

BIRDING DOWN UNDER



INTRODUCTION

A perfect expedition experience for those who love birding and incredible natural sites alike. The Subantarctic Islands are home of incredible natural wildlife, with some of the most vibrant and hardy birdlife in the whole world. This trip is not only for bird enthusiasts, lovers of ecology, botany and incredible photography. The Subantarctic Islands are the perfect adventure journey for those seeking a Galapagos-esque and Antarctic holiday close to our shores, in the safety and isolation of the New Zealand Subantarctic.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Invercargill

Passengers should make their way to the Ascot Park Hotel where our group will spend the first night of the expedition. This evening there will be an informal get together at the hotel for dinner; an excellent opportunity to meet fellow adventurers and some of our expedition team.



TRIP CODE

ACHEBA

DEPARTURE

04/12/2021

DURATION

19 Days

LOCATIONS

New Zealand and Subantarctic Islands



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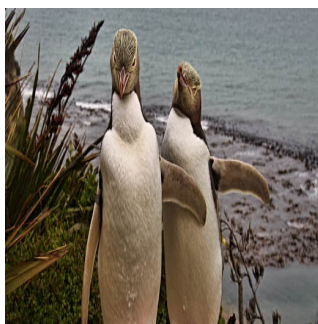
DAY 2: Embarkation in Bluff

Today we enjoy breakfast in the hotel restaurant and take the opportunity to explore some of the local Southland scenery and attractions before heading to the Port of Bluff to embark the Spirit of Enderby. You will have time to settle into your cabin and familiarise 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 as they were once considered a hazard for sailing ships. Comprising of two main islands and a group of five islands called the Western Chain; they are uninhabited and enjoy the highest protection as Nature Reserves. It is claimed by some that these islands are home to more nesting seabirds than all of the British Isles together. We plan to arrive early in the morning and as landings are not permitted we will Zodiac cruise along the sheltered eastern side of the main island if the weather and sea conditions are suitable. In the sheltered bays, we should see the endemic Snares Crested Penguin, Snares Island Tomtit and Fernbirds. Cape Pigeons, Antarctic Terns, White-fronted 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. The Buller's Albatross also breed here from early January onwards.



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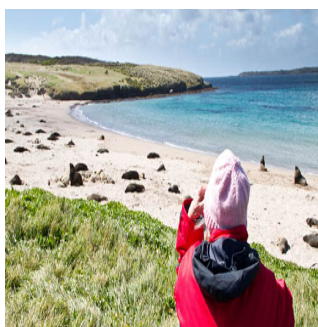
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DAY 4: Enderby Island

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. Enderby Island is one of the most beautiful islands in this group and is named for the same distinguished shipping family as our own vessel. This northern most island in the archipelago is an outstanding wildlife and birding location and is relatively easy to land on and walk around. The island was cleared of all introduced animals (pests) in 1994 and both birds and the vegetation, especially the herbaceous plants, are recovering both in numbers and diversity. 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. During our day ashore there will be several options, some longer walks, some shorter walks and time to spend just sitting and enjoying the wildlife. The walking is relatively easy, a board walk traverses the island to the dramatic western cliffs from there we follow the coast on the circumnavigation of the island.



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DAY 5: Carnley Harbour

In the south of the archipelago there is a very large sheltered harbour it is rich in human history including shipwrecks, treasure hunters, Coastwatchers and of course scientific parties. We plan to arrive early morning from our anchorage at Enderby Island. We enter the harbour through the eastern entrance which is guarded on both sides by dramatic cliffs and rugged, tussock-covered hills. Our activities here today are totally weather dependent. We have a number of options. If the weather is OK there will be an opportunity for the more energetic expeditioners to climb to the South West Cape and visit the Shy Mollymawk colony. Above the colony we occasionally see Gibson's Wandering Albatross breeding. This climb provides magnificent views in all directions, especially over the western entrance to Carnley Harbour, Adams Island and Western Harbour. For those not able to make the climb (it is reasonably difficult) there will be an opportunity to Zodiac cruise along the coast of Adams Island and Western Harbour, with landings in the later. Other options include the Tagua Bay Coastwatcher's hut and lookout (the former is derelict) which was occupied during the Second World War. We could visit Epigwatt and the remains of the 'Grafton' which was wrecked here in 1864. Alternatively we may visit the Erlagan clearing where a German Merchant ship cut firewood to fire its boilers after slipping its moorings in Dunedin on the eve of the Second World War.



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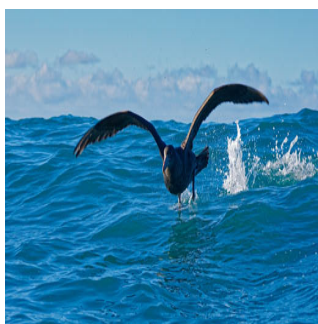
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DAY 6: At Sea

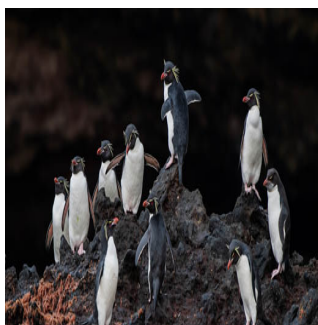
As we make our way south through the Furious Fifties also known as the Albatross latitudes, the birding especially south of the Auckland Islands should be good. We will have a series of informal lectures on the biology and history of the Subantarctic Islands. We will also prepare you for our visit to Macquarie Island.



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DAY 7: Macquarie Island - Day 7 to 8

The great Australian Antarctic Explorer Sir Douglas Mawson once called Macquarie Island “One of the wonder spots of the world.” You are about to discover why as we spend two days exploring this amazing Island. It was one of the first of the Subantarctic Islands to obtain World Heritage Status and that was largely due to its unique geology. Macquarie Island is home to four species of penguin, Kings, Royals, Gentoo and Rockhopper. The Royal Penguin occurs nowhere else in the world. During our visit we will land at two sites (subject of course to weather and sea conditions) and you will get a chance to see, observe and photograph all four species, although the Rockhopper is much harder to capture than the others. Macquarie also has a large population of Southern Elephant Seals. Pups are born in October and weaned in November when the breeding adults return to sea. The weaners and sub adults lie around on the beaches. We plan a landing at the Australian Antarctic Research Base at Buckles Bay where you will be able to meet with scientists and base staff. The original base was established in 1947 and the island has been ‘manned’ since then. It is one of the longest continuously occupied bases in the Subantarctic. We depart for Campbell Island on the afternoon of the second day.



DAY 9: At Sea

Today is very similar to Day 6 except we are north bound and hopefully running with the prevailing weather which should make it a bit more comfortable. There will be lectures, opportunities for pelagic birding and/or simply relaxing.



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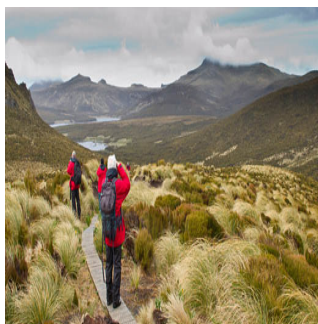
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DAY 10: Perseverance Harbour

Today we explore Campbell Island, New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory. Its history is as rich and varied as the other islands we have visited. Discovered in 1810 (by the same sealing captain who discovered Macquarie Island) it too was soon occupied by sealers who introduced rats and cats. In 1895 the New Zealand government advertised the island as a pastoral lease. The lease was taken up by an entrepreneurial New Zealand sheep farmer who stocked the island with sheep and cattle. The farming practices, which included burning the scrub, modified the island considerably. The farming lasted until 1934 when it was abandoned. We will offer several options which will enable you to explore the island. There will be extended walks to Northwest Bay and possibly Mt Honey. There will also be an easier walk to the Col Lyall Saddle. All these options will allow you the opportunity and time to enjoy the Southern Royal Albatross which nest here in large numbers. We also visit areas of the island which contain outstanding examples of the megaherbs for which the island is renown.



DAY 11: At Sea

At sea en route to the Antipodes, it is a day for pelagic birding. Species commonly seen in this area include Wandering Albatross species, Southern Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Lightmantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, the Sooty Shearwater and the Little Shearwater. This region of the Southern Ocean is one of the few places where the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion occur together, providing a good opportunity for comparison.



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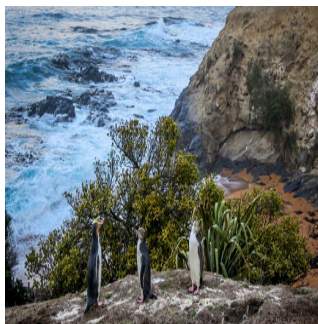
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DAY 12: Antipodes Island

The Antipodes group of islands is the most isolated and perhaps the least known of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. Sealers lived here in the decades immediately after their discovery in 1806. There are two historic and one recent shipwreck recorded. Mice are the only introduced animal on the islands but efforts to eradicate them will hopefully see that their days are numbered. The islands are of volcanic origin but are heavily eroded especially the western shoreline. The largest of the group is Antipodes Island. Landings are not permitted, so if the weather is suitable, we plan to cruise, along the coastline by Zodiac where we have a good chance of seeing the Antipodes Parakeet, the largest of New Zealand's parakeets.



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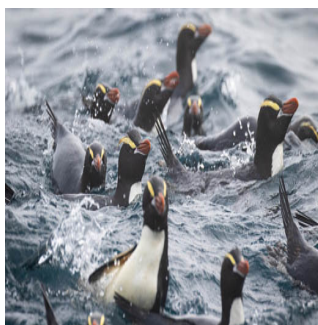
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DAY 13: Bounty Island

We arrive at the incongruously named Bounty Islands, the remote northernmost of the five New Zealand Subantarctic groups; they were discovered by Captain Bligh just months before the infamous mutiny. Here inhospitable granite knobs, tips of the submerged Bounty Platform, are lashed by the Southern Ocean. They are home to thousands of Salvin's Albatross, Erect-crested Penguins, Fulmar Prions and the endemic Bounty Island Shag - the world's rarest. We plan to arrive in the early morning and if sea and weather conditions are suitable we will cruise by Zodiac around the granite outposts to take a closer look at the birds which breed there. New Zealand Fur Seals which were almost hunted to extinction in the Subantarctic Islands are present in large numbers.



DAY 14: Pyramid Rock

As we continue toward the Chatham Archipelago, there are excellent opportunities for pelagic birding today. In particular, we will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel which has been seen on this leg of the voyage before. Late this afternoon we will cruise around spectacular Pyramid Rock, a basalt outcrop south of Pitt Island. This is the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. Landings are not possible (nor practical - a fact you will appreciate when you see it) but great views of nesting birds can be had from the ship. There will also be hundreds of birds following the ship.



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DAY 15: Waitangi - Chatham Islands

The Chatham Archipelago consists of one large island and numerous smaller islands and rocky islets. Only two of the islands are inhabited. They represent New Zealand's eastern most territory. The islands were originally settled by East Polynesians (either directly or via New Zealand as the evidence supports some contact there). In the 1400s the population became isolated and interestingly developed its own distinct culture. The islands were discovered by Europeans in the 1790s. Sealers and settlers followed and then in the 1830s Maoris from New Zealand invaded killing and enslaving many of the indigenous people. Today we will visit one of the original private reserves established by a local family on the south coast of the main island where there is a very good chance to see the endemic Chatham Island Pigeon and Warbler. The pigeon was close to extinction until recently, and is now in good numbers. We will travel by local bus to the reserve. The road takes us through developed farmland where we will undoubtedly see numerous introduced species and possibly the Weka. Near our landing in Waitangi there is a good chance of seeing the endemic Chatham Island Shag. This afternoon we cruise back along the south coast, this is where the only known population of the Taiko breeds and also where they are attempting to establish a new population of the Chatham Island Petrel in a predator free area.



DAY 16: South East Island and Mangere Islands

Early this morning we arrive at South East Island. This has to be one of the world's greatest nature reserves and landings are not permitted. However, we should obtain good views of the very rare New Zealand Shore Plover and Chatham Island Oystercatcher from the Zodiacs as we cruise along the coast. We should also see the Pitt Island Shag which nests on the island. This afternoon we will cruise past Mangere and Little Mangere Islands before departing for Dunedin, these islands are situated to the west of Pitt Island. Mangere is known as one of only two sites in the world where Black Robin are found. We will hear the story of how this endemic species was rescued from the brink of extinction in the 1970s when the total population consisted of just six birds.



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DAY 17: At Sea - Day 17 to 18

En route to Dunedin we will cross the Chatham Rise, a large, relatively shallowly submerged part of the Zealandia continent that stretches east from near the South Island of New Zealand. Nutrient-rich waters from the south mix with warm northern waters and there is an overlap between northern pelagic species and birds from southern latitudes, so we can expect great pelagic sightings



DAY 19: Disembark in Dunedin

En route to Dunedin we will cross the Chatham Rise, a large, relatively shallowly submerged part of the Zealandia continent that stretches east from near the South Island of New Zealand. Nutrient-rich waters from the south mix with warm northern waters and there is an overlap between northern pelagic species and birds from southern latitudes, so we can expect great pelagic sightings. To allow time for disembarkation procedures we do not recommend booking flights from Dunedin before midday.



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INCLUSIONS & DETAILS

Accommodation

Cabin on board ship

Inclusions

Cabin accommodation on board ship
All meals whilst on board
Pre/post cruise transfers
One night accommodation in twin share room (inc. breakfast) prior to embarkation
Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew
Landing fees (800USD per person)
EXCLUSIONS
International flights
Travel insurance
Any items not mentioned as included
Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable)
Items of a personal nature such as drinks and laundry

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

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Single Surcharge	Available upon request. Contact us for more information.
Notes	Please note this itinerary may be subject to change depending on weather and ice conditions.
Price Dependent upon	Departure date, seasonality and availability

SUSTAINABILITY

Being environmentally accountable is a crucial part of our organisation. Chimu is currently striving towards using less paper, taking several initiatives to do so and tracking our progress along the way. Our goal: A paperless organisation. For this reason, all information given to you will be sent electronically. We encourage those who choose to travel with us to support our aspirations and actions and ask that you reconsider printing out documentation. To view these documents, you can download them to your iPad or portable computer before and during your trip.

Chimu is passionate and dedicated to sustainability measures and understands the crucial part sustainability plays within the tourism industry.

We use local guides and office staff to both maximise local employment opportunities and minimise carbon footprint. Local guides also ensure you benefit from the intimate knowledge, passion and culture of the country you're visiting. Our guides are all highly qualified (most with university degrees) or equip with many years of experience and are paid above the standard wage. Whether it be our knowledgeable local guides, locally produced meals or the transport on tour, we do not use imported goods when local products are available. We aim to minimise our impact on the environment and give as much back as possible to the communities we work in.

While visiting the many national parks, heritage sites, museums and landmarks our travellers are encouraged to explore whilst remaining culturally aware and sensitive. We further encourage you to buy appropriate souvenirs and discourage the buying of anything wrongfully made or taken from the environment i.e. shells and endangered species products. Information on how you can be environmentally conscious, and travel responsibly will be made available in our Travellers Guides and provided during your travels by guides and staff.

For more information on our sustainability policies, including how we are striving towards being a paperless organisation, click [HERE](#)

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