



**It's all in the ears** – There are two natural groups of seals: true seals and fur seals. True seals differ from fur seals, such as sea lions, in that they have no outer ears and can't walk on all-fours. Fur seals are also smaller, with adult females weighing only 150 kg. True seals on the other hand, can be massive. A male elephant seal, for example, can weigh an impressive 4 tonnes!



**A coat fit for a penguin** – All penguins living in Antarctica have feathers devoted entirely to insulation. Penguin feathers are short, densely packed and, cleverly, also overlap. The structure and arrangement of their feathers helps them trap air all around their bodies. A thick coat of fat just beneath the skin completes the armour the hot-blooded penguins need not only to survive but thrive in the coldest place on earth.



**Deep breaths** – Whales are not fish; they belong to the mammal species known as cetaceans. And like any other mammal, whales need to breathe. This forces them up to the surface every 20 minutes or so. All of the whale species seen in Antarctica have had to migrate from afar, usually swimming thousands of miles. That's a lot of breaths just to get here. Even with an abundance of food triggered by the Antarctic summer's 24-hour sunlight, whales never forget to take a break from their around-the-clock feeding frenzy to surface and breathe.

## Wildlife on ice

The mighty, frozen continent that surrounds the South Pole is home to a surprisingly large array of animals.

### Cute alert

The continent's signature animal is the penguin. The most common penguin species are Adélie, chinstrap, gentoos and emperor. With our Expedition Team guiding the way during your landings ashore, you are more than likely to meet these adorable, tuxedoed creatures.

Certain colonies may also be near families of seals. With their bulbous body and head, short snout, and

deep, expressive, soulful eyes, there are few animals that will capture your heart like the Weddell seal. A Weddell seal pup just multiplies that cuteness factor by ten.

### Birds up high, giants below

The Antarctic Ocean is a feeding ground for several whale species: blue, fin, humpback, minke, orcas, southern right and sperm whales. You might see these magnificent giants surfacing near the ship and

even breaching acrobatically and dramatically out of the water.

There are vast amounts of seabirds breeding along the coast and offshore islands of Antarctica. From the deck, you might spot albatrosses, petrels, cormorants, fulmars, gulls, terns and skuas, among others.