

THE OFFICIAL VOYAGE LOG OF



ALBATROS
EXPEDITIONS

Albatros Magazine

A Visual Journey



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ALBATROS EXPEDITIONS

Albatros Magazine: A Visual Journey

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Below: *Ocean Victory* in fast ice off View Point on 11 December 2023





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Kayak Guide



René Olsen
Expedition Guide



Victoria Herrainz
Expedition Guide



Mariam Pousa
Expedition Guide



Luis Turi
Kayak guide



Stephanie Hannemann
Expedition Guide

The excellent crew on MV *Ocean Victory* have ensured that we are comfortable, delighted us with food and always offered us a sparkling smile. A very special thanks to Captain Jeremy Kingston, the officers, and crew for safely navigating *Ocean Victory* through the challenging waters of the Southern Ocean.



Captain Jeremy Kingston (centre) and his officers welcome the guests aboard

The crew of 84 includes the following officers:

- Captain: **Jeremy Kingston (UK)**
- Chief Officer: **Toni Kraljevic (Croatia)**
- Second Officer: **Valeriy Zelenyak (Ukraine)**
- Third Officer: **Michael Padilla (Philippines)**
- Doctor: **Fernando Benavides (Colombia)**
- Chief Engineer: **Srdan Jakovic (Croatia)**
- Chief Electrical & Technical Officer: **Oleg Palamarchuk (Ukraine)**
- IT Officer: **Rene Reyes (Philippines)**
- Hotel Director: **Dmitar Potkonjak (Croatia)**
- Chief Purser: **Diane Gonzales (Philippines)**
- Food & Beverage Service Manager: **Vilamor Ignacio (Philippines)**
- Executive Chef: **Alexander Mungcal (Philippines)**

M/V *Ocean Victory* – Design optimised for lower carbon emissions

Sustainable travel – managing a balance

Increase:

Local jobs and income
Understanding and Learning
Conservation and Protection
Change Ambassadors

Decrease:

Greenhouse gases
Waste & pollution
Negative impact on destination



Wartsila 20 – Tier 3 compliant engine

MV *Ocean Victory* uses the cleanest engine and Marine Gas Oils only.

M/V *Ocean Victory*'s engines are equipped with an SCR (Selective Catalytic Reduction) catalyst, Wartsila NOR (nitrogen oxide reducer), which reduce NOX emissions by up to 75%.



Design Criteria

Compact - to get into most remote areas
X-bow for comfort (less seasickness)
X-bow for speed in rough seas
Rolls Royce zero speed stabilizers
Ice Class 1A



***Ocean Victory* was designed to operate with the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per passenger in the expedition cruise industry**



Southward Bound

7 December 2023

Stephanie Hannemann

Our voyage began in Ushuaia, the city at the end of the world. The snowy peaks formed a dramatic backdrop to the harbour, which was busy: several expedition vessels (including *Ocean Victory*) lay at the pier, ready to embark on their adventure. After a short briefing on the bus from Neill, we received a warm welcome onboard MV *Ocean Victory*, home for the duration of the voyage to the white continent. The hotel staff began their dedicated mission to feed us as much as possible with cake and sandwiches in the lounge. After we found our cabins, everyone went to the Shackleton Lounge for the initial safety briefing which was followed by a

safety drill, complete with lifejackets and a trip to the lifeboats. Afterwards, the hotel director introduced the ship's amenities to us before Phil, the expedition leader, gave an overview of our voyage and introduced the expedition team. It was then time to set course south; we left Ushuaia's pier and headed towards the Beagle Channel. We enjoyed its great views during dinner from the restaurant and also afterwards in the bar, lounge and panorama bar where we sat together with old and new friends. We also spotted our first travel companions: kelp gulls, cormorants, cape petrels and the first albatrosses as well. An auspicious start to the adventure. And so to bed.

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth; ...*

*... I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Verses 1 and 4 of 'The Road Not Taken', by Robert Frost, published in 1916 in his book 'Mountain Interval'

Welcome to your own road less traveled

Into the quite smooth Drake Passage

8 December 2023

Lisa Pettenuzzo

Today we woke to a busy day! It was considered a smooth Drake Passage but still the motion of the ocean was felt. We had breakfast from 7:00-8:30 and swiftly made our way to the Shackleton theatre for our mandatory briefing. We learned about IAATO (International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators) and how they, as a member organization, are trying to regulate the footprint that tourism leaves in Antarctica to reduce the impact to “no more than a minor or transitory impact”. This is a difficult task considering there are over 100 000 people that came to Antarctica last year. This means “taking only pictures and leaving only footprints”, with special consideration that no footprints are left in anything organic that would jeopardize the wellbeing of flora or fauna. We had a safety talk from Magdalena about the Zodiacs and learned how to embark and disembark from them; this included the “sailors grip” and the “sit and slide” maneuver on the pontoon.

For the a.m. activity we had biosecurity where we cleaned all our outerwear from seeds and organic matter. One dandelion seed could wreak havoc in Antarctica so anything biological had to be removed from our clothing to protect the environment of the continent. After that we went to the bow and received our parkas and went to the mudroom to try on our Muck boots and our life jackets. Then we had lunch buffet and looked for wildlife out the windows. We saw light mantled albatross, grey headed albatross, Sooty albatross, Cape petrels, and porpoising Chinstrap penguins.



The afternoon was filled with more briefings for optional activities. The first p.m. session was for all those interested in kayaking, with Luis and Daria. Of course, we needed a break in between all our information sessions, so we had afternoon tea at 16:00 including sandwiches with the crusts cut off, and all kinds of cookies and cakes. This is looking like a dangerous pattern of food consumption for anybody expecting to still fit in their clothes by the end of the trip.

After tea we learned the basics of photography with Renato and learned how to take quality pictures with our mobile phones.

The evening was filled with a briefing for tomorrow's events and a welcome toast from the Captain Jeremy. We were introduced to all the expedition team and the hotel director. This was followed by a beautiful four course welcome dinner. It was a great leader day to a long-awaited trip.



Captain's cocktails



*Top to bottom:
Patrick with the
drinks and canapés at
the ready; outgoing
trays, Hotel manager,
Chief Officer, Captain,
Doctor, and Chief
Engineer toast the
success of the voyage*



At sea, southbound

9 December 2023

Cherese Taggart

Greeted by a soft glow from the morning sun as it reflected off the gently rolling waves, the passengers of the Ocean Victory began to stir, and welcome another day of tame waves within the Drake Passage. The morning was filled with logistics, and many of us attended briefings for camping and snowshoeing. Abuzz with excitement for upcoming activities, many took to the outer decks and enjoyed the rare pelagic birds that very few people ever get to see firsthand. Such birds as the Antarctic Prion, a medium-sized seabird with beautiful soft grey plumage and a noticeable dark "M" stretched across their backs from wingtip to wingtip. Southern Fulmar, a distinctive, medium-sized silvery-grey with a white flash in its dark wing-tips. The crowning gem for many of us were the Black-browed Albatross. Gracefully soaring up and down the waves, timing their accents and descents to maximize lift with minimal effort.

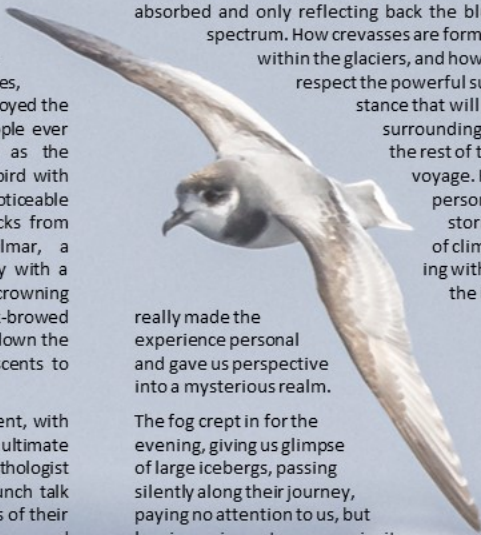
The afternoon was time for enrichment, with dual lectures to prepare us for the ultimate experience of Antarctica. Ornithologist Cherese gave us an enjoyable post-lunch talk about penguins, educating us on parts of their anatomy, like their dense bones, and complicated vocal construction. We dove into their mating habits, how they are not as monogamous and Hollywood has told us, but they tenderly care for each other to ensure the success of their offspring. Most importantly she gave us some laughs about the many quirks of the animated animals we are excited to see.

Glaciologist, Kuba, then tickled our imaginations with the grandeur of the ice we are bound to see. We learned the differences in glacial types, tidewaters and mountains. Why is the ice blue? The color waves being absorbed and only reflecting back the blue spectrum. How crevasses are formed within the glaciers, and how to respect the powerful substance that will be surrounding us the rest of the voyage. His personal stories of climbing within the ice

really made the experience personal and gave us perspective into a mysterious realm.

The fog crept in for the evening, giving us glimpses of large icebergs, passing silently along their journey, paying no attention to us, but leaving an impact on our curiosity for the days to come.

After dinner, we got the chance to explore our artistic skills. Under Mariam's supervision, we took pencils and paintbrushes and coloured our own version of our favourite penguin.



"I now belong to a higher cult of mortals, for I have seen the albatross" – Robert Kushman Murphy

Danco Island & Cuverville Island

10 December 2023

Coni Costa



Snowshowers on Danco Island

Today we wake up very excited knowing that we will set foot in Antarctica. Our first destination is Danco Island. Situated in the middle of the Errera Channel, a body of water that runs between Rongé Island and the coast of Graham Land of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Only 1 mile long, Danco's wide, flat beach rises to a permanently ice-covered hill which gives stunning views over the channel. The most adventurous of the snowshoers opted for this outing guided by Mariam and Nick, went all the way to the top, surely it was worth the effort!

The view from the top over the icebergs in the channel and crevassed glaciers in the surrounding mountains was stunning.

The island hosts around 1500 breeding pairs of gentoo penguins. They like to nest away from the beach up the slopes, and so you can always see them making their journeys to and

from the sea, and Danco Island can have some of the best penguin highways in the snow where the Gentoo penguins climb up and down to the colonies on the higher part of the island.

Seals are also frequent visitors to the island, as are a variety of Antarctic bird species including skuas, terns, and kelp gulls.

Danco Island was also the site of Base "O", built by the British Antarctic Survey in 1954 as a base for geological research and exploration. The base was abandoned in 1959 when the expedition ended, and the huts were removed in 2004. Most of the season the island is covered in snow but, on the beach, you can find a plaque with an inscription giving the story of the base.

Along this shoreline, the first group of kayakers got to paddle between fantastic shades of blues from the floating bergy bits.

Danco Island & Cuverville Island (continued)

10 December 2023

Coni Costa

After being treated with a delicious buffet lunch in the Beagle Restaurant, we were ready to keep exploring as Phil, our expedition leader, announced the successful repositioning of the ship to disembark in Cuverville Island.

The island is a 252-meters high (826 feet) rock with a long shingle beach at its foot, home to a sizable colony of gentoo penguins. About 6,500 breeding pairs of gentoos call Cuverville home, composing the largest rookery on the Antarctic Peninsula. This population is recognized by BirdLife International as an "Important Bird and Biodiversity Area". But the flora is every bit as precious: The only flowering plants on Antarctica, Antarctic hairgrass (*Deschampsia antarctica*) and Antarctic pearlwort (*Colobanthus quitensis*), can be found here.

After we enjoyed observing the penguins in their colonies and the views from the island, we got to explore the bay in front of Cuverville Island by zodiac. Icebergs in all sorts of shapes and sizes often run aground nearby, and seals commonly frequent the west shallow channel near the island. On this occasion we were gifted by the presence of several Weddell seals resting on a snow-covered rock and a Leopard Seal sleeping peacefully on a floating iceberg. All this scenery made the waters around this island perfect for a memorable zodiacruise.

Back on board the *Ocean Victory* everyone is smiling, what an incredible first day in this magic continent! The recap and Phil's briefing made us become excited about our next days explorations.

On the way to Cuverville Island's gentoo colony



Pléneau Island & Petermann Island

11 December 2023

Chloe Power

Our day began early, starting with hot chocolates up in the Observation Lounge on Deck 8 ready for our spectacular cruise through the Lemaire Channel. The Channel is 11 km (6.8 miles) long and 1,600 metres (just under one mile) wide at its narrowest point. It is often nicknamed the 'Kodak Gap', due to its impressive towering peaks topping 2,000 ft in height on either side of the iceberg-filled passage.

We then were greeted by none other than our sister ship, the *Ocean Albatros*! This was the first time ever the fleet had come together, and what a location to do so! Guests aboard both vessels had the opportunity to admire each other's sister ship, and wave from the Deck 5 observation balconies at the bow.

We then carried on our operations with a landing at Pléneau Island, and a zodiac cruise around the 'iceberg graveyard'. Pléneau Island is an important historic site for the French Antarctic Expedition (1903-1905) led by Jean-Baptiste Charcot who named its northeast point for Paul Pléneau, the photographer of the expedition. We got to see more gentoo penguins, and even a southern elephant seal and Weddell seal too which was super exciting!

The zodiac cruises got treated by quite the show by not one but ~5 humpback whales showing off their flukes, pectoral fins and what looked like some feeding action at the

surface. Humpback whales travel to Antarctica each summer to feed on Antarctic krill. They also feed on small fish and other zooplankton, by straining huge volumes of seawater through their baleen plates, which act like a sieve. They can capture their food through an impressive technique called 'bubble net feeding' whereby the whales dive deep, blowing air from their blowholes to create a jet of bubbles. This can confuse and trap krill and small fish to the surface, trapping them into a tight ball ready for the whales to gulp them up.

After lunch, we headed back onto the zodiacs for a landing at Petermann Island. We got to observe numerous gentoo penguins gifting pebbles to their mate, and even saw some eggs being incubated on the nests. We were lucky to see some Adélie penguins too amidst the gentoos, and interestingly we were told that this part of the island used to be an Adélie colony, but in the last ten years gentoos have taken it over!

The zodiac cruises also spotted some more whales, and some of us got to witness bubble net feeding from the ship! It was truly a spectacular day.

After dinner, we finished off the night with 'Shark Bingo' with Nick and Coni from the expedition team. It was a hilarious night full of competition and laughter, and we'll never be able to look at Jaws the same again.

The sisters meet: Ocean Albatros and Ocean Victory



Brown Station, Paradise Harbor & Leith Cove

12 December 2023

Stephanie Hannemann



Welcome to Paradise! Well, Paradise Harbor, to be precise, so named by whalers operating in the vicinity about 100 years ago for the calm conditions in this protected bay. Still, a weather system from the Gerlache Strait had stretched out its fingers and caused a snowy misty welcome. So expedition leader Phil decided to wait for half an hour before starting our morning activities. Luckily, by then the sight had cleared and the first groups set out for a continental landing at the Argentinian station Almirante Brown. The station had been established in the 1950's, but the buildings only date back to the 1990's because the original facilities were burned down in 1984 by the station's doctor after he was ordered to stay another winter. Since that time, Almirante Brown is no longer a permanent but only a summer station. However, the station team had not yet arrived for this season and the grounds were still only inhabited by the "locals", the gentoos.

Some of us enjoyed the climb up to the 84 m / 276 ft high peak behind the station. It was definitely worth the effort for the great views over the bay.

While half of us landed, the other half cruised around icebergs, spotted seals and visited the a cormorant colony. Only from the zodiacs we got to see the beautiful colourful lichens that grow on some of the rocks framing the bay.

During lunch, the *Ocean Victory* repositioned to Leith Cove, a sheltered bay nearby which was perfect for our afternoon activity: the Polar Plunge. A record of 119 brave plungers dared a dip into the "warm" Antarctic waters. The operation actually had to pause several times due to bergy bits and icebergs approaching the ship. What a once-in-a-lifetime experience!

But the day was not over yet. Some of us had then only little time to warm up again because, after dinner, it was time for the campers to head shore again. Equipped with shovels, bivvy bags and sleeping bags (and hopefully empty bladders!), they prepared their comfortable snow beds for the magical experience of sleeping under the dusk Antarctic sky. Sweet dreams (and warm thoughts)!

Borgen Bay & Damoy Point

13 December 2023

Mariam Pousa

In the early morning, we picked up the intrepid group of campers who spent the night surrounded by high mountain peaks, ice-covered cliffs and steep glaciers.

By breakfast time we were entering Neumayer Channel and Borgen Bay presented an opportunity to go out on our first adventure. But the wind conditions weren't exactly as predicted, so we wait a bit until it calmed down. An hour later, the team launched the zodiacs and we were ready to explore. We cruised in the calm waters contemplating the massive glacier front and occasionally, when the clouds were kind enough, beautiful mountain ranges. By the time we were heading back, a Humpback whale showed up to say good bye.

In the afternoon, we sailed further south to Damoy Point. It was the perfect spot for the snowshoers to go out on an adventure. They stomped a path in the deep snow for the people on boots following them before heading back to take a closer look at the hut, the orange-colored old air transit facility used by British Antarctic Survey between 1973-1993.

The area is surrounded by high snowy mountains that offer a stunning backdrop for photographs even in this semi casted day, one of them being Mount Français, the highest peak in the Antarctic Peninsula rising up to 2,890 meters.



Meeting the Port Lockroy Team

13 December 2023 (continued)

Mariam Pousa



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As for the moment, due to avian flu regulations, Port Lockroy, the famous Penguin Post Office around the corner, is closed for visitor. However, the team there was keen to come on board and give us a lecture of the history of the base and the work of the UKAHT. The base is staffed by a four-person team during the summer season that takes care of the museum, the post office and the shop. All proceeds from the shop and post office go directly to the conservation of the historic huts in Antarctica.

We learn that Port Lockroy has a long history as a safe harbor for explorers and whalers who sailed on the Antarctic Peninsula. First discovered and named by the French explorer Jean-Baptiste Charcot in 1904 on his French Antarctic Expedition, the island was later used by whalers between 1911-1931.

During WW2, British military sent a secret military operation code-named Operation Tabarin to the Antarctic Peninsula with a purpose of establishing a permanent British presence to the continent. HMS William Scoresby, SS Fitzroy and 14 men led by Lieutenant Commander James Marr reached the

Antarctic waters in February 1944 and established the Base A at Port Lockroy. The base was used for various scientific work over the years. It was a key monitoring site during the International Geophysical Year in 1957 and the first measurements of the ionosphere and recording of an atmospheric whistler were made at Base A.

Port Lockroy was designated a Historic Site or Monument (HSM 61) following a proposal by the United Kingdom to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting. The renovation work of the base buildings started in 1996 and today the base is managed by United Kingdom Heritage Trust that looks after seven historic British huts in the peninsula as well as the conservation management plan of Shackleton's ship Endurance found from the bottom of the Weddell sea in 2021.

The day was finished by a ship cruise back on the Neumayer Channel, with a little detour on the entrance of the Gerlache Strait to admire the Peninsula for a last time. What a spectacular end for an excellent day and Voyage!



*Sending a postcard from the southernmost post office in the world & purchasing one-of-a-kind gifts
- All pictures above are owned by www.ukaht.org -*

Riding the Dragon – part 1

14 December 2023

Coni Costa

Guess what? We're on our way back to Ushuaia, soaking in the memories of an epic last day in Antarctica.

Today, we decided to kick off the day a bit later than usual to finally catch some much-needed rest after these intense and fantastic days.

At 10am, Lisa dropped some knowledge bombs about "The Antarctic Treaty". Why do we need law in a place where no one lives, and no one owns it? We delved into the history of Antarctic exploration, territorial claims, and the Treaty's nitty-gritty. Turns out, this place is not only significant, but it's also unique enough for numerous countries to agree to keep it peaceful and dedicated solely to scientific pursuits.

After lunch, Gaby followed up with the disembarkation plans; brace yourselves tears are already flowing.

Then, Chereese took the stage to talk about sea birds, with a focus on albatrosses, fulmars, shearwaters and petrels. Did you know these birds have fancy tube-shaped nostrils? These are either on the sides of their bill (albatrosses) or on the top (all the other petrels). Most have a well-developed sense of smell, which helps them find food and their nesting place.

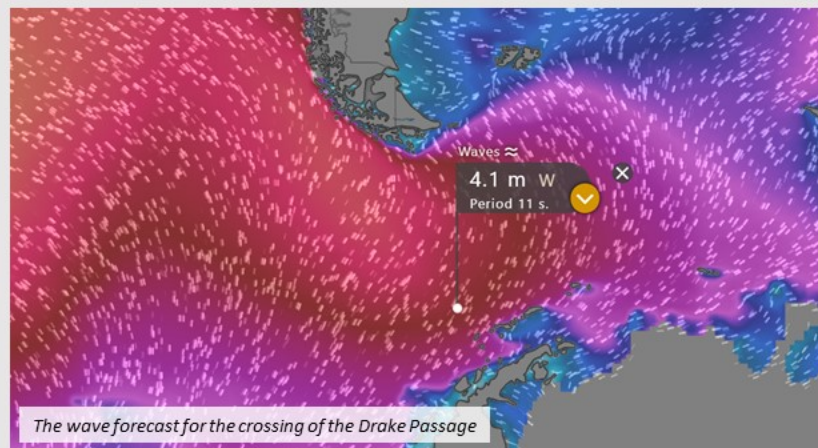
The tubes also drain away excess salt, which is excreted from a gland above the eyes. The albatrosses' ability to ride the wind without flapping is mind-blowing, and their onshore courtship ceremonies are a spectacle. Talk about relationship goals- they return to the same nest site and stay faithful for life.

And then Chloe treated us to a deep dive into "Marine Mammals of the Southern Ocean". From the colossal blue whale to eared and true seals, we covered it all.

Whales, categorized into baleen and toothed whales, stole the show. Did you know they sleep by shutting down half of their brain at a time? It's like aquatic power naps. And the young ones chill while their moms pulling them along in the slipstream.

Pinnipeds, or seals, are the rockstars of the Southern Ocean. Chloe broke down the differences between otariids and phocids. Otariids, like the Antarctic fur seal, flaunt fur coats, ear flaps, and flipper flexibility for land strolls. Phocids, on the other hand, rely on blubber, lack visible ear flaps, and have hilarious land waddle.

In the evening, we winded down with a movie and popcorn, and a gentle rock to sleep.



Riding the Dragon – part 2

15 December 2023

Stephanie Hannemann

The second day on the Drake Passage began again a bit shaky. The ship was gently rocking and rolling but by now, most of us had found a way to move along safely in the rhythm of the waves. Most of us slept in again before grabbing a quick breakfast and then heading to the lounge to listen to Coni telling us about the indigenous people of Tierra del Fuego.

However, the items most embattled by the audience were a chart of our voyage beautifully painted by Mariam – and a shredded zodiac propeller! Rocks at Cuverville Island destroyed a good part of the propeller of the zodiac Rene was driving that day. His initial bad conscious had dissolved completely after he learned that he there-with had contributed to earn more than 2000 USD for charity.



A little later, as the final educational talk of the trip, Victoria lectured about Antarctica being the heart of the ocean.

After lunch, we got the chance to learn more about other trips with ATG and some of us already made plans for future adventures.

Later in the afternoon, a charity raffles and auction were held in support of the Ocean Youth Academy. Many of us had bought raffles tickets and many of us participated in the auction. Various objects were offered by auctioneer Neill: jewelry, stuffed penguins, handmade items, gin and several flags signed by the expedition team.

Thank you again to all who gave for that good cause!

Afterwards, Phil detailed our route, the various landings and cruises we had done. The aperture photo group presented impressive pictures they had taken during the voyage. The captain, his officers, the entire hotel team and the expedition team said their farewell to us.

Finally Renato presented his voyage slide show. The reactions from the audience echoed the happiness about all those wonderful memories of an amazing trip that none of us will ever forget.

Return to Tierra del Fuego

16 December 2023

Stephanie Hannemann

After last night's end-of-voyage celebrations, we awoke early for our final morning on the *Ocean Victory*.

Although we wish we could stay longer and head back out to exploring beautiful Antarctica, we spent the morning getting ready to leave behind the ship and the people we've come to know so well over the past ten days. After more than a week immersed in the landscapes and amongst the wildlife of the Antarctic, it was time to return home or to wherever our life's journey would take us next.

And so — farewell, adieu, and goodbye. Together we have visited an incredible and vast wilderness and the wonderful wild creatures that call this home.

We hope the Expedition Team has helped make this the trip of a lifetime. Although we must say goodbye to these places, it is a fond farewell as we are all true ambassadors for the Antarctic and all the beauty it holds.

On behalf of Albatros Expeditions, our captain and crew, the Expedition Team, and everyone else who helped make this journey a resounding success. It has been a pleasure travelling with you. We hope that you will come back and experience these wonderful places with us once again!



*Back row, L to R: René, Fede, Lisa, Magdalena (AEL), Neill, Phil (EL), Nick, Gaby (AEL), Ana, Kuba, Chloe
Front row, L to R: Luis, Stephanie, Renato, Victoria, Bela, Daria, Cheresse, Coni, Rico*

