

Royal Navy Hydrographic Surveying in Antarctica

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The Royal Navy has a long history of both hydrographic surveying and polar exploration. From James Clark Ross' expeditions in Polar Regions in the early 19th century to the Falkland Island Dependencies surveys in the 1940s, the work continues today with Royal Navy Hydrographic and Meteorological specialists conducting a range of charting and science objectives to better understand the Antarctic environment and improve the safety of navigation for all mariners.

HMS Protector is the Royal Navy's Ice Patrol Ship whose mandate is to Patrol and survey the Antarctic and South Atlantic, maintaining UK Sovereign presence with wider regional engagement and supporting the global community of Antarctica. Since being procured from a commercial entity in 2013, following an initial 2 year lease period, HMS Protector has steamed thousands of nautical miles, visited every continent and welcomed thousands of visitors on board, including scientists and researchers investigating a wide range of disciplines such as oceanography, biology, geology and microplastics.

We invite you to join us on a journey to the end of the World following HMS Protector's 2021/22 Operation Austral deployment, from the first multibeam bathymetric surveys of uncharted Antarctic waters to penguin counting on remote, rarely visited islands. We will discuss some of the challenges involved when the environment is devoid of infrastructure, communication limited, access to shore precluded by vast sheets of ice and where existing charts are quite often, literally whitespace.