

Greetings Friends ; Tuesday late afternoon

Today was our last day of exploring in the Antarctic sound. We traveled through iceberg alley, the Gerlache channel, we visited Esperanza, which is Argentina's research camp and the Adelie penguin colony which is right next to the camp. This is definitely the place for penguins to hang out. Their little bodies dotted the hillsides from top to bottom. It reminded me of tourists in Laguna Beach on a hot summer day; only penguins wear their tuxedos to the beach. I couldn't help but laugh as I watched them react to our big ship sailing past their quiet, floating islands. I can just imagine what they must be thinking.. "Holy Cow... we're going to get crushed by that giant ship....run for your life!" And off they waddle as fast as their little feet can take them, but it's not that easy when they have to run on ice and their round little bellies are only 3 inches up from their feet; but they make the plunge into the water and then swim as fast as they can, away from the ship and onto another floating iceberg. They are, without a doubt, my greatest source of entertainment on this ship and yes Teryl...they remind me of Wilson! I get so saddened when i learn about their struggle for life. Below is an excerpt from an article I read in one of my guide books today.

"US scientists have found toxic chemicals, including PCB's and DDT, in Adelie penguins and conjecture that glaciers have stored the chemicals (spread in the atmosphere) and are slowly releasing them to the sea as the ice melts."

This sounds to me like the reason for the reduction in population! Remember what Alex said about Antarctica being a great place to study, because everything that happens first on our planet, happens in the Antarctic? If these penguins are the first to die off because of these toxic chemicals we put into the air....who will be next?

Adelie Penguins

Tabular icebergs

Argentina Research center and Penguin Colony

Shackelton and Elephant

Island:

Tuesday Evening 8:30pm

Their boats Landing on Elephant Island

Camping on a floating iceberg

"For scientific leadership give me Scott. For swift and efficient travel give me Amundsen, but when you are in a hopeless situation, when you are seeing no way out, get down on your knees and pray for Shackleton." Sir Raymond Priestley- A member of the 1907 Nimrod Expedition

At this very moment I am up in the crows nest, front and center, approaching an Island that has been up until now, just an imagine in my mind. ELEPHANT ISLAND! The story "Endurance" has always been my very favorite. 22 of Earnest Shackleton's men were stranded on this island for 135 days, living beneath unturned boats. What spoke to me louder than anything else in that story was how incredibly powerful the human spirit is. Shackleton's story has given me strength and encouragement during times when I've felt defeated. Isn't it amazing how one mans story that took place over 100 years ago, can lift and encourage us today? At this time we are approximately 15 miles away from the island. The sun is setting and the rays are trying very hard to shine through the grey clouds that hover above the island. The island is shaped like an elephant and has several glaciers streaming down from the mountain peaks. I am in tears just reflecting on those brave men who endured so much and never gave up! They lived up to their boats name....Endurance! From the time they left South Georgia to the day they landed on elephant island was a total of 500 days! Can you imagine what it must have felt like to finally set their feet on land?

Shackleton is a legend and has gained the respect of all nations represented here today. There are mountains, rivers, bays inlets and islands named after him and his first mate Wild. What makes this man so famous is not so much what he accomplished but who he was as a human being. His way of leadership earned him the respect and love of all 28 men on his crew and all of you, who also know about his story.

Shackleton was buried on South Georgia Island. His men called him "The Boss." They built a cross out of wood for him that stands tall on a hillside in the town of Grytviken. On the back of his granite headstone (engraved with a 9 pointed star that Shackleton used as his personal emblem) is one of his favorite quotations, from the poet Robert Browning;

"I hold that a man should strive to the uttermost for his life's set prize."

The route they took elephant Island

These girls are from Holland.

We all stood out on the bow of the boat as we passed the island.

They were lots of fun to be with.

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New critters spotted today;

1. Orca Whales

Love to all, Susie