New Zealand

Birding Down Under: Subantarctic & Chatham Islands



Southern Royal Albatross displaying at a colony on Campbell Island by Adam Riley

Listen to the names: Snares, Bounty, Antipodes, Auckland, Campbell, Macquarie and Chatham Islands. They are music to the ears of 'Birders'. Apart from the Chathams, these islands are probably more isolated now than they were when they were discovered in the late 1700s and early 1800s and were regularly visited by sealers, whalers and government steamers searching for castaway sailors. It is relatively simple to get to the Chatham Islands, but opportunities to visit the others are rare.

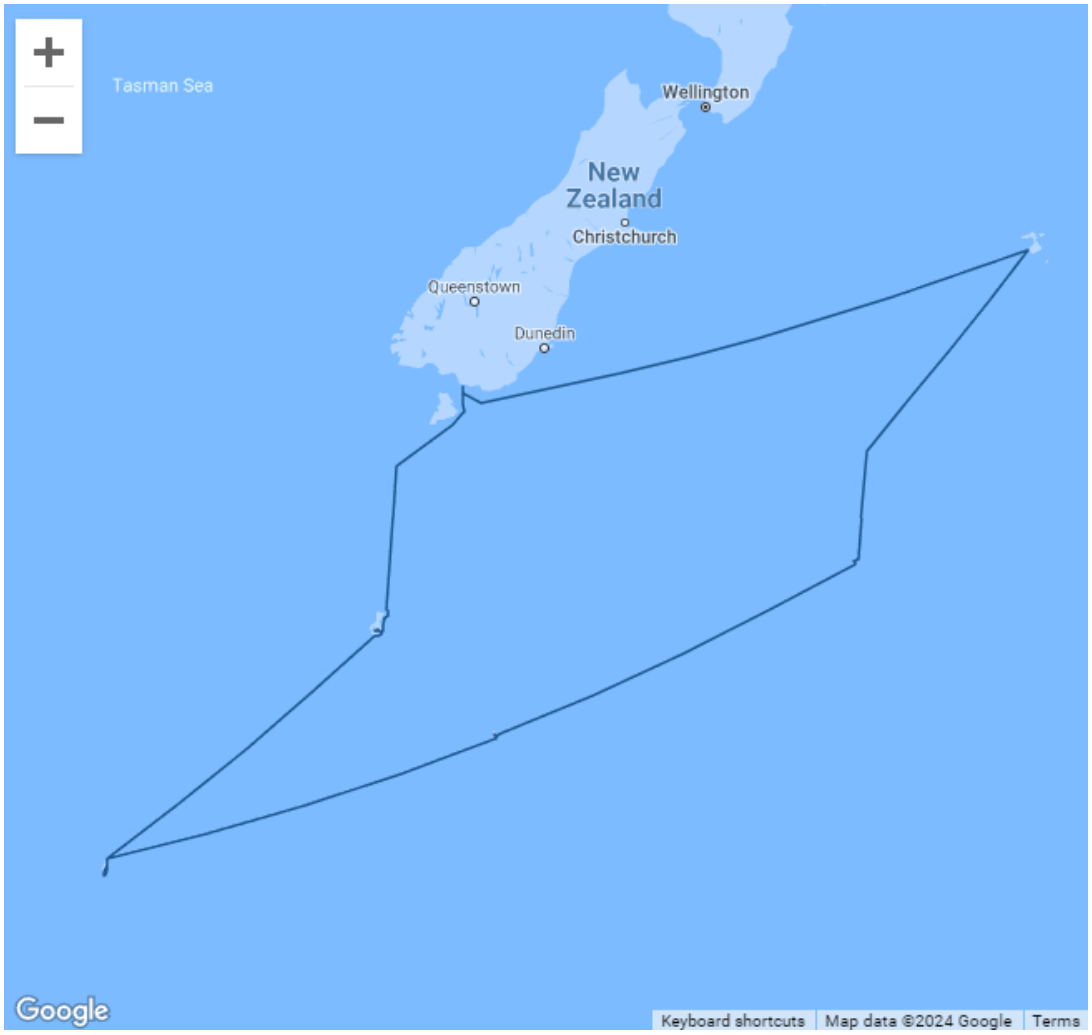
The islands occupy the tempestuous latitudes of the Roaring Forties and the Furious Fifties, but they are also known as the Albatross Latitudes and with good reason. Ten of the world's albatross species breed in the region; five of them nowhere else but here! In fact, this zone where the air is never still hosts the most diverse collection of seabirds in the world. More than 40 species breed here - that is at least 11 per cent of the entire world's seabird population. Except for the Chathams, the islands are all designated UNESCO World Heritage sites and are afforded the highest conservation status and protection by the Australian and New Zealand governments, so passage to their shores is not granted lightly. There are also islands that we visit within the Chatham Islands' Archipelago with similar status and protection.

This expedition has huge appeal to pelagic enthusiasts, penguin fanatics and those interested in island endemics. Though you don't have to be a keen birder to enjoy this voyage. People interested in islands and island ecology, botany, geology and an increasing number of photographers have enjoyed this trip immensely, as have those interested in the history of Southern Ocean discovery and exploration.

This is one of our 'signature expeditions' which has operated annually for more than 20 years, so you will benefit from the knowledge and expertise gained over that time.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival in Queenstown, New Zealand**
Day 2	**Queenstown to Port of Bluff, board vessel & depart**
Day 3	**The Snares – Northeast Island**
Day 4	**Auckland Islands – Enderby Island**
Day 5	**At sea**
Days 6 & 7	**Macquarie Island**
Day 8	**At sea**
Day 9	**Campbell Island – Perseverance Harbour**
Day 10	**At sea**
Day 11	**Antipodes Islands**
Day 12	**Bounty Islands**
Day 13	**Pyramid Rock & Southeast Island**
Day 14	**Chatham Islands – Waitangi**
Days 15 & 16	**At sea**
Day 17	**Disembark in Port of Bluff, transfer to Queenstown & final departure**



Birding & Wildlife sites in detail

Port of Bluff. *Today we enjoy breakfast in the hotel restaurant and have the morning free to explore Queenstown before returning to the hotel for lunch and departing for the Port of Bluff to embark your ship. 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 in the Observation Lounge and up on the Observation Deck as we set our course to The Snares and our adventure begin.*



Buller's Albatross by Forrest Rowland

The Snares – Northeast 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 the British Isles together. We plan to arrive 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. In the sheltered bays, we should see the endemic Snares Penguin, 'Snares' Tomtit and 'Snares' New Zealand Fernbird. There are hundreds of thousands of Sooty Shearwaters nesting on The Snares; the actual number is much debated. Buller's Albatross breed here from early January onwards. There will be opportunities to view the forests of large tree daisy *Olearia lyallii* which forms a canopy over much of the island group.



Snares Penguin by Adam Riley

Auckland Islands – Enderby Island. 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 after the same distinguished shipping family as one of our own vessels. 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 New Zealand (Hooker's) 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. 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.



Rata Forest on Enderby Island by Adam Riley

During our day ashore there will be several options, some longer walks, some shorter walks and time to spend 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 Shag, Auckland Teal, Auckland Island form of Double-banded Plover, Auckland Island forms of Tomtit and New Zealand Bellbirds, New Zealand Pipit, Red-crowned Parakeet, Yellow-eyed Penguin and Light-mantled Albatross. There is also a very good chance of seeing the Subantarctic Snipe. Other more common species we will see include the European Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Common Blackbird, Common Starling, Silver (Red-billed) Gull and Common Redpoll. On Derry Castle Reef we will look for migratory waders which could include Bar-tailed Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone and also has potential for vagrants.

At sea - Auckland Islands to Macquarie Island. As we make our way through an area known as the Furious Fifties in the tumultuous Southern Ocean, we will learn more about the flora and fauna as we prepare for our arrival at Macquarie Island. En route there are great birding opportunities which may include Antipodean, Northern Royal, Black-browed, Light-mantled, Salvin's and Grey-headed Albatrosses, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, Sooty and Little Shearwaters.



Light-mantled Sooty Albatross on nest by Adam Riley

We will endeavour to spot Fairy Prion, Fulmar and Antarctic Prions – never an easy task – but we should get some great views. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged, Mottled, White-headed, Grey-faced and White-chinned Petrels, Grey-backed, Wilson's and Black-bellied Storm Petrels.

Macquarie Island. The great Australian Antarctic Explorer Sir Douglas Mawson once called Macquarie Island "One of the wonder spots of the world." You are about to discover why as we spend two days exploring this amazing Island. It was one of the first of the Subantarctic Islands to obtain World Heritage Status and that was largely due to its unique geology. It is one of the few places on earth where mid-ocean crustal rocks are exposed at the surface due to the collision of the Australian and Pacific Plates. The island was discovered in 1810 and was soon ravaged by sealers who introduced various animals including rats, mice, cats and rabbits. The native bird population was virtually eliminated, and plants destroyed. The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service which administered the island recently embarked on a very ambitious eradication program which appears to have been successful.



Shy (top) and Salvin's Albatross by Erik Forsyth

The island is now predator free, and both the birds and plants are responding. It is amazing to witness the regeneration and the increase in the number of birds. Macquarie Island is home to four species of penguin, King, Royal, Macaroni and Southern Rockhopper. During our visit we will land at two sites (subject of course to weather and sea conditions) and you will get a chance to see, observe and photograph all four species, although the Southern Rockhoppers are much harder to capture than the others. Macquarie also has a large population of Southern Elephant Seals. Pups are born in October and weaned in November when the breeding adults return to sea. The weaners and sub adults lie around on the beaches. The weaners go to sea sometime in January, running the gauntlet of Killer Whales who are waiting offshore. We plan a landing at the Australian Antarctic Research Base at Buckles Bay where you will be able to meet with scientists and base staff. The original base was established in 1947, and the island has been 'manned' since then. It is one of the longest continuously occupied bases in the Subantarctic.



Subantarctic Snipe by Forrest Rowland

Campbell Island – Perseverance Harbour. Today we explore Campbell Island, New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory. Its history is as rich and varied as the other islands we visit. Discovered in 1810, it was soon occupied by sealers who introduced rats and cats. Farming followed from 1895 to 1934 when it was abandoned. Coastwatchers were stationed on the island during the war and at the end of the war the station was taken over by

the New Zealand Metrological service. They maintained a manned weather/ research station there until 1995. In the early 1970s the removal of farm animals commenced, and all were eventually removed by 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 Teal, which had been rediscovered on an offshore island in 1975. Subantarctic Snipe, which were formerly unknown from the island but were discovered on another offshore island, recolonised the islands themselves.



Mottled Petrel by Adam Riley

The vegetation which the great English botanist Sir Joseph Hooker described in 1841 as having a "Flora display second to none outside the tropics" is flourishing and is nothing short of spectacular. We will offer several options which will enable you to explore the island including an extended walk to Northwest Bay. There will also be an easier walk to the Col Lyall Saddle. All these options will 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 renowned.

At sea - Campbell Island to Antipodes Island. At sea en route to the Antipodes, it is a day for pelagic birding. Species commonly seen in this area include Snowy, Antipodean, Southern Royal, Black-browed, Campbell, Light-mantled, Salvin's and Grey-headed Albatrosses, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels and both Sooty and Little Shearwaters. This region of the Southern Ocean is one of the few places where Fairy, Fulmar and Antarctic Prions occur together, providing a good opportunity for comparison. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged, Mottled, White-headed, Grey-faced and White-chinned Petrels, Grey-backed, Wilson's and Black-bellied Storm Petrels and Common Diving Petrel.



Campbell Island Albatross by Adam Riley

Antipodes Islands. The Antipodes group of islands is the most isolated and perhaps the least known of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. Sealers lived here in the decades immediately after their discovery in 1806. Mice are the only introduced animal on the islands but efforts to eradicate them will hopefully see that their days are numbered. The islands are of volcanic origin but are heavily eroded especially the western shoreline. The largest of the group is Antipodes Island. Landings are not permitted so we plan to cruise, along the coastline by Zodiac where we have a

good chance of seeing the Antipodes Parakeet, the largest of New Zealand's parakeets. This species has an entirely green head. We will also look for Reischek's Parakeet, split from Red-crowned Parakeet. We should also see the Antipodes subspecies of the New Zealand Pipit. Good views of both Erect-crested and Southern Rockhopper Penguins can be expected along the coast where they often breed in mixed colonies.



Cape Petrel by Adam Riley

Bounty Islands. We arrive at the incongruously named Bounty Islands, the remote northernmost of the five New Zealand Subantarctic groups; they were discovered by Captain Bligh 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 Albatrosses, Erect-crested Penguins, Fulmar Prions and the endemic Bounty Shag – the world's rarest. We plan to arrive in the early morning and if conditions are suitable, we will cruise by Zodiac around the granite outposts to take a closer look at the birds which breed there. New Zealand Fur Seals which were almost hunted to extinction in the Subantarctic Islands are present in large numbers. Sailing towards the Chatham Islands there are opportunities to see a good selection of birdlife as we sail. These should include Antipodean and Northern Royal Albatrosses, Mottled, White-chinned and Soft-plumaged Petrels, Broad-billed Prion and Black-bellied Storm Petrel. Other possible sightings include Shy (White-capped) Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Cape Petrel, Antarctic Fulmar, Sooty and Little Shearwaters and Grey-backed Storm Petrel. We will also start to keep a lookout for the Chatham Petrel.

Pyramid Rock & Southeast Island. As we continue toward the Chatham Archipelago, there are excellent opportunities for pelagic birding today. We will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel which has been seen on this leg of the voyage before. In the past we have observed the very rare Chatham Island Taiko in this area. 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 to number less than 150. This afternoon we will cruise around spectacular Pyramid Rock, a basalt outcrop south of Pitt Island. This is the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. During the afternoon we arrive at Southeast Island. This must be one of the world's greatest nature reserves and landings are not permitted. However, we should obtain good views of the very rare New Zealand Shore Plover and Chatham Island Oystercatcher from the Zodiacs as we cruise along the coast. We should also see the Pitt Shag which nests on the island.



Chatham Albatross by Erik Forsyth

Chatham Islands – Waitangi. The Chatham Archipelago consists of one large island and numerous smaller islands and rocky islets. Only two of the islands are inhabited. They represent New Zealand's eastern most territory. The islands were originally settled by East Polynesians. In the 1400s the population became isolated and interestingly developed its own distinct culture. The islands were discovered by Europeans in the 1790s. Sealers and settlers followed and then in the 1830s Māori from New Zealand invaded killing and enslaving many of the indigenous people. The impact of the original settlers, the Europeans and later the Māori people 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.



Chatham Shag by Erik Forsyth

With a new generation has come a new awareness and a willingness to be part of a concerted conservation effort. Several private reserves have been established, a lot of replanting has taken place, and predators are being controlled. Today we will visit one of the original private reserves established by a local family on the south coast of the main island where there is a very good chance to see the endemic Chatham Pigeon and Chatham Gerygone. The pigeon was close to extinction until recently and is now in good numbers. We will travel by local bus to the reserve. The road takes us through developed farmland where we will undoubtedly see numerous introduced species and possibly Weka. Near our landing in Waitangi there is a good chance of seeing the endemic Chatham Shag. This afternoon we cruise back along the south coast; this is where the only known population of Magenta Petrel (Taiko) which breeds and where they are attempting to establish a new population of the Chatham Petrel in a predator free area. We have seen both Taiko and Chatham Petrel in this area on previous expeditions.



Pyramid Island by Erik Forsyth

At sea – Chatham Islands to Port of Bluff. En route to Port of Bluff we will cross the Chatham Rise, a large, relatively shallowly submerged part of the Zealandia continent that stretches east from near the South Island of New Zealand. Nutrient rich waters from the south mix with warm northern waters and there is an overlap between northern pelagic species and birds from southern latitudes, so we can expect great pelagic sightings. Species we expect to encounter include Antipodean, Southern Royal, Black-browed, Shy and Salvin's Albatrosses. Petrel species we

should be able to identify are Northern Giant, Cape, Westland, White-chinned, Great-winged and Cook's Petrels, Grey-backed and White-faced Storm Petrels and Common Diving Petrel. Photographic opportunities may include Flesh-footed, Buller's, Sooty and Little Shearwaters. Small petrels on the horizon and close by include Fairy and Broad-billed Prions. We will recap the highlights of our expedition and enjoy a farewell dinner tonight as we complete the last few miles of our journey.

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 or Bounties.

Vessel Schematics



The Heritage Adventurer - our home away from home - courtesy of Heritage Expeditions

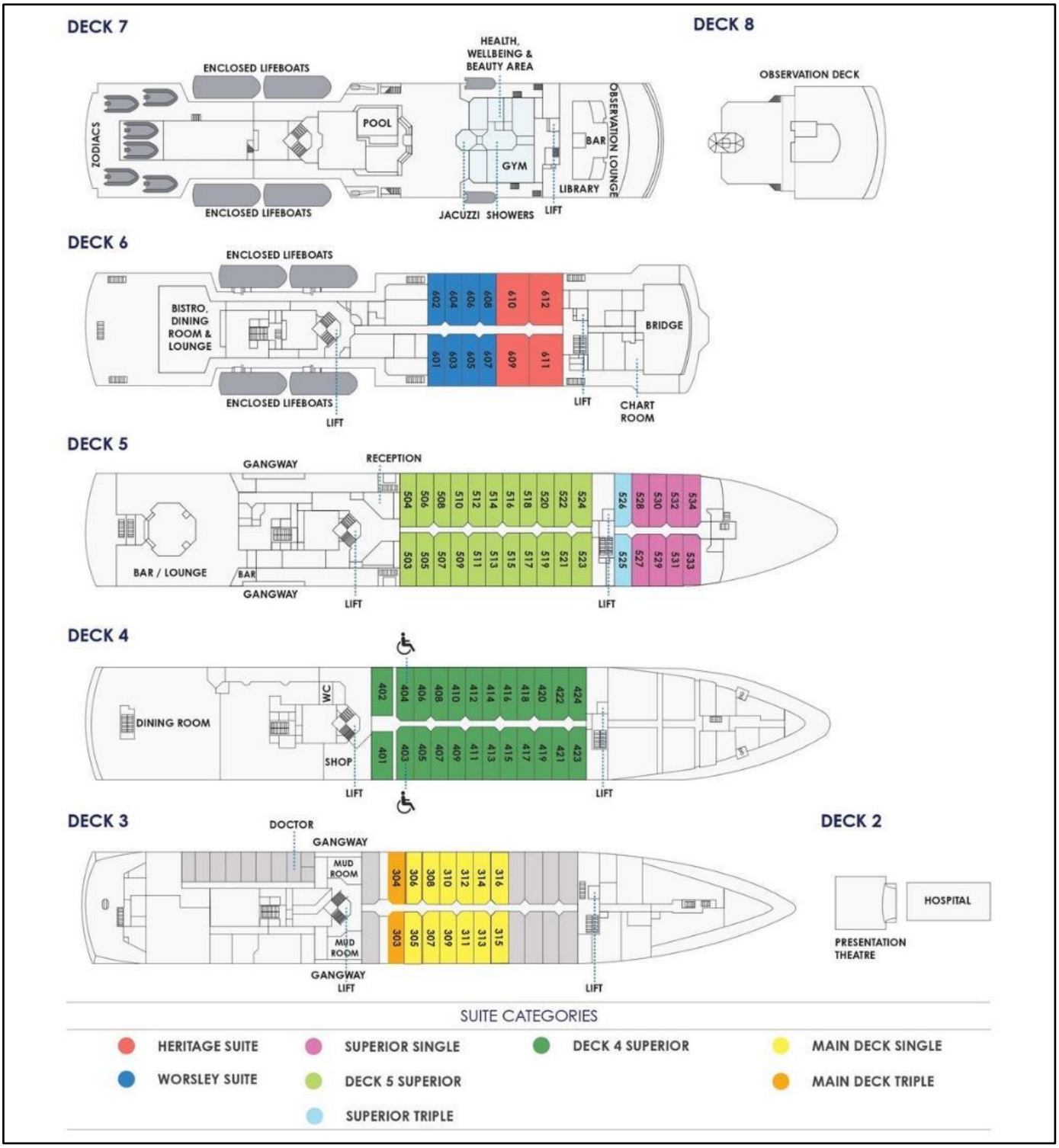
Heritage Adventurer is a true pioneering expedition vessel of exceptional pedigree. Often referred to as the 'Grande Dame of Expedition Cruising' due to her celebrated history and refined design, she was purpose-built for adventure in 1991 at Finland's Rauma shipyard and specifically designed for Polar exploration.

Setting a peerless standard in authentic expedition travel, Heritage Adventurer (formerly known as MS Hanseatic) combines the highest passenger ship iceclass rating (1A Super) with an impressive history of Polar exploration. Having held records for the most northern and southern Arctic and Antarctic navigations, and for traversing both the Northwest and Northeast Passages, makes Heritage Adventurer perfect for pioneering New Zealand-based Heritage Expeditions signature experiential expedition travel.

Originally designed to accommodate 184 guests, Heritage Adventurer now welcomes just 140 expeditioners ensuring spacious, stylish and comfortable voyages, while a fleet of 14 Zodiacs ensures all guests can maximise their expedition adventure. Heritage Adventurer proudly continues our traditions of exceptional, personalised expedition experiences as Heritage Expeditions flagship.

Technical Specs

Year Built	**1991**	**Shipyard**	**Rauma, Finland**
Classification	**Lloyds 1AS, GL E4**	**Accommodation**	**140 guests**
Length	**124 metres**	**Beam**	**18 metres**
Draft	**4.97 metres**	**Gross Tonnage**	**8,378gt**
Engines	**3,940 horsepower (x2)**	**Maximum Speed**	**15 knots**
Cruising Speed	**12 knots**	**Range**	**8,600 nautical miles**
Zodiacs	**14**		



Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Payments are non-refundable. We highly recommended that you take out comprehensive travel insurance to cover yourself if you need to cancel your booking for whatever reason.

Tour inclusions:

- Pre/Post cruise transfers.
- one night hotel accommodation in a twin share room (inc. dinner/breakfast).
- All on board ship accommodation with meals, house beer, wine and soft drinks with lunch and dinner.
- All shore excursions and activities.
- Programme of lectures by noted naturalists.

Tour exclusions:

- All items of a personal nature.
- Laundry.
- Drinks
- Gratuities.
- International/domestic flights.
- Passport and applicable visa expenses.
- Government arrival and departure taxes not mentioned.
- **Baggage, cancellation, interruption and medical travel insurance—strongly recommended.**
- Excess-baggage fees on international and domestic flights.
- Phone and Internet charges (connectivity may vary by location)
- Additional overnight accommodation

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If we cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (Expedition staff, crew, tour leaders) is not included on this tour. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour-related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges, or other price adjustments need to be implemented.**
- **We may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the tour leaders at short, or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**
- **A Rockjumper leader will not accompany the expedition unless a minimum of 12 participants are signed up through Rockjumper. In the case that a Rockjumper leader is not on board, the professional expedition staff will take care of all participants signed up through Rockjumper.**
- **Embracing the unexpected is part of the legacy and excitement of expedition travel. When traveling in extremely remote regions, your Expedition Team must allow the sea, the ice, and the weather to guide route and itinerary details. This itinerary is a tentative outline of what you'll experience on this voyage; please be aware that no specific itinerary can be guaranteed. By the same token, wildlife encounters as described are expected but not guaranteed. Your Expedition Team will use their considerable experience to seek out wildlife in known habitats, but the presence of any species of bird or marine wildlife is not a guarantee.**
- **In the unlikely event of serious illness or injury, the Expedition Leader may instruct the vessel to abort the cruise and return to port as soon as possible. Cruise logistics and safety decisions are out of Rockjumper's hands and dependent upon the expertise of the Expedition Leader and crew.**

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will begin with an arrival day in Queenstown on day 1. The cruise will embark on day 2 and conclude by early to mid-morning (sea conditions can affect this time) on day 17 in Queenstown/Invercargill.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your Tour Confirmation package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

Invercargill Airport, New Zealand (IATA: IVC) is the main port of entry and departure for this tour. Most international flights will route via Auckland international Airport (IATA: AKL).

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.