

VOYAGE INFORMATION

Voyage Name	Mawson's Antarctica
Voyage Code	MAW101221G
Dates	10 December 2021 – 04 January 2022
Duration	26 days / 24 nights
Embark	Hobart, Tasmania
Disembark	Hobart, Tasmania
Ship	<i>Greg Mortimer</i>
Optional Activities	Kayaking
Forms Due	10 September 2021

VOYAGE SUMMARY

Follow in the wake of Australia's greatest polar pioneer. Departing Tasmania's glorious south coast, sail to New Zealand's Auckland Islands to encounter sea lion harems and yellow-eyed penguins. On Campbell Island, delight in royal albatross courting amidst megaherb meadows. Sail south into pack ice, skirt the Mertz Glacier Tongue and enjoy the wildlife-rich waters leading to Commonwealth Bay. Ice and katabatic winds allowing, Mawson's Hut transports you back to the Heroic Age, where the ghosts of Sir Douglas's team await. Cruise west along the East Antarctic coastline searching for emperor and Adélie penguins, snow petrels, seals and orcas. Sailing north, drop into Macquarie Island, where vast king penguin rookeries, nesting albatross and elephant seal wallows await.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1	Arrive in Hobart; Welcome Reception & Pre-Embarkation Briefing
Day 2	Final health screening/testing; Embark the <i>Greg Mortimer</i> ; Set sail
Days 3-5	At sea
Days 6-8	Auckland Islands, Campbell Island
Days 9-10	At sea
Days 11-14	Commonwealth Bay
Days 15-17	East Antarctic Coast
Days 18-20	At sea
Days 21-22	Macquarie Island
Days 23-25	At sea
Day 26	Disembark in Hobart

VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Skirt beaches busy with New Zealand sea lion harems, to reach gnarled rata forests where yellow-eyed penguins are found.
- Navigate a maze of pack ice alive with Weddell and leopard seals, Adélie and emperor penguins and hunting orcas to reach Mawson's Hut, Commonwealth Bay (ice and weather permitting).
- Explore an ice-bound coast few have ever seen in an attempt to reach Point Martin's Adélie and chinstrap penguin rookeries.
- Zodiac-cruise off Lusitania Bay, Macquarie Island, welcomed by thousands of bathing king penguins alert for hungry leopard seals.

EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Arrival transfer from airport to hotel on Day 1
- Welcome Reception / Pre-Embarkation Briefing on Day 1
- One night's hotel accommodation with breakfast in Hobart on Day 1
- City tour on Day 2
- Mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID test on Day 2
- Departure transfer from *Greg Mortimer* to airport or hotel on last day
- Onboard accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service
- All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- Captain's Welcome and Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises
- Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team
- Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic (initial consult)
- A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket
- Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage
- Port surcharges, permits and landing fees
- Gratuities for ship crew

EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- International or domestic flights not mentioned in the itinerary
- Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Passport, visa, and vaccination charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Hotels and meals not included in itinerary
- Optional excursions not included in the itinerary
- Optional activity surcharges
- All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, gratuities, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges.

Day 1 Hobart

Having made your way to Hobart, you will be met by a representative of Aurora Expeditions and transferred to our group hotel. Upon arrival, kindly remind hotel check-in staff to provide you with Aurora Expeditions cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number.

That evening, enjoy a light refreshment as you meet your fellow expeditioners at a Welcome Reception and Pre-Embarkation Briefing. Afterwards, there's free time to dine at your leisure (Dinner not included).

Accommodation: Crowne Plaza Hobart Hotel.

Day 2 Hobart

This morning, please ensure your cabin luggage is fitted with cabin tags clearly labelled with your name and cabin number. Please take your cabin luggage down to hotel reception by 10.00 am. Please keep any valuables or personal items with you throughout the day. Enjoy breakfast in the hotel before a short walking tour of Tasmania's Antarctic heritage (approx. 2 hours).

During this time, your luggage will be transferred to the ship for sanitisation and delivery to your cabin. We will then conduct our final, mandatory pre-embarkation health screening and COVID (rapid antigen) testing before you are transferred to the Port of Hobart for embarkation of the *Greg Mortimer* in the late afternoon. Settle into your cabin before attending important safety briefings, and enjoy the thrill of departure as we 'throw the lines' and set sail.

In the evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Captain's Welcome Dinner as we follow in the wake of Sir Douglas Mawson and the *Australasian Antarctic Expedition* of 1911, that also sailed down the Derwent River and into Storm Bay. Keep an eye out for the magnificent views of Cape Raoul's striking dolerite cliffs of Tasman Island.

Days 3-5 At sea

Enjoy exciting days at sea, with entertaining talks on exploration and natural history. Spend time on deck photographing seabirds and keeping an eye out for the rare sight of Campbell, Salvins and white-capped albatross, seen in few other regions.

Days 6-8 Auckland Islands & Campbell Island

First discovered in 1806 by British whaler Abraham Bristow, these remote specks of land in the Southern Ocean are a refuge for thousands of birds and sea lions. Depending on weather and sea conditions, Enderby Island, the most northern in the Auckland Islands, is our first landing. Hop aboard a Zodiac to cruise into Sandy Bay, land near a researcher's hut, and be greeted by raucous New Zealand (Hooker's) sea lions, the world's rarest and most endangered of the five sea lion species. It's breeding season, as 500-kilogram adult males fight for the favour of females, who form harems of up to 25 attended by a single dominant bull. Keep an eye out for newborn pups. Enter a forest fit for hobbits, walking among twisted trunks of southern rata trees. Stretch your legs on a hike across the island's megaherb moors, spotting yellow-eyed penguins, light-mantled sooty albatross and royal albatross with a wingspan of nearly 3.5 metres. Our second day begins with an exciting Zodiac cruise through Victoria Passage, a lively channel separating Adams Island from Auckland Island (Motu Maha), and finishes with explorations of Carnley Harbour, with superb Zodiac cruising, walks through rata forests alive with birdsong and historic sites from early sealers and World War II coastwatchers.

Campbell Island (Motu Ihupuku), New Zealand's most southerly subantarctic island, is the highly eroded remnant of an ancient volcano that rises to 570 metres and cops some rough weather – gusts over 50 knots (96 kph) occur at least 100 days a year. Wind and weather permitting, we plan to Zodiac cruise protected harbours and coves to

photograph waterfalls, yellow-eyed penguins and possibly the reintroduced endemic Campbell Island snipe. At Perseverance Harbour, an opportunity to hike up a boardwalk through flowering megaherb meadows to breeding southern royal albatross allows us to sit quietly and watch as they unfurl their three-metre wingspan, clack their beaks and issue their unforgettable, mournful cries.

Days 9-12 At sea

Marvel at the ULSTEIN X-BOW's ability to smooth our ride as we sail the Southern Ocean, admiring wandering albatross in flight. Cross the Antarctic Convergence, where cold, dense polar waters meet temperate waters, hopefully heralding our first iceberg. Entering the ethereal world of pack ice, rejoice at how quickly the seas calm. Keep a watch for orcas, seals and penguins as we navigate a wonderland few have experienced.

Days 13-14 Commonwealth Bay

Ice and weather permitting, we enter Commonwealth Bay, dubbed the 'Home of the Blizzard' by Mawson. We hope to land at Cape Denison, where the hut was built for his 1911-14 expedition and has withstood katabatic winds since then, thanks to the efforts the Mawson Hut Foundation. If calm enough conditions prevail, we plan to land and walk across to Mawson's Hut. Step inside and immediately feel connected with the era and men of that incredible expedition. With luck we may see Wilson's storm petrels, Weddell seals, Adélie penguins and perhaps some skuas. Since Mawson's day, the South Magnetic Pole has migrated off the land and is now located out to sea. Ice and weather permitting, our Captain will attempt to manoeuvre the *Greg Mortimer* into position over the South Magnetic pole.

Days 15-17 East Antarctic Coast

Heading east, we hope to stop at the rocky toehold of Point Martin on the Antarctic Plateau, usually out of reach of Commonwealth Bay's notorious katabatic winds. Here we may visit the French Base abandoned after a fire in the 1950s, and now home to a lively Adélie penguin colony. On Christmas Day, we continue towards Petrel Island, aptly named for its nesting grounds of snow and Wilson's storm petrels. We hope to walk the island shores and perhaps board our Zodiacs to admire the ice-front of the Astrolabe Glacier. Finally, before heading northwards, we plan to sail past the ice tongue of Mertz Glacier, which floats kilometres out to sea before disgorging icebergs into the Southern Ocean. Just over a decade ago, the massive iceberg designated B09B collided with the ice tongue and knocked 80 percent off its length, leaving a 20 km stub. Nonetheless, this natural barrier continues to attract wildlife, including the larger whale species. Should the opportunity arise, we take a closer look at its crevassed ice cliffs from our Zodiacs.

Days 18-20 At sea

As we put the grandeur of Antarctica behind us, these days at sea can mark a time for reflection, reading or pursuing creative activities. But keep watch outside, as these waters are rich in whale species, from humpback and orca, to the greater whale species, like blue.

Days 21-22 Macquarie Island

Douglas Mawson set up his communication base here in December 1911, and now supports one of the highest concentrations of wildlife in the Southern Ocean. Millions of penguins of four different species – king, rockhopper, gentoo and the endemic royal – breed here. Upon arrival, we hope to Zodiac-cruise Lusitania Bay. The king penguin rookery here is a quarter of a million strong, noisy and spectacular. A welcoming committee will likely porpoise around our Zodiacs, and leopard seals often patrol the waters. Our next days are spent around Sandy Bay, where a boardwalk leads up to a royal penguin rookery teeming with showy birds displaying their golden head feathers. At the shore are stately king penguins and chicks, and above fly black-browed and light-mantled sooty albatross. Fur

and elephant seals hide amongst thick tussocks that have come back to life, thanks to a successful pest-eradication program. Celebrate our final landing at New Year's Eve celebrations on board.

Days 23-25 At sea

Heading north, take time to assimilate the rich experiences of the past few weeks. Organise photo files, tidy up a journal or simply relax before stepping back into the 'unreal' world. After almost a month away, the emerald shores of Tasmania greet you like a warm smile as, like Mawson before us, we make our way into Storm Bay and up the Derwent to Hobart.

Day 26 Hobart

After breakfast, farewell your expedition team and disembark to be transferred to the airport or your hotel accommodation.

Important note: In the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage exploration and adventure offering flexibility in challenging environments. This itinerary is only a guide and is subject to change due to weather, sea state, ice and other conditions beyond our control.