

# At the World's End

Wildlife portraits become true art in the hands and eyes of a great, multi-award winner nature photographer from the Czech Republic - who travels the world far and wide but has a special passion for remote, cold Antarctica

## *Vaclav Silha: A Wildlife Photographer in his own words*

I feel myself always to be very close to nature. Even as a kid I read a lot about animals and attended various children's vivarium clubs. When I later became to be a photographer these two of my interests naturally combined. Initially I focused mainly on photography in Africa where I spent a lot of time working on the annual great animal migration from Tanzania to Kenyan game reserve Masai Mara. Gradually I started to shoot in other parts of the world - from Australia to Alaska. In the last two years I also had the opportunity to organize two boat expeditions which were very important to me. One of them led me to the sub-Antarctic island of South Georgia, the other in Antarctica itself.

I use two cameras - Canon EOS 5D Mark II and Canon EOS 1D Mark IV. The lenses are Canon EF 500/4, 0 L IS USM, Canon EF 300/4, 0 L IS USM, Canon EF 70-200/2, 8 L IS II USM and Canon EF 28-70 mm f/2.8 L USM. Top technology is of course important but not enough by itself. Even much more important is a good knowledge of the photographed animal and its environment. The photographer must have some kind of relationship with the photographed subject, shortly said - he has to like it. Only then he can take photos which have some meaning. It seems to me that recently more and more photographers debate about how many pixels should be in their

cameras instead of talking about the photo itself. What should be a good wildlife photo? I, for example, do not want my images to be only id shots which one could take at the zoo. I search for a story in each picture. Sometimes it can be some extraordinary situation but I also love to take pictures where animals are integrated into the landscape in which they live. Pictures of this type I had a chance to do for example in Antarctica. Animals are not shy there and one can approach them closely. I would like to return into this inspiring cold world again in future...My images have been published in many magazines across the world. I work closely with the British Barcroft Media bank, I am the author of several books, I give lectures and publish regularly in my home country (Czech republic) and abroad. At present I also participate in two film projects from Africa and Antarctica. Together with the travel agency African Way, operated by my wife, I also have been regularly working as a professional photo guide on photographic expeditions in different parts of the world. My work was also awarded some prizes in the past. Some of my most recent successes is the win in my category within the Czech Press Photo competition 2012 as well as the gold medal NSFF which I was awarded within the 16 FIAP International Biennial in Norway in the same year.







**Gentoo Penguin chick**

*(Pygoscelis papua)*

The sunset created a stunning scene in one of the most beautiful parts of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Booth Island, Antarctica.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/320, f9, no flash, ISO 400, Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.



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### Icebergs

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Icebergs are  
an icon of  
Antarctica.

To every photo-  
grapher they  
also offer an  
interesting  
challenge.

Antarctica.

Canon EOS-1D

Mark IV,

1/1000,

f8.0, no flash,

ISO 500,

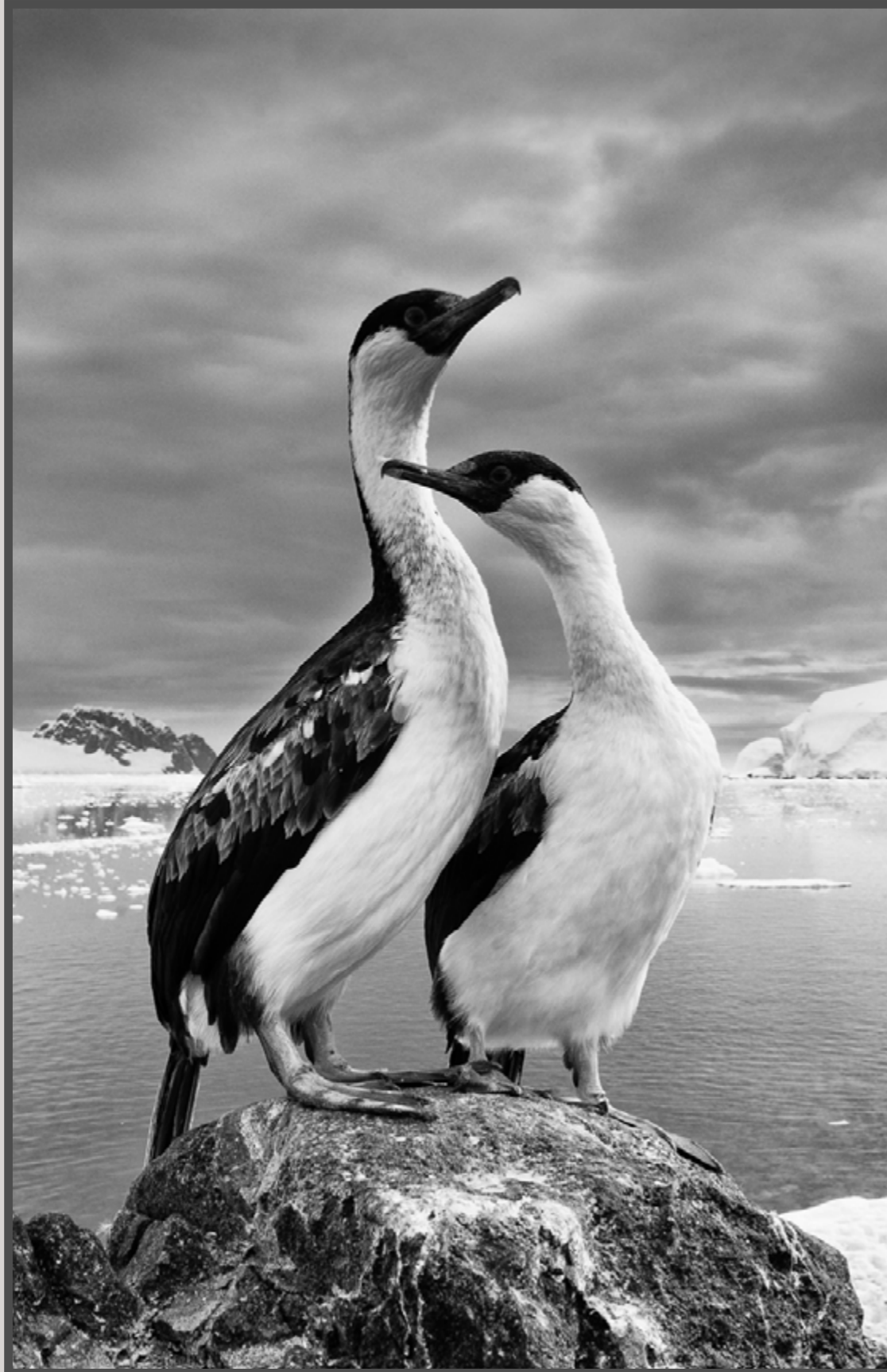
Canon EF70-

200mm f/2.8L

IS II USM.





**Antarctic Shags** (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*)

A couple of Antarctic Shags in a colony on Fish Island. It is amazing how close one can get to the animals in Antarctica without stressing them. Antarctica.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/250, f11, no flash, ISO 200, Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.

**Southern Giant Petrel**

(*Macronectes giganteus*)

Southern Giant Petrels are constantly on guard in their nest against marauding skuas. Just a moment's distraction and baby birds falls victim to these birds of prey. South Shetland Islands.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/2000, f8.0, no flash, ISO 400,

Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.





**Black-browed  
Albatross**

*(Thalassarche  
melanophrys)*

Black-browed  
Albatross above  
Elsehul Bay.  
Elsehul Bay,  
South Georgia.

Canon EOS 5D  
Mark II,  
1/1000, f8,  
no flash,  
ISO 400,  
Canon EF24-  
70mm f/2.8L  
USM.







**Elephant Seal** (*Mirounga leonina*)

Young elephant seal on Possession Bay beach. In a few years it will grow up into a dreaded beach master. South Georgia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/250, f8, no flash, ISO 320,  
Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.

**Grey-headed Albatross**  
(*Thalassarche chrysostoma*)

Grey-headed Albatross in its nest in Elsehul Bay. South Georgia.  
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/3200, f6,3, no flash, ISO 400  
Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.







**Weddell Seal**  
(*Leptonychotes weddellii*)

Weddell seal on  
Ginger Island  
beach,  
Antarctica.

Canon EOS 5D  
Mark II, 1/1250,  
f7,1, no flash,  
ISO 400,  
Canon EF24-  
70mm f/2.8L  
USM.



**King Penguin colony** (*Aptenodytes patagonicus*)

Every year hundreds of thousands of birds are nesting here. Certainly one of the most powerful experiences in South Georgia.

St. Andrews Bay, South Georgia.

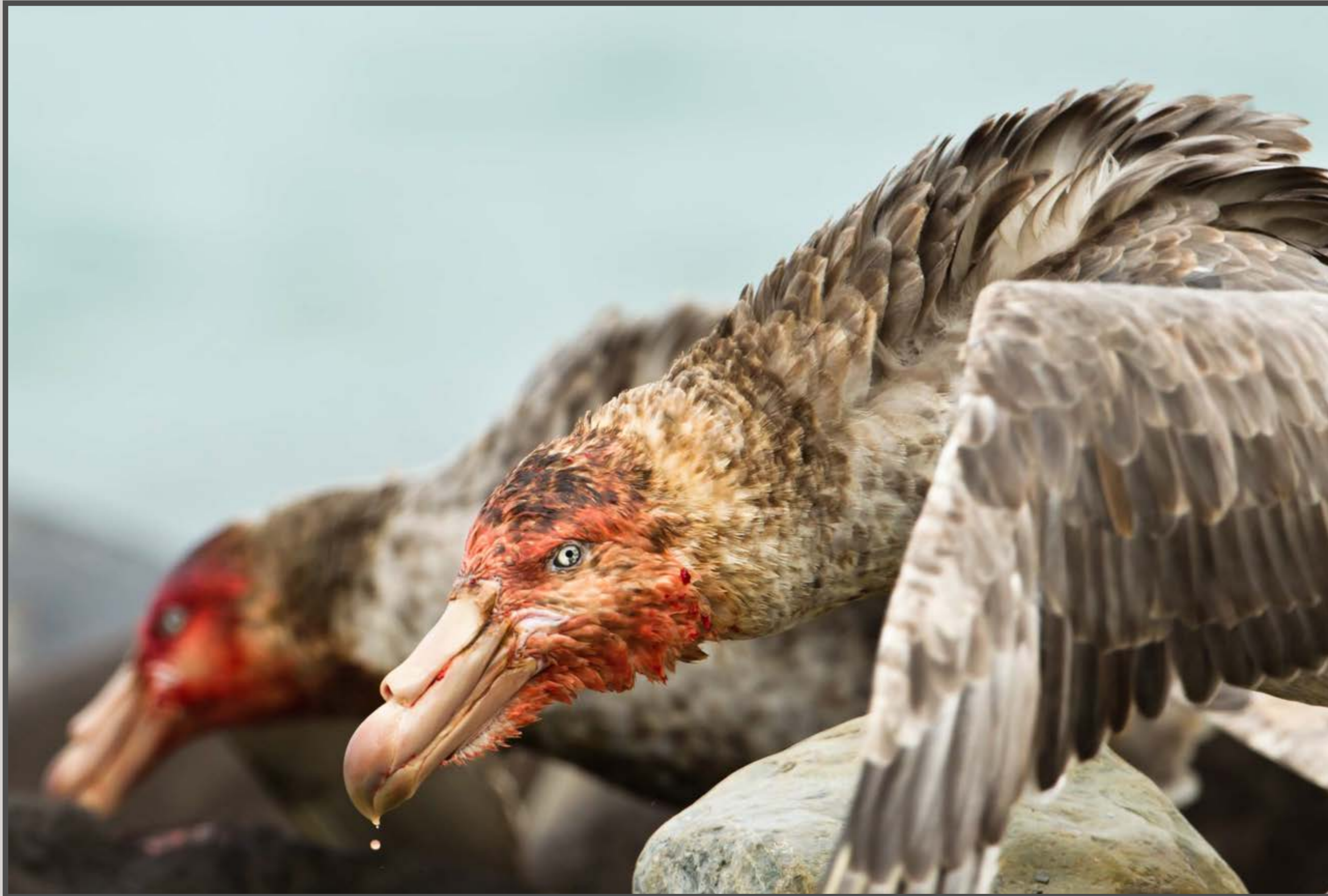
Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/160, f18, no flash, ISO 320,  
Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.

**Chinstrap Penguin** (*Pygoscelis antarctica*)

It was interesting to take photographs in the sun with the animal nestled into the landscape. Aitcho Islands, South Shetland Islands.

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/1600, f8.0, no flash, ISO 400,  
Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM.





**Southern  
Giant Petrel**

(*Macronectes  
giganteus*)

Southern Giant Petrels have a similar function as the vultures in African savannas. St. Andrews Bay, South Georgia. Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/400, f8, no flash, ISO 400, Canon EF500mm f/4L IS USM.



**Humpback Whale***(Megaptera novaeangliae)*

Humpback whale blowing, Antarctica.

Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/4000, f8.0, no flash, ISO 500,

Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM.

**Elephant Seals***(Mirounga leonina)*

In October and November tough fights take place on the beaches. Males guard their harems, fights among several-ton monsters can lead to death of one of the rivals. St. Andrews Bay, South Georgia.

Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/250, f11, no flash, ISO 320,  
Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.





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**Humpback  
Whale**

*(Megaptera  
novaeangliae)*

I didn't want to photograph a whale itself but also the high mountains in the background, so I waited many days for this picture.

Eventually, I lived to see. Antarctica.

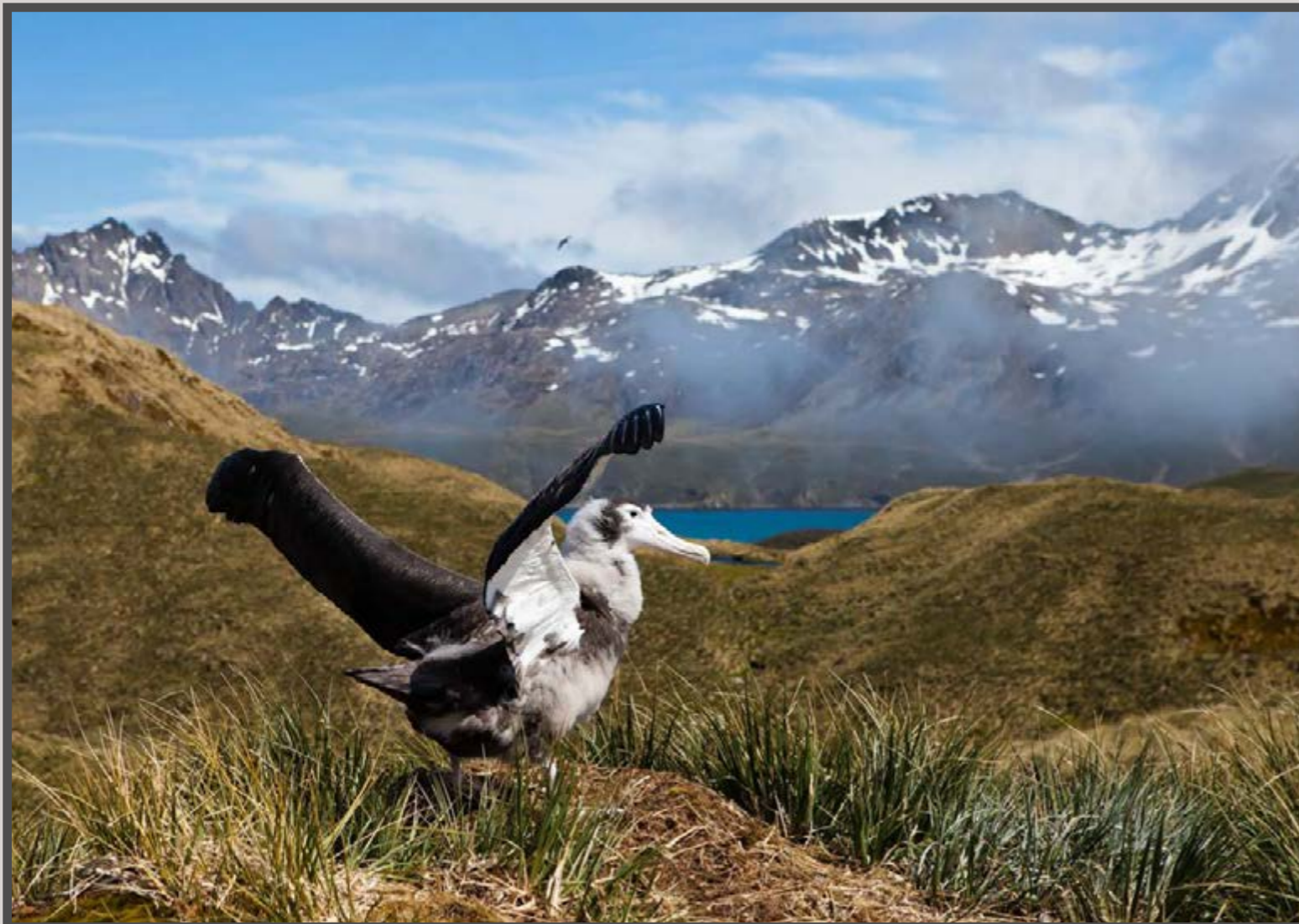
Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/2500, f8.0, no flash, ISO 500, Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM.



**Southern Giant Petrel**

*(Macronectes giganteus)*

Southern Giant Petrel in its nest, South Shetland Islands.  
 Canon EOS-1D Mark IV, 1/4000, f8.0, no flash, ISO 640,  
 Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8L IS II USM.



**Wandering Albatross** *(Diomedea exulans)*

Young Wandering Albatross. Around 4000 pairs of these endangered birds are still nesting in South Georgia. Unfortunately their numbers are still decreasing. South Georgia.  
 Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/1600, f7,1, no flash, ISO 320,  
 Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.



**Killer Whales**

(*Orcinus orca*)

Killer Whales are top predators of Antarctic seas.

In this picture is a group of Killer Whales - type A, which mainly hunt whales.

Antarctica.

Canon EOS-1D

Mark IV,

1/1600,

f6,3,

no flash,

ISO 320,

Canon EF70-200mm f/2.8L

IS II USM.





**Leopard Seal**

*(Hydrurga leptonyx)*

Leopard Seal in  
Cierva Cove bay.

The Leopard Seal is  
one of the top  
predators of  
Antarctic region.

Antarctica.

Canon EOS-1D

Mark IV, 1/2000,

f6,3, no flash,

ISO 640,

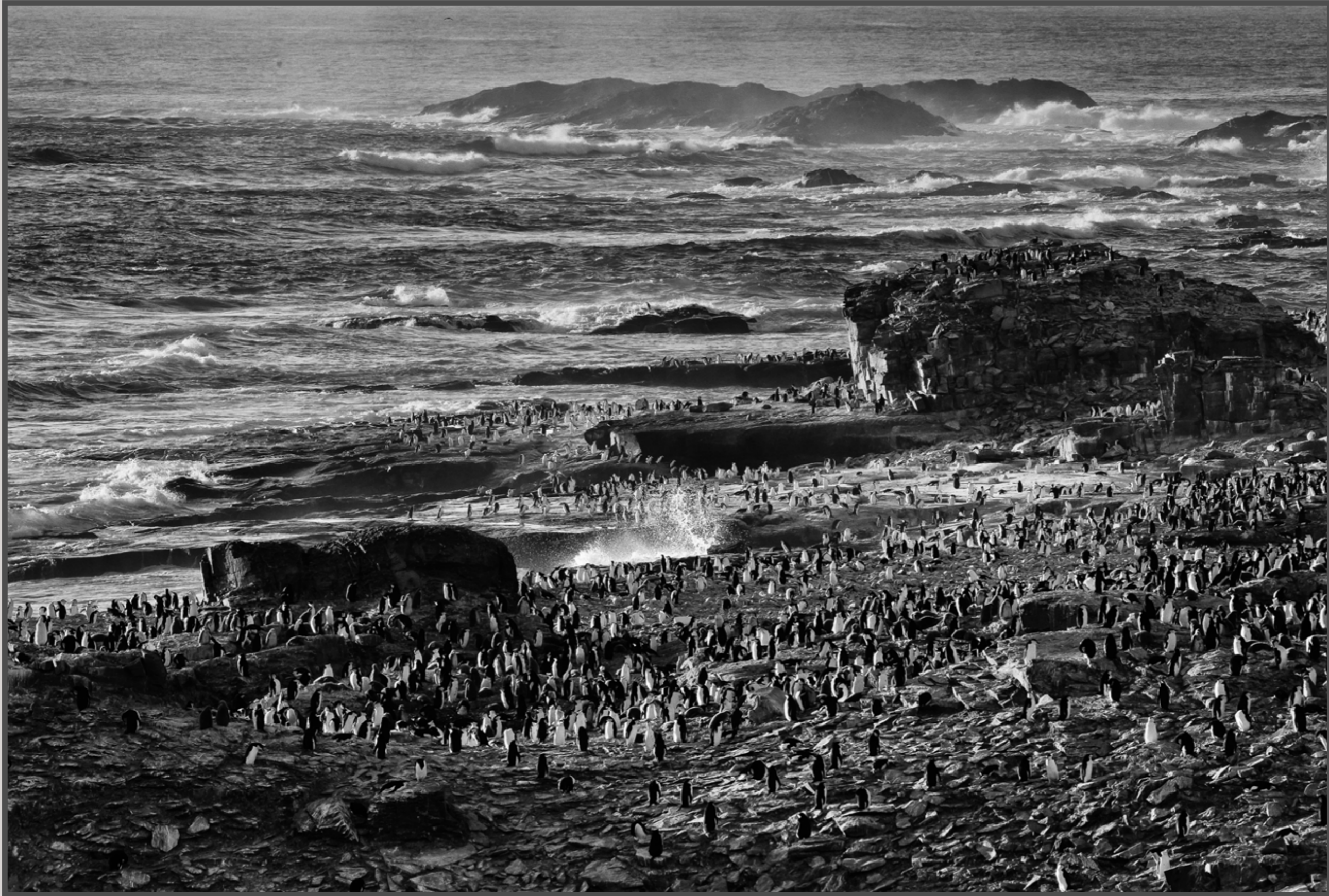
Canon EF70-

200mm f/2.8L

IS II USM.







**Chinstrap  
Penguin colony**

*(Pygoscelis  
antarctica)*

Chinstrap  
penguin colony  
on the shore of  
Heywood Island.  
Backlight which  
slightly illuminates  
the waves gives  
this picture an  
interesting  
atmosphere.  
South Shetland  
Islands.

Canon EOS-1D  
Mark IV, 1/320,  
f14, no flash,  
ISO 640,  
Canon EF70-  
200mm f/2.8L  
IS II USM.



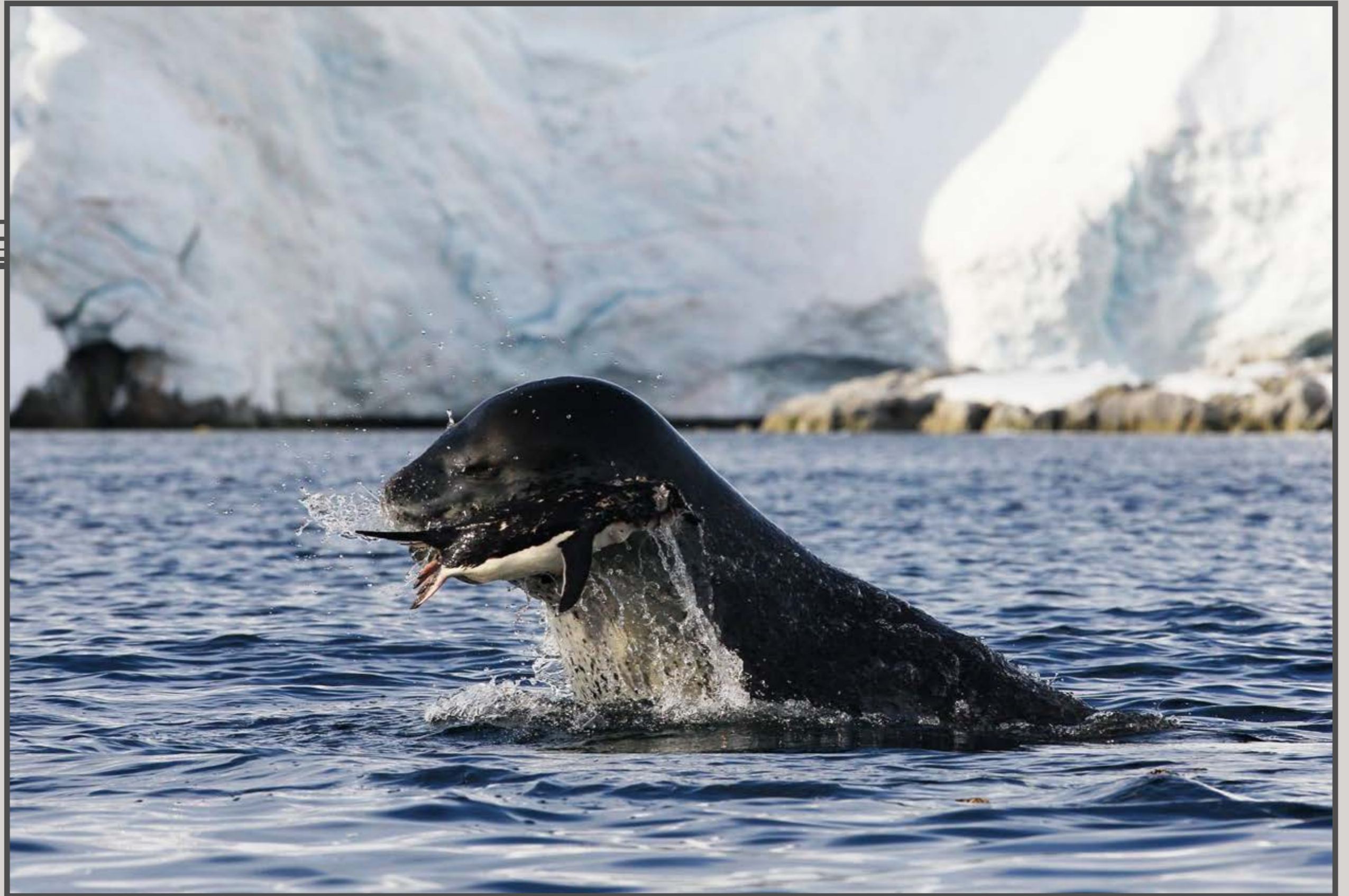
**Leopard Seal**

(*Hydrurga leptonyx*)

Leopard seals hunt chinstrap penguin. Their body is built for quick attacks and therefore it is not a problem for them catching an animal as fast as a penguin.

Anvers Island,  
Antarctica.

Canon EOS-1D Mark  
IV, 1/2500,  
f8.0, no flash,  
ISO 500,  
Canon EF70-200mm  
f/2.8L  
IS II USM.







## Macaroni Penguins

(*Eudyptes chrysolophus*)  
Couple of Macaroni penguins. They feed mainly on krill and fish and can hunt at a depth up to 80 m. Cooper Bay, South Georgia. Canon EOS 5D Mark II, 1/500, f9, no flash, ISO 500, Canon EF24-70mm f/2.8L USM.