PolarExplorers' 2026 Shackleton Crossing Post Expedition Report

A PolarExplorers' team successfully completed the Shackleton Crossing of South Georgia Island from October 31-November 3, 2026. The team consisted of 8 clients with previous training and expedition experience and 2 guides who had previously guided the crossing.

On the afternoon of October 31 we were dropped off near Pegotty Bluff in King Haakon Bay. The snow conditions were more favorable than our last crossing in 2023, allowing us to start skiing within 100 meters of the water. We ascended to the Murray Snowfield using the traditional route that passes south of the James Nunatak. As this ascent continues to lose snow mass it has become steeper. We removed our skis half way up and ascended the top half of the slope on foot. We spent our first night on the western edge of the Murray Snowfield. That night the winds increased significantly and shifted from the south to the east but by morning they had diminished.

On the second day (November 1) we traversed the Murray Snowfield and ascended to the Trident Ridge. Conditions were good with light & variable winds and temperatures around -1°C. As we ascended the slope to the Trident Ridge we noticed an increase in exposed rock since 2023. We evaluated the slope from the Trident Ridge to Compass Glacier and descended using the thicker, southernmost, red dotted route on the BAS Shackleton Crossing map. This is the same descent we have used for our previous three crossings. There was more snow than during our 2023 descent when we saw several crevasses on the lower half of the descent. While we did not see open crevasses on this descent we observed that the overall snowpack continues to diminish, making the slope steeper and potentially making the descent more technical. We camped in the lateral moraine between the Compass and Crean glaciers.

The next day (November 2) we skied, in wind and rain, to the edge of the left descending lobe of the Turnback Glacier. We were lucky to find the Wessex V helicopter remains amidst what was, for much of the day, a white-out. As we approached the Turnback Glacier we made a wide turn to the east roughly following the northernmost red dotted route on the BAS Shackleton Crossing map. In previous crossings we descended the right descending lobe of the Turnback Glacier, which has become a much more technical descent due to glacial retreat. The northern route, using the left descending lobe, was much better. We camped on the snow at the terminal edge of the glacier. The final morning (November 3) we hiked across the terminal moraine to Fortuna Bay where a zodiac picked us up. We completed the remaining Shackleton Walk that afternoon with other members of the ship in good conditions.

We communicated with our home office and our support ship daily. We had no incidents or injuries to report. We followed our biosecurity plan closely and stayed well clear of the few seals and penguins at the drop off and pick up sites. All our equipment worked well. Overall the crossing was successful and a very enjoyable expedition.