



*Top: Polar Sea channel-tending in McMurdo Sound. Bottom left: Flight ops McMurdo Sound - Mt. Erebus looms in distance. Bottom middle: A whale taking advantage of a lucky break. Bottom right: Polar Sea tied up alongside USNS Yukon at ice wharf.*

*Our month in the McMurdo Sound area began mid-January. The never setting sun seemed only to heighten the blending of one day into the next. With the birds on the line the break-in was a breeze. To the veterans of previous south trips the sights were familiar. To the Arctic sailor it was icebreaking with a twist. Those new to the business found it nothing short of spectacular. Not only were they seeing the power of their ship at work, they had the added sights of the Antarctic wildlife and mountain ranges. Towering above all was Mt. Erebus, sure to take the breath away from boot or vet alike.*

*The weeks were to be filled by hard work and hard play. Mishaps would occur and be quickly overcome. Storms met head-on for days couldn't dampen spirits, giving renewed meaning to the motto, "No ice too tough, no seas too rough."*

*When the time came to pull in the lines, make one more pass by Cape Adare and start the homeward leg it somehow seemed easier to get up each morning and face the day. Having spent fifty days away from what most people call civilization, the words Wellington, New Zealand held a magical appeal. It was hard to believe it was only a week away.*

