

## Antarctica and Argentina

4-19 December 2014



Our ISU group during our “polar plunge” at Deception Island, 11 December 2014.

At the end of the fall 2014 semester at Iowa State University I co-led (with Dr. Julie A. Blanchong) a Study Abroad trip to Antarctica. Our group of twelve students spanned several academic majors in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) and the trip was the culmination of an ISU course entitled *Natural History of Antarctica*. Prior to the trip we met weekly to introduce students to the birds, mammals, geology, and exploration of Antarctica. The logistical challenges for such a trip were many and included arranging for students to either take their exams early, or during the trip. This was because the travel dates included all of ISU's dead week and final exam week. By my count we administered 17 exams during the trip, most on the boat. Overall our travel went smoothly, and we are indebted to the CALs Study Abroad staff and Betchart Expeditions for making most of the arrangements. Our boat was the M/V Ushuaia, which carried 88 passengers and 44 crew members. The total navigated distance was 1,953 nautical miles by boat during the 12-day excursion. Some of the many trip highlights included seeing a nice diversity of wildlife (77 bird and 9 mammal species), viewing icebergs of many sizes, shapes, and colors, breathtaking views of mountains and glaciers, stops at several places of historical (exploration) significance, moderately rough and incredibly calm crossings of the Drake Passage, and much more. Simply put, it *was* the trip of a lifetime!

### 4 December

The trip departed from Des Moines as planned at 5:45 a.m. on 4 December. After connections in Atlanta, Miami, and Buenos Aires (Argentina) we finally arrived at our destination in Ushuaia (Argentina) at 11:50 a.m. on 5 December.

## 5 December

On arrival in Ushuaia we met our local guide (Leandro) and were transferred to Backpacker's Hostel where we were booked for two nights. After checking in we walked to a nearby pizzeria for lunch (pizza and cold drinks). The weather was gorgeous (sunny and temperatures in the low 50s) so afterwards we went for a nice hike along the waterfront where we saw our first local birds including Upland Goose, Crested Duck, Southern Giant Petrel, Rock and King cormorants, Dolphin Gull, South American Tern, Dark-bellied Cinclodes, and Chilean Swallow. We returned to the hostel by 5 p.m. for a short break and then met at 7 p.m. to walk to dinner. We ate at a local Irish pub and enjoyed good food and drinks before returning to the hostel by 9:30 p.m. Everyone was exhausted and went to bed almost immediately. [Clear, temperature 45-54°F, winds east 5-10 mph]



Upland Goose (left) and Fire-eyed Diucon (right)

## 6 December

After some fitful sleep (interrupted several times by heavy rain) we met for breakfast in the hostel at 8 a.m. (rolls, butter and jelly, oranges, and coffee). At 9 a.m. we were picked up by Leandro and our driver for a day trip to Tierra del Fuego National Park. We drove slowly to the park entrance, noting several historical landmarks and discussing the expansion of Ushuaia towards the park recently. After entering the park our driver dropped us off at the parking area overlooking Bahia Ensenada. From here we hiked west along the Senda Costera Trail (it follows the north shore of the Beagle Channel), eventually ending at the highway near Lapataia at 3 p.m. after a 5-mile hike. Along the hike we saw 2 seals and many birds including both species of steamerducks, Upland and Ashy-headed geese, Austral Parakeet, Magellanic Woodpecker, White-throated Treerunner, Fire-eyed Diucon, Patagonian Sierra-Finch, and Black-chinned Siskin. The forest was also quite interesting and we saw many flowers including a local white orchid.

Leandro and the driver dropped us off at Backpackers at 5:30 p.m. We tried unsuccessfully to make arrangements for dinner at one of several small diners, and eventually settled on a pizza place just downhill from the hostel. We ordered six pizzas with an interesting combination of toppings and then stopped for gelato on our return to the hostel. Everyone was back by 7:30 p.m. for a short group meeting before retiring to our rooms by 8 p.m. [Partly

cloudy, temperature 43-55°F, wind ENE 5-15 mph and gusty, intermittent light rain in the morning]

## 7 December

Today was our last day in Ushuaia and we planned to spend some time seeing the town. We ate breakfast at the hostel at 8 a.m. (rolls, butter and jelly, apples, oranges, and coffee). Leandro met us at 9 a.m. and we checked out of the hostel but made arrangements to store our luggage for a 4 p.m. pickup. The original plan was to visit the maritime museum in the morning and then have free time after lunch. This must have resulted in some confusion because we hiked along the waterfront and around the bay in the morning and ended up skipping the museum. We ate lunch at a quaint local deli on the waterfront and most people ordered a panini. We shared five fancy desserts afterwards, including two made from local berries. They were all delicious! After lunch everyone had a couple of hours of free time for shopping and last minute needs for Antarctica before meeting at 3:45 p.m. at the hostel. We gathered our bags and were quickly transferred to the dock where we boarded the M/V Ushuaia at 4:15 p.m.

On board we quickly checked into our rooms and our bags were delivered there ahead of time. At 5:30 p.m. we met in the lounge for a welcome toast (champagne or fruit juice and many excellent hors d'oeuvres), after which some of us explored the boat. The expedition leader was Agustín Ullmann and he was assisted by Valeria Faus (assistant leader), Lida Pimper (biologist), Alejandro Ajó (biologist), and Pablo Arias (guide). We met again at 6:30 p.m. in the lounge for a safety briefing, immediately followed by a short drill with the life boats. There was a 30-minute break before dinner, so some of us looked for wildlife and saw our first Black-browed Albatross and Southern Fulmar plus the more common species. Dinner was at 8 p.m. and consisted of a salad, dinner rolls, spaghetti with shrimp sauce, and dessert that included a brownie, a cream puff, or cookies. After dinner we returned to the upper deck to watch for wildlife and saw many Magellanic Puffins plus huge numbers of King Cormorants and South American Terns. It was getting dark so we headed to our rooms by 10 p.m. for some much-needed rest. [Mostly cloudy, temperature 42-48°F, wind SW 10-25 mph and gusty, intermittent light rain with some sleet in late afternoon]



Black-browed Albatross (left) and Magellanic Penguin (right)

## 8 December

I awoke at 5 a.m. in the rough waters just past the mouth of the Beagle Channel. A storm in the Drake Passage had delayed us overnight as we idled to let the winds die. Ocean watching from the upper deck from 6-8 a.m. produced our first Hourglass Dolphins. The breakfast buffet consisted of bacon, scrambled eggs, toast, fresh fruit, yogurt, several types of cereal, milk, juice, and coffee. After breakfast we did some more ocean watching and saw lots of seabirds including our first Slender-billed Prions. Lunch (salad, roast chicken with rice, and a spiced apple for dessert) was interesting in the rough seas – every few minutes a swell would send all the dishes spilling! After lunch many of us relaxed and took a short nap because the rough seas made wildlife viewing difficult (and all but the deck outside the bridge were closed). A brief 1-hour watch before dinner produced fewer seabirds, although diversity was good. Dinner (salad, roast pork loin with potatoes and carrots, and lemon cake with whipped topping) was delicious, and much less hectic than lunch! Some of us returned to the bridge until 9:30 p.m., but it was quiet in the fading light except for more dolphins and a lone small unidentified penguin. [Mostly cloudy with light rain/sleet/snow in the a.m., temperature 36-42°F, winds SW 25-40 mph in a.m. diminishing to 20-25 mph]



Cape Petrel (left) and Southern Giant Petrel (right)

## 9 December

Winds had died overnight and we awoke this morning to much calmer seas! I was on deck by 6 a.m. to photograph seabirds in the soft morning light and saw all of the common species plus the first Northern Royal and Light-mantled albatrosses and White-chinned Petrel. At around 6:30 a.m. we crossed the Antarctic Convergence when water temperatures dropped from 6°C to 2°C. Breakfast was at 8 a.m. and consisted of the usual buffet. After breakfast most of the group spent time outside looking for wildlife, but seabird numbers had dropped and we saw nothing new. We met again for lunch (Waldorf salad, a delicious beef and vegetable stir-fry, and apple crisp for dessert) at 12:30 p.m. Ocean watching after lunch produced multiple groups of Fin Whales and a Humpback Whale in addition to the expected seabirds. At 4:15 p.m. we sighted the first iceberg, a huge tabular berg that had perhaps 20 Chinstrap Penguins perched on a lower

portion. We also saw our first Antarctic Petrels while viewing the berg. At 5 p.m. we had an hour-long presentation on rules for landings and how to use the zodiacs. Afterwards we had a short break before dinner to relax. Dinner was at 7:30 p.m. and consisted of a salad, baked hake with pumpkin potatoes, and orange custard for dessert. After dinner I worked on downloading photos and then returned to the deck to ocean watch. During this time we saw Antarctic Petrel, Antarctic Prion, and Black-bellied Storm-Petrel. At about 11 p.m. we sighted the South Shetland Islands and shortly thereafter passed through Nelson Strait en route to the Antarctic Peninsula. But first we had to cross Bransfield Strait (a.k.a. the “mini-Drake”), which is often just as rough as the Drake Passage itself. Our crossing was a little bumpy, but not bad by Antarctic standards. [Partly to mostly cloudy, temperature 33-37°F, winds variable but mostly SW 10-20 mph]



Wandering Albatross (left) and a large tabular iceberg (right)

## 10 December

This was our first day in Antarctica proper and began with an early morning crossing of Bransfield Strait and a planned landing at Brown Bluff around 9 a.m. Unfortunately when we arrived in the Antarctic Sound at 8:30 a.m. we found that ice conditions were unfavorable, and when combined with a north wind at 40 knots the landings at Brown Bluff and Paulet Island were not possible. So, we turned back west to attempt a landing at Gourdin Island after lunch. While boating in the sound we saw many Adelie and Gentoo penguins, Antarctic Shag, Snow Petrel, and Antarctic Tern, although overall seabird numbers were much less than in the Drake Passage. Between 9:45 and 10:30 a.m. we slowly circled three large tabular icebergs, one more than 1 km square, and enjoyed the color of the ice. We ate an early lunch at 11:45 a.m. (tomato soup, steak with French fries and onions mixed with egg, and chocolate/vanilla ice cream for dessert) and then discovered that the landing was covered by old ice, plus the winds made zodiac navigation impossible. With the uncooperative weather our expedition leader decided to forgo any landings in the Antarctic Sound for now and head to Deception Island, a much more protected site. We started steaming south at 12:30 p.m. and continued all night. The weather in the Bransfield Strait was unexpectedly rough with 50+ knot winds, although this was far better than the 90 mph winds experienced by another boat lingering in the Antarctic Sound, right where we had been in the morning! Along the way we saw many icebergs, some of them very large,

plus lots of wildlife including many porpoising penguins and large numbers of Cape Petrels and Wilson's Storm-Petrels. [Mostly cloudy, temperature 32-34°F, wind N 20-40 knots mph and gusty becoming westerly, intermittent moderate snow and fog all day]



Gentoo Penguin (left) and scenery along Bransfield Strait (right)

## 11 December

We arrived off Deception Island around 3 a.m. after steaming all night across the Bransfield Strait. The boat idled until 7 a.m. when we passed through Neptune's Bellows and into Fortuna Bay. The weather was windy and not conducive to a planned landing at Whaler's Bay, so we continued north for a 9 a.m. landing at Telephone Bay. On the beach were 3 Weddell Seals (including a female with a calf and a lone male), Brown and South Polar skuas, Kelp Gulls, Antarctic Terns, and small groups of Adelie and Chinstrap penguins. We were able to hike along the shore at our leisure. There was also a short hike up to view a caldera and the view of the bay was awesome. We returned to the boat by noon, just in time for lunch (potato soup, a chicken and rice bowl with carrots and peas, and strawberry cake for dessert). We had a short break after lunch before a planned 2 p.m. landing at Pendulum Cove for our polar swim. Conditions were perfect for the swim with a low tide, light winds, and a little sunshine. The water temperature was perhaps in the 60s degrees Fahrenheit, but there were patches of warmer water as well as warm water on the surface. Everyone swam and waded for perhaps 20 minutes before exiting, drying off, and then returning to the boat quickly to warm up. We posed for a group photo in the bay and it was a lot of fun despite the snow and cold temperatures. We were back on the boat by 3:45 p.m. and relaxed and enjoyed hot chocolate until a group meeting at 6 p.m. to discuss plans for tomorrow. Dinner was at 7 p.m. and consisted of pumpkin soup, lamb with French fries, and a whipped cream and strawberry dessert. After dinner we planned our third landing of the day at Whaler's Bay, which was now accessible, starting at 8:30 p.m. This is an old whaling station and the only place on the island where old buildings are still standing and accessible to visitors. Unfortunately, a Spanish research vessel needed to make repairs at the site and we were unable to arrange a visit. Our boat exited Deception Island at 8:30 p.m. and we began a long steam (40 nautical miles) for the Gerlache Strait. While in route we enjoyed relaxing, snacks, and wine in

the lounge until almost midnight. [Partly to mostly cloudy, temperature 26-34°F, winds NW 20-30 mph, intermittent light to moderate snow all day]



The M/V Ushuaia (left) and our group hiking on Deception Island (right)

## 12 December

The boat moved during the night and when I awoke at 6:30 a.m. we were slowly cruising the Gerlache Strait. At 7:30 a.m. we entered Wilhelmina Bay and shortly thereafter ate breakfast (same buffet as usual). The scenery here was stunning with snow-capped mountains and glaciers converging with the ocean in spectacular style. Our planned morning landing didn't happen, so we took a short zodiac cruise of icebergs and glaciers instead, beginning at 9:30 a.m. This happened in two shifts and our ISU group was in the second shift from 11:15 a.m.-12:45 p.m. In addition to the ice and scenery we had close views of several Weddell Seals, Gentoo Penguins, and Antarctic Shag. We returned to the boat just in time for lunch (onion soup, beef and vegetable stir-fry, and strawberry jello with whipped topping for dessert). After lunch we slowly cruised the entire south shore of Wilhelmina Bay and saw lots of birds plus a single Crabeater Seal. We then re-entered the Gerlache Strait and saw more birds plus a couple of distant groups of Humpback Whales. At 5:30 p.m. we departed for a 2.5 hour landing at Danco Island. We landed on the beach and were greeted by Gentoo Penguins and many Snowy Sheathbills. It was a short hike uphill to the main Gentoo Penguin colony where we enjoyed watching the territorial squabbles, exchange of pebbles, and all the other activities of these intriguing birds. From here it was a longer hike uphill to the summit (elevation ~150 meters) with another Gentoo Penguin colony and a stunning 360-degree view of the surroundings. We took several group photos here before returning to the big boat by 8 p.m. Dinner was at 8:30 p.m. and consisted of corn soup, pork loin with mixed vegetables and a blueberry coleslaw, and a swan-shaped cream puff for dessert. We held a brief class meeting after dinner. Afterwards most people retired to bed, but some of us relaxed in the lounge until after midnight. [Clear all day becoming overcast after 8 p.m., temperature 31-35°F, winds SW 25-40 mph diminishing to <20 mph by 7 p.m.]



Weddell Seal (left) and Snowy Sheathbill (right)

### 13 December

Overnight we steamed slowly southwest and by 7 a.m. we were entering Paradise Bay. We ate our usual breakfast buffet at 7:30 a.m. and then slowly approached the Chilean research station González Videla. The bay was nearly slick calm and the scenery was once again stunning. Bird life was sparse but we did see several Weddell Seals. At 9 a.m. we landed at the station and enjoyed viewing the large Gentoo Penguin colony that was literally amongst the buildings. We got to watch all of their behaviors including exchanging and stealing small rocks used for nests, territorial fights, calling males, and displaying pairs. Most of the nests had eggs so the colony was very active. Penguins were walking everywhere, including the sidewalk. A special feature of this colony is the regular presence of a few leucistic Gentoo Penguins. There were also many Snowy Sheathbills here, including one bird wearing a metal leg band with the number “1301” stamped on it. We also visited the small gift shop and bought a few souvenirs, plus stamped some postcards and had our passports stamped. There was also a small museum and we got to tour the main living quarters and climb up to a small lookout tower. The Chilean hosts were very accommodating. The weather during our visit was splendid with clear skies, no wind, and a temperature of 42°F, so warm that it was comfortable with no gloves or hat! We were back on the boat by 11:45 a.m. just in time for appetizers (grilled Argentinian chorizo sausage in a bun plus vegetable skewers) before lunch at 12:30 p.m. (grilled chicken, steak, or ribs with tossed salad and peaches with whipped topping for dessert). After lunch we had a long boat ride to our planned evening landing at Hydrurga Rocks, so most of us ocean watched from the deck in the unbelievably nice weather. We saw a nice variety of birds plus a single close Humpback Whale. We departed for Hydrurga Rocks on the zodiacs at 6:30 p.m. and returned to the boat by 8:45 p.m. It was another excellent landing with great weather and lots of wildlife. There was a large and scattered Chinstrap Penguin colony and we also saw nesting Wilson’s Storm-Petrel, Antarctic Shag, Kelp Gull, and Antarctic Tern plus many Snowy Sheathbills. In addition there were perhaps 25+ Weddell Seals scattered on the ice, including two “singing” individuals that were simply mesmerizing. We had a late dinner at 9 p.m. that consisted of vegetable soup, baked salmon with fried potatoes, and a mocha cake for dessert. Afterwards we held a short meeting to discuss the next day’s itinerary and were free to relax at 11 p.m. Our



group mostly departed for bed, but some of us stayed up until after midnight relaxing in the lounge and looking for wildlife (we saw a few more Humpback Whales). [Partly cloudy, temperature 32-42°F, winds light SW]



Chinstrap Penguins (left) and Antarctic Shag (right)

## 14 December

When we awoke this morning we were still steaming north in the Bransfield Strait headed for the Antarctic Sound. We were at least several miles from the peninsula and the calm seas were full of feeding flocks of Chinstrap Penguins with a few Adelie and Gentoo penguins mixed in with them. I also saw several distant swimming seals (probably Weddell Seals), our first albatross (a Black-browed) in several days, and two Antarctic Petrels circling a huge tabular iceberg. At 10:30 a.m. we made a landing at Gourdin Island off the southwest edge of the Antarctic Sound. This site has a huge mixed penguin colony, probably 90% Adelie with smaller numbers of Chinstrap and Gentoo penguins. There were also many Snowy Sheathbills, both skuas (we witnessed several thefts of penguin eggs), and loafing Weddell Seals, but the real prize was a lone Macaroni Penguin, a bird that is a vagrant anywhere near the Antarctic Peninsula. We arrived back on the boat at 1:00 p.m. and had lunch at 1:30 p.m. (cauliflower soup, a seafood mix over rice, and milk cake with strawberry jelly for dessert). After lunch we met briefly for three student presentations and then had a break until the next landing.

Much of the afternoon was spent cruising the eastern portion of the Antarctic Sound (between Andersson and Rosamel islands) and the opening to the Weddell Sea. The edge of the pack ice was just east of the sound (it encompassed Rosamel Island) and there were some very impressive tabular icebergs in this region. The captain measured one of the closer ones as having a height above water of 123 meters; more distant bergs appeared a lot taller and we wondered if they were pieces of the Larsen Ice Shelf. Along the edge of the pack ice were many birds including hundreds of Adelie Penguins, 50+ Snow Petrels, and a cooperative Crabeater Seal resting on the ice. There was no chance of reaching Paulet Island because of the ice so we had an early dinner at 7 p.m. and then a zodiac cruise (there was too much ice for a landing) at Brown Bluff at 9:00 p.m. The cruise was awesome on very calm, slick ocean waters and we slowly moved east to west along the base of the bluff. Overhead were Snow and Cape petrels (probably

nesting on the cliff) and we saw the three common penguin species although >99% were Adelie Penguins. But the highlight was a large and very curious Leopard Seal that spent almost 10 minutes circling the zodiacs; at one point it swam slowly under our boat, belly up, and appeared to be sizing up whether we were just a large penguin! It was a great experience with the seal. At 10:00 p.m. we returned to the boat to relax until bedtime at around 2 a.m. [Partly to mostly cloudy, temperature 32-34°F, winds W 5-15 mph increasing during the day, light intermittent snow in the afternoon]



Macaroni Penguin (left) and Snow Petrel (right)

## 15 December

This morning found us crossing the Bransfield Strait and by breakfast we were just off Robert Island. Breakfast was the usual buffet at 7:30 a.m. Soon after we dropped anchor and then made a landing at Robert Point on Robert Island. This was a gravelly beach with a large aggregation of Southern Elephant Seals consisting of females and juveniles males (it is not a breeding site). It was fun to watch some of the larger males fight; all of them had many bloody scratches and scars around their face and neck. There were also a few Weddell Seals plus birds that included nesting Southern Giant Petrels, Chinstrap and Gentoo penguins, many marauding Brown Skuas, and Antarctic Terns. A Leopard Seal followed some of the zodiacs near the landing site. Lastly, this was our first experience with the plant life of Antarctica – we saw Antarctic Hair-grass, Antarctic Pearlwort, and two species of lichens. We were back on the boat by noon and ate lunch (green bean soup, pasta with meat sauce, and Black Forest cake for dessert) at 1 p.m. After lunch we steamed south and then west through the English Strait, which was stunning in the sunny skies with its deep blue water and snow-capped mountains on both sides. By 3 p.m. we had reached our planned afternoon landing site at Barrientos in the Aitcho Islands, but it was too windy to land safely. We circled the area for an hour to wait for calmer conditions and finally at 4:30 p.m. made our landing. There was a single Southern Elephant Seal on the beach along with many Adelie and Gentoo penguins and some old whale vertebrae. The penguin colonies were right along the beach and then on the surrounding ridgetops and a higher

plateau in the middle of this narrow part of the island. We also witnessed two successful Brown Skua attacks on penguin nests, and judging by the many broken eggs there must have been many other successful thefts. After arriving back on the boat at 7 p.m. we had a short break before dinner at 7:30 p.m. (tuna pocket, beef and vegetables with fried potato balls, and whipped orange topping for dessert). We entered the Drake Passage during dinner and the swell, while gentle, increased substantially. Many people disappeared during and after dinner with symptoms of seasickness. While relaxing in the lounge we had a false alarm on a pod of Killer Whales (they turned out to be Humpback Whales). I was exhausted and headed to bed by 10 p.m. [Partly cloudy, temperature 32-35°F, winds WNW 15-30 mph]



Adelle Penguin (left) and Brown Skua with penguin egg (right)

## 16 December

This morning we awoke in the gentle swell and calm surface of the Drake Passage. Winds were light, hence we were experiencing the rare “Drake Lake” effect. I ocean watched before breakfast and was surprised to see many small groups of Chinstrap Penguins so far from land (>100 miles north of the South Shetland Islands). Other birds included Black-browed Albatross, Antarctic Prion, and Black-bellied Storm-Petrel. Breakfast was the usual buffet at 8 a.m. Bird numbers were very low between breakfast and noon, although I did see several more Antarctic Prions. Lunch was at 12:30 p.m. (macaroni salad, baked ground beef in sauce with a layer of eggs and mashed potatoes on top, and a cream puff for dessert). I continued to look for wildlife intermittently all afternoon and saw Gray-headed and Light-mantled albatrosses, Slender-billed Prion, and a nice aggregation of Blue Petrels plus a lone Humpback Whale. By about 4 p.m. the wind freshened out of the northwest and the seas became noticeably rougher. More ocean watching in late afternoon and early evening turned up nothing new and overall bird numbers remained low. Dinner was at 7:30 p.m. and consisted of tossed salad with shredded tuna and potato, grilled chicken breast in honey mustard sauce with a carrot/pea/potato salad and string carrots, and toffee cake with whipped topping for dessert. [Mostly cloudy, temperature 34-39°F, wind W 5-20 mph increasing through the day, fog and light rain in mid-morning]



Humpback Whale (top left), Gray-headed Albatross (top right),  
and Light-mantled Albatross (bottom)

## 17 December

This morning we awoke to substantially rougher seas that had increased overnight. Before breakfast I looked for wildlife and saw quite a few albatrosses of four species plus White-chinned Petrel. Breakfast was the usual buffet at 8 a.m. After breakfast I continued to look for wildlife and we saw 2 probable Sei Whales plus Southern Rockhopper (2 singles) and Magellanic (many adults with juveniles) penguins and the usual assortment of seabirds. At 11 a.m. the boat stopped to wait for another captain to guide us through the Beagle Channel (it is the law). Because we had arrived here much earlier than expected we waited until nearly midnight for our escort. Lunch at 12:30 p.m. consisted of calamari, roast duck with rice, and a fruit kabob drizzled with chocolate for dessert. The afternoon and evening were busy in preparation for our arrival in Ushuaia. At 4 p.m. we met for an hour to go over the disembarkation procedure and see a summary of the trip. The staff had put together a nice video of the trip, complete with music, as well as text documents showing our trip route and summarizing the daily itinerary. We then cleared our accounts at the bar and gift shop and met again at 7 p.m. for the presentation of certificates verifying our landing on continental Antarctica. Each person was recognized individually and most greeted each of the scientific staff one-on-one, so it took more than an hour! We then went straight to dinner at 8 p.m. (baked king crab, filet mignon, and ice cream with a fruit sauce for dessert). Afterwards we returned to the lounge for a party that lasted into the early morning hours, complete with lots of dancing. [Partly cloudy, wind WNW 25-35 mph, temperature 37-42°F], intermittent light drizzle in the afternoon]



Southern Fulmar (left) and Royal Albatross (right)

## 18 December

We awoke early this morning to finish packing and clean out our rooms, ate an early breakfast (the usual buffet) at 7 a.m., and departed the boat for the last time at 8:30 a.m. The biggest mishap of the entire trip occurred when a debarking elderly passenger fell off the gangway into the water between the ship and dock! Luckily he was quickly pulled out without any serious injury. A driver was there to meet us and hold our luggage until 11:30 a.m. when our group met on the Ushuaia waterfront for the ride to the airport. All flights home went smoothly.



Our ISU group with Ushuaia in the background.

**For more information, please contact:** Stephen J. Dinsmore, Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management, 339 Science Hall II, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; E-mail: [cootjr@iastate.edu](mailto:cootjr@iastate.edu)

**BIRD LIST (77 species)**

Black-necked Swan  
Upland Goose  
Kelp Goose  
Ashy-headed Goose  
Flying Steamerduck  
Flightless Steamerduck  
Crested Duck  
Silver Teal  
Chiloe Wigeon  
Great Grebe  
Gentoo Penguin  
Adelie Penguin  
Chinstrap Penguin  
Southern Rockhopper  
Penguin  
Magellanic Penguin  
Macaroni Penguin  
Wandering Albatross  
Northern Royal Albatross  
Southern Royal Albatross  
Black-browed Albatross  
Light-mantled Albatross  
Gray-headed Albatross  
Northern Giant Petrel  
Southern Giant Petrel  
Southern Fulmar  
Sooty Shearwater  
Cape Petrel  
Antarctic Petrel  
White-chinned Petrel  
Snow Petrel  
Blue Petrel

Wilson's Storm-Petrel  
Black-bellied Storm-Petrel  
Slender-billed Prion  
Antarctic Prion  
Magellanic Diving-Petrel  
Common Diving-Petrel  
Neotropic Cormorant  
Antarctic Shag  
Rock Shag  
King Cormorant  
Turkey Vulture  
White-tailed Hawk  
Crested Caracara  
Chimango Caracara  
Southern Lapwing  
Snowy Sheathbill  
Brown Skua  
South Polar Skua  
Kelp Gull  
Dolphin Gull  
South American Tern  
Antarctic Tern  
Rock Pigeon  
Austral Parakeet  
Burrowing Owl  
Magellanic Woodpecker  
Common Miner  
Dark-bellied Cinclodes  
Thorn-tailed Rayadito  
White-throated Treerunner  
White-crested Elaenia  
Fire-eyed Diucon  
Fork-tailed Flycatcher

Southern Martin  
Chilean Swallow  
House Wren  
Austral Thrush  
Chalk-browed  
Mockingbird  
Correndora Pipit  
European Starling  
Patagonian Sierra-Finch  
Rufous-collared Sparrow  
Grayish Saltator  
Long-tailed Meadowlark  
Black-chinned Siskin  
House Sparrow

**MAMMAL LIST (9 Species)**

Fin Whale  
Sei Whale  
Humpback Whale  
Hourglass Dolphin  
Southern Elephant Seal  
Antarctic Fur Seal  
Weddell Seal  
Crabeater Seal  
Leopard Seal