



Expedition Log

Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula

28th January – 15th February 2007

M/V Aleksey Maryshev

М/В АЛЕКСЕЙ МАРЫШЕВ



The *Aleksey Maryshev* was a research vessel used by the Russian Academy of Science and is now under a long-term contract to Oceanwide Expeditions. The ship was built in Finland in 1990 and is an ice-strengthened vessel. The Maryshev is 210 feet (66 metres) long, has a draft of 12 feet (3.5 metres) 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, three international expedition guides and polar experts and one emergency doctor.

With

**Captain – Yuriy Gorodnik
and his Russian Crew of 18**

including

1st Mate: Sergey Glazunov
2nd Mate - Gennadiy Vishnevskiy
3rd Mate - Pavel Kulinich
Radio Engineer - Zodiac Driver: Sergey (Marconi) Polyak
Boatswain: Andrey Kochanov
Able Seaman - Zodiac Driver: Sergey Ushakov
Able Seaman - Zodiac Driver: Eduard Skarina
Cabin Stewardess: Valentina Lokhovinia
Cabin Stewardess: Elena Ushakova
Laundry Services Stewardess: Tatyana Zaromyanyuk
Dining Room Stewardess: Olga Filimonova
Dining Room Stewardess: Lyubov Demchenko

and

Expedition Leader – Rolf Stange (Germany)
Guide/Lecturer – John Harrison (Great Britain)
Guide/Lecturer – Rupert Krapp (Germany/Norway)
Hotel Manager – Alan Hogan (Canada)
Head Chef – Frank Metselaar (The Netherlands)
Sous Chef – Beverley Howlett (N. Orkney Islands)
Ship's Physician – Dr. Tom Charrette (USA)

**And 47 of us from Australia, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, The Netherlands,
Russia, and the United States**

28th January 2007 – Ushuaia / Tierra del Fuego, Argentina

Position 54°45' S / 68°30' W

Temperature Air: 12°C, Water 8°C,

Sunshine with a few showers.

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 as well, 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 harbor. 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 had finally landed in Ushuaia, the place which called itself “El fin del mundo” (the end of the world). The rugged spine of the Andes Mountains stretches the entire length of the South American continent, coming right down to meet the sea here at the southern tip of Chile and Argentina. The four-hour flight from Buenos Aires over the flat, dry Argentine Pampas and Patagonia was highlighted by the plane's steep descent over the snow and glacier-capped peaks to the airstrip which projects straight out into the Beagle Channel. The scenery includes many extensive fjords somewhat reminiscent of parts of Norway.

At four in the afternoon the ship and the crew were ready to welcome us on board, where we got some time to find our cabins and to unpack and rest a little. Due to

some late arrivals we had to delay our departure just a little bit, but as soon as they had come aboard, the lines were taken in and we left the pier, heading out to our adventure.

At 5.30 p.m. we met in the dining room for the first time, and Rolf Stange, our Expedition leader, whom most of us had met at the gangway, gave us a short introduction to the staff and the ship, followed by a welcome from Alan Hogan, our hotel manager.

The polar bug had long ago bitten all members of the expedition staff. Rolf is a trained geographer, author of several books and a seasoned expedition guide and expedition leader in the Arctic, Antarctic and South Atlantic areas and through his travels has developed a wide-ranging knowledge of the geological processes, formations and features of these areas. Our guides, Rupert Krapp and John Harrison, could also look back on several years of experience in expedition cruises. Rupert is a marine biologist and scientific diver, who has been travelling and working in polar seas for several years as a scientist as well as expedition guide. John, also a geographer, had discovered his passion for the area, its physical geography and history many years ago while he was travelling as a passenger, and decided to dedicate himself to Antarctica immediately.

The hotel department on board the *Aleksey Maryshev* was led by Alan Hogan from England. The cooks, who would take care of tasty meals during our voyage, were Frank Metselaar and Beverley Howlett. Tom Charrette, the ship's physician, had been working and travelling with Oceanwide before, both in Arctic and Antarctic waters, and therefore came with a wealth of knowledge about cold climate, emergency medicine and motion sickness remedies. But of course we hoped that we would not have to consult with him too much!

Captain Yuriy Gorodnik 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.

Just prior to sailing, Sergey, our gentle giant of a first officer, gave us an important safety briefing on the upcoming lifeboat drill. Shortly after, the ship's alarm sounded a signal to practice this emergency evacuation drill. Moving to our cabins, we donned our warm clothes and life jackets and proceeded to our muster station,



just outside the bridge. We completed the exercise by climbing inside the egg-shaped lifeboats. We all felt quite safe inside, although certainly not overly comfortable, but happy to finally get back to our cabins. Finally, the ship's docking lines were hauled in, and we set sail out of the harbour. The Beagle scenery was a delight, with several seabirds already following in our wake. A nice dinner awaited us shortly after the life boat drill, giving a chance for everybody to get a little more acquainted. After dinner, it was time for an evening stroll on deck to further admire the wonderful scenery. A few sooty shearwaters were seen, promising much more excitement for crossing to the Falkland Islands.

Our Antarctic adventure was about to start!!!

29th January 2007 – En route to the Falkland Islands

Position at 07.30h: 54°31' S / 64°38' W

Off Staten Island/ Isla de los Estados (12 nm on our starboard side)

210 nm to Falklands

Temperature Air: 9°C, gentle breeze, sunshine with high clouds

Today we found ourselves en route to the Falkland Islands, heading on a north-easterly course. The early morning hours had showed great promise for the day with good visibility and plenty of sunshine. During the day, the wind and swell picked up a bit, so it was not so popular to be on the outer decks, but still the bridge offered a great view around. We had been briefed on the main compartments, instruments and general rules for the bridge in several groups throughout the morning by Rupert, so we soon started to feel quite comfortable between the chart table, the radar monitors and the helm, as we kept our watch officers company. We could now see



numerous black browed albatrosses gliding in the slip stream of our vessel. Also, a number of prions (Antarctic or slender billed – they are very difficult to distinguish) were spotted throughout the day as well as the small Wilson's storm petrel and several Cape petrels.

In the afternoon, Rolf gave us an overview of the coming days in the Falklands, pointing out the places we would visit on the West and East Falklands, assisted by John. We also were briefed on the use of our zodiac life vests as well as behaviour in the inflatable boats, commonly called by their brand name, Zodiac. We would become very familiar with them in the days to come, since we would be using them for all of our daily excursions and landings. After a lengthy coffee break, Rolf continued by offering us some introduction to the wildlife we were about to see, including some aspects of the breeding biology of the most common as well as their and conservation status. Finally, we had some time to build up our appetite for the next Maryshev dinner to come, and our lecture hall was again converted into the common dining room by our stewardesses.

Just to remind us that we should always try to keep an eye on the horizon, suddenly several large whale blows appeared only a few miles to starboard: fin or possibly even blue whales, at least three of them!

30th January 2007 – Falkland Islands

New Island, Carcass Island.

Position at 06.15h: 51°41' S / 61°15' W

Approaching New Island

Temperature Air: 10°C, very light breeze, sunshine with few clouds

After a pleasant crossing, we arrived at New Island, in the South West Falklands. The Falkland Island archipelago consists of two main islands (East and West Falkland) and 778 smaller islands. This was our first landing and everybody was eagerly awaiting the zodiacs. As soon as the Maryshev dropped anchor we were sped ashore and made our landing on the beach at Coffin's Harbour, on the east side of the island. We were greeted in perfect weather by our hosts, Tony Chater and Ian Strange, originally, owners of the island, but now ranger/caretakers of the New Island South Wildlife Reserve.

The white sand beach was a haven for wildlife, upland geese, kelp geese, dolphin gulls, pied and black oystercatchers, imperial shags, rock shags and even a pair of flightless steamer ducks, assembled for our arrival.

The gentle walk across the island over green pastures and through areas of tussac grass was just what the doctor ordered. Almost at every step we were greeted by the friendliest of land birds imaginable, long tailed meadowlarks with their brilliant red breasts, tussacbirds, dotterels, striated caracaras (Johnny Rooks), and even a few turkey vultures. Falkland thrushes were everywhere and among the tussac grass could be seen the heads of many upland geese.

The walk terminated at the most magnificent vista of rocky cliffs, crashing waves and wall to wall wildlife. King cormorants, rockhopper penguins and black browed albatrosses were all nesting together, in certainly what appeared to be reasonable harmony. Endless photos were taken in the rather windy conditions, but it was



marvellous to watch the albatross, taking off from the cliff edges into the wind. Most of us just sat quietly and watched the interesting antics of the different species, the rockhoppers building nests and attending to their chicks, albatross landing and taking off, while several pairs performed their courtship rituals. On our return to the beach, Tony and Ian had set up some tables with wonderful items for sale; stamps, books, first day cover envelopes and postcards, all of which he had personally designed. It was sad to leave but a wonderful first morning and an easy and pleasant landing site. As we were swiftly brought back to the ship, we discovered several dolphins, playing in the zodiac's wake: Peale's dolphins! What a wonderful way to be welcomed to the Falklands!

It was a good 40 nautical miles to Carcass, and with skilful navigation, the captain took us through the very shallow narrows between West Point Island and the mainland of West Falkland. A westerly wind had picked up significantly and blew directly into our intended landing beach. So the expedition leader and the captain had to



review their options and decided to sail around a point and land us on the next beach, which was more protected. It was a bit choppy out there, and we got some spray into the zodiacs, but as soon as we got closer to the beach, the island protected us as planned and we could land on yet another wonderful beach, with Magellanic penguins already awaiting us.

Carcass Island takes its name from HMS *Carcass*, which visited in the late 18th century. Today a mature tussock plantation covers much of the lower ground and the absence of cats, rats and mice throughout the island's history, has made for a spectacularly large population of small birds, which is one of the special features of this island.

We started our hike over the island and along the way could enjoy the scenery, the birds around and overhead as well as the unexpected combination of penguins, cattle and surf splashing on sandy beaches. Our ship had in the meantime navigated around the

island and also our zodiacs had made their way to the Carcass Island settlement, where we were heading. On our way, we came across both Magellanic and gentoo penguins. Further along the beach, flocked dozens of kelp and upland geese, and several endemic flightless steamer ducks swam close to the shoreline. Tussock birds were sighted early on, one of the main birding attractions of this rat-free island. The vegetation was varied with many low growing cushion or carpet forming plants and rolling hills of lush green grasses. Beautiful European gorse lined the path closer to the settlement and striated caracaras were everywhere around the settlement. With little more than 500 pairs, the caracaras are a rare species, and Carcass island is home to more than 30 pairs, so we were very fortunate to see so many. These birds of prey are extremely tame and we were able to approach close enough to get wonderful photographs

We found a farm arranged beautifully around the natural harbour, with palm trees and some more caracaras around, some of which were even ready to pose for us on top of one of the old Land Rovers. Although we could not tell for sure, it seemed as if ownership had been taken over by the birds, although they obviously did not have much use for its four-wheel drive capacities.

Rob and Lorraine, the present day owners of Carcass Island have lived on the island for almost 30 years and have upheld the conservationist traditions. After a walk through the gardens, surrounded with Monterey cypress trees, planted many years ago by the owners, we were all invited in for tea, coffee and the most incredible table laden with homemade cakes, scones, pies and biscuits. It was absolutely delicious, and everybody had a great and relaxing stay inside or around the farm house while the weather was still as pleasant as it could be, and probably a lot nicer than many of us had expected.

After bidding farewell to our very special hosts, we sadly made our way back to the jetty to catch our zodiac transportation to the ship. It had been an unforgettable experience, truly a superb day spent in the Falkland Islands.

31th January 2007 –Falkland Islands: Stanley

Position at 0645 a.m.: 51°23' S / 57°45' W

Temperature Air: 12°C, sunny, fresh breeze.

We entered the spectacular natural harbour of Port Stanley through what is known as “the narrows”. Even though the wind had picked up quite a bit, the sun had come out to greet us on our visit to the capital of the Falkland Islands. With a population of 1989 people Port Stanley makes up for the vast majority of the population of the archipelago. Only 2379 people inhabit these remote islands in addition to approximately 1200-1500 British military personnel. A small but nonetheless very interesting capital was waiting to be explored, which by the way prides itself on being the safest in the world.

The *Aleksey Maryshev* anchored right off the town centre and only a short zodiac cruise was needed to bring us ashore for a dry landing at a small jetty.





Buses were waiting to take us on bird tours and a Stanley highlights tour. The bird tour was indeed a walking tour, lasting three hours. The bus dropped us on the coast, close to the shipwreck *Lady Elisabeth II*. In a rocky area, a pair of variable or red-backed hawks was usually nesting, but unfortunately they were not home. Further along the path, some hundred Magellanic penguins had set up their nest in a peat layer and in some nests, chicks could be seen huddled deep inside. Further up along the cliffs, we

had an outstanding view of the neighbouring islands. The tour ended on the most beautiful white sandy beach of Gypsy Cove.

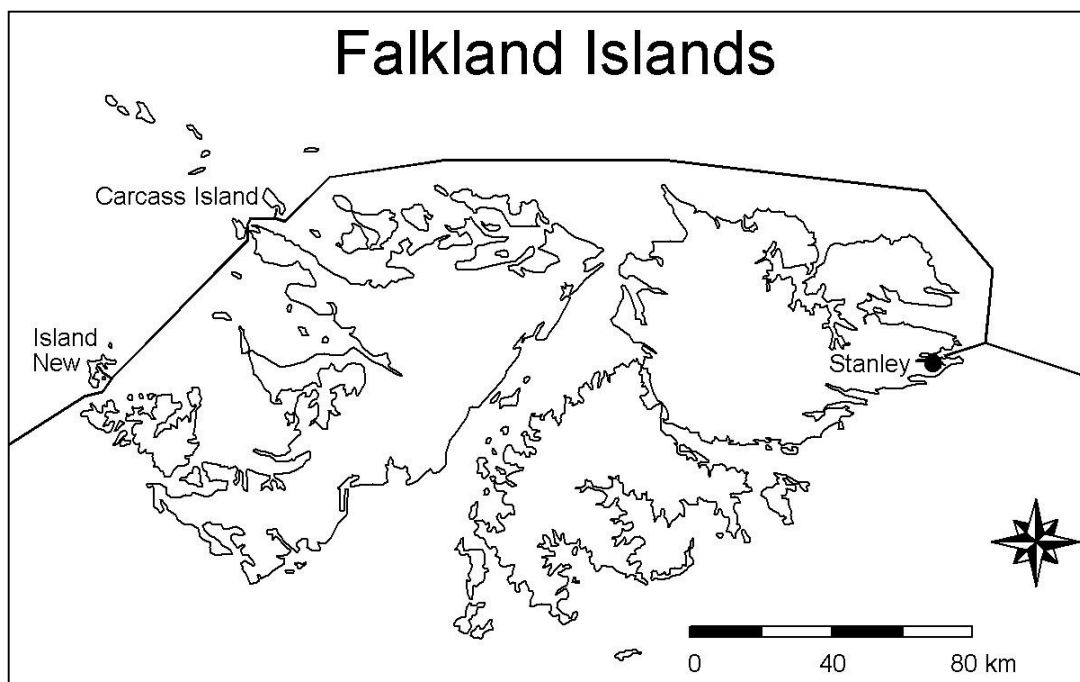
Meanwhile, John had been taking care of those of us more interested in the town and its history, and was able to show us several remarkable details and tell stories that we probably would not have been aware of, had we been there on our own. The participants of the bird-watching tour were also offered such a town walk, ending by the museum, which



unfortunately by that time was closing. For the rest of the afternoon, we were strolling



around on our own, exploring the little town, until the zodiac service back to the ship commenced at 16h. During our adventures on land, the ship had bunkered fuel in Port William, the outer bay, but now she had returned through the Narrows into Port Stanley and was ready for us again.



01th February 2007 – En route to South Georgia

Position at 07.30h: 52°02' S / 64°38' W

140 nm from the Falklands, 600 nm to South Georgia

Temperature Air: 10°C, light breeze, light cloud cover

We started another sea day after a night of pitching and rolling, which of course had some effect on our sleeping habits. Although the wind was blowing in a favourable direction, pushing us along on our course, we had not only been encouraged by our brave little ship to “grow our sea legs”, but had also discovered some stay-in-the-bunk-reflexes as well as the “shower-roll” and the “breakfast pitch”. But all of our fellow travellers took the challenge with gusto, and we could compare during the day just how the bunks aligned with the ship’s main axis had been more practical during mostly pitching movements, while bunks across the bow were more comfortable in rolling movements. Since we got a fair share of both, everybody felt that they were given a chance to try the pros and cons.

Rolf started the daily programme with a recap and summary of our past days in the Falklands. We had visited both West and East Falkland, had seen a nature reserve and a still functional farm as well as the proud little capital with its government buildings, monuments and numerous shipwrecks. Phil, our chief birder and group escort to some of us, filled us in on the rich and varied birdlife we had encountered, while Rupert said a few words about the marine life, of which we had seen already two species of dolphins as well as the abundant seaweeds, popularly known as “kelp”. Finally, John took over and gave us a brief overview of the historic dimension of the life of the “kelpers”, as the Falkland Islanders sometimes refer to themselves, and he both explained the long history of various settlements and claims as well as the most well-known British-Argentine conflict of 1982.



Later that day, all eyes were up on the bridge to spot seabirds and possibly more dolphins and whales, until it was time for yet another lecture, this time on the geological history of the area, given by Rolf. After a good long coffee break the lecture room had yet again been transformed to its third state, the “Maryshev Cinema”, where the well-known voice of David Attenborough welcomed us to the first part of the wonderful “Life in the Freezer” documentary.

Many of us were wondering at the end of the day just how quickly they had become accustomed to their new and constantly moving surroundings, and also how quickly the days seemed to pass. After yet another dinner during which we could practice our “catch-the-sliding-glass” skills, we were once again invited to the “Maryshev Cinema” where the first half of Kenneth Brannagh’s “Shackleton” was the evening movie, with additional audio-visual and even motion effects supplied by the Southern Ocean itself.

02nd February 2007 – En route to South Georgia

Position at 07.00h: 52°45' S / 47°11' W

400 nm from the Falklands, 340 nm to South Georgia

Temperature Air: 7°C, wind increasing to force 6 (Bft.)

Updated ETA: South Georgia: 03rd February early afternoon

Our second day at sea since the Falklands looked a lot nicer than some of us had expected, given the fact that yesterday’s weather chart had indicated high winds of a frontal system to the north and west of us. But although it was now significantly cooler outside, we were still steaming through roughly the same conditions as before: moderate swells, tailwinds and, probably most importantly, fairly regular movements of the ship. So as soon as breakfast was finished, the usual positions along the bridge windows, chart room couches and bar tables were taken again and everybody was ready to enjoy yet another day at sea. Today we again got lucky and saw some hourglass dolphins, *Lagenorhynchus cruciger*, clearly identifiable by their hourglass-shaped pattern of white along the sides of the dark body. During the morning, Rolf offered the second part of the lecture on geology, this time focusing on plate tectonics and the Scotia Sea.

The lecture program continued with an overview of the history of whaling, given by John, and then we could see the second installment of the “Life in the Freezer” before it was time for dinner again.

The evening program offered yet another oceanic cinema experience, i.e. the second part of the “Shackleton” movie.

3rd February 2007 – en route to South Georgia: Elsehul

Position at 07.30h: 53°27'S / 40°27' W

80 nm to South Georgia, cruising at 7-8 kn

Temperature Air: 3°C, south-easterly winds, increasing to force 7

Today we woke up to slightly rougher seas, the ship pitching a little on rather large swells. At our wake-up call, Rolf announced that a snow petrel had been seen around the ship this morning, a first for many of us.

Mid-morning we gathered together in the dining room to receive an update on our scheduled activities and landings in South Georgia, as well as a briefing on the code of conduct.

During the early afternoon, sea conditions and visibility changed considerably, and at times the sun broke through, raising the temperature, making it a little more comfortable on the outside decks. Most of us spent some time on the bridge or foredeck to look for whales, seals and birds. The birdlife was becoming even more prolific as we neared South Georgia, many seabirds escorting the ship towards land; black-browed albatross, prions, southern giant petrels, white-chinned petrels, cape petrels, grey-headed albatross, diving petrels, light-mantled sooty albatross, gentoo penguins popping up next to the ship and more Antarctic fur seals leading us towards the island which was already clearly visible. Just as we approached, still in bright sunshine, a big cloud moved in quickly and turned the scenery into a rainstorm. Nevertheless, our captain anchored the *Maryshev* close to shore and our first zodiac operations in South Georgia were quickly under way. As soon as we had cruised into the bay of Elsehul, or Else's cove as the Norwegian name would be translated, we were more sheltered started to get a better visibility as well. We would soon learn why this zodiac outing was just a cruise and no landing: the beaches were covered with king and gentoo penguins and seals, as far as the eye could see. There were also blue-eyed shags on the cliffs and rocks in between the beaches, and lots of inquisitive and playful fur seals in the kelp that covered most of the bay. Several of us spotted "blondies", fur seals with a white coat, which in fact is not an albinism but a recessive gene which is expressed about once in a thousand pups. Therefore, "blondie counts" are actually also a useful estimate of the total population in a given area, which otherwise would be very hard to determine, since there are always seals coming and going, hiding in the tussock etc. There were also elephant seals, snorting loudly.

On our way along the shores of the bay, we also spotted a macaroni penguin colony, a first sighting for many of us, and some of us even found a single chinstrap penguin standing all alone among the others. The weather had been cold a windy during our excursion, and it was now quickly getting dark. As the last zodiac returned to the ship, it turned even darker: another thick cloud had moved in, this time delivering hail and even stronger winds! So it was perfect timing then for us to enter the ship, get out of our waterproof gear and get ready for yet another delicious expedition dinner.

4th February 2007 – Bay of Isles: Salisbury Plain and Prion Island,

Fortuna Bay and Stromness Harbour

Position at noon: 54°03S / 37°19'W

Temperature Air: 6C, Water: 4C, little winds.



Rolf had warned us last night that this day might start very early, since we had not two, not three, but in fact four destinations on our itinerary! The first one, at 6h in the morning, was Salisbury Plains, a huge stretch of glacial outwash on which we were presented with an impossible task: king penguins everywhere! As it turned out, there were hundreds and thousands of them all over the place, and as we moved along the beach, the groups just got denser and denser until one could see nothing else but penguins, penguins and more penguins. Of course, that was not entirely fair to the other numerous inhabitants of this beach, the fur seals, who were represented with both large bulls, trying to keep their harems in cheque, as well as several groups of frolicking pups. So most of us probably felt a bit overwhelmed: very early morning, no breakfast, too many seals and even more

penguins, how should one decide where to point the camera, where to stand or where to go?

The beach was fine sand and five kms long with a glacier at either end (Grace and Lukas) and as we stepped ashore, in various degrees of dryness, we were instantly amazed at the amount of wildlife that confronted us.

King penguins as far as the eyes could see, the second largest colony in South Georgia, close to 200,000 and thousands of Antarctic fur seals around. Skuas flew constantly overhead and giant petrels combed the beaches for seal and penguin carcasses, while Elephant seals laid huddled in scattered wallows. Some of the king penguins were still in various stages of moult, including their young.



The main rookery was just a short walk up the beach, through sporadic tussac and onto the flat plain. An absolutely breathtaking sight, so much to see and almost everyone remained ashore for the full 4 hours. Newly born seal pups slept and played all along the beach, with the mothers showing very little interest in our visit. It was a superb morning and the memories of the great rolling sea journey were already diminishing. Although the weather was not as inviting as it could have been, it was definitely worth the early start, and so we returned onboard, eager for some food and

warmth, but also reluctant to leave this breathtaking scenario behind.

During breakfast, the ship relocated and anchored just off Prion Island, our second landing of the day, one of the very few places in the world where one can see nesting wandering albatrosses. We arrived at the beach in a sheltered little cove in glorious sunshine. When everyone had gathered on the beach, Rolf started the short but rather difficult ascent to the summit. The small gully was exceedingly muddy and slippery but we took our time and finally reached the crest with only a few stumbling along the way. Here we split up into two groups, each venturing their own way to find albatross nesting. It was not long before everyone was seated in the tall grasses, observing the daily events in the life of albatrosses. Scattered among the albatrosses were many giant petrels, also nesting.



With a wingspan of more than 3 meters (10 feet) they are the world's largest flying bird, and especially impressive when observed from such a short distance.

We eventually continued, reluctantly, to our next destination, Fortuna Bay. Here some of us were put ashore to commence the last (and easiest) part of the Shackleton Walk, the famous crossing of the island to reach the whaling settlement of Stromness. While Rolf and our ship's doctor were hiking with this group, the ship sailed on with the remaining passengers to Stromness Bay, where the two groups eventually met again in the vicinity of the remains of the historical whaling station. While the hikers had certainly enjoyed the exercise of the walk, the "cruisers" had had a relaxing and scenic passage to and landing at Stromness, including a short zodiac cruise along the waterfront of the former whaling station. As the two groups met again, a small herd of reindeer



passed through Shackleton Valley. These hardy animals, originating from Scandinavia, had originally been introduced in 1911 by the whaling entrepreneur C.A. Larsen, and their descendants were still doing well despite the often harsh climate. Although there are no predators around to interact with the stock, their numbers have remained rather stable over the years, and it is believed that their abundance is mostly controlled by the harsh climate and also by the abundance of intestinal parasites.

5th February 2007 – Herkules Bay and Grytviken, King Edward Cove

Position at 07h: 54°07'S / 36°39'W

Temperature Air: 6°C, no wind, but cloudy.

Rolf had scheduled Herkules Bay, a known nesting site of Macaroni penguins, for the morning. As we approached, we found that both the landing site and the beach were quite confined by large boulders and near-shore reefs, so as soon as our experienced zodiac drivers had manoeuvred into a spot hardly wide enough for one zodiac, the first group set off to climb up a gully towards the ridge, where the main penguin site was. Others spent their time observing the playful fur seals and wallowing elephant seals along the beach, before it was their turn to come up the tussock-lined path. Although the terrain was



muddy and trampled by seals and penguins, it was a wonderful spot up there close to the penguins, and since the olfactory impressions were at least as powerful as the visual ones, this was yet another site which would be hard to forget.



In the afternoon we arrived at King Edward Cove, where the famous Norwegian whaling station (funded by Argentinean capital)

Grytviken now lies as a relic of former industrial times. We had to refill our tanks with water at the port facilities of King Edward Point, but we also had to be cleared by the government officer first. South Georgia is a British dependency and although remote, regulations must be upheld. Not until everything had been thoroughly inspected we were allowed to disembark, but we did not even have very far to walk, since we immediately boarded our zodiacs on the beach next to the jetty, to make a quick dash across the bay. There we landed close to the former whaling station *Grytviken*. That way we saved some time, but also avoided having to walk the dusty and rather featureless track from King Edward Point to *Grytviken* for both ways.



In the old graveyard, our historian, John Harrison, invited us for a toast and a short speech in honour of “the Boss”, as Shackleton was fondly referred to by his men. We gathered around, while a horrible Dutch genever (“Beerenburg”) was poured for all who dared to try it, and after the speech and the toast, all who wanted to have a souvenir picture taken next to the tombstone took turns while the rest of us dispersed, some of them to study the inscriptions on the other stones and markers, while others started to head for the beach and the ruins of the *Grytviken* whaling station nearby. The road around the whaling station was interesting in itself. Each side was littered with fur and elephant seals, some fast asleep and some very active. A few fur seals tried to challenge our passage and some of us saw young elephant seal bulls challenging each other in some “play” or “practise fights” - but unfortunately for the keen photographers, most of these big seals remained rather unimpressed by our visit and just continued snoring, snorting and belching peacefully. As we entered the former station, we found recently installed plates with site-specific information at several corners, informing us about the function and each and every structure, building and machinery around us, so those who were interested could follow step by step through the procedure of this certainly gruesome slaughtering operation going on here for 60 years.

But there was also a chance to get a peaceful moment at the beautiful little church, where some of us also explored the historic but accessible library with both English and Norwegian titles. Another highlight was of



course the wonderful museum, installed in the former manager's villa at the other side of the settlement, and many of us probably spent most of their time in the various exhibition rooms as well as the sales room, where we also could purchase and send postcards and stamps.

In the evening, shore staff joined us for a barbecue on the foredeck, followed by some impromptu and often indescribable dancing, by staff, crew and passengers.



6th February 2007 – Gold Harbour and Larsen Harbour, Drygalski Fjord

Position at 0630h: 54°38'S / 56°52' W

Temperature Air: 5°C, no perceivable wind, partly sunny, light swell

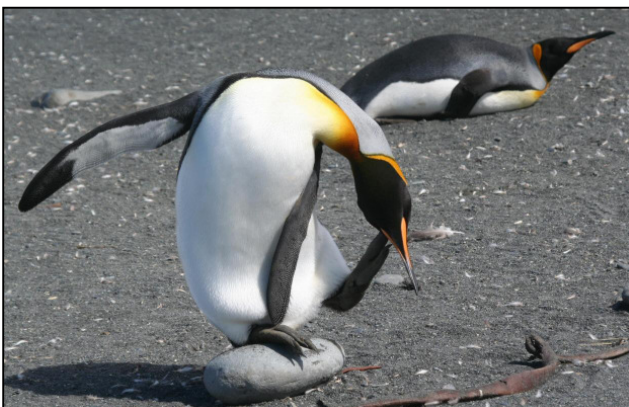


Rolf had saved a special treat for our last full day in the sub-Antarctic isle of South Georgia: Gold Harbour, named after the fool's gold found here by the German sailors of the 1911 German scientific expedition. It turned out to be a real goldmine, although one containing a different resource altogether: king penguins, king penguins, king penguins as far as the eye could see. Knowing that the surf could be rough on this beach, we were relieved to see that our zodiacs again managed to put us ashore in the one spot which was just slightly more protected by a few

partly submerged rocks, on the right-hand side of the beach near the cliffs. Not surprisingly, we were again



welcomed by eager but also quite aggressive fur seals, but by now all of us had grown accustomed to their half-hearted charges and a few rapid movements, raised arms, or even



an answer of equally fierce growling took care of that matter. The wonderful setting with ragged peaks, hanging glaciers and tussock-covered hill slopes gave us a multitude of angles for photography, and as a special attraction, some spotted kings with eggs and even with small chicks. These "late breeders" had quite likely had a successful breeding and chick-rearing event the previous year, and were therefore delayed with this season's attempt. Depending on the development of the season, it would maybe be their second breeding success within a three-year period, but they are more likely to fail, as king penguins usually breed successfully only every other season. But for now, it was yet another

marvellous scene for us to admire, how the eggs and chicks appeared from under the protective feathery pouches of the parents.

Of course, there were again many elephant seals around, most likely the biggest we had seen so far, and since the moulting king penguins had shed a significant amount of feathers by the time of our visit, one could observe “downy” or rather feather-covered elephant seals while they were occasionally throwing even more sand, debris and feathers on their backs with their big fore flippers.



In the afternoon, Rolf decided that we would also have some time for another, so far unscheduled outing, namely a zodiac cruise Larsen Harbour. Here we found ourselves in the midst of rich kelp beds again, so rich in fact that their exsudates (excess of photosynthetically produced sugar compounds) were colouring the water a deep murky brown. We yet again found fur seals, but this time we were trying to spot a different species, namely Weddell seals, which were known to breed and haul out in this southernmost part of South Georgia, although in limited numbers.

As on all the previous days, the luck was on our side again and we quickly spotted several, one on a snowfield, some others along rocky shores of Bonner and Laws Beach. These seals are much more common in the ice-

covered waters of the Weddell and Bellingshausen Seas that we were about to visit, but these few individuals were a much appreciated appetizer of what was still to come.

Our journey along the northern and eastern shores of South



Georgia ended in Drygalski Fjord, with hanging glaciers on both sides, and the impressive fronts of the Risting and Jenkins Glaciers at its end. While we were cruising towards the glacier front of the Risting Glacier, we passed a large seal hauled out on an ice floe, and although it presented itself at a rather unfavourable angle at first, it soon became apparent that this was exactly what many of us had hoped for: a leopard seal!

Unfortunately, it soon slipped into the water and disappeared out of sight. Closer to the ice cliffs, we could now observe pintado petrels as well as several Wilson’s storm petrels feeding and flying

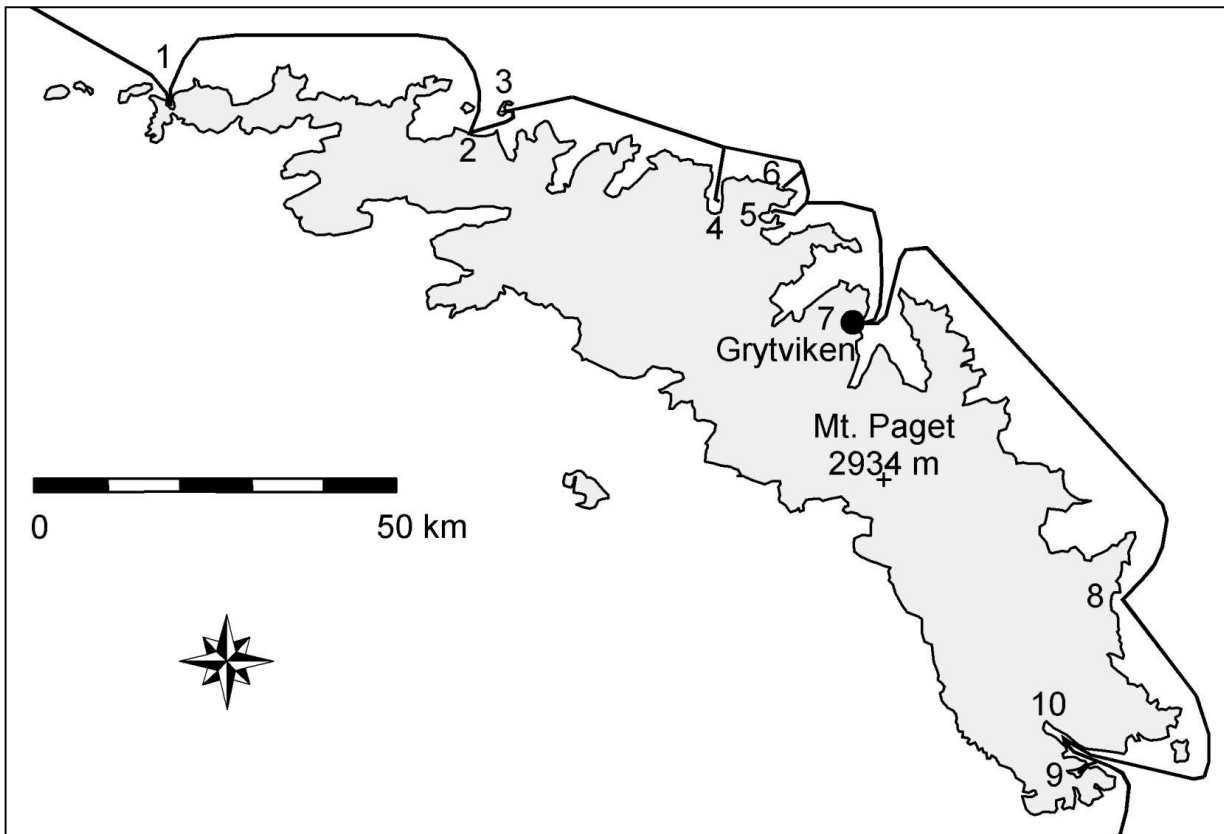
around us. While some of us had their eyes on the birds, they suddenly realized that the boat kept creeping closer and closer towards the ice, until it finally was less than a ship’s length away: what an amazing piece of navigation! Rolf took the opportunity to inform us of that, as well as thank the captain and the chief mate, who was watch officer, for their patient and precise operation.

Finally, we turned around and slowly made our way back out of the fjord, passing the entrance to Larsen Harbour on the way, and just as we could see the open sea again, our hotel manager Alan invited us for dinner again. A truly remarkable day at the end of a spectacular visit!



around us. While some of us had their eyes on the birds, they suddenly realized that the boat kept creeping





- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Elsehul | 6. Herkules Bay |
| 2. Salisbury Plain | 7. Grytviken |
| 3. Prion Island | 8. Gold Harbour |
| 4. Fortuna Bay | 9. Larsen Harbour |
| 5. Stromness Whaling Station | 10. Drygalski Fjord |

7th February 2007 – At Sea en route to the South Orkney Islands

Position at 0800h: 56°28'S / 39°02'W

120 nm from South Georgia, 330 nm to South Orkney Islands

Overcast, some rain. Temperature Air: 5°C, tailwinds of force 5, heavy swell

Once again, we were at sea and we started our southward journey with a morning recap of what we had seen so far on the island of South Georgia. Rolf started by giving us an overview of the geological composition of the island's main formations, followed by John, who gave us a historical perspective of the exploration of the Southern Ocean and the long-lasting and finally proven myth of a southern continent, which we were about to visit in the next days. As the last part of our South Georgia summary, Rupert presented an overview of the seal species that we had so far seen: their breeding and feeding behaviour as well as distribution. We continued through rather dense fog, making the bridge and outer decks rather unattractive for whale-spotting or birding, but many of us probably had to organize their notes, pictures and diaries after such an exciting and successful stay at South Georgia, so a few quiet hours were welcomed by all.



Our lecture and presentation program continued in the afternoon with "Life on an icebreaker – 3 months in the Weddell Sea", a summary of a scientific cruise that our guide and marine biologist Rupert had participated in during the austral summer 2004/05. Later that afternoon, we could enjoy even more impressions of the Antarctic, as the Maryshev cinema presented another episode of "Life in the Freezer".

During the evening, we had to prepare ourselves and our cabins for another night in the Southern Ocean: everything had to be

secured again, especially camera and electronic gear, binoculars, books, chairs and our bunk ladders, since the ship was moving quite a bit again. But by now, most of us had grown accustomed to pitching (up-and-down movement of bow and stern of ship), rolling (pendulum movement of superstructure from side to side), heaving (sideways movement of entire ship) and yawing (horizontal turning movement of ship around its centre).

8th February 2007 – At sea en route to the Orcadas (South Orkney Islands)

Position at 0730h: 59°17' S / 42°17' W

123 nm to South Orkneys

Temperature Air: 2°C, rough seas, strong headwinds from SW (force 6-7)

Overnight we had been slowed down by rough conditions and we still had a full sea day ahead of us on the way to South Orkney, so, as during the last period of sea days, lectures and documentaries were filling our days. Due to the low visibility throughout the day, there were initially not many good reasons to go outside, the lower decks still off-limits due to the rough weather. So our expedition and hotel staff did their best to keep us entertained inside the ship.

We continued our lecture program with “Identifying seabirds at sea”, a



presentation by Phil Palmer, our birding expert, and in the afternoon John told us about the Swedish explorer Nordenskjöld and his Antarctic adventure, which took place in the area we were heading into, using an expedition vessel named– who would have guessed it – *Antarctic*.

Another highlight of this day at sea were the sighting of several huge blows only a few cables (1 cable = 0.1 nautical miles = 185 meters) off our port bow (i.e. on our 9-10 o'clock or “left” side as seen from the bridge). This could very likely have been blue whales, the greatest of all! Unfortunately, we never saw anything else than these few blows, but since they came in a short sequence of at least three, it must have been several individuals. Some of us even managed to catch a glimpse of a fluke, which raised the odds in favour of blue whales rather than fin whales, which are known to display their flukes only very rarely.

Our progress towards the station *Orcadas* on the South Orkneys was still slow, and in the afternoon our expedition leader and the captain agreed on giving up this extra stop, so instead the watch officer received order to change course directly towards the tip of the Antarctic Peninsula.

9th February 2007 – At sea en route to the Antarctic Peninsula

Position at 0730h: 60°21' S / 47°10' W

>300 nm to the Antarctic Peninsula, SOG (speed over ground) 6-7 knots

Temperature Air: 0°C, rough seas, continuously strong SW headwinds.

Another day at sea started with the friendly voice of our expedition leader, giving us the latest news at the wake-up call: we were still experiencing strong headwinds and were therefore not able to cover more than six to seven nautical miles (1 nm = 1852 m) per hour. Today's program would again consist of relaxing, reading and some lectures and documentary screenings in the ship's dining room and lecture hall. Today it was “Ice Day”, as we were to learn about both glaciers and glacial ice, as well as sea ice and its special biology and ecology, the former presented by Rolf and the latter by Rupert.

Also the outside scenery was dominated by more and more icebergs drifting past, and to wrap things up, John offered the fourth episode of “Life in the Freezer”, featuring the onset of winter in Antarctica.

10th February 2007 – En route to Antarctic Peninsula

Position at 0730h: 61°46' S / 52°38' W

40 nm to Clarence Island (South Shetland Is.), 150 nm to Ant. Peninsula

Temperature Air: 5°C, sunny, later overcast, slight breeze.

Finally, the seas had calmed down – significantly! Most of us were reporting the best night's sleep they'd had since the barbeque night where we went to bed while the ship was still moored to the King Edward Point jetty. The day began slightly overcast, with the odd patch of blue sky and sunshine managing to squeeze between the



clouds. Icebergs were appearing more often, and closer to the ship, and with some experience we were able to discern chinstraps and also occasionally Adelie penguins sitting on top of them. The view from the bridge had so far been dominated by pintado petrels, southern fulmars and a few Wilson's storm petrels, and during the day a few grey-headed albatrosses were also seen. But the big attractions were yet to come during this morning: whale blows all around us! While some of us were listening to the second part of

Rolf's glacier lecture, two pods of whales were spotted from the bridge and due to their rather steep, columnar blows the best guess for a species determination was sei whales. Unfortunately, we were not able to gather any more clues to further corroborate this, but just the view of up to 20 individual blows was spectacular.

Later on as (almost) all eyes were searching the horizon for more whale blows, our wishes were granted again and we could observe several humpback whales displaying feeding behaviour within reasonable camera and spotting distance.

During the afternoon, we were once again invited for a lecture, this time featuring the well-known subject of the "ozone hole". Rupert presented it as a "detective story" and explained the what, the where and the how of this scientific success story which reached public awareness in record time during the 80's.

Later on, Rolf gave us an overview of the coming days that we were to spend in the Antarctic Peninsula.

11th February 2007 – Gerlache Strait, Orne Islands, Neko Harbour

Position at 0730h: 63°33' S / 60°43' W

70 nm to Trinity Island, 88 nm to Orne Islands, SOG 6-7 kn

Temperature Air: 4°C, strong headwind, sunny.

Finally we were in the area which for most of us was the final highlight of our voyage: Antarctica! Just to make sure that we fully understood that the wind and ice were the masters of this area and not us, we got some more strong headwinds and lots of icebergs thrown in our way, which delayed us a bit more, but also made life for the watch officers a bit more exciting again. But we sailed on, determined to make our way towards the shores that had been promised to us by our expedition leader: dry land was ahead of us, and there was even some talk about penguins! So we made the best out of it, went out on the open decks and enjoyed the fabulous scenery of the Christiania Islands on our starboard and Trinity Island on our port, while the sun was shining and the pintados were whirling around in our wake in the dozens.

As one of our guides remarked that this would be a good time for some whales, the watch officer just replied dryly: "11 o'clock!" - fortunately, by now everybody had gotten used to this expression and understood it as a direction relative to our course, rather than a set time at which we should expect the whale to come for a visit. So instead of looking at our watches to find out how long we would have to wait, we grabbed our binoculars and trained them on the left of our bow and forecastle: there she blows! A minke whale quickly surfaced several times, blowing a small puff of exhaled breath each time and then dived again. Just as we thought we might get another look at the animal it disappeared again, as whales do.



But this was fortunately not our only whale encounter, and so we just stayed out on the fly bridge (for some reason, the chief mate preferred to call it the "monkey bridge" – and he would always say it with a little smile...) and came into the bar or the bridge at times to warm up again. It certainly was a welcome sight to have so much land around us, and we happily soaked up the sun after these stormy and grey days in the Scotia Sea.

And then, finally, we heard the message over the PA system that we had been waiting for: time to put the boots on again, landing in 15 minutes! Our ship had arrived outside the Errera Channel and we could already see the Orne Islands on our starboard bow, behind some impressive icebergs.

We landed on the northern end of the island in smooth conditions, nosing the bow of the zodiac directly onto the rocks. The island has a rocky dome some 75 meters in height and some of it was still snow covered. We found two little rookeries of chinstrap penguins, and soon we had dispersed in two semi-circles to observe them from a respectful distance. Just as we settled down, the sun came out again and highlighted the mountain ranges



around us. Many of us enjoyed just being on shore again, and although the penguins and seals certainly had also established their characteristic aroma on this site, it was good to be out again.

After a while we were taken back by zodiac and started a ship's cruise through the spectacular Errera Channel, a scene which we shared with another vessel, the *Antarctic Dream*. This was the first ship we had seen since Stanley, but it quickly disappeared from view as soon as we had passed through the end of the Errera and turned into Andvoord Bay.

Our second landing was to start immediately after our evening meal, so we sat down as soon as Alan announced dinner time

while the ship made its way towards the coast of the Antarctic Peninsula. This was the continent we could see now within a few miles from our portholes, and we were about to land on Antarctica, certainly one of the highlights of our trip!

As soon as the zodiacs and gangway were ready for us, we were out on the main deck again in full Antarctic expedition gear. Our landing site was strewn with gentoo penguins, their nests and their almost fledged chicks, so we had to tread carefully around them. The view over the iceberg-filled bay was magnificent, the nearby glacier front rumbled with short intervals, reminding us of the huge forces at work there, and there were several perfect angles for an "Antarctic souvenir shot". Some of us received some extra attention from the inquisitive penguin chicks, which fearlessly pecked at our boots, and although they seemed quite smart, most of us were still puzzled by the fact that these little gentoos apparently had managed to erect a decent, full-sized hut on the slope. Given that they only had their claws and beaks to work with, this seemed truly astonishing. Only closer inspection revealed that it was the Argentine Navy which had to be given credit for this construction, and not the penguins.



On our way back, we were awarded yet another treat: the sailors had spotted a big leopard seal hauled out on an



ice floe close to the ship, and as each zodiac returned from the shore, it made a little detour to say hello and offer the opportunity to take some good pictures. The seal seemed totally unfazed, but slightly unkempt, and the explanation for the latter was that it had not managed to moult completely, i.e. there were still some patches of its old skin and fur in place, while most of its side and belly already was rubbed clean of the older, browner fur coat. The explanation for the former, i.e. its stoic glances at us, was probably that it had recently had a good meal of either penguin or krill, and therefore was not interested in gore-tex wrapped snacks so late in the evening.

Back on board, Alan had been service-minded as usual and had prepared some hot cocoa with some rum for us, to warm up while the ship's crane lifted up the zodiacs and gangway, and we enjoyed the last moments outside, before we scrubbed off the dirt and mud – real Antarctic mud this time, especially sticky!

12th February 2007 – Petermann Island, Lemaire Channel, Paradise Harbour, Almirante Brown Station

Position at 0430h: 65°10.5' S / 64°07.6' W (furthest south of voyage)

Temperature Air: 3°C, some snow, reduced visibility.

This morning was the earliest most of us had probably had in a while: wake-up call at 4.30h, in the zodiacs at 05h and ashore until 7h! Fortunately, the place proved to be worth it, there were both gentoo and Adelie penguins around in several rookeries, and we quickly and quietly dispersed to watch them while they were rearing their chicks, waddling towards the shore or simply standing still and enduring their moulting process. This looked rather miserable: a little creature, half covered in mud, the other half with some old feathers which



were gradually falling out and drifting away with the wind – we suddenly realised that there could be worse things to endure than an early morning without coffee or a decent breakfast. At least we could return to the ship after a while and queue for bacon and eggs as soon as we felt like it. These little fellows would have to get by with much less until they were through with the tedious business of changing their black and white suit of feathers. Apart from the Adelie and gentoo penguins, Petermann Island also had a Argentine base hut, and judging from the flag mast next to it, there seemed to be some personnel present, but we did

not bother visiting them, we would see more than enough Argentines in a few days upon our return to Ushuaia. So all eyes and cameras were focussing on the penguins, at least as long as we could keep them open and steady...

When we finally returned to our landing site, a crabeater seal snored happily and undisturbed on the rocky beach. That gave us another excellent photo and wildlife observation opportunity, but also reminded us of what we had been missing for the last few hours: sleep!

As soon as we got back on board, we made our way to the breakfast buffet. Copious amounts of coffee cups had to be poured, so that we could stay up for passage of



the famous Lemaire Channel, a remarkable sound between the Antarctic Peninsula and Booth Island with towering peaks and hanging glaciers on both sides, and only a few hundred meters distance between the two sides.

Then the ship quickly fell silent as we sailed north towards our third

destination with the promising name “Paradise Harbour”. Most of us certainly enjoyed the post-breakfast nap during that stretch but, around 11 o’clock, the second wake-up call came through the PA system: we were approaching Paradise!

As we looked out of our portholes and observed the approach from the bridge or the outer decks, we had to admit that the name was probably more fitting than we had anticipated: this was yet another highlight of our voyage, a wide bay rimmed by ragged peaks and dramatic glacier fronts, and filled with dozens of spectacular icebergs as well as a carpet of brash ice. Right on cue, the sun broke through the cloud cover, and as soon as the anchor was down, we boarded the zodiacs again, ready for a cruise. There were



several floes with promising dark shapes on them, and we discovered both fur seals, Weddell seals and crabeater seals basking in the sun. Then we moved on to the glacier front and finally ended our cruise at the beach below the Almirante Brown Station, yet another base maintained by Argentina.

The base was in rather poor condition, which could be explained by the fact that it had been abandoned for years and only visited occasionally by the Argentine naval supply vessels, which used it as a fuel depot for their scout helicopters.



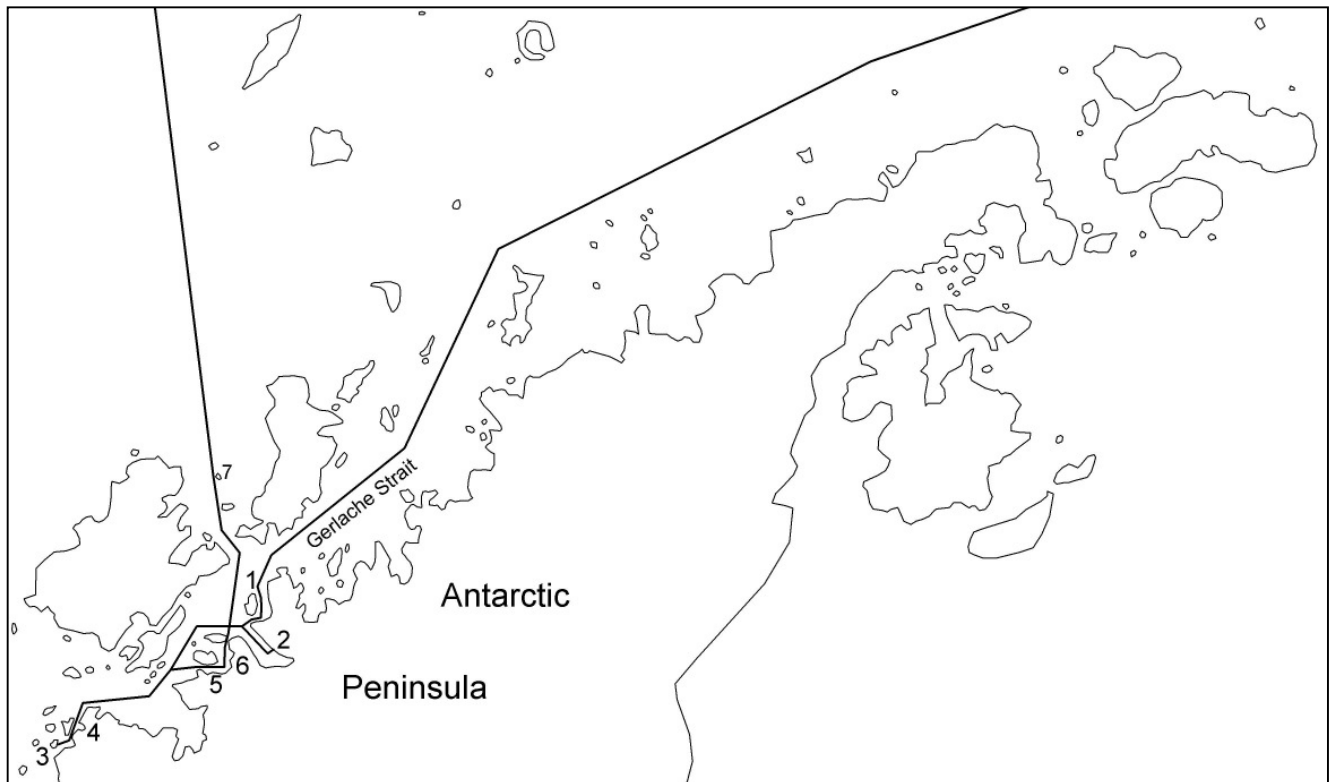
We landed and just saw a small party of station staff leave in a zodiac with what looked like oceanographic equipment. As we explored the



buildings around the base, we found a big area which looked like a concrete foundation of a building which had been removed completely. Could it have been swept away in a storm? All the other buildings were tied down with strong wires and bolted to concrete pillars, but the explanation was even more dramatic: in 1984, the station's doctor must have been fed up with the isolation of his assignment, which by then had been for two full years, so he decided to do something about it – and burnt the main building of the station down. The foundation was now used as storage area for the aviation fuel drums.

Then it was finally time to return to ship for the last time of our voyage. We had seen the Falklands, South Georgia and finally Antarctica under near-perfect conditions, and although the weather had shown us how rough and windy the Southern Ocean can be even during summer, we had managed all landings and zodiac excursions in good conditions.

While the ship sailed north again, those of us still on the lookout were rewarded with even more whale sightings, and the captain had even one last trick up his sleeve for us: the passage through the Melchior Islands was to be our last scenic cruise and certainly an appropriate way of saying goodbye to Antarctica.



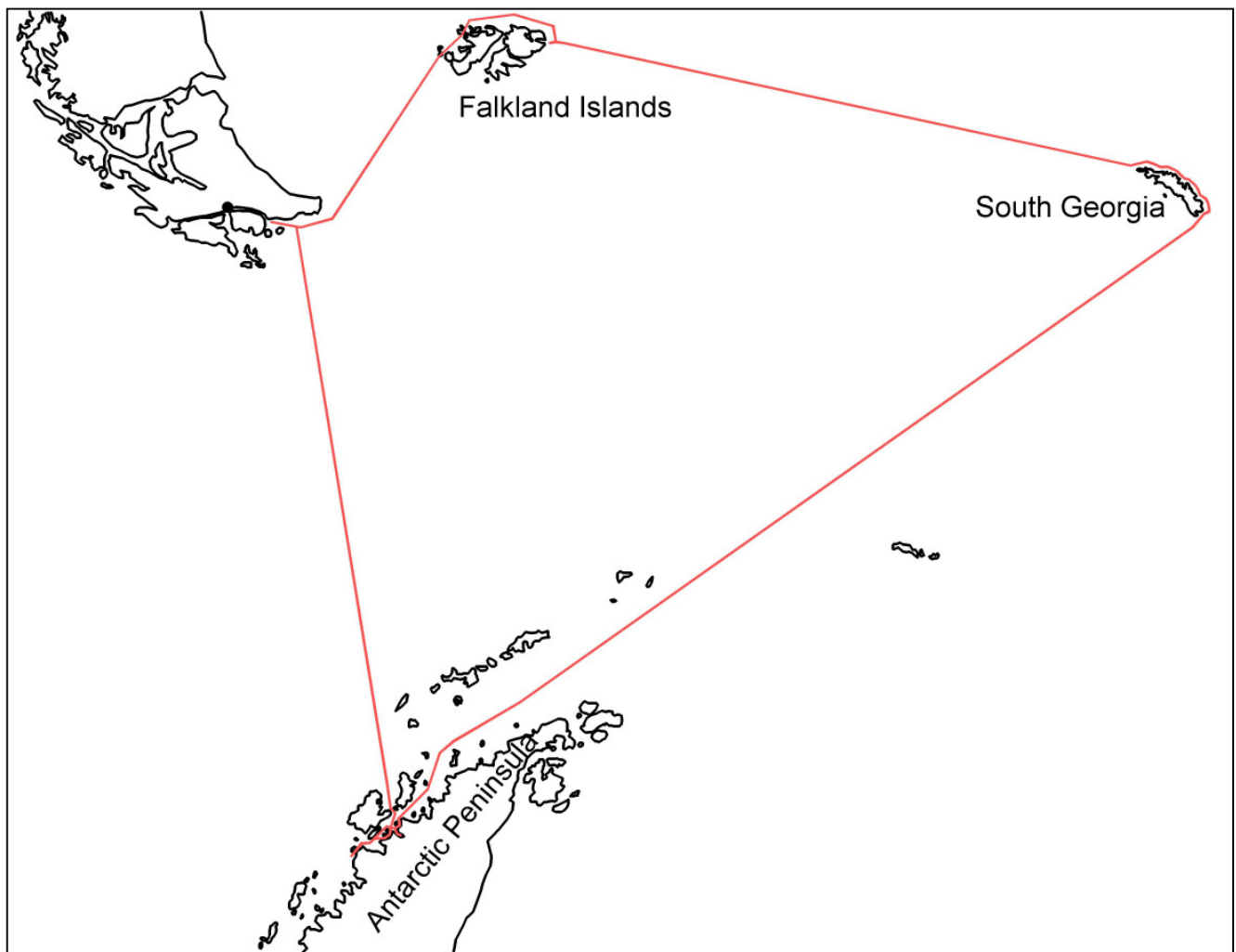
1. Orne Island
2. Neko Harbour
3. Petermann Island
4. Lemaire Channel
5. Ferguson Channel
6. Paradise Bay/Almirante Brown Station
7. Melchior Islands

The Drake Passage

The Drake Passage geologically opened about 22 to 30 million years ago, and connects the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean south of Tierra del Fuego. The South Shetland Islands border the south of this strait, which is here about 800-900 km wide. The Drake played an important part in the trade of the 19th and early 20th centuries before the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914. The stormy seas and icy conditions made the rounding of Cape Horn through the Drake Passage a rigorous test for ships and crews alike, especially for the sailing vessels of the day. Though bearing the name of the famous 16th-century English seaman and explorer, the Drake Passage was, in fact, first traversed in 1616 by a Flemish expedition led by Willem Schouten. Sir Francis Drake did not sail through the passage but passed instead through the Straits of Magellan to the north of Tierra del Fuego, although he was blown south into the more extreme latitudes of the passage by a Pacific storm. The passage has an average depth of 3400 m (11,000 feet), with deeper regions of up to 4800 m (15,600 feet) near the northern and southern boundaries.

The winds through the Drake Passage are predominantly from the west and are most intense in the northern half. The mean annual air temperature ranges from 5°C in the north to -3°C in the south. Cyclones (atmospheric low-pressure systems with winds that blow clockwise in the Southern Hemisphere) formed in the Pacific Ocean traverse the passage towards the southern end. Surface water temperature varies from near 6°C in the north to -1°C in the south, with the temperature altering sharply in a zone near 60°S. This transitional zone is known as the Antarctic Convergence, or Polar Front. It separates the sub-Antarctic surface water from the colder and fresher Antarctic surface water. At depths of between approximately 500 to 3000 m there occurs a layer of relatively warm and salty deep water. The maximum sea ice cover occurs in September; 25% to a full cover of 100% extends to 60°S, with occasional ice floes reaching Cape Horn.

The water within the passage flows from the Pacific into the Atlantic, except for a small amount of water in the south that comes from the Scotia Sea. The general movement, known as the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, is the most voluminous in the world, with an estimated rate of flow between 950 to 1500 Mio cubic meters per second.



13th February 2007 – Drake Passage, en route to Ushuaia

Position at 0730h: 62°13' S / 63°43' W

463 nm to the Beagle Channel, 10 kn current speed

Temperature Air: 4°C, wind calming down, but still heavy swell

The ship had been making steady progress through the night, but fortunately for us this passage through the open sea was going relatively smoothly. We started the daily programme of activities with another recap, this time summing up our activities along the Antarctic Peninsula. Rolf started out by giving us a general overview of the places we had visited, including a historical and political perspective on the various stations in the area. This was followed by John, who explained the Antarctic Treaty system which was the foundation for all scientific activities, but also a binding contract regulating political and diplomatic interactions of the member states. Finally, Rupert gave us some facts about the crabeater seal, the last species on our list of pinnipeds (= "fin-legged" i.e. the scientific group description of seals), and most of us were probably surprised to hear that this seal species is believed to be the most numerous in the world, with estimates of up to 40 million individuals!

After lunch, we were promised "the true story" about Shackleton, the man we had heard so much about throughout our voyage: we passed the house where he had been staying in Stanley, we did (the last and easiest) part of his trek across South Georgia to Stromness whaling station, we toasted his grave in Grytviken, and finally we had passed Elephant Island, where the majority of his crew of the "Endurance" had been marooned, while he undertook the famous voyage in the "James Caird" to South Georgia. The part of the story that much fewer people know, is the fate of his other expedition ship and her crew, the "Aurora", which were sent to the Ross Sea to meet him there, and to prepare depots for his attempted crossing. There is a recent book publication titled "Shackleton's Forgotten Men" featuring the Ross Sea party and their dramatic story, some of us had already found it in the ship's bar.

Later this afternoon, Rupert also referred to the famous explorers of Antarctica and their navigational tools and skills during his talk on "Animal navigation", and we were presented with the fascinating subject of animal migrations, direction-finding senses and biological clocks, a special aspect of biology which had received its own name, *chronobiology*. The most intriguing but also least known aspect he introduced to us was the idea of an "animal map", i.e. a record of where to go, in what direction and for which time interval, which apparently was stored, reproduced, taught and very possibly also inherited in many organisms throughout the animal kingdom.

Finally, it was dinner time and as always, the ship seemed to move just that little bit more, or was it maybe because we were paying more attention to it as soon as we got ready to sit down for a meal? Some of the aspects of shipboard travel would continue to surprise us, even after more than two weeks at sea, but some suspected that we might even miss the "good life" in a few days, too!

14th February 2007 - Drake Passage, en route to Ushuaia

Position at 0730h: 58°09' S / 65°05' W

215 nm to the Beagle Channel, 10-11 kn current speed

Temperature Air: 7-8°C, moderate wind and swell



This was to be our last day at sea, so Rolf gave us some disembarkation instructions after breakfast, including details on our arrival and transfer times, luggage handling etc. For the remaining day, we would be offered yet another lecture by John, this time on "Sailing ships around Cape Horn". We quickly realized that our little Antarctic adventure could not be compared to the hardships and challenges these sailors had had to face! In the afternoon, Rolf offered us some pictures and stories from the "other end of the world", the Arctic, where he had been working and travelling extensively, both on Oceanwide's ships and on his own. For those of us who had not been there yet, it was certainly an interesting preview of what could maybe become one of our next holiday destinations. Finally, those of us who had become interested in the

inner workings of the ship, we were offered some engine room tours, where we would be introduced to the engine control system as well as get a chance to look at the two main engines, the auxiliary engines, water and climate control systems, grey water recycling systems and even the shaft and gearbox. A very noisy but nonetheless fascinating insight, but we were faced with one puzzling aspect: since the ship was built in Finland, many signs and inscriptions were Finnish, as well as Russian on a separate plaque. That meant that we could read one version, but not make much of it, while the other version was intelligible to most of us, but when read aloud would probably have sounded very much like “generator” or other recognizable engine terms.

We ended this day at sea with one last dinner *chez Alan* in the Maryshev dining room, and then it was time for one last test of our courage and bravery: time to settle our bar, souvenir and sitcom accounts with Alan and Rupert!

15th February 2007 – Ushuaia

Position at 0900h: 54°50'S / 68°20'W

Temperature: a lot warmer than Antarctica!

In the early hours of the morning, the *Aleksey Maryshev* 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!

Total length of this trip: 3334 nm = 6 185 km = 3844 statute miles

**On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions we wish you a safe journey home and hope to see you again
sometimes, maybe in another polar region.**

www.oceanwide-expeditions.com

Log compiled by: Rupert Krapp.

Proofreading: John Harrison.

Images, maps, layout: Rolf Stange

Species list: Phil Palmer and Rupert Krapp

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

Lecture and presentations list

28 th of January:	<i>Welcome aboard</i> <i>Safety Briefing</i>	Rolf Stange, Allan Hogan Sergey Glazunov, 1 st mate
29 th of January:	<i>Bridge Tours</i> <i>Briefing on the Falklands</i> <i>How to use the zodiacs</i> <i>Wildlife of the Falklands</i>	Rupert Rolf & John Rolf Rolf
	<i>"The Blue Planet" part 1</i>	BBC video production
1 st of February:	<i>Recap of Falkland Islands visit</i> <i>Geological History of the area</i>	Rolf, Phil, Rupert, John Rolf
	<i>"Life in the freezer" part 1</i> <i>"Shackleton" part 1</i>	BBC video production Movie by K. Brannagh
2 nd of February:	<i>Plate tectonics in the Scotia Sea</i> <i>History of Whaling</i>	Rolf John
	<i>"Life in the Freezer" part 2</i> <i>"Shackleton" part 2</i>	BBC video production Movie by K. Brannagh
3 rd of February:	<i>Briefing on South Georgia</i>	Rolf
	<i>"The Blue Planet" part 2</i>	BBC video production
7 th of February:	<i>Recap of South Georgia visit</i> <i>Life on an icebreaker</i>	Rolf, John, Rupert Rupert
	<i>"Life in the Freezer" part 3</i>	BBC video production
8 th of February:	<i>Identifying sea birds at sea</i> <i>Nordenskjöld's Antarctic expedition</i>	Phil Palmer, chief birder John
9 th of February:	<i>Glaciers and landscapes</i> <i>Sea ice – a unique habitat</i>	Rolf Rupert
	<i>"Life in the Freezer" part 4</i>	BBC video production
10 th of February:	<i>Glaciers lecture – continued</i> <i>The Ozone hole – a detective story</i> <i>Briefing on the Antarctic Peninsula</i>	Rolf Rupert Rolf
12 th of February:		
	<i>"Life in the Freezer" part 5</i>	BBC video production
13 th of February:	<i>Recap of Antarctic Peninsula visit</i> <i>Shackleton – the true story</i> <i>Animal navigation</i>	Rolf, John, Rupert John Rupert
	<i>"Life in the Freezer" part 6</i>	BBC video production
14 th of February:	<i>Disembarkation details</i> <i>Sailing ships around Cape Horn</i> <i>Travelling in the Arctic</i> <i>Engine Room Tours</i>	Rolf John Rolf Rupert & engine room crew

Species list

Ushuaia - Falklands – South Georgia – Antarctic Peninsula 28th January - 15th February 2007

Birds:

<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>	King Penguin
<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>	Gentoo Penguin
<i>Pygoscelis adeliae</i>	Adelie Penguin
<i>Pygoscelis antarctica</i>	Chinstrap Penguin
<i>Eudyptes chrysocome (crestatus)</i>	Rockhopper Penguin
<i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i>	Macaroni Penguin
<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>	Magellanic Penguin
<i>Diomedea exulans</i>	Wandering Albatross
<i>Diomedea epomophora</i>	Royal Albatross (northern & southern)
<i>Diomedea melanophris</i>	Black-browed Albatross
<i>Diomedea chrysostoma</i>	Grey-headed Albatross
<i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i>	Light-mantled Sooty Albatross
<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>	Southern Giant Petrel
<i>Macronectes halli</i>	Northern Giant Petrel
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Antarctic Fulmar
<i>Daption capense</i>	Cape Petrel
<i>Pagodroma nivea</i>	Snow Petrel
<i>Pterodroma mollis</i>	Soft-plumaged Petrel
<i>Halobaena caerulea</i>	Blue Petrel
<i>Pachyptila vittata</i>	Antarctic Prion
<i>Pachyptila belcheri</i>	Thin-billed Prion
<i>Pachyptila turtur</i>	Fairy Prion
<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>	White-chinned Petrel
<i>Puffinus gravis</i>	Great Shearwater
<i>Puffinus griseus</i>	Sooty Shearwater
<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	Wilson's Storm-petrel
<i>Fregetta tropica</i>	Black-bellied Storm-petrel
<i>Garrodia nereis</i>	Grey-backed Storm-petrel
<i>Fregetta grallaria</i>	White-bellied Storm-petrel
<i>Pelecanoides magellani</i>	Magellanic Diving Petrel
<i>Pelecanoides georgicus</i>	South Georgian Diving-petrel
<i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i>	Common Diving-petrel
<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>	Rock Shag
<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>	Blue Eyed (Imperial) Shag
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Black-crowned Night-heron
<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>	Kelp Goose
<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>	Ruddy-headed goose
<i>Chloephaga picta</i>	Upland Goose
<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>	Falkland Flightless Steamer-duck
<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>	Flying Steamer-duck
<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>	Crested Duck
<i>Anas georgica</i>	South Georgia Pintail
<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Turkey Vulture
<i>Buteo polysoma</i>	Red-backed (Variable) Hawk
<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>	Striated Caracara
<i>Caracara plancus</i>	Southern (Crested) Caracara
<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>	Magellanic Oystercatcher
<i>Haematopus ater</i>	Blackish Oystercatcher
<i>Charadrius modestus</i>	Rufous-chested Dotterel
<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>	Two-banded Plover
<i>Gallinago paraguaiiae</i>	Magellan (Paraguayan) Snipe
<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	White-rumped Sandpiper
<i>Chionis alba</i>	Pale-faced Sheathbill

Birds:

<i>Catharacta maccormicki</i>	South Polar Skua
<i>Catharacta chilensis</i>	Chilian Skua
<i>Catharacta antarctica</i>	Brown Skua (Falkland+Subantarctic)
<i>Larus scoresbii</i>	Dolphin Gull
<i>Larus dominicanus</i>	Kelp Gull
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic Tern
<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>	South American Tern
<i>Sterna vittata</i>	Antarctic Tern
<i>Anthus antarcticus</i>	South Georgia Pipit
<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>	Falkland Thrush
<i>Muscisaxicola macloviana</i>	Dark-faced Ground-tyrant
<i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>	Tussacbird
<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>	Black-throated Finch
<i>Sturnella loyca</i>	Long-tailed Meadowlark
<i>Carduelis barbata</i>	Black-chinned Siskin
<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	Grass Wren
<i>Troglodytes cobbi</i>	Cobb's Wren
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	House Sparrow

Marine Mammals:

<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Fin Whale
<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>	Antarctic Minke Whale
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Humpback Whale
<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blue Whale
<i>Lagenorhynchus australis</i>	Peale's Dolphin
<i>Lagenorhynchus cruciger</i>	Hourglass Dolphin
<i>Cephalorhynchus commersonii</i>	Commerson's Dolphin
<i>Mirounga leonina</i>	Southern Elephant Seal
<i>Hydrurga leptonyx</i>	Leopard Seal
<i>Leptonychotes weddellii</i>	Weddell Seal
<i>Lobodon carcinophaga</i>	Crabeater Seal
<i>Arctocephalus gazella</i>	Antarctic Fur Seal

Land Mammals:

<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Reindeer
<i>Lamborghini malvinii</i>	Falkland sheep

You can help even more to preserve South Georgia's endangered birds!!

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.



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.

"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.

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