Science Report

MS FRAM

MS FRAM
27 December 2025 – 17 January 2026

In-Depth Antarctica, Falkland Islands & South Georgia Expedition

Yuri Choufour

History & Culture

During our voyage, we explored the historic whaling station of Grytviken in South Georgia — a place transformed from a hub of industry into a sanctuary of wilderness. Here, rusting relics stand among thriving wildlife, telling a powerful story of nature's renewal at the edge of the world.

Yuri Choufour

Arts & Crafts

Our sea days were not only a time to rest while crossing the Southern Ocean but also moments filled with arts and crafts. We painted, drew, and used clay to create our own Antarctic creatures. It was a wonderful way to connect with one another and to explore our inner worlds, reflecting on the emotions inspired by our outdoor adventures.

Yuri Choufour

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Science Boat

During our voyage we conducted 7 Science Boat outings during which we collected Secchi disc measurements, CTD data, and water samples. While the greatest diversity and concentration of planktonic organisms was found in South Georgia associated to the kelp forests ecosystem, the clearer waters with low phyto and zoo-plankton diversity and abundance were encountered in the northern part of the Antarctic Peninsula.

CTD data was submitted to the Southern Atlantic Environmental Research Institute (SAERI), while Secchi disk data was automatically uploaded to the Secchi Disk Project. Lastly, the samples collected for FjordPhyto will contribute to the project's ongoing eight-year effort to understand how glacial melt influences phytoplankton communities.

Thanks for your enthusiasm in joining the science boat and the workshops, it was a great fun to have a look to our samples with you.

Yuri Choufour

Underwater Drone

During our voyage, we explored the underwater ecosystems of giant kelp forests (*Macrocystis pyrifera*) around Gold Harbour in South Georgia, which had poor visibility and the presence of coralline algae forests at 25m depth. We then opportunistically dropped our ROV in the Antarctic waters around the Barrientos Islands of the South Shetland Islands. There, the effects of ice scouring were evident in the flattened, carpet-like seaweed formations.

Gentoo penguins were frequently seen gliding between pieces of ice, a striking contrast to their clumsy movements during their land-based breeding activities.

Click here to visit our YouTube channel to see the drone videos from your voyage.

Yuri Choufour

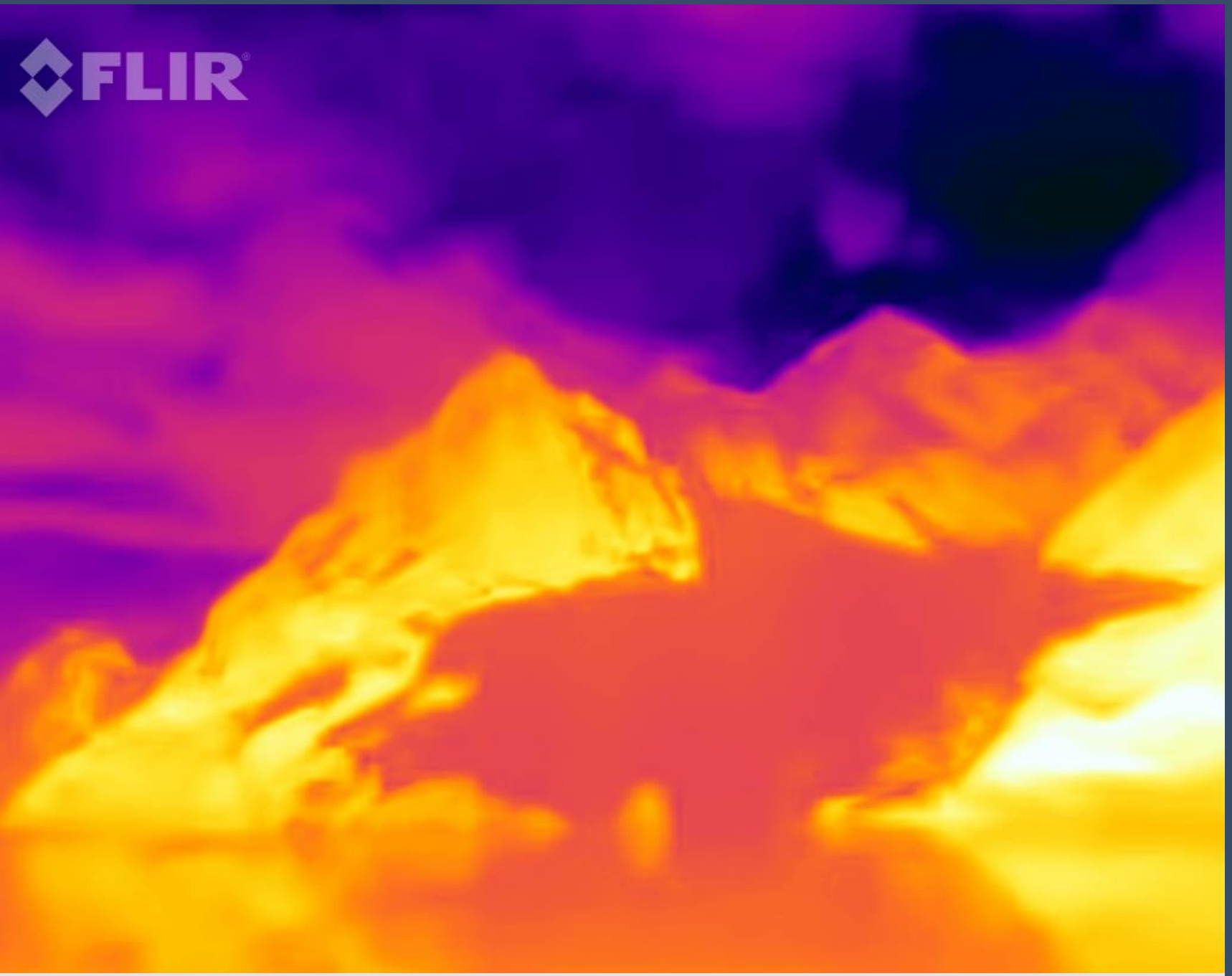
GLOBE Cloud Observer for NASA

Together with the help of Amélie and guests, we collected 7 observations for NASA using the GLOBE Observer app, all of which matched with a satellite overpass.

This provides essential data in the polar region to help calibrate satellites and to gain vital insights into atmospheric changes that trigger cloud formation.

Please continue observing the sky from home, as every contribution supports scientists.

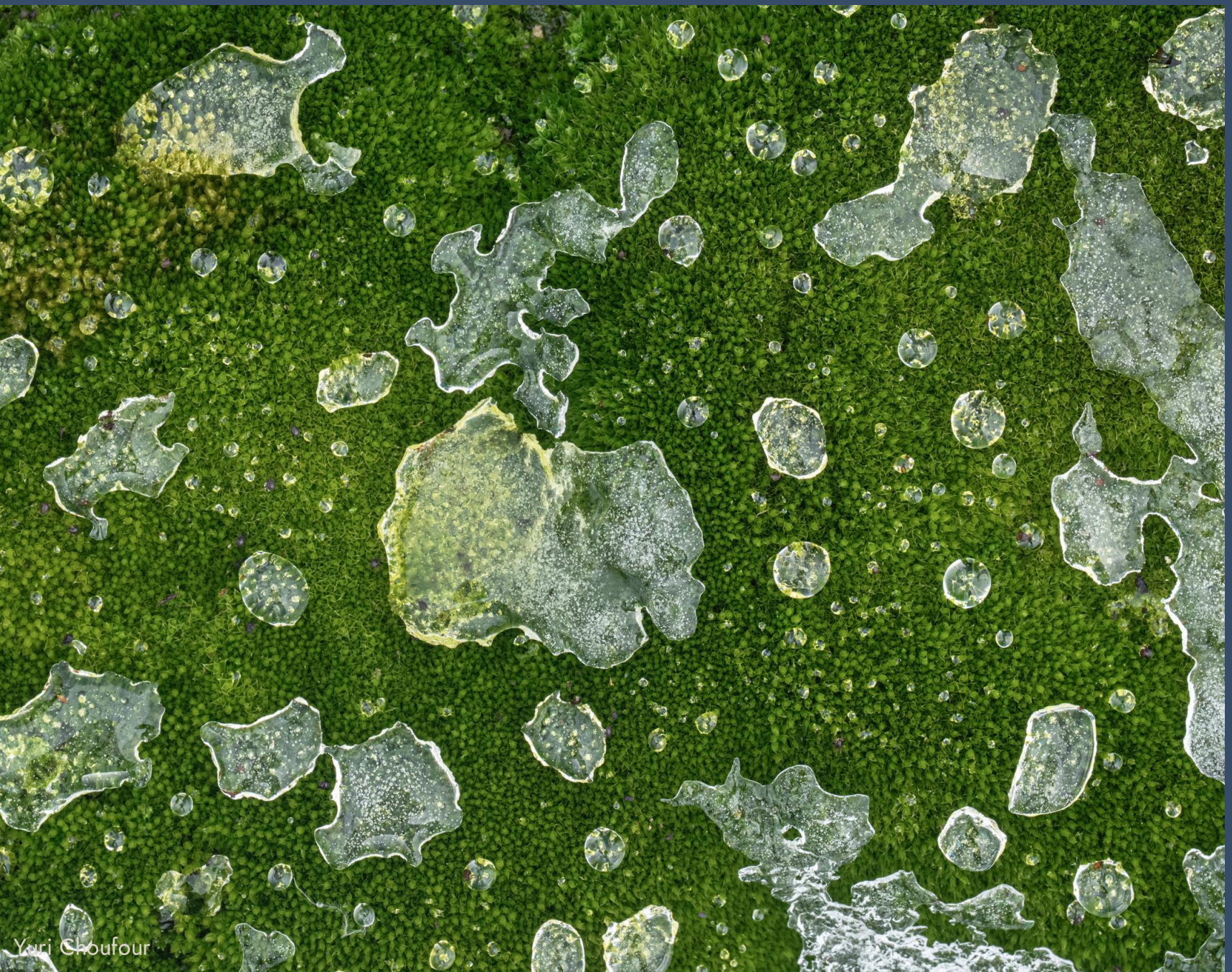
View our data on the global map



The Polar Ice Thermal Imaging Project

The Polar Ice Thermal Imaging Project, led by Professor Joe Muise, investigates the surface properties of ice by measuring polar ice temperature variations and analyzing how they change over time and across different locations. The project aims to engage students and the general public in understanding global warming and its effects on polar regions. Amelie collected 6 images around South Georgia that have been submitted to the project.

You can explore an interactive map displaying data collected by various organizations here.



Yuri Choufour

iNaturalist

Thanks to your efforts, we recorded over 120 observations representing 63 species on iNaturalist! The most frequently reported species were king penguins and southern elephant seals, and about one-third of all species observed were plants. These opportunistic data help identify biodiversity hotspots and track the arrival of invasive species in remote regions.

You can upload your observations from our voyage here when back home.

Yuri Choufour

eBird

Your onboard Ornithologist Andres completed 65 eBird checklists of 72 different species. The greatest diversity was observed in the Falkland Islands and the Chilean fjords, while South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula were limited to seabird species. The most abundant species was the king penguin with more than 25,426 individuals in total, while the most frequently observed species was the southern giant petrel. The complete overview of our voyage is available in our trip report.

View our data on our eBird trip report

eBird

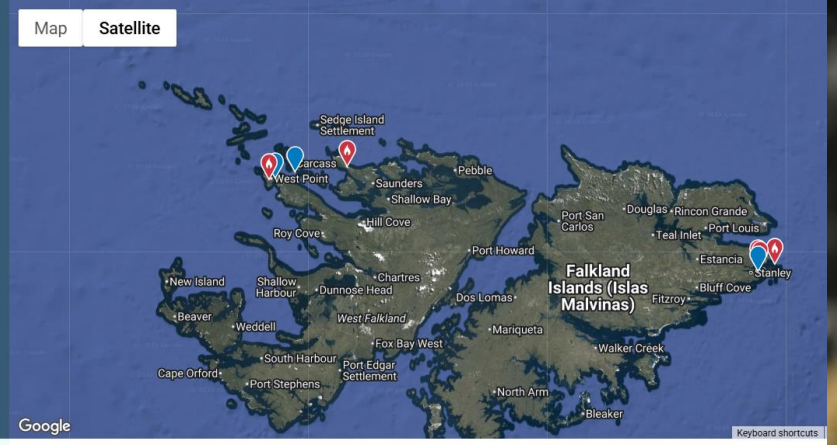
Falkland Islands

29 – 30 Dec 2025 (2 days) Link-only

Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

Andrés de Miguel

Share Edit



Narrative

Owners and editors of a Trip Report may write a narrative.

34 Species Observed +2 other taxa

9 Checklists

26 Species with Photos

eBird

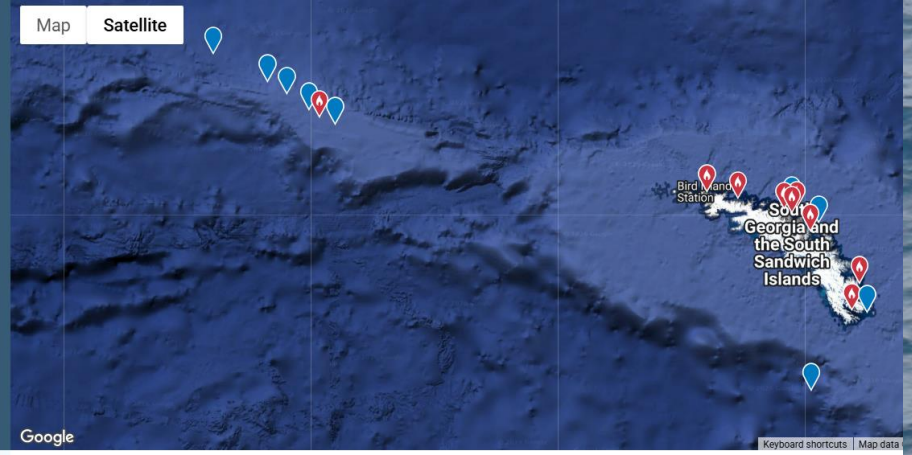
South Georgia

1 – 5 Jan 2026 (5 days) Link-only

South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

Andrés de Miguel

Share Edit



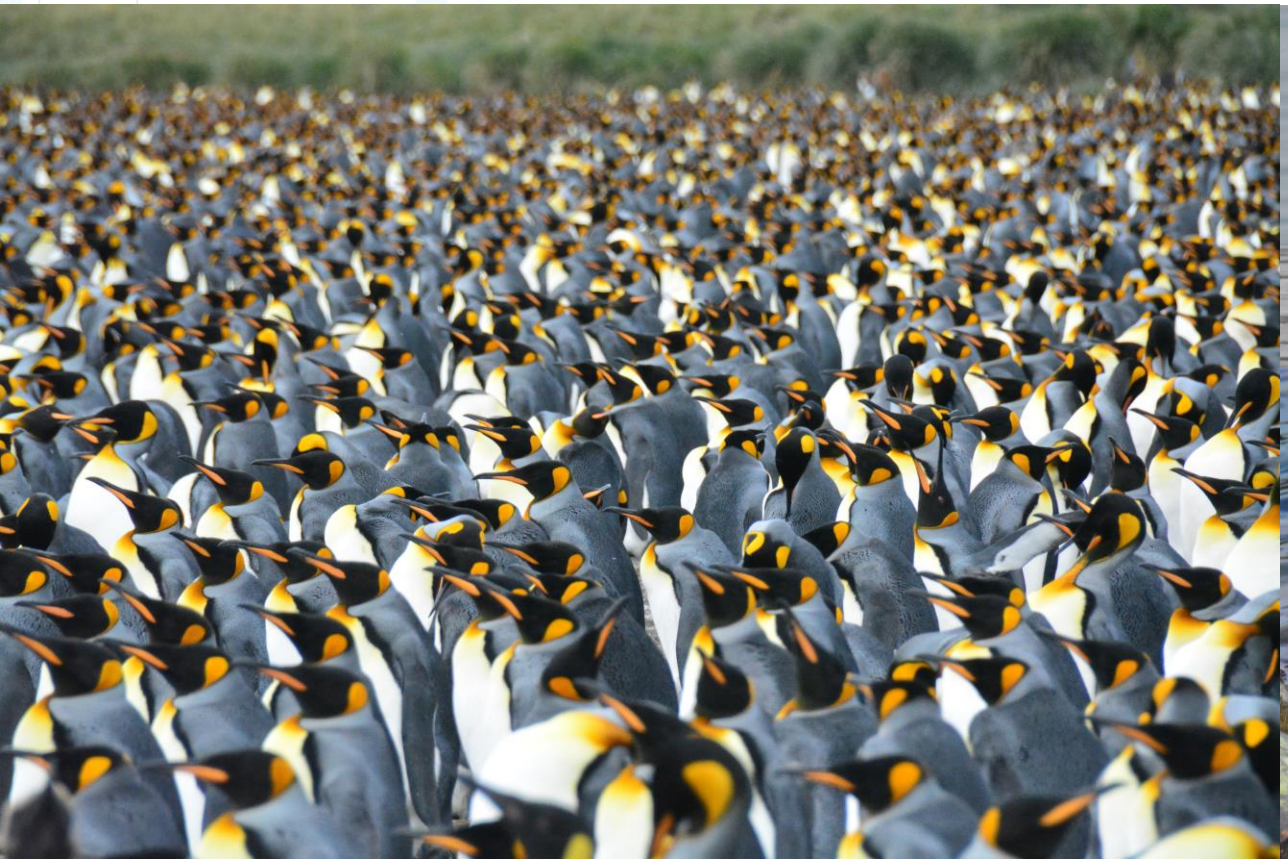
Narrative

Owners and editors of a Trip Report may write a narrative.

27 Species Observed
+2 other taxa

19 Checklists

20 Species with Photos



eBird

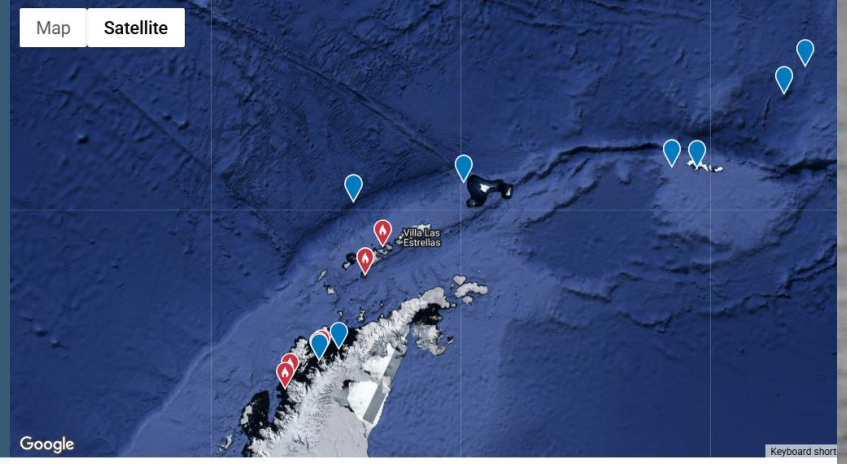
Antarctica

6 – 13 Jan 2026 (8 days) Link-only

Antarctica

Andrés de Miguel

Share Edit



Narrative

Owners and editors of a Trip Report may write a narrative.

22 Species Observed
+3 other taxa

14 Checklists

8 Species with Photos

eBird

Chilean Fjords

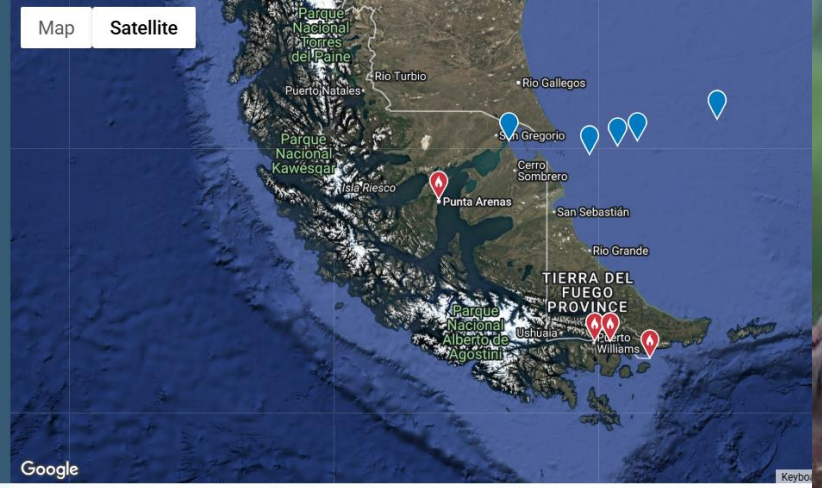
27 Dec 2025 – 15 Jan 2026 (20 days)

Link-only

Argentina | Chile Subregions

Andrés de Miguel

Share Edit



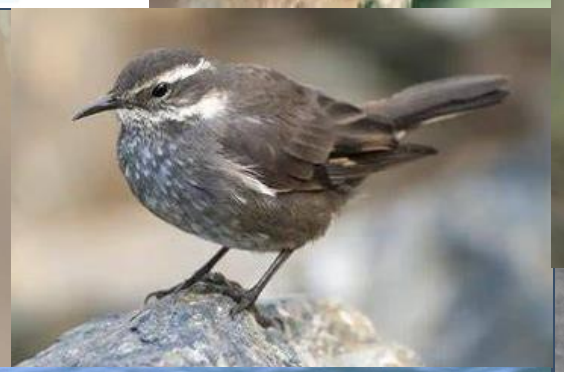
Narrative

Owners and editors of a Trip Report may write a narrative.

34 Species Observed
+2 other taxa

9 Checklists

7 Species with Photos



Happywhale

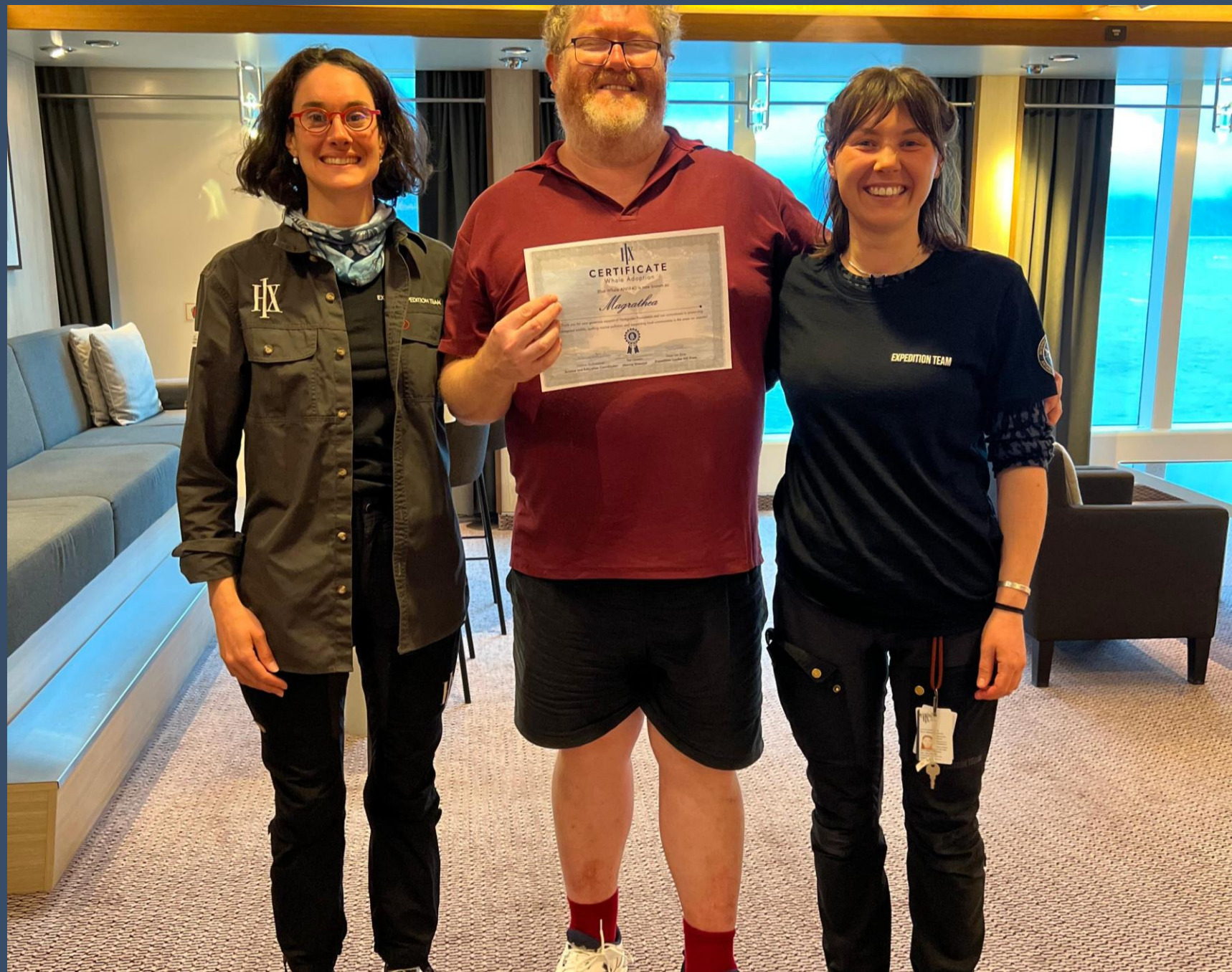
We submitted more than 30 observations during our voyage, with a total of 31 individuals encountered. Specifically, 16 humpback whales' flukes, 14 orcas, and one blue whale were reported. All humpback whales were sighted around South Georgia, while most orca observations were from an encounter in the Antarctic waters, prior to our reaching the Signy Research Station. Two humpback whales seen around South Georgia gave an immediate match, one showing resighting for the first time in 10 years, the second, the first time in 20 years! This illustrates the power of Citizen Science around the world, and how opportunistic observations provide key information on the movement patterns of marine mobile animals.

Yuri Choufour

Happywhale

The highlight of our voyage was our encounter with the newly named blue whale, Magrathea. This magnificent individual was first sighted in 2019 near South Georgia by the British Antarctic Survey. Through our naming auction, we raised valuable funds — something both Happywhale and the entire MS Fram team are truly thrilled about.

Thank you for supporting cutting-edge science at the end of the world, and stay tuned for the next chapter in Magrathea's incredible journey.



Wildlife List – Marine Mammals

Yuri Choufour

Wildlife List – Marine Mammals – Cetaceans

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Balaenoptera borealis	sei whale	Seiwal
Balaenoptera physalus	fin whale	Finnwal
Megaptera novaeangliae	humpback whale	Buckelwal
Orcinus orca	killer whale, orca	Schwertwal, Orca
Balaenoptera bonaerensis	Antarctic minke whale	Südlicher Zwergwal
Cephalorhynchus commersonii	Commerson's dolphin	Commerson-Delfin
Cephalorhynchus australis	Peale's dolphin	Peale-Delfin
Cephalorhynchus cruciger	hourglass dolphin	Stundenglasdelfin
Hyperoodon planifrons	southern bottlenose whale	Südlicher Entenwal
	Unidentified whale	
	Unidentified dolphin	
	Unidentified beaked whale	

Wildlife List – Marine Mammals – Pinnipeds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Arctocephalus australis	South American fur seal	Südamerikanischer Seebär
Arctocephalus gazella	Antarctic fur seal	Antartischer Seebär
Otaria flavescens	South American sea lion	Mähnenrobbe
Leptonychotes weddellii	Weddell seal	Weddelrobbe
Mirounga leonina	southern elephant seal	Südlicher See-Elefant
	Unidentified pinniped	

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Wildlife List — Birds

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Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Aptenodytes patagonicus	king penguin	Königspinguin
Pygoscelis papua	gentoo penguin	Eselspinguin
Eudyptes chrysocome	southern rockhopper penguin	Südfelsenpinguin
Eudyptes chrysolophus	macaroni penguin	Goldschopfpinguin
Spheniscus magellanicus	Magellanic penguin	Magellanpinguin
Pygoscelis adeliae	Adélie penguin	Adeliepinguin
Pygoscelis antarcticus	chinstrap penguin	Kehlstreifpinguin
Oceanites oceanicus	Wilson's storm petrel	Buntfuß-Sturmschwalbe
Garrodia nereis	grey-backed storm petrel	Graurücken-Sturmschwalbe
Fregetta tropica	black-bellied storm petrel	Schwarzbauch-Sturmschwalbe
Diomedea exulans	wandering (snowy) albatross	Wanderalbatros
Phoebetria palpebrata	light-mantled albatross	Graumantelalbatros
Thalassarche melanophris	black-browed albatross	Schwarzbrauenalbatros
Diomedea epomophora	southern royal albatross	Südkönigsalbatros
Diomedea sanfordi	northern royal albatross	Nordkönigsalbatros
Thalassarche chrysostoma	grey-headed albatross	Graukopfalbatros

Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Macronectes giganteus	southern Giant petrel	Riesensturmvogel
Macronectes halli	northern Giant petrel	Hallsturmvogel
Fulmarus glacialoides	southern fulmar	Silbersturmvogel
Pagodroma nivea	snow petrel	Schneesturmvogel
Daption capense	cape petrel	Kapsturmvogel
Pterodroma lessonii	white-headed petrel	Weißkopf-Sturmvogel
Halobaena caerulea	blue petrel	Blausturmvogel
Procellaria aequinoctialis	white-chinned petrel	Weißkinn-Sturmvogel
Ardenna gravis	great Shearwater	Großer Sturmtaucher
Ardenna grisea	sooty Shearwater	Dunkler Sturmtaucher
Pachyptila desolata	Antarctic prion	Taubensturmvogel
Pachyptila belcheri	slender-billed prion	Dünnschnabel-Sturmvogel
Pachyptila turtur	fairy prion	Feensturmvogel
Pelecanoides urinatrix	common diving petrel	Subantarktis-Lummensturmvogel
Pelecanoides georgicus	South Georgia diving petrel	Breitschnabel-Lummensturmvogel
Chionis albus	snowy sheathbill	Weißgesicht-Scheidenschnabel
Pelecanoides magellani	Magellanic diving petrel	Magellan-Lummensturmvogel

Wildlife List – Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Tachyeres brachypterus	Falkland steamer Duck	Falkland-Dampfschiffente
Chloephaga picta	upland goose	Magellangans
Chloephaga hybrida	kelp goose	Kelpgans
Chloephaga rubidiceps	ruddy-headed goose	Rotkopfgans
Lophonetta specularioides	crested duck	Schopfente
Anas georgica	yellow-billed pintail	Spitzschwanzente
Nycticorax nycticorax	black-crowned night heron	Nachtreiher
Phalacrocorax magellanicus	rock shag	Felsenscharbe
Leucocarbo atriceps	imperial shag	Kaiserscharbe
Leucocarbo georgianus	South Georgia shag	Südgeorgienscharbe
Leucocarbo bransfieldensis	Antarctic shag	Antarktikscharbe
Haematopus leucopodus	Magellanic oystercatcher	Magellanaustern fischer
Haematopus ater	blackish oystercatcher	Südamerikanischer Austernfischer
Charadrius falklandicus	two-banded plover	Falkland-Regenpfeifer
Calidris fuscicollis	white-rumped sandpiper	Weißbürzel-Strandläufer
Chroicocephalus maculipennis	brown-hooded gull	Patagonienmöwe

Wildlife List – Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Leucophaeus scoresbii	dolphin gull	Blutschnabelmöwe
Larus dominicanus	kelp gull	Dominikanermöwe
Sterna hirundinacea	South American tern	Falklandseeschwalbe
Sterna vittata	Antarctic tern	Antarktikseeschwalbe
Stercorarius maccormicki	south polar skua	Antarktikskua
Stercorarius antarcticus	brown skua	Subantarktikskua
Stercorarius chilensis	Chilean skua	Chileskua
Gallinago stricklandii	Fuegian snipe	Kordillerenbekassine

Wildlife List – Landbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Cathartes aura	turkey vulture	Truthahngeier
Phalcoboenus australis	striated caracara	Falklandkarakara
Caracara plancus	southern crested caracara	Schopfkarakara
Cinclodes antarcticus	blackish cinclodes	Falkland-Uferwipper
Muscisaxicola maclovianus	dark-faced ground tyrant	Maskengrundtyrann
Tachycineta leucopyga	Chilean swallow	Chileschwalbe
Cistothorus platensis	grass wren	Graszaunkönig
Troglodytes cobbi	Cobb's wren	Falklandzaunkönig
Turdus falcklandii	austral thrush	Magellandrossel
Passer domesticus	house sparrow	Haussperling
Anthus correndera	correndera pipit	Correnderapieper
Spinus barbatus	black-chinned siskin	Bartzeisig
Leistes loyca	long-tailed meadowlark	Langschwanzstärling
Melanodera melanodera	white-bridled finch	Weißbart-Ammertangare
Phrygilus patagonicus	Patagonian sierra-finch	Graukopf-Ammertangare
Elaenia albiceps	white-crested elaenia	Weißkronen-Olivtyrann
Theristicus melanopis	black-faced ibis	Schwarzzügelibis

Wildlife List — Flora

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Wildlife List – Flora of the Falkland Island

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH
Hierochloe redolens	cinnamon grass
Poa alopecurus	blue grass
Luzula alopecurus	native woodrush
Gunnera magellanica	pig vine
Armeria macloviana	Falkland thrift
Cerastium arvense	field mouse-ear
Oxalis enneaphylla	scurvy grass
Hebe elliptica	boxwood
Luzuriaga marginata	almond flower
Apium australe	wild celery
Senecio candidans	sea cabbage
Acaena lucida	native yarrow
Acaena magellanica	prickly burr
Symphyotrichum vahlii	marsh daisy
Pernettya pumila	mountain berry
Empetrum rubrum	diddle-dee
Baccharis magellanica	Christmas bush

Wildlife List – Flora of the Falkland Island

SCIENTIFIC NAME	**ENGLISH**
Caltha sagittata	arrow-leaved marigold
Senecio littoralis	Falkland wooly daisy (endemic)
Nassauvia gaudichaudii	coastal nassauvia (endemic)
Bolax gummifera	balsam bog
Leucheria suaveolens	vanilla daisy (endemic)
Blechnum cordatum	tall fern
Blechnum penna-marina	small fern
Senecio vulgaris	groundsel (introduced)
Rumex acetosella	sheep sorel (invasive)
Ulex europaeus	gorse (invasive)
Ulva sp	sea lettuce
Iridaea cordata	iridescent alga
Macrocystis pyrifera	giant kelp
Durvillea antarctica	bull kelp (cochayuyo)

Guest Scientists – ORCA

We had the privilege of hosting Nikki and Karen from ORCA, one of the UK's leading whale and dolphin conservation charities. They have been on board conducting exciting whale research for a project that is monitoring recovering whale populations in the Southern Ocean. Nikki and Karen have been carrying out their scientific surveys from the bridge of the ship and the data collected will help better understand the abundance and distribution of large whales around South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula. During their surveys a total of 1,330 individual animals were recorded from eleven different whale and dolphin species, almost beating the previous record on MS Fram of 1,357 individuals!

You can contribute to the ORCA project by visiting their website and helping them gather more data through donation.

Guest Scientists – Penguin Watch

We had the privilege of hosting Craig and Liz from Penguin Watch, a penguin monitoring project based at Oxford Brookes University on MS Fram. Zoe and Craig conducted research for this project across the Falkland, South Georgia, South Shetland, and the Antarctic Peninsula. They conducted drone surveys for population counts over 15 colonies (seabirds and seals) over this trip, serviced three existing timelapse cameras, and deployed one new tripod with cameras that look at penguin behaviour and biology. Their highlights this trip were keeping a long-standing time-series alive at Georges Point, surveying an Adélie colony for the first time this season at Yalour Island, and surveying Rugged Rocks, which hadn't been monitored in several years because it is so difficult to get to! They will need time to analyze the results, and we look forward to hearing more about their research.

Guest Scientists – BAS

During our voyage, we collaborated with the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) to transport scientists to and from the Signy Scientific Research Station. Nicoletta, Mauro, and Derren joined us from the start of the journey to Signy, collecting samples of endemic plants and observing birdlife from the bridge and during the wildlife watch.

Later, Stacey and Richard came aboard for the leg from the Signy Research Station to Punta Arenas, after spending nearly two months at the station. Through this logistical collaboration, HX Expeditions continues to bridge the gap between science and society, while providing essential support to the scientific community.

Yuri Choufour

What data?	How much data?
CTD for SAERI	3 profiles
Secchi depth	7 measurements
GLOBE Cloud observations for NASA	7 observations, 7 matches
iNaturalist	120+ observations
eBird	65 checklists, 72 species
Cetacean sightings for ORCA/IAATO	1,300++ observations, 72+ hrs of effort survey
Happywhale	31 registered encounters
Penguin Watch	32 aerial drone surveys 4 cameras serviced, 1 new built

In Summary

Our voyage stood out for the data it yielded for ORCA, Penguin Watch, eBird, and Happywhale, thanks to the dedication and passion of our Guest Scientists and Expedition Team members. These initiatives account for the most observations and direct submissions to their respective projects, fueling the scientific community with the crucial data needed for research. Daily, one to five scientific publications are produced from eBird and iNaturalist. This combined data helps us better understand diversity and distribution patterns of mobile species and monitor the arrival of invasive species. Our journey across three distinct bioregions allowed us to cross the Antarctic Polar Front – the Antarctic Convergence – twice, travel through calm waters, and experience the Drake Passage on our return to Punta Arenas. In the Chilean fjords, we were awe-struck by the pristine landscapes that characterize this region of the world. Our encounters with the majestic blue whale around South Georgia was a true highlight of this voyage.

Thank You!

The MS Fram Science and Education Team, along with our Guest Scientists, extends heartfelt thanks for choosing HX Expeditions to explore some of the most remote places on Earth. Your participation not only supports the ongoing work of our researchers but also enables them to join our voyages, carry out meaningful studies, and access essential logistical resources that are often difficult to secure.

We are deeply appreciative of your genuine curiosity and shared enthusiasm for the natural world — from birds and marine mammals to ice, lichens, mosses, and even the microscopic life found in a drop of water.

It was a true joy to exchange ideas, reflect on history over coffee, and marvel together at the pristine ecosystems we encountered. We hope this journey will remain among your most treasured memories.

Yuri Choufour


Connect with your
inner scientist