



Science & Education Report

MS Fridtjof Nansen

Highlights of Antarctica

18 – 27 February 2026





Science & Education Programme

During this voyage, we collected data for 6 Citizen Science projects in total: eBird, Happywhale, iNaturalist, ORCA, GLOBE Observer for NASA, and the Secchi Disk project. You were able to enrich your mind with 20 lectures on different topics from birds to rocks. You also took part in the 13 discovery sessions we conducted.

We had Guest Scientist that were collecting data for two different projects while you were on board.

A lot of you were very interested in the scientific aspect of our voyage and we thank you all for your enthusiasm and participation. Here we provide a full inventory of our science activities.



Lectures & Discovery Sessions

- 20** lectures
- 13** discovery sessions
- 6** Citizen Science projects
- 18** science boat outings
- 3** Guest Scientist projects



Wildlife Watch

48 Species:
13 mammals
35 birds

History & Culture

On our voyage we discussed the explorers that charted the part of the Antarctic Peninsula we have been sailing in. We have talked about how Charcot and his French expedition overwintered on Port Charcot, which we saw from Pleneau Island. When MS Fridtjof Nansen sailed through the Lemaire Channel, we were following the journey of Adrian de Gerlache and his ship the *Belgica* in 1898.

On Danco Island we saw the foundations of British research stations that were operative in the 1950s but were abandoned and later dismantled in 2004 because they were not declared historical sites and thus the materials could not stay in Antarctica according to the Antarctica Treaty.

On Damoy Point, on the other hand, we visited the hut, which is still standing and being maintained because it was declared an historical site. We could see the layout of the hut and some provisions and tools from the times it was operative. The hut was used as a turnover for provisions and personnel going to stations further south (Rothera).



GLOBE Cloud Observer, NASA

On this Highlights of Antarctica expedition we conducted three Cloud Observation sessions and sent our data off to NASA!

Thank you to the 41 Cloud Observers who participated in the programme, and remember, you can continue to do this at home!

Observations from the Drake Passage are critical, as they reflect the ocean-atmosphere interface of the Circumpolar Current and winds.

Thank you for your active participation!

[View our data](#) on the global map



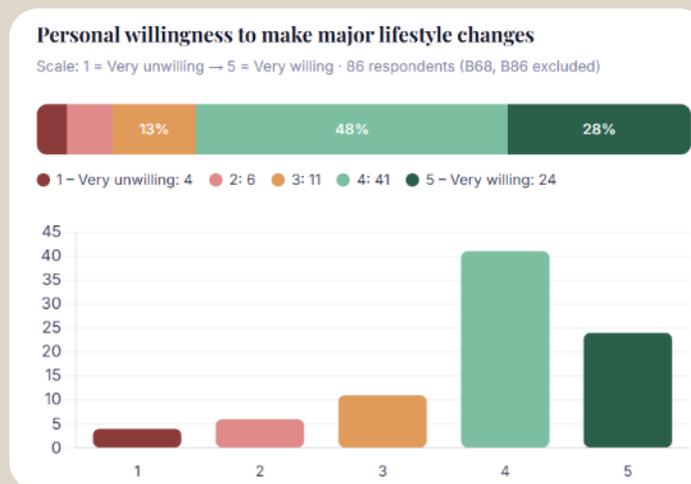
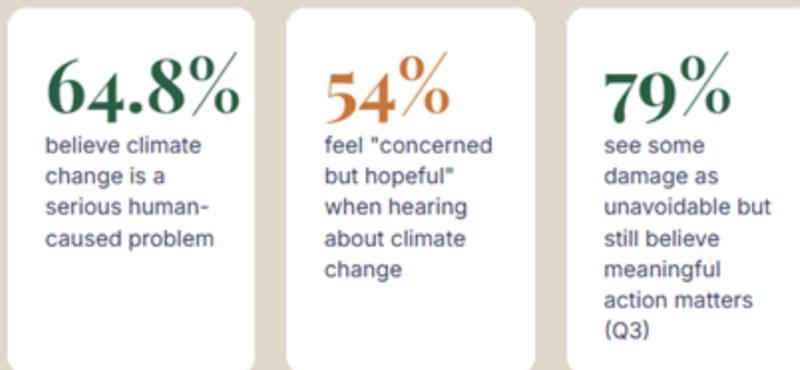
Climate Change Survey

How do you feel about climate change?

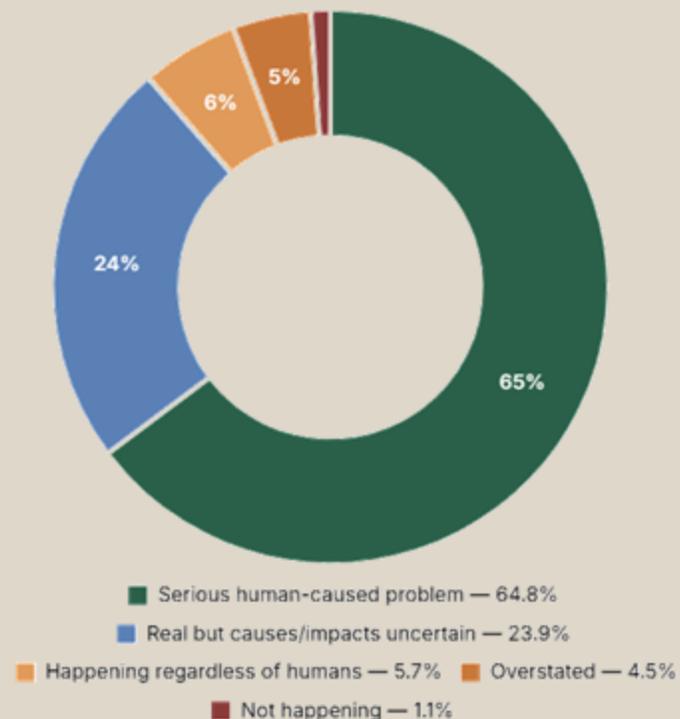
As an experiment, we conducted a survey on our guests' views and feelings on the subject of climate change. In the long run, we would like to gather enough data for a scientific statistical study in the microcosm of our ship.

Thank you to the **105 participants** who answered the survey. On our cruise, we find that **64.8%** of our guests consider climate change a serious problem caused by humans. **You can view the results and interpretations at this link.**

The results will continue to evolve the more data we collect.



When you hear about climate change, what best describes your reaction?



Visit the IPCC website

Climate change IPCC FAQ

IPCC summary report

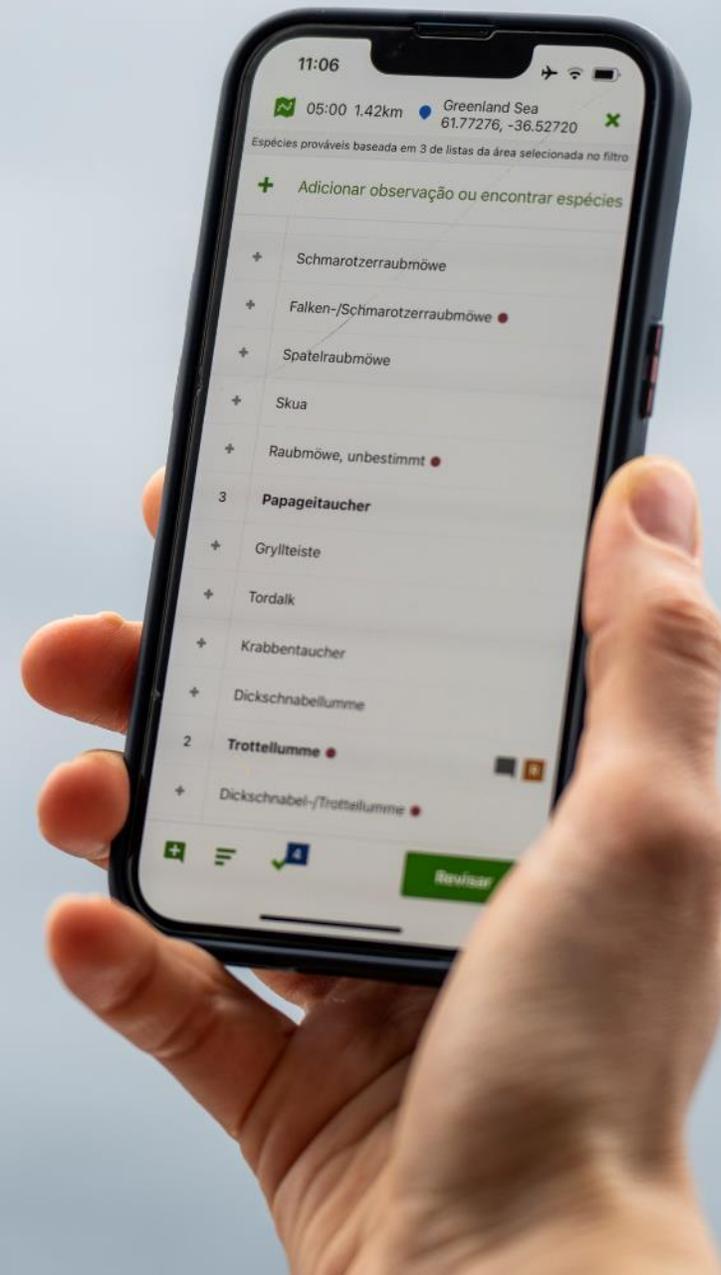


The eBird project

During this voyage, our Ornithologist, conducted **12 surveys**. At least **13 species** were observed. The most frequently observed species were the Wilson's storm petrel, black-browed albatross, pintado petrel, and soft-plumaged petrel.

Find the trip report for the voyage and the checklists here:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/478265>



Trip Report on eBird



< My Trip Reports

< Previous

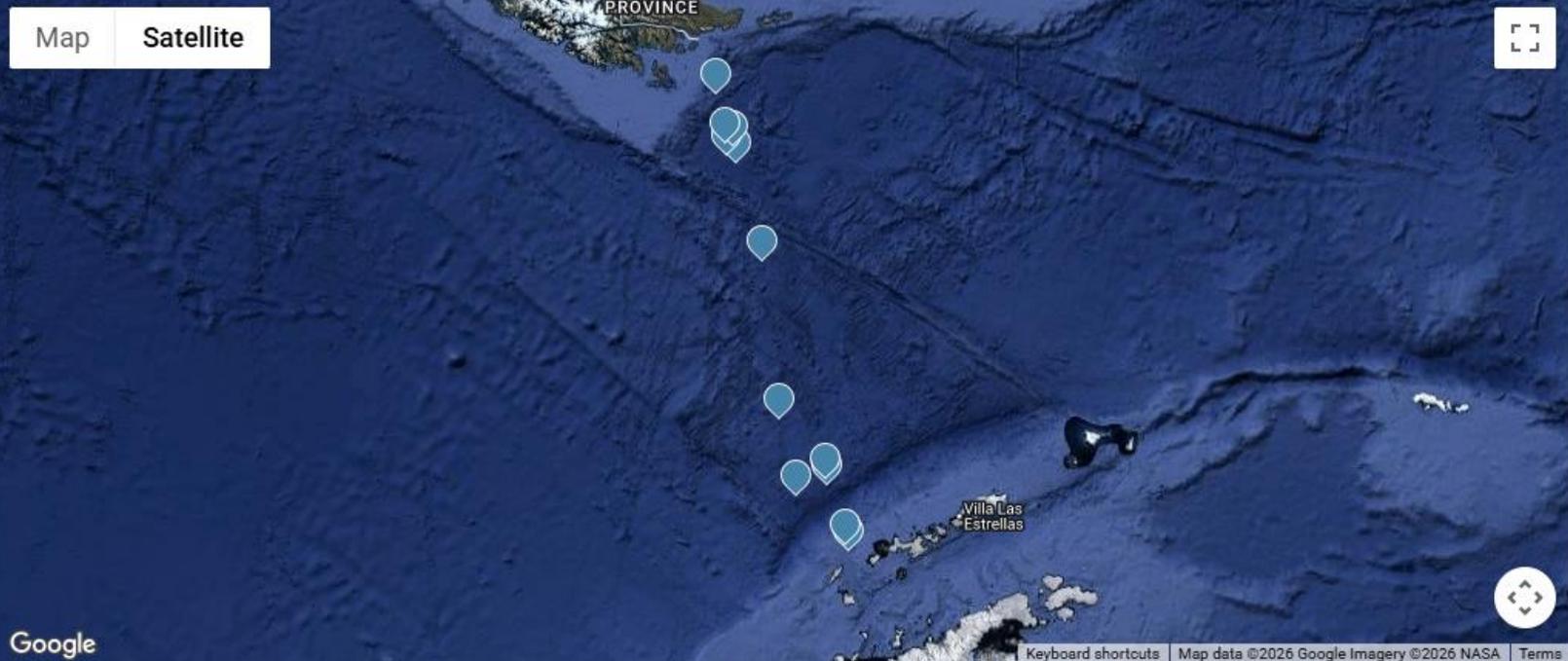
FNANT2606 Fridtjof Nansen Highlights of Antarctica 18 - 27 February 2026

18 - 27 Feb 2026 (10 days) **Public**

Antarctica | Chile **Subregions**

Simon Delany

Share Edit



Narrative

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

Add narrative

13

Species Observed
+2 other taxa

12

Checklists

Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

| | | |
|----|----------------------------|-------|
| 5 | Macaroni Penguin | ▶ 📊 1 |
| 3 | Southern Royal Albatross | ▶ 📊 3 |
| 3 | Snowy Albatross | ▶ 📊 3 |
| 1 | Gray-headed Albatross | ▶ 📊 1 |
| 11 | Black-browed Albatross | ▶ 📊 5 |
| 16 | Wilson's Storm-Petrel | ▶ 📊 4 |
| 6 | Black-bellied Storm-Petrel | ▶ 📊 2 |
| 3 | Southern Giant-Petrel | ▶ 📊 2 |
| 6 | Pintado Petrel | ▶ 📊 1 |
| 6 | Soft-plumaged Petrel | ▶ 📊 2 |
| 9 | White-chinned Petrel | ▶ 📊 6 |
| 2 | Sooty Shearwater | ▶ 📊 1 |
| 1 | Common Diving-Petrel | ▶ 📊 1 |

ADDITIONAL TAXA

| | | |
|----|--------------------------------|-------|
| 16 | penguin sp. | ▶ 📊 2 |
| 2 | Southern/Northern Giant-Petrel | ▶ 📊 1 |



iNaturalist

Joining iNaturalist offers a unique opportunity to engage with a global community of naturalists and Citizen Scientists, simply by uploading your photographs.

- Get bird the subjects of your photographs identified
- Use and improve your bird identification skills
- Contribute to scientific research
- Learn the distribution patterns of different species
- Meet expert biologists online in their field of study
- Support conservation efforts
- Explore the world and discover what species can be observed and where



iNaturalist

We submitted 203 observations identifying 29 different organisms. The most observed species were the humpback whale followed by the gentoo penguin. **There is still time to join our project** once you are back home and have time to go through your photos. Helping us document the local biodiversity will help scientists worldwide monitor the changes of distribution and the abundance of the most iconic Antarctic species.

Join our project by searching its code name or clicking this link: **2026 Feb 18 - Highlights of Antarctica - MS Fridtjof Nansen**



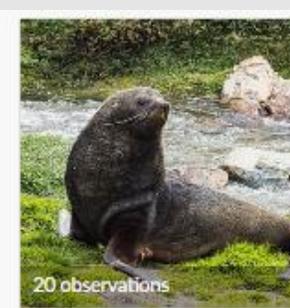
43 observations

Humpback Whale · Baleine à Bosse · Buckelwal
Megaptera novaeangliae



30 observations

Gentoo Penguin · Manchot Papou · Eselspinguin
Pygoscelis papua



20 observations

Antarctic Fur Seal · Arctocéphale de Kerguelen · Antarktischer Seebär
Arctocephalus gazella



12 observations

Weddell Seal · Phoque de Weddell · Weddellrobbe
Leptonychotes weddellii



9 observations

Chinstrap Penguin · Manchot à Jugulaire · Zügelpinguin
Pygoscelis antarcticus



9 observations

South Polar Skua · Labbe de McCormick · Antarktiskua
Stercorarius maccormicki



7 observations

Kelp Gull · Goéland Dominicain · Dominikanermöwe
Larus dominicanus



7 observations

Imperial Shag · Cormoran Impérial · Blauaugenscharbe
Leucocarbo atriceps



3 observations

Southern Fulmar · Fulmar Argenté · Silbersturmvogel
Fulmarus glacialisoides



3 observations

Orca · Orque · Schwertwal
Orcinus orca



3 observations

Crabeater Seal · Phoque Crabier · Krabbenfresser
Lobodon carcinophaga



2 observations

Adelie Penguin · Manchot Adélie · Adeliepinguin
Pygoscelis adeliae



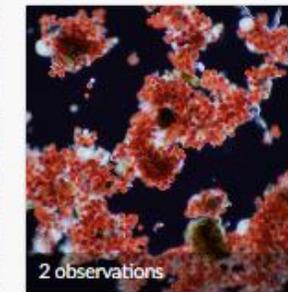
2 observations

Antarctic Tern · Sterne Couronnée · Antipodenseeschwalbe
Sterna vittata



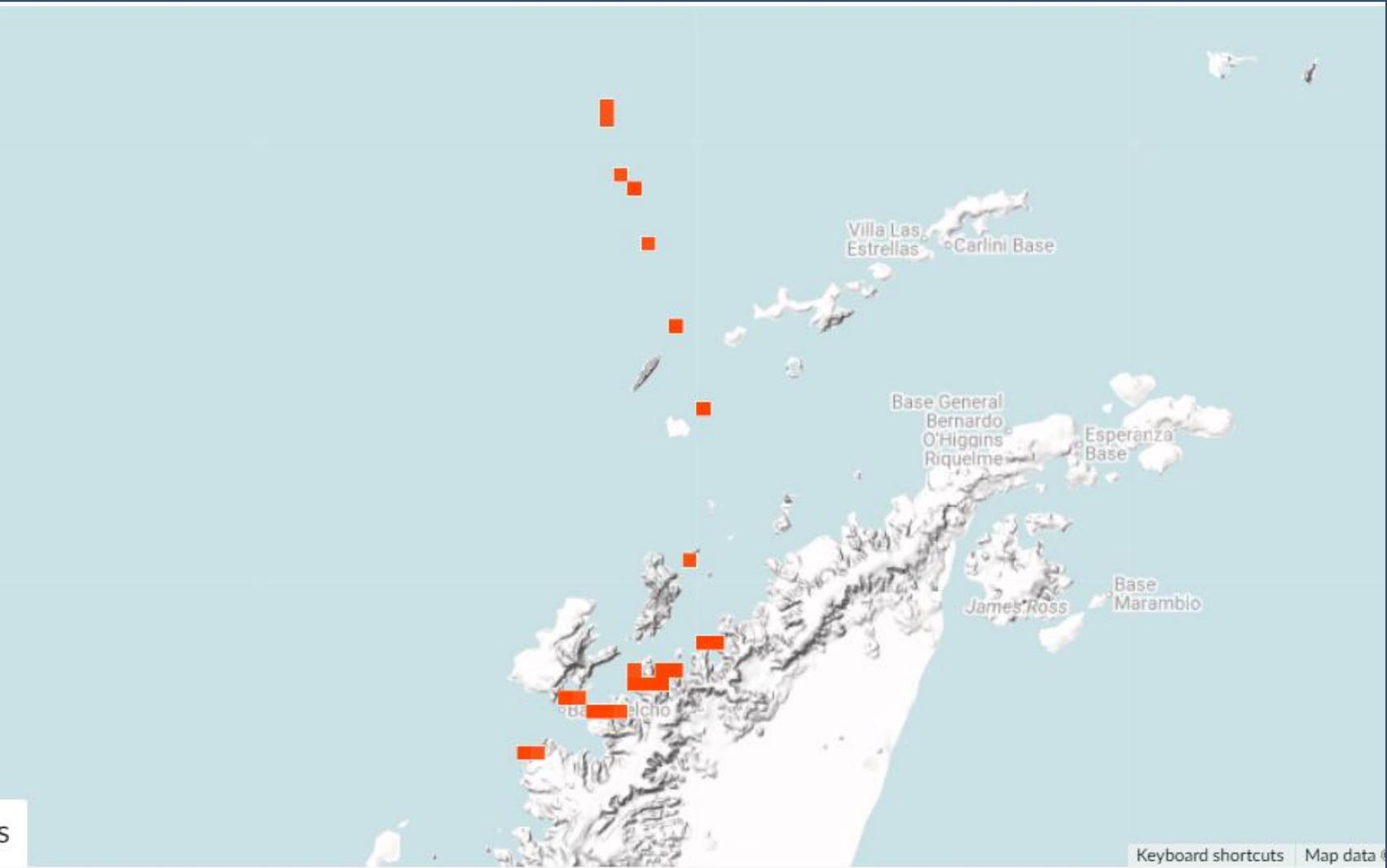
2 observations

Antarctic Minke Whale · Petit Rorqual de l'Antarctique · Südlicher Zwergwal
Balaenoptera bonaerensis



2 observations

Watermelon Snow
Chlamydomonas nivalis



iNaturalist

Here is the map of our iNaturalist project's observations. Please note that only observations of the members with dates between 29 January and 8 February 2026 will appear in this project.

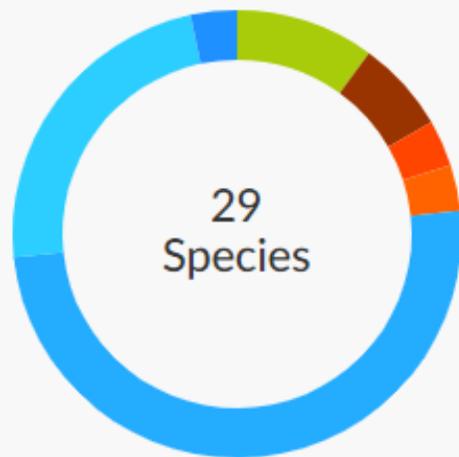




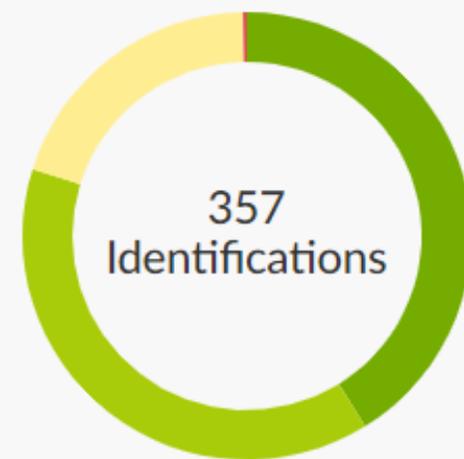
iNaturalist



- Research Grade
- Needs ID
- Casual



- Unknown
- Protozoans
- Fungi
- Plants
- Chromista
- Mollusks
- Insects
- Arachnids
- Ray-Finned Fish
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Birds
- Mammals
- Other Animals



- Improving
- Supporting
- Leading
- Maverick

Happywhale

This voyage was a success in terms of whale sightings and our Marine Scientist Daniela, together with the Science Team, submitted **19 fluke photo** to the platform. Five of these came back as matches to whales that have been spotted before. Thank you so much for helping us gathering amazing pictures and moments!

[View our data](#) on the global map





ORCA

Using ORCA's OceanWatchers App, multiple sightings were registered across our voyage and submitted to IAATO's Voluntary Cetacean and Pinniped Sightings (V-CaPS) project.



During ORCA OceanWatchers surveys we observed:

- Humpback whales
- Sei whales
- Fin whales
- Antarctic minke whales
- Orcas / killer whales
- Weddell seals
- Crabeater seals
- Antarctic fur seals

A total of

- **17 hrs 09** min of active surveying
- **257.70** kms surveyed
- **175** individuals sighted
- **13** wildlife watch survey sessions

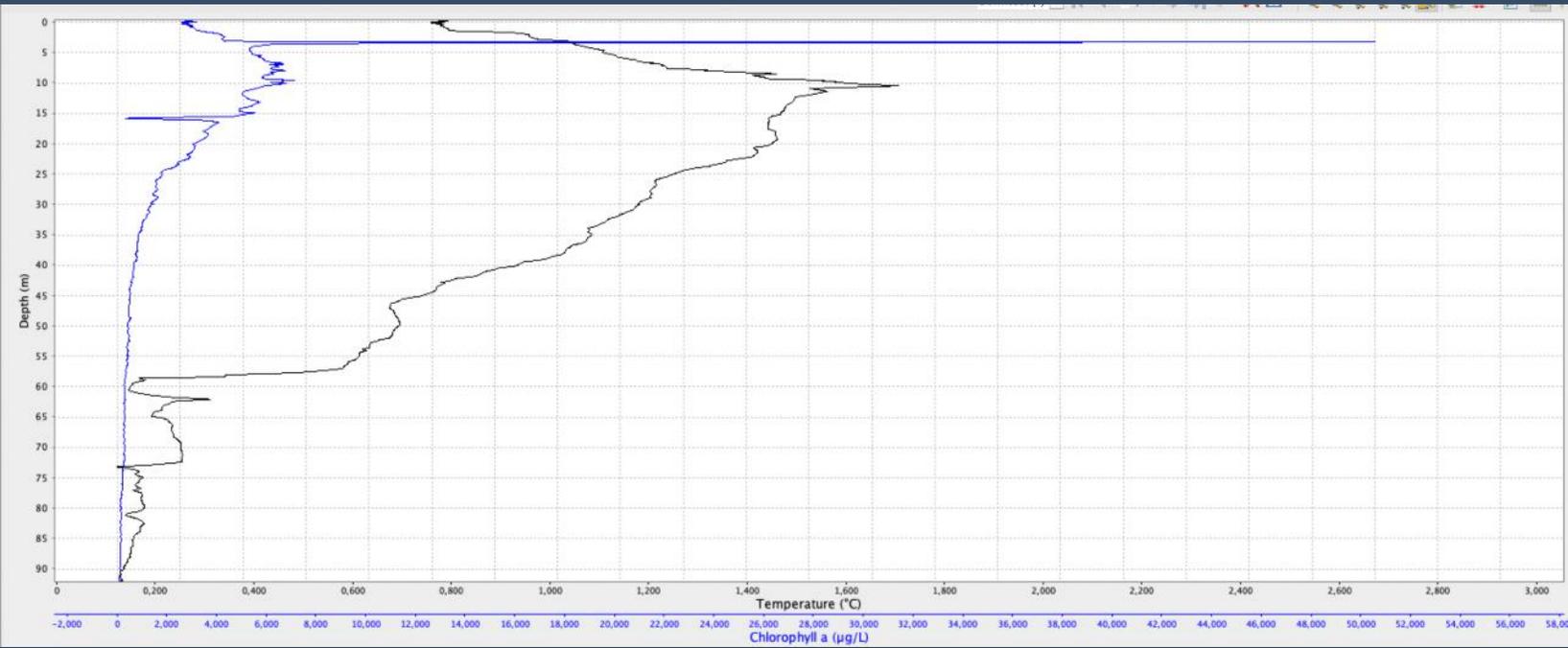
Science Boat

We conducted 12 science boat sessions during this trip in: Wilhelmina Bay, Pleneau Island, Damoy Point, Danco Island, and Portal Point. We sampled for different projects. We used the Secchi Disk measurements to document the turbidity/clarity of the water and assess the abundance of phytoplankton. We towed a plankton net of 20 μm mesh size to gather water samples, and deployed our CTD sensor to understand the oceanographical parameters of the water (temperature, salinity, chlorophyll a). The whole mission was a success; thank you for participating!

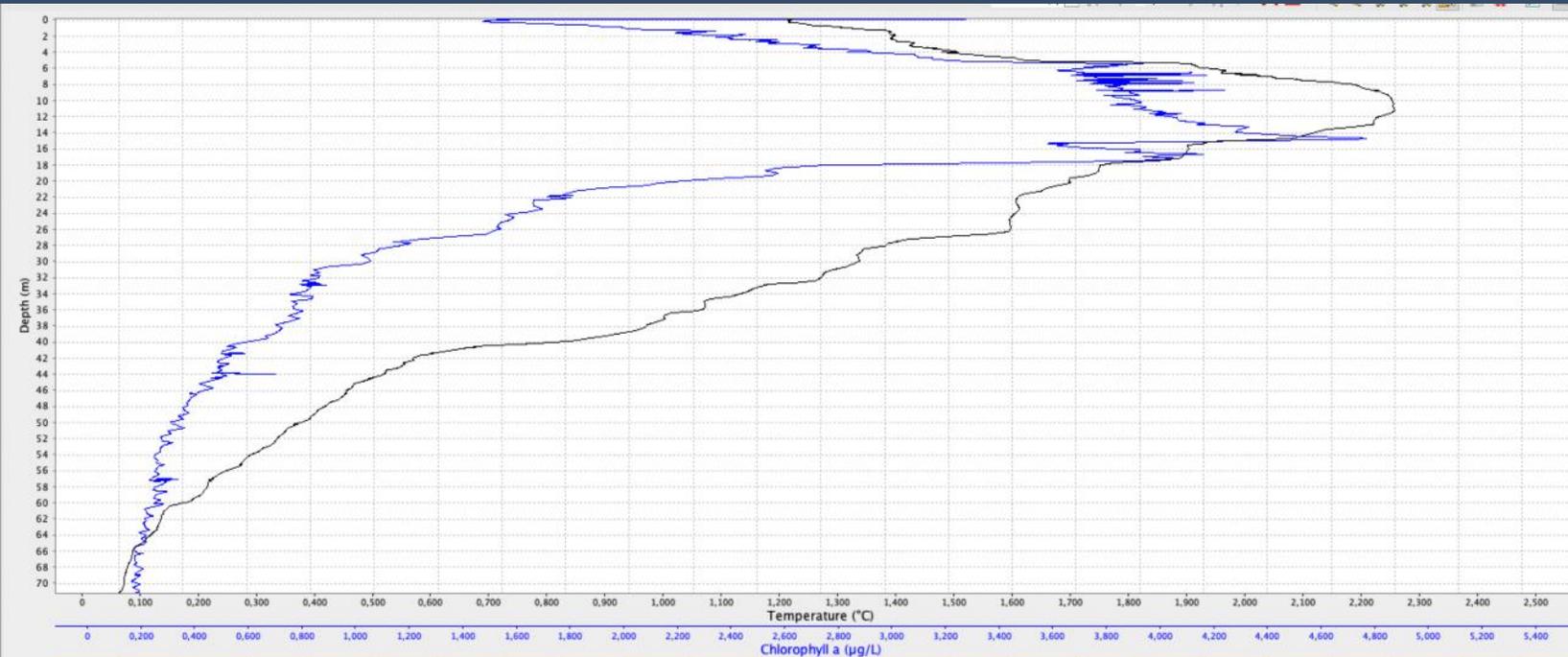


[View our data](#) submitted to the Secchi Disk Project

Wilhelmina Bay

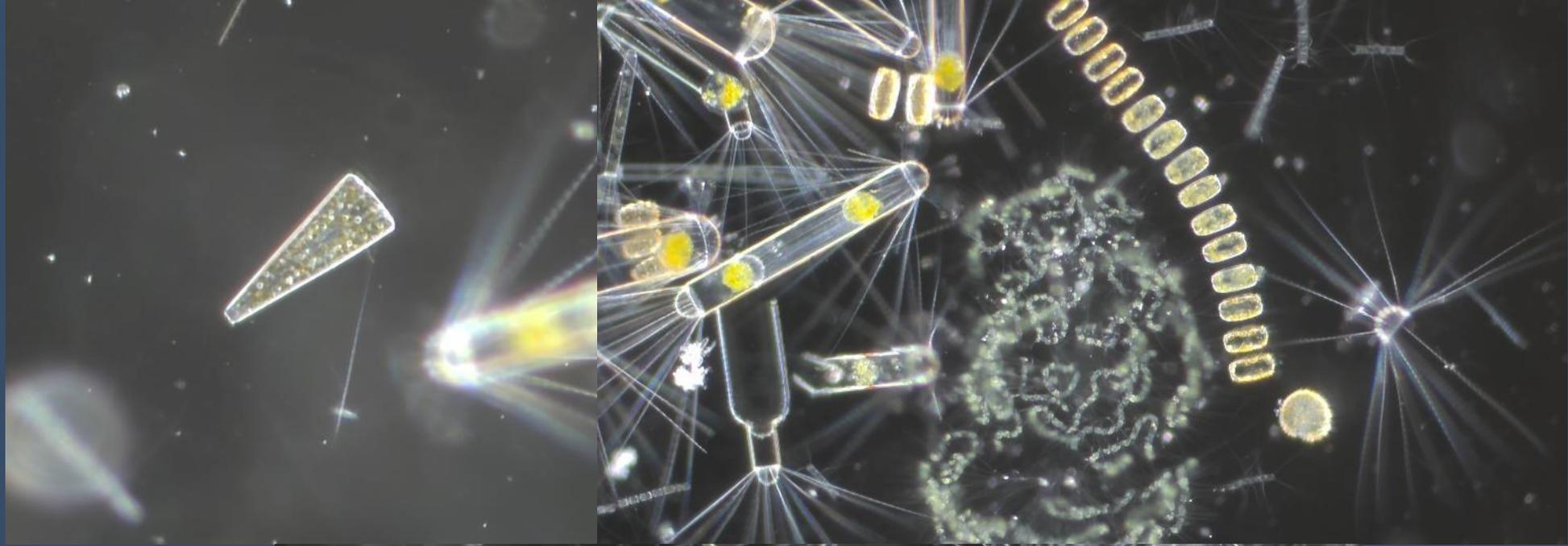


Portal Point





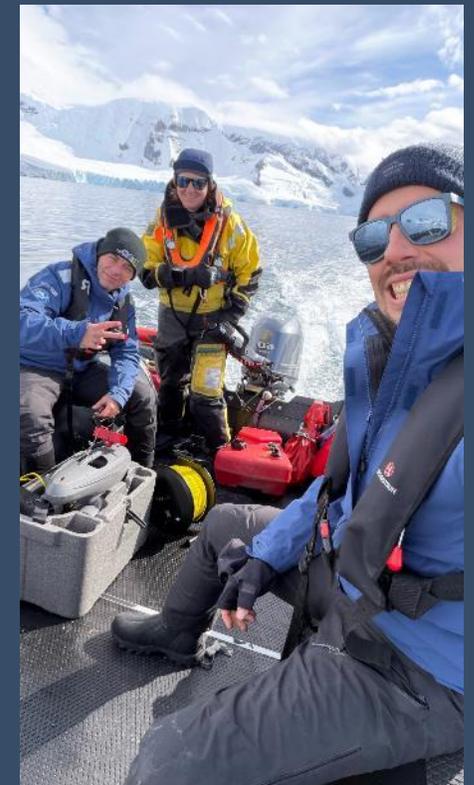
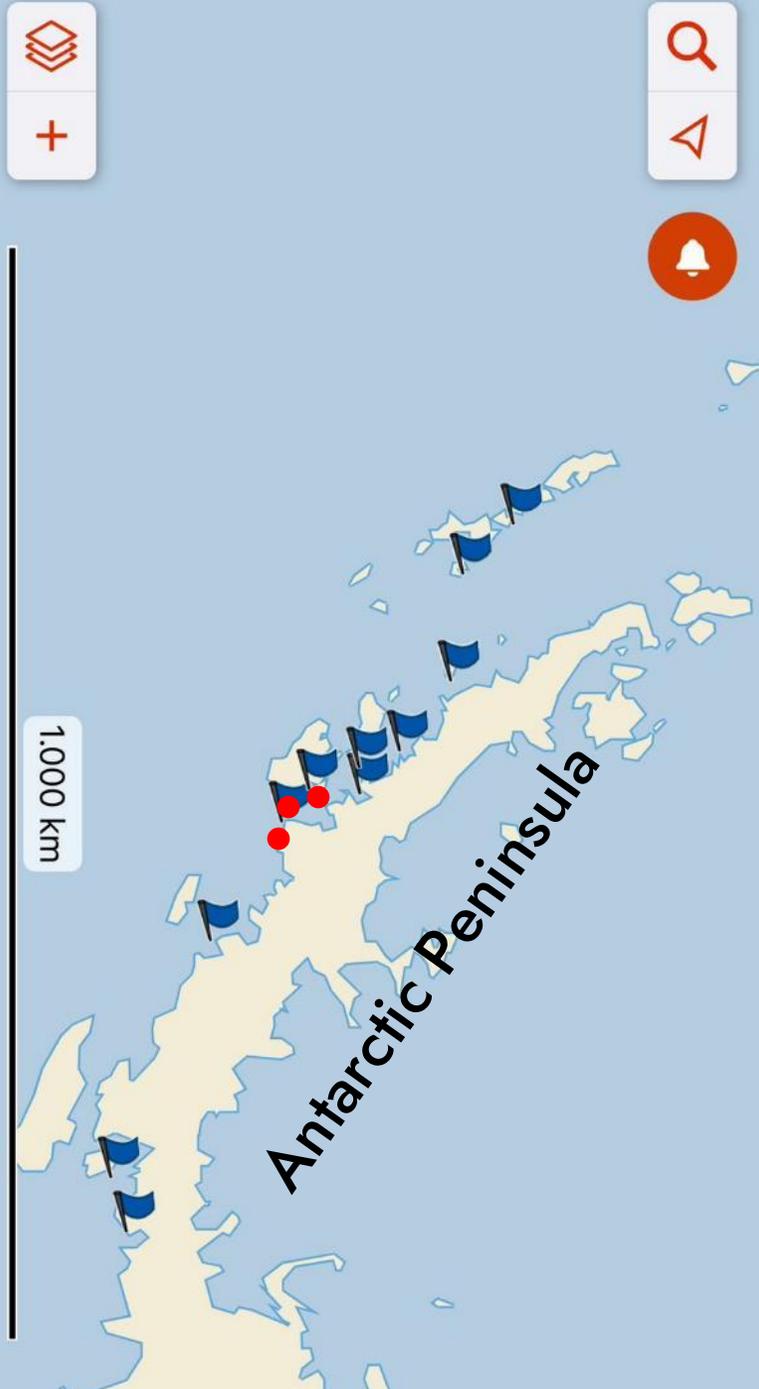
Plankton Samples

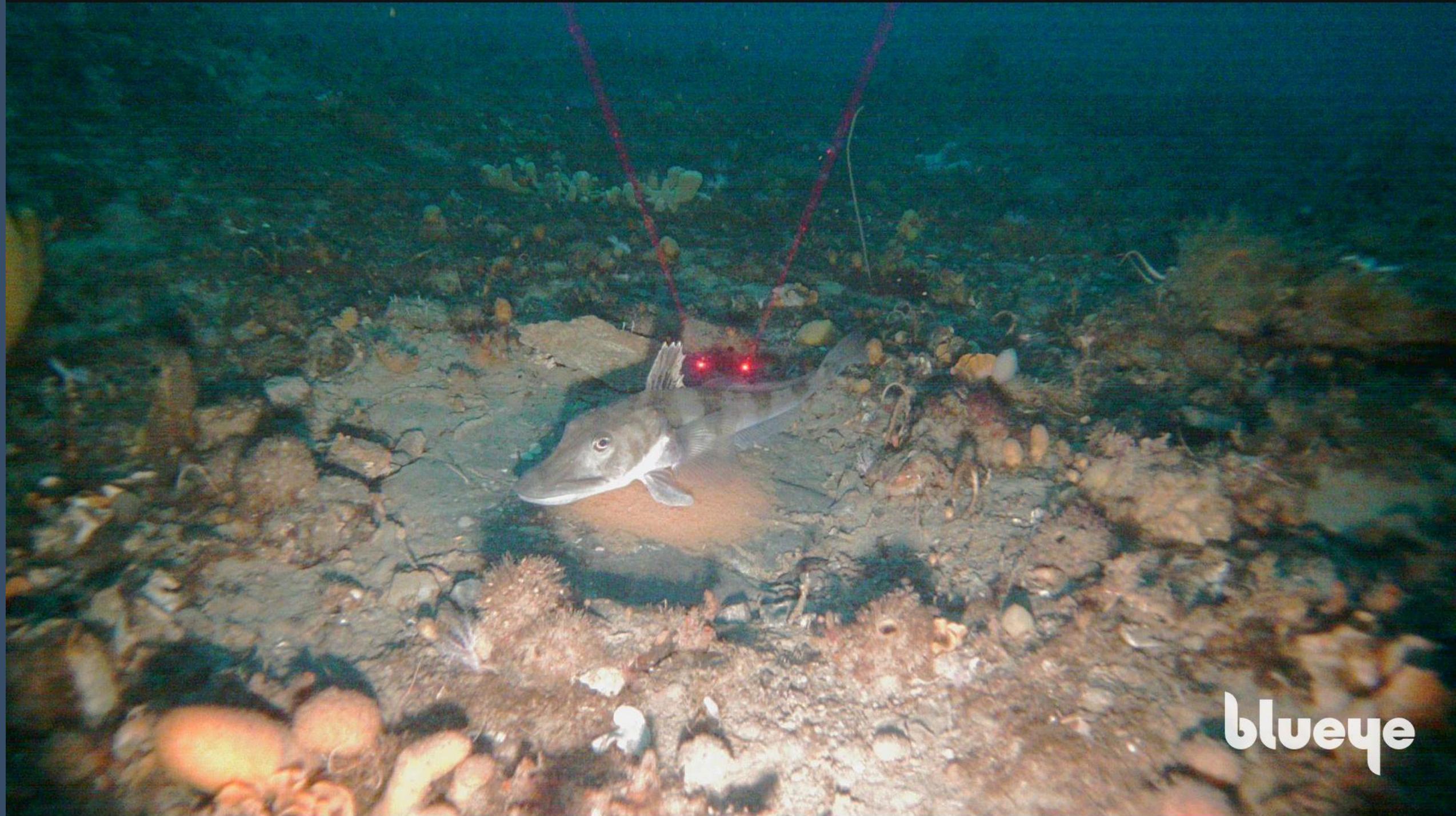




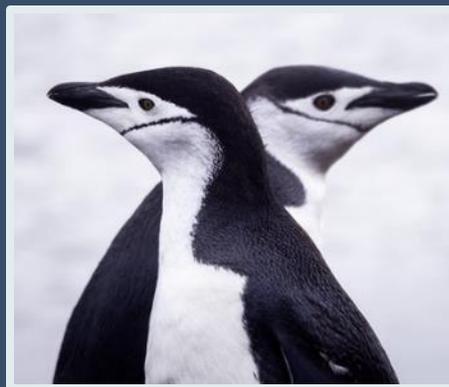
SUMMARY

- Antarctic Highlights Expedition (18 – 27 Feb 2026)
- 3 sites explored
- 4 ROV deployments
- Icefish spawning ground discovery
- ~60 min/deployment. ~180 min / ~ 3 h footage





blueye



Pathogen surveillance in Antarctic seabirds and seals

Trip Summary

Observations

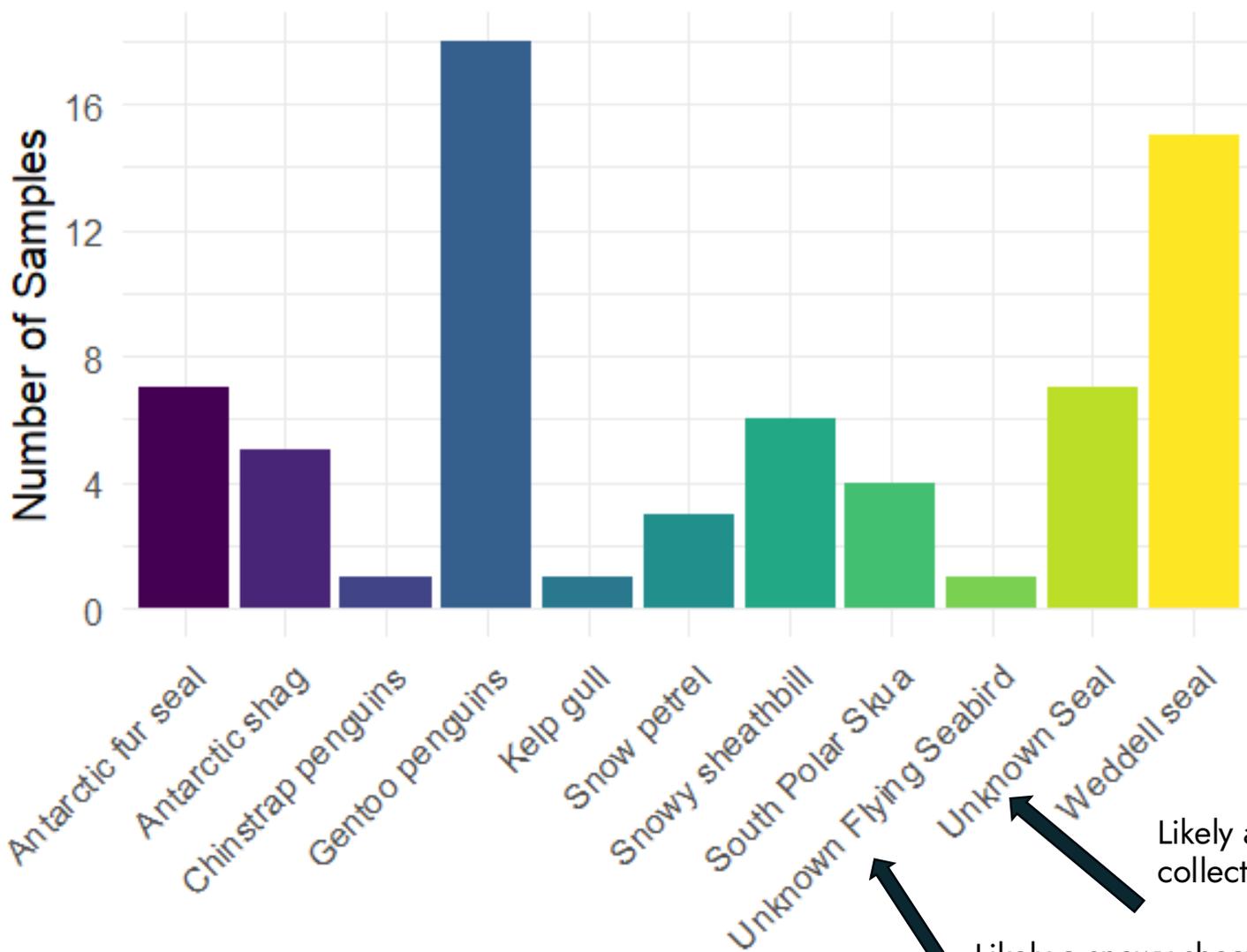
Key Findings...

We sampled 9 different species:

| Name of Species | Number of samples |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Antarctic fur seal | 7 (five individuals) |
| Antarctic shag | 5 |
| chinstrap penguin | 1 |
| gentoo Penguin | 18 |
| kelp gull | 1 |
| snow petrel | 3 (one individual) |
| snowy sheathbill | 6 (two individuals) |
| south polar Skua | 1 |
| Weddell seal | 15 (two individuals) |



Number of Samples per Species



Species

- Antarctic fur seal
- Antarctic shag
- Chinstrap penguins
- Gentoo penguins
- Kelp gull
- Snow petrel
- Snowy sheathbill
- South Polar Skua
- Unknown Flying Seabird
- Unknown Seal
- Weddell seal

Species

Likely a fur seal – we collected 6 samples

Likely a snowy sheathbill – we collected 1 sample

Observations

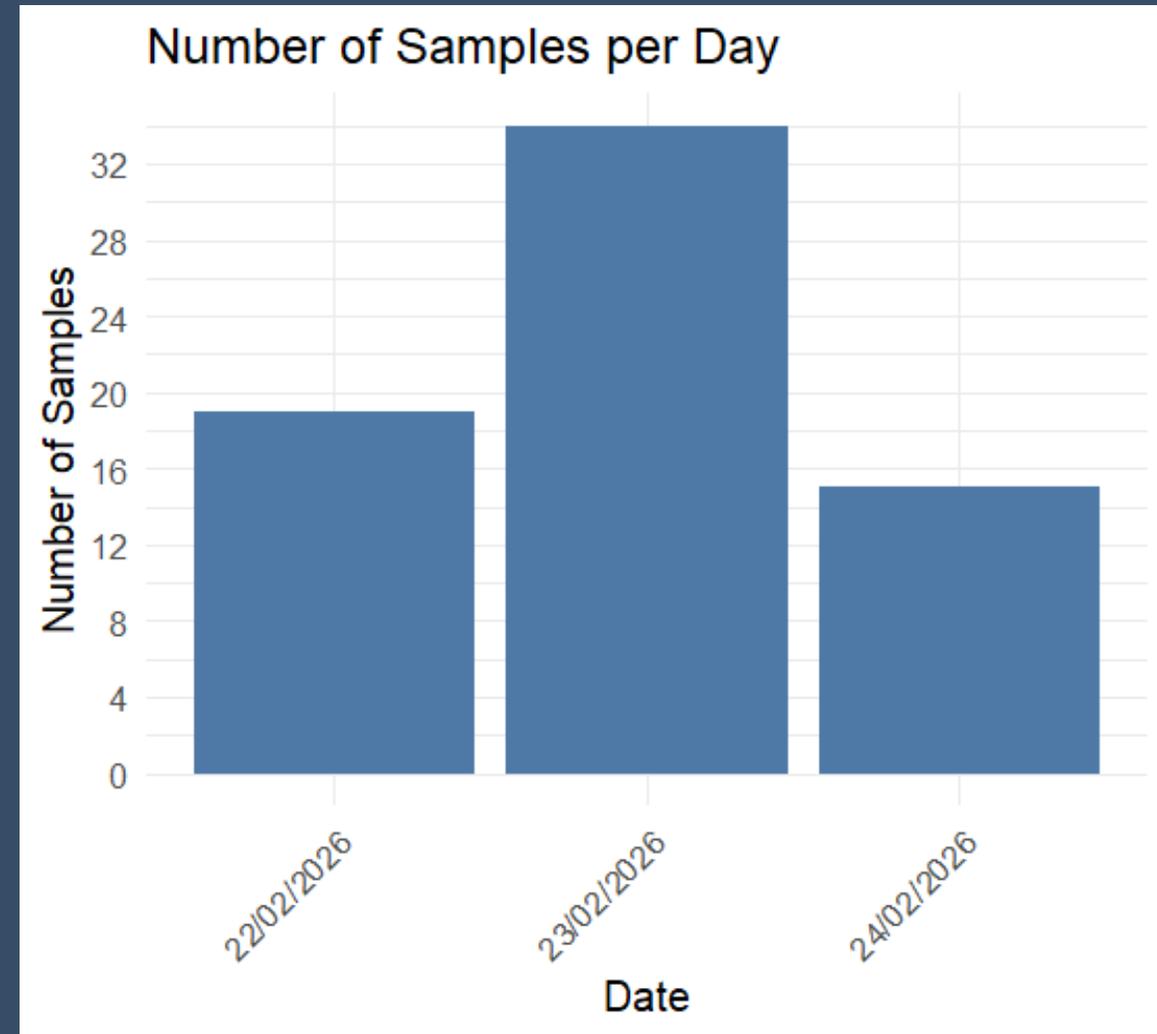
Key Findings...

How many samples did we collect at each landing site?

Day 5 – Pleneau Island = 19 samples

Day 6 – Damoy Point = 34 samples

Day 7 – Danco Island = 15 samples



Locations

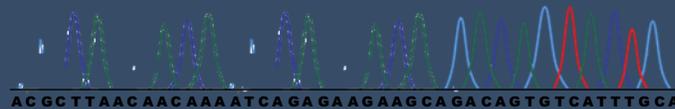


What's next...

Samples will be frozen and transported back to the University of Tasmania, Australia (over 8600km from Ushuaia).



Viral DNA and RNA will be extracted and sequenced to identify viruses in Antarctic seabirds and seals.



From the identified viruses, we can start to paint a clearer picture of disease diversity across Antarctic wildlife.



Photo: Dave Bone 

By better understanding Antarctic wildlife disease diversity, we can track changes and better predict viral outbreaks, behaviour, and spread.



These findings will contribute to PhD research, support many years of future studies, and, most importantly, aid in the conservation of these exquisite and unique Antarctic species.

**THANK
YOU!**



Photo: Ruth Wielinga

DONATIONS & EMAIL UPDATES





POLAR WHALE WATCH

Trip summary



AWR | ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND



ANTARCTIC
SCIENCE FOUNDATION



AUSTRALIAN
ANTARCTIC
PROGRAM

Photo credit: © Goddard_Photography

Observations



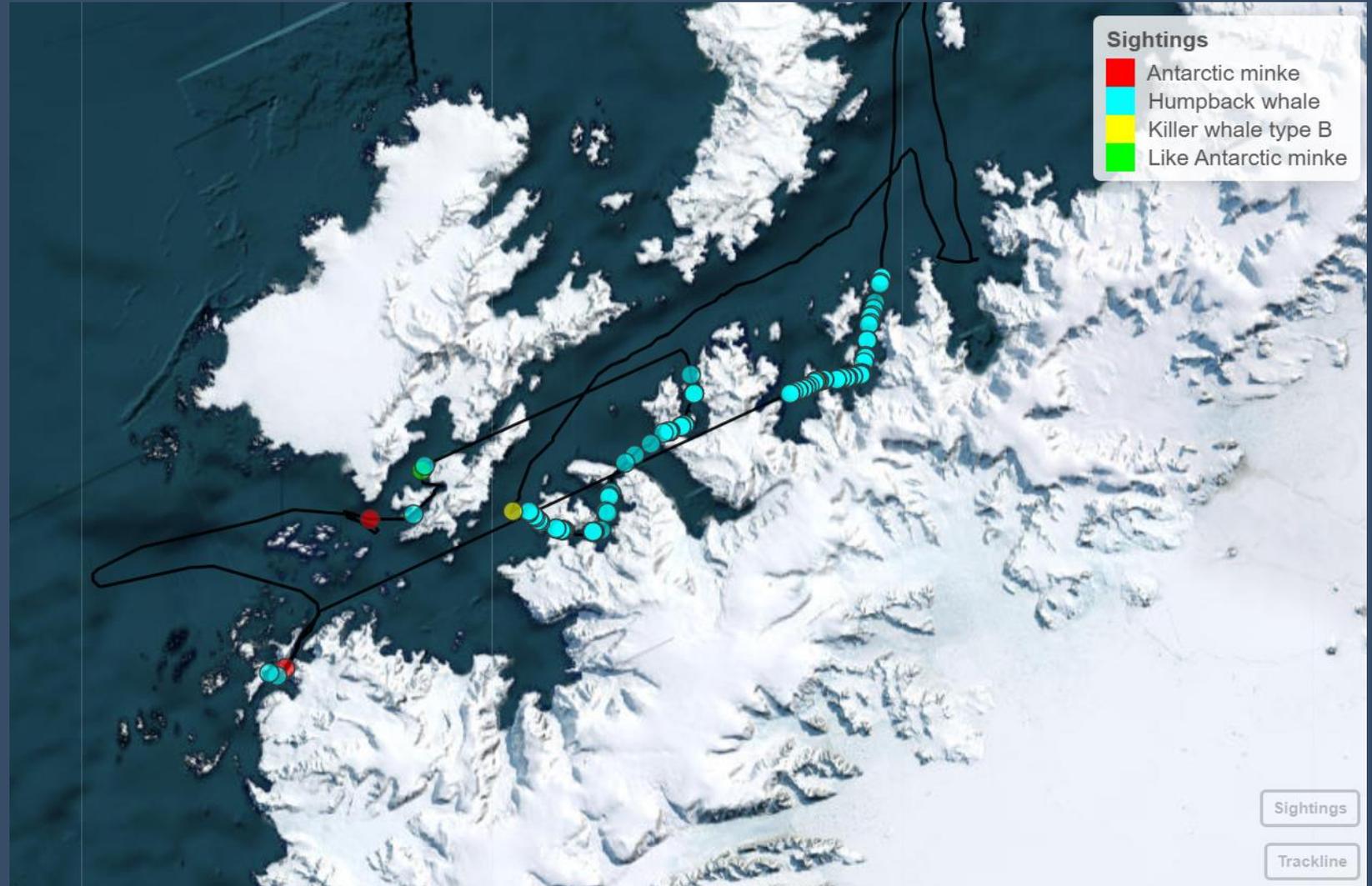
Key findings: list of species we spotted and how many

| Species Name | Number of Sightings | Number of Individuals |
|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Antarctic Minke | 3 | 3 |
| Humpback whale | 94 | 145 |
| Killer whale | 1 | 23 |
| Likely a minke whale | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 99 | 172 |

Observations



Key Findings:
Where did we spot these whales?



What's Next?



- The observations made on this voyage will be added to a database.
- Observations also shared with Krill Fishery Managers & the Convention for the Conservation of Antarctic Living Resources (CCAMLR)
- Data passed to CCAMLR
- Results will be used in PhD and masters research
- This data was collected as a part of Lead Researcher Angus Hendersen's PhD framework.



Want to know more?



Email list

Enter your email here for project updates.



Donations portal

Rewards available for large donations!



Tax deductible for AUS and US citizens.



Wildlife List — Birds



Birds - Wildlife List

| Scientific Name | English | Deutsch | Français |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Pygoscelis papua</i> | gentoo penguin | Eselspinguin | manchot papou |
| <i>Pygoscelis adeliae</i> | Adélie penguin | Adeliepinguin | manchot d'Adélie |
| <i>Pygoscelis antarcticus</i> | chinstrap penguin | Zügelpinguin | manchot à jugulaire |
| <i>Eudyptes chrysolophus</i> | macaroni penguin | Goldschopfpinguin | gorfou doré |
| <i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i> | Magellanic penguin | Magellanpinguin | manchot de Magellan |
| <i>Diomedea exulans</i> | snowy albatross (wandering albatross) | Wanderalbatros | albatros hurleur |
| <i>Diomedea epomophora</i> | southern royal albatross | Königsalbatros | albatros royal |
| <i>Thalassarche melanophris</i> | black-browed albatross | Schwarzbrauenalbatros | albatros à sourcils noirs |
| <i>Thalassarche chrysostoma</i> | grey-headed albatross | Graukopfalbatros | albatros à tête grise |
| <i>Phoebastria palpebrata</i> | light-mantled albatross | Graumantelalbatros | albatros fuligineux |
| <i>Macronectes giganteus</i> | southern giant petrel | Riesensturmvogel | pétrel géant |
| <i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i> | white-chinned petrel | Weißkinn-Sturmvogel | puffin à menton blanc |
| <i>Pterodroma mollis</i> | soft-plumaged petrel | Weichfeder-Sturmvogel | pétrel soyeux |
| <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> | southern fulmar | Silbersturmvogel | fulmar argenté |
| <i>Daption capense</i> | cape petrel | Kapsturmvogel | damier du cap |
| <i>Thalassoica antarctica</i> | Antarctic petrel | Antarkissturmvogel | pétrel Antarctique |
| <i>Pagodroma nivea</i> | snow petrel | Schneestormvogel | pétrel des neiges |
| <i>Halobaena caerulea</i> | blue petrel | Blausturmvogel | prion bleu |
| <i>Pachyptila belcheri</i> | slender-billed prion | Dünnschnabel-Sturmvogel | prion de Belcher |
| <i>Pachyptila desolata</i> | Antarctic prion | Taubensturmvogel | prion de la Désolation |

| Birds - Wildlife List | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Scientific Name | English | Deutsch | Français |
| <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i> | Wilson's stormpetrel | Buntfuß-Sturmschwalbe | océanite de Wilson |
| <i>Fregetta tropica</i> | black-bellied storm petrel | Schwarzbauch-Sturmschwalbe | océanite à ventre noir |
| <i>Pelecanoides urinatrix</i> | common diving petrel | Subantarktis-Lummensturmvogel | puffinure plongeur |
| <i>Ardenna grisea</i> | sooty shearwater | Dunkelsturmtaucher | puffin fuligineux |
| <i>Ardenna gravis</i> | great shearwater | Kappensturmtaucher | puffin majeur |
| <i>Leucocarbo atriceps</i> | imperial cormorant | Kaiserscharbe | cormoran impérial |
| <i>Leucocarbo magellanicus</i> | Magellanic shag | Felsenscharbe | cormoran de Magellan |
| <i>Stercorarius maccormicki</i> | south polar skua | Antarktiskua | labbe de McCormick |
| <i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i> | brown Skua (subantarctic) | Subantarktiskua | labbe Antarctique |
| <i>Stercorarius chilensis</i> | Chilean skua | Chileskua | labbe du Chili |
| <i>Larus dominicanus</i> | kelp gull | Dominikanermöwe | goéland dominicain |
| <i>Leucophaeus scoresbyii</i> | dolphin gull | Blutschnabelmöwe | goéland de Scoresby |
| <i>Chionis albus</i> | snowy sheathbill | Weißgesicht-Scheidenschnabel | chionis blanc |
| <i>Sterna vittata</i> | Antarctic tern | Antarktikseeschwalbe | sterne couronnée |
| <i>Sterna hirundinacea</i> | South American tern | Falklandseeschwalbe | sterne hirundinacée |



Wildlife

List — Marine Mammals

Wildlife List – Marine Mammals

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins, porpoise)

| Scientific Name | English | Deutsch | Français |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> | fin whale | Finnwal | rorqual commun |
| <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> | sei whale | Rorqual de Rudolphi | seiwal |
| <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> | humpback whale | Buckelwal | baleine à bosse |
| <i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i> | Antarctic minke whale | Südlicher Zwergwal | petit rorqual de l'Antarctique |
| <i>Orcinus orca</i> | killer whale (orca) | Orca o Schwertwal | orque |
| <i>Lagenorhynchus cruciger</i> | hourglass dolphin | Stundenglas delfin | lagénorhynque sablier |
| <i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i> | dusky dolphin | Schwarzdelfin | lagénorhynque obscur |

Pinnipeds (seals)

| Scientific Name | English | Deutsch | Français |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <i>Lobodon carcinophaga</i> | crabeater seal | Krabbenfresser | phoque crabier |
| <i>Leptonychotes weddellii</i> | Weddell seal | Weddelrobbe | phoque de Weddell |
| <i>Hydrurga leptonyx</i> | leopard seal | Léopard de mer | seeleopard |
| <i>Arctocephalus gazella</i> | Antarctic fur seal | Antarktischer Seebär | otarie à fourrure antarctique |
| <i>Mirounga leonina</i> | Southern elephant seal | Eléphant de mer austral | südlicher see-elefant |
| <i>Otaria byronia</i> | South American sea lion | Mähnenrobbe | lion de mer d'Amérique du Sud |

The image features a large, translucent blue 'THANKS' text overlay on a background of a blue ice cave. The text is positioned on the left side of the frame, with the 'T' and 'H' on the left and the 'A', 'N', 'K', 'S' on the right. The background shows a vast, blue ice cave with a penguin standing on a small ice ledge in the distance. The lighting is soft and blue, creating a serene and cold atmosphere.

THANKS

Thanks for your participation!