

GALAPAGOS OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS OF
NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA

EXPEDITION DOSSIER
21 NOVEMBER – 4 DECEMBER 2021



Heritage Expeditions

Antarctica • Western and South Pacific
Subantarctic Islands • Russian Far East



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This is without doubt one of the most inspirational and informative journeys or expeditions into the Southern Ocean ecosystem that one can make anywhere in the world. Long recognised for their rich biodiversity, the Subantarctic Islands lying to the south of New Zealand are UNESCO World Heritage sites. This places them in a select group of only 180 natural sites that have been designated as 'the most important and significant natural habitats' on the planet. They are also afforded the highest conservation status and protection by the Australian and New Zealand governments and access to these islands is by permit only. On this expedition we offer you the unique chance to explore, photograph and understand these wonderful places in the company of some of the most knowledgeable and passionate guides.

As a young biologist, Heritage Expeditions founder Rodney Russ first visited these islands in 1972 with the New Zealand Wildlife Service. He organised New Zealand's

first commercial expedition there in 1989 and it was only natural that his family should travel with him, what wasn't predicted was that they would join him in the business and be as passionate about the conservation of this region as he is. Now, many years and over 100 expeditions later, Rodney's sons Aaron and Nathan continue their father's enthusiasm and legacy for this region with Heritage Expeditions. As the original concessionaire we enjoy good relationships with the conservation departments and some of the access permits we hold are unique to these expeditions.

The name we have given to this voyage 'Galapagos of the Southern Ocean' reflects the astounding natural biodiversity and the importance of these islands as a wildlife refuge. (The book *Galapagos of the Antarctic* written by Rodney Russ and Aleks Terauds and published by Heritage Expeditions describes all of these islands in great detail.) The islands all lie in the cool temperate zone with a unique climate and are home to a vast array of wildlife including albatross, penguins, petrels, prions, shearwaters and marine mammals like sea lions, fur seals and elephant seals. The flora is equally fascinating; the majority of it, like the birds, is endemic to these islands.

Our journey takes us from Hobart to Australia's icy outback Macquarie Island, where we are introduced to four different species of penguin at this UNESCO World Heritage Site, and continues on to four of the New Zealand Subantarctic Islands, The Snares, Auckland, Macquarie and Campbell. Each of the Subantarctic Islands we explore is different, and each one is unique – just like this expedition.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Hobart, Australia

Arrive in Hobart, capital of Australia's Island state of Tasmania. Fringed by forest this bustling port town is rich in culture and colonial history, and features a renowned foodie scene all wrapped in stunning waterfront surrounds.

Our group will spend the first night of the expedition at a city hotel, 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. (Further information regarding hotel accommodation will be confirmed with your expedition notes).

Day 2: Port of Hobart

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel; a compulsory luggage security check in the foyer this morning will also be undertaken. There maybe some time to explore the city before a coach transports you to the Port of Hobart, after completing security formalities on arrival at the port your expedition team welcomes you as you embark *Akademik Shokalskiy*. There will be time to settle into your cabin and familiarise yourself with the ship, and we will also take the opportunity to conduct a number of safety briefings.

In the early evening we depart the Port of Hobart, once one of Australia's finest deep-water ports and the centre for the Southern Ocean whaling and sealing trade; it is now a busy seaport and also serves as the home port for both Australian and French Antarctic operations. You are invited to join the expedition team and captain on the bridge as we set sail across Storm Bay, strong winds can sometimes blow through the bay, coming straight up from Antarctica, via the Southern Ocean. We sail



past Bruny Island and the Tasman Peninsula and set our course for Macquarie Island.

Days 3 to 5: At Sea

As we make our way south through the roaring '40s to Macquarie Island, we will prepare for our visit, and there will be a series of video-supported lectures on the biology and history of the island and the Southern Ocean.

Birding opportunities may include the Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, Sooty Shearwater and Little Shearwater. We will endeavour to spot the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion – never an easy task – but we should get some great views.

Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-petrel, Wilson's Storm-petrel, Black-bellied Storm-petrel and Common Diving-petrel.

Days 6 to 7: Macquarie Island

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. It is one of the few places on earth where mid-ocean crustal rocks are exposed at the surface due to the collision of the Australian and Pacific Plates.

Macca, as it is affectionately known by its resident ranger population, was discovered in 1810 and was soon





ravaged by sealers who introduced various animals including rats, mice, cats and rabbits. The native bird population was virtually eliminated and plants destroyed. The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service, who administer the island, embarked on a very ambitious 7-year eradication program resulting in the island earning pest-free status in 2014. Both the birds and plants have responded and it is amazing to witness the regeneration and the increase in the number of birds.

Macquarie Island is home to four species of penguin, Kings, Royals, Gentoo and Rockhopper, with the Royal Penguin occurring 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 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. The weaners go to sea sometime in January, running the gauntlet of Orcas or Killer Whales waiting offshore.

We also 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.

This afternoon we depart for Campbell Island.

Day 8: At Sea

Sailing north through the Furious Fifties, also known as the Albatross latitudes, we will have a series of informal lectures on the biology and history of the Subantarctic Islands and prepare for our visit to Campbell Island.

Species that we may see include the Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, Sooty Shearwater and Little Shearwater. There should be plenty of prions including Fairy, Fulmar and Antarctic, identifying them is not easy – but we should get some great views.

Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-petrel, Wilson's Storm-petrel and Black-bellied Storm-petrel.

Days 9 to 10: Campbell Island – Perseverance Harbour

New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory, its history is as rich and varied as the other islands we visit. 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. Coastwatchers were stationed on the island during the war, at the end of the war the station was taken over by the New Zealand Meteorological service and they maintained a manned weather/research station on the island until 1995.

In the early 1970s the island was fenced in half and stock was removed off the northern half. The impacts of the remaining animals were monitored and they were all eventually removed in 1990. The vegetation recovered quickly and the cats died out naturally. In a very ambitious (and never before attempted on such a large scale) eradication programme the New Zealand Department of Conservation successfully removed the rats. With the island declared predator free in 2003, the way was clear to reintroduce the endangered Campbell Island Flightless Teal, which had been rediscovered on an offshore island in 1975. Snipe, which were formerly unknown from the island but were discovered on another offshore island, recolonised the islands themselves. The vegetation which the great English botanist Sir Joseph Hooker described in 1841 as having a "Flora display second to none outside the tropics" is flourishing and is nothing short of spectacular.

We will offer a number of options 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 of 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 renowned.

Other birds which we will search for include the teal and snipe, although the latter is what we would refer to as a 'luck' bird. The endemic shag can be seen on the harbour, but unfortunately the nesting colonies of Rockhopper Penguins, Grey-head, Black-browed and Campbell Island Albatross are outside of the permitted areas and we will have to look for these species at sea.

Other birds we should see include Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Southern Skua, Red-billed Gull, Black-backed Gull, Antarctic Tern, Redpoll, Dunnock and New Zealand Pipit.

This afternoon we depart for the Auckland Islands.

Day 11: Auckland Islands – Carnley Harbour

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.

In the south of the archipelago there is a very large sheltered harbour 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 nesting. 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 at the latter.

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. All five men aboard survived and lived here for 18 months before sailing their modified dinghy to New Zealand to get help. Two of the survivors wrote books about their ordeal. Their first-hand accounts tell us a lot about their time here. 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. Another potential site is Camp Cove where we can see the remains of the castaway depots established and maintained by the New Zealand government between the 1860s and early 1900s.

Day 12: Auckland Islands – Enderby Island

Enderby Island is one of the most beautiful islands in this group and is named after the same distinguished shipping family as one of our own vessels. 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 to a single pup. Hooker's 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.



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 boardwalk traverses the island to the dramatic western cliffs, from there we follow the coast and circumnavigate the island.

Birds that we are likely to encounter include the following species: Southern Royal Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Auckland Island Shag, Auckland Island Flightless Teal, Auckland Island Banded Dotterel, Auckland Island Tomtit, Bellbird, Pipit, Red-crowned Parakeet, Yellow-eyed Penguin and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. There is also a very good chance of seeing the Subantarctic Snipe. Other more common species we will see include the Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, European Starling, Red-billed Gull and Redpoll. On Derry Castle Reef we will look for migratory waders which could include Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone and possibly vagrants.

Day 13: 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



© R Robinson

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 breed here from early January onwards.

This afternoon en route to the Port of Bluff, take the opportunity to relax and reflect on an amazing experience. We will recap the highlights of our expedition and enjoy a farewell dinner tonight as we complete the last few miles of our journey.

Day 14: Port of Bluff, New Zealand

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.

During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed. Landings at the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand are by permit only as administered by the Government of New Zealand. No landings are permitted at The Snares.

DATES

Voyage #SHO2141
21 November – 4 December 2021

PRICES

Heritage Suite \$11,400 pp*
Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

Mini Suite \$10,700 pp*
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a lounge area, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

Superior Plus \$10,400 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Superior \$9,600 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Main Deck \$9,100 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

Main Deck Triple \$8,550 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

* The price listed includes the additional landing fees of \$800 pp. (All prices are per person in US\$)

PRICE INCLUDES

Landing fees, pre/post cruise transfers, one night hotel accommodation in a twin share room (incl. dinner/breakfast), all on board ship accommodation with meals and all expedition shore excursions.

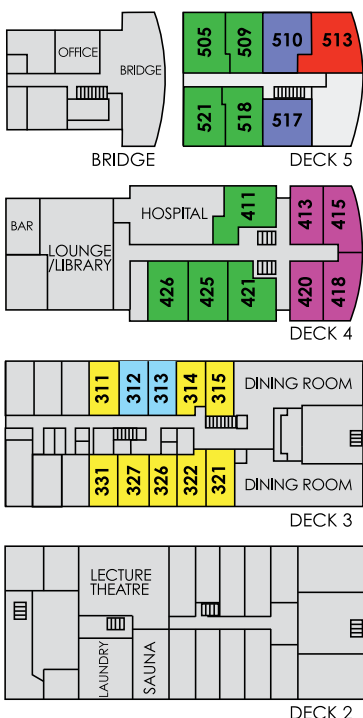
PRICE EXCLUDES

All items of a personal nature, laundry, drinks, gratuities. International/domestic flights, visas and travel insurance.

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■ **Heritage Suites:** Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

■ **Mini Suites:** Separate bedroom with a double bed and a lounge area, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

■ **Superior Plus Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

■ **Superior Cabins:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

■ **Main Deck Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

■ **Main Deck Triple:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.



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