



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Antarctica

Classic I: The Falklands, South Georgia & Antarctica

20 Nov - 8 Dec 2016 (19 Days)

Trip Report



Cape Petrels and Southern Fulmar at Elephant Island, Antarctica by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Trip report compiled by Tour Leader, Dušan Brinkhuizen



Tour Summary

Rockjumper's Classic Antarctica I adventure started in the scenic harbour of Ushuaia, the southernmost town of Argentina. In the afternoon, we boarded the impressive Akademik Ioffe, a Russian research vessel that became our home for the next 19 days. The lifelong dream to visit the continent of Antarctica, the world's largest unspoilt wilderness area, was soon to become reality!



Dolphin Gull by Lee Hunter

Day 1, 20 Nov: Ushuaia harbour and Beagle channel. We were with about one hundred fellow passengers on the ship and no less than thirty of us were birders, an exceptionally high number, and a real bonus having so many pairs of eyes on the lookout for birds and marine mammals. Soon many of us Rockjumper's and other birders met on the top platform (deck 7), where the first birding commenced! While heading out Ushuaia Harbour, species such as Upland Goose, South American Tern, Kelp Gull and the handsome Dolphin Gull were seen. A Flying Steamer Duck in flight was a nice catch and our only confirmed sighting of the trip. Further down the Beagle Channel, along the rocky shore, we saw a few flightless Fuegian Steamer Ducks with their short wings and large orange bills. Southern Giant Petrels were seen in good numbers, but interestingly, only juveniles in their uniform dark brown plumage. Black-browed Albatrosses were picked

up as well, *the first of many to come!* Imperial and Rock Shag were commonly seen in the water, and in a flock of shags, we got our first Magellanic Penguins as well. We also saw quite a few Chilean Skuas along the way, some in small flocks. Our rarest sighting was that of a Burmeister's Porpoise, two were swiftly seen ahead of the bows by a few lucky participants.

Day 2, 21 Nov: At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean). Our first day at sea was exciting. The ocean was choppy and the weather wasn't really nice either, but there were many seabirds out there! Large numbers of Black-browed Albatrosses, White-chinned Petrels and Sooty Shearwaters kept us busy continuously. Out of the crowds, we regularly picked out a "big boy", the spectacular Southern Royal Albatross, of which we saw at least twenty. Slender-billed Prions started to appear in small numbers during the course of the day, and we also got our first Cape Petrels and Great Shearwaters. Our first Northern Giant Petrel was a moulting individual. A superb Snowy Sheathbill that landed on deck was quite a surprise to us, and a typical sighting that would repeat itself during our voyage. Really exceptional was a single flyby Least Seedsnipe that got photographed, a vagrant to the Falkland Islands. Our first Fin and Sei Whales were other highlights for the day.



Southern Royal Albatross by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Day 3, 22 Nov: Falkland Islands; West Point and Carcass Island. In the early morning, we woke up in the Falklands! Common Diving Petrels, Black-browed Albatrosses and Great Shearwaters, among others, were watched from the deck before breakfast. Our first landing was at the scenic West Point Island. Blackish Cinclodes were waiting for us at the dock, as well as a nesting pair of Blackish Oystercatcher and a pair of Falkland Steamer Ducks. Austral Thrush, Dark-faced Ground Tyrant, Black-chinned Siskin and Long-tailed Meadowlark were watched in the nearby bushes. Flocks of geese were carefully scanned and soon we located a pair of Kelp Goose and a family group of the rare Ruddy-headed Goose. A few confiding Striated Caracaras were seen during a beautiful hike to the Black-browed Albatross breeding site, which was our main objective for the morning. Once we got to the colony, we had over two hours to soak up the beauty of all the spectacular wildlife on site. Thousands of Black-browed Albatrosses nesting on a magnificent cliff, pairs in display, a continuous flow of individuals landing and taking off, all at touching distance – *a truly incredible sight!*



Black-browed Albatross by Dušan Brinhuizen

The Southern Rockhopper Penguins that were nesting among the albatrosses were fantastic too, and watching some of them hopping in between the rocks was real fun! After lunch, we navigated to nearby Carcass Island. Here we successfully targeted the endemic Cobb's Wren foraging in the flotsam along the sandy beach. The darker individual was a juvenile and we watched it being fed by its parent. Blackish Cinclodes were rather tame and Snowy Sheathbill and Falkland Steamer Duck were watched at close range as well. In the tall grass and between the tussocks, we watched Grass Wren, Correndera Pipit and a single cryptically patterned South American Snipe. After some effort, we all got to see the splendid White-bridled Finch, a much-desired target. For the rest of the afternoon, we spent time at a beautiful beach, enjoying small groups of Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins. Our first Brown Skuas were seen here as well. *What an amazing day it was!*

Day 4, 23 Nov: Falkland Islands; Gypsy Cove and Stanley. After breakfast, we landed at Stanley and took a bus ride to Gypsy Cove. A scheduled stop at a shipwreck along the way produced excellent scope views of the handsome Two-banded Plover. Here we also got our only White-rumped Sandpipers for the trip. At Gypsy Cove itself, we very much enjoyed watching Rock Shags nesting on the rocky cliffs, together with a few pairs of Black-crowned Night-heron. Brown-hooded Gulls were an addition to the list and some got to see Commerson's Dolphins swimming by. Passerines that we picked up along the trail included Grass Wren, Correndera Pipit, Austral



White-bridled Finch by Lee Hunter



Thrush and the beautiful Long-tailed Meadowlark. On our way back to Stanley, all the birders got off the bus north of town. Our major target bird in the fields here was the Rufous-chested Dotterel. Within a few minutes, we located a couple of these stunners, *a real feast!* Other birds that we saw here included



Rufous-chested Dotterel by Lee Hunter

White-bridled Finch, Correndera Pipit and South American Snipe. Pelagic birding during the late afternoon as we departed towards South Georgia produced our first Gray-backed Storm Petrels and Grey-headed Albatross!

Day 5 & 6, 24 & 25 Nov: At sea between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean). Two full days of sea-watching was a delight. The captain allowed us to observe from inside the bridge, which was really nice (*especially on those cold and windy days!*). The bridge was always manned with birders, but the stern deck (*closer to the hot chocolate!*) was quite popular too. The sea-watching was kind of a lottery and regular time-outs were necessary

because of the cold weather. A few birders had walkie-talkies, which was really helpful. In this way, people at different decks got informed if a rare bird was being seen. Port-side and starboard-side became important phrases and during the voyage, everybody got familiar with them. Commonly seen species during the two days out at sea included Black-browed Albatross (*abundant*), Wilson's Storm Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Cape Petrel and both Northern and Southern Giant Petrel. Slender-billed Prions were absent and soon were replaced by the very similar Antarctic Prion. Some people were able to connect again with Gray-backed Storm Petrel, a species surprisingly difficult to observe because of their grey backs blending in with the colouration of the sea.

As we were approaching colder waters, the beautiful Black-bellied Storm Petrels were being seen more frequently. Memorable was the sighting of our first Wandering Albatross, a spectacular juvenile, following the ship at close range for a few minutes. A few more Wanderers were seen but also plenty of Southern Royal and Grey-headed Albatrosses. The real jackpot was a White-headed Petrel that followed the ship for a few minutes on our first day at sea. *Luckily, many people were able to connect with this rare and distinct petrel!* Kerguelen Petrel was also seen on a number of occasions but, unfortunately, always very briefly. Closer to South Georgia, we also started to see the Light-mantled Albatross, a handsome and truly elegant species of albatross! Antarctic Fur Seals were also becoming more frequent closer to South Georgia. A few Humpback Whales were seen on the way as well. At Shag Rocks, we watched our first flock of South Georgia Shags; while some people spotted the very first King Penguin. Very unusual was the fact that we had not seen a single Soft-plumaged Petrel during the two days of navigation.



Wandering Albatross by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Day 7, 26 Nov: South Georgia; Salisbury Plain and Fortuna Bay. Our first landing in South Georgia was at Salisbury Plain. This site is well-known for its spectacular King Penguin rookery, one of the largest in the world! Landing seemed a little difficult because of all the untamed wildlife occupying the beach, but we did manage to find a spot in between the hundreds of penguins and seals. We were carefully

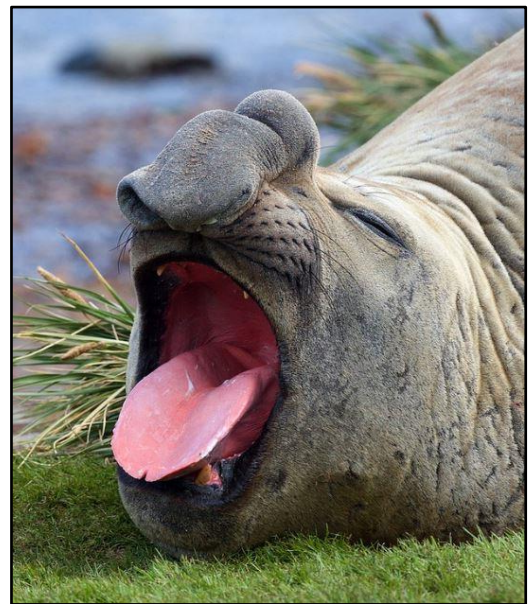


King Penguin by Dušan Brinkhuizen

warned regarding the territorial Antarctic Fur Seals that could become dangerous if we entered their space. For this reason, trekking poles were mandatory during our landing so we could keep potentially angry seals at a safe distance. After a short hike inland, we reached the edge of the breeding colony. Standing next to an estimated half a million King Penguins was difficult to comprehend, *the ultimate wildlife experience!* Soaking up the colours, the sounds, the smell, and their behaviour, with adults and juveniles of these incredible creatures all around us, right at our feet, was just mind-blowing. We had a couple of hours to enjoy this marvellous place and after some quality penguin viewing, we went to search for the endemic South Georgia Pipit, the southernmost breeding passerine on earth. A conservation project named team RAT did a fantastic job in eradicating Brown Rats on the island and we were witnessing the success of this project with our own eyes: we easily located several pipits in flight display above the grassy fields, a sighting that was unthinkable a couple of years back. After lunch, we navigated to Fortuna Bay and saw our very first Snow Petrels, a superb, all white petrel! A single Blue Petrel in a flock of Antarctic Prions was observed by only a few participants. Our second landing of

the day was at Fortuna Bay. Numbers of King Penguin were nowhere close to Salisbury Plain, but the setting was different, so it was definitely worth the visit. At some point, it started snowing, which created nice conditions for “penguins in the snow” photography. A single “lost” Chinstrap Penguin among the much larger King Penguins was quite a remarkable sight!

Day 8, 27 Nov: South Georgia; Stromness Bay and Grytviken. In the morning, the conditions did not allow a landing at Stromness Bay. It was unfortunate, but luckily we did not have any important targets at this particular site. We watched the scenery and wildlife from the ship for a little while before we continued to Grytviken, located at King Edward Cove. Our visit to the old whaling station of Grytviken was special. First, we had a memorial drink at Ernest Shackleton's grave, and then we slowly walked along the historical buildings of the whalers. The Southern Elephant Seals were scattered all over the place and watching these enormous, fairytale-like creatures from close range was simply spectacular. The sound of the elephant seal pups nicknamed “weaners” echoing among the buildings was almost surreal. “South Georgia” Yellow-billed Pintails were around in small numbers and for being a wild teal, they were not shy



Southern Elephant Seal by Lee Hunter



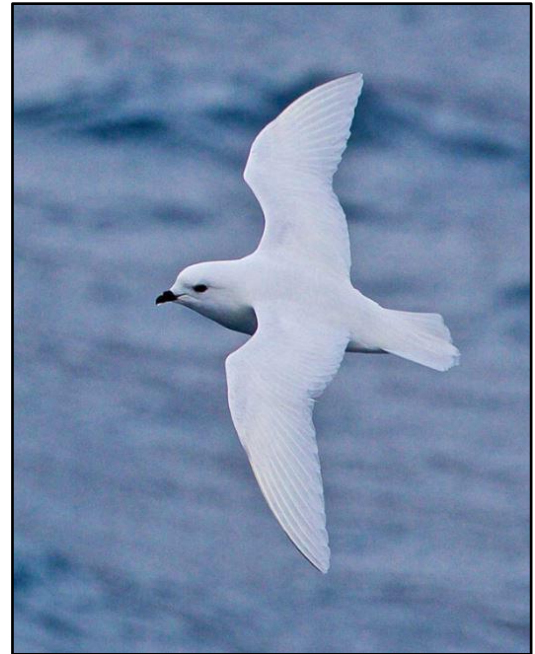
at all. A recently fledged chick of Antarctic Tern being fed by its parent was surely a superb photo opportunity for the photographers amongst us. The lovely South Georgia Museum was another highlight for the day.



Macaroni Penguin by Lee Hunter

Day 9, 28 Nov: South Georgia; Gold Harbour, Royal Bay and Drygalski Fjord. In the morning, we visited Gold Harbour, a truly magical site! The setting of the beach packed with wildlife and a glacier in the background was just perfect. For a couple of hours, we enjoyed King Penguins, Southern Elephant Seals, Southern Giant Petrels, Brown Skuas, and Snowy Sheathbills all around us. The fact that there were hardly any Antarctic Fur Seals at the site made the walking amongst the wildlife more relaxing. To our surprise, the pups of the Southern Elephant Seals were remarkably friendly today, in some cases even climbing on top of our belongings! We also witnessed some impressive fights between large males of Southern Elephant Seals, but, of course, at some distance. Our first “White Nelly” of the trip, a spectacular white morph of the Southern Giant Petrel, was spotted in the water. A pair of Light-mantled Sooty Albatross nesting on the cliffs was watched with the telescope.

Our excursion to Royal Bay was quite exceptional because conditions usually don’t allow a zodiac cruise at this site. In comparison to yesterday, we were so lucky with the calm waters of the bay, especially since we had a major target bird here. Rarely do you get the opportunity to get up close and personal with Macaroni Penguin, *which is what we got!* The zodiac cruise along the rocky cliffs was just excellent, with superb sightings of Macaroni Penguins, South Georgia Shags, and Light-mantled Sooty Albatrosses, all at close range. A South Georgia Pipit doing its flight display was also a memorable observation, and a great sign for the ground nesting birds in the area! Some people saw the first Leopard Seal of the trip swimming in the bay, but views were brief. Next, we entered the scenic Drygalski Fjord, where we enjoyed spectacular glaciers and up to twelve Snow Petrels! In the late afternoon, the sea-watching was booming as we left South Georgia. We actually delayed our dinner because we didn’t want to miss out on the tonnes of seabirds that were passing by the bow of the ship! First, we ran into spectacular flocks of Antarctic Prions and later on, superb Blue Petrels started showing up. At some point, the Blue Petrels were outnumbering the prions! Tonnes of Black-bellied Storm Petrels at the bow were also a spectacular sight. A single Fairy Prion was picked out of the crowd and the photographs confirmed its identification. Some also got lucky to see another Kerguelen Petrel shear by. Another highlight was the continuous flow of



Snow Petrel by Lee Hunter



dozens of diving petrels passing by, with many individuals showing characteristics strongly pointing towards South Georgia Diving Petrel.



Southern Fulmar by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 10, 11 & 12, 29 Nov – 1 Dec: At sea between South Georgia and Antarctica (Scotia Sea). After our South Georgia adventures, we had three full days at sea. Seabird activity was highly variable and very often the ocean felt ‘empty’, with only a few birds seen per hour. Common species like Black-browed Albatross and White-chinned Petrel became scarce birds the further south we went and even Antarctic Prions weren’t always around. As we got closer to Elephant Island, the seabird activity picked up, and the handsome Southern Fulmar became a common sight, often together with Cape Petrel, flying along with our ship. To our enormous surprise, a single White-headed Petrel showed up for a few minutes, being a nice catch-up for some of us. The number of Cape Petrels started to grow significantly (*a flock of over 300 birds!*) and watching them playing in the wind was surely pelagic birding at its best. We knew we were getting into territory for the sought-after Antarctic Petrel and careful scanning

of the Cape Petrels paid off: a splendid adult Antarctic Petrel showed up at the stern deck and very soon, everybody got their bins on it. Cetaceans that were seen along the way included Sei Whale, Hourglass Dolphin and a single Southern Bottlenose Whale. Also memorable was the Snowy Sheathbill that we had aboard, hitchhiking along all the way to the Antarctic Peninsula!

Day 13, 2 Dec: Antarctic Peninsula; Antarctic Sound, Paulet Island and Brown Bluff. The morning started off with a “big bang”. A surreal wake-up call announced over the bridge radio: “everybody get out of your beds, we are navigating towards an Emperor Penguin”. Within minutes, birders (*and many non-birders as well*) were congregating at the bows. Unbelievable, an adult Emperor Penguin standing on an ice floe and the captain “parked” the ship right next to it! The bird we had been talking and fantasising about; “the holy grail of Antarctica”. This wandering individual was together with some Adelie Penguins, and it made them look tiny! We watched this mega cracker for about twenty minutes before the captain decided to move on. *What a blast!*

We were now in the Antarctic Sound, surrounded by spectacular icebergs of different sizes and formations. Adelie Penguins were all over the place but, of course, no more emperors that day. Our first landing was on Paulet Island. The massive colony of Adelie Penguins was the



Emperor Penguin with Adelie Penguin by Dušan Brinkhuizen



main attraction here and we really enjoyed watching them at close range. It was funny to watch the individuals with small stones in their beaks build their nest. Another highlight was the colony of Antarctic Shags located on the nearby slope. *What a handsome shag that is!* Plenty of Snowy Sheathbills were scavenging around the colony and Brown Skua was present in small numbers as well. Our landing at



Gentoo Penguin with chicks by Lee Hunter

Brown Bluff was magical. Here we officially set foot on mainland Antarctica and marvelled at the stunning scenery! We enjoyed two species of nesting penguins at this site: the Gentoo Penguins were nesting in small, scattered congregations; while the Adelie Penguin was nesting in a more dense colony. *The Gentoo chicks were so adorable!* Snow Petrel was also nesting and some of us hiked up the hill to watch an active nest in a crevice. New mammals that we saw today were Weddell Seal, Antarctic Minke Whale and Crabeater Seal. A delicious barbeque on the stern deck, while it was snowing lightly, was unreal!

Day 14, 3 Dec: Antarctic Peninsula; Half Moon Island and Deception Island. In the morning, we visited the Chinstrap Penguin colony at Half Moon Island. It was warm and sunny outside so we could finally take off those layers! The penguin rookery was situated on a small, picturesque, snow-covered island and we had been given a couple of hours to fully enjoy the Chinstraps and the snow. In the colony, among hundreds of Chinstraps, we watched a single “lost” Macaroni Penguin. It was presumably a male since it was singing and displaying very frequently. Our next stop

was Deception Island, a caldera of an active volcano. We watched a flock of skuas at a small pond as we arrived and it was unique to see three species together. The bulk was Brown Skua, but a vagrant Chilean Skua was highly unexpected here. We also picked out two South Polar Skuas of the intermediate paler morph (*one bird was banded*) and a dark morph. Even though the sharp, cold winds were picking up quickly, some crazy people decided to take a polar plunge in the water! While navigating through the Bransfield Strait, we watched many spectacular whale blows, tails and dorsal fins of both Humpback and Fin Whale.

Day 15, 4 Dec: Antarctic Peninsula; Wilhelmina Bay and Port Lockroy. In the morning, we had a zodiac cruise at Wilhelmina Bay. First, we approached a couple of foraging Humpback Whales and we watched them at a reasonably close distance. Later on, a suspicious seal resting on an ice floe was spotted in the distance and as we got closer, we could indeed confirm it was a huge Leopard Seal! We watched this impressive animal at a close distance for quite some time. It



Chinstrap Penguin by Dušan Brinkhuizen



frequently yawned, showing its sharp teeth. Several Crabeater Seals were seen at close range too. We continued back towards the ship where we ran into a spectacular flock of Antarctic Cormorants in the water. At some point, we got out of the zodiacs to dance on the pack ice. It was great fun, but the dancing quickly stopped as we got a report of a possible Emperor Penguin nearby! Within minutes, we were at the site; a lone Emperor Penguin was standing on the pack ice less than hundred feet away from us! This time it was a second-year juvenile bird, lacking the yellow in the neck. A Gentoo Penguin jumped out of



Emperor and Gentoo Penguin by Dušan Brinkhuizen

the water and walked straight to the Emperor. The Gentoo seemed as surprised as us when realising that his brother was a little bigger than usual. *It was an incredible sighting. Who had expected the second encounter with Emperor Penguin?!* In full ecstasy, we went back to the ship where we enjoyed a nice, warm meal. In the afternoon, we visited the museum and post office at Port Locroy. Nothing new at Port Locroy in terms of birds, but a pair of South Polar Skua and a few Snowy Sheathbills around the buildings were fun to watch.

Day 16, 17 & 18, 5, 6 & 7 Dec: The Melchior Islands and back through the Drake Passage towards Cape Horn. A zodiac cruise at the Melchior Islands was our last excursion before we sailed back to Ushuaia. The icy scenery was incredible at the islands, but there was not much wildlife, apart from Antarctic Terns, a few Crabeater Seals and a South Polar Skua. We did get close up views of Humpback Whales, which was a real treat. The pelagic birding on our way back through the Drake Passage was excellent, especially as we were getting closer to mainland South America. A superb Antarctic Petrel following the ship for hours was a definite highlight on the first day out. We said goodbye to Snow Petrel; while the Black-browed Albatrosses and White-chinned Petrels started to become numerous again. The distinct Blue Petrels were around in good numbers and we also saw quite a few Light-mantled Albatrosses. Stunning was a group of hunting Killer Whales that attracted a large flock of albatrosses because of their feeding actions. *A truly spectacular sight!* Other Cetaceans that were seen included Long-finned Pilot Whale and a couple of Peale's Dolphins that were "riding the bows". Closer to Cape Horn, the Southern Royal Albatrosses and Grey-headed Albatrosses were common and we also picked out a few spectacular Wanderers. A single Northern Royal Albatross that got photographed was a new addition to the list. We tried very hard for Magellanic Diving Petrel at Cape Horn, but only a single participant got lucky to see this rare bird. The next morning, we arrived timely in the harbour of Ushuaia and said farewell to the wonderful and exceptionally professional staff of our epic voyage!



Antarctic Petrel by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Annotated List of species recorded

Note: Number in brackets () indicate number of days on the tour the species was recorded.

Birds (81 in total: 81 seen)

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gill, F and D Donsker (Eds). 2016. IOC World Bird List (v 6.2). Doi 10.14344/IOC.ML.6.2.

Status codes: E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced

IUCN codes: CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl Anatidae

Flying Steamer Duck

Tachyeres patachonicus

(1) Ushuaia harbour 20.11.

A single individual was observed just outside the harbour of Ushuaia. It was seen in flight which made the identification straightforward.

Fuegian Steamer Duck

Tachyeres pteneres

(1) Beagle Channel 20.11.

A few of this flightless species were seen on the rocky shore along the Beagle Channel. Often named Flightless Steamer Duck.

Falkland Steamer Duck E

Tachyeres brachypterus

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Stanley 23.11.

This large and impressive flightless endemic was seen in small numbers during all our landings in the Falklands. Some individuals allowed close approach.

Upland Goose

Chloephaga picta leucoptera

(3) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Fields south of Stanley 23.11.

A few individuals were seen in the harbour of Ushuaia during departure. Large numbers that were seen in the Falklands involved the endemic subspecies *leucoptera*.

Kelp Goose

Chloephaga hybrida malvinarum

(2) Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A pair of this stunning species was observed at close range on the beach of Carcass Island. We also had a pair at the cliffs of Gypsy Cove

Ruddy-headed Goose NE

Chloephaga rubidiceps

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Fields south of Stanley 23.11.



Small numbers of this Falklands near-endemic were seen during all our landings. Individuals were often found near flocks of the more numerous Upland Goose. We saw several pairs with chicks. This species is nowadays a major rarity in mainland South America.

Crested Duck

Lophonetta specularioides specularioides

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Small numbers of this species were seen at close range in the Falklands.

Yellow-billed Pintail

Anas georgica georgica

(3) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, 4 Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

The endemic subspecies *georgica* was seen during all our landings in South Georgia with some birds being remarkably tame. A few participants observed a pair with chicks at Grytviken. Some consider it as a distinct species "South Georgia Pintail".

Penguins Spheniscidae

King Penguin

Aptenodytes patagonicus

(4) 1 At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

Our visit to the colony of Salisbury Plain with an estimated total of 450.000 individuals was truly incredible. Adults, juveniles and chicks of these marvellous creatures were watched for several hours at close range and absorbing their charming behaviour in this untamed habitat was surely one of the finest wildlife experiences ever! Smaller (but still impressive) numbers were also enjoyed during many other landings in South Georgia.

Emperor Penguin (NT) E

Aptenodytes forsteri

(2) Antarctic Sound 2.12 and Wilhelmina Bay 4.12.

Our first encounter with this "holy grail" of Antarctica was a splendid adult standing on an ice floe in the Antarctic Sound. The captain turned the ship and navigated back to the bird especially for us. We got amazing views of this huge and spectacular species that was standing next to a few of the much smaller Adelie Penguins. As unbelievable was our second encounter with an Emperor Penguin, a juvenile this time, standing on the ice in Wilhelmina Bay. This juvenile was watched from the zodiac at close range.

Gentoo Penguin

Pygoscelis papua

(5) Carcass Island 22.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

Our first Gentoo's were seen beautifully at Carcass Island. The larger nominate subspecies was seen in the Falklands and South Georgia. The smaller race *ellsworthi* was seen in good numbers at their colonies in the Antarctic Peninsula. Nesting birds with chicks were watched at the scenic Brown Bluff.



ellsworthi:

(4) Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12, Deception Island 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, Port Lockroy 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

Adelie Penguin (NT) E

Pygoscelis adeliae

(1) Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12 and Paulet Island 2.12.

This Antarctic speciality was first seen on the ice floe together with the single Emperor Penguin. It was the most numerous penguin on the ice in the Antarctic Sound. A landing at the colony of Paulet Island was unique with close range views of hundreds of nesting birds for several hours. Large numbers were also enjoyed at Brown Bluff.

Chinstrap Penguin

Pygoscelis antarcticus

(6) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

Singletons among other penguin species at Fortuna Bay and Brown Bluff were the first ones seen. Our visit to the colony of Half Moon Island was a fantastic experience with hundreds of nesting birds watched at close range in a beautiful with snow covered setting.

Southern Rockhopper Penguin (VU)

Eudyptes chrysocome chrysocome

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

This attractive species was seen nesting in the mixed colony among the Black-browed Albatrosses on West Point Island. Watching them at close range "rock hopping" and interacting with the nesting albatrosses was awesome. Small numbers were seen at sea near Cape Horn as well.

Macaroni Penguin (VU)

Eudyptes chrysolophus

(3) Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, 1 Half Moon Island 3.12 and 3 Drake Passage 6.12.

The calm weather allowed us to make a unique zodiac cruise to the colony of Royal Bay. Here numerous birds were watched at close range along the rocky shore and hundreds were seen on the steep slopes in the colony.

Magellanic Penguin (NT)

Spheniscus magellanicus

(4) 3 Beagle Channel 20.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Our first penguin species of the trip with a few seen from the ship in the Beagle Channel. At Carcass Island we got our first close-up encounters with this species. At the end of our journey near Cape Horn small flocks at sea were seen as well.

Austral Storm Petrels *Oceanitidae*

Wilson's Storm Petrel

Oceanites oceanicus

(11) Beagle Channel 20.11, At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, West Point Island 22.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean)



25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

The most numerous storm-petrel of our journey with daily sightings. The subspecies *chilensis* was most likely observed at sea near Cape Horn (their breeding site). This race is sometimes considered a distinct species named Fuegian Storm Petrel.

exasperatus:

(8) At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Bransfield Strait 2.12, Bransfield Strait 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

Grey-backed Storm Petrel

Garrodia nereis

(2) 3 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11 and At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11.

Only a few of this scarce species were observed at sea east of the Falklands. The grey rump made identification straightforward but because of their cryptic colouration, these tiny birds were hard to spot at sea.

Black-bellied Storm Petrel

Fregetta tropica tropica

(8) 1 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

This distinct Storm Petrel was not uncommon in colder waters near South Georgia. Impressive numbers at sea were seen just after passing the southern tip of South Georgia. We were able to watch a few individuals at close range from the ship bows.

Albatrosses Diomedidae

Wandering Albatross (VU)

Diomedea exulans

(4) 2 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

The largest albatross and the bird with the longest wingspan on earth. Only a few of this iconic species were seen during our voyage. All were immatures (plumage stages 2-4). We saw several at sea east of the Falklands, a single wanderer near Elephant Island, and a few more on our way back through the Drake Passage.

Southern Royal Albatross (VU)

Diomedea epomophora

(7) 25 At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, 3 At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, 10 Drake Passage 6.12, Drake Passage 7.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

The most common *Diomedea* of the voyage but as impressive and huge as Wandering Albatross. Good numbers (c.25) were seen on our first day at sea towards the Falklands. Between the Falklands and



South Georgia, only a few birds were counted. On our way back in the Drake Passage we picked up good numbers again with up to c. 30 individuals. Most individuals observed were immatures (especially plumage stage 2) but we also saw some near adult types (stage 5).

Northern Royal Albatross (EN)

Diomedea sanfordi

(1) Drake Passage 7.12.

A single adult was picked out the more numerous Southern Royals in the drake passage. Photographs of the bird fully confirmed its identification.

Light-mantled Albatross (NT)

Phoebastria palpebrata

(8) 6 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Drake Passage 5.12 and Drake Passage 6.12.

This graceful and elegant albatross was fairly common in small numbers during our voyage, especially near South Georgia. Several pairs were seen in flight at their nesting sites in South Georgia. At Royal Bay, we watched a nesting pair from the zodiac and we could even hear their awesome courtship vocalisations.

Black-browed Albatross (NT)

Thalassarche melanophris

(14) Beagle Channel 20.11, At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, West Point Island 22.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

The most common albatross of the voyage and seen daily in great numbers, except for the days near the Antarctic Peninsula. A special visit to the colony of West Point Island with an estimated 8000 individuals was a major highlight of the tour. Here the albatrosses were literally flying overhead at touching distance.

Grey-headed Albatross (VU)

Thalassarche chrysostoma

(9) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, 2 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, 3 At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Much less numerous compared to Black-browed Albatross but we did pick out quite a few during our voyage. The species was more frequent at sea near South Georgia and was also more commonly seen on our way back through the drake passage.

Shearwaters and Petrels Procellariidae

Southern Giant Petrel

Macronectes giganteus



(15) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Beagle Channel 20.11, At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, West Point Island 22.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, 2 At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Bransfield Strait 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

This large and impressive petrel was commonly seen throughout the tour. Interestingly, on our first day near the mainland, we saw juveniles only (uniform brown plumage). The spectacular white morph (nicknamed "white nelly") were first seen at South Georgia and from there southward towards Antarctica. Several GP's were watched at close range scavenging on the beach at Gold Harbour.

Northern Giant Petrel

Macronectes halli

(10) 1 At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, 1 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

A singleton in moult was seen on our first day at sea. East of the Falklands and at South Georgia the species was much more common. A few were also seen in the drake passage. The diagnostic red bill tip was the easiest way to separate the species in the field from Southern Giant Petrel.

Southern Fulmar

Fulmarus glacialisoides

(10) 1 At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, 1 At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, 50 At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Bransfield Strait 2.12, Bransfield Strait 3.12, Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, Drake Passage 5.12 and Drake Passage 6.12.

The first fulmar was seen steaming towards the Falklands and another one was seen on the way to South Georgia. The species became much more frequent in the cold waters south of South Georgia with the largest numbers (c.50) near Elephant Island. Birds were frequently following the ship together with the Cape Petrels.

Antarctic Petrel E

Thalassoica antarctica

(3) At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Bransfield Strait 3.12 and Drake Passage 5.12.

A spectacular sought-after target seen multiple times at sea near the Antarctic Peninsula. Singletons followed the ship on two occasions giving us prolonged and superb close-up views.

Cape Petrel

Daption capense capense

(16) At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, 500 At sea near Elephant Island



1.12, Bransfield Strait 2.12, Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Deception Island 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12, Melchior Islands 5.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

This stunning petrel was seen almost daily and typically a few would follow the ship for prolonged periods. Spectacular large flocks of 300 birds or more were seen near Elephant Island. Nesting birds were watched at Deception Island.

Snow Petrel

Pagodroma nivea nivea

(9) At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, Drygalski Fjord, South Georgia 28.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Bransfield Strait 2.12, Bransfield Strait 3.12, Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12 and Drake Passage 5.12.

An iconic pure white petrel first seen in South Georgia with daily sightings southward to the Antarctic Peninsula. The species was especially common at Drygalski Fjord. At Brown Bluff, we watched a pair at nest with the telescope.

Blue Petrel

Halobaena caerulea

(7) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, Drake Passage 6.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

A handsome prion-like petrel easily identified by its distinct white tail tip. Singletons were picked up on our way to South Georgia. Large numbers suddenly appeared at sea south of South Georgia quickly outnumbering the prions. Many were also seen on our way back in the drake passage.

Antarctic Prion

Pachyptila desolata

(9) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12 and Drake Passage 6.12.

The most numerous prion of the trip with our first sightings at sea between the Falklands and South Georgia. Spectacular large flocks of this species were seen close to shore at the south-eastern tip of South Georgia.

Slender-billed Prion

Pachyptila belcheri

(3) At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, Cape Horn 7.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

Large numbers of this species were seen on our first day at sea while steaming to the Falklands. The species was also recorded east of the Falklands but in the colder waters past the Antarctic Convergence Slender-billed was soon replaced by the Antarctic Prion.

Fairy Prion

Pachyptila turtur turtur

(1) At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11.

A single bird was picked out among dozens of Blue Petrels south of South Georgia. Photographs of the bird fully confirmed its identification.



Kerguelen Petrel*Aphrodroma brevirostris*

(4) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11 and At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11.

This dark and distinct looking petrel was seen a number of times in deeper waters near South Georgia. Unfortunately, all the sightings were swift and for many, it was difficult to connect with this species.

White-headed Petrel*Pterodroma lessonii*

(2) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11 and At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11.

This rare and spectacular *Pterodroma* was seen twice during our voyage. The first one was seen and photographed east of the Falklands. Our second individual was seen east of Elephant Island. Both birds flew along with the ship for a few minutes only. To our surprise, the expected Soft-plumaged Petrel was absent at sea east of the Falklands this time of year.

White-chinned Petrel (VU)*Procellaria aequinoctialis*

(14) At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, West Point Island 22.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, At sea near South Georgia 26.11, At sea near South Georgia 27.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, observed Drake Passage 5-7.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

A large, all dark petrel, commonly seen during our voyage. Numbers decreased significantly closer to Antarctica with no sightings at the Antarctic Peninsula. Numbers picked up again as we were steaming back north in the drake passage.

Sooty Shearwater (NT)*Ardenna grisea*

(4) At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, West Point Island 22.11, At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 23.11, Cape Horn 7.12 and Drake Passage 7.12.

A commonly seen shearwater at sea during our first and last days of the voyage.

Great Shearwater*Ardenna gravis*

(2) 5 At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11 and West Point Island 22.11.

Small numbers of this distinct shearwater were observed west of the Falklands and near West Point Island.

Diving-Petrels *Pelecanoididae***Magellanic Diving Petrel***Pelecanoides magellani*

(1) Drake Passage 7.12.

Only a single individual of this species was seen by a lucky participant on our way north towards Cape Horn.



South Georgia Diving Petrel E*Pelecanoides georgicus*

(1) At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11.

Large numbers of presumably this species were seen just south of South Georgia. In the field separation with Common Diving Petrel is extremely difficult. Observed and photographed field characters include a paler, more contrasting facial pattern, white scapular markings (very obvious in some individuals), white tips to the secondaries, white underwing and more intense bluish legs compared to Common Diving Petrel. All these characters strongly point towards South Georgia Diving Petrel. Diagnostic identification features such as the shape of the lower mandible and the black stripe on the tarsus were impossible to discern at sea.

Common Diving Petrel*Pelecanoides urinatrix*

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11.

Our first were seen near shore close to West Point Island. A single bird stranded on the ship and was carefully studied making sure it was not South Georgia Diving Petrel (the shape of the lower mandible was checked). Large numbers of presumably this species were seen just south of South Georgia intermixed with South Georgia Diving Petrels.

exsul:

(1) At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 28.11.

Grebes Podicipedidae**Great Grebe***Podiceps major*

(1) 1 Stanley 23.11.

A single bird was seen in the harbour of Stanley by a single observer. This is a vagrant to the Falkland islands.

Hérons, Egrets, and Bitterns Ardeidae**Black-crowned Night Heron***Nycticorax nycticorax falklandicus*

(1) Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Nesting birds of the endemic subspecies *falklandicus* were seen at close range on the cliffs at Gypsy Cove.

Cormorants and Shags Phalacrocoracidae**Neotropic Cormorant***Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

(1) West Point Island 22.11.

Apparently a vagrant to the Falklands. A single bird was observed near shore at West Point Island.

Rock Shag*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*

(3) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Beagle Channel 20.11, West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A few were seen along the Beagle Channel but our closest encounters with this attractive shag was at Gypsy Cove where we watched nesting birds at close range.

Imperial Shag

Leucocarbo atriceps

(2) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Beagle Channel 20.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Large numbers were seen along the Beagle Channel, in the Falklands and near Cape Horn. Both races were seen in flocks near Cape Horn where the white-cheeked "Imperial" race *atriceps* was less numerous. The birds in the Falklands were all of the "King" race *albiventer*. Sympatry of "King" Shag and "Imperial" Shag in southern South America needs study to resolve status as species or colour morph; best to lump as do HBW, SACC and IOC.

albiventer:

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

South Georgia Shag E

Leucocarbo georgianus

(4) At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11 and Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11.

Our first birds were seen at Shag Rocks west of South Georgia. At Royal Bay, we got fantastic close-up views of these beauties during our zodiac excursion.

Antarctic Shag E

Leucocarbo bransfieldensis

(5) At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

We had daily sightings of this handsome shag during our days in the Antarctic Peninsula. A visit to a colony at Paulet Island was superb. Several chicks had hatched.

New World Vultures Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura jota

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Fields south of Stanley 23.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11 and Stanley 23.11.

Several birds of the race *falklandicus* were observed during our landings in the Falklands.

Hawks, Eagles, and Kites Accipitridae

Variable Hawk

Geranoaetus polyosoma polyosoma

(1) West Point Island 22.11.

A single immature of the race *polyosoma* was observed in the fields of West Point Island by a few observers.



Sheathbills *Chionidae*

Snowy Sheathbill

Chionis albus

(10) 1 At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11, 1 At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, Port Lockroy 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

An iconic all-white scavenger placed in its own unique family commonly found at these latitudes. Good numbers were seen during our landings at the penguin colonies with up to ten birds landing on a zodiac at Gold Harbour. At sea we also had the regular company of sheathbills landing on our ship and hitchhiking along.

Oystercatchers *Haematopodidae*

Magellanic Oystercatcher

Haematopus leucopus

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A few birds were observed during our landings in the Falklands.

Blackish Oystercatcher

Haematopus ater

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A couple of pairs were seen in the Falklands, including an incubating adult at West Point Island.

Plovers and Lapwings *Charadriidae*

Two-banded Plover

Charadrius falklandicus

(1) 5 Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A few pairs with recently hatched chicks were scoped on the fields at Gypsy Cove. A handsome plover!

Rufous-chested Plover

Charadrius modestus

(1) 4 Fields south of Stanley 23.11.

We were very pleased to observe a few adult birds on the plains just south of Stanley town. In the scope we got great looks at this superb wader!

Seedsnipes *Thinocoridae*

Least Seedsnipe

Thinocorus rumicivorus

(1) 1 At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11.

A single male was photographed at sea near the Falklands. An unexpected vagrant!



Sandpipers and Allies Scolopacidae**South American Snipe***Gallinago paraguariae magellanica*

(2) Carcass Island 22.11 and Fields south of Stanley 23.11.

We got cracking views of this species at both Carcass Island and in the plains south of Stanley. Sometimes named Magellanic Snipe.

White-rumped Sandpiper*Calidris fuscicollis*

(1) 3 Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A few winter-plumage birds were seen foraging at the water edge at Gypsy Cove.

Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers Laridae**Brown-hooded Gull***Chroicocephalus maculipennis*

(1) 2 Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A pair was observed standing on a rock at the tip of Gypsy Cove in the Falklands.

Dolphin Gull*Leucophaeus scoresbii*

(3) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A common bird in Ushuaia but several of these awesome gulls were also seen in the Falklands.

Kelp Gull*Larus dominicanus*

(6) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Beagle Channel 20.11, West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

The largest and most commonly seen gull of the voyage. Both adults and immatures were observed, often present in small numbers at the penguin rookeries. Birds in the Antarctic Peninsula were of the *austrinus* subspecies.

austrinus:

(5) At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12, Deception Island 3.12, Port Lockroy 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

South American Tern*Sterna hirundinacea*

(5) Ushuaia harbour 20.11, Beagle Channel 20.11, At sea southwest of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Seen in good numbers, often in small flocks, in Ushuaia, the Beagle Channel, in the Falklands, and again close to Cape Horn on our way back.

Antarctic Tern*Sterna vittata*

(3) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

Birds of the subspecies *georgiae* were seen at South Georgia. We watched a recently fledged chick at Grytviken that was being fed by one of its parents. In the Antarctic Peninsula, we saw birds of the subspecies *gaini*.

gaini:

(4) Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12, Deception Island 3.12, Port Lockroy 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

Skuas and Jaegers *Stercorariidae*

Chilean Skua

Stercorarius chilensis

(3) Beagle Channel 20.11, Deception Island 3.12 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Many were seen along the Beagle Channel and also on our way back near Cape Horn. A vagrant individual was seen and photographed at Deception Island in a small party of Brown and South Polar Skuas.

South Polar Skua

Stercorarius maccormicki

(3) Deception Island 3.12, Port Lockroy 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

Only a few individuals of this species were observed at the southern end of our voyage. Three birds of the intermediate paler morph (including a banded individual) and a dark morph were seen in a small party of skuas at Deception Island. We also saw a pair of dark morphs on the buildings at Port Locroy. Another dark morph was seen and photographed during our zodiac cruise in the Melchior Islands.

Brown Skua

Stercorarius antarcticus

(3) Carcass Island 22.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11 and At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11.

lonnbergi:

(6) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11, Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12, Brown Bluff 2.12, Paulet Island 2.12, Half Moon Island 3.12 and Deception Island 3.12.

The most frequently seen skua of our voyage. Typically present in small numbers at the penguin rookeries. Birds seen in the Falklands involved subspecies *antarcticus* "Falkland Skua". Subspecies *lonnbergi*, "Subantarctic Skua" was commonly seen in South Georgia and in the Antarctic Peninsula.

Falcons and Caracaras *Falconidae*

Striated Caracara (NT) NE

Phalcoboenus australis

(1) West Point Island 22.11.

This Falkland near-endemic was seen very well at West Point Island. A tame juvenile was seen at close range on the way to the Black-browed Albatross colony. Adults were also seen in small numbers.



Southern Crested Caracara*Caracara plancus*

(1) West Point Island 22.11.

A single immature bird was seen on our way to the Black-browed Albatross colony. A scarce species in the Falklands but common on the South American mainland.

Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers *Furnariidae***Blackish Cinclodes***Cinclodes antarcticus antarcticus*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Birds of the endemic subspecies *antarcticus* were watched at ridiculously close range at Carcass and West Point Island. We also saw a few at Gypsy Cove.

Tyrant Flycatchers *Tyrannidae***Dark-faced Ground Tyrant***Muscisaxicola maclovianus maclovianus*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Fields south of Stanley 23.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Birds of the endemic subspecies *maclovianus* were seen at all our landing sites in the Falklands.

Wrens *Troglodytidae***Grass Wren***Cistothorus platensis falklandicus*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

The endemic race *falklandicus* was seen during three of our landings in the Falklands. Birds were easy to hear but were a little more difficult to see in the tall grasses.

Cobb's Wren (VU) E*Troglodytes cobbi*

(1) Carcass Island 22.11.

This Falkland endemic was seen exceptionally well foraging in the flotsam along the beach of Carcass Island. We also watched a juvenile that was being fed by its parent.

Thrushes and Allies *Turdidae***Austral Thrush***Turdus falcklandii falcklandii*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

The endemic race *falcklandii* of this handsome thrush was seen during most of our landings in the Falklands. A few distinctly spotted juveniles were observed as well. A single leucistic adult was also seen.



Old World Sparrows *Passeridae***House Sparrow***Passer domesticus*

(1) Stanley 23.11.

This introduced species was only seen in the town of Stanley, where it seemed to be common.

Wagtails and Pipits *Motacillidae***Correndera Pipit***Anthus correndera grayi*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Fields south of Stanley 23.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Birds of the endemic race *grayi* were observed at all our landing sites. They weren't always easy to see but in the fields above Stanley, most of us got good looks.

South Georgia Pipit (NT) E*Anthus antarcticus*

(2) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

This South Georgia endemic is also the southernmost breeding passerine on earth. We saw good numbers of this sought-after target at four sites (the species used to be restricted to a few small predator-free sites only). Team RAT did a fantastic job in eradicating Brown Rats on the island and we were able to witness the amazing success of this project ourselves. Pipits in display flight were watched at Salisbury Plain and from the zodiac in Royal Bay.

Finches, Euphonias *Fringillidae***Black-chinned Siskin***Spinus barbatus*

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Stanley 23.11.

Small numbers of this species were seen at West Point Island and in the town of Stanley.

Troupials and Allies *Icteridae***Long-tailed Meadowlark***Sturnella loyca falklandica*

(2) West Point Island 22.11, Carcass Island 22.11, Fields south of Stanley 23.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

A very attractive species that we saw well during all our landings in the Falklands. The subspecies *falklandica* is confined to the Falklands.

Tanagers and Allies *Thraupidae***White-bridled Finch***Melanodera melanodera melanodera*

(2) Carcass Island 22.11 and Fields south of Stanley 23.11.



A stunning finch (especially the male) was seen beautifully at Carcass Island. We also saw a few of them while looking for the dotterels above Stanley. This nominate subspecies is confined to the Falklands.

Mammals (19 in total: 19 seen)

Status codes: E = Endemic, NE = Near-endemic, I = Introduced

IUCN codes: CR = Critically endangered, EN = Endangered, VU = Vulnerable, EW = Extinct in the Wild, NT = Near Threatened, DD = Data Deficient

Rabbits, Hares *Leporidae*

European Rabbit

Oryctolagus cuniculus

(1) Gypsy Cove 23.11.

One was seen from the bus at Gypsy Cove.

Sea Lions *Otariidae*

South American Fur Seal

Arctocephalus australis

(1) Cape Horn 7.12.

A single was identified at sea near Cape Horn.

Antarctic Fur Seal

Arctocephalus gazella

(5) At sea east of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 24.11, At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11, Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

Abundant in South Georgia. Large powerful males defending their territories on the beach often made our zodiac landings quite challenging! Luckily, they would typically give a warning call if we came to close to them.

South American Sea Lion

Otaria flavescens

(3) Beagle Channel 20.11, Gypsy Cove 23.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

Small numbers of this species were seen at three sites during our voyage.



Seals Phocidae**Leopard Seal***Hydrurga leptonyx*

(3) Royal Bay, South Georgia 28.11, Antarctic Sound 2.12 and Wilhelmina Bay 4.12.

A few individuals of this large penguin-eating seal were seen during our voyage. Our best view of this species was at Wilhelmina Bay where we watched an impressive individual resting on an ice floe at close range.

Weddell Seal*Leptonychotes weddellii*

(2) Antarctic Sound 2.12, Brown Bluff 2.12 and Half Moon Island 3.12.

Small numbers were seen in the Antarctic Peninsula. At Brown Bluff and Halfmoon Island, we watched resting seals on land at close range.

Crabeater Seal*Lobodon carcinophaga*

(3) Antarctic Sound 2.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12 and Melchior Islands 5.12.

We saw several of this species on the ice, sometimes in small groups, in the Antarctic Peninsula.

Southern Elephant Seal*Mirounga leonina*

(3) Fortuna Bay, South Georgia 26.11, Salisbury Plain, South Georgia 26.11, Stromness harbour, South Georgia 27.11, Grytviken, South Georgia 27.11 and Gold Harbour, South Georgia 28.11.

This massive creature was seen daily in South Georgia. What an incredible beast! We watched several fighting males at Grytviken and Gold Harbour. We also enjoyed the sweet and curious young on the beach. What a cool sound they make!

Porpoises Phocoenidae**Burmeister's Porpoise***Phocoena spinipinnis*

(1) Beagle Channel 20.11.

Two of this rare porpoises were swiftly seen ahead of the bow by a few lucky participants.

Beaked Whales Ziphiidae**Southern Bottlenose Whale***Hyperoodon planifrons*

(1) At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11.

Some lucky participants saw a single whale in the Scotia Sea.

Oceanic Dolphins Delphinidae**Commerson's Dolphin***Cephalorhynchus commersonii*

(2) West Point Island 22.11 and Gypsy Cove 23.11.

Seen at least on two occasions in the Falklands.

Long-finned Pilot Whale*Globicephala melas*

(1) Drake Passage 7.12.

A few were identified at sea when crossing the drake passage.

Peale's Dolphin

Lagenorhynchus australis

(2) Gypsy Cove 23.11 and Cape Horn 7.12.

A few of these lovely dolphins were seen well, especially when "riding the bows" near Cape Horn.

Hourglass Dolphin

Lagenorhynchus cruciger

(1) At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11.

This distinct dolphin was seen in the Scotia Sea south of South Georgia.

Killer Whale

Orcinus orca

(1) Drake Passage 6.12.

A group of at least three Killer Whales (type B) were seen hunting at sea in the drake passage. A large flock of albatrosses was attracted by their feeding actions. A spectacular sight!

Rorquals Balaenopteridae

Antarctic Minke Whale

Balaenoptera bonaerensis

(1) Antarctic Sound 2.12.

A few of these smaller whales were seen nicely in the Antarctic Sound.

Sei Whale

Balaenoptera borealis

(2) At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11 and At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11.

This large whale was identified twice during our voyage.

Fin Whale

Balaenoptera physalus

(5) At sea south-west of Falkland Islands (South Atlantic Ocean) 21.11, At sea south of South Georgia (Scotia Sea) 29.11, At sea east of Elephant Island (Scotia Sea) 30.11, At sea near Elephant Island 1.12 and Bransfield Strait 3.12.

We had multiple views of this second largest animal in the world.

Humpback Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

(5) At sea west of South Georgia (South Atlantic Ocean) 25.11, Bransfield Strait 3.12, Wilhelmina Bay 4.12, Melchior Islands 5.12 and Drake Passage 6.12.

The most commonly observed whale during our voyage. We had close range views of foraging Humpbacks from the zodiac in Wilhelmina Bay.



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