



TOTORORE EXPEDITION
Inc.

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REPORT No: 5

Dear Friends of the Totorore Expedition,

This is the last and final progress report on the Expedition, which ended on 6th November when Totorore and I arrived home in Kerikeri, to a warm welcome at the very place from which we sailed, 3 years and 8½ months ago.

Since Report No.4, dated 8th December 1985, circumstances regrettably interfered with the work programme of the Expedition, so that some of its activities had to be curtailed. However, on the return voyage of Totorore from Cape Town to New Zealand, much valuable data on seabird distribution was obtained.

My crew from Cape Town consisted of Christine Hanel, a tremendously enthusiastic member of the South African National Foundation for the Conservation of Coastal Birds, and Paul Scofield, a keen zoology student from the Auckland University. We left Cape Town on 22nd December 1985, bound for Marion Island, in the Prince Edward Islands, where the South African Government maintains a meteorological station. On 30th December Totorore was capsized in mountainous seas, during an exceptionally severe storm, and dismasted. Using a spinnaker pole as a jury mast and a tarpaulin and a bedsheet for sails, we continued to Marion Island, arriving there on 16th January.

On Marion Island, itself an exciting bird island, my crew were accepted as shipwrecked mariners, and were returned to Cape Town by the next ship to visit the island, arriving back at the end of May. The team of nine meteorologists was most hospitable, and gave me considerable assistance to erect a rather better jury mast with which to complete the voyage. There is no sheltered anchorage at Marion Island, and strong gales were frequent, which delayed my departure until 16th February.

Totorore arrived at the French base on Crozet Islands on 4th March. I was not allowed ashore, and sailed for Kerguelen on 6th March. I reached Port aux Francais on 25th March and was well received by the French, who were most helpful to me during my three day visit. It took six days for me to reach McDonald Island, about 240 miles away, where I spent the night of 4th April, then carried on to nearby Heard Island the next day. Both of these islands are uninhabited. Almost constant bad weather hampered my work on Totorore's jury rig, which I was trying to improve so that Totorore could again steer herself, and it was not until 15th April that I was able to leave, bound for Macquarie Island.

On 19th April, in 54° 24'S, 78° 45'E, Totorore was struck by a terrible storm which rolled her over 360° twice, and wrecked the jury mast. Six days later, there was an even more violent storm, with waves probably over 30 metres in height, and Totorore was rolled 360° three times.

Miraculously, although there was considerable loss of gear and equipment from on deck, and the tiller was smashed, the hull of Totorore was undamaged, and my own injuries were not very serious. As the engine was out of action, I changed my intention of going to Macquarie Island, and headed towards Australia as soon as I was able to rig a new jury mast from a piece of wood I had picked up on Heard Island.

I arrived in Fremantle on 27th June, hoping to have the engine repaired so that I could complete the voyage to New Zealand.

P.T.O.

While at Fremantle, experienced yachtsman and boat builder, Ted Leeds, from Opuia, Bay of Islands, flew out to give me invaluable assistance in repairing Totorore and preparing her for the voyage. The West Australians were extremely helpful and hospitable, and our own New Zealand Challenge team for the America's Cup came to the fore and gave Totorore a complete new mast and rigging to see us return to New Zealand 'in style!'. Having been out of touch with news for so long, I had known nothing about the Challenge for the America's Cup, so it would certainly seem that I was guided into the incredible good fortune of going to Fremantle.

When Ted Leeds had to return to New Zealand, I was joined by Ross Ewens, from Kerikeri, who generously flew over to give his support in the final preparations, and to sail part of the way home with me.

We sailed from Fremantle, on 10th September, for Albany on the south coast of W.A. There, Ross's place was taken by a knowledgeable bird observer, Lola Broadhurst, who had been one of our very first volunteers before the Expedition started, but had been unable to come before this. She was able to come as far as Hobart, and on the way we stopped at several islands in the Recherche Archipelago, where Flesh-footed shearwaters were nesting.

At Hobart, David Trow from Kerikeri, a keen sailor who wanted blue water experience took over from Lola as crew for the Tasman crossing, which was accomplished without incident.

* * *

I feel that, thanks to all of our efforts, the Totorore Expedition was a great success. It is always difficult to rate success in finite terms, but we can say that we did what we set out to do. As you know, our objective was to obtain further information on the seabird populations of the Southern Oceans, to contribute to the basis needed for the formulation of conservation policies in that area. The state of health of the marine environment in the Southern Oceans can affect life forms in all the other oceans of the World, which may have a direct bearing on Man's chances of survival on this Planet. It is vital that we should do all that we can to protect the Balance of Nature in our Antarctic and sub-Antarctic waters.

Much of the new information acquired by the Totorore Expedition has already been published in various ornithological journals and there is still a great deal waiting to be written up. Apart from the voluminous records of at-sea observations, perhaps the most notable of our achievements were the discoveries of previously unknown breeding colonies of various penguins, albatrosses, petrels, and shearwaters. Also the first complete survey of the Wandering Albatross and the King Penguins in the whole of South Georgia, carried out during two winters. Feather lice or ticks from 20 different species of seabird were obtained for the National Museum in Wellington.

Another very important function of the Expedition was, and still is, to share with those who were not fortunate enough to come with us, some of our experiences in the fantastic, and so far unspoiled, parts of the world which it was our privilege to visit. This helps to spread awareness of seabirds as an important part of God's Creation. To this end I am at present writing a book in which I am trying to give a true record of all the adventures which I and my various crew members enjoyed, or otherwise, throughout the expedition. It should be published by Century Hutchinson, N.Z. Ltd. by Christmas 1987. I hope you will all read it!

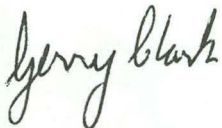
Before I finish, I must pay tribute to all the crew members who accompanied me on the Expedition, and to say how lucky I was to have been able to work with such fine people. Because they were conservationists and believed in what we were doing, they came prepared to face discomforts, hardships, and danger, with little respite. This they did, without complaint. I have made many friends on this Expedition, and foremost among them will always be members of my crew, and the members of the Expedition Committee, who did so much work behind the scenes.

I must also thank all of you, my good friends who gave us your work, financial support, and moral support, which made the Expedition possible, and brought it to a successful conclusion.

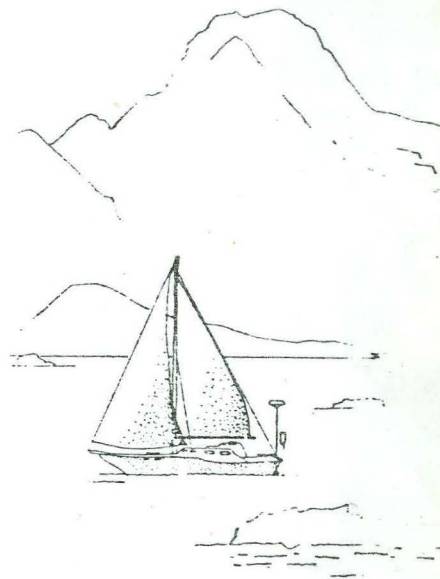
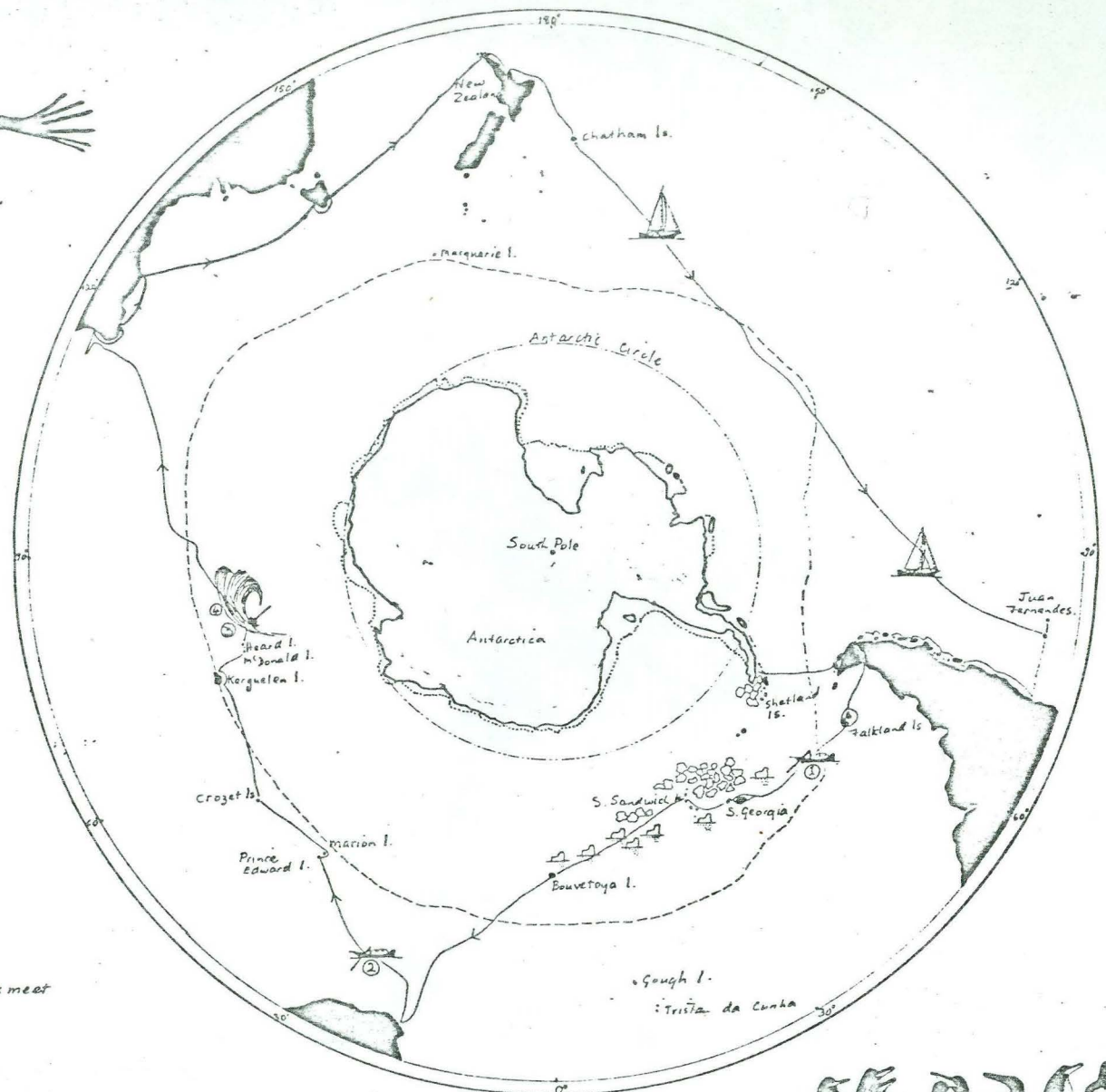
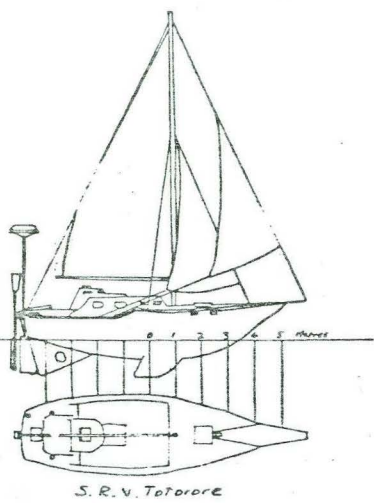
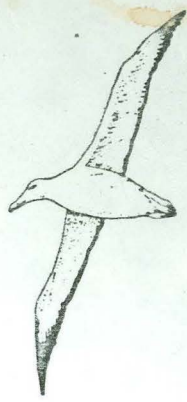
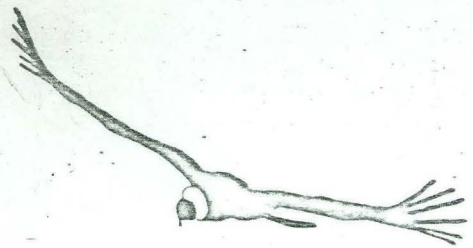
But let none of us be complacent. In today's ever changing world there is a growing need for constant vigilance, and action, to protect the environment from the ravages of greedy over-exploitation. Let us make sure that instead of just thinking about it, we all continue to do something. Every contributory action in the right direction, however small, is important and worth while.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas, and a joyful New Year, full of hope and promise for our endangered World.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerry Clark". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the page.

GERRY CLARK



- Approximate course of Totorore
- - - Approximate Antarctic Convergence where cold Antarctic and warmer Sub-Antarctic waters meet
- ⋯ Approximate extent of polar ice cap.
- Antarctic Circle
- ① Dismasted
- ② Capsized, dismasted.
- ③ Rolled 360° twice
- ④ 360° three times
- ⊞ pack

1000 2000
Scale in kilometers
along meridian

