

# CHATHAM ISLANDS – A LAND APART

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INCLUDING THE ANTIPODES  
AND BOUNTY ISLANDS

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EXPEDITION DOSSIER  
8 – 17 MARCH 2023



Heritage Expeditions

Antarctica • Western and South Pacific  
Subantarctic Islands • Russian Far East





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**D**iscover amazing endemic wildlife, meet the locals and experience conservation in action as we journey through these incredibly diverse archipelagos.

Their first inhabitants, the Moriori, called them 'Rekhou' (misty skies), the Europeans who rediscovered them in 1791 named them the Chatham Islands after their ship, while Maori, who didn't settle the islands until 1835, called them 'Wharekauri'. Today, most New Zealanders know them as the last place mentioned in their daily weather forecast, but some might also know them as the home of the endangered Black Robin.

The Chatham archipelago (made up of at least 12 islands, plus numerous islets) lies 870 kilometres east of New Zealand and runs 45 minutes ahead of the rest of the country. The first part of New Zealand and the first inhabited landmass around the globe to be greeted by the morning sun, the history of these islands and their rich natural history is unique. It is only in recent years that these precious islands have begun to be understood and appreciated. Several books, including Michael King's *Moriari: A People Rediscovered* and Rodney

*Russ' Galapagos of the Antarctic – Wild Islands to the South of New Zealand* capture some of their beauty and mystique, but it is only by visiting and experiencing these remarkable islands that one can truly appreciate what they have to offer. During explorations around the archipelago we will hear remarkable stories of rediscovery and population recovery with the Black Robin and its rescue from the brink of extinction and the once thought to be extinct Chatham Island Taiko (Magenta Petrel). The ongoing careful management of these critically endangered species serve as beacons of hope and inspiration for conservationists everywhere. Heritage Expeditions has an excellent track record of sighting a number of Chatham Island Taiko during its voyages to the Chatham archipelago and we hope to continue the good fortune during this expedition.

Visiting the Chatham Islands is not difficult – there are regular flights to and from New Zealand and several travel companies offer guided tours – but this expedition is unique and rare, as it includes the seldom visited (and almost impossible to get to) outlying islands where much of the story of the Chatham Islands can be seen and experienced. Our journey is also guided by a team of Chatham Island experts whose knowledge will add another dimension to your experience.

This expedition also includes designated UNESCO World Heritage sites The Antipodes and Bounty Islands, which are afforded the highest conservation status and protection by the New Zealand Government (there are also islands that we visit within the Chatham Islands' archipelago with similar status and protection). While no landings are possible at these remote outcrops, islets and stacks, we plan to Zodiac cruise their shorelines if weather conditions are favourable.



## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Invercargill

Make your way to the Ascot Park Hotel where we will transfer you to our departure at the Port of Bluff. (Reporting times and the departure time of the transfer will be confirmed with your voyage documents). The township of Bluff is situated on the north-eastern side of Bluff Hill, an extinct volcanic cone which forms a knoll at the southern end of the Bluff Peninsula which extends into Foveaux Strait.

The captain and expedition team will be waiting to welcome you on board the ship and show you to your cabin. You will then have the opportunity to familiarise yourself on board, followed by formal introductions to the expedition team and safety briefings.

Join the captain on the bridge, or fellow travellers on deck, as we set sail for the Antipodes group, the most remote, and youngest, of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands.

### Day 2: At Sea

At sea en route to the Antipodes, today is a day for pelagic birding. Species commonly seen in this area include Wandering Albatross, Southern Royal Albatross, Black-browed Albatross, Campbell Island Albatross, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Salvin's Albatross, Grey-headed Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrel, and the Sooty Shearwater and Little Shearwater. This region of the Southern Ocean is one of the few places where the Fairy Prion, Fulmar Prion and Antarctic Prion occur together, providing a good opportunity for comparison. Other species to be on the lookout for include the Soft-plumaged Petrel, Mottled Petrel, White-headed Petrel, Grey-faced Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, Grey-backed Storm-petrel, Wilson's Storm-petrel, Black-bellied Storm-petrel and the Common Diving-petrel.

### Day 3: Antipodes Islands

The Antipodes Islands are the most isolated and perhaps least known of New Zealand's Subantarctic Islands. Sealers lived

here in the decades immediately after the islands' discovery in 1806 and two historic, and one recent, shipwreck have been recorded here. The islands are of volcanic origin, but are heavily eroded, especially the western shoreline which is ragged and dotted with sea caves, stacks and coves. The islands are frequently buffeted by westerly winds, while overcast conditions and drizzle are not unusual. The largest of the group is Antipodes Island, which rises to 366 metres with the volcanic cone of Mt Galloway, most of the island has an undulating plateau which is cut by deep alluvial gullies.

Main island and namesake Antipodes Island has benefited from one of the world's most successful island eradications dubbed the 'Million Dollar Mouse'. A joint initiative between the Department of Conservation (DOC), the Morgan Foundation, WWF New Zealand, Island Conservation and public support, the programme successfully eradicated some 200,000 mice from the island in less than two years with DOC announcing the



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island 'mouse free' in 2018. The island's unique plants and wildlife, including 21 species of breeding seabirds, more than 150 species of insects – 17 per cent endemic to the Antipodes; 21 uncommon plant species and four unique land birds now thrive following the removal of the mice.

Landings are not permitted on the Antipodes group, so if the weather and sea conditions are suitable, we plan to cruise along the coastline of Antipodes Island by Zodiac. The bull kelp *Durvillaea Antarctica* 'Antipodes Island' is prevalent here, this dark-brown subtidal plant with thick flattened blades can grow up to 10 metres long. As we Zodiac cruise the coastline we have a good chance of seeing the Antipodes Parakeet, the largest of New Zealand's parakeets, which has an entirely green head. We will also be looking for the Reischek's Parakeet, a strong subspecies of the Red-crowned Parakeet found in the Auckland Islands and on the Chatham Islands, as well as the Antipodes subspecies of the New Zealand Pipit.

We can also expect good views of both Erect-crested and Rockhopper Penguins along the coast where they often breed in mixed colonies. Antarctic Terns and Kelp Gulls are also often seen in good numbers.

## Day 4: Bounty Islands

We arrive at the incongruously named Bounty Islands, the northernmost of the five New Zealand Subantarctic groups. They were discovered by Captain William Bligh when the British naval ship *HMS Bounty* sailed by the islands in 1788, just months before the infamous mutiny. Here inhospitable granite knobs, tips of the submerged Bounty Platform, are lashed by the Southern Ocean. They are home to thousands of Salvin's Albatross, Erect-crested Penguins, Fulmar Prions and the endemic Bounty Island Shag – the world's rarest. We plan to arrive in the early morning and if sea and



© D. Brown

weather conditions are suitable we will cruise by Zodiac around the granite outposts to take a closer look at the birds which breed here. New Zealand Fur Seals which were almost hunted to extinction in the Subantarctic Islands are present in large numbers.

After the cruise we depart for the Chatham Islands. There are opportunities to see a good selection of birdlife as we sail. These should include Wandering Albatross, Northern Royal Albatross, Mottled Petrel, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Broad-billed Prion, White-chinned Petrel and Black-bellied Storm-petrel as well as Wilson's Storm-petrel. Other possible sightings include White-capped Albatross, Northern Giant Petrel, Cape Petrel, Antarctic Fulmar, Sooty Shearwater, Little Shearwater and Grey-backed Storm-petrel.

## Days 5 to 9: Chatham Islands

There are excellent opportunities for pelagic birding as we approach the Chatham Islands' archipelago. In particular, we will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel, and in the past we have observed the very rare Chatham Island Taiko in this area too. Endemic to the Chatham Islands, the Chatham Island Taiko – also known as the Magenta Petrel – is among New Zealand's most endangered species. It is one of the world's rarest seabirds with a population estimated at less than 150.

Consisting of one large island and numerous smaller islands and rocky islets, only two islands of the Chatham Islands' archipelago are inhabited. They represent New Zealand's eastern most territory and were originally settled by East Polynesians (either directly or via



New Zealand as the evidence supports some contact there) in the 1400s. Their geographic isolation saw them develop their own distinct culture. In the 1970s Europeans discovered the islands with sealers and settlers following. In the 1830s New Zealand Maori invaded the islands, killing and enslaving many of the indigenous people. The impact of the original settlers, the European and later the Maori on the native flora and fauna was disastrous. Introduced animals, hunting, fires and land clearing wiped out many species of endemic birds. Fortunately a number survived on the offshore islands in the archipelago.

This expedition has been planned to take advantage of the warmer, longer days of early autumn in order to maximise our time here. We will work closely with the Chatham Island people in order to create an extensive and varied programme ensuring greater appreciation and exploration of these islands. The daily itinerary will be determined by weather and sea conditions. Our visit could include:

## Chatham Island

The charming and friendly main settlement of Waitangi features a wharf in the township and is normally bustling with activity from fisherman and the locals are always happy to stop and chat. Near our

landing in Waitangi there is a good chance of seeing the endemic Chatham Island Shag.

With a new generation of Chatham Island people there has come a new awareness and a willingness to be part of a concerted conservation effort. A number of private reserves have been established, a lot of replanting has taken place and predator control initiatives have been instigated on the island.



We plan to visit the Awatotara Valley, one of the original private reserves established by a local family on the south coast of the main island, where there is a very good chance to see the endemic Chatham Island Pigeon, Chatham Island Warbler and Tui. The pigeon was close to extinction, though now supports a healthy population. Travelling by local bus, the road takes us through developed farmland where we will undoubtedly see numerous introduced species and possibly the Weka. There will also be an opportunity to continue further south to the Tuku River and Taiko Town where you will be able to learn about the discovery and conservation work done on the Chatham Island Taiko, one of the world's most endangered seabirds.

During our time on the main island our activities may include:

- Visiting the small fishing village of Owenga and the monument to Tommy Solomon, the last full-blooded Moriori, and searching Blind Jim's Creek for fossilised sharks' teeth at Te Whanga Lagoon.
- Maunganui's old stone cottages will provide a window into the history of the European settlement, while at JM Barker (Hapupu) National Historic Reserve a short walk takes us to view the dendroglyphs (tree carvings), which date back to the earliest settlers – the Moriori.
- Examining aspects of the island's unique natural history we expect to see the island's two endemic shags (cormorants) at Matarakau and endemic plants, including the famed Chatham Island Forget-me-not, at Kaingaroa.
- A visit to the uniquely designed Kōpinga Marae, built as a tribute to the Moriori ancestors legacy of peace, and now a popular meeting place for Moriori.

## Mangere and Little Mangere Islands

Situated to the west of Pitt Island, Mangere Island is one of only two sites in the world where the Black Robin (once the world's rarest bird) are found. We will hear the story of how this endemic species was rescued from the brink of extinction in the 1970s when the total population consisted of just six birds. The recovery of this little bird is a remarkable tale of persistence, passion, courage and a little good luck. If weather conditions allow we will launch the Zodiacs and cruise the islands. If we are lucky we may see the Forbes' Parakeet at Mangere Island, also known as the Chatham Parakeet. This rare parakeet is endemic to the Chatham Islands group, where it is confined to just these two tiny islands.

## Pitt Island

Spectacular scenery waits at Pitt Island, the jewel in the Chatham Islands' crown. The easternmost



inhabited island in New Zealand, it is situated approximately 22 kilometres south-east of the main Chatham Island. Named 'Rangihaute' by the Moriori, it is separated from the main island by Pitt Strait and is officially the first inhabited place on Earth to be greeted by the sun of each new day.

Our visit to Pitt Island may include Flowerpot or Glory Bay where we look forward to meeting some of the local residents and hearing their stories of life on the island.

While here we will also be on the look out for the rare breed of impressively horned New Zealand Pitt Island Sheep (the rams' horns measure up to a metre long around the curve) on the surrounding hillsides.

## Pyramid Rock

We plan to cruise around the spectacular basalt outcrop of Pyramid Rock, south of Pitt Island – the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. Landings are not possible (nor practical – a fact you will





appreciate when you see it) but great views of birds can be had from the ship and there will also be hundreds of birds following behind.

### South East Island

This has to be one of the world's greatest nature reserves and while landings are not permitted, during a Zodiac cruise along the South East Island coastline we can expect good views of the world's rarest wader the endemic New Zealand Shore Plover, and Chatham Island Oystercatcher. We should also see the Pitt Island Shag which nests on the island.

As the final programme for our visit to these islands is not set in stone, small ship expedition cruising allows us the flexibility to work around the elements to maximise our experiences and opportunities here.

### Day 10: Christchurch

Early this morning we will arrive in the Port of Lyttelton. After a final breakfast and completing Custom formalities we bid farewell to our fellow voyagers and take a complimentary coach transfer to Christchurch Airport. In case of unexpected delays due to weather and/or port operations we ask you not to book any onward travel until after midday today.

**During our voyage, circumstances may make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. This can include poor weather and opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed.**

## DATES

**Voyage #SOE230308**  
**8 – 17 March 2023**

## PRICES

**Heritage Suite \$ 7,950 pp\***  
Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

**Mini Suite \$ 7,450 pp\***  
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

**Superior Plus \$ 7,000 pp\***  
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

**Superior \$ 6,500 pp\***  
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

**Main Deck \$ 6,250 pp\***  
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

**Main Deck Triple \$ 5,750 pp\***  
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

\* The price listed includes the additional landing fee of \$100 pp. (All prices are per person in US\$)

## PRICE INCLUDES

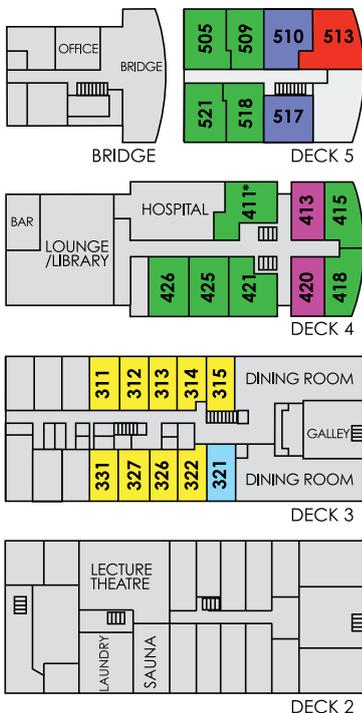
Landing fees, pre/post cruise transfers, all on board ship accommodation with meals and all expedition shore excursions.

## PRICE EXCLUDES

All items of a personal nature, laundry, drinks, gratuities. International/domestic flights, visas and travel insurance. Visit to Tuku River and Taiko Town where an extra charge applies and is subject to species present.



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■ **Heritage Suites:** Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

■ **Mini Suites:** Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

■ **Superior Plus Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows. \*Cabin 411 has a double bed with upper bunk.

■ **Superior Cabins:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

■ **Main Deck Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

■ **Main Deck Triple:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.



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