

Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code
NZHEBA
Departure



Introduction

A perfect expedition experience for those who love birding and incredible natural sites alike. The Subantarctic Islands are a haven of incredible natural wildlife, with some of the most vibrant and hardy birdlife in the whole world. This trip is not only for bird enthusiasts, lovers of ecology, botany and incredible photography. The Subantarctic Islands are the perfect adventure journey for those seeking a Galapagos-esque and Antarctic holiday close to our shores, in the safety and isolation of the New Zealand Subantarctic.

Itinerary

DAY 1: Arrival and Overnight in
Queenstown

Guests should make their way to the designated hotel where we will spend the first night of the expedition. This evening there will be an informal get-together at the hotel for dinner; an excellent opportunity to meet fellow adventurers on your voyage and some of our expedition team.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 01/12/2027

Duration

17 Days

Restations

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

Bluff to embark your ship. You will have

time to settle into your cabin and familiarise

yourself with the ship; we will also take the

opportunity to conduct a number of safety

briefings. You are invited to join the

expedition team in the Observation Lounge

and up on the Observation Deck as we set

our course to The Snares and our adventure

begins.



DAY 3: The Snares - North East Island

The closest Subantarctic Islands to New

Zealand, they were appropriately called The

Snares as they were once considered a

hazard for sailing ships. Comprising of two

main islands and a group of five islands

called the Western Chain; they are

uninhabited and enjoy the highest

protection as Nature Reserves. It is claimed

by some that these islands are home to

more nesting seabirds than all of the British

Isles together. We plan to arrive in the

morning, and as landings are not permitted,

we will Zodiac cruise along the sheltered

eastern side of the main island if the

weather and sea conditions are suitable. In

the sheltered bays, we should see the

endemic Snares Crested Penguin, Snares

Island Tomtit and Fernbirds. There are

hundreds of thousands of Sooty

Shearwaters nesting on The Snares; the

actual number is much debated. Buller's

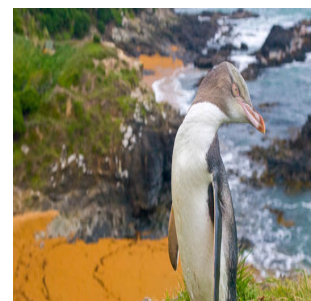
Albatross breed here from early January

onwards. There will be opportunities to view

the forests of large tree daisy *Olearia lyallii*

which forms a canopy over much of the

island group.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration

The Auckland Islands group was formed by two volcanoes which erupted some 10-25 million years ago. They have subsequently been eroded and dissected by glaciation creating the archipelago as we know it today. Enderby Island is one of the most beautiful islands in this group and is named after the same distinguished shipping family as one of our own vessels. This northern most island in the archipelago is an outstanding wildlife and birding location and is relatively easy to land on and walk around. The island was cleared of all introduced animals (pests) in 1994 and both birds and the vegetation, especially the herbaceous plants, are recovering both in numbers and diversity. Our plan is to land at Sandy Bay, one of three breeding areas in the Auckland Islands for the Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion, a rare member of the seal family. Beachmaster bulls gather on the beach, defending their harems from younger (ambitious) males, to mate with the cows shortly after they have given birth to a single pup. Hooker's or New Zealand Sea Lion numbers are in a slow decline, for reasons which are not obvious but most probably connected with a nearby squid fishery. During our day ashore there will be several options, some longer walks, some shorter walks and time to spend just sitting and enjoying the wildlife. The walking is relatively easy. A boardwalk traverses the island to the dramatic western cliffs, from there we follow the coast and circumnavigate the island. Birds that we are likely to encounter include the following species: Southern Royal Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Auckland Island Shag, Auckland Island Flightless Teal, Auckland Island Banded Dotterel, Auckland Island Tomtit, Bellbird, Pipit, Red-crowned Parakeet, Yellow-eyed Penguin and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross. There is also a very good chance of seeing the Subantarctic Snipe. Other more common species we will see include the Goldfinch, Song Thrush, Blackbird, European Starling, Red-billed Gull and Redpoll. On Derry Castle Reef we will look for migratory waders which could include Bar-tailed Godwit, Turnstone and possibly vagrants.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026, 01/12/2027

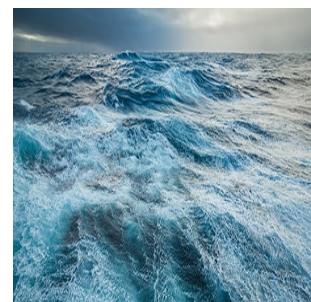
Duration

14 Days At Sea

Locations

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

as the Furious Fifties in the tumultuous Southern Ocean, we will learn more about the flora and fauna as we prepare for our arrival at Macquarie Island. En route there are great birding opportunities which may include the Wandering Albatross, Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, Sooty Shearwater and Little Shearwater. We will endeavour to spot the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion - never an easy task - but we should get some great views. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, Wilson's Storm-Petrel and the Black-bellied Storm-Petrel.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/13/2027 - Day 6 to 7

Duration

The Days at Australian Antarctic Explorer Sir Douglas Mawson once called Macquarie Island "One of the wonders of the world." You are about to discover why as we spend two days exploring this amazing Island. It was one of the first of the Subantarctic Islands to obtain World Heritage Status and that was largely due to its unique geology. It is one of the few places on earth where mid-ocean crustal rocks are exposed at the surface due to the collision of the Australian and Pacific Plates. The island was discovered in 1810 and was soon ravaged by sealers who introduced various animals including rats, mice, cats and rabbits. The native bird population was virtually eliminated and plants destroyed. The Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Service which administered the island recently embarked on a very ambitious eradication program which appears to have been successful. The island is now predator free and both the birds and plants are responding. It is amazing to witness the regeneration and the increase in the number of birds. Macquarie Island is home to four species of penguin, Kings, Royals, Gentoo and Rockhopper. The Royal Penguin occurs nowhere else in the world. During our visit we will land at two sites (subject of course to weather and sea conditions) and you will get a chance to see, observe and photograph all four species, although the Rockhopper is much harder to capture than the others. Macquarie also has a large population of Southern Elephant Seals. Pups are born in October and weaned in November when the breeding adults return to sea. The weaners and sub adults lie around on the beaches. The weaners go to sea sometime in January, running the gauntlet of Orcas or Killer Whales who are waiting offshore. We plan a landing at the Australian Antarctic Research Base at Buckles Bay where you will be able to meet with scientists and base staff. The original base was established in 1947 and the island has been 'manned' since then. It is one of the longest continuously occupied bases in the Subantarctic.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026, 01/12/2027

~~Duration~~ Sea

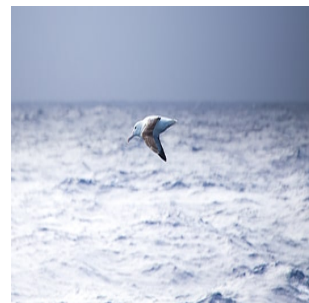
17 Days

~~Locations~~ route to Campbell Island and time

~~Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand~~

Macquarie Island. Look for cetaceans and

albatross, join a lecture or catch up on your photos and journaling.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

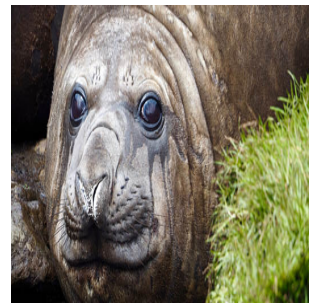
NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration

17 Days
Campbell Island, New Zealand's southernmost Subantarctic territory. Its Subantarctic Islands are the other islands we visit. Discovered in 1810, it was soon occupied by sealers who introduced rats and cats. Farming followed from 1895 to 1934 when it was abandoned. Coastwatchers were stationed on the island during the war and at the end of the war the station was taken over by the New Zealand Metrological service. They maintained a manned weather/ research station there until 1995. In the early 1970s the removal of farm animals commenced and all were eventually removed by 1990. The vegetation recovered quickly and the cats died out naturally. In a very ambitious (and never before attempted on such a large scale) eradication programme the New Zealand Department of Conservation successfully removed the rats. With the island declared predator free, the way was clear to reintroduce the endangered Campbell Island Flightless Teal, which had been rediscovered on an offshore island in 1975. Snipe, which were formerly unknown from the island but were discovered on another offshore island, recolonised the islands themselves. The vegetation which the great English botanist Sir Joseph Hooker described in 1841 as having a "Flora display second to none outside the tropics" is flourishing and is nothing short of spectacular. We will offer a number of options which will enable you to explore the island including an extended walk to Northwest Bay. There will also be an easier walk to the Col Lyall Saddle. All of these options will allow you the opportunity and time to enjoy the Southern Royal Albatross which nest here in large numbers. We also visit areas of the island which contain outstanding examples of the megaherbs for which the island is renowned.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

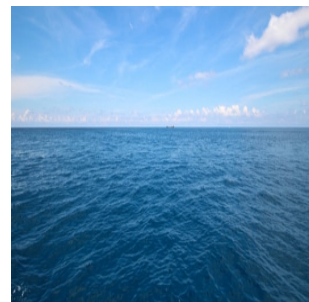
02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration

17 Days
 An 17-day route to the Antipodes, it is a day for pelagic birding. Species commonly seen

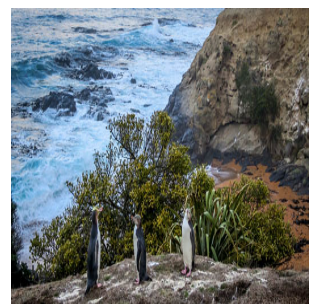
Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand species, Southern Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Lightmantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, the Sooty Shearwater and the Little Shearwater. This region of the Southern Ocean is one of the few places where the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion occur together, providing a good opportunity for comparison. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, Whitechinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-Petrel, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, Black-bellied Storm-Petrel and the Common Diving-Petrel.



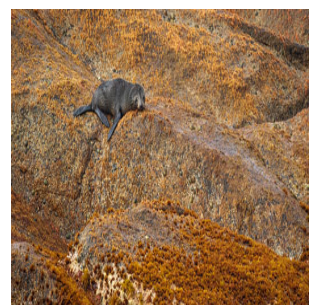
DAY 11: Antipodes Islands

One of the most isolated, least known and rugged of the Subantarctic Islands; landings are not permitted here, so we cruise along the coast looking for the endemic Antipodes Island and Reischek's Parakeet. We may also see the Antipodes subspecies of the New Zealand Pipit, and with half the world population of Erect-crested Penguins here, we should encounter one or two as well as Antarctic Terns and Kelp Gulls.



DAY 12: Bounty Islands

These inhospitable granite islets are home to thousands of Salvin's Albatross, Erect-crested Penguins, Fulmar Prions and the endemic Bounty Island Shag, the world's rarest. At sea we should spot Wandering Albatross species, Northern Royal Albatross, Mottled Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Broad-billed Prion, White-chinned Petrel and Black-bellied Storm-Petrels as well as Wilson's Storm-Petrel.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/11/2026 - 01/12/2027

DAY 13: Pyramid Rock, South East Island

Duration

17 Days

As we continue toward the Chatham Islands, there are excellent opportunities for birding today. In particular, we will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel which has been seen on this leg of the voyage before. In the past we have observed the very rare Chatham Island Taiko in this area. Endemic to the Chatham Islands, the Chatham Island Taiko - also known as the Magenta Petrel - is among New Zealand's most endangered species. It is one of the world's rarest seabirds with a population estimated to number less than 150. This afternoon we will cruise around spectacular Pyramid Rock, a basalt outcrop south of Pitt Island. This is the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. During the afternoon we arrive at South East Island. This has to be one of the world's greatest nature reserves and landings are not permitted. However we should obtain good views of the very rare New Zealand Shore Plover and Chatham Island Oystercatcher from the Zodiacs as we cruise along the coast. We should also see the Pitt Island Shag which nests on the island.



DAY 14: Chatham Island

We continue north towards the Chatham Islands, with similar species accompanying us as yesterday. Towards evening, as we approach the islands, we are closer to the Subantarctic and sub tropical convergence and will see a subtle change in the species composition. Late this afternoon we arrive at the spectacular Pyramid Rock, the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration

17 Days to Bluff we will cross the Chatham

Rocks and rise, relatively shallowly

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

That stretches east from near the South

Island of New Zealand. Nutrient rich waters

from the south mix with warm northern

waters and there is an overlap between

northern pelagic species and birds from

southern latitudes, so we can expect great

pelagic sightings. Species we expect to

encounter include Wandering Albatross,

Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross,

White-capped Albatross and Salvin's

Albatross. Petrel species we should be able

to identify are the Northern Giant Petrel,

Cape Petrel, Westland Black Petrel, White-

chinned Petrel, Great-winged Petrel, Grey-

backed Storm-Petrel, Whitefaced Storm-

Petrel, the Diving Petrel and Cook's Petrel.

Additional birdlife will include species of

shearwater seabirds. These tubenose birds

fly with stiff wings and use a 'shearing'

flight technique to move across wave fronts

with the minimum of active flight.

Photographic opportunities can include

Flesh-footed Shearwater, Buller's

Shearwater, Sooty Shearwater and Little

Shearwater. Small petrels on the horizon

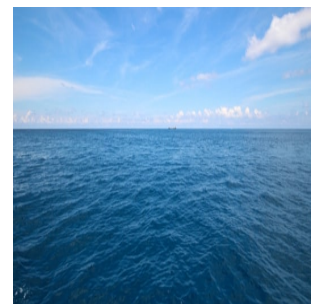
and close by include Fairy Prion and Broad-

billied Prion. We will recap the highlights of

our expedition and enjoy a farewell dinner

tonight as we complete the last few miles of

our journey.



Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration/Queenstown

17 Days

Each morning we will arrive in the Port

of Bluff. After a final breakfast we bid

farewell to our fellow voyagers and take a

complimentary coach transfer to either

Invercargill or Queenstown Airports. In case

of unexpected delays due to weather and/or

port operations we ask you not to book any

onward travel until after midday from

Invercargill and after 3pm from

Queenstown. Note: During our voyage,

circumstances may make it necessary or

desirable to deviate from the proposed

itinerary. This can include poor weather and

opportunities for making unplanned

excursions. Your Expedition Leader will

keep you fully informed. Landings at the

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand are by

permit only as administered by the

Government of New Zealand. No landings

are permitted at The Snares, Antipodes or

Bounties.



Inclusions & Details

Accommodation

Cabin on board ship & Hotel

INCLUSIONS

Pre/post cruise transfers to/from the ship (does not include airport arrival transfer to hotel)*

One night hotel accommodation in Queenstown in a twin share room (incl. dinner/breakfast)

Cabin Accommodation on board vessel

All meals whilst on board; house beer, wine and soft drinks with lunch and dinner

Landing Fees (valued at 500USD per person)

Guiding and lectures by experienced expedition crew

Expeditions by zodiac according to itinerary

Inclusions

EXCLUSIONS

International flights

Airport transfers, taxes and excess baggage charges unless specified

Meals other than those specified in the pre-departure information

Pre or post cruise travel expenses

Any optional activities not mentioned in itinerary

Visa and reciprocity fees (if applicable)

Travel insurance

All items of a personal nature

Laundry and drinks

Customary gratuities for staff and expedition crew

Difficulty Rating

2 (light adventure)

Sub Antarctic Islands - Birding Down Under | Heritage Adventurer

Trip Code

NZHEBA

Departure

02/12/2026 - 01/12/2027

Duration

17 Days

Locations

Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand

Notes



Available on request. Subject to availability. Please contact us for more information.

Prices are based on per person, twin share* (unless otherwise stated for triple/quad cabins)

Prices are correct at time of publishing but are subject to change at any time.

Itinerary is subject to change depending on government regulations, weather and ice

conditions

* Landings at the Subantarctic Islands of New Zealand are by permit only as administered by the Government of New Zealand. No landings are permitted at The Snares.

Price Dependent upon

Departure date, fuel surcharges, cabin category, currency fluctuations, seasonality and availability.

Sustainability