

Prion Island and Whistle Cove

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Boardwalk at Prion Island.



Northern giant petrel.



Fur seal in tussock.



Parade of king penguins.



Colony of kings.

Our first landing on South Georgia happened today! How can anyone explain the pure joy of watching fur seal pups play in the surf? Groups of 20 dashed and tumbled in the waves and came ashore quite curious about us. Our first landing was on Prion Island. The beach was strewn with blackish fur seal pups calling for their mothers while Gentoo and King Penguins withstood the rigors of their seasonal moult. The tussock grass growled at us as we walked the boardwalk to see nesting wandering albatross. Fur seals hidden by the long blades of grass made their presence known in no uncertain terms. From time to time the pups would climb onto the boardwalk and take a threatening stance, growl and then run away as fast as they could go. I think we were their entertainment for the morning. The albatross and petrels looked serene and definitely removed from the active chaos of the beach. Up in the windy tops of the island, giant petrels and wandering albatross slept. The tussock moved like a river rapid in the shifting winds. All too soon it was time to go, but now we know how magical South Georgia can be and we were excited for the afternoon landing.

Wind gusts were well above 30 knots so we found the sheltered site named “Whistle Cove” in Fortuna Bay. Herds of Fur Seal pups gathered around the Zodiac at the shore. Dozens of king penguins gave us a careful look over before passing by us on the beach.

Tom Ritchie and Rich Kirchner lead a long walk to the penguin colony via a small hill or two. There we saw the pattern of gray, orange and black as a sea of penguins was in front of us. Memories of photos of hillsides of penguins came to mind because there they were. Adult king penguins and their young brown fuzzy chicks, known as oakum boys, stood in a huge mass like some auditorium on Superbowl Sunday. If there was a Tom Brady in the group, I couldn't find him as I must admit, they all look alike to me.

About the Author



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For the past 20 years, Marylou Blakeslee has traveled the world sharing her love of wild places. She lectures on a number of topics from the bears and wolves of the Arctic, to