

# Dive Log

At noon on the 6th of March M/V Plancius left the port of Ushuaia and went through the beautiful Beagle channel. The sky was almost as high as the expectations among the passengers. Hours later we got in to the Drake passage and everybody on board was happy to find out that, at this time, the Drake was unusually calm and welcoming.

Due to the pleasant wind conditions we were able to fill all the tanks during the crossing and in the morning on the 8th of March everyone was ready for their “check out” dive at Aitcho Island. The purpose of this dive is mainly to check out the diver’s equipment and to get familiar with the new diving environment in terms as temperature, salinity and to go through all the procedures during the diving operations.

## **8th March. Aitcho Island**



Considering the large amount of divers everything went well and although it was the first time for all of divers everyone was now able to adjust their weights and other equipment for the next dive later in the afternoon. We made the dive close to the shore to make it possible for the

divers to stand on the bottom. This limiting the risk for anyone if heavily over weighted or if any of the equipment would fail.

## **8th March. Half Moon Island**

The second dive this day was made at Half Moon Island and at this time the wind had increased quite a lot and the fog were hanging heavily over the surface of the sea. We managed to find a sheltered place behind a big rock and the dive went very well.

## **9th March. Cuverville Island**

The second day Plancius anchored up outside Cuverville Island and here we had to face both a strong wind and a mix of rain and heavy snowfall during the launching. The weather calmed down and we dived among small icebergs in the bay. We admired the different structures and colours of the ice. One zodiac even had leopard seal around some divers. All four zodiacs full came back to the ship with very satisfied divers.

## **9th March. Neko Harbour**

In the afternoon most of the divers went for a second dive, this time in Neko harbor. The wind was still strong and the snow and the rain fell almost horizontal. We found a

reasonably sheltered dive spot in a little bay and some people made a dive while others snorkeled.

### **10th March. Palmer station wreck**

In the morning the third day we did a wreck dive outside Palmer station. The wreck of the sunken Argentinean supply ship “Bahia Paraiso” was laying on its side at a depth of about 20 meters and while exploring the huge wreck the divers encountered a lot of marine animals and vegetation that now had found a home on the shipwreck. Making this dive a fairly short one we managed to get some time at the actual Palmer station as well.

### **10th March. Pleneau Bay:**



While passing through the beautiful Lemaire channel the clouds disappeared and the blazing sun started shining and the majestic rocks, the white glaciers and the blue sea made a stunning scenery. In the sheltered Pleneau bay the ship anchored up and the divers went

out on a beautifully calm surface to look for an iceberg to dive. We cruised around a lot for a good spot and saw some astonishing things; a big arch in an iceberg, a group of four leopard seals and a crabeater seal together on the ice, fur seals and Weddell seals. Due to the good dive and the beautiful weather everybody’s smiles were as bright and shiny as the sun when coming back to the ship where a barbecue was arranged.

### **11th March. Useful Islands**

In the morning the fourth day of diving some of the divers wanted to try out the diving at Useful Islands. This was a place where no one had dived before. A channel provided a good place for both diving and landing. There were a lot of penguins and fur seals both on land and in the water.

### **11th March. Almirante Brown:**

Here we dived next to the Argentinean station in good weather conditions. Some divers saw debris thrown in the water from the station over the years and some divers dived along a steep wall. There were some very nice soft corals, kelp, sea cucumbers and star fish. As on many times before, a lot of divers finished with some snorkeling or a short landing.



**12th March. Danco Island:**

Danco in sunshine, great for divers and “others”. We dived and snorkeled along the shore and on some small ice bergs. We saw a lot of krill and that also meant a lot of penguins feeding in the water.

**12th March. Melchior Islands:**

The last dive at this trip was made at Melchior Islands. The ship anchored just outside the station and the three dive zodiacs including four snorkelers cruised around for a while looking for the best site to dive. We found a sheltered spot with some fur seals where everybody went in the water for the last time on this trip. Very good visibility in the water gave the divers an opportunity to see lots of sea stars, anemones, sea urchins and both snorkelers and divers were able to see a few fur seals. Some divers even saw a leopard seal.