



## TRIPLOG

2011-2013 Polar Scientific Explorations of Chinese Youngster  
to the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands

January 25 – February 04, 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.

Li Chengsen	Professor for Botany, Leader of scientists
Zhao Qi	Professor for Ecology
Ding Lin	Professor for Geology
Mr.Guan Kaiyun	Professor for Botany
Zhang Chunguang	Professor for Zoology
Guo Hongfeng	Senior Engineer Astronomy
Mr.Ding Chen	Group leader
Mr.Zhao Xi	Environment
Mr.Wang Tailai	
Ms.Li Xiangman	
Ms.Jiang Jie	



Ms.Gao Ranxin
Mr.Li Chenxi
Mr.Zhang Tongkun
Mr.Zhao Ya
Ms.Zhang Junhong
Ms.Zhu Liwei
Ms.Zhang Hui
Ms.Lin Xingzi
Mr.Han Zhipeng
Mr.Lin Zijun
Mr.Li Zejie
Mr.Wang Kaixiang
Ms.Wu Minyue
Ms.Zhang Jiani
Mr.Yao Haoyang
Mr.Zhao Chenguang
Mr.Liu Zhibo
Mr.Li Sihan
Qi Xin
Ms Grace Kelly Garrett
Ms.Liu Xuechun
Mr.Duan Xu
Ms.Bai Jiawen
Mr.Li Xingzhi
Mr.Peng Jin
Ms.Liu Limeng
Mr.Su Xuanbo
Mr.Guan Hongyi
Mr Zhang Zhe
Mr Zhu Jun
Zhou Youhong
Mr.Wang Jiaqi
Mr.Song Kangrui
Ms.Dai Yuhong
Mr.Zhao Bohan
Mr.Liu Jiuze
Ms.Dai Yixin
Ms.Zhang Hui
Mr.Guo Jianhua
Ms.Jin Yينو
Ms.Wang Wei
Mr.Zhang Jingyuan
Mr.Yang Zhijian
Ms.Liu Tengjiao
Ms.Wan Yi
Mr.Liu Ziwei
Mr.Wang Shiqi
Mr.Cai Min
Ms.Cheng Rui
Ms.Gao Ying





**With:**

**Nautical Crew:**

Captain: Sergey Nesterov (Russia)  
Chief Mate: Dmitry Chuvakov (Russia)  
Second Mate: Oleg Lyakh (Russia)  
Second Mate: Roman Aleksakhin (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)

**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: Veronique Verhoeven (Belgium)

And further 32 international Crew Members.

**Wednesday, 25.01.2012 - Ushuaia**

*Position (5 p.m.): 54°48'7 S 68°17'7 W. Weather: 14°C, calm, sunny*

Everybody came on board Ortelius, our home for the next ten days, just before 6 p.m. and we started to our expedition trip to Antarctica half an hour later. Fortunately the weather was calm and sunny. Ushuaia gave us a spectacular view of the last of civilization before disappearing in the distance behind us as we navigated into the Beagle Channel. Just before dinner we met for the mandatory life boat drill. Late in the evening we all met in the bar/lecture room again, where hotel and expedition staff were introduced. The pilot that accompanied us through the treacherous waters of the Beagle channel left us around 10 p.m. - Drake Passage here we come!



## Thursday, 26.01.2012 - At Sea

Position (7 a.m.): 56°37'2 S, 65°50'1 W. Weather: 7°C, moderate breeze, fog, moderate sea.

The Drake Passage gave us a smooth welcome, but never the less the gentle rocking left some of us resting longer in their cabins as breakfast was served. The morning was somewhat quiet and the fog around the ship finally turned into rain just before lunch. Not many birds or wild life were seen as the winds were calm and the clouds were low...



Christian Savigny presented his lecture on sea birds with translation from one of our Chinese professors. He raised questions on conservation and protection of the albatross, which our knowledgeable guide-ornithologist was very keen on answering.

Through the afternoon the wildlife started their show: Some Black-browed and Grey-headed Albatrosses flew around the ship. Relatively many Blue Petrels and a few Wilson's and Black-bellied Storm Petrels passed in front of our ship. Then a majestic Fin Whale appeared in front of the ship, announced by our captain over the PA system and everyone rushed to the bridge and the outer decks to spot the second largest cetacean in the vast Southern Ocean. A few of us were lucky to see the glimpse of a passing Orca.

## Friday, 27.01.2012 - At Sea, Dallmann Bay

Position (7 a.m.): 61°36'7 S, 64°08'8 W. Weather: 0°C, moderate breeze, overcast, slight sea.

After breakfast we had our mandatory IAATO and Zodiac safety briefing where all of us participated. Bio-security check and vacuum cleaning of all the clothing and gear to be used was done successfully, and boots were handed out to all passengers.

Because we had such a good weather for the Drake Passage crossing we arrived in Antarctica already at noon on this second day at sea. As we had our first glimpse of Smith Island three humpback whales showed up and gave us a spectacular show displaying flukes and flippers. What an incredible welcome! During our last leg of the Drake Passage a fine group of Cape Petrels followed the ship, small flocks of porpoising Chinstrap and Gentoo Penguins appeared and a few Antarctic Fur Seals spied the passing ship. After dinner the weather stayed as calm as we could only dream about and as we cruised





through the group of islands known as Melchior Islands, the sun reflected over the high mountains of Brabant and Anvers Island with extraordinary pink and orange colours. As we sailed into the Gerlache Strait Humpback Whales and Penguins kept showing up in the distance before we got to our anchorage position right in front of Cuverville Island, our designated landing site for the next morning.

**Saturday, 28.01.2012 - Cuverville Island, Neko Harbour, Paradise Bay**

*Position (7 a.m.): 64°40'4 S, 62°37'8 W. Weather: 1°C, light air, sunny, slight sea.*

Bright sun and no clouds at all blessed our first landing in Antarctica. Breakfast was served at 7:30 and Zodiac operation started just afterwards. Everyone was on shore by 9:20 and after Rolf, our Expedition Leader, briefed us on shore, everyone presided to enjoy the beauty of the biggest Gentoo Penguin rookery at the Antarctic Peninsula. The whole group was divided into smaller groups with different tasks: some were collecting samples of feathers, others penguin guano, some small rock samples or yet others sampled lichens and mosses. Sampling was arranged in agreement with our Expedition Leader who was informed of the corresponding permits issued by the Chinese Government. This trip is extraordinary for our group of Chinese school kids who are participants of a special scientific research program. Aside Gentoo Penguins we also observed South Polar Skuas, two Adelie Penguins and a Leopard Seal. At noon everyone was back on board. There we got ready for lunch as we cruised through the Errera Channel into Andvord Bay.



Neko Harbor was our next destination and the sun was still shining above our heads. The glacier in the bay was stunning and the breeding penguins were very active as usual. At this location our scientific program was to collect ice samples using a special designed drill that unfortunately gave us some grief as it got stuck several times before the entire sampling was finished. Never the less the view to the glacier dome over the Gentoo Penguin colony was incredible and the sun stayed with us - some of us got nicely tanned and others sun burned! When the first of us started to get back to the ship two Antarctic Minke Whales were passing by. Despite the delayed ice core drilling goup all were back on board right for dinner time. The restaurant was filled with voices talking eagerly of the experiences of the day. After dinner the Captain took us for a ship cruise into Paradise Bay where again the sun painted the Peninsula's high mountain tops in beautiful pink.



**Sunday, 29.01.2012 - Yelcho Point, Goudier Island/Port Lockroy**

*Position (7 a.m.): 64°52'4 S, 63°36'3 W. Weather: 0°C, light breeze, overcast, slight sea.*

Our designated landing site for today was Yelcho or Py Point. After staff was scouting to find an appropriate landing site we finally went ashore at an abandoned Chilean station. All around the station Gentoo penguins had established many small rookeries. The landing site was a bit rugged, and we went out of the zodiac a bit different than usual. Lastly all were able to get to higher grounds and then gathered above the station buildings for a group photo.

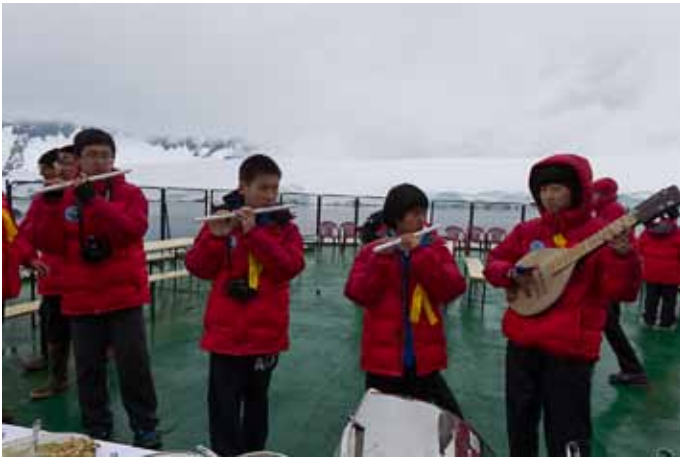
We divided into various smaller groups with different tasks of study. One group was in charge of sampling ice cores on the snow field towards the Peltier Channel. Others diverted their intention to mosses, algae and soil or studied the behavior of penguins or measured penguin nests.



Everybody was back onboard during noon and the Captain repositioned the Ortelius through the Peltier Channel to Port Lockroy, just around the corner. Before landing, one of the station personnel came onboard to brief us about the history of Port Lockroy, the former Base A of the British WWII Operation Tabarin. After the briefing a first group landed on Goudier Island. We visited the museum, bought souvenirs, wrote postcards and observed the penguins and Snowy Sheathbills. The wildlife was nesting and acting closer the narrow foot path, than anywhere else we have been so far. Later we switched with the others on board who now got time to visit everything at the tiny island. Back onboard our crew had prepared an Antarctic BBQ at the heli-deck. Also the staff from the base was invited. The BBQ finished in a very special way with a new year's music concert by some of our younger students.







**Monday, 30.01.2012 - Port Charcot, Lemaire Channel**

*Position (7 a.m.): 64°49'6 S, 63°35'6 W. Weather: -2°C, no wind, sunny and foggy.*

Today we landed at the north end of Booth Island at Port Charcot. Fog and pack ice prevented us to go to the usual landing site. However, two Adelie Penguins welcomed us to Island. Here we could walk up to the top a very small rocky hill made of granite and well-polished by an ancient glacier. After about an hour on the spot we went for a Zodiac cruise in the area covered with about 50% pack-ice. We came close to some Crab Eater Seals and Leopard Seals resting on the ice flows and we used the opportunity to take hundreds of pictures of the resting animals.

In addition to the Adelie Penguins, our bird observation list included Gentoo Penguins, South Polar Skuas and Giant Petrel. In the far distance a Snow Petrel could be observed flying over the pack ice. The fog finally raised and the mountains showed their beauty as we went back to the ship for lunch.



After the meal time our Captain maneuvered the ship through the Lemaire Channel – this famous and beautiful narrow channel with steep and high mountains on both sides. The steep cliffs were covered with huge glacier caps. We then reached the southernmost position of our trip right in front of Petermann Island and then turned back north again through the Lemaire Channel. Again we could observe many Crab Eater and Leopard Seals on the ice floes as well as a Weddell Seal and many porpoising Gentoo Penguins. Again, one Snow Petrel passed our way. Some of us joined the staff at the bow for a picture in the beautiful weather and enjoyed the scenery which was quite epic.



From here we were heading north, towards the South Shetland Islands, now cruising into the Gerlache Strait where we found a pod of Orcas of about ten individuals in the area close to Cuverville Island, our first landing site of the trip. A few Humpback Whales and some Antarctic Fur Seals also showed up as the sun painted the mountains with purple and pink and the evening ended this fabulous day.

### **Tuesday, 31.01.2012 - Telephone Bay (Deception Island), Great Wall Station (Fildes Peninsula)**

*Position (7 a.m.): 62°58'9 S, 60°33'6 W. Weather: 0°C, no wind, overcast.*

Early in the morning we cruised into the caldera (the crater) of Deception Island. The volcano is in fact still active. Just about forty years ago, a scientific station was destroyed by an eruption. We chose Telephone Bay as our landing site, where we studied basaltic rocks, lichens and mosses, jelly fish and krill. We strolled around and enjoyed the view from higher ground and came close to one of the many craters created during the latest eruption in 1969. On the beach we saw a few Antarctic Fur Seals and two Chin Strap Penguins; about ten Kemp Gulls and 5-10 South Polar Skuas were feeding at the beach for dead or alive Krill and other small crustaceans. Lunch time was approaching and we went back onboard Ortelius. During meal time we cruised out of the caldera through Neptune's Bellow, a treacherous channel only hundred meters wide and high cliffs on one side. What a spectacular view! Right outside Neptune's Bellow we encountered four Humpback Whales. The captain followed them slowly as they slowly moved around. From here we set course to the Chinese Great Wall Station, where we landed after dinner.



The scientists welcomed us friendly on the beach. Then all of us went up to the flag to do a group picture. Later the station personnel gave us a guided tour through the station. Coming to the main building we already felt a bit like home in China. We were surprised about the two new buildings: the recreation house and the scientific laboratory. Everywhere was light and lots of space. Maybe one of us is coming back in a couple of years to work as polar scientist at the station?





### Wednesday, 01.02.2012 - Great Wall Station (Fildes Peninsula)

*Position (7 a.m.): 62°13'6 S, 58°36'1 W. Weather: 0°C, gentle breeze, overcast.*

Straight after breakfast we all jumped onboard the Zodiacs and rushed back to Great Wall Station. Here we divided into different groups. Some of us went to explore the geology of the surrounding hills, trying to find fossils and minerals. Others explored the area for wildlife and plant life. The final hike took all of us to the north side of the Fildes Peninsula where we found Elephant Seals, Weddel Seals and last but not least Antarctic Fur Seals hauled out on the beach. A troop of chinstrap penguins also strolled along the shore.

The Drake Passage showed us its calm state that awaited us for our afternoon departure. At lunch time we all went back to the station for real Chinese food. Some of us gave a short New Year concert, while others went on a zodiac ride for a visit to the Chilean station around Ardley Peninsula. Eventually after this short visit we all came back to Great Wall station to say good bye to the scientists and started our way back to the ship.

Sad enough to know, this was our last landing in Antarctica: This beautiful place that showed us such incredible things and gave us so many nice experiences. We took a last glimpse of Antarctica under incredible coloured skies. The Drake Passage was laying ahead of us - South America here we come back...



### Thursday, 02.02.2012 - At Sea

*Position (8 a.m.): 60°15'4 S, 62°00'8 W. Weather: 1°C, moderate breeze, partly clouded.*

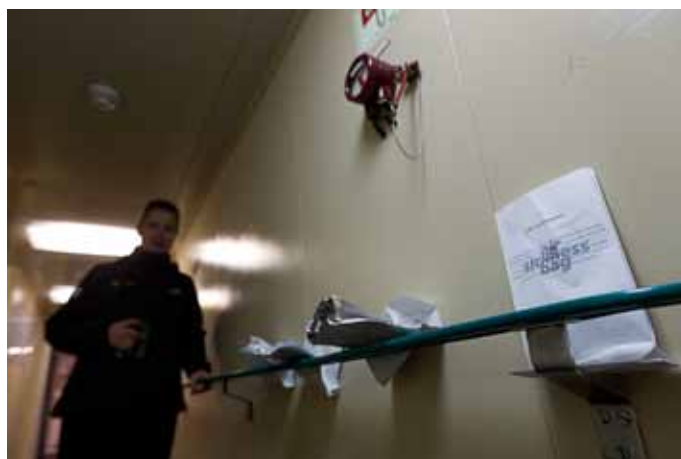
Our first day into the Drake Passage started quiet even though not everyone made it to breakfast. Which also meant our doctor was a bit busy delivering sea sickness medicine. Since a lot of the outer decks were closed due to safety reasons, those of us that were not lying in the bed could enjoy the movie "Life in the Freezer" indoors. Just before meal time some of us observed Hour glass Dolphins passing by the ship.

Also during lunch there were a lot of empty seats in the restaurant. The afternoon was a bit more agitated as we had a head wind of constant 25 knots which made the waves grow up to three to four meters. Ortelius was moving a bit in this sea and many of us went to bed. From the bridge we still could observe giant petrels and a few shearwaters that flew around the ship, although wildlife as such was rather poor in numbers. After dinner time the rest of the evening was really quiet.

## Friday, 03.02.2012 - At Sea

*Position (8 a.m.): 60°15'4 S, 62°00'8 W. Weather: 1°C, moderate breeze, partly clouded.*

Today we are still rocking along the Drake Passage. It won't get better until we will reach Cape Horn in the afternoon. During the day the sky cleared a bit up and the upper outer decks got a good place to observe wildlife. Northern Giant Petrels, Wandering Albatrosses, Cape Petrels and Black browed Albatrosses accompanied us on our course north. In the afternoon Cape Horn came into sight in a distance. The view of this rugged piece of land gives us an idea of the harsh times the sailors had back in the days when this area was considered one of the most difficult to navigate. The old wooden vessels were really hard to maneuver. In addition strong winds and currents steer this frigid water. Everything got so much calmer when we finally rounded the Cape. Here the sea is protected by the archipelago of islands that lay around the Horn. Our section of treacherous waters was finally done... Beagle Channel here we are again. Almost all of us are now back in good shape and ready to enjoy the last dinner onboard Ortelius. Our voyage is almost at its end. The beauty and the spectacular views of Antarctica are now a part of our memories. Now we are all ambassadors to Antarctica, let us spread the word of this incredible place and it's delicate balance. We should all help to keep it as wild and pristine as we found it for future generations.



## Saturday, 04.02.2012 - 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 10 days, and had one last look at the Ortelius, the ship that took us on such an incredible voyage 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.

Text and editing: Pablo Brandeman, Christian Glahder, Elke Lindner.

Wildlife list: Christian Savigny.

Layout and pictures: Rolf Stange.

Total distance sailed on this voyage (Ushuaia - Ushuaia):

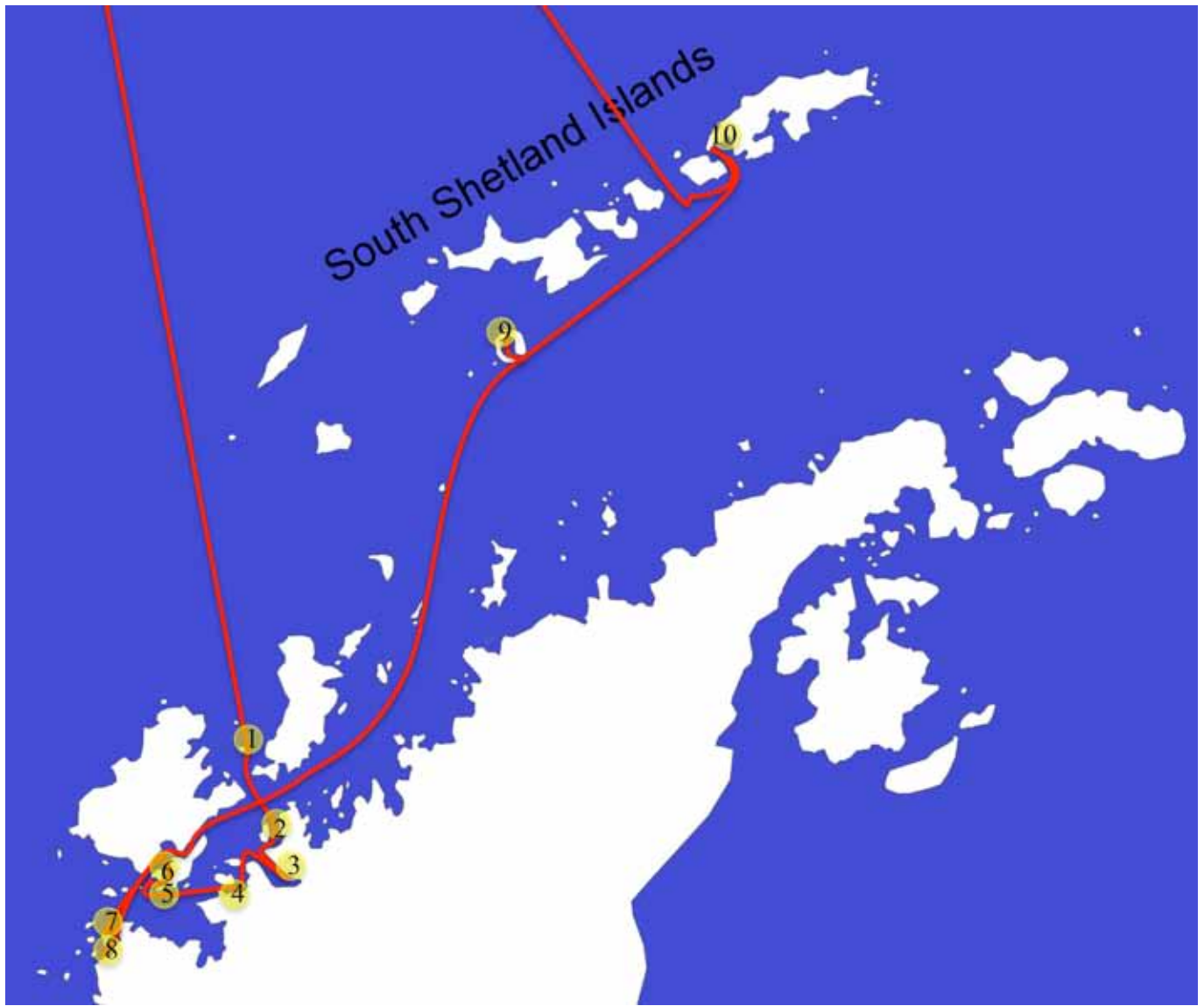
1640 nautical miles / 3037 kilometres

**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 Antarctica with us and hope to see you again!**

For more information, please visit [www.oceanwide-expeditions.com](http://www.oceanwide-expeditions.com).





1. Dallmann Bay, Melchior Islands	6. Port Lockroy
2. Cuverville Island	7. Port Charcot
3. Neko Harbor	8. Lemaire Channel, Penola Strait
4. Paradise Bay (evening ship cruise)	9. Deception Island, Telefon Bay
5. Yelcho Point	10. Great Wall Station, Fildes Peninsula