

ACROSS THE TOP OF THE WORLD

TO WRANGEL AND
HERALD ISLANDS

EXPEDITION DOSSIER

24 JULY – 7 AUGUST 2022

7 – 21 AUGUST 2022

21 AUGUST – 4 SEPTEMBER 2022



Heritage Expeditions

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





Wrangel Island Reserve © E Bell



Wrangel Island Reserve © E Bell



Wrangel Island Reserve © M. Kelly



This unique expedition crosses the Arctic Circle and includes the isolated and pristine Wrangel and Herald Islands and a significant section of the wild North Eastern Siberian coastline. It is a journey only made possible in recent years by the thawing in the politics of the region and the retreat of summer pack ice in the Chukchi Sea. The very small distance between Russia and the USA along this border area was known as the Ice Curtain, behind which, then and now, lies one of the last great undiscovered wilderness areas in the world.

The voyage journeys through the narrow Bering Strait, which separates Russia from the United States of America, and then travels west along the Chukotka coastline before crossing the De Long Strait to Wrangel Island. There we will spend four to five days under the guidance of local rangers on the nature reserve. Untouched by glaciers during the last ice age, this island is a treasure trove of Arctic biodiversity and is perhaps best known for the multitude of Polar Bears that breed here. We

hope to catch many glimpses of this beautiful animal. The island also boasts the world's largest population of Pacific Walrus and lies near major feeding grounds for the Gray Whales that migrate thousands of kilometres north from their breeding grounds in Baja, Mexico. Reindeer, Musk Oxen and Snow Geese can normally be seen further inland. A visit to massive bird cliffs on nearby Herald Island is also planned. The 'mammoth steppe' vegetation complex, a rich and diverse relic from the Pleistocene epoch nurtures over 400 plant species and never fails to astound visitors with its sublime beauty. The number and type of endemic plant species, the diversity within plant communities, the presence of relatively recent mammoth tusks and skulls, a range of terrain types and geological formations in the small geographical space are all visible evidence of Wrangel's rich natural history and its unique evolutionary status within the Arctic.

The human history of Wrangel Island is fascinating on its own. Highlights include a 3,400 year old Paleo Eskimo camp in Krassin Bay, controversy over discovery and ownership of the island, the amazing story of the survivors of the *Karluk*, Ada Blackjack the heroine of the island, the Soviet occupation and militarisation and, more recently, the establishment of this world class nature reserve. A host of similarly enthralling stories hail from several optional landings along the northern coasts of Chukotka. Our expert expedition team will take you on guided walks, Zodiac cruises and provide lectures to help you better understand and appreciate this unique High Arctic landscape.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Nome, Alaska, USA

Our expedition begins and ends in Nome, Alaska's most famous gold rush town. Make your way to the designated meeting point for your transfer to *Heritage Adventurer* (times and meeting point will be confirmed with your voyage documents) where the captain and expedition team will be waiting to welcome you aboard.

You will have the opportunity to settle into your accommodation and familiarise yourself on board before joining your fellow expeditioners on deck as we set sail across the Bering Strait and International Date Line for Provideniya, Russia.

Day 2: Provideniya, Russia

After clearing Russian Customs and Immigration there may be an opportunity to explore this fascinating former Soviet military port and administrative centre followed by an afternoon expedition.

Day 3: Yttygran Island and Gil'mimyl Hot Springs

Yttygran Island is home to the monumental ancient aboriginal site known as Whale Bone Alley, where whale bones stretch along the beach for nearly half a kilometre. There are many meat pits used for storage and other remains of a busy whaling camp that united several



aboriginal villages at a time. In one location, immense Bowhead Whale jawbones and ribs are placed together in a stunning arch formation. Gray Whales are frequently seen around the island. After landing at Whale Bone Alley we will take the Zodiacs on a whale-watching excursion. This afternoon we intend to make a landing at the Gil'mimyl Hot Springs. They are a short walk from the coastline, but well worth the effort. There will be a chance to explore the tundra for birds, plants and animals as we walk to and fro. After a soak in the springs we will re-join the ship for a relaxing evening.

Day 4: Bukhta Pultin and Cape Dezhnev

This morning there may be an opportunity to enjoy a Zodiac safari of Bukhta Pultin. Beyond its narrow entrance this sheltered and rarely-visited bay opens revealing a new world. Explore the coastline, fields of wildflowers, look for wildlife or hike up the ridgeline and take in the impressive helicopter view.

This afternoon we plan to be at Cape Dezhnev, the north-eastern most point of the Eurasian continent. This cape commemorates the accomplishment of the Cossack Semyon Dezhnev who was the first European to sail through this strait in 1648 (80 years before Bering did). On the cape is a lighthouse, a monument and the remains of a Border Guard base. If the weather and sea conditions are suitable we plan to land here and give you the opportunity to explore the area. A short distance south of the cape is the former Inuit settlement of Naukan. The Soviet government relocated these people to other Chukotka

settlements in the 1950s as it was thought they posed a security risk, supposedly because of the close proximity of Alaska. It is still possible to sense the melancholy in the air because the people never wanted to leave. As the relocation was fairly recent, there is a wealth of historic data and photographs that makes this visit even more poignant.

Day 5: Kolyuchin Island and Kolyuchin Inlet

Today is an expedition day where we plan to visit Kolyuchin Island and Inlet. Once the location of an important Russian Polar Research Station, this small island has since been abandoned following the collapse of the USSR. While the buildings are now derelict, the abundant wildlife the men studied is still there. Near the old station at the north-western end of the island are some of the most amazing bird cliffs in the Arctic, where puffins, guillemots, gulls and cormorants can be observed and photographed just metres away. A prominent walrus haul out often congregates at the south-eastern end and, if the animals are present, you can expect some excellent photographic opportunities from the Zodiacs.

We also plan to visit Belaka Spit near the mouth of the Kolyuchin Inlet. So huge that it is visible from satellite photos, it contains vast numbers of waterfowl and migratory waders. This wild and desolate landscape is also a strangely beautiful birding hotspot. Joined by Beringia National Park rangers, we plan to search the dunes and tidal areas for Emperor Geese. If we are lucky, the Gray Whales which frequent the area will be feeding just metres offshore.



Days 6 to 10: Wrangel and Herald Islands

Ice and weather conditions permitting, we plan to spend the next few days exploring Wrangel Island and, if possible, we also plan to include a visit to nearby Herald Island.

Wrangel Island is one of those islands that you have to visit to appreciate. The earliest human occupation is dated 3200 years BC, and it has been established that they were seasonal hunters from Siberia. The island's presence was speculated about and marked on maps by early Russian explorers, but it wasn't until 1849 that it was 'rediscovered' by the British. A Canadian expedition attempted to establish a permanent settlement and claim the island for Canada, however they were evicted by the Russians who took ownership of the island.

Today it is a Russian Federal Nature Reserve of international importance. A lot of its significance lies in the fact that it is a major Polar Bear denning area. In fact it is sometimes referred to as 'the world's Polar Bear maternity ward' on account of the large numbers of cubs born there. It is also the last landfall for migratory species flying north. Each summer

thousands of birds migrate here to breed including Snow Geese, Snowy Owl, skua and Arctic Tern.

There are many landings that we can make to search out wildlife, wild flowers and Arctic landscapes. Polar Bears will be high on our list of animals to see and with a little patience we should be rewarded with a number of encounters. Musk Oxen and reindeer were introduced to the island in 1975 and 1948 respectively, though reindeer numbers are low. We also have a chance to visit Dragi Harbour where the survivors of the *Karluk*, which was crushed by ice in 1914, scrambled ashore and lived until they were rescued. If ice conditions permit, we will

explore Herald Island to the east of Wrangel Island.

Day 11: North Siberian Coast

Although the North Siberian Coast is well-mapped and charted, there have been very few expedition cruises here and, consequently, there is a lot of scope for expedition landings. Depending on weather and sea conditions we will attempt an expedition landing today.

There are several choices including Cape Vankarem where there is a seasonal large walrus haul out which may have animals present. Another is the area around the Cape bounded by narrow sand ridges with numerous coastal lagoons





Beringia National Park © J. Mishina



Beringia National Park © A. Terauds

and inlets; while nearby there is a small Chukchi village whose residents still make their living hunting walrus, seals and whales. Another option is Chukchi village Nutepelmen, situated on a spit at the entrance to Pyngopikhin Lagoon, west of Cape Vankarem.

Day 12: Unnamed Bay and Lavrentiya

Picturesque Unnamed Bay is our planned destination for this morning where we will Zodiac cruise to shore. Welcomed by an expansive stretch of beach, backed by a lagoon and surrounded by rugged hills, there's much to discover. Enjoy a walk along the beach and tundra looking for wildlife, or scale one of the nearby peaks and take in the stunning vistas.

Dropping anchor in beautiful Lavrentiya Bay, we expect to spend the afternoon exploring its historically and culturally rich village. A former indigenous settlement, this Soviet-planned community was established in the 1920s as an administrative centre where local Chukchi and Siberian Yupik were encouraged to move to. We plan to visit the Lavrentiya museum, meet local elders and enjoy an authentic taste and slice of village life in the main square.

Day 13: Bukhta Penkingney and Arakamchechen Island

This morning we will be launching our Zodiacs with a planned landing at Bukhta Penkingney, a long fiord cut into the coastline by glaciers and popular spot for whale watching. Here a small braided river, its gravel bed studded with Willow bushes, winds its way down to the sea where we land. Exploring this scenic location we will be looking for Arctic Ground Squirrels and Pikas, Willow Ptarmigan, Sandhill Cranes and brown bears attracted by the berries and salmon-filled river.

This afternoon we plan to cruise over to Arakamchechen Island, just north of Cape Chaplino and separated from the Chukotka mainland by the 8-kilometre wide Senyavina Strait. Having watched Gray Whales feeding here previously, we recommend being out on deck as we slowly cruise through the strait. On Arakamchechen Island we aim to explore the lush tundra and, if they are present, view the prominent walrus haul out.

Day 14: Provideniya

After clearing Russian Customs and Immigration in Provideniya we will set sail for Nome across the Bering Strait. One of the

world's most nutrient-rich stretches of water, each spring the Bering Strait is the scene of one of the planet's largest wildlife migrations. Beluga, Bowhead and Gray Whales, walrus, Ringed Seals and numerous seabirds are all known to frequent the strait so there is plenty of opportunity for wildlife encounters.

Join the expedition team for a recap and disembarkation briefing before enjoying a farewell dinner to celebrate our journey as we sail back across the International Date Line.

Day 15: Nome, Alaska, USA

After breakfast and clearing US Immigration and Customs formalities it will be time to say our farewells. There will be a complimentary transfer to take you to the airport or a designated central location.

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



HERITAGE ADVENTURER

Heritage Adventurer is a true pioneering expedition vessel of exceptional pedigree often referred to as the 'Grande Dame of Polar Exploration'.

Purpose built for adventure in 1991 at Finland's Rauma shipyard and specifically designed for Polar exploration, *Heritage Adventurer* (formerly known as *MS Hanseatic*) is 124-metres long, boasts the highest passenger-ship ice-class rating (1A Super) and an impressive history of Polar and remote region exploration making her perfect for Heritage Expeditions signature experiential expedition travel.

Originally designed to accommodate 184 guests, we now welcome just 140 expeditioners to create a spacious, comfortable on board experience and continuation of the exceptional, personalised expedition experience synonymous with the company. While a fleet of 14 Zodiacs ensures

all guests are able to maximise their expedition experience. On board, enjoy stylish, sophisticated accommodations spanning 4 decks, visit the captain and crew in the Bridge with our Open Bridge Policy and dine on gourmet fare from leading Australasian chefs.

Watch your adventure unfold from numerous spectacular indoor and outdoor viewing locations including *Heritage Adventurer's* famed Observation Lounge resplendent with 270-degree views and join our world-renowned team of naturalists, botanists, historians and experts as they interpret the natural and human history discovered during each voyage, as well as hosting regular lectures.

And should you require a little R&R, unwind in the library, pool, gym, hot tub, sauna and steam room, indulge in some retail therapy or find a quiet place to enjoy a coffee or cocktail from the café and bar.

DATES

Voyage #HA220724
24 July – 7 August 2022

Voyage #HA220807
7 – 21 August 2022

Voyage #HA220821
21 August – 4 September 2022

PRICES

Heritage Suite **\$29,450 pp***

Located on Deck 6, Heritage Suites are an expansive 44m² and feature large double panoramic windows, king bed, large living area with a sofa, coffee table and chairs and grand marble bathroom with a double basin, bathtub and shower, large writing desk, floor to ceiling cabinetry for storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Worsley Suite **\$21,450 pp***

Located on Deck 6, Worsley Suites are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable chaise-style lounge suite, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Single **\$18,450 pp***

Superior Single Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, king bed, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Triple **\$12,450 pp***

Superior Triple Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, two single beds and one Pullman bed which folds down from the wall, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Deck 5 **\$15,575 pp***

Superior Cabins on Deck 5 are a spacious 22m² and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Superior Deck 4 **\$14,975 pp***

Superior Cabins on Deck 4 are a spacious 42m² and feature large panoramic windows, king or two single beds, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Main Deck Single **\$17,475 pp***

Main Deck Single Cabins on Deck 3 are a spacious 22m² and feature two porthole windows, king bed, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

Main Deck Triple **\$11,950 pp***

Main Deck Triple Cabins on Deck 3 are a spacious 22m² and feature two porthole windows, two single beds and one Pullman bed which folds down from the wall, comfortable lounge, writing desk, private en-suite with shower, ample storage and a flat screen entertainment system.

* The price listed includes the local landing fees of \$500. (All prices are per person in US\$).

PRICE INCLUDES

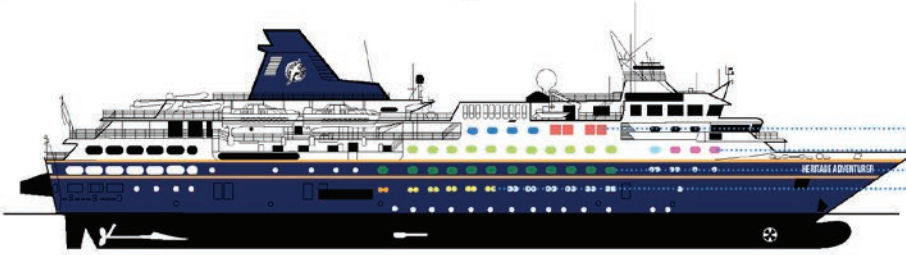
Pre/post cruise transfers, all on board ship accommodation with meals and all expedition shore excursions.

PRICE EXCLUDES

All items of a personal nature, laundry, drinks, gratuities. International/domestic/charter flights, visas and travel insurance.

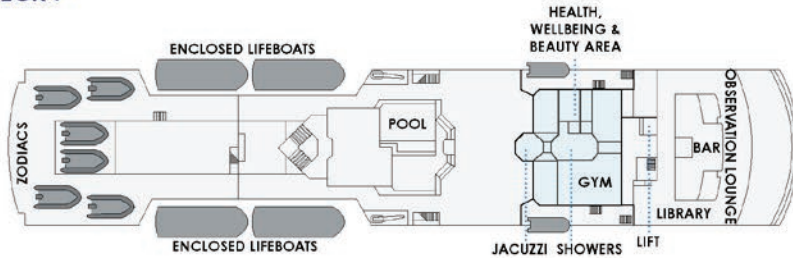
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Heritage Adventurer Deck Plan

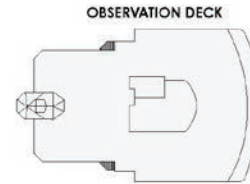


DECK 6: SUITES ● WORSLEY ● HERITAGE
 DECK 5: ● SUPERIOR ● SUPERIOR TRIPLE ● SUPERIOR SINGLE
 DECK 4: ● SUPERIOR
 DECK 3: ● MAIN DECK TRIPLE ● MAIN DECK SINGLE

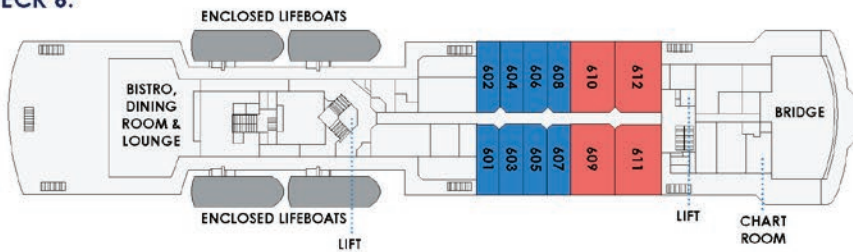
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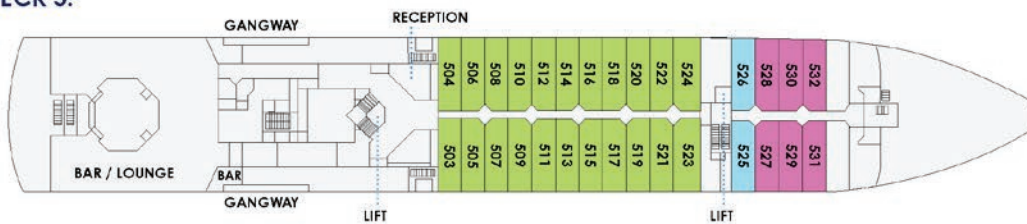
DECK 8



DECK 6:



DECK 5:



DECK 4:



DECK 3:



DECK 2



SUITE CATEGORIES

- HERITAGE SUITE
- SUPERIOR SINGLE
- DECK 4 SUPERIOR
- MAIN DECK SINGLE
- WORSLEY SUITE
- DECK 5 SUPERIOR
- MAIN DECK TRIPLE
- SUPERIOR TRIPLE



Heritage Expeditions

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Freephone: 0800 262 8873 (within NZ) 1800 143 585 (within Australia) 1866 285 7884 (within USA/Canada)

Antarctic House, 53B Montreal Street, P.O. Box 7218, Christchurch 8240, New Zealand.

Tel +64 3 365 3500 info@heritage-expeditions.com www.heritage-expeditions.com