



MS Fridtjof Nansen

2025.03.08 - 2025.03.18





## Ushuaia - Embarkation

Travel these days is hurry up and wait, and with travel changes and chaos, some of us only saw our hotel rooms for a few short hours before stumbling downstairs and heading back to the airport. Our excitement grew with the thrust of the engines as we rocketed down the runway and broke through into the morning sunlight, winging our

way south to Ushuaia, Fin del Mundo, the end of the world and the beginning of everything. We caught glimpses of our floating base camp tied to the pier like a restless colt. We are finally here – the adventure begins, and the biting winds remind us that it is REAL.





Tolhuin

Parque Nacional  
Yendegaia

Ushuaia

Ushuaia

Puerto Williams

Hoste Island

Reserva Nacional  
Marina Yaganes

Drake Passage

Drake Passage

Legend

— HX Expedition

30 km

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## Drake Passage - Day 2

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The expedition team told us the Drake was being kind, but to those new to life at sea, it did not feel that way. We spent the day exploring

our new home, meeting the team, and learning the rhythm of the ship.

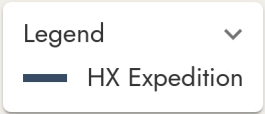


## Drake Passage - Day 3

They tell us the Drake is calmer today, though some do not believe this to be the case. Today we learnt about IAATO and the expectations placed on us as responsible visitors to Antarctica. We conducted biosecurity on our field gear, were kitted out with rubber boots, and

briefed on how to sit, spin, and slide in and out of a zodiac, all while using the sailor's grip. In the evening, we were welcomed by Captain Raymond Martinsen, his officers, and the expert expedition team onto whose hands we had entrusted this adventure.





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## Garden of Icebergs

There was less movement in the ship as we awoke this morning. Opening the curtains, we were greeted with our first glimpses of this otherworldly place - Antarctica. We glided through glassy seas, decorated with majestic icebergs and bergy bits. Now it gets real. We

began our zodiac cruising operations in the Garden of Icebergs, navigating through the icebergs and brash ice, looking for whales, seals, and, of course, penguins.

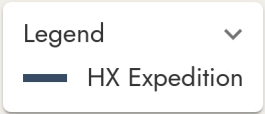


## Petermann Island

In the afternoon, we moved south for a landing at Petermann Island, where we saw our first Adelie and Gentoo penguins. Nearly fully fledged chicks kept us endlessly entertained. In the early evening, we

navigated our way through the ice-choked Lemaire Channel, named after a Belgian explorer.





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## Paradise Bay

The calm waters of Paradise Harbour ensured a peaceful and scenic breakfast. We sailed past two stations: the Argentine Base Brown, named after the founder of the Argentine Navy, and the Chilean Gonzalez Videla, named after the first head of state to visit Antarctica

in 1957. Gonzalez Videla is also the site of the smallest overwintering party in 1932, when the Cope Expedition, consisting of two young men, Bagshaw and Lester, spent a year at Waterboat Point doing meteorological research.





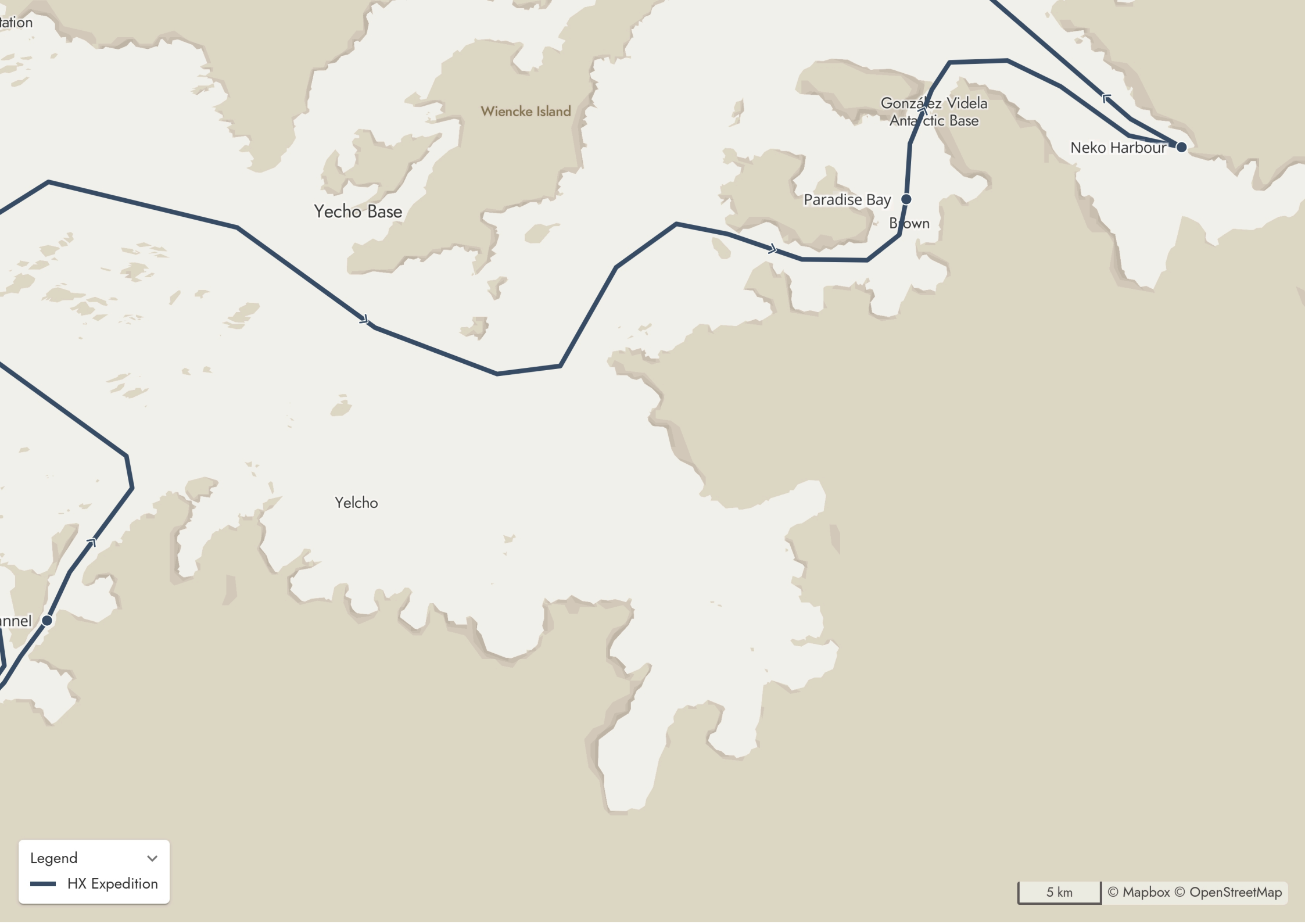
## Neko Harbour

We sailed in the afternoon to Neko Harbour in Andvord Bay for our Continental Landing. Towering glaciers surrounded the landing site as we climbed up to observe the Gentoo penguins in the rookery.

Further up, we reached a spectacular viewpoint providing an overview of the bay. The zodiac cruising through the ice was expertly guided by members of the expedition team and deck department.





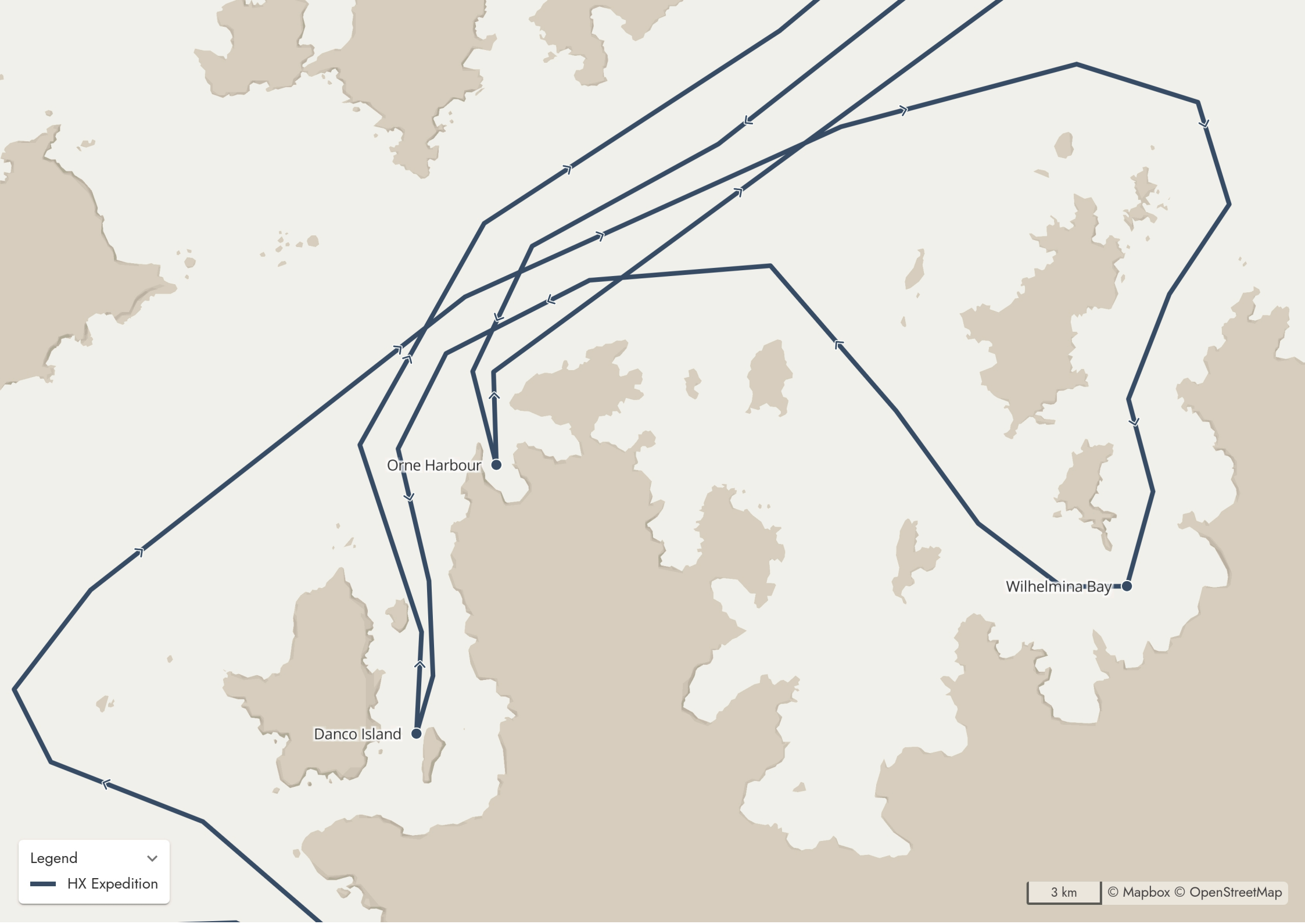


## Wilhelmina Bay

We have developed a comfortable rhythm onboard, exploring with the ship while we restore and recharge over breakfast. We cruised

Wilhelmina Bay, and our necks were exercised as we kept turning to look at more whales. It should have been named Whale Maxi Bay.





Orne Harbour

Danco Island

Wilhelmina Bay

Legend



— HX Expedition

3 km

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## Danco Island

After lunch, we had another landing at Danco Island, named after the Polish geologist who died during Gerlache's Belgian Expedition of 1898–99. After coming ashore, we walked up to a rookery filled with molting penguins—adults and chicks. The adults had a dark bronze-

black coloration of old feathers, while the chicks had fresh jet-black feathers, with some still showing remnants of their down poking through. Many brave guests also took the polar plunge at the beach on Danco Island.

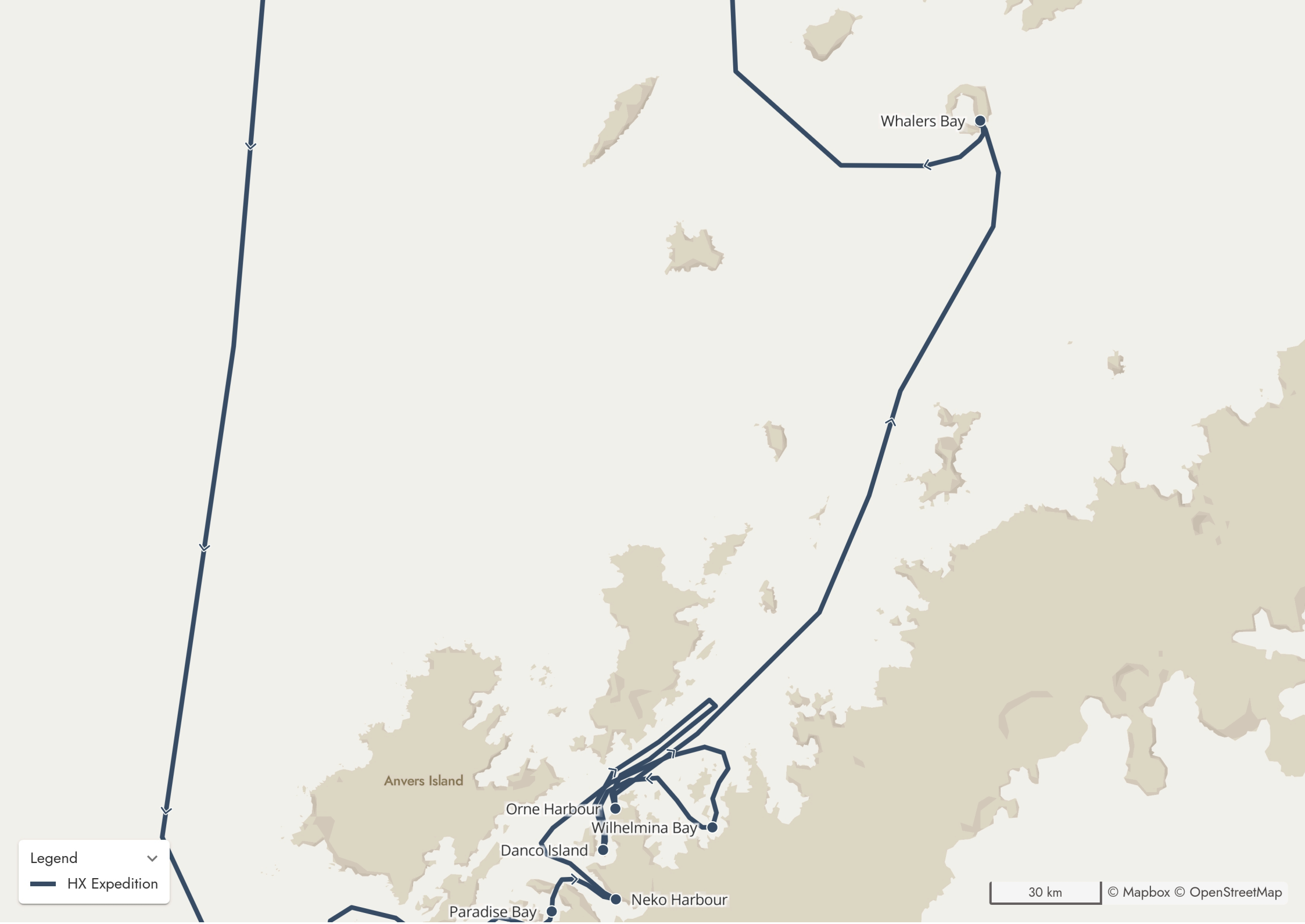


## Orne Harbour

We sailed into Orne Harbour from the Gerlache Strait. Our expedition team went ashore to assess the landing conditions. Unfortunately, the conditions were not suitable to conduct a landing safely, but our cruising operations went ahead. Wow, what a treat - fur

seals, chinstrap penguins, and whales, whales, whales, and even more humpback whales. An excellent finale to our time on the peninsula.





Legend

— HX Expedition

30 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



## Whalers Bay

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We crossed the Bransfield Strait and headed towards an active volcano in the South Shetland Islands. Deception Island last erupted between 1966 and 1970 and is still very much an active volcano. The entrance, Neptune's Bellows, is a narrow stretch of water with a submerged rock, Ravn Rock, halfway across. The entrance is characterized by strong winds exiting the caldera from katabatic winds. On our entrance, the peak wind speeds were in excess of 35 knots.

Entering Port Foster, we could marvel at the industrial-scale slaughter

of whales that must have occurred, with the remains of the Hector Whaling Company's shore-based whale processing factory. We were greeted by fur seals and gentoo penguins as we managed to stretch our legs from the landing site to climb up to Neptune's Window, a break in the caldera wall where we could look southwards to the Antarctic Peninsula.

During the morning, the weather began to turn against us, with rain and increasing winds. Sadly, the call had to be made at lunchtime to abandon the landing and start heading back across the Drake.



## Drake Passage - Day 9

We awoke to the unfamiliar movement of the ship as we re-entered the Drake Passage as we began the long sail back to Ushuaia. The Drake was giving us a taste of what it could be like, and how we had been spared on our southbound crossing a mere six days (and a lifetime) before. Am I the same person who left Ushuaia, or has

Antarctica changed me in ways I am still yet to fathom? 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.





Legend

— HX Expedition

Drake Passage

*Drake  
Passage*

Drake Passage

Whalers Bay

## Drake Passage - Day 10

Our last day at sea. The Drake was kind, and we had made good progress. It was a day of continued learning - sharing conversations, feelings, and emotions with newfound friends and fellow adventurers as we reflected on the impact this visit to Antarctica had on us. Sadly, we realized our adventure was coming to an end when we had to

return and clean our boots - a task we undertook with pleasure to protect and preserve Antarctica for future generations. We have come to understand why the expedition team is so passionate about what they do and their deep need to return year after year to experience and share the wonders of Antarctica.





## Ushuaia - Disembarkation

The adventure comes to an end as we say goodbye to our floating home and newfound friends. In awe, we make our way back from Fin del Mundo - the city at the end of the world and the beginning of everything. As we fly north, our hearts remain in the south, reflecting

on the new adventures that await our newfound friends among the crew of MS Fridtjof Nansen. We wish them clear skies and a following sea. I hear the white wastes calling across a restless sea; civilization is paling - the wanderer's disease.







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