

## Join Mark Carwardine and expert friends on a very special whale-watching and wildlife expedition to the Russian Far East

7-26 June 2019

(including travel to Sakhalin and back from Petropavlovsk)



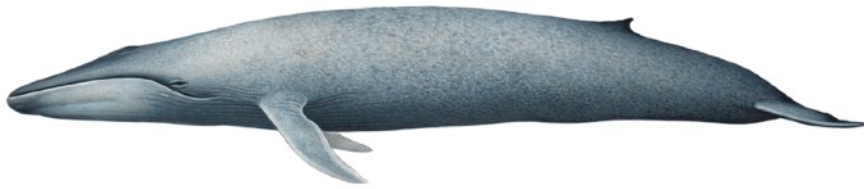
“This has to be one of the most exciting whale-watching trips ever – in a part of the world that most people couldn’t even point to on a map. We hope to see critically endangered North Pacific right whales, bowhead whales, blue whales, humpback whales, fin whales, minke whales, rarely-seen western grey whales, eastern grey whales (perhaps even some of our old friends who will have migrated 6,000 miles from Baja California, Mexico), sperm whales, Baird’s beaked whales, Cuvier’s beaked whales, two different killer whale ecotypes, Pacific white-sided dolphins, harbour porpoises and Dall’s porpoises, as well as huge colonies of tufted puffins, horned puffins and other seabirds, and everything from Steller’s sea eagles, ribbon seals and northern fur seals, to Kamchatka brown bears and sea otters.” **Mark Carwardine**



### About our trip

We have exclusively chartered the 50-passenger Spirit of Enderby – a comfortable and ice-strengthened polar expedition ship – for this wonderful, far-reaching 16-night expedition cruise. Travelling through some of the most remote and least-visited regions of the world, we will go in search of lots of different whales and along the way will pack in Zodiac cruises and shore landings for close encounters with a wide variety of other exciting wildlife. This is a rare opportunity to visit the Russian Far East – which is almost impossible to get to and explore any other way. The region was closed for decades (even to Russians) and it is only now – some two decades after perestroika – that it is possible to travel in the region (with an unbelievable number of permits and permissions – which you don’t have to worry about!). Consequently, very few people have been to many of the places we will be visiting. Yet this is one of the richest corners of the world for marine life, in terms of both variety and sheer abundance. Our journey takes us from Sakhalin Island to the Shantar Islands, across the Sea of Okhotsk, through the northern Kuril Islands, along the Kamchatka Peninsula and across the Bering Sea to the incredibly remote Commander Islands.





## Highlights

- Explore Sakhalin Island, the Sea of Okhotsk, the northern Kuril Islands, southern Kamchatka, the Bering Sea and the Commander Islands.
- We'll be watching two different populations of grey whales – the critically endangered western greys (with a surviving population of just 130) that feed mainly off the northeastern corner of Sakhalin Island – and the eastern greys that have migrated all the way from their breeding lagoons in Baja California (in 2017, Mark recognised one particular individual that he's seen many times in Baja).
- We have a fair chance of seeing critically endangered North Pacific right whales (Mark has seen one en route to the Commander Islands, and we will be visiting several hotspots).

- We expect to see Baird's (*left*) and Cuvier's beaked whales but Hubbs' and Stejneger's also occur.

- If we are really,

really, really lucky we might spot an 'unnamed beaked whale' – a new species of beaked whale known only from this corner of the world.

- Other mammals we hope to see include Kamchatka brown bears, spotted seals, northern fur seals, Steller's sea lions, sea otters and Arctic foxes.
- Bird highlights include Steller's sea eagles (we'll be visiting an area with the highest concentration in the Russian Far East), red-faced cormorants, red-legged kittiwakes, Aleutian terns and up to 14 different species of auks.
- Other highlights include a fascinating human history; active volcanoes along the famous 'Ring of Fire'; the only known home of the extinct Steller's sea cow; and much, much more.

## Itinerary

### 7 June – fly to Moscow

Depart London on a scheduled flight direct to Moscow and transfer to a hotel in the city centre.

### 8 June – overnight flight to Sakhalin

Morning tour of the centre of Moscow, before transferring to the airport for our overnight flight.

### 9 June – board the Spirit of Enderby

Arrive in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island. Transfer to Korsakov port and board the Spirit of Enderby. A chance to unpack and explore the vessel (and watch some of the birds

around the ship – hopefully, rhinoceros auklets and spectacled guillemots among them.

### 10 June – Whale watching at sea

Everyone out on deck or on the bridge to watch for whales and other wildlife. We could see North Pacific right whales, bowhead whales, western grey whales, killer whales, ribbon seals, spotted seals, all sorts of seabirds and much more.

### 11 June – Piltun Bay

A very special day with western grey whales. The last survivors of this critically endangered population gather off the northeast coast of Sakhalin Island to feed every summer. We expect to spend the whole day with them on their feeding grounds – spending as much time in the Zodiacs as possible (on a good day, they can be as friendly as in Baja). There is also a good chance of seeing Steller's sea eagles here.

### 12 June – Whale watching at sea

### 13-14 June – Shantar Islands

An exciting couple of days pushing through ice and Zodiac cruising around these wild and remote islands - a hotspot for bowhead whales and gorgeous ribbon seals, as well as



everything from Kamchatka brown bears to spectacular seabird cliffs.

### 15-16 June – Whale watching at sea

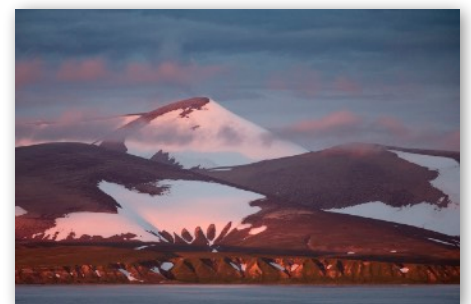
More whale watching as we cross the southern Sea of Okhotsk en route to the northern Kuril Islands – we might be lucky and see bowhead whales, and hope to see other species along the way, but our real target is North Pacific right whales (*above*) – there are no more than a few hundred of these critically endangered whales left and between here and the Commander Islands is where they are seen most frequently by scientists trying to keep tabs on them.

### 17 June – Northern Kuril Islands

We pass through the Second Kuril Strait, between Paramushir and Shumshu islands, a rich feeding ground for cetaceans, to look for North Pacific right whales, bowhead whales, killer whales and a host of other species. There is also a good chance of seeing sea otters and there are Kamchatka brown bears here, too. We hope to visit the tiny Ptichi Islands, which are home to a spectacular variety of seabirds.

### 18 June – Bukhta Russkaya

A day exploring this wildlife-rich fjord on the Kamchatka Peninsula. We're here to look for the local killer whales and Kamchatka brown bears, but this is also a great place to see the critically endangered Kittlitz's murrelet, Steller's sea eagles, Steller's sea lions and sea otters.



### 19 June – Whale watching at sea

Today could be one of the highlights of the trip – the sea between southern Kamchatka and the Commander Islands is teeming with whales and the Kamchatka Trench, in particular, is one of the best places in the world for whale watching. We hope to see blue, fin, minke, humpback, sperm and killer whales, as well as Pacific white-sided dolphins and Dall's porpoises. And this is where Mark saw a North Pacific right whale in 2017.

### 20-22 June – Commander Islands

We have three days to explore the last known home of the extinct Steller's sea cow (we'll keep our eyes peeled, just in case!). This is a veritable cetacean hotspot. We'll cruise just offshore in search of Baird's beaked whales and Cuvier's beaked whales. We also hope to see a variety of other cetaceans (including sperm, killer, humpback and minke), watch playful sea otters along the south coast of Bering Island, and spend time ashore to look for the

endemic sub-species of Arctic fox and to visit huge colonies of northern fur seals and Steller's sea lions.



### About the Spirit of Enderby

Originally built in Finland in 1984, specially for polar and oceanographic research, the ice-strengthened Spirit of Enderby was refitted in 2012 to accommodate a maximum of 50 passengers (our charter will be taking just 45). There will also be an expedition team of 13 (Mark and friends with Heritage Expedition staff) plus 22 Russian crew. Originally called the Professor Khromov, the vessel has a combination of twin and triple cabins with shared or private bathrooms, as well as three spacious suites. All cabins have either a window or a porthole (with some of the most spectacular views in the world!), a hand basin, a writing desk and chair, and ample storage space. The facilities on board include a combined bar, library and lounge, plus a dining room, lecture room and medical facilities.



### 23 June – Olga Bay

Today is another special whale day – Olga Bay is frequented by large numbers of eastern grey whales (which are sometimes as friendly as they are in their Baja breeding lagoons). This is also a good spot for Kamchatka brown bears, and we could even see a Kamchatka reindeer.



### 24 June – Zhuponavo River

We'll take a Zodiac cruise into this slow-flowing river, bordered by birch forest and backed by snow-capped mountains, where we hope to have great views of Steller's sea eagles, Kamchatka brown bears and spotted seals. Then we continue into Avacha Bay on our way to Petropavlovsk, looking out for a large population of killer whales that lives here (the focus of long-term studies by the Far East Russian Orca Project).

### 25 June – disembark at Petropavlovsk and fly to Moscow

Daytime scheduled flight from Petropavlovsk to Moscow. Transfer to a hotel in the city centre for the night.

### 26 June

Fly from Moscow to London.

*Please note: this tour is highly weather- and sea-dependent. Although we will stick to the itinerary as closely as possible, it may change to make the most of local conditions. It's all part of the fun of remote exploration!*

*Also many Russian airlines do not release their schedules until roughly six months before the season of operation, so we will be unable to confirm exact routes and timings until early 2019. At that time – depending on the new schedules – it may be possible to eliminate the overnight in Moscow on the way back to London at the end of the trip (effectively reducing the journey by one day).*

### Meals

The dining room is catered by international chefs, offering a daily choice of cuisine. The food is truly excellent, varied and tasty, with plenty of healthy options made with fresh ingredients.

### Leaders

Mark Carwardine will be hosting the trip and, of course, will also give lectures. He will be accompanied by Chris Breen (owner and founder of Wildlife Worldwide), Katie Murray (historian extraordinaire, whose main aim in life is to search out the wildest places imaginable) and Rachel Ashton (who will be trip manager and administrator and will produce a fun slideshow of our expedition for everyone to take home afterwards). There will be a highly experienced resident expedition team on board, too.

### Group size

There will be approximately 45 passengers on the ship altogether, plus Mark and his team.



**Heritage Suite:**  
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 to allow great views.

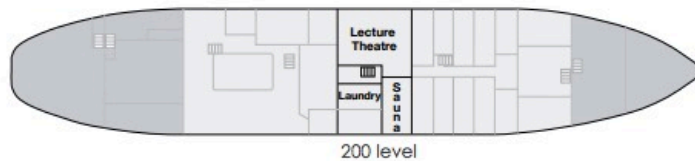
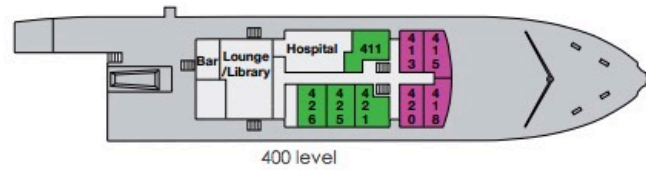
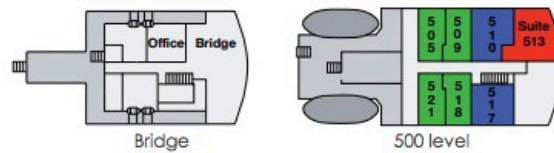
**Mini Suites:**  
Separate bedroom with a double bed and a single bed or sofa in the lounge, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. Mini Suites have windows.

**Superior Plus cabins:**  
Two lower berths, writing desk, wardrobe and drawers. Private bathroom with shower, toilet and washbasin. These cabins have windows.

**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. Shared shower and toilets facilities nearby 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. Shared shower and toilet facilities nearby with other Main Deck cabins. These cabins have a porthole.



### Price does not include

Passport and visa expenses; excess baggage charges; cancellation, baggage and travel insurance (compulsory); meals on shore (not listed in 'Price includes'); alcoholic and soft drinks; items of a personal nature such as laundry and telecommunications charges; medical expenses; crew and resident expedition staff gratuities (we suggest about \$10-\$12 per day – it's usually collected just prior to the end of the cruise).

### Payment schedule (per person)

- Non-refundable deposit on booking: £2,000
- Second payment due on 19 October 2018: £2,500
- Balance due on 17 January 2019: varies according to cabin

### Russian Visa

Roughly six months before we depart, we will provide you with a 'letter of invitation', so you can arrange your individual Russian visa. We strongly recommend you use a professional visa service, as this can eliminate any bureaucratic snags (eg VFS.Global <http://ru.vfsglobal.co.uk/>)

### For more information, please contact:

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[www.markcarwardine.com](http://www.markcarwardine.com)

### To book, please contact

Wildlife Worldwide,  
tel +44 (0)1962 302 086  
[sales@wildlifeworldwide.com](mailto:sales@wildlifeworldwide.com)



### Accommodation (see above for details) and prices (including international and domestic flights)

- **Main Deck Triple cabin with shared facilities**  
X1 available: **£12,995 per person**
- **Main Deck twin cabin with shared facilities**  
X7 available: **£14,995 per person**
- **Superior twin cabin with private facilities**  
X4 available: **£15,595 per person**
- **Superior Plus twin cabin with private facilities**  
X8 available: **£16,195 per person**
- **Mini Suite (twin) with private facilities**  
X2 available: **£16,495 per person**
- **Heritage Suite (twin) with private facilities**  
X1 available: **£17,195 per person**

### Price includes

- Return international flights to Moscow and domestic flights from Moscow to Sakhalin and Petropavlovsk to Moscow; transfers in Moscow, Sakhalin and Petropavlovsk; 2 nights' accommodation in Moscow (on a bed and breakfast basis); welcome dinner in Moscow. *Please note that this package is based on current air fares and is subject to change.*
- 16 nights' accommodation in comfortable cabin on the Spirit of Enderby, with daily housekeeping; all breakfasts, lunches and dinners throughout the voyage; guide services of Mark Carwardine and expert friends from arrival in Moscow; leadership throughout the voyage by the resident Expedition Team; all shore landings and excursions during the cruise; comprehensive pre-departure advice and information; all miscellaneous service taxes, permits, landing fees and port charges throughout the voyage; loan of Wellington boots (saves space on your luggage).

*Please note: this tour is operated by Wildlife Worldwide, and hosted and led by Mark and his team.*

### Financial security

*This trip's bonding and liability insurance is provided by Wildlife Worldwide – so all the money you pay is safe even in the highly unlikely event of cancellation or insolvency. Wildlife Worldwide holds an ATOL (Air Tour Operator's Licence) issued by the CAA, which regulates the entire travel industry. ABTOT: registered member 5199 ATOL: registered member 10544*

