

## **THE WHITE DESERT**

Moored to the George VI Ice Shelf, I sit on Sea master's bow and look out across the vast plains of the White Desert.

As far as the eye can see, a smooth snowy/ice white landscape like the surface of another planet is dotted with perfectly sculptured formations and gleaming trapped ice castles, waiting for their release to the sea.

Aged by time and weather and surrounded by rugged mountains, how many years have these formations been resting in this peaceful and quiet, yet harsh, environment?

Seals alongside Seamaster are resting on the ice or out fishing for an evening meal. Penguins are standing to attention or just relaxing on their bellies. Whales are catching their breath before another dive to penetrate below the shelf.

Oh, the glory and excitement as one watches wildlife at it's finest.

This is the Heart of the Antarctic that I have grown to love in the few short weeks I have been here.

An untouched paradise yet to be discovered, but hopefully when so, will be treated with the love and tenderness I feel now.

The visible ice shelf slowly inclines towards it's source, the mist and haze, shielding the wonders afar.

Listening, I can hear the whales under the ice flow and the seals snorting through their nostrils.

I imagine the old explorers attempting to conquer this continent, and the harsh realities and difficulties they encountered while doing so.

Perhaps we are at a point where no man has been before, -- it is certainly possible as the melting of the shelf is far greater this year. I am one of the privileged few.

I write with some hesitation and sadness, as in my travels, I have seen what damage man can do to the environment.

I pray with all my heart that this wonderful oasis will never be affected by such greed and foolishness.

It almost makes me not want to tell a soul and just keep it locked inside my memories, only passing on to friends and loved ones.

How is life going to survive here should man invade the terrain and waters with selfish interests?

**My present answer is it won't.**

Water visibility is poor due to the nutrients that abound and one wishes the waters were clear for a dive so I could become one with the life below. Alas this is my own selfish interest.

As I sit here and look out across the pristine landscape, I wonder what changes I will see in my lifetime within this area.

Will they be good or will they be bad?

Lets hope other people feel the same way as we (the seamaster crew) do about protecting what we have, and in the future learn to cherish it instead of reaping it of it's wealth.

I am asking all

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