

Dutch Tall Ship Oosterschelde Triumphs Over the Treacherous Waters of Cape Horn during DARWIN200 Conservation Voyage

DARWIN200 conservation voyage retraces Charles Darwin's route aboard historic Dutch tall ship Oosterschelde

STANLEY, FALKLAND ISLANDS,
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-- The historic Dutch tall ship [Oosterschelde](#) is safely docked in Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands having achieved a remarkable maritime milestone, successfully rounding Cape Horn during the [DARWIN200](#) conservation mission. On February 12th, the crew successfully achieved an official 'rounding' of the infamous cape having set off from New Zealand last month on the 5,300 nautical mile voyage - further cementing Oosterschelde's place in maritime history.



Photo by Josh Clarke, Oosterschelde approach to Hobart on DARWIN200 Voyage

In order to be considered an official Cape Horn Rounding the voyage had to round Cape Horn under sail as part of a non-stop passage of at least 3,000 nautical miles passing above the latitude of 50° South in both the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and completed without the use of engines for propulsion.

Oosterschelde's Director Gerben Nab says "Cape Horn was identified by mariners and first rounded in 1616 by the Dutchmen Willem Schouten and Jacob Le Maire, who named it Kaap Hoorn after the city of Hoorn in the Netherlands. While hundreds of ships have gone down near Cape Horn since, one vessel that narrowly escaped that fate was the HMS Beagle, with naturalist Charles Darwin aboard in a harrowing passage just before Christmas 1832! As one of the very few truly historic sailing ships left in the world, Oosterschelde crew have decades of experience safely navigating our oceans and have prepared well for our third Cape Horn rounding".

Cape Horn, located at 55.98°S, 67.29°W, is the southernmost headland of the Tierra del Fuego

archipelago of Chile. Renowned as the 'Mount Everest of Sailing,' it is notorious for its treacherous conditions, with howling winds, massive waves, unpredictable currents, and freezing temperatures that have challenged even the most experienced mariners for centuries. By successfully rounding Cape Horn, Oosterschelde and its crew have conquered one of the most dangerous maritime passages in the world, reaffirming the ship's place in sailing history.

The successful passage of Cape Horn is a testament to the skill, determination, and resilience of the Oosterschelde crew, led by Captain Maarten De Jong, 46, from the Netherlands on his 197th voyage with Oosterschelde who says:

"This legendary headland has been the graveyard of countless ships since the Age of Exploration. The extreme weather, with frequent 12-meter waves and wind speeds exceeding 100 km/h, has made it one of the most feared sailing routes on Earth. I'm proud of the ship and our crew for skilfully navigating these challenging waters to show what is possible and reinforce our mission of making seafaring and exploration accessible for adventure seekers of all ages and backgrounds."

The crew consists of professional sailors and guest voyage crew from the public who signed up for the challenge. The tall ship has launched its 2025 sailing schedule, inviting adventure seekers to join. On this leg, 27 people from countries including the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, UK, US, Australia, and Canada helped sail and navigate the ship. The crew's ages ranged from those born in 2003 to 1955.

Professional crew:

1. Maarten de Jong (Netherlands) - Captain
2. Matu O'Flaherty (UK/NZ) - 1st Mate
3. Boudewijn Ridder (Netherlands) - 2nd Mate
4. Timo Naef (Switzerland) - Bosun
5. Tjaardy Buiskool (Netherlands) - Sailor
6. Gijs Koek (Netherlands) - Sailor
7. Silja Ravn-Jonsen (Denmark) - Sailor
8. Sjoerd Lubbers (Netherlands) - Cook

Retracing Darwin's Path: A Mission for Conservation

Setting sail from Plymouth, UK, in August 2023, Oosterschelde, as part of the DARWIN200 mission, embarked on an extraordinary two-year planetary conservation mission, retracing Charles Darwin's 19th-century route on the HMS Beagle. Oosterschelde has covered over 31,500 nautical miles on a journey that has so far taken 545 days. The voyage aims to host and train a total of 200 exceptional young environmentalists from all over the world, engaging them in hands-on conservation efforts in the same locations where Darwin and his colleagues explored the natural world almost two centuries ago.

Oosterschelde's Epic Voyage: From Cargo Vessel to Cultural Icon

The Oosterschelde is one of the world's finest, fully restored historic tall ships and the largest sailing vessel ever to be restored in the Netherlands. She is registered by the Dutch Government as a monument of great cultural and historical value. The ship is one of the oldest and most authentic ships in the international fleet of Tall Ships. Oosterschelde relaunched after a major refurbishment in 1996 and was recommissioned by Her Royal Highness Princess Margrite of The Netherlands. She is a bastion of Dutch ship building and is described by the ship's Director and Captain Gerben Nab as having had at least five lives, starting in 1917 as a cargo vessel. Over the past 30 years Oosterschelde has welcomed thousands of sailors and adventure seekers on board including royalty, politicians, presidents and pop stars, even once hosting a birthday party for Sir Tom Jones!

Oosterschelde was the first Dutch commercial tall ship to sail to both the north and south poles and successfully tackle the infamous Cape Horn.

The DARWIN200 voyage completes in Falmouth, UK in July 2025 with major port stops in Falkland Islands (February), Cape Town (April), St Helena (May), Ascension Island (May), Across the Equator to Azores (June) and Falmouth UK (arriving 19th June 2025).

A 'Victory lap' to London and a homecoming voyage to the ship's port of Rotterdam follow.

From September 2025 an exciting programme of voyages available for guest crew to book is now available in the UK, Portugal, Cape Verde Islands, Canary Islands, Suriname, Martinique, St Martin and the Bahamas for adventure seekers to join in.

Oosterschelde details: <https://www.dutchtallship.com/sailing-trips/>

DARWIN200 details: <https://darwin200.com/>

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<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Xi1OMq6YZgOsYvJpKlfb40eYxzOg32fZ>

PHOTOS & VIDEOS CAPE HORN

<https://f.io/SFRYKwaa>

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