



TRIPLOG

Falkland Islands - South Georgia - Antarctic Peninsula

February 04-22, 2012

MV Ortelius



MV Ortelius was named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. MV Ortelius was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland, as a research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science and was named *Marina Svetaeva*. In 2011 she was purchased by **Oceanwide Expeditions**. The vessel was re-flagged and renamed Ortelius. Now the ship is sailing as a 125-Passenger vessel. Ortelius is 91 m long, 17,6 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5,80 m, with an Ice Strength rating of UL1/1A, top speed of 13 knots and one diesel engine generating 3200 kW.

With:

Nautical Crew:

Captain: Sergey Nesterov (Russia)
Chief Mate: Dmitry Chuvakov (Russia)
Second Mate: Oleg Lyakh (Russia)
Second Mate: Valery Troyansky (Russia)

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Rolf Stange (Germany)
Assistant Expedition Leader: Elke Lindner (Germany)
Guide/Lecturer: Christian Glahder (Denmark)
Guide/Lecturer: Christian Savigny (Argentina)
Guide/Lecturer: Pablo Brandeman (Argentina)
Honorary shore man: Robert Eschenbach (Germany)

Hotel Staff:

Hotel Manager: Natasha Hanson (USA)
Assistant Hotel Manager: Beverly (Scotland)
Head Chef: Bryan Scott Hanson (USA)
Sous Chef: Marcelo Canel (Argentina)

Ship's Physician: Anja Eschenbach (Germany)

And further 32 international Crew Members.

Saturday, 04.02.2012, Ushuaia

Position (5 p.m.): 54°48'7 S 68°17'7 W, Weather: calm, sunny

We boarded Ortelius, our home for the next 18 days, right after 4 p.m. At 6 p.m. we started our expedition voyage to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. Fortunately the weather was calm and warm. Ushuaia gave us a last spectacular view of the civilization before the city disappeared in the distance behind us as our officers on the bridge and an Argentinian Pilot navigated our ship through the Beagle Channel. Just before dinner we met for a welcome introduction with our Expedition Staff team and the Hotel Managers in the bar and lecture room. A bit later this was followed by a mandatory life boat drill. The pilot that accompanied us through the treacherous waters of the Beagle channel left us around 10 p.m. And soon we entered the open waters of the South Atlantic Ocean on our way to the Falkland Islands or "Las Islas Malvinas", as the Argentinians call the Archipelago. Soon all felt the movement of the ship in form of a gentle rolling. However, we could get used to it during the night...



Leaving Ushuaia behind – The mandatory lifeboat drill.

Sunday, 05.02.2012, At Sea towards the Falkland Islands

Position (7:30 a.m.): 54°02'5 S 64°04'8 W, Weather: 6°C, strong gale, overcast

During the morning the ship rolled even more, but as we were well prepared only a few of us were missing under breakfast. We spend the whole day at sea and had a full lecture program. In between the lectures there was time to stay on the bridge or outside in sheltered areas.

Elke started the “Ortelius University Courses” with an introduction into Antarctic sea birds. She gave us an overview of the most common genera and species of sea birds we were likely to see during our journey. Later on Pablo lectured on his first part of the Falkland history. The history dates back only some 500 years from the first discovery, through various land claims and wars among France, Spain and Britain, to the Argentine-British Falkland War in 1982.

After lunch and a short break, our Expedition Leader Rolf gave the mandatory introduction to the Zodiac operations that would face us under the trip, but also how we should behave while watching wildlife during our excursions, i.e. the IAA-TO rules and regulations. Later Rolf told us about the plans for the next two days on shore the Falkland Islands. A three page program was handed out to all passengers. The weather had now changed to patchy blue sky and a calmer sea. After dinner some of us enjoyed the outside decks or a documentary about Falkland Islands Nature in the bar.

In between lectures and meals there was time for observations and photographing from around the ship. A rather large group of at least 30 Long-finned Pilot Whales came close to the ship shortly before Pablo's historic lecture. This southern subspecies has a conspicuous creamy eye patch and saddle, so our guides on the bridge could tell this species apart from others. Also many sea birds were around the ship all day. A few of the large albatrosses (Royal and Wandering Albatross) were seen, together with many Black-browed Albatrosses and Southern Giant Petrels. In between we could observe White-chinned Petrels, Great and Sooty Shearwaters, and some of the smaller prions and storm-petrels.



Giant Petrel and some of us enjoying the evening light during the crossing to the Falkland Islands.

Monday, 06.02.2012, Falkland Islands: Westpoint Island, Saunders Island

Position (7:00 a.m.): 51°20'8 S 60°40'0 W, Weather: 7°C, near gale, cloudy

During the night the waves got less and just before wakeup call the anchor went down. There was a lot of laughter and talking at the breakfast tables: everybody awaited their first landing. A first guide zodiac went ashore. During their ride we could already observe the strong winds that blew the water off the tops of the waves. The sky was nice and the sun was shining, what a start of the day! Then we got the message that the landing was canceled.



During our first day in the Falklands, we could not get to the wildlife but the wildlife came to us.

Rolf gave us a short briefing in the bar, about the cancellation and the further plans of the day. Afterwards most of us had a lookout on the very windy but sunny outer decks. The wind was still so strong (about 25 m/s), that we passed Carcass Island, where we had planned our afternoon landing. Our expedition team wanted to go for another trial at the nearby Saunders Island. This island has different beaches, one of them might have got some wind shelter...

We anchored in front of the “Neck” at the northern side of Saunders Island. It was obvious that a landing would be impossible. However, the wildlife came to us! Lots of Peale’s and some Commerson’s Dolphins appeared on both sides of the ship. Some of the dolphins already accompanied us on the way to this place. After a while we continued to the Saunders settlement that is situated at the East of the Island. We found the weather situation unchanged: sunny and strong wind. However, also here we anchored for a couple of hours. Commerson’s Dolphins came close by, and penguins like Rock-hopper or Gentoos could be observed in the water around the ship. Later we had a second trial at Saunders “Neck”. Although no shore excursion in sight, we enjoyed the wildlife observations from the outer decks.

The day ended with a short briefing in the bar, explaining the many opportunities we will have during the next day in Stanley. While we were outside on deck today, Rolf organised eagerly some optional shore excursions in Stanley. After dinner the crew heaved anchor and set course towards our next destination.

Tuesday, 07.02.2012, Falkland Islands: Stanley

Position (6:00 a.m.): 51°41'2 S 57°51'1 W, Weather: 11°C, strong breeze, overcast

In the early morning Ortelius anchored in the Bay of Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands. The wind was not so strong any more so we had an easy breakfast very early in the morning. Our day started at 7:45 at the gangway, from where we were shuttled to the Jetty close to the Stanley Visitors Center. Many of us had signed for the Nature Trek excursion in the Gypsy Cove area while some stayed in town and its surroundings.

A bus drove us to the wreck of the old sailing ship *Lady Elisabeth* at the eastern side of the Stanley Harbour. Four skilled local guides lead us on the 5 km walk to Engineer Point along the coast and then further to Gypsy Cove and York Bay from where we were picked up by the bus again at noon. It was a pleasure to land today and to stretch our legs in this open landscape always with a view to the sea. It was windy, overcast and rather warm, 11°C. The area was well vegetated with scattered rocky outcrops and with a slightly undulating landscape. Diddle Dee bushes grew along the path. The red bitter berries are used by the locals to make a jam, which they made eatable with help of loads of sugar. At this time of the year



Impressions from the Nature Trek:

*Sea cabbage with the wreck of the Lady Elisabeth in the background, Steamer duck,
old WWII cannon at Ordnance Point, Magellanic penguin.*

the Kelp Goose feed on these berries. Big cushions of the Balsam Bog grew between some cliffs. The leaves of the Scurvy Grass (not a grass) were visible between larger ferns and shrubs. A 30 cm high veronica-species with white flowers was the nearest to a native tree in the Falklands.

During the hike we faced also the variety of Falkland's bird life. Along the coast we observed Kelp Geese, Ducks, Dotterels and Oystercatchers. Later we found Upland Goose, Correndera Pipit, Dark-faced Ground-tyrant and Long-tailed Meadowlark. We passed a smaller Magellanic Penguin colony where large chicks hid in the burrows, which were dug by the penguins. In the rocky Gypsy Cove area Rock Shags bred and large brown juveniles of Night-herons flew around the rocks.

Back in town we received lunch-packets. We used the time for a stroll in town. A few of us took off for the Battlefield tour in the hills around Port Stanley and had a very interesting tour with talks, memorials, remains etc. of the 1982 war. Just a bit later most of us were picked up by 8 Land-rovers and transported to the Lagoon Bluff Cove. The ride took about half an hour and was easy in the beginning on tar and gravel roads, but the last leg was off-road riding. Once at the Lagoon we enjoyed the Gentoo Penguin colony, where penguin parents fed and sheltered their large chicks. Among the Gentoo Penguins a group of five King Penguins had their brown chicks lying sheltered on the parents' feet. Many Geese were feeding in the surroundings of the penguin colony and on the shore Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins came and went through the breaking waves. Two-banded Plover, Sanderling, Rufus-chested Dotterel and White-rumped Sandpiper were feeding on the shore and in the lagoon near the penguin colony. After the intense watching it was nice to refresh ourselves with plain and penguin tea, loads of different cookies and live music.

Well back in town we were shuttled back to the ship and had dinner just in time. Later the documentary about the Falkland Islands Nature was offered again upon request in the bar.



Friendly Gentoo penguins at Lagoon Cove.

Wednesday, 08.02.2012, At Sea towards South Georgia

Position (7:30 a.m.): 52°06'8 S 53°57'4 W, Weather: 3°C, gale, overcast & partly rainy

This morning we could sleep a bit longer. This was good after the long day yesterday. The sun shine through the portholes and windows. The Ortelius was rolling from one side to the other and we needed some sea legs to get to the restaurant for breakfast.

After meal time most of us enjoyed the nice weather outside, before participating in the lecture by Christian about the Albatrosses of the world. He presented all kind of different albatrosses: large and small, polar and temperate species and their relationship to the other tube-nosed birds we have heard about and seen during the last days.

Before lunch some of us preferred to have a nap, others chose to be on the outside decks, where a variety of albatrosses such as Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross and even the rather rare Sooty Albatross were playing in the winds.

At early afternoon Chris introduced us to the seabirds we have seen around the ship so far. He had quite a lot of useful hints how one should determine the species. So much to look at and so many details to remember! We decided to join the two Christians more often on the outside decks to learn about the birds in the field.

One hour later all our guides invited us to a retrospective on the Falkland Islands, that we could get answers on our last questions before we get to South Georgia. Pablo offered more historical information about the Falkland Islands. Elke introduced a variety of plants we have seen on our excursions and our birders continued with a broad overview on birds we have seen on shore. We finished this day with the first part of a movie about the famous Antarctic Explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton.

Thursday, 09.02.2012, At Sea towards South Georgia

Position (7:30 a.m.): 52°43'8 S 47°24'3 W, Weather: 6°C, strong breeze, cloudy

Today we spend the entire day at sea on our journey towards South Georgia. Weather stayed reasonably calm and at gentle sea provided us with excellent possibilities of staying out on deck everywhere on the ship. A group of 5-10 Wandering Albatrosses in different plumages circulated around the ship all day. White-chinned, Giant and Soft-plumaged Petrels were also seen in small numbers together with the rather abundant Black-bellied Storm-petrel. Later in the day about five King Penguins were observed in front of the ship and few South Georgia and Common Diving-petrels took flight just before they were run over by the ship. A small group of Hour-glass Dolphins appeared with just a brief bow-riding and a medium sized whale stayed submerged at the starboard side of the ship.

In the morning there was a mandatory briefing in the bar where Rolf told about the visit to South Georgia, rules and regulations from the Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI), the IAATO rules and the rodent eradication program which is in its early phase but prove successful. Written material about South Georgia by GSGSSI was handed out to each passenger. After a short break the meeting continued with a DVD about South Georgia provided by GSGSSI. The film was followed by a mandatory vacuum cleaning of out-door clothing and bags.



Relaxed days at sea: Albatrosses, lectures, preparing for South Georgia (biosecurity), more Albatrosses.

In the afternoon Christian told us about the Antarctic Convergence Zone, how it creates and why it is so important for marine life. It is a wide zone of upwelling cold water that provides nutrients and oxygen for planktonic organisms. These again attract fish, birds and marine mammals to feed in this zone. Pablo went on in our "Ortelius University" and went through the history of explorers and expeditions that have been at South Georgia. We heard from Cook re-discovering the Islands. We got to know about the whaling period with Carl Anton Larson, the Captain of the "Antarctic"-Expedition of Nordenskiöld, who started the commercial whaling at South Georgia by founding the whaling station of Grytviken. And last but not least we listened to Pablo as he talked about Sir Ernest Shackleton and his Endurance Expedition, where six men went in an open boat from Elephant Island to South Georgia and three of them even desperately crossed the high mountain chain to get help from the whaling station. It was a good introduction that got most of us to the "Ortelius Cinema" again in the evening, where we continued with the second part of the movie on Shackleton's Endurance expedition.

Friday, 10.02.2012, South Georgia: Right Whale Bay

Position (7:00 a.m.): 53°47'7 S 38°47'5 W, Weather: 5°C, very rough sea, gale, fog

This morning we woke up a bit earlier. This day was meant to be a not fully day at Sea. The sky was rather grey and the waves pretty high, but this could not prevent us from going to the outside decks. A good number of Wandering Albatrosses accompanied us, in addition to Storm Petrels and Prions. A group of Hour-glass Dolphins showed up alongside. All of us were keen to see a glimpse of South Georgia soon.

During noon it was getting foggy. Bird observations could be made, such as light-mantled Sooty Albatross and Grey headed Albatross, but also Fur seals and small groups of penguins showed up in the water. The coast must be close, but we could not see anything. There, finally -big waves that could only been created by the big swell meeting the coastline. South Georgia was close. That was the time when we sailed near Bird Island just before lunch.

After lunch we passed Elsehul, a very exposed bay that was on our schedule for today. We wanted to find some more shelter in a bay further South: Right Whale Bay. We dropped anchor and the Expedition team send a staff zodiac out to scout the conditions. Soon we got informed about our first outing at South Georgia. We dressed waterproof and went outside. Six Zodiacs took us on a rainy ride towards the coast. There a committee of thousands of fur seals and a bit less King Penguins welcomed us. What a sight! The sound of all the seals sound and the penguin were trumpeting. Despite the rain and the wind we could not stop making pictures. Seals were swimming around the boats. Giant Petrels and Skuas had a fight for a penguin carcass ashore and Snowy Sheathbills patrolled the beach. When we went around the corner we got our feet ashore for five minutes at a little beach to train the landing procedure that we would have to remember from now on. Continuing along the coast line, every little space on the rocks was occupied by a fur seal. Sometimes a white morph seal was sitting in between all dark brown animals. At the end of the cruise we reached the big colony of King Penguins. The birds huddled together from the beach, high up to the slopes aside a picturesque waterfall and steep slopes with tussock grass. Groups of birds passed by the Zodiacs and some of them even captured our inflatables to play with them and surround them. Cold and wet but very happy we went back to the ship – everybody with a wide smile in the face...



We met the wildlife of South Georgia in Right Whale Bay for the first time at their home.

On this occasion it was a grey and wet but nevertheless highly enjoyable experience.

Saturday, 11.02.2012, South Georgia: Salisbury Plain, Prion Island, Hercules Bay

Position (6:00 a.m.): 54°03'2 S 37°19'3 W, Weather: 4°C, smooth sea, fresh breeze, cloudy

We had great plans for the day with three landings starting very early in the morning and hoping at least for the wind to ease down to an acceptable level. And indeed we succeeded to complete all our landings and on top of that the weather turned out to be perfect with just a light breeze and sunshine from a blue sky.

We had a wakeup call at 5:00 followed by a light breakfast in the bar. Only one hour later the first zodiacs landed on the beach of Salisbury Plain. This landing is well known for its huge swell and difficult landings with most passengers getting wet both when landing and again when leaving. But our landing went very smooth and all came dry on shore. Here some of the 60,000 breeding King Penguins awaited us together with numerous Antarctic Fur Seals and a couple of Southern Elephant seals. We walked slowly up to the King Penguin colony on the pre-marked route. The sun shone through dark clouds and a rainbow painted the sky.

The penguin colony is partly situated on flat terrain and partly sloping up a hillside covered with tussock grass. The scenery was sat with snow peaked mountains, glaciers, tussock grass plains, the blue sea and scattered green and dark grey islands and rocks. We spend about three hours here just sitting and watching and photographing the penguins and the fur seals. Back on board it was still early in the morning and we had the real breakfast while the ship left the area and sailed towards Prion Island, our next landing site.



Impressions from Salisbury Plain. Having been there on a fairweather day as we could enjoy is a lifetime experience!

Prion Island is a so called Special Protected Area (SPA) with a specific wildlife. Among others Wandering Albatrosses and the endemic South Georgia Pipit are breeding there. One of the dangers to the wildlife on South Georgia as such is the introduced rats and Prion Island is important because it has no rats. Special measures must therefore be taken when visiting the island, among these a careful inspection of e.g. bags before and after landing. As only a smaller number of persons are allowed to visit the island at a time we went ashore in two separate groups. We landed on a small beach with fur seals, two elephant seals and Gentoo Penguins. Wandering and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses circled the island together with quite a few Sub-Antarctic Skuas. Some of us on the beach observed a South Georgia Pipit who was feeding among the fur seals.

We walked up a boardwalk fringed with fur seals in the tussock grass and on top about 10 Wandering Albatrosses were breeding. One adult came in for landing and greeted the bird on the nest with cackling sounds and stretched wings. There was a magnificent view from up here over the coast of South Georgia and the scattered islands. From the slightly lower platform a small lake could be seen where at least three Yellow-billed Pintails rested. At early noon all passengers were back on board and lunch was served.



Prion Island had obviously the wrong name and should be named "Albatross Island".

(Ed.: the name Albatross Island is already given to another near-by and very similar island).

We now sailed eastward for our third landing in Hercules Bay. The weather was still beautiful and so was the northern coastline. We passed through the milky melting water from a glacier and observed the very sharp border between this fresh water and the salt sea water. The ship anchored in Hercules Bay and half an hour later we landed on a small beach to see the Macaroni Penguins in their breeding colonies. We walked up a slippery path and from a small platform we could follow the life in the colony among the tussock grass. A few Snowy Sheathbills were busy cleaning up the colony. On the rocky beach many Macaroni Penguins had gathered and a single Chinstrap Penguin was also seen. Afterwards, or before, we cruised the Hercules Bay and saw the impressive geological folding, a beautiful waterfall and the Macaroni Penguin colony at the end of the bay with two steep rocky landings for the homecoming penguins. All were back on board by 19:30 and shortly after Rolf told us in the bar about our plans for tomorrow. Half an hour later dinner was served and after dinner most people almost collapsed after this intense and stunning day.



In Hercules Bay we were greeted by the lively and noisy Macaroni penguins.

Sunday, 12.02.2012, South Georgia: Whistle Cove, Leith Harbor, Stromness, Maiviken, Grytviken

Position (6:30 a.m.): 54°08'7 S 36°47'5 W. Weather: 4°C, calm sea, fog, rain

We anchored during the night in Fortuna Bay. Rolf woke us up pretty early and a landscape covered in fog and rain awaited us outside. Instead of the planned Shackleton hike we went for a beach visit at Whistle Cove. After a long zodiac ride we Fur Seals, Elephant Seals and King Penguins awaited us on the beach. Just around the corner a small cove hosted some bones and fur remains of reindeer. In the beginning of the last century sealers often used the cave when harvesting Elephant Seals. When we strolled along the marked direction towards the King Penguin rookery we had to pass hundreds of Fur Seals on the beach and the plain. On the slopes and on the plain reindeer were observed as well. These animals do not belong naturally to the Island but were introduced by the Norwegian whalers about one hundred years ago. Since they feed also on tussock grass they destroyed quite bit of the natural breeding habitat for petrels, prions, ducks and penguins. During the last years there arose plans to clean the Island not only from rats but also from reindeer.

The weather was rather rainy with a fresh breeze. Later the wind even picked up and some of us went back earlier to the ship, because we were getting cold. However, with the increasing wind the fog also lifted a little bit and we had some nice views to the mountains around Fortuna Bay.



Brown Skua and marooned King penguin at Whistle Cove, Fortuna Bay.

After Lunch the Crew navigated the Ortelius close to the abandoned whaling settlement of Leith Harbour. The sun was shining and it was rather warm out on deck compared to the morning landing. Leith Harbour was the largest whaling station and operated until 1965. During the 1982 war British military patrolled the stations until 2001. Sailing out of the bay we went into the westerly situated whaling station Stromness. This was the settlement where Shackleton, Crean and Worsley reached civilization and thus help for the rest of their crew on the 20th of May in 1916. Stromnes was a whaling station until the early 1930s and got a ship repair yard until 1960.



Left: Stromness whaling station, with the famous Shackleton Waterfall in the background to the right of the centre.

Right: The hikers made their way up from Maiviken towards Grytviken.

In the afternoon we got a surprising new landing at Maiviken. The weather was brilliant, so 41 hikers took off with three guides for a crossing to Grytviken. We others remained on the ship and enjoyed the scenery while setting course for Grytviken. The ship's horn blew good bye and soon we were alone in the grandeur of the wilderness of South Georgia. After the tussock beach we had to follow a path on steep meadow slopes. A great variety of lichens and mosses grew between



Wildlife was abundant again today in Grytviken where whales had been slaughtered and boiled into oil into the 1960s.

the dominating grasses and burnet species. A small hut shelter at the Maivatn-Lake was our first resting place. Some of us wanted to move on quickly so we divided us into groups and the hikers or rather runners went off with Pablo. When we reached the barren and non-vegetated pass we had a wonderful view towards the glacier and snow covered mountains around Grytviken. The settlement itself was not visible yet. Some quiet minutes let us be aware of the silence and seclusion of this area. The last meters led us through some succulent meadows until we saw the first glimpse of the former whaling station: the old and rusty oil tanks but also the white tower of the newly restored church. This church comes originally from Norway and was brought in pieces to Grytviken in 1913.

Well down we individually explored the site. The museum and the post office had open and Ortelius had already anchored up in King Edward Cove. When we were done at the museum most of us went over to the cemetery on the southern part of the bay to visit the graves of Sir Ernest and his friend and right hand man Frank Wild.

We finished this wonderful day with a BBQ on the heli-deck together with the crew from the Museum and King Edward Point. Just before midnight we heaved anchor and went into the fog banks out in the fjord.



Evening light over Cumberland East Cove. It was time to celebrate two very successful days in South Georgia.

Monday, 13.02.2012, South Georgia: Gold Harbour, Drygalski Fjord, at Sea

Position (7:30 a.m.): 54°37'4 S 35°56'1 W. Weather: 5°C, moderate sea, strong breeze, partly cloudy.

After breakfast at 6.30 we prepared for our morning landing at Gold Harbor. The landing itself was an easy one with nearly no surf. The weather was splendid with sun and blue sky and just a mild breeze. Here in the bottom of the fjord there is a large King Penguin colony of about 25,000 pairs situated on the flat terrain near the beach. The mountains on the southern side carried a well cleft glacier from which roaring and thunder reached us once in a while. Many King Penguins were moulting and here and there we saw some King Penguin juveniles in their fluffy brown coats. In the rivers and ponds the penguins had gathered together with the always present Antarctic Fur seals. Near our landing site 10-15 rather large Southern Elephant Seals rested in the sand. For the first time in South Georgia we saw reasonably large males with an elephant trunk. A bull can mate from around its fourth year, but most mate when they are about ten years of age. A bull can weigh up to 3.7 tons, a cow up to 800 kg. The bulls here come to moult after the breeding season.

About ten Snowy Sheathbills flew constantly around in the penguin colony to feed on the remains of everything from the penguins and returned to their nests in the surrounding hills. On the rocks and at the beach a few Gentoo Penguins could be seen. After almost two hours a shore the wind had suddenly changed direction and blow in strong gusts from west. The



South Georgia at its best: Elephant seals and King penguins in large numbers. Stunning scenery under the blue sky.

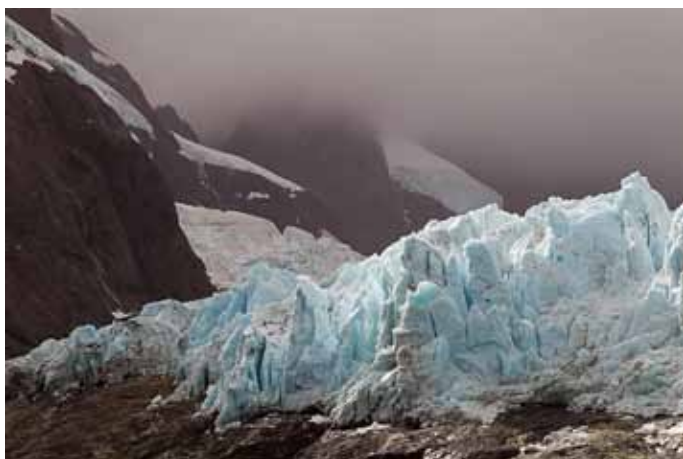
gusts swept sand and penguin feathers among us. Rolf decided to leave the landing site earlier before the wind got too strong which would make the zodiac operation much more difficult or even impossible.

We left Gold Harbor and many of us had gathered on the bow deck to watch the scenery, birds, seals and possible whales. Many sea birds appeared off the coast, among these two Snow Petrels, many Antarctic prions, Black-browed Albatrosses, White-chinned Petrels, South Georgia Shags, Common and South Georgia Diving-Petrels. We have not been at the open sea for too long, when a strong wind blow off the coast and coloured the sea whitish green. We passed Cooper Island, a rat free island and thus an important island for breeding birds. Two large icebergs stayed near the island and suddenly a fierce wind blew us away from the bow deck.



The enormous wind in Drygalski Fjord kept the waterfalls from reaching the sea.

After lunch we entered Drygalski Fjord, a long fjord that ends at the Risting and Jenkins Glaciers. A very strong headwind of 30 m/s or about 100 km/h swept the fjord and made the water in the waterfalls to fall up instead of down. It looked as if the cliffs were smoking. Many Wilson's Storm-petrels were feeding here and some Snow Petrels passed the ship. When leaving South Georgia around 14.30 we had to stay inside due to the still very strong wind. A beautiful phenomenon arose



In given conditions, the cruise of Drygalski Fjord was a breathtaking experience in the true sense of the word.

from the fierce wind that spread the spray from the breaking waves; in this sea water cloud the reflecting sunlight created a horizontal rainbow over the sea giving the impression that the sea was burning. Again in open sea we were met with waves and wind from west slowing the speed down to about 8 knots. After dinner, where about a quarter of the passengers did not show up, the “Ortelius” Cinema showed “Star wars, part 2” after meal time.



We met truly furious winds after our departure from South Georgia.

Tuesday, 14.02.2012, At sea to Antarctica

Position (7:30 a.m.): 56°53'2 S 39°05'7 W. Weather: 3°C, high sea, gale, fog.

We re-gained one hour again during the night. In addition we had a later breakfast, so we could recover from the packed program in South Georgia. It was still very windy and the ship was rolling a lot, but somehow it felt better than yesterday evening. Only a few of us were missing during breakfast. This might maybe also be thanks to our Doctor Anja, who helped a lot with delivering medicine against sea sickness.

After breakfast Rolf opened the “Ortelius University courses” again with a series of 2 lectures on plate tectonics and the development of the Southern Ocean and its Sub-Antarctic Islands. We heard about subduction and spreading zones, about the very young (200 Ma!) Southern Ocean and that South Georgia once was a part of South America, whilst the South Orkney Islands once belonged to the Antarctic Peninsula. We also learned that Antarctica was the center of the ancient southern continent Gondwana and used to have temperate climate, whereas it is now the coldest and windiest place on Earth. After the lecture some of us had to rest and others observed the wild Southern Ocean from the bridge. The outside decks remained closed because of safety reasons since yesterday evening. After lunch Christian told us about the life and biology of the Wandering Albatross. Weighing about 8 kg and having a wingspan of more than 3 meters (9 feet) the albatross is the largest and heaviest flying bird. The Wanderers are pairing for life and have a life span of more than 50 years. This albatross rears the chick for 9 months. Unfortunately there is still a yearly decline of about 4-5% in the Wandering Albatross Population at South Georgia due to long-line fishery.

Christians lecture was followed by a South Georgia recap by our expedition team. We heard about the rat eradication program, and birds we have seen around South Georgia. Pablo told us about how to smoke a pipe out of the grass filling of old sailors shoes, cleaning the pipe with a whisker stolen under high risk to be bitten of a fur seal and finally how to get rid of anger as a whaler by trampling on a well blown up and inside decomposed whale carcass. Last but not least Elke

told us about the influence on native vegetation and the population development of the introduced Norwegian reindeer by whalers a hundred years ago. Rolf pointed out, that with eradication of this reindeer; Santa Claus would have it difficult to travel with reindeer with antlers during Christmas.

After a delicious Valentines dinner we had movie time again: "Life in the freezer" was on the plan, before we finally went to our cradles.

Wednesday, 15.02.2012, At sea to Antarctica

Position (7:30 a.m.): 59°26'3 S 44°18'5 W. Weather: 0°C, very rough sea, near gale, cloudy.

We woke up at one more full day at sea on our way to the Antarctic Peninsula. The wind was all day fierce from a southwesterly direction and waves and swell were high and came from the same corner. That together slowed down our journey towards southwest and the ship's speed was only 7-8 knots. When falling the waves down slope the ship made 10 knots, crawling up hill only 6-7 knots. Cascades of water swept over the bow and as the sun came through the clouds rainbows formed. Dramatic was the sea and easy to imagine how difficult a journey it was that Shackleton and his five men made during May (comparable to Northern Hemispheres November) when crossing from Elephant Island to South Georgia. In the afternoon we were about 20 nautical miles North off South Orkney and a glimpse of the more than 1000 m high mountains could be seen of these islands. More and more birds appeared around the ship and also a couple of whales could be observed. Often 2-4 blows from the whales could be seen hanging a few seconds in the air before they were integrated in the surrounding sea spray. Observation conditions were extremely difficult both due to the ships unpredictable movements and the constant spray on the windows of the wheelhouse. Despite this we managed to see a few of the whales so well that we could identify two Humpback Whales, one Sei Whale and 3-5 Fin Whales. Most likely most of the 15-20 whales we saw during about an hour were Fin Whales. Of birds around the ship we saw many Cape Petrels, some Southern Fulmars and a few Wandering, Black-browed and Grey-headed Albatrosses. Also smaller flocks of Chinstrap Penguins appeared on the surface.

During the day three lectures were given in the dining room: During the morning Pablo told about the history of Antarctic which covers 200-300 years from the non-discovery history, like the voyages of James Cook and the Russian Expedition of Baron von Bellinghausen around the outskirts of the Antarctic Continent.). But his lecture was also about the discovery era, the heroic period to present day. After lunch Christian G. gave a talk about the penguins of the world, the 6 genera and 17 species, their distribution, size and so on. And later Elke presented some links of the food web of the Southern Ocean including the importance of the Antarctic sea ice, phytoplankton and krill. After dinner it was movie time again. We enjoyed this time two additional parts of the BBC documentary "Life in the Freezer" in the moving bar-cinema-hall before we went to bed.

Thursday, 16.02.2012, At sea to Antarctica

Position (7:00 a.m.): 61°08'2 S 48°35'8 W. Weather: -2°C, very rough sea, gale, cloudy.

This morning the ship was not rolling but pitching. At least another movement! The wind was still very strong and blew the white crests off the waves. Cape Petrels were following us all the time. A while after breakfast we gathered in the restaurant again to hear about sea bird conservation in the Southern ocean. Chris showed us a lot of scary pictures how albatrosses, cormorants, petrels and other birds ended as by-catch in fishing gear. Although it seems to be so easy to prevent birds to come to close to the dangerous nets and lines, not all fishermen seem to know or care about it. Although there has been done some effort to make these lethal traps for seabirds safer, there seems to be not much of an effect for the bird populations, especially albatrosses. We left his lecture thoughtfully but also knowing there are options for us to



Southern fulmars and Cape petrels became more and more abundant as we got further south.

help. Those of us who spent their time on the bridge soon spotted the first tabular icebergs but also the Antarctic Petrel our birders were so much longing for.

When lunch was served the sea was already a bit calmer. Except the bow all outer decks were available again for us. It was a pleasure to get a fresh breeze of air! In the afternoon we followed Pablo down in the catacombs again. He let us take part in the adventurous expedition of the Swede Otto Nordenskjöld and the ship Antarctic, who have suffered in the region we would reach the next day. How lucky this explorer and his men must have been, although they had to overwinter in Antarctica longer as they were supposed to. Only one man died, when easily all could have been lost. It was most likely the Argentinian expedition member Sobral who changed their faith. Or would the Argentinian navy have looked for the Swedish explorers if not an Argentinian citizen was with them? However, all three in the area spread out parties, who did not know from each other finally met again at the main base on Snow Hill Island, where also the rescue ship Uruguay found its way to. And all men but one could be rescued.

We also were rescued soon because all outer decks were open now and Ortelius got close to the first pack ice from the Weddell Sea. Many of us rushed either to the outside decks or filled the bridge with life to scan the ice edge for wildlife. Single Adelie Penguins were spotted and Humpback Whales were present in the icy waters. It was freezing cold outside – yes, we came closer to Antarctica!

The evening divided us, some went for the “Ortelius cinema” and others had to go outside to watch more ice, ice bergs and wildlife until the light disappeared.

Friday, 17.02.2012, Errebus and Terror Gulf, Paulet Island, Brown Bluff

Position (6:30 a.m.): 63°35'3 S 55°31'3 W. Weather: -3°C, smooth sea, light air, cloudy.

Finally our rough sea journey from South Georgia was over and all night we had sailed in the calmest sea you could imagine. There were icebergs and ice floes everywhere but enough open water for the ship to keep a steady 8-9 knots. Now and again during the night our sleep was interrupted when the ship passed drift ice fields and touched smaller ice floes. Some of us were on deck already around 4:30 to see the sunrise, but only a reddish glimpse came through the sky. A couple of Snow Petrels flew low over the sea and ice and many Wilson's Storm-petrels were feeding on the surface. Quite a few ice floes were inhabited by Adelie Penguins, mostly juveniles, which we could recognize by the less black coloured head and the missing conspicuous white eye ring. Also seals were frequently seen: Antarctic Fur Seals, Crabeater Seals and Weddell Seals were either swimming between or hauled out on the ice floes. Large tabular icebergs drifted as ice giants between the smaller floes and bergs, making their way out of the Weddell Sea.



Sea ice and a blue iceberg during our approach to Paulet Island.

Before breakfast we could already see the cone-shaped Paulet Island in the distance. The island, a former volcano, holds a large Adelie Penguin rookery which we planned to visit. Right after breakfast we jumped into the zodiacs. First we started with a short cruise around the icebergs. Some of them housed resting Adelie Penguins on top. After a while we landed on a gravel beach. We were welcomed by several curious groups of juvenile Adelies, who walked forth and back the shore. When we reached the highest shore line we were supposed to be on the edge of the colony. Surprisingly there were only a few breeding birds with juveniles left at the slopes. The walk to Larsen's hut was rather slippery and smelly. We had to pass the reddish guano plain, where the penguins used to sit on their nests in order to get higher up. Pale-faced Sheathbills were busy feeding in the guano-soup and a few Sub-Antarctic Skuas were scavenging on dead penguins. Many of us went off for a hike around a hill, starting at the “fresh”water lake. We had to climb up a slope and enjoyed a magnificent view over the area. At another lake some male fur seals found their resting grounds and Skuas were feeding on some of the many carcasses of penguins we found on our way. We strolled towards the beach, which was packed with fur seals. They made their funny noises, that we still remembered so well from South Georgia, to defend their small territories on the



Paulet Island: White-faced shearwaters, Adelie penguins, Blue-eyed shag and Ole C. Wenersgard's grave.

The last letter of Ole Christian Wenersgard, member of Larsen's party of the Nordenskjöld expedition, written shortly before his death on Paulet Island (original in Swedish):

Dear Father and Mother,

For some time now I have been ill, which I became after Antarctic was lost the 12th February this year. First I got bronchitis and was very ill, then I got scurvy and I do not think I will live much longer. However, I am facing death as a blessed redeemer, and I hope by the grace of God that all my sins will be me forgiven, and for the sake of the death of Jesus that I may go to heaven before you and wait for you there. Please do not grieve too much because of me, because as you know I am with God. I know I have done evil and bad things but God's mercy is greater than my sins. So dear parents, these are the dearest regards and please give my regards to all my brothers and sisters and ask them to live in such a way that we can all meet with God in heaven.

Ole Chr. Wenersgaard

beach. Some of them also started fights. A younger Southern Elephant Seal slept, not bothered by its relatives, in the middle of all squabbling. In some distance we saw some zodiacs slowly approaching the beach and also the others that did join our short hike. Close to the cormorant colony we met at the grave of Ole Christian Wenersgaard, who was the only men who died on the Nordenskjöld Expedition. Rolf read his farewell letter to his mother and father. Before we could get back to the ship several divisions of Adelie youngsters passed the beach and prevented us to get into the zodiacs, which seemed to attract them. Well back on board the Ortelius went directly on course for our afternoon destination, Brown Bluff.

The sun appeared and made it a nice and warm experience to stand on deck and just enjoy the scenery and the wildlife. After lunch we passed Andersson Island and Jonassen Island on our port side. Hundreds of Cape Petrels formed flocks on the water or in the air. These birds were most likely breeding on the islands nearby. One Antarctic Minke Whale appeared a few times on the surface without a blow and some Crabeater Seals and a few Weddell Seals lay basking on the ice floes. After lunch we anchored off Brown Bluff and soon the first zodiacs landed on shore. Scattered blocks of volcanic rocks



*Cruising through drice ice and icebergs in the northern Weddell Sea. Coastline of the northeastern Antarctic Peninsula.
Snow petrel and Gentoo penguin at Brown Bluff.*

were spread out over the beach. Some Kelp Gulls were nesting on the largest of them. Many Gentoo penguins were standing and moulting on the plain - as spread as the rocks - and also some fur seals rested in the same loose pattern. A large group of hikers went off a pretty steep moraine ridge. We others strolled along the plain and visited the Gentoo Penguin colony. Rather many were still feeding their near fledged chicks. When chicks begged for food by tapering on the parents bills the parent started to run, most often in the direction of the sea, with the chick eagerly running behind. Often both stumbled several times during such a race. Also here at Brown Bluff the Adelies were not at home anymore, although it was still early in the season to leave the breeding area. Maybe the krill, their food resource, was much further to the north this year than usual and the birds have suffered from that? Or was it the heavy weather of the last days that chased them out to sea? ...

We observed some Giant Petrels who caught a young Penguin and fought for it. At some larger boulders we found breeding Snow Petrels. We could have spent hours at this place! Well, many of us actually did. Staying or sitting quietly at the spot the penguins approached us very curiously.

The hikers got a nice view over the nearby glacier and the Antarctic Sound. On the top of the ridge surprisingly mosses were growing. Also Kelp Gulls and Skuas were waiting here for us. Huge icicles hang on the steep and high cliffs. The origin of the cliffs was well visible, especially after Rolf had explained the geological background of sub-glacial volcanic eruptions during different stages. So-called pillow lava formed the lower part of the cliffs. It was created during early stages of the eruptive activity. When the glacier ice was melted and the melt water came into contact with the magma explosions were the result and pieces of the cooled down pillow lava and ashes were thrown into the air and then deposited. This mixture could be seen on top of the first layer and in some of the boulders that were deposit by the glacier a long time ago. The fine, light brown sediment on top originated from the eruptions that took place after the volcano had penetrated the glacial surface.

Some ten meters above in the cliff a 'pillow' was missing and this hole was now the breeding place for a Snow petrel that came and went without being bothered by us. A few times we could hear the communication between the chicks and the adult bird, when the adult came for feeding.

Back on board we set course to the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Saturday, 18.02.2012, Cierva Cove, Gerlache Strait, Orne Island, Errera Channel

Position (7:30 a.m.): 64°08'6 S 60°55'8 W. Weather: -3°C, calm sea, light air, snow fall.

In the morning we arrived in Cierva Cove. The visibility was reduced by dense snow fall. The sea was smooth and a few ice bergs were around the ship. All open decks had a white snow cover. Some of us enjoyed the situation and created some short snow ball fights on the spot.

When we started our planned zodiac cruise it was still snowing. We were all well swept in thick layers of cloths to be able to enjoy the snowy ride as long as possible. Our drivers took us to some icebergs. It was almost mystic to see them in the fog and with a light white cover on top. Newly accrued sea ice covered partly the water surface. Some of the water seemed to be rather oily: this would most likely be covered by new sea ice in the next couple of hours.

A beautiful arch of ice attracted us. Some of us went around others stayed, so we could take pictures from each other through the icy gate. Suddenly a big leopard seal appeared. It stayed and played with us for a long time: diving under the zodiacs, watching us from short and far distance and leading us to further companions at some smaller ice bergs close by. It was a great spectacle! It took us a while to move on. We went through scattered pieces of ice and along huge icebergs. The glacier of their origin appeared soon in the distance. Some leopard seals were hauled out on ice floes. Their sniffing was clearly audible, when they curiously raised their head. One of them even gave us a little show by sliding off the piece of ice surrounding one of the zodiacs and going back to the ice to jump on to it. And the seal repeated it for several times, circling around different zodiacs. Unfortunately soon it was time to return. First when heading back we realised that feet and hands got cold. We did not notice it during all our seal encounters and ice berg studies...



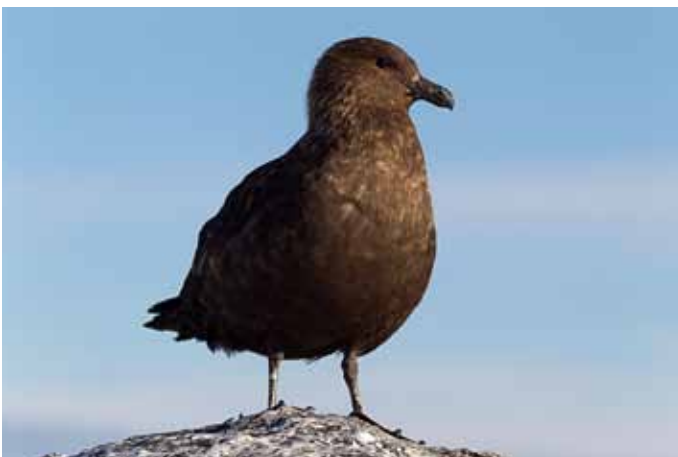
Antarctic impressions from Cierva Cove: Ice and Leopard seals, both in abundance.

Ortelius set course south. Our next destination was Orne Island. On our way the sky cleared up and we had a spectacular view to the coastlines of the Gerlache Strait. And then we got the call from the bridge that there were whales around! Five Humpback whales played slowly in our water way. They were gently surfacing and diving as close as possible alongside our ship. The white of the big flippers were clearly visible as they were swimming close by or turning upside down. The crew took us slowly with the whales and we got about half an hour's time to watch them intensively.

When we arrived at Orne Island in the evening, the wind had dropped completely and only in the West some clouds showed up. A huge iceberg was lying between the ship and the landing site. We went ashore like Rock hopper Penguins. When we first had passed the rocky beach we climbed a short slope of a snowfield up the island. Skuas and Chinstrap Penguins awaited us. Already from the first ridge we had a wonderful view over the Gerlache Strait and the neighbouring Islands of Rongé and Cuverville. The Chinstrap chicks had already started moulting. They were not very active, the sun radiation



warmed them pretty much up and more movement would mean even more heat production. Every sub-colony had its own pair of Skuas. They were eagerly guarding their territory. When everybody was ashore, we also got the possibility to walk up to the top of the island. However, this led us directly into Skua territory and we were happy with a few square metres rock underneath our feet. Some fluffy, greyish Skua chicks were hiding between the boulders. Adults came or flew away, sometimes greeting loudly. In the distance we could hear the rumbling of the glaciers, when ice broke off, but it was difficult to observe the calving itself. During some silent minutes on the top we could hear the waves that washed the shore and the penguins calling each other in a distance. A fur seal came up from the beach to cool down a bit on the snow. It rolled over the snow and put its nose deep into it: a little spectacle for the cameras aside all the resting or busy penguins in the colonies.



Chinstrap penguins, our hikers, a Skua and the Ortelius at Orne Island.

Although we did not like to leave this beautiful little island, we had to go back on board. Our Expedition Leader had some more plans for us this evening. Straight after dinner we sailed through the breath-taking Errera Channel. The orange sun disappeared behind Ronge Island and the last sunrays painted the peaks of the surrounding mountains in intense orange colours. Ahead of us fjord, glaciers, mountains and sky were lighted up by the sunset, while the landscape behind our stern was covered in all nuances of blue light. While many of us disappeared tired in their cabins, the others stayed awake until we also had passed the spectacular Paradise Bay.



Antarctic sunset in the Errera Channel.



Sunday, 19.02.2012

Lemaire Channel, Port Lockroy (Goudier Island), Jougla Point, Neumayer Channel, Melchior Islands

Position (6:00 a.m.): 65°03'3 S 63°55'5 W. Weather: -2°C, calm sea, light air, partly cloudy.

We had an early morning wakeup call by Rolf again. The reason was that we wanted to enter the spectacular Lemaire Channel. But many enthusiasts were up on deck already much earlier to see the sunrise at 5:25. This was not very obvious, but the morning was beautiful anyhow with the surrounding steep dark mountains mantled in snow, scattered ice bergs and floes in the sea, a new moon visible over the mountains, orange light against violet dark sky and a completely calm sea. Many South Polar Skuas passed the ship on their way to their morning feeding areas, few Wilson's Storm-petrels were feeding low over the surface and some Antarctic Terns passed by. When we passed through the narrow and remarkable Lemaire Channel the sun rose slowly and coloured the tops of the steep mountains. We passed Booth Island, Hovgaard Island and Peterman Island before our Captain decided to return: this was our southernmost position on our South America, Falkland, South Georgia, Antarctica round trip: 65°11,4 S and 64°07,8 E.

A few ice larger floes carried some Weddell and Crabeater Seals. Shortly before we turned we observed two Humpback whales that rested at the surface. Once again we cruised through Lemaire Channel and breakfast was served.



Scenery and Crabeater seals in the Lemaire Channel.

Sometime after breakfast we dropped anchor near Goudier Island where the former British Station Port Lockroy (from the French Port Le Croix) is situated on. We split into two groups; one landed at Port Lockroy, the others went ashore on Jougla Point. Both locations housed Gentoo Penguin colonies where chicks were not many days from fledging, but they were still fed by their parents. Around the shop and museum at Port Lockroy up to 20 Pale-faced Sheathbill were seen and at least two brownish chicks were fed by their parents. Often they were fed by krill, not caught by the sheathbills themselves, but by the Gentoo Penguins. When the adults were feeding their chicks, sheathbills waited vigilantly and when the Gentoo chick eventually dropped some of the food the sheathbills immediately grabbed the krill. On a distant ice floe a Leopard Seal was yawning in the sun. The shop and the post office were busy during our visit and many also paid the fine museum a visit. The staff in Port Lockroy counts five persons who stay here during summer. They are paid for the job and are picked among more than 100 candidates. In about two weeks they will all heading home. On Jougla Point the bones of whales, perhaps at least one Blue Whale, could be seen. Half a century ago some of the whale bones had been formed into a near complete whale skeleton of about 20m. We left this lovely place and headed north towards Dallmann Bay and Melchior Islands. The weather was still beautiful with blue sky and little wind.



White-faced Sheathbill and Gentoo penguins at Port Lockroy.

After lunch again we came very close to two Humpback Whales and the light was sometimes beautifully interacting with the surfacing whales and their blow. We finally left the whales and resumed our course towards Dallmann Bay. Around ten Humpback Whales could be seen underway, few South Polar Skuas and many porpoising Gentoo penguins. At late noon we anchored near the in the middle of the Melchior Islands. Soon all zodiacs went to the water and we started cruising. Some of us crossed the Melchior Sound and went into Andersen Harbour. From here we sailed into narrow straits and found Weddell Seals hauled out on the gravel beaches and snow fields near the beaches. Also Antarctic Fur Seals were around and Kelp Gulls filled the air with anxious calls due to their nearby fledged juveniles. We passed a yacht anchored in the sheltered channel and came out into open waters. We followed the rocky coasts of the spread islands build by square blocks and covered with thick ice caps. Two Humpback Whales appeared not far from the zodiacs and shortly after we found ourselves in the center of the whales feeding grounds. One of the whales came so close that the water around the zodiacs was boiling and the white flippers were apparent a few meters from under the boats; a sensational moment to witness! We left the scene in a strange and happy mood and continued our round trip. An Antarctic Fur seal came close to the zodiacs and later a flock of nearly 100 juvenile Antarctic Terns were feeding near the coast. Shortly before we



Another Humpback whale encounter in Gerlache Strait.



*The Melchior Islands: Antarctica in a nutshell.
Cruising hidden channels, Weddell seal, Blue-eyed shag and Humpback whale.*

returned to the ship we again came close to four feeding Humpback Whales. Also the other boats went through narrow channels and explored various coves. Many fur seals rested on the beaches and beautiful icebergs were stranded in front of some waterways. Far out in the open Sea several blows could be seen. When we approached these closer, four Humpback Whales were feeding on the surface. Many gulls marked already the area where these big mammals would find food. And on our way we had observed some glittering schools of juvenile fish. Returning to the ship we found the other zodiacs not far and close to them four more Humpback Whales. We followed them slowly until they waved a last time 'good bye' with their remarkable flukes.

What a final zodiac cruise in the most beautiful weather! Dinner was served at 20.00 while we initiated our crossing of the Drake Passage. The weather forecast promised tailwind that should not be too strong – fingers crossed.

Monday, 20.02.2012, Drake Passage

Position (8:00 a.m.): 61°54'3 S 64°23'2 W. Weather: -1°C, moderate sea, fresh breeze, partly cloudy.

This morning we could sleep as long as we wanted. Our hotel staff had organised a Brunch menu for us, so we could drop in one after another to fill our stomachs and sit and chat. Some of us have been awake earlier and used the chance to get some fresh air on the outside decks or to observe wildlife from the bridge. The sea was rather calm and we made good speed towards north.

In the afternoon the Ortelius University opened its doors one more time. Chris started with a historical overview on the discoveries of penguins. We learned that the first penguin discovered was the Great Auk, which was not a penguin but an auk and which today is extinct. We heard about Spanish and Portuguese traders who went to India around Cape Good Hope and who actually found the very first penguins. Also lots of scientific expeditions in the last centuries studied these birds intensively. This included the Scott Expedition that was on the quest for the sacred eggs. However, they unfortunately had to find out, that penguin eggs are as usual as any other bird egg. Christian was the next to tell us stories about our non-flying friends. We learned amazing things about the life and the breeding ecology of them. We learned that a King Penguin can swim as fast as 9 km per hour and can cover about 900 km distance in search of food. The chicks are remaining in crèches in the colony and can wait up to one month for their parents to return to feed them.

Last but not least Elke went on with a lecture on glaciology. Glaciers seem to be very different in form and characteristics. Ice can be cold or warm. And glaciers of the polar areas grow much slower than glaciers in temperate areas. Antarctica includes 90% of the freshwater of the earth that is bound in ice. We found out: ice is not only nice but also complicated, important and interesting.

The evening was finished slightly different than usual. After having seen yet another episode of life in the freezer our Expedition Staff and Beverly the bar lady, presented some songs. One of them was even self-composed and written by Christian and Pablo. Although

it was thought to present only two songs, they kept on playing the guitar and singing until long in the evening. In between Josh, one of our fellow travellers presented some underwater video clips he took on the voyage. It showed us the much different world of the underwater habitat and also some close ups with seals, humpback whales and ice.



Paying a musical homage to Frank Wild.



The weather near Cape Horn was singing its usual song.

Tuesday, 21.02.2012, Drake Passage, Cape Horn

Position (7:30 a.m.): 56°39'6 S 66°58'5 W. Weather: 4°C, rough sea, strong breeze, cloudy.

The night Ortelius started to dance Rock'n Roll again. However, it was our last day in open sea in the Drake Passage. During morning the weather was gray with scattered showers and windy. Rather many albatrosses could be seen around the ship, especially the Black-browed, but also a few Wandering and Grey-headed Albatrosses. As we came closer to land King Shags and Sooty Shearwaters appeared.

After breakfast Pablo told us some short stories of rather less known expeditions. One of them was Shackleton's Ross Sea party. We have heard much about the ship wreck, Elephant Island and the journey in James Caird to South Georgia, but hardly anything about the group that went to Ross Sea and Scott's camp to place depots for Shackleton after his landing in the Weddell Sea area and his South Pole visit. However, this party had a lot to suffer and struggled with weather and ice conditions. At the end of their mission the life of five men was lost. Since Pablo is a great fan of the Norwegian polar hero Roald Amundsen, he went on with a short tale of his expeditions and life. When he came to the Arctic part, Rolf took over and presented an interesting slide show about the arctic archipelago of Spitsbergen. Maybe this will be one of our next polar destinations one time?

Around noon we came close to Cape Horn. The huge albatross sculpture on top of the Cape was rather covered in clouds. To get into the waters around the Horn meant also a bit less rolling of the ship and help for the ones of us suffering from motion sickness.

After a proper lunch we could enjoy the Ortelius' cinema one more time: 'Winged migration'. Before dinner we had a final gathering in the bar again. Rolf told us about the plans and organisation for the disembarkation in Ushuaia, which was a bit sad to listen to, because this meant the trip will be over soon. However, he got us happy again with an impressive slide show. It was interesting to see where we have been sailing and what we have actually seen.

Just before dinner we arrived at the pilot station, where we got the Argentinian pilot on board, to go through the Beagle Channel. We finished this last evening on board with a slide show of our photo competition, where many of us had contributed to.

Wednesday, 22.02.2012 - Ushuaia

Position (7 p.m.): 54°48'7 S 68°17'7 W. Weather: certainly warmer than in Antarctica.

Today was disembarkation day. Coming alongside at 07.00, we were boarded by the Argentine officials who cleared our vessel. On the pier we bade farewell to crew and staff we have come to know over the past 18 days, and had one last look at the Ortelius, the ship that took us on such an incredible voyage to the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and at last to Antarctica. This trip will last us a lifetime – in our memories, our imaginations, and in our dreams. Not a few of us were wondering when we might return.

Total distance sailed on this voyage (Ushuaia - Ushuaia): 3314 nautical miles or 5965 kilometres.

Furthest south position: 65°11'1 S, 64°07'8 W, 1489 nautical miles or 2758 km from the South Pole.

Text and editing: Christian Glahder, Elke Lindner.

Wildlife list: Christian Savigny.

Layout, maps and pictures: Rolf Stange.

It has been a pleasure to travel with you.
On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Sergey Nesterov, Expedition Leader Rolf Stange
and all the crew and staff, we thank you for visiting the Falkland Islands, South Georgia
and Antarctica with us and hope to see you again!

For more information, please visit www.oceanwide-expeditions.com.

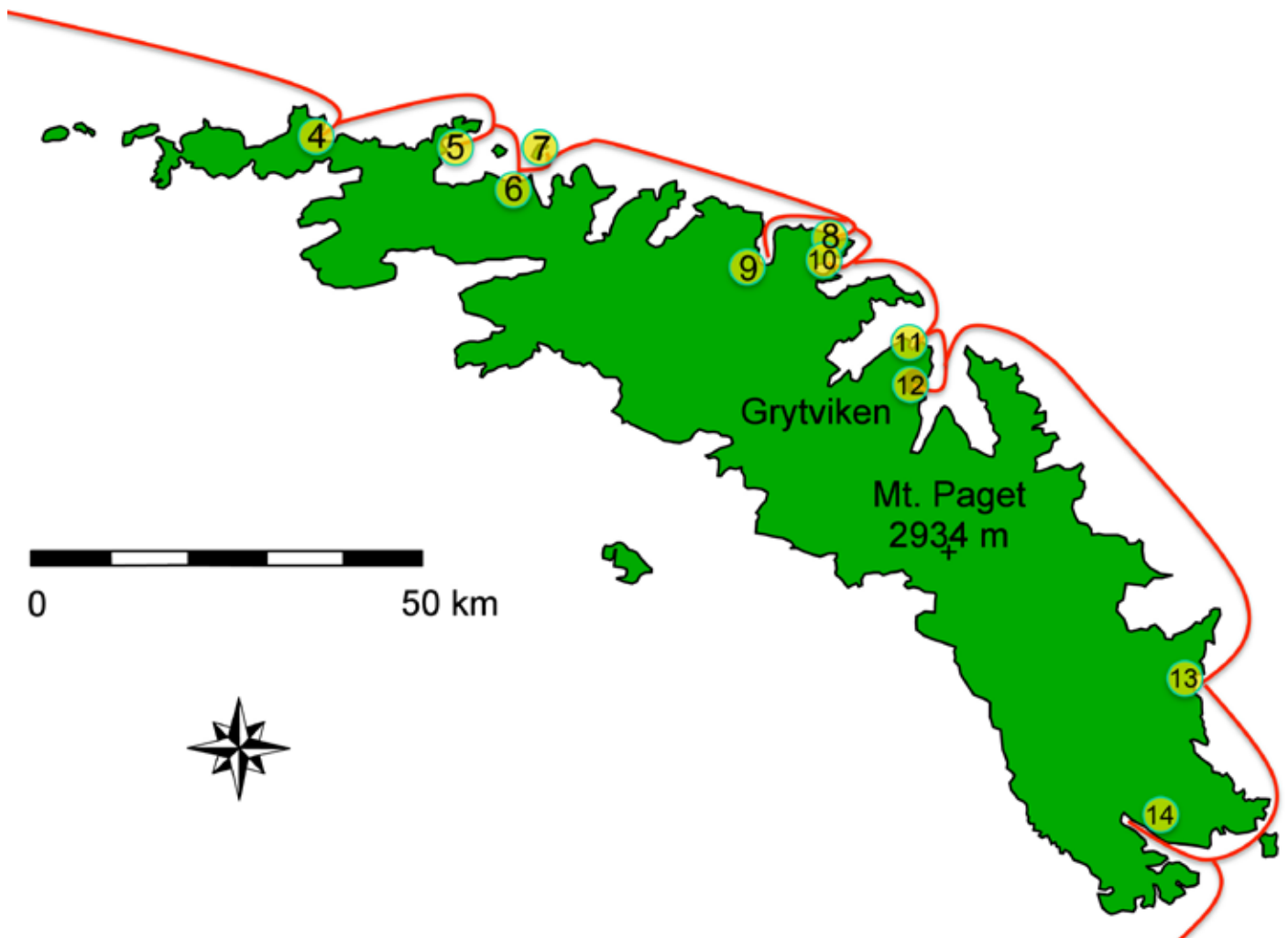
Some of the photos in this triplog show people within less than 5 metres from wildlife. In these and similar cases, the animals had decided to approach the people out of curiosity, which is a very enjoyable and completely acceptable experience also from the perspective of wildlife protection and applicable regulations. The animals were not disturbed during the depicted situations.

Lectures, movies and other on board activities during our voyage

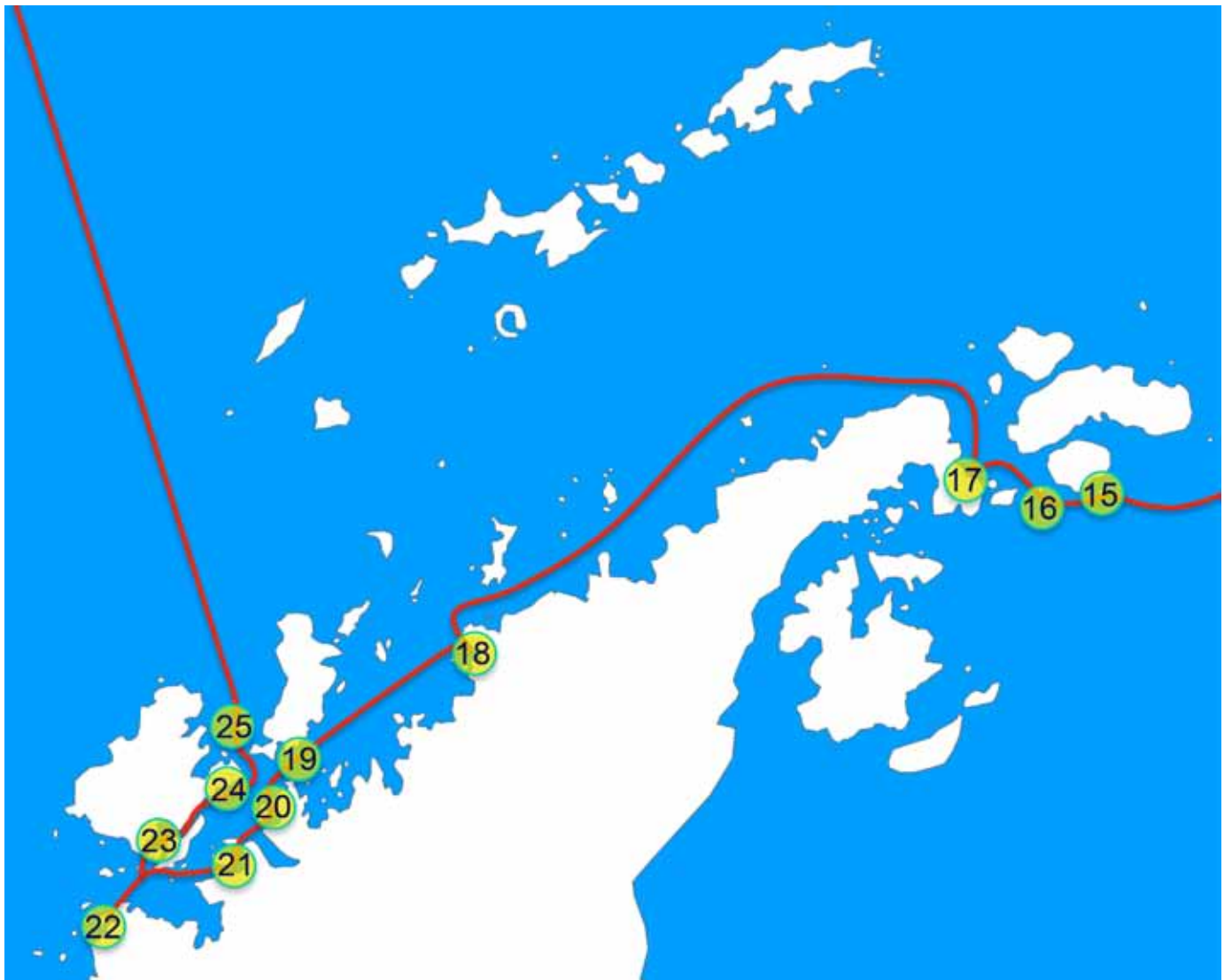
Date	Lecture/Briefing/Recap	Who
04 Feb 2012	Safety Briefing & Drill	2nd Mate Oleg & Rolf
05 Feb 2012	Introduction into Antarctic sea birds (lecture)	Elke
05 Feb 2012	Falkland history Part II (lecture)	Pablo
05 Feb 2012	IAATO & Zodiac briefing	Rolf
05 Feb 2012	Plans for tomorrow	Rolf
05 Feb 2012	Falkland Island documentary movie	
07 Feb 2012	Falkland Island documentary movie	On request
08 Feb 2012	Albatrosses of the world (lecture)	Christian G.
08 Feb 2012	Seabirds : field identification (lecture)	Christian S.
08 Feb 2012	Recap on the Falkland Islands	Pablo, 2 Christians, Elke
08 Feb 2012	Movie: Shackleton Part I	
09 Feb 2012	South Georgia briefing incl. biosecurity & SG government DVD	Rolf
09 Feb 2012	Antarctic convergence (lecture)	Christian G.
09 Feb 2012	South Georgia history (lecture)	Pablo
13 Feb 2012	Movie time (Star Wars)	
14 Feb 2012	Plate tectonics I: A general introduction	Rolf
14 Feb 2012	Plate tectonics: The Southern Ocean perspective	Rolf
14 Feb 2012	The Wandering Albatross	Christian G.
14 Feb 2012	South Georgia Recap	Expedition Team
14 Feb 2012	Movie: Life in the Freezer Part I	
15 Feb 2012	History of Antarctic exploration	Pablo
15 Feb 2012	Penguins of the world	Christian G.
15 Feb 2012	Antarctic Food Web	Elke
15 Feb 2012	Movie: Life in the Freezer Part II & III	
16 Feb 2012	Seabird conservation	Christian S.
16 Feb 2012	Nordenskiöld-expedition	Pablo
16 Feb 2012	Recap and Plans for the next day	Rolf
17 Feb 2012	Movie: Life in the Freezer Part IV & V	
18 Feb 2012	Movie: Life in the Freezer Part V	Upon request
20 Feb 2012	The discovery of penguins	Christian S.
20 Feb 2012	The Life of the Penguins	Christian G.
20 Feb 2012	Ice is nice: Basic overview on glaciology	Elke
20 Feb 2012	Movie: Life in the Freezer yet another part	
20 Feb 2012	Elephant Island channies and windy Falkland songs	"Ortelius Polar Hero Band"
21 Feb 2012	Adventure stories and short talks	Pablo
21 Feb 2012	Spitsbergen Presentation	Rolf
21 Feb 2012	Movie: Winged migration	
21 Feb 2012	Final voyage slide show	Rolf
21 Feb 2012	Fellow travellers picture contest	All



1	Westpoint Island
2	Saunders Island
3	Stanley



4	Right Whale Bay
5	Rosita Harbor (anchor position during the night only)
6	Salisbury Plain
7	Prion Island
8	Hercules Bay
9	Fortuna Bay: Whistle Cove
10	Leith Harbor, Stromness Whaling Station (ship cruise)
11	Maiviken
12	Grytviken
13	Gold Harbor
14	Drygalski Fjord
15	Paulet Island
16	Erebus and Terror Gulf (northern Weddel Sea)
17	Brown Bluff
18	Cierva Cove
19	Gerlache Strait (Humpback Whales)
20	Orne Island, Errera Channel
21	Paradise Bay
22	Lemaire Channel, furthest south (near Petermann Island)
23	Port Lockroy, Jougla Point, Neumayer Channel
24	Gerlache Strait (Humpback Whales)
25	Melchior Islands



Please consider to support the following projects that are directly dedicated to the conservation of the wildlife of South Georgia and the Southern Ocean:

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 American Bird Conservancy – www.abcbirds.org

RSPB – www.rspb.org.uk

The **South Georgia Habitat Restoration / Rat Eradication** Programme is very important to re-establish South Georgia's value as a seabird nesting site. It must be completed before the glaciers have retreated far enough to allow rats to cross these so-far impenetrable boundaries, so it is important to take action soonest! Please visit www.sght.org for more information.



Sponsor a Hectare of South Georgia

You can give a hectare (or more) of South Georgia back to its birds for only £90/\$140 per hectare

If you would like to be involved in protecting and conserving South Georgia, please complete the coupon below



I would like to sponsor _____ * Hectares (*insert number of hectares) at £90/\$140 each. Total value _____

Name _____

Name as you wish it to be on the certificate _____

Address _____

Country _____

Email address (please write clearly) _____

Credit Card number _____

Security number (the last 3 digits on the back of your card) _____ Expiry date ____ / ____

Signature _____ Date _____

Please tell us where you obtained this form _____

Gift Aid: for UK donors only. Gift Aid means that for every £1 you give, we can claim an extra 28p from the Inland Revenue ☐ helping your donation go further.

☐ I would like the South Georgia Heritage Trust to reclaim tax through Gift Aid on this gift and any future gifts, until further notice. (NB: You must pay income tax or capital gains tax equal to the tax we reclaim, currently 22% .

☐ In the future we may wish to send you updates on this project and our other work on South Georgia. Please tick this box if you do not wish to receive these.

If you would like to receive these updates by email, please ensure your email address is included above (Sometimes we like to use email as it is quicker and cheaper ☐ leaving us with more money to spend on our conservation work).

Your details will not be made available to any other party.

PLEASE POST YOUR FORM AND PAYMENT TO

South Georgia Heritage Trust, Verdant Works, West Henderson Wynd, Dundee, DD1 5BT, Scotland., UK

Tel: +44 (0) 1382 229792 : Email: info@sght.org : Website: www.sght.org

Scottish Registered Charity Number: SC 036819