This "Individual project" for the 2000/2001 Graduate Certificate of Antarctic Studies was born out of a two-fold interest. Firstly, a wish to refine and put into perspective my own fledgling thinking about wilderness and nature's relationship to it, and secondly, a desire to read some of the diaries of the heroic era explorers. The first wish stems from two years of deliberately searching for wilderness in New Zealand's relatively untouched backcountry. This search has led to a slowly emanating perception that there are spiritual values and experiences beyond the thrill of achievement and physical exertion to be found when engaging in travels through such lands. The second wish stems from a boyhood fascination with explorers, a seed of which probably most people interested in the Antarctic carry within themselves. This essay started as an attempt to merge these two reading projects. I begin with an overview of the temporal evolution of the idea of wilderness in the western world. My initial idea was to find fragments in the accounts of the heroic era explorers that would fit into the picture drawn by this historic review. However, these diaries proved to be a very poor mine of thoughts on the landscape and nature, so that my reading of these diaries often proved to be like the proverbial search for a needle in the haystack. Therefore, I extended my readings to some contemporary authors where more suitable passages, albeit on an absolute scale still few, can be found. The result that is to hand is primarily thought as a step on my own journey towards a better understanding and sharpened perception.
Wildest Antarctica: Antarctic Circle. Overview. This special voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula departs from Ushuaia, Argentina. Daylight grows longer and the air gets colder as we head south across the Drake Passage, accompanied by soaring albatross. Our first explorations of the White Continent are in the South Shetland Islands, historically important and rich with iconic Antarctic wildlife.