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WESTERN PACIFIC ODYSSEY - EXTENSION: THE ULTIMATE BIRDING VOYAGE FROM NEW ZEALAND, VIA PAPUA NEW GUINEA, TO JAPAN

Known in birding circles simply as the 'WPO', this expedition incorporates many of the key birding areas in the South West Pacific. First offered in 2007, it is now considered one of the 'must do' expeditions for any birder because of its opportunities to see some of the rarest pelagic seabirds in the world, plus many island endemics. But it is not just for 'birders', the cetacean list can only be described as outstanding, while there is also so much more to enjoy for anyone interested in taking a leisurely expedition cruise through a transect of the Pacific Ocean. Remote beaches, glowing tropical sunsets (with maybe a green flash or two!), flying fish, towering tropical rainforests and wild and remote oceans just to name a few. This season guests have the option to disembark in Kavieng, Papua New Guinea, or continue on a specially priced extension through to Japan. After departing Auckland, New Zealand, we sail for the rich waters of the Hauraki Gulf where there are numerous speciality seabirds, including the New Zealand Stormpetrel. From there it's northward to Australia's Norfolk Island with its endemic birds, Norfolk Pines and rugged shoreline. Our next stop is New Caledonia, one of the world's most biologically interesting islands, where we search for the amazing Kagu and other endemic bird species in the Parc Provincial de la Riviere Bleue/Riviere Bleue. Heading on through Melanesia we will call in at a couple of the largest islands, Guadalcanal and Bougainville, before cruising across the New Britain Trench, an area known to be extremely rich in cetaceans. As we sail along the coasts of Bougainville and New Ireland, we will look for two rarely seen seabirds: Heinroth's Shearwater and the critically endangered Beck's Petrel which was only rediscovered in 2007,

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both of which we have seen on almost all our previous expeditions in this region. Following a further stop at Kavieng, Papua New Guinea, guests have the option to disembark or continue on our extension sailing northward all the way to Japan. We will arrive at the Bonin Islands south of Japan; our route will take us to Chichi-jima, the largest island in the archipelago and where we have observed the critically endangered Bryan's Shearwater. We then intend to backtrack slightly to Haha-jima to look for the weird Bonin White-eye and resume our northwards journey to Tori-shima Island where we hope to get great views of the Short-tailed Albatross before we arrive at our last port of call in Osaka, Japan, where our voyage concludes. This expedition is accompanied by some of the best pelagic birding guides in the world who have extensive experience of the seabirds of the West Pacific and have visited the islands we will be landing on multiple times. Birding starts at dawn and finishes at sundown. Our guides are there throughout the day to assist you and the 'reading of the bird list' each evening is legendary for its detail and discussion. This is one birding expedition you can't afford to miss. Guests have the option to disembark after 15 days in Kavieng, Papua New Guinea, or continue on to Osaka, Japan, for the full, 25-day voyage on a specially-priced



extension.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Auckland, New Zealand



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Join Heritage Adventurer this afternoon in the heart of New Zealand's commercial capital, Auckland. Your Captain and Expedition Team will be waiting to greet you on arrival and show you to your cabin. You will have time to settle in and familiarise yourself with the ship; we will also take the opportunity to introduce you to your Expedition Team and Guides and our voyage plans. You are invited to join your Expedition Team and Guides in the Observation Lounge and up on the Observation Deck as we set sail for the Hauraki Gulf.

Day 2: Mokohinau Islands and the Hauraki Gulf

Daybreak will find us in the Mokohinau Islands (known locally as the Mokes), a group of small islands in the Hauraki Gulf. These predator free islands are a haven for breeding seabirds and we should start the voyage with a wonderful selection of seabirds around the ship. Grey Noddy are usually to be found perching on some of the rocks and there is an Australasian Gannet colony here as well. As we head further out to sea we will focus on looking for the New Zealand Storm Petrel. The species' recent and astonishing discovery is now well known along with the fact that it is breeding at Little Barrier Island. We have never missed this special bird and usually find several. Indeed this whole area offers fantastic seabirding and some of the other species we can hope to see are Little Blue Penguin; Black, Grey-faced, Cook's and possibly Pycroft's Petrel, Buller's, Flesh-footed, Fluttering and Little Shearwater, Fairy Prion, White-faced Storm Petrel and

Common Diving Petrel. In addition this area is a good feeding ground for albatross and we are likely see several species including White-capped, Campbell, Buller's and Antipodean Albatross. The waters of the Hauraki Gulf usually have a few cetaceans around including Short-beaked Common Dolphin, Long-finned Pilot Whale and occasionally Bryde's Whale.

Day 3: At Sea

Today will be spent sailing north to Norfolk Island and passes through rich waters for seabirds. These deep, far offshore waters are excellent for an impressive mix of Pterodroma/Gadfly Petrels and we hope to see Grey-faced, Kermadec, White-necked, Blackwinged, Cook's, Gould's and Tahiti Petrel. There should again be good numbers of albatross around and they will be some of the last we see until we enter the realm of their Northern Hemisphere cousins much later in the journey. We sometimes see beaked whales in these deep waters and several species of these enigmatic cetaceans occur here. We stand a good chance to see Sperm Whales as well.

Day 4: Norfolk Island, Australia

This far flung island, named by Captain James Cook, has a rich history. Initially inhabited by Polynesians, it later served as a penal colony and was then colonised by descendants of The Bounty mutineers. The famous and picturesque Norfolk Island



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Pine dominates the landscape over much of the island, along with palms and the world's tallest treeferns. Sadly much of the incredible array of endemic wildlife that this island once held is extinct following the arrival of humans and their commensals, but the remaining forests are magnificent and still support a selection of endemic birds: Norfolk Parakeet, Slender-billed White-eye, Norfolk Robin and Norfolk Gerygone. Also found here are Pacific Emerald Dove, Golden Whistler and Grey Fantail. During our time ashore there may also be an opportunity to see some nesting seabirds including Black Noddy, White Tern and spectacular Red-tailed Tropicbirds. As we depart the island in the latter part of the afternoon there will be some excellent opportunities for more seabirding. The Island's breeding seabird population was decimated but is making a steady recovery with predator control. We will be on the lookout here for 'Tasman' Brown Booby, White-bellied and White-faced Storm Petrel, Little Shearwater and, in some years, Providence Petrel have also been observed.

Day 5: At Sea

As we sail north through the Coral Sea we can expect yet another excellent day of seabirding from the decks. Once again it will be those amazing Pterodroma petrels that should provide much of the entertainment and today we will be looking for more Kermadec, White-necked, Black-winged, Gould's and Tahiti Petrel. If we are lucky there may be a few Providence or even Herald Petrel around and we should encounter our first Collared Petrels of the voyage. Both the light and dark morph of this

species should be encountered, the dark morph often being referred to as Magnificent Petrel. We will pay particular attention to storm petrels on this leg of the journey. In addition to Wilson's and White-faced Storm Petrel, we hope to see White-bellied Storm Petrel and, with luck, even Polynesian Storm Petrel. It is on this transit that we began seeing a mysterious Storm Petrel in the early days of the WPO. The bird is now recognised as being the rediscovery of the long lost *Fregetta lineata* and is known as the New Caledonian Storm Petrel. The species appears to be quite rare and hard to see here but we have managed to observe it on several occasions to the south of its presumed breeding grounds somewhere around New Caledonia.

Day 6: Riviere Bleue, New Caledonia

New Caledonia has been described as a taste of France in the Pacific and is one of the most fascinating islands in the world. First inhabited by Lapita peoples, it was named by Captain James Cook who felt it reminded him of Scotland. New Caledonia is a fragment of the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana, and it is believed that it detached and became an island tens of millions of years ago. Isolation over such a long period of time on a relatively large tropical island explains both the extent of biodiversity and the incredible levels of endemism on this delightful tropical island. Its botany is characterised by an extraordinary diversity of gymnosperms particularly the spectacular Araucaria Trees, along with some of the largest tree ferns on Earth. It also holds the most ancient lineage of flowering plants and the largest gecko in the world. In common



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with so many Pacific Islands, there was a tragic extinction of many amazing birds upon the arrival of humans, yet the island still plays host to an extraordinary number of endemic species. Foremost of these is, of course, the Kagu the sole surviving member of its family. This extraordinary, flightless bird is now readily seen in Riviere Bleue, thanks to a massive conservation effort. We will be visiting this special reserve today to seek out the Kagu. Everyone has seen the pictures but to experience this unique creature in the feathers is a lifetime birding highlight. Also here are almost all of the island's other endemic birds headlined by spectacular Cloven-feathered Dove, Horned Parakeet and the critically endangered and often tricky to see Crow Honeyeater. The long list of other endemics include Goliath Imperial-pigeon, White-bellied Goshawk, New Caledonian Parakeet, New Caledonian Myzomela, New Caledonian Whistler, the toolusing New Caledonian Crow, South Melanesian Cuckooshrike, New Caledonian Friarbird, Barred Honeyeater, Yellow-bellied Robin, Green-backed White-eye and Red-throated Parrotfinch. Our time here at Riviere Bleue is a chance to immerse ourselves into one of the most spectacular and well protected forests on the island and experience not only the birdlife but some of the extraordinary botany as well.

Day 7: Mount Koghi

With another morning of birding on this special island, today we visit the slightly higher forest elevations of Mount Koghi. Our time here will be spent looking for any birds we missed yesterday. These forests tend to be better for White-bellied

Goshawk, Cloven-feathered Dove, New Caledonian Crow and Striated Starling, even the poorly known and rarely observed New Caledonian Thicketbird occurs here. Other birds to keep an eye out for include Streaked Fantail, Southern Shrikebill and Metallic Pigeon. Those so inclined may wish to spend some time exploring the capital of Noumea or enjoy a swim. Once back on board we will sail along the world's longest, continuous barrier reef systems, a very scenic cruise and with some interesting birds including Fairy Tern. Once beyond the reef we should see large numbers of Gould's Petrels and Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and this will provide us with another opportunity to seek out the New Caledonian Storm Petrel.

Days 8 to 10: At Sea

We now have three sea days as we steam north into the tropical waters of the Solomon Islands. While the pelagic birding may slow a bit as we head into warmer waters, it remains excellent. This stretch is our best chance to observe the incredible Polynesian Storm Petrel and we should also see Band-rumped Storm Petrel. The latter was initially discovered in this area during the WPO and seems likely to represent an unknown breeding population. We should also enjoy more Collared and Tahiti Petrels, both Red-tailed and White-tailed Tropicbirds plus hopefully watch Masked, Brown and Red-footed Boobies hunt the dazzling array of often spectacularly coloured flying fish that are abundant in these waters. As always, it is worth keeping an eye out for cetaceans including Sperm Whales, various beaked whales, and Short-finned Pilot Whales.



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Day 11: Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands

A chain of almost 1,000 lushly forested islands and some of the highest levels of endemism and marine life on Earth define this remarkable, yet rarely-visited nation. We will be exploring the largest of the country's islands, Guadalcanal. Perhaps best known to the outside world for the intense fighting that occurred here during World War II, Guadalcanal has been inhabited for many thousands of years. Its rugged and almost totally unexplored interior contrast sharply with the thriving city of Honiara, the capital. An early morning departure from Heritage Adventurer allows us relatively quick access into some lower montane forest where along a road we can seek out a few Guadalcanal endemics and a large number of slightly more widespread Solomons endemics. Some of the more sought after species here include Ultramarine Kingfisher, Solomons Cockatoo, Guadalcanal Crow and the huge Sanford's/Solomon Sea Eagle. Among the long list of other possible species are Pied Goshawk, Claret-breasted Fruit-dove, Cardinal and Yellowbibbed Lory, Buff-headed Coucal, spectacular Blyth's Hornbill, attractive Solomons Cuckooshrike, Black-headed Myzomela, Chestnut-bellied Monarch, Steel-blue Flycatcher, Brown-winged Starling, Long-tailed Myna and Midget Flowerpecker. It will certainly be one of our most diverse stops of the voyage!

Day 12: At Sea

We sail westwards through the Solomon Islands chain today. Because of its remarkable oceanic topography, the Solomons can offer some of the best tropical seabird and marine mammal watching anywhere. Some transits can be teeming with life, while others can be quieter. We should experience some feeding frenzies of terns, boobies, Wedge-tailed Shearwaters and marauding Frigatebirds. We also stand a good chance of observing the strange and rare Heinroth's Shearwater today. Marine mammal sightings in this area are always hard to predict but we regularly see Kogias here including Dwarf Sperm Whale, and even rare Pygmy Sperm Whales. Spinner and Pantropical Spotted Dolphin are the most regularly observed dolphin species and Pygmy Killer Whales seem fairly regular. Blainville's, Cuvier's and even Longman's Beaked Whales have all been seen on previous voyages, while flying fish reach some of their highest diversity in this area.

Day 13: Bougainville Island, Papua New Guinea

Geographically we are entering Papua New Guinea today, but biologically Bougainville has more in common with the Solomon Islands and is the largest island in the archipelago. With a tumultuous history it is only fairly recently that Bougainville has reopened to tourism, but is nowadays a very welcoming destination. Happily there is a paved road that gives easy access to some mid elevation forest which, while somewhat degraded, still offers excellent birding. We will have more



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opportunities to observe Sanford's/Solomon Sea Eagle, Solomons Cockatoo and Ultramarine Kingfisher today and we will be looking for endemics including the Bougainville Crow, Bougainville Monarch and perhaps the secretive Bougainville Bush Warbler. Other new birds to look for today are many and include Yellow-throated White-eye, Bougainville White-eye, Solomons Monarch, Red-capped Myzomela, Pale Mountain Pigeon, Mackinlay's Cuckoo Dove and Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon.

Day 14: At Sea, off the coast of Bougainville

Today we will be sailing between Bougainville and New Ireland. It is in this region that we will be looking for the Beck's Petrel. Some of the first ever at sea sightings of this very poorly known seabird occurred on this voyage and to this day almost every birder that has observed a Beck's Petrel has done it while on the Western Pacific Odyssey! So we will be working hard to see this species again today. Heinroth's Shearwater is another exciting possibility in this area. Again, cetaceans are very hard to predict but this area is home to many infrequently seen species. It can be particularly good for Kogias (the Dwarf and Pygmy Sperm Whale), along with the blackfish: False Killer Whale, Pygmy Killer Whale, Short-finned Pilot Whale and Melon-headed Whale. If we are fortunate enough to see the latter species it will most likely be accompanied by the beautiful Fraser's Dolphin.

Day 15: Kavieng

The capital of Papua New Guinean province of New Ireland and the largest town on the island of the same name, Kavieng is known for its ancient Malagan culture. Those choosing to disembark today say their farewells after breakfast with a transfer to Kavieng Airport. For those continuing the adventure we plan to explore the best birding opportunities possible with the available time, we should be able to locate the endemic Mottled Mannikin/Munia. Other possibilities here include the Variable Goshawk, White-bellied Sea Eagle, Red-knobbed Imperial Pigeon and Bismarck Crow.

Days 16 to 20: At Sea

We now have a full five days at sea as we sail northwards. These are days to relax and catch up on notes and photos as we cross the Equator and sail through a blue desert. While the birding will be slow in these deep, warm waters there will be occasional sightings of Bulwer's Petrel, White-tailed Tropicbird, White and Sooty Tern and both Great and Lesser Frigatebirds. In the final day or two on our approach into Japan things should pick up considerably as exciting new species begin to make their first appearance including Matsudaira's Storm Petrel, Bonin Petrel and Bannerman's Shearwater.

Day 21: Chichi-jima Island, Japan



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We will arrive at the Bonin Islands, the most remote part of Japan with plans to complete customs at the largest of the Bonin Islands, Chichi-jima. While here there may be time for a short walk on shore to explore the settlement and the surrounding area. During the afternoon we will look for the critically endangered Bryan's Shearwater. This mysterious seabird was described based on a bird found in a burrow on Hawaii but is currently believed to breed only in the Bonins and in tiny numbers at that. We will be in the vicinity of its only known breeding island and will certainly try our best to see it this afternoon, along with the much more numerous Bannerman's Shearwater.

Day 22: Haha-jima Island

Today we will be returning south to visit the most interesting of the Bonin Islands, biologically speaking, Haha-jima. This hard to reach island is the last home of the bizarre Bonin White-eye and we hope to see this strange species while ashore. While its taxonomic affinities have been hotly debated, it is now considered to be a white-eye in its own genera. It can be a bit tricky to find, so we will hope for some luck during our time ashore. The greenfinch that occurs here was recently recognised to be a distinct species, the Bonin Greenfinch, and while its status on this island is a bit unclear it certainly does occur at least as a visitor. Other possibilities today include the Japanese

Wood Pigeon, Eastern Buzzard, Brown-eared Bulbul, Japanese Bush Warbler, Warbling White-eye, White's Thrush and Blue Rock Thrush. A variety of shorebirds and passerines could also occur here as transient migrants and there are lots of possibilities. Humpback Whales are also often seen here in the nearshore waters.

Day 23: Tori-shima Island

Today we will be off Tori-shima Island, a spectacular looking island and an active volcano which has not been inhabited since a volcanic eruption 1902. Tori-shima was thought to be the last stronghold of the Short-tailed Albatross which disappeared in the 1940s and was feared to have gone extinct. Miraculously birds began reappearing in 1954 and reformed a breeding colony which has grown to several thousand. Obviously, seeing this species will be the prime focus of the day. While landings are not permitted on the island, after communications with the relevant authorities we will approach as close as allowed aboard Heritage Adventurer and should get to see this magnificent bird, hopefully in good numbers. Other species that could be present include Blackfooted and Laysan Albatross, Streaked Shearwater, and both Tristram's and Matsudaira's Storm Petrel. We also sometimes see cetaceans in this area and sightings on previous voyages have included Risso's and Pantropical Spotted Dolphin, Melon-headed Whale, Cuvier's Beaked Whale and even the very rarely seen Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale.

Day 24: At Sea



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Our final day at sea will see us sailing towards Honshu where we hope for one last blast of excellent pelagic birding on this final stretch. Some expected species here include the Streaked Shearwater, and Tristram's and Matsudaira's Storm Petrel. We will also be on the lookout for Japanese Murrelet in these waters, although seeing them will take some luck.

Day 25: Osaka

After breakfast and arrival formalities have been completed for Osaka, you will disembark Heritage Adventurer. There will be a complimentary transfer from the ship to Osaka Air Terminal. We ask you not to book any onward flights (Domestic or International) until mid-afternoon to account for any delays and the time it takes to travel to the airport. 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.

Please Note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: Heritage Adventurer

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Heritage Adventurer is a true pioneering expedition vessel of exceptional pedigree. Often referred to as the 'Grande Dame of Polar Exploration' due to her celebrated history and refined design, she was purpose-built for adventure in 1991 at Finland's Rauma shipyard and specifically designed for Polar exploration. Setting a peerless standard in authentic expedition travel, Heritage Adventurer (formerly known as MS Hanseatic) combines the highest passenger ship ice-class rating (1A Super) with an impressive history of Polar exploration. Having held records for the most northern and southern Arctic and Antarctic navigations, and for traversing both the Northwest and Northeast Passages, makes Heritage Adventurer perfect for pioneering experiential expedition travel. Originally designed to accommodate 184 guests, Heritage Adventurer now welcomes just 140 expeditioners ensuring spacious, stylish and comfortable voyages, while a fleet of 14 Zodiacs ensures all guests are able to maximise their expedition adventure. Heritage Adventurer proudly continues our traditions of exceptional, personalised expedition experiences as Heritage Expeditions flagship. Observation Lounge - One of the most celebrated and best-known features of Heritage Adventurer is the awe-inducing

Observation Lounge, Library and Bar. Located on Deck 7 and perched directly above the Bridge, enjoy sweeping 270-degree views through floor to ceiling windows, perfect for wildlife spotting and quick access to the outer deck. Bring your binoculars to spot wildlife, observe the ever-changing landscape, write in your journal or relax with a book. Observation Deck - Enjoy 360-degree views from the highest point on the ship. The Observation Deck sits above the Observation Lounge and provides exceptional outside viewing options. Stretching the full width of the vessel, this is the perfect spot to take in the surrounding land and seascapes. Perfect on a sunny day, recline in the comfortable sun loungers protected from the wind and elements and watch your voyage unfold. The Bridge - No expedition is complete without visiting Heritage Adventurer's busy nerve centre. Located on Deck 6, Heritage Expeditions' Open Bridge Policy means you are welcome to observe the Captain and crew at work while enjoying some of the ship's best views. It's a fascinating place to learn about navigation and vessel operations, however please note the Bridge will be closed when departing or arriving at port. Dining Room - Indulge in fine international cuisine from our talented chefs in the lavish surrounds of our Dining Room on Deck 4. Sensational 270-degree views provide a stunning backdrop to meals here along with an international wine list featuring many outstanding regional wines. With relaxed seating arrangements, all guests can enjoy dining in a single sitting from hearty breakfasts setting you up for the day's adventure to sumptuous lunches and multi-course evening dining. Bistro - Simple fast and delicious meals and snacks are on offer in our relaxed

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Bistro on Deck 6. Perfect for early risers to enjoy tea, coffee and light breakfast options the Bistro provides great views and opens directly onto a covered and heated teak-deck outdoor dining area. The Bar and Lounge - The social hub of Heritage Adventurer, the Bar and Lounge on Deck 5 features seating for all guests. Enjoy a beverage at the bar, sink into an armchair, relax on one of the many spacious loungers and watch the world go by through the panoramic windows or make new friends at the communal seating. This multi-tasking space also doubles as the location of daily briefings and evening recaps with the expedition team. The Gym - Featuring spectacular ocean views, the well-equipped gym is adjacent to the pool, hot tub and sauna in Deck 7's wellbeing zone. Maintain your routine with an elliptical cross trainer, treadmill, rowing machine, stationary bikes, TRX as well as free weights, yoga mats and fitness balls. Towels are provided with change room and shower amenities nearby. Sauna and Steam Room - True to her Nordic origins, Heritage Adventurer features a dry-heat Finnish sauna and European steam room on Deck 7. Perfect for warming up post Polar plunge or unwinding after a day's adventures, the sauna and steam room include change room facilities, showers and towels. Swimming Pool and Hot Tub - Surrounded by relaxed teak seating including sun loungers, the open-air saltwater pool can be heated or chilled. Encased in glass the hot tub ensures all-weather use, perfect for those who like to relax with a view following a day of exploring. Lectures and Presentations - Enjoy informative and entertaining lectures on history, biology, wildlife, and ecology in the comfort of the Presentation Theatre. With state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment, our world-renowned expedition team will bring your adventure to life through interactive presentations and



discussions.



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