

UK polar research ship to make 2nd voyage to Antarctica

November 15 2022



A general view of the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough from the helicopter deck on the berth in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant

Britain's polar research ship is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity.

Jane Francis, director of British Antarctic Survey, which operates the ship named after naturalist David Attenborough, said Tuesday that scientists will study the melting of the west Antarctic ice sheet, how it impacts global sea level rise and when "the Earth goes into irreversible change."

"If that [ice sheet](#) does melt, it holds about three to five meters (9.8 to 16.4 feet) of [global sea level rise](#), so what happens in Antarctica won't just stay in Antarctica, it will affect us all," Francis said

The RRS Sir David Attenborough, billed as one of the world's most advanced polar research vessels, completed its maiden voyage in November 2021. It is scheduled to set sail again on Sunday, from Harwich port, in eastern England, carrying around 45 [crew members](#) and scientists.

Plans call for the ship to reach Rothera Research Station, on the Antarctic Peninsula, by Christmas and to spend about six months in Antarctica. Along with delivering food, equipment and fuel to the British Antarctic Survey's research stations, the mission calls for carrying out trials of polar science equipment and collecting data to understand how climate change is affecting the region and beyond.



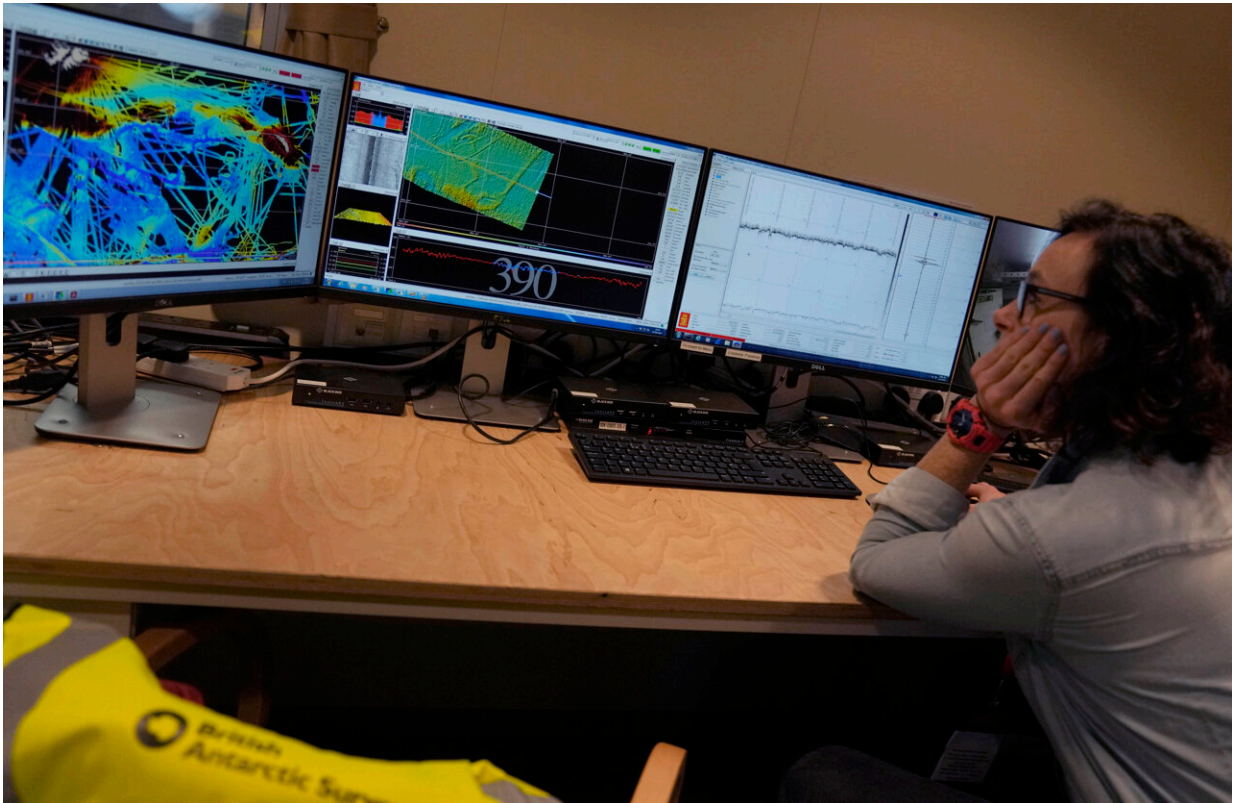
Captain Will Whatley the commander of the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough sits on the bridge as the ship loads supplies at the berth, in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant



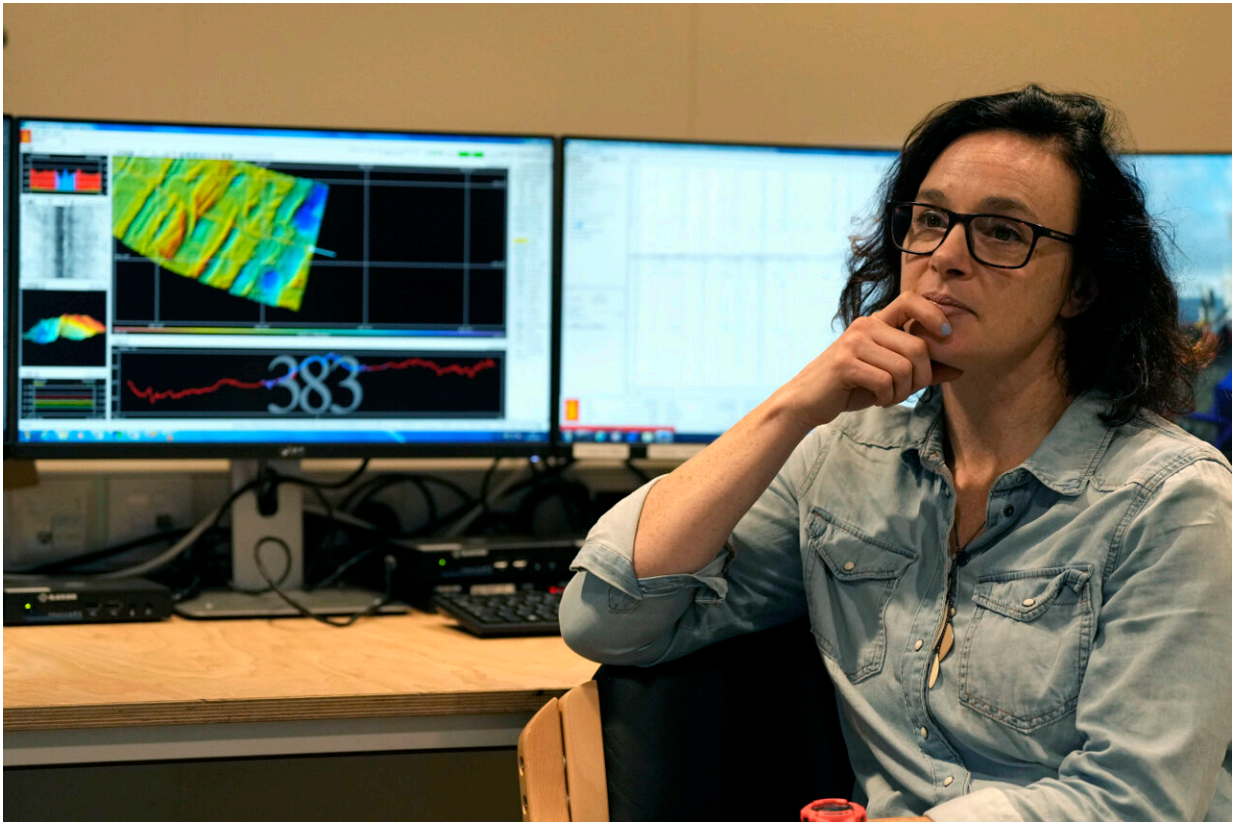
The British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough loads supplies at her berth in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Jane Francis, director of British Antarctic Survey, which operates the polar ship, said Tuesday that scientists will study the melting of the west Antarctic ice sheet, how it impacts global sea level rise, and when “the Earth goes into irreversible change.” Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant



One of the 4 control stations of the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough, showing the bow thruster controls on the bridge of the ship at the berth, in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant



Kelly Hogan a marine geophysicist looks at a display of part of the Southern Ocean sea floor map, on board the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough at her berth in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant



Kelly Hogan a marine geophysicist with a display of part of the Southern Ocean sea floor map, on board the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough, at the berth, in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant



A view of one of 4 ship control stations on board the British Antarctic Survey Ship Sir David Attenborough at the berth, in Harwich, England, Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2022. Britain's polar research ship, named after naturalist David Attenborough, is preparing for its second voyage to Antarctica to investigate sea level rises and threats to marine biodiversity. Credit: AP Photo/Alastair Grant

"We need to understand what the water is doing, we need to understand how the air is warming, and we need to understand how the ice is reacting to all of those different factors," Kelly Hogan, a marine geophysicist for the British Antarctic Survey, told reporters during a tour of the vessel on Tuesday.

"To do that, we need to measure lots of different parts of the system to get the big picture. And that's why a ship like the David Attenborough is

so important, because we actually have all of the tools and equipment to do all of those measurements in state of the art ways," she added.

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