



GALAPAGOS OF THE SOUTHERN OCEAN

NEW ZEALAND'S SUBANTARCTIC
AND CHATHAM ISLANDS

EXPEDITION DOSSIER
11– 27 FEBRUARY 2021



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



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Opportunities to visit all five of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands plus the Chatham Islands are rare and can only be experienced by a privileged few. This outstanding voyage is your opportunity to discover amazing endemic wildlife, meet the locals and experience conservation in action as we journey through these incredibly-diverse archipelagos rich in wildlife, human history and filled with inspirational stories of conservation.

Long recognised for their rich biodiversity, the Subantarctic Islands lying to the south and east of New Zealand are UNESCO World Heritage sites. This places them in a select group of only 180 natural sites that have been designated as 'the most important and significant

natural habitats' on the planet. They are also afforded the highest conservation status and protection by the New Zealand Government and access to these islands is by permit only.

The Chatham archipelago (made up of at least 12 islands, plus numerous islets) lies 870 kilometres east of New Zealand and runs 45 minutes ahead of the rest of the country. The first part of New Zealand and the first inhabited landmass around the globe to be greeted by the morning sun, the history of these islands and their rich natural history is unique. It is only in recent years that these precious islands have begun to be understood and appreciated.

It is only by visiting and experiencing these remarkable islands that one can truly appreciate what they have to offer. During our explorations of these wild and remote islands we will hear remarkable stories of rediscovery, population recovery and world leading conservation efforts including the Black Robin and its rescue from the brink of extinction and the once thought to be extinct Chatham Island Taiko (Magenta Petrel).

The name we have given to this voyage 'Galapagos of the Southern Ocean' reflects the astounding natural biodiversity and the importance of these islands as a wildlife refuge.

This impressive expedition includes all five New Zealand Subantarctic Islands, The Snares, Auckland, Campbell, Antipodes and Bounty along with the Chatham Islands. Each one is different and unique – just like this expedition.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Invercargill

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

Day 2: Port of Bluff

Today we enjoy breakfast in the hotel restaurant and take the opportunity to explore some of the local Southland scenery and attractions before heading to the Port of Bluff to embark the *Spirit of Enderby*. You will have time to settle into your cabin and familiarise yourself with the ship; we will also take the opportunity to conduct a number of safety briefings. You are invited to join the expedition team and captain on the bridge as we set our course to The Snares and our adventure begins.

Day 3: The Snares – North East Island

The closest Subantarctic Islands to New Zealand, they were appropriately called The Snares as they were once considered a hazard for sailing ships. Comprising of two main islands and a group of five islands called the Western Chain; they are uninhabited and enjoy the highest protection as Nature Reserves. It is claimed by some that these islands are home to more nesting seabirds than all of the British Isles together.

We plan to arrive early in the morning and as landings are not permitted we will Zodiac cruise along the sheltered eastern side of the main island if the weather and sea conditions are suitable.



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In the sheltered bays, we should see the endemic Snares Crested Penguin, Snares Island Tomtit and Fernbirds. Cape Pigeons, Antarctic Terns, White-fronted Terns and Red-billed Gulls are also present in good numbers. There are hundreds of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters nesting on The Snares; the actual number is much debated. The Buller's Albatross also breeds here from early January onwards.

Days 4 to 6: Auckland Islands – Enderby Island/Carnley Harbour

The Auckland Islands group was formed by two volcanoes which erupted some 10-25 million years ago. They have subsequently been eroded and dissected by glaciation creating the archipelago as we know it today.

Enderby Island is one of the most beautiful islands in this group and is named for the same distinguished shipping family as our own vessel. This northern most island in the archipelago is an outstanding wildlife and birding location and is relatively easy to land on and walk around. The island was cleared of all introduced animals (pests) in 1994 and both birds and the vegetation, especially the herbaceous plants, are recovering both in numbers and diversity.

Our plan is to land at Sandy Bay, one of three breeding areas in the Auckland Islands for the Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion, a rare member of the seal family. Beachmaster bulls gather on the beach defending their harems from younger (ambitious) males, to mate with the cows shortly after they have given birth of a single pup. Hookers or New Zealand Sea Lion numbers are in a slow decline, for reasons which are not obvious but most probably connected with a nearby squid fishery.

During our day ashore there will be several options, some longer walks, some shorter walks and time to spend just sitting and enjoying the wildlife. The walking is relatively easy, a boardwalk traverses the island to the dramatic western cliffs, from there we follow the coast circumnavigating the island.

In the south of the archipelago there is a very large sheltered



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harbour it is rich in human history including shipwrecks, treasure hunters, Coastwatchers and of course scientific parties. We plan to arrive early morning from our anchorage at Enderby Island. We enter the harbour through the eastern entrance which is guarded on both sides by dramatic cliffs and rugged tussock covered hills.

Our activities here today are totally weather dependent. We have a number of options. If the weather is OK there will be an opportunity for the more energetic expeditioners to climb to the South West Cape and visit the Shy Mollymawk colony. Above the colony we occasionally see Gibson's Wandering Albatross breeding. This climb provides magnificent views in all directions, especially over the western entrance to Carnley Harbour, Adams Island and Western Harbour. For those not able to make the climb (it is reasonably difficult) there will be an opportunity to Zodiac cruise along the coast of Adams Island and Western Harbour, with landings in the latter.

Other options include the Tagua Bay Coastwatcher's hut and lookout (the former is derelict) which was occupied during the Second World War. We could visit Epigatty and the remains

of the 'Grafton' which was wrecked here in 1864. All five men aboard survived and lived here for 18 months before sailing their modified dinghy to New Zealand to get help. Two of the survivors wrote books about their ordeal and their first hand accounts tell us a lot about their time here.

Alternatively, we may visit the Erlagan clearing where a German Merchant ship cut firewood to fire its boilers after slipping its moorings in Dunedin on the eve of the Second World War. Another potential site is Camp Cove where we can see the remains of the castaway depots established and maintained by the New Zealand Government between the 1860s and early 1900s.

Day 7: Campbell Island

– Perseverance Harbour

New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory Campbell Island's history is as rich and varied as the other islands we have visited. Discovered in 1810, it too was soon occupied by sealers who introduced rats and cats.

In 1895 the New Zealand Government advertised the island as a pastoral lease. The lease was taken up by an entrepreneurial New Zealand sheep farmer who stocked the island with sheep and cattle. The farming practices, which included burning the scrub, modified the island considerably. The farming lasted until 1934 when it was abandoned. Coastwatchers were stationed on the island during the war, at the end of the war the station was taken over by the New Zealand Metrological service and they maintained a manned weather/research station on the island until 1995.

In the early 1970s a fence was erected down the middle of the island, with stock removed from the northern half. The impacts of the remaining animals were



monitored and they were all eventually removed in 1990. The vegetation recovered quickly and the cats died out naturally.

In a very ambitious (and never before attempted on such a large scale) eradication programme the New Zealand Department of Conservation successfully removed the rats. With the island declared predator free, the way was clear to reintroduce the endangered Campbell Island Flightless Teal which had been rediscovered on an offshore island in 1975. Snipe, which were formerly unknown from the island but were discovered on another offshore island, recolonised the islands themselves. The vegetation which the great English botanist, Sir Joseph Hooker described in 1841 as having a "Floral display second to none outside the tropics" is flourishing and is nothing short of spectacular.

We will offer a number of options which will enable you to explore the island and allow you the opportunity and time to enjoy the Southern Royal Albatross which nest here in large numbers. We also visit areas of the island which contain outstanding examples of the megaherbs for which the island is renown.

Day 8: At Sea

At sea en route to the Antipodes, it is a day for pelagic birding. Species commonly seen in this area include Wandering Albatross species, Southern Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, the Sooty Shearwater and the Little Shearwater. This region of the Southern Ocean is one of the



few places where the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion occur together, providing a good opportunity for comparison. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Black-bellied Storm-Petrel and the Common Diving-Petrel.

Day 9: Antipodes Islands

The Antipodes Islands are the most isolated and perhaps least known of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. Sealers lived here in the decades immediately after the islands' discovery in 1806 and two historic, and one recent, shipwreck have been recorded here.

The islands are of volcanic origin, but are heavily eroded, especially the western shoreline which is ragged and dotted with sea caves, stacks and coves. The islands are frequently buffeted by westerly winds, while overcast conditions and drizzle are not unusual. The largest of the group is Antipodes Island, which rises to 366 metres with the volcanic cone of Mt Galloway, most of the island has an undulating plateau cut by deep alluvial gullies.

Main island and namesake Antipodes Island have benefited from one of the world's most successful island eradication programmes dubbed the 'Million Dollar Mouse'. A joint initiative between the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Morgan Foundation, WWF New Zealand, Island Conservation and public support, the programme successfully eradicated some 200,000 mice from the island in less than two years with DOC announcing the island 'mouse free' in 2018. The island's unique plants and wildlife, including 21 species of breeding seabirds, more than 150 species of insects – 17 per cent endemic to the Antipodes; 21 uncommon plant species and four unique land birds now thrive following the removal of the mice.

Landings are not permitted on the Antipodes group, so if the weather and sea conditions are suitable, we plan to cruise along the coastline of Antipodes Island by Zodiac. The bull kelp *Durvillaea antarctica* 'Antipodes Island' is prevalent here, this dark-brown subtidal plant with thick flattened blades can grow up to 10 metres long. As we Zodiac cruise the coastline we have a good chance of seeing the Antipodes Parakeet, the largest of



New Zealand's parakeets, which has an entirely green head. We will also be looking for the Reischek's Parakeet, a strong subspecies of the Red-crowned Parakeet found in the Auckland Islands and on the Chatham Islands, as well as the Antipodes subspecies of the New Zealand Pipit. We can also expect good views of both Erect-crested and Rockhopper Penguins along the coast where they often breed in mixed colonies. Antarctic Terns and Kelp Gulls are also often seen in good numbers.

Day 10: Bounty Islands

The incongruously named Bounty Islands, the northernmost of the five New Zealand Subantarctic groups, were discovered by Captain William Bligh when the British naval ship *HMS Bounty* sailed by the islands in 1788, just months before the infamous mutiny. Here inhospitable granite knobs, tips of the submerged Bounty Platform, are lashed by the Southern Ocean. They are home to thousands of Salvin's Albatross, Erect-crested Penguins, Fulmar Prions and the endemic Bounty Island Shag – the world's rarest. We plan to arrive in the early morning and Zodiac cruise the granite outposts to take a closer look at the birds breeding here and the large numbers of New Zealand Fur Seals which were almost hunted to extinction.

Day 11: Pyramid Rock

There are excellent opportunities for pelagic birding as we approach the Chatham Islands' archipelago. In particular, we will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel, and in the past we have observed the very rare Chatham Island Taiko in this area too. Endemic to the Chatham Islands, the Chatham Island Taiko – also known as the Magenta Petrel – is among New Zealand's most endangered species. It is one of the world's rarest seabirds with a population estimated at less than 150.

This afternoon we plan to cruise around the spectacular basalt outcrop of Pyramid Rock, south of Pitt Island – the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. Landings are not possible (nor practical – a fact you will appreciate when you see it) but great views of birds can

be had from the ship and there will also be hundreds of birds following behind.

Days 12 to 14: Chatham Islands

We have three days to explore here and have worked closely with the Chatham Island people to create a varied programme ensuring a greater appreciation and exploration of these islands, however the daily itinerary will be determined by weather and sea conditions.

Consisting of one large island and numerous smaller islands and rocky islets, only two islands of the Chatham Islands' archipelago are inhabited. They represent New Zealand's eastern most territory and were originally settled by East Polynesians (either directly or via New Zealand as the evidence supports some contact there) in the 1400s. Their geographic isolation saw them develop their own distinct culture. In the 1770s Europeans discovered the islands with sealers and settlers following. In the 1830s New Zealand Maori invaded the islands, killing and enslaving many of the indigenous Moriori people. The impact of the original settlers, the European and later the Maori on the native flora and fauna was disastrous. Introduced animals, hunting, fires and land clearing wiped out many species of endemic birds.





Fortunately a number survived on the offshore islands in the archipelago.

With a new generation of Chatham Island people there has come a new awareness and a willingness to be part of a concerted conservation effort. A number of private reserves have been established on the main Chatham Island; a lot of replanting has taken place and predator control initiatives have been instigated. We hope to experience some these firsthand during our time on the main island.

We expect to visit the Awatotara Valley, one of the original private reserves where there is a very good chance to see the endemic

Chatham Island Pigeon, Chatham Island Warbler and Tui. The pigeon was close to extinction, though now supports a healthy population. Travelling by local bus, the road takes us through developed farmland where we will undoubtedly see numerous introduced species and the Weka. There will also be an opportunity to continue further south to the Tuku River and Taiko Town where you will be able to learn about the discovery and conservation work done on the Chatham Island Taiko, one of the world's most endangered seabirds.

During our time here we also hope to Zodiac cruise South East Island, arguably one of the world's greatest nature reserves. While

landings are not permitted, we can expect good views of the world's rarest wader the endemic New Zealand Shore Plover, and Chatham Island Oystercatcher. We should also see the Pitt Island Shag which nests on the island.

At Pitt Island, spectacular scenery waits at this jewel in the Chatham Islands' crown. The easternmost inhabited island in New Zealand, it is situated approximately 22 kilometres south-east of the main Chatham Island. Named 'Rangihauté' by the Moriori, it is separated from the main island by Pitt Strait and is officially the first inhabited place on Earth to be greeted by the sun each day.

Situated to the west of Pitt Island, Mangere Island is one of only two sites in the world where the Black Robin (once the world's rarest bird) are found. We will hear the story of how this endemic species was rescued from the brink of extinction in the 1970s when the total population consisted of just six birds. The recovery of this little bird is a remarkable tale of persistence, passion, courage and a little luck. Also on Mangere and Little Mangere Islands is the Forbes' Parakeet (aka the Chatham Parakeet). This rare parakeet is endemic to the Chatham Islands, where it is confined to these tiny islands.





Days 15 to 16: At Sea

En route to Invercargill we can expect some great pelagic birding. We expect to encounter include several species of albatross, petrel, shearwater and prion as we sail back.

It's also a good time to take the opportunity to relax and reflect on the expedition, and download and edit any remaining photos while they are fresh in your mind and you have the experience of our expedition team on board for questions.

We will recap the highlights of our expedition and enjoy a farewell dinner on the second evening as we sail to our final port.

Day 17: Invercargill

Early this morning we will arrive in the Port of Bluff. After a final breakfast we bid farewell to our fellow voyagers and take a complimentary coach transfer to either a central city point or to the airport.

In case of unexpected delays due to weather and/or port operations we ask you not to book any onward travel until after midday today.

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

DATES

Voyage #SOE2186
11 – 27 February 2021

PRICES

Heritage Suite \$17,430 pp*
Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

Mini Suite \$16,360 pp*
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

Superior Plus \$15,890 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Superior \$ 14,675 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Main Deck \$ 13,900 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

Main Deck Triple \$ 13,075 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

* The price listed includes the additional landing fee of \$1,200 pp. (All prices are per person in NZ\$)

PRICE INCLUDES

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

PRICE EXCLUDES

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