

**BIRDS & MAMMALS OF
ANTARCTICA, SOUTH GEORGIA &
THE FALKLAND ISLANDS**

January 5 – 26, 2009

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA PRE-TRIP

January 3 – 6, 2009

SANTIAGO, CHILE POST-TRIP

January 25 – 27, 2009

Leaders:

**Victor Emanuel
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Special Guest: Lars Jonsson

List compiled by Barry Lyon, April 21, 2009

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TOUR REPORT
ANTARCTICA, SOUTH GEORGIA, AND THE FALKLAND ISLANDS
January 5–26, 2009

By Victor Emanuel

Our January 2009 cruise to Antarctica, South Georgia, and the Falkland Islands was one of the best Antarctic cruises we have ever operated. Those who joined us for the Buenos Aires Pre-trip enjoyed outstanding birding in and around that great city. Highlights from our time there included Black-necked Swans, a Plumbeous Rail, a Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, stunning Scarlet-headed Blackbirds, and a host of other species.

By the evening of January 6th, our entire group had assembled in Ushuaia, Argentina, the southernmost city in the world. The next day we birded nearby Tierra del Fuego National Park, and later the area around the waterfront. In the park we were treated to superb views of a pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers, Great Grebes, Ashy-headed and Upland geese, Thorn-tailed Rayaditos, and a White-throated Treerunner along with other birds of the *Nothofagus* forests. On our way to lunch, a flock of Austral Parakeets flew over our bus and perched nearby affording us wonderful looks. After an authentic Argentine barbecue, we watched a wonderful gaucho dance troop perform. On the way to the ship we stopped at a pond just back from the harbor where we had good looks at Crested Ducks, Red Shovelers, Speckled Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, and Chiloe Wigeon.

Anticipation was high when we boarded the *Clipper Adventurer* and started down the Beagle Channel, headed for the Falkland Islands. En route to the islands, we spent a day at sea where we had our first taste of the marvelous seabirding that this cruise offers. White-chinned and Southern giant-petrels were around the ship almost all the time. We saw our first albatrosses, including Black-Browed and Royal, as well as numbers of other pelagic species.

Our first day in the Falklands was truly amazing. We spent a morning on Saunders Island, where an incredible variety of wildlife flourishes, including colonies of Rockhopper and Magellanic penguins, a Black-browed Albatross colony, numerous Striated Caracaras, King Penguins, Gentoo Penguins, and Magellanic Oystercatchers. There were so many wonderful creatures to look at and the weather was perfect—mild and sunny with almost no wind. This landing provided a perfect beginning to our trip.

In the afternoon we landed on Carcass Island, where we saw many other birds including the Blackish Cinclodes; Black-throated Finch; Ruddy-headed, Upland, and Kelp geese; Blackish Oystercatchers; and Dark-faced Ground-Tyrants. The highlight of the next morning was a pair of Rufous-throated Dotterels near the Stanley airport.

We had two full days at sea traveling from the Falklands to South Georgia. During that crossing we enjoyed some of the best seabirding of the trip. We also heard some fascinating lectures from the expedition staff including several on the history of the region.

Although everyone has heard of Antarctica, many people have never heard of South Georgia, the huge subantarctic island in the far South Atlantic that was discovered in 1775 by Captain Cook. Even people who have heard about South Georgia are not aware how marvelous it is. South Georgia has some of the greatest scenery in the world, with snow-capped rugged peaks running the length of the island. And it teems with an astonishing display of wildlife.

Our four days on South Georgia couldn't have been better. We visited two huge King Penguin colonies, landed on Prion Island to see the Wandering Albatrosses on their nests, had great looks at the South Georgia Pipit, saw thousands of Antarctic fur seals, walked up to a Macaroni Penguin colony, and visited the old whaling station at Grytviken. We spent a marvelous morning at Gold Harbor, a site many people who have been to Antarctica and South Georgia pick as their favorite place, and for good reason. We gazed in awe upon thousands and thousands of King Penguins. The orange on their necks was glowing in the brilliant morning sun. Light-mantled Albatrosses flew along the grassy ridges, and some people even climbed up one hill to view a nest of this most elegant of the albatrosses. We ended our time at South Georgia with a cruise to the head of Drygalski Fjord where we watched a glacier calve and saw a huge gathering of Cape and Snow petrels, two of the most strikingly beautiful seabirds in the world.

We had two days at sea en route to the Antarctic Peninsula, during which time we enjoyed more great sea-watching for birds and mammals. Highlights included our first Southern Fulmars—lovely silvery-gray seabirds, and a remarkable number of whales including fin, southern right, and humpback. An Emperor Penguin was spotted ahead of the ship, and though many saw it, the looks were distant and short.

Our time in Antarctica was spent in the Wedell Sea area and the South Shetland Islands. We visited several big Adelie Penguin colonies and several fascinating historical sites where early explorers had overwintered in stone huts that remain today. One of these huts was at the site of the Argentine research station, Esperanza, at Hope Bay. One of the many highlights during our time in Antarctica was the opportunity to see several groups of orcas, including one that stayed around the bow of the ship for over a half-hour.

One of the most beautiful and striking Antarctic birds is the Antarctic Petrel. Since it nests further south than expedition ships typically go, we have missed it on some of our previous trips. If we are lucky, we see a few of this species. It likes to be in areas where there is a lot of ice. As we cruised in the Weddell Sea, we saw lots of ice including city-block-sized huge tabular bergs that had broken off from the continental ice shelves, tank-sized bergs that had calved from glaciers, and smaller, mostly flat chunks of sea ice. During two dinners, FLOCKS of Antarctic Petrels appeared seemingly out of nowhere and circled repeatedly around the ship. Some of us couldn't get enough of these gorgeous birds.

One evening we headed farther south in the Weddell Sea toward Snow Hill Island, hoping for more Emperor Penguins. There was even more ice in that region including lots of sea ice, so our hopes were high. We were not to be disappointed. During dinner one Emperor Penguin was spotted on a chunk of sea ice right next to the ship, and farther on two more were spotted. Encountering four Emperors on one trip was truly amazing. We felt blessed, and we were.

After our time in Antarctica, we headed back to Argentina, crossing the Drake Passage in two days, with more seabirding and more lectures en route. We arrived in Ushuaia and were greeted by a gorgeous morning with cloudless skies, mild temperatures, and no wind. Many joined us for a most delightful walk around the harbor where we had long studies of many waterbirds and where we even found a small flock of Baird's Sandpipers.

Our post-trip in the Andes above Santiago, Chile yielded a fine variety of montane species and more great scenery. Highlights included two Austral Pygmy-Owls, Scale-throated Earthcreepers, Rufous-

banded Miners, Moustached Turcas, and several species of sierra-finches. Just as we were ready to return to Santiago, four magnificent Andean Condors flew over our group to provide a fitting ending to a most wonderful and successful trip.

ANTARCTICA, SOUTH GEORGIA & THE FALKLAND ISLANDS ITINERARY

January 6, 2009 – Today marked the official start of our expedition to Antarctica, South Georgia, and the Falkland Islands. Cruise participants arrived in Ushuaia, Argentina throughout the day and checked in to the Albatross Hotel. Some people had been in Ushuaia on their own for a few days while approximately half the group, which had participated on the Buenos Aires pre-trip, arrived in Ushuaia late in the afternoon. Tonight we all gathered at the Albatross Hotel, where Victor offered a formal welcome followed by an introduction of the VENT staff.

January 7 – This morning we kicked the trip off with a visit to Tierra del Fuego National Park. As we didn't have to be at the ship until approximately 4:00 p.m., we had most of the day to explore the beautiful national park outside Ushuaia in search of some of the special birds of southern South America. It was a spectacular day of birding and sight-seeing. The unequivocal highlight of our time in the field was an eleventh-hour encounter with a photogenic pair of Magellanic Woodpeckers. We enjoyed lunch at the "Hiking Club," complete with a well-choreographed folk dancing show. Many people loved this "bonus" aspect to the day. On the return to Ushuaia, we searched the waterfront for Chiloe Wigeon and Flightless Steamer-Ducks. We arrived at the *Clipper Adventurer* as planned. The remainder of the afternoon was spent settling in to our cabins, exploring the ship, and participating in the mandatory safety drills. Around 7:00 p.m. we finally departed Ushuaia, with the Beagle Channel in front of us and the Atlantic Ocean beyond.

January 8 – We awoke this morning in the southern Atlantic Ocean not far outside the mouth of the Beagle Channel. Birds were everywhere. Thousands of Sooty and Greater shearwaters were visible all around the ship, in addition to impressive numbers of albatrosses, petrels, giant-petrels, and storm-petrels. We spent the entire day at sea today as we made our way toward the Falkland Islands. The seabirding was spectacular all day long and we finished the day with a glowing sunset.

January 9 – Arriving in the Falkland Islands early this morning, we spent the first of almost two full days here exploring two of the westernmost islands in the archipelago: Saunders and Carcass islands. Saunders Island was our first destination and provided our first zodiac landing of the trip. Opinions differ as to whether the Falklands represent true sub-Antarctic islands, given their proximity to the South American mainland, but regardless, this outpost supports some of the greatest abundances of wildlife in the southern Atlantic Ocean. A full morning on Saunders Island was glorious. Beautiful weather and close encounters with four species of penguins, visits to colonies of Black-browed albatrosses, and sightings of steamer-ducks, Crested Ducks, oystercatchers, and Striated Caracaras would make this excursion one of the best of the trip. After lunch the ship relocated a short distance to Carcass Island. Wind is a constant companion in the Falkland Islands, and, after enjoying a calm morning, the wind kicked up in the afternoon.

We landed at Carcass Island in the early afternoon, but spent much of our time walking into a strong headwind as we made our way down to the perimeter of the large protected bay that sits more or less at the center of the island. Despite the wind, and the lengthy walk, the birding was fantastic. Good views

of Ruddy-headed Geese, Blackish and Magellanic oystercatchers, Blackish Cinclodes, Canary-winged (Black-throated) Finch, Sedge (Grass) Wren, and House (Cobb's) Wren were the spoils of our afternoon on the island. By the time we departed, the wind was roaring and the seas were choppy. During the night the *Adventurer* relocated to Port Stanley on East Falkland Island.

January 10 – This morning began under dubious conditions. The wind that we encountered the previous afternoon persisted into the morning, which delayed our planned disembarkation in Port Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands. The local port authority would not grant permission for us to disembark the ship due to the rough water in Stanley Harbor. In fact, we were told at one point that we would not be allowed off the ship until early afternoon. Fortunately, the wind abated just enough so that we were allowed to disembark around 10:00 a.m., about an hour and a half later than originally planned. Despite the wind-whipped sea and seawater washing into the zodiacs, we were able to enjoy the “spirit of adventure” aspect to the trip ashore. Once on land, we boarded buses for a trip southeast of town to the airstrip, where we hoped to find Rufous-chested Dotterel two-banded Plover. It took time, but the search for the Dotterel was a success. Eventually everybody saw adult birds, while some of the lingerers amongst us were treated to juveniles. Our time on the tundra produced more Ruddy-headed Geese and a few Correndera Pipits. The last part of the morning into the early afternoon was free time for people to explore Stanley at their leisure and enjoy a local meal. By the middle of the afternoon we were back on board the ship and heading back out to sea. Leaving Stanley Harbor, we were greeted by thousands of Sooty and Greater shearwaters. The scene was exceptional as birds were everywhere. Time on deck revealed many other seabirds in the immediate area as well. Late in the afternoon we encountered some fin whales and our first hourglass dolphins. The day ended with another dazzling sunset.

January 11 – The crossing to South Georgia generally takes two days, depending on weather and sea conditions. Today was the first of two full days at sea as we began the roughly 800 mile crossing between the Falklands and South Georgia. Given the amount of time at sea, people had options of attending lectures throughout the day or seawatching from the ship's viewing decks. The main birding highlights of the day were the sudden, and brief, appearances of White-headed and Gray petrels seen from the back of the ship just before lunch. Unfortunately, these birds were seen by only a handful of people.

January 12 – Day two of the major crossing was similar to the day before, although the seabirding was slower, on balance, than the previous day. We also experienced some rougher water, which had a number of people under the weather. Still in all, we continued our journey eastward toward South Georgia. Of interest to many, we crossed the Polar Front, or Antarctic Convergence, for the first time on the trip, marking our official entrance into the Southern Ocean and the Antarctic. During dinner we finally came to the Shag Rocks, a remote cluster of six sheer-sided rocks emerging collectively as a lonely outpost about 150 miles from South Georgia Island. Though late, birds filled the sea and sky around us in all directions. Whether it was the spectacle of seeing such an abundance of life, or seeing our first sign of land in two days, everybody was out on deck and the mood on the ship was one of cheer and excitement.

January 13 – We awoke this morning to find ourselves approaching the northwest coast of South Georgia Island. The outlying Willis Islands was the first sign of land, but soon enough we were traveling east along the northern coast of the island. Our first intended stop was the Salisbury Plain, but windy conditions prevented the ship from landing so we detoured instead to Grytviken, capital of South Georgia Island, where we spent more than three hours this afternoon. En route, we were treated to a preponderance of breathtaking mountain and glacial scenery. Approaching Grytviken, we entered

scenic Cumberland Bay, where the water was colored an intermittent blend of blue and green, with several grounded icebergs rounding out the scene. Upon disembarking the ship, people could do as much or as little as they felt like. visit to the gravesite of Sir Ernest Shackleton was accompanied by an obligatory toast to “The Boss.” A self-guided tour of the old Norwegian whaling station offered a look into the island’s whaling past, while a tour of the whaler’s museum, the chief attraction at Grytviken, was an essential stop for most. A side trip out to King Edward Point to view the memorial cross erected to Sir Ernest was an option that a few took advantage of as well. Of course, throughout this little spot of civilization, Antarctic wildlife was found in abundance, with King Penguins, Antarctic Terns, elephant seals, and fur seals lining the beaches.

January 14 – During the night we backtracked all the way to the Bay of Isles at the northwestern end of the island. The morning’s activities included a pre-breakfast hike up access-restricted Prion Island to view Wandering Albatrosses on their nests as well as the endemic South Georgia Pipit, which favors areas of tussock grass. The remainder of the morning was dedicated to visiting the enormous King Penguin colony at Salisbury Plain. Here, we found ourselves amid an amazing wildlife spectacle, as tens of thousands of King Penguins of all ages filled the beaches, alluvial plain, and nearby hills. It was a remarkable experience and testimony to the extravagant wildlife shows for which South Georgia is known. We departed the Bay of Isles at lunch and sailed east along the north coast of the island. The scenery was magnificent, with towering, snow-capped mountains forming a majestic backdrop to the sunlit sea. Our next destination was Fortuna Bay, where about two-thirds of our group got off the ship to hike across a rising neck of land that divided Fortuna Bay from the next bay to the east, Stromness Bay. The so-called “Shackleton hike” replicated the last stretch of the overland route completed by Ernest Shackleton, Tom Crean, and Frank Worsley, capping the final stage of their remarkable journey back from their shipwreck in the Weddell Sea. Those not making

the hike stayed aboard the *Adventurer*, which circled around to Stromness Bay. By the time we arrived in Stromness, the wind had kicked up once again so that we were unable to get off the ship to visit the old whaling station. We simply waited until the hikers emerged onto the vast alluvial plain which connected the mountain pass to the beach. We were soon all back on board the ship.

January 15 – The day began under overcast skies with spotty rain and a moderately strong wind. The morning’s destination was Godthul, a nearly perfect circle of a bay etched into the northeast coast of South Georgia. The primary activity was a hike up the nearby hillside to view our first colonies of Gentoo Penguins. Other area attractions included herds of reindeer (introduced), a gorgeous alpine lake, and a picturesque little waterfall at the southwest corner of the bay. Some people had a close-up zodiac tour of the waterfall while others lingered on the beach, photographing penguins and seals. The afternoon portion of the day was disrupted by high winds, which prevented us from making the challenging landing at St. Andrew’s Bay, site of another massive colony of King Penguins. Instead, we detoured to the large protected bay to the east, Royal Bay, where we would ultimately spend the rest of the afternoon. Royal Bay is large, and within it lie a couple of smaller bays, including our destination, Moltke Harbor. On a trip filled with an abundance of exquisite scenery, the landscapes and seascapes of Moltke Harbor were as breathtaking as anything we saw on the trip. The landing site for the zodiacs was a broad beach composed of brown sand and loose gravel, gently washed by the incoming waves and foam. Scattered down the length of the beach were groups of King and Gentoo penguins. Meanwhile, Antarctic Terns and Cape Petrels foraged in the surf line only yards offshore, picking food off the surface of the sea. Back from the beach, a wide alluvial plain stretched a mile or more back to a rising mountain that appeared to form a barrier to the country beyond. Flowing off the face of the mountain were several large waterfalls, all of which cascaded a hundred feet or more to the bottom, sending spirals of mist into the air. The water from the falls converged into a river that tumbled down

through the center of the alluvial plain and out to the sea. Near the river's outfall, groups of King Penguins gathered to cool themselves in the icy water.

Looming over the entire eastern side of Royal Bay was a ragged ridge of rock, towering up several thousand feet and partially locked under snow and ice. Great hanging glaciers and cornices decorated the face and loftier reaches of the range, giving the impression of an impenetrable wall of rock and ice. Many people spent the afternoon lingering on the beach photographing the wildlife while a number of the rest of us embarked on a two and a half mile hike up the alluvial plain.

January 16 – Our fourth and final day at South Georgia was as memorable for the scenery as for the wildlife. Visits to three major destinations filled our time as we worked our way from the northeast corner of the island down the short length of the eastern coast and finally to the southeast corner before heading out to sea in the evening. We began the day with an entire morning at Gold Harbor, a reasonably well protected bay that allows for Zodiac landings that would be difficult or impossible to perform elsewhere. On this day we were greeted by moderate winds, but our schedule was unaffected and our landing proceeded as planned. Gold Harbor is for many the premier site on all of South Georgia. An abundance of King Penguins, elephant seals, and fur seals thronging the beaches is the most obvious and spectacular sight here, but nesting Light-mantled Albatrosses and spectacular scenery add to the wonder of the place. In the eastern corner of the bay, a glacier descending a wall of rock gave way to a photogenic waterfall feeding an icy pool of water just back from the beach. Out in the bay were several stranded tabular icebergs. We had approximately 3 hours to enjoy the penguins, radiant in the morning sun, besides the overall spectacle. Some people followed some leaders up to the ridge to view the nesting albatrosses. Leaving Gold Harbor before lunch, we enjoyed tremendous views of the behemoth icebergs parked on offshore shoals, while seabirds were in abundance. In the afternoon we visited Cooper Bay on the eastern side of the island. Weather conditions often prevent ships from landing, but for those that make it, what await are four species of penguins, including a colony of Macaroni Penguins, Kelp Gulls, South Georgia Shags, and even a few South Georgia Pipits. From the elevated position of the Macaroni colony, a sweeping view of the circular bay and a large offshore island provided remarkable scenery. Departing Cooper Bay later in the afternoon, we continued south along the island's eastern coast. The iceberg show was magnificent and the offshore waters in this area were filled with birds. A couple of fly-by South Georgia Diving-Petrels energized those of us who were on deck. A late afternoon/early evening cruise up the Drygalski Fjord proved a worthy grand finale to our time at South Georgia. Approaching the mouth of the fjord from the north, we were met by immense stranded tabular icebergs adorning the shallow coastal waters, while the water itself was colored a gorgeous mix of blue and green. Cruising west up the fjord, we found ourselves at the bottom of a water-filled canyon, with sheer ridges of rock and ice rising up around us. The scenery was dramatic and everybody was out on deck. Near the end of the fjord we approached the mighty Risting Glacier that sat at the head of the canyon. Birds were again everywhere, and most notable were the large numbers of Cape and Snow petrels. Kenn Kaufman counted almost 75 Snow Petrels swirling around the face of the glacier. That night we headed back out to sea as a very satisfied group of travelers.

January 17 – This was the first of two days at sea as we left South Georgia for the Antarctic Peninsula and Weddell Sea. Unfortunately, we got into some rough water that lasted all day. The sea birding was actually quite productive at times, but many of us stayed inside the ship much of the day. Lectures by expedition staff and an evening video were part of the day's program.

January 18 – The second of two days at sea started much the way the previous day ended: windy and rough. The seabirding through this portion of the Scotia Sea was always good, if not spectacular, with

numbers of Wandering Albatross present around the ship most of the day. By the afternoon, the weather and sea conditions had improved measurably. By mid-afternoon we were closing in on the South Orkney Islands, the first evidence of land in almost two full days. The scenery, predictably, was stunning. Remote, ice-covered, and alone in the Scotia Sea, the South Orkneys represented a remarkable gateway to the Antarctic. Enormous icebergs of all shapes and sizes filled the inter-island waters, birds were everywhere, and a few whales appeared here and there. Our destination was Orcadas Bay on Laurie Island. Because we still had a big distance to cover, we did not get off the ship here, but rather blew our horn to alert the Argentines at the Orcadas scientific base to our presence. South Georgia Shags and Chinstrap Penguins covered some of the hillsides around the base. After our brief stop, we returned to sea and continued our southbound journey. Those who stayed on deck were treated to a subtle yet penetrating sunset. The giant icebergs that filled the water in all directions were tinted glowing shades of purple, pink, and orange.

January 19 – Today was another full day at sea as we made our way toward the Antarctic, yet a day that had a very different feel to it than any of our other days at sea. This leg of the journey was the last step before we finally arrived in Antarctica, and the sense of anticipation was easily perceptible. Throughout the day we ran on smooth, even glassy, seas. Birds were ever-present, but not in large numbers. The color of the ocean ranged from deep navy blue to moss green and ice was an ever-present companion. The giant tabular bergs were highly visible every day in the Antarctic, but the shape and variety of form at times seemed to defy proper description. Some of the colossal bergs towered up like city buildings, while some of the older, eroded, partially capsized bergs appeared as wave-washed castles of ice. Some sparkled a gleaming white, while others glowed a luminous cobalt blue. Our first leopard seals appeared on the remains of the disintegrating pack ice, while later on, an immature Emperor Penguin was located in the water ahead of the ship. The bird was eventually seen by most, yet the distance between us and the bird, combined with its elusiveness, left many of us less than satisfied before we eventually moved on. Those present during the initial sighting had more to cheer about.

January 20 – On the Antarctic continent, expedition cruises focus on the north projecting Antarctic Peninsula. What varies is which side of the peninsula a given cruise will explore. For this trip, we went down the eastern side into the top of the Weddell Sea. Today marked the first of two full days in Antarctica and we spent it by dividing our time between Paulet and Devil islands. Our first landing took place on Paulet Island, a scenic, rocky mountain of an island filled with thousands of nesting Adelie Penguins. Walks down the beach and a short distance into the interior allowed us to study the fascinating little Adelies at length. Of great historical interest, this was the site where Captain Carl Larsen and 19 of his men from Otto Nordenskjold's Swedish Antarctic Expedition (1901-1904) were marooned for a winter after their ship, *Antarctic*, sank 25 miles offshore. Mid-day found us cruising south toward the afternoon's destination, Devil Island. En route we were treated to more of the majestic Antarctic scenery, in addition to a wonderful show of killer and humpback whales. Our visit to Devil Island was memorable for its penguin colonies, opportunities to view South Polar and Brown skuas side-by-side, and an optional walk to the tip of one of the Devil's "horns." The hike, a moderately challenging traipse up an extinct volcanic cone, was certainly an opportunity for exercise, and which was taken advantage of by perhaps half the group. For those who made it to the top, the reward was a splendid 360° view of the island (from above), the surrounding sea, other islands, the ship, and chunks of ice clogging the nearshore waters. Back on board the ship, a final activity included a true Antarctic Polar Bear plunge, where perhaps 10 hardy souls earned their stripes. Following dinner, the captain unexpectedly announced he would take the ship farther into the Weddell Sea in the general direction of Snow Hill Island, at least until the sea ice became too thick. This decision would prove extraordinary, as we soon located 3 separate Emperor Penguins hauled out on the ice. Unlike the

first bird in the water from a couple of days before, two of three birds we found were close and easy to see. With the entire passenger contingent out on deck, we basked in the glow of observing and photographing the Antarctic's most mysterious, alluring, and seldom-seen bird.

January 21 – Our last day in the Antarctic included an essential continental landing, which took place at Brown Bluff, and a visit to an Argentine research station (Esperanza) at Hope Bay, also on the continent. The morning at Brown Bluff centered on hikes up and down the beach to view nesting Adelie and Gentoo penguins, in addition to our best views of Weddell seal, and, of course, to “claim” the seventh continent. The trip to Hope Bay allowed us to spend time at an active scientific research base, manned year round, in addition to serving as the place where three more of Nordenskjold's men overwintered after the *Antarctic* sank. They had been dropped off as an advance party trying to reach Snow Hill Island, but were essentially forced to stay put for the winter after their ship didn't return to pick them up. Late in the day, the *Adventurer* began the long journey back to Ushuaia, but with a full day in the South Shetlands just ahead.

January 22 – For many Antarctic expeditions, the South Shetland Islands are another of the gateways to the Antarctic region beyond. Although they are affected by many of the same weather patterns as the continent, they are a decidedly more temperate place. Snow melts off earlier, temperatures are comparatively milder, and the vegetation is more vigorous here. Jagged mountains, volcanic outcrops, and ancient glaciers are all features of the landscapes within the South Shetlands. For our morning landing, we visited Half Moon Island, a tiny crescent-shaped island known historically among sealers, but today is the site of an Argentine research station. We spent the better part of the morning here observing and photographing colonies of Chinstrap Penguins. Heavy overcast and mist were the rule of the morning, but didn't dampen our spirits as we spent time in close quarters with the entertaining Chinstraps. Though largely veiled in clouds, the facing shore of distant Livingston Island was partially in view to reveal a string of interwoven glaciers forming a veritable ice sheet that continued into the sea. The concussions created by calving glaciers were easily heard, if not always seen. We made our final landing of the trip at Barrientos Island, a surprisingly verdant place filled with wildlife. A walk of perhaps half a mile brought us to the island's western end, notably marked by impressive outcrops of columnar basalt. Lots of Gentoo and Chinstrap penguins made for wonderful companions during our time on the island, while a circular hike along the western coastline provided final experiences with elephant seals, Brown and South Polar skuas, and nesting giant-petrels. Late in the day, on the return trip to the ship, the wind picked up suddenly and dramatically. Before and after dinner we were treated to a glorious display of sunlit icebergs. For a grand finale, we came across a family group of killer whales, which was studied close and at length for close to an hour.

January 23 – No Antarctic expedition would be complete without a crossing of the Drake Passage. The journey typically takes two days, and, from that standpoint, ours was no different. The seabirding, which can be outstanding in these waters, was slower than expected. A slate of presentations was planned for the day so that passengers had the choice of staying inside to hear talks or spend time on the decks seawatching. The wind from the previous evening stayed with us throughout the day so that the crossing, while not downright rough, was not silky smooth either.

January 24 – The second day in the Drake Passage proved better for birding, and the wind finally abated in the early afternoon. Like the previous day, passengers had opportunities for attending presentations throughout the day or spending time on deck seawatching. In the late afternoon we finally reached the entrance to the Beagle Channel. The long approach to Ushuaia carried us up the channel in a westerly direction. The birding was fantastic, with lots of giant-petrels, shearwaters,

penguins, cormorants, gulls, skuas, and terns in the air and water around us. It was a glorious time to be out on deck. That evening, we anchored in the channel several hours from port.

January 25 - The ship pulled up anchor during the night and began the final leg of the journey to Ushuaia. We arrived in port before 7:00 a.m. Disembarkation commenced and all passengers and luggage was offloaded.

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP ITINERARY

January 4, 2009 – Pre-trip participants arrived in Buenos Aires today. Early this afternoon we gathered in the hotel lobby for a brief welcome and introduction before boarding a bus for a trip to nearby Costanera Sur, a local refuge situated in the heart of Buenos Aires. With one of the worst droughts in memory afflicting Buenos Aires, we found the large impoundments, which are typically full of water, bone dry. The land birding was very good, however, and we had a wonderful afternoon in the field studying a variety of hawks, cuckoos, woodcreepers, flycatchers, horneros, swallows, gnatcatchers, warbling-finches, cardinals, and more.

January 5 – We met shortly after breakfast this morning and boarded a bus for the hour-long ride to the Otamendi Preserve, a lovely natural area protecting grasslands, marshes, and gallery forests. We spent the entire morning working different sections of the road that bisected the preserve, turning up a wonderful variety of birds. Highlights included Dusky-legged Guan, Plumbeous Rail, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, and Scarlet-headed Blackbird. For lunch we headed to a wonderful restaurant that appeared to have once been part of a Spanish hacienda or estate. On the return trip to Buenos Aires, we stopped by a couple of parks in the city, where we found Black-necked Swans, two species of coots, and a few other species to finish the day.

January 6 – Today proved a day of logistical twists and turns, complete with a lengthy flight delay, arrival into a different city than planned, a lengthy bus ride, and...satisfaction? Yes. Early this morning as we were preparing to depart the hotel, we were notified that the airport in Ushuaia, our destination city, was closed due to a failure of an important piece of radar equipment. Our flight, originally scheduled for the mid-morning, was delayed until early afternoon and the new destination city was Rio Grande, several hours north of Ushuaia. With nothing to do but be patient, we eventually boarded the flight and made the trip to Rio Grande. Upon arrival, and a short wait, we were greeted by a fleet of buses sent up from Ushuaia. The drive to Ushuaia took three hours, but we were treated to magnificent scenery nearly the whole way. With mountains, the coast, alpine lakes, and beech forests to look at, many of us felt that the delay had been worthwhile. An added bonus was the sightings of Guanacos, a South American animal closely related to llamas, along the roadsides en route.

SANTIAGO POST-TRIP ITINERARY

January 25, 2009 – Our group flight left Ushuaia for Santiago in the early afternoon, but we didn't arrive in Santiago until after 8:00 p.m. After transferring to the hotel we enjoyed a lovely late dinner at the hotel's open air restaurant.

January 26 – Following breakfast, we boarded a bus for the short trip into the Andes just outside Santiago. Our destination was the mountains in the vicinity of the Ferellones Ski Area. We made several stops en route, looking for birds in each of the distinct habitats we visited. We ultimately

enjoyed a wonderful day in the field, recording a fine variety of birds, many of which are specialties of southern South America and the Andes. Among the most satisfying sightings were Andean Condor, Austral Pygmy-Owl, Chilean Flicker, Gray-flanked Cinclodes, Moustached Turca, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, and Gray-hooded and Mourning sierra-finches. We enjoyed a delicious lunch at a mountain chalet-type restaurant, followed by another hour of birding in the high country before returning to Santiago. We had dinner at the hotel before transferring to the airport for international flights leaving that night.

ANTARCTICA, SOUTH GEORGIA & THE FALKLAND ISLANDS CHECKLIST

Note: The checklist order, and common and scientific names used in these birdlists are those given by James F. Clements in *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6th edition, Cornell University Press, with all current updates.

Penguins (*Spheniscidae*)

King Penguin (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*) – One of the special experiences of any trip to the Antarctic is the sight of thousands of King Penguins clustered on the beaches of South Georgia Island. The second largest of the penguins, the Kings form enormous colonies at South Georgia during the Antarctic summer, with some sites containing more than a hundred thousand birds, although smaller numbers can be found at a variety of sites. We found Kings in the largest numbers at the Bay of Isles (Salisbury Plain), where birds were present in every stage of development. By mid-January, many of the fluffy- brown 1-year olds are molting to adult plumage while a percentage of adult are on eggs again. The other major site for King Penguins was Gold Harbor, where a glorious, sun-splashed morning illuminated thousands more Kings that were lining the beaches. Other sites included a memorable group in a river outfall at Royal Bay, Grytviken, Cooper Bay, and even a few at Saunders Island in the Falklands. We saw *A.p. patagonicus* of the far south Atlantic.

Emperor Penguin (*Aptenodytes forsteri*) – For many, seeing an Emperor Penguin represents the quintessential Antarctic wildlife experience. Typically restricted to remote corners of the continent and the edge of the ice pack, this species is only very rarely encountered in the region of the Antarctic Peninsula. On our trip, we were incredibly fortunate to record four individual Emperors, all immature birds. The first occasion involved a lone bird at sea between the Orkney Islands and the Weddell Sea. Originally found in the water ahead of the ship, the bird proved elusive and difficult to observe as it slowly moved further and further from the ship. With everybody on deck, perhaps a third of the group had what could be called a satisfying view, but that was not the case for most. The next night, following our visits to Paulette and Devil's islands, the captain took the ship far enough south into the Wedell Sea that brought us relatively close to the breeding colony at Snow Hill Island. Toward the end of dinner that night, the cry went up that Emperor Penguins were being seen on the sea ice. In a flurry of activity, everybody was on deck within minutes, viewing the remarkable birds. The first sighting was the best, but two others were also noted.

Gentoo Penguin (*Pygoscelis papua*) – A common and easy to study penguin that we found at Saunder Island in the Falklands, at several places on South Georgia, and more in Antarctica. This penguin was perhaps the most docile of all the penguin species we encountered on this trip. We saw *P. p. papua* in the Falklands and South Georgia and *P.p. ellsworthi* south of about 60°S.

Adelie Penguin (*Pygoscelis adeliae*) – This is an entirely Antarctic species with a circumpolar distribution. We had wonderful experiences with this species that some would call the “cutest” of the penguins, at Paulette Island, Devil’s Island, and Brown Bluff. The largest numbers by far were noted at Paulette Island.

Chinstrap Penguin (*Pygoscellis antarcticus*) – An almost entirely Antarctic Penguin, this species is found in greatest numbers at the South Shetland, South Sandwich, and South Orkney groups, with a few getting all the way to South Georgia. Irascible but endearing, we found the most Chinstraps around Orcadas Bay, though distant, and Half Moon Island in the South Shetlands.

Rockhopper Penguin (*Eudyptes chrysocome*) – One of the crested penguins, we had wonderful close studies of birds at a breeding colony on Saunders Island in the Falklands during our first landing of the trip. *E.c. chrysocome* of the Cape Horn archipelago and Falkland Islands.

Macaroni Penguin (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*) – Macaronis prefer nest sites that can be a challenge to access. Our stop at Cooper Bay on the final afternoon at South Georgia allowed us to visit a dramatic clifftop colony overlooking the sea. Though one of the most numerous penguins on South Georgia, we typically visit places where it is the least numerous.

Magellanic Penguin (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) – A species of Patagonian South America and the Falkland Islands, we had nice studies of birds in the water while we cruised the Beagle Channel, in addition to other birds in the Falklands. Unlike the other penguins we saw on the trip, this species nests in burrows.

Grebes (*Podicepsidae*)

Great Grebe (*Podiceps major*) – Three or four in Tierra del Fuego National Park on the first morning out, including two on nests.

Albatrosses (*Diomedidae*)

Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) – We began seeing our first Wanderers on our first day at sea between Ushuaia and the Falkland Islands. From that point on, we saw them almost every day for the rest of the trip. Our long seawatching vigils revealed birds of both sexes and all ages around the ship, sometimes for hours at a time. Graceful passes at eye level and sweeping arcs on long, flattened wings revealed the beauty of the species in full. Our close proximity to the birds allowed us to note the key differences between this species and the Royal Albatrosses that also appeared with regularity. A hike up access-restricted Prion Island allowed us to see more Wanderers on nests, including one particular individual that became the subject of a Lars Jonsson painting. The *exulans* race, or “Snowy” Albatross, that breeds on South Georgia Island.

Royal Albatross (*Diomedea epomophora*) – The other of the “great albatrosses,” the Royal Albatross was seen with almost equal frequency as the Wandering between the South American mainland and at least halfway to South Georgia. An overwhelming majority of birds occurring in the South Atlantic are of the *epomophora* subspecies, “Southern” Royal Albatross. In most years we note the *sanfordi* subspecies, “Northern” Royal Albatross, in small numbers; this year, however, we didn’t see more than

one or two individuals. Many excellent comparisons were available between Royal and Wandering albatrosses of various ages and both sexes. Both races breed on sub-Antarctic islands of New Zealand.

Gray-headed Albatross (*Thalassarche chrysostoma*) – An elegant and graceful “mollymawk” of the Southern Ocean, we saw numbers of birds throughout the trip. Never especially numerous, we ultimately saw this bird most days between the Falkland Islands, South Georgia and the Scotia Sea. As this species breeds on South Georgia, it was no surprise that we saw more in the island’s offshore waters than anywhere else. Unlike the two “great” albatrosses and the very numerous Black-browed Albatross, this species rarely came very close to the ship, and even then most stayed for only a short time before peeling off to sea.

Black-browed Albatross (*Thalassarche melanophris*) – Unquestionably the most numerous and frequently encountered albatross of the trip. Another of the “mollymawks,” this species nests in numbers in and around the Beagle Channel, the Cape Horn archipelago, the Falkland Islands, and South Georgia Island. Our visit to Saunders Island in the Falklands saw us visiting two significant colonies at very close range, while many more individuals were seen at sea on a daily basis. This bird even ranges all the way to the edge of the pack ice in the true Antarctic.

[Shy Albatross (*Thalassarche chrysostoma*) – An individual casually photographed between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia by one of the leaders was initially thought to be a Gray-headed Albatross. Only after the image was later examined was it confirmed as a Shy Albatross, subspecies *salvini*, or Salvin’s Albatross, a bird of the southern Indian Ocean and sub-Antarctic islands of New Zealand. This is a very rare bird in the waters of the far South Atlantic. Not seen by any passengers, therefore, it is listed as a leader only bird.]

{Sooty Albatross (*Phoebastria fusca*) – A bird seen flying by the ship en route to the Falkland Islands was thought by the observer to be this species. Sooty Albatross is a rare bird in waters this far southwest of its breeding range of Tristan de Cunha. Unfortunately, the bird was not seen by any of the leaders and the bird’s identity could not be confirmed. }

Light-mantled Albatross (*Phoebastria palpebrata*) – A lovely albatross with a circumpolar distribution, the Light-mantled breeds only at South Georgia in this part of the Southern Ocean. While individuals were noted at sea far from South Georgia, predictably we saw most of our birds in waters just offshore of the island. Courting birds were noted in flight at Prion Island in the Bay of Isles while birds at nest sites were found on the ridge overlooking Gold Harbor.

Shearwaters & Petrels (*Procellariidae*)

Southern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes giganteus*) – This was a common and widespread bird that we saw every day of the trip. Nearly as large as an albatross, we found this bird to be a regular traveler behind the ship at nearly all times. On shore, it was also common in and around the Beagle Channel, the Falklands, South Georgia, and the Antarctic Peninsula. As a regular follower of our ship, we noted with great admiration the birds’ ability to fly effortlessly over the ship, with birds entertaining us with fierce dives toward the sea and tremendous upward vaults that carried them from the sea surface over the ship. We had good comparisons with the next species, in addition to seeing many of the white morph individuals known as “White Nellies.” Formerly called “Antarctic Giant Petrel” by some authorities.

Northern Giant Petrel (*Macronectes halli*) – Previously known as “Hall’s Giant Petrel,” this species is far more restricted in range in this part of the Southern Ocean. Nevertheless, it was found in greatest

numbers around South Georgia Island while others were noted at sea from the Falkland Islands all the way to the Antarctic Peninsula. Side-by-side comparisons were had on numerous occasions with the former species.

Southern Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialoides*) – This is a beautiful, ghostly looking bird of the Southern Ocean that seems to spend most of its time around the pack ice not far from the Antarctic continent. The first individuals were noted in the Scotia Sea southeast of South Georgia, but it wasn't until we were south of the South Orkney Islands that we encountered these birds in appreciable numbers. Despite some obvious similarities, this bird is actually very different in appearance than the more familiar Northern Fulmar, *Fulmaris glacialis*.

Antarctic Petrel (*Thalassoica Antarctica*) – Though this bird ranges widely through the Southern Ocean, during the summer it is largely restricted to the immediate precincts of Antarctic Islands and coasts. Most VENT trips typically see very few individuals, and sometimes none at all. This trip was extraordinary for this species. It was first noted with great fanfare during dinner on the last evening before we reached the Antarctic Peninsula. With everybody on deck, we enjoyed a magical show of Cape Petrels, Snow Petrels, and a handful of Antarctic Petrels flying around the ship and against the nearby icebergs. The next evening, an additional dozen or so at least were seen at about the same time and place as where we found the Emperor Penguins in the Weddell Sea.

Cape Petrel (*Daption capense*) – One of the most handsome birds of the Southern Ocean, we didn't actually find this species in expected numbers until we reached South Georgia Island. From that point on, Cape Petrels were ever-present travel companions until we started back across the Drake Passage. Adorned in lovely black-and-white plumage, it is a shame the old name of Pintado (painted) Petrel was never adopted. We had wonderful experiences watching them as they fed with Antarctic Terns in the surf at Royal Bay and many others against the glacier wall at the head of Drygalski Fjord at South Georgia Island, and many other still in the Antarctic.

Snow Petrel (*Pagodroma nivea*) – One of the premier birds of the Antarctic and a species always high on everybody's wish list. The delicate looking and elegant Snow Petrel, all white save for a black bill and eyes, seems to represent the Antarctic as fittingly as any birds we saw. Our first individuals were seen around the edges of the massive tabular icebergs grounded on the shoals off the north coast of South Georgia, such as at Gold Harbor and Cooper Bay. At the head of Drygalski Fjord, Kenn Kafuman counted at least 73 birds mixed in with the equally numerous Cape Petrels as they fed at the face of the glacier. Others were noted with regularity all the way to the Antarctic Peninsula, where we found plenty more in the Weddell Sea, particularly around the edges of the giant icebergs. This was the *nivea* subspecies, "Lesser Snow Petrel," that breeds around the Scotia Arc.

White-headed Petrel (*Pterodroma lessonii*) – The sighting of this species offered a case-study of why spending maximum time on deck is required for getting the rare ones. One morning, with most of the passengers and leaders inside the ship attending a lecture, one of the leaders and a few of the more stalwart seawatchers amongst us enjoyed a flyby of a single bird that came down the starboard side of the ship, passed through the wake, and then disappeared. White-headed Petrel is a species that breeds in the far southern Indian and Pacific oceans and is recorded only on every third or fourth Antarctic expedition. Remarkably, this bird was seen only minutes after an equally uncommon Gray Petrel appeared in the wake. The location of the sighting was our first day at sea between the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. Kudos to those who got both species.

Soft-plumaged Petrel (*Pterodroma mollis*) – Though certainly not rare, it is difficult to predict the numbers of individuals that will appear from one expedition to the next. We enjoyed many great views of this sleek little seabird every day between the Falklands and South Georgia and South Georgia and the South Orkney Islands.

Blue Petrel (*Halobaena caerulea*) – This is a fairly common bird of Antarctic waters from South Georgia all the way to the Antarctic Peninsula. Though remarkably similar to the prions in appearance, we had little trouble discerning all the key field marks. This small petrel was seen very well by most. It is an early breeder, with many individuals nesting in October.

Antarctic Prion (*Pachyptila belcheri*) – The most common and expected prion south of the Polar Front, which is essentially the region from South Georgia to the Antarctic Peninsula and part way across the Drake Passage. As a group, the prions are among the most challenging of the world's birds to identify. Similar in colors, sizes, and proportions, the differences between species are typically very subtle. Even individuals within species often appear to contrast with one another. Identification typically requires care and repeated views to appreciate the differences between species. A larger bill, dark gray sides, heavy markings above, and larger size are the distinguishing features of this species.

Slender-billed Prion (*Pachyptila belcheri*) – This is the most commonly encountered and expected species from the South American mainland through the Falkland Islands to near South Georgia, and part way across the Drake Passage. Distinguishing features include a more evenly gray upperwing, a grayer face, and a reduced amount of black on the tail.

Fairy Prion (*Pachyptila turtur*) – A VERY challenging bird to identify, this species is learned only after astute study of the other prion species. Identification is based as much on “gestalt” as much as on particular field marks. Distinguishing features include a more delicate look, with long, narrow wings set farther forward on the body, imparting a longer-tailed appearance as well as a pale, lightly marked face, and an uppertail surface displaying an ample amount of black.

Gray Petrel (*Procellaria cinerea*) – One bird was seen by one leader and a few passengers late in the morning one day after leaving the Falkland Islands en route to South Georgia. This bird is recorded only every third or fourth trip. See the annotation under White-headed Petrel for more information regarding the sighting.

White-chinned Petrel (*Procellaria aequinoctialis*) – One of the most widespread seabirds encountered on the entire voyage, we saw birds every day of the trip except for one day at the beginning of the trip and one day at the end. A large petrel, we saw individuals at sea around the ship at nearly all times. Early sailors and whalers called the birds “shoemakers,” who decided that the tapping sounds that emanated from the birds' burrows apparently sounded like the tapping of a hammer struck by a shoemaker.

[Kerguelen Petrel (*Aphrodroma brevirostris*) – Two birds were seen only by leaders in the Scotia Sea the first morning after departing South Georgia. Unfortunately, the heavy seas of the day kept most people indoors and off the viewing decks, explaining why this infrequently seen petrel was essentially missed.]

Greater Shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*) – An abundant breeder on the Falkland Islands, we noted this species in very large numbers outside the Beagle Channel on our first day at sea. Another large aggregation was seen outside Stanley Harbor on the afternoon we departed the Falkland Islands. Other

birds were seen commonly at sea all the way to South Georgia. Few to none in the colder waters to the south.

Sooty Shearwater (*Puffinus griseus*) – The most numerous shearwater species seen, with thousands of birds noted in the waters outside the Beagle Channel and thousands more seen around the Falklands.

Manx Shearwater (*Puffinus puffinus*) – A few birds mixed in with the massive aggregation of Sooty and Greater shearwaters outside the Beagle Channel on our first morning at sea. This species breeds predominately in the North Atlantic, but winters regularly to the tip of South America.

Storm-Petrels (*Hydrobatidae*)

Gray-backed Storm-Petrel (*Garrodia nereis*) – For the second consecutive year at least, our expedition failed to turn up more than one or two birds. This is a breeding species of South Georgia Island, with perhaps more in the Falklands. The most unlikely sighting was the bird that grounded itself on the back of the ship one night as we approached the Falkland Islands. Not seen by more than a handful of participants at most.

Wilson's Storm-Petrel (*Oceanites oceanicus*) – This is a hardy and widespread little seabird found throughout the world's oceans, including all the way to the Antarctic continent. We had no problem seeing this species well, including many hundreds on a daily basis.

Black-bellied Storm-Petrel (*Fregatta tropica*) – While certainly not as common as the former, we had no problem seeing this species inside the Polar Front from South Georgia to the Antarctic continent.

Diving-Petrels (*Pelecanoididae*)

Magellanic Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides magellani*) – This is a bird found throughout the inshore waters from the tip of the South American continent up the western side of Chile. It is not rare, particularly in the vicinity of the Beagle Channel, yet, the bird's diminutive size and habit of offering fleeting looks makes seeing one always a challenge. One or two were noted the first afternoon out of Ushuaia by a few of us and were spotted just before the day's last light; but the best views were had by those who still had the enthusiasm to be out on deck very early on the last morning as we cruised up the Beagle Channel to the port in Ushuaia.

South Georgia Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides georgicus*) – The South Georgia Diving-Petrel breeds on South Georgia, as the name implies, but so does Common Diving-Petrel, making identification a challenge. With persistence and a lot of time on deck, we eventually noted perhaps a half dozen birds, but probably not more than 2 or 3 seen well, off the north and east coasts of the island. Critical field marks to watch for include a more extensive and whiter collar, whiter underwings, and more white over the eye. This is a tough identification.

Common Diving-Petrel (*Pelecanoides urinatrix*) – An abundant and widespread bird throughout the waters of the South Atlantic, but found mainly north of the Polar Front. As is typical of this group, the small size of the birds, their habit of disappearing quickly, and their fast flight style make them difficult to observe. Despite their abundance, many people didn't see this species well until near the end of the trip.

Cormorants (*Phalacrocoracidae*)

Rock Shag (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*) – This is a fairly common bird of the protected waters and immediate coasts of Chile, Argentina, and the Falkland Islands. Though far less common than Imperial

Shag, birds were noted with regularity in and around the protected waters of the Beagle Channel and Ushuaia. The best views were had on Carcass Island in the Falklands, where on a windy, but brilliantly sunny day, we enjoyed scope views of adult birds perched atop rocks a short distance offshore.

Antarctic Shag (*Phalacrocorax bransfieldensis*) – A truly Antarctic species, we found this bird only around the Antarctic Peninsula and South Shetland Islands. Distinguished by range and such field marks as extensive white in the face and more white on the back.

South Georgia Shag (*Phalacrocorax georgianus*) – Very similar in appearance to Imperial and Antarctic shags, it is distinguished by range, and less white in the face and back than in Antarctic Shag. We first recorded this bird at the Shag Rocks while en route to South Georgia Island, but ultimately found the bird quite common in the nearshore waters of South Georgia. Remarkably, this bird was present in large numbers in the South Orkney Islands as well.

Imperial Shag (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*) – This is the common cormorant species found at the tip of South America and in the Falkland Islands. The South American form *atriceps*, presents some interesting taxonomic questions. The majority of birds encountered around the tip of South America are at least partially white-cheeked, but some birds are clearly dark-cheeked, which is more typical of birds occurring farther north along the Argentine coastline and in the Falkland Islands. Previous authors have suggested that more than one species may be involved, but more recent work seems to suggest that the white- and dark-cheeked forms are best treated as color morphs. The dark-cheeked birds we saw in the Falklands were of the race *albiventer*.

Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns (*Ardeidae*)

Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) - A few birds noted around Ushuaia (*obscurus* of Southern South America) and in the Falkland Islands (endemic *falklandicus*).

Ibises & Spoonbills (*Threskiornithidae*)

Black-faced Ibis (*Theristicus melanopis*) – This is a fairly common and very distinct bird of short grasslands around Ushuaia. We had perhaps half a dozen birds during our morning in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Ducks, Geese & Swans (*Anatidae*) – As a general statement, the waterfowl of southern South America are as appealing a group of birds as any. Containing a large diversity of species, and many distinctive and beautiful members, these birds provided many wonderful memories of our time around Ushuaia and the Falkland Islands.

Upland Goose (*Chloephaga picta*) – While our first birds were seen outside Tierra del Fuego National Park (subspecies *picta*), this species was best studied at different sites in the Falkland Islands (subspecies *leucoptera*). The males, striking in bold black and white plumage, contrast considerably against the less obvious, but no less attractive brown and rufous plumage of the female birds. This species is one of the most common waterfowl species in the Falklands.

Kelp Goose (*Chloephaga hybrida*) – This bird was first noted around the Ushuaia waterfront (subspecies *hybrida*), but it wasn't until we reached the Falklands where we were able to really enjoy this bird in numbers and at close range. The male, a lovely all white bird with yellow legs and a dark bill, contrasted markedly with the female, a largely brownish bird with beautiful white barring and vermiculations on her underside. The Falkland subspecies is *malvinarum*.

Ashy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga poliocephala*) – Our only Ashy-headed Geese of the trip was a family group found the first morning along the river in Tierra del Fuego National Park. While scope views were enjoyed by all, the birds were not particularly close.

Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) – As this is not an easy bird to find around Ushuaia, it is by default considered one of the premier birds of the Falkland Islands. Seeing this species cannot be taken for granted, yet this year we enjoyed wonderful luck. Ruddy-headed Geese were seen by the landing site on our afternoon at Carcass Island, near the end of the trail we walked from the zodiacs a couple miles to the pick-up site, and near the airstrip outside Stanley the next day. This species bears a close superficial resemblance to the female Upland Goose, but with practice, the smaller size, more clearly demarcated head, and rufous undertail feathers can be picked out.

Flightless Steamerduck (*Tachyeres pteneres*) – The only birds seen this year were the few noted around the waterfront on the first afternoon, January 6, in Ushuaia. A serious search around the waterfront before we boarded the ship on January 7 failed to turn up any others.

Falkland Steamerduck (*Tachyeres brachypterus*) – This is a fairly common to common bird at most coastal locations in the Falkland Islands. We had scope views of family groups in the small bay at Saunders Island and along the coastline later in the day at Carcass Island. The next day, we had several pairs in Stanley Harbor, East Falkland, with one particularly memorable family group along the waterfront right along the main thoroughfare.

Flying Steamerduck (*Tachyeres patachonicus*) – A few were noted in flight along the river in Tierra del Fuego National Park, and several others were seen along the waterfront in Ushuaia before we boarded the ship. Great studies.

Chiloe Wigeon (*Anas sibilatrix*) - A lovely South American bird, we had wonderful scope views of several pair in the large impoundment just back from the waterfront in Ushuaia.

Speckled Teal (*Anas flavirostris*) – Probably seen best around the waterfront in Ushuaia, but others were also seen in the Falkland Islands and at South Georgia. The widespread subspecies, *flavirostris*.

Crested Duck (*Anas specularioides*) – Many outstanding views of birds around Ushuaia, and, particularly, in the Falkland Islands. Family groups were noted in the small bay at Saunders Island. Subspecies *specularioides*.

Yellow-billed Pintail (*Anas georgica*) – Nice views of a moderately large group of birds in the large impoundment just back from the waterfront in Ushuaia on January 7 (subspecies *spinicauda*). The partially carnivorous South Georgia subspecies, *georgica*, was noted at many landings while we were at South Georgia.

Red Shoveler (*Anas platalea*) – A large group of birds swimming and at rest was found in the large impoundment just back from the waterfront in Ushuaia.

New World Vultures (*Cathartidae*)

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – A few seen around Ushuaia, but most obvious in the Falkland Islands. Subspecies *jota*.

Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*) – Seeing this bird is always high on everybody's list. On the one hand we were successful in that we saw several birds in flight high over the peaks in Tierra del Fuego National Park on January 6, and at least one more over the mountains on January 25 while coming back up the Drake Passage. On the other hand, though definitive, none of the views were particularly close.

Hawks, Eagles & Kites (*Accipitridae*)

Variable Hawk (*Buteo polysoma*) – One or two birds noted in flight and perched at a distance in Tierra del Fuego National Park. This species was formerly known as Red-backed Hawk before being lumped with the similar Puna Hawk.

Falcons & Caracaras (*Falconidae*)

Striated Caracara (*Phalcoeboenus australis*) – This is a very range-restricted species limited to outer Tierra del Fuego, the Cape Horn archipelago, and Falkland Islands. We had exquisite views of birds at Saunders and Carcass Islands. As hunters and scavengers, these birds are most likely to be encountered anywhere birds are nesting and seals are hauled out on the beaches.

Southern Caracara (*Caracara plancus*) – A few were observed flying around in Tierra del Fuego National Park, and a couple of others seen in the Falkland Islands.

Chimango Caracara (*Milvago chimango*) – A common and raucous bird easily found around development in Tierra del Fuego National Park and around Ushuaia; subspecies *temucosensis*.

Oystercatchers (*Haematopodidae*)

Magellanic Oystercatcher (*Haematopus leucopodus*) – Wonderful scope studies of birds at Saunders and Carcass islands in the Falklands.

Blackish Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ater*) – We had enjoyable experiences with this species in the Falkland Islands as well, with individual birds noted on the rocks at Carcass Island, and others flying around in vocal groups. Still others noted the following day at Stanley on East Falkland.

Plovers & Lapwings (*Charadriidae*)

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) – A common and conspicuous bird found in areas of short grass around Ushuaia and Tierra del Fuego National Park; subspecies *fretensis*.

Rufous-chested Dotterel (*Charadrius modestus*) – While in Stanley, a bus ride south of town to the airstrip put us in the appropriate breeding habitat of this bird: wet, windswept, rocky moorlands. A coordinated search over the uneven landscape eventually resulted in our finding an adult dotterel that everybody got to see. The people who hung in longest discovered that the adult was part of a family group, with a couple of young birds present. Finding this bird was never easy, and our search, on a cold, gray, and windy day, was typical of the experience. A special bonus was dynamite views of a family of Ruddy-headed Geese on a pond a short distance from the dotterel.

Sandpipers & Allies (*Scolopacidae*)

South American Snipe (*Gallinago paraguaiaiae*) – Superb close studies of birds feeding and at rest in Tierra del Fuego National Park; other individuals were seen at Carcass Island and by the airstrip outside Stanley in the Falklands. Subspecies *magellanica*.

Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) – An individual or two found by Michael at the airstrip outside Stanley were seen by part of the group. This species is an uncommon but regular visitor to the Falkland Islands during the boreal winter.

Sheathbills (*Chionidae*)

Snowy Sheathbill (*Chionis albus*) – Few birds evoke such a sense of peculiar wonder and astonishment as the Snowy Sheathbill. Is it a shorebird? Is it a landbird? Or is it some chicken-like bird?! The Snowy Sheathbill is in fact a member of the shorebirds, but one that is utterly unlike anything else. Its plump size, ability to run, and large, conical beak truly impart the feeling of watching a chicken or other ground-dwelling bird. Despite its appearance, however, the sheathbill can fly well, and is capable of crossing long distances of open water during the migration period. We found sheathbills at a number of sites at South Georgia, including Salisbury Plain, Royal Bay, Cooper Bay, and Stromness, but possibly the most memorable encounter was the group of 6 or so running around between our feet on the beach at Gold Harbor.

Gulls (*Laridae*)

Dolphin Gull (*Larus scoresbii*) – This is a common, but very attractive gull of Tierra del Fuego and the Falkland islands. This bird's dark gray plumage and red bill and legs are quite striking.

Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*) – The ever-present Kelp Gull proved itself to us as a resourceful and hardy bird. Except for the days at sea, we found Kelp Gulls at virtually every landing throughout the trip, with two subspecies recorded. The race *dominicanus* was the common gull of Ushuaia, the Beagle Channel, the Falklands and South Georgia, while *austrinus* was the variety of Antarctica and nearby islands.

Brown-hooded Gull (*Larus maculipennis*) – While not common, we did enjoy nice views of both breeding and non-breeding plumaged birds around the Ushuaia waterfront and at Saunders Island, Falklands.

Terns (*Sternidae*)

South American Tern (*Sterna hirundinacea*) – Until the last full day of the trip, South American Terns were noted in small numbers around Ushuaia and in moderate numbers near the mouth of Stanley Harbor in the Falklands (where they breed). But on the last day of the trip, we were amazed at the massive agglomerations of terns we encountered while cruising back up the Beagle Channel toward Ushuaia. Huge feeding flocks containing hundreds, if not thousands, of birds were seen streaming back and forth up the channel all afternoon. With binoculars, we could watch in the distance as flock after flock of terns passed by the ship. A conservative estimate would put the total number of terns at a couple of thousand birds.

Antarctic Tern (*Sterna paradisaea*) – The Antarctic Tern is a beautiful bird and we were fortunate to experience it over and over again from South Georgia to the Antarctic. While this species was seen at a number of sites, one of the most memorable encounters was surely the group of birds feeding in the surf, only yards from us at Royal Bay, among a group of Cape Petrels. Nesting birds were noted at Grytviken as well. Race *georgiae* was found at South Georgia; *gaini* in the South Shetland Islands and Antarctica.

Skuas & Jaegers (*Stercoraridae*)

Chilean Skua (*Stercorarius chilensis*) – This is the most distinctive of the skuas and we had little problem finding them the first couple days of the trip. Unlike the Brown and South Polar Skuas, this is

a species more closely tied to the South American mainland, and that spends its time hunting the coastal waters of Tierra del Fuego. It does not range particularly far out to sea. As expected, most of the birds we saw were in the nearshore waters and just outside the mouth of the Beagle Channel. One or two individuals were noted at sea perhaps as far as half way to the Falklands, but no further.

South Polar Skua (*Stercorarius maccormicki*) – Unlike the Chilean and Brown skuas, that breed mostly farther north, the South Polar Skua spends its summers on the edge of the Antarctic continent. We did not encounter this species until we finally got into the Weddell Sea. A beautiful light morph bird was seen by part of the group on Paulette Island on the morning of January 20, while several typical looking adults were seen on Devil's Island in the afternoon of the same day. A few others were at Brown Bluff the next day. The best experiences of the trip with this bird were with the group loafing on the gravel at the west end of Barrientos Island in the South Shetlands. There, we had side by side comparisons with the more numerous and larger Brown Skuas.

Brown Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*) – Of the three skua species possible on this cruise route, Brown Skua is the most numerous and most often seen. Our first bird of the trip was found a little more than half way to the Falkland Islands on January 8. From that point on, we saw Brown Skuas every day but one until we were through the South Shetland Islands near the end of the trip. Skuas seen in the vicinity of the Falkland Islands belong to the subspecies *Antarctica* (Falkland Skua), while Brown Skuas seen in the Southern Ocean, including South Georgia and the Antarctic Peninsula belong to the subspecies *lonnbergi* (Sub-Antarctic Skua). Besides being the most numerous skua, Brown Skuas are also the largest and most predatory of the three species. On several occasions, we witnessed these skuas preying on young penguins around the penguin colonies as well as attacking other birds in flight. Side-by-side comparisons with the South Polar Skuas at Devil's Island and at Barrientos Island in the South Shetlands were very helpful.

Long-tailed Jaeger (*Stercorarius longicaudus*) – This bird is apparently a regular boreal winter inhabitant of cold waters from 39°- 45°S. A single bird identified at sea west of the Falkland Islands.

Parrots (*Psittacidae*)

Austral Parakeet (*Enicognathus ferrugineus*) – On a day of superb birding at Tierra del Fuego National Park, our good luck stayed with us even after leaving the park. On the way back to Ushuaia, we spotted a group of these parakeets in trees along the main road on the edge of town. The birds of Ushuaia and Tierra del Fuego National Park belong to the subspecies *ferrugineus*, which inhabits the *nothofagus* (southern beech) forests of far southern South America.

Woodpeckers & Allies (*Picidae*)

Magellanic Woodpecker (*Campephilus magellanicus*) – On a trip filled with magical and spectacular natural history experiences, finding the Magellanic Woodpecker in Tierra del Fuego National Park on the first morning out was as satisfying as anything we saw. Despite the good birding otherwise, a couple hours of searching had failed to turn up the woodpecker. But an eleventh hour reconnoiter of the surrounding forest resulted in the discovery of an amazingly obliging pair in the national park campground. The male, with his nearly all red head was the star of the show, but the female, with her recurved crest was equally attractive. For an hour we followed the woodpeckers through the campground, at times at a distance of only a few feet away as they worked from one tree to the next. The photographers among us were in seventh heaven as the birds appeared to hardly take notice of our presence. The whole experience was literally spell-binding.

Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers (*Furnariidae*)

Blackish Cinclodes (*Cinclodes antarcticus*) – In South America, this is a decidedly uncommon species restricted to outer Tierra del Fuego and the Cape Horn archipelago. It is a very common bird, however, on some of the Falkland Islands, as evidenced by the fact that we had bountiful good views while traipsing along the coast of Carcass Island. Subspecies *antarcticus*.

Thorn-tailed Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*) – This interesting and distinctive little bird proved an ever-present companion in Tierra del Fuego National Park. During our exploration of the park, it seemed we were never far from these diminutive forest inhabitants as they worked through the forest in pairs and small groups in their never-ending quest for food. Subspecies *spinicauda*.

White-throated Treerunner (*Pygarrhichas albogularis*) – Unlike some of the other landbirds we typically encounter in Tierra del Fuego National Park, this species can be a very difficult bird to locate. We were lucky this year, as we found a single bird in a small flock of other birds as it looked for food on several *nothofagus* trees in the forest near the end of the national park road.

Tyrant Flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*)

White-crested Elaenia (*Elaenia albiceps*) – This is a common forest bird in Tierra del Fuego National Park. We saw many individuals easily and well. Subspecies *chilensis* that winters north to Brazil.

Tufted Tit-Tyrant (*Anairetes parulus*) – At least one of these little sprites was found with other small birds in the *nothofagus* forest in Tierra del Fuego National Park. Bearing a bright eye and erect crest, this peculiar little bird, while distinct enough, is often quite inconspicuous. Subspecies *parulus*.

Austral Negrito (*Lessonia rufa*) – This sharp little bird is another of South America's ground-dwelling flycatchers. We found several female and immature birds in the vicinity of the waterfront at Ushuaia.

Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) – Nice studies of this ground-dwelling flycatcher were had on both days in the Falkland Islands, particularly on Carcass Island on the afternoon of January 9.

Swallows (*Hirundinidae*)

Chilean Swallow (*Tachycineta meyeni*) – This is typically the only swallow species found in far southern South America. The white band over the base of the tail is distinctive, and, with patience, can usually be seen. Good looks were had in Tierra del Fuego National Park.

Wagtails & Pipits (*Motacillidae*)

Correndera Pipit (*Anthus correndera*) – Fair views of this ground-dwelling bird were had the first morning out in Tierra del Fuego National Park and on our first day in the Falkland Islands. The best views of this species were had in the low vegetation by the airstrip outside Stanley on January 10. Subspecies *chilensis* at Ushuaia and *grayi* in the Falklands.

South Georgia Pipit (*Anthus antarcticus*) – The entire world range of this species is limited to South Georgia Island and its satellite islets. Through the 1800s and 1900s, during the years of industrial whaling and sealing, ships visiting South Georgia inadvertently introduced the scourge of rats to the island, where they had never before existed. The prolific spread of the rodents across the western and northern parts of the island led to the extirpation of the pipit in these afflicted areas. It is thought that the pipit survives primarily on offshore islands and parts of the eastern and southern faces of South Georgia. We had excellent studies of displaying birds on Prion Island in the Bay of Isles. A couple of other individuals were noted on the beach at Cooper Bay on the east side of the island.

Wrens (*Troglodytidae*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – If for no other reason than occurring over a vast range, the House Wren is a remarkable bird. Comprised of an astonishing 32 subspecies, the bird is found from southern Canada all the way to the tip of South America. We located several individuals of the race *chilensis* in the forest understory in Tierra del Fuego National Park. We also saw “Cobb’s Wren,” a Falkland Islands endemic subspecies, along the beach on the afternoon we visited Carcass Island. Please note that “Cobb’s Wren” was recently lumped, in the Clements taxonomy, as a subspecies of House Wren. The official notation now reads: House Wren (Cobb’s) *Troglodytes aedon cobbi*.

Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) – This is another bird with a surprisingly large distribution. Ranging from the prairies of North America all the way to the tip of South America, it is reminiscent of House Wren in its adaptability and ecological opportunism, although this species is far more habitat restricted than the former and its range lacks the contiguousness of the former as well. We saw *falklandicus* at Carcass Island and outside Stanley while in the Falklands. Some authorities consider this endemic island race as distinct enough to warrant full species status (Grass Wren)

Thrushes & Allies (*Turdidae*)

Austral Thrush (*Turdus falcklandii*) – This is the THE primary member of the *Turdus* (Robin) family found in southern South America. It was common and conspicuous in Tierra del Fuego National Park (subspecies *magellanicus*) and in the Falkland Islands (subspecies *falklandii*). It is interesting to note that the specific name is *falklandii* as well, indicating where this bird was probably initially collected and described to science.

Old World Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – An introduced bird found in small numbers around Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego National Park, and even Stanley in the Falkland Islands.

Siskins, Crossbills & Allies (*Fringillidae*)

Black-chinned Siskin (*Carduelis barbata*) – This smart looking little bird was found with ease this year in Tierra del Fuego National Park and on Carcass Island in the Falklands.

Buntings, Sparrows & Allies (*Emberizidae*)

Patagonian Sierra-Finch (*Phrygilus patagonicus*) – An undeniably beautiful little bird, the Patagonian Sierra-Finch is a member of a special group of birds mostly relegated to alpine and sub-alpine ecosystems of the Andes. In Tierra del Fuego National Park, we had at least two pair at our feet in the campground. The male, a lovely burnt orange bird with a gray head, was especially striking, but the female, with the orange replaced by yellow and the head a more muted gray, was equally lovely.

Canary-winged Finch (*Melanodera melanodera*) – This is an especially striking and attractive bird of far southern South America and the Falkland Islands. Known as Black-throated Finch in A.O.U. taxonomy, we had wonderful views of several males in the low vegetation on Carcass Island in the Falklands. A few others were seen briefly by the airstrip outside Stanley the next day. The subspecies endemic to the Falklands, *melanodera*, is the only form we can expect to find on this tour/cruise route, which makes it a de facto target bird during our time in the Falklands.

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – A common South American bird that reaches all way to the tip of the continent.

Troupials & Allies (*Icteridae*)

Long-tailed Meadowlark (*Sturnella loyca*) – We enjoyed wonderful studies of several red-breasted males on the short grass at Saunders and Carcass islands in the Falklands.

MAMMALS

Hares & Rabbits (*Leporidae*)

European Hare (I) (*Lepus capensis*) – This is an introduced animal to the Falklands, and we found it common on both Saunders and Carcass islands. When rabbits and hares are introduced to island ecosystems, the results are usually disastrous. Voracious and with an ability to propagate quickly, these animals are capable of changing the composition and quantity of the vegetative landscape dramatically.

European Rabbit (I) (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) – Like the hare, the rabbit is an introduced species to South America. And also like the hare, it has become an obvious pest. On our morning visit to Tierra del Fuego National Park, we found the little “bunnies” very common along the main thoroughfare through the park. While one would hope for the best, the destructive capacity of these animals probably means that the park’s native flora has sustained substantial damage.

Guanaco (*Lama guanicoe*) – A native animal of southern South America, this camel relative was seen in small groups on the drive to Ushuaia from Rio Grande. While this part of the trip was entirely unplanned (for everybody coming in from Buenos Aires, but who couldn’t make it because of the airport closure in Ushuaia), the sighting of these animals, plus the spectacular scenery, certainly made the long detour worthwhile.

Right Whales (*Balaenidae*)

Southern Right Whale (*Eubalaena australis*) – We encountered this species three or four times during the cruise, but the best experience was with an animal on our last afternoon in the South Shetlands that surfaced frequently and allowed the ship to get within close proximity.

Rorqual Whales (*Baleanopteridae*)

Fin Whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) – This was the most commonly encountered large whale of the trip. We saw this species well on several occasions, most notably between the Falklands and South Georgia and in the waters around Antarctica.

Antarctic Minke Whale (*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*) – Individuals were seen on several occasions, but none particularly close, in Antarctica and the South Shetland Islands.

Humpback Whale (*Megaptera novae-angliae*) – We enjoyed nice views of an adult animal while en route to Devils’s Island. Most interesting was that it was apparently interacting with a pod of nearby Killer Whales. Unlike animals of the Pacific Ocean, which display dark undersides to the pectoral flippers, humpbacks of the southern Atlantic Ocean display white undersides to the flippers.

Pilot & Killer Whales (*Globicephalidae*)

Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca* – This was a banner trip for this species. Once we reached Antarctica, we found at least one pod of these magnificent animals every day. At least two types were noted. Among the memories associated with this species was the group we came upon en route to Devil Island that was interacting with a humpback whale. In this pod we saw a number of younger animals and at least two larger adults. The other experience was an unforgettable encounter in the

South Shetland Islands with a family group that allowed close approach after they had apparently attacked a smaller sea mammal. We enjoyed plenty of photographic moments of animals at close range. We even witnessed a few breaches.

Dolphins (*Delphinidae*)

Dusky Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*) – This was the most often encountered dolphin species of the trip this year. It is most often found in the protected waters of the Cape Horn and Tierra del Fuego archipelagos as well as offshore from the South American continent. We saw a couple groups in the Beagle Channel and others at sea around the Falkland Islands.

Hourglass Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus cruciger*) – This is the most pelagic, deep-water loving of the dolphin species we encountered on our cruise. The first individuals were seen east of the Falkland Islands one evening when we were stopped for a fin whale. Others were seen beyond South Georgia Island all the way to Antarctica. This species takes its name from the peculiar white markings that stand out in bold contrast to their otherwise black bodies.

Peale's Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus australis*) – Another nearshore species, we saw this species on two occasions. The first was outside the Beagle Channel part way to the Falkland Islands on the evening of January 7. The second encounter was near the end of the trip coming across the Drake Passage as we approached the mainland.

Commerson's Dolphin (*Cephalorhynchus commersonii*) – Commerson's Dolphin, a beautifully marked black and white animal, is most closely affiliated with the nearshore waters of the South American mainland and the Falkland Islands. The only sighting of the trip was of a couple of animals in the surf at Saunder's Island.

Sea Lions & Fur Seals (*Otaridae*)

Southern Sea Lion (*Otaria byronia*) – A group of young animals in the water outside the Beagle Channel may have been the only ones seen. Others possibly at Saunder's Island in the Falklands.

Antarctic Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus gazella*) – The sight of huge numbers of fur seals crowding the beaches of South Georgia and Antarctica will be among our longest lasting memories. At the onset of the Antarctic summer, thousands of fur seals come ashore to establish territories, breed, and raise pups. As the process played out again this summer, the sounds of barking, scolding, and growling seals permeated the air at practically every landing site, while infant and one year old animals, eternally curious, approached within inches of us. Amazing scenes of thousands of penguins and fur seals thronging the beaches of South Georgia, against backdrops of ice-clad mountains and stranded icebergs must rank among the most dazzling of nature's spectacles.

True Seals (*Phocidae*)

Southern Elephant Seal (*Mirounga leonine*) – As the largest seal in the Antarctic, the elephant seal is an impressive beast. By this point in the Antarctic summer, most of the large males have returned to the sea, leaving the beaches to be occupied by females, immatures, and molting individuals. The greatest gathering was noted at Gold Harbor, where hundreds of animals lined the beach like rows of enormous sausages. Several more mature, but not fully adult, males were present and even engaged in some half-hearted sparring, much to the delight of our group.

Crabeater Seal (*Lobodon carcinophagus*) – Along with the leopard and Weddell seals, the Crabeater is an animal most at home in the true Antarctic. We never saw many of these animals, but several on ice floes were noted from south of the South Orkney Islands into the Weddell Sea.

Leopard Seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*) – Few animals of the Antarctic garner such respect and admiration as the leopard seal. Reptilian in appearance, and with a mouth armed with sharp teeth, the “sea leopard” is also a feared animal known for its voracious appetite for penguin meat. We had nothing to fear, of course, and we had several fine views of animals hauled out on ice floes. One of the most memorable sightings was of a sleeping animal on the ice at Paulette Island.

Weddell Seal (*Leptonychotes weddelli*) – We didn’t actually see more than a handful of Weddells, but the one on the beach at Brown Bluff, and another animal, sound asleep on the beach at Hope Bay, were so close as to be able to be touched (although we stopped just short of that!).

Deer (*Cervidae*)

Reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus*) – This non-native animal was first introduced to South Georgia Island by Norwegian whalers in the early years of the 20th century. Like so many other cases, an exotic animal brought to a pristine island ecosystem is a recipe for ecological disaster. While the effects of the animals on the native flora were not known to us, the results must surely be adverse. Judging by the herds we saw (an admittedly beautiful sight) at Godthul Bay, Fortuna Bay, and Royal Bay, the species appears to be doing quite well here.

BUENOS AIRES PRE-TRIP BIRDLIST

Key: C = Costanera Sur; O = Otamendi Preserve (including city parks in Buenos Aires)

Grebes (*Podicipedidae*)

Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Cormorants (*Phalacrocoracidae*)

Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – C; O

Hérons & Egrets (*Ardeidae*)

Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) – C; O

Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – C; O

Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*) – O

Black-crowned Night-Heron – O

Ibises & Spoonbills (*Threskiornithidae*)

White-faced Ibis (*Plegadis chihi*) – O

Ducks, Geese & Swans (*Anatidae*)

Black-necked Swan (*Cygnus melanocoryphus*) – O

Speckled Teal (*Anas flavirostris*) – O

Rosy-billed Pochard (*Netta peposaca*) – O

New World Vultures (*Cathartidae*)

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – O

Hawks, Eagles & Kites (*Accipitridae*)

Long-winged Harrier (*Circus buffoni*) - O

Harris's Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) - C

Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*) – C; O

Caracaras & Falcons (*Falconidae*)

Southern Caracara (*Caracara plancus*) – O

Chimango Caracara (*Milvago chimango*) – O

Guans (*Cracidae*)

Dusky-legged Guan (*Penelope obscura*) – O

Limpkin (*Aramidae*)

Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*) - O

Rails & Gallinules (*Rallidae*)

Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*) - O

Plumbeous Rail (*Pardirallus sanguinolentus*) - O

White-winged Coot (*Fulica leucoptera*) – O

Red-gartered Coot (*Fulica armillata*) - O

Plovers & Lapwings (*Charadriidae*)

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*) – O

Gulls (*Laridae*)

Kelp Gull (*Larus dominicanus*)

Pigeons & Doves (*Columbidae*)

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*) – C; O

Picazuro Pigeon (*Patagioenas picazuro*) – C; O

Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*) – C; O

Picui Ground-Dove (*Columbina picui*) – C; O

Parrots & Parakeets (*Psittacidae*)

White-eyed Parakeet (*Aratinga leucophthalma*) - O

Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*) – C; O

Yellow-chevroned Parakeet (*Brotogeris chiriri*) – O

Cuckoos (*Cuculidae*)

Guira Cuckoo (*Guira guira*) - C

Hummingbirds (*Trochilidae*)

Glittering-bellied Emerald (*Chlorostilbon aureoventris*) – C; O

Gilded Sapphire (*Hylocharis chrysura*) – O

Kingfishers (*Alcedinidae*)

Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle Americana*) - O

Woodpeckers & Allies (*Picidae*)

Checkered Woodpecker (*Picoides mixtus*) – C; O
Green-barred Woodpecker (*Colaptes melanochloros*) – C; O

Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers (*Furnariidae*)

Rufous Hornero (*Furnarius rufus*) – C; O
Wren-like Rushbird (*Phleocryptes melanops*) – O
Sooty-fronted Spinetail (*Synallaxis frontalis*) – O
Freckle-breasted Thornbird (*Phacellodomus dorsalis*) – C; O
Narrow-billed Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*) – C
Rufous-capped Antshrike (*Thamnophilus ruficapillus*) - O

Tyrant Flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*)

Small-billed Elaenia (*Elaenia parvirostris*) – C; O
Warbling Doradito (*Pseudocolopteryx flaviventris*) – O
Many-colored Rush-Tyrant (*Tachuris rubigastria*) – O
Bran-colored Flycatcher (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) – O
Spectacled Tyrant (*Hymenops perspicillatus*) – C; O
Yellow-browed Tyrant (*Satrapa icterophrys*) - O
Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – C; O
Streaked Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) - O
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – C
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (*Tyrannus savana*) –C; O
White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus* – C; O

Swallows (*Hirundinidae*)

White-rumped Swallow (*Tachycineta leucorrhoa*) – C; O
Brown-chested Martin (*Progne tapera*) – C; O
Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) – C; O
Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) – C; O
Tawny-headed Swallow (*Alopochelidon fucata*) – C; O

Wrens (*Troglodytidae*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) – C; O

Mockingbirds (*Mimidae*)

Chalk-browed Mockingbird (*Mimus saturninus*) - C; O

Thrushes & Allies (*Turdidae*)

Rufous-bellied Thrush (*Turdus rufiventris*) – C; O
Creamy-bellied Thrush (*Turdus amaurochalinus*) – C; O

Gnatcatchers (*Poliophtilidae*)

Masked Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila dumicola*) – C; O

Starlings (*Sturnidae*)

European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) – C; O

Old World Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) – C; O

Vireos (*Vireonidae*)

Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*) – C; O

Siskins (*Fringillidae*)

Hooded Siskin (*Carduelis magellanica*) – C; O

New World Warblers (*Parulidae*)

Tropical Parula (*Parula pitiayumi*) - O

Masked Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*) – C; O

Tanagers (*Thraupidae*)

Sayaca Tanager (*Thraupis sayaca*) - O

Blue-and-yellow Tanager (*Thraupis bonariensis*) - O

Diademed Tanager (*Stephanophorus diadematus*) - O

Sparrows & Seedeaters (*Emberizidae*)

Black and Rufous Warbling-Finch (*Poospiza nigrorufa*) – C; O

Double-collared Seedeater (*Sporophila caerulea*) – C; O

Saffron Finch (*Sicalis flaveola*) – C; O

Grassland Yellow-Finch (*Sicalis luteola*) – O

Great Pampa Finch (*Embernagra platensis*) – O

Red-crested Cardinal (*Paroaria coronata*) – C

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – C; O

Saltators & Allies (*Cardinalidae*)

Grayish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*)

Golden-billed Saltator (*Saltator aurantiirostris*)

Troupials & Allies (*Icteridae*)

Yellow-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius thilius*) – O

White-browed Blackbird (*Sturnella superciliosa*) - O

Bay-winged Cowbird (*Molothrus badius*) – C

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – C; O

Epaulet Oriole (*Icterus cayenensis*) – O

Solitary Cacique (*Cacicus solitarius*) - O

Brown-and-yellow Marshbird (*Pseudoleistes virescens*) – O

Scarlet-headed Blackbird (*Amblyramphus holosericeus*) - O

SANTIAGO POST-TRIP BIRDLIST

Ibises & Spoonbills (*Threskiornithidae*)

Black-faced Ibis (*Theristicus melanopis*)

New World Vultures (*Cathartidae*)

Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*)

Hawks, Eagles & Kites (*Accipitridae*)

Variable Hawk (*Buteo polysoma*)

Caracaras & Falcons (*Falconidae*)

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)

New World Quails (*Odontophoridae*)

California Quail (I) (*Callipepla californica*)

Pigeons & Doves (*Columbidae*)

Rock Pigeon (I) (*Columba livia*)

Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*)

Black-winged Ground-Dove (*Metriopelia melanoptera*)

Parrots & Parakeets (*Psittacidae*)

Monk Parakeet (*Myiopsitta monachus*)

Hummingbirds (*Trochilidae*)

White-sided Hillstar (*Oreotrochilus leucopleurus*)

Woodpeckers & Allies (*Picidae*)

Chilean Flicker (*Colaptes pitius*)

Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers (*Furnariidae*)

Rufous-banded Miner (*Geositta rufipennis*)

Scale-throated Earthcreeper (*Upucerthia dumetaria*)

Bar-winged Cinclodes (*Cinclodes fuscus*)

Gray-flanked Cinclodes (*Cinclodes oustaleti*)

Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail (*Leptasthenura aegithaloides*)

Lesser Canastero (*Asthenes pyrrholeuca*)

Cotingas (*Cotingidae*)

Rufous-tailed Plantcutter (*Phytotoma rara*)

Tyrant Flycatchers (*Tyrannidae*)

White-crested Elaenia (*Elaenia albiceps*)

Tufted Tit-Tyrant (*Anairetes parulus*)

Fire-eyed Diucon (*Xolmis pyrope*)

Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant (*Agriornis montanus*)

Great Shrike-Tyrant (*Agriornis lividus*)

Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola rufivertex*)

White-browed Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola albilora*)

Cinereous Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola cinereus*)

Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maculirostris*)

Swallows (*Hirundinidae*)

Chilean Swallow (*Tachycineta meyeni*)

Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiodelichon cyanoleuca*)

Wrens (*Troglodytidae*)

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)

Mockingbirds (*Mimidae*)

Chilean Mockingbird (*Mimus thenca*)

Thrushes & Allies (*Turdidae*)

Austral Thrush (*Turdus falcklandii*)

Old World Sparrows (*Passeridae*)

House Sparrow (I) (*Passer domesticus*)

Siskins (*Fringillidae*)

Black-chinned Siskin (*Carduelis barbata*)

Sparrows & Seed eaters (*Emberizidae*)

Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch (*Phrygilus gayi*)

Mourning Sierra-Finch (*Phrygilus fruticeti*)

Band-tailed Sierra-Finch (*Phrygilus alaudinus*)

Common Diuca-Finch (*Diuca diuca*)

Greater Yellow-Finch (*Sicalis auriventris*)

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*)

Troupials & Allies (*Icteridae*)

Long-tailed Meadowlark (*Sturnella loyca*)

Austral Blackbird (*Curaeus curaeus*)