

AFTERNOON ON THE ANTARCTIC PENINSULA

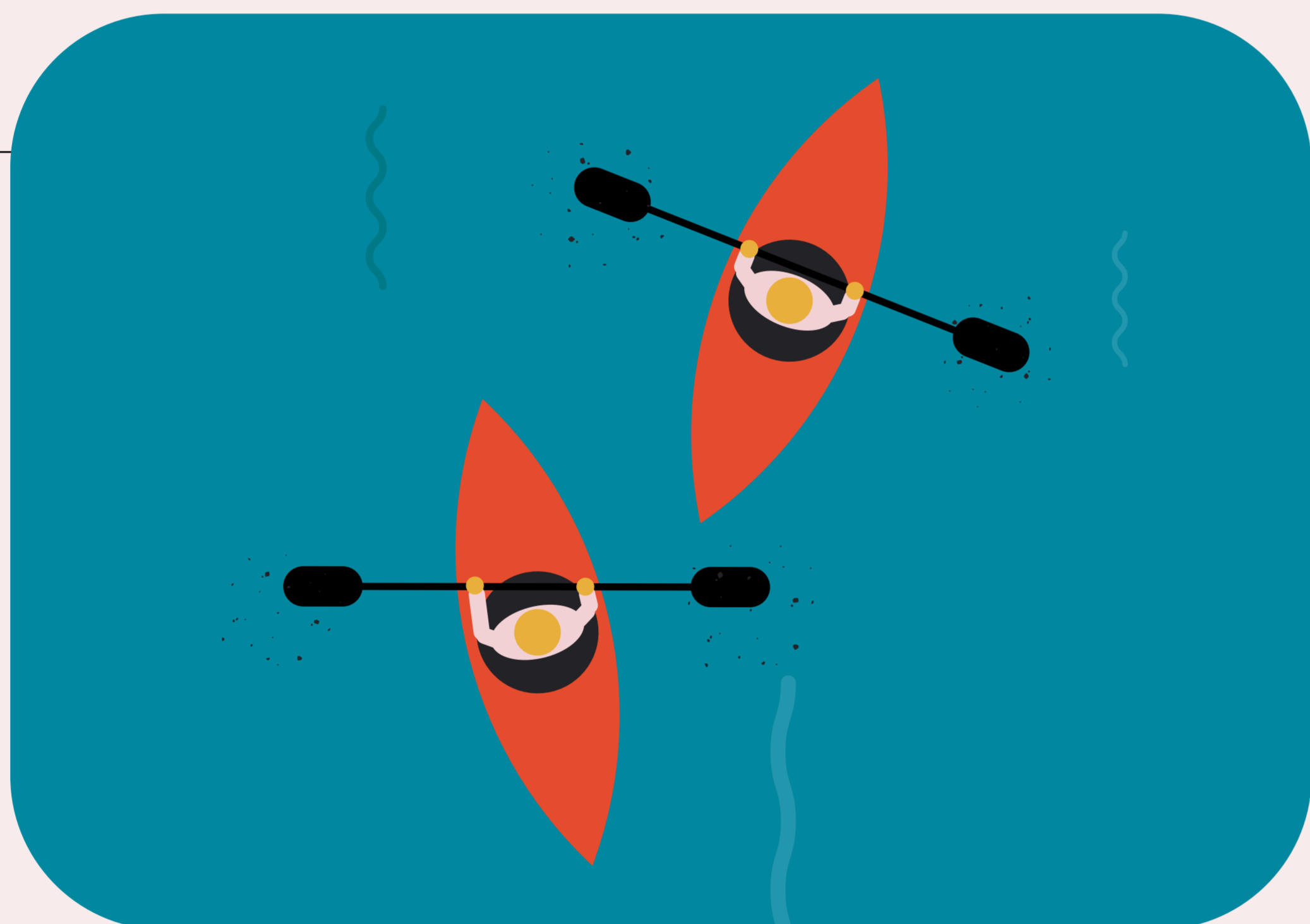


1330

The Assistant Expedition Leader arrives to the bridge to tell me we've received an email from the base commander at the research station we had planned to visit this afternoon. The landing site is blocked by drift sea ice and he believes a landing will be impossible. I discuss with Captain, and we agree that since the tide is dropping, which can often move sea ice away from shore, we will continue on our way and make a decision once we get there.

1400

We are nearing our anchorage and Captain and I can see significant ice along the shoreline. While the ship is still underway, we lower a scout boat to get a closer look at the ice conditions on shore. Two other staff and I drive towards the landing site but realise that the ice is impenetrable. I radio back to Captain to implement our contingency plan – a visit to an Adelie penguin colony on a nearby island.

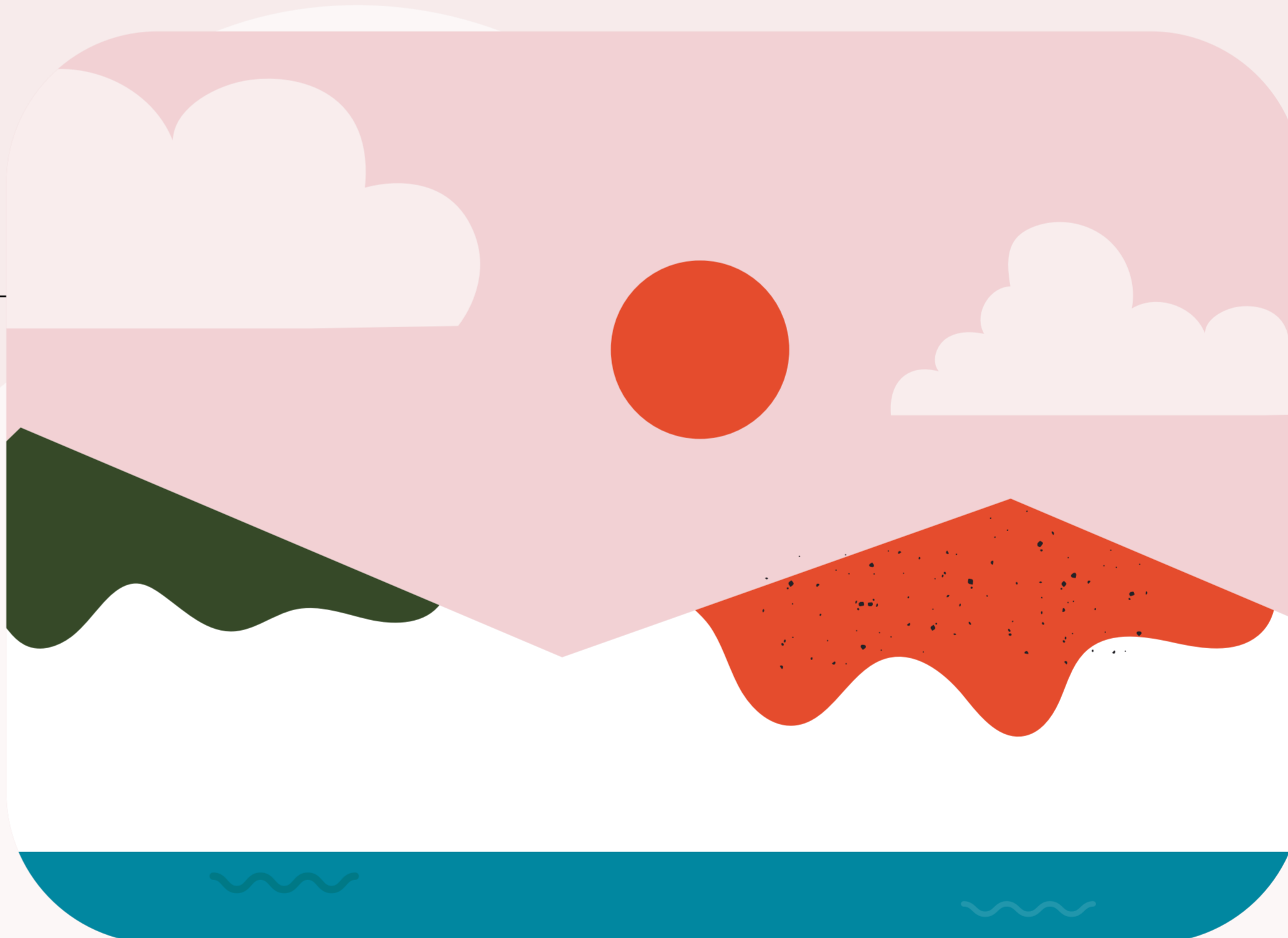


1500

We arrive at our anchorage and thankfully the wind has dropped to 5 knots so we will be able to kayak this afternoon. The kayak guide calls the kayakers for a meeting. 20 plan to paddle. I update the guests and let them know the first disembarkation group will be called in 30 minutes.

1530

The shore team arrives to the landing site and are disheartened to see the entire area covered in slippery algae. While I discuss further contingency plans with the AEL, several of the staff have successfully made it onto the snow, which is also covered in a bright red snow algae. It won't be possible to safely land on the island.



1645

An hour later, we have all of our guests off the ship in 12 boats and 10 kayaks for 90 minutes exploring the islands. While not our Plan A or B, we're treated to groups of Adelines encouraging each other to plunge into the icy water, lazing fur seals on the low-lying rocks in between the larger islands, curious Leopard seals gliding alongside us and even several groups of feeding Humpbacks including mothers with calves. Plan C delivers!

IAATO.

Ines is an Expedition Leader on a 134-passenger IAATO member vessel with a kayaking program. Here she shares a day in her life; the everyday essential tasks, the challenges and ultimately rewards of leading responsible, enriching and educational expeditions to the *Antarctic Peninsula*.