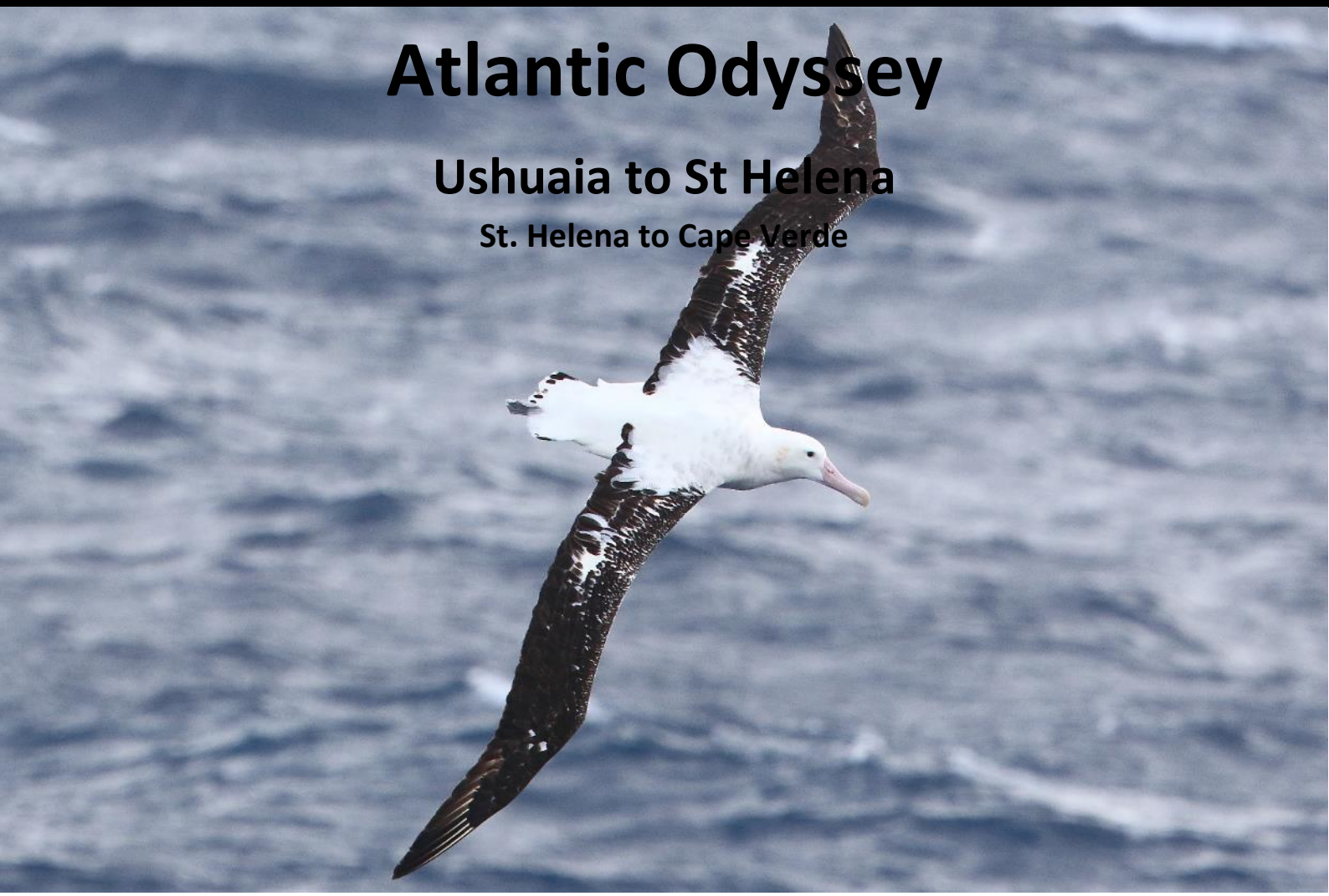
Atlantic Odyssey

Ushuaia to St Helena

St. Helena to Cape Verde



Tristan Albatross by Adam Riley

Our voyage traverses some of the most interesting areas in the Southern Ocean; including South Georgia, Gough Island, the Tristan da Cunha archipelago, and St. Helena. From famous and historical to incredibly remote, we take in a part of the world conquered by only the hardiest, Sir Francis Drake, Captain James Cook, Sir James Clark Ross, Sir Ernest Shackleton, and Roald Amundsen. Not only can we expect an incredible array of avian and mammalian encounters, but equally some of the harshest, most impressive vistas known to man. Some of the most sought-after island species on this cruise include St Helena Plover, Gough Moorhen, Gough and Wilkin's Buntings, Inaccessible Island Rail, Inaccessible and Nightingale Island Finches and Tristan Thrush Tristan whilst pelagic birding is superb with, Snowy, Light-mantled, Northern Royal and Southern Royal Albatrosses, King, Magellanic, Macaroni, Northern Rockhopper, Adelie and Chinstrap Penguins, Magellanic Diving Petrel, Spectacled, Snow, Antarctic, Blue, Kerguelen, White-headed & Great-winged Petrels, Antarctic Prion, Southern Fulmar, Black-bellied and Grey-backed Storm Petrels, Chilean Skua and Dolphin Gull.

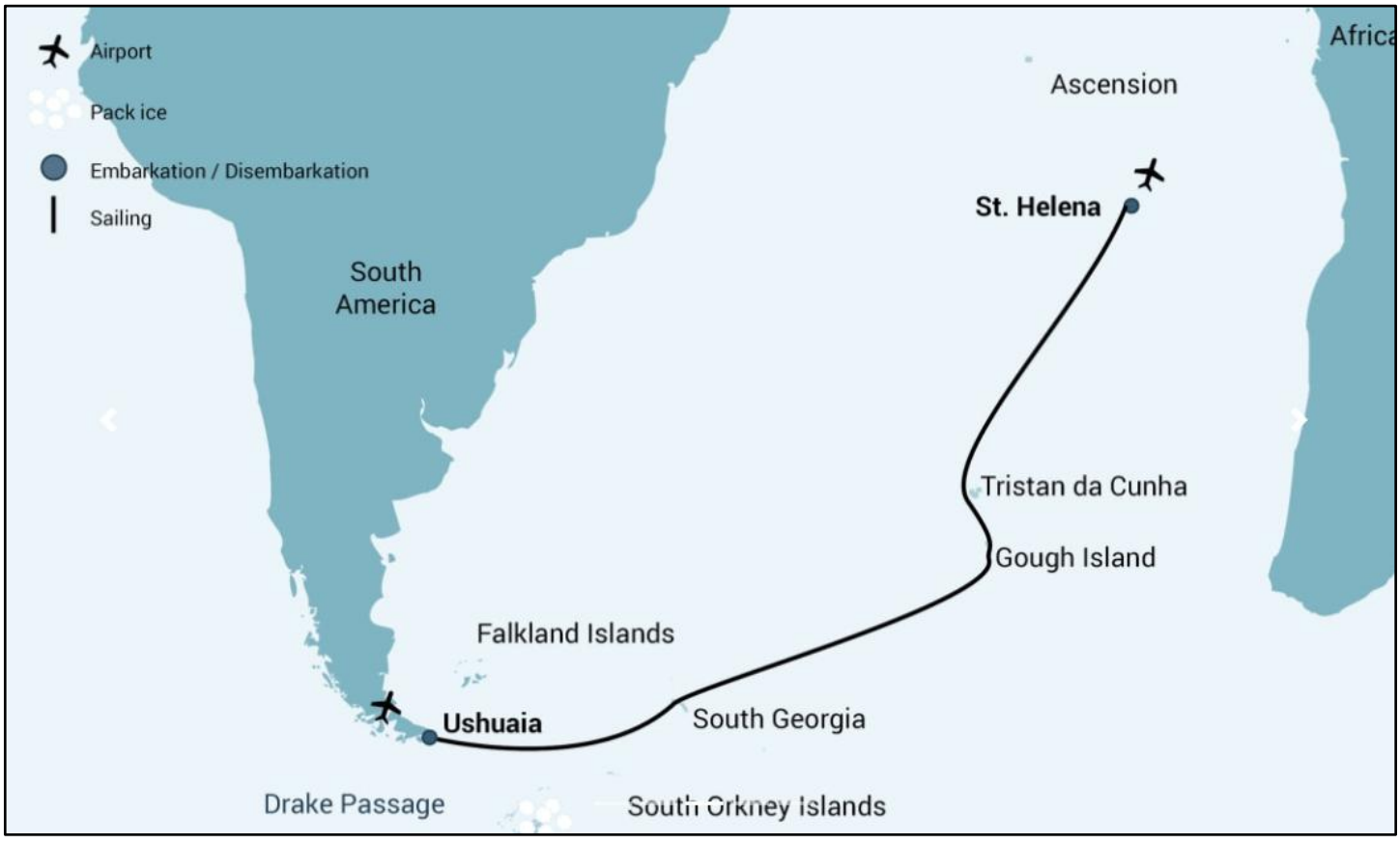
Itinerary & Map

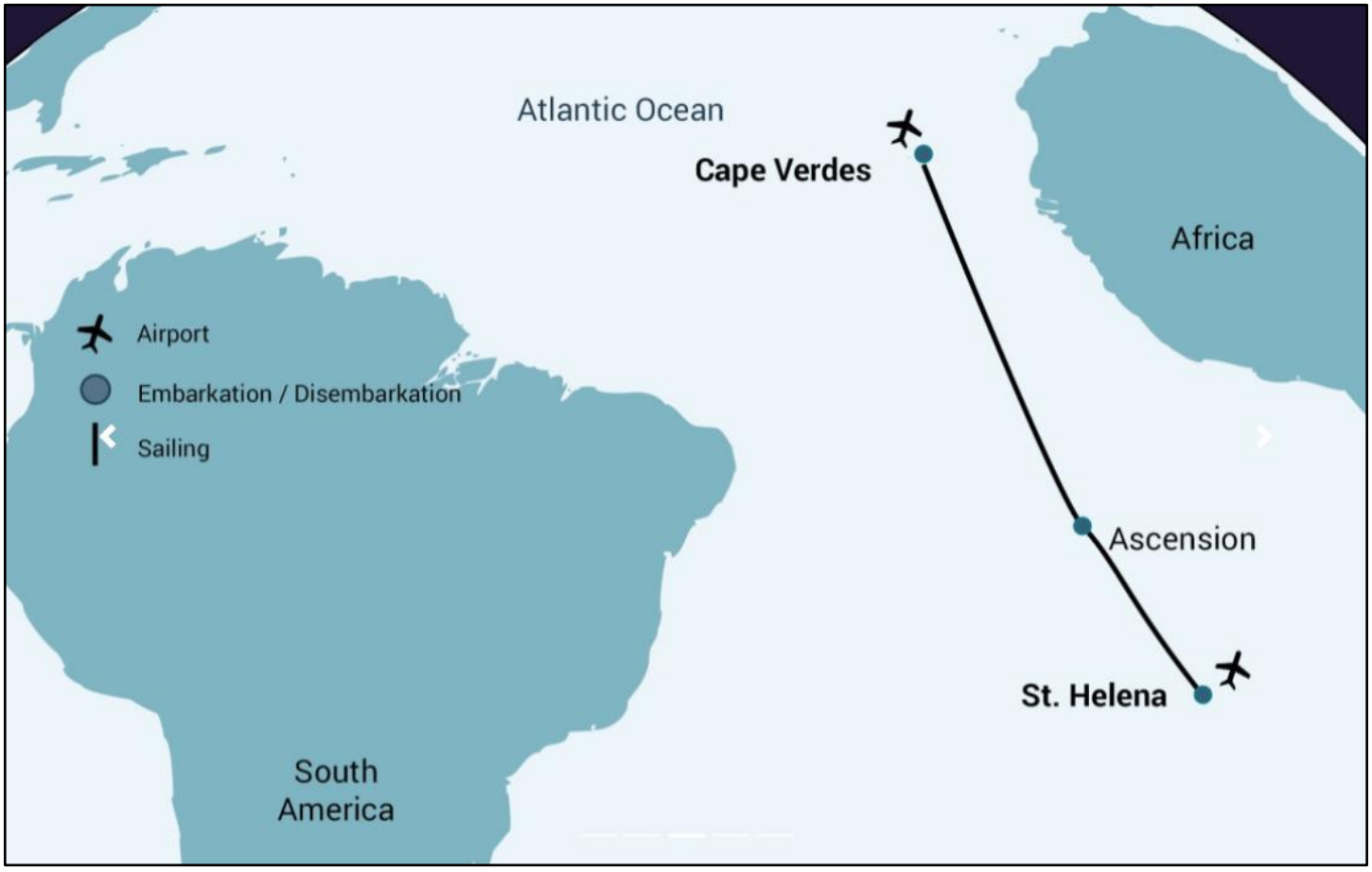
Ushuaia to St Helena

Day 1	Arrival in Ushuaia, Argentina
Days 2 to 4	At sea to South Georgia
Days 5 to 7	South Georgia
Days 8 to 12	At sea to Gough Island
Day 13	Gough Island
Days 14 to 17	Tristan da Cunha
Days 18 to 21	At sea to St. Helena
Days 22 to 24	St. Helena & final departure

St. Helena to Cape Verde

Day 1	Depart from St. Helena
Days 2 & 3	Sailing the Mid-Atlantic Ridge
Days 4 & 5	Onward to Ascension Island
Days 6 to 10	Crossing the equator
Day 11	Arrival in Praia, Cape Verde & final departure




Atlantic Ocean
Cape Verdes
Africa
Airport
Embarkation / Disembarkation
Sailing
Ascension
St. Helena
South America

Birding & Wildlife sites in detail

Beagle Channel. After boarding our vessel, we'll begin our journey eastwards towards South Georgia. As we leave the scenic harbour of the world's most southern city, we enter the famous Beagle Channel. Forming the boundary between Argentina and Chile, we will have rugged cliffs and islands on either side of us and our birding will begin in earnest! We will look out for both Flying and the flightless Fuegian Steamer Ducks, Upland Goose, Great Grebe, Rock and Imperial Shags, Dolphin Gull, Chilean Skua and South American Tern. Even the mighty Andean Condor has been seen here on previous Rockjumper cruises. We may well encounter our debut penguins in the form of Magellanic; but once we enter the open ocean, we will begin our lessons in pelagic bird identification. Here we will meet the first of many Black-browed Albatross, Cape and White-chinned Petrels, Southern Giant Petrel and Sooty Shearwater, and we will also keep alert for Magellanic Diving Petrel as we enjoy our first watery sunset.



Grey-headed Albatross by Glen Valentine

South Georgia. As we approach South Georgia, the marine avifauna is dominated increasingly by the species breeding there. Given the enormous numbers of seabirds nesting on South Georgia and its surrounding islets, this is not surprising. Although this island lies south of the Antarctic Convergence, its waters don't freeze in winter, meaning it can support life throughout the year. As a result, vast numbers of birds and pinnipeds live here year-round – over 500,000 pairs of King Penguins call this island home and walking through their packed colonies is without a doubt one of the single greatest wildlife experiences on the planet. In fact, the area around Salisbury Plain is believed to have the highest density of wildlife of anywhere on Earth!

We have several days to explore this mountainous, glaciated island. So stark, but home to such mind-bogglingly abundant and exciting wildlife. We will make every effort to explore the Salisbury Plain, where beyond the black



Light-mantled Albatross by Adam Riley

sand beach, lies one of the world's largest King Penguin colonies. In addition, we plan a landing at St Andrew's Bay, where an even bigger King Penguin colony exists. Nearby are the breeding grounds for Light-mantled Albatross, White-chinned Petrel, Snowy Sheathbill, Brown Skua and Antarctic Tern.



Antarctic Petrel by Adam Riley

The beaches heave with South American Fur Seal, and if we are lucky, we may even see enormous Southern Elephant Seal beachmasters battling for supremacy. These enormous animals, the largest species in the order Carnivora, reach weights of up to 4,000 kg (8,800 lb) and lengths of 5.8 m (19 ft). Their large proboscis, which gives them their name, allows them to roar extraordinarily loudly. This, combined with their fierce fighting, result in an incredible spectacle to experience.

We also plan to visit Grytviken, the whaling station where the largest individual animal known to have lived on earth, a huge Blue Whale specimen, was butchered. Here we will visit the South Georgia Museum, remnants of the whaling station and the grave of the famed Antarctic explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton. Of course, birds and pinnipeds are also resident, and photographic opportunities will be breath-taking throughout

Please bear in mind, that throughout Antarctica and the Subantarctic, landings are subject to the weather conditions; alternatives are usually available when winds and surf are unfavourable at a pre-planned site.

Other birds we seek during these three unforgettable days include South Georgia Diving Petrel, the endemic South Georgia Shag, inquisitive Snowy Sheathbills, the Subantarctic race of Brown Skua and Antarctic Tern. The endemic South Georgia Pipit, the world's most southern passerine, was completely restricted to small offshore islands, but great news is that it has now expanded due to the eradication of rats from South Georgia and is now far more easily located than before. Over 3 million pairs of Macaroni Penguin breed on the island, but are nowhere near as obvious as the Kings, but we will no doubt encounter them. Another target is the "South Georgia" Yellow-billed Pintail, a strange race of this more widespread species which is known to be carnivorous here on South Georgia.



King Penguins by Keith Valentine

South Georgia features some of the most dazzling scenery, especially around the south-east tip of the island; while the stunning Drygalski Fjord is framed by sharp, non-glaciated mountain peaks. For photographers, this offers some truly spectacular photographic opportunities and sea birding will be at its very best as

we depart from South Georgia. We will look out for our first pure-white Snow Petrels, as well as South Georgia Diving Petrels and most of the species already mentioned, in particular Kerguelen Petrels.



Atlantic Petrel by Glen Valentine

At sea to Gough Island. In the Westerlies we hope to have a pleasant tailwind. On both sides of the Antarctic Convergence, we may observe great numbers of the many Antarctic and sub-Antarctic's seabirds including a stack of albatrosses; Snowy, Southern and Northern Royal, Grey-headed, Atlantic Yellow-nosed, Sooty and Light-mantled. Petrels are also well represented with Antarctic, Blue, Antarctic, Slender-billed, Great-winged, White-headed, Soft-plumaged, Atlantic, White-chinned, Spectacled and Grey; White-faced, Black-bellied and White-bellied Storm Petrels.

Gough Island. Today we plan to approach Ilha de Gonçalo Álvares. The island bears the name of the intrepid Portuguese explorer who found and mapped it in 1505, but it is more generally known as Gough Island after it's 'rediscovery' by Charles Gough in 1732.

Almost as remote a location as South Georgia, the island is occupied year-round by a small team of 6 hardy South African's manning the weather station. The island, covered in lush, green vegetation is a World Heritage site, perhaps one of the least disturbed of all the Atlantic islands. To maintain the pristine conditions, only the weather station staff and the occasional biologist are allowed to set foot on the island, so we shall cruise along the shoreline by Zodiac instead (as always weather permitting).

Gough Island is the most important seabird island known to man, with incredible densities of breeding seabirds. Great Shearwater, Atlantic Petrel and Broad-billed Prion each number over a million pairs. Perhaps more importantly, the world's entire breeding population of the Critically Endangered Tristan Albatross and Atlantic Petrel are found here. We also have some highly sought after island Endemics, Gough Moorhen and Gough Bunting, both have only been seen by a handful of intrepid birders. Amongst the many species we can expect to see, highlights include the seldom encountered Northern Rockhopper Penguins, Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross, Kerguelen Petrel, Grey Petrel and Little Shearwater.



Snow Petrel by Dušan Brinkhuizen

We hope to circumnavigate most of the 33-mile circumference of the island in the ship whilst enjoying spectacular scenery and an unprecedented abundance of wildlife. We should be amongst the very few privileged visitors who

have been able to experience Gough and its unique birdlife. The island serves as a focal point for some more mammal encounters with resident Subantarctic Fur Seals, while Southern Right Whale and Dusky Dolphin are generally common. We may also find any number of other species amongst Humpback, Long-finned Pilot, Killer, Sperm or False Killer Whale. After this fabulous experience, we shall make the short crossing to the archipelago of Tristan da Cunha.



Spectacled Petrel by Daniel Danckwerts

Tristan da Cunha. Our tour of the Tristan da Cunha archipelago will start with a visit to Inaccessible Island, where we can expect to arrive in the early morning.

The remnants of a long extinct volcano, Inaccessible Island sits about 45km southwest of Tristan da Cunha. We shall spend a day cruising around the island by Zodiac, hoping to see a few very special birds. A tantalizing name, mouse-like behaviour and the mantle of world's smallest flightless bird makes the Inaccessible Island Rail the top of our priority list. Recent taxonomic investigation also means we have another island endemic to search for, the Inaccessible Island Finch. While not an endemic, Inaccessible is also the sole breeding site for Spectacled Petrel and plays host to a colony of Northern Rockhopper Penguin. We can also expect to see very large numbers of Subantarctic Fur Seals lounging about in the tussock grass.

Despite its proximity to Inaccessible, Nightingale Island is an active volcano with a rather more chequered past. Successfully occupied and claimed by pirates during the 19th century, the island has suffered from a cyclone, volcanic eruption, and a gigantic oil spill in recent years.

A Zodiac trip around the island offers us a chance for the endemic Nightingale Island Finch as well as the Endangered Wilkins's Bunting. Much like the other nearby islands, there is a high concentration of nesting seabirds including Common Diving and Soft-plumaged Petrels, White-faced and White-bellied Storm Petrels and the Tristan sub-species of Brown Skua which may warrant full species status. We conclude our time here by visiting the island, Tristan da Cunha. We plan to call on the settlement at the west side of the main island where we should see the first and commonest of the archipelago's endemics, the Tristan Thrush or 'starchy' as the locals term it.



Black Noddy by Glen Valentine

Please note that we will try and approach for landings, however due to the weather conditions this is not always possible.

At sea to St. Helena. Our departure from Tristan da Cunha means we shall enter sub-tropical waters shortly. The volume of pelagic species will reduce noticeably, but this also heralds a change in species composition. Cetacean sightings are likely to be good, with chances of Sperm, Fin, and Short-finned Whales. As we move closer to St. Helena, we will start to see our first Bulwer's Petrel, Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrel and Parasitic and Long-tailed Jaegers.



Red-billed Tropicbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

St. Helena. On approach to St Helena and even from land, we can expect to see close and plentiful sightings of White Tern, Black Noddy, Red-billed Tropicbird and Masked Booby. Founded in 1502 by the Portuguese, St Helena is one of the most solitary Islands of the South Atlantic Ocean sitting roughly halfway between the continents of Africa and South America. Although it is in the tropics, its climate is mild. For centuries it was an important trade route, but St Helena became better known as a place of exile for enemies of the British state including Napoleon Bonaparte, Dinizulu kaCetshwayo and many Boer soldiers.

Upon discovery, St Helena was reported to be covered with trees and birds. Sadly, it has suffered greatly from human settlement and domestic animals. Presently many areas have been stripped of all trees and there is now only one endemic bird species left. There are several introduced species, and it should not take much effort to locate most of them around Jamestown, including Peaceful Dove, Rock Dove, Common Myna, Common Waxbill, Yellow Canary, Red Fody and Java Sparrow.



Sperm Whale by Adam Riley

During our time here, we will be able to visit many of the nearby historical sites, including The Briars and Longwood (Napoleon's residences during exile), his burial site and those of 141 Boer graves too. A visit to Deadwood Plain, where exiled Boers lived in tented camps circa 1903 also happens to be an excellent site for the Critically Endangered endemic, St Helena Plover (also known as the Wirebird). There are thought to be around 50 to 250 adults left, victims of habitat destruction, competition with introduced birds and domestic animals. We can also plant a Gumwood in the

Millennium Forest, where over 5000 have been planted by visitors to regenerate the denuded land.

St. Helena to Ascension Island. These two days of sailing are fairly quiet from a bird and mammal perspective. With a little luck though, we should be able to see Long-tailed Jaeger, Leach's Storm Petrel, Sooty Shearwater, Sooty Terns and the first of many Ascension Frigatebirds, there are also breeding pairs of White-tailed Tropicbird, White Tern, Black Noddy and Masked, Brown and Red-footed Boobys.



Cape Verde Shearwater by Adam Riley

Ascension Island. This is a dry volcanic island with a moist and richly vegetated top. The island serves as little more than a military post for the British and American militaries as well as hosting ground satellite, European Space Agency rocket tracking and a signals intelligence facility. Of far more importance to birders are the large Sooty Tern (wide-awake) colonies, consisting of up to 100 000 breeding pairs at any one time. We will try to climb the moist summit of Ascension Island and make a zodiac-cruise around Boatswain Bird Island, offering great opportunities for snorkelling. Boatswain Bird Island hosts the entire breeding population of Ascension Frigatebird. We may witness egg-laying Green Turtles coming ashore in the evening.

Ascension Island to Cape Verde. We should witness an improvement in bird quantity and diversity as we near and cross the equator. The northbound spring migration should allow us regular views of Cory's Shearwater, Bulwer's Petrel, Leach's Storm Petrel, Long-tailed Jaeger and Arctic Tern, with some luck we could also see Sabine's Gull and Pomarine Skua. As we get nearer to the Cape Verde, we will start to see new species in the shape of Fea's Petrel, Boyd's and Cape Verde Shearwaters. Mammal sightings should improve dramatically too with the possibility of many dolphins including Spinner, Pantropical, Rough-toothed, Risso's and Clymene. Whale wise, we could see any of Sowerby's Beaked, Cuvier's Beaked, Blainville's Beaked, Short-finned Pilot, Humpback, Killer and False Killer.



Common Kestrel (Alexander's) by Adam Riley

Praia, Cape Verde. Disembarkation normally takes place at 09.00 hours*, whereafter we'll make an excursion to Cidade Velha. Steeped in history, we'll enjoy the massive fortress on the hill, built to deter English marauders in the period when the Crowns of Portugal and Spain were united and Portuguese possessions became as fair game to the likes of Drake and Raleigh as were Spanish ones. We will also see the ruins of the Cathedral, the oldest Christian Church in the tropics, and the slave whipping



Santiago Island, Cape Verde by Adam Riley

post in the main square. The village is well watered and there are plantations of sugar cane, which support a rum distillery, and several species of terrestrial birds including Grey-headed Kingfisher, Common Kestrel (of the island sub-species commonly known as Alexander's), Cape Verde Swift, Black-crowned Sparrow-Lark, Eurasian Blackcap, Spectacled Warbler and Spanish Sparrow. We have another guided stroll around the City of Praia, the capital of Cape Verde. A shall hear a variety of unique folk music as we pass the various bars!

* For the disembarking passengers, we will reserve a few rooms in a hotel in Praia, where your luggage will be collected and you can freshen up at the end of your excursion before travelling to the airport this evening, or to your hotels if you decide to stay longer in Praia.

Vessel Schematics & Cabins



M/v "Plancius" accommodates 108 passengers with private toilet and shower in 4 quadruple porthole cabins, 9 twin porthole cabins, 25 twin cabins with window and 2 twin deluxe cabins, all (ca. 12,5 square meters) and 10 twin superior cabins (ca. 21 square meters). All cabins offer lower berths (one queen-size bed in the superior cabins and two single beds in the twin cabins), except for the 4 quadruple cabins (for 4 persons in 2x upper and lower beds).

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

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

Tour inclusions:

- Voyage aboard the indicated vessel as indicated in the itinerary
- 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.
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the programme.
- Comprehensive pre-departure material.

Tour exclusions:

- Any airfare, whether on scheduled or charter flights
- Pre- and post- land arrangements.
- Passport and visa expenses.
- Government arrival and departure taxes.
- Meals ashore.

- Baggage, cancellation and personal insurance (which is strongly recommended).
- 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 voyages for stewards and other service personnel aboard (guidelines will be provided).

- **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 10 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.**
- **PLEASE NOTE: All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on ice, weather, and wildlife conditions. Landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions, and environmental concerns per IAATO regulations. Official sailing plans and landing slots are scheduled with IAATO prior to the start of the season, but the expedition leader determines the final plan. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises.**
- **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 main tour departs from Ushuaia on day 1 (arrival day). The cruise will conclude in St Helena on day 24.

The extension departs from Jamestown, St. Helena on day 1 and concludes in Praia, Cape Verde on the morning of day 11.

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.

As many international flights to Ushuaia route via Buenos Aires, it is important to know that there are two airports in the city.

1. Ministro Pistarini International Airport (IATA: EZE) which handles international and domestic flights.
2. Buenos Aires – Aeroparque, also known as Jorge Newberry (IATA: AEP) which handles domestic flights.

Both the international and domestic airports cater for internal flights within Argentina. These airports are separate, and the drive between them usually takes between 1 to 2 hours traffic dependent. It is, therefore, essential that you confirm with your travel agent the airport code to be sure which airport your flights arrive at and depart from.

Ministro Pistarini International Airport, Buenos Aires (IATA: EZE) is the main port of entry for international flights into Argentina and is well serviced by many of the world's major airlines. From Buenos Aires, there are regular flights to Malvinas Argentinas Ushuaia International Airport (IATA: USH).

Departure flights from Saint Helena Airport (IATA: HLE) are via South Africa only.

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.