

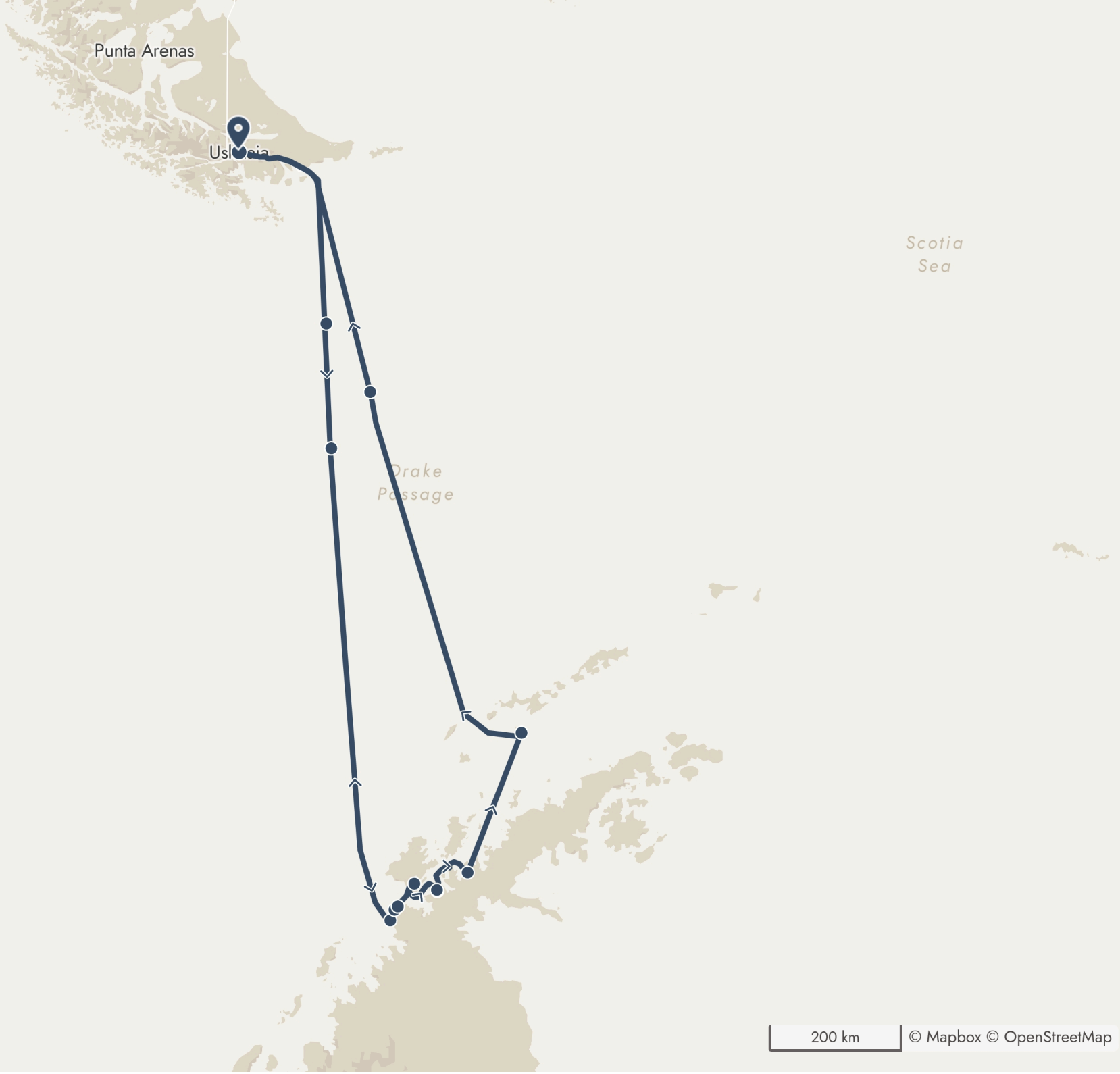


MS Fridtjof Nansen

2024.12.18 - 2024.12.27

Legend

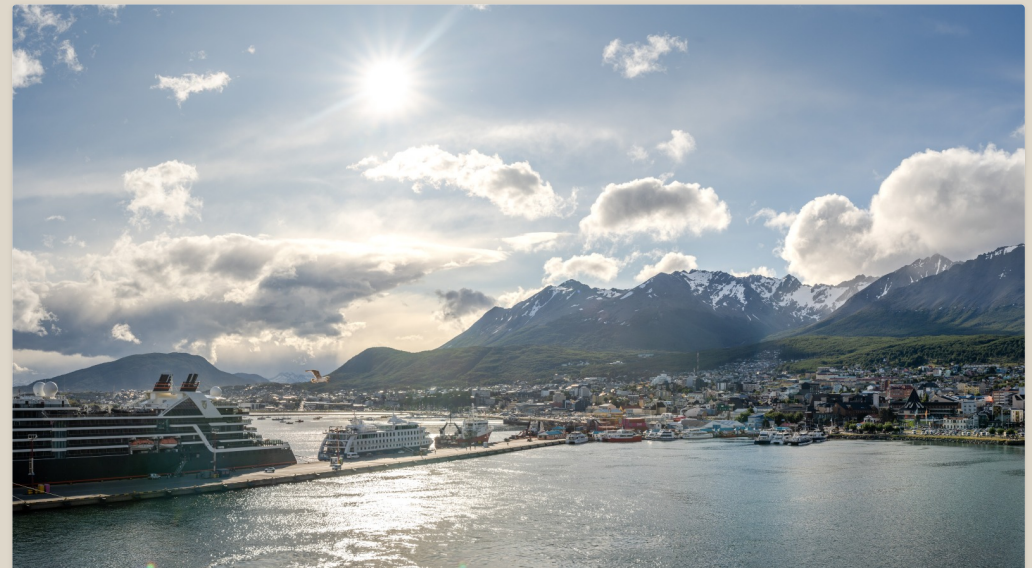
— HX Expedition



Day 1 - Embarkation in Ushuaia

Was it nerves or fear that led to the restless night's sleep as we waited anxiously for our flights to Ushuaia? Soon, we were rocketing down the runway and soaring into the morning skies. Before we knew it, we were starting our descent over Tierra del Fuego and our approach over the Beagle Channel – catching our first glimpses of the snow-capped peaks of southern Patagonia. We were whisked away in buses

for the short journey to our floating base camp for the next 10 days. What a magnificent sight it was to see MS Fridtjof Nansen moored to the pier, pulling at the lines, ready to head south once again. We were quickly checked in, found our cabins and luggage, and proceeded to the Safety Drill and our Muster Stations.



Ushuaia Ushuaia

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

Drake
Passage

Legend
HX Expedition

100 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 2 - Drake Passage

During the early hours of the morning, we left the sheltered waters of the Beagle Channel, and our Master Raymond Martinsen, turned the bow of Fridtjof Nansen to the South. Destination: the Great White South Land – ANTARCTICA. The Drake lived up to its well-deserved

reputation and proved a challenge for a few, who wisely choose to recover from jet lag by being horizontal. The evening concluded with a welcome from our captain and an introduction to the Expedition team.

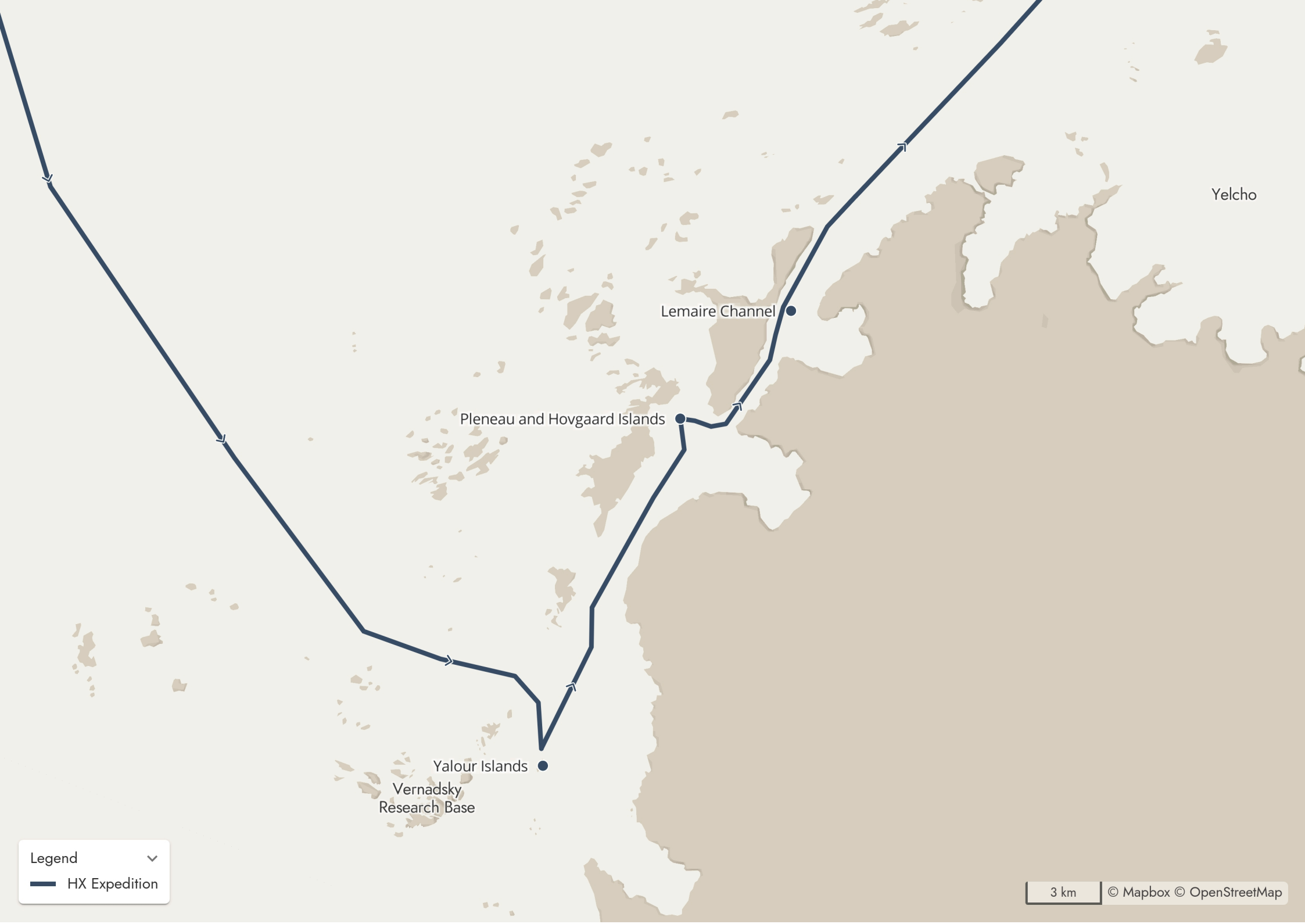


Day 3 - Drake Passage

Today, the Drake started to be kinder as our excitement grew. More preparatory arrangements were taking place, mandatory IAATO briefings on acceptable behaviour ashore, Tender Boat briefings to

ensure our and our crew's safety. In the late afternoon, a buzz of excitement rippled through the ship as we spot our first iceberg, a majestic tabular berg slowly making its way north.





Yelcho

Lemaire Channel

Pleneau and Hovgaard Islands

Yalour Islands

Vernadsky
Research Base

Legend
HX Expedition

3 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 4 - Yalour Islands

Wow, does anything match the beauty of waking up in Antarctica? Opening the curtains in our cabin, we are greeted with a blue-ribbon sky Antarctic morning. We quickly boarded our zodiacs for a morning cruise through the ice and then around the Yalour Islands. The fresh

smell of penguins let us know we were near a small colony of Gentoos and Adelie penguins. Penguin highways led from the shore up to the colonies.



Day 4 - Pleneau and Hovgaard Islands

In the afternoon, we moved further north to Pleneau Island and had our first true expedition experience - a change of plans due to ice — with massive icebergs blocking the landing site. Moving quickly onto Plan B, we undertook our second zodiac cruise, manoeuvring through

majestic icebergs. Gentoo and Adelie penguins lined the shores, and a lone elephant seal pup was hauled out, modelling on a rock. For some, it was the opportunity to have an intimate experience and spend the night ashore camping on Hoovergard Island.





Mount William

Damoy Point

Port Lockroy and Base

Wien

Doumer Island

Legend

— HX Expedition

1 km

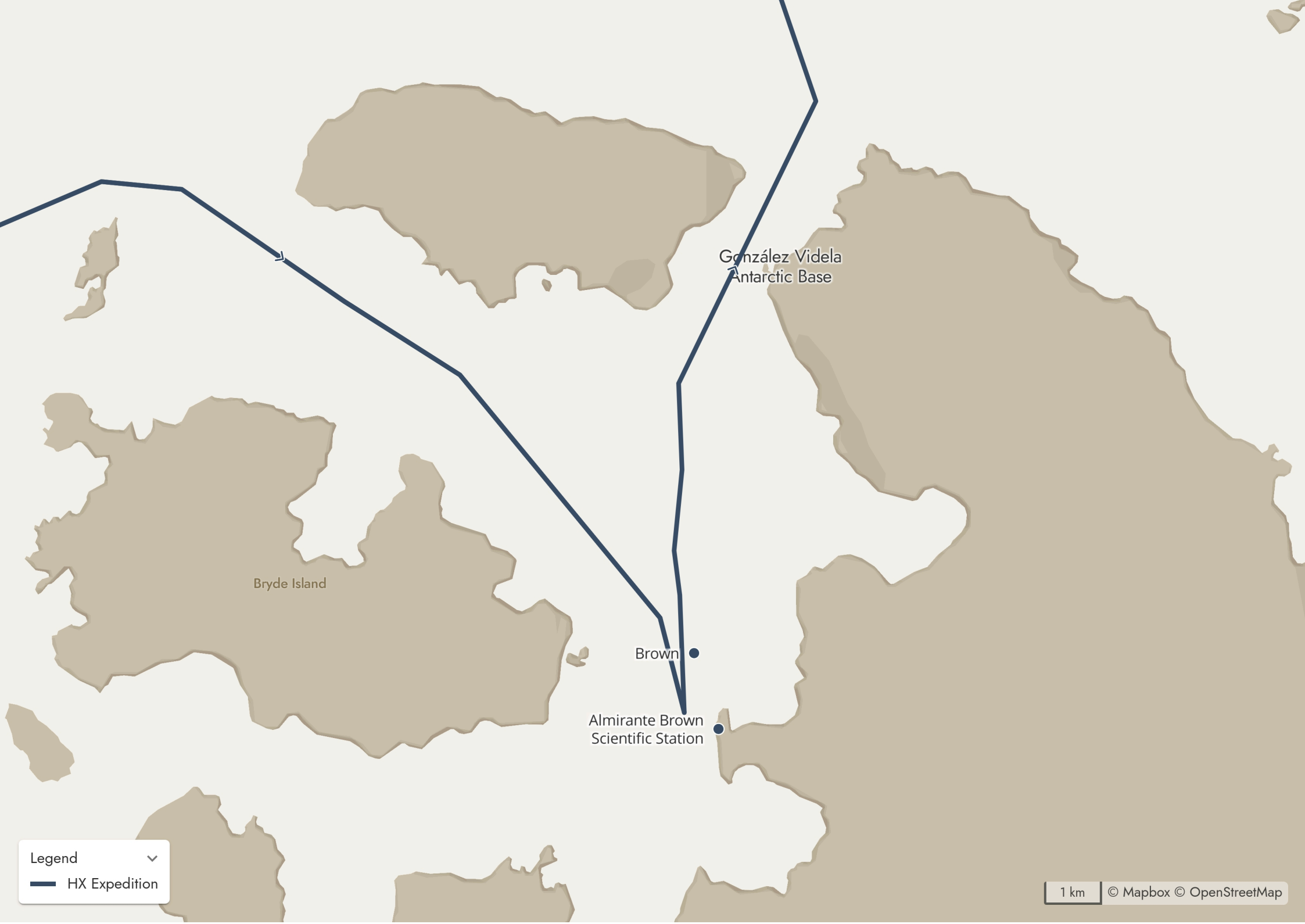
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Day 5 - Damoy Point and Port Lockroy

Land, land, land! Today, we made it ashore on a spectacular blue sky day. Our zodiac drivers expertly manoeuvred through the shallows of Dorian Bay so we could explore Damoy. Damoy is home to two huts: an Argentine Emergency Refuge hut and the UK Antarctic Heritage trust at Damoy, which was used as a base for the resupply of other British bases down the Peninsula. Several managed to venture out and experience Antarctica on snowshoes, experiencing more of the terrain at Damoy. The sun shone throughout the afternoon as we explored the history and Gentoo penguin rookeries at this amazing site. The

occasional Adelie and Chinstrap penguin were spotted amongst the Gentoos. We were entertained by the antics of the nesting penguins as they displayed pair bonding behaviours, exaggerated dances, flipper flapping, and calling. Some eggs were spotted, as well as the first chicks of the season. During the evening, we did a scenic sailing past Port Lockroy, home of the Penguin Post Office. Staff from the base came aboard, bringing the base stamp to mark souvenirs of the occasion.





Bryde Island

Brown

Almirante Brown
Scientific Station

González Videla
Antarctic Base

Legend



— HX Expedition

1 km

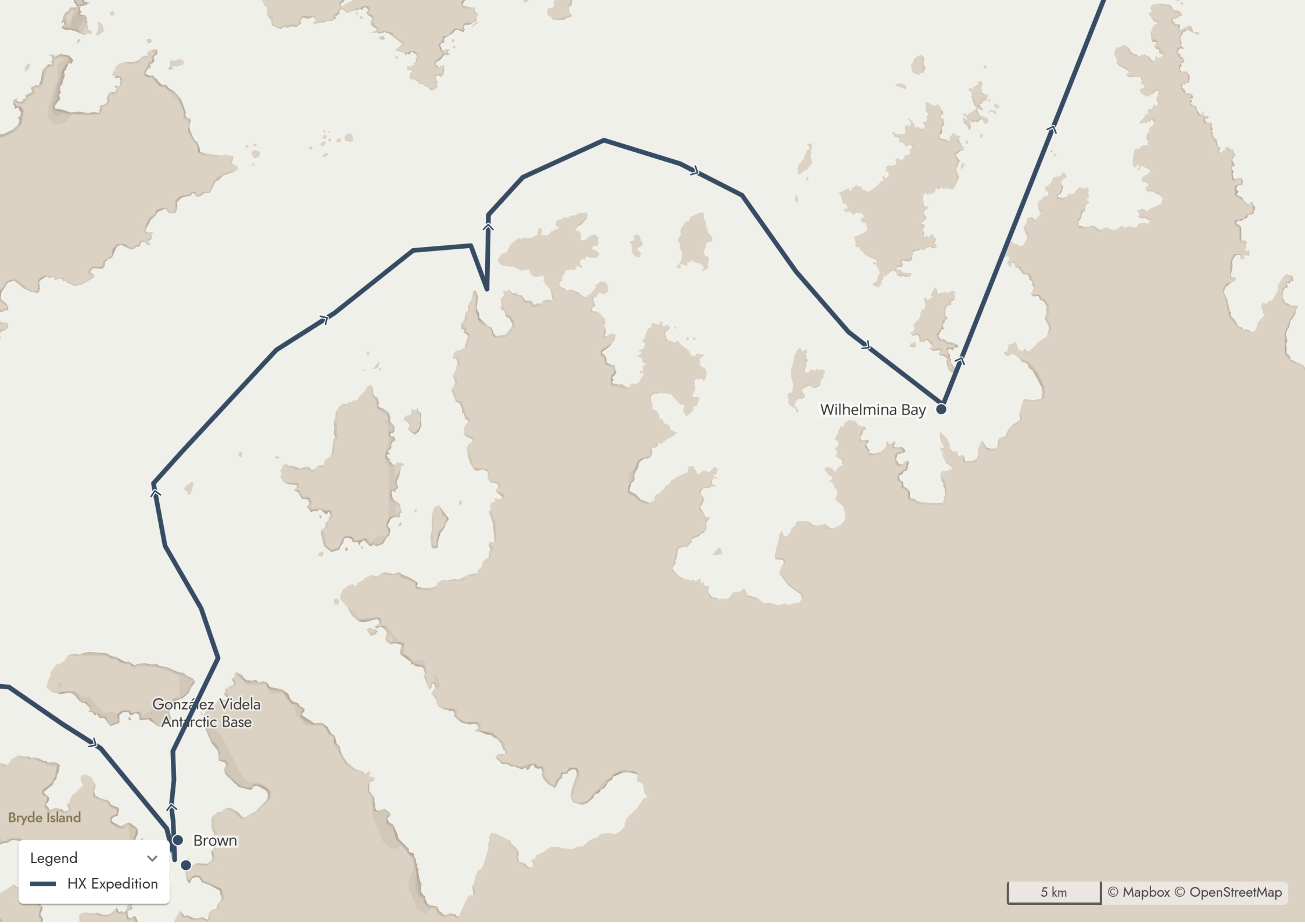
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Day 6 - Paradise Bay - Brown Station

During the morning, we navigated our way through the Neumeyer Channel and into Paradise Harbour. Today, we saw a different side to Antarctica, and after lunch, we felt like true explorers as we started exploring through falling snow and were able to step ashore on the continent for the first time. For some of our lucky throng, this was their Seventh Continent – a worthy goal and aspiration. It was an action-packed afternoon filled with landings, cruising through the icebergs in Paradise Bay, and participating in the Citizen Science projects being run by the ship on one of four Science Boats. The samples we collected will be analysed in San Diego at the Scripps Institute and the

University of La Plata in Argentina – a combination of DNA and visual identification of the phytoplankton. Water samples were taken to analyse the oxygen isotopes to gain a deeper understanding of the fresh water entering the system in Paradise Harbour. It was awesome to be actively involved in the collection of samples that will be used to determine the changes that can be observed over the Antarctic season – as the ship will be back in another 10 days' time. The evening was spent learning about and supporting to the HX Foundation, so we could give back to the places we love. We managed to raise over €6,100 for the foundation.





González Videla
Antarctic Base

Bryde Island

Brown

Legend

— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Brown - Dec 23, 2024

Wilhelmina Bay - Dec 24, 2024

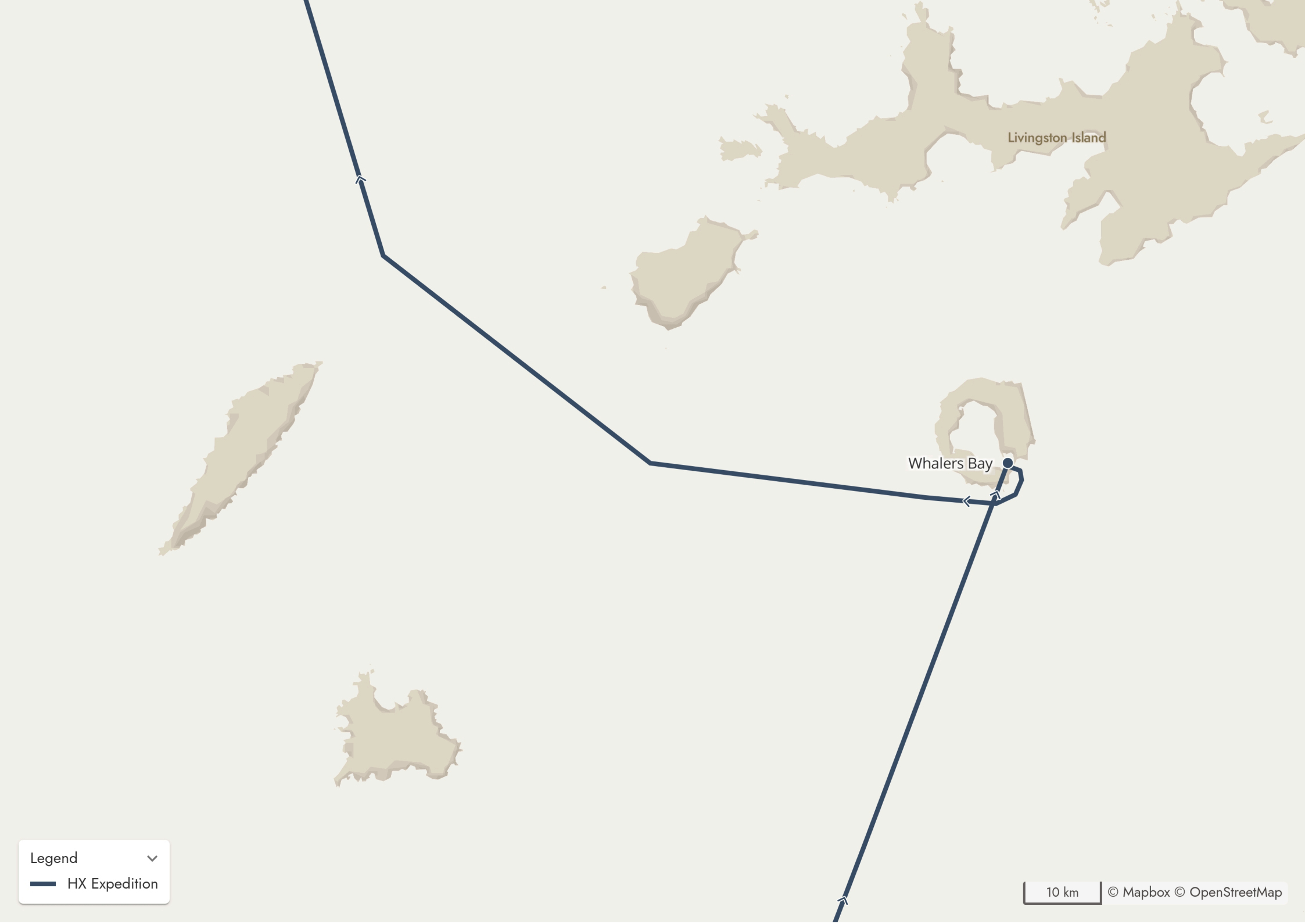
Day 7 - Christmas' Eve in Wilhelmina Bay

Antarctica was showing its challenging side again this morning with strong winds and choppy seas as we approached our morning landing site of Orne Harbour. As some of us were waking up, our illustrious Expedition Leader had to make the call to move to Plan B as the landing site was blocked with ice. Capitalising on his and the captain's experience, we sailed north into Wilhelmina Bay for zodiac cruising amongst the whales. We came to rest in the bay, near some 'logging' (sleeping) Humpback whales. The bay was like glass as we commenced our explorations. One zodiac was boarded by a pirate Adelie who jumped onboard to check out this strange group of people. A fine day was had by all. Traditions are traditions and need

to be followed both on land and at sea. Santa was able to make an appearance at the end of our crew's magnificent rendition of a selection of Christmas carols, and in the spirit of global cooperation and understanding, "Silent Night" was sung in four languages: English, German, Tagalog (Filipino), and Chinese. In Norway, the Christmas tradition is to watch the English comedy skit "Dinner for One". At Miss Sophie's 90th birthday dinner, her butler James must fill in for her four departed friends - and that includes lots of drinks before every course. This was ably performed by members of the expedition team.







Livingston Island

Whalers Bay

Legend
HX Expedition

10 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 8 - Whalers Bay

We crossed the stormy Bransfield Strait between the Antarctic Peninsula and the South Shetland Islands, a forewarning of the Drake Passage to come. We sailed into an active volcano through the narrow Neptune's Bellows of Deception Island. The calm, wide waters of Port Foster greeted us as we prepared to explore the industrial archaeological ruins of Whalers Bay. The scale of the ruins reminded us of the industrial-scale slaughter and exploitation of the Southern Oceans and strengthened our resolve to do more to actively protect

Antarctica. We traced Capt. Nathaniel Palmer's footsteps along the volcanic sand beach to Neptune's Window, a gap in the wall of the caldera. It is from here that Nathaniel Palmer looked to the southeast and could see the Antarctica Peninsula, and he was the first to record this event in the ship's log. To celebrate our last landing on this voyage, filled with highlights, we decided to take a polar plunge into the waters of Port Foster. Despite being an active volcano, the heat had not transferred to the waters of the bay.





Days 9 & 10 - Drake Passage

Day 9 - We awoke to the familiar movement of the ship as we re-entered the Drake Passage as we began the long sail back to Ushuaia. The day was spent in reflection and continued learning, with lectures and presentations by the never-tiring, friendly, and enthusiastic expedition team who have cared for us throughout this adventure. Sadly, we realised the adventure was coming to an end when we had to return and clean our boots – to protect and preserve Antarctica for future generations – a task we undertook with pleasure.

Day 10 - Our last day at sea. The Drake showed us her kinder side. A day of continued learning. Sharing conversations, feelings, and emotions with new found friends and adventurers as we reflected upon the impact that this visit to Antarctica has had upon us. We slowly came to realise why the expedition team is so passionate about what they do, and the need they have to come back year after year to experience the wonders of Antarctica.





Ushuaia, Argentina - Dec 27, 2024

Day 11 - Disembarkation in Ushuaia

The adventure comes to an end as we say goodbye to our ship and newfound friends and we make our way back from the Fin del Mundo – the city at the end of the world and the beginning of everything. As

we fly north, our thoughts, hearts, and emotions are still in the south. I hear the white wastes calling across a restless sea; civilisation is palling the wanderer's disease.



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