

CHATHAM ISLANDS – A LAND APART

DISCOVER THE HEART OF NEW
ZEALAND'S EASTERNMOST ISLANDS

EXPEDITION DOSSIER
21 – 28 March 2021

HOUSE OF TRAVEL





© A Breniere



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Discover amazing endemic wildlife, meet the locals and experience conservation in action on an unforgettable journey through New Zealand's Chatham Islands.

Their first inhabitants, the Moriori, called them 'Rekhou' (misty skies), the Europeans who rediscovered them in 1791 named them the Chatham Islands after their ship, while Maori, who didn't settle the islands until 1835, called them 'Wharekauri'. Today, we know them as the home of the endangered Black Robin.

The Chatham archipelago (made up of at least 12 islands, plus numerous islets) lies 870 kilometres east of New Zealand and runs 45 minutes ahead of the

rest of the country. The first part of New Zealand and the first inhabited landmass around the globe to be greeted by the morning sun, the history of these islands and their rich natural history is unique. It is only by visiting and experiencing these remarkable islands that one can truly appreciate what they have to offer. During explorations around the archipelago we will hear remarkable stories of rediscovery and population recovery with the Black Robin and its rescue from the brink of extinction and the once thought to be extinct Chatham Island Taiko (Magenta Petrel). The ongoing careful management of these critically endangered species serve as beacons of hope and inspiration for conservationists everywhere.

Visiting the Chatham Islands is not difficult – there are regular flights to and from New Zealand and several travel companies offer guided tours – but this expedition is unique and rare, as it includes the seldom visited (and almost impossible to get to) outlying islands where much of the story of the Chatham Islands can be seen and experienced. Our journey is also guided by a team of Chatham Islands' experts whose knowledge will add another dimension to your experience.

This expedition includes some designated UNESCO World Heritage sites which are afforded the highest conservation status and protection by the New Zealand Government. While no landings are possible at some of these remote outcrops, islets and stacks, we plan to Zodiac cruise their shorelines. The daily itinerary will be determined by weather and sea conditions.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Christchurch

Make your way to your overnight accommodation in Christchurch where you will spend the first night with your fellow expeditioners. (Reporting times and accommodation details will be confirmed with your voyage documents).

Day 2: Waitangi

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel before being transferred to Christchurch Airport for your flight to Chatham Island where your adventure begins.

Chatham Island's charming and friendly hub, Waitangi features the island's main wharf and is normally bustling with activity. Near our landing in Waitangi there is a good chance of observing the endemic Chatham Island Shag. With a new generation of Chatham Island people there has come a new awareness and a willingness to be part of a concerted conservation effort. A number of private reserves have been established, extensive replanting has taken place and predator control initiatives have been instigated on the island.

In the afternoon you will be transferred to the ship where the captain and expedition team will be waiting to greet you and show you to your cabin. You will have the opportunity to familiarise yourself on board and there will be formal introductions to the team followed by safety briefings.

Day 3: Kaingaroa

This remote fishing village has a picturesque harbour historically used by early sealers, whalers and trading ships. Points of interest here include the J.M.



Barker (Hapupu) National Historic Reserve, one of only two National Historic Reserves in New Zealand, where a short walk takes us to view ancient dendroglyphs (tree carvings), which date back to the Chatham Island's earliest settlers – the Moriori.

Also nearby is the Te Whakaru graveyard which is considered one of New Zealand's oldest European cemeteries and the remains of the first German missionary settlement built in 1843. At Point Munning a large New Zealand Fur Seal colony can be observed and, during the summer months, migrant Turnstones and Banded Dotterels have also been spotted here. We will also be on the lookout for endemic plants including the famed Chatham Island Forget-me-not.

Day 4: South Coast

We plan to visit the Awatotara Valley, one of the original private reserves established by a local family on the south coast of the main island, where there is a very good chance to see the endemic Chatham Island Pigeon, Chatham Island Warbler and Tui. The pigeon was close to extinction, though now supports a healthy population. Travelling by local bus, the road takes us through developed farmland where we will undoubtedly see numerous introduced species

including the Weka. Continuing further south to the Tuku River and Taiko Town where you will be able to learn about the discovery and conservation work done on the Chatham Island Taiko, one of the world's most endangered seabirds.

Day 5: Pitt Island

At Pitt Island, spectacular scenery waits on this jewel in the Chatham Islands' crown. The easternmost inhabited island in New Zealand, it is situated approximately 22 kilometres south-east of the main Chatham Island. Named 'Rangihaute' by the Moriori, it is separated from the main island by Pitt Strait and is officially the first inhabited place on Earth to be greeted by the sun each day.

The island's rugged coastline and bush-clad valleys are home to a variety of birdlife including Tui, Tomtit, Red-crowned Parakeets, Warblers, Fantails and other rare and endemic birds. Listen to stories





of life on the island and its rich history as we explore this natural wonderland.

Day 6: Outlying Islands

Today we have a day of small island and rocky outcrop exploration planned including a Zodiac cruise of South East Island, arguably one of the world's greatest nature reserves. While landings are not permitted, we can expect good views of the world's rarest wader the endemic New Zealand Shore Plover, and Chatham Island Oystercatcher. We should also see the Pitt Island Shag which nests on the island.

Situated to the west of Pitt Island, Mangere Island is one of only two sites in the world where the Black Robin (once the world's rarest bird) are found. We will hear the story of how this endemic species was rescued from the brink of extinction in the 1970s when the total population consisted of just six birds. The recovery of this little bird is a remarkable tale of persistence, passion, courage and a little luck.

We should also find the Forbes' Parakeet (aka the Chatham Parakeet) on Mangere and Little Mangere Islands. This rare parakeet is endemic to the Chatham Islands, where it is confined to these tiny islands. There are excellent opportunities

for pelagic birding as we approach Pyramid Rock. In particular, we will look out for the Chatham Island Petrel, and in the past we have observed the very rare Chatham Island Taiko in this area too. Endemic to the Chatham Islands, the Chatham Island Taiko – also known as the Magenta Petrel – is among New Zealand's most endangered species. It is one of the world's rarest seabirds with a population estimated at less than 150.

This afternoon we plan to cruise around the spectacular basalt outcrop of Pyramid Rock, south of Pitt Island – the only breeding place of the Chatham Island Albatross. Landings are not possible (nor practical – a fact you

will appreciate when you see it) but great views of birds can be had from the ship and there will also be hundreds of birds following behind.

Day 7: Owenga

History and nature combine at Owenga Village, a small port settlement and fishing village on the northeastern side of the main island. Owenga's rugged coastline is a popular diving and fishing spot and offers excellent opportunities to observe seabirds. Owenga is also the location of New Zealand's only Moriori marae, Kōpinga which is located on nearby hilltop Te Awatea.

Today we also plan to Zodiac cruise several of the outlying islands including The Sisters. This clutch of three islands are the northernmost in the Chatham Archipelago, have the second largest breeding colony of Northern Royal Albatross and an endemic species of stag beetle. Laying claim to being the easternmost point of New Zealand, the Forty-Fours islands are important breeding sites for the Chatham Fulmar Prion, Buller's and Northern Royal





© S Howell

Albatross, while the five rocky islets comprising the Star Keys is another stronghold for the critically endangered Chatham Island Shag.

It's a good time to take the opportunity to relax and reflect on the expedition, and download and edit any remaining photos while they are fresh in your mind and you have the experience of our expedition team on board for questions.

Tonight enjoy a recap of the highlights from your expedition followed by a farewell dinner.

Day 8: Christchurch

After a final breakfast bid farewell to your fellow voyagers and expedition team. Transfer to Chatham Islands/Tuuta Airport for your flight back to Christchurch.

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



© L Gwynn

DATES

Voyage #SOE2192
21 – 28 March 2021

PRICES

Heritage Suite NZ\$8,450 pp*
Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.

Mini Suite NZ\$7,495 pp*
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

Superior Plus NZ\$6,995 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Superior NZ\$6,495 pp*
One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

Main Deck NZ\$5,495 pp*
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.

* All prices are per person in NZ\$

PRICE INCLUDES

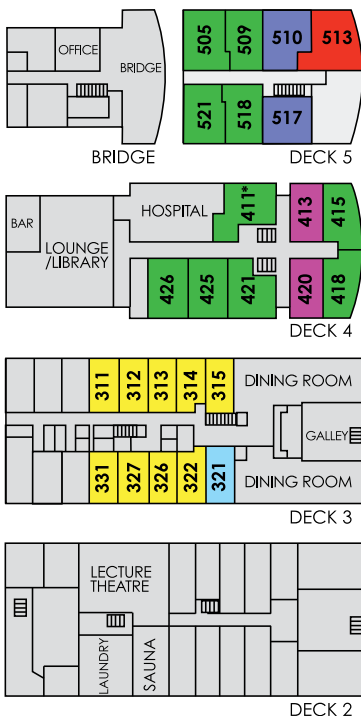
Flights from Christchurch to Chatham Island and return, one night hotel accommodation in a twin share room (incl. breakfast), landing fees, pre/post cruise transfers, all on board ship accommodation with meals and all expedition shore excursions.

PRICE EXCLUDES

All items of a personal nature, laundry, drinks, gratuities, visas and travel insurance. For flights to and from Christchurch please talk to your House of Travel consultant.



© P Tyree



- **Heritage Suites:** Large lounge area, separate bedroom with double bed and a single bed in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Large forward and side facing windows allow great views.
- **Mini Suites:** Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.
- **Superior Plus Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows. *Cabin 411 has a double bed with upper bunk.
- **Superior Cabins:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth), writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.
- **Main Deck Cabins:** Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.
- **Main Deck Triple:** One bunk (one upper and one lower berth) and one additional lower berth, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private washbasin. Nearby shower and toilet facilities are shared with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.



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