

Falklands, South Georgia & Antarctic Peninsula with Naturalist Journeys



November 2 – 22, 2022

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Tour Highlights

- Cruise onboard the m/v *Hondius*, an ice-strengthened expedition vessel
- See an old whaling camp on South Georgia, walking in Shackleton's footsteps
- Witness some of the largest wildlife colonies on Earth, home to King, Magellanic, Adelie, Chinstrap, Gentoo, and Macaroni Penguins
- Experience outstanding wildlife observation on shore, on Zodiac excursions, and from the ship
- Look for Southern Elephant, Weddell, and Leopard Seals, as well as Humpback and Minke Whales, Orca, and more
- Learn about the environment, wildlife, history, and ecology from polar experts
- Photograph penguin rookeries backed by soaring, snow-covered peaks
- Cruise past huge icebergs in the icy Antarctic waters

Tour Summary

21-Day / 20-Night Antarctic Wildlife Cruise on the *Hondius* with John Carlson
Starting at \$13,200, from Ushuaia
Arrival airport is El Tehuelche (PMY) in Puerto Madryn & departure airport is Ushuaia (USH)

The incredible wildlife and seabird richness of the Southern Oceans are calling! Considered by many to be the trip of a lifetime, our Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and Antarctic Peninsula cruise is a wildlife lover's dream come true. From penguins to whales to seeing the southernmost songbird in the world (South Georgia Pipit) there is simply no voyage to compare. The incredible beauty of ice and the serene sense of space is beyond measure. This expedition explores one of the last untamed areas on Earth—a land of ruggedly beautiful landscapes and amazingly varied wildlife.

We are booking this November cruise with a new company and ship, new to us but not to our star guide for this voyage, John Carlson. For years we used two

Russian ships, which are no longer available (the *Ioffe* and *Vavilov*) and when we tried a more luxurious vessel, the cost went up beyond reach of our regular travelers. Inspired by them to find alternatives, we have been on the search for a good mix of comfort and value in a ship, one that has the features so important to us to maximize wildlife viewing. John recommended we check out the m/v *Hondius* and we think it's a perfect fit! What we like are the big windows in public areas, the spacious observation lounge with bar, the fully-surrounding viewing walkway, the ability to be out on deck with ease to catch that prime photo, but not to be removed from good viewing if conditions are cold or wet. The m/v *Hondius* is an ice-strengthened vessel with room for 170 passengers in 80 cabins so it is just the right size. The m/v *Hondius* is high-quality accommodation, it is nicely decorated, stabilized, and all cabins have private bath—a real plus! The ship staff is just amazing, from the Captain and nautical crew to those in hospitality, expedition leaders, lecturers, and even a ship doctor, all are united to make sure this is the voyage of a lifetime.

So why go with Naturalist Journeys? First and foremost, it doesn't cost you any more to book with us. We add the bonus of sending John Carlson as our group host (with at least 10 clients signed on) to share his years of Antarctic experience, keen eye for seabirds, and knowledge about Southern Ocean ecology. He is also a great help if you wish to upgrade your efforts at photography. Our group within the larger group has good fun at meals, extra help with birding, and a trip report and species list at the end to cherish. We want to make your travel hassle-free so also offer the services of our travel agent at no cost to help make your travel plans and do any pre-or post-cruise bookings in Ushuaia.

Day-to-Day Itinerary

Wed., Nov. 2 Sandy Argentine Beaches

Your embark from Puerto Madryn in the afternoon, your prow aimed for the Falkland Islands. Golfo Nuevo is

renowned for its visiting Southern Right Whales, so you have a good chance of spotting one as you sail toward the open ocean.

Thurs., Nov. 3 & Fri., Nov. 4 Sea Life, Sea Birds

Though we're now at sea, there's rarely a lonesome moment here. Several species of bird follow the vessel southeast like albatross, including Black-browed, Southern Royal, and Wandering may follow the vessel along with Slender-billed Prion, Sooty Shearwater, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, Wilson's Storm Petrel, and other species. We are in the path of winds that blow around the Southern Hemisphere in the mid-latitudes, controlling much of the climate of Patagonia and southern South America. For seabirds they make foraging possible, indeed many never approach land except to breed and can relax or sleep on the wing.

There is also time to look for birds from the bridge or other observation areas, and if we encounter currents with krill, there are sea mammals to see as well.

Sat., Nov. 5 Finding the Falklands

The Falkland (Malvinas) Islands offer an abundance of wildlife that is easily approachable, though caution is always advised. Our expedition guides take us to penguin colonies and open grassland areas to search for signature species. These islands are largely unknown gems, very British in feel from colonization, and still very much so after the UK prevailed in the 1982 war with Argentina. Falkland Steamer Duck may scamper away from us at our landings. Not only do some fascinating species of bird live here, but chances are great we see both Peale's and the beautifully black and white Commerson's Dolphin in the surrounding waters.

During this segment of the voyage, we may visit following sites in our mix of landings:

Steeple Jason

Home to the world's largest black-browed albatross colony (roughly 113,000), Steeple Jason is a wild and rarely visited island buffeted by wind and waves. Weather and swell conditions dictate the journey here.

Carcass Island

Despite its name, this island is pleasantly rodent-free and hence bounteous with birdlife. Anything from breeding Magellanic and Gentoo Penguins to numerous waders and passerine birds (including endemic Cobb's Wren and the Blackish Cinclodes, a regional specialty) live here. Striated Caracara cause a stir as they approach nesting colonies.

Saunders Island

On Saunders Island you can see the Black-browed Albatross and its sometimes-clumsy landings, along with breeding Imperial Shag and Rockhopper Penguin. King Penguin, Magellanic Penguin, and Gentoo Penguin can also be found here. Songbirds may include Falkland (Correndera) Pipit or Dark-faced Ground Tyrant. Brown Skua patrol the shag and penguin colonies.

Weather always controls our landings, but with good luck we hope to make all three stops.

Sun., Nov. 6 The Seat of Falklands Culture

The capital of the Falklands and center of its culture, Port Stanley, offers a little Victorian-era charm: colorful houses, well-tended gardens, and English-style pubs are all to be found here. You can also see several century-old clipper ships nearby, silent witnesses to the hardships of 19th Century sailors. The small but interesting

museum is also worth a visit, covering the early days of settlement up to the Falklands War. Approximately 2,100 people live in Port Stanley. Admission to the museum is included.

The small but interesting museum is worth a visit, covering the early days of settlement up to the Falklands War. Enjoy some free time to wander at will; take some cash with you as there may be small admission fees to local attractions or souvenirs to purchase in shops.

Our birders might like to work the edges of the town or the coastal shoreline in search of additional species such as Kelp Goose, Chilean Skua, and Black-crowned Night Heron. Some species carry over from the South American mainland but may be easier to find here, such as Austral Thrush, Long-tailed Meadowlark, and Black-chinned Siskin. Wetland sites may hold Two-banded Plover, both Silver and Yellow-billed Teal, and Chiloe Wigeon.

Mon., Nov. 7 & Tues., Nov. 8 Once More to The Sea

En route to South Georgia, we now cross the Antarctic Convergence. The temperature cools considerably within the space of a few hours, and nutritious water rises to the surface of the sea due to colliding water columns. This phenomenon attracts a multitude of seabirds near the ship, including several species of albatross, shearwaters, petrels, prions, and skuas.

Wed., Nov. 9 – Sat., Nov. 12 South Georgia Journey

Today you arrive at the first South Georgia activity site. Please keep in mind that weather conditions in this area can be challenging, largely dictating the program.

Over the next several days, you have a chance to visit the following sites:

Prion Island

This location is closed during the early part of the Wandering Albatross breeding season (November 20 – January 7). From January on, the breeding adults have found their partners and are sitting on eggs or caring for their chicks. Enjoy witnessing the gentle nature of these animals, which possess the largest wingspan of any bird in the world.

Fortuna Bay

Near beaches inhabited by various penguins (thousands of Kings!) and seals, you have the chance to follow the final leg of Shackleton's route to the abandoned whaling base of Stromness. This path cuts across the mountain pass beyond Shackleton's Waterfall, and as the terrain is partly swampy, be prepared to cross a few small streams. We are in the realm of flowering plants; watch for miniature wildflowers including the clover-like Burnett plant, Pixie-cap lichen, Antarctic Bedstraw, and Antarctic Hairgrass.

Salisbury Plain, St. Andrews Bay, Gold Harbour

These sites not only house the three largest King Penguin colonies in South Georgia, they're also three of the world's largest breeding beaches for Antarctic Fur Seal. Millions breed on South Georgia during December and January. Our timing lets us witness plenty of penguin courting, and we should find adult penguins covering eggs beneath their warm folds of skin. Hear their honking calls as beaks point skyward! It is breeding time in the mammal realm as well. Watch the large Fur Seal bulls keep a constant vigil (and occasionally fight) over territories where dozens of females have just given birth or are about to deliver. Populations are so high right now that it may affect our walking route—ship staff help us navigate.

Grytviken

Some 175,000 whales were processed here, mostly into oil, but also for meat and other products until the station closed in 1962. Now, in this haunting, abandoned whaling station, King Penguin walk the streets and Southern Elephant Seal lie around like they own the place ... because they basically do. Here we visit the South Georgia Museum as well as Shackleton's grave. Here it is customary to offer a toast of whiskey to "The Boss" prior to spreading some on his grave. Learn more about the life of Ernest Shackleton, especially of his 800-mile journey in the 22-foot wooden life boat, the *James Caird*. Their voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia Island is truly an epic feat in the annals of sea adventures. Mountains loom behind the rusting buildings and graveyard, all very picturesque and moving.

The world's southernmost songbird, the South Georgia Pipit, has responded remarkably well to recent conservation measures to control exotic rats on the island and we should be able to find this special species at most landings on South Georgia. We should also find South Georgia Pintail and Antarctic Tern. Macaroni Penguin can be found along the southern coast near their breeding colonies and can often be found porpoising offshore as the ship moves between landings. Keep your eyes peeled for breeding Snowy Sheathbill.

Sun., Nov. 13 Southward Bound

There may be sea ice on this route, and at the edge of the ice some South Polar Skua and Snow Petrel could join the other seabirds trailing the vessel south. Be on the lookout for both Fin and Humpback and house-sized icebergs! At sunset with a show of color they are especially incredible. Watch for South Georgia Diving Petrel. Ship lectures help you appreciate how seabirds survive and even thrive in these harsh conditions.

Mon., Nov. 14 The Scenic Vistas of South Orkney

Depending on the conditions, you might visit Orcadas Base, an Argentine scientific station on Laurie Island in the South Orkney archipelago. The personnel here happily show you their facility, where we can enjoy expansive views of the surrounding glaciers. If a visit isn't possible, you may land in Coronation Island's Shingle Cove.

Tues., Nov. 15 Last Push to the Antarctic

Enormous icebergs and a fair chance of Fin Whale sightings ensure there's never a dull moment on this last sea voyage south. This is also our best chance to spot Antarctic Petrel.

Wed., Nov. 16 – Sat., Nov. 19 Awe-Inspiring Antarctica

If the ice conditions permit, we now sail into the Weddell Sea. Here colossal tabular icebergs herald your arrival to the eastern side of the Antarctic Peninsula. Paulet Island, with its large population of Adélie Penguin, is a possible stop. You might also visit Brown Bluff, located in the ice-clogged Antarctic Sound, where you could get the chance to set foot on the Antarctic Continent itself.

If conditions aren't favorable to enter the Weddell Sea from the east, the ship sets course for Elephant Island and heads into the Bransfield Strait, between the South Shetland Islands and the Antarctic Peninsula. Here you can attempt to access the Antarctic Sound from the northwest.

The breathtaking scenery continues in the Bransfield Strait and, if conditions allow further South in the Gerlache Strait.

Soak in time surrounded by an epic landscape of alpine peaks and mammoth glaciers calving at sea level. Gentoo Penguin, Leopard Seal, Weddell Seal, Humpback Whale, and Minke Whale are often seen here.

The volcanic islands of the South Shetlands are windswept and often cloaked in mist, but they nonetheless offer many subtle pleasures. A wide variety of flora (mosses, lichens, flowering grasses) and fauna (Gentoo and Chinstrap Penguins and Southern Giant Petrel) live here.

On Half Moon Island, Chinstrap penguins and Weddell seals often haul out onto the beach near Cámara Base, an Argentine scientific research station.

On Deception Island, the ship plunges through Neptune's Bellows and into the flooded caldera. Here you can find an abandoned whaling station, and thousands of cape petrels. A number of kelp gulls, brown skuas, south polar skuas, and Antarctic terns can be spotted too. Wilson's storm petrels and black-bellied storm petrels also nest in the ruins of the whaling station in Whalers Bay. As an alternative, you can take part in activities near Telefon Bay, further inside the caldera.

This extended voyage gives you the chance to sail even farther down the icy coast of the western Antarctic Peninsula. There are several opportunities for great landings where you might set foot on the Antarctic Continent, surrounded by an epic landscape of alpine peaks and mammoth glaciers calving at sea level. Gentoo penguins, leopard seals, Weddell seals, humpback whales, and minke whales are often seen here.

Throughout the area ice chunks provide haul outs for Crabeater and Weddell Seals and we may see the predatory Leopard Seal dining on penguins at sea. We also keep watch for the pretty Antarctic Shag. The whole region seems a wonderland, with deep blue ice appearing like giant, other-worldly sculptures. The sudden crack of calving glaciers can create a large wave splashing ashore on icebergs. Each cove features ice encrusted landscapes, jagged rocks, and cliffs carved and polished by glaciers. Rock towers surrounded by snow and ice are known as nunataks. Chinstrap Penguin pose, then pop into the water where they are as agile as fish. With luck you can see them slide across the snow on their bellies.

From a previous trip diary: "Penguins porpoise, whales roll and blow, skuas, shags, terns, and petrels fly by. A Snowy Sheathbill fluttered onto the ship deck, pecking in shallow pools of water for something to eat. The air is fresh and clean most of the time, except when downwind from a penguin colony. The scenic grandeur of mountains, glaciers, floating ice, and sea has become a constant. And the sea here is alive with penguins, seals, whales, and birds. It literally churns with life, including the rivers of tiny krill that support the Antarctic wildlife. Massive swarms of krill comprise the vital broad base of the Antarctic food pyramid."

Sun., Nov. 20 & Mon., Nov. 21 Crossing the Drake—Passage Seabirds Abound

Over the next two days on the Drake Passage, you enjoy some of the same experiences encountered by the great polar explorers who first charted these regions: cool salt breezes, rolling seas, and possibly Fin Whale spouting up sea spray.

After passing the Antarctic Convergence—Antarctica's natural boundary, formed when north-flowing cold waters collide with warmer sub-Antarctic seas—you are in the circum-Antarctic upwelling zone formed when north-flowing colder waters meet warmer seas.

This part of our voyage is far from lonely. While crossing the Drake, we're greeted by the vast array of seabirds. We feast our eyes on possible Black-browed, Light-mantled, Gray-headed, Southern Royal, and Wandering Albatross from the ship. Cape and White-chinned Petrels accompany us.

Tues., Nov. 22 Earth's Southernmost City

You arrive and disembark in Ushuaia, commonly held to be the world's most southern city. It is located on the Tierra del Fuego archipelago, nicknamed the "End of the World." But despite this stopping point, the wealth of memories you've made on your Antarctic expedition will travel with you wherever your next adventure lies.

You can leave late in the afternoon or on evening flights, or you may want to overnight so you can get your land legs back before travel—if so, our travel agent can help you make plans. You typically disembark in the morning with some free time ashore before going to the airport for International flights.

A Note from Our Operator

All itineraries are for guidance only. Programs may vary depending on local ice and weather conditions and in order to take advantage of opportunities to see wildlife. The on-board expedition leader determines the final itinerary. Itineraries may mention places that require permission to land, which must be granted by the relevant national authorities. Such permission is not granted prior to the publishing of these itineraries. Flexibility is paramount for expedition cruises.

About the Ship



M/v *Hondius* offers high-quality accommodation for 170 passengers in six grand suites with balconies (27 square meters, 291 square feet), eight junior suites (19 to 20 square meters, 205 to 215 square feet), eight superior cabins (20 to 21 square meters, 215 to 226 square feet), 11 twin deluxe cabins, (19 to 21 square meters, 205 to 226 square feet), 14 twin window cabins (12 to 14 square meters, 129 to 151 square feet) as well as 27 twin porthole cabins, two triple porthole cabins, and four quadruple porthole cabins that vary in size from 12 to 18 square meters, or 129 to 194 square feet. One deck consists of a large observation lounge and separate lecture room, which are reserved for a wide variety of interactive workshops, exhibitions, and performances particular to *Hondius*. Though elegantly designed in stylish mid-century modern décor, this vessel holds true to Oceanwide's distinctive cozy and informal atmosphere.

The Rooms

We have a variety of rooms available in our room block. We *may* be able to put you in a different type of room if you prefer, so please ask (not guaranteed).

Quadruple Porthole | \$13,200

Max: 4 Persons

- 2 portholes
- 2 upper & lower berths
- Small sofa
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer



Triple Porthole | \$14,700

Max: 3 Persons

- 2 Portholes
- 1 upper berth & 2 lower berths
- Small sofa
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet & wardrobe



Twin Porthole | \$16,000

Max: 2 Persons

- 2 portholes
- 2 single beds
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet & wardrobe



Twin Window | \$16,800

Max: 2 Persons

- 2 single beds
- 1 window
- Small sofa
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV



- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Cabinet & wardrobe

Twin Deluxe | \$17,900

- 2 windows
- 2 single beds
- Sofa
- Private shower & toilet
- Desk & chair
- Flatscreen TV
- Telephone & WiFi (supplemented)
- Hair dryer
- Refrigerator
- Bathrobe
- Coffee & tea maker
- Cabinet & wardrobe



Guide John Carlson



John first set foot in Antarctica in 1994 as a general laborer at Palmer Station. He has spent the last 25 years figuring out ways to continue to return. This has included stints researching Adelle Penguins at two locations on the Peninsula, conducting biological inventories throughout the peninsula, and as a guide/naturalist on many expeditions to Antarctica as well as South Georgia and the Falklands. When he isn't traveling south he is a Wildlife Biologist for the Bureau of Land Management in Billings, Montana. His main duties are now centered on Greater Sage-Grouse management.

John was born and raised in northeastern Montana and has had a strong interest in wildlife in general and birds specifically for as long as he can remember. He obtained his BA in Zoology from the University of Montana and MS in Zoology and Physiology from the University of Wyoming. In addition to his Antarctic work, he has conducted research on a wide variety of animal species from one end of the world to another, including seabird research in the Bering Sea, and northern Baffin Bay.

Tour Details

Plan Ahead!

Protect yourself with Allianz Travel Insurance. As of January 2017, Naturalist Journeys pays 100% of your flight carbon offset.

Cost of the Journey

Pricing is by cabin, per person, based on double occupancy. Please note that many cabin levels sell quickly—this is a VERY popular cruise. Let us know your preference and we can help you choose.

Quad: \$13,200
Triple: \$14,700
Twin Porthole: \$16,000
Twin Window: \$16,800
Twin Deluxe: \$17,900

Please ask for pricing on Superior, Junior Suite, and Grand Suite.

The earlier you sign on, the better the selection. Categories are limited, and it is first come, first served.

Tour price includes: Voyage aboard the 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; Pre-scheduled group transfer from the vessel to the airport in Ushuaia (directly after disembarkation); All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program; Comprehensive pre-departure material; A sea kayaking program is available (additional charge of approximately US\$795pp) and must be reserved when booking your voyage (limited spots available); you must have some prior paddling experience.

Tour price does not include: 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).

Travel Information

Arrival airport is El Tehuelche Airport (PMY) in Puerto Madryn and departure airport is Ushuaia (USH). Please plan to arrive at a time convenient for you on November 1. Please plan departures on November 22 in the late afternoon or evening. We highly recommend using a travel agent to book your flights. This is a remote part of the world and, from past experience, we know that it can get tricky rebooking your flight if it is cancelled or there are significant delays. Please ask and we will connect you with our agent.

Our operator and expedition staff are Oceanwide Expeditions, a company with impressive polar experience.

Photo Credits

Black-browed Albatross, Greg Smith (GS); Macaroni Penguins, GS; Gentoo Penguins, GS; Humpback Whale Fluke, GS; Elephant Seals, Peg Abbott (PA); Weddell Seal, GS; Striated Caracara, GS; Hondius photos courtesy Oceanwide Expeditions.

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