ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

TRIP CODE
ACTSRSAC
DEPARTURE
08/02/2022
DURATION
30 Days
LOCATIONS
Antarctica

INTRODUCTION

The Ross Sea region of Antarctica is one of the most remote places on Planet Earth and one of the most fascinating places in the continent's human history. With shipping restricted by impenetrable pack ice to just two brief months each austral summer, few people have ever visited this strange and beautiful territory, with opportunities for non-scientific personnel limited to a handful of tourist expedition ships. Heritage Expeditions offers such a voyage on its own fully equipped and ice-strengthened ship, crewed by some of the most experienced officers and sailors in the world and staffed by some of the most passionate and knowledgeable Guides. This is a unique opportunity to experience nature on a scale so grand there are no words to describe it.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Invercargill

Arrive at Invercargill, New Zealand’s southernmost city. Established by Scottish settlers, the area’s wealth of rich farmland is well suited to the sheep and dairy farms that dot the landscape. Passengers should make their way to the Kelvin Hotel in the central city, where a complimentary night’s accommodation is provided overnight. This evening there will be an informal get-together at the hotel for dinner; an excellent opportunity to meet fellow adventurers on your voyage and some of our expedition team.

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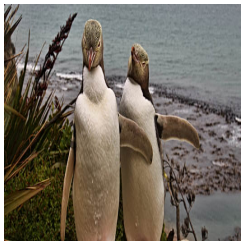
DAY 2: Port of Bluff

Take breakfast at your leisure in the hotel restaurant then enjoy a visit to the Southland Museum to view the Subantarctic display before transferring to the port to embark the Spirit of Enderby. You will have the opportunity to settle into your cabin and familarise yourself with the ship; we will also take the opportunity to conduct a number of safety briefings. You are invited to join the expedition team and captain on the bridge as we set our course to The Snares and our adventure begins.

DAY 3: The Snares – North East Island



The closest Subantarctic Islands to New Zealand, they were appropriately called The Snares because they were probably considered a hazard by their discoverer Lieutenant Broughton in 1795. Comprising of two main islands and a smattering of rocky islets, they are uninhabited and highly protected. North East Island is the largest of The Snares and it is claimed that this one island is home to more nesting seabirds than all of the British Isles together. We will arrive early in the morning and cruise along the sheltered eastern side of the rugged coastline by Zodiac if weather and sea conditions are suitable (landings are not permitted). In the sheltered bays, we should see the endemic Snares Crested Penguins, Snares Island Tomtit and Fernbirds. Cape Pigeons, Antarctic Terns and Red-billed Gulls are also present in good numbers. There are hundreds of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters nesting on The Snares; the actual number is much debated. Around Christmas time each year the Buller's Albatross return here to nest. Out on the Western Chain (considered part of The Snares island group) the Salvin's Albatross will already be nesting. Other nesting seabirds include Cape Petrel (or Pigeon), Mottled Petrel, diving-petrel and Broad-billed Prion.

TRIP CODE

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ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 4: Auckland Islands

The Auckland Islands group was formed by two volcanoes which erupted some 10-25 million years ago. They have subsequently been eroded and dissected by glaciation creating the archipelago as we know it today. The group is one of the largest in the Subantarctic and has a most colourful history of discovery and attempted settlement. Characterised by towering cliffs and rugged sea stacks, these islands have borne witness to many a shipwreck in days gone by. Enderby Island in this group is a great place to view birds and wildlife and is perhaps the most beautiful of all the Subantarctic Islands. Located at the northern end of this cluster of islands, it offers a varying landscape with a low plateau of scrubland and cushion bog. We will enjoy the extensive areas of regenerating patches of megaherbs especially the Anisotome latifolia and Stilbocarpa Polaris. Introduced cattle, rabbits and mice were removed from this island in the mid 1990s and the plants and birds are responding, increasing in numbers and diversity. The island enjoys a much milder climate than most Subantarctic Islands because of its location. Our plan is to land at Sandy Bay, one of three breeding areas in the Auckland Islands for the Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion, a rare member of the seal family. Beachmaster Bulls gather on the beach defending their harems from younger (ambitious) males, to mate with the cows shortly after they have given birth of a single pup. Hookers or New Zealand Sea Lion numbers are in a slow decline, for reasons which are not obvious but most probably connected with a nearby squid fishery. As we explore further inland it is not unusual to encounter a sea lion relaxing in the gnarled and windswept rata forest. In the forest behind the beach we find Bellbirds, Red-crowned Parakeets and the friendly Tomtits. Yellow-eyed Penguins also nest in the forest and under the tangled divaricated shrub Myrsine divaricata. You can see them as they travel backwards and forwards across the beach to their nests, especially in the evenings. On the more open terrain beyond the Rata forest we find nesting Royal Albatross and the endemic Auckland Island Dotterel. There is also a good chance of seeing the endemic Auckland Island Flightless Teal and the Subantarctic Snipe. Migratory waders (if there are any) congregate at Derry Castle Reef, and it is not unusual to observe Bar-tailed Godwit and Turnstone here. As we explore further we should also have the chance to see the following species: Northern Giant Petrel, Auckland Island Shag, Tomtit and Pipit and the Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. Other more common species we will see include the Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, European Starling, Red-billed Gull and Redpoll.

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ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 5: Auckland Islands

We arrive in Carnley Harbour, once the caldera of the Carnley volcano. The walls of the caldera have been breached on both the eastern and western sides, separating Adams Island to the south. The Eastern entrance is navigable for smaller vessels such as ours. The extensive harbour is rich in history and in opportunities. Our activities are totally weather dependent as the wind often funnels down the harbor making anchoring and some landings impossible. We have a number of options including a reasonably difficult scramble to a Shy Albatross colony on South West Cape. For those not able to manage this there will be the option to Zodiac cruise the pristine shores of Adams Island and Western Harbour. If wind and weather prevent us from doing this, other options include a relatively easy walk to an abandoned coastwatchers hut and lookout used during the Second World War. If landing on the shores on the north arm of Carnley Harbour where the Grafton was wrecked in 1865, the remains of the vessel and their castaway hut can still be seen. There are two other sites of interest that if we can't land at the above sites we might consider. They are Camp Cove, site of the official Government Castaway depots constructed in the late 1800s and the 'Erlangen' clearing where the German merchant ship of the same name cut firewood on the eve of the Second World War which allowed it to leave New Zealand undetected.

DAY 6: At Sea

At sea, learn more about the biology and history of the Subantarctic Islands and the Southern Ocean through a series of lectures and presentations. We will be at sea all day, so it is another opportunity to spot pelagic species including (but not limited too) the Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross, Shy and White-capped Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Whitechinned Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Cape Petrel, diving-petrel, Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm-Petrels. This is potentially some of the best pelagic 'birding' on the expedition and for those with country lists (of birds) we will be passing from New Zealand into Australian waters.

TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

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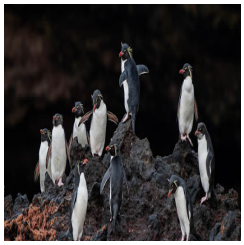
ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 7: Macquarie Island - Day 7 & 8

Australia's prized Subantarctic possession, it supports one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in the Southern Ocean. Millions of penguins of four different species – King, Rockhopper, Gentoo and the endemic Royal – breed here. We plan to spend our time divided between the two approved landing sites, Sandy Bay and Buckles Bay as well as a Zodiac cruise at Lusitania Bay if weather conditions permit. At Sandy Bay a Royal Penguin rookery teems with feisty little birds trotting back and forth, golden head plumes bobbing as they march to and from the shore. All three million of the world's Royal Penguins breed on Macquarie Island. There is also a substantial King Penguin Colony. Some of the best observations will be had by quietly sitting and letting the birds come to you. They are both unafraid and inquisitive – the combination is unique. At Buckles Bay we will have a guided tour of the Australian Antarctic Division Base which was established in the late 1940s and has been manned continuously since then. There is a range of scientific research being undertaken here as well as a very strategically important weather station. Large groups of Southern Elephant Seals slumber on the beaches and in the tussock at both of our landing sites. These giant, blubbery creatures will barely acknowledge our presence, lying in groups of intertwined bodies, undergoing their annual moult. Younger bulls spar in the shallow water, preparing for their mature years when they will look after their own harems. The King Penguin rookery at Lusitania Bay is noisy and spectacular. A welcoming committee will likely porpoise around our Zodiacs as a quarter of a million King Penguins stand at attention on shore. In the centre of the rookery, rusting condensers are grim reminders of a time when scores of penguins were slaughtered for their oil. Now their offspring have reclaimed this territory. In 2011 the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service undertook one of the most ambitious eradication projects anywhere in the world. Their plan was to rid the island of all introduced species including rabbits, rats and mice. It looks like it has succeeded and the island and its wildlife is responding. The vegetation is re-establishing and petrel and prion numbers are increasing. It is an amazing island, in addition to the penguins and elephant seals, there are three species of fur seals to be found there and four species of albatross, Wandering, Black-browed, Grey-headed and Light-mantled Sooty.



TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

DEPARTURE

08/02/2022

DURATION

30 Days

LOCATIONS

Antarctica

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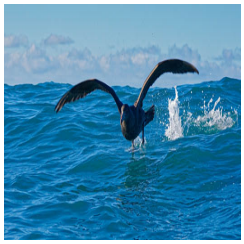
ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 9: At Sea - Day 9 to 12

Soaring albatross and petrels circle the vessel as we steam ever southward through the Southern Ocean. Lectures now concentrate on Antarctica and the Ross Sea region. We will pay attention to water temperatures so that we know when we cross the Antarctic Convergence into the cold but extremely productive Antarctic waters. Drifting icebergs carry vivid colours and come in extraordinary shapes. Each is a unique, natural sculpture. The captain will manoeuvre the ship in close for your first ice photography and announce a special celebration as we pass the Antarctic Circle and into Antarctica's realm of 24-hour daylight! Relax in the ship's bar and catch up with some reading in the library. If you have brought your laptop with you there will be time to download and edit photos while they are fresh in your mind.



TRIP CODE

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ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 13: Antarctica's Ross Sea Region - Day 13 to 22

During our time in the Ross Sea region, we will visit the highlights of Antarctica's most historic region. Due to the unpredictable nature of ice and weather conditions, a day-by-day itinerary is not possible. The captain and Expedition Leader will assess daily conditions and take advantage of every opportunity to make landings or send you out in the Zodiacs. Our program emphasises wildlife viewing, key scientific bases and historic sites, as well as the spectacular scenery of the coastal terrain, the glaciers and icebergs of the Ross Sea. Whilst specific landings cannot be guaranteed, we hope to visit the following as well as seek out new, perhaps previously unvisited areas. We hope to visit the following areas: Cape Adare Cape Adare's bold headland and the Downshire Cliffs greet us as we approach Cape Adare – ice conditions permitting – at the tip of the Ross Sea, the site of the largest Adelie Penguin rookery in Antarctica. Blanketing the large, flat spit which forms the cape is the huge rookery which now, at the height of summer, numbers over one million birds – an absolutely staggering sight. You will never forget your first experiences in a ceaselessly active and noisy 'penguin city', where the dapper inhabitants show no fear of their strange visitors. Our naturalists will point out various aspects of their lifestyle and, by sitting down quietly, one may observe the often comical behaviour of the penguins, courtship displays, feeding ever-hungry chicks, territorial disputes and the pilfering of nest material. Curious penguins often come very close, presenting superb photographic opportunities. Surrounded by a sea of penguins, we will find Borchgrevink's Hut, the oldest in Antarctica, an overwintering shelter for the first expedition to the Antarctic continent in 1899. It is a fascinating relic of the 'Heroic Age' of Antarctic exploration and we are able to inspect the interior, which still contains artefacts of the early explorers. One thousand feet up in the hills behind Cape Adare is the oldest grave in Antarctica, that of 22-year-old Nicolai Hansen, a member of Borchgrevink's expedition. Cape Hallett The enormous Admiralty Range heralds our arrival at Cape Hallett, near the head of the Ross Sea. The scenery here is wild and spectacular; mountains rear up from the sea to over 4,000m and giant glaciers course down from the interior to the water's edge. We land next to the site of the abandoned American/New Zealand base, home to large numbers of Adelie Penguins and Weddell Seals. Franklin Island This rugged island, deep in the Ross Sea, is home to a large Adelie Penguin colony and other nesting seabirds. We will attempt a Zodiac landing near the rookery as well as exploring the coastline. If a landing is achieved and weather conditions are suitable there will be an opportunity for those who are feeling fit to climb to the summit of the island. Possession Islands These small, rugged and rarely visited islands lie off the shore of Cape Hallett. An Adelie Penguin rookery, numbering tens of thousands of birds, blankets Foyn Island. Observe their busy and sometimes humorous activities, with the Admiralty Mountains forming a superb backdrop across the water. Ross Ice Shelf The largest ice shelf in Antarctica, the Ross Ice Shelf is also the world's largest body of floating ice. A natural ice barrier, at times it creates hazardous weather conditions, with sheets of snow blown at gale force by the katabatic winds coming off the polar ice cap. Just 800 miles from the South Pole, this daunting spe

TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

DEPARTURE

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30 Days

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Antarctica

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ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

DAY 23: At Sea - Day 23 to 25

En route to Campbell Island, take part in a series of lectures designed to prepare you for our visit tomorrow. Pelagic species abound here as they did en route to Macquarie Island earlier in our voyage. Above all, take the time to rest and enjoy shipboard life after the excitement of the Antarctic.

DAY 26: Campbell Island – Perseverance Harbour- Day 26 & 27

New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory, the Campbell Island group lies approximately 660km south of Bluff. We visit Campbell Island, the main island in the group, and spend the day exploring the island on foot from Perseverance Harbour, a long inlet cutting into the undulating landscape. Campbell Island is a truly magnificent place of rugged scenery, unique flora and abundant wildlife. Perseverance Harbour where we drop anchor is an occasional refuge for Southern Right Whales who come here to calve. Here we will find a now abandoned New Zealand meteorological station as well as Campbell Island Shags, penguins, fur seals and rare Hooker's Sea Lions. As rats and sheep have been successfully removed, there has been an encouraging increase in small bird numbers and the recovery of wild flowers and megaherbs. Campbell Island Flightless Teal have been successfully reintroduced, a previously unknown Snipe is re-colonising the island from neighbouring Jacquemart Island and the Pipit is making a comeback. The highlight of our visit however is a walk to the hilltop breeding sites of Southern Royal Albatross, over six thousand pairs of which breed on Campbell Island. These magnificent birds, close relations to and the same size as the Wandering Albatross, have the largest wingspan in the world and are very approachable, making superb photographic subjects.

DAY 28: At Sea - Day 28 & 29

At sea en route to the Port of Lyttelton, take the opportunity to relax and reflect on an amazing experience. This is a good opportunity to download and edit any remaining photos while they are fresh in your mind and you have the experience of our expedition team on board for questions. We will recap the highlights of our expedition and enjoy a farewell dinner tonight as we sail to our final port.

DAY 30: Christchurch

Early this morning we will arrive in the Port of Lyttelton. After a final breakfast and completing Custom formalities we bid farewell to our fellow voyagers and take a complimentary coach transfer to either a central city point or to the airport. In case of unexpected delays due to weather and/or port operations we ask you not to book any onward travel until after midday today.

TRIP CODE

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Antarctica

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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation	Cabin on ship.
Inclusions	All on-board accommodation All meals during voyage All scheduled landings and shore excursions Pre and post cruise transfers **Exclusions** Airfares to/from embarkation and disembarkation cities Visa fees (if applicable) Travel and medical insurance Personal expenses (including laundry and telecommunications) Beverages on-board (other than tea & coffee) Gratuities for staff and crew
Difficulty Rating	2 (light adventure)
Single Surcharge	Available upon request
Notes	Contact us for more details
Price Dependent upon	Season and availability

TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

DEPARTURE

08/02/2022

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Antarctica

SUSTAINABILITY

GUIDANCE FOR VISITORS TO THE ANTARCTIC

RECOMMENDATION XVIII-1, ADOPTED AT THE ANTARCTIC TREATY MEETING, KYOTO, 1994

Activities in the Antarctic are governed by the Antarctic Treaty of 1959 and associated agreements, referred to collectively as the Antarctic Treaty System. The Treaty established Antarctica as a zone of peace and science.

In 1991, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties adopted the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty, which designates the Antarctic as a natural reserve. The Protocol sets out environmental principles, procedures and obligations for the comprehensive protection of the Antarctic environment, and its dependent and associated ecosystems. The Consultative Parties have agreed that as far as possible and in accordance with their legal system, the provisions of the Protocol should be applied as appropriate. The Environmental Protocol was ratified in January 1998.

The Environmental Protocol applies to tourism and non-governmental activities, as well as governmental activities in the Antarctic Treaty Area. It is intended to ensure that these activities, do not have adverse impacts on the Antarctic environment, or on its scientific and aesthetic values.
This Guidance for Visitors to the Antarctic is intended to ensure that all visitors are

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aware of, and are therefore able to comply with, the Treaty and the Protocol. Visitors are, of course, bound by national laws and regulations applicable to activities in the Antarctic.

PROTECT ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE

Taking or harmful interference with Antarctic wildlife is prohibited except in accordance with a permit issued by a national authority.

Do not use aircraft, vessels, small boats, or other means of transport in ways that disturb wildlife, either at sea or on land.
Do not feed, touch, or handle birds or seals, or approach or photograph them in ways that cause them to alter their behavior. Special care is needed when animals are breeding or molting.
Do not damage plants, for example by walking, driving, or landing on extensive moss beds or lichen-covered scree slopes.
Do not use guns or explosives. Keep noise to the minimum to avoid frightening wildlife.
Do not bring non-native plants or animals into the Antarctic, such as live poultry, pet dogs and cats, or house plants.
RESPECT PROTECTED AREAS

A variety of areas in the Antarctic have been afforded special protection because of their particular ecological, scientific, historic, or other values. Entry into certain areas may be prohibited except in accordance with a permit issued by an appropriate national authority.
Activities in and near designated Historic Sites and Monuments and certain other areas may be subject to special restrictions.

Know the locations of areas that have been afforded special protection and any restrictions regarding entry and activities that can be carried out in and near them.
Observe applicable restrictions.
Do not damage, remove, or destroy Historic Sites or Monuments or any artifacts associated with them.

RESPECT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Do not interfere with scientific research, facilities or equipment.

Obtain permission before visiting Antarctic science and support facilities; reconfirm arrangements 24-72 hours before arrival; and comply with the rules regarding such visits.
Do not interfere with, or remove, scientific equipment or marker posts, and do not disturb experimental study sites, field camps, or supplies.
BE SAFE

Be prepared for severe and changeable weather and ensure that your equipment and clothing meet Antarctic standards. Remember that the Antarctic environment is inhospitable, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous.

Know your capabilities and the dangers posed by the Antarctic environment, and act accordingly. Plan activities with safety in mind at all times.

TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

DEPARTURE

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30 Days

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Antarctica

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ANTARCTIC CIRCLE - IN THE WAKE OF SCOTT & SHACKLETON

Keep a safe distance from all wildlife, both on land and at sea.
Take note of, and act on, the advice and instructions from your leaders; do not stray from your group.
Do not walk onto glaciers or large snow fields without the proper equipment and experience; there is a real danger of falling into hidden crevasses.
Do not expect a rescue service. Self-sufficiency is increased and risks reduced by sound planning, quality equipment, and trained personnel.
Do not enter emergency refuges (except in emergencies). If you use equipment or food from a refuge, inform the nearest research station or national authority once the emergency is over.
Respect any smoking restrictions, particularly around buildings, and take great care to safeguard against the danger of fire. This is a real hazard in the dry environment of Antarctica.

KEEP ANTARCTICA PRISTINE

Antarctica remains relatively pristine, the largest wilderness area on Earth. It has not yet been subjected to large-scale human perturbations. Please keep it that way.

Do not dispose of litter or garbage on land. Open burning is prohibited.
Do not disturb or pollute lakes or streams. Any materials discarded at sea must be disposed of properly.
Do not paint or engrave names or graffiti on rocks or buildings.
Do not collect or take away biological or geological specimens or man-made artifacts as a souvenir, including rocks, bones, eggs, fossils, and parts or contents of buildings.
Do not deface or vandalize buildings or emergency refuges, whether occupied, abandoned, or unoccupied.

TRIP CODE

ACTSRSAC

DEPARTURE

08/02/2022

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30 Days

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Antarctica

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