



**BIRDING CRUISE ANTARCTICA: TIERRA DEL FUEGO, THE
FALKLANDS, SOUTH GEORGIA, AND THE ANTARCTIC
PENINSULA**

23 NOVEMBER–11 DECEMBER 2023



*The angelic **Snow Petrel** should be seen as we head closer to the Antarctic Peninsula.*

This magnificent cruise starts in the world’s southernmost city, Ushuaia. This Argentinean city is bounded by the famous Beagle Channel on one side and by the mountains of Tierra del Fuego (“Land of the Fire”) on the other. We already start looking for “mainland” birds here before we set sail to the Falkland Islands, famed for the massive colonies of **King Penguins** (plus four other penguin species), **Black-browed Albatross**, and a fabulous suite of other charismatic birds as well as marine mammals. We then head to South Georgia, where we hope to find some endemic birds along with all the penguins, petrels and other seabirds, including one of the world’s most iconic birds, the massive **Wandering Albatross**. The next island archipelago we will visit is the South Orkney Islands which will provide sightings of large numbers of seabirds against a dramatic backdrop of spectacular scenery. We’ll eventually head to the Antarctic Peninsula itself, where we hope to see **Snow Petrel** and to add new penguin species to our list, among many other things. We’ll try (ice-permitting) to sail into the Weddell Sea. On our way back to Ushuaia, we’ll keep scanning the ocean for species we may have missed before – perhaps a **Sooty** or **Light-mantled Albatross**! The tour ends in the world’s southernmost city, Ushuaia. This Argentinean city is bounded by the famous Beagle Channel on one side and by the mountains of Tierra del Fuego (“Land of the Fire”) on the other and is a spectacular place to find oneself in!



*We will visit large colonies of **King Penguins** on the Falkland Islands.*

For those who are keen to spend the day birding Ushuaia and its surroundings you can sign up for our **1-day Ushuaia birding tour** where we will target the impressive **Magellanic Woodpecker** among other exiting birds, or perhaps for our more comprehensive 4-day **Tierra del Fuego birding tour** where additionally we will look for **White-bellied Seedsnipe** and many

other important Tierra del Fuego specials, along with more widespread birds such as **Andean Condor**.

Itinerary (19 days/18 nights)

Day 1: Boarding of our vessel in Ushuaia

The Beagle Channel is home to the world's southernmost city, Ushuaia in Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, and it is here where we will board our ship for the breathtaking Antarctic region. We will spend the evening admiring the captivating passing scenery.

Day 2: Sailing towards the Falkland Islands

We spend the entire day at sea in the direction toward the Falkland Islands. The prevailing winds from the west will bring us a wide range of remarkable birds, such as diving and storm petrels, a variety of albatrosses, and some shearwaters.



Light-mantled Albatross should be seen as we cruise through the Antarctic Convergence.

Day 3: Exploring the Falkland Islands

Our first day exploring the Falkland Islands will be spent in the western part, which will include a visit to Carcass Island. Here a walk on the shoreline will reward you with marvelous sightings

of **Gentoo** and **Magellanic Penguins**, passerines such as the endemic races of **Blackish Cinclodes**, **White-bridled Finch**, **Dark-faced Ground Tyrant**, **Correndera Pipit**, and **Austral Thrush**, as well as close-up views of waterfowl species including **White-tufted Grebe**, **Upland Kelp** and **Ruddy-headed Geese**, **Falkland Steamer Duck**, **Chiloe Wigeon**, **Yellow-billed Pintail** and **Silver Teal**.



Ruddy-headed Goose can be seen on the Falkland Islands.

As we discover Saunders Island, the rare sight of four species of breeding penguins can be seen. These are the magnificent **Southern Rockhopper**, **Magellanic**, **King**, and **Gentoo Penguins**. Other remarkable birds to observe will include **Imperial Shag** and **Black-browed Albatross**.

As we maneuver around the islands, we may come across attractive **Peale's** and **Commerson's Dolphins!**

Day 4: Discovering Stanley

We spend the day exploring the Falklands' capital, Stanley. Birding is generally good nearby to town where we might get views of **King** and **Gentoo Penguins**, **Imperial Shag**, **Upland Goose**, **Dolphin Gull** and **Falkland Steamer Duck** with a decent selection of passerines available too including **White-bridled Finch**, **Austral Thrush** and the striking **Long-tailed Meadowlark**. This is the ideal opportunity for you to experience the island's culture, which is a perfect blend of old British charm and South American style. It is difficult to miss the long-ago-stranded shipping vessels that dot the coastline. There are several local and cultural attractions to visit in Stanley, including the museum and church (admission fees at your own expense), and you may spend some time visiting the area by themselves.

Days 5 – 6: En route to South Georgia

The next two days will be spent en route to breathtaking South Georgia. Sailing across the Antarctic Convergence and entering the much cooler Antarctic waters, you can now expect significantly cooler temperatures. As we head toward the Antarctic Convergence, we should start to see several kinds of fabulous birds such as petrels, skuas, albatrosses, prions, and shearwaters.



Southern Elephant Seals occur in large numbers on South Georgia.

Days 7 – 10: Exploring and birding South Georgia

Our arrival in spectacular South Georgia will be in the early afternoon. If conditions are favorable, we could visit the Bay of Elsehul, which is home to an extremely active **Antarctic Fur Seal** breeding beach.

Later we will sail directly to Right Whale Bay, Salisbury Plain, Godthul, St Andrews Bay, Gold Harbor, Cooper Bay, and Drygalski Fjord to give you the best chance to view a large array of the most stunning scenery and wildlife. This should hopefully include the likes of **Macaroni Penguin**, **King Penguin**, **Southern Elephant Seal** and **Antarctic Fur Seal**. We will of course look for **South Georgia Pipit** (the most southerly occurring passerine) which, since the eradication of rats from the island, are now fairly widespread!

Prion Island and the surrounding waters are always a treat! Here we should experience first-hand views of the immense **Wandering Albatross**. (Note that the island is closed for visitors during breeding season from 20 November to 07 January, but we are almost bound to see the species flying around, if not at the breeding grounds themselves).

Depending on the group and other conditions, once we reach Fortuna Bay we could do exactly as the noble British explorer Ernest Shackleton did and hike all the way over to Stromness Bay.

Grytviken affords you the thrilling opportunity to see an abandoned whaling village. Instead of humans, **King Penguins** now roam the streets, and seals now occupy the buildings. This is certainly a sight to see! The South Georgia Museum in Grytviken, a whaling history museum, as well as Ernest Shackleton's grave, are not-to-miss sights in this area.

We leave South Georgia on Day 10 in the afternoon.

Day 11: Birding on the water

Although we spend the entire day at sea, there is certainly no shortage of seabirds! The birds and birding may change, especially if the vessel encounters sea ice, as this is where we are likely to observe some special, high Antarctic birds such as **Snow Petrel** or **South Polar Skua**.



A cute Weddell Seal pup!

Day 12: Orcadas Station, South Orkney Islands

Today we may visit Orcadas Station (weather dependent), which is an Argentinean base situated on Laurie Island in the South Orkney Islands archipelago. Here you will be greeted by the friendly staff of the base, who will give us a tour of their premises. We will also take in the spectacular views of the glaciers surrounding us. Alternatively, we could attempt a berthing on Coronation Island at Shingle Cove.

Day 13: At sea en route to Antarctica

The day will be spent admiring the magnificent scenery from the vessel. Be sure to have your camera ready as we pass spectacular icebergs. There is also a good possibility of spotting **Fin Whale** and **Antarctic Petrel**.



*We stand a chance of encountering **Antarctic Petrel** on this trip.*

Days 14 – 16. The magnificent Antarctic Peninsula

Ice conditions permitting, we will sail through the icy Antarctic Sound and into the famed Weddell Sea. As we arrive at the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula it is difficult not to stand in awe of the grand, tabular icebergs that greet us!

An exciting visit to Paulet Island will reveal Brown Bluff and an immense number of **Adelie Penguins**. If conditions are favorable, we may be able to set foot on the continent. Hopefully the weather will allow us to spend some more time in the Weddell Sea.

Although the South Shetland Islands are volcanic and windswept in nature and are often very misty, they do offer great natural delights such as a wide range of flora (beautiful flowering grasses, lichens, and mosses) and fauna (including **Chinstrap Penguin**, **Gentoo Penguin**, and **Southern Giant Petrel**).

The unique **Chinstrap Penguin** can be observed in all its glory during our visit to Half Moon Island, while the ever-so-cheeky **Weddell Seal** can be clearly spotted on the beach close to Cámara Base (the Argentinean scientific research station).

To reach our next destination, Deception Island, our ship will barrel through the amazing Neptune's Bellows, the crater's entrance; the island is a subducted crater opening into the sea,

forming a natural harbor for our vessel. On Deception Island, there is incredible birdlife! You can view species such as **Antarctic Tern**, **Black-bellied** and **Wilson's Storm Petrels**, **South Polar Skua**, **Kelp Gull**, and thousands of **Cape Petrels**.



The cute Adeline Penguin should be seen at Brown Bluff!

Days 17 – 18. Birding on the ship en route to Ushuaia

These days are spent on board the vessel on our way back to Ushuaia. As we cross the Drake Passage we can observe a large number of spectacular seabirds.

Day 19: Disembarkation from our vessel in Ushuaia

Arrival in Ushuaia in the morning and disembarkation after an amazing 19-day bird- and wildlife-filled scenic adventure.

IMPORTANT: This is a standard itinerary to the Falklands Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctic Peninsula regions. It is for illustration purposes only, and actual schedules could change due to various factors such as weather, berthing availability, and wildlife opportunities. The tour leader will decide on the eventual itinerary, and it is therefore essential to remain flexible. The vessel cruises at an average speed of 10.5 knots.

Duration:	19 days
Limit:	The group sizes of cruises are a function of the capacity of the ship, so our usual small group size policy naturally can't apply here.
Dates:	23 November–11 December 2023
Start:	Ushuaia, Argentina
End:	Ushuaia, Argentina
Price per person:	Quadruple beds porthole – sharing US\$13,550 Triple beds porthole – sharing US\$15,100 Twin beds porthole – sharing US\$16,500, single US\$28,050 Twin beds window – sharing US\$17,250, single US\$29,325 Twin beds deluxe – sharing US\$18,350, single US\$31,195 Double bed superior – double US\$33,405, single US\$39,300 Double bed junior suite – double US\$35,445, single US\$41,700 Double bed grand suite – double US\$40,545, single US\$47,700

All cabins contain private shower and toilet, desk and chair, flat screen TV, telephone and internet connections, hair dryer, and ample storage space.

Price includes:

All meals throughout the voyage aboard the ship, including snacks, coffee, and tea
 All shore excursions and activities throughout the voyage by Zodiac
 Program of lectures by noted naturalists and leadership by experienced expedition staff
 Free use of rubber boots and snowshoes
 Luggage transfer from pick-up point to the vessel on the day of embarkation in Ushuaia
 Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation)
 All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program
 Comprehensive pre-departure material

Price excludes:

Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights
 Pre- and post-tour land arrangements
 Passport and visa expenses
 Government arrival and departure taxes
 Meals ashore
 Baggage, cancellation, and personal insurance (which is mandatory)
 Excess baggage charges and all items of a personal nature, such as laundry, bar, beverage charges, and telecommunication charges
 The customary gratuity at the end of the voyage for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided)