



WildWings

Remote Islands of the South Indian Ocean Expedition NEW!

Mauritius, Crozet, Heard, Kerguelen, Amsterdam and St Paul Islands and then to Australia

Endemic seabirds on remote islands, a truly unique voyage!

Updated 21/6/11 – Final planned itinerary and lower prices!

We have waited many years to offer this amazing, one off seabird endemic itinerary again, and ten years after the first, Rodney Russ is going to take the *Spirit of Enderby* from Mauritius and plan to land on five of the world's remotest and least visited islands. These legendary islands all have huge seabird and marine mammal colonies. Star birds should include Amsterdam Island Albatross, the world's rarest and seen on the 2002 voyage, Northern Rockhopper Penguin, Black-faced Sheathbill, Eaton's Pintail, Salvin's and Saint Paul Prions, Crozet, Heard and Kerguelen Shags plus Kerguelen Tern. The supporting cast is somewhat mouth-watering too, and the numbers of birds immense. Other expected species King, Gentoo, Rockhopper, Northern Rockhopper and Macaroni Penguins, Wandering (Snowy), Black-browed, Salvin's, Grey-headed, Indian Yellow-nosed, Sooty and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Southern & Northern Giant Petrels, Cape, Great-winged, White-headed, Kerguelen, Soft-plumaged, Blue, White-chinned and Grey Petrels, Antarctic, Slender-billed, Fairy, Broad-billed & Fulmar Prions, Flesh-footed, Wedge-tailed, Short-tailed, 'Audubon's' & Little (Sub-Antarctic) Shearwaters, Wilson's, Grey-backed, Black and White-bellied Storm-Petrels, South Georgian & Common Diving-petrels, Cape & Australian Gannets and Brown (Sub-Antarctic) Skuas. Half of the world's King Penguins breed in the Crozet Islands alone! Some of the beaches teem with Southern Elephant and both Antarctic and Sub-Antarctic Fur Seals plus Orcas and other cetaceans will be seen in the seas. Other potential species include Southern Bottlenose and Strap-toothed Whales, Hourglass and Southern Rightwhale Dolphins plus Spectacled Porpoise. Landings will be attempted at all five islands but will be subject to weather and local conditions on the day. It is worth noting that the 2002 expedition got ashore at all of them. This epic journey will start in Mauritius, which in its own island group offers almost 20 endemics (why not fly out early?) and adds a chance of Barau's, Mascarene and Round Island Petrels plus noddies, boobies, frigatebirds, White & Sooty Terns, Red & White-tailed Tropicbirds. WildWings may arrange some optional pre-voyage birding subject to demand.

Our vessel will be the comfortable expedition ship, the *Spirit of Enderby*, operated by Heritage Expeditions carrying a maximum of just 50 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. We will use her Zodiacs for landings and cruises.

All the islands are uninhabited with small scientific camps on some and are wildly beautiful. Photo opportunities should be good to superb.

Places are limited to just 48 lucky passengers worldwide and demand is certain to be very strong, so early booking is definitely required!

Itinerary

Day 1: Embark the vessel in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius, and set sail.

Days 2 – 8: At sea, sea-watching for seabirds and cetaceans.

Days 9 - 10: Heard Island *

Antarctic Fur Seal, Southern Elephant Seal and King Penguins, which were heavily exploited in the 19th century, are now recovering here. Gentoo, Macaroni and Rockhopper Penguins also breed there. Other main breeding bird species include Wandering, Black-browed and Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Antarctic and Fulmar Prions, Wilson's Storm Petrel, Common Diving Petrel, Black-faced Shearbill and the endemic Heard Island Shag.

Day 11: At sea.

Days 12 -14 Kerguelen Islands

The Kerguelen archipelago comprises one large island and about 300 outer islands, islets and rocks.

These islands are breeding sites for 30 species of bird including King, Macaroni and Rockhopper Penguins, Wandering Albatross, Cape, White-headed, Kerguelen and Blue Petrels. Both Wilson's and Black-bellied Storm Petrels breed here, as do diving petrels.

Days 15-18: At sea.

Day 19: Crozet Islands

The islands boast more breeding seabirds than any other island group in the world. 36 species of bird breed on the group, there are 24 species recorded from Ile de la Possession alone. Among the most common are King, Macaroni, and Rockhopper Penguins, Wandering, Light-mantled Sooty Albatross, Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, Kerguelen Petrel, White-chinned Petrel, South Georgian Diving Petrel, Crozet Shag, Kerguelen Tern, Eaton's Pintail and Black-faced Shearbill. Several species are very abundant on the small offlying islands, these include Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Blue Petrel and Fairy Prion. Southern Elephant Seal and both Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic Fur Seals breed on the Islands.

Days 20 - 23: At sea.

Day 24: St Paul

Introduced mammals have had a considerable impact on the island's vegetation and birdlife. Cats and rats are thought responsible for the severe depletion of bird populations, especially small burrowing petrels. Five bird species currently breed there including Northern Rockhopper Penguin, Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross, Sooty Albatross, Flesh-footed and Little Shearwaters, Broad-billed Prion, White-faced Storm Petrel and Antarctic Tern. Sub-Antarctic Fur Seals also breed on the island. As the ship sailed away in 2002 an adult Amsterdam Albatross came in and circled the ship for several minutes. Seeing this species at sea will be the best chance!

Day 25: Amsterdam Island

At least nine bird species are known to breed on the island, including Northern Rockhopper Penguin and Indian Yellow-nosed Albatross. Also breeding on the island are Sooty albatross, and probably the bird of the trip, the extremely rare and endemic Amsterdam Island Albatross, Soft-plumaged Petrel, Brown Skua, and the introduced Eaton's Pintail. Note the albatross colony is on top of the island and is normally 'out of bounds' sadly.

Days: 26 - 32

We begin the last leg of what will have been an amazing voyage at sea, sea watching all the way!

Day 33: We will disembark in Albany, western Australia. There will be coach transfers to the inner city and Perth airport.

NB Exact itinerary subject to weather and local conditions, and permissions from the French and Australian governments (permits applied for). * Please note the planned landings at Heard Island will require all ship's staff and passengers who go ashore to be wearing completely sterile clothing and boots, the vessel will provide these for all and the cost of this is reflected in the landing fees for the voyage.

Voyage Information

Dates: 31st October – 2nd December 2012

Leader/s: Rodney Russ & expedition team plus WildWings leader TBA.

Prices:

Sharing a twin basic (lower berths)

£13,439

Sharing a twin with facilities (upper & lower berth)	£14,059
Sharing a superior twin with facs. (lower berths)	£14,375
Sharing a mini suite with facilities (3/4 bed & single beds)	£15,299
Sharing a suite with facilities (double & single beds)	£16,875

Landing Fees * £625p

Fluid pricing will apply for this voyage. Sterling prices above reflect exchange rate of GBP1 = US\$1.6
Payment can also be made in US\$, please contact us for rates.

Deposit 25%

Single occupancy 1.8 times twin share price (x2 for suites)

Prices include: Voyage with accommodation as booked, including all meals aboard vessel, tea and coffee, guided shore excursions as described, lectures and services of ship's expedition team including birders, sterile clothing and boots for Heard Island, day by day bird and mammal checklist, departure airport transfers in Australia and evening log-call (at sea).

Excludes: Flights (to Mauritius, from Perth), transfers in Mauritius pre-voyage hotel in Mauritius or post-voyage hotel in Perth if required, travel insurance, other drinks, crew tips (suggested amount US\$10 per day), visas and other items of a personal nature.

