



Science & Education Report

MS Fridtjof Nansen

Highlights of Antarctica

18 – 28 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



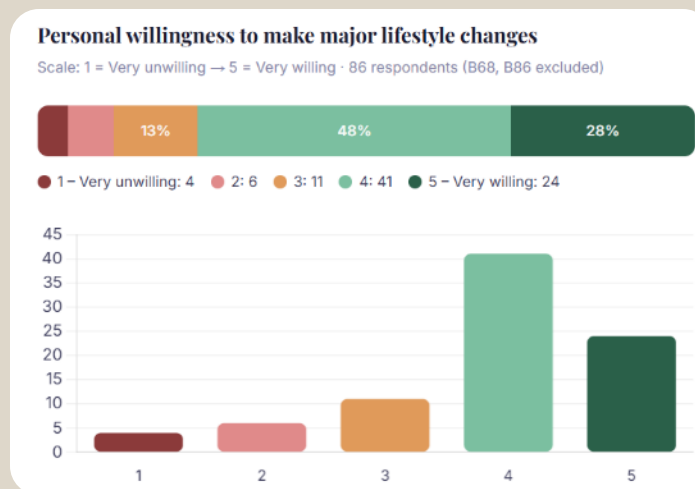
Climate Change Survey

How do you feel about climate change?

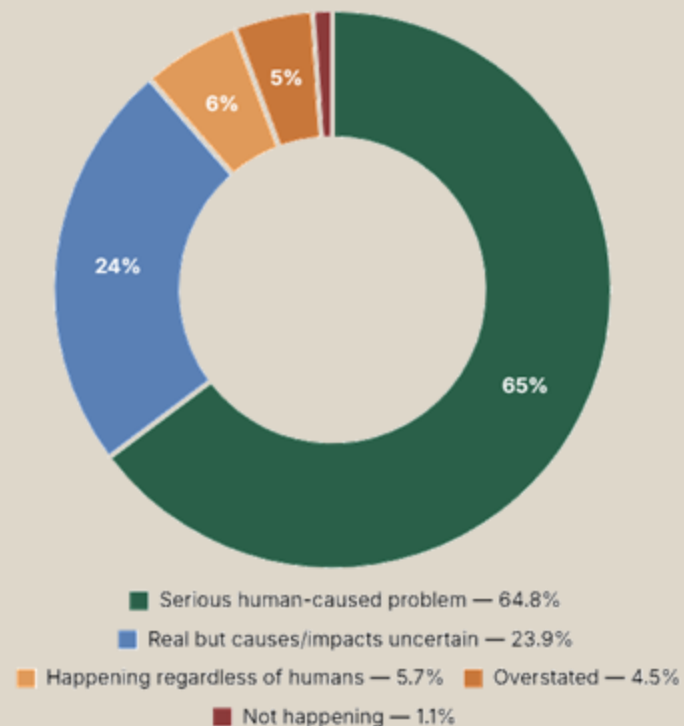
As an experiment, we conducted a survey on our guests' views and feelings on the subject of climate change. In the long run, we would like to gather enough data for a scientific statistical study in the microcosm of our ship.

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](#)

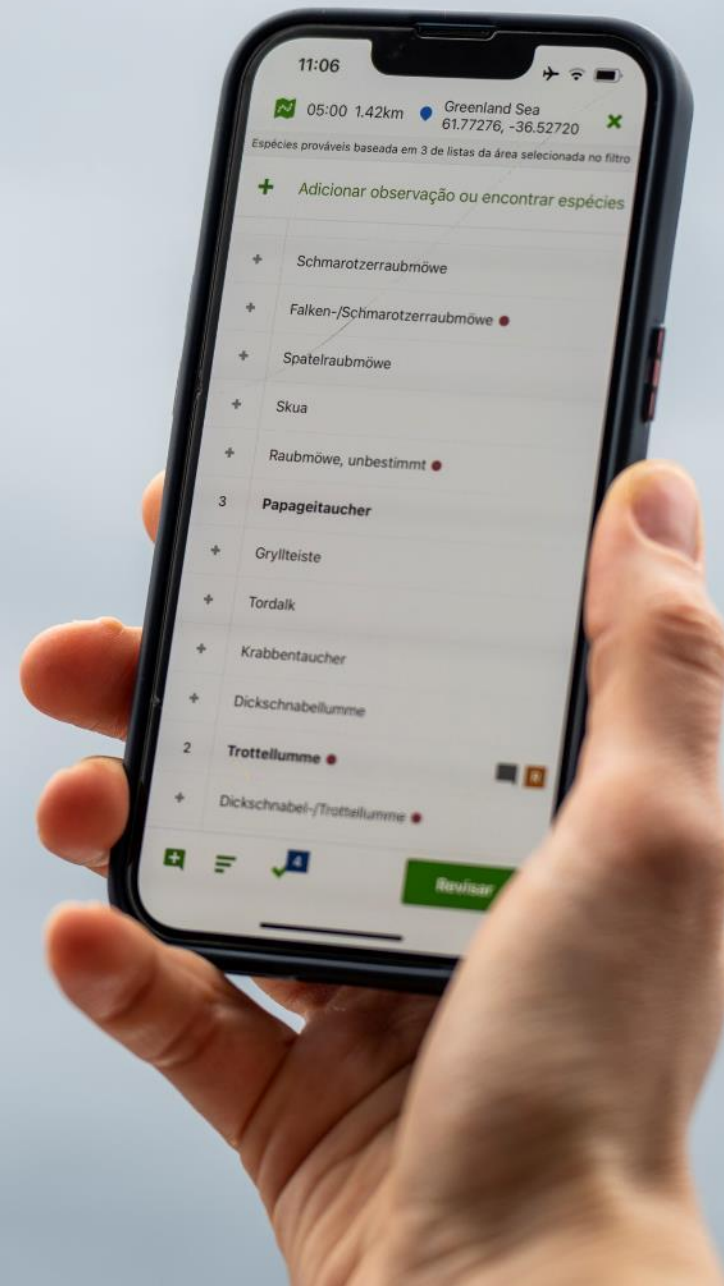


The eBird project

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

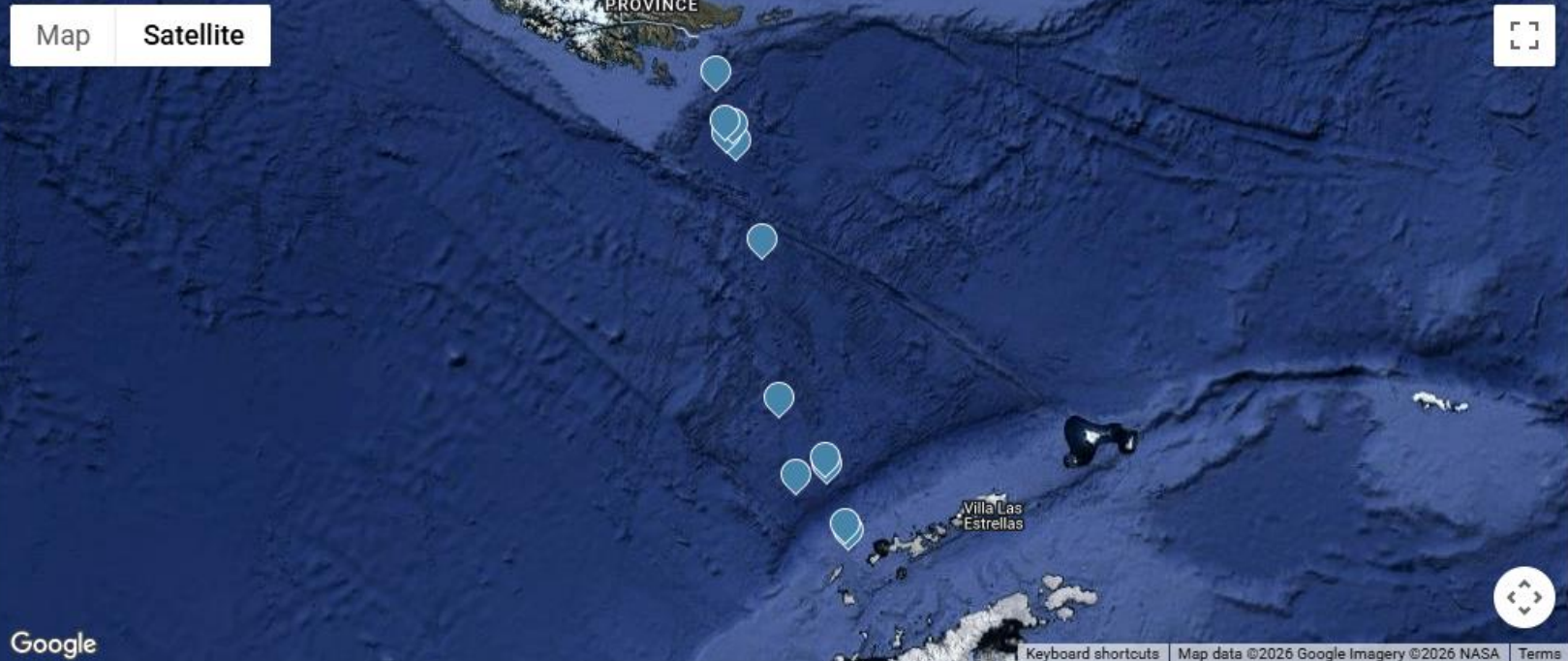
FNANT2606 Fridtjof Nansen Highlights of Antarctica 18 - 27 February 2026

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



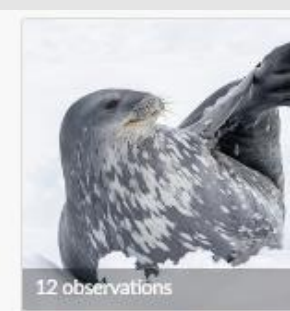
30 observations

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



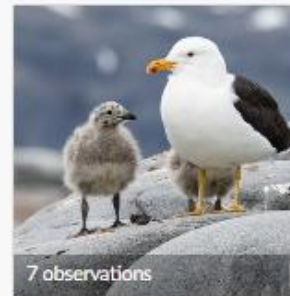
9 observations

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



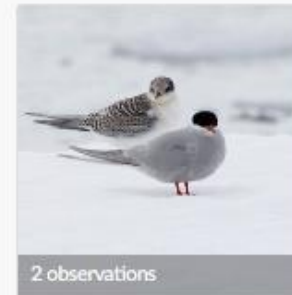
3 observations

Crabeater Seal · Phoque Crabier · Krabbenfresser
Lobodon carcinophaga



2 observations

Adelie Penguin · Manchot Adélie · Adeliepinguin
Pygoscelis adeliae



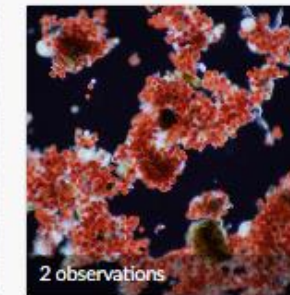
2 observations

Antarctic Tern · Sterne Couronnée · Antipodenseeschwalbe
Sterna vittata



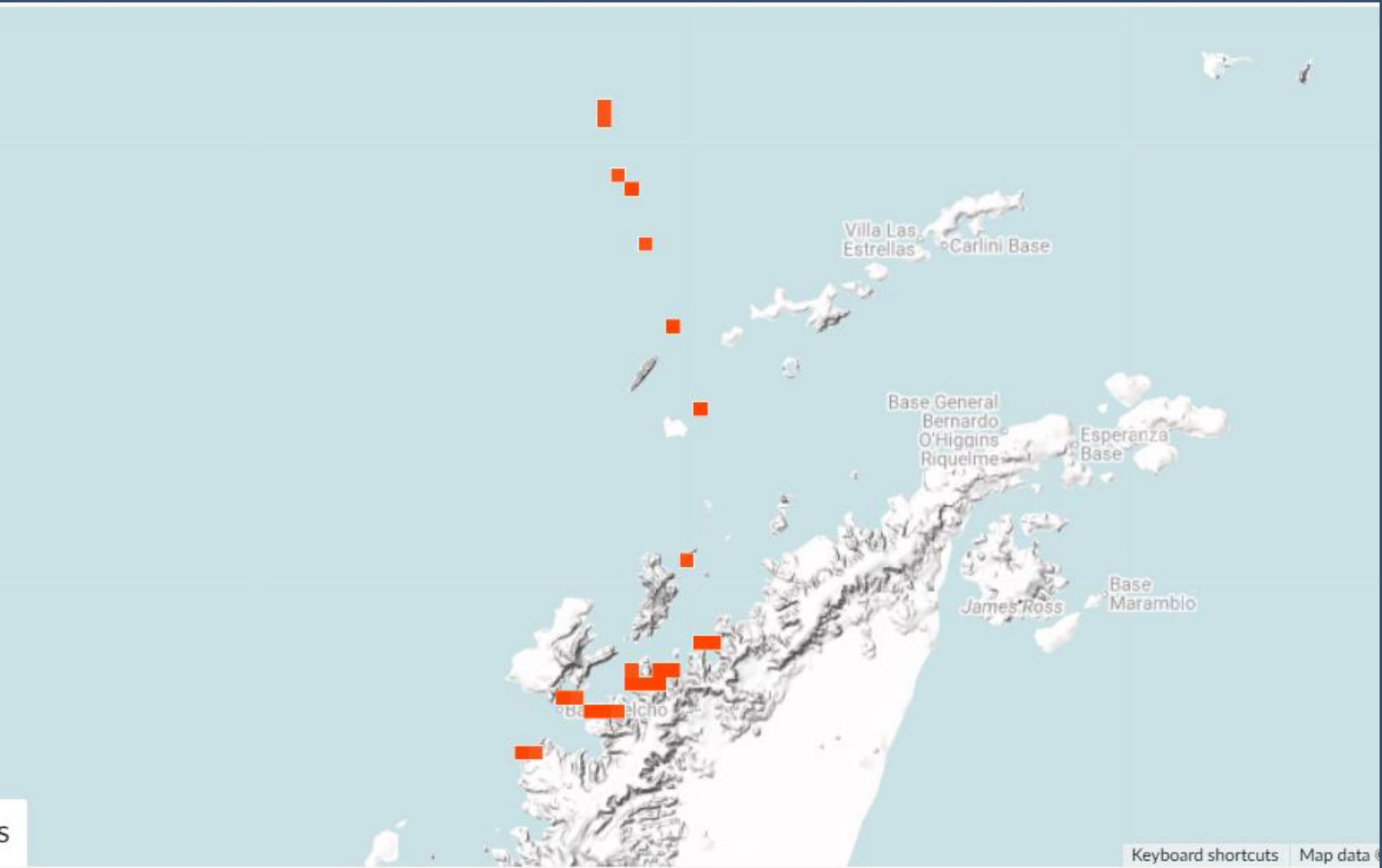
2 observations

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.

S

Keyboard shortcuts | Map data ©





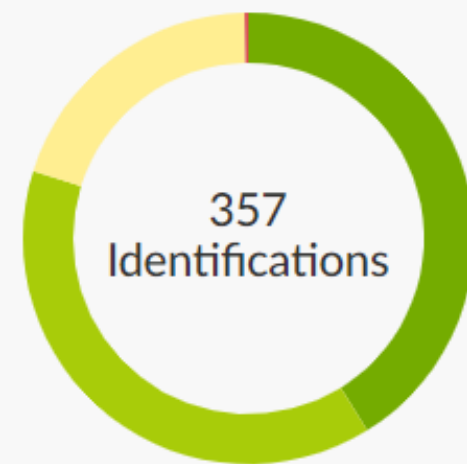
iNaturalist



- 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!

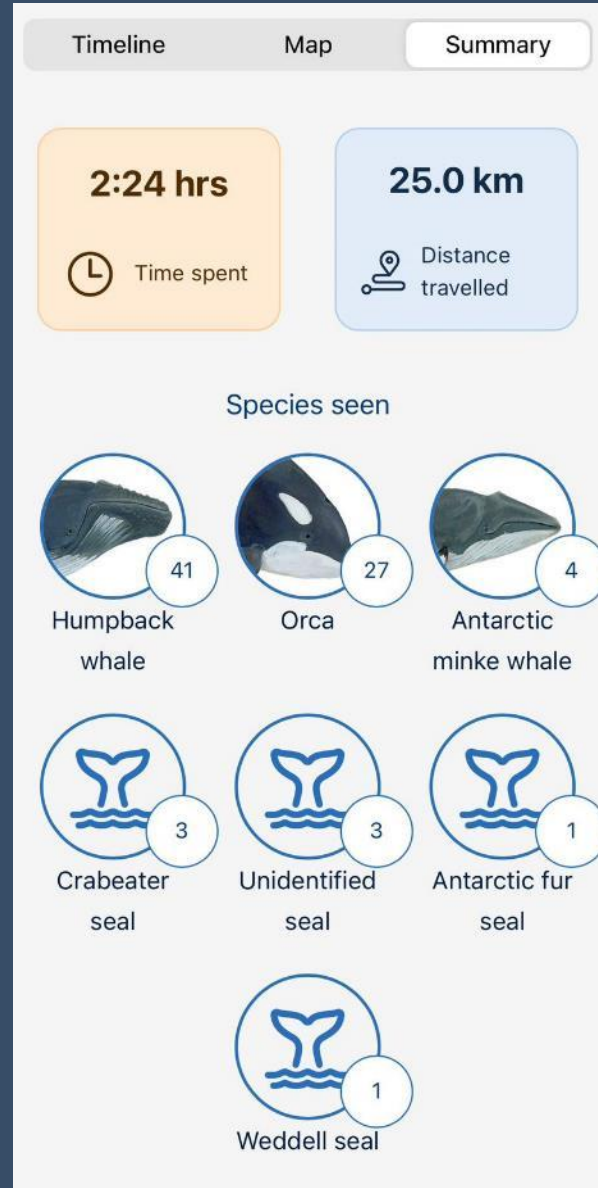
[View our data](#) on the global map





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

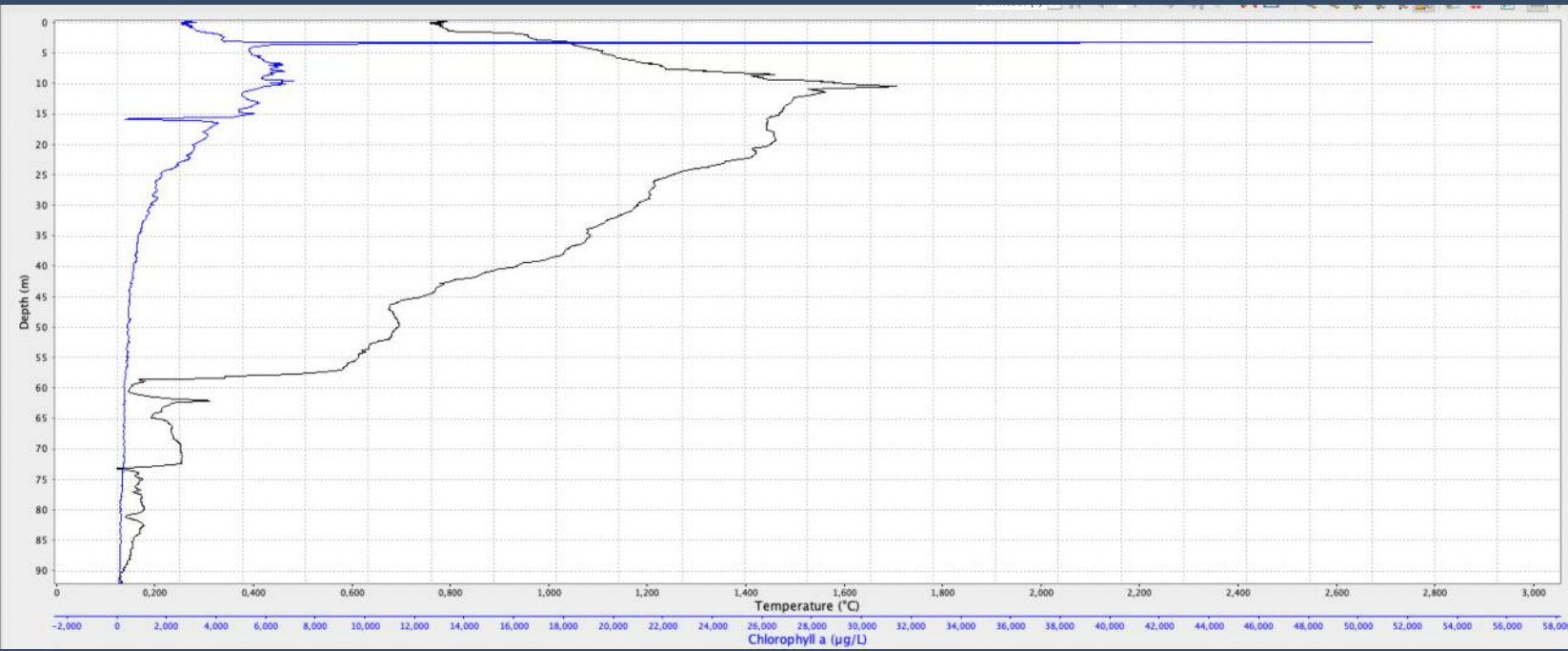
Science Boat

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!

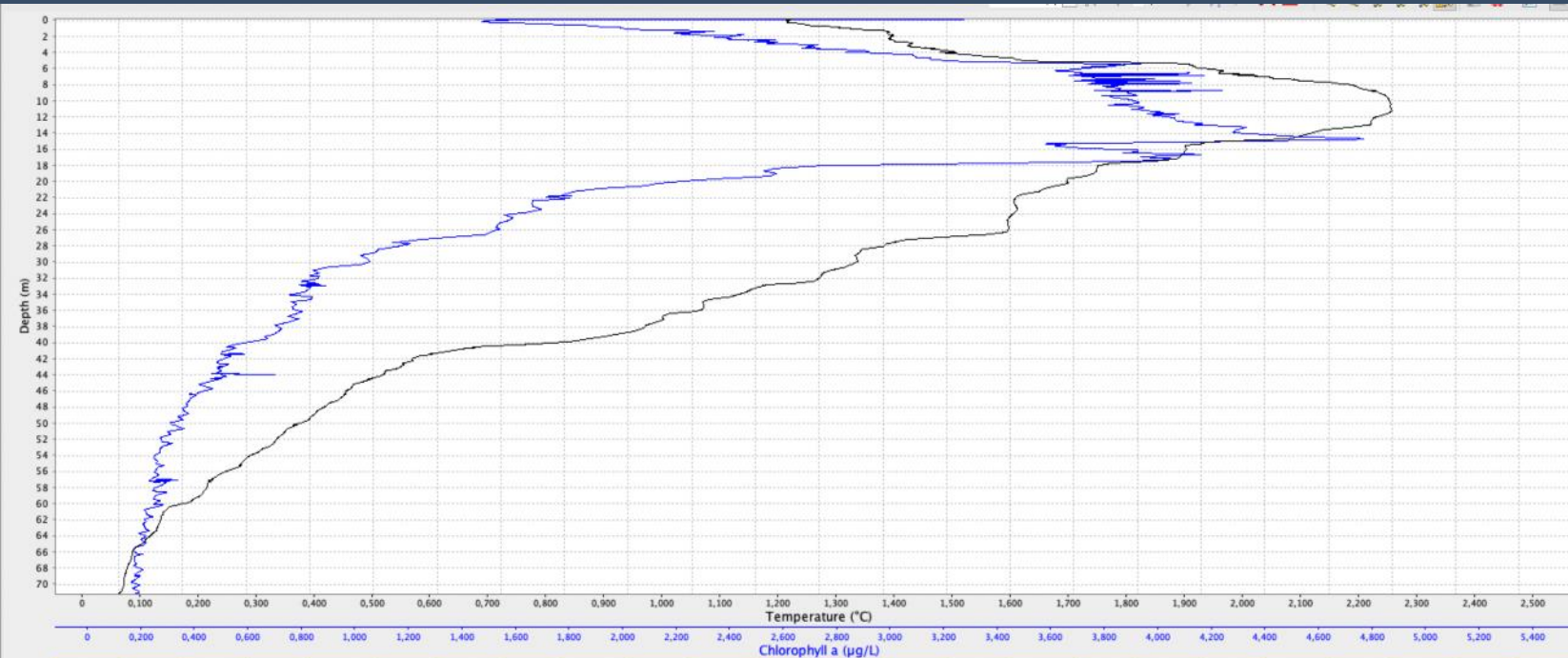


[View our data](#) submitted to the Secchi Disk Project

Wilhelmina Bay

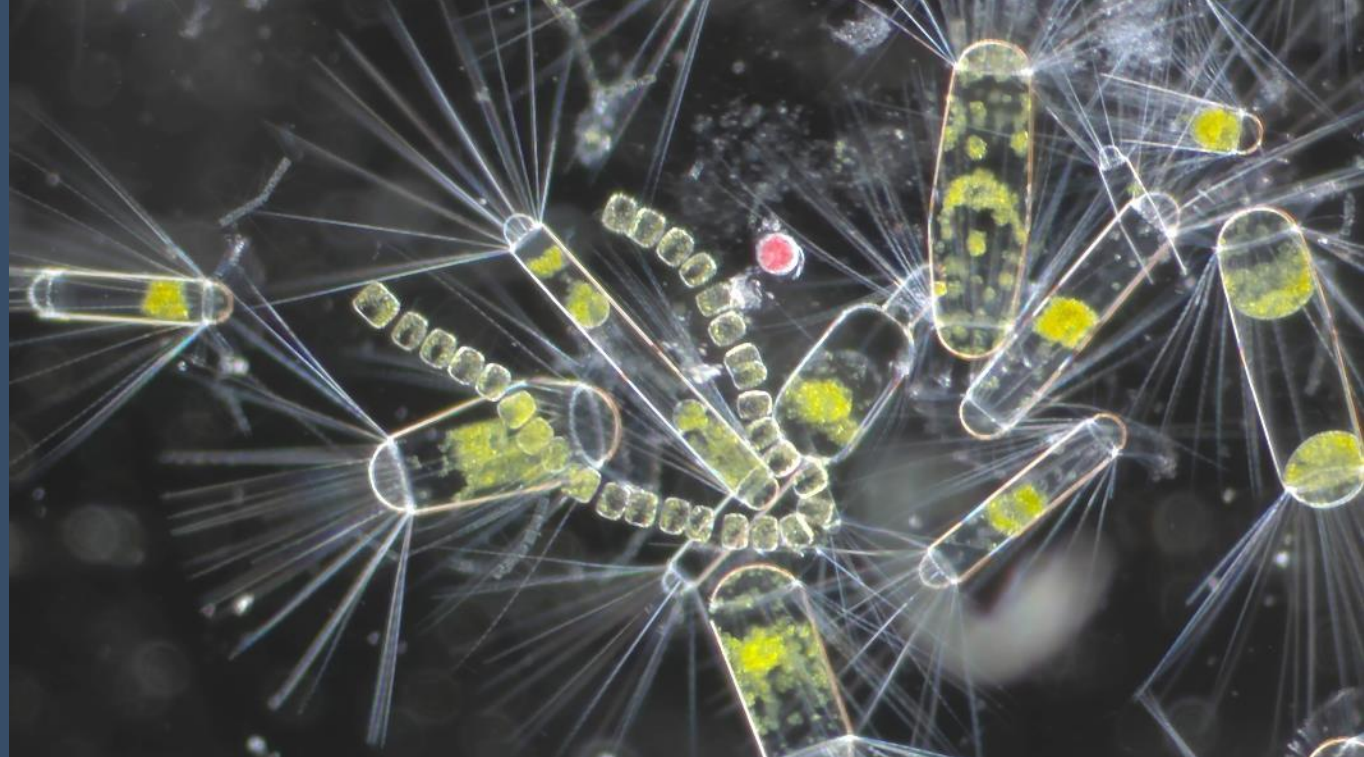
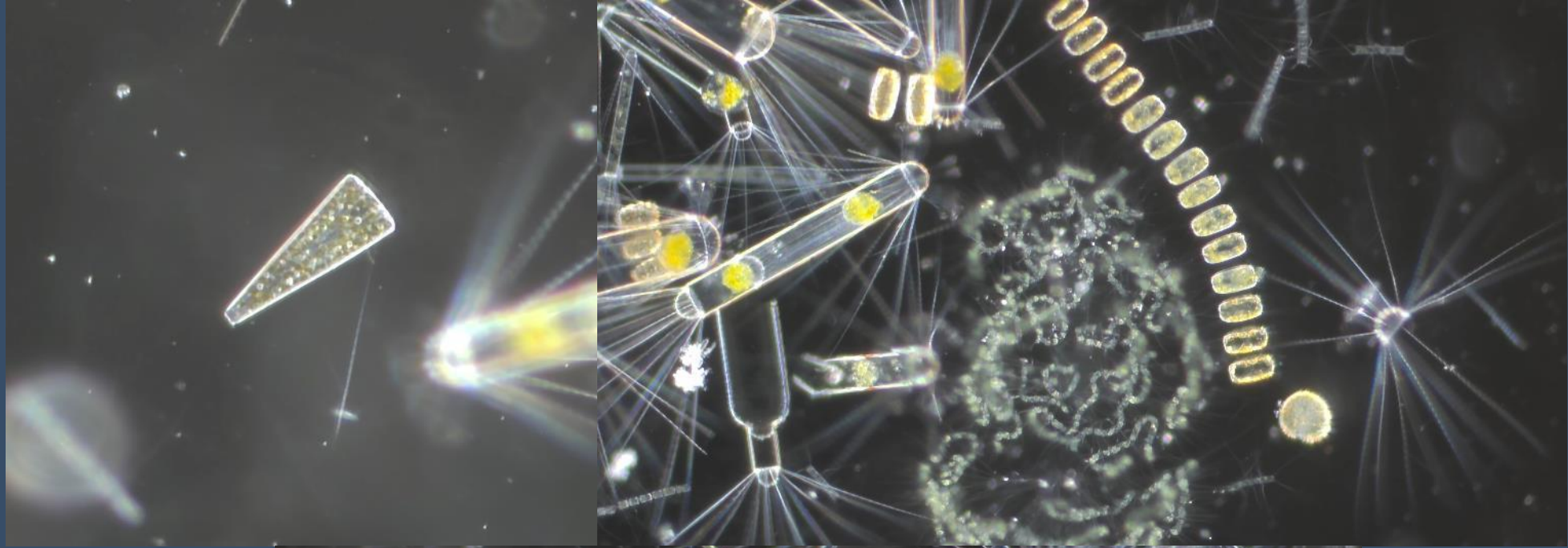


Portal Point





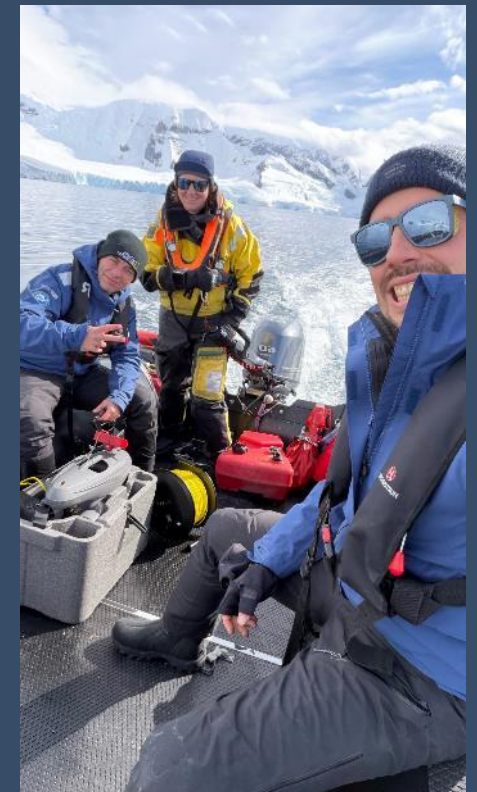
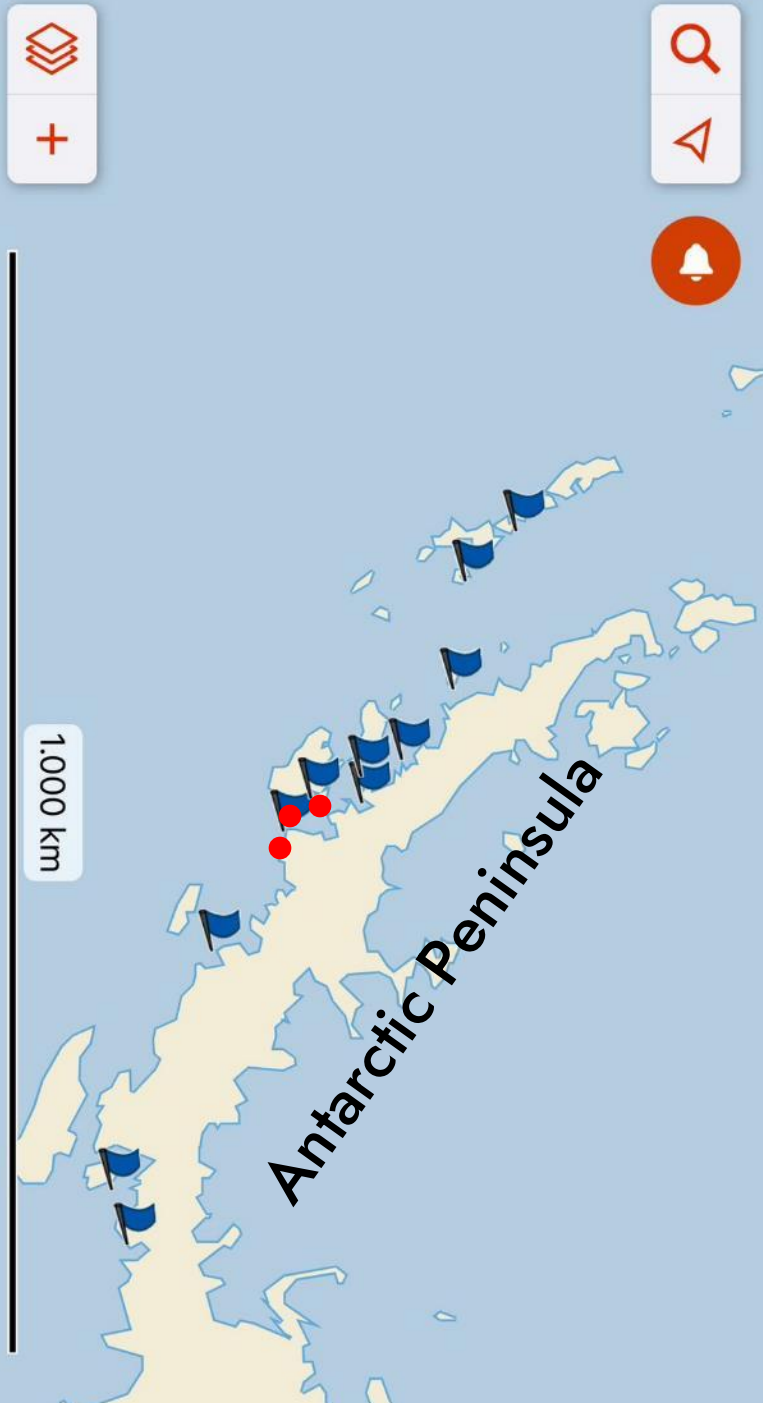
Plankton Samples

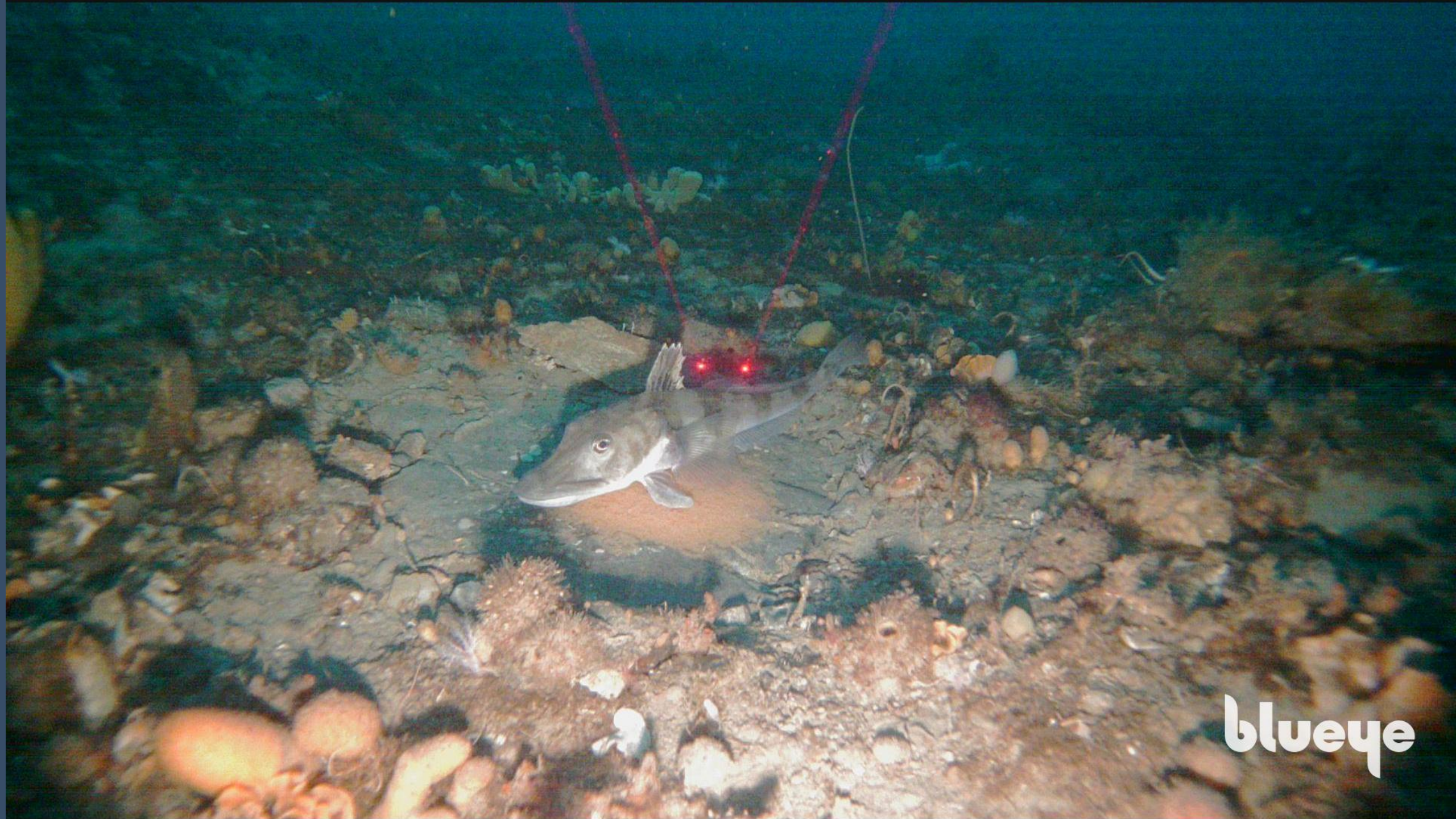




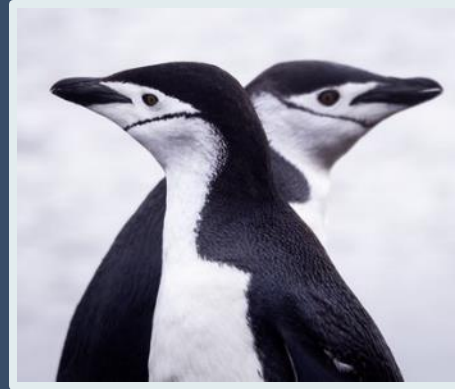
SUMMARY

- 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





blueeye



Pathogen surveillance in Antarctic seabirds and seals

Trip Summary

Observations

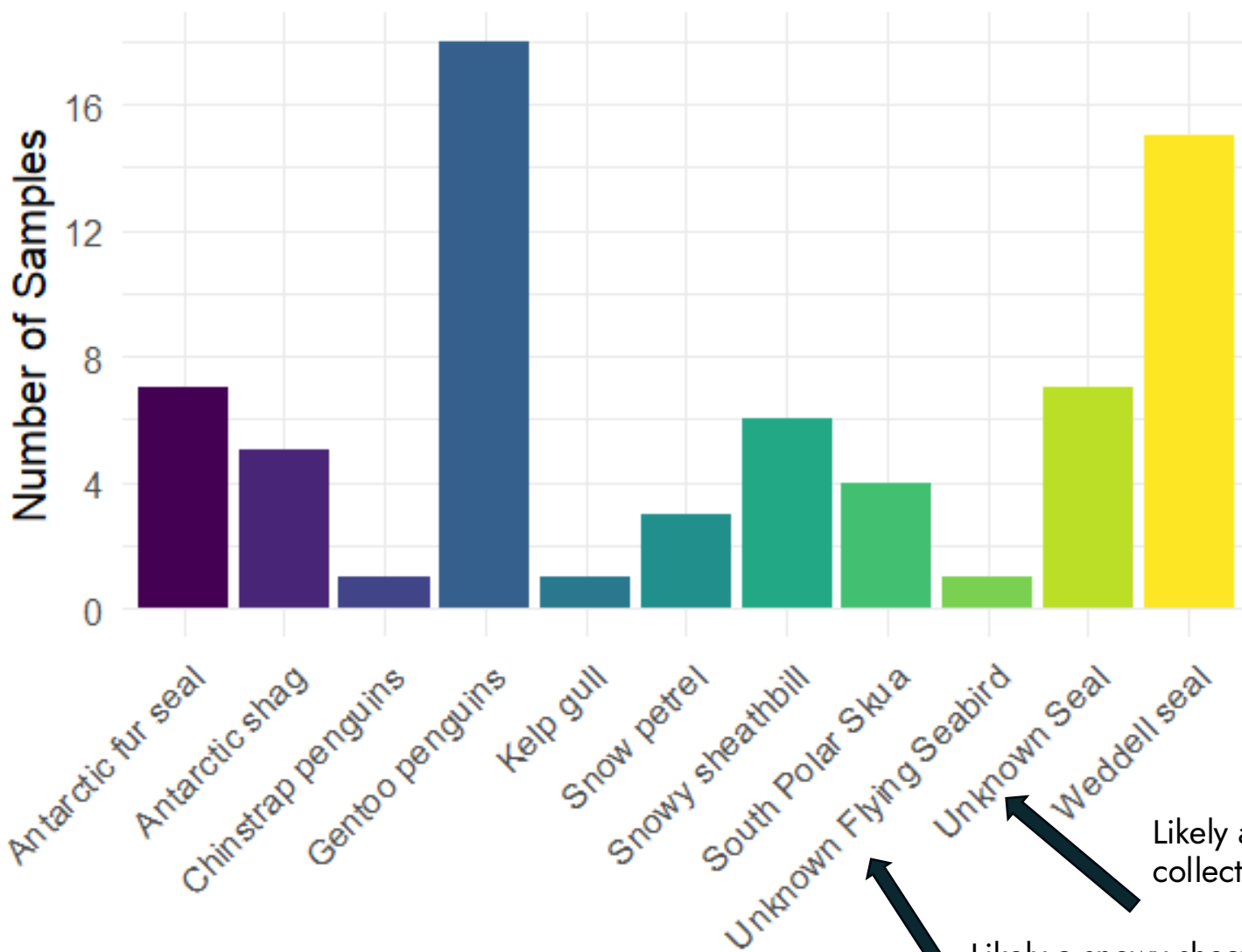
Key Findings...

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

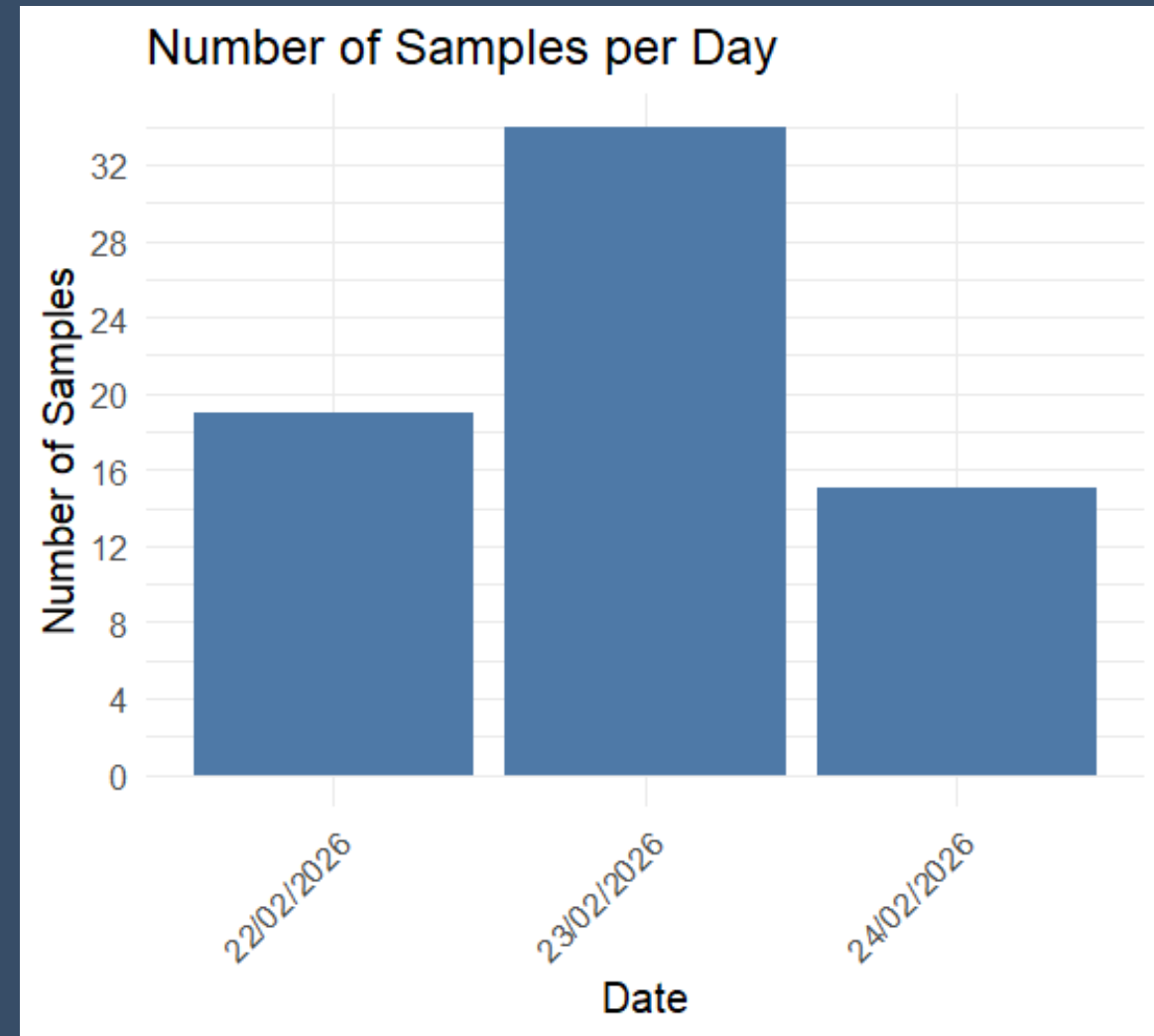
Key Findings...

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

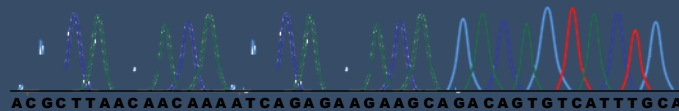


What's next...

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

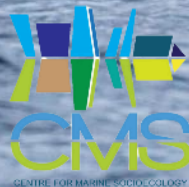
DONATIONS & EMAIL UPDATES





POLAR WHALE WATCH

Trip summary



AWR | ANTARCTIC WILDLIFE RESEARCH FUND



ANTARCTIC
SCIENCE FOUNDATION



AUSTRALIAN
ANTARCTIC
PROGRAM

Photo credit: © Goddard_Photography

Observations



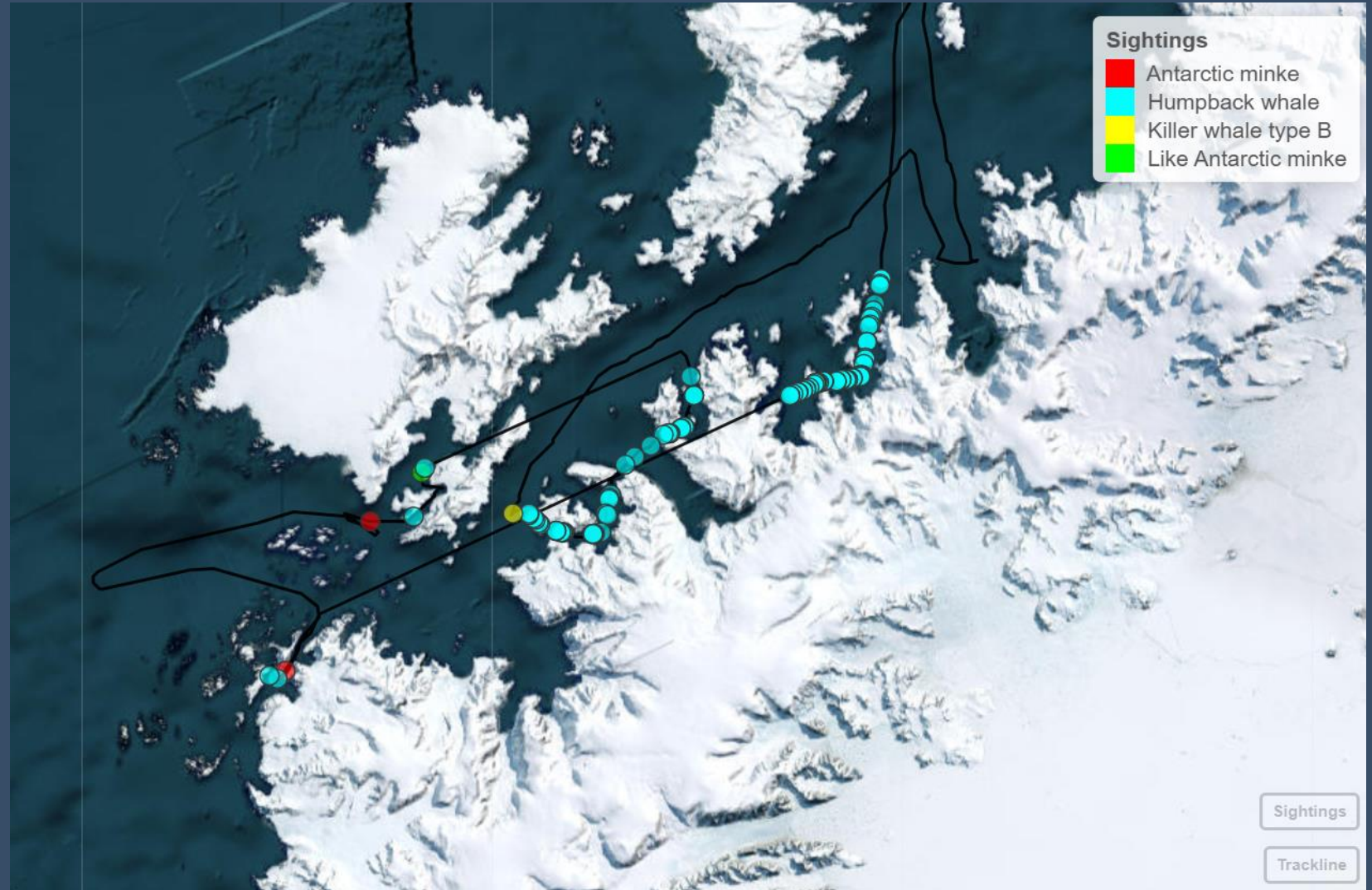
Key findings: list of species we spotted and how many

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

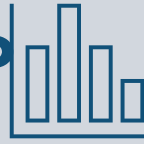
Observations



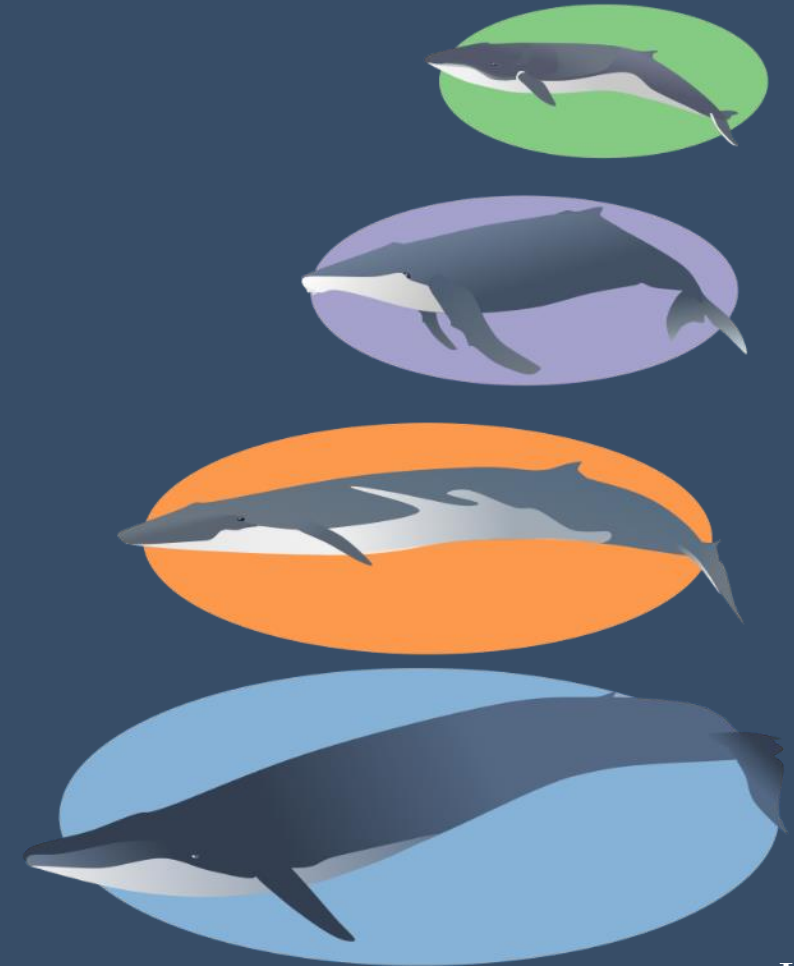
Key Findings:
Where did we spot these whales?



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	Subantarktisch-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. The background shows a vast, blue ice cave with a penguin standing on a ledge in the distance. The lighting is soft and blue, creating a serene and cold atmosphere.

THANKS

Thanks for your participation!