

CRUISE ON THE SPIRIT OF ENDERBY

Western Pacific Odyssey

New Zealand, Norfolk Island, New Caledonia, Solomon Islands, Caroline Islands, Mariana Islands & Japan – Escorted Wildlife & Photography Tour

Saturday 16 April to Friday 20 May 2011

Leader: Tony Pym

Cruise with us from New Zealand to Japan, on a 4,000 mile transect of the western Pacific Ocean! On this phenomenal voyage, which is a repeat of our very successful 2009 cruise, we shall visit remote islands, search for rare and endemic species, and see numbers of the world's diverse seabirds. It is the best seabirding cruise possible, a birding trip conceived in heaven! Not just the birds though, this expedition is unique for those that simply love the thrill of a cruise in the South and West Pacific that includes distant lands, remote islands and atolls, and rarely visited peoples. After departing Tauranga near Auckland we spend a day in the rich waters of the Hauraki Gulf, home to the recently re-discovered New Zealand Storm-Petrel. From there it is northward to Norfolk Island and New Caledonia where we make shore excursions to see the endemic Kagu. Landfall in the Solomon Islands is planned at remote Rennell Island. Five days are scheduled in the Solomons before sailing north across the Britain Trench, an area known to be rich in cetaceans, to Micronesia. We have landings scheduled at Chuuk (Truk) before Chich Jima in the Bonin Islands. We sail, as close as we are allowed, to Torishima Island, sole breeding grounds for the enigmatic Short-tailed Albatross. The journey will end at Yokohama in Japan.

Our vessel will be the comfortable expedition ship, the Spirit of Enderby, operated by Heritage Expeditions carrying a maximum of 48 passengers. All cabins have portholes or windows and plenty of storage space. The ship has a bar/library lounge and a dedicated lecture room with informal but excellent dining in two dining rooms. She has zodiacs for landings and cruises.

Throughout the cruise you will have the company of our guide Tony Pym, one of the world's seabird and cetacean experts, to look after you. It is likely that this will be the last cruise of the Western Pacific for many years to come. So early booking is essential to secure your cabin.

ITINERARY

Days 1 to 3

We leave London in the afternoon on a scheduled flight to Auckland. We arrive into Auckland on the morning of the third day. We transfer to our hotel in Tauranga where we have time to relax, have dinner and stay overnight.

Day 4

We board the *Spirit of Enderby* in the late afternoon and set sail in the early evening.

Day 5

We sail northwards through the Hauraki Gulf of North Island. There are at least five seabird species whose breeding ranges are mostly limited to islands in the Gulf. We shall be looking for Grey Ternlets, Black Petrels and particularly the recently rediscovered New Zealand Storm-Petrel. We shall need to look at finer detail to identify and compare a challenging species found here, Pycroft's Petrel.

Days 6 & 7

For these two days we are at sea, as we head towards Norfolk Island. We may have albatrosses from the subantarctic in our wake, yet the next moment possibly a tropicbird will be in view. We expect Black-winged, White-necked and Kermadec Petrels in this area, plus Grey-faced and possibly Providence Petrels. Wedge-tailed Shearwaters will be in numbers and the delicate White Tern should appear. We should see Norfolk Island in the evening.

Day 8

We go ashore on Norfolk Island where redstone cliffs are topped with Norfolk Pines and the turquoise waters will be dotted with noddies and tropicbirds. We shall spend the day ashore on this charming and unspoilt island. There are three island endemics; Norfolk Island Parakeet, Norfolk Gerygone and Slender-billed White-eye. We should find all quite easily and, following lunch, have optional visits to view Red-tailed Tropicbirds and one of the noisy Black Noddy



Gibson's Wandering Albatross



New Zealand Storm-Petrel

colonies. Late in the day the ship will re-position off nearby Phillip Island for the evening seabird gathering.

Day 9

We are at sea heading northwest towards New Caledonia. This will be an important area for the gadfly petrels, and we can look out for both Collared and Gould's Petrels.

Days 10 & 11

We should arrive in Noumea, New Caledonia during late afternoon. Seabirds may include frigatebirds and three species of booby may be seen on our approach to the island: Masked, Red-footed and Brown. We shall go ashore on the tropical paradise of New Caledonia. Our excursion will be to the famous Parc de Riviere Bleue, the rainforest home to the Kagu, a unique bird, and the one and only member of a monotypic family. Its affinities are still not resolved with some believing it is related to herons yet its closest relative appears to be the Sunbittern of Central and South America! There are many other endemics and we shall seek Crow Honeyeater, New Caledonia Goshawk, New Caledonia Parakeet, New Caledonia Whistler and the striking Cloven-feathered Dove to name a few.

Days 12 to 14

We leave New Caledonia for the passage across to Rennell Island in the Solomons. Sooty and Crested Terns will be our companions and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters our outriders. As we leave the reefs of New Caledonia we should start picking up charismatic Tahiti Petrels plus smaller numbers of Collared and White-necked Petrels. Boobies and frigatebirds breed in the region. This is a known hotspot for cetaceans, including the large whales, and for the birders, this could be our only chance for Polynesian Storm-Petrel.

Day 15

We leave the *Spirit of Enderby* for a tour of Rennell, an unspoilt tropical sanctuary. This is a rarely visited island with natural forest filled with

birds. There will be options for birding, sightseeing, taking a cool swim or relaxing. The avifauna includes five endemic species: Rennell Shrikebill, Rennell Fantail, Rennell White-eye, Rennell Starling and Bare-eyed White-eye. We hope to find a colony of the Rennell Flying Foxes also. We plan another landing, on the island of San Christobal, an exciting new landing for birding, previously only visited by the Western Pacific Odyssey.

Day 16

At Makira Island we will seek the endemic Sooty Myzomela, San Cristobal Melidectes, White-collared Monarch, Mottled Flowerpecker, White-headed Fruit-Dove and Rufous Fantail. Other species could include Rainbow Lorikeet, Red-knobbed and Imperial Pigeons, San Cristobal Singing and Metallic Starlings, Brahminy Kite, Pied Goshawk, Pacific Baza and Cardinal Myzomela. We can enjoy the hospitality of the people in nearby Anuta Village before departing for Honiara.

Day 17

We pass off the coast of Guadalcanal to make a landing at Honiara. The optional birding walk will take us to Mount Austin where island group endemics include Midget Flowerpecker, Ultramarine Kingfisher and Ducorp's Cockatoo. The impressive Blyth's Hornbills may be encountered also.

Day 18

We will begin looking for Heinroth's Shearwater, a near-mythical and virtually unknown species seen by very few, as we travel through another area renowned for cetaceans, particularly the little known beaked whales. We can compare Lesser and Great Frigatebirds as they glide overhead. We make a landing on Kolombangara in the Solomon Islands. This is a heavily forested strato-volcano where the impressive Solomon Sea-Eagle nests and Melanesian Scrubfowl roam. Buff-headed Coucal, Solomon Islands White-eye, White-capped and Kolombangra Monarchs are resident. Our prize though will be

to see Roviana Rail, mainly a crepuscular species and only described in 1991.

Days 19 to 22

Again at sea, our course a heading north, off the western side of lush and rugged Bougainville Island. We need to be alert for Beck's Petrel, another little known species that has been recorded from this area only. The comparison species, Tahiti Petrel, should be seen whilst we cruise the channels between islands; this is another cetacean hotspot so look out for whales and dolphins. Black Noddies could number thousands and there will be hundreds of Brown Noddies. Sooty Terns, Red-footed Boobies and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters will add to the tally. We shall cross the equator and will pass many archetypal tropical islets and atolls on our way to Chuuk (Truk).

Days 23 & 24

We arrive at the huge atoll of Chuuk in Micronesia. Well known as an undersea haven for divers (there will be the opportunity to snorkel) there are more endemics here, including the ultra rare Truk Monarch. We would be extremely lucky to find this gem but Caroline Islands White-eye should be found and both the Caroline Islands Reed Warbler and Caroline Islands Swiftlet are abundant. We will start early the next morning to visit areas of Weno Island. Species include Micronesian Myzomelas, Micronesian Starling, Crimson-crowned Fruit-Dove, Blue-faced Parrotfinch and Caroline Island Ground-Dove. We depart from Chuuk in the early afternoon for the Bonin Islands.

Days 25 to 29

We spend a long period at sea now. New seabirds should include Matsudaira's Storm-Petrels, Bannerman's Shearwater and Bonin Petrel, all localised species of the western Pacific, and Bulwer's Petrels. Our route will take us towards the Bonin Islands, a rich seabird archipelago. The scene of Bonin Petrels, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters plus various storm-petrels around the ship awaits us, and we should look out for the occasional albatross.



White Tern

Itinerary

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Day 1 | Depart London |
| Day 2 | In transit |
| Day 3 | Tauranga |
| Day 4 | Embark the <i>Spirit of Enderby</i> |
| Day 5 | Hauraki Gulf |
| Days 6-7 | At sea |
| Day 8 | Norfolk Island |
| Day 9 | At sea |
| Days 10-11 | New Caledonia |
| Days 12-14 | At sea |
| Day 15 | Rennell Island |
| Day 16 | Makira Island |
| Day 17 | Honiara |
| Day 18 | Kolombangara |
| Days 19-22 | At sea |
| Days 23-24 | Chuuk Island |
| Days 25-29 | At sea |
| Day 30 | Bonin Islands |
| Day 31 | At sea |
| Day 32 | Torishima |
| Day 33 | At sea |
| Day 34 | Disembark the <i>Spirit of Enderby</i> |
| Day 35 | Arrive London |

Tour Prices

Please see the cabin layout and check which category cabin you require. (See page 137)

Total cost for 35 days in 2011:

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Main Deck Triple Cabin | £7,699 |
| Main Deck Cabin | £8,399 |
| Single cabin | £13,799 |
| Superior Cabin | £9,199 |
| Single cabin | £15,199 |
| Superior Plus Cabin | £9,699 |
| Single cabin | £16,199 |
| Mini Suite | £10,399 |
| Single cabin | £19,199 |
| Heritage Suite | £10,899 |

Tour Price Includes:

- All flights
- All transfers
- Landing fees (USD \$500)
- Hotel accommodation

Tour Price Does Not Include:

- Travel Insurance
- Items of a personal nature
- Laundry
- Beverages
- Excess baggage charges
- Any Visa fees
- Gratuities
- Meals while not on board ship.

If you wish to arrange your own flights for this tour then please deduct £1,200.



Bottle-nosed Dolphins

Day 30

More than thirty islands make up the Bonin Islands group. We shall make landings at Chichi Jima where we shall seek Japanese Bush Warbler and Japanese White-eye. Blue Rock Thrushes are common around the harbour. Laysan Albatrosses could be around the islands, and we should see Humpback Whales that make this their summer home to breed and calve.

Day 31

At sea again and new seabirds should include Black-footed Albatross, Streaked Shearwater and Tristram's Storm-Petrel.

Day 32

We arrive off Torishima. This volcanic speck in the ocean is the sole breeding site for the rare Short-tailed Albatross, a species slowly recovering from the brink of extinction. Landings are not allowed here but we should see the albatross, a seabird highlight of the trip. We can expect Black-footed Albatrosses, probably Bonin and Kermadec Petrels plus shearwaters and storm-petrels round the ship.

Day 33

Flocks of Streaked Shearwaters will increase in number, as we get closer to Japan. We may have some stowaways come aboard as we shall be following a migration route for many song and shorebirds that may rest awhile with us before continuing their journeys northwards. We shall be looking for tiny Japanese Crested Murrelets as we approach Miyake Jima in the Izu Islands, our last landing before mainland Japan. Izu Thrush and Izu Warbler are two prizes here.

Days 34 & 35

After breakfast we disembark in Yokohama. We transfer to Tokyo for the return flight to London, where we arrive the next day.

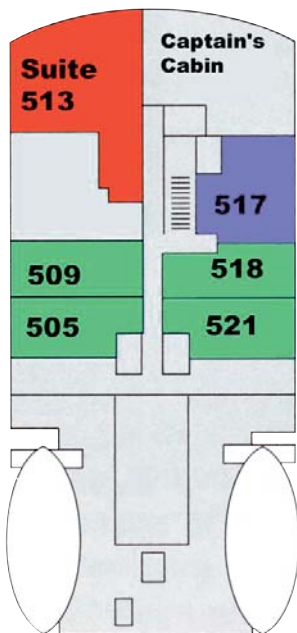
Landings at the islands are by permit only as administered by the relevant Governments. Circumstances may be encountered during our voyage, which will make it necessary or desirable to deviate from the proposed itinerary. These circumstances include poor weather and opportunities for making unplanned excursions. Your Expedition Leader will keep you fully informed during the voyage.



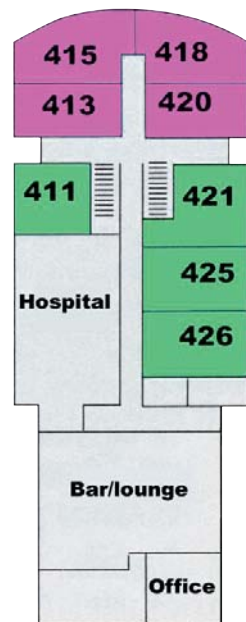
Black Petrel

Spirit of Enderby Deck Plan

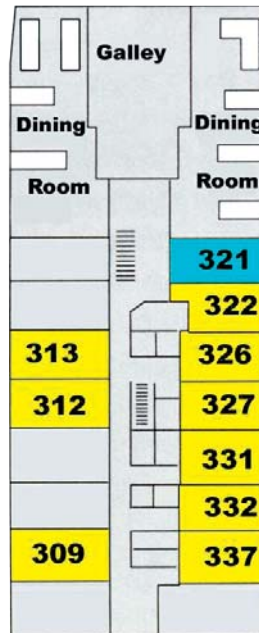
Upper Deck



Middle Deck



Lower Deck



The *Spirit of Enderby* is the complete expedition vessel, built in 1984 for polar and oceanographic research; she is fully ice-strengthened and has stabilisers for comfortable travel. She was refurbished in 2004 to provide comfortable accommodation for just 48 passengers. This class of vessel is world renowned for polar cruising because of its strength, manoeuvrability and small passenger numbers.

Ship Specifications

Built/Refurbished: 1984/

New Zealand 2004

Type: Passenger Vessel, 48 Passengers max

Propulsion: Two, 1,156 horsepower, diesel engines

Speed: 12 knots

Length: 72m

Beam: 12.8m

Ice strengthened hull

Amenities & Facilities

- Bar
- Dining hall
- Lounge
- Library
- Zodiacs
- Medical centre
- Open bridge policy
- Laundry
- Lecture theatre

Heritage Suite

Large lounge area, a separate small bedroom with double bed, a single bed in the main room which has large forward and side facing windows and a private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin.

Cabin 513

Mini Suite

Separate small bedroom with three quarter bed, a couch bed in the main room, windows, a desk and a private bathroom with a shower, toilet and washbasin.

Cabin 517

Superior Plus

Twin-bedded cabins with two lower berths, private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin and outside window

Cabins 411, 421, 425, 426, 505, 509, 518, 521

Superior

Twin-bedded cabins with one lower and one upper berth, private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin and outside window

Cabins 413, 415, 418, 420

Main Deck

Twin-bedded cabins with two lower berths, washbasin and portholes. The nearby showers and toilets are shared with other main deck cabins.

Cabins 309, 312, 313, 322, 326, 327, 331, 332, 337

Main Deck Triple

Triple-bedded cabins with two lower berths and one upper berth, washbasin and portholes. The nearby showers and toilets are shared with other main deck cabins.

Cabin 321



Spirit of Enderby