

Request for Proposals from Visiting Scientists: Southern Ocean Region (October 2025 – March 2026)

This region includes: Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia, Falkland Islands, and coastal Argentina.

Background

National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions (NG-LEX) specializes in small-ship expedition cruises. Lindblad Expeditions has been leading maritime expeditions for over 50 years, taking guests to some of the most remote locations on Earth. The company emphasizes exploring the unique nature and culture of each place visited. Since 2004, Lindblad Expeditions has partnered with National Geographic in a collaboration of exploration, research, technology, and conservation aimed at providing extraordinary travel experiences and disseminating geographic knowledge around the globe. The NG-LEX fleet consists of twelve vessels: four US-flagged in North and Central American waters, four foreign-flagged in polar and “blue water” regions, and four in the Galapagos. **This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for the following polar and blue water vessels: *National Geographic Resolution, National Geographic Endurance, and National Geographic Explorer.*** Please see the NG-LEX website (www.expeditions.com) and RFP supplemental materials (below) for more information on the fleet, destinations, and guest expectations.

Opportunity Overview

This RFP seeks interested field scientists who wish to join voyages to access some of the world’s most remote locations for research purposes. While the ships will primarily be conducting educational tour operations prioritizing the experience of paying clients (or “guests”), there is scope for research activities to be conducted alongside guest operations. This offer is therefore unique compared to strictly research-focused ship time proposals that may be more familiar to some candidates. Applicants are encouraged to submit the most feasible proposal, recognizing that follow-up with suggested modifications is likely to support the project’s success within the operational practicalities of a voyage.

The NG-LEX website (www.expeditions.com) is a great beginning resource about the fleet of vessels, guest voyage product, destinations, and typical activities/operations conducted. It is important to understand that the travel experience and comfort of guests takes priority but that proximity to research can amplify and enhance their experience greatly. As you fill in the proposal form, if you have questions on what may be feasible, please reach out to science@expeditions.com.

Timeline

It is essential that visiting researchers secure their own research permits and are booked well in advance. Therefore, the RFP timeline for the upcoming Southern Ocean 2025-26 season is:

RFP issued & Proposal submission begins: 14 February 2025

Priority proposal submission period closes: 14 March 2025

Final proposal submission period closes: 31 March 2025

Proposal submissions for the priority timeline will be reviewed as they are received. If the proposed research relies on a specific voyage or timeframe, it would be wise to submit expeditiously. Projects with research permits already in place will also be given priority, but opportunities and voyages remain available for those in the process of seeking permits.

Proposals are first reviewed and prioritized for relevancy and onboard feasibility by a committee of individuals with field science careers and backgrounds with a deep understanding of NG-LEX voyage field operations. Applicants can expect follow-up questions regarding their proposal within three to four weeks of receipt. Note that timely, proactive communications regarding shipboard research plans and opportunities extended are critical for voyage planning, confirmation, and booking. Slow or missing responses decrease the likelihood of a proposal being awarded ship time.

Details of the Visiting Scientist Opportunity

This RFP is offering a “platform of opportunity” that includes access to the general itinerary locations identified at the end of this document. Data collection focused on visual observations or photographs is simple and ideal. Visiting researchers are expected to interact with guests casually while onboard and also to engage in post-voyage follow-up about the accomplishments and challenges of the work completed.

Provided with the opportunity:

- One or two bunks in a double occupancy staff cabin with a shared bathroom. **We strongly recommend same-gender science teams for berthing comfort. For mixed-gender teams, we will ask if both parties agree to share a compact cabin.**
- Basic onboard amenities included: meals and snacks, wi-fi internet (satellite, low bandwidth), laundry.
- Access to locations/sites for typical guest operations, subject to rules and restrictions of typical guest participation. Please become familiar with the local tourism bodies to understand what our guests are normally allowed to do regarding landing sites, shore operations, exploration via Zodiac, and coastal/offshore transits between sites.
- Access to natural history team tools such as a plankton net (150µm mesh), stereo dissecting microscope (located in a public area; Leica EZ 4W or similar), and a hydrophone (Cetacean Research Technology C57-pas). Please inquire in advance if these are essential to your proposal.
- Access to underway information available on the bridge (e.g., seawater and air temperature, wind speed and direction, weather observations, GPS track).
- Use of dedicated plastic buckets (5 gallons each, with lids) and tubs for sample collection, storage, and management.
- Use of limited dry storage area (approx. 1 cubic meters) with pre-approval.
- Use of limited deck storage area (approx. 2 cubic meters) with pre-approval.
- Use of freezer storage (-20°C dedicated for science, approx. 100L)
- Use of refrigerated storage (0°C, dedicated for science, approx. 40L)

Expectations of Visiting Researchers:

- Arrange and pay for travel costs to/from the embarkation and disembarkation ports (or meeting location) for the research team, including visas as needed. Carbon offsets are encouraged for emissions related to travel to/from the point of embarkation.
- Complete pre-trip paperwork and booking requirements in a timely manner (i.e., passport details, medical clearances, and travel information).
- Cover all project expenses, including field equipment and supplies, software, research permits, salary, overhead and indirect costs, etc.
- Secure all required permits for sample/data collection and transport from all relevant governments and agencies **well in advance of the voyage.**
 - This includes specially regulated areas such as national parks and marine protected areas.
 - If permits are not needed, provide a documented exemption from destination authorities.

- Customs declarations for importing/exporting scientific equipment or samples may be required in some countries. It is the responsibility of Visiting Scientists to make plans accordingly.
- All projects must adhere to their respective country's scientific research permit requirements, as well as any additional requirements for their specific research locations. For instance, US-based scientists conducting projects in foreign waters will need to apply for permission through the US [Department of State's Research Application Tracking System](#) no less than 6 months prior to the voyage date, in addition to obtaining any other relevant permits from other agencies and/or the research sites. It is understood that other countries have similar diplomatic requirements, which the researcher is responsible for identifying and fulfilling.
- Coordinate transport of equipment and samples to/from embarkation and disembarkation ports. **Samples and equipment may not be left aboard the ship.**
- Prepare and present at least one “recap” about your onboard data collection efforts. (Recaps are short 5-7 minute presentations for guests, typically relevant to daily activities and given by shipboard natural history staff during the evening cocktail hour.)
- Prepare at least one 30-minute presentation for guests (a diverse, public audience) about your field of study, region-specific research, or the project being conducted onboard. It is not guaranteed that there will be time to present, but important that a presentation is at the ready. Please keep in mind that there are several natural history guides on each voyage that give general wildlife and environmental sciences talks, so your presentation should focus on your specific research or specialty.
- Frequent and proactive daily interactions with guests onboard, including attendance at cocktail hour and evening recap each night and a genuine effort to engage during “down time” including in the Science Hub on NGED/NGRS. It is understood that each research team will require some undisturbed time for data organization and processing.
- Dining with guests for lunch and dinner each day.
- Off-ship interaction pre- and post-voyage, details to be discussed further upon award. Some examples include coordinating with the NG-LEX Marketing Department for descriptive stories and/or social media posts, and highlighting results from data collected onboard so results and successes may be shared with guests after the voyage.
- Complete a post-voyage report or debrief detailing outcome(s) of the research opportunity and providing Visiting Scientist program feedback.
- Acknowledgement of NG-LEX’s contribution to the proposed research when results are published and/or presented.
- Acknowledgement of logistical, operational, and/or financial support provided by Lindblad Expeditions, the National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions fleet, and (for NG Explorer Visiting Scientists only) the LEX-NG Fund when results of the proposed research are published and/or presented.

Proposal Evaluation

Proposals are reviewed and prioritized for relevancy and onboard feasibility by a committee of individuals with field science careers and backgrounds with a deep understanding of NG-LEX voyage field operations. The committee considers the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposed project to regionally important issues, such as wildlife conservation, climate change, or other human interactions with the environment.
- Operational feasibility, including the degree to which data can be collected within the onboard guest-focused expedition voyage structure and the extent of required staff/crew support.
- Geographic flexibility with regards to data collection locations. Voyages travel to the general areas outlined in each itinerary, but are dynamic, “expedition-style” trips during which plans

often change due to weather and exciting discoveries. The review committee is open to proposals that could span multiple (back-to-back) trips.

- Proven competency in the field of research and methodologies proposed, plus cogent communication of the need for and value of planned activities.
- A working knowledge of research permitting and ethics, and the ability to identify and secure needed international permits relatively independently.
- All proposed onboard team members must have demonstrably relevant expertise and/or skills, and a clear role in conducting the work being proposed.

Proposal Submission

After careful review of this RFP and familiarization with relevant sections of the NG-LEX website, please complete the accompanying PDF proposal form. Please email the proposal form and supplemental materials (CVs and any additional documents) to science@expeditions.com. Please include "Visiting Science Program Proposal" in the subject line.

Additional guidelines for National Geographic Explorers

If you are a **National Geographic Explorer**, you are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$20,000 USD to cover costs related to travel to/from the embarkation and disembarkation ports, direct project expenses, including field equipment and supplies, software, research permits, overhead costs, etc. The National Geographic Society [budget guidelines](#) apply. Competitive proposals will have well justified and cost-effective budgets that make use of the scientific infrastructure onboard the NG-LEX fleet and equipment that can be loaned by the NGS ExTech Lab. If your project requires additional equipment, please note that any instruments or tools purchased under this grant may be considered to become permanent assets on the NG-LEX fleet for future Visiting Scientist use.

Proposals submitted by National Geographic Explorers seeking funding will undergo an extra level of review by National Geographic staff. Selected projects will be supported by the Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic Fund, which relies on donations from travelers aboard NG-LEX voyages to achieve its mission. The mission of the LEX-NG Fund is to invest in projects that help better understand and protect the world's ocean, restore critical marine and coastal habitats, and foster environmental stewardship in the regions visited by the NG-LEX fleet, and beyond. **Grant agreements will specify additional requirements**, including related to submission of project media to National Geographic, acknowledging LEX-NG Fund support when results are published or presented, and adhering to NG's Code of Ethics, and the Explorer Mindset and Code.

To apply, please send your proposed budget ([form here](#)) along with your proposal to Lindblad Expeditions Science Program (science@expeditions.com) and National Geographic Society staff, Sven Andes (svenandes@ngs.org) and Kylie Spado (kspado@ngs.org).

Southern Ocean 2025-26 Voyages Available for Visiting Researchers

How to read the following pages...

Example: **ANTA – Voyage to Antarctica**

“ANTA” is a 4-letter code used internally as shorthand of the longer voyage name that appears on the website, “Voyage to Antarctica.” It is simpler to speak in these abbreviated codes when referring to voyages than the colorful, lengthy names used in guest-facing descriptions.

Please read the entire voyage description on the website (links provided) for any itineraries of interest. This is the most thoroughly prepared version of trip plans at this time.

Ship Codes:

NGEX = National Geographic Explorer

NGRS = National Geographic Resolution

NGED = National Geographic Endurance

Several (1-2) travel days before embarkation and after disembarkation are required from/to your home airport if based in North America or Europe. The total voyage days for each trip are listed below – when considering your calendar, make sure to factor in sufficient additional travel time. Note that some voyages have different embarkation and disembarkation ports. Detailed dates and ports for each trip are provided in the season overview table following the maps.

Each map shows the general route and tentative locations for a given voyage. The described stops are likely, as they are expected by guests, and most trips visit many more locations not named on the map. On some dates, trips follow the described itinerary but with stops in reverse order.

Equally, our expedition-style voyages sometimes skip or alter stops identified on the map due to adverse weather, sea or ice conditions, unique opportunities for wildlife or exploration, or other operational demands. Flexibility and adaptability are keys to success for visiting researchers.

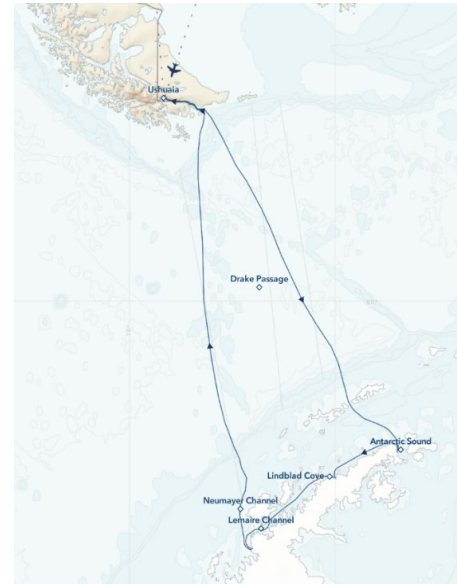
ANTA – Voyage to Antarctica

NGED & NGRS – November 2025 through February 2026

10 days aboard

Major regions: Antarctic Peninsula

<https://world.expeditions.com/en/expeditions/journey-to-antarctica-the-white-continent>



ASGF – Antarctica, South Georgia & The Falklands

NGEX, NGED & NGRS – October/November 2025 and February 2026

20 days aboard

Major regions: Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia (east & north coasts), Falkland Islands



<https://world.expeditions.com/en/expeditions/antarctica-south-georgia-and-the-falklands>

BASF – Wild Coasts of Argentina, South Georgia and the Falklands

NGED – October 2025

25 days aboard

Major regions: Patagonia (east coast), South Georgia (east & north coasts), Falkland Islands

<https://world.expeditions.com/en/expeditions/wild-coasts-argentina-south-georgia-falklands>



Southern Ocean 2025-26 Table of Voyages Available for Visiting Researchers, arranged by vessel & dates

****Be sure to allow 1-2 travel days before and after the dates provided below when considering your calendar.**

Voyage Code	Embark / Disembark Port	Embark Date	Disembark Date	Days at Sea
NG EXPLORER				
ASGF	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	19-Oct-25	8-Nov-25	20
NG RESOLUTION				
ASGF	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	29-Oct-25	18-Nov-25	20
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	18-Nov-25	28-Nov-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	28-Nov-25	8-Dec-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	8-Dec-25	18-Dec-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	18-Dec-25	28-Dec-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	28-Dec-25	7-Jan-26	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	7-Jan-26	17-Jan-26	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	17-Jan-26	27-Jan-26	10
NG ENDURANCE				
BASF	Buenos Aires / Ushuaia	8-Oct-25	31-Oct-25	24
ASGF	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	31-Oct-25	20-Nov-25	20
ASGF	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	20-Nov-25	10-Dec-25	20
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	10-Dec-25	20-Dec-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	20-Dec-25	30-Dec-25	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	30-Dec-25	9-Jan-26	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	9-Jan-26	19-Jan-26	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	19-Jan-26	29-Jan-26	10
ANTA	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	29-Jan-26	8-Feb-26	10
ASGF	Ushuaia / Ushuaia	8-Feb-26	28-Feb-26	20