

FALKLAND ISLANDS & SOUTH GEORGIA TOUR REPORT 2022

19 / 20 / 22 November - 10 December 2022

BY PETE MORRIS

Well, I may as well cut straight to the chase... The 2022 Birdquest tour to Antarctica, the Falkland Islands and South Georgia did not exactly go to plan as sadly, our voyage had to be drastically altered before we ever reached Antarctica. The start of the 2022 Antarctic season saw an unusual amount of bad weather with many large storms, high winds and heavy seas, conditions which also impacted on us. As we left South Georgia, heading south for Antarctica one of the passengers on the ship (not a member of our group) fell, hit his head and went into a coma, meaning that the Captain and staff had no option other than to change course and return to Port Stanley to seek help for our medical emergency. Tragically, the passenger concerned passed away as we were sailing back to Port Stanley in the Falklands. It was a huge tragedy to everyone on board, and especially to Frank, his friends, family and fellow travellers. Our loss was small by comparison, but it did stop us from actually reaching Antarctica proper, as there was not time to do so once the necessary legal formalities had been completed in Port Stanley. So really, from our perspective, the tour became ***The Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands***. On the plus side, the weather when we first passed the Falklands was poor, preventing us from making most of the landings we had hoped to, so a return to this wonderful archipelago allowed us to enjoy what we had missed the first time around, as well as a bonus or two!

Reflecting back after the voyage, of course not reaching the Antarctic continent was a big disappointment for all. However, if one can put that to one side, and concentrate on what we did do, the places that we visited, the wildlife we saw and the experiences we had, it was still a remarkable adventure, filled with so many fantastic memories. From the stunning scenery of Tierra del Fuego to the rolling islands and abundant wildlife of the Falklands, to the incredibly scenic and rugged South Georgia, it was action-packed all the way. And then there were the sea-crossings... a test of endurance for sure, but for those that made the effort, it was often very worthwhile. Having albatrosses and petrels passing close by, eyeballing us as they went, was quite an experience!

For those that took the pre, pre-tour extension, we spent a spectacular morning exploring the high mountains around the Garibaldi Pass. An hour or so north of Ushuaia, we parked up and walked along a scenic valley before cutting up above the tree line. It was a fair hike, but fairly soon we were at the altitude we wanted to be at, and it didn't take too long at all before we found our main quarry, the very special White-bellied Seedsnipe (it may have helped that Nina and I were there the day before too!). We watched a pair of these often elusive and cryptic birds, as they slowly made their way across the

cushion bog. A really magical experience, especially in that breath-taking landscape. Also here were some really lovely Yellow-bridled Finches and fast-moving Ochre-naped Ground Tyrants, as well as a variety of more common species.

After a highly successful and enjoyable morning, we paused on our way back to Ushuaia for a lavish lunch. An obligatory stop at the dump provided numerous localized White-throated Caracaras and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles, amongst the throng of scavengers, whilst a stop in town yielded good numbers of gulls, numerous Southern Giant Petrels, smart Chilean Skuas and a surprise South Polar Skua which ended up being our only one of the tour! Back nearer to our hotel, an excellent variety of shorebirds, gulls and waterfowl were present. Highlights included some smart Ashy-headed Geese, Kelp and Upland Geese, Flying and Fuegian Steamer Ducks, dapper Chiloe Wigeon, smart Black-faced Ibises, delightful Dolphin Gulls, Magellanic and Blackish Oystercatchers, a lovely pair of Magellanic Snipes and some diddy Austral Negritos. It had been a fantastic, but tiring day!

The next day we were joined by a few more group members for our pre-tour extension visit to the Nothofagus woodlands, lakes and mountains of the rugged Tierra del Fuego National Park. We joined the queues at the park gates on what was a pretty wild and windy day! Once in the park, we took a detour from the crowds and headed for a pretty pebbled beach. As we arrived, a flock of Austral Parakeets flew over and landed in view, a great start. Nearby, the reliable pair of Dark-bellied Cinclodes showed very well, even displaying from the flagpole on the adjacent pier! Another stop nearby yielded a number of the more common forest species including the superb Thorn-tailed Rayadito and numerous Chilean Elaenias.

We then drove to a nearby lake side Nothofagus forest that we knew was a good hang out for one of our main target species of the day, the Magellanic Woodpecker. It was pretty breezy and we needed to work hard before finding a spectacular male sporting a bright red head crowned with a small crest. He was extremely obliging, flying around our group, and hammering away on old logs and tree trunks. A completely enthralling experience having such a good show from this magnificent bird! Along the shore of the nearby lake, we saw a stunning pair of Great Grebes at their nest, giving great views. A most amazing species!

With the wind still pretty ferocious, we moved on to another location along the coast of Tierra Del Fuego that offered a little more protection. A pleasant walk here produced a brilliant views of a feisty little Austral Pygmy Owl, as well as more forest species including the uncommon White-throated Treerunner which posed really well for us. The coast itself was quiet, and in an ever-strengthening wind, we retired for lunch in the rather pleasant national park restaurant. After lunch, having stopped for a pair of Black-necked Swans, we made our way back to Ushuaia. Our first stop was to see the localized White-throated Caracara, before heading back to the river mouth by the hotel, where we once again enjoyed the excellent variety of waterbirds on show, including the smart Ashy-headed Goose, Black-faced Ibis and Magellanic Snipe, and spent some time enjoying the similar White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers on the shore. It had been a great day but it wasn't over yet. Those of us that still had the energy headed back into the park at dusk, and after a bit of hunting around we managed to find a stunning Rufous-legged Owl which showed brilliantly in the spotlight. What a great bird!!

With a bonus morning on our hands, many of us decided to take an additional boat excursion. We dropped all of our luggage off at the terminal and went out on a small boat to a group of islands in the Beagle Channel, the Faro Les Éclaireurs and the Sea Lion Islands. Travelling out, we saw plenty of Southern Giant Petrels and Black-browed Albatrosses as well as our first Magellanic Penguins. The rocky islets were home to breeding colonies of South American Terns, South American Sea Lions, and Imperial and Rock Shags, and we also noted our first Snowy Sheathbills. Of greatest importance to us though, was the presence of the local form of Blackish Cinclodes, which is split by some authorities as Black Cinclodes. These delightful little birds live on the barren rocky islands, but are inquisitive, and one made it over to our boat and was rewarded with a drink of fresh water, a scarce resource out there!

It was an excellent morning, and after a pleasant lunch, it was time! We headed for the dock, passed through the security, and found the Plancius, before boarding and settling into our cabins. That afternoon, after all of our mandatory safety briefings, we set sail. Cruising down the Straits of Magellan on beautiful calm seas, with amazing rainbows, we soon saw plenty of Black-browed Albatrosses, distant Magellanic Penguins (and our first Gentoo) on a beach and a lovely sunset. We went to bed knowing that things would change...

And change they did! It was a rude awakening the next morning as the boat was moving substantially in pretty heavy seas, a real contrast to the previous evening! Sadly, the conditions made life hard. Seawatching was trickier, and finding suitable shelter was not straightforward, whilst for some, the motion was just too much! Those that persevered were treated to a decent variety of seabirds, including huge Southern Royal Albatrosses, our first Northern Giant, White-chinned and Cape Petrels, Slender-billed Prions (our first of this confusing group), Sooty Shearwaters and numerous Wilson's Storm Petrels.

We awoke to calmer seas and made our way past West Point Island in the Falklands just after sunrise, where we were joined by briefly playful Commerson's and Peale's Dolphins. Sadly, the rough weather that we had endured had left us with some headaches, and our original plans had to be modified due to the weather, and the two landings we made were the back-up sites. They were of course fantastic places but meant that we had no chance of the endemic Cobb's Wren. Still, there was plenty to enjoy!!

Our first landing was at Grave Cove which is home to some Gentoo Penguin colonies, one at the beach where we landed and others at an ocean-facing beach on the opposite side of the island. As we landed, Striated Caracaras (known locally as Johnnie Rooks) came to inspect us and carry on with their mischievous business! Also present were attractive Ruddy-headed Geese, as well as Kelp and Upland Geese, and nearby, Yellow-billed Teal and Crested Ducks were seen.

At the long white-sand beach on the other side of the island, we had great fun watching the comings and goings of the penguins! Here too, Snowy Sheathbills foraged on the beach, smart Dolphin Gulls patrolled the coast, and Blackish Cinclodes busily picked along the tideline. We were also pleased to see our first Falkland Steamer Ducks, which included a couple of pairs with young ducklings!

After a lovely morning we made our way back to the Plancius for a lavish lunch. It should be said at this point that I think all on board were mightily impressed by the job that the cooks and staff did. Great food and loads of it. Losing weight really was not an option!! As we re-stocked with calories, the Plancius was navigated round to West Point Island for our afternoon excursion.

Once all of the group had gathered on shore and admired more Ruddy-headed Geese and Blackish Cinclodes (Tussockbirds), we made our way across the island. Correndera Pipits and colourful Long-tailed Meadowlarks were a distraction (especially against the bright yellow gorse), and we also saw Crested Caracara (scarce in the Falklands) and our first Variable Hawks. However, the main focus on this lovely sunny afternoon was to spend time at the captivating Black-browed Albatross and Southern Rockhopper Penguin colony and this we did as albatross bills clattered in display, and cute rockhoppers hopped through the muddy tussocks! It was a wonderful experience. Heading back, as we approached the landing cove, we enjoyed a couple of lovely Magellanic Penguins, Magellanic and Blackish Oystercatchers and a fine pair of Kelp Geese enjoying the afternoon sun.

Setting sail in the evening, we rounded the northwest corner of the Falkland Islands, but we knew that more rough weather was on its way. In fact, it was rough enough to close the main harbour at Port Stanley, and consequently our plans were changed once more. In effect, we were beginning the long passage from West Point Island to South Georgia!

And long it was! Three full days of pretty blustery and choppy conditions made it somewhat a test of endurance! Time to take in a few lectures, to relax, to witness life on the bridge, to drink coffee and eat biscuits and cakes, and of course, for those with the stamina and inclination, to peer endlessly at the ocean in the hope of a few seabirds or cetaceans. Of course, no one could manage dawn until dusk on deck, but between us we gave it pretty good coverage and managed a decent list of seabirds during the voyage. For me, it is always a real privilege just to be on the ocean, watching albatrosses cruising by and tiny storm petrels fluttering over the ocean. How they manage to eke out an existence in these harsh conditions is mind-boggling at times! Highlights included our first epic Wandering Albatrosses, numerous Southern Royal and a single Northern Royal Albatross, our first stunning Light-mantled and Grey-headed Albatrosses, the much-wanted Atlantic Petrel, good numbers of Soft-plumaged Petrels, numerous smart Black-bellied and Grey-backed Storm Petrels, and a few Arctic Terns (having just completed their extraordinary migration). Closer to South Georgia, having crossed the Antarctic Convergence, we found our first stunning Snow Petrel, attractive Blue Petrels, the bulky Antarctic Prion, Fairy Prion (just a few, best identified from photographs), South Georgia Diving Petrel (another best confirmed from photos). By the third day we reached Shag Rocks, and here we had some feeding Fin Whales as well as huge numbers of South Georgia Shags as well as a good array of the seabirds mentioned above, including some super-obliging Light-mantled Albatrosses. It was a pleasant distraction from the otherwise endless seascapes!!

We arrived at South Georgia, unsurprisingly, in a stiff forty-knot wind which forced us to abandon our 'Plan A' landing at Right Whale Cove. 'Plan B' was then activated. We sailed around the north coast of South Georgia to Prince Olaf Harbour, home to an abandoned whaling station and wrecked coal carrier, all beautifully located at the base of a soaring conical snow-capped mountain. We decided to do a zodiac cruise here and enjoy our first views of Antarctic Fur Seals at a colony, numerous Southern Elephant Seals, close up giant petrels and South Georgia Shags, and our first sightings of Antarctic Tern, South Georgia Pipit and South Georgia Pintail, all set against some gorgeous lichen-covered rock formations. There was some stunning geology here, with lines of pushed-up rock covered in vibrant yellow lichens.

After a pleasant introduction to this magnificent island, we then headed for the famous Salisbury Plain and the Bay of Islands. Conditions were still difficult, and the chance of a landing was up in the air, so we spent some time cruising around the spectacular Bay of Islands, with the amazing glacier at Rosita Bay and rocky islets with stunning Snow Petrels and distant nesting Wandering Albatrosses. Vast King Penguin colonies were visible in the distance, but all we could do was to cross our fingers! Fortunately, late in the afternoon the wind did drop, and we were able to squeeze in an excellent pre-dinner landing on Salisbury Plain. It was our first chance to visit one of South Georgia's fantastic giant King Penguin colonies, and in lovely low afternoon light. There was always so much to watch going on, with notable highlights including some endearing elephant seal pups, as well as more South Georgia Pipits and South Georgia Pintails.

We moved east along the coast overnight, and had breakfast off of the amazing St Andrews Bay, surrounded by inquisitive King Penguins in the water, and Snowy Sheathbills on deck! We then had a fantastic landing where everyone was free to roam along the marked walkways through the penguin and seal colonies, watching the incredible interactions going on whilst admiring the awesome scenery. A 'blonde' leucistic Antarctic Fur Seal was a popular inhabitant, song-fighting South Georgia Pipits were lovely to see (incredible how quickly they've rebounded since the rat eradication), and breeding Brown Skuas were busy flashing their white wing patches. Watching the King Penguins, occasional Gentoo Penguins and elephant seals going in and out of the sea was great fun too. It was a truly wonderful morning, and great weather too! We returned to ship and had another great lunch, and as we moved on, we were entertained by three Humpback Whales that swam and dived beneath us for a while before bidding us farewell. An incredible experience that left smiles on all of our faces.

We sailed around to Godthul, home to a former sealing colony and several colonies of Gentoo Penguins. It was a pretty grey afternoon, and we scrambled up a steep hillside covered in clumps of tussock, and were rewarded with more Gentoo colonies, complete with young chicks, as well as some smart Antarctic Terns and more South Georgia Pintails.

An early start the following morning in the mist and clouds of northern South Georgia, soon gave way to a beautiful sunny morning as we sailed to our first destination, Hercules Bay, home to a small colony of Macaroni Penguins. We anchored up here in the relative calm of the bay to eat breakfast, surrounded by stunning geology formations in the cliffs and a large waterfall. What a lovely spot! We did two rounds of zodiac cruises at Hercules, each cruising the shoreline visiting the colonies of the brilliant Macaroni Penguins, probably our most-wanted outstanding species at this point. South Georgia Shags, Antarctic Terns, South Georgia Pipit, and several King and Gentoo Penguins were also present alongside a few Antarctic Fur and Southern Elephant Seals present on the beaches and in the caves. And all of this in the amazing scenery! On a fabulous, sunny South Georgia day we then set sail for Grytviken.

The sun continued into the afternoon as we went ashore at Grytviken and commenced the afternoon's activities at the great man Sir Ernest Shackleton's grave, toasting the amazing explorer and adventurer with a tot of Scotch Whisky. We spent the whole afternoon at Grytviken allowing the group to wander as they pleased around the museum (with the replica of the James Caird boat used in Shackleton's rescue mission), the church, the old whaling station, the gruesome oil tanks, and, of course, amongst the abundant wildlife. Nesting Antarctic Terns, South Georgia Pintails, a few King Penguins, cute elephant seal pups and adorable new-born fur seals all were admired, before we headed back to the Plancius where we enjoyed a fine barbecue dinner on the back deck washed down with fine wine and quality ales!!

The wind and ocean swells were quite strong until we reached the lee of the island near Gold Harbour the following morning, and fortunately we were able to get ashore early. Gold Harbour was stunningly beautiful with incredible numbers of tame elephant seal pups, skuas displaying, and loads of King Penguins. In the early light, we watched penguins coming and going from the beach, and were richly entertained by the inquisitive elephant seal pups. It was a great early morning, but we were ready for breakfast by the time we got back on board!

Our run of calm weather continued and on our last zodiac cruise at South Georgia we visited Cooper's Bay, home to colonies of both Chinstrap and Macaroni Penguins. While these colonies were our main targets we were sent off from South Georgia with a bang after seeing four different penguin species on this cruise – Gentoo, King, Macaroni and Chinstrap! Indeed, we saw almost a full suite of South Georgia creatures here including Southern Elephant Seals, Antarctic Fur Seals, the four penguins, South Georgia Shags, South Georgia Pipit, South Georgia Pintails, Snowy Sheathbills, Brown Skuas, and Southern (including several fine snowy-white individuals, one at close range) and Northern Giant Petrels. We did not, at this stage, realise the significance of making the effort to see these Chinstraps!

We then continued on towards Drygalski Fjord. As we approached, we could see lots of white caps in the distance, and suddenly hit ferocious winds. As we entered the fjord the wind was really whistling along, hitting 60 knots. As we admired the amazing scenery, whilst holding on to our hats, we hoped that this was just a local katabatic wind being generated from the high peaks and whistling down the fjord... As we set sail for Antarctica, those hopes turned to blind optimism! The ferocious winds continued unabated and it was clear we were in for a bumpy night. Seabirding that afternoon was, to say the least, somewhat challenging.

We awoke the following morning in still bumpy conditions, and some of us were up on deck, oblivious to the fact that we had changed course. At eight o'clock the announcement came that we were heading back to Port Stanley due to a medical emergency on board. Tragically, Frank, the passenger concerned, never regained consciousness, and passed away, but our course was set, and we had to make Port Stanley to complete the necessary documentation and arrange Frank's repatriation. A great tragedy, and with the time this was going to take, our visit to the Antarctic continent itself had to be cancelled.

It was three days at sea, generally going against the wind and the currents, so progress was slow. Conditions varied, but it was generally breezy, without being too uncomfortable, and there was plenty of time to admire the seabirds and the seascapes! On the seabird front we did manage to pick up a couple of new species with several good views of speedy Kerguelen Petrels, and a less expected White-headed Petrel, as well as good numbers of Soft-plumaged Petrels, a few smart Atlantic Petrels and some excellent Great Shearwaters. A wonderful variety of previously seen seabird were also around, with favourites such as Light-mantled and Grey-headed Albatrosses and Cape Petrels frequently present.

It was a relief when Port Stanley finally came into view, and as we entered the harbour early in the morning there was a real sense of relief that we would finally be back on terra firme. Although we had missed out on our trip to Antarctica, we had also largely missed out on the best bits of the Falklands, due to the weather during our initial visit, so we now had time to make amends, and we were determined to make the most of it!

It took a while for some necessary formalities to take place but we went ashore in the morning to explore the town. It was fantastic just roaming around, seeing all the sights, visiting a few shops and cafes and admiring the steamer ducks and other wildlife along the shore. After a group fish, chips and a pint lunch at the local pub "The Globe", we all boarded buses and drove out on a stunning sunny day to Gypsy Cove. We were soon catching up on the birds we had missed previously. Smart White-bridled Finches and diminutive Grass Wrens performed virtually at our feet, and two very special waders, Two-banded Plover and Rufous-chested Plover (or Dotterel). Both showed stupendously well and became instant favourites. On the way back to town we stopped at a small pool where a smart pair of White-tufted Grebes were in

residence. The local (nominate) form here is much larger than the mainland race, and may well represent a distinct species, endemic to the Falklands. A confiding Magellanic Snipe was also present, rounding off an excellent afternoon.

The following morning, we arranged a special excursion, by 4WD, to Kidney Cove, about an hour and a half drive across peat bogs and rocky slopes from Port Stanley. We arrived at the cliffs by some wonderful Southern Rockhopper Penguin colonies, and although it was a bit grey and drizzly, we were soon enthralled by all the activity in the wonderful colonies. Best of all was the vagrant Northern Rockhopper Penguin, complete with lavish yellow tufts; a real bonus bird! A pair of Macaroni Penguins were also present, as well as a hybrid Macaroni x Southern Rockhopper Penguin! It was a fantastic morning, and we even saw a few Sei Whales offshore! Heading back to Port Stanley, we saw a few more Rufous-chested Plovers and another fine pair of White-tufted Grebes. After lunch, we left Stanley, and after sailing past Cape Pembroke, where we finally saw Southern Fulmar, the terrible weather returned. We spent the afternoon again in a raging sea with a 55-knot wind blowing, but hopeful that this would abate by the time we arrived in the West Falklands the following day.

As it turned out our worries about the weather completely subsided when we sailed into the small bay of the Settlement on New Island in extremely calm conditions. New Island is the most remote of all the Falklands inhabited islands and has some of the most incredible scenery and the largest concentrations of wildlife in the archipelago. We went ashore at Coffin's Harbour, with both Peale's and Commerson's dolphins accompanying the zodiacs. Coffin's Harbour is home to a small community and a lovely rustic museum fashioned out of the buildings of the former whaling station. In front of the museum, in a bay of turquoise waters and white sand, was a substantial shipwreck which was home for the local Striated Caracaras.

We were free to roam on New Island, and there was plenty to do. A small Gentoo Penguin colony was entertaining, especially when the unwelcome Striated Caracaras were around, and across the neck, there was an amazing colony of Southern Rockhopper Penguins and Black-browed Albatrosses. Also here were marauding Brown Skuas, busy taking rockhopper chicks. One pair was even watched engaging in a round of tug-of-war with a hapless chick which was snapped in half, and the two halves swallowed simultaneously by the culprits!

In the afternoon various walks were on offer, including, for those that wished, a walk to a South American Fur Seal colony. To reach the fur seal colony we had to hike over fields dotted with the burrows of over 2 million Slender-billed Prions, so it was a single-file hike through a minefield of burrows. Striated Caracaras were busy here too, chasing and catching any prions that were foolish enough to be active in daylight! The fur seal colony was in another dramatic cliff location on the island's western side. The South American Fur Seal is a much timider creature than the bold and aggressive Antarctic Fur Seals on South Georgia, living quietly in small groups along the rocky coast. We wandered back, admiring the rich variety of wildlife on this gloriously sunny day, and as we boarded the zodiacs, Kelp Geese, Magellanic Oystercatchers and Striated Caracaras entertained us, rounding off a fantastic day. We pulled anchor off New Island and set sail, admiring a lovely sunset as we went.

We had relatively calm and peaceful conditions through the night and awoke just off the lovely Saunders Island where we went ashore at The Neck. Saunders Island is always a favourite. Just at the landing area are Gentoo and King Penguins, and a little further along Magellanic Penguins, whilst further up the slope are colonies of Southern Rockhopper Penguins and Black-browed Albatrosses. There was also a gorgeous beach, where all the penguins were coming and going, Snowy Sheathbills fed, a poor deceased gentoo lay on the beach with Turkey Vultures trying to work out how to get through the tough exterior, and Falkland Steamer Ducks tended their young. At one stage a group of Commerson's Dolphins were playing in the surf too! It was a fabulous landing, and everyone could choose which aspects of the amazing wildlife spectacle they wished to focus on!

After lunch, and a minor re-positioning manoeuvre, we made our last landing in the Falklands at Carcass Island, a spot that we were unable to visit the first time around. Carcass Island is one of the few predator-free islands that we are able to get to, and consequently has a thriving population of the endemic Cobb's Wren, the missing link in our chain! It did not take many seconds to locate these inquisitive birds, as they fed along the tideline with Blackish Cinclodes. Also present were more White-bridled Finches. We then made the short walk over the tussock and grasses to the stunning white sands of Leopard Beach which made a fitting finale to our Falkland adventure. Here, with pristine white sands and clear turquoise waters, we were able to watch groups of Gentoo and Magellanic Penguins coming ashore, alongside Kelp Geese, Falkland Steamer Ducks and oystercatchers. It really was a moment to sit in the sunshine and just reflect upon what had been an epic adventure, albeit not the one we were expecting!

We took one last zodiac ride back to the Plancius and boarded the ship for the last time. It was a relatively calm sailing back to Ushuaia, with calmish seas and plenty of birds as well as a few Long-finned Pilot Whales. Great rafts of Sooty Shearwaters and Black-browed Albatrosses were good value, we managed to see just our second Northern Royal Albatross, and for those on deck at the time, there were also our only Magellanic Diving Petrels of the voyage. By the afternoon we were well within sight of the mainland, and after being joined by the pilot in the small hours, made our way back along the Beagle Channel overnight. We docked at 0600, and after breakfast and an obligatory group photo, said our farewells and disembarked. It had been an epic adventure, and without doubt, a unique itinerary!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g., it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

The symbol (U) denotes that the species was only recorded on the extensions in the Ushuaia area.

BIRDS

Black-necked Swan ◊ (U) *Cygnus melancoryphus* A couple seen in Tierra del Fuego NP.

Flying Steamer Duck ◊ (U) *Tachyeres patagonicus* Plenty around Ushuaia.

Fuegian Steamer Duck ◊ (U) *Tachyeres pteneres* Plenty around Ushuaia.

Falkland Steamer Duck ◊ *Tachyeres brachypterus* Fairly common in the Falklands.

Upland Goose ◊ *Chloephaga picta* Common around Ushuaia (nominate) and in the Falklands (*leucoptera*).

Kelp Goose ◊ *Chloephaga hybrida* Seen well around Ushuaia (nominate) and in the Falklands (*malvinarum*).

Ashy-headed Goose ◊ (U) *Chloephaga poliocephala* A few seen in the Ushuaia area.

Ruddy-headed Goose ◊ *Chloephaga rubidiceps* Plenty of great views in the Falklands.

Crested Duck *Lophonetta specularioides* Seen around Ushuaia and in the Falklands (*specularioides*).

Red Shoveler (U) *Spatula platalea* Seen by some of us when we got back to Ushuaia. Technically just after the tour ended!!

Chiloe Wigeon ◊ (Southern W) *Mareca sibilatrix* Some nice looks in Ushuaia.

Yellow-billed Pintail ◊ *Anas [georgica] spinicauda* A few seen well in Ushuaia.

Yellow-billed Pintail ◊ (South Georgia P) *Anas [georgica] georgica* Many great looks on South Georgia.

Yellow-billed Teal (Speckled T) *Anas flavirostris* Best views were on the Falklands.

White-tufted Grebe *Rollandia rolland* Great views of the large nominate form in the Falklands. Perhaps a future endemic?

Great Grebe (U) *Podiceps major* Some nice views of a breeding pair in Ushuaia National Park.

Snowy Sheathbill ◊ (Pale-faced S) *Chionis albus* A few on the islands off Ushuaia and throughout the cruise.

Magellanic Oystercatcher ◊ *Haematopus leucopodus* Seen well around Ushuaia and the Falklands.

Blackish Oystercatcher *Haematopus ater* Seen well around Ushuaia and the Falklands.

Southern Lapwing (U) *Vanellus chilensis* A few seen around Ushuaia.

Two-banded Plover ◊ *Charadrius falklandicus* Great looks on the Falklands. Cracker!

Rufous-chested Plover ◊ (R-c Dotterel) *Charadrius modestus* Great looks on the Falklands. Another cracker!

White-bellied Seedsnipe ◊ (U) *Attagis malouinus* Superb views in the mountains near to Ushuaia.

Baird's Sandpiper (U) *Calidris bairdii* Some fine views near to our hotel in Ushuaia.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* Many great looks, the first around the hotel in Ushuaia.

Magellanic Snipe ◊ *Gallinago magellanica* Some stunning looks in Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

Dolphin Gull ◊ *Leucophaeus scoresbii* Great views of this attractive gull in Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* Common throughout.

South American Tern *Sterna hirundinacea* Common around Ushuaia and the Falklands.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* A few of these amazing migrants seen at sea including a smart 1cy bird.

Antarctic Tern ◊ *Sterna vittata* Many brilliant views around South Georgia.

Chilean Skua ◊ (U) *Stercorarius chilensis* Some great looks around Ushuaia.

South Polar Skua ♦ (U) *Stercorarius maccormicki* One in Ushuaia was a lucky surprise!

Brown Skua ♦ (Antarctic S) *Stercorarius antarcticus* Common around the Falklands (nominate) and South Georgia (*lonnbergi*).

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus* Just one seen on our way back into Ushuaia.

King Penguin ♦ *Aptenodytes patagonicus* So many brilliant experiences, especially the huge colonies on South Georgia.

Chinstrap Penguin ♦ *Pygoscelis antarcticus* Some great looks at Cooper Bay at the southeast end of South Georgia.

Gentoo Penguin ♦ *Pygoscelis papua* Many stunning views on the Falklands (nominate) and South Georgia (*poncetii*).

Magellanic Penguin ♦ *Spheniscus magellanicus* Some super looks on the Falklands.

Macaroni Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes chrysolophus* Brilliant looks at a couple of colonies in South Georgia. Also a few in the Falklands, including a breeding pair at Kidney Cove.

Southern Rockhopper Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes chrysocome* Some stunning colonies in the Falklands (nominate).

Northern Rockhopper Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes moseleyi* A lovely individual in the brilliant colony at Kidney Cove. A real bonus!

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* Common at sea. Many great looks.

Grey-backed Storm Petrel ♦ *Garrodia nereis* A total of nearly 30 logged during the voyage.

Black-bellied Storm Petrel ♦ *Fregetta tropica* Plenty seen well at sea.

Wandering Albatross (Snowy A) *Diomedea exulans* Good number at sea, from immatures to snowy adults.

Southern Royal Albatross ♦ *Diomedea epomophora* The commonest big albatross, with many immatures seen.

Northern Royal Albatross ♦ *Diomedea sanfordi* Just two seen, one on the way to the Falklands and one on the return.

Light-mantled Albatross ♦ (L-m Sooty A) *Phoebastria palpebrata* Plenty once we crossed the Antarctic convergence. The best seabird?

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris* The commonest of the albatrosses, a near constant companion at sea, and some great colonies seen.

Grey-headed Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche chrysostoma* Quite a few once we crossed the Antarctic convergence, and around South Georgia. Another great bird!

Southern Giant Petrel (Common G P) *Macronectes giganteus* The commoner of the two – green-tipped bill.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* Smaller numbers – dark, reddish-tipped bill.

Southern Fulmar ♦ *Fulmarus glacialis* Only a couple seen as we left Port Stanley.

Cape Petrel (Pintado P) *Daption capense* Common at sea (nominate).

Snow Petrel ♦ (Lesser S P) *Pagodroma [nivea] nivea* Many great looks around South Georgia.

Blue Petrel ♦ *Halobaena caerulea* Some great looks once we crossed the Antarctic convergence.

Antarctic Prion ♦ (Dove P) *Pachyptila desolata* Quite common once we crossed the Antarctic convergence.

Slender-billed Prion ♦ (Thin-billed P) *Pachyptila belcheri* Quite common around the Falklands.

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur* One or two photographed near to South Georgia.

Kerguelen Petrel ♦ *Aphrodroma brevirostris* A total of nine logged off the south coast of South Georgia.

White-headed Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma lessonii* One seen as we made our way back towards the Falklands.

Atlantic Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma incerta* Seven seen at sea on the journeys between the Falklands and South Georgia.

Soft-plumaged Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma mollis* Good numbers seen at sea on the journeys between the Falklands and South Georgia.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Good numbers at sea throughout.

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea* Quite common at sea, especially around the Falklands.

Great Shearwater *Ardenna gravis* Some great looks between South Georgia and the Falklands.

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus* At least one between South Georgia and the Falklands.

Magellanic Diving Petrel ♦ *Pelecanoides magellani* At least three seen as we were heading back towards Ushuaia.

South Georgia Diving Petrel ♦ *Pelecanoides georgicus* A few identified from photos around South Georgia.

Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* Seen around the Falklands (*berard*) and South Georgia (*exsul*).

Rock Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo magellanicus* Seen well around Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

Imperial Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo atriceps* Seen well around Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

South Georgia Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo georgianus* Many brilliant looks around South Georgia, including the incredible Shag Rocks.

Black-faced Ibis ♦ (U) *Theristicus melanopis* A few seen well around Ushuaia.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Small numbers seen in the Falklands.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* Good numbers seen in the Falklands, including two eating a dead Gentoo.

Variable Hawk ♦ *Geranoaetus polyosoma* A few seen well in the Falklands.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (U) *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* Excellent views around Ushuaia.

Austral Pygmy Owl ♦ (U) *Glaucidium nana* Great views of one in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Rufous-legged Owl (U) ♦ *Strix rufipes* Stunning views of one spotlighted in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Magellanic Woodpecker (U) *Campephilus magellanicus* Stunning views of a male in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

White-throated Caracara ♦ (U) *Phalacrocorax albogularis* Great views of a few near to Ushuaia.

Striated Caracara ♦ *Phalacrocorax australis* Brilliant views of good numbers in the Falklands. Johnny Rook!

Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus* Common around Ushuaia and a couple in the Falklands.

Chimango Caracara (U) *Milvago chimango* Common and noisy around Ushuaia.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* A couple noted in the Falklands.

Austral Parakeet ♦ (U) *Enicognathus ferrugineus* Seen briefly north of Ushuaia and then good views in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

White-throated Treerunner ♦ (U) *Pygarrhichas albogularis* Great views in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Blackish Cinclodes ♦ *Cinclodes [antarcticus] antarcticus* Many seen well in the Falklands

Blackish Cinclodes ♦ (U) (Black C) *Cinclodes [antarcticus] maculirostris* Seen well on the islands off Ushuaia. Split by some authorities.

Dark-bellied Cinclodes ♦ (U) *Cinclodes patagonicus* Great views in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Thorn-tailed Rayadito ♦ (U) *Aphrastura spinicauda* Great views in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Chilean Elaenia (U) *Elaenia chilensis* Great views in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Ochre-naped Ground Tyrant (U) *Muscisaxicola flavinucha* Seen well in the mountains north of Ushuaia.

Dark-faced Ground Tyrant *Muscisaxicola maclovianus* Seen well around Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

Austral Negrito ♦ (U) *Lessonia rufa* A few seen well around Ushuaia.

Chilean Swallow ♦ (U) *Tachycineta leucopyga* Common around Ushuaia.

Grass Wren (Grass W) *Cistothorus platensis* A few seen very well in the Falklands (*falklandicus*).

House Wren (U) (Southern H W) *Troglodytes [aedon] musculus* Common around Ushuaia.

Cobb's Wren ♦ *Troglodytes cobbi* Great looks at this endemic on Carcass Island in the Falklands.

Austral Thrush ♦ *Turdus falcklandii* Common around Ushuaia (*magellanicus*) and in the Falklands (nominata).

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Only in Ushuaia.

Correndera Pipit *Anthus correndera* A handful seen well in the Falklands (*grayi*).

South Georgia Pipit ♦ ***Anthus antarcticus*** Now the rats have gone, common on South Georgia!

Black-chinned Siskin ♦ ***Spinus barbatus*** Plenty seen around Ushuaia and in the Falklands.

Rufous-collared Sparrow (U) *Zonotrichia capensis* Common around Ushuaia (*australis*).

Long-tailed Meadowlark ♦ ***Leistes loyca*** A couple briefly on the boat trip out of Ushuaia (nominated) and many great views in the Falklands (*falklandicus*)

Patagonian Sierra Finch ♦ (U) ***Phrygilus patagonicus*** Many seen well around Ushuaia.

White-bridled Finch ♦ (Black-throated F) ***Melanodera melanodera*** Some great looks in the Falklands.

Yellow-bridled Finch ♦ (U) ***Melanodera xanthogramma*** Great looks in the mountains north of Ushuaia.

MAMMALS

European Rabbit (introduced) *Oryctolagus cuniculus*

Culpeo (U) (Argentine Red Fox) *Pseudalopex culpaeus* Seen around our hotel in Ushuaia.

South American Fur Seal *Arctocephalus australis* A group of c40 seen well on New Island in the Falklands.

Antarctic Fur Seal *Arctocephalus gazella* Common and occasionally scary around South Georgia.

South American Sea Lion *Otaria flavescens* Small numbers noted, the first around Ushuaia.

Southern Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina* Many great looks. Funky-looking males and adorable calves!

Southern Bottlenose Whale *Hyperoodon planifrons* One seen briefly at sea, close to the boat!

Commerson's Dolphin *Cephalorhynchus commersonii* Some great encounters around the Falklands.

Long-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala melas* At least three pods noted during our voyage.

Peale's Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus australis* Some great encounters around the Falklands.

Sei Whale *Balaenoptera borealis* Good numbers around the Falklands but seemed a little boat shy.

Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus* A few seen well around South Georgia.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* Quite a few seen including an incredible group that swam repeatedly right under the ship. Incredible!!



Flying Steamer Duck (image by Pete Morris)



Flightless Steamer Duck (image by Pete Morris)



Falkland Steamer Duck (image by Pete Morris)



Fairy Prion (image by Pete Morris)



Drygalski Fjord (image by Pete Morris)



Dolphin Gull (image by Pete Morris)



Dark-faced Ground Tyrant (image by Pete Morris)



Dark-bellied Cinclodes (image by Pete Morris)



Crested Duck (image by Pete Morris)



Corondera Pipit (image by Pete Morris)



Commerson's Dolphin (image by Pete Morris)



Cobb's Wren (image by Pete Morris)



Chinstrap Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Chimango Caracara (image by Pete Morris)



Chiloe Wigeon (image by Pete Morris)



Chilean Skua (image by Pete Morris)



Chilean Elaenia (image by Pete Morris)



Cape Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Buff-necked Ibis (image by Pete Morris)



Brown Skua (image by Pete Morris)



Blue Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Blackish Oystercatcher (image by Pete Morris)



Blackish Cinclodes (image by Pete Morris)



Blackish (Black) Cinclodes (image by Pete Morris)



Black-necked Swan (image by Pete Morris)



Black-chinned Siskin (image by Pete Morris)



Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (image by Pete Morris)



Black-browed Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



Black-bellied Storm Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Bay of Isles (image by Pete Morris)



Austral Thrush (image by Pete Morris)



Austral Pygmy Owl (image by Pete Morris)



Austral Parakeet (image by Pete Morris)



Austral Negrigo (image by Pete Morris)



Austral Negrito (image by Pete Morris)



Atlantic Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Ashy-headed Geese (image by Pete Morris)



Antarctic Tern (image by Pete Morris)



Antarctic Prion (image by Pete Morris)



Antarctic Fur Seals (image by Pete Morris)



Magellanic Woodpecker (image by Pete Morris)



Magellanic Snipe (image by Pete Morris)



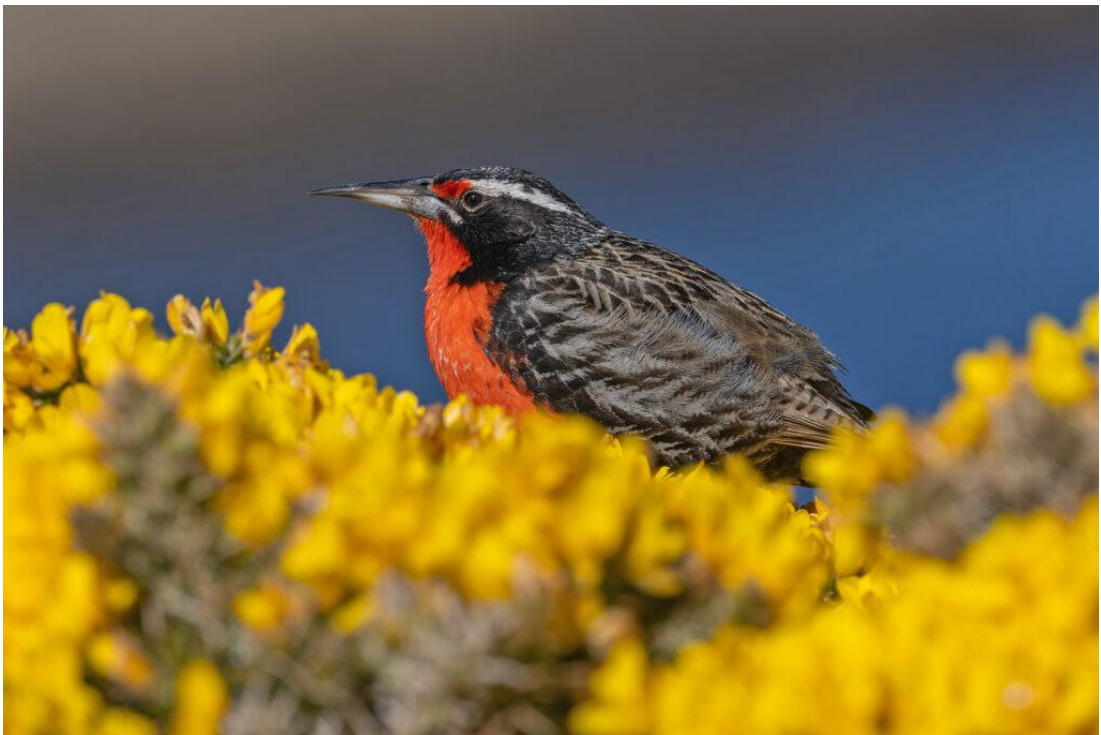
Magellanic Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Magellanic Oystercatcher (image by Pete Morris)



Macaroni Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Long-tailed Meadowlark (image by Pete Morris)



Light-mantled Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



King Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



King Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Kerguelen Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Kelp Geese (image by Pete Morris)



Imperial Shag (image by Pete Morris)



Humpback Whales (image by Pete Morris)



Iceberg ahead! (image by Pete Morris)



Grey-headed Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



Grey-backed Storm Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Great Grebe (image by Pete Morris)



Grass Wren (image by Pete Morris)



Gian Petrel in the sunset (image by Pete Morris)



Gentoo Penguin and King Penguins (image by Pete Morris)



Southern Elephant Seals (image by Pete Morris)



South Polar Skua (image by Pete Morris)



South Georgia Shag (image by Pete Morris)



South Georgia Pipit (image by Pete Morris)



South Georgia Pintail (image by Pete Morris)



South American Tern (image by Pete Morris)



Soft-plumaged Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Snowy Sheathbill (image by Pete Morris)



Snow Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



Slender-billed Prion (image by Pete Morris)



Shag Rocks (image by Pete Morris)



Rufous-legged Owl (image by Pete Morris)



Rufous-collared Sparrow (image by Pete Morris)



Rufous-chested Plover (image by Pete Morris)



Ruddy-headed Goose (image by Pete Morris)



Rock Shag (image by Pete Morris)



Patagonian Sierra Finch (image by Pete Morris)



Ochre-naped Ground Tyrant (image by Pete Morris)



Northern Royal Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



Peale's Dolphin (image by Pete Morris)



Plancius (image by Pete Morris)



Northern Rockhopper Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Northern Giant Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



New Island (image by Pete Morris)



New Island flora (image by Pete Morris)



Yellow-bridled Finch (image by Pete Morris)



White-tufted Grebe (image by Pete Morris)



White-throated Treerunner (image by Pete Morris)



White-throated Caracara (image by Pete Morris)



White-headed Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



White-chinned Petrel (image by Pete Morris)



White-bridled Finch (image by Pete Morris)



White-bellied Seedsnipe (image by Pete Morris)



Wandering Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



Variable Hawk (image by Pete Morris)



Upland Goose (image by Pete Morris)



Two-banded Plover (image by Pete Morris)



Thorn-tailed Ryadito (image by Pete Morris)



Striated Caracara (image by Pete Morris)



Speckled Teal (image by Pete Morris)



Southern Royal Albatross (image by Pete Morris)



Southern Rockhopper Penguin (image by Pete Morris)



Southern Lapwing (image by Pete Morris)



Southern Giant Petrel (image by Pete Morris)