



We had some amazing wildlife encounters during this tour, and charismatic King Penguins certainly performed. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

THE SUBANTARCTIC ISLANDS OF NEW ZEALAND & AUSTRALIA

14 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER 2013

LEADER: DANI LOPEZ-VELASCO

Unforgettable. That's a good way of describing our 2013 Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand & Australia cruise. With 48 species of tubenoses seen this year - an all-time record for this cruise - this is surely the ultimate seabirding experience in the World, and it's definitely a must for any seabird enthusiastic. Quite a

selection of rare endemics occur in these remote islands, making it an obligatory visit for the world birder, and given the sheer numbers of wildlife, absolutely stunning scenery and outstanding photo opportunities, any nature lover will also find this a magical cruise. During our epic trip, we visited a succession of famous islands, whose names most of us had heard many times and evoked remoteness and masses of seabirds, but actually never thought we would ever set foot on: the Snares; the Auckland Islands; Macquarie Island; Campbell Island; the Antipodes Islands; the Bounty Islands and the Chatham Islands. Called by Heritage Expeditions 'Birding Down Under', our 18-day voyage aboard the Russian oceanographic research vessel *Professor Khromov* (renamed *Spirit of Enderby* by our New Zealand tour operator) took us to a series of tiny pieces of land in the vast Southern Ocean and treated us to extraordinary numbers of penguins, albatrosses, petrels, storm petrels and shags, as well as some of the world's rarest land birds. Most of these islands are uninhabited, and because of this and their remoteness, the wildlife is not afraid of humans at all. The feeling of having huge albatrosses, funny penguins or massive elephant-seals at your feet, totally unconcerned by your presence, is something really especial and very difficult to find these days, and should be experienced at least once in a lifetime.

In the seabird front, we recorded an impressive 48 species of tubenoses, including 14 forms of albatrosses, 30 species of shearwaters, petrels and prions, including two mega-rare seabirds: the Critically Endangered Magenta Petrel, and the Endangered Chatham Petrel, which have been seen at sea only a handful of times ever, as well as four species of Storm Petrels. On land, we were treated to magical encounters with no less than 9 species of penguins and displaying albatrosses, plus a selection of the rarest land birds in the World. The almost endless highlights of the tour included some absolutely magical hours spent, under sunny skies, with the Royal, King and Gentoo Penguins on Macquarie Island; a "golden hour" on our last afternoon in the Chathams with at-sea sightings of Magenta and Chatham Island Petrels – two of the rarest seabirds in the world, with the latter being a Birdquest lifer-; elegant Light-mantled (Sooty) Albatrosses in their beautiful display flight over a cliff face on Enderby Island; face-to-face encounters with Southern Royal Albatrosses on the nest at Campbell Island; an impressive seabird feeding frenzy right off the bow of our ship, with thousands of albatrosses of 9 species, including hundreds of beautiful Chatham Albatrosses; no less than 9 species of *Pterodroma* (meaning winged-runner) Petrels; a very rare sighting of a Great Shearwater; a vagrant Chinstrap Penguin in Macquarie which was one of the first records of this species in this part of the world; some seldom-seen shorebirds: the cryptic Subantarctic Snipe on Enderby Island and the recently discovered and very little known Campbell Island (Subantarctic) Snipe on Campbell; the exceedingly rare Chatham Oystercatcher and the strange Shore Dotterel (Shore Plovers) in the Chatham Islands; great views of flightless Auckland and Campbell Teals -surely the rarest ducks on our planet- ; large numbers of delightful Snares Crested and Erect-crested Penguins at their breeding colonies; a total of six species of restricted range shags; great views of New Zealand Falcon on Enderby; Snares Island Fernbird in the Snares and Antipodes and Reischek's Parakeets in the Antipodes. Mammalian highlights included aggressive New Zealand Sea-Lions in the Auckland Islands and on Campbell Island, a single Subantarctic Fur-Seal in the Antipodes, fighting male Southern Elephant Seals in Macquarie and several cetaceans including Great Spermin Whales, Long-finned Pilot Whales, a small pod of Killer Whales and several Dusky Dolphins. We were lucky with the weather this year, with the seas being fairly calm, for Southern Ocean standards that is, during most of the voyage, although we did get a taste of the 'roaring forties' and 'furious fifties' during our journey to Macquarie. The tour official started in the late afternoon of the 14th of November, when people from all over the world gathered at the Kelvin Hotel in Invercargill, all very excited with our forthcoming adventure on the Southern Ocean. At dinner we met expedition leader Rodney Russ, who outlined the programme for the next day, and then we all went to bed. Before leaving Invercargill the next day, we paid a visit to Southland Museum in the morning where there was excellent exhibit on the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand, and we were also treated to great views and some natural history talk on the Tuataras - a prehistoric reptile endemic to a few New Zealand offshore islands -, that are captively bred in a special part of the museum. After an early lunch we then drove to Bluff Harbour to clear customs and with eager excitement boarded the Spirit of Enderby. After settling in our cabins and wandering around the ship, looking for the best viewing spots, we had our obligate first briefing in the lecture room and a lifeboat drill. We departed at 4 pm, crossed the Foveaux Strait that separates South Island from Stewart Island, and sailed past the eastern side of Stewart I. Despite the overcast weather, most of us spent the whole afternoon in the upper deck, watching our first of the many tubenoses we would see in the following

days: Gibson's, Southern Royal, White-capped and Salvin's Albatrosses, Sooty and Buller's Shearwaters, White-chinned and Cape Petrels, Northern Giant Petrels, Fairy and Broad-billed Prions, large numbers of the beautiful Mottled, as well as a few Cook's Petrels and Bronze (Stewart I) and Spotted Shags.



Cook's (left) and striking Mottled Petrels (right) were already seen on the first afternoon at sea. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

We arrived in the Snares, renown for their huge breeding colonies of seabirds, notably Sooty Shearwaters, in the early hours of the next day and drifted off South Bay as Captain Dmitry and Rodney assessed whether we could take the planned Zodiac cruise. Winds were pretty strong but the swell wasn't that bad, so we went ahead with the planned trip in five Zodiacs. We made our way between the main island and Broughton Island to Hoho Bay where we found ourselves in a very sheltered little inlet, where good numbers of the endemic Snares Penguins breed. The Snares are a strict nature reserve, and tourists are not allowed to land, but nevertheless we managed to approach closely to the penguins and got great views of them. Snares Island Fernbirds and Tomtits of the all-dark endemic race were also in the area. After an hour or so we returned to the ship and headed further South towards the Auckland Islands, enjoying some good seawatching, while others listened to an introduction to the Auckland Islands from Rodney. Amongst the tubenoses seen on the way South we recorded our first Northern Royal, Campbell and Buller's Albatrosses as well as good numbers of Southern Royal, White-capped and Salvin's Albatrosses, lots of Cape Petrels, 4 species of prions: Fairy, Fulmar, Antarctic and Broad-billed and our first Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm Petrels.



Snares Penguins (left) gave excellent views, while Black-bellied Storm Petrels (right) were commonly seen during the cruise. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Dawn greeted us off Port Ross, on Enderby Island. The ship had arrived there after mid night and dropped anchor in a sheltered harbour, so we enjoyed a much-needed restful sleep in the calm waters. Two Zodiacs were launched after the morning briefing, gear cleaning and lunch packing, to shuttle the group ashore. Our full day on lovely Enderby Island was a real delight. After landing at Sandy Bay, getting past some inquisitive New Zealand Sea-Lion bulls, (never run when they attempt to charge against you!), we assembled on the beach for the boardwalk walk across the island. A very obliging New Zealand Falcon perched in a tree was a welcome find, and after taking some photos we made our way up through the Rata forest, with its ancient, moss-covered gnarled trees, seeing a nesting Yellow-eyed Penguin right by the side of the boardwalk, onto the open grasslands in the interior of the island, where several scattered big white blobs proved to be nesting Southern Royal Albatrosses. At the end of the boardwalk, we did a major search for the rodent-like Subantarctic Snipe and ended up having very good views of several individual creeping about in the grass, along with many Double-banded Plovers and New Zealand Pipits. Afterwards we went to a nearby cliff-face, where we were treated to the wonderful displays of several Light-mantled Albatrosses, surely the most elegant member of this amazing family. Then, some decided to go on a short walk while others opted for the longer walk all around the eastern shore of the island, with highlights being great looks at several endemic Auckland Teals, close up views of Yellow-eyed Penguins, more Subantarctic Snipes, a colony of Auckland Shags, Red-crowned Parakeets, Tui and Bellbird. In the late afternoon we all returned to the ship and had a sumptuous dinner in the calm seas of the bay. It had been a great day by all means.



A New Zealand Sea-Lion pup with our ship, the "Spirit of Enderby", in the back. Enderby Island, the Aucklands. (Heritage Expeditions)



Displaying Light-mantled Albatrosses put on a great show on Enderby. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

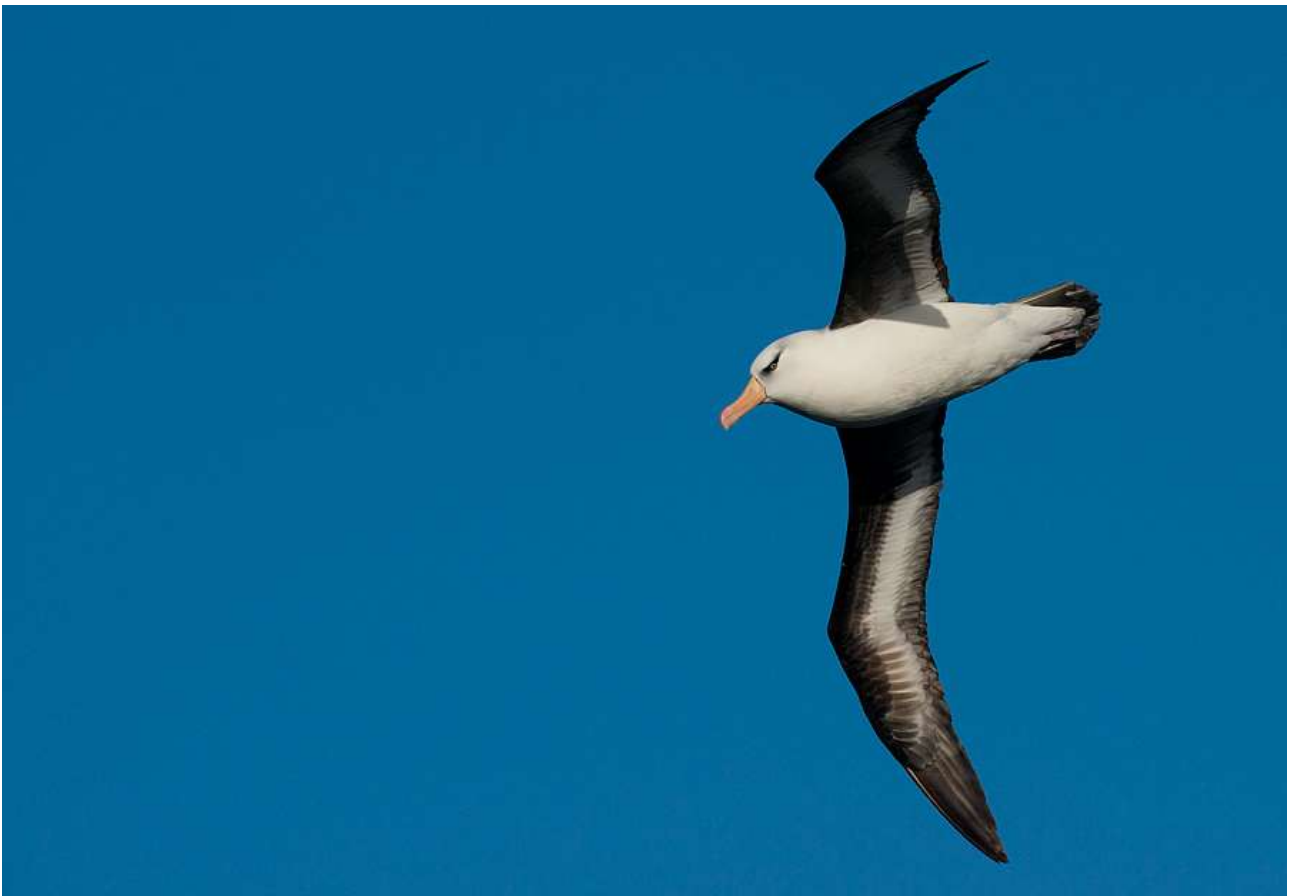


Several cryptic Subantarctic Snipes showed well on Enderby, as did quite a few Auckland Teals. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

After a good nights sleep, rain and low cloud accompanied our entry into Carnley Harbour. Given the weather, we decided that the climb up to see the White-capped Albatross colony on South West Cape would certainly not be worth the effort, so instead Rodney decided to make a brief landing near the place of a famous wreck, to look, successfully, for Yellow-crowned Parakeets in the surrounding mossy Rata forest. After having lunch we started to cruise towards the distant Macquarie Island. The weather was great, the sun was shining and there were seabirds everywhere! The afternoon seawatch gave us Gibson's, Southern Royal, Campbell, White-capped, Light-mantled and our first juvenile Grey-headed Albatrosses, a single Short-tailed Shearwater, several Subantarctic Little Shearwaters, Antarctic Prions, three exquisite Blue Petrels, both Black-bellied and Grey-backed Storm Petrels and small numbers of Mottled Petrels.



Structural differences between Southern Royal (immature, left) and Gibson's (Antipodean) Albatrosses (right) are obvious on this side-by-side shot. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Campbell Albatross showing its distinctive yellow iris and extensive amount of black on the inner underwing. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

The seas were pretty rough on the journey south towards Macquarie Island – the single Australian island in our itinerary-, with many preferring the comfort of their bunks to the windy decks, although some of us spent a considerable amount of time seawatching up in the bridge. Due to 10-metre wave seas and 40 knot winds the ship rolled from side to side, reaching up to 40 degrees, so having lunch and dinner were no easy tasks! Avian highlights included two Snowy (Wandering), and six Grey-headed Albatrosses, three Subantarctic Little Shearwaters and good numbers of Black-bellied Storm Petrels, including birds with almost no black belly stripes.



Great Albatrosses (such as this Gibson's) flew effortlessly in 40+ knot winds. They are truly wind masters! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Subadult Grey-headed Albatross (left) and Antarctic Prion (right). (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

We came to anchor after midnight off Buckles Bay, the site of the ANARE (Australian National Antarctic

Research Expeditions) base in Macquarie Island. Rodney went ashore and picked up three local rangers of the station, and then we cruised south to Sandy Bay - the site of large colonies of King and Royal Penguins. We did two different landings at this most memorable place – no wonder why Macquarie is often called Galapagos of the Southern Ocean- and spent almost all day with the Royal and King Penguins. As we went ashore and threaded our way through massive Southern Elephant Seals there were little groups of Royal Penguins - one of the stars of Macquarie, which hosts the entire world population of this species - loafing about on the beach or waddling up a narrow trail to their colony on the hillside above us. There were also plenty of charismatic King Penguins walking around, which made for great photo opportunities in the sunny and relatively warm weather. Just sitting on the beach and being inspected by these fascinating and funny creatures was a truly incredible and unforgettable experience. And while scanning a group of Royal Penguins in the beach we came across a vagrant Chinstrap Penguin, one of the first records of this species in this part of the globe, and a very welcome tick for the Aussies on board! We were also met by some of the hunters who patrol the island with their dogs looking for any remaining rabbits, rats and mice, and it was great to listen to their experiences of living in such a remote and challenging place. Then we walked across to the edge of a King Penguin colony where there were thousands of adults together with a few large, chocolate-coloured chicks, looking like cute fluffballs. It was difficult move away from the penguins, but there were other interesting birds to be seen here, including a few endemic Macquarie Island Shags, a number of Southern Giant Petrels and several Subantarctic Brown Skuas. Unfortunately it then started to snow and we decided to head back to the ship. As soon as the last Zodiac made its way back to the vessel, a small pod of 6 “B-type” Killer Whales (Orcas) was spotted, with one large male with its huge dorsal fin clearly visible above the waves. In the late afternoon we saw our first Black-browed Albatrosses and Soft-plumaged Petrels of the trip, flying around the ship, as well as 2 Blue Petrels. It had been a wonderful day, full of memories which will surely last in our minds forever.



Typical Macquarie view: hundreds of unconcerned penguins doing their thing (here, Royal and King) and plenty of huge elephant seals, with some tour participants on the shore. An unforgettable experience! (Heritage Expeditions)



A group of Royal Penguins coming ashore. Their landings were not always smooth though.... (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



A vagrant Chinstrap Penguin was a very unexpected find at Macquarie. Close-up of a gorgeous King Penguin. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

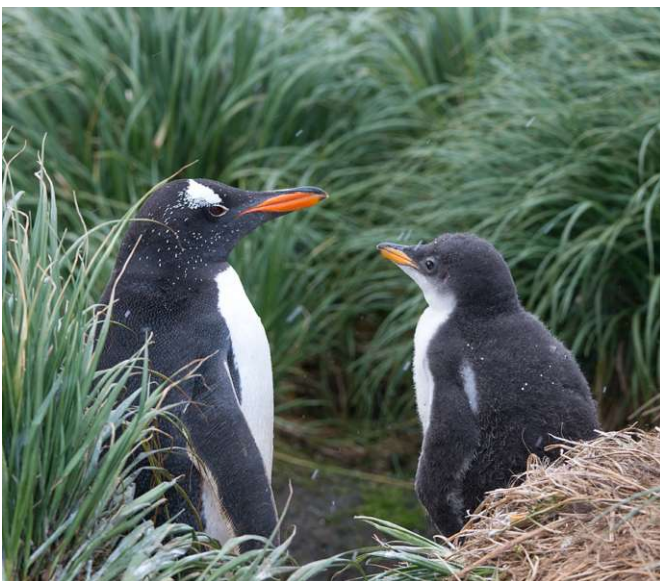
Snow had covered the island overnight, so we admired the glistening coastline as we made our way south to view the huge King Penguin colony on the southern tip of the island. Around half a million birds gather here, making it the third largest colony in the world. Sea conditions were not good enough for a Zodiac cruise so we saw what we could from the ship and returned north to anchor off Buckles Bay. There we went ashore under sunny skies and were split into 5 groups to tour the Australian Base and the surrounding area in the company of base staff. Just near the landing site we enjoyed great views of nesting Gentoo Penguins. The beach on the western side of the small isthmus was a wild and windy place, with Southern Elephant Seals laying everywhere, while striking white-morph Southern Giant Petrels patrolled the area. Small numbers of introduced Lesser Redpolls were also seen here. We then went inside the station for a much-appreciated warm coffee, and got to talk for a while with some of the station members. All too soon it was time to transfer back to the ship, with Zodiacs pausing at a rocky outcrop on the ride back to see some Southern Rockhopper Penguins. Once in the ship we saw another pod of Killer Whales as well as a Southern Fulmar, our first one of the trip. After a late lunch we said farewell to this wonderful island, turning north-east, and set off on the next leg of our journey to Campbell Island, over 36 hours away. The sea was a bit rough but the visibility was very good and the seawatching was quite productive. During the course of the afternoon, we recorded a wide selection of tubenoses including 13 Southern Fulmars, record numbers of Blue Petrels, with at least 30 noted, 40 Short-tailed Shearwater plus our first White-headed Petrels and Wilson's Storm Petrels.



The morning views of Macquarie Island covered by snow were really breathtaking. And the swarm of specks in the lower part of the picture are half a million King Penguins! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



A view of the ANARE base. Check those turquoise-colored waters, just like in the Caribbean, but a bit colder...! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Gentoo Penguin with a chick (left) and a stunning male Killer Whale. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

The next day was another full day at sea, with good numbers of tubenoses recorded from dawn to dusk. We had many Southern Royal, a few Gibson's, at least 50 Light-mantled, good numbers of Campbell and up to twelve Grey-headed Albatrosses, including some nice adults. Also a few Subantarctic Little Shearwaters, Common Diving Petrels, Southern Fulmars, Mottled, White-headed and Soft-plumaged Petrels, Grey-backed and Black-bellied Storm Petrels and three nice adult Arctic Terns very close to the ship were seen. The weather was fine and we were all eagerly awaiting our arrival at the Campbell Islands, which was estimated to happen during the night.



We had superb views of Southern Fulmar (above) during the cruise. White-headed Petrel (below, left) and Blue Petrel (below, right), showing its distinctive white tail-tip performed well too. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



By the time we awoke the following day we were already anchored in Perseverance Harbour, in Campbell I. After the usual briefing, and given the various possible plans for the day, we decided to split into three groups. One group enjoyed a day-long walk which included skirting Col Peak to Windless Cove and returning to Camp Cove. They had a successful day, seeing good numbers of breeding Southern Royal Albatrosses, several flightless Campbell Teals and even a nesting Campbell Island (Subantarctic) Snipe right next to the track. Another smaller group set off to walk along the foot of Mt Honey on a hunt for the Campbell Island Snipe. The difficult walk was worth it as we returned with great photographs of this elusive species. The existence of the Campbell Island Snipe (still considered a subspecies of Subantarctic Snipe, although it will surely get full specific status in the near future) was unknown until 1997 when, during a search for the endangered Campbell Teal, there was the chance discovery of a small population on an almost inaccessible rock, Jacquemart Island. Thus there is not much information about this snipe and it remains one of the least known birds in the world. By 2001 the rats on Campbell Island had been eradicated (the largest eradication of rats as a conservation effort in the world) and it was hoped that the snipe would naturally return to their original home. And luckily that's what happened: a survey team in 2006 found several snipes on Campbell Island. Now, the snipe are naturally repopulating the pest-free island and it seems their numbers are increasing year after year. The remainder of the group went for a Zodiac cruise. They made a landing at Camp Cove, where the 'loneliest tree in the world' (according to the Guinness Book of Records) sits guarded by New Zealand Sea-Lions, while along the coastline Campbell Teals were seen. Luckily, all three groups enjoyed great views of this mega rare duck, as well as several Campbell Shags. Campbell Teal was once found freely on Campbell Island, but was driven to extinction there by the introduction of Norway Rats, and was for many years presumed extinct. Then, in 1975, big news hit the birding community, as a female was rediscovered on a small islet near Campbell called Dent Island, by Rodney Russ, our expedition leader, and Christopher Robertson. The population was so small that a single event could have driven it to complete extinction so to prevent this from happening, the birds were taken into captivity by the NZ Department of Conservation and were also put on the list of critically endangered species. Captive breeding was initially very difficult to achieve, but in the end, after a lot of effort, it proved successful. Then, after a major eradication operation in 2001 that removed rats from the island, a number of birds were re-located back to Campbell Island. Fortunately, the birds seem to be doing well and several hundred free-ranging teals now occur on Campbell Island. After lunch we went back to the island to walk up the boardwalk. Two New Zealand Sea-Lions were encountered very high up on the walkway and after some persuasion the groups made it safely past these growling creatures. The major highlight up there was definitely the time spent amongst the largest breeding colony of Southern Royal Albatross in the whole world. The experience of being up close with these huge wind masters, with their 3.5 metre wings, just a few feet from us and totally unconcerned by our presence was absolutely mind blowing. In the late afternoon, while waiting for the last Zodiac, some of us had the privilege of being approached by a Campbell Teal. The bird actually walked right up to me and nibbled at my fingers, which was quite an experience! A truly memorable encounter with one of the world's rarest ducks! After dinner we left the Campbell Islands and started the journey towards the Antipodes.



Antarctic Tern (left) and the very rare Campbell Island Snipe. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Having a huge Southern Royal Albatross just a few feet from you is really an incomparable experience. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



The flightless Campbell Teal, one of the world's rarest ducks. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

The following day was rather uneventful. Some attended the various lectures given while others spent most of the day seawatching. The seas were pretty calm although the continuous drizzle and overcast day wasn't good for photography. Nevertheless, we tallied 22 tubenose species. Good numbers of albatrosses, of 7 species, were constantly in view, while Subantarctic Little Shearwaters, Fairy Prions, up to 50 Mottled, 60 White-headed and few Soft-plumaged Petrels and three species of Storm Petrels were also logged.



Light-mantled Albatrosses are surely the most elegant members of this amazing family. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Soft-plumaged Petrel (left) and tiny Grey-backed Storm Petrel (right). (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

When we awoke we still had some way to go until our arrival off the Antipodes, and before reaching the islands we enjoyed great views of up to 10 Antipodean Albatrosses and a few Grey Petrels, amongst others. We came to anchor in Anchorage Bay in the Antipodes after our arrival at around midday. After lunch it was time to venture out under sunny skies in the Zodiacs for a closer look at these rocky outposts where we were able to enjoy excellent views of Erect-crested – endemic to the Antipodes and the Bounties-, and Southern Rockhopper Penguins. We were very lucky with the two endemic parakeets, and before long all Birdquesters got excellent views of both Antipodes and Reischek's Parakeets. During the journey south from Anchorage Bay to Leeward Island and back we also saw numerous New Zealand Fur Seals, a few Southern Elephant Seal weaners and a lone Subantarctic Fur Seal surveying us from the rocks. We spent a wonderful two hours exploring caves and inlets along the rocky coastline of these seldom visited islands. The ship stayed at anchor until after dinner, when we set out to cover the 70 miles to the Bounty Islands.



Tour members on the Zodiacs about to explore the shores of the Antipodes, where the rare Antipodes Parakeet and the endemic Erect-crested Penguin showed very well. (Heritage Expeditions, above, and Dani Lopez-Velasco, below)



We reached the Bounty Islands, a mere collection of 20 small bare rocks fully covered with breeding sea-birds and fur seals, in the middle of the vast southern ocean, early in the morning. The swell was too large to Zodiac cruise the islets, so instead our ship made three close passes of the islands, which we could see, were teeming with birdlife. Birds seen here included many Fulmar Prions, which unusually for a prion they visit their cliff nesting sites by day, and we had great views of them. Salvin's Albatrosses, of which over 30,000 pairs are estimated to breed here, were everywhere, and we also enjoyed excellent views of the endemic Bounty Shag, one of the world's rarest shag with some 500-600 pairs. We rounded off our short visit to the Bounty Islands with a session of 'chumming' as we moved slowly away from the islands. Within minutes, and thanks to Adam and the rotten fish he was throwing off the bow, we had hundreds of Salvin's Albatrosses squabbling in our wake, only a few feet away. In the afternoon we continued our cruise towards the Chatham Islands. We enjoyed excellent sailing conditions in the bright sunshine, and saw a bunch of good birds. Amongst the 21 species of tubenoses seen were good numbers of Northern Royal Albatrosses, a couple of interesting looking Little-type Shearwaters (quite different to the expected Subantarctic (*elegans*) Little that are supposed to occur here, showing almost entirely white faces and thus resembling other Little Shearwater forms), 5 Grey-faced Petrels and our first White-faced Storm Petrels.



The Bounties are covered by masses of seabirds. All those dots in the sky are Salvin's Albatrosses! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Bounty Shag (left), possibly the world's rarest shag, and Fulmar Prion (right), showing its distinctive bill. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Close-up of an adult Salvin's Albatross in the early morning light. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Next day was supposed to be “Taiko” – the local name of the legendary Magenta Petrel- day, as on earlier trips this stretch of sea had produced practically all ‘at sea’ records (possibly less than 10 in total!) of this petrel. The first hours of this lovely, sunny day were promising, and pretty much every birder on the ship spent the whole morning up in the “monkeydeck” and scanning. Lots of seabirds were logged, including our first Chatham and Pacific (Buller’s) Albatrosses, while a distant trawler with a thick cloud of seabirds following it, stretching for several miles – totalling quite a few thousand birds – was quite a sight, but unfortunately no Taikos were seen. We then started chumming both with fish scraps and fish oil, but even though large numbers of tubenoses were attracted, including 9 species of albatrosses and several *Pterodroma* petrels, our main target, Magenta Petrel was again a definite no show. Apart from the seabirds, we had good views of a Great Sperm Whale, which was a nice addition to our mammal list. By mid morning, Rodney called us all to a briefing to discuss our activities in the Chathams. He announced that the privately funded Taiko Trust had offered to take people for a close-up viewing of a Magenta Petrel at their Sweetwater property in exchange for a donation. Four people, including 2 Birdquesters, signed up for this special experience to see one of the world’s rarest seabirds. When the first islands of the Chathams appeared on the distant horizon, we knew that we had failed in a big way as our chances for the Taiko had almost gone. By early evening we had arrived at Pyramid Rock, the southernmost of the Chatham Islands and only breeding site for the entire world population of Chatham Albatrosses. We slowly circled the rock and enjoyed wonderful views of thousands of albatrosses sitting on their nests, circling over the top of the island and squabbling for food only feet away off the stern of the ship. A truly magical experience. Later we moved the short distance to South East Island. Rodney had checked the Chatham’s weather forecast and decided that since a strong Easterly front was coming we should take the opportunity today to Zodiac cruise along the lee of South East Island before wind and swell made it impossible. We set off after a late lunch, and although conditions were not ideal, as Rodney said it was “now or never”. It was certainly the right decision (as we would all realize next day) and we managed to see numerous Pitt Shags sitting along rocky ledges, while several handsome and extremely rare Shore Dotterels gave good views, although no Chatham Oystercatchers could be located. A pair of Blue Penguins trying to hide from us in a shallow cavity was well photographed, and a single Swamp (Australasian) Harrier was also recorded, but unfortunately a more than

likely Black Robin –recently introduced in SE Island- was seen too briefly to be ticked off. After a couple of very enjoyable hours cruising around the island under sunny skies, we went back aboard and headed for Waitangi, sailing past Pitt Island and seawatching on the journey. Our only Chatham Shags were seen on this stretch of sea, with several birds flying around the ship, and four *Pterodroma* species, including Cook’s Petrel, were logged, although again no Taiko was seen. Our chances of seeing this mega bird at sea had almost vanished, but we still hadn’t lost all hope.



Up to 9 species of albatrosses (below) came to the chumming session near the Chathams, including the highly sought-after Chatham (above), with its banana-like bill and bright-orange gape. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)





The mighty "Pyramid Rock", (above), where the entire world's population of Chatham Albatross breeds. Shore Dotterel (below, left) and Little (Blue) Penguin (below, right), were seen very well on our Zodiac Cruise along South East Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



After breakfast we attended a short briefing from Rodney, packed our lunches and were ferried ashore for a day on the main island. The group was delighted by the timely appearance of a Chatham Oystercatcher, which obligingly waited near the pier where we landed. This was our last chance to see this endangered species, so we were really pleased. School buses then transferred us to the Tuku reserve, owned by Bruce and Liz Tuanu. This private reserve is a real oasis of indigenous bushes and trees among the endless pasturelands and patches of planted coniferous forests which cover nearly the whole island. Here the group was again split to those who wanted to do a longer walk and those who opted for the more leisurely approach. Target birds in this area included two Chatham Island endemics, the pigeon and the warbler, and we had excellent views of both of them. In addition we also recorded New Zealand Fantail, Red-crowned

Parakeet, Shining Bronze Cuckoo, Tui and Wekas. Four of the group took the opportunity to be taken inside the predator-proof fence at Springwater to see a Magenta Petrel. They were shown a non-breeding individual on its burrow, and they declared it a magnificent experience well worth the donation to the protection programme. The story of Magenta Petrel is well worth commenting. The first specimen of Magenta Petrel was collected from His Italian Majesty's ship *Magenta* on 1867 in the South Pacific Ocean, midway between New Zealand and South America. It wasn't seen again until its amazing rediscovery in 1978 in the south-west corner of Chatham Island, New Zealand, 111 years after it was first collected at sea! In 1994, only four breeding pairs were known, although it was suspected that others remained undetected, and that the population was still declining at this time. By 2006, there were an estimated 25 breeding pairs. Between 2007 and 2011, a total of 59 chicks were successfully moved from the Tuku Nature Reserve in the south of Chatham Island to the nearby Sweetwater Conservation Covenant, where they all successfully fledged. Extensive conservation efforts seemed to be working, however, in 2012 only 12 occupied breeding burrows were known, and only 9 had been found by the time we were there. The total population is estimated at around 150 individuals, at most, including immatures, sadly making this petrel one of the rarest and more endangered birds in the world. Its range at sea is known to extend across the entire South Pacific Ocean from the Tasman Sea to South America, based on recent tracking results using geolocators, while during the breeding season, birds feed mainly south and south-east of the Chatham Islands. So with so few birds left, and with such a huge dispersal area in the entire Pacific Ocean, it certainly felt as finding a needle in a haystack... After a nice morning walking in the forest, we returned to the township and enjoyed some free time in the large and popular pub, thanks to the now heavy and persistent rain. Rodney announced that he had heard from the Captain that conditions in the bay were not good for retrieving everyone from Zodiacs so he had decided to move the ship to another anchorage further around the island. The trusty school buses having returned from their primary task of returning children home from school would transfer us by road to the new location. Unfortunately when the ship arrived at this new point it was discovered that conditions there were even worse, so the ship returned to the original anchorage. However the only safe way to board the Zodiacs was off the beach, meaning we would all get very wet. We boarded the buses again and headed for the beach, which by this time was a very wet and windswept place to be... It was a wild and wet ride and everyone got soaked but hot showers and drinks cheered us on our return. Once everyone was back aboard, Rodney announced that there was no point in us staying in the Chathams as the weather was only going to deteriorate further and it would be impossible to even attempt a Zodiac cruise along Little Mangere Island, so we would set a course for Dunedin that night after dinner, cutting our time short by half a day. We had had excellent weather until this day, but by now the weather had severely deteriorated. We would now sail along the main channel, timely passing in the late afternoon in front of the valley where the last Taikos breed. This meant the following two hours would be our very last chance for seeing it, so a few of us nervously assembled up in the bridge. Gale force (40+ knot) winds, rain, mist and poor visibility didn't help at all, and the truth was that by then we had pretty much lost any hope that was left of seeing this almost mythical bird. But then, the miracle happened... At 19:30 a stunning Magenta Petrel was spotted flying a couple hundred metres from the ship. Chaos, screaming and cursing then took place, and all who were up in the bridge got to see it well. After getting some good looks at the bird, which was flying next to a Sooty Shearwater, I was lucky enough to snap a few record shots – some of the first at-sea pics of this bird-. Given the terrible conditions I was more than pleased to see the bird could be identified, although they were far worse than János's 2009 photos of a very close individual. As soon as the bird was spotted general alarm was immediately given through the ship's PA system and in no time the bridge was full of people, who were already dining. By then the bird was a bit distant, but quite a few managed to get tickable views. Wow, what a moment!! And, amazingly, the show was far from over... After some time, it was clear that the bird wasn't coming back, so most people decided to go down for a well-deserved dinner. However, a few of us decided to skip dinner, just in case, and it proved to be the right decision. Unbelievably, half an hour later, I spotted a *Pterodroma* petrel approaching the ship... I couldn't believe my eyes... It was a Chatham Petrel! I started yelling, and luckily everybody who was up in the bridge saw it. The bird was very close and flew past right in front of the stern, so the diagnostic and really striking underwing was seen very well. Amazing! A Birdquest lifer (the claimed 2009 bird wasn't seen by our Birdquest leader) and one of the very first at sea sightings of this Endangered species. Within an hour we had seen two "once in a lifetime" birds. Persistence definitely pays off! It soon got dark and with big smiles on our faces we went to our cabins. It had been a truly memorable and unforgettable day!



Both the Endangered Chatham Oystercatcher (left) and Chatham Pigeon (right) were seen well on mainland Chatham. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



After pretty much having lost all hope of seeing it, this Critically Endangered Taiko or Magenta Petrel decided to fly alongside the boat on our last afternoon in the Chathams. Conditions were extreme, but most of us managed to get good views, and even some record shots! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Next day was spent at sea, travelling westwards towards mainland New Zealand. The ship was rocking and rolling quite a lot all day so lectures had to be suspended. No less than 26 species of tubenoses were seen, including two all-time new birds for this cruise. First one was a Great Shearwater I was fortunate to find at midday, which stayed around the boat for a while. One of the first records for New Zealand waters! Then, another rarity in form of a Gould's Petrel, which was photographed. With Black-winged, found by Rob Morris, and Westland Petrels, Fluttering and lots of Buller's Shearwaters as supporting cast it was surely a very productive day.



An impressive Southern Royal Albatross (above) in the late afternoon light. This vagrant Great Shearwater (below, left), was a good find west of the Chathams, where good numbers of Buller's Shearwaters were also seen. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Another day of heavy swells meant many hunkered down in their cabins. However, those of us who ventured onto the bridge or upper decks saw quite a few tubenoses, including our first sightings of Hutton's and Flesh-footed Shearwaters, plus a single Southern Fulmar and a Westland Petrel. In the late afternoon Rodney gave a presentation on the Spoon-billed Sandpiper and the work Heritage is doing to support its conservation in the Russian Far East.



Pacific (Buller's) Albatross (above), Short-tailed Shearwater (below, left) and Grey-faced Petrel (below, right). (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



The first of December was our final day at sea on the long trek back to New Zealand's South Island. The journey proved quite uneventful bird-wise. Some spent a last day enjoying the sunshine on deck while others began packing. In the afternoon Adam gave a short summary of the wildlife highlights and commented that we had seen a staggering 48 tubenoses which was a new record for this itinerary. Wow!! The gathering ended with the showing of an excellent slide show Meghan had put together from photos she, Agnes and Samuel had taken during the voyage. Dinner was a buffet extravaganza as our cooks Bruce and Dean pulled

out all the stops to make it a memorable last meal together. Reluctantly we tore ourselves away from the dining rooms to enjoy our last beautiful sunset at sea.



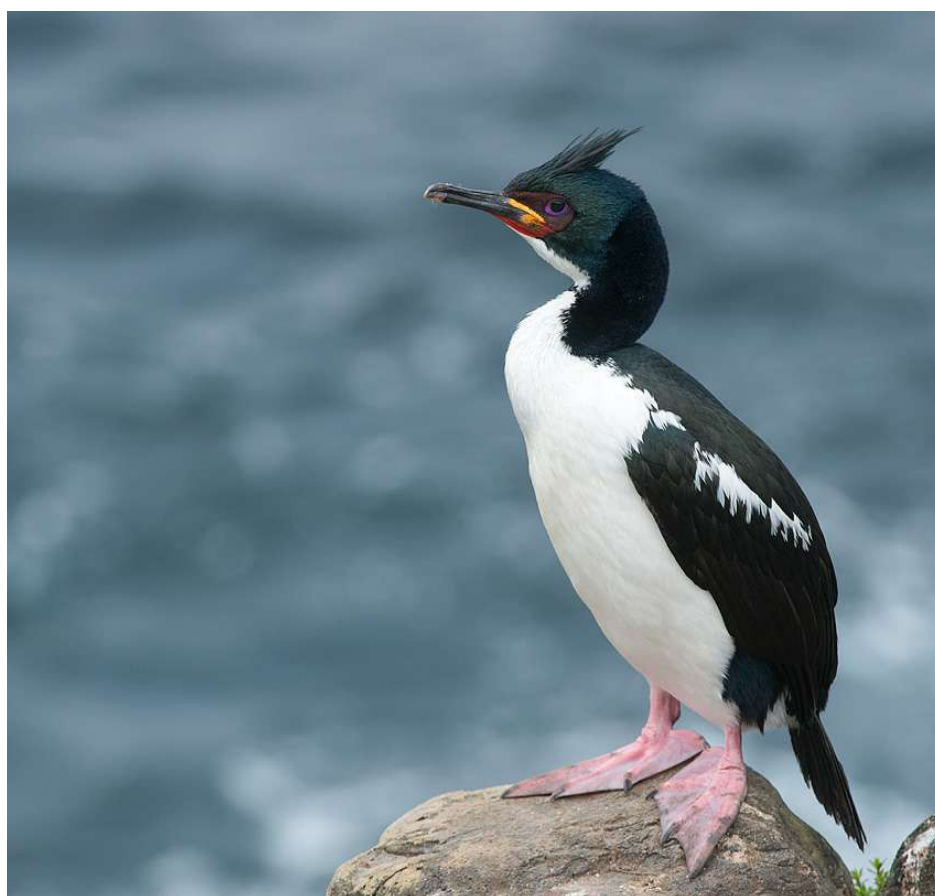
White-chinned Petrel against silvery seas (above). Cape Petrels (below, left) were common throughout the cruise, with both subspecies, capense and australe, recorded. Northern Royal Albatrosses (right) gave good photo opportunities. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



We arrived in the harbour of Dunedin in the early morning. After customs clearance we posed for an official group photo on the wharf and then were transferred to the city or airport, which marked the end of this fantastic tour. We had spent a wonderful time together, made many friendships and seen islands and wildlife many can only dream about. All in all, It had been a truly unforgettable trip, and I would like to thank Rodney, our fantastic expedition leader, Adam – certainly one of the most skilled and experienced seabirders in the world-, Meghan, Samuel, Agnes, Bruce, Dean and all the crew, especially Captain Dmitri, for working so hard during the entire trip, which resulted in a highly enjoyable and successful cruise.



Birdquest tour leader Dani Lopez-Velasco captaining the King Penguin team on Macquarie Island. (Joshua Bergmark)



The endemic Auckland Shag showing its colourful head pattern. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Chatham Albatross walking on the water. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Salvin's Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



Southern Elephant Seal, Subantarctic Brown Skua and King Penguin, with our ship in the background. Macquarie. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



A beautiful Southern Ocean sunset on the Chathams. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Black Swan (introduced) *Cygnus atratus* Seen on the drive to Bluff.

Mallard (introduced) *Anas platyrhynchos* Four seen on Enderby Island.

Pacific Black Duck (Grey D) *Anas superciliosa* Seen on Macquarie.

Auckland Teal ◊ (A Island T) *Anas aucklandica* At least 20 seen very well on Enderby I in the Aucklands.



A confiding Auckland Teal. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Campbell Teal ◊ (C Island T) *Anas nesiotis* Three pairs seen on Campbell Island.



Campbell Teals did show well... This one thought my fingers were tasty! (Dani Lopez-Velasco and Samuel Blanc / Heritage Expeditions)

King Penguin ♦ *Aptenodytes patagonicus* Close views of several hundred birds at Sandy Bay on Macquarie.

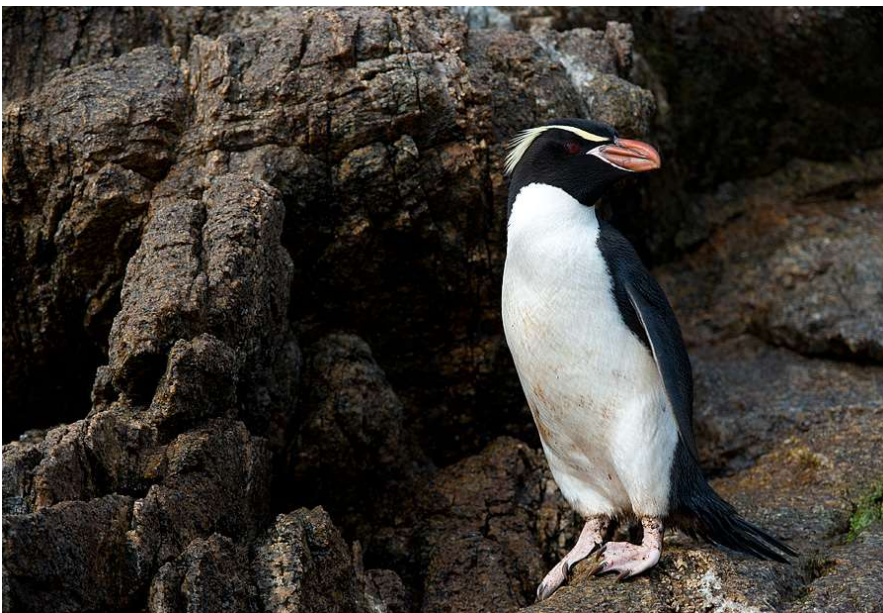


King Penguins. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Chinstrap Penguin ♦ *Pygoscelis antarcticus* One unexpected find at Sandy Bay on Macquarie.

Gentoo Penguin ♦ *Pygoscelis papua* Superb views in the small colony at the ANARE base on Macquarie.

Snares Penguin ♦ (S Crested P) *Eudyptes robustus* Excellent views during our Zodiac cruise in the Snares.



Snares Penguins were seen well on the Snares. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Erect-crested Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes sclateri* Several hundred birds seen in the Antipodes and Bounty Islands.

Southern Rockhopper Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes chrysocome* Seen near the ANARE base and in the Antipodes.

Royal Penguin ♦ *Eudyptes schlegeli* Thousands of birds at the Sandy Bay colony on Macquarie Island.



Close-up of the endemic Royal Penguin. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Yellow-eyed Penguin ♦ *Megadyptes antipodes* 15 birds seen well on Enderby I, with a further 5 on Campbell I.



Yellow-eyed Penguin showing its yellow eye. Enderby Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Little Penguin ♦ (Blue P) *Eudyptula minor* Two on our first afternoon and great views in the Chathams.

Wandering Albatross (Snowy A) *Diomedea (exulans) exulans* Two seen near Macquarie Island. See Note.

Gibson's (Antipodean) Albatross ♦ *Diomedea (antipodensis) gibsoni* Sightings on 10 days, with up to 15 seen.

Antipodean Albatross ♦ *Diomedea antipodensis* Small numbers noted on 6 dates, with up to 10 near the Antipodes.



Adult female Antipodean Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Southern Royal Albatross ♦ *Diomedea epomophora* The commonest of the great albatrosses seen during the trip.



Old adult Southern Royal Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Northern Royal Albatross ♦ *Diomedea sanfordi* Recorded on 6 dates, with up to 15 around the Chathams.



Northern Royal (left) and White-capped (right) Albatrosses. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Light-mantled Albatross ♦ (L-m Sooty A) *Phoebastria palpebrata* Seen on 9 dates, with breeding birds on Enderby.



Light-mantled Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Black-browed Albatross (B-b Mollymawk) *Thalassarche melanophris* Small numbers seen on 3 dates.

Campbell Albatross ♦ (C Mollymawk) *Thalassarche impavida* Recorded on 11 dates.



Campbell Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

White-capped (Shy) Albatross ♦ **(W-c Mollymawk)** *Thalassarche (cauta) steadi* The most common albatross seen.



White-capped Albatross. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Chatham Albatross ♦ (C Island Mollymawk) *Thalassarche eremita* Abundant around the Chathams.



Chatham Albatross approaching the ship. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Salvin's Albatross ♦ (Salvin's Mollymawk) *Thalassarche salvini* Seen on 10 dates, large numbers in the Bounties.



Salvin's Albatross fighting for food. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

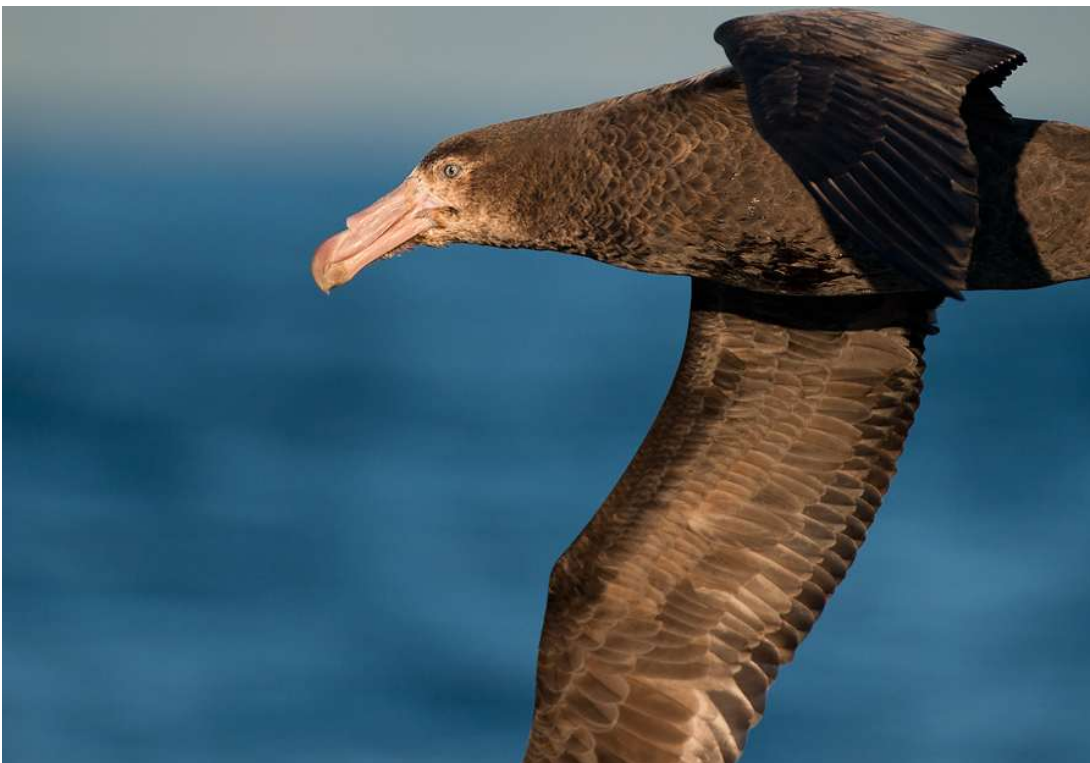
Grey-headed Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche chrysostoma* Small numbers noted on 7 dates.

Buller's Albatross ♦ (Buller's Mollymawk) *Thalassarche bulleri* Small numbers seen on the second day.
Pacific (Buller's) Albatross ♦ *Thalassarche (bulleri) sp.* Fairly common around the Chathams.



Pacific (Buller's) Albatross near the Chathams. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus* Fairly common on Macquarie Island.
Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli* Fairly common throughout the cruise.



Close up of a Northern Giant Petrel. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Southern Fulmar ♦ (Antarctic F) *Fulmarus glacialis* A total of 16 individuals seen.
Cape Petrel (C Pigeon, Pintado P) *Daption capense* Common and widespread.
Blue Petrel ♦ *Halobaena caerulea* A total of 35 birds spread over 3 days in the deep south.



Blue Petrels are gleaming white below. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Broad-billed Prion ♦ *Pachyptila vittata* Recorded on 5 days, with at least 500 on the way to the Chathams.



The bill of a Broad-billed Prion looks quite massive, even at a distance. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Antarctic Prion ♦ *Pachyptila desolata* The common prion in the south.



Antarctic Prions were very common in the south. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Fairy Prion ♦ *Pachyptila turtur* The commonest prion except in the southernmost areas.



Fairy Prions were commonly seen throughout the cruise. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Fulmar Prion ♦ *Pachyptila crassirostris* Small numbers on the second day and then hundreds around the Bounties.



The Bounties are surely the best place in the world to get definite views of Fulmar Prion. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Grey-faced (Great-winged) Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma (macroptera) gouldi* Seen on 4 dates in the last stretch of the tour.

White-headed Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma lessonii* Good numbers seen on 6 dates.



White-headed Petrels are amongst the most beautiful *Pterodroma* petrels in the world. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Magenta Petrel (Taiko) ♦ *Pterodroma magentae* 1 seen off mainland Chatham, and one in the hand at Sweetwater.



A non-breeding Taiko in the hand at the Sweetwater Property in the Chathams, and another (or the same?) at sea off mainland Chatham. (Rob Morris and Dani Lopez-Velasco).

Soft-plumaged Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma mollis* Small numbers seen on 7 dates.



An unprecedented 9 species of *Pterodroma* were seen on this year's cruise. Soft-plumaged Petrel above. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Mottled Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma inexpectata* This striking and fairly common petrel was seen on 10 dates.



Mottled Petrels were abundant at sea. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Black-winged Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma nigripennis* One seen by some on the journey back to mainland NZ.

Gould's Petrel *Pterodroma leucoptera* One seen well and photographed west of the Chathams.

Chatham Petrel ♦ (C Island P) (LO) *Pterodroma axillaris* Excellent views of one as we were leaving the Chathams.

Cook's Petrel ♦ *Pterodroma cookie* Recorded on 4 dates, with a maximum of 25 birds.

Grey Petrel ♦ *Procellaria cinerea* Only seen south of the Antipodes.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis* Fairly common and widespread, except in the far south.

Westland Petrel ♦ *Procellaria westlandica* Two birds seen well and photographed the day before reaching NZ.

Buller's Shearwater ♦ *Puffinus bulleri* 100 birds seen on the last two days of the trip.

Great Shearwater *Puffinus gravis* One seen well and photographed west of the Chathams.

Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus* Fairly common and widespread.

Short-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus tenuirostris* Noted on 4 dates, with up to 40 seen.



Some Short-tailed Shearwaters made very close passes. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Flesh-footed Shearwater *Puffinus carneipes* Three birds seen well on our last day at sea.

Fluttering Shearwater ♦ *Puffinus gavial* At least 2 birds seen and photographed on our last day at sea.

Hutton's Shearwater ♦ *Puffinus huttoni* Around 30 birds seen well on our last day at sea.

Subantarctic Little Shearwater ♦ *Puffinis (assimilis) elegans* Small numbers seen on 7 dates.



Typical Subantarctic Little Shearwater (left). Some interesting birds near the Bounties had very white faces (right). (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* A total of 7 birds recorded throughout the cruise.

Grey-backed Storm Petrel ♦ *Garrodia nereis* Up to 15 seen on 9 dates.

White-faced Storm Petrel ♦ *Pelagodroma marina* Fairly common around the Chathams.

Black-bellied Storm Petrel ♦ *Fregetta tropica* Small to moderate numbers seen on 9 dates.

Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix* Fairly common and widespread.

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae* Seen in the Chathams.

Little Pied Cormorant (Little Shag) *Microcarbo melanoleucos* Two seen in Bluff Harbour.

Spotted Shag ♦ *Phalacrocorax punctatus* Eight seen in Bluff harbor.

Pitt Shag ♦ (P Island S) *Phalacrocorax featherstoni* Excellent views during our Zodiac cruise off South East Island.



Pitt Shag on South East Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Australian Pied Cormorant (Pied C, P Shag) *Phalacrocorax varius* One seen as we were leaving Bluff.

Chatham Shag ♦ (C Island Shag) *Leucocarbo onslowi* Six birds as we cruised north from South East Island.

Campbell Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo campbelli* Around 30 seen very well on Campbell Island.



Campbell Shag. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Auckland Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo colensoi* Great views in the small colonies around Enderby Island.

Bronze Shag ♦ (Stewart Island Shag) *Leucocarbo chalconatus* Several seen in Bluff Harbour.

Bounty Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo ranfurlyi* Around 100 seen in the Bounties.

Macquarie Shag ♦ *Leucocarbo purpurascens* Seen well on Macquarie Island.



Macquarie Shag in flight. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Swamp Harrier (Australasian H) *Circus approximans* Three seen in the Chathams.

Weka ♦ (introduced) *Gallirallus australis* One seen well in the Tuku reserve on the main Chatham I.

Chatham Oystercatcher ♦ *Haematopus chathamensis* One seen very well at Waitangi.

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles* Several seen in the Chathams.

Double-banded Plover ♦ (Banded P, D-b Dotterel) *Charadrius bicinctus* Superb views on Enderby Island.



Double-banded Plover with a chick sheltering from the rain under its mom's feathers. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Shore Dotterel ♦ (S Plover) *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* At least 8 seen well on South East Island.

Subantarctic Snipe ♦ (New Zealand S) *Coenocorypha aucklandica* Great views on Enderby I.



We had mega views of Subantarctic Snipe on Enderby Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Campbell Island (Subantarctic) Snipe ♦ *Coenocorypha (aucklandica) perseverance* Seen well on Campbell.



The very rare Campbell Island Snipe was also seen well on Campbell Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica* A single seen on Enderby Island.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Two seen on Enderby Island.

Red-billed Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus scopulinus* 15 seen in Bluff harbor.

Black-billed Gull ♦ *Chroicocephalus bulleri* Two as we were leaving Bluff.

Kelp Gull (Cape G) *Larus dominicanus* Fairly common on the island groups that we visited.

White-fronted Tern ♦ *Sterna striata* Seen in the Snares and the Chathams.

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea* Four birds seen between Macquarie and Campbell Island.

Antarctic Tern ♦ *Sterna vittata* Recorded on most island groups.

Subantarctic Brown Skua ♦ *Stercorarius antarcticus* Moderate numbers seen throughout the trip.



Subantarctic Brown Skua being chased off by a Kelp Gull. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Chatham Pigeon ♦ (C Island P) *Hemiphaga chathamensis* Six birds seen well in the Tuku reserve.

Rock Dove (introduced) (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* Seen at Invercargill and Dunedin.

Shining Bronze Cuckoo *Chrysococcyx lucidus* One singing bird seen in the Tuku reserve.

New Zealand Falcon ♦ *Falco novaeseelandiae* Great views of a bird on Enderby Island.



This New Zealand Falcon gave the best possible views on Enderby Island. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Antipodes Parakeet ♦ (A Island P) *Cyanoramphus unicolor* Excellent views of 2 birds on Antipodes I.
Yellow-crowned Parakeet ♦ *Cyanoramphus auriceps* A few in the Auckland Islands.
Red-crowned Parakeet ♦ *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae* Seen on Enderby and on the Chathams.



Red-crowned Parakeet on Enderby I. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Reischek's Parakeet ♦ *Cyanoramphus hochstetteri* Ten seen on Antipodes I. See Note.
Tui ♦ *Prothemadera novaeseelandiae* Seen on Enderby and in the Chathams.
New Zealand Bellbird ♦ *Anthornis melanura* Seen in the Auckland Islands.
Chatham Gerygone ♦ (C Island Warbler) *Gerygone albofrontata* A few birds seen well in the Tuku reserve.
Australian Magpie (introduced) *Gymnorhina tibicen* Seen on the drive to Bluff.
New Zealand Fantail ♦ (Fantail) *Rhipidura fuliginosa* Seen in the Tuku reserve.
Tomtit ♦ *Petroica macrocephala* Seen in the Snares – distinctive all-black *dannefaerdi* ssp, and in the Aucklands.
Eurasian Skylark (introduced) *Alauda arvensis* Seen on the main Chatham Island.
Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* Seen around Invercagill and on mainland Chatham.
Snares Fernbird ♦ *Megalurus (punctatus) caudatus* Seen very well in the Snares. See Note.



Several Snares Fernbirds showed well during our Zodiac cruise. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis* Seen on Auckland, Campbell and Chatham Islands.
Common Starling (introduced) *Sturnus vulgaris* Seen at various islands.
Common Blackbird (introduced) *Turdus merula* Small numbers on Auckland, Campbell and the Chathams.
Song Thrush (introduced) *Turdus philomelos* Recorded on the main Chatham Island.

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Common on the mainland and also seen in Waitangi.

Dunnock (introduced) *Prunella modularis* Noted on Campbell Island and in the Chathams.

New Zealand Pipit (Australasian P) *Anthus novaeseelandiae* Three different subspecies recorded. See Note.



New Zealand Pipit on Enderby. (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Common Chaffinch (introduced) *Fringilla coelebs* Small numbers on the main island in the Chathams.

Lesser (Common) Redpoll (introduced) *Acanthis (flammea) cabaret* Seen on Enderby, Campbell and Macquarie.

MAMMALS

New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri* Noted on most island groups visited.

Subantarctic Fur Seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* One seen very well in the Antipodes.

New Zealand Sea-Lion (Hooker's S-L) *Phocarctos hookeri* Our best encounters were on Enderby Island.



Birdquesters Bill and Libby enjoying their lunch together with a New Zealand Sea-Lion on Enderby Island. (Heritage Expeditions)

Southern Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina* Some great encounters on the beaches on Macquarie Island.



Elephant Seal bulls are really massive creatures: compare its size with tour participant Joshua Bergmark! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

Great Sperm Whale *Physeter catodon* Seen before arriving to the Chathams.

Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca* A small pod showed well on Macquarie.

Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* A pod of 10 individuals seen near the Chathams.

Dusky Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obscurus* Five were seen on our last day at sea.

Long-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala melas* A small group seen south of the Snares.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Albatrosses - general taxonomic note

Recent work (especially that by Robertson and Nunn published in *Albatross Biology and Conservation* 1998) has suggested that several distinct forms of albatross are better treated as separate species. Many of the forms are very difficult to identify at sea and this new approach is a matter of ongoing study and debate. In his excellent book, *A Complete Guide to Antarctic Wildlife* (2002, with a new, updated edition in 2008), currently the best and most accessible reference on this subject, Shirihai has cautiously adopted this approach, but has treated the newly recognized (split) species as 'allospecies' grouped into 'superspecies'. Each allospecies has a distinct English name and is identified in its scientific name by a trinomial with the superspecies name preceding it in square brackets. We have followed this approach. In addition the same studies retain the great albatrosses (the Wandering and Royal superspecies) in the genus *Diomedea* but place the smaller albatrosses (or Mollymawks) in the genus *Thalassarche*.

Reischek's Parakeet *Cyanoramphus hochstetteri*

This form, which occurs in the Antipodes, has been split off from Red-crowned Parakeet *C. novaezelandiae*.

Snares Fernbird *Megalurus (punctatus) caudatus*

This form is sometimes lumped in New Zealand Fernbird *M. punctatus*.

New Zealand (Australasian) Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae*

The name Richard's Pipit was often used for this species, but it is now best referred to as New Zealand Pipit to differentiate it from the real Richard's Pipit from Asia, which has been split off as separate species. Several subspecies occur on the island groups visited - *aucklandicus* in the Auckland Islands and Campbell I, *chathamensis* in the Chathams and *steindachneri* in the Antipodes, and some of them might be split off in the future.