

AUCKLAND ISLANDS AND THE SNARES

SUBANTARCTIC WONDERLAND

EXPEDITION DOSSIER

6 – 12 FEBRUARY 2021



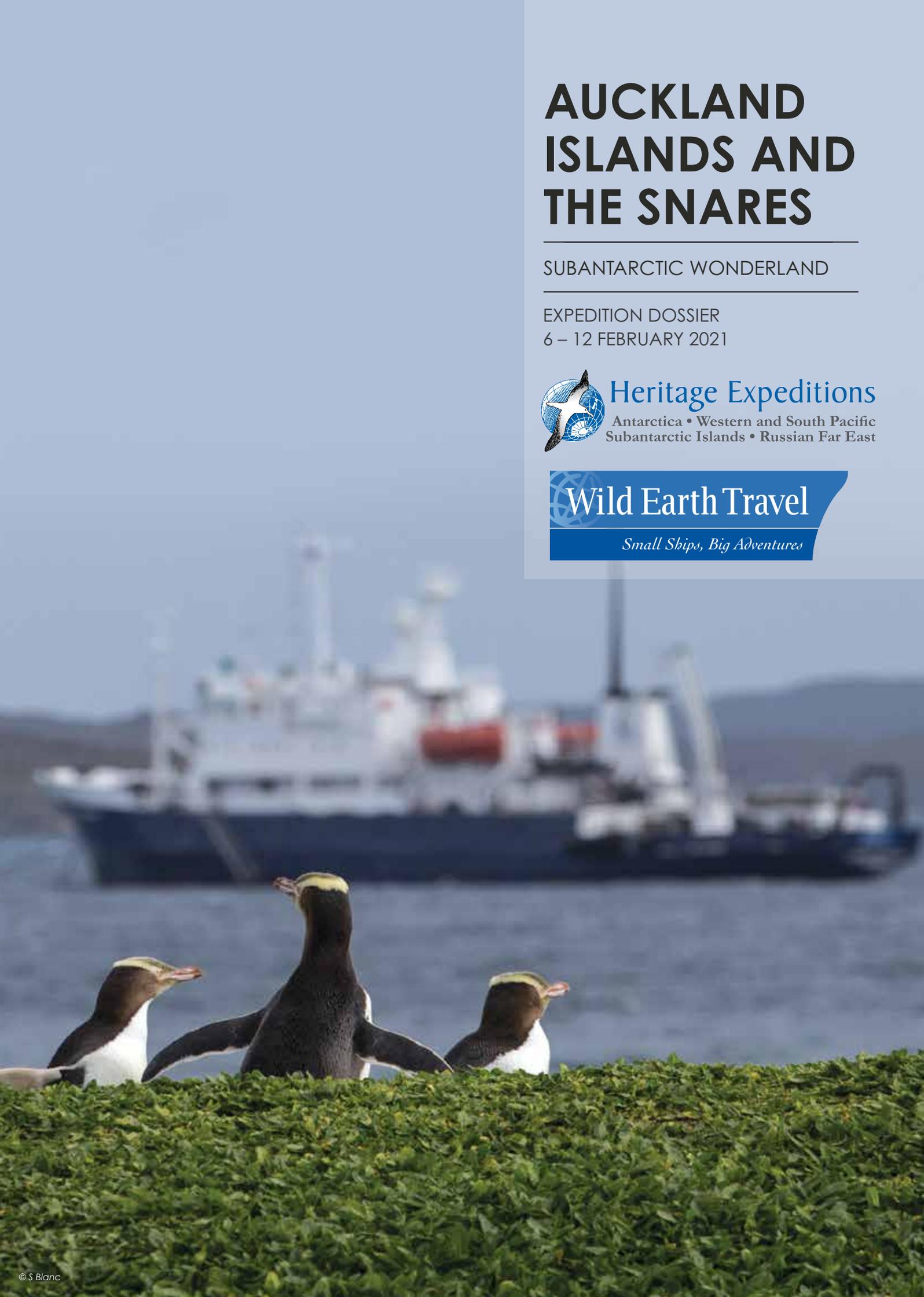
Heritage Expeditions

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



Wild Earth Travel

Small Ships, Big Adventures





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Join Heritage Expeditions, the Christchurch-based pioneers in authentic small ship expedition cruising, as we explore the spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Sites of New Zealand's wild and remote Subantarctic Snares and Auckland Islands on this 7-day wilderness safari.

Discover the extraordinary Auckland Islands, a land where very few have been before and endangered wildlife flourishes among oversized alien blooms all wrapped in a rich human history, and Zodiac cruise the rocky, inhospitable coast of The Snares – one of the world's most important nature reserves – on this unforgettable adventure.

Despite their low profile, these furthest reaches of New Zealand are among the most remarkable wildlife reserves in the Southern Ocean, designated UNESCO World Heritage sites and afforded the highest protection.

Departing the Port of Bluff, Invercargill, the first of these islands we visit are The Snares. No landings are permitted because the islands are honey-combed with seabird burrows. Rarely visited and one of New Zealand's best kept secrets, The Snares are internationally renowned as a wildlife haven where we should see the Snares Crested Penguin, Snares Island Tomtit and Fernbird, New Zealand Fur Seals and tree daisy forest as we Zodiac cruise its jagged coastline.

We will have three days to explore the Auckland Islands, the largest of New Zealand's Subantarctic Island groups where albatross wheel in the sky above, tiny endemic birds peer out among fields of flowering megaherbs and Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lion politics play out on white sand beaches.

A full day is planned on Enderby Island, arguably the most amazing Subantarctic Island, where you can hike through windswept Rata forests and along exposed coastal cliffs. Abundant wildlife is never far, and its lack of fear makes for excellent photography and observation opportunities.

In Carnley Harbour, in the south of the Auckland Islands, there are a number of fascinating sites including a Shy Albatross colony, abandoned Coastwatcher's huts, a shipwreck and castaway depots that we can visit as we explore New Zealand's Subantarctic wonderland.

Join us on an epic adventure to some of the planet's most extraordinary destinations close to home, yet world's away as we redefine natural history travel.



© S Gutowsky

coastline of these ancient granite islands on an unforgettable wildlife safari. Appropriately called The Snares as they were once considered a hazard for sailing ships, these rugged outposts comprise of two main islands and a group of five smaller islands called the Western Chain.

You'll soon discover why these pristine nature reserves have been afforded both UNESCO World Heritage status and the highest level of government protection as we explore sea caves and observe wildlife in spectacular numbers. Highlights include Snares Crested Penguins navigating the treacherous 'Penguin Slide', New Zealand Fur Seals lazing on jagged rocks, inquisitive Hooker's/New Zealand Sea Lions which may approach our Zodiacs and looking for endemic Snares Fernbirds and Tomtits among the large tree daisy forests.

Sooty Shearwaters are often seen in incredible numbers rafting on the water and Buller's Albatross have also been observed nesting and soaring over these priceless

ITINERARY

Day 1: Invercargill

Make your way to the Ascot Park Hotel, from where we will transfer you to the Port of Bluff. (Reporting times and the departure time of the transfer will be confirmed with your voyage documents). The township of Bluff is situated on the north-eastern side of Bluff Hill, an extinct volcanic cone which forms a knoll at the southern end of the Bluff Peninsula which extends into Foveaux Strait.

The captain and expedition team will be waiting for your arrival at the ship to greet you and show you to your cabin. You will have the opportunity to familiarise yourself on board and there will be formal introductions to the team followed by safety briefings.

Join the captain on the bridge or fellow travellers on deck as we set sail for The Snares Islands. We will sail past Ruapuke Island, formerly a local Maori stronghold supporting a population of over 200 people. We will also be able to see Stewart Island. Despite appearing quite small on most

maps it is really quite large and has a 700 kilometre coastline. Seabirds that we may encounter at this early point in the voyage includes several species of albatross, petrels, cormorants, gulls and Little Blue Penguins.

Day 2: The Snares – North East Island

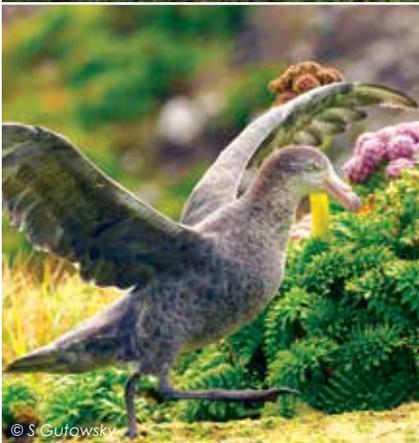
The closest Subantarctic Islands to New Zealand, today we plan to Zodiac cruise the craggy



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ecosystems which have been claimed to be home to more nesting seabirds than all of the British Isles combined!

Days 3 – 5: Auckland Islands

We have the next three days to explore the remarkable Auckland Islands, an archipelago formed by two volcanoes which erupted some 10-25 million years ago. Enderby Island, one of the most beautiful and wildlife rich islands in this group, is named after the same distinguished shipping family as one of our own vessels *Spirit of Enderby*.

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 undergoing a remarkable recovery both in numbers and diversity.

Our plan is to land at Sandy Bay, one of three breeding areas in the Auckland Islands for the Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion, a rare member of the seal

family. Beachmaster bulls gather on the beach defending their harems from younger (ambitious) males, to mate with the cows shortly after they have given birth to a single pup. 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 here there will be several options, some longer walks, some shorter walks and time to spend just sitting and enjoying the wildlife. The walking is relatively easy. A boardwalk traverses the island to the dramatic western cliffs, from there we follow the coast and circumnavigate the island.

Birds that we are likely to encounter include the following species: Southern Royal Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Auckland Island Shag, Auckland Island Flightless Teal, Auckland Island Banded Dotterel, Auckland Island Tomtit, Bellbird, Pipit, Red-crowned Parakeet, Yellow-eyed Penguin/Hoiho and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. There is also a very good chance of seeing the Subantarctic Snipe. Other more common species we will



© A Fergus



see include the Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, European Starling, Red-billed Gull and Redpoll. On Derry Castle Reef we will look for migratory waders which could include the Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone and possibly vagrants.

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

Our activities here are totally weather dependent. We have a number of options. If the weather is OK there will be an opportunity for the more energetic expeditioners to climb to the South West Cape and visit the Shy Mollymawk colony. Above the colony we occasionally see Gibson's Wandering Albatross

nesting. This climb provides magnificent views in all directions, especially out over the western entrance to Carnley Harbour, Adams Island and down the Western Harbour.

For those not able to make the climb (it is reasonably difficult) there will be an opportunity to Zodiac cruise along the coast of Adams Island and Western Harbour, with landings at the latter. Other options include

the Tagua Bay Coastwatcher's hut and lookout (the former is derelict) which was occupied during the Second World War. We could visit Epigwatt and the remains of the *Grafton* which was wrecked here in 1864. All five men aboard survived and lived here for 18 months before sailing their modified dinghy to New Zealand to get help. Two of the survivors wrote books about their ordeal. Their firsthand 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 6: At Sea

Today we are at sea en route to the Port of Bluff. We will take the opportunity to recap the many experiences we have had on this expedition. This is also a good opportunity to download





© L Thorpe

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. There will also be some good pelagic birding opportunities.

Tonight we enjoy a farewell and celebratory dinner with new found friends with time to reflect on a wealth of new experiences.

Day 7: Invercargill

We arrive at the Port of Bluff early in the morning. After breakfast, and a final farewell from your expedition team you disembark and board our complimentary coach transfer to either a central city point or to the airport. Our adventure ends but memories will last long beyond this.



© K Ovsyanikova

In case of any unexpected delays due to weather and/or port operations, we ask you not to book any onward travel from Invercargill 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.

DATES

Voyage #SOE2184
6 – 12 February 2021

PRICES

Heritage Suite NZ\$8,850 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 NZ\$7,895 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 NZ\$7,395 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Superior NZ\$6,895 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 NZ\$5,895 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 NZ\$4,895 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 \$400 pp. (All prices are per person in NZ\$)

PRICE INCLUDES

Landing fees, pre/post cruise transfers, all on board ship accommodation with meals and all expedition shore excursions.

PRICE EXCLUDES

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



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