

New Zealand Subantarctic Islands 12 Nov – 4 Dec 2017

... a personal trip report by *Jesper Hornskov goodbirdmail(at)gmail.com* © this draft 24 Jan 2018

I joined the 2017 version of the Heritage Expedition 'Birding Down Under' voyage – The official trip reports covering this and five others are accessible via the link <https://www.heritage-expeditions.com/trip/birding-downunder-2018/> ... and I heartily recommend reading all of them in order to get an idea of how different each trip is. While you are at it, accounts of less comprehensive trips are posted elsewhere on the Heritage Expedition website, e.g. <https://www.heritage-expeditions.com/trip/macquarie-island-expedition-cruise-new-zealand/>

The report is written mostly to help digest a wonderful trip, but if other people – Team Members as well as prospective travelers – enjoy it, find it helpful, or amusing, then so much the better...

Itinerary:

12 Nov: arrived Invercargill after a journey that saw me leave home @08h00 GST + 1 on 10th...

To walk off the many hours spent on planes and in airports I grabbed a free map at the Heritage Expedition recommended Kelvin Hotel and set out on a stroll - did Queen's Park 19h05-20h15, then walked on along Queen's Drive skirting the SE corner of Thomson's Bush (an attractive patch of native forest which it was, alas, too late in the day to explore) and back to town along the embankment of Waihopai river as it was getting dark. Back at hotel 21h45 & managed to grab a trendy pita bread for dinner just before the joint closed.

13 Nov: met my trip companions-to-be Sander & Steve at breakfast and they kindly invited me to join them on their morning's excursion near Invercargill.

Once we'd found the end of Bryson Str we had a quick look at Bushy Point Conservation Area 08h45-10h05, moving on after seeing Fernbird by the fence from the rise overlooking New River estuary inlet (where a scope would have been handy!), and then did Daffodil Bay area, walking Rover Track as far as the Oreti river lookout until 12h05.

We had hoped to extend the car hire period beyond the 14h00 drop-off but this did not work out, and in retrospect – as we mainly owing to inaccurate gen, hm-hm, failed to make the best use of the remaining couple of hours – it would have been better to have simply stayed by the Oreti river (or perhaps to have driven on to nearby Whaler's Bay). As it was we managed little more than a quick look at a pool behind an industrial development off Lake Str, beyond the railway parallel to the road S to Bluff.

After a rest back at Kelvin Hotel I again did Queen's Park 17h20-19h05, enjoying the antics of Tuis centering on a stand of eucalyptus while trying to take on board just how completely the scene was dominated by introduced species of birds.

After I'd met my roommate Sam the Heritage Expedition part of my trip started with buffet dinner and intro pep talk by Rodney Russ, our Expedition Leader & founder of Heritage Expeditions. It turned out our trip would mark the end of an era as Rodney would be handing over the reins to his sons...

We were informed that there would be an 'unavoidable' delay to our joining the ship, Spirit of Enderby, at Bluff.

14 Nov: a pre-breakfast visit to Queen's Park 07h00-07h50 (calm, a noticeable Southland edge to the air, partial cloud cover) followed by post-breakfast handing over of the carefully labelled luggage and a group visit to the nearby Southland Museum.

After lunch back at the hotel, rather than hang out in the lobby (regrettably the delayed departure for Bluff did not result in our being allowed to keep our rooms beyond 10h00) or go shopping I did the Invercargill Estuary Walkway 13h20-14h30 – doing so I met our expedition bird guide Chris who'd had a tangible aim in doing the full circuit: a Northern Shoveler had been reported from the area, and this would have been a new NZ bird for him.

After group transfer by bus to Bluff we hung about aboard the ship and weren't out of the harbour until 21h15, unfortunately missing out on the much looked-forward-to Foveaux Strait / Stewart Island crossing intro to our seabirds (and, barring a stray at Snares, our one chance of seeing Fiordland Crested Penguin *Eudyptes pachyrhynchus*, sighted in these waters on most Birding Down Under voyages!).

15 Nov: pre-breakfast finally got in a bit of seabird time on deck. During breakfast c07h30 it was announced that Snares Island was in sight and that we had thus caught up – gentle seas had made this easier.

We did our 1st Zodiac cruise after safety briefing. The sea remained gentle, and cruise skippered by Chris Todd was enjoyable, taking us close to shore for penguins, through a rock tunnel, into caves and right to the very end of a forest gully for Fernbird and more penguins, incl some out on limbs of *Olearia* trees.

Departed Snares for Auckland Island at 12h15. On deck 12h15-13h00 & 13h40-19h00.

16 Nov: at dawn at anchor off Enderby Island at Port Ross, in shelter for a NW wind 'unexpected and not unexpected' (Rodney). At 08h15 it was announced that departure postponed from 09h00 to 11h00 owing to current miserable weather and forecast of improved weather in the afternoon. Everyone had to go through exacting bio-security: thoroughly cleaning gear, where necessary using tweezers to get at any seeds or bits of vegetation imbedded in Velcro, shaking out and vacuuming bags, and rinsing boots in biocide Vircon tub on the way to gangway.

Both walk options were supervised: first across island on the narrow boardwalk, then either back the same way or on to the far end of island before looping back above cliffs into wind.

It was raining as we walked across the island but this stopped soon enough, with only intermittent dripping later, and some sun. The longer (10-11km?) walk took us through a varied landscape along the top of sea cliffs to a point with a memorial to victims of a ship wreck (very

low key: just a stone marked by a 'pole', a cross with the horizontal bar gone); after a sit-down snack onwards, crossing a couple of streams, seeing more parakeets, NZ Falcon, a Yellow-eyed Penguin on guard duty in the forest, close-up shags of different ages, and Giant Petrels zooming along the cliff top real close. Back at the beach an optional diversion in search of (more) Subantarctic Snipe...

I made a point of being on the last Zodiac shuttle back to the ship after a final sit-down overlooking the beach. The Hooker's Sea Lions there were intermittently and somewhat half-heartedly scrapping. We had been instructed that to simply ignore these large animals would be the best way to avoid trouble (and the official 2010 trip report states 'seemingly menacing, [the sea lions] were in fact harmless and everyone enjoyed interacting with them'), but this proved easier said than done: while heading past a narrow stretch of beach to get to the Zodiac at least two of us only narrowly escaped being bitten by an assertive, fortunately rather small individual, and it was later admitted that one of the guides on a recent trip had in fact been bitten (but had been spared more than torn clothing and bruised skin; owing to the risk of infection the merest scratch can have serious consequences).

Back on board 18h45, a full 45 min ahead of deadline stipulated by the strict Department of Conservation landing permit. The dinner was rescheduled from 20h00 to 19h30 but as that announcement had been undecipherable to those on deck I was late.

17 Nov: winds gusting to Force 8 as we were on deck for the spectacular passage into Carnley Harbour 06h00-07h00, the mountainous, strictly no-landings Adams Island, home to Auckland Islands Rail *Lewinia muelleri*, to our S. At anchor at Tagua Bay post-breakfast.

The Zodiacs shuttled us across to the tidal stony beach for a trudge up through nice, gnarled forest to the historic coast watchers' hut and observation shelter via a lookout with simultaneous views of both bays. Pigs, mice & cats plague the island and as a consequence very few native birds are present. At list time that night the keen birdwatchers were frustrated to be informed that Yellow-crowned Parakeet had been seen...

By the time I was back on deck post-lunch at 13h50 the ship was on the move and we had already exited Carnley Harbour to cover the 360 miles to Macquarie Island. Historically, this crossing could take 2-3 months (!) against the prevailing weather...

Except for a shortish cup-a-soup w/ biscuits break I stayed out until 19h30, when a simple meal of pasta was served. More people than expected turned out for the meal so the portions were a good deal smaller than usual ('usual' serving size already reflected Rodney's desire to avoid food wastage). The sea was lively, and we were admonished over the PA to be 'very, very, very careful'; the ship juddered, corkscrewed, did steep climbs followed by spray-raising thuds, yawed – when I moved indoors for sustenance the movements were more of a problem than they had been outside behind the bridge: walking along the corridors and down stairwells involved planned rushes, 'one hand for the ship at all times', and avoiding getting scalded when filling (for safety reasons only half-filling, actually) the tea cup was easier said than done.

18 Nov: pre-breakfast on bridge 07h15-08h30; post-breakfast behind bridge 09h20-13h00 (occasional shower w/ reduced visibility); post-lunch behind bridge 14h40-19h00, by which

time sea calmer but still with the occasional thud-and-judder of the ship as we continued towards Macquarie Isl.

...In contrast, on this day in 2013 'the north-west wind continued to howl and rage, and the seas were spectacular, with waves crashing over the bow as [the ship] plunged into mountainous seas', 'the albatross[es] were dwarfed by the white-capped swells', and then the decision was made to return to shelter overnight in the lee of the Aucklands!

19 Nov: out post-shower at 06h00 but still too dark so went back in to get coffee; out again 06h45 to find visibility c1km, Macquarie Isl (still) not visible – little wind, no birds. Out until 07h40.

Anchored off Australian research station at Buckles Bay to allow six Macquarie bound personnel to disembark and to pick up our five escorts. Then moved on S along E coast to penguin colonies at Sandy Bay where we anchored, doing two landings 11h30-13h30 and 15h15-18h30. Weather firmly on our side – 'so calm; amazing!' commented Andrea the Head Ranger while we waited to get in the Zodiacs.

Our gentle landing was in stark contrast to the 2016 trip when any attempt at landing would have been 'irresponsibly dangerous' even after the ship hung back at Aucklands for a extra day hoping for the weather to improve...

During the morning landing I walked S along the beach to a stream at the far end, as instructed avoiding to get too close to a couple of Northern Giant Petrel chicks on the edge of the tussock grass slope, and then up the build-to-last boardwalk to the viewing platform at the 30,000 pairs strong Royal Penguin colony. I stayed here, watching the goings-on until timed-out by our minders. Knowledge gleaned from explanatory boards - complete with sketches of penguin body language - enhanced an experience if anything made more authentic by the wind-drifted drizzle.

Incidents / behavior witnessed included

... egg-grabs by the patrolling skuas, two successful and one where the robber dropped the egg back into the colony without attempting to retrieve it.

... one of a pair of squabbling skuas tumbled down off the tussock grass edge to find itself amongst the penguins, which didn't peck it in earnest, and the skua was not in any great hurry to extract itself.

... the thin-walk by commuting penguins. Mostly commuters were allowed to pass through the throng unmolested, but occasional ones were pecked viciously; one was even grabbed by the neck and flung to ground.

... gentle pair-bond neck-pecking.

... full call-display during which the penguin moves its head side-to-side nearly ear-to-flipper.

On the explanatory board it said that males upon reaching maturity would return to where they were hatched (a week ahead of the females) and that younger birds had to make do with nest sites on the edge of the colony where it was less safe; this seemed a bit contradictory, but I never had a chance to pursue this with an expert – will the penguins gradually move towards

the center of the colony as they mature, or do males explore deeper into the colony to potentially capture any desirable spot?

The penguins showed a fair degree of variation, and one showed full Macaroni traits; as this individual was spotted only just before we 'had to' leave not much was made of it and although it was close apparently no photographic evidence was obtained.

Along the beach both King and Royal Penguins were arriving and departing and loafing, and it was both impossible and unnecessary to keep your distance – some birds would come up to you inquisitively while others ignored you as they sorted out their issues both by stylized pecking and more forthright hostilities.

Post-lunch I went the other way from the landing spot, first to a rock pool spit with Macquarie Shags (as it turned out, all immatures), then slowly up to hauled-out Elephant Seal bulls doing very occasional fighting but mostly doing nothing much – nose scratch, flank scratch, sneeze, bellow... One skua pecked sideways under the nose of one of these giants to get at the dribbled snot: a fair few of the seals were snotty-nosed. Later I saw one skua wandering along a line of weaners pecking at any scratch or wound it noticed, painfully waking up the dozing pups one after the other.

Further along, around the corner from the Zodiac landing spot, a rope had been stretched across the beach to mark how close to the colony of King Penguins we were allowed. There were incubating birds, woollies, and immatures. One immature differed from the others in having shed all its 'wool' without acquiring any yellow on the bill.

Dozens of penguins were bathing just offshore; one particularly inquisitive individual walked up to me & nibbled at my knee (after I'd retracted my fingers! Jaap allowed it to nibble his fingers and lived to tell the tale; Leani had her camera lens nibbled as she was video-ing the bird, obtaining very amusing footage).

Some light rain did not prevent most of us from wringing every last minute from the visit. After enjoying the King Penguin colony I still had time to wander back along the beach to where the Royals were loafing and commuting up to the slippery gully leading to the colony. Using just my mobile phone I joined Rafa and Julian on the edge of the beach and was able to get close-up images of birds doing their stylized pecking. Eventually expedition staff had to resort to whistling at us to make us return and board the Zodiac.

Fog descended shortly after we got back on the ship, obscuring the picturesque headlands in what would have been a most fitting end to the day, but...

In the pre-dinner quiet King Penguins were active on the port side: diving alongside, surfacing to look up at the ship, occasionally vocalizing.

Post-dinner I went out again to watch the seaward side and was rewarded beyond all reasonable expectation when a male Killer Whale surfaced at most 50m away. It was on the move, and although the tall dorsal fin could be seen repeatedly again as the animal headed S none of the other team members summoned by banging on the library windows got comparable views as it kept going.

I stayed out until 22h15 – sea calm, mist.

20 Nov: we cruised S as far as Lusitania Bay ('not that Lusitania!') from our overnight anchorage off Sandy Bay. The King Penguin colony there is 150,000 pairs strong but unfortunately no Zodiac cruise or landing was scheduled, and our sail-past, turn & sail-past again was just that little too far out to sea to really overwhelm. 'The rusting boilers on the shore bore witness to a historically different approach to the animals here', as the official 2014 trip report writer noted. The penguins' calls were audible above the noise of the ship's engine, and there were wafts of guano fragrance...

Fog closed in as we headed N so I guess we were lucky to see the colony at all: calm, not a single white-cap.

On deck again 07h40-08h00...

Then Buckles Bay from 08h25, with a landing and guided tour of The Isthmus (incl the unforgiving W side where we saw Giant Petrels of both species deal with a dead Elephant Seal) and the ANARE research base during 09h55-14h00. Owing to low cloud we never even glimpsed the island's mountainous interior, and I was told by Andrea the Head Ranger that inland hikes are never scheduled for day visitors, partly because there'd not be enough man/woman power to properly oversee activities, partly because weather in any case so rarely would allow such a hike.

Before landing I was lucky enough to see an Antarctic Fulmar which came in to investigate close to the ship. The entire voyage yielded only three of four sightings, and this was the only one I managed.

I was in the first Zodiac to land, nine of us tourists plus an expedition staff member met on the beach by our ranger / volunteer guide for the morning. We first walked S to climb Razorback Ridge via wooden steps reached after passing a wind tunnel gap through which breeding Gentoo Penguins could be seen – a long enough climb out of the damp wind to set one on the path to overheating, but when one arrived at the platform at the top after falling back to sensibly take off one's overtrousers one was greeted by a somewhat unwelcoming cool breeze. Giant Petrels whizzing by, Gentoo Penguins were below, and we got as much of a view of the rest of the island as we were going to get. Eyewatering - though at c15 knots moderate for 'Macca' – wind, a bit of drizzle. Heading back down out of the wind it seemed warm! Climbing Razorback Ridge repeatedly and / or doing an elephant seal dodge jog along the track below was pretty much the outdoor exercise options for the station's residents.

Skirting the Magnetics Records Exclusion Zone marked by a length of rope on the edge of the track we then reached the W-facing beach. Even the still woolly-looking juvenile Northern Giant Petrels have the menacing white iris. One particularly manic individual was on top of the seal carcass, wings spread in ownership claim & pale eyes staring a psychopath's challenge, and we saw some fierce attempted pecking-order score-settling.

On the edge of the water two baby seals were fighting – from their fighting we knew they were males!

Reaching the well-appointed canteen we took our boots off to enjoy a not desperately needed scones-and-tea break and chatted briefly to staff members, some of them homebound and due to join our ship.

Outside again we witnessed the launching of a weather balloon, something the Macquarie station apparently pioneered and have now kept up twice daily for 70 years. The white recording boxes cost 130 A\$ apiece, we were told, and takes the relevant measurements until it drops after up to 170kms. Team member Greg was thrilled to receive a nicked balloon as a souvenir... The meteorologist put on a good show explaining things and was duly applauded, causing him to remark that the only applause he'd got in his previous job was when he left.

We then nipped up an alley behind the Met section, seeing the recording equipment in the yard. Just outside the log fence (the station is heavily fortified to avoid being overrun by Elephant Seals) was a colony of Gentoo Penguins, with some twin chicks already two-thirds the size of the parents. Upon hearing that another of our sub-teams had seen Rockhoppers at the far end of the beach we went there, dodging Elephant Seals – we got acceptable if not close views of the penguins, and photographed the research base from a different angle, this time with loafing seals in the foreground.

Next stop was the so-called museum, more of a store room really, home to a vat, various rusty bits of metal, some ancient bottles, AND to the teeth of the sperm whale which had expired on the Isthmus beach back in February. We had seen its jaw on the beach earlier and were now given a chance to feel the weight of a tooth.

One final stop was by three rusting distillers which had been used to render down both Elephant Seal and Royal Penguin (not, apparently, Kings: according to the explanatory board, they were 'too bloody').

An interesting excursion which as usual ended with us getting into a Zodiac, this time from a bouldery beach – unsurefootedness / poor timing caused wet feet for some... En route back to the ship we detoured past a point where more Rockhoppers lurked, out of view and unapproachable from the base.

We soon set out for Campbell Island, at 380 nautical miles a slightly longer crossing than Auckland to 'Macca' but not against the prevailing weather.

Back on deck from 15h15: Macquarie Island disappearing behind us, low clouds, a few whitecaps only; back out (after a break) 18h45-19h30: still foggy, some whitecaps, gentle rolling motion; back out 21h00-21h45: less foggy, hardly a whitecap to be seen, still gentle rolling motion by ship...

21 Nov: out by 06h30: 8/8 clouds, good visibility, only a few whitecaps – already 40 nautical miles back in to NZ waters. Not too many birds but at 08h15 an adult *exulans* Wandering Albatross passed at <100m when I cunningly lingered outside to avoid having to queue for my breakfast.

On deck again 09h15-13h05; post-lunch again 13h35-18h00 (when I went in to do mandatory bio-security inspection) & 18h35-19h35, and post-dinner again 20h25-22h00.

It was good to see the outline of Campbell Island heave into view before finally calling it a day, still Grey Petrel-less but pleased after a gentle day at sea with many good looks at various seabirds.

22 Nov: Campbell Island. At dawn at anchor off Beeman Base at Perseverance Harbour since a few hours ago: a bit windy, almost foggy w/ low clouds.

At briefing informed that long walk off on account of settled fog... however, as we came back out on deck clouds were tending to lift, with the sun soon hitting slopes across the water from Beeman Base.

Back on ship 11h50 after a mostly sunny Zodiac cruise along shore positioning for close encounters with shag and flightless teal. During stop to see Loneliest Tree in the World Julian got on to a snipe directly: I had to wade back through the stream when Sander shouted, somewhat unintentionally working as beater and flushing the bird back towards the assembling group. The bird - 'enigmatic but recolonising', in the words of the 2014 official trip report writer - flew 1-2m, giving perfectly adequate views in superb sunlight. A landing to retrieve a memorial gave Joseph the DOC Rep a chance to hone his stick skills when an aspiring beachmaster sea lion repeatedly took an interest...

After more cruising we doubled back to see a Kelp Gull eat the mussel it had just air-dropped on to rocks in order to crack the shell; we also edged close to a small raft of shags. En route back to the ship we got splashed, pretty much the first time on the whole voyage for this to happen. Our driver was Matt, temporarily relieved of his duties as chef.

Back in the Zodiacs post-lunch at 13h30, and eventually back on ship 18h05 post-hike to Col Lyall Saddle along a boardwalk not quite as built-to-last as the Aussie one on 'Macca' but still impressive. Conditions were not ideal – low, drizzle-laden cloud intermittently obscured things and it was pretty windy... but it could easily have been worse. Probably the cancelled longer hike would have been at least a partial success with intermittent good views during the morning? Not far beyond the currently unmanned research station we lost time to a sea lion bull guarding a moribund, skin-and-bones female lying on the opposite side of the boardwalk – he stood his ground when Lisle, who was in the lead, pointed a stick at him, repeatedly lashing out fangs bared and breathing fishy breath, and ditto when he had the contents of a water bottle squirted at him. Tough Guy Joseph was summoned, but initially all that was achieved was the exact opposite of what we hoped: the bull now got on to the boardwalk instead of crashing down into the forest. He humped along 20-30m, and there was no way we could get round as the vegetation on the steep-ish slope was dense and deep. Anxious team members asked what we should do if the sea lion attacked – 'run!'. That would of course be impossible given how boxed-in on the narrow boardwalk we were, so we recycled the old joke that anyone who could outrun the slowest team member would be fine...

Eventually Lisle, Chris & Joseph managed to outnumber the belligerent animal and we could press on up the hill. The stunted forest soon gave way to bushes and herb fields, and Pete Dean spotted a snipe, up on the boardwalk before covering a few feet from it – a bit of a crush to see it but I was just that bit too far away to join, and anyway I expected to have time to look for my very own snipe(s) later on.

No view was to be had from the loop at the far end of the boardwalk so I sat out of the wind on one of the benches finishing the by now tepid contents of my thermos cup, then headed slowly down photographing flowers and watching the Southern Royal Albatrosses display, greet etc. One albatross crash-landed denting a tussock right by the boardwalk close to where I was loitering, then waddled over to its partner / colleague for some friendly greetings & preening; wonderful to see, but the session ended abruptly when he went too far, plucking a feather from her breast. That caused much mutual bill clattering, a domestic run-in of antagonism and outrage, and then she waddled off on up the slope. By then more and more albatrosses were appearing overhead ('not Kelp Gulls': Rafa), and all the while we kept getting close encounters with the friendly pipits which were walking along on the boardwalk, singing, calling & perching atop bushes. A very special place!

A medical emergency back at the ship had us rush back down the boardwalk rather than linger a little longer trying for (more) snipe, and we were all back on the ship and the ship was out past the head of the harbour by 19h00, turning N around the island to return to Auckland Island to rendezvous with helicopters to medivac our Second Engineer who'd suffered a stroke. Rodney held an obligatory briefing on this, saying that the weather forecast suggested the lifting-off of the sick man would be comparatively straight forward, and that if this proved to indeed be the case then we could pretty much catch up by combining our visits to Antipodes and Bounties into one intense day.

On deck 18h50-19h30 + 21h00-21h40: good views of Campbell Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Shag & lots of Cape Petrels as we were leaving...

23 Nov: on deck 06h40-08h20 – heading for Auckland Island to rendezvous with two helicopters from mainland NZ. Dr Robert had had a long night caring for the stricken man, frustrated by a language barrier which had meant that his detailed explanations and reassurances had been only perfunctorily translated into Russian by crew members drafted in as interpreters.

Post-breakfast on deck from 09h05: 1/8, less windy as we approach Auckland Islands to find the desired shelter.

The evacuation was done by 11h15 close in under Adams Island: we'd carefully maneuvered into an area of whitecap-free sea away from williwaws rushing down mountains and out of the Fly Harbour fiord, allowing one of the helicopters to edge close to lower the rescuer onto the area aft by the Zodiacs. The helicopter hovered nearby while the patient, on his feet rather than on a stretcher, was being readied for lift-off; when all was ready the waiting helicopter edged close again, the patient and the rescuer were hoisted up together, and with a parting 'mission

accomplished!' wave of the hand that was that: the helicopters swung N against a backdrop of brightly sunlit Auckland Rail habitat and sped away.

During the remainder of the trip we were intermittently updated – our Second Engineer went first to the Invercargill hospital, then on to Dunedin where he was operated on, and the last thing we heard was that the crew would visit him on the day we disembarked at Dunedin... A replacement would join the ship from Russia before the Spirit of Enderby's next voyage, and we speculated that the sick man, at an age of 65, might not return to the sea.

On deck until 13h00 + 13h50-19h30. Plenty of birds!

Post-dinner out again 20h40-21h45: nothing for it except to view this medivac detour as an opportunity for more birdwatching, all the more interesting for this particular stretch of ocean not being traversed on the trips that go to plan: who knows, one might see a Chatham Island Petrel!? (...one was seen between Antipodes and Campbell on the 2014 trip, which started at Chathams.)

24 Nov: at sea en route to the Antipodes. On deck 05h40-08h15 – only a few whitecaps, post-rain 8/8 cloud, gently rocking motion; by 08h15 curtains of light showers.

Post-breakfast on deck 09h05-13h00. By 11h00 it was windier, w/ pale misty sun; by 13h00 borderline for sunglasses: had them on, took them off again – good visibility, a few whitecaps.

On deck again from 15h25-17h00, post 'Geology of Macca' lecture: pale sun, 7-8/8 cloud, less windy.

Post Antipodes lecture on deck again 17h30-19h30 – one felt chilly towards the end of the vigil but the albatrosses weaving patterns around the ship made it worthwhile: simply unbelievable views of the Antipodean form of Wandering (which impressed the 2016 official trip report writer with its 'distinctive plumage and small size!').

25 Nov: official wake-up 05h45 for Zodiac cruise 06h30-08h30. I got up 04h45, but the intended as-we-creep-close first light watch not feasible as visibility was down to just 100m. A glass of water, biscuits, dates & nuts from my own stash, a cup of tea – it was a good morning not to need milk in your tea as there wasn't any: I left the bar, snack completed, as one of our team members started asking about milk and rummaging through the cupboards.

By 05h30 cloud / fog over Ringdove Bay lifting slightly, and there were Erect-crested Penguins next to the ship. Sailors named the bay for the indeed somewhat dove-like prions.

With a view to pragmatically getting away towards Bounties a bit sooner, Zodiac cruising time was reduced by 20 mins after we'd seen most of what was on offer, incl Fulmar Prions nesting in a cave as spacious as a cathedral. The crew and expedition staff lost no time hoisting the Zodiacs back on board: by 08h25 we were indeed departing, and by 08h55 we'd already passed Bollons Island. We were entering waters where Black-bellied Storm Petrels again showed

proper black bellies, unlike those on the day when I logged 150 of them... 5km+ visibility, very pale sun, sea calm.

On deck 10h00-10h40, and post rest again from 11h30. Skipped lunch. By 13h30 5/8, not-so-pale sun, glitter off sea. Vigil interrupted by Bounties briefing 16h00-16h10; by 17h00 Bounties visible ahead, and by 18h25 we were level with the E-most island. Given the accuracy of previously announced ETAs we were rather surprised and certainly disappointed that we were now running an hour late despite the favourable sea conditions, and rather than the desired Zodiac cruise up close up under the forbidding cliffs we only got a too-distant, somewhat perfunctory look before departing 19h20 after three passes past the teeming, guano-reeking colonies.

The 2014 official trip report writer called the Bounties Zodiac cruise a 'very special and rare treat', while the 2010 official trip report writer describes at length a clearly unique experience: 'approaching these rocky outcrops it was plain to see that not a square metre of real estate was spare. NZ Fur Seals lived closest to the water's edge and hundreds of females with pups, males and juveniles were about. Above them in altitude were Erect Crested Penguins in their thousands. They are entertaining little penguins and there was no shortage of humorous moments as they went about their very busy lives. Still above them were over 30,000 breeding pairs of Salvin's Albatross. These are majestic animals at sea, but perched like this in the cliffs they were crowded in together along with the penguins and seals, endemic Bounty Shags and Fulmar Prions. Amazingly we also saw a Leopard Seal who appeared very fat, probably because it had been gorging itself on penguins').

We left the deck at 19h45 after seeing the islands recede in the dwindling light.

26 Nov: on deck from 04h50 (5-6/8, good visibility, not a white-cap anywhere, and monkey deck 'wind' mostly generated by the ship's progress – pre-sunrise start as today was a high stakes day, with the ultra-rare Chatham Islands & Magenta Petrels both possible.

At 08h00 moved to bow as monkey deck just that bit too windy.

At 09h00 8/8 again after some sun; by 10h30 windier, with a fair few whitecaps, 6/8 cloud, pale sun.

A Magenta Petrel real close at 10h30, and quite likely the same bird again at 11h00 (much to the relief of at least one keen birder who'd gone in for coffee at 10h29!)...

Vigil interrupted by 11h30-11h55 compulsory Chatham briefing. Until the sighting of Magenta Petrel it had seemed desirable that the briefing should take place on the bow, but no one had had it in them to actually suggest this to Rodney...

It will never be known if a Chatham Island Petrel came close during the time everyone was below for the briefing...

Lunch 13h00-13h45 – back on deck 7/8 cloud, pale sun, fewer whitecaps but heavier swell.

Not long before 17h00 our first Chatham Albatross was sighted, and by 18h00 the Chatham Islands, our last stop, were in view distantly.

By 20h00 we were cruising off SW cape of main island – another Magenta Petrel was seen rather briefly between the ship and the shore in the gathering gloom, but it was fairly distant and it was already much too dark to see much on it. Inexplicably we'd again arrived an hour later than announced ETA so our cruising along the coast was really that hour too late...

27 Nov: Chatham Islands. We'd been at anchor off Waitangi Harbour since last night. As repair work to the jetty was in progress there was a fairly last-minute announcement that it would be a wet landing after all – most people brought shoes or hiking boots to change into after landing, leaving the wellies in boxes to be returned to the ship for the duration of the excursion, but as it turned out wellies was the appropriate footwear on the muddy morning hike down to the coast...

Having seen Chatham Island Oystercatcher well next to where we landed we were bussed S to a private reserve where we stayed 08h45-13h00. The Taiko Trust ranger had been out checking for petrels until 04h30 but none had come in so the 400NZ\$-a-shot in support of the Trust, optional visit to the nest box(es) in the next valley was off.

En route sheep country, views across badly overgrazed land down towards the leaden sea. Our bus parked on Gully Bend, and we assembled by the improvised T-shirt stall for an intro by land owners Bruce and Liz, who over 25 years had overseen the local recovery of the endemic pigeon, Tui, and other forest species. Great efforts to trap cats and possums had to be kept up week after week, year after year. The omnivorous possums are double trouble as they not only predate pigeon nests but also compete with the pigeons for food. Unfortunately, and in no small part due to the islanders' attachment to their pet cats, all-island eradication of pests appears to be a long way off.

On our guided walk down one side of the regenerating valley and back up along the other we saw tree ferns, in patches in pure stands – most impressive, and invoking what habitat once was.

The track was mud-squelchy in places, which seemed funny as one of the rangers had assured a concerned team member that he'd be fine in his trainers! Wearing wellies made things easier, but some less fit team members found the hike down to the sea challenging owing to a combination of mud, steepness & distance. Down by the sea some lovely native flowers, a distant Pitt Shag on a nest marked by guano white, and crashing rollers.

As the team was strung out along the track those of us doing the 'long' hike (rather than a shorter one under the ship's bird guides) were somewhat left to their own devices re the birds, but the pigeon was hard to miss, and at least one warbler (along with a couple of fantails and some Silvereye) responded well to pishing. Apparently no one got more than flight views of the less reliable, Chatham form of Red-crowned Parakeet.

Time had been allowed back at the harbour to enjoy a beer at the hotel bar and interact with the locals (and / or shop for souvenirs) – most team members duly did, but those used to non-smoking conditions found indoors difficult and some didn't enter the premises. Outside gentle rain turned to drizzle, allowing me to take a stroll along the beach w/ Aleks who'd joined us at Macca. It was disconcerting that all birds around the settlement were non-native, disconcerting to the point where in order to avoid disappointment one actively abstained from bush-bashing...

We were back on the ship by 15h10, and by 17h00 we weighed anchor to again cruise off the SW corner of the main island hoping for one of the Chatham Islands Petrel expected back now any day (and perhaps another Magenta Petrel?). It took us an hour and a half to reach the target area (off where we were this morning: the inlet we'd walked down to was easy to recognize) and we stuck it out until 20h20, by which time the light was hopelesser and hopelesser.

28 Nov: last night we'd come to anchor off Pitt Island's small harbour. I came on deck 05h05 to find fishing in progress off the stern. Our first fully satisfactory Chatham Shags were flying by as the sun came out, and White-fronted Terns were alongside...

Pitt Island is 'the other inhabited island' of the Chatham group, and we could see buildings above the harbour, and more rolling hills overgrazed by cattle and sheep.

We weighed anchor 05h30, and then did a Zodiac cruise all the way round nearby Mangere Island 06h30-08h30. We went with Matt as our driver, with a detour to the landing spot where they'd got the Black Robins off Little Mangere Island from in that legendary, headline-making nick-of-time rescue. A tricky climb! The propellers of our trusted Yamaha 60HP outboards got caught in crayfish trap ropes a couple of times. We went close to tidal platforms w/ kelp attaching firmly to the edges, seeing our first Shore Plover way back, then another up close slightly farther along. Despite Matt's gentle handling of our Zodiac this was a rockier, splashier ride than any previous one (and one which some teams have missed out on due to less favourable weather); it was also the longest in distance covered.

Apparently it was only the 3rd occasion the Birding Down Under voyage had been able to 'get' Forbe's Parakeet, and the little while longer it took for the Zodiac I was in to get satisfactory views of it did not cause upset!

Back on deck post-breakfast after we'd gone back round and past Pitt harbour. Volcanic dome, idyllic beaches, offshore islets.

Then Southeast Island from 11h15, with a Zodiac Cruise 11h30-13h40. This time I was in the Zodiac driven by Connor. Again we were all amazed at how each cruise is so unique, and how varied the bits of shore we get close to are. A raft of Buller's (aka Pacific) Albatross by the ship as we left still there and approachable to <1m when we got back! Highlights on this roasting noon cruise were, among so many, Shore Plovers doing all-out displaying oblivious to our presence, cute pup NZ Fur Seals, and Little Blue Penguins (incl one which we unintentionally

cornered and then watched take a tumble, bouncing & bounding as it took fright and failed to scale a vertical cliff; later we saw it again, apparently none the worse for it, now keeping a low profile behind the edge of kelp attaching to the tidal platform).

Last but not least we went round Pyramid Rock, the only bit of land Chatham Albatrosses call home, 15h00-16h00, before doing a well attended (by both photographers and sea birds!) chumming session off the rear 16h30-17h00. Conditions remained ideal, with superb light and hardly a whitecap, and it was simply good fun seeing the photo op albatrosses go for the bits of fish.

Back in full seawatching mode from 17h30, with some of the chumming session albatrosses still keeping up with the ship, hoping for more.

By 18h45 Chathams barely visible, and by 19h45 it felt no great loss to go in to dinner...

29 Nov: at sea heading W towards Dunedin. On bow by 05h40 – still not a whitecap anywhere, and ship barely rolling. The monkey deck was again just that bit too windy. Many birds were sitting on the sea rather than use up precious energy flying. Ross enquired on the bridge and was told we were doing 11 knots at 2,000m above the sea floor.

On deck until 08h05, then 09h05-09h30, and again from 10h45 (after a well-timed showing of the Black Robin Rescue documentary: among other things it was fun to get an aerial view of the stretch of coast we'd just explored, and sobering to be reminded what an all-out, learning-as-you-go effort can achieve).

At 12h00 to everyone's delight the ship went into quieter one-engine mode to save fuel and also in order not to arrive too early at Dunedin, planning to do eight knots the rest of the way. I skipped lunch as there was still a potential for Chatham Islands Petrel.

By 15h00 it was getting chillier again as the sun had gone in, but by 16h00 the sun was coming back out...

Dinner 19h00-19h55, then on deck again until 21h15, having clocked-up in excess of 12 hours on deck.

30 Nov: still at sea, still heading for Dunedin, sea still still. On deck from 06h10: as we were now further W there would be no point in being out earlier – 7/8 cloud clearing from S, not cold.

By 08h20 it had turned foggy, and post-breakfast it was still foggy: all milky glare w/ sun.

Out again 09h55 – 50km+ visibility, 1-2/8 cloud, a bit of swell but no whitecaps. Occasional fog bank, and by 11h00 again foggy; during 12h40-13h00 still foggy but w/ a few clear patches in between, and pale sun.

Post-lunch it was time to settle our individual bar etc bills. Still foggy, and team members were pretty much everywhere but on deck, packing, resting, or reading in the library.

By 16h00 openings started appearing, and by the time we came back out on deck at 17h45 after the summing-up lecture by Rodney and a most impressive slide show by Chris Todd the fog was behind us, and there was hardly a cloud in the sky.

There were birds aplenty now that not only did we have visibility we were also abruptly coming into shallower water, and what with several seabird species still not seen could one afford to go in to dinner??

Sure enough, by the time dinner was over the bird-rich transition zone was behind us, NZ was visible, and it seemed too half-hearted a compromise merely to have skipped the cheese as we were now DEFINITELY not going to see e g Kerguelen Petrel *Aphrodroma brevirostris*, Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*, Black-winged Petrel *P. nigripennis*, Chatham Islands Petrel *P. axillaris*, Gould's Petrel *P. leucoptera*, Pycroft's Petrel *P. pycrofti*, Grey Petrel *Procellaria cinerea*, Black Petrel *P. parkinsoni*, Westland Petrel *P. westlandica*, Buller's Shearwater *Ardenna bulleri*, Flesh-footed Shearwater *A. carneipes*, Fluttering Shearwater *Puffinus gavia*, Hutton's Shearwater *P. huttoni*, or Australian Gannet *Morus serrator*, all species regularly / sometimes / occasionally seen on Birding Down Under voyages...

1 Dec: On deck 05h20, by which time the Spirit of Enderby was already well in towards Dunedin, past the breakwater, the pilot having arrived a bit early.

And then, quite suddenly, it was all over: we'd handed in our immigration forms, shown our passports to the friendly officials who'd boarded, been caught red-handed trying to sneak off a very small banana for later, stepped ashore, said our goodbyes, triple-checked that our bags weren't on the wrong bus, and there we were, like so many lost penguins, on the pavement of a historic city, squinting in the bright spring sunshine.

As my adventures in Dunedin is really an appendix now is the time to record my gratitude, shared without a grain of doubt by all team members, to Expedition Leader Rodney as well as to all hard-working Heritage Expedition staff members, Chris, Chris, Lisle, Heidi, Anna, Connor, Matthew & Robert, to Joseph, so much more than simply the Department of Conservation representative, to Natalia and Olga who worked so tirelessly getting our food to us, and to the crew of Spirit of Enderby. Thank you for a well-planned trip, executed with such cheerful competence!!

The appendix:

...right! There had been three options when marking our bags pre-disembarkation – a blue piece of string would have indicated an airport-bound bag, a yellow one a city drop-off bag, and a white one an 'own arrangements' bag.

Not confident that I'd feel up to 24 hours of flying after so many days of potentially rough seas I'd been reluctant to opt for a 1 Dec flight departure, as well as slightly concerned at how things would play out if we were a bit late disembarking, and when it turned out I could get a couple of days 'for free' in Dunedin by not flying home until 4th that's what I selected. Thank you, Michael, for spending so much time on getting me just the right flights!

So, the pavement I – along with Julian – found myself on after dropping most people at the Heritage Expedition approved hotel was On Top Backpackers', on Filleul Str, booked in advance. It was perfectly adequate, and should my plans during the trip have evolved so that I didn't need to stay there then it would have been no huge loss to write off one night's room charge.

As check-in wasn't possible until in the afternoon we put our bags in storage and headed for the Otago Museum, somewhat overdressed in the sun, with an internet stop at the library. At the museum Julian & I very regrettably got separated...

Except for an exploratory visit to the University Book Store across the road I spent until closing time at that World Class museum, returned the next day, and even then felt I could easily have spent more time there.

2 Dec: I went to the Farmers Market by the historic railway station as stall holders were setting up, then after breakfast at On Top Backpackers (not very satisfying compared to what we'd got used to on Spirit of Enderby!) returned there before making my way on foot towards Botanical Gardens on a sunny morning, covering this thoroughly 10h35-13h25 before returning to the museum. When the museum closed I walked Woodhaugh Park / Town Belt and along Leith Water on the Ross Creek reservoir trail 17h25-19h55, failing to quite reach the reservoir as access was blocked due to repairs but enjoying myself exploring some habitat and certainly getting some kilometers in. As where I came out after following the upmarket Burma Road back towards town turned out to be quite close to Botanical Gardens I detoured through there again 20h00-20h40 (the gardens are open sunrise to sunset) before returning to On Top Backpackers.

3 Dec: I failed to get out of bed to grab a taxi out to Aramoana Breakwater for sunrise...

After breakfast I visited the Otago Settlers Museum, also recommended by Rodney at the summing-up lecture. The first thing I saw there was a poster at the information desk saying there'd be a showing of 'Secret Sharer', a new film 'inspired by' (as I remember it; on the poster it said 'based on', something rather different, but when I wanted to check after seeing the film the poster had already been removed) the somewhat autobiographical short story by Joseph Conrad.

It turned out there was a Conrad connection to Dunedin: the only ship he ever captained was the Otago, a ship built for and first captained by a local man.

Attending a 2 PM event at the museum would upset my plans, such as they were, but I could not resist attending, at the cost of not getting back to quite finish at the other museum, having

made a dash for the book store and the outdoors kit store after seeing most of the exhibits, and getting back only at the very moment the showing was supposed to start.

The showing was courtesy of the NZ Polish Embassy, and the nice lady introducing the film refer'd to it as 'Secret Shearer'. Anyway, the Otago's importance to Conrad was exaggerated and distorted, including with claims that the shipowner had allowed Conrad to retrace Captain Cook's voyage (he didn't) simply because he was fond of the author-to-be, that the voyage, Cook being Conrad's hero, had been 'formative', and that Conrad had immediately afterwards given up his sea life to step ashore, becoming 'one of the greatest writers in the world'. One can only hope that the people who attended went on to read the story as the film, shot on location in Thailand and China and apparently the directorial debut of Peter Fudakowski, a Pole, was somewhat disappointing, being little more than an entertainment-romance partly in English, partly in Chinese, with elements of comedy, more than an attempt to engage with the moral and existential dimensions of the Conrad story, and it is highly doubtful that anyone familiar with Conrad would be impressed with the film!

After the showing I stayed at the museum until it closed at 17h00, after chatting to the event organizers and enjoying an excellent, and much needed, cup of coffee w/ a slice of chocolate cake (was it my imagination or did the nice lady really seize me up and then cut me a slice of cake quite a bit larger than what the other guests got??).

A final visit to Botanical Gardens rounded off another pleasantly summery day – a Tui in the same field-of-view as a New Zealand Pigeon seemed a fitting finish to a very interesting trip.

4 Dec: departed On Top Backpackers c07h45 on a pre-booked airport shuttle. Got a bit of a Scenic Detour as Driver Stan picked up other passengers first in the heights above the city center, then out at St Clair (complete with a steep climb up followed by a view if the sea). He reassured us that we'd be at the airport no later than 09h00 – this felt a bit tight (and was certainly later than what the booking office had promised) but 'don't worry, it's only a small airport'...

On the way Driver Stan drew my attention to the gorse hedges doing what the plant had been introduced to do, serving as a windbreak in sheep country – in contrast to the plants running riot over the nearby hills which the seeds reached by wind-drifting.

The last bit of road out to the airport was the 'shortest highway in the country' (a slight compensation for skipping the Guinness Book of Records 'steepest street in the world'), now with improved-grip surfacing on a bend where it in the past had not been unusual to see vehicles in the ditch. This was the 2nd time Driver Stan touched upon road safety, after mentioning a dangerous hill behind which any overtaking vehicles could not be seen...

And that was that – Dunedin to Auckland (with great views of Mt Taranaki, recently given special legal status: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/dec/22/new-zealand-gives-mount-taranaki-same-legal-rights-as-a-person>)... to Singapore... to Copenhagen!

Cxq//r28

Species list:

Canada Goose *Branta canadensis* (introduced)

At Invercargill singles at both Bushy Pt & Lake Street Pool on 13th.

Black Swan *Cygnus atratus* (introduced)

Seen at Invercargill (two pairs, of which one w/ two cygnets, at Thomson's Bush / Waihopai River on 12th, 80 at Bushy Pt & three pairs w/ six, one & two cygnets at Lake Street Pool on 13th, and 250 at Estuary Walkway on 14th).

Paradise Shelduck *Tadorna variegata* **E**

30 bird-days. Noted at Invercargill (ten at Bushy Pt & two at Daffodil Bay on 13th, and eight at Estuary Walkway on 14th) & Dunedin (Botanical Gardens, Ross Creek walk & en route to airport).

Australasian Shoveler *Spatula rhynchotis variegata*

Noted daily at Invercargill – four at Waihopai River on 12th, two at Daffodil Bay & one at Lake Street Pool on 13th, and no fewer than 280 at Estuary Walkway on 14th.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (introduced)

Noted at Invercargill, at Auckland Isl (five at Enderby on 16th) & at Campbell Isl (15 at Perseverance Harbour on 22nd)

Grey Teal *Anas gracilis*

Noted only at Invercargill: 350 at Bushy Pt, 75 at Daffodil Bay & 180 at Lake Street Pool on 13th, and 120 at Estuary Walkway on 14th.

Auckland Flightless Teal *Anas aucklandica* **E**

Two at Enderby Island on 16th (with at least a couple more seen by other team members).

***'Population surveys show no evidence of on-going declines, with all islands that currently support populations now free from introduced mammals. However, the population is unlikely to expand while cats and pigs remain on the main Auckland Island': IUCN (2017)

Campbell Flightless Teal *Anas nesiotis* **E**

Ten at Perseverance Harbour on 22nd (with an additional ten or so seen by other team members; in 2013, 'a record-breaking seven birds [were] seen – something unimaginable even three years ago') – if anything too easy to photograph: WOW!

***Pulled back from the very brink of extinction; now 'Endangered because it has an extremely small population, which is nevertheless increasing thanks to successful conservation efforts. The species remains susceptible to external threats, and any evidence of a renewed decline is likely to make the species eligible for uplisting [to Critically Endangered]': IUCN (2017).

'It had been confined to Dent Island, an offshore islet of Campbell Island, for many decades. It was first collected in 1886 from the sea near Campbell (just 3 km away from Dent and likely to have been a stronghold for the species), but was not discovered on Dent until 1975. In 1990, a survey of Dent estimated a population of 60-100 birds (Goudswaard 1991), and it is likely that no more than 25 breeding pairs were present in 1998 (Gummer and Williams 1999). In 1999 and 2000, 24 captive-bred birds were released on Codfish Island to create a temporary population, and egg-laying occurred in their first year (Gummer and Williams 1999, Gummer 2006b). Following the successful eradication of brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* from Campbell Island in 2001, birds were taken back from Codfish Island for release in 2004 (50), 2005 (55) and 2006 (54) (Potter 2006, P. J. McClelland *in litt.* 2012, www.doc.govt.nz). The majority of birds released in 2004 were believed to have survived their first year on Campbell Island, and successful breeding was confirmed in 2006 when a brood of ducklings were seen in January, followed by sightings of a duckling, three juveniles and two nests containing eggs in February 2006 (Anon 2006). A survey in December 2008 confirmed that the species has established on the island (P. J. McClelland *in litt.* 2008, 2010, 2011), and the total population (captive and wild) has climbed to more than 200 individuals (Potter 2006). The 2008 survey, along with opportunistic observations of breeding and dispersal activity (P. J. McClelland *in litt.* 2008, 2010, 2011), suggests that the population now includes between 100 and 200 mature individuals.' IUCN (2017: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22724580/0>)

New Zealand Scaup *Aythya novaeseelandiae* **E**

Seen at Invercargill with a male at Waihopai River on 12th, and 40 at Lake Street Pool on 13th.

King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*

Seen only at Macquarie Isl, with 25-35 around the ship both on 19+20th, 5,000+ at Sandy Bay on 19th, and 'lots' at Lusitania Bay (the colony there is apparently c150,000 pairs strong) on 20th.

Gentoo Penguin *Pygoscelis papua*

Seen only at Macquarie Isl: 215 at Buckles Bay on 20th.

Snares Penguin *Eudyptes robustus* **E**

2,250+ seen during Zodiac cruise at Snares on 15th.

***Surveys in 2016 concluded that the world population is >60,000:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22697782/0>

Erect-crested Penguin *Eudyptes sclateri* **E**

On 25th 255 at Antipodes Isl, seven (3+3+1) well out to sea en route to Bounties, and 4,000+ at Bounties.

***[Classified as] 'Endangered' because its population is estimated to have declined very rapidly over the last three generations, and it is almost certainly still declining. Furthermore, it has a very small breeding range, which may now be restricted to just two locations'; 'The most recent population survey conducted in 2011 found 34,226 nests on the Antipodes (Hisock and Chilvers 2014); on the Bounty Islands there were an estimated 26,000 nests in the same year (Miskelly 2013)': IUCN (2017).

Southern Rockhopper Penguin *Eudyptes chrysocome* E

Seen only at Macquarie Isl: 55 at Buckles Bay on 20th.

***Note that e.g. <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz> splits ssp *filholi* as Eastern Rockhopper Penguin.

Royal Penguin *Eudyptes schlegeli* () (E)

Seen only at Macquarie Isl: the 30,000 pairs strong colony at Sandy Bay on 19th, and 40 off Lusitania Bay, ten en route back to Buckles Bay & three as we left for Campbell Isl on 20th.

***Considered conspecific with Macaroni Penguin by some authorities, though not by IUCN (2017): 'This species is confined to Macquarie Island and nearby Bishop and Clerk Islands.'

Macaroni Penguin *Eudyptes chrysolophus*

At Macquarie Isl one was seen well in amongst the Royals at the Sandy Bay colony.

***Much less localized than Royal Penguin, *vide* IUCN (2017): [has] 'at least 258 colonies at c. 55 breeding sites'.

***<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/> informs us that

- a) Macaroni Penguin 'was given its name by 19th century sailors after members of the 'Macaroni Club', a pejorative term for young men with outlandish tastes or fashion sense,' and (no doubt of greater interest to the team listers) that
- b) 'DNA analysis indicates that the macaroni penguin split from the royal penguin approximately 1.5 million years ago.'

Yellow-eyed Penguin *Megadyptes antipodes* E

Just three in total: two at Enderby Isl on 16th & one close to the ship as we left Campbell on 22nd.

***'listed as Endangered because it is confined to a very small range when breeding, in which its forest/scrub habitat has declined in quality. Its population has undergone extreme fluctuations and is now thought to be in overall decline [estimated at just 1,700 breeding pairs]': IUCN (2017).

Little Penguin *Eudyptula minor chathamensis*

At Chathams five off the SW coast on 27th, and three at Southeast Isl on 28th.

Wilson's Storm Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*

Singles noted at sea on four dates: between Auckland and Macquarie on 18th, between Macquarie and Campbell on 21st, between Campbell and Auckland on 22nd, and between Antipodes and Bounties on 25th.

Grey-backed Storm Petrel *Garrodia nereis*

145 bird-days. Noted on ten dates, with a daily max of 63 between Bounties and Chatham on 26th.

***...monotypic genus.

White-faced Storm Petrel *Pelagodroma marina maoriana*

Noted daily over 26-30th. A bit of a show-stealer on the day we first encountered it: 344 noted before 19h00 when things really took off, with vast numbers seen heading back towards the Chathams – quite likely >200 birds / min would have been logged if we'd been stationary and counting properly!

Black-bellied Storm Petrel *Fregetta tropica*

385 bird-days. Noted on nine dates, with a daily maximum of 152 between Auckland Isl and Antipodes on 23rd.

Leaving Antipodes for Bounties on 25th I noted of the 1st two encountered that they had 'proper black bellies, unlike most on the day the when 150+ where seen'.

***The lack of a black belly in many individuals is puzzling...

*** Don't write off seeing one in your back yard:

https://www.madeirabirds.com/black_bellied_storm_petrel_madeira

Wandering Albatross *Diomedea exulans*

Just four birds where seen that could be confidently identified as *exulans* – undoubtedly, one classy adult passing within 100 m of the ship at 08h15 on 21st was a trip highlight.

Antipodean Albatross *Diomedea antipodensis*

34 bird-days. Noted on five dates; daily max 14 at sea between Antipodes and Bounties on 25th.

***See <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22728318/0>

Gibson's Wandering Albatross *Diomedea (antipodensis) gibsoni*

13 bird-days. Noted on four dates; daily max nine at sea between Auckland Isl and Antipodes on 23rd.

***IOC (2017) and IUCN lists ssp *gibsoni*, of Auckland island, as a ssp of *Diomedea antipodensis*.

***Rather than get completely bogged-down in hard-to-follow and possibly not entirely error-free ID accounts in e.g. Shirihai (2008) most of us were happy to defer to our guides Chris & Lisle when it came to pinning a name on these supreme fliers...

*****Unid. Wandering Albatross**

37+ bird-days. Noted on five dates – of these 25+ were on our first day at sea...

Southern Royal Albatross *Diomedea epomophora*

281 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates. Given that 99% of the population, >7,000 pairs (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698314/0>), breeds on Campbell Island it is unsurprising that we really started seeing this species as we approached Perseverance Harbour on 21st!

Seeing them at close range during our afternoon stroll on 22nd was a trip highlight.

Northern Royal Albatross *Diomedea sanfordi*

39 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

****vide* IUCN (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22728323/0>) 99% of the populations breeds in the Chathams, and we started seeing more of them as we entered these waters on 26th.

Light-mantled Sooty Albatross *Phoebastria palpebrata*

95 bird-days. Noted on 10 dates / daily over 16-25th – several jaw-droppers whilst at sea but owing to dodgy weather when it mattered we largely missed out on seeing their wonderful synchronized display-flights.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*

30 bird-days. Noted on eight dates.

Campbell Albatross *Thalassarche impavida*

83 bird-days. Noted on nine dates – main event 30 at sea en route to Antipodes on 24th.

***'breeds only on the northern and western coastline of Campbell Island (111 km²) and the tiny offshore islet, Jeanette Marie'; 'with the most recent censuses in 2006-2012 giving an estimate of 21,648 pairs': IUCN (2017).

*****Black-browed / Campbell Albatross** *Thalassarche melanophris / T. impavida*

A few...

White-capped Albatross *Thalassarche (cauta) steadi*

496 bird-days. Noted on 11 dates.

***IOC (2017) does NOT split off ssp *steadi*, breeding on offshore islands of New Zealand ('ninety-five percent of breeding pairs are on Disappointment Island (96,242 - 97,486 pairs), with further breeding colonies on Adams (165- 221) and Auckland Islands (4,603 - 4,879) [...], and 50 - 100 pairs on Bollons Island in the Antipodes [...] (Baker *et al.* 2015)', from Shy Albatross but IUCN *does*: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22729609/0>): 'Very similar to slightly smaller Shy Albatross *T. cauta* but *T. steadi* has paler face and less yellow on the culmen of the bill.': IUCN (2017).

***Interestingly, 'models developed indicated that the estimated bycatch from global fisheries is unsustainable for White-capped Albatross. However, as the observed population trend over the last 10 years has not shown the rate of decline predicted by modelling, it is possible that bycatch estimates used in the models were too high and impacts of fisheries bycatch on this species are less severe than predicted (Baker 2016).': IUCN (2017).

Chatham Albatross *Thalassarche eremita*

This attractive species was not seen until we approached Chathams late in the afternoon of 26th, with just five birds; then on 28th we did a turn round The Pyramid, the only breeding site, seeing at least 2,000 birds. As we left Chathams for Dunedin we saw another 23 (incl ten during the chumming session), but none were seen at sea on 29+30th.

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini*

1,910+ bird-days. Noted on eight dates. Main event 1,500+ at the Bounties colony on 25th, but 145 (incl a raft of 25 birds) at sea on 26th & 86 at sea on 29th as we headed back towards Dunedin were also of note.

Grey-headed Albatross *Thalassarche chrysostoma*

24 bird-days. Noted on four dates: 12 en route to Macquarie Island over 17-18th (incl two 'seen well' on 17th), 11 at sea between Macquarie and Campbell on 21st, and one between Antipodes and Bounties on 25th.

Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri*

39 bird-days. Noted on four dates. One ssp *bulleri* over our Zodiac during cruise at Snares on 15th was apparently back at the colony well ahead of schedule; then reasonable numbers of ssp *platei* at Chathams over 26-28th, both off SW coast of main island, at Pitt, Mangere & Southeast Islands (incl eight by the ship as we waited to get back on board at Southeast), two at Pyramid Rock, and finally eight during the chumming session as we started back.

None were seen at sea on 29+30th.

Southern Giant Petrel *Macronectes giganteus*

140+ bird-days. Noted on six dates, mainly at / around Macquarie Isl (c100 at Buckles Bay on 20th!), but also a White Nelly at Pyramid Rock on 28th, three at sea en route back to Dunedin, and one as we crept in to drop anchor off Dunedin on 30th.

Northern Giant Petrel *Macronectes halli*

285+ bird-days. Noted on 15 dates – highlights c75 at Enderby Island on 16th (incl some very close in magnificent light, seen gliding along cliff top when we were nearly back from our walk), and 40 mostly on the exposed W side of The Isthmus at Macquarie on 20th (with some sorting of pecking order issues going on around and on top of the elephant seal carcass).

Southern Fulmar *Fulmarus glacialisoides*

One close to the ship when we were at anchor at Buckles Bay, Macquarie, on 20th.

***Another two or three singles were not seen by me...

Cape Petrel *Daption capense capense* & *D. c. australe*

A companion treasured for its beauty as well as for its cheeky flying (several individuals seemed to dare birdwatchers on the bow to pluck them from the air, dangling one foot to increase maneuverability) - ssp *australe* was seen daily, often in good numbers; ssp *capense* was much scarcer, with just nine in total on five dates.

***ssp *australe* is not considered separately by IUCN (2017); <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/>, however, informs us it 'breeds on the Snares, Bounty, Antipodes, Auckland and Chatham Islands, [with...] the total population at the Snares Islands [...] estimated at 7,385 breeding pairs in 1984'.

***'Daption' is derived from Ancient Greek for "little devourer", and the *Cape* name is because of where the type specimen was collected. Finally, *pintado* [an alternative name for the species,

favoured by some aboard, is 'Pintado Petrel'] is Spanish for "painted" for its plumage. One of their other names, Cape Pigeon, is from their habit of pecking at the water for food. The word *petrel* is derived from St. Peter and the story of his walking on water. This is in reference to the petrel's habit of appearing to run on the water to take off :

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_petrel

Blue Petrel *Halobaena caerulea*

Two seen well at sea between Auckland and Macquarie on 18th – Tingaling!

Broad-billed Prion *Pachyptila vittata*

Noted on at least a couple of dates, with five between Snares and Auckland Isl on 15th, and one between Macquarie and Campbell on 21st.

***Some team members spent more time on Prions than I did, using photograph-and-identify techniques to get good records.

MacGillivray' Prion *Pachyptila (salvini) macgillivrayi*

30+ at sea between Bounties and Chathams on 26th (using photograph-and-identify techniques) was a scoop as the species 'is found only on Gough Island' (IUCN 2017).

***'It is possible that the MacGillivray's Prion is the same taxon as the thin-billed form of the prion known from Amsterdam (where now extinct) and St. Paul (where a few hundred birds are now confined to one rat-free islet) in the Indian Ocean, but genetic analyses and direct comparisons of skins are still required to resolve this (Ryan *et al.* 2014)':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/104062579/0>

***IOC (2017) lists *macgillivrayi* as a race of Salvin's Prion *P. salvini* (of Amsterdam and St. Paul), but more research is clearly needed...

Antarctic Prion *Pachyptila desolata*

Identified on at least three dates mainly at sea en route to and from Macquarie.

Slender-billed Prion *Pachyptila belcheri*

Three were confirmed (using photograph-and-identify techniques) between Macquarie and Campbell on 21st.

***Breeds Crozet, Kerguelen, Falklands & Noir. Outside the breeding season it can be found 'over much of the Southern Ocean': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698119/0>

Fairy Prion *Pachyptila turtur*

Apparently fairly common at sea, incl. e.g. 200+ between Snares and Enderby on 15th.

***No doubt team members working diligently with photograph-and-identify techniques can tell a fuller story.

Fulmar Prion *Pachyptila crassirostris*

Identified on at least three dates – main event 650+ on 25th around Bounties (where team members using photograph-and-identify techniques considered the birds larger and darker than those seen both around the ship inside their breeding cave at Ringdove Bay, Antipodes, earlier in the day!)...

***Clearly, yet again, more research is needed...

White-headed Petrel *Pterodroma lessonii*

147 bird-days. Noted on five dates: a glimpse of one as we entered Carnley Harbour, Auckland Isl, on 17th, then very satisfyingly 60 at sea en route to Macquarie later the same day, and 54 at sea en route from Macquarie to Campbell on 21st. Seven at sea between Bounties and Chatham on 26th seemed a bonus...

Grey-faced Petrel *Pterodroma gouldi*

47 bird-days. Noted on four dates – two all too brief ones between Snares and Auckland on 15th, then quite a few en route to Chathams on 26th, and as we headed back to Dunedin on 29-30th.

***The majority seemed to be moulting their flight feathers...

Magenta Petrel *Pterodroma magentae*

This Critically Endangered species was seen only on 26th: superb views at sea of possibly the same singleton (10h30 + 11h00), and then one briefly off SW Chatham as we cruised 'inshore waters (1-2 km offshore from the colony) around Otawae Point [...] thought to be important for non-breeders visiting the colony and during courtship at night' (IUCN, 2017) looking for more (and for the not-seen Chatham Islands Petrel *P. axillaris*) in the evening...

***'The species [also known as Chatham Islands Taiko] was rediscovered in 1978 in the south-west corner of Chatham Island, 111 years after it was first collected at sea [...]. Its prevalence in Moriori middens suggests it was once common and has undergone a massive historical decline [...]. The population is slowly recovering thanks to intensive conservation work' (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698049/0>), something we heard more about during our excursion to Aototora Reserve on 27th.

***Chatham Islands Petrel *P. axillaris* is listed as 'Vulnerable' with a total population estimated at 1400 birds in 2010. Tracking research has shown that birds feed mainly south and east of the Chatham Islands during the breeding season; the species migrates to the eastern Pacific in winter to an area over and north of the Nazca sea ridge, about 1,000-1,500 km west of Chile and Peru': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22697949/0>

Soft-plumaged Petrel *Pterodroma mollis*

36 bird-days. Noted at sea on five dates – main event 25 en route to Chatham on 26th.

Mottled Petrel *Pterodroma inexpectata*

166 bird-days. Noted on no fewer than 11 dates – main event 94 between Bounties and Chatham on 26th.

Cook's Petrel *Pterodroma cookii*

58 bird-days. Noted at sea on four dates, with all but four birds seen between Chathams and Dunedin.

***Listed as 'Vulnerable' with the total population estimated at 670,000 mature individuals:
<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22697975/0>

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*

634+ bird-days. This widely distributed species was noted on 13 dates.

***I looked hard at many of them hoping for an 'Endangered' Westland Petrel *P. westlandica* and / or a Black Petrel *P. parkinsoni* but to no avail. Neither was included on the Heritage Expedition checklist for this trip. The former is a winter breeder returning to the colonies in the densely forested coastal foothills near Punakaiki, W South Island, New Zealand, from mid-February from central Pacific and eastern New Zealand waters, the east coast of Australia and off South America (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698155/0>); the latter is a summer breeder on Little Barrier and Greater Barrier Isl, off North Island, New Zealand, returning from mid-October from the eastern Pacific Ocean between the Galápagos Islands, southern Mexico and northern Peru (<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698150/0>).

White-chinned Petrel is remarkably variable: on some individuals the white chin is extensive and visible from afar even in fairly poor light while others lack even a hint of a white chin. Bill tip colouration is thus of crucial importance - but can be surprisingly hard to judge...

Sooty Shearwater *Ardenna grisea*

1,900+ bird-days. Noted on 12 dates. On 23rd, after an afternoon of low-to-modest numbers, we suddenly came across gatherings of 290, then 100; on 27th as we headed S from Waitangi Harbour still hoping for Chatham Islands Petrel off the SW coast at least 395 were seen, pretty much a steady stream heading E initially in front of the ship, then to the landward side...

***Listed as 'Near-threatened' by the IUCN despite a global population of > c20,000,000 individuals: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698209/0>

Short-tailed Shearwater *Ardenna tenuirostris*

One headed S late in the afternoon of 24th, passing within 100m of the bow of the ship as we hurried towards Antipodes.

Subantarctic Shearwater *Puffinus elegans*

83 bird-days. Noted on four dates. Main event 75 between Antipodes and Bounties on 25th.

***IUCN's 2017 write-up reflects lack of firm taxonomic ground:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/45959186/0> - *vide* Heather & Robertson (2015) 100,000+ pairs breed on Antipodes Islands.

'Chatham Shearwater' *Puffinus sp*

Singles on 26+29th.

***Although IOC (2017) includes Chatham Isl in the range of Subantarctic Shearwater - *vide* Heather & Robertson (2015) c150 pairs breed on Star Keys - birds seen near there differed in having white faces, possibly an unnamed taxon (C Collins pers com; small *Puffinus* taxonomy is

fast-evolving) rather than Little Shearwater *P. assimilis haurakiensis* (of NE North Island, NZ) or *P. a. kermadecensis* (of Kermadec Isl).

South Georgia Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides georgicus*

One between Bounties and Chatham on 26th was the only one seen well enough (by me; using photograph-and-identify techniques others did better) to eliminate Common Diving Petrel.

***Genus badly in need of revision (C Collins pers com): birds seen are unlikely to be conspecific with birds breeding on South Georgia.

Common Diving Petrel *Pelecanoides urinatrix*

185+ bird-days. Noted on four dates, mainly at and around Snares.

***In addition, 45+ unidentified Diving Petrels were noted.

***The Common Diving-petrel has discrete ranges surrounding oceanic islands in the south Atlantic at South Georgia, Falklands, Tristan da Cunha & Gough Islands, Antipodes Islands), and also on New Zealand's north island and Tasmania. Very little is known of their range when not breeding: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22698300/0>

Royal Spoonbill *Platalea regia*

63 bird-days. Seen at Invercargill (20 at Bushy Point, eight at Daffodil Bay & two at Lake Street Pool on 13th, and 35 at Estuary Walkway on 14th), and at Otago Harbour (eight on 1 Dec).

White-faced Heron *Egretta novaehollandiae*

13+ bird-days. Noted daily at Invercargill, and at Chatham two at Waitangi Harbour & one at Aototora Reserve on 27th.

Little Pied Cormorant *Microcarbo melanoleucos*

4+ as we sailed up Otago Harbour on 1 Dec.

Spotted Shag *Phalacrocorax punctatus* **E**

Three at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill, on 13th, and three at Bluff Harbour as we waited for the ship to leave on 14th.

Pitt Shag *Phalacrocorax featherstoni* **E**

82+ bird-days: eight at Waitangi Harbour & one at nest at Aototora Reserve on 27th, and 3+ at Pitt, 25 at Mangere (up really close during Zodiac Cruise: amazing bright green faces!) & 45 at Southeast Isl.

***Restricted to Chathams, with a declining total population of c1,300 birds:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696907/0>

Great Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae*

Two at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill, on 13th.

Macquarie Shag *Leucocarbo purpurascens* E

c115 bird-days over 19-20th. Seen both at Buckles Bay (main event 100 at the colony on the W side of The Isthmus on 20th) & at Sandy Bay (ten on 19th).

***Not awarded full species status by IUCN (2017), which treats it as a race of Imperial Shag *Phalacrocorax atriceps*: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22729686/0> ; <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/> concedes that the taxon, 'one of the 'blue-eyed' group of shags that are found in southern South America, the Antarctic, and islands of the southern Indian and Atlantic oceans', is 'often treated as a subspecies of the imperial shag', and differ from e.g. Heather & Robertson (2015) in including it despite there being no records on actual NZ territory (<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/sites/all/files/checklist/Checklist-of-Birds.pdf> ; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_birds_of_New_Zealand), the species being 'sedentary, [a] poor flier with small wings, and [...] restricted to inshore waters' of 'Macquarie Island and Bishop and Clerk islets, which lie 33 km to the south'.

Otago Shag *Leucocarbo chalconotus* E

Two off Dunedin on 30th.

***This recently elevated taxon 'can be distinguished from Foveaux shags by their facial ornamentation in the breeding season: Foveaux shags have dark orange papillae on their face, whereas Otago shags have both papillae and small bright orange facial caruncles above the base of the bill [...]' – apparently this taxon is closer related to Chatham Shag than to Foveaux Shag: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otago_shag

Foveaux Shag *Leucocarbo stewarti* E

At Bluff Harbour three – incl at least one 'bronze' morph bird - around the ship as we waited impatiently to depart on 14th, and another one as we finally got going...

***IOC (2017): 'split from Otago Shag (*L. chalconotus*), formerly Stewart Island Shag (Rawlence et al. 2016)'; IUCN (2017) has not yet caught up, treating the two together as *Phalacrocorax chalconotus* - <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696853/0>

Chatham Shag *Leucocarbo onslowi* E

We saw this Critically Endangered species only at Pitt (six by the ship as the sun came up on 28th) & at Mangere (two during Zodiac cruise).

***Total population c1,000, with largest colony at Star Keys comprising c80 pairs: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696861/0>

Campbell Shag *Leucocarbo campbelli* E

40 bird-days. 18 at Perseverance Harbour on 22nd included a raft of 12 which we were able to approach during the Zodiac cruise, and three on a rock at point-blank range... As we left to return to Auckland Isl another 22 were seen from the ship, incl some flying right by for additional photo ops.

***The species 'nests in inaccessible colonies of up to 150 nests on exposed rocky ledges or in sea caves' and, with a population estimated at >8,000, is in better shape than e.g. Chatham Shag: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696840/0>

Auckland Shag *Leucocarbo colensoi* E

110+ bird-days. Noted on three dates – main event 95+ at Enderby Isl on 16th: ‘both superb fly-bys, and adults, young & immatures close on cliff top as we finished our walk’.

***Total population c4,500: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696869/0>

Bounty Shag *Leucocarbo ranfurlyi* E

600+ seen from the ship as we did three sail-bys at the Bounties colonies on 25th, and we had in fact seen the species before we quite reached the islands as a few had flown out to greet us, just like Rodney had promised they would!

***Total population c1,500: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696876/0>

Australian Harrier *Circus approximans*

18 bird-days. This widespread species was noted on four dates: nine around Invercargill over 13-14th, two at Bluff while waiting to depart on 14th, and at Chatham four on 27th & three at Southeast Isl on 28th.

Weka *Gallirallus australis hectori* (Chathams – introduced from E South Island)

Two seen well at Aoatotra Reserve on 28th, working a slope around a clump of flowering flax plants as we started back up towards Gully Bend.

South Island Oystercatcher *Haematopus finschi* E

115+ bird-days. Noted around Invercargill (eight at Bushy Point, 50 at Daffodil Bay & two at Lake Street Pool on 13th, and five at Estuary Walkway on 14th), and 50+ at Otago Harbour as we headed in towards Dunedin on 1 Dec.

***Unlike e.g. IOC (2017), IUCN (2017) considers this (endemic) taxon conspecific with Eurasian Oystercatcher *H. ostralegus* (!); '*H. o. finschi* breeds and winters in New Zealand (Hockey *et al.* 2013). Two thirds of the *H. o. finschi* population winter in the northern half of the North Island, while breeding is confined to the South Island, mainly east of the Southern Alps':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22733462/0>

Variable Oystercatcher *Haematopus unicolor* E

Ten at Bluff Harbour on 14th, and at least three at Otago Harbour on 1st.

Chatham Oystercatcher *Haematopus chathamensis* E

Six in total: three at Waitangi Harbour on 27th, and three at Mangere Isl the next day.

***An Endangered species – ‘censuses [...] suggest the population has levelled off at 110-120 pairs, and about 300-320 individuals’: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22693656/0>

Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus*

81 bird-days. Seen only around Invercargill (main event 45 at Estuary Walkway on 14th) and en route to Bluff.

***IUCN (2017) & Heather & Robinson (2015) differ from IOC (2017) in lumping White-headed Stilt *H. leucocephalus* back in with *H. himantopus*, following del Hoyo *et al.* (2014).

Masked Lapwing *Vanellus miles novaehollandiae*

Ten bird-days. Noted at Invercargill (two at Bushy Point & four at Daffodil Bay on 13th, and three en route to Bluff on 14th), and one heard at golf course near Ross Creek reservoir, Dunedin, on 2nd.

Double-banded Plover *Charadrius bicinctus exilis*

14+ at Enderby Island on 16th.

***ssp endemic to Auckland Isl; *vide* Heather & Robinson (2015) there were at least 730 *exilis* in the Aucklands in Nov 1989.

Shore Plover *Thinornis novaeseelandiae* E

Two at Mangere and 18 at Southeast Island, Chathams, on 28th. Superb views of birds in full display mode!

***This Endangered species was listed in family *Charadriidae* as 'Shore Dotterel' by IOC (2017), sharing the genus with 'Hooded Dotterel' *T. cucullatus* of S Australia; it was 'once widespread around the coast of at least the South Island, but had been extirpated from mainland New Zealand by the 1870s' – current population is c65-70 pairs:

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22693899/0>

Bar-tailed Godwit *Limosa lapponica*

34, visitors from faaaar away, at Estuary Walkway, Invercargill, on 14th.

Subantarctic Snipe *Coenocorypha aucklandica* E

Two ssp *aucklandica* at Enderby Isl on 16th, and one ssp *perseverance* at Campbell on 22nd.

***'*C. a. perseverance* was not known to exist before a chance discovery on Jacquemart Island in 1997, but has since recolonised the main Campbell Island from Jacquemart Island following the eradication of Norway rats in 2001, and is now rapidly spreading over the 12,300 ha island':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22727499/0>

***Unfortunately, neither Snares Snipe *C. huegeli* ('historically restricted to the Snares Islands' but subject to conservation translocations: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22727509/0>) nor Chatham Snipe *C. pusilla* - 'confined to four small, predator-free islands in the Chathams, where it is common and considered stable. It was once widespread throughout the group. The population is estimated at c.900-1,100 pairs. Most of these, 700-800 pairs, are on Rangatira (=South East) Island. The population on Mangere Island (which was reintroduced from Rangatira Island) numbers between 200 and 250 pairs. Birds have recently colonised Little Mangere Island, and a population was recently found on Star Keys (totalling fewer than 50 pairs': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22693137/0> - are gettable under the current permit regime: R Russ pers com.

Silver Gull *Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae scopulinus*

420+ bird-days. Noted on 13 dates. Main event 265 at Estuary Walkway, Invercargill, on 14th.

A few also at Snares, Enderby Isl, Carnley Harbour, Perseverance Harbour, Chathams (incl 12 on the ship as we were anchored off Pitt Isl on 28th, attracted by the early morning fishing) & daily at Dunedin (where some menaced the parks' picnic areas!).

***'Red-billed Gull originally split by Schodde *et al.* 1983, Sibley & Monroe 1990, Burger & Gochfeld 1996, and Given *et al.* 2005, but now lumped by H&M4, HBW Alive, Gill *et al.* 2010': IOC (2017).

***IUCN (2017) continues to list the species as *Larus novaehollandiae*.

Black-billed Gull *Chroicocephalus bulleri* E

Seen only at Invercargill on 13th: two in the distance at Bushy Point, then 14 at close range at Daffodil Bay doing various displays!

***An Endangered species – 'Very rapid declines have been noted in a number of this species' populations over the last couple of decades. Despite increases in numbers of a few smaller colonies, the species is believed to be undergoing a continuing and very rapid decline overall':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22694413/0>

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*

560+ bird-days. This widespread species was noted on 15 dates – main events 120 in fields en route S from Invercargill & 225 at Bluff Harbour on 14th.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia*

Seen only at Invercargill, with one at Bushy Point on 13th & two at Estuary Walkway on 14th.

White-fronted Tern *Sterna striata* E

179+ bird-days. Noted on four dates: 40 as we left Bluff Harbour on 14th, four at Waitangi Harbour, a pair w/ one juvenile (adults seen vigorously attacking a passing harrier!) at Aototora reserve & one off SW coast of Chatham Isl on 27th, two at Pitt Isl, 90 at Mangere Isl & 35 at Southeast Isl on 28th, and finally three as we sailed up Otago Harbour on 1st.

***'The global population is very unlikely to exceed 50,000 individuals':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22694607/0>

Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea*

Singles at sea between Auckland and Macquarie on 17th (right alongside ship!), and between Macquarie and Campbell on 21st.

Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata bethunei*

64+ bird-days. This widespread species was noted on seven dates: at Snares (ten adults w/ two juveniles at point-blank range during the Zodiac cruise), at Enderby Isl & Carnley Harbour, at Macquarie (just one at Sandy Bay on 19th, but five at Buckles Bay the next day), Perseverance Harbour (main event 15 as we left to return to Aucklands), and Antipodes.

South Polar Skua *Stercorarius maccormicki*

One seen well as it headed E, overtaking the ship at close range (but not seen by team members on the bridge!), at 10h31 on 24th as we continued towards Antipodes.

***Another Skua seen briefly at sea between Auckland and Macquarie on 18th may also have been one, though doubt set in once we reached Sandy Bay the next day and encountered good numbers of the highly variable Brown Skua...

Brown Skua *Stercorarius antarcticus lonnbergi*

83+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates. Main events 15 at Sandy Bay, Macquarie, on 19th, and 15 at Mangere Isl on 28th...

***Intriguingly, the official 2013 report mentions 'the distinctive but as-yet-unnamed 'Chatham Skua' - a member of the Brown Skua complex but in some ways looking more like a South Polar Skua' - this was not brought up on our trip, and is mentioned neither under 'Geographical Variation' on <http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/subantarctic-skua> - which merely notes 'Populations of large skuas occur in the North Atlantic, and Southern Hemisphere from Patagonia, through Falkland Islands, Scotia Arc Islands and Antarctic Peninsula, circumpolar subantarctic islands, to New Zealand subantarctic and islands off Stewart Island. Skua taxonomy and naming is disputed by experts, with some designating the genus as *Catharacta*, others as *Stercorarius* and the different populations variously to *antarctica*, *lonnbergi*, *hamiltoni* or *skua*, as species or subspecies. New Zealand's subantarctic skuas are currently referred to in New Zealand as *Catharacta antarctica lonnbergi*' – nor even by Shirihai (2008) in his caveat-saturated account of the complex.

Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus*

One seen well if briefly as it headed S at 11h25 on 21st as we travelled towards Campbell Isl.

New Zealand Pigeon *Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae* E

15 bird-days. Seen daily at Invercargill & Dunedin.

Chatham Pigeon *Hemiphaga chathamensis* E

6+ at the Aototra reserve on 27th incl a couple seen very well.

***'It formerly occurred on the islands of Mangere and Pitt (del Hoyo *et al.* 1997, Gibbs *et al.* 2001), but it is now mainly restricted to Chatham Island. Most of the population occurs in southern Chatham Island, with a few in forest patches near the southern and western shoreline of Te Whanga Lagoon, and intermittently in forest patches elsewhere on the island (Powlesland 2013). The population has been much reduced since European settlement, and was estimated at just 45 birds in 1989 (Powlesland 2013). Since then, as a result of pest control, the population has increased markedly. During a survey in 2009, 263 individuals were counted and the population was estimated to number more than 600 (Powlesland 2013)':

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22732918/0>

Sacred Kingfisher *Todiramphus sanctus*

One out on the beach briefly at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill, on 13th.

New Zealand Falcon *Falco novaeseelandiae* E

Excellent views of an adult male w/ a juvenile or immature female perched on dead trees at the edge of the forest out near the far end of our walk at Enderby Island, Aucklands, on 16th, and later an adult seen passing along the cliff-top away from that area (most likely the same – it didn't seem bulky enough to be a female, and *vide* Rodney there are only two pairs on the

island, with the other pair presumably around the opposite end of the island from where we were...).

***This 'widespread but uncommon' (Heather & Robinson, 2015) species is considered Near-Threatened: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22696476/0>

Eastern Rosella *Platycercus eximius* (introduced)

Singles at Dunedin Botanical Gardens on both 2+3rd.

Forbe's (= Chatham) Parakeet *Cyanoramphus forbesi* E

12 at Mangere & one at Southeast Island on 28th.

***Apparently it was only the 3rd occasion the Birding Down Under voyage had been able to 'get' this species, which thanks to conservation efforts is no longer considered Endangered: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22724553/0>

*****Yellow-crowned Parakeet** *Cyanoramphus auriceps* E

Bird guide Lisle apparently saw one at Tagua Bay, Auckland, on 17th...

Antipodes Parakeet *Cyanoramphus unicolor* E

Four during Zodiac cruise on 25th: close views of one being chased round the top of a rock by an irritable fur seal (was the parakeet for its own amusement deliberately leading on the seal??)...

***This not especially threatened species 'is found throughout the island habitats, but is most common in the tall, tussock grassland and sedges, particularly near the coast, in well vegetated gullies and near substantial penguin colonies [...]. The leaves of these grasses form the main part of the species' diet, supplemented with seeds, berries, flowers, carrion and small storm petrels which they are known to kill [...]. It nests in underground burrows, often more than one meter long, in tussock or sedge [...]. In captivity, clutch-size is between five and six, but only one to three fledged young are generally seen with adults in the wild. A single nest has been located in the wild containing 5 eggs [...]. Young probably start breeding at one year of age. Birds may be quite long-lived - two recaptures from Antipodes Island were at least 10 years old [...]': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22685162/0>

Red-crowned Parakeet *Cyanoramphus novaezelandiae novaezelandiae* & *C. n. chathamensis* E

30+ bird-days: 24+ at Enderby Island on 16th, and at Chatham two at Aototora reserve on 27th, and one at Mangere & three at Southeast Island on 28th.

Reischek's Parakeet *Cyanoramphus hochstetteri* E

14 on Antipodes on 25th.

***Possibly as a taxonomic oversight this taxon is not split from Red-crowned Parakeet by IUCN (2017); the split (following Boon et al. (2001). Molecular systematics and conservation of kakariki (*Cyanoramphus* spp.). *Science for Conservation* **176**. Dept of Conservation: Wellington, New Zealand) is accepted by e.g. Heather & Robinson (2015) & IOC (2017), and 'appearances can be deceiving. Genetic studies reveal that crown colour may not be a good indicator of parakeet taxonomy, and that the diminutive [and Critically Endangered] orange-fronted

parakeet [*C. malherbi*] may be the closest relative of Reischek's parakeet':

<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/reischeks-parakeet>

Tui *Prothemadera novaeseelandiae novaeseelandiae* & *T. n. chathamensis* **E**

167+ bird-days. Noted on nine dates – particularly common at Invercargill's Queen's Park with up to 35 daily over 12-14th, and also not rare at Dunedin (on 2nd five at Botanical Gardens & ten along trails up to Ross Creek).

During the main trip seen at Enderby Island, Tagua Bay, mainland Chatham, and at both Mangere & Southeast Islands.

New Zealand Bellbird *Anthornis melanura* **E**

69+ bird-days. Noted on seven dates: reasonably common around Invercargill (2-5 daily at Queen's Park, and six at Bushy Point & two at Daffodil Bay on 13th), at Aucklands 12 on Enderby Isl on 16th & 3+ at Tagua Bay on 17th, and common at Dunedin (main event five at Botanical Gardens & 26 (incl adults feeding fledglings) on 2nd).

Grey Gerygone *Gerygone igata* **E**

15 bird-days. Noted only at Invercargill & Dunedin.

Chatham Gerygone *Gerygone albofrontata* **E**

Six at Aototora reserve, Chatham, on 27th.

Australian Magpie *Gymnorhina tibicen* (introduced)

One near Invercargill on 13th.

Brown Creeper (= Pipipi) *Mohoua novaeseelandiae* **E**

14 at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill, on 13th.

New Zealand Fantail *Rhipidura fuliginosa fuliginosa* & *R. f. penita*

29 bird-days. Noted on five dates at Invercargill (one at Thomson's Bush on 12th, and on 13th three at Bushy Point & ten at Daffodil Bay), at Chatham (ten at Aototora reserve on 27th & four at Mangere Isl the next day), and at Dunedin a singleton high in trees above suburban gardens along Burma Road on 2nd.

***A New Zealand endemic only since 'subspecies *cervina*, endemic to Australia's Lord Howe Island, went extinct in the 1920s': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/22735745/0>

Tomtit *Petroica macrocephala* **E**

40 bird-days. Noted on five dates: two at Daffodil Bay, Invercargill, on 13th, 17 during Zodiac cruise at Snares on 15th, 17 on Enderby Isl on 16th, three at Tagua Bay on 17th, and one from the Zodiacs at Mangere Isl on 28th.

***ssp *macrocephala* at Invercargill, *dannefaerdi* on Snares, *chathamensis* on Chatham, and *marrineri* on Auckland.

***IUCN (2017), following del Hoyo *et al.* (2016), unlike e.g. IOC (2017) & Heather & Robertson (2015), considers the all-black Snares taxon a full species, 'Vulnerable because it has a small

population size and an extremely restricted range, and if invasive mammals should arrive at its island range the species could be very quickly driven to listing as Critically Endangered or possibly to extinction': <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/103734886/0>

Eurasian Skylark *Alauda arvensis* (introduced)

Common around Invercargill, and ditto on mainland Chatham (10+ in fields adjacent to Aototora reserve on 27th, and more along the roads across the island to get there).

Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxana neoxana*

15+ bird-days. Noted on six dates at Invercargill (two at Thomson's Bush / Waihopai River on 12th, singles both at Bushy Point on 13th & at Estuary Walkway on 14th), at Bluff (one at the harbour as we waited to depart on 14th), at Chatham (three en route on 27th) & at Dunedin (up to four daily around Botanical Gardens, and one along the suburban Burma Road on 2nd).

New Zealand Fernbird *Megalurus punctatus* E

Three at Bushy Point, Invercargill, on 13th, and six from the Zodiacs at Snares on 15th.

****M. p. punctatus* at Invercargill & *M. p. caudatus* on Snares.

***IUCN (2017) listed the species as *Poodytes punctatus*, and followed del Hoyo *et al.* (2016) in elevating ssp *caudatus* to full species status: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/103798418/0> ; elsewhere, species (still) listed as *Bowdleria punctata*: 'the only other member of this endemic genus was the extinct Chatham Island fernbird *B. rufescens*.'

(<http://nzbirdsonline.org.nz/species/fernbird>)

Silvereye *Zosterops lateralis*

130+ bird-days. Noted on ten dates at Invercargill, Snares, Enderby, Tagua Bay, mainland Chatham, Mangere Isl & at Dunedin.

***ssp *lateralis* – migrants from Tasmania colonized NZ naturally from 1856, gaining the Maori name *taohou*, 'stranger': Heather & Robinson (2015).

Eurasian Starling *Sturnis vulgaris* (introduced)

Fairly common, incl at Buckles Bay, Campbell & mainland Chatham (where seen breeding in sea cliffs at Aototora reserve)...

Common Blackbird *Turdus merula* (introduced)

Common! Away from Invercargill & Dunedin noted at Snares, Enderby, Carnley Harbour, Campbell & mainland Chatham.

Song Thrush *Turdus philomelus* (introduced)

Very common at Invercargill & Dunedin; also 2+ at Aototora reserve, Chatham...

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (introduced)

Common at Invercargill & Dunedin.

Dunnoek *Prunella modularis* (introduced)

Common at Invercargill & Dunedin; also noted at Enderby, Campbell & mainland Chatham.

New Zealand Pipit *Anthus novaeseelandiae* E

68+ bird-days. 35+ at Enderby Isl on 16th, 20+ at Campbell on 22nd, ten from the Zodiacs at Antipodes on 25th, and three during the cruise around Mangere Isl on 28th.

***ssp *chathamensis* on Chatham, *aucklandicus* on Auckland & *steindachneri* on Antipodes: IOC (2017) – vide Heather & Robinson (2015) birds on Campbell, from where none listed by IOC, are also *aucklandicus* but are listed as ssp nova in checklist supplied by Heritage Expeditions.

Common Chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs* (introduced)

Common at Invercargill & Dunedin; also 4+ at Aototora reserve, Chatham...

European Greenfinch *Chloris chloris* (introduced)

A few at Invercargill & Dunedin.

'Common' Redpoll *Acanthis flammea* (introduced)

Very common at Invercargill & Dunedin; also noted at Snares, Enderby, Tagua Bay, Macquarie (both at Sandy Bay & Buckles Bay) & at Campbell.

***If source for introductions was Britain then ssp involved would be *cabaret*, still considered a full species by IOC (2017), 'Lesser Redpoll' *A. cabaret* ...

***As with (most?) other introduced species overrunning the NZ countryside their presence is due to the Acclimatisation Societies, established in New Zealand by European colonists from the 1860s (see e.g. <https://teara.govt.nz/en/acclimatisation/page-1>). Their activities were disastrous and today seem bizarre: 'Not only did [the acclimatization societies] import animals, but they also exported them. For example, in 1872 the Whanganui society exported kiwis to Adelaide in exchange for rooks':

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acclimatisation_societies_in_New_Zealand

European Goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis britannica* (introduced)

Common at Invercargill & Dunedin; also 2+ at Aototora reserve, Chatham...

Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* (introduced)

Singles at Thomson's Bush / Waihopai River, Invercargill, on 12th & at Aototora reserve, Chatham on 27th...

x/fg

Mammals:

Southern Right Whale *Eubaleana australis*

One by the ship at Enderby Isl on 16th – a nice after-dinner surprise!

Antarctic Minke Whale *Baleanoptera bonaerensis*

One at 12h25 between Auckland and Macquarie on 18th.

*** <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/dec/23/sea-shepherd-loses-antarctic-battle-japan-whale-hunters>

Fin Whale *Baleanoptera physalus*

One between Bounties and Chathams on 26th.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

Two came in to bow-ride on 30th.

Long-finned Pilot Whale *Globicephala melas*

As we headed back to Dunedin c10 at c14h00 on 29th & two on 30th.

Hourglass Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus cruciger*

Three between Auckland and Antipodes on 24th.

Dusky Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obscurus*

I noted the species on three dates: two between Snares and Auckland on 15th, 11 between Bounties and Chatham on 26th, and 40+ (pods of 30+ & 10+) as we started back towards Dunedin on 28th.

Southern Right Whale Dolphin *Lisodelphis peronii*

Eight between Bounties and Chatham on 26th, and three between Chatham and Dunedin on 28th.

Killer Whale *Orcinus orca*

One huge male surfaced next to the ship when we were at anchor off Sandy Bay, Macquarie, at 21h25 on 19th: initially at just c50m it was on a mission, heading S at speed, so most team members only got fairly distant looks...

Southern Bottlenose Whale *Hyperoodon planifrons*

11 animals on 29th – incl six (of which at least two were calves) came as close as c100m before diving under the ship, allowing us to see bulbous head & spotting on the back very clearly: WOW!

Strap-toothed Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon layardii*

Two between Chatham and Dunedin on 28th.

Subantarctic Fur Seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis*

One at Antipodes on 25th didn't make the official Heritage Expedition list.

New Zealand Fur Seal *Arctocephalus forsteri*

Noted on nine dates, incl at Snares, Antipodes, Bounties (500+ on 25th), Southeast Island (80+ on 28th), and at sea back towards Dunedin on 29-30th.

***The official 2011 trip report states '[the Bounties] seal population was almost wiped out during the sealing period in 1950's where numbers got down to only 10'!

New Zealand (= Hooker's) Sea Lion *Phocarctos hookeri*

I noted the species on three dates: two on 15th, 55 on the beach at Enderby Isl, and 12 at Perseverance Harbour, Campbell, on 22nd.

Southern Elephant Seal *Mirounga leonina*

Two at Enderby Isl on 16th, up to 100+ a day at Macquarie over 19-20th, and one at Antipodes on 25th.