



OCEANWIDE
EXPEDITIONS

Spitsbergen: Polar Bear Special

on board

m/v Ortelius

June 21 – June 28, 2017



M/V *Ortelius* was named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. MV *Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland, as a research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science and was named *Marina Svetaeva*. In 2011 she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel was re-flagged and renamed *Ortelius*. Now the ship is sailing as a 125-passenger vessel. *Ortelius* is 91 m long, 17,6 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5,80 m, with an Ice Strength rating of UL1/1A, top speed of 13 knots and one diesel engine generating 3200 kW.

Captain Ernesto Barria

and his international crew of 52

including

First Officer:	Yury Marin	[Russia]
Second Officer:	Laimonas Choroscia	[Lithuania]
Third Officer:	John Williams	[Great Britain]
Chief Engineer:	Guntis Dizbite	[Latvia]
Hotel Manager:	Dejan Nikolic	[Serbia]
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Lilian van Meurs	[Poland]
Head Chef:	Heinz Hacker	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	Khabir Moraes	[India]
Ship's Physician:	Veronique Verhoeven	[Belgium]

and

Expedition Leader:	Rinie van Meurs	[The Netherlands]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	Arjen Drost	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Bill Smith	[Scotland]
Expedition Guide:	Ian Stirling	[Canada]
Expedition Guide:	Szymon Niezabitowski	[Poland]
Expedition Guide:	Mick Brown	[Ireland]
Expedition Guide:	Baldur Thorvaldsson	[Iceland]
Expedition Guide:	Pete Gwatkin	[Great Britain]
Expedition Guide:	Marijke de Boer	[The Netherlands]

Day 1 – Wednesday, 21st June 2017

Longyearbyen

GPS position at 1200: 78°14.0' N, 015°37.4' E

Wind: WNW 3 m/s Weather: clear skies Temperature: 11 °C



On this nice day in Longyearbyen, when we made our way to the pier we found out that indeed we were about to embark on an adventurous voyage. *Ortelius* was at anchor out in the fjord, and once we had arrived to the small pier we met members of the expedition team who took care of our luggage and handed us lifejackets – our transfer to the ship would be by zodiac. Soon we were crossing the calm waters towards the ship. After we had made our way up the *Ortelius* gangway, we met the hotel team who showed us to our cabins. As soon as we had settled into our comfortable home for the next 8 days, most of us found themselves either on the outside decks to enjoy the views and the sunshine or in the bar for a coffee or tea.

Soon it was time to gather in the lecture room for several welcome briefings. One was by our Expedition Leader Rinie van Meurs, another by our hotel manager Dejan (DJ). Third Officer John briefed us on ship safety. A drill of the general alarm (seven short blasts followed by one long blast) was made, and we all donned the SOLAS orange life jackets and mustered in the bar guided by crew and staff. After a roll call to assure everyone was present we went out to the lifeboats to see them.

We returned to our cabins briefly before regrouping with Captain Ernesto Barria in the lounge for a welcoming toast of champagne or juice before heading down to the dining room for our first scrumptious dinner prepared by Chef Heinz and his staff. Meanwhile, *Ortelius* made her way through Isfjorden towards the open sea. After dinner we were called to the lecture room once again to receive our rubber boots, needed for most of our landings. After this most of us went to the outside decks to enjoy the first part of our voyage. We enjoyed the nice weather and the spectacular scenery of the entrance of Isfjorden and were surprised by a few distant blows of a Blue Whale. What an exciting first day, and what a start to our voyage!

Day 2 – Thursday, 22nd June 2017

Sarstangen and Engelsbukta

GPS position at 1200: 78°44,4' N, 011°25,5' E

Wind: calm Weather: cloudy Temperature: 10 °C



Our overnight journey was so smooth that it seemed as if our ship was alongside the dock! Following a leisurely breakfast we attended two more briefings. One concerned safety and environmental protocol in the Arctic, the other related to Zodiac operations. By eleven o'clock we were boarding the boats and heading off to visit the Walrus colony at Sarstangen. On shore we gathered in two groups and each group took turns to see the Walrus close up. Situated on a narrow sandpit, the magnificent animals, about 80 in all, amused and intrigued us with their behaviour and their appar-

ent interest in us! Some of them left the main group and swam along the shore in our direction. Adult and youngsters then came within three metres of some of us and we 'eyeballed' each other! Along with seeing the Walrus we walk along the beach to the nearby lagoon where several species of birds were foraging and possibly breeding. Two King eider ducks, male and female, swam past close enough for us to see the beautiful marking of the male. Hazy sunshine and calm conditions made this Summer Solstice morning especially enjoyable here in the high Arctic.

In the afternoon we went ashore at Englesbukta and here we split into three groups. Long, medium and leisurely walks were on offer and off we set in three directions. Off shore a Harbour seal was seen 'porpoising' close to the zodiacs. A group of 14 Harbour seals were hauled out at the entrance to the lagoon. A terminal moraine, a glacier and a ring of spectacular mountains made for a very enjoyable experience. A very cold wind reminded us that we were in the Arctic, as did the Polar bear and Arctic fox tracks on the beach and nearby mud. At 17.30 we began the zodiac operation returning to the ship. A recap and a briefing was followed by dinner at 19.00. We sailed into Kings bay at 20.00 and reached a glacier around nine PM. A beautiful blue iceberg had the added interest of many Fulmars feeding around it. More spectacular mountains and 'Alpine scenery' finished off this long and marvellous day for us.

Day 3 – Friday, 23rd June 2017

Pack Ice

GPS position at 1200: 79°56,9' N, 013°09,5' E

Wind: W 3 m/s Weather: cloudy Temperature: 3.5°C



When we first looked out from the ship on Friday morning, we were a few kilometres offshore from the NW corner of the island of Spitsbergen, the largest island in the Svalbard archipelago. It was overcast with bits of low cloud and fog, occasional snow flurries, cool, and windy. But – we were surrounded by dense sea ice and that meant we might see what we all came for - polar bears! So, undeterred by the weather, and dressed in warm clothing, the bridge and the decks were soon filled with eager binocular-carrying passengers searching the sea ice, not only for bears but also for other arctic treats such as the ringed and bearded seals, walruses, and minke whales scattered at low densities throughout the ice-covered areas. For the birders, the possibility of seeing a diversity of sea birds, including such treasures as the ivory gull ensured that all eyeballs and binoculars would be glued together. In fact, the presence of large numbers of birds feeding in the pack ice surrounding the ship suggested that the waters below were rich in food, which would be good for seals and polar bears as well. But, beyond the goal of seeing a single priority species, it was the first opportunity for most of the passengers to simply observe and experience the fascinating environment of the arctic pack ice.

Overall, we were extraordinarily fortunate today, especially considering that the overall visibility

was not great. By the time we had finished breakfast, one of the ship's officers on the bridge had already spotted a distant yellowy spot which, as we approached, became a bear. It was lying down and as we got closer, it stood up and looked at the ship. We could also see he was an adult male but not in particularly good condition. There was little fat on his hindquarters so his hide simply appeared to drop down from his hips. The bear was not afraid but it was also clear he wasn't interested in visiting as he simply began to slowly walk away. Consequently, we didn't follow him because it is important that we not stress any of the wildlife we have come to view in their natural home.

After a few more hours of searching, Rinie spotted another distant yellowy dot lying motionless in a small pit dug into a snowdrift that had formed on a small ridge of ice. With great patience, Captain Barria skilfully moved the *Ortelius* to about 150 m or so from the bear. In fact, the ship's approach was done so sensitively, the bear continued to sleep soundly after we arrived, apparently unaware of our presence. For well over an hour we studied the sleeping bear and wondered when he might get up and be a bit more active. We also knew that when bears sleep during the day out on the sea ice, they normally don't wake for 7-8 hours, much like a human. Rather than disrupt the natural behaviour of the sleeping bear, so we could see him walk about, we briefly considered leaving him undisturbed and going to investigate a third very distant bear that appeared to be scavenging on something. However, we knew he had to wake up sometime so, since we were so well positioned, we decided to be patient and simply wait. Then however, we got a big surprise. A minke whale surfaced and blew beside the ship, dove, and surfaced to blow again ... right beside the bear! Completely startled, the bear jumped up, looked at the ship, and then walked slowly over to within a few metres. The roar of camera shutters was almost deafening. After 20 minutes or so of being a star, he wandered over to a nearby crack in the ice and lay down to demonstrate how a bear still-hunts for a seal. After hunting for about another 20 minutes, he stood up and slowly walked away from the area. As he walked, we could see he was a full adult males with scars on his neck from fighting with other males over females in the breeding season and he was in fairly normal body condition for a male bear at this time of year.

Overall, these two bears provided some outstanding viewing along with some interesting insights into their life on the sea ice. Along with the abundance of birds, including an ivory gull and an arctic skua stealing a fish from a tern, several seals and, of course, our friendly minke whale, it was a wonderful first day in the sea ice.

Day 4 – Saturday, 24th June 2017

Pack Ice

GPS position at 1200: 80°02.0' N, 013°19.1' E

Wind: calm Weather: clear Temperature: 8°C



Morning doesn't predict for us any good weather condition for next few hours, thick fog around ship and cloudy sky, but luckily just before lunch we had almost clear sky above us and endless ice. After lunch temperature on open deck reach 12°C, it was like a Mediterranean cruise around pack ice, few guides took of warm clothes and put on shorts. Mean while, guides spotted for us laying on sea ice Bearded Seal. Long, fat, "sausage"-shaped adult male with small head and long whiskers, starring at our ship not far away than 30 meters, after 20 minutes of taking pictures we set course at far north to spot more Polar Bears Before dinner passengers participate in astonishing lecture about Polar Bears conducted by Ian Stirling the Word famous Polar Bear researcher. On A lecture we absorbed a lot of information about evolution and behaviour of those amazing animals, next after the lecture Dejan with Lilian invite us on open deck to have a cup of cinnamon hot chocolate with rum and tasty cookies. Before dinner we had a recap by Marijke and Mick about spotted Bearded Seal and Northern Fulmars, Rinie also give us some more detailed information about future plan for our stunning voyage.

Day 5 – Sunday, 25th June 2017

Magdalenafjord and Sallyhamna

GPS position at 1200: 79°33.6' N, 011°03.9' E

Wind: calm Weather: clear Temperature: 21°C



We awoke whilst already approaching Magdalenafjord and this was a promising start of yet another beautiful sunny day. Soon a few walrus were spotted as they created puffy bushy blows at the entrance of this magnificent fjord. We made a landing at Gravenesodden for a scenic walk towards the glacier. A few minutes silence was held during which the sound of birds, glacier and even the barking of a distant polar fox were heard.

In the mean time, on the other side of the fjord, some of us were landing at the foot of a huge colony of Little Auks. It was a bit of a climb up towards this impressive colony but it was definitely worth it. The lichens and mosses made for a rather soft walk up, passing through some areas of snow, whilst overhead tens of thousands, if not more, Little Auks were greeting us with their chatter. When we reached the area of the first boulders we could see these tiny auks with some impressive close-up views – how pretty they were, with their white-eye stripe and dark heads. They were nesting amongst these boulders and there was quite a bit of Auk traffic going on and things seemed quite organised. However, now and again a giant Gloucus Gull disturbed the Auk-order and caused chaos resulting in all the Little Auks taking flight into the air. There were also many polar fox tracks in the snow, but they must have been hiding somewhere, undoubtedly making good use of

their camouflage. We admired all the sounds and the coming and going of all the auks.

After outmanoeuvring some shallow rocks, a scenic drive brought us back to the vessel where a lunch buffet was served. After lunch the Ortelius continued transiting towards Sallyhamna and Holmiabukta. Some pretty impressive scenery was on show here. But we also admired the small copepods, which were on display in a small aquarium on the bow. They were only just collected by Arjen whilst he had been towing a plankto-net behind his zodiac. How many of these tiny creatures were found in such a small sample! It was a real eye opener for most of us and especially the little jellies made an impressive display!

Following on from our copepod adventure, we boarded zodiacs for a scenic tour along the glacier and around a string of tiny islands. Some polar bear tracks were visible on the island's coastline but we could not find a bear. Instead, we enjoyed the ice formations and the delicate Arctic Terns, which were feeding close to the coastline. Eider ducks were pairing up preparing for another busy breeding season. Glaucus Gulls and Barnacle Geese were also seen and some of us were lucky to see a Bearded Seal. Back onboard the day ended with an Arctic Barbeque!

Day 6 – Monday, 26th June 2017

Pack Ice

GPS position at 1200: 80°00,4' N, 013°10,1' E
Wind: calm Weather: clear Temperature: 10°C



The passengers awoke to the reassuring steady throb of the engines and dull clunk of occasional ice flows hitting the hull as Ortelius approached the edge of the drift ice for another day of bear patrolling. The sun blazed from a crystal clear sky and sparkled from the jumbled blocks slowly drifting in a perfectly calm sea.

After breakfast passengers festooned with binoculars and various sizes of cameras lined the decks facing in every direction, hoping to be the first to spot a bear. Rinie and Ian, both with powers of impressive concentration, stuck to their posts the longest. Ian with the odd break for coffee and Rinie to use the bridge windows as a mirror to apply multiple layers of sun cream on his already brown face.

Cameras focused on the empty vastness of the panorama and on the abstract patterns created by the shattered flows as they cracked apart, tilted dramatically, and swept past along the side of the ship. Every now and then a seal was spotted. The most impressive being a couple of close encounters with bearded seals, which resulted in excellent photographs from the constantly clicking passengers.

Mick delivered a lecture in the morning titled 'Birds of Svalbard' whilst Ian followed up in the afternoon with a thought provoking presentation 'Polar Bears and Climate Change'.

At 'Sounds of the sea' quiz by Marijke at recap had everyone entertained followed by Rinie and Ian with a presentation on 'Polar bear hunting techniques'. It was another relaxing Oceanwide Expeditions day with passengers entranced by the zigzagging aesthetic patrol through the ever changing textures of sea ice and stimulated by the series of educational lectures.

Day 7 – Tuesday, 27th June 2017

At Sea and Colesbukta

GPS position at 1200: 78°10.4' N, 012°58.4' E

Wind: S 5 m/s Weather: clear Temperature: 7°C



Waking up to the roughest (or to put it more appropriately, least calm) seas on the trip did not spell well for our intended morning of whale-watching. But it turned out to be not so bad actually. The whales were there and were for the most part calm and showed no clear avoidance of the *Ortelius*. All in all we saw at least 2 Blue Whales and 2 Fin Whales, one of the latter seemingly a bit smaller than the other, so being able to tick off two of the largest animals the planet has ever seen in one morning is not the worst way to start a day.

The idea was to do our last landing at the Alkhornet but in the end the wind just did not allow for the required landing conditions. Upon considering our options, we decided to go for the so-called Colesbukta instead as it would be more sheltered. Formerly a small Russian mining settlement but now abandoned, this site is a graveyard to its buildings and structures as well as the final resting place of some of its former workers, for there is a graveyard with some seventeen graves a little distance from the sea. It is also home to an array of fascinating creatures and while we appreciated the reindeer and the birds, the superstars came in the shape of a family of Arctic foxes with tiny little cubs. We approached them slowly and in parts, meaning they did not see us as a threat and so we got good looks at them, making this afternoon a mix of what makes Svalbard such a special place; one of great wild nature and remains of the people that came up there to make use of it.

Day 7 – Wednesday, 28th June 2017

Longyearbyen

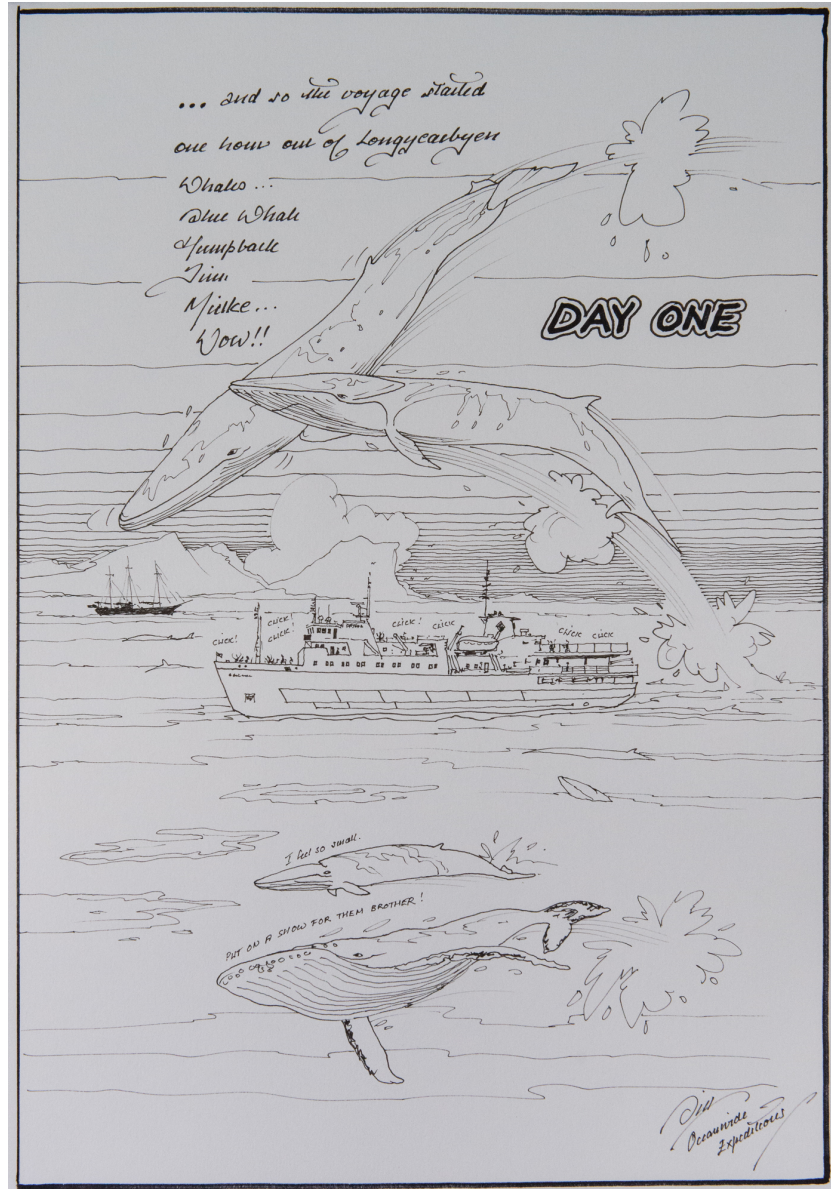
GPS position at 0800: 78°14.0' N, 015°37.4' E

Our wonderful vessel Ortelius arrived slightly sooner than usual in port as some of our passengers had an early morning flight and so this had to be accommodated. While some slept, or tried to after our inspirational week together, staff and crew were busy unloading bags and assisting passengers as well as loading provisions in preparation for yet another wonderful Arctic adventure. The rest of the passengers left around 9 AM and were met with a series of buses ready to take them into town for a little exploration of what has to be the most northerly settlement of any size in the world. An amazing adventure was now over but hopefully it served to create appetite for even more!

*Thank you all for such a wonderful voyage, for your company,
good humour and enthusiasm. We hope to see you again in the future,
wherever that might be!*

Total distance sailed on our voyage: 644 nautical miles

Furthest North: 80°09.8' N / 012°17.7' E



On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria, Expedition Leader Rinie van Meurs, Hotel Manager Dejan Nikolic, and all their crew and staff, it has been a pleasure travelling with you.



- 1 - Longyearbyen**
- 2 - Sarstangen (Walrus)**
- 3 - Engelsbukta**
- 4 - Kongsvegen (ships cruise)**
- 5 - Pack ice**
- 6 - Magdelenafjord**
 - Graveneset (walk)
 - Alkekongen (Little Auks)
- 7 - Fuglefjorden (zodiac cruise)**
- 8 - Isfjord (Blue & Fin Whales)**
- 9 - Colesbukta**

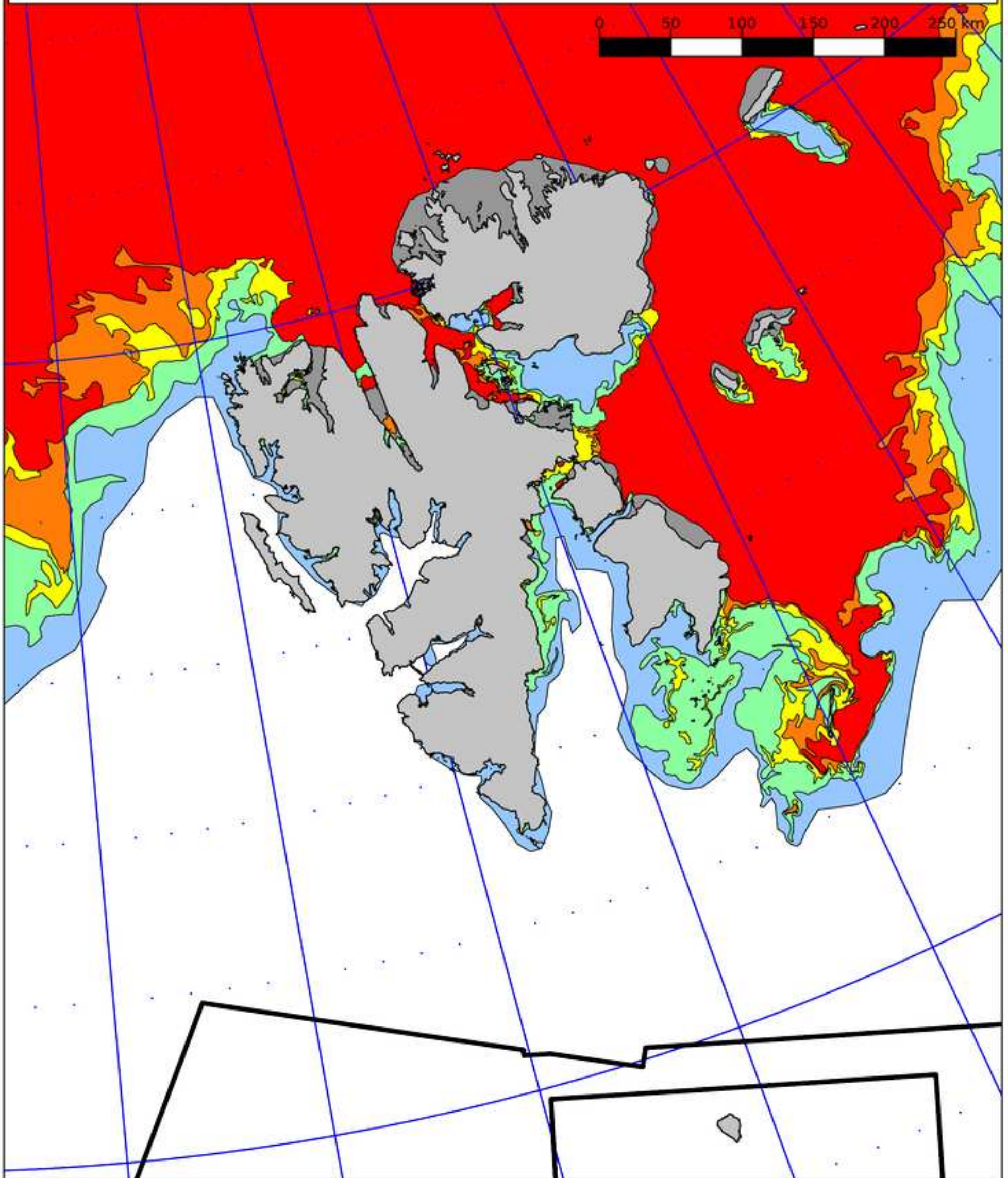
Species list OTL07 21st-28th June 2017

English Name	Scientific	21-jun	22-jun	23-jun	24-jun	25-jun	26-jun	27-jun
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>							
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		x					
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>							
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>							
Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>							
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>							
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>		x		x	x		x
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>							
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>							
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>							
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>							
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>							
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>							
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>							
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>							
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>							
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	x	x		x	x		x
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>		x					
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>							
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>							x
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>							
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>							
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	x						x
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>							
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>							x
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>							
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>							
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>							
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>		x					
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>							
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>							x
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>							
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>							
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>							


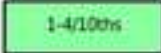

Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>							
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>							
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>				x		x	
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>		x		x		x	x
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>							x
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>		x	x			x	
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>							
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>							
Common/Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>							
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	x	x	x	x		x	x
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>				x			
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>							
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>							
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>							
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ross' Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>							
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>			x	x			
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	x	x	x	x		x	x
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>							
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	x	x	x	x		x	x
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>	x	x	x	x		x	x
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	x	x	x	x		x	x
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	x	x	x		x	x	x
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>							
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>							
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>							
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>							
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>							
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	x						x
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>							
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>							
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>							
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>							
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>							
Gyrfalcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>							

MAMMALS

English	Scientific	21-jun	22-jun	23-jun	24-jun	25-jun	26-jun	27-jun
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>		x					
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>		x		x	x	x	
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>							
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>			x	x		x	
Hooded seal	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>							
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		x					
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	x	x	x	x	x		
Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>							
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	x						x
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>							x
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>							
Bowhead whale	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>							
Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>							
Narwhal	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>							
Northern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>							
Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>							
White-beaked Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>							
Beluga	<i>Dephinapterus leucas</i>							
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>			x				
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>							
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>		x					x
Sibling vole	<i>Microtus rossiaemeridionalis</i>							
Short tailed Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>							



Ice Categories

 10/10ths	Fast Ice	 7-9/10ths	Close Drift Ice	 1-4/10ths	Very Open Drift Ice
 4-10/10ths	Very Close Drift Ice	 4-7/10ths	Open Drift Ice	 0-1/10ths	Open Water

Projection: Polar Stereographic, True Scale at 90°N, WGS84 Scale: 3.792.530
 Map Corners:
 UL = 82°59'26.367"N, 4°23'24.258"E UR = 80°15'44.998"N, 44°11'58.041"E
 LR = 72°32'49.391"N, 22°45'57.155"E LL = 73°52'48.561"N, 1°53'51.282"E
 Coastline Data: GSHHS version 2.2.0 (<http://www.soest.hawaii.edu/wessel/gshhs/>)



 **Sentinel-1
Radarsat-2**



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The size of your photo should be between 2MB and 8MB. Our lucky winners will be contacted by e-mail and Facebook by January 15, 2018.

Read the terms and conditions of the contest on www.oceanwide-expeditions.com/page/contest-terms



Kayaking the Waters of Antarctica The weather changes so dramatically down here that you simply cannot say, "this looks like a great day" if it is one – rather you must live in the moment and perhaps a more appropriate phrase might be, "this looks like a great moment"! After enduring Force 8 winds on the Beaufort Wind Scale the Ortelius (our home during this Antarctica cruise) pulled into calm waters at Georges Point affording us our first close look at the breathtaking scenery (icebergs, glaciers and mountains)

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Write about your experience!

What was it like to camp out under the Antarctic sky? Was it scary when you encountered a polar bear? Was this your first cruise and were you nervous about crossing open waters?

After all, how your expedition made you feel is what you're going to carry with you for the rest of your life. If you share your experience you just might win yourself a € 1000 gift voucher for your next polar adventure.

Here's what you need to do:

1. Write a post (600 – 1200 words) in Dutch, English, or German about what excited you the most on your Oceanwide Expeditions cruise. The topic is entirely up to you.
2. Make sure you add tiles and subtitles to the story.
3. Create a hyperlink or two inside of your post that links back to the particular trip you took as found on our website. The link could connect to the ship's page, the trip itinerary, the particular destination's page, or perhaps a page related to one of the activities you enjoyed.
4. Add 3 to 5 pictures (they should be 2 MB minimum in size, in landscape format and attached separately when you decide to send your entry to us).
5. Post it online and send us the URL where your story is published. **OR** send your post to us at marketing@oceanwide-expeditions.com. Either way, make sure you include your full name and e-mail address.
6. **Spread the word!**



PRIZES



€ 1000
GIFT VOUCHER

for Oceanwide Expeditions



€ 500 gift voucher
for Oceanwide Expeditions



€ 250 gift voucher
for Oceanwide Expeditions



**ENTRIES CLOSE
DECEMBER 31**

Our lucky winners will be contacted by e-mail and Facebook by January 15, 2018

Read the full terms and conditions on oceanwide-expeditions.com/page/contest-terms

Rinie van Meurs Expedition Team Leader



After a formal education in Forestry and Nature Conservation, Rinie started to travel around the world in search of wildlife and in particular birds. However, he was already attracted by the polar regions since he was a boy. After he finished his study, he went in the early eighties on private trips to Iceland and Northern Scandinavia; this was as Arctic as he could afford. However he knew, further north the pack ice in the high Arctic Ocean that was his goal. To explore one day the sea ice, as the early explorers did, that was something he could only dream of.

Until 1989, he managed to find a job on board of the “old” Plancius as a potato peeler for his first season in Spitsbergen. After he came back he knew he was definitely hooked on the high latitudes. Rinie became one of the industry’s first expedition leaders and a pioneer in exploring new landing sites in Spitsbergen and the Antarctic. Only around Spitsbergen he has made more than 200 expedition cruises. He knows Spitsbergen better than his own backyard!

Since '89 then he has logged in his sea man’s book more than 300 expedition cruises including; East- and West Greenland, the Canadian high Arctic, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya, Geographical North Pole, Antarctica, South Georgia, the Falklands, the sub Antarctic Islands of New Zealand, and many islands along the Atlantic Ridge.

During these years, spending so much time exploring the Arctic and having the opportunity to encounter so many Polar Bears in the ice, he has become absolutely passionate about these magnificent animals. Give him a ship with the right ice class and Rinie will take you to the Polar Bears. He has become an expert in leading Polar Bear trips.

He is also leading every fall Polar Bear trips on the Hudson Bay. He has published four photo books on the Polar Regions of which one was about the Polar Bears of Spitsbergen.

Arjen Drost - Guide & lecturer



When Arjen arrived in Spitsbergen for the first time in 1999 as a biology student, he fell in love with the Arctic. After three summers of research on Barnacle Geese in Ny Ålesund, Spitsbergen he started guiding in small expedition cruise ships for Oceanwide Expeditions. Here he loves to share his passion for the Polar Regions with others.

Arjen was born in the Netherlands and soon started watching birds. Many hours were spent finding and watching birds in the local neighbourhood and enjoying nature. His choice to start studying biology came to no surprise for anybody. During this study he specialized in ecology, especially the interaction between herbivores and plants.

For ten years Arjen has combined guiding in the Arctic with a full time teacher job at a secondary school in the Netherlands, where he taught biology. Now he gave up his teaching job to become a fulltime expedition guide.

In his spare time Arjen is a keen nature and wildlife photographer, giving photo workshops and lectures and is co-author of several Dutch books on nature photography.

Arjen speaks English, Dutch and German.



Bill Maclean Smith

Bald, blue-eyed, patriotic but not fanatical, tartan-clad, hairy-chested, yellow wellie and kilt wearing, energised, fun loving Scotsman.

50 years teaching / 36 years Head of Art and Design Ellon Academy,
Artist / Designer / Illustrator / Cartoonist
50 years experience in Adventure Education

Royal Yachting Association Advanced Powerboat Instructor
Royal Yachting Association Senior Sailing Instructor
Royal Yachting Association Windsurfing Instructor
British Association of Ski Patrollers First Aid Trainer UK and the Alps.
British Canoe Union Open Canoe Instructor
British Caving Association Cave Leader.

Depute Leader Glenshee Ski Patrol Team – Skis everyday during the winter
Member of the Federation Internationale de Patrolles De Ski Avalanche
Committee

President of Lochinver Highland Games Committee
Crofter – Assynt, North West Highlands

Safety Expert

Oceanwide Expeditions Guide Arctic / Antarctic
Adventure Sports –Windsurfing / Sailing / Powerboating / Skiing / Canoeing
Loves excitement - art and design, mountains and the sea

Lectures

A Taste of Scotland – History of Whaling Arctic – History of Whaling Antarctic
Paintings of the sea

Ian Stirling (Guide/naturalist)



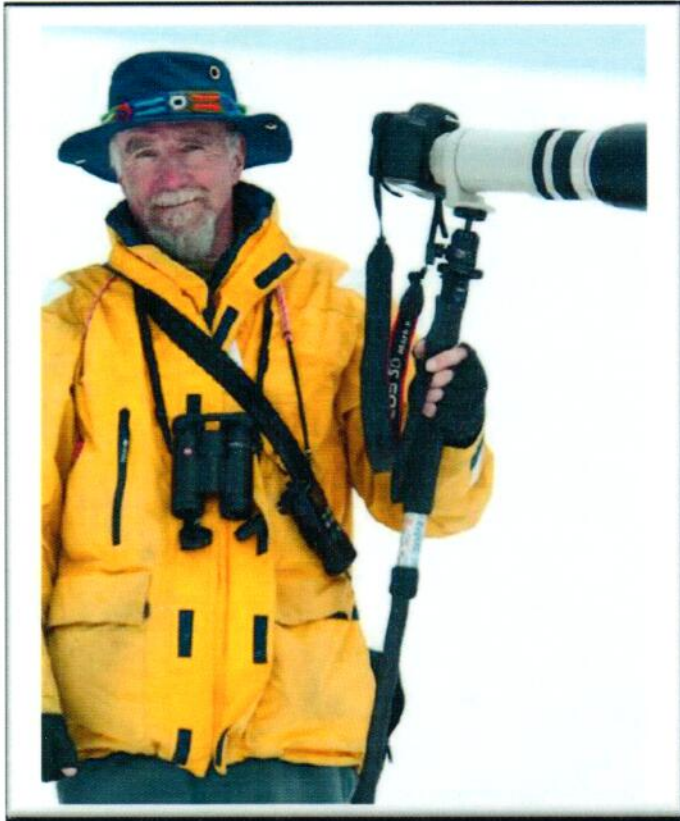
Ian Stirling is an Emeritus Scientist with Environment Canada and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. Following a life-long fascination with polar marine mammals, he has carried out research on polar bears and polar seals (Arctic and Antarctic) and trained graduate students in polar marine mammal research for over 50 years. Particular areas of research interest include ecology, behaviour, evolution, relationships between polar bears and seals, the biological importance of polynyas, and the conservation and management of polar marine mammals and ecosystems. For his work, he has won several awards. He participates in a number of national and international committees on polar bears and marine mammals, has authored or co-authored over 300 scientific articles, and written 5 books on bears and their ecology for the general public. This is his twelfth season as an ecotourism guide in Svalbard and Antarctica.

Szymon Niezabitowski, Poland



Szymon was born in 1993 in Cracow, Poland. He studied Biology and Geography at Jagiellonian University in Krakow where he received graduate degree in "Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences". His graduate thesis was about "Volcanic Soils on Iceland". After he finished his studies he worked for the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, where he was a guide and keeper of exotic animals. From the earliest years of his life he is a passionate naturalist with a special interest in the geography and the wildlife of the higher latitudes.

Mick Brown –Guide & Lecturer



A native of Dublin, Mick has lived in Pembrokeshire, West Wales for over forty years. Many years of experience as a guide, naturalist, and also with the RSPCA, have given him a depth of understanding based on hands-on experience, in particular with seals and seabirds. As an educationalist, he has also worked locally with Pembrokeshire Coast National Parks and also at a children's outdoor education centre.

He has travelled widely (and wildly!) specialising for 15 years in the Arctic and

Antarctica. A zodiac driver and lecturer, he views his role as that of an interpreter, 'translating' the natural world and the animal kingdom. Wherever there is a bear or a badger, a penguin or a gannet to be found, whether in the remote Polar regions or on the Pembrokeshire Islands, Mick is equally at home.

An all round naturalist and a photographer since his teens, his passion for the natural world is truly inspiring. He has recently published a book of his early days in Dublin as a street photographer which has achieved high critical acclaim.



Baldur Thorvaldsson – Polar Expedition Guide

Baldur is Icelandic and has been a marine naturalist since gaining an MSc degree in Ecotourism in Scotland in 2012. He grew up by the North Atlantic Ocean but it took three months of volunteering in a landlocked site in Namibia to make him realise how much the sea truly means to him.

Baldur joined the expedition industry in 2015 and has guided on trips in the Antarctic, Falkland Islands, South Georgia, Svalbard, and Greenland as well as his native Iceland. He cannot say which is his favourite, but if pressed hard, he would say South Georgia.

He loves working on whale-watching boats but only found what his true love is when he started working on expedition ships since they present him with the change and challenges that he thrives on. Not one who fancies a future behind a desk, he always looks forward to his next trip offshore or surrounded by ice.

Baldur is a marine naturalist and expedition guide because he finds the smiling faces on the pier at the end of a trip hugely rewarding. As a graduate of Ecotourism, he strongly believes in sustainable, ethical wildlife tourism as a powerful tool in helping people become conservation minded and appreciate wild places and wildlife.

Pete Gwatkin (Guide/Kayaking Guide) UK

Pete lives in Scotland where he works as a trainer/guide/coach within the outdoor education sector. He works for himself as well as for a number of organisations including the University of Edinburgh, the Scottish National Outdoor Training Centre, Scottish Natural Heritage and the University of the Highlands & Islands. Pete holds undergraduate qualifications in Engineering, Youth Work, Community Education in addition to a postgraduate MSc in Outdoor Education. He has attained the highest professional kayaking, climbing and mountaineering qualifications in the UK where he also works as an outdoor activity advisor as well as a First-Aid trainer/assessor.

A flexible working life allows Pete time for seasonal travel to the polar-regions undertaking short contract work for Oceanwide Expeditions more often as a kayaking guide.

Pete started mountain walking, rock climbing and canoeing at an early age, these activities leading him into many adventures around the world. Pete's longest self supported expedition took place over 54 days where he kayaked 1000 miles up the coast of British Columbia to Alaska. A keen naturalist/photographer Pete takes an interest in all wildlife and would describe himself as a generalist.



Marijke de Boer – Guide/naturalist



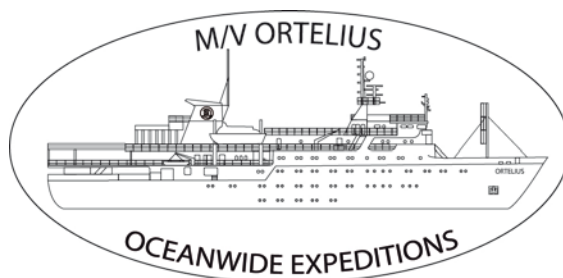
Marijke grew up in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany. In the early-90s, she worked over a number of summers as a volunteer field biologist specialising in sea turtle conservation in Greece. This was a magnificent experience and formed the inspiration for switching her Academic career towards Marine Biology.

She is fascinated by cetaceans, and has worked with Minke whales in Scotland, Killer whales, Blue whales and Belugas in Canada, Bottlenose whales in the Arctic Labrador Sea, Risso's dolphins in the Irish Sea and Sperm whales off the Azores. She has also participated in various ocean-crossing surveys, namely the Davis Strait, Indian Ocean, South China Sea, Southern Ocean and Antarctica. These surveys formed the core foundation of her detailed in-depth experience with marine mammals.

She completed a MSc in Marine Ecology (University of Utrecht) and a PhD (Marine Mammal Ecology) at the University of Wageningen focusing on the abundance and distribution of cetaceans using (low-cost) seagoing vessels ('Platforms of Opportunity').

Nowadays her research focuses on marine fauna within the Wider Caribbean Region, West Africa and Cornwall (UK). Marijke has produced a wide selection of scientific publications and presented numerous papers to various international conferences and committees.

Whilst she very much enjoys the academic side of her career, her first love is sharing her knowledge in the field. She has worked as a wildlife guide during multiple oceanic expeditions and is happy to 'escape the office'. She currently lives in the Netherlands and Cornwall and speaks Dutch, English and German. The ocean is very special to her – *'after more than 20 years of sailing the seven seas, it never fails to educate, surprise and enthrall me'*.



North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 1, June 21, Wednesday: Boarding and departure from Longyearbyen

WELCOME ABOARD!

For the arriving passengers: luggage will be delivered to your cabin as soon as possible. Please check to make sure you have received all your luggage!

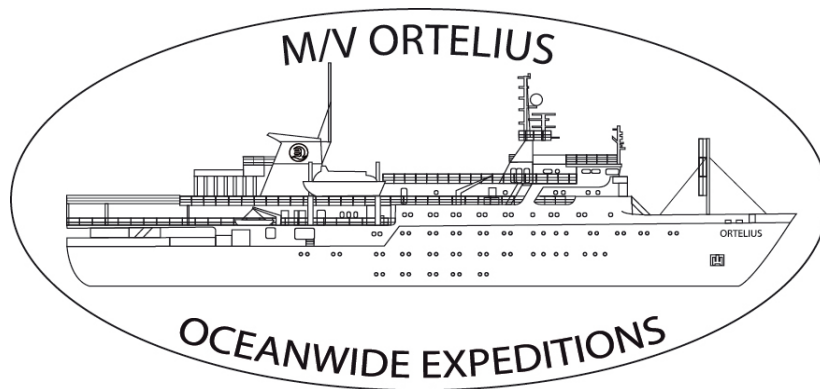
**** Tea and coffee are always available in the lounge bar on deck 6 ****

- ±17.00 Welcome briefing in the lecture room (deck 3, forward). Expedition leader Rinie and hotel manager Dejan will introduce you to life on board the Ortelius. This will be followed by a mandatory 'Safety at Sea' briefing and abandon ship drill.
- ±18.00 Departure of the Ortelius. Please stay off the bridge during the departure, while we are sailing out of the harbour. It will be announced when the bridge will be open.
- 18.45 Welcome meeting and toast with the Captain in the Bar at deck 6. Here you will meet the expedition team and hear about our plans.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the dining room (Deck 4 behind reception).

The first part of the evening we will sail through the large Isfjord towards the open sea. Then we head north, along the outer coast of Spitsbergen. We will stay on the outside of the long and narrow island of Prins Karls Forland, as the passage between this island and Spitsbergen is too shallow.

TBA = To Be Announced

Remember: Take your seasickness medication before you feel the movements of the vessel. Walk slowly on the ship and always use one hand for yourself and one for the ship! Stow your belongings well so things do not break because of the motion of the ship



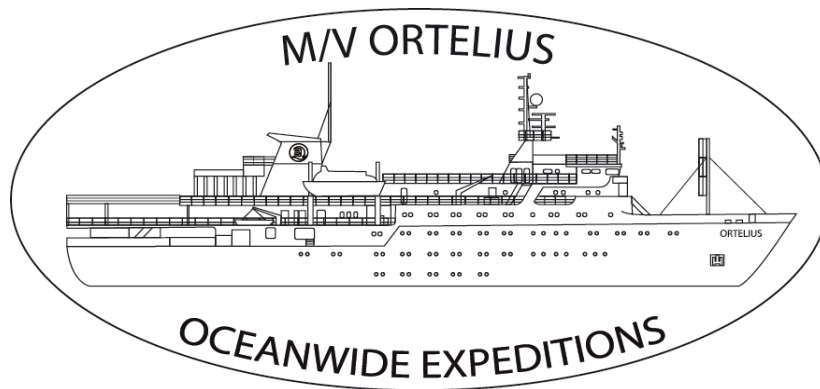
North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 2, June 22, Thursday: Sarstangen, Engelsbukta and Lilliehöökreen

- 07.15 Wake-up call.
- 07.30 – 08.30 Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room (Deck 4) for one hour.
- 08.30 Please join the Expedition Team in the Lecture Room (on deck 3) to hear our mandatory Environmental Guidelines, Zodiac Operations briefing and our Polar Bear “Safety in the Field” briefing.
- TBA* We plan to visit a Walrus haul out site at Sarstangen. If the Walruses are at home we like to offer a landing. We will split up in two groups where one will go for a short walk, while the other visits the Walruses. Later we will swap. More will be explained during the pre-landing briefing in the bar. Stand by for announcements
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room. (Deck 4, behind Reception).
- TBA* After lunch we like to take you ashore on Engelsbukta. Here we like to split up in different groups and take you for a scenic hike with spectacular views over glaciers and moraines. Before the landing there will be a briefing in the bar with more information.
- 18.30 Recap in the bar
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.
- TBA* During dinner we will sail into Lilliehöökfjord towards the beautiful Lilliehöökreen (breen = glacier). After dinner we will cruise with the ship along this spectacular glacier front. Dress warmly and head outside to enjoy!

*TBA: To be announced



North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

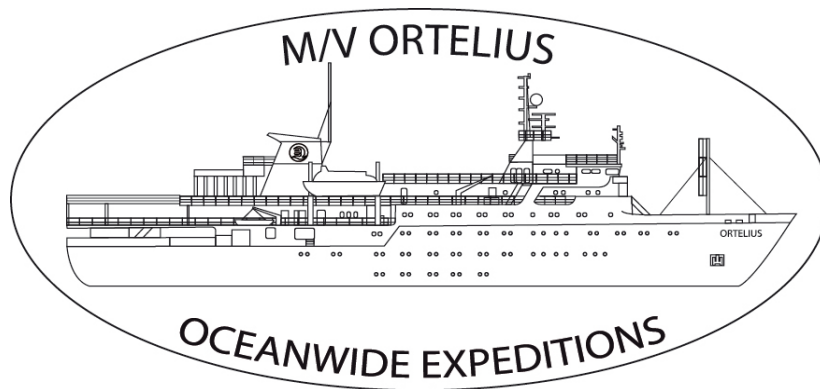
Day 3, June 23, Friday: Pack ice

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 07.45 | Wake-up call. |
| 08.00 – 09.00 | Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room for one hour. |
| 12.30 | Lunch is served in the Dining Room. |
| 18.30 | Recap in the bar. |
| 19.00 | Dinner is served in the Dining Room. |

Today is a true expedition day. We plan to stay in the pack ice the whole day, searching for wildlife. Our course will be determined by the ice and weather. So dress warmly, grab your binoculars and camera's and head outside to enjoy this endless white high arctic scenery.

Depending on weather and wildlife sightings we will make a start with our lecture program, so stand by for announcements. Wildlife sightings will be announced as well.

Remember: if we manage to get close to wildlife, please be quiet on the outside decks so we don't disturb the animals.



North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

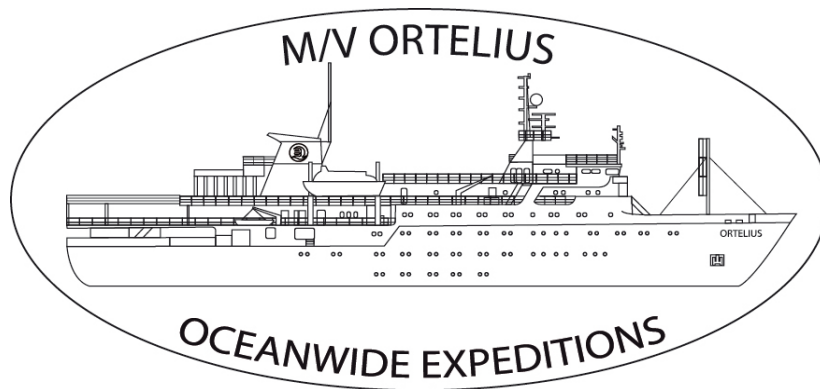
June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 4, June 24, Saturday: Pack ice

- 07.45 Wake-up call.
- 08.00 – 09.00 Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room for one hour.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- 18.30 Recap in the bar.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.

Today will be another expedition day. We will cruise through the pack ice in search for wildlife like birds, seals, whales or more Polar Bears. Please dress warmly and come and help us search on the outside decks. If time and conditions allow, we might give some educational lectures about things we have seen. Stand by for announcements.

Remember: if we manage to get close to wildlife, please be quiet on the outside decks so we don't disturb the animals.

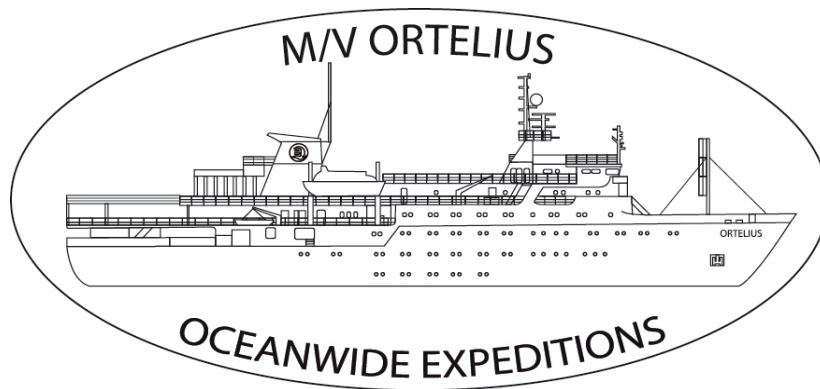


North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 5, June 25, Sunday: Northwest corner

- 07.15 Wake-up call.
- 07.30 – 08.30 Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room for one hour.
- TBA In the morning we offer the choice between two activities in Magdalenafjord. One group can stretch their legs a little at a scenic walk along the shores of Gravenesodden towards a glacier. Another group can go a little uphill to have a look at a Little Auk colony. For more information come to the briefing after breakfast.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- TBA Weather permitting we would like to offer a zodiac cruise in Sallyhamna and Holmiabukta after lunch. These bays have some really nice scenery and have several small islands where we hope to find some bird- and wildlife. Dress warmly as we plan to stay out in the zodiacs for some time. Of course there will be a briefing before this activity with the latest updates.
- 18.30 Recap in the bar.
- 19.00 A special Arctic dinner. Stand by for announcements.



North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

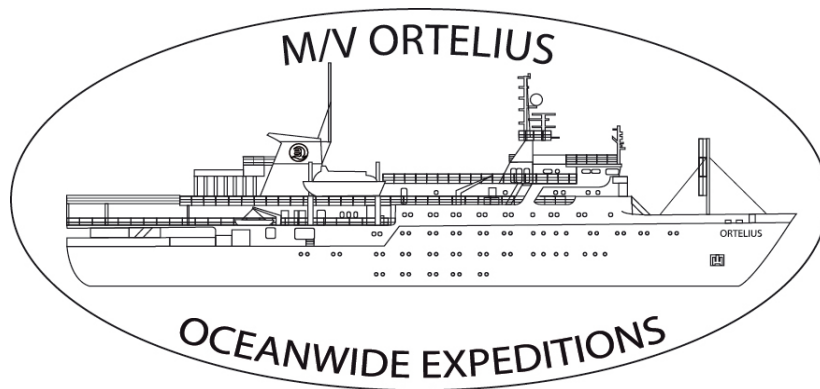
June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 6, June 26, Monday: Last day in the pack ice

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 07.45 | Wake-up call. |
| 08.00 – 09.00 | Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room for one hour. |
| 12.30 | Lunch is served in the Dining Room. |
| 18.30 | Recap in the bar. |
| 19.00 | Dinner is served in the Dining Room. |

Today is another expedition day. We will spend the whole day in the ice looking for Polar Bears. Dress warmly and join us on the outer decks searching for wildlife. Please stand by for announcements for lectures.

Remember: if we manage to get close to wildlife, please be quiet on the outside decks so we don't disturb the animals.

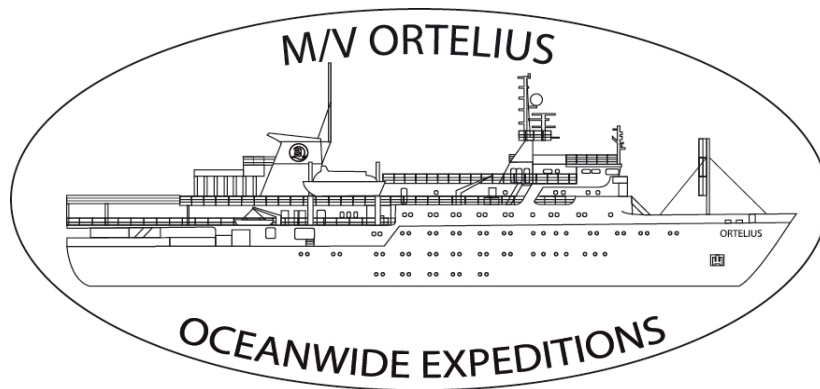


North Spitsbergen, Polar bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 7, June 27, Tuesday: Isfjord

- 07.45 Wake-up call.
- 08.00 – 09.00 Breakfast buffet in the Dining Room for one hour.
- In the morning we will sail through the entrance of Isfjord. This area is usually a good place to find large whales. Keep your eyes open for large blows. If we find some nice ones, we might try to get a little closer.
- TBA During the morning it is time to settle your ships account. Stand by for announcements.
- 12.30 Lunch is served in the Dining Room.
- TBA In the afternoon we like to offer a landing at Alkhornet. Beneath this bird cliff has very tundra and usually nice Spitsbergen Reindeer. Also there is a chance to see Arctic Fox. Stand by for announcements for the pre-landing briefing.
- TBA After this landing we like to collect the rubber boots and life jackets. Please wait until you are called to drop off your boots.
- 18.30 Farewell meeting in the bar.
- 19.00 Dinner is served in the Dining Room.



Spitsbergen, Polar Bear Special

June 21 – 28, 2017

Day 8, June 28, Wednesday: Disembarkation – Farewell.

00.00 **Only for those leaving at the 2:30 flight:** please put your heavy luggage in the corridor near your cabin. The crew and staff will carry it down the pier.

Please leave your cabin keys at the reception.

00.30 It is time to say goodbye for those who leave at the 2.30 flight. There will be a bus that takes you and your luggage to the airport. Please check that you take all your luggage from the pier and drop it in the bus.

07.15 Wake-up call for all the other passengers.

07.30 Breakfast

Please put your heavy luggage in the corridor near your cabin, at the latest at 07.30. The crew and staff will carry it down to the pier.

Please leave your cabin keys at the reception.

08.30 Time to say goodbye! All passengers leave the ship.

Please check that you take all your luggage from the pier and drop it at the luggage truck. The luggage will be brought to the airport where you can pick it up before your flight. A chartered bus will take you to the parking lot at the Svalbard Butikken (the main shopping centre in Longyearbyen).

11.30 Airport transfer. The bus will depart from Svalbard Butikken to the airport, where you will pick up your luggage from the luggage vehicle. If you are late you must arrange your own taxi!

On behalf of the Captain, Officers, staff and crew, we would like to wish you a safe onward journey. It has been a pleasure having you onboard the M/V Ortelius.