

**VOYAGE INFORMATION**

Voyage Name	Western Australia and the Coral Coast
Voyage Code	WAC190921G
Dates	19 Sept – 01 Oct, 2021
Duration	13 days / 12 nights
Embark	Broome, Western Australia
Disembark	Fremantle, Western Australia
Ship	<i>Greg Mortimer</i>
Forms Due	19 June, 2021
Optional Activities	Kayaking, Diving
Note	<i>Snorkelling is included in the expedition cost</i>

Explore above and below the turquoise waters of northwest Australia's spectacular Indian Ocean coast. Sail overnight from Broome to Rowley Shoals Marine Park, three coral atolls swept by nutrient-rich deep ocean currents. Kayak, snorkel and dive lagoons and spectacular drop-offs in crystal-clear waters shared with turtles, manta rays, whales and dolphins. Discover the Montebello Islands, once the site of nuclear weapons testing, now breeding grounds for ospreys, white-bellied sea eagles, terns, and oystercatchers. On Barrow Island spot rare mammals like the spectacled hare-wallaby, golden bandicoot, black-flanked rock-wallaby and more. Immerse yourself in Ningaloo, the world's largest fringing reef, and Coral Bay, where humpbacks, whale sharks, manta rays and sea turtles swim. At Shark Bay, watch for the many dugongs feeding on extensive sea grass beds, then adventure throughout the exquisite Houtman Abrolhos islands, with its sea lion colonies, photogenic fishing shacks and perfect lagoons to swim, snorkel and kayak.

**ITINERARY OVERVIEW**

Day 1	Embark the <i>Greg Mortimer</i> in Broome and set sail
Days 2-3	Rowley Shoals
Day 4	Dampier Archipelago
Day 5	Montebello Islands, Barrow Island
Days 6-7	Ningaloo Coast
Days 8-9	Shark Bay
Days 10-12	Houtman Abrolhos Islands
Day 13	Disembark in Fremantle

**VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS**

- Zodiac-cruise, snorkel or dive spectacular coral gardens, lagoons and canyons of Rowley Shoals Marine Park, hike to caves and have the chance to see nesting red-tailed tropic birds, ruddy turnstones, white-throated needle-tails and more.
- Enjoy the Dampier Peninsula's maze of waterways alive with hawksbill turtles, dolphins and shy dugongs. Beachcomb remote, pristine beaches or strike off inland to admire Aboriginal rock engravings.
- Explore Barrow Island, one of WA's most important conservation reserves, watching out for rare and endangered mammals like the spectacled hare-wallaby, golden bandicoot and black-flanked rock-wallaby.
- Snorkel, kayak and dive magnificent Ningaloo Reef, a migratory route for dolphins, dugongs, manta rays and humpback whales, and Coral Bay, nesting grounds for loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles.

- Discover sea lion colonies, seabirds and exquisite waterways in the adventure playground of the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.
- Explore and learn about the unique marine ecosystems designated as “Hope Spots” by Sylvia Earle’s Mission Blue team, including the Exmouth Gulf and Ningaloo Coast and the Houtman Abrolhos Islands.

## EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Arrival transfer from airport to Greg Mortimer on Day 1
- Departure transfer from Greg Mortimer to airport or hotel on last day
- Onboard accommodation during voyage including daily cabin service
- All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner
- Captain’s Welcome and Farewell reception including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises
- Snorkelling activities and use of snorkelling equipment
- **Whale shark or Humpback Whale swim**
- Educational lectures and guiding services from expedition team
- Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic
- Complimentary spray jacket
- Comprehensive pre-departure information
- Port surcharges, permits and landing fees
- Gratuities for ship crew

## EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- International or domestic flights not mentioned in the itinerary
- Transfers not mentioned in the itinerary
- Airport arrival or departure taxes
- Passport, visa, and vaccination charges
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges
- Hotels and meals not included in itinerary
- Optional excursions not included in the itinerary
- Optional activity surcharges
- All items of a personal nature including but not limited to: alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, gratuities, Wi-Fi, email or phone charges.

## **Day 1 Broome**

Embark the *Greg Mortimer* in the afternoon. After boarding, take time to settle into your cabin before attending important safety briefings. Enjoy the thrill of departure as we pull away. In the evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Captain's Welcome Dinner as the sun sets over the Indian Ocean.

## **Days 2-3 Rowley Shoals**

Sail overnight to Rowley Shoals Marine Park, three coral atolls rising from the seabed to the surface (and above at low tide). One of the world's finest snorkelling and dive destinations, it features deep drop-offs festooned with soft coral, protected lagoons brimming with tropical fish and channels alive with larger marine animals, including sea turtles, manta rays, whales and dolphins. Spectacular kayaking and Zodiac-cruising await those who prefer their adventures above the sea. Beach walk to caves where seabirds nest including red-tailed tropicbirds and the rarer white-tailed tropicbird.

## **Day 4 Dampier Archipelago**

Named after William Dampier, an English buccaneer and explorer who visited in 1699, the 42 islands feature brilliant sapphire waterways, set against the Pilbara's red and ochre-hued landscape, alive with hawksbill turtles, dolphins and shy dugongs. Snorkel, dive or kayak, or land on sandy beaches to discover amazing Aboriginal rock engravings of turtles, fish, kangaroos and wallabies.

## **Day 5 Montebello Islands / Barrow Island**

Start the day in the Montebello Islands, an archipelago of some 174 small limestone islands about 130 kms off the Pilbara coast. The site of nuclear weapons testing in the 1950s, including the United Kingdom's first ever atomic weapon, the islands are now the breeding ground for beach stone curlews, fairy and roseate terns, ospreys, white-bellied sea eagles and sooty oystercatchers. Mala, (rufous-hare wallaby) has been reintroduced to the islands. After lunch, we land on Barrow Island, one of the most important conservation reserves in WA where oil and gas fields coexist with rare and endangered mammals like the spectacled hare-wallaby, golden bandicoot and black-flanked rock-wallaby. Among the 43 species of reptiles on the island is the perentie, Australia's biggest lizard.

## **Days 6-7 Ningaloo Coast and Reef**

Immerse yourself in UNESCO's Ningaloo Coast World Heritage Area and Sylvia Earle's Mission Blue Hope Spot. It is the world's largest fringing reef and major migratory route for dolphins, dugongs, manta rays and humpback whales. Visit ruins of the Norwegian Bay whaling station harking back to the early 1900s, when a Norwegian whaling company ran whaling and factory ships before building the shore-based processing plant in 1915. After lunch, hike through stunning gorges of Cape Range National Park and swim in crystal-clear Turquoise Bay. Next day, swim, snorkel, dive and kayak Coral Bay's prime spots like Asho's Gap, where cleaner wrasse attend to the teeth and parasites of grey reef sharks, and loggerhead, green and hawksbill turtles nest nearby. **Experience the unique thrill of a Whale Shark and/or Humpback Whale Swim where you will immerse yourself in these majestic creatures natural environment.** A sunset walk to Point Cloates Lighthouse to finish the day.

## **Days 8-9 Shark Bay**

Wake to low-lying Bernier Island, one of three islands of the Bernier and Dorre Nature Reserve, two that hide a tragic past. In the early 1900s, the islands housed 'lock hospitals', where Aboriginal men, women and children were taken for treatment of venereal disease, many never to return to their homelands. Today these islands are home to some of the rarest animals in the world and we hope to go ashore to see the Shark Bay mouse, western barred bandicoot,

banded hare-wallaby, and rufous hare-wallaby. After lunch we move to Dirk Hartog Island, to swim and snorkel, and learn of Dirk Hartog's pewter plate, which now resides in the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam. Next morning, visit Surf Point to snorkel and dive a marine sanctuary protecting vase and plate corals, a variety of staghorn species and tropical fish, including parrotfish, butterflyfish, wrasse, angelfish and snapper. After lunch, search for endangered banded hare-wallabies and hike to Steep Point to view magnificent Zuytdorp Cliffs.

## **Days 10-12     Houtman Abrolhos**

Over three days, explore the Abrolhos Islands, another of Sylvia Earle's Mission Blue Hope Spots. They are a stunning necklace of 122 islands surrounded by the southernmost coral reefs in the Indian Ocean. Beginning in the Wallabi Group of islands, puzzle how such a peaceful setting could be where the 1629 shipwreck of the *Batavia*, and the subsequent mutiny and massacre, took place. Enjoy swimming, snorkeling and diving, or kayaking past remote fishing camps, watching for tammar wallabies, successfully reintroduced on North Island. On day two, explore the Easter Group, its islands, like many in the Abrolhos, are breeding grounds for up to 100 bird species including the prolific wedge-tailed shearwater, lesser noddy's, storm petrels, pacific reef herons, white-bellied sea eagles and osprey. Wake on the third morning in the Pelsaert Group, a wonderland of tern nests and scene of some of the worst shipwrecks in Australian maritime history, including the *Zeewijk*, the last of four Dutch East Indiamen to be wrecked there. The *Zeewijk's* crew lived for 10 months off seals, seabirds, eggs, and supplies salvaged from the wreck before finishing an 18 m boat that, over nearly a month, they successfully sailed to Sunda Strait. Each day in the Abrolhos Islands promises to bring new and memorable adventures.

## **Day 13             Fremantle**

After breakfast, farewell your expedition team before you disembark for your transfer to the airport or hotel accommodation.

*Important note: In the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage exploration and adventure offering flexibility in challenging environments. This itinerary is only a guide and is subject to change due to weather, sea state and other conditions beyond our control.*