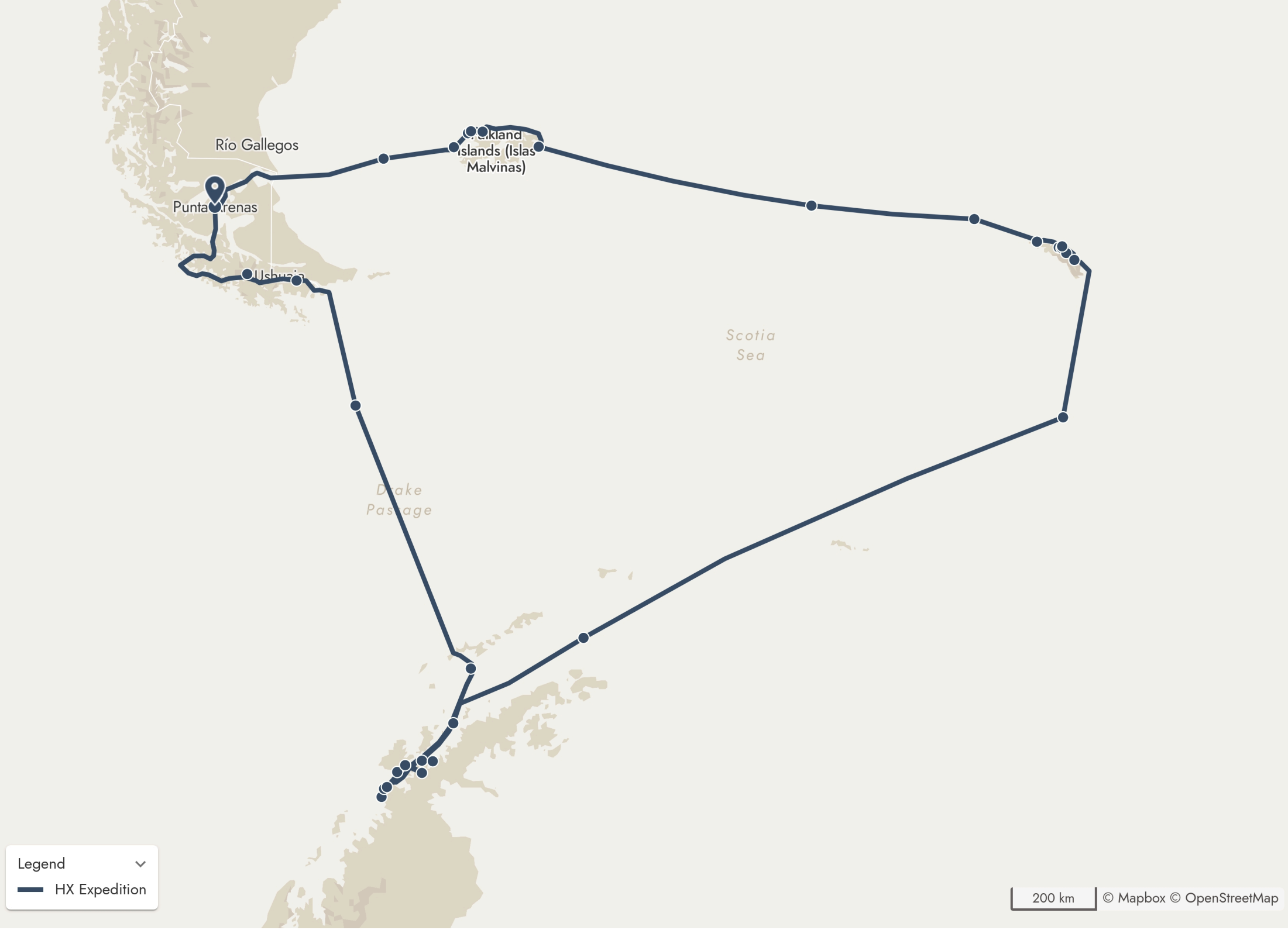




FRANT2417 - In depth Antarctica, Falklands and South Georgia Expedition

2025.02.23 - 2025.03.16



Embarkation Day

Our group gathered in Punta Arenas, the gateway to Antarctica, where we boarded the MS Fram, our floating home for the upcoming three-week expedition. Excitement filled the air as we prepared for an adventure spanning the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, and

Antarctica. After settling into our cabins, we enjoyed a delightful inaugural dinner aboard the ship. Following the mandatory safety drill, we set sail late at night toward our first destination: the Falkland Islands.

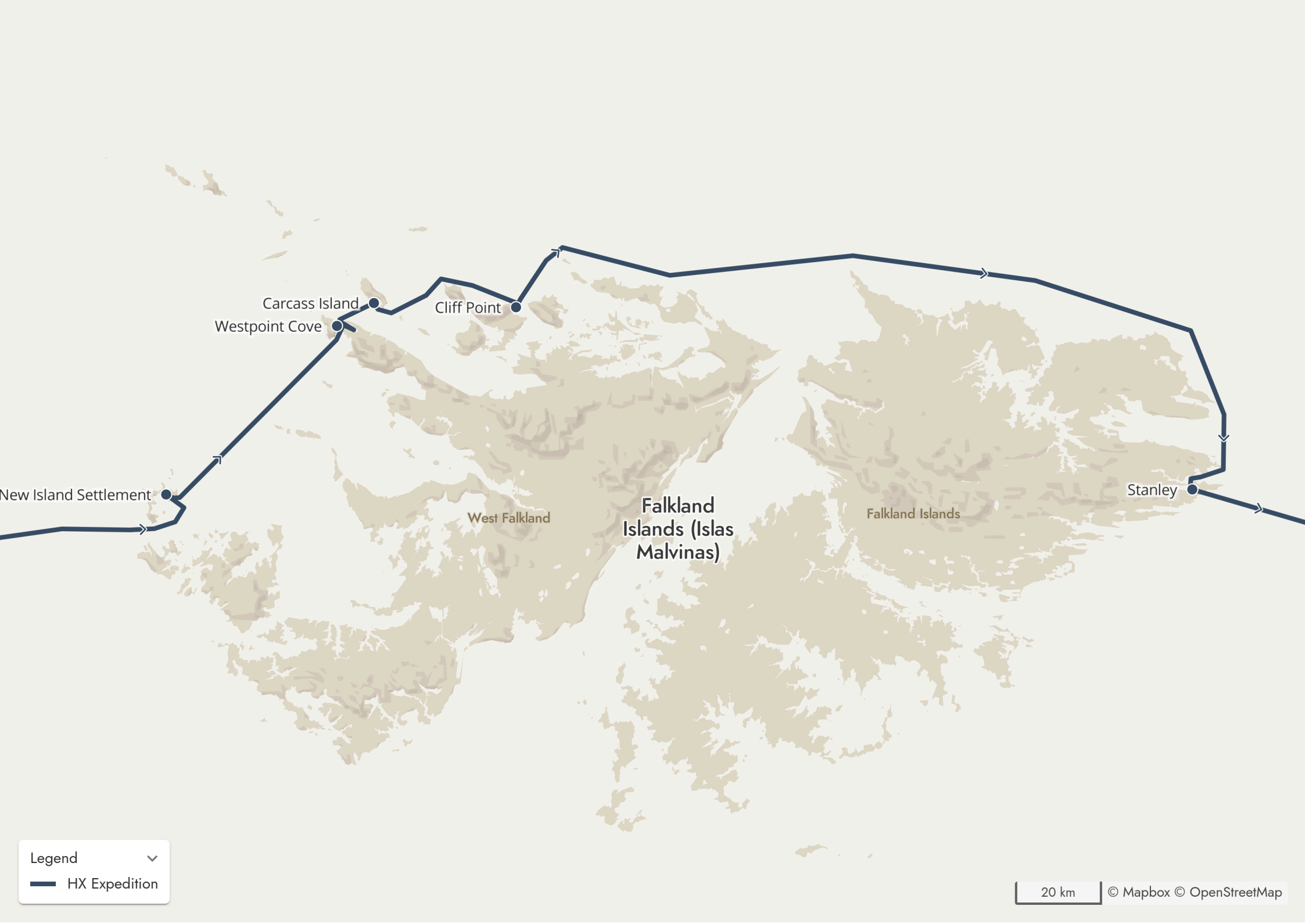


On our way to the Falklands

Our day at sea was packed with engaging activities. We began with wildlife watching on the bow, hoping to spot marine life. Later, we attended an introduction to the ship and the voyage in the Lecture Hall. The Expedition Team shared insights into MS Fram's science program, followed by an opportunity to meet the scientists in the

Science Centre. An afternoon lecture focused on photography composition. In the evening, the captain hosted a welcome drink in the Explorer Lounge and introduced the officers, crew, and Expedition Team. We concluded with a briefing on our plans for the next day.





Carcass Island
Westpoint Cove

Cliff Point

New Island Settlement

West Falkland

Falkland
Islands (Islas
Malvinas)

Falkland Islands

Stanley

Legend

HX Expedition

New Island & West Point

Exploring the Falkland Islands was unforgettable! We started with an early landing on New Island, walking to a bay overlooking a mixed colony of Rockhopper penguins and Black-browed Albatrosses. Later, we visited West Point Island to observe Magellanic penguins and

trekked to another colony nestled in tussock grass on a cliff. Our visit ended with homemade treats at Kiki and Thiese's home. Onboard activities included wildlife watching and a lecture on the Falkland/Malvinas conflict.





Carcass Island & Cliff Point

Challenging conditions prevented us from landing at Carcass Island, which led to the cancellation of the planned nature hike. Instead, we attended Marcos' lecture on whale sounds and participated in wildlife watching from deck 5 as we sailed toward Saunders Island. Our

afternoon landing offered diverse experiences, including observing Gentoo and Magellanic penguins near a pond and viewing Black-browed Albatrosses nesting along cliffs. The day was filled with learning opportunities and rewarding wildlife encounters.





Stanley, Capital of the Falklands

Our time in Stanley Harbour was eventful. Some joined the Falklands Nature Trek to explore local wildlife, while others took part in a guided community walk highlighting town landmarks. Another group opted for a bus tour, ending at the Historic Dockyard Museum and

enjoying its exhibits. MS Fram departed at 17:00 through The Narrows, offering scenic views. Evening activities included wildlife watching on deck 5 and singing in the Explorer Lounge.



On our way to South Georgia

The day featured enriching activities at sea. Participants contributed to bird conservation through the eBird Citizen Science project on deck 5 and observed marine life during wildlife watching sessions. A

mandatory briefing prepared us for South Georgia's regulations. Additional activities included a Scavenger Hunt: Penguin Edition and exploring photos of captured creatures in the Open Science Centre.



Sailing by Shag Rocks

Another vibrant day at sea! Wildlife watching continued alongside Enzo's eBird Citizen Science project. Giulia shared insights into seals, while others identified whales by their fins and flukes. Creative workshops included scientific drawing and cloud identification for

climate research, led by Linda. Paul hosted sea shanty rehearsals, while Jan conducted a wildlife photography workshop. Passing Shag Rock en route to South Georgia, Jane recounted the story of Shackleton's expedition.





Legend

HX Expedition

Right Whale Bay

Right Whale Bay offered stunning landscapes and abundant wildlife encounters. Morning activities included wildlife watching on Deck 5 and lectures about South Georgia's birds. A knot-tying workshop

preceded an interactive session on rock formations in the Science Centre. Afternoon landings introduced us to fur seals, king penguins, elephant seals, and majestic scenery.



Fortuna Bay & Stromness Harbour

Fortuna Bay offered breathtaking views of penguins and fur seals during our morning landing at Whistle Cove. Some embarked on the Shackleton Hike from Fortuna Bay to Stromness, while others explored

historic sites near the Stromness Whaling Station or admired a picturesque waterfall along the riverbeds. In the evening, presentations outlined plans for tomorrow.





Grytviken & Hercules Bay

Our visit to Grytviken began near Sir Ernest Shackleton's gravesite, followed by an exploration of the whaling station ruins, museums, and nearby post offices. Activities included guided walks focusing on the history of whaling and hiking the Maiviken trails. Later, at Hercules

Bay, we cruised past scenic views of Macaroni penguin colonies before attending the usual onboard presentations about the Plans for Tomorrow.





St Andrews Bay

St. Andrew's Bay showcased South Georgia's largest king penguin colony, alongside fur seals, elephant seals, and a variety of bird species thriving in pristine conditions. Activities ranged from Science Boat excursions to Photo Adventure Landings, before we cruised along rugged coastlines in a farewell gesture during the afternoon

Wildlife Watch or NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer sessions. We also attended a lecture on Sir Ernest Shackleton and explored the Science Centre to examine plankton samples. The day concluded with a singing session in the Explorer Lounge.



Sailing further South...

While sailing toward Antarctica's icy kingdom today, we participated in interactive sessions exploring bird feathers, alongside lectures covering seal behaviours and Antarctic ecosystems. These insights

inspired photo critiques afterward, concluding with lively sea shanty singalongs. The evening wrapped up with a fun-filled quiz, fostering camaraderie among travellers aboard MS Fram.



At sea - Mar 7, 2025

Crossing the Open Seas

Today, we explored the wonders of the open sea, engaging in enriching activities that deepened our appreciation for Antarctica. We began with wildlife observation on Deck 5, marvelling at seabirds and marine life. Later, we attended fascinating lectures on Antarctic seals and the icy kingdom's ecosystem, gaining insights into this

unique environment. The photo critique sessions allowed us to refine our skills and share perspectives. In the afternoon, we joined a lively sea shanty session, singing together in good spirits. As the evening approached, we gathered for a mandatory briefing and concluded the day with a fun-filled quiz that brought everyone together.

At sea - Mar 8, 2025

Reaching the White Continent

The morning began with wildlife watching from the bow, where we scanned the horizon for seabirds and other creatures. Engaging lectures followed, offering insights into the history of Antarctica and the fascinating world of penguins. In the Science Centre, we explored bird biology, examining skulls and bones, and even learned how to

"build" a whale model. Sailing past towering icebergs, we were inspired as we approached the frozen continent. The rhythm of the day balanced discovery and reflection, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the stark beauty and unique atmosphere of this remote environment.



Legend

— HX Expedition



Orne Harbour & Wilhemina Bay

On March 9th, 2025, we found ourselves in Antarctica, ready for exploration. The day unfolded with the landing at Orne Harbour, where we got acquainted with the Antarctic landscape and met the first chinstrap penguins. Some of us went kayaking, while others went in the Science Boat with the Science Coordinator Vivi. After lunch,

there was an anticipated small boat cruise at Wilhelmina Bay, where most of us had the chance to encounter whales and seals in their natural environment. Onboard, activities included a wildlife watch and a lecture on the Belgian Antarctic Expedition, which provided insights into the region's history and wildlife.





Yalour & Pleneau Islands

On March 10th, 2025, we explored the Yalour Islands and Pleneau Island in Antarctica. In the morning, conditions allowed us to perform a small boat cruising activity in an iceberg-filled sea at the Yalour Islands, where we encountered Adélie penguins and other wildlife.

Later, we landed at Pleneau Island, before leaving the bravest of us to overnight in a campsite on nearby Hovgaard Island. What an unforgettable adventure!





Hovgåard Camping Site, Antarctica - Mar 10, 2025

Lemaire Channel, Antarctica - Mar 11, 2025

Going through Lemaire & Neumayer Channels

Today, we navigated the Lemaire Channel, surrounded by towering ice cliffs and calm waters, marvelling at the serene beauty of Antarctica. Wildlife sightings kept us engaged as we scanned the horizon from the bow. In the afternoon, we landed at Neko Harbour, stepping onto the Antarctic continent itself. Some of us joined kayak excursions, gliding quietly among icebergs, while others participated

in science boat activities, observing the unique ecosystem up close. Onboard, lectures deepened our understanding of this remote region. The day closed with storytelling sessions that connected us further to the wonders and challenges of this extraordinary environment



Cruise Sailing, Antarctica - Mar 11, 2025

Neumeyer Channel, Antarctica - Mar 11, 2025

Neko Harbour - Mar 11, 2025



Deception Island

We arrived at Deception Island on March 12, 2025, and navigated through Neptune's Bellow in the early morning. Our expedition team organized the landing at Whalers Bay, where we went ashore in groups throughout the morning. Many of us participated in the Polar Plunge, braving the cold Antarctic waters while the crew provided towels. Some joined the Science Boat excursions, exploring the

surrounding waters before being dropped off at the landing site. Back on board, we attended lectures about Antarctic exploration and the properties of ice. We examined water samples collected during our Science Boat trips and observed wildlife from the observation deck. The day concluded with a talk about Antarctica, the frozen continent.



Shaky Drake

We sailed through the Drake Passage on March 13, 2025. Rough seas prevented us from conducting observation sessions from the bow of deck 5, so we roamed around Deck 7 over watching the seas until conditions became too severe. Throughout the day, we attended educational lectures about Antarctica's climate history and the albatrosses and petrels accompanying our journey. Some of us joined

photo editing sessions with Jan and Geraldine to improve our Antarctic photography. The expedition team presented information about Svalbard, its glaciers, and fjords. We visited the Science Centre to learn about volcanic eruptions. Unfortunately, Jane's excellent quiz was cancelled due to rough seas.



Reaching the Patagonian Shelf

As the day unfolded, we observed wildlife from the bow, participated in lectures on topics ranging from cetacean migrations to Antarctic food webs, and engaged in hands-on workshops like clay sculpting and knitting. The Science Centre hosted gatherings that fostered

camaraderie among campers, while evening events such as the charity auction and band night brought a lively conclusion to our experiences.





Chilean Fjords & Pia Glacier

On March 15, 2025, we explored the Chilean Fjords and Pia Glacier during day 21 of our voyage. We landed at Pia Glacier in the morning, with fantastic weather and finally some lush vegetation. Throughout the day, we attended several informative sessions, including a lecture about Tierra del Fuego and a Science Recap where we revisited the discoveries made during our journey. We

participated in a Wildlife Watch from the bow on deck 5. In the evening, we gathered in the Explorer Lounge for the Captain's Farewell, followed by a voyage slideshow in the Lecture Hall, where Jan and Geraldine presented photographs and videos documenting our expedition.





Disembarkation Day

As we stepped off MS Fram, our hearts swelled with bittersweet emotions. For three extraordinary weeks, this ship had been our gateway to the wonders of the Southern Hemisphere. Our journey through the Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Antarctica, the Beagle Channel, and the Strait of Magellan left an indelible mark on our souls. We found ourselves amidst vast colonies of albatrosses and penguins in the Falklands. In South Georgia, we stood in awe before thousands of king penguins, their golden crests gleaming against dramatic landscapes. Antarctica's pristine realm of ice and snow exhilarated us as we witnessed majestic icebergs and observed curious wildlife in their natural habitat. Sailing through the Beagle

Channel, we marvelled at fjords and snow-capped mountains and were amazed by the unexpected landing at the gorgeous Pia Glacier. Navigating the legendary Strait of Magellan connected us to the spirit of intrepid explorers. Our experiences — from thrilling zodiac cruises among ice floes to warm friendships and insightful lectures — were more than a vacation; they were a transformative journey to the end of the world. As we bid farewell to the dedicated crew of MS Fram, we felt a pull to return, knowing that the impact of this extraordinary adventure would resonate within us for years to come, calling us back to the majestic landscapes and incredible wildlife of these southern realms.



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