

Cruise for Conservation  
5 January 2007 to 11 January 2007  
Expedition Log



**Heritage Expeditions**  
A Division of Heritage Travel Group Ltd

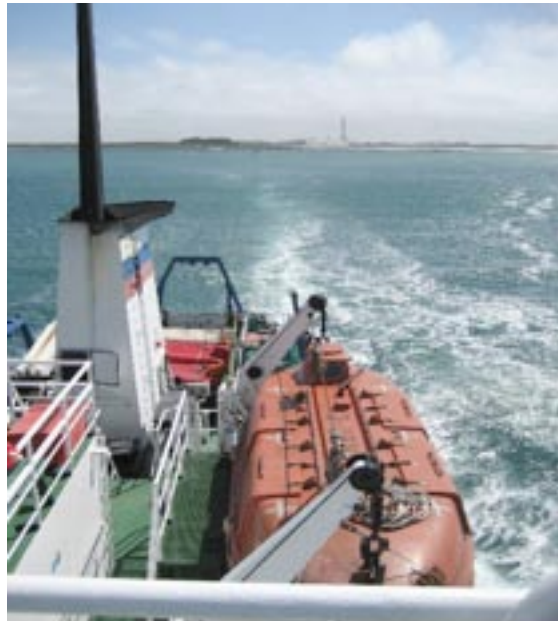
### **Day 1 - Friday 05 January 2007**

We all assembled at the Kelvin Hotel in Invercargill after breakfast and were met by Chris Ellis from Heritage Expeditions. From there it was a 30-minute ride by coach to Bluff Harbour, where the Spirit of Enderby was docked. We boarded the ship at 10.30 am.

While the bags were being delivered to cabins by the crew, Nathan Russ, our expedition leader, held the first briefing for everyone on board to introduce us to the ship, the voyage and all the expedition staff.

With a little time to explore the ship, at 11.30 am, the pilot came aboard and our voyage commenced with a leisurely trip through the harbour entrance. The pilot left us beyond the harbour entrance. From there the Captain set course Southwards down the eastern coastline of Rakiura (Stewart Island) and on into the Southern Pacific Ocean. The weather was reasonable for the start of our trip, with only a gentle swell and a cool afternoon. Most of us were on deck or on the bridge enjoying the coastal scenery and do some "birding". In the early afternoon, we had a mandatory lifeboat drill while we were in the relatively sheltered waters near Stewart Island.

It takes a little time to get ones "sea legs", and relatively rough seas resulted into few making it to the bar before dinner and even fewer to dinner, served at 7.30 pm by our chefs Luke and Ralf.



### **Day 2 - Saturday 06 January 2007**

We spent the day at sea pushing south on a course for Campbell Island, with a crossing wind and sea swell. A few people had gained their coveted 'sea legs' and were able to enjoy the day on deck or on the Bridge, birding or just enjoying the journey others found the lying low option the more comfortable one.

In the afternoon, Nathan gave us an introductory lecture on Campbell Island. This gave us an insight to the features and activities awaiting us on the Island.

Although sea conditions were moderate by Southern Ocean standards a few more people than the previous night enjoyed another fine meal tonight prepared by chefs Ralf and Luke.

### **Day 3 - Sunday 7 January**

The Spirit of Enderby entered Perseverance Harbour at Campbell Island to a mild but overcast day on Campbell Island. On a typical day on Campbell Island all four seasons can be experienced in the same hour!

In the calmer waters, we had a chance to view the video "Beyond the Roaring 40's" was screened in the morning. This video, although now dated, is an excellent commentary on New Zealand's sub Antarctic Islands.

After breakfast, Nathan briefed us on the day's activities and the inflatable Naiad boat operations while the other expedition staff launched the Naiads and organized the day's activities.



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53b Montreal Street, PO Box 7218, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Tel: +64 3 365 3500 / Fax: +64 3 365 1300

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Two separate activities were organized for the day, with the choice of a round trip to North West Bay (the “long walk”) or the walk up the boardwalk to spend time with the southern Royal Albatross in its breeding area (the Col/Lyall walk). On both walks, the mega-herbs are a major feature. By 10am, we were ashore at the Campbell Island wharf and the day’s activities began.

While here we also picked up 3 National Geographic people including Christine Eckstrom, Frans Lanting and Carl Safina. They had been dropped off one Heritage Expeditions previous Subantarctic voyage a week before and had been studying the wildlife and taking thousands of photos for various articles. This widely travelled and highly experienced group proved an inspiration to many for everything from photography hints to future travel ideas and wildlife expertise.

#### **North West Bay.**

It was a great day for this walk, with almost calm conditions on Northwest Bay. From the Jetty, the track passed through the old base site, around Tucker Cove and then climbed steadily on to the ridge overlooking Northwest Bay. At the top of the ridge, the group was able to enjoy wonderful views of NW Bay and the carpets of mega herbs.

On the descent into Capstan Bay, they saw Giant Petrels nesting, Yellow-eyed penguins, Campbell Island shags, hooker sea lions, and elephant seals in and around Capstan Cove. Following an old fence line up the hill and crossed into a basin where there were many nesting Southern royal albatrosses. Then there was a gentle descent back into Camp Cove with great views of Perseverance Harbour. Everyone was back on board by late afternoon, having enjoyed a memorable walk.

#### **Col/Lyall Walk.**

The people who went on the Col/Lyall boardwalk had an equally enjoyable day. The shorter walk enabled us to spend time observing the nesting Southern royal albatrosses. From the top of the boardwalk, most of us continued up to the ridgeline overlooking Northwest Bay. With a strong but not too cold wind out of shelter, the views and the mega herbs were magnificent. There is more albatross activity in the afternoons, and most of us spent some time on the hill observing the “gamming” and nesting albatross returns and departures during the afternoon. People were given almost as much time as they like to gradually returned to the jetty during the afternoon and we were all back on board the Spirit of Enderby by 6.00 pm.

With the day’s excitement over and everyone back on board, once again, Ralf and Luke prepared an incredible dinner and we enjoyed a very pleasant evening.



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## **Campbell Island History**

Campbell Island was discovered in January, 1810 by Captain Frederick Hasselburg of the sealing brig, Perseverance. Hasselburg named the island after his employers, Robert Campbell and Co. of Sydney. On a later visit to the Island Captain Hasselburg, along with a woman called Elizabeth Farr and a young boy George Allwright, were drowned in Perseverance Harbour.

The Sir James Clark Ross expedition of 1840-42 called at Campbell Island. Two scientists accompanying Ross, J Hooker and D Lyall, compiled the first plant and animal inventories for Campbell Island.

A second expedition sponsored by the government of France to observe the transit of Venus arrived in 1874 and remained for three months. One member of this expedition, M Duris, died of typhoid fever on the island. He was buried on the point opposite Venus cove. An inscribed tombstone and iron cross were erected over the grave. From 1868 to 1923, both British Navy and New Zealand government vessels made periodic visits to the island to service a castaway depot (at Depot Point, Perseverance Harbour), one of the several erected on subantarctic islands.

Sheep, goats and pigs had been liberated at various times prior to 1895 with the intention of providing sustenance to the shipwrecked, but none of these animals survived for very long. Fires had been started occasionally by accident or by design and rats had been reported as well established on the main island by 1874. Sheep were re-introduced in 1895 after the island (Pastoral Run No. 511) had been leased to J Gordon for a term of 21 years. The last of the shore whaling stations was located at North West Bay and operated from 1909 to 1916, in conjunction with management of the sheep run.

The farming era lasted until 1931 when unreliable transport, accidents and a world-wide recession finally made farming uneconomical. The farmers withdrew and left about 4000 sheep and between 20 to 30 cattle unattended on the island.

A wartime coast-watching station was established in 1941. When the coast-watching station was abandoned at the end of the war, meteorological activities continued at Tucker Cove. The station now occupies a new base at Beeman Cove, opened in November 1958. This base was decommissioned in late 1994. The old base is derelict.

The sheep were removed over a 20 year period 1970 – 1990. The cattle were removed in the 1970's and once the sheep were gone what few cats remained died out naturally. The Rats were poisoned in a major operation in 2001. Today the flightless teal have been released back on the main island and snipe have recolonised the Island.

## **Day 4 - Monday 8 January**

This morning we arrived at Auckland Island at around 1130 hrs. Most people were out of the cold in the bridge to see the great view of the harbour entrance as we entered Carnley Harbour before anchorage in Tagua Bay. Later we had a briefing on the days' activities from Nathan – a walk to the coast watchers hut, led by Nathan. The coast watchers' camp in Tagua Bay is hidden amongst the rata forest, and although in a state of rapid decline, it gives an insight into the life of the few people who lived on the Auckland Islands during WW2. The lookout further up the track with its view straight down Carnley Harbour must have seen many hours of watching. Its position and the vegetation combine to give the feeling of seclusion.

In the early evening, with everyone back on board the Spirit of Enderby people enjoyed a drink or two in the bar for pre dinner drinks before dinner. We went to sleep in the calm, and at approx. 0100 hrs the captain lifted anchor and we headed for Port Ross.

## **Day 5 - Tuesday 9 January**

The Spirit of Enderby arrived in Port Ross early in the morning and anchored just off Sandy Bay at Enderby Island.

Conditions for landing were a little too difficult at the normal landing position near the DoC huts, so the decision was made to land on the rocks near the rock platforms to the right of the beach. Immediately after breakfast, we all attended a pre-landing briefing with Nathan in the lecture room while the chefs put out lunch material and Chris and Aleks launched the naiads for our landing on the Island.

Having made our choice of either a short or long walk on the Island, we then packed our gear for the day, made our lunch and by 0900 we were ashore on Enderby Island.

The landing was on to a wave platform at the right end of the beach, and we were met by a large number of Yellow Eyed Penguins which Sue from the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust loved as it was the largest number of Yellow Eye's she had ever seen together. She announced that on return to Dunedin, she will try and make Enderby Island the new headquarters of the Yellow Eyed Penguin Trust!



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A short walk took us to the Department of Conservation buildings at the Eastern end of the beach. There Nathan gave us an orientation briefing and reinforced the Department of Conservation rules about access to the area by visitors.

Sandy Bay beach was crowded with Hooker Sea Lions. The calving and mating seasons are only weeks apart, so much is going on here. Newborn pups are beginning to form crèches, the beach masters are mating with the cows, young pups are being suckled, and there are frequent fights between the beach master bulls and other males attempting to gain superiority.



From the beach, we made our way across the Island to the cliffs on the Northern side. The rata forest was in flower, and out in the open, the Bulbinella, and many other plants, were in full flower. Several Yellow-eye penguins were seen en route, and a number of Southern royal albatrosses also.

At the northern cliffs, there were Auckland Island shags and a pair of light-mantled sooty albatross breeding. There was a cool breeze, but the weather was fine.

### **The Derrycastle**

The weather was thick on the night of March 20, 1887 when the barque Derrycastle ran aground on the northern tip of Enderby Island. The ship broke up quickly and of the crew of 23 only 8 managed to scramble ashore. The survivors found a small hut on the Island but were without food and fire. A fire was later lit by exploding the cap of a revolver cartridge which one of the survivors found in his pocket. After being on the Island for 92 days and having been able to see a castaway depot across the water in Port Ross, the survivors found an old axe head buried in the sand. With this they fashioned a punt and two of the men successfully paddled to the provision depot. The two men returned in a boat with provisions and clothes. Within a few days all of the survivors were established at the Port Ross depot. Here they remained until July 19, when the steamer Awarua put into Port Ross while on a sealing cruise.

At this point, the short-walkers headed back to Sandy Bay beach to spend more time viewing the sea lion activity on Sandy Bay beach. The rest of the group headed on around the Island on the long walk.

Everyone had an excellent day. The long walkers encountered numerous species of coastal and bush birds, as well as sea lions, New Zealand fur seals and yellow-eyed penguins. Auckland Island teal and snipe were also sighted. The weather was excellent for the walk.



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By 5.00 pm, we were all back on the ship and shortly afterwards we departed for the Snares Islands. The sea conditions were good and it was a pleasant voyage northwards overnight.

### **Birds of the Auckland Islands**

The Auckland Islands are the main breeding ground for the white-capped albatross *Thalassarche [cauta] cauta* with an estimated population of 65,000 pairs chiefly on Disappointment Island. Other albatrosses breeding include the Gibson's wandering albatross *Diomedea [exulans] gibsoni*, with an estimated ca. 7000 breeding pairs - main population on Adams Island. The Southern royal albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] epomophora* is represented by only 60 breeding pairs on Enderby and Adams Island. The light mantled sooty albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata* is quite abundant, especially around the southern end of the main island with an estimated population of 5000 pairs. Northern giant petrel *Macronectes giganteus* is a common breeder. Other tubenoses that breed in the group include cape petrels (approx. 200 pairs), which breeds mainly on Beacon Rocks, the white-headed petrel *Pterodroma lessonii* and the fulmar prion *Pachyptila crassirostris*. Sooty shearwater breeds chiefly on offshore islands whilst Antarctic prion *Pachyptila desolata banksi* and the white-chinned petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* breed in various sized colonies. The grey-backed storm petrel *Garrodia nereis*, white-faced storm petrel *Pelagodroma marina* and black-bellied storm petrel *Pachyptila belcheri* are widely distributed as is the Sub-Antarctic little shearwater *Puffinus assimilis elegans* in a much smaller number. The Sub-Antarctic form of the common diving petrel breeds numerously around coastal fringes, whilst South Georgian diving petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus* has been recorded breeding on Enderby and Dundas (present status not fully understood).

Yellow-eyed penguins are found throughout the island group, with good populations on Enderby and Rose Islands. The rockhopper penguin population has declined but some traditional colonies still exist on both east and west coasts.

The Auckland Island shag breeds throughout the entire group, whilst the Auckland Island flightless teal occurs only on the free-predator islets. The Auckland Island snipe breeds on most offshore Islands, including Ewing, Disappointment, Adams and Enderby. The Auckland Island rail breeds on Adams and Disappointment Island. Banded dotterel *Charadrius bicinctus* breeds on Enderby Island. The southern skua is found in scattered numbers throughout the group, whilst moderate numbers of southern black-backed gull and red-billed gull, breed throughout the group. White-fronted tern and Antarctic terns breed in small colonies throughout the group. The red-crowned parakeet is dominant on the larger offshore islands, whilst the yellow-crowned parakeet is found on the main Auckland Island. The local form of the NZ pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae aucklandicus* is common chiefly around the coastal areas. Long-tailed cuckoo and welcome swallow also breed on the island. Grey duck and the NZ falcon breed in small numbers, but with main concentration on the southern end of the main island. Silvereye and Auckland Island tomtit *P. M. marrineri* are common throughout. Bellbird is probably the most numerous of the bush birds, while the tui is present throughout the group in good numbers.

Self introduced breeders include the mallard, skylark, hedge sparrow, song thrush, blackbird, chaffinch, goldfinch, redpoll, house sparrow, and starling. Migratory waders include the knot, sharp-tailed sandpiper, curlew sandpiper, red-necked stint, turnstone, eastern-bartailed godwit and Asiatic black tailed godwit. The white-faced heron is a straggler and the Arctic tern is occasionally seen.

### **Day 5 - Wednesday 10 January**

We enjoyed a pleasant night at sea in reasonably calm conditions. After breakfast, Nathan gave an overview of the Snares Islands in the lecture room.

By 8.30 am, most were awake and on deck or in the bridge to see the stunning coastline as we were approaching the Snares. Unfortunately, the swells proved too dangerous for the planned zodiac cruising here. The ship cannot anchor at the Snares, so the Captain brought the Spirit of Enderby in close to the Eastern side of the Island and allowed the ship to drift while Nathan set up a "chumming" session at the stern of the ship. This gave us the opportunity for some great photographs as dozens of Buller's albatrosses and other species landed in the water behind the ship.

As we couldn't zodiac cruise around the Snares, Nathan Russ decided on trying for Port Pegasus in South Eastern Stewart Island. It was hoped that calmer conditions there in the evening would give us the opportunity for a zodiac cruise in the stunning but rarely seen part of the island. Unfortunately the weather proved to again be a little too much for a safe zodiac cruise.

At about 5.30pm, in the sheltered waters near Stewart Island, we had our last dinner and Nathan gave the final debrief and slide show of our trip. The ship lifted anchor at 11pm, and we sailed towards Bluff.



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### **The Snares Islands**

Situated approximately 209 km southwest of Bluff, the Snares are 243 ha in extent and consist of two small rocky islands and several rocks, including the five islands of the so-called western reef- Tahī, Rua, Toru, Wha and Rima.

The islands were discovered by Vancouver in 1791. Just over one year later, December, 1772, the crew of the Britannia sighted the Snares and named them the Sunday Islands. The name Sunday gave way to that given by the first discoverer – the Snares.

Historical records of these Islands are sketchy. Little is known of the activities of sealers which obviously worked these Islands. It appears a gang of four, who were escaped convicts from Norfolk Island, were marooned on the Snares between 1810-1817 from the ship Adventure, the reason given was that the ship was running short of provisions and the captain gave the men the choice of going ashore or of starving afloat. The men were given a few potatoes which they planted. During their long exile one of the four became deranged – this alarmed the others so much that they pushed him over a cliff. The remaining three were rescued by an American ship the Enterprise which reached Philadelphia on 11 May 1818.

There are no recorded shipwrecks from the Island despite their position almost directly in the path of vessels sailing from Australia towards Cape Horn. It was intended at one stage to erect a lighthouse on the Island but with the opening of the Panama Canal the need for a lighthouse largely disappeared.

### **Day 6 - Thursday 11 January.**

After a reasonably calm passage towards Bluff, just after breakfast, the Pilot boarded and guided the ship to its berth at the Port of Bluff. We had the official trip photo taken on the wharf in, then with bags ready and a fond fare-welling from staff and all the passengers onboard, everyone boarded the coach and headed for Invercargill at the end of a great voyage, one that for most people, they would have seen and done things that very few people will ever get to experience.



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