

POLAR DIVING

ANTARCTICA & ARCTIC



With the following information we like to give you a brief introduction on our Polar diving operation during our expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctica. For more detailed information on the Polar regions and travel information please contact our office or check out our website www.waterproof-expeditions.com.

Polar Diving Expeditions

The dive operations managed by the Waterproof Expedition team, relies on more than 15 years of experiences in Polar diving and is organized by polar dive experts who have experienced many extreme situations in the field and who are trained to search out the best opportunities for diving, taking into account the unpredictable weather and ice conditions. We maintain the highest level of safety in combination with quality diving.

We don't dive through a wide hole in the ice (no ice diving !), but in a controlled environment around small grounded icebergs, from the shore or a zodiac or an ice shell.

Another important element on our dive trips is snorkelling. Some of the best encounters we had with large mammals is by snorkelling, including Leopard seals and Humpback Whales. Snorkelling is a major part of the trip experience.

The main language of the dive operation will be in English.

Full concept

With Waterproof Expeditions, we're effectively running two trips, each with their own dedicated guide(s). For the topside explorers, this means much smaller groups on a landing site or on a zodiac cruise of an area than is normally possible. For example we have between 10 and 16 guests on landings and zodiac cruises, compared with 45 or more (often much more) for a 'normal' expedition vessel. These small numbers gives us exceptional freedom to, for example, get an extra zodiac cruise on more than one occasion, and to do longer, more exploratory cruises. On the landing sites, our 'footprint' is very small – we are few enough to cause virtually no disturbance, leaving us with more rewarding interactions with the wildlife – and a feeling of being that little bit more in our own personal wilderness.

There are also occasions where the 'explorer's and the divers can add to each others' experience. Life in the Polar Regions is very much based under the sea, and divers' perspectives, photographs, videos and presentations by our staff on the underwater world have proved fascinating for our topside guests. On many occasions our topside boats alert the divers to some wildlife they hadn't seen, and vice versa. We also notice a very pleasant synergy, when divers start talking to the topside folks and hear about the landings or zodiac cruises, they often decide to 'take a dive off' and join us for a landing or a cruise.

We always have a zodiac ready for those explorers who do not wish to dive, but who like to go for a long hike or take their time for topside photography.

Experienced divers

These voyages are not for beginners, you'll have to be an experienced diver and must be familiar with cold water diving and *dry suit* diving (at least 20 dry suit dives). Before departure you will have to show an internationally accepted diving certificate, diver's log book and a statement from your doctor (not older than two years) stating that you are physically healthy to practice scuba diving.

The voyage will start with a check-dive so all divers can get used to the cold water and adjust their weights and equipment. Before each dive, there will be a briefing about the location of the site, the weather and ice conditions and the procedure of the dive.

For the advanced diver this is truly a unique experience. You will see amazing ice formations and marine life seemingly from another planet, such as the Giant Isopods and salps. Seals race fearlessly by, graceful in a way not possible above the surface. Sunlight from above creates a stunning, ever-changing spectrum of color among the diverse benthos. Take your time to explore an environment few divers have ever experienced: the kelp walls, sea snails, crabs, sea butterflies, Shrubby horsetails, jellyfish, squid, Sea hedgehogs, starfish, krill and various Antarctic fish.

The waters of the Polar Oceans also support an economically important world fishery of fin fish, squid and krill, and the waters of the Polar Oceans affect all other world oceans.

Diving procedure

Diving in these remote Polar areas is no more dangerous than normal scuba diving as long as one important rule is adhered to: Safety First ! All divers looking for dangerous stunts or want to make deep dives are kindly asked to stay at home.

There is no decompression chamber, medical care in these polar regions is almost non-existent and there is hardly any infrastructure. Although we have a doctor on board the vessel for first aid assistance, we cannot accept risky ventures from any of our divers.

The dives will be done in a 'buddy system'. If you don't have a dive-buddy, one will be assigned to you. The divers are expected to be experienced enough to read their compass, depth gauges and look after each other in order to have a safe dive.

Although the diving you will be doing while in the Polar Regions is not really considered "technical" in professional diving terminology, the conditions and gear required to dive safely do require a fair bit of experience and training. Since diving is an equipment intensive activity, diving in Polar Regions requires an extensive amount of additional equipment because of the cold weather and water, and a higher level of diving experience because of the remote location involved. You will find more detailed information on our website on Polar Diving Procedures in the section Travel Resources. Diving is no fun if you are cold and uncomfortable. Divers in cold water may have a higher air consumption rate, expend more energy, and can become more fatigued. Cold water also decreases a diver's ability to perform complex tasks that require manual dexterity.

If our dive master feels that the diver does not meet the necessary experience, he can decide to exclude the diver from the dive program (this decision will be made for your own safety). In this case, Waterproof Expeditions cannot be held (financially) responsible and does not grant any claims. All divers are required to follow the instructions of the dive master and guides at all times. All participants are diving 100 % at their own risk, which is also the case while on land during the excursions.

Marine life at the dive sites

The dive sites will vary from shallow ice diving, diving along a wall or around a grounded iceberg. We don't dive through a wide hole in the ice, but in a controlled environment under small grounded icebergs, from the shore or a zodiac or an ice shell.

The maximum depth is 20 meters / 60 feet. The combination of sunlight and the often-extraordinary formations of ice cause an overwhelming, ever-changing spectre of colours, with a fantastic variety of shades and brilliance.

While snorkelling or diving along the ice floes, you will be amazed and never forget these deep blue colours. Diving in the Polar areas does not only offer ice, but also an interesting marine life, such as kelp walls, sea-snails, crabs, sea butterflies, various bottom fish, shrubby horse-tails, jelly-fishes, sea-hedgehogs and starfishes. In the Antarctic and Arctic waters there is typical marine life such as sea squirts, squat lobsters, many species of starfish, spider crabs, soft corals, anemones, peacock worms, and dogfish.

In Antarctica you may have the possibility to snorkel or dive with seals and penguins including the fearless Leopard Seal.

Number of dives

We plan at least two dives per day (except for days at sea), but an exact number of dives cannot be given. It all depends on ice and weather conditions.

Trip itineraries are a guideline. We will always try to hold to the itinerary as much as possible, but SAFETY is number one. Since this is an expedition to a remote part of the world, unpredictable weather conditions, availability of anchorages, wind conditions, and other factors beyond our control will always dictate when it's safe to make a dive.

Waterproof Expeditions Dive Container

Because the Polar expedition vessels are not specifically built for diving we have designed a special Dive Container that we bring on board. This provides comfortable storing space in boxes for your gear, and a heating system to dry your suit and BC. No hassle to bring your suits and gear into your cabin or inside the ship. You don't need to store your dive gear in your cabin. Upon arrival our dive staff will show you where you can leave your dive equipment. Every diver is expected to prepare his own equipment well in advance prior to each dive. Bring your own spare parts for your regulators and dry suit in case of leakage or damage.

What to pack for your Diving

Please contact your airline about their luggage restrictions and request a special allowance for your dive equipment prior to departure. All excess baggage is at your own expense.

- All divers must have experience with dry suit diving (minimum 20 dives required).
- Dry suit with hood
- Thick and warm underwater garment (2 sets), dry gloves or adequate thick wet gloves (make sure they will keep your hands warm in sub-zero waters)
- 2 separate freeze protected regulators, because we dive with special bottles with two separate outlets. The tanks we are using are 12L steel tanks. They are fitted with a "Y" or "H" valve configuration, with DIN or Yoke (INT) adaptable connections.
- Pressure gage
- Stabilizing jacket or some kind of BC with quick release – divers without BDC trusting only their dry suit for buoyancy control will not be allowed to dive.
- Depth gage, watch or computer
- Compass
- Knife and a torch
- Mask, fins and snorkel
- Weight belt (weights available on board)
- Safety buoy

Please note that the snorkel is a vital part of the safety equipment and will often be used when snorkelling with seals and such.

Setting up your gear:

You need two sets of regulators:

1st set includes: Freeze protected First stage
 Second stage (incl. hose)
 Hose for BC
 Pressure gage / computer

2nd set includes: Freeze protected First stage
 Hose for Dry suit

IMPORTANT: Do not bring any new equipment on this expedition that you have not already tested in the water and you are not very familiar with. The Polar regions are not the place to test out new equipment. It is required that you complete a few dives with all the equipment you will be using before coming on the trip. This will also allow you to fine-tune your buoyancy and trim characteristics, and make a note of how much weight you will need when diving with all your equipment.

Equipment on board

On board we have a Bauer compressor (200 litres), steel bottles of 12 litres, 200 bar, with DIN and Yoke adaptable connections and two separate outlets and enough weights. This will allow for the attachment of a primary and a secondary backup regulator, which allows for either regulator to be independently isolated if there is a malfunction or a free flow.

Expedition style travelling

We offer expedition style travelling to remote polar regions where very few travellers have been. We need to adjust our routes in progress to take best advantage of weather and ice conditions—which can vary unpredictably from day to day. We are always ready to alter plans accordingly to take advantage of wildlife sightings and other one-of-a-kind opportunities.

We cannot guarantee that all dives and shore landings will take place or that they will include all the events we've outlined in advance. Embracing the unexpected is part of the legacy and excitement of expedition-style travel, and a measure of flexibility is something all of us must bring along on the voyage. – we do not take a trip, a trip takes us... Possible alterations that relate to weather and ice conditions, can never be a reason for claims, reimbursements or whatsoever. When changing the itinerary, we can assure you that the captain, expedition leader and dive master will do their utmost to provide an alternative program, along the same lines as the originally planned cruise itinerary.

PADI POLAR DIVER SPECIALTY COURSE



This is a unique chance to become one of the first certified Polar Divers in the world !

The Polar Diver Specialty Course can only be taken with Waterproof Expeditions in Antarctica, below the Antarctic Convergence or below 60 degrees, or in the Arctic, above the Arctic Circle.

This course is designed to be an introduction to Polar diving and help the Student diver develop the skills, knowledge and techniques necessary for diving in polar environments.

Why is this Course so unique ?

- It is an adventure;
- You will experience a unique maritime environment and wildlife;
- You will be diving in an area that very few divers have explored;
- There will be no crowds and peaceful atmosphere;
- There are challenging photography and filming, new motives and sceneries;
- You will be one of the few certified Polar Divers in the dive industry.

To qualify for the Polar Diver course, you must:

- Be certified as a PADI Advanced Open Water Diver or have a qualifying certification from another training organization;
- Be 18 years of age or older;
- Show proof of experience in dry suit diving or being certified as a PADI Dry Suit Diver.

Course Overview

The purpose of the PADI Polar Diving Specialty Course is to familiarize divers with the skills, knowledge, planning, organization, procedures, techniques, problems, hazards, and excitement of diving in the Polar areas.

Goals

- To enable the student to explain the planning, organization, procedures, techniques, problems and hazards of diving in the Polar areas.
- To familiarize the student with the use of any special equipment such as surface markers/floats, configuration of double regulators if used, signals, communication and recall signal.
- To enable the student to engage in dives to explore the Polar environments found within depths and conditions as good as or better than those in which they have been trained safely and enjoyable.

Costs for the Polar Diver Course is USD 250 incl. certification.

Disclaimer:

All Dive expeditions are undertaken on the responsibility of its participants. Waterproof Expeditions does not assume any responsibility for accidents which are caused by its customers or can be traced to their own actions. Participants have to sign a waiver before undertaking all trips stating that they realize that all outdoor activities carry an inherit risk.

Please contact us for more information, detailed itineraries and special departures.
www.waterproof-expeditions.com | info@waterproof-expeditions.com
Tel: + 31 (0)858 771 583