



Heritage Expeditions

TRIP DOSSIER, VOYAGE 1332

ACROSS THE TOP OF THE WORLD

TO WRANGEL & HERALD ISLANDS



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"Near the top of the world in one of the most remote and inhospitable parts of the planet, lie two wild and undeveloped islands of great significance to the conservation of life on earth."

This unique journey not only includes the isolated Wrangel and Herald Islands but also a significant section of the wild North Eastern Siberian coastline.

It is a journey made possible only in recent years by the thawing in the politics of the region and the retreat of the summer pack ice in the Chukchi Sea. Right on the border between Soviet Russia and the USA, the area was known as the Ice Curtain and today remains one of the last undiscovered wonders of the world.

We sail through the Bering Strait west along the north Siberian coastline before crossing the De Long Strait to Wrangel Island and there spend four to five days under the guidance of local Rangers on the Nature Reserve.

Untouched by glaciers during the last ice age, this is a treasure trove of arctic biodiversity and is perhaps best known for the multitude of Polar Bears that breed on the island. We hope to catch many glimpses of this beautiful animal as well as Walrus, Reindeer, Snow Geese and other migratory species that nest here annually.

Of equal importance is the 'mammoth steppe' vegetation complex, a rich and diverse relic from the Pleistocene epoch, nurturing over 400 plant species. The islands' human histories are not without interest either and our expert Expedition Team will take time to give lectures and background to the landscape we move through and the encounters we enjoy.

We will undertake numerous landings during our voyage, look for whales, visit huge bird colonies, Walrus haul-outs and native villages and will take every opportunity to discover the region's rich biodiversity.



Our vessel, the Spirit of Enderby (Professor Khromov) is perfect for expedition travel.

The real focus and emphasis of every expedition is getting you ashore as often as possible for as long as possible with maximum safety and comfort. It carries just 50 passengers in very comfortable accommodation. She measures 72 metres in length and is fully ice-strengthened.



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NOTE: You can join this expedition either in Anadyr, Russia or in Nome, Alaska. Those starting in Nome will fly by a Heritage Expeditions charter flight to Anadyr and will join the ship and the expedition members who have travelled direct to Anadyr.

Day 0: Nome

Those departing from Nome, Alaska, should arrive in Nome before midday and preferably the previous night.

On arrival, you should check in with Bering Air at the Nome Airport who will have details of our charter flight. During this flight you will cross the International Date Line, arriving into Anadyr on Day 1 of the expedition. You will clear Russian Customs and Immigration.

Day 1: Anadyr

All expedition members will arrive in Anadyr. If you are travelling direct to Anadyr and require pre or post cruise accommodation or excursions, please contact us.



Depending on your arrival time you may have the opportunity to explore Anadyr, the administrative centre of the Chukotka region, before getting to know your fellow voyagers and crew on board the Spirit of Enderby.

Day 2: Anadyrskiy Bay

We will depart Anadyr Harbour early morning and you are invited to join the Captain, officers and the expedition staff on the bridge. The Anadyr estuary is renowned for its Beluga Whales.

Today as we sail across Anadyrskiy Bay towards the Bering Strait there will be briefings, introductory lectures and a chance to relax or enjoy some "birding" with our naturalists.

Day 3: Ytthygran, Nuneangan and Arakamchechen Islands

Ytthygran Island is home to the monumental ancient aboriginal site known as Whale Bone Alley. Whalebones 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.

Grey Whales are frequently seen around the Island. After landing at Whale Bone Alley we will take the Zodiacs on a whale watching excursion. We will also cruise close inshore of neighbouring Nuneangan Island (Bird Island) where a large number of seabirds nest.

On nearby Arakamchechen Island there is a prominent walrus haul out; if the animals are present we will land and walk across the tundra to view them from the cliffs.

Day 4: Cape Dezhnev / Uelen Village

Sea conditions permitting, we will land at Cape Dezhnev early this morning. The north-eastern most point of the Eurasian continent, it is sometimes possible to see the coast of America from this remote and lonely outpost. It is also a historic landmark named after the Siberian Cossack Semyon Dezhnev, who in 1648 became the first European to sail from the Arctic to the Pacific.



A steep scramble from the beach brings you to an abandoned Border Guard base, a monument to Dezhnev and another to all the sailors who have sailed these seas.

Cape Prince of Wales in Alaska lies 89 kilometres across Bering Strait. A few nautical miles to the west of Cape Dezhnev we visit Uelen Village; the most north-eastern village in Russia. Archaeological work has revealed that walrus, seal and whale hunters have lived here for over 2000 years. Today the population is predominantly Chukchi, with some Russians and Inuit. Hunting is still very important but the village is also one of the largest centres for traditional Chukchi and Inuit art in the world.

We will be entertained by villagers and visit the bone-carving workshop during our visit. Sculptures from the bone-carving workshop in Uelen

can be found in most of the major museums in Russia.



Day 5: Kolyuchin Island

This small island was once an important Russian Polar Research Station and one of a number dotted across the Arctic. Sadly with the collapse of the USSR there was no money to maintain them and they were abandoned; the buildings are derelict but the wildlife the men studied are still there. Near the abandoned station at the north-western end of the island are some of the most amazing bird cliffs in the Arctic; puffins, guillemots, gulls and cormorants can be observed and photographed from just meters away.

At the south-eastern end of the island there is a prominent Walrus haul out, if the animals are present it is one of the easiest places to observe them and get some good photographs.

Days 6 to 10: Wrangel and Herald Islands

Ice and weather conditions permitting, we will spend the next few days on Wrangel Island and we will also 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 3,200 years BC and it has been established 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 settlement and claim the Island for Canada, they were evicted by the Russians who claimed the island.

Today it is a Russian Federal Nature Reserve of international significance and 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 a Polar Bear maternity ward on account of the large numbers of pups 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 Owls, skuas, Arctic Terns, Ross's, Sabine's and Ivory Gulls.

There are many landings that we can make to search out wildlife, wildflowers 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 well mapped and charted, there have been very few expedition cruises and consequently there is a lot of scope for expedition landings. Depending on weather and sea conditions we will attempt a landing today.

There are several choices, at Cape Vankarem there is reputedly a large Walrus haul out that we would like to check out. The area around the Cape is bounded by narrow sand ridges with numerous coastal lagoons and inlets; nearby there is a small Chukchi village whose residents still make their living hunting Walrus, Seals and Whales. There is another smaller Chukchi village called Nutepelmen which is situated on a spit at the entrance to Pyngopikhin Lagoon, further west of Cape Vankarem.

Day 12: Kolyuchin Inlet

So huge that it is visible from satellite photos, this inlet contains vast numbers of waterfowl and migratory waders. We concentrate our visit on the spit near the mouth of the Inlet.



It is a wild, desolate landscape that is strangely beautiful. We search the dunes and tidal areas for birdlife including Emperor Geese and Spoon-billed Sandpipers. Grey Whales frequent the area and are sometimes spotted feeding only meters offshore.



Day 13: Bering Strait and Chukotka Coast

Early morning we will pass the Diomedede Islands, sometimes called Tomorrow Island and Yesterday Isle because they straddle the International Date Line. Here Russia and America are separated by only 2.3 nautical miles of ocean. We will remain in Russian territory as we cruise south past the islands.

In 1867 when the USA purchased Alaska from Russia the new boundary was drawn between Big (Russian) and Little (USA)

Diomedede Islands. This makes Big Diomedede Island Russia's eastern-most possession. The island was originally inhabited by Yupik Eskimos but after World War II the native population were relocated to the mainland. Today there are no permanent residents but the Russians maintain a Border Guard station there. It is an important island for birdlife with good numbers of Blacklegged Kittiwakes, Common and Brunnich's Guillemot and Horned and Tufted Puffin.

Later this afternoon we make an expedition landing on the Chukotka coast our last chance to enjoy the wildlife and tundra landscape.

Day 14: At Sea

Join the staff for an expedition recap and a disembarkation briefing, and then simply relax as we sail across Anadyrskiy Bay towards Anadyr.

Day 15: Anadyr

After breakfast it will be time to say our farewells. There will be a complimentary transfer to the airport or to a hotel of your choice.

Those returning to Nome will join a Charter flight that will depart Anadyr around midday and, because of the dateline, arrive back in Nome on the evening of the previous day. However, we strongly advise that you do not book any onward travel from Nome until the following day to allow for possible delays in the charter flight. Those returning to Moscow can either be transferred to the airport or hotel in Anadyr, depending on their flight times.

Dates:

Nome to Nome

#1332 6th - 20th Aug 2013

Anadyr to Anadyr

#1332 7th - 21st Aug 2013

Prices:

Heritage Suite	\$13,100 pp
Mini Suite	\$12,600 pp
Superior Plus	\$12,000 pp
Superior	\$11,600 pp
Main Deck	\$10,900 pp
Main Deck Triple	\$9,800 pp

Additional charges:

Private charter flight Nome to Anadyr to Nome	\$2,000 pp
Landing Fees/ Local Payment	\$500 pp

(All prices are per person in USD)

Price Includes:

All on board ship accommodation and meals and all shore excursions.

Price Excludes:

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