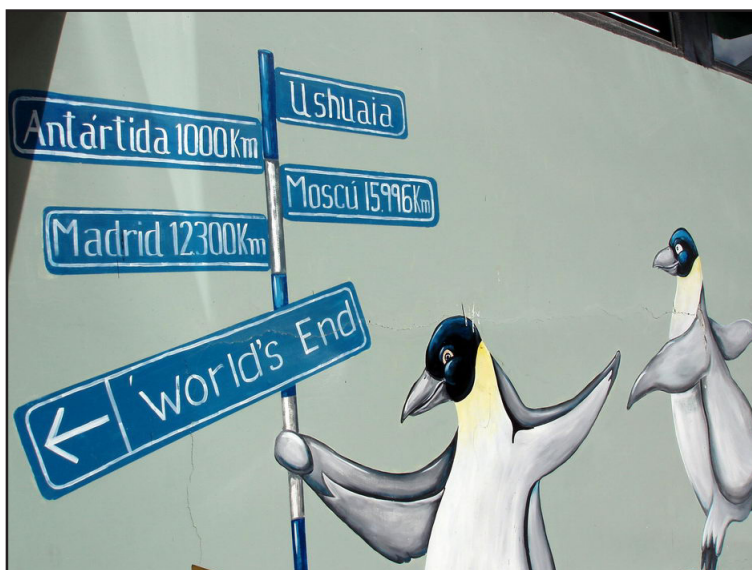
Having spent the night in a Buenos Aires hotel, it was back to the airport and onboard for the domestic flight to Ushuaia where we arrived at midday to be greeted by our local guide, Estefan. Having settled into our hotel and had a bite to eat, a late afternoon stroll to the bay gave us our first real taste of some of the local birds. Unsurprisingly, gulls were most evident, with the very smart Dolphin Gull most evident but larger Kelp Gull also seen. A couple of Kelp Geese posed obligingly on the shoreline as did a Flightless Steamer Duck. King Cormorants fished offshore whilst there cousins, the Rock Cormorants mostly roosted. Heading back to our hotel via a grassy area with trees, we had Chilean Swallow whizzing past our heads and, for some, glimpses of Black-chinned Siskin. Dinner was followed by a much needed long sleep.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2008 – Ushuaia / Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

Position 54°45' S / 68°30' W. Cloudy at first then sunshine

For most, the day was to be spent touring parts of the Tierra del Fuego National Park, with our local guides Estefan and Allesandro. Our first roadside stop provided a host of new birds including Chimango Caracara, Patagonian Sierra-finch and Rufous-collared Sparrow (and Black-chinned Siskin for those that had not yet seen it). Moving on to a small bay, there were a couple of very obliging Dark-bellied Cinclodes, as well as (allegedly) the most southerly post office in the world from which many sent a postcard. At the back of this bay was woodland where a woodpecker was heard....surely the star Magellanic Woodpecker that many were hoping to see. After a few tense minutes and playing of a call, two were spotted, but gave us the run around for a while before the male gave up the game and perched on a dead branch in clear view for many a minute. Later, roadside stops and a short walk gave us more excellent sightings including; Southern Widgeon, Austral Thrush, Austral Blackbird and a cracking view of a Black-chested Buzzard-eagle.

We were joined at our picnic lunch by Chimango Caracara and the stroll, post-lunch, brought us Thorn-tailed Rayadito and, for some, White-throated Treerunner. As ship departure time approached, we made a quick visit to the municipal rubbish tip where we picked up Turkey Vulture and White-throated Caracara as well as close up views of several of the other birds we had already seen.



*Ushuaia*

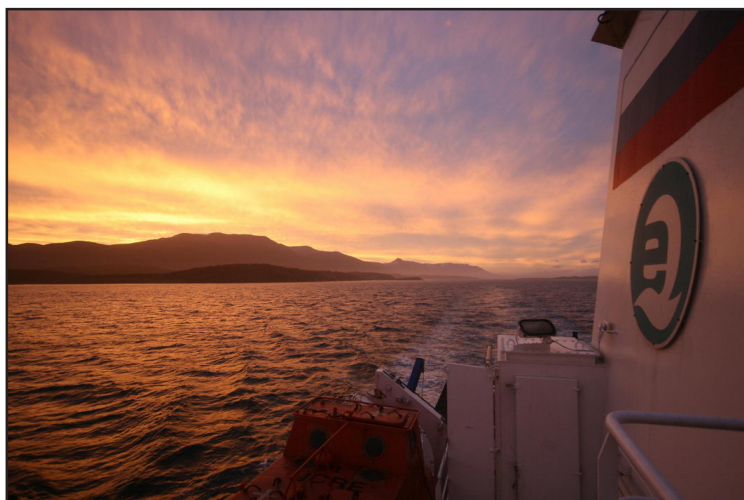
With a rapidly growing population of 55,000 people, **Ushuaia** is a flourishing duty free port with a fishing industry particularly famous for its crabs (centolla). There are other new industries, notably electronics. The new buildings and roads give the appearance of a latter day “frontier town” and one of the few remnants of the last century is a beautiful Victorian timber building right on the harbour. Its first owner purchased the so-called Casa Beban building through a catalogue over a hundred years ago. The museum in the former prison had a fascinating and well-arranged series of displays.



We boarded the good ship *Grigoriy Mikheev* at around 16:30 and were welcomed by the ship staff. We then had some time to find our cabins and unpack. Later, we met in the dining room for the first time, and Rolf Stange, our Expedition leader, gave us a short introduction to the staff and the ship, followed by a welcome from Angel Quiroga-Iturralde, our hotel manager. Rolf is trained as a geographer, and has thirteen years of experience as a tour guide and expedition leader in both the Arctic and the Antarctic. He had done this trip several times before, and knows many of the secrets and special places of



the islands we were going to see over the next few weeks. Both our on-board guides were biologists, specialising in polar biology. Maarten has many years of experience in polar science and is based every summer at the Netherlands Arctic station at Ny Ålesund on Spitsbergen, whereas Ditte works primarily in North-east Greenland, and has guided tours in Svalbard and Greenland. Peter, the ships physician was introduced, as was the chef and sous-chef, Marcelo and Juan. We did not get to meet them yet, as they were busy preparing our first dinner on board. Captain Andrey Khoroshaylov was still busy on the bridge, but we would see him later. He had an experienced crew of 18 Russian officers, sailors, engineers and service personnel on board.



*Evening light in the Beagle Channel.*

Shortly before leaving Ushuaia, the alarm sounded for the mandatory lifeboat drill, and soon after we found ourselves on the deck wearing our life jackets. We did not get to see the inside of the life boats, but the crew explained what supplies and emergency communication equipment was on board.

We set sail at around 19:30. Gliding down the Beagle Channel in fine weather, there were Giant Petrels (probably Southern), Magellanic Penguins, King and Rock Cormorants to be seen, as well as what were probably South American Sea Lions all set against a backdrop of peaks mottled with snow.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – En route to the Falkland Islands**

Position at 07.30h (GMT -3): 54°32' S / 64°38' W. 195 nm to West Falklands, speed 11.6 knots (nautical miles per hour) giving 17 hrs sailing to the Falklands. Air Temperature: 10°C, sunny

We spent all day on the open sea. As we woke, we could still see the faint outline of the South American coast, but it soon disappeared, and we were surrounded by ocean on all sides. Numerous birds had joined us or were busy feeding nearby (offering good photo opportunities in the bright sunlight). We managed to positively identify many including Southern Giant Petrel, Black-browed Albatross, Cape Petrel, Sooty and Great Shearwaters and Wilson's Storm Petrel. However, some, like the Prions, remained, for now, as only possibles (Slender-billed?).

The ship was rolling somewhat, but the weather was beautiful and many went to the top deck to 'watch the horizon' and to get some fresh air. Guided tours to the bridge were organised, where the Captain explained the function of all the different instruments and equipment (including the garlic!), how to read the maps and measure distances etc. In the afternoon Rolf gathered us all in the dining room for a briefing



*Enjoying a sunny day at open sea - Captain Khoroshaylov explains the instruments.*

on the plans for the next couple of days in the Falkland Islands, including how to behave near the wildlife. We were also briefed on the protocol when entering and leaving Zodiacs.

### **5<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Falkland Islands: West Point Island, Carcass Island.**

Position at 06:30 (GMT -3), 51°26' S / 60°47' W, approaching West Point Island

Air Temperature: 10°C, rain to start then cloudy and finally some sun

The first sensation after the wake-up call was the notion that the ship had reached calmer waters. Approaching West Point Island we were all eager to have a day full of wildlife viewing on land. Anchoring in a small natural harbour, we could see Magellanic Penguins everywhere: on the beach, all along the green hills and swimming past the ship. The landing jetty was awash with Kelp Geese and Upland Geese grazed nearby. Quickly spotted here were also a couple of the (Falklands) endemic Falklands Flightless Steamer Duck. The landscape (and the wet weather...) might resemble Scotland, but the bird life was clearly different! It was raining, but all of us were well dressed and prepared to go out. Our first zodiac landing was an easy one, onto a jetty with even a carpet provided. Some were taken by Land Rover across the island, but most opted to walk the mile or so and soon met up with several Striated Caracara, Turkey Vultures, Austral Thrushes and Long-tailed Meadowlarks. Heavy hail did not stop us. Arriving at the breeding colony, we slowly moved through the Tussac Grass, and stood eye-to-eye with Black-browed Albatross and Rockhopper Penguins less than a metre distant. The juvenile Rockhopper Penguins were completely wet and rather bedraggled and miserable looking, but as the rain eased and the sunny peeped out they soon dried and became their fluffy, happy selves again. Occasionally a Black-browed Albatross would lift itself from its raised nest cup and we'd glimpse various downy youngsters. Some of us caused a bit of a traffic jam for some of the Rockhopper Penguins which wanted to move across where we were standing, waiting patiently for their right of way. Some of the albatrosses were courting noisily, both partners moving simultaneous



*Mixed colony with Black-browed Albatrosses and Rockhopper Penguins on West-Point Island.*





*Jonny Rook coming for a tea at Napier's.*

and alternating between crossing their bills, taking a sleeping posture and fanning their tails. Strolling back to the jetty, some spot Magellanic Snipe and Falkland Pipit (and endemic race of the Correndera Pipit). Arriving back at the settlement we are all invited into the island owner's house (spookily topped with Turkey Vultures) for a superb spread of tea and cakes.

Post lunch we arrived at Carcass Island and were greeted by a very friendly pod of Commerson's Dolphins which seemed to play a game of chase the Zodiac. The beach landing also had a greeting party, this time the ridiculously tame Blackish Cincloides (known locally as the Tussac-bird). As this island is free of rats and cats, this, and other small bird species, have persisted here, whilst declining or become extinct on other islands where such predators have been introduced. A short walk brought us to Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins. The Magellanic were close-by and stand guard next to their breeding holes, the Gentoos were a touch more distant and moved in small groups to and from the sea. As well as penguins, we picked out a couple of the near endemic (to Falklands) Ruddy-headed Geese, in amongst the many Upland Geese, and a few Falkland Skuas wheeled overhead. Walking back to the landing beach, several of us virtually stumbled over a Magellanic Snipe with a chick. From there, most chose to stroll the mile or so up to the settlement and were rewarded with fine views of Magellanic and Blackish Oystercatchers, Grass Wren, and the (Falklands) endemic Cobb's Wren – as well as yet another beautifully presented high tea. In nice sunshine, we returned to the ship.



*Carcass Island: Walk along Port Pattison - Magellanic Penguins - Crested Duck - Falkland tea*



**6<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Gypsy Cove, Stanley**

Position at 06.30h (GMT -3): 51°34' S / 57°40' W, 12 nm to Stanley

Air Temperature: 10°C, calm, mostly cloudy, some rain-showers



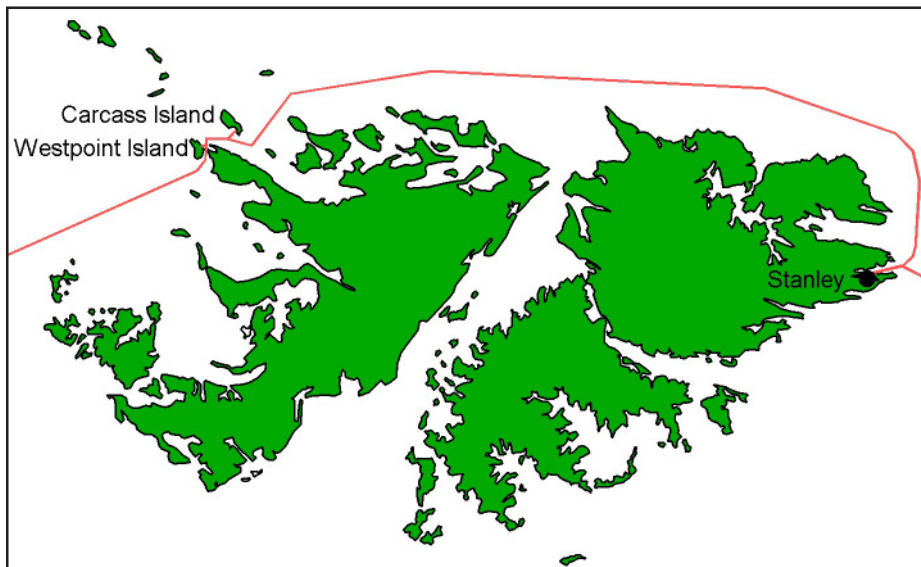
*Impressions from our excursion to Gypsy Cove.*

Upon arrival in Stanley we were picked up by bus and met our local guide, Arthur, who was going to introduce us to Gypsy Cove and the local wildlife. On the way out of Stanley, we passed a red London bus now used as tourist tour bus in town. First stop was the *Lady Elizabeth*, a proud ship, now standing in the shallow bay, a few minutes out of Stanley. On the slopes around us were several Long-tailed Meadow Larks as well as Falklands Flightless Steamer Duck and White-bellied Sandpiper on the shore. We continued the trip to Gypsy Cove, where we had our first sighting of a lone King Penguin (many more were to come later!). The beach at Gypsy Cove looked like something out of an advertisement for a holiday in the Caribbean, with endless, perfectly white beach and turquoise waters. Unfortunately, unexploded ordnance may still wash up on the beach, so it is strictly forbidden to paddle. We followed a trail along the coast, first through some fern with several breeding Magellanic penguins, later along cliff tops. Here, we saw breeding Black-crowned Night Herons on the cliffs, and a couple of South American Sea Lions came to have a closer look. From the top of the cliffs we could see our ship bunkering fuel in the neighbouring bay. We were back in Stanley by lunchtime, and had the afternoon off to explore the town on our own. In particular the museum, some 20 minutes walk from the centre, was popular. On display was a large selection of artifacts of life in the Falklands through time, whaling history and the Falkland conflict. There was also a nice little display on the natural history of the islands. Around five-ish the ship came to pick us up and we sat down for dinner as the Falklands disappeared behind us and we began the voyage towards South Georgia.

*Stanley: the three kings playing a bagpipe - on the way back home.*







*Our route in the Falkland Islands.*

### **7<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – En route to South Georgia**

Position at 07.30h (GMT -3): 52°09' S / 53°38' W. 150 nm from the Falklands, 575 nm to South Georgia  
Air Temperature: 11°C, calm, mostly cloudy

We woke up to the news from John, that a Wandering albatross was trailing the ship. Today was a full day at sea but everybody enjoyed the sun, the seabirds and life on board. After breakfast, Maarten gave a lecture on sea birds, focussing on the tubenoses. We learned about the distribution of rich food spots in the Antarctic Ocean and the adaptations of these birds to a life at sea. In the afternoon, Rolf explained about plate tectonics. He showed the existing evidence and explained about spreading centres, subduction zones and transform faults. In the second part of his lecture, he showed how Antarctica was formed and how glaciation here started only 30 million years ago with the opening of the Drake Passage between Antarctica and South America.



*Maarten Loonen talks about seabirds - hardships of a sea journey in the Southern Ocean.*

Seabirds came and went throughout the day and the decent weather allowed for the positive identification of many, including; Southern Royal Albatross, White-chinned Petrel, Black-bellied Storm Petrel and more unusually for these waters a Sooty Albatross (we have the photo evidence) and a Little Shearwater. On several occasions some distant whales were observed, some but possibly not all were humpbacks. In the evening after the birdlist, the first half of the film Shackleton about the life of this famous explorer was screened.



## 8<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – En route to South Georgia, Shag Rocks

Position at 07.30h (GMT -3): 53°01'S/46°17'W. Air temperature 10°C.

We were woken up by Maarten, who greeted us cheerfully with an individual 'good morning' to everybody on the ship. During the early hours we had passed the Antarctic convergence, the zone where cold water from the Antarctic ice meets the warmer waters further north, both being driven eastwards by the prevailing winds. In this area there is a sharp gradient in salinity, temperature and nutrients in the waters, and the zone is often rich in birds and whales. We spent most of the day on the decks and on the bridge, but only saw a few whale blows in the distance. Albatrosses glided gracefully around the ship. There were still a number of Black-browed Albatrosses around, but we also saw Wandering and Grey-headed Albatrosses, and an increasing number of fur seals, all indicating that we were approaching South Georgia. The day was an hour shorter, for we had the first of several time zone changes during our voyage. In the late morning, Ditte gave a presentation on the biology of penguins, introducing both the ones we had already seen on the Falklands as well as those that we might see in South Georgia and the peninsula. After lunch, Rob announced a bird identification session based on the photos taken on the trip so far. The bird identification session was interrupted by an announcement over the radio that there were Orcas in front of the ship. Everybody rushed to the decks, but only a few of us got a glimpse of them before they were gone.

Soon after, we all met in the dining room again, where Rolf introduced us to the plans for our visit on South Georgia. Due to the risk of introducing foreign species to the vulnerable ecosystem of South Georgia, the presentation also included instructions on the need to disinfect and clean all gear. The authorities on South Georgia take this seriously and we were all given the regulations in writing and asked to sign that we had read and understood them before we would be allowed to land on the islands.

After dinner we got a special treat. In the middle of the southern ocean are the Shag Rocks. The rocks form a small micro-continent of their own, being completely surrounded by oceanic crust. The birdlife on the rocks is rich, but they offer little else for passing ships, having no fresh water and nowhere to land. We passed them as the sun was setting and they looked somewhat dark and eerie, a few very steep rocks, sitting all alone in the ocean, far away from the nearest land. We were lucky to see them, usually they are passed in the middle of the night. In the evening we saw the second half of the film on Shackleton's expedition to Antarctica, the loss of the *Endurance* and the rescue to South Georgia.



*Shag Rocks.*

## 9<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – South Georgia - Elsehul

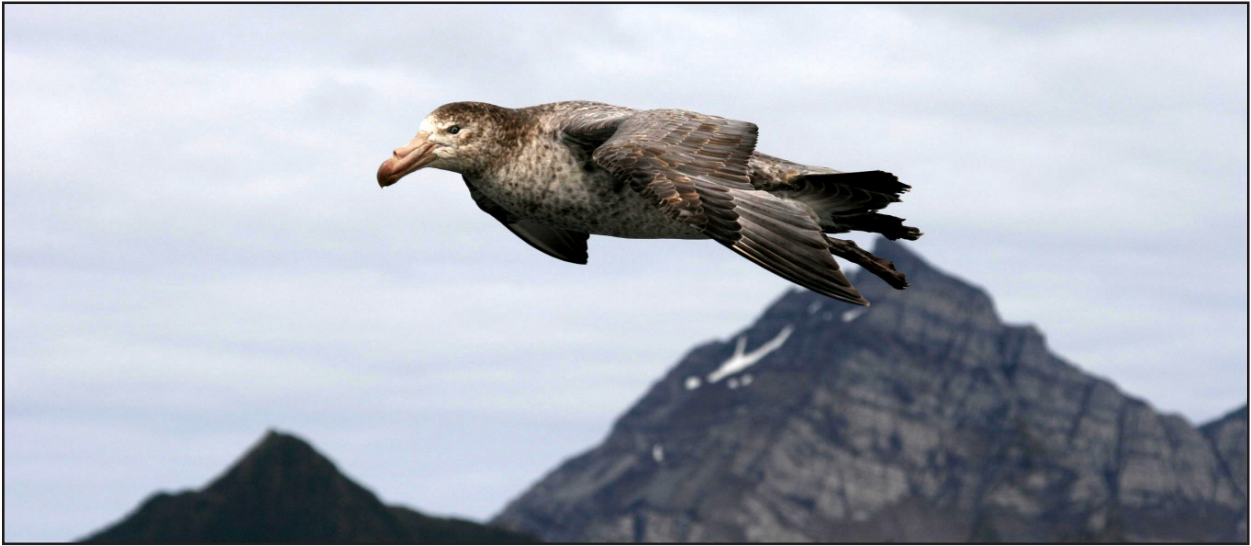
Position at 07.30h (GMT -2): 53°53' S / 38°57' W. 27 nm to South Georgia.

Air Temperature: 4°C, calm, overcast

Today's wake-up call was made by Ditte. With South Georgia and icebergs in sight, we quickly got out of bed. The number of birds around the ship had increased. We were sailing through groups of Antarctic Prions and Diving Petrels, passing the northwestern islands that belong to South Georgia, Willis Island and Bird Island, on our starboard side. Having made good time, we were able to embark on our first activity before lunch. At Elsehul we went for a zodiac trip. Five zodiacs entered the bay and followed the coastline. The beaches were packed with Antarctic Fur Seals and so unsuitable for landing. The pups were loudly



*Antarctic Prion.*

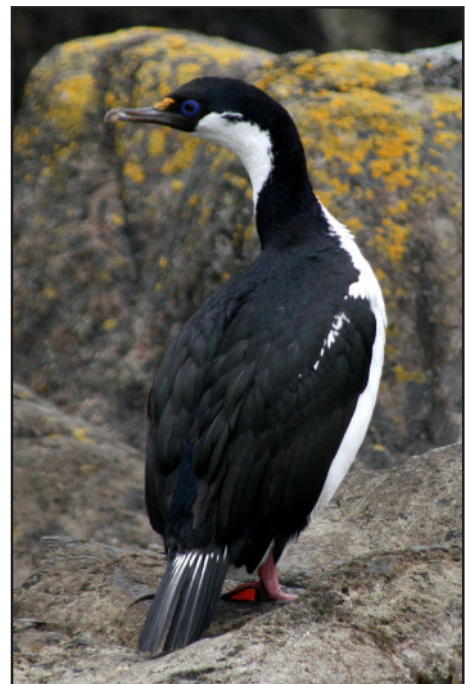


*Approaching South Georgia. Northern Giant Petrel with Bird Island in the background.*

asking for food and Snowy Sheathbills scavenged for scraps. We soon spotted two endemic species of this island, the South Georgia Pintail and the South Georgia Pipit.. Every beach also had groups of King Penguins. A large group of Cape Petrel was feeding in a kelp bed. The final part of the bay had a colony of rather comical Macaroni Penguins. Most of these were standing on the middle of a steep hill, which made us wonder how they got there. Some were close to shore and were targeted for beautiful close-up photos. The two hours in the Zodiac had quickly passed, but were also a bit chilly, so a hot drink on return to the ship was well in order.



*Light-mantled Sooty Albatross and South Georgia Shag in Elsehul*



After the lunch we moved on to a second landing site. It was the second largest King Penguin colony on South Georgia: Salisbury Plain. Although the beach is much larger than Elsehul, it was still tricky to find a landing spot where we were able to land without disturbing the fur seals on the beach. Moving in between them and King Penguins we were mostly ignored, except by some young seals that made impressive charges but quickly fled when we banged two pebbles together and counter charged! The penguins were fully at ease as we passed at a few metres distance. We also found some Elephant Seals which only winked their eyes at our passing. After a few hours and under sunny skys with hardly any breeze, we returned to our ship. After a delicious meal, we closed the day with our daily bird list.





*King Penguins who like visitors*



*King Penguins who like each other*

*Impressions from Salisbury Plain*

*"Can't you see I'm dangerous?"*

*King Penguins out for a walk*



**10<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – South Georgia: Fortuna Bay and the Shackleton Hike to Stromness, Grytviken**

Position at 06.30h (GMT -2): 54°31' S / 37°08' W

Air Temperature: 7°C, calm, cloudy, sun breaking through

For the first time during the voyage we had the chance to go on a proper hike. This opportunity was welcomed by about half of us. We strode the last section of the Shackleton crossing, about 7 km from Fortuna Bay over the highlands to Stromness. Upon landing on the beach in Fortuna Bay we were greeted as usual by a party of Antarctic Fur seals, hissing at us without being really serious. The lower slopes were lush and green, with plenty of tussocks, but as we climbed the slope the vegetation gradually gave way to grass and finally to barren land. Halfway up, we caught our first glimpse of the Reindeer, introduced by Norwegian Whalers in 1904. They were somewhat shy and ran off as we approached. Looking back we could see a magnificent view of the Fortuna Bay, the rugged mountain tops in the background and the massive König glacier. We saw a few Antarctic terns, and judging by their behaviour they were probably nesting near a small lake near the top of our hike. There was little vegetation, only mosses in sheltered areas around the streams. Rounding a corner, the Shackleton valley lay open in front of us with Stromness whaling station in the background, and the *Mikheev* anchored in the bay. The descent to the valley was steep, but manageable. Once down in the valley, a few of us went round the corner to have a closer look at the Shackleton waterfall, surrounded by a surprisingly lush and green vegetation.



*Starting the “Shackleton hike” in Fortuna Bay and descending down to Stromness.*

*Wildlife in Stromnes Bay: Antarctic Fur Seals and King Penguins.*



The other half of our group had stayed on the *Mikheev* while it sailed from Fortuna Bay to Stromness Bay, taking in the scenery and particularly to looking out for whales, which are usually plentiful in these waters, but not on this occasion.... This group spent their time exploring the Shackleton Valley. There were more reindeer, these more approachable, Gentoo penguins nesting in the hills, and on the beach hundreds of Antarctic Fur Seals basking in the sun, including a few white individuals. Near the shore there was a small paddling pool crammed with seal pups practising the art of swimming. We could see the old whaling station in the background, but due to the risk of asbestos and unstable buildings, we could not approach it closer than 200 metres.

In the afternoon we sailed to Grytviken, the first of the whaling stations on South Georgia, and one of largest. We landed on the beach near the graveyard – surely the only one in the world fenced in to prevent Fur seal invasion. Here Shackleton is buried, along with a number of Norwegian whalers and one of the first casualties from the war in 1982. True to tradition, our guides and hotel staff had brought rum and glasses ashore and we all sacrificed a small drop of rum onto Shackletons grave before giving a toast to his name. We then wandered along the beach towards the old whaling station. Several Southern Elephant Seals had to be negotiated on the way; they were basking on their backs and hardly winked at our passing. Moulting King Penguins were standing in the streams looking rather miserable. The moult takes up to three weeks during which they cannot go to sea to feed, and they loose up to 50% of their body weight during the moult. Grytviken whaling station has largely been preserved and due to a massive environmental clean-up of the place, it is possible to walk around the station and get an impression of how life was when the station was still in working order. Not least thanks to a number of informative signs with descriptions on the different processes, buildings and equipment. In 1913 a small Norwegian church was erected in Grytviken, and as we entered we saw the recent Christmas decorations and ‘Juleevangeliet’ – the Christmas gospel – on display. The Museum was a highlight of the visit with lovely displays of both the whaling history and the natural history of South Georgia. South Georgia Pintail dabbling along the shoreline was a welcome sight.





### *Grytviken*

*A combination of history and tradition, nature and wildlife, celebration and socialising with fellow passengers, staff, crew and scientists.*



Upon returning to the ship, we found the aft deck converted to a large barbeque and dance floor and our chefs were happily dishing out grilled meats and shrimp, together with a number of salads for the herbivores amongst us. Some of the staff from the British Antarctic Survey in Grytviken joined us, giving us a nice opportunity to chat with them and hear about the work and living conditions in South Georgia.

### **11<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – South Georgia: a lot of wind and Drygalski Fjord**

Position at 07.30 (GMT 02): 54°14'S/36°27'W, leaving Cumberland Bay.

Air Temperature 11°C, strong northerly breeze.

Over the night we had a steep drop in air pressure and the weather changed to a westerly storm. We had planned a trip to Hercules Bay to see more Macaroni Penguins and to Prion Island for nesting Wandering



*A change of the meteorological conditions that did not go unnoticed.*



*Glacier tongue in Drygalski Fjord.*

Albatrosses. Unfortunately this was impossible with these winds. Rolf decided to go around the south-east point of South Georgia and hoped for the best. During the morning, the wind picked up even more and with wind force 11 Beaufort gusting up to 12 Beaufort (hurricane force!), we passed Royal Bay. Sea spray was blown over the sea deck and we passed some spectacular ice bergs with plateaus almost 50 metres above sea level. The outer decks were off limit in this weather, as there was a risk of being blown off the ship.

During lunch, the Captain moved the ship closer to shore to make sure that all the food could be served without accidents. Our waitresses made an impressive display of how to balance trays full of porcelain in storm force winds. In the afternoon, the boat sailed into Drygalski Fjord where we saw our first stunning Snow Petrels and some spectacular glaciers on the steep sides of the fjord. Waterfalls cascading down from these were regularly blown upwards or vapourised, such was the strength of the wind. This weather did not permit any landing or access to the deck, so we sailed for the South Orkneys with very strong winds from starboard and rolling the ship. Many had their sea legs by now and were coping fine with the moving boat. In the evening the *Mikheev*-cinema opened for two episodes of the BBC documentary “Life in the Freezer” with David Attenborough.

#### **12<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – At sea, en route to South Orkneys**

Position at 07.30h (GMT -2): 56°13' S / 37°52' W, 345 nm to South Orkney

Air Temperature: 5°C, overcast, strong breeze from W

We were at open sea and a strong breeze had reduced our speed to 8.7 knots, so we still had 40 hours of sailing ahead of us before reaching the South Orkneys. Although the wind had calmed down a little during the night, we still had a wind of force 7, and a lot of swell, so the ship was rolling in all directions. However, almost everybody showed up for breakfast, and seemed to be in good spirits. We were warned not to walk bare footed on the ship, as the rolling frequently meant broken glass on the floor. Those early on the bridge spotted many a Blue Petrel. Later Ivan (aka Bill or William) presented a beautiful slideshow of wildlife in Norfolk through the seasons. Many of us spent the afternoon on the bridge watching the waves and the Albatrosses following us; Wandering, Black-browed, Grey-headed and Light mantled Sooty Albatross all made a showing. We also saw several blows of a whale (probably a Humpback) at a distance, but sadly it didn't come any closer.



*The crossing to South Orkney was partly a moving experience.*



In the late afternoon, Ditte gave a presentation on the seals of the Antarctic, summarising the biology of the fur seals that we had already seen, and introducing the ones we might hope to see further south. Despite being at open sea with more than 100 nm to the nearest land, we still saw several seals from the bridge, leaping out of the water. In the evening we watched another two episodes of the BBC documentary “Life in the Freezer” with David Attenborough, before heading off to a good nights sleep. The ship was rolling somewhat during the night, but we had the opportunity for a lie-in, as we had a time-change during the night, giving us an extra hour in bed.

### **13<sup>th</sup> January 2009 –South Orkneys**

Position at 07.30h: 59°28' S / 43°02' W

Air Temperature: 5°C

We woke in calmer weather but still in mid-ocean. During the morning, the ship passed 60 degrees southern latitude and we were for the first time within the area of the Antarctic Treaty. In the morning all the lecturers on board gathered to give a small recap on issues related to our visit to South Georgia. Rolf talked about the origin of the rocks which shapes the island. Ditte talked about the human history, especially whaling and sealing and John showed his pictures of the Shackleton Walk from Fortuna Bay to Stromness. Maarten explained the structure of the local marine food web and Rob showed pictures of a selection of the birds we had seen. This kept us busy for a while.

In the afternoon we saw some Humpback Whales and three Antarctic Minke Whales from the bridge. On our approach to the South Orkneys, the number of birds increased and our first Southern Fulmar was briefly spotted. The area around the islands was filled with spectacular icebergs. Most were sparkling white but some were elfish blue or green, colours originating from compression of ice or ice formation from salt water at the bottom of the glacier respectively. New for the trip, groups of Chinstrap Penguins porpoised around the ship as we approached the Argentine base Orcadas on Laurie Island. The base is built on a beach of cobble stones between a big glacier and a towering mountain. Since 1904, meteorological data has been gathered here, which makes it the longest on record of this part of the world. We landed with four Zodiacs on the southern beach and were welcomed by 5 Argentinians. Most huts were painted orange as were their coats.



*Iceberg near South Orkney*

*Laurie Island*





*Base Orcadas, Laurie Island: Argentine Base and inhabitant.*

On the southern beach we saw Fur Seals and Chinstrap Penguins, and hiding amongst them another new penguin, some five Adelies with their conspicuous white eye ring. The northern beach was full of ice blown ashore. We got a tour around the base and were welcomed with coffee and cake. Despite the hospitality, most of us experienced the place as a desolate village far away from the rest of the world. We returned to the boat in a fog which soon lifted and we passed some stunning icebergs, the largest being more than 2.2 nautical miles long. After dinner we added the two new penguin species to our bird list and we prepared for a Scottish dance on the ice.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Open sea, en route to the Antarctic Peninsula**

Position at 09.30h: 61°18' S / 49°05' W

213 nm to Joinville Island, speed 10 knots

Air Temperature: 4°C, fog, strong breeze from W

Today we probably had the latest wakeup call ever. To break the routine a little and for those who liked to spend some time in bed, our chefs had prepared a brunch. Some of us were on the bridge from early morning, but the visibility was poor due to the fog. In the afternoon, Maarten gave a presentation on the human impact in Antarctica, touching upon issues such as invasive species, climate change and fishing. With a westerly breeze and quite a swell, the ship was rolling but we had all learned to negotiate stairs and cups by now. In the late afternoon we all gathered in the dining room again, as Penny had volunteered Peter (!) for a slide show on their recent trip to Kamchatka, complete with descriptions of Russian architecture, mating bears and the difficulties of different time zones. A few Cape Petrels were following the ship, but sadly nothing that we hadn't already seen.

After dinner, Rolf presented the plans for the next couple of days on the Peninsula. We were all greatly looking forward to getting off the ship for a while.

*Tabular iceberg in the northwestern Weddell Sea.*





## 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Arriving at the Antarctic Peninsula

Position at 07.00h: 63°02' S / 55°28' W

5 nm to Joinville Island, 14 nm to Larsen Channel

Air Temperature: 3°C, mostly cloudy

In the morning, we arrived at the Antarctic Peninsula through the Larsen Channel, between two large icecaps on the islands of Joinville and D'Urville and full of ice bergs and our first Leopard Seal. The channel was up to one nautical mile narrow and very scenic, although partly obscured by low clouds.



*Larsen Channel*

Our desired destination was Hope Bay and a landing at the Argentinian base Esperanza. Unfortunately, the local commander was on an inspection tour and was unable to receive us or to grant us permission for a short landing.

So we continued our course to View Point rounding Tabarin Peninsula. The landing at View Point was our first landing on the Antarctic continent. This was a good opportunity for a group picture. We took two photos: the first as a tourist group, the second laying claim by holding the British Ensign- revenge on the base commander of Esperanza. We found nesting Kelp Gull and Subantarctic Skua. Antarctic terns were flying around but we did not observe any territoriality. Apart from the two small huts and a nice little walk to the top, there was little more that kept us on land, but it was good to have finally touched the seventh continent.



*Hope(less) Bay*

Before returning to the ship, Ditte and Maarten updated their skills on Zodiac shuttling and we all returned aboard with a satisfied feeling.

*View Point lives up to its name - a real piece of continental crust of Antarctica!*





*Beak Island and its few inhabitants.*

After dinner, we went for an extra landing at Beak Island. This was also not a place with much wildlife but it will always be remembered as the location of our Scottish dancing. After some practice runs on the boat, we danced commemorating the story of the Piper and the Penguin. A small walk over the island gave us a view of some Crabeater Seals and a small lake. Another group went to the other side of the island, followed by about eight angry skuas. We found a few Gentoo Penguins and Antarctic terns. A bit farther away was a large freshwater lake, but we did not approach it, not wanting to disturb the fragile ecosystem of the isolated lake. We were fascinated by the impression of desolation that this island made on us and were back on our ship at 22:30.

#### **16<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Devil Island, Brown Bluff**

Position at 06.30h: 63°33' S / 57°22' W

Drifting in ice near View Point

Air Temperature: 7°C, cloudy



*Crabeater Seals*

Rolf woke us up shortly before 06:30 with an announcement that the ship was surrounded by ice and seals, and those who wanted a closer look should get up before we lifted the anchor. Despite the immediate displeasure of having to get out of bed earlier than planned, it certainly was worth it. During the night ice had drifted into the bay, and the ship was completely surrounded by brash ice and newly formed ice floats. The sky was grey and cloudy, emphasising the blue in the ice. We saw Crabeater Seals on several of the ice floes, some went into the water at our approach, others hardly lifted their heads when we sailed past them. We sailed on to Devil Island, 63°33' S / 57°23' W, and were ready to board the Zodiacs shortly after breakfast. We cruised around between

the small ice bergs for a while. New snow covered the ice, and the shapes and colours were beautiful. From a distance we could see that the coast line on Devil Island had a number of large pinkish areas, and as we approached we realised that they were the sites of the Adelie penguin colony. A large one! Although not one of the largest, according to our expedition leader. We spent some time to cruise around the icebergs that were stranded in the shallow waters near the island and then landed on the beach, in the middle of a penguin rush hour with penguins going to and fro. They seemed to gather in large groups on the coast, none of them keen to be the first one in the water, then suddenly the entire groups leapt in the water at once. We slowly moved up the hill between two sections of the colony. Some of us went for a hike to the top of one of the hills, others stayed around the colony. As long as we didn't approach too closely the penguins didn't seem to mind. Most of the penguin chicks were relatively old, some already moulting, but a few were still young,





*Impressions from Devil Island - an Antarctic dream!*

and from what we had learned about penguins by now we knew that they had little chance of surviving. Adelie penguins often lay two eggs, but the parents will always feed the stronger and bigger chick first. This ensures that in bad years, at least one of the young stands a chance of surviving. Towards the end many of us strolled to the far end of the colony, where an albino chick was standing together with all the normally coloured, grey chicks.

After Devil Island, we set sail towards Brown Bluff, but as we were passing Fridtjof Sound, suddenly Marteen's voice sounded over the loudspeakers that an Emperor Penguin had just been seen on an ice floats. While we all rushed to the deck, the ship circled back. It turned out to be a juvenile one, easily recognisable, even without the bright yellow markings of the adults.

We concluded the day's sightings of unusual penguins at Brown Bluff with a adult isabelline Adelie penguin, still with the markings of a darker back, but blond instead of black. Brown Bluff offered several new photo opportunities, as the beach was littered by ice blocks, the penguins making their way between or over them on their way to and from the colony. On the outskirts of the colony a few Kelp Gulls were nesting, the chicks posing in the rocks. It was windy and cold, and somewhat difficult to hold the Zodiacs





*(Upper left) Isabelline Adelie Penguin, Brown Bluff*

*(Upper right) Juvenile Emperor Penguin, Fridtjof Sound*

*(Lower left) Adelie Penguin Chick, Brown Bluff*

*(Lower right) Who said Penguins don't fly? Brown Bluff*

steady on the beach, but we all made it safely back to the warmth of the ship where a warm and well-prepared dinner was awaiting us.

### **17<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Trinity Island, Cierva Cove, Gerlache Strait, Wilhelmina Bay**

Position at 07.00: 63°43'S/60°W, sailing south in Orleans Strait, 30 nm to Mikkelsen Harbour

Nice, sunny, blue sky, white coasts, calm water, some drifting ice fields. Air Temperature: 3°C

Overnight, the weather improved and we woke up with bright sunlight and clear blue sky. With hardly any wind, the water was flat and Humpback Whales were seen before breakfast. There were very few birds around the ship, except some penguins and an occasional skua. We were sailing to the southern end of Trinity Island to a small island in Mikkelsen Harbour. Though the air temperature was just 3 degrees Celsius and the water temperature only 0 degrees, the sun felt warm during our landing on a small island in front of the glaciers. The island was full of Gentoo Penguins. The parts still covered with snow contained "Penguin highways", hollowed out tracks full of Gentoo traffic. There was an old hut with penguins nesting on the doorstep and behind the hut, whale bones as leftovers of another era. Both beaches held a Fur Seal male as true beachmasters but without any harem to their possession. The Gentoo Penguin chicks were small, with only a 1/3 towards fledging. The general activity within the colony was much lower than it had been in the Adelie Penguin colony we had visited the previous day. What was planned as a short morning landing became a full morning activity in nice sunny weather. Rolf and Ditte went for a short but very courageous ocean swim.

Before and after lunch we went whale watching in the Gerlache Strait. We were seeing them on all sides, and the boat kept making circles at slow speed to get close to them. We saw many tail flukes, some flippers but the most exciting view was a whale passing right in front of the bow under water with a powerful stroke of its tail fluke. Another two whales swam for a moment right next to the ship, beautifully showing the white of their bellies and flippers in the clear water.





*Wildlife & scenery at Mikkelsen Harbour, Trinity Island.  
Gentoo Penguins - Antarctic Shag - Gentoo Penguin - Homo sapiens turisticus*

*Humpback Whale in Orleans Strait - Leopard Seal in Cierva Cove  
Enjoying Antarctica - Angel serving hot chocolate. Cierva Cove*







*Scenery at Wilhelmina Bay, 60°40'S*

The ship brought us into Cierva Cove, where we made a Zodiac cruise surrounded by glaciers. With 5 Zodiacs, we went into a field of brash ice and many small and some larger icebergs. On four occasions we found an ice flow with a Leopard Seal on it, which did not want to end its sun bath. One of the Leopard Seals was tagged with a light blue tag in each tail flipper. The cruise continued along some icebergs. One had a light blue cove in it, the other was rounded with lines, and the third had melted into some kind of sculpture. Returning to our ship, we were welcomed by Angel with some warming hot chocolate and rum. While the cruise continued through the Gerlache Strait, we were again surrounded by Humpback Whales. Two whales even breached out of the water.

Later we saw a small group of Humpback Whales bubble fishing, coming out of the bubble curtain only a few metres from the side of the ship. Dinner was a wonderful meal but eaten quickly as there was more whale watching to be done as we approached Wilhelmina Bay in the evening sun. Wilhelmina Bay seemed impossible to cross, but the captain navigated us through the narrow passage to the most southern latitude of our trip: 64 degrees 40 minutes south.

### **18<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – Deception Island, Halfmoon Island**

Position at 06:54h: 63°13' S / 60°40' W

12 nm to Deception Island,

Overcast, reduced visibility, calm, Air Temperature: 5°C

Rolf woke us up announcing that we were approaching Deception Island, an old collapsed – but still active – volcano (a structure called “caldera”), now forming an almost completely closed bay, Port Foster, encircled by a rim of volcanic ashes covered with glaciers on the top. As we approached it looked dark and gloomy in the overcast weather. Sailing through the narrow entrance known as Neptune’s Bellows involved some tricky navigation as there is a large underwater rock in the middle, Raven Rock, which had already pierced more than one hull. We landed in Telefon Bay and went for a walk on the lava sand beach, climbing one of the hills to get the view of the bay. The landscape was a stark contrast to the brilliant sunshine on the glaciers in the Gerlache Strait yesterday: blackish, completely barren with a few dirty snow patches here and there, all looking even gloomier in the falling snow. As we had sailed out of Neptune’s Bellows we passed the large Chinstrap colony at Baily Head, but apart from a few leaping penguins in the water we did not see much of them because the clouds had come even further down.



*Entering Deception Island through Neptune’s Bellows - hiking in Telefon Bay.*





*Lucky shot of a Wilson's Storm Petrel - Chinstraps are not the world's cleanest Penguins*

*Our final Antarctic impressions, Halfmoon Island*

*Scenery and wildlife on Halfmoon Island were a clear photographer's delight!*



The last landing of the trip provided by far the dirtiest penguins yet seen. We landed on Halfmoon Island in the South Shetlands, to visit a breeding colony of Chinstrap Penguins. The weather was undecided, changing between rain and spells of sun. Chinstraps were constantly on the move over the beach and rocks climbing to the colony. Since their movement on land seem to involve a lot of effort, stumbling, hopping and climbing, it was remarkable how high some of the climbed to nest. Some of the personnel of the nearby Argentinean station paid us a visit inviting us to the base for some postcard writing and passport stamping, but we gracefully declined so we could enjoy our last landing for as long as possible. We then went back to the Mikheev and prepared for the Drake Passage. Shortly after dinner we left English Strait and the ship started to roll in the swell.

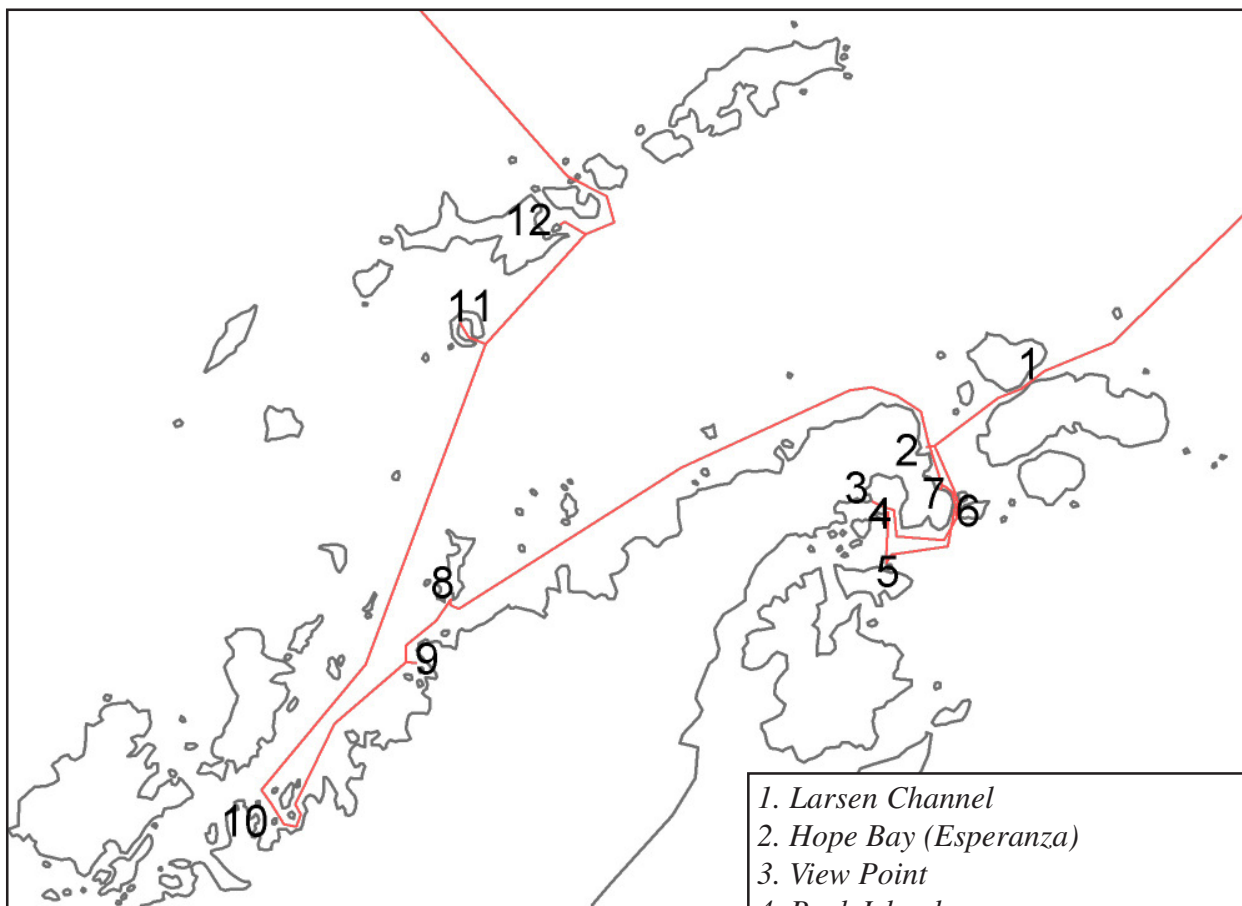
#### **19<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – En route to Ushuaia, crossing the Drake Passage**

Position at 07:30h : 60°11' S / 61°53'W, 350 nm to the Beagle Channel

Overcast, clear, no wind, some swell. Air Temperature: 10°C

All night, we rocked in our beds while the boat was made good progress. "John-from-the-bridge" did the morning call and reported calm weather, clear visibility, no birds and a bit of a swell. We were on our way crossing the Drake Passage. Moving through the ship was difficult, but we were getting used to that. Bird watching was not very productive and after our passage of 60° S, a morning programme with several talks was offered. Rolf talked about the geology of Deception Island. Ditte showed us adaptations of animals and plants to polar life. Maarten showed data on the amount of seeds, fungi and small insects brought to Antarctica by national research programmes and tourists. John and Rob closed the session with some nice pictures on mammals and birds observed during our stay around the Peninsula.

The Drake remained in good mood for the rest of the day, and after lunch we joined Rolf for a talk about



1. Larsen Channel
2. Hope Bay (Esperanza)
3. View Point
4. Beak Island
5. Devil Island
6. Fridtjof Sound (Emperor)
7. Brown Bluff
8. Mikkelsen Harbour
9. Cierva Cove
10. Wilhelmina Bay (60°40'S)
11. Deception Island  
(Neptune's Bellows, Telefon Bay)
12. Halfmoon Island

glaciers and later again Maarten who looked at Antarctica from a heavenly perspective, touching issues such as southern stars, polar lights and ozone.

The last parts of *Life in the Freezer* rounded the day off.

#### **20<sup>th</sup> January 2009 – En route to Ushuaia, crossing the Drake Passage**

Position at 07:30h : 56°26' S / 65°17' W

100 nm to the Beagle Channel

Overcast, force 7-8 (Beaufort) from NW. Air Temperature: 8°C

The wind had picked up considerably since yesterday evening to a solid force 7 or 8 on the Beaufort scale - nothing extraordinary in the screaming sixties and furious fifties of the southern hemisphere, but enough to give us a good impression why the Drake Passage had its bad reputation, and many of us spent most of the night holding on to anything solid excluding only solid sleep.

But we had all grown our sea-legs since we had left Ushuaia a long time ago, and breakfast was well attended, and so were the talks that were offered during the day. Ivan Williams invited us once again for some of his marvellous photos and explanations, focussing on *wildlife on the North Sea coast*, followed by Ditte who gave us an overview of *research in Antarctica*. In the afternoon, Rob briefed us about the exciting subject of *our journey back home*. Meanwhile, we were in the protection of the south American coast, approaching the Beagle Channel and thus enjoying calmer waters.

After a last, good *Mikheev*-dinner, Rolf invited us one last time to the lecture hall for a final highlight that he had chosen to call "*what have we done?*", a photographic recap of our remarkable journey, a slideshow highlighting an amazing 19 days from the Beagle Channel via the southern Ocean islands of the Falklands, South Georgia and South Orkney, culminating around the northern Antarctic Peninsula. It was hard to believe that we had done and seen this all within such a short time!





*The dreaded Drake Passage in average mood - living up to its bad reputation ...*

## **21<sup>st</sup> January 2009 – Ushuaia**

Position at 07.30: 54°50'S / 68°20'W

Temperature: a lot warmer than Antarctica!

In the early hours of the morning, the *Grigoriy Mikheev* reached the pier in Ushuaia and our long journey in the Southern Ocean came to an end. We left our luggage outside our cabins ready for collection and had our last breakfast together, then went down the gangway for the last time, saying farewell to our fellow travelers and our hotel and expedition team who had been looking after us for the past days. Some of us left directly for the airport and further connections home, while others headed for hotels and tours in South America.

We had covered a respectable area of the Southern Ocean, had experienced the warmth and welcoming atmosphere of the Falklands, the rugged and windswept coasts of South Georgia, and the icy splendor of Antarctica. But the next adventure was already waiting for us: South America welcomed us again in the charming and colorful “frontier town” of Ushuaia!

**Thank you for travelling with us on board MV *Grigoriy Mikheev*  
and for keeping the good spirit on board, in the Zodiacs and out there in the wild!  
We wish you a safe journey home and hope to see you again, anywhere between the poles!**

**Total length of this trip: 3 419 nm = 6 332 km = 3 935 statute miles**

**For further information, please visit**

**<http://www.oceanwide-expeditions.com>**

**and**

**<http://www.naturetrek.com>**

Log compiled by: Ditte Hendrichsen, Maarten Loonen.  
Proofreading and additional text: John Carruthers, Rob Mileto.  
Images, maps, layout and final mistakes: Rolf Stange

**This log can be downloaded with colour photographs from <http://www.spitzbergen.de>**

## Appendix 1. Presentations

date	Title	Lecturer
3/1	Introduction to staff and ship	Rolf
4/1	Excursion on the bridge	Rolf and Captain
4/1	Introduction to the Falklands	Rolf
7/1	Seabirds; life at sea	Maarten
7/1	Plate tectonics and the formation of the Southern Ocean	Rolf
8/1	Penguins	Ditte
8/1	Introduction to South Georgia	Rolf
12/1	Seals	Ditte
12/1	Wildlife of Norfolk	Ivan Williams
13/1	Recap on South Georgia	Rolf, Ditte, Maarten, John & Rob
14/1	Human influence in Antarctica	Maarten
14/1	Kamchatka – Birds, landscape, timechanges and other excitements of the Russian far east.	Peter
15/1	Naturetrek to Namibia	Rob
19/1	Naturetrek to Spitsbergen	John
19/1	Recap on the Antarctic Peninsula	Rolf, Ditte, Maarten, John & Rob
19/1	Glaciers	Rolf
19/1	Antarctica from a "heavenly" perspective – stars of the southern sky, magnetic and other poles, polar light, ozone etc	Maarten
20/1	Wildlife of the British North Sea coast	Ivan Williams
20/1	Antarctic Research	Ditte

Additionally, the BBC documentary "Life in the Freezer" and "Shackleton" (featuring Kenneth Brannagh) were shown.

## Appendix 2. Quotations used on the daily programmes during our voyage

03 January (Ushuaia)

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step

*Lao Tse*

04 January (At sea)

Great things have small beginnings

Sir Francis Drake (1540 –1596)

05 January (East Falkland)

There are no native trees, ... the fauna is varied, interesting and remarkably tame

The Lonely Planet Guide to Antarctica. (1996),

referring to the Falkland Islands

06 January (West Falkland)

Islands lost

In the midst of the sea

Forgotten

In an angle of the World

-where the waves

cradle

abuse

embrace...

Jorge Barbosa



07 January (At sea)

He who commands the sea has command of everything  
Themistocles

08 January (At sea)

The ocean area, from 40°S latitude to near the Antarctic circle, has the strongest sustained westerly winds found anywhere on earth. The highest frequency of gales is reported between Longitude 20° and 60°E, north of the Ross and Weddell Sea, and the approaches to the Drake Passage. Interaction between the frigid air coming off Antarctica and the relatively warm and moist air from the lower latitude ocean areas, creates the cyclonic 'Roaring Forties' storms. They make the region from 40° to 60°S one of the stormiest areas in the world. The main course of these cyclones is from east to west around the periphery of Antarctica  
The Antarctic Pilot 1974

09 January (South Georgia)

Visually and emotionally, the island of South Georgia overwhelms.  
At first glance, it resembles the far South Atlantic branch of Dr Doolittle's fantastic zoo: a profusion of captivating animals that quickly transforms even the most discriminating observer into a raving anthropomorphic.  
Ron Naveen - Wild Ice

10 January (South Georgia)

Men wanted for hazardous journey, small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful.  
Honour and recognition in case of success.  
Sir Ernest Shackleton advertisement for crew to head South

11 January (South Georgia)

I now belong to a higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the Albatross  
Robert Cushman Murphy

12 January (At sea)

For sheer downright misery give me a hurricane, not too warm,  
the yard of a sailing ship, a wet sail and a bout of sea sickness  
Apsley Cherry-Gerrard (who sailed South with Captain Robert Falcon Scott)

13 January (South Orkney)

Beyond 40°S is no law, beyond 50°S is no God  
Whalers Saying

14 January (At sea)

Antarctica is still very difficult to reach. The most isolated continent, it must be earned, either through a long, often uncomfortable ship voyage, or an expensive airplane flight. Weather and Ice - not clocks or calendars set the schedule.  
Antarctica - Lonely Planet Travel Guide (1996)

15 January (Antarctic Peninsula, eastern side)

The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around.  
*It cracked and growled and roared and howled like noises in a swound.*  
Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
From the Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner

16 January (Antarctic Peninsula, eastern side)

I have often had the impression that to penguins, man is just another penguin - different, less predictable, occasionally violent,  
but tolerable company when he sits still and minds his own business.  
Bernard Stonehouse in his book 'Penguins'

17 January (Antarctic Peninsula, western side)

Glittering white, shining blue, raven black,  
in the light of the sun the land looks like a fairy tale.  
Pinnacle after pinnacle, peak after peak,  
crevassed, wild as any land on our globe,  
it lies, unseen and untrodden.  
Roald Amundsen, describing the Antarctic Peninsula

18 January (South Shetlands)

We owe some of the most beautiful and interesting shoreline scenery  
to the sculpting effect of moving water  
Rachel Carson

19 January (Drake Passage)

Strange: There is always sadness on departure.  
It is as if I cannot after all bear  
to leave this bleak waste of ice, glaciers, cold and toil  
Fridtjof Nansen

20 January (Drake Passage)

I am the albatross that waits for you at the end of the earth.  
I am the forgotten soul of the dead sailors who crossed Cape Horn  
from all the seas of the world.  
But they did not die in the furious waves.  
Today they fly in my wings to eternity in the last trough of the Antarctic wind.  
Sara Vial - Poem inscribed on the albatross sculpture at Cape Horn

21 January (Ushuaia)

A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike.  
And all plans, safeguards, policies and coercion are fruitless.  
We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip; a trip takes us.  
John Steinbeck

Appendix 3. list of bird and mammal species seen during our voyage.

A detailed day-per-day account will be published on the Naturetrek website.

	MAMMAL SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME				
1	Antarctic Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>				
2	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>				
3	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaengliae</i>				
4	Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>				
5	Peale's Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus australis</i>				
6	Commerson's Dolphin	<i>Cephalorhynchus commersoni</i>				
7	Weddel Seal	<i>Leptonychotes seddelli</i>				
8	Crabeater Seal	<i>Lobodon carcinophagus</i>				



	BIRD SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME			BIRD SPECIES	SCIENTIFIC NAME
1	Great Grebe	<i>Podiceps major</i>		51	Flightless Steamer-Duck	<i>Tachyeres pteneres</i>
2	White-tufted Grebe	<i>Rollandia rolland</i>		52	Falklands Flightless St' Duck	<i>Tachyeres brachydactyla</i>
3	Wandering Albatross	<i>Diomedea exulans</i>		53	Flying Steamer-Duck	<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>
4	Southern Royal Albatross	<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>		54	Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle	<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>
5	Black-browed Albatross	<i>Diomedea melanophrys</i>		55	Striated Caracara	<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>
6	Grey-headed Albatross	<i>Diomedea chrysostoma</i>		56	White-throated Caracara	<i>Polyborus albogularis</i>
7	Light-mantled Sooty Albatross	<i>Phoebetria palpebrata</i>		57	Crested Caracara	<i>Polyborus plancus</i>
8	Sooty Albatross	<i>Phoebetria fusca</i>		58	Chimango Caracara	<i>Milvago chimango</i>
9	Northern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes halli</i>		59	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
10	Southern Giant Petrel	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>		60	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
11	Southern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialoides</i>		61	Magellanic Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>
12	Cape (Pintado) Petrel	<i>Daption capense</i>		62	Blackish Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ater</i>
13	Snow Petrel	<i>Pagodroma nivea</i>		63	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
14	Soft-plumaged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>		64	Two-banded Plover	<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>
15	Great-winged Petrel	<i>Pterodroma macroptera</i>		65	White-rumped Sandpiper	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>
16	Blue Petrel	<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>		66	Magellanic (South American) Snipe	<i>Gallinago paraguaiiae</i>
17	Antarctic Prion	<i>Pachyptila desolata</i>		67	Snowy (Pale-faced) Sheathbill	<i>Chionis alba</i>
18	Slender-billed Prion	<i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>		68	Falklands (Subantarctic) Skua	<i>Catharacta antarcticus antarcticus</i>
19	Fairy Prion	<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>		69	Subantarctic Skua	<i>Catharacta antarcticus lonnbergi</i>
20	White-chinned Petrel	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>		70	South Polar Skua	<i>Catharacta maccormicki</i>
21	Great Shearwater	<i>Puffinus gravis</i>		71	Chilean Skua	<i>Catharacta chilensis</i>
22	Sooty Shearwater	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>		72	Dolphin Gull	<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>
23	Little Shearwater	<i>Puffinus assimilis</i>		73	Kelp Gull	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
24	Wilson's Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites oceanites</i>		74	South American Tern	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>
25	Grey-backed Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanites nereis</i>		75	Antarctic Tern	<i>Sterna vittata</i>
26	Black-bellied Storm Petrel	<i>Fregatta tropica</i>		76	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
27	White-bellied Storm Petrel	<i>Fregatta grallaria</i>		77	Austral Parakeet	<i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>
28	Common Diving Petrel	<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>		78	Magellanic Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus magellanicus</i>
29	South Georgia Diving-petrel	<i>Pelecanoides georgicus</i>		79	Tussac-bird (Blackish Cinclodes)	<i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>
30	Emperor Penguin	<i>Aptenodytes forsteri</i>		80	Dark-bellied Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>
31	King Penguin	<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>		81	Thorn-tailed Rayadito	<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>
32	Gentoo Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>		82	White-throated Treerunner	<i>Pygarrhichas albogularis</i>
33	Chinstrap Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis antarctica</i>		83	Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola macloviana</i>
34	Adelie Penguin	<i>Pygoscelis adeliae</i>		84	Austral Negrito	<i>Lessonia oreas</i>
35	Rockhopper penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>		85	White-crested Elaenia	<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
36	Macaroni Penguin	<i>Eudyptes chrysolipus</i>		86	Chilean Swallow	<i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>
37	Magellanic Penguin	<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>		87	House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
38	Rock Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>		88	Grass Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
39	South Georgia Shag	<i>Phalacrocorax georgianus</i>		89	Cobb's Wren	<i>Troglodytes cobbi</i>
40	King Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>		90	Austral Thrush	<i>Turdus falklandii</i>
41	Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>		91	Correndera Pipit	<i>Anthus correndera</i>
42	Black-faced Ibis	<i>Theristicus melanopsis</i>		92	Falkland Pipit	<i>Anthus correndera grayi</i>
43	Kelp Goose	<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>		93	South Georgia Pipit	<i>Anthus antarcticus</i>
44	Ashy-headed Goose	<i>Chloephaga poliocephala</i>		94	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
45	Upland Goose	<i>Chloephaga picta</i>		95	Patagonian Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus patagonicus</i>
46	Ruddy-headed Goose	<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>		96	Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
47	Crested Duck	<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>		97	Black-throated Finch	<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>
48	Southern (Chiloe) Wigeon	<i>Anas sibilatrix</i>		98	Black-chinned Siskin	<i>Carduelis barbata</i>
49	Yellow-billed (Speckled) Teal	<i>Anas flavirostris</i>		99	Austral Blackbird	<i>Curaeus curaeus</i>
50	South Georgia Pintail	<i>Anas georgica georgica</i>		100	Long-tailed Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella loyca</i>

*You can help to preserve South Georgia's endangered birds*

This initiative, which will be the largest of its kind in the world, is supported by IUCN (World Conservation Union) and New Zealand Department of Conservation, the world leaders in eradication.

Please help South Georgia's threatened birds by donating to SGHT. Your donation will help to bring them back to South Georgia's coastline to breed by supporting the rat eradication programme in South Georgia.

*"I am sure my expressions of support and encouragement to those involved in developing this proposal are echoed by everyone who cares about the earth's few true remaining wild places, and the wildlife they contain."* Alan Saunders IUCN.

Please complete the coupon below and post it to:

South Georgia Heritage Trust

23 Springfield

Perth Road

Dundee DD1 4JE

**Scotland**

or pay online using Paypal at [www.sght.org/donations.htm](http://www.sght.org/donations.htm).

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss/Dr \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip/Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Country \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my donation of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mark:

cheque (payable to **South Georgia Heritage Trust**)

Money order

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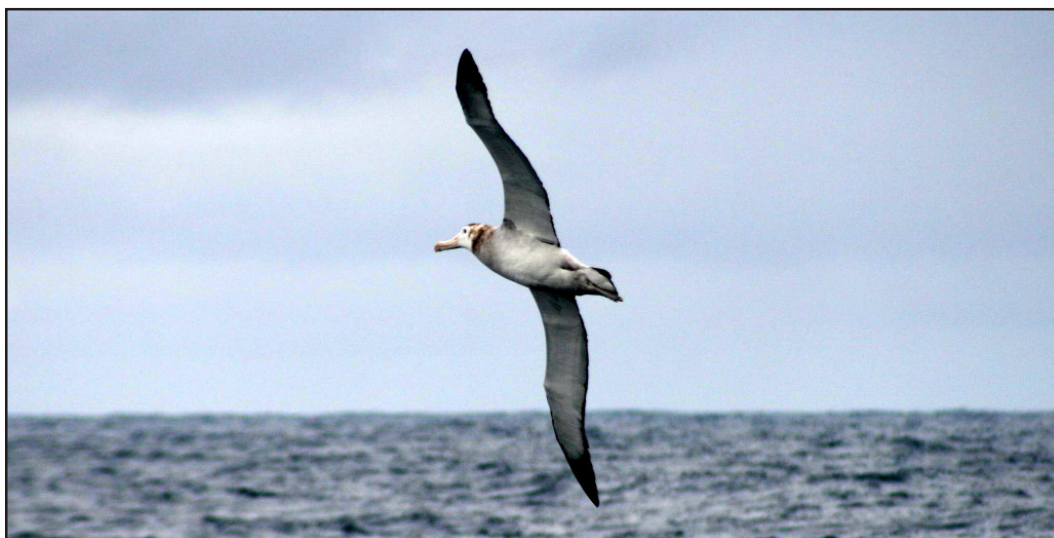
Bankcard

Card No. |\_|\_|\_|\_| |\_|\_|\_|\_| |\_|\_|\_|\_| |\_|\_|\_|\_|

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

*A tax deductible receipt will be issued upon receipt of your donation.*





# SAVE THE ALBATROSS CAMPAIGN

## Background

Every year thousands of albatrosses and other seabirds are being caught and drowned on baited hooks set by longlining fishing vessels around the world. The birds gather round the stern of fishing vessels as the lines are laid out, see the fish bait drop down on to the sea and grab it before the line has time to sink beneath the water, only to find a hook inside it which drags them down and drowns them. This 'by-catch' is not in the fishermen's interests, as they set the lines to catch fish such as tuna, squid and toothfish. Every seabird caught on the hooks is lost revenue for them. A single tuna longlining vessel can set a line over 80 miles long, on which there are 20,000 baited hooks. A single toothfish can sell for \$1,400. One southern bluefin tuna recently brought \$173,600 at a Tokyo fish market.

## The campaign

The global campaign is being run by Birdlife International, an international partnership of bird conservation organizations. They are raising funds and lobbying for new laws. The funds will help to finance the campaign and to introduce mitigation measures on fishing boats, such as bird-scaring devices and adding more weights to the lines so that they sink more quickly out of sight of the birds. The new laws are to ensure that all countries with fishing fleets sign up to international agreements to take specific measures to reduce the seabird by-catch from longlining. A further initiative is to encourage the development of accreditation systems for fish sold, to ensure that it is 'albatross friendly' by being caught on lines which use recommended mitigation practices. This follows the success of 'dolphin friendly' tuna fishing practices in the 1980s and 1990s which led to the outlawing of drift nets, the so-called 'walls of death', which were killing thousands of dolphins, porpoises and birds.

## The legislation

A new international treaty introduced in 2001, the *Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels* (ACAP), under the *Convention on Migratory Species* (CMS), known as the Bonn Convention, has been signed by several countries already, but many, including the USA, South Africa, France, Russia, and Argentina, have yet to sign or to ratify the Agreement. This is a legally binding Agreement with an Action Plan which requires signatories to take specific measures to reduce the seabird by-catch from longlining. Additionally the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has an International Plan of Action (IPOA) which encourages UN member countries to assess the seabird by-catch problem within their area of control, and to develop and implement their own National Plan of Action (NPOA) to tackle the problem.

## What you can do

- (i) Make a donation to the campaign, using the attached form, and send this to the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) in England – see the accompanying letter.
- (ii) Write to your Member of Parliament (or equivalent) asking if your country has signed and ratified the ACAP and, if it is a member of UN, if it has implemented an NPOA.

## Further information

This is available on the following websites:-

Birdlife International – [www.birdlife.net](http://www.birdlife.net) American Bird Conservancy – [www.abcbirds.org](http://www.abcbirds.org)

RSPB – [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)