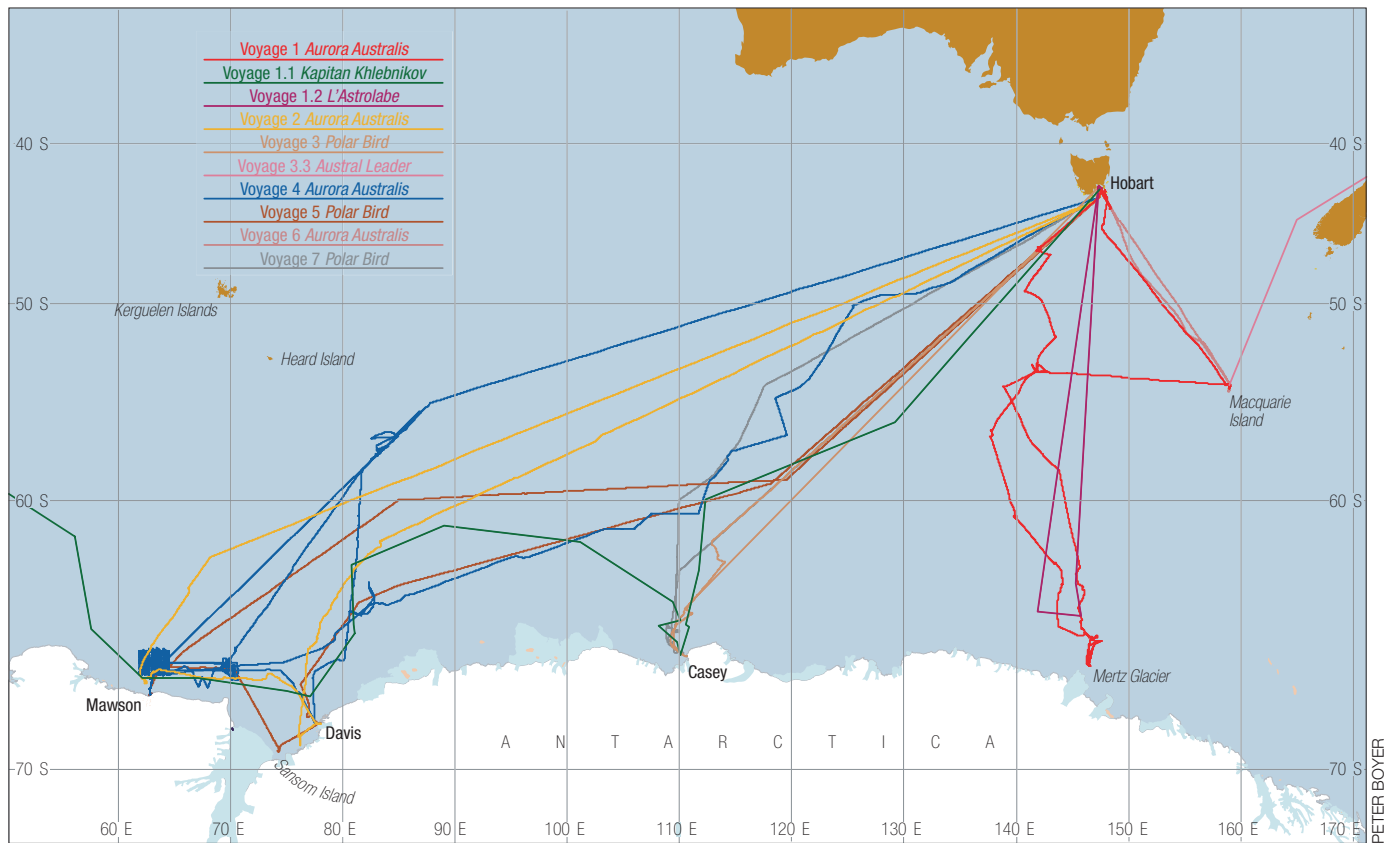


The 2002-03 season a huge success



The support of programs in and around Antarctica requires a large and complex logistical effort. The 2002–03 shipping season involved seven voyages by the regular ‘work horses’ RSV *Aurora Australis* and MV *Polar Bird*; the use of the French program vessel *L’Astrolabe* to deploy and recover a heritage conservation team from Cape Denison, Commonwealth Bay; the charter of IB *Kapitan Khlebnikov* for an early voyage from South Africa to Mawson, Davis and Casey; and the use of berths on cruise ships and a fishing vessel to add flexibility to ‘standard’ shipping arrangements.

An ‘ANARE first’ saw the ship-to-ship transfer of fuel – from *Polar Bird* to *Aurora Australis* – a seven-hour, incident-free operation conducted while the vessels moored alongside each other in Horseshoe Harbour, Mawson. An ‘ANARE last’ saw *Polar Bird* make its final voyage for the Australian Antarctic Program – the end of season Casey summer retrieval during which the vessel distinguished itself by making its way to the anchorage on what was expected to be a fly-off operation. *Polar Bird* (*Icebird*) began its Australian Antarctic career in 1984.

While there were no significant variations from the published shipping schedule, the summer was not without challenges for the teams involved. The voyage out of

South Africa, for example, involved tracking over a hundred expeditioners, their 2.5 tonnes of hand-carried excess baggage, and cargo and equipment airfreighted, railed and shipped to Cape Town from Australia, South America, Canada, Germany, USA and The Netherlands. Some of the wind turbine components delivered to Mawson on *Polar Bird* are believed to be the largest units of cargo ever unloaded at our stations. Two catteradication program dogs retrieved from the wilds of Macquarie Island were probably the most buoyant items transported.

MV Polar Bird leaves Mawson for the last time



in their seventeenth year of operation in Antarctica. Four summered on the continent, supporting camps at Rofe Glacier, Mt Stinear, Wilson Bluff, Cumpston Massif, Mawson Escarpment, and as far south as Komsomolskiy Peak (75°S). The aviation support of programs was not limited to the use of helicopters. A DHC-6 Twin Otter ferried from Calgary, Canada to Davis at the end of October, completed 475 hours flying in little more than three months on the continent, mainly in support of Australian and German scientists working in the southern Prince Charles Mountains. Experiencing good weather, the aircraft ably demonstrated the abilities of fixed wing aircraft to deploy, support and retrieve remote field parties.

Closer to home and at the end of the season, two helicopters and two LARCs were used to changeover personnel and resupply Macquarie Island. The retrieval of plateau huts at Tiobunga, Mt Eifel and Windy Ridge, and a coastal hut at Davis Point, was a significant achievement given the island's testing flying conditions.

SANDRA POTTER, LOGISTICS GROUP, AAD

Australian Antarctic shipping program 2003-04

The following shipping schedule for the 2003-04 season was correct as at 24 July 2003. However, published voyage timings are subject to change without notice and may be brought forward or delayed. The most current information is available on the AAD's website at <<http://www.aad.gov.au/shipping0304>>.

- Voyage 1 Aurora Australis: Marine science, Casey changeover
Departing Hobart 9 September 2003, returning Hobart 1 November 2003
- Voyage 2 Aurora Australis: Davis changeover and resupply
Departing Hobart 3 November 2003, returning Fremantle 5 December 2003
- Voyage 3 Southern Supporter: Heard Island deployment
Departing Fremantle 2 December 2003, returning Hobart 26 December 2003
- Voyage 4 Aurora Australis: Marine science, Davis retrieval
Departing Fremantle 8 December 2003, returning Hobart 12 February 2004
- Voyage 5 Vasily Golovnin: Casey, Mawson, Davis resupply
Departing Hobart 30 December 2004, returning Hobart 16 February 2004
- Voyage 6 Southern Supporter: Heard Island retrieval
Departing Esperance 6 February 2004, returning Fremantle 27 February 2004
- Voyage 7 Aurora Australis: Macquarie Island resupply, Casey flyoff
Departing Hobart 15 February 2004, returning Hobart 12 March 2004

New ship for Australian Antarctic program

The Australian Antarctic Program will see a new ship next summer: the MV *Vasily Golovnin*.

The *Vasily Golovnin* has been chartered to replace the MV *Polar Bird*, which was sold following the completion of its final voyage last season. Owned and operated by the Far Eastern Shipping Company of Vladivostok, the *Vasily Golovnin* has initially been chartered for one season, with options to extend this charter to a maximum of five years.

At 159.8m long, the *Vasily Golovnin* provides the AAD with a cargo capacity greater than any ship it has previously used. The increased capacity will allow the AAD to undertake the resupply of multiple continental stations on the one voyage. This has been a goal for some time, although it has not previously been possible due to the smaller capacities of ships used in the past.

Operations on the *Vasily Golovnin* will commence on 26 December when it comes on charter in Hobart. The vessel will then be loaded with cargo for Casey, Mawson and Davis stations, departing for Casey on the 30 December. The voyage will take approximately 48 days, with the vessel expected to arrive back in Hobart on 16 February.

The 13,514 tonne ship, registered in



MV Vasily Golovnin

Vladivostok, is one of a series of Vitus Bering class icebreaking transport vessels purpose-built for service in Arctic and Antarctic waters. Sister ships are also used to support other nations' Antarctic programs.

MV *Vasily Golovnin* was built to carry general and bulk cargo, cargo fuel oil,

heavy vehicles and containers. It is fitted with hydraulic electric deck cranes, stern quarter door and landing ramp, helicopter hangar and helipad. Powered by two 5,730 kW diesel electric engines, the vessel has a Russian crew of 39 and can accommodate approximately 27 expeditioners.