

## **ANTARCTICA**

### **LEOPARD SEAL & WILDLIFE EXPEDITION**

The Ultimate Dive, Snorkel & Photography Expedition



**“Leopard seals are the most incredible animals I have ever had the pleasure of photographing.”**

*Paul Nicklen, award-winning National Geographic photographer*

Join us on this unique Dive, Exploration and Photography Expedition designed exclusively for Waterproof Expeditions. Featuring the elusive leopard seal (*Hydrurga Leptonyx*) you will dive, snorkel, photograph and film these fascinating creatures during a private voyage onboard a luxury ice strengthened expedition yacht for only 12 guest.

Every austral summer the penguins of Antarctica leave their large nesting colonies to spend the season at sea. The adults go first, then the newly fledged chicks. While for most birds fledging means learning to fly, for penguins this is learning to swim. They stand on shore and face the sea. Everything about them says this is where they need to go. The sea is their survival, their bread-basket filled with fish, squid and krill. It's a daunting task. Leopard seals are out there waiting, hunting and patrolling for the slow and unwary. They kill hundreds, perhaps thousands, of penguins, thrashing them back and forth with massive jaws. To dive an azure blue iceberg is the ultimate high, but to be joined on the same dive by a huge leopard seal, that's when the mind really blows!

During this voyage we will also participate in our 'Sea Leopard Project'; To understand the behaviour, ecology, and population dynamics of Leopard Seals on the Antarctic Peninsula in order to promote their conservation and safe human-seal interactions.

#### **The Hanse Explorer: your home in Antarctica**

Your home for this expedition is the luxury expedition yacht 'Hanse Explorer'. With a length of 48 metres, a shallow draft of 4.40 metres and an E3 ice-class, she can sail in areas where many vessels, other than private yachts, cannot. The yacht accommodates a select group of only 12 passengers with two expert guides and more than 10 crew. The six guest cabins are luxuriously and tastefully fitted and are equipped with the latest technology including a satcom-device with free email and a large flat screen for working on digital photographs. A sauna and fitness room will help guests relax after their adventurous day. Weather permitting, the outside dining area provides the most incredible backdrops whilst eating superb international cuisine. The atmosphere onboard is relaxed and informal.

There are many advantages to joining the small group on this voyage. The small numbers give us great flexibility and the chance to offer a wide choice of activities from landings and hiking to diving, cruising and photography. This is the ultimate complete Antarctic experience. Non-divers will enjoy the cruise as much as the divers - joining as a snorkeller, photographer or hiker (or all three!).

### **Diving and snorkeling with experts**

Join renowned and professional **'Big Animals' photographer Amos Nachoum** on this exciting photo expedition. Learn how to make great images and use the best lighting techniques and compositions including photography coaching and workshops.

The vessel carries an onboard state of the art dive operation organized by Waterproof Expeditions, the polar dive experts with many years experience of extreme situations. We are trained to search out the best opportunities for diving, taking into account the unpredictable weather and ice conditions, whilst maintaining the highest level of safety in combination with quality diving. We conduct open water dives in a controlled environment under small, grounded icebergs diving from the shore, a zodiac or an ice shell.

Whilst exploring the South West Antarctic Peninsula the dive sites we visit may include: Cuverville and Pleneau Islands with superb iceberg diving; the magnificent Lemaire Channel; Argentine Islands with good chances of spotting gentoo penguins 'flying' through the water; and the spectacular sites around Vernadskiy, the Ukrainian Scientific station.



### **Sample itinerary**

**Day 1** Embark in Ushuaia, Argentina.

**Days 2 - 3** At sea crossing the Drake Passage.

**Days 4- 8 /-12** Exploring the South West Antarctic Peninsula. With only a small group of divers we can be flexible and take advantage of the best wildlife opportunities, weather and ice conditions and the most beautiful light for amazing photos. We start our first day in Antarctica with a mandatory checkout dive at an easy accessible site to get you accustomed to the cold water and to adjust your weights. Diving in Antarctica is serious and safety is our first priority.

**Days 9-11 /12-15** Sailing back across the Drake Passage to disembark in Ushuaia.

**Dates : 12 – 26 February 2012 (14 nights / 15 days)**

**Price: Euro 18.500 per person**

#### **Rates include**

- Full board including non-alcoholic beverages
- Luxury Suite cabin with private bathroom (double occupancy)
- All dives and excursions by Zodiac according to the daily program
- Dive compressor, tanks, weights and belts (you need to bring your own personal dive gear)
- Leadership and photo guidance by our Polar Dive Experts
- Miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program

#### **Rates do not include**

- International flights and taxes
- Excess baggage charges on flight
- Personal dive equipment
- All items of personal nature such as laundry, meals ashore, alcoholic beverages, telecommunication charges
- Gratuities
- Pr-and Post-voyage packages with air & hotel



**Please contact us for detailed itineraries and special departures.**  
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