

Antarctica Trip Report

November 30 – December 18, 2017 | Compiled by Greg Smith



With Greg Smith, guide, and participants Anne, Karen, Anita, Alberto, Dick, Patty & Andy, and Judy & Jerry

Bird List — 78 Species Seen

Anatidae: Ducks, Geese, and Swans (8)

- Upland Goose** (*Chloephaga picta*) Only seen on the Falklands, and most had young or were on nests.
- Kelp Goose** (*Chloephaga hybrid*) On the beach (or close to the beach) at West Point and Carcass Islands.
- Ruddy-headed Goose** (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) Mixed in with the grazing Upland Geese on the Falklands.
- Flightless Steamer Duck** (*Tachyeres pteneres*) Found on both islands that we visited, and on Stanley.
- Crested Duck** (*Lophonetta specularioides*) Not common at all with only a few seen in a pond on Carcass Island.
- Yellow-billed (Speckled) Teal** (*Anas flavirostris*) Two small flocks were using freshwater ponds.
- Yellow-billed Pintail** (*Anas georgica*) Fairly common on South Georgia.
- South Georgia Pintail** (*Anas georgica georgica*) Only on South Georgia and seen on every beach access.

Spheniscidae: Penguins (7)

- King Penguin** (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*) Only on South Georgia and there were thousands and thousands.
- Gentoo Penguin** (*Pygoscelis papua*) Not as many as the Kings, but still thousands.
- Magellanic Penguin** (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) Only on the Falklands and not nearly as common as the Gentoo.
- Macaroni Penguin** (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*) Saw a colony at Elishul Bay on South Georgia.
- Southern Rockhopper Penguin** (*Eudyptes chrysocome*) A nesting colony among the Black-browed Albatross on West Point Island.
- Adelie Penguin** (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) Landed near a colony of over 100,000 pairs at Paulet Island on the Peninsula.
- Chinstrap Penguin** (*Pygoscelis antarcticus*) Seen on the Peninsula and we watched a particularly intense Leopard Seal hunt and kill a Chinstrap.

Diomedeidae: Albatrosses (6)

- Black-browed Albatross** (*Thalassarche melanophris*) One of the more common ship followers away from the Antarctic Peninsula.
- Gray-headed Albatross** (*Thalassarche chrysostoma*) Lots of nesting and foraging birds on Elishul Bay.
- Light-mantled Albatross** (*Phoebastria palpebrata*) Nesting pairs were soaring near their nests at Gold Harbour and Elishul.
- Southern Royal Albatross** (*D. epomophora epomophora*) At least two dozen were seen, mostly in the Scotia Sea.
- Northern Royal Albatross** (*D. epomophora sanfordi*) At least ten from the stern and bridge along the edge of the South American shelf.
- Wandering Albatross** (*Diomedea exulans*) About a half dozen for the entire trip in the Southern Ocean.

Procellariidae: Shearwaters and Petrels (14)

- Southern Giant-Petrel** (*Macronectes giganteus*) Common near the Falklands and South Georgia.
- Northern Giant-Petrel** (*Macronectes halli*) Best views were of the numerous individuals riding the ship's wind wave.

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Cape Petrel (*Daption capense*) Almost always had individuals around the ship while at sea.

Snow Petrel (*Pagodroma nivea*) Lots of great looks, especially down along the Peninsula.

Kerguelen Petrel (*Aphrodroma brevirostris*) A few were seen on our approach and while visiting South Georgia.

Southern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialisoides*) Not at all uncommon and would only be seen while the ship was underway.

White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) Small groups on the water and out foraging near Gold Harbour and Stromness.

Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*) A few were photographed and seen between the Peninsula and South America.

Antarctic Prion (*Pachyptila desolata*) With 22-million nesting pairs in South Georgia, our most common prion.

Fairy Prion (*Pachyptila turtur*) A number were seen off of the Falklands.

Slender-billed Prion (*Pachyptila belcheri*) A couple around the Falklands.

Great Shearwater (*Ardenna gravis*) Only seen on our approach to the Falklands.

Sooty Shearwater (*Ardenna grisea*) Numbers were seen around the Falklands and the tip of South America.

Little Shearwater (*Puffinus assimilis*) Only one was seen by those of us up on the bridge.

Pelecanoididae: Diving-Petrels (2)

Common Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) A few seen between the islands and off of South Georgia.

South Georgian Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides georgicus*) A couple around South Georgia looked very good for this species.

Hydrobatidae: Storm-Petrels (3)

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (*Fregetta tropica*) Not common, but very good looks at them.

Grey-backed Storm-Petrel (*Garrodia nereis*) A few around the Falklands and that was it.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) The most common storm-petrel.

Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants and Shags (5)

Antarctic Shag (*Phalacrocorax bransfieldensis*) Down on the Peninsula, mostly on nests.

Magellanic Cormorant (Rock Shag) (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*) On the Falkland at all three stops, in the harbor at Ushuaia and Stanley.

Imperial Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*) Only on the Falkland Islands.

South Georgia Shag (*Phalacrocorax georgianus*) Of course, nesting along the South Georgia perimeter.

Ardeidae: Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns (1)

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) On the rocks in Stanley.

Cathartidae: New World Vultures (1)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) Common on the Falkland Islands.

Chionidae: Sheathbills (1)

Snowy Sheathbill (*Chionis albus*) All the islands and on the Peninsula.

Haematopodidae: Oystercatchers (2)

Blackish Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ater*) On the beach at West Point and Carcass Islands.

Magellanic Oystercatcher (*Haematopus leucopodus*) As above.

Charadriidae: Plovers and Lapwings (2)

Two-banded Plover (*Charadrius falklandicus*) Great looking during our day at Stanley in the Falklands.

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Rufous-chested Dotterel (*Charadrius modestus*) Nice alternate-plumaged male near Stanley.

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers and Allies (1)

Magellanic (South American) Snipe (*Gallinago paraguaiiae*) Seen in a small wetland near the dotterel site.

Stercorariidae: Skuas and Jaegers (4)

Chilean Skua (*Stercorarius chilensis*) Not as common as the Brown, but there were a few around.

Falkland (Brown) Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*) Common on Falkland Islands and out to sea.

Subantarctic (Brown) Skua (*S. antarcticus lonnbergi*) The most common skua on the Peninsula.

South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*) Had to get further south on the Peninsula to see these as they were all nesting.

Laridae: Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers (5)

Dolphin Gull (*Leucophaeus scoresbii*) Just a few were seen on the Falklands.

Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) Common anywhere near land on the entire cruise.

Arctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) A photo of one foraging with the Antarctic Terns in Fournier Bay.

Antarctic Tern (*Sterna vittata*) All over the Peninsula.

South American Tern (*Sterna hirundinacea*) Seen very well in Stanley and in the Beagle Channel.

Accipitridae: Hawks, Eagles, and Kites (1)

Variable Hawk (*Geranoaetus polyosoma*) Seen both days on the Falklands.

Falconidae: Falcons and Caracaras (3)

Striated Caracara (*Phalco boenus australis*) At least a half dozen on West Point and three on Carcass Island.

Southern Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*) Only seen around Stanley in the Falklands.

Chimango Caracara (*Milvago chimango*) Seen while leaving the dock at Ushuaia.

Furnariidae: Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers (1)

Blackish Cinclodes (*Cinclodes antarcticus*) Also known as the Tussock Bird, they were very confiding on both the Falklands and South Georgia.

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers (1)

Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) A couple of pairs on West Point Island put on a nice show.

Hirundinidae: Swallows (1)

Chilean Swallow (*Tachycineta leucopyga*) Just a few foraging over the freshwater pond on Carcass Island.

Troglodytidae: Wrens (2)

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) Seen well on West Point Island.

Cobb's Wren (*Troglodytes cobbi*) Seen best on Carcass Island.

Icteridae: Troupials and Allies (1)

Long-tailed Meadowlark (*Sturnella loyca*) On all of the larger Falkland Islands we visited.

Turdidae: Thrushes and Allies (1)

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Austral Thrush (*Turdus falcklandii*) A few in Stanley were all that gave us looks.

Motacillidae: Wagtails and Pipits (2)

South Georgia Pipit (*Anthus antarcticus*) On South Georgia, but not common yet. But with the rat eradication program ...

Correndera Pipit (*Anthus correndera*) Best looks were around Stanley.

Thraupidae: Tanagers and Allies (1)

White-bredled Finch (*Melanodera melanodera*) Common everywhere we went that had short grass on Sea Lion Island.

Fringillidae: Finches, Euphonias and Allies (1)

Black-chinned Siskin (*Spinus barbatus*) Just a few in the Stanley area outside of town.

Passeridae: Old World Sparrows (1)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) Stanley had its fair share.

Mammal List — 18 Species Seen

South American Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus australis*) Seen around the continent and on the day out to the Falklands.

Antarctic Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus gazelle*) All over South Georgia and breeding was well under way.

South American Sea Lion (*Otaria byronia*) Seen only around South America.

Leopard Seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) Best looks were around Elephant Island where most of us watched it hunt.

Weddell Seal (*Leptonychotes weddellii*) Saw quite a few of these down along the Peninsula.

Crabeater Seal (*Lobodon carcinophaga*) For being one of the most populous seals in the world, we only saw six.

Southern Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonina*) Most seen were on South Georgia, but there were a few on the Peninsula.

Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) We had four or five sightings of the second largest whale.

Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) They were just starting to arrive in the Peninsula.

Long-finned Pilot Whale (*Globicephala melas*) A large-sized pod was seen in the Scotia Sea.

Antarctic Minke Whale (*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*) Our first morning along the Peninsula gave us some sightings.

Southern Bottlenose Whale (*Hyperoodon planifrons*) Seen one day from the bridge and those on the starboard side of the ship.

Strap-toothed Whale (*Mesoplodon layardii*) Only one adult male was seen, and he was pretty well scarred up.

Hourglass Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus cruciger*) We saw these mostly between the islands on our transit.

Commerson's Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus commersonii*) One view as we left the Peninsula.

Peale's Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus australis*) Our most common dolphin, with about a half dozen sightings for the trip.

Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) Great views of a pod as we were moving towards South Georgia Island.

Spectacled Porpoise (*Phocoena dioptrica*) One was seen by a few folks on the bridge.