

Orion Expedition Cruises – New Zealand and Sub Antarctica

Isolated, windswept, beautiful and fragile, New Zealand's sub-Antarctic islands are unique and irreplaceable, a privileged visit. Described by the United Nations Environment Program as "The most diverse and extensive of all sub-Antarctic archipelagos", all five island groups - the Bounty Islands, the Antipodes Islands, the Snares Islands, the Auckland Islands and Campbell Island - were honored with World Heritage status in 1998.

These locations are a birders and photographers paradise. The New Zealand sub-Antarctic islands are blessed with the most significant populations of many species, such as the Southern Royal Albatross, the Yellow-Eyed Penguin and the New Zealand Sea Lion. They are particularly notable for the large number and variety of pelagic seabirds and penguins that nest there. There are 126 bird species in total, including 40 seabirds, five of which breed nowhere else in the world.

The five island groups that make up the sub-Antarctic islands are located in the Southern Ocean, south to south-east of New Zealand. Spanning six degrees of latitude, from 47 to 52 degrees south, the five island groups occupy the stormy latitudes of the Roaring Forties and Furious Fifties, known also as the Albatross Latitudes.

Much like Orion's Antarctic explorations, itineraries, landings and access to these areas will be influenced by permits and prevailing weather conditions.

New Zealand & Sub-Antarctic Wildlife Adventure

2010 Departure - December 8

2011 Departures- January 15, 20 December

Protected by the Southern Ocean, secluded and seldom visited, the Australian and New Zealand Sub-Antarctic Islands, recognized by UNESCO as one of the world's precious regions of unique biodiversity, will be visited by *Orion*.

These remote Nature Reserves enjoy World Heritage status, recognized for their volcanic and glacial geological formations and extraordinary diversity of flora and fauna - much of which is endangered or recovering since being discovered and later plundered in the late 1700's and early 1800's by sealers and whalers.

Home to over half of the world's seabirds, some of which exist nowhere else, this wildlife paradise contains 40% of the world's albatross species and 50% of the world's penguin species including the endangered yellow-eyed penguin, plus hundreds of thousands of other endemic birds - petrels, prions

and cormorants.

At Snares Island there is every expectation that guests will see Sooty Shearwaters, the endemic Snares Crested Penguins, Snares Fernbird and Tomtits. On Enderby Island expect to see pipits, parakeets and plovers, Hooker's Sea Lions, and perhaps even the Auckland Island Flightless Teal and Sub-Antarctic Snipe. Campbell Island, home to the Southern Royal Albatrosses, has the highest diversity of breeding albatrosses of any island in the world.

And then there are plant species that have to be seen to be believed, including 5 meter high tree daisies on Snares, giants compared to their relatives in more temperate climates. With convenient embarkation in Bluff (Invercargill, NZ) or Hobart, Orion will head south to visit (depending on voyage) Macquarie, Campbell, Stewart, Snares and Auckland Islands as well as spending time exploring New Zealand's beautiful Fiordlands (including Milford and Doubtful Sounds).

Adventures of Lord Howe & Aotearoa

This 11 night voyage features a myriad of islands, beautiful bays and beaches, remnant and active volcanoes, exquisite wine country, calm harbours and exploration in vibrant Auckland. Explore onboard *Orion* from Brisbane visiting World Heritage listed Lord Howe Island and Balls Pyramid, the stunning Bay of Islands, White Island and Marlborough Sounds enroute to Wellington.