



**Exploring the Spitsbergen coastline
Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen
15th of June – 22nd of June 2022
On board of the
*M.V. Plancius***



MV *Plancius* is named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geologist and minister Petrus Plancius (1552-1622). She was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy with the name Hr. Ms. Tydeman. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004, when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. In 2007 the ship was completely overhauled and converted into a 114-passenger expedition ship. Plancius is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draught of 5 m (20 feet), ice class 1D, top speed 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.

Captain Torry Sakkariassen

and his international crew

of 49 sailors:

Chief Officer	Romanas Vicas	[Lithuania]
2. Officer	Yaroslav Pyetukhov	[Ukraine]
3. Officer	Martin Hansson	[Sweden]
Hotel Manager:	Aleks Lebedev	[Ukraine]
Head Chef:	Ivan Yuriychuk	[Ukraine]
Sous Chef:	Sergey Sklyarov	[Ukraine]
Ships doctor:	Bram Wouters	[Netherlands]
Expedition Leader:	Pablo Brandemann	[Argentina]
Assist. Exp. Leader:	Marcel Paul	[Netherlands]
Kayak Guide:	Alexis Bellezze	[Argentina]
Expedition Guide:	Chloé Maréchal	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Ben Giunchi	[Argentina]
Expedition Guide:	Beth Hitchcock	[Scotland]
Expedition Guide:	Slava Nikitin	[Russia]
Expedition Guide:	Keechy Akkerman	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Axel Brandemann	[Argentina]
Expedition Guide:	Regis Perdriat	[France]

Day 1 - Wednesday 15th of June, Longyearbyen

21h00 GPS Position: 78°10.2'N / 013°28.3'E

Wind: NW 2 Sea: Smooth Weather: Partly Cloudy Temperature: 4°C

Many of the guest arrived at Longyearbyen on the day of embarkation. Throughout the afternoon the luggage was shuttled from the key out to Plancius on anchor in the bay. By 4pm there was an eager line of guests waiting to embark on the Zodiac journey! Our luck with the weather meant that we could save our wet zodiac journeys for later in the trip.

Once on board the evening went by quickly as we were busy with familiarisations, safety briefings, cocktails with Captain Torry Sakkariassen and of course a lovely first dinner. As we set off out of Isfjord in the evening, and northward towards our first scheduled activity of the trip, there was time to enjoy the views of the flat table-topped mountains in the late evening light.



Day 2 - Thursday 16th of June, Smeerenburg - bear sighting at the glacier and 'blubber town' afternoon landing

21h00 GPS Position: 79°57.8'N / 006°9.0'E

Wind: SE 1 Sea: Smooth Weather: Overcast Temperature: 4°C

The first morning of our voyage in the Arctic arrived and our Expedition Leader Pablo woke us up with an update of weather conditions that awaited us outside the beginning of this adventure. Thirty minutes later Alek announced breakfast time. We were delighted with the fantastic buffet to fill ourselves with energy, so we were then ready to explore. As with every expedition, we must start with a few briefings to inform us of procedures, safety and rules. Although we cannot eliminate our impact, the guidance helps us to minimize our impact as far as possible in this pristine environment.



The plan was a ships cruise for the first half of the day to allow enough time for all these mandatory talks. However, the morning was interrupted by the presence of a distant polar bear mother and her two second year cubs. They were in a rocky

outcrop at Smeerenburg glacier. Plancius approached very carefully until we were a safe distance from the bears where we started launching zodiacs. The zodiac cruise enabled us to be on the water with a better view of the spectacular moment. Nine boats were deployed, and in a snake-like path, we went closer keeping a considerable distance to prevent disturbing the animals. Fortunately, we had a good time and opportunity to take some beautiful pictures. After some time, we left the bears in piece and continued along the coastline to the glacier front cruising in the magnificent landscape.

Out on the zodiac cruse the cold winds reminded us of where we were in the high arctic. It was a lovely warm feeling to be back on board in time for a great lunch prepared and served by the galley team.



The ship stayed in the area, and it couldn't had been a better idea, the next activity planned was a landing at Smeerenburg where there is an historical site related to the early times of the whalers. Very old and faint ruins were spotted by members of the expedition team who explained in detail fascinating tales from centuries ago when the Dutch occupied this promontory which became known as 'blubber town'.

But that was not the only reason we landed there, there was also something very characteristic from the Arctic resting in the beach not far from our landing site: a group of 30 walrus lay very chilled on the beach. Our guides took us there following a slow approach, gradually getting closer to these big mammals.

With all the logistics of the day we were able to see how the zodiac operations work on board Plancius. In addition, our good luck and the efforts of the crew and staff brought us an impressive first day to start this dreamed adventure – it will be a challenge to match this in the days to come!

Day 3 - Friday 17th of June, bear sighting at Texas Bar and afternoon landing at Monacobreen

21h00 GPS Position: 79°42.9'N / 014°12.9'E

Wind: Calm Sea: Smooth Weather: Overcast Temperature: 6°C



As usual we were woken up by the sweet voice of Pablo at exactly 7 o'clock. Guides were already at the bridge scanning the landing site around Texas bar. The name

of the place might give us the impression it is a bar, but it's not. It is a hut that was built in 1927 by the well-known hunter Hilmar Nøis and his uncle. Why they gave it this name remains a mystery.

The area seemed clear of polar bears and safe to land so the guide team went ashore to scout the area from land. Just before the first passengers landed however a bear was spotted in the distance. Although the bear was moving away from the landing site the landing had to be cancelled for safety reasons. There cannot be any chance taken with bears on land as they can cover large distances in a short period of time. It is our absolute priority to keep the passengers and the bears safe.

Instead of the landing, Chloe gave a very interesting lecture about polar bears and there was a very lively round of questions at the end of the presentation. This goes to show just how much the king of the Arctic is of interest to people.



After lunch there was a Zodiac cruise in front of Monaco Breen, we also found a little island where we could land and enjoy the views of the glacier. After continuing the Zodiac cruise all along the long front of the Monaco glacier we spend some time in-between the ice before returning to the ship.

Just before dinner there was a recap by Marcel with some pictures of how Smeerenburg looked in the early years of the 18th century. The recap was overdue from the day before when we visited Smeerenburg but then there was not enough time during the recap. There was a small break during the recap as a polar bear was spotted, but unfortunately the bear quickly went out of sight. Second recap was another enthusiastic delivery from Beth on how to explain the landscape through the geology and glaciology. Last up before dinner was Pablo who told us all about the plans for tomorrow.

After dinner there was another bear sighting announced but soon to be rectified to be a “rock bear”. Late evening the Plancius passed Moffen island where some rare gulls were spotted as well as quite a bit of activity by the resident walruses.

Altogether another very good day in the Arctic.

Day 4 - Saturday 18th of June, zodiac cruising at Alkefjellet and afternoon sighting of bears hunting at Wahlenbergfjord entrance

21h00 GPS Position: 80°00.7'N / 017°23.0'E

Wind: S 4 Sea: Slight Weather: Partly cloudy Temperature: 2°C

What a day!

After breakfast, the Expedition team led us zodiac cruising along the gigantic cliffs of Alkefjellet, literally meaning “Auks (Birds) mountains”.

Every year, tens of thousands of seabirds come to breed on these huge rocky walls. AS we approached closer to the cliffs, we could actually see that each species has his own level. Kittiwakes in higher parts, some fulmars too, and 60,000 pairs of Brunnich’s guillemots just below.

All the senses were on. Sound, sight, even sense of smell!

With there are so many birds, it must attract predators. We got lucky when an Arctic fox appeared, slowly walking under the towering cliffs in search of some eggs or lost birds. The Arctic fox was there for enough time to allow all of us to enjoy the sighting of this cute little polar mammal.

Weather and sea conditions were perfect and allowed us to enjoy the full picture and the details.

Alex and his team joined us with an extra zodiac and started to offer us hot drinks. Perfect timing for this floating polar bar!



In the early afternoon, more Polar bears were spotted - a female and two cubs. Again, conditions helped us to watch them approach a seal and start a hunt. The female missed the first one, we had to leave them for next destination while a second try was underway.

After this great moment, the decision was made that we would circle around a bit further to see if we could find more wildlife as it looked like we were on our lucky day. Well, this option appeared to be the good one as a Blue Whale was spotted in late afternoon. Another great moment, watching the biggest mammal worldwide swimming a few meters away. We had the opportunity to see the fluke, back, and fin and to hear the strength of the blow.



Day 5 - Sunday 19th of June, bears near the Sjuøyane, zodiac cruise and landings at Chermsideøya

21h00 GPS Position: 80°36.8'N / 020°17.9'E

Wind: NE 1 Sea: Calm Weather: Fog Temperature: 0°C

The announcement of a bear sighting at 0800 was a great way to start the day! The bear sat on the pack ice in front of one of the islands belonging to the magical island group Sjuøyane. The bear did not move around much but was mostly just relaxing and every now and then he stuck his nose in the air, to sniff for any prey nearby. Although it is always amazing to see a polar bear, it did mean we had to cancel our landing on one of the islands, so we turned the ship around and moved toward Chermsideøya.

At Chermsideøya we had the opportunity to navigate the zodiacs through the ice in search of some wildlife. It started with a bearded seal relaxing on the sea ice, followed by a swimming walrus, and more seals and walruses lying on the ice a bit

further away. The water was flat calm, which provided beautiful reflections of the surrounding hills. Because the water was so clear, we could look into the water and see the algae and kelp. Throughout the zodiac cruise the sea ice started to close in, leading to some exciting and tricky navigation through the ice back to Plancius!



After the zodiac cruise, we enjoyed the delicious lunch provided by the crew, and we had a brilliant surprise... through the windows in the restaurant, we saw a walrus with a baby on the sea ice nearby on Plancius' starboard side! Really cute! Some amazing photos were taken of this very special sighting.

After being fuelled with the lunch, we could test if our sea legs still worked on land, after a few days on the ship. We landed at the southern point of Chermsideøya on the beach. Here we had the opportunity to hike up the hill and enjoy the glorious views from height. Below the hill, words were written on the ground with rocks, geological graffiti. It had become a habit amongst expeditions that visited the site to leave a 'who is who' with the name of the ship and the year. There was even a swastika, created by crew members of a German submarine during the second

world war. The swastika led to a lot of debate if such a symbol belongs in this peaceful environment.



During the recap, Regis gave an informative talk on guillemots, rounding up the abundance of these birds which we saw the day before. Following this Keechy surprised us by introducing us to Svalbard's tropical forest! Spoiler alert, it was a 380 million year old fossil forest...

Last but not least, in the evening dinner was not served in the restaurant... We had a BBQ at the back deck! Accompanied with some party music and (glüh)wine flowing freely, the evening quickly turned into a party with loads of laughter and dancing into the night! A fantastic ending to another brilliant, fully packed day!

Day 6 - Monday 20th of June, into to pack ice

21h00 GPS Position: 80°15.3'N / 011°37.5'E

Wind: NE 3 Sea: Slight Weather: Partly Cloudy Temperature: 4°C

We spend the day approaching the sea ice pack and skirted along the edge. Many binoculars were looking into the bright ice covered ocean and observing all the varying shades of blue illuminating the ice. The furthest North position we reached was 80°57.3' North 18° 10.9 East.



It was a sunny day, the views were clear and beautiful. It was wonderful to be able to spend time out on deck or in the warmth of the bridge enjoying the views across the restless ice blocks that cast a brightness in the sky above. The occasional blue skies and calm morning weather were a welcome rest after the kayaking and walk yesterday.

By the afternoon the swell had increased making Plancius roll and pitch more than usual. During the day many of us suffered the consequences of the motion and showed sea sickness symptoms. The Doctor was busy delivering medication to

assist where possible aiming to reduce the unescapable feeling of seasickness! The ship was quite by the evening as many had retired to their cabins early due to the weather and the earlier start scheduled for tomorrow. The quiet day by the ice allowed us to process the range of wildlife we had been fortunate to see on this trip, to play games and to enjoy the piece of the Arctics far north, something we cannot experience in our bustling lives back home.

Day 7 - Tuesday 21st of June, Ny-London landing and polar plunge

21h00 GPS Position: 78°10.9'N / 013°35.8'E

Wind: W 3 Sea: Smooth Weather: Rain showers Temperature: 6°C



Rise and shine on the longest day of the year! Early morning today! We had our first landing at 0700, after an early bird breakfast of a selection of pastries in the lounge. It was really windy outside, making for a bumpy zodiac ride to the shore of Ny-London in order to wake us all up. On shore we were greeted by beautiful purple saxifrages, and those weren't the only flowers around! There were also stunning

white arctic bell heather and mountain avens. We had to tread carefully around a nesting long tailed skua as well!

There were a few buildings and artefacts around, including an old railway line. They were built between 1910 and 1913 by the Northern Exploration Company, led by the Englishman Ernest Mansfield. They were hoping to find large quantities of high-quality marble. The marble was there, but it was of poor quality with cracks, and consequently Mansfield was fired. The houses were later frequently used by trappers for overwintering, there was even someone born in 1930!

After exploring this beautiful, historic site, the brave amongst us did a polar plunge in the cold waters of the fjord! Followed by a bumpy ride back to the ship, so that we could continue to make our way back south.



In the afternoon we had some time to relax and listen to some more lectures about topics that were asked about during the week. We also watched two stunning videos made by a passenger, Marcus, about Antarctica, which made us all want to go on another trip!

The day ended with some amazing food and the captain's cocktail, where we also watched a video of this weeks' adventures, kindly put together by Markus. And what an amazing week it has been! From polar bears to glaciers, to walrus, to birds, to sea ice, and so much more! Most of all, it was a week with a lot of big smiles on faces!

Day 8 - Wednesday 22nd of June, arrival back into Longyearbyen

GPS 0800 position: 78°14.0' N, 015°37.6'E (Harbour Longyearbyen)

Wind: SSE 4 Sea: Smooth Weather: Overcast Temperature: 4°C

Early this morning, we arrive in Longyearbyen. While we enjoy a last breakfast on board, our suitcases are taken off the ship. It is a sad moment to disembark from the Plancius, which has been a comfortable and cosy home during this unforgettable journey. We have have shared really unique moments, have seen a lot of animals, and made new friends. Loaded with fond memories we now must head home.

Kayak Trip Log

Alexis Bellezze

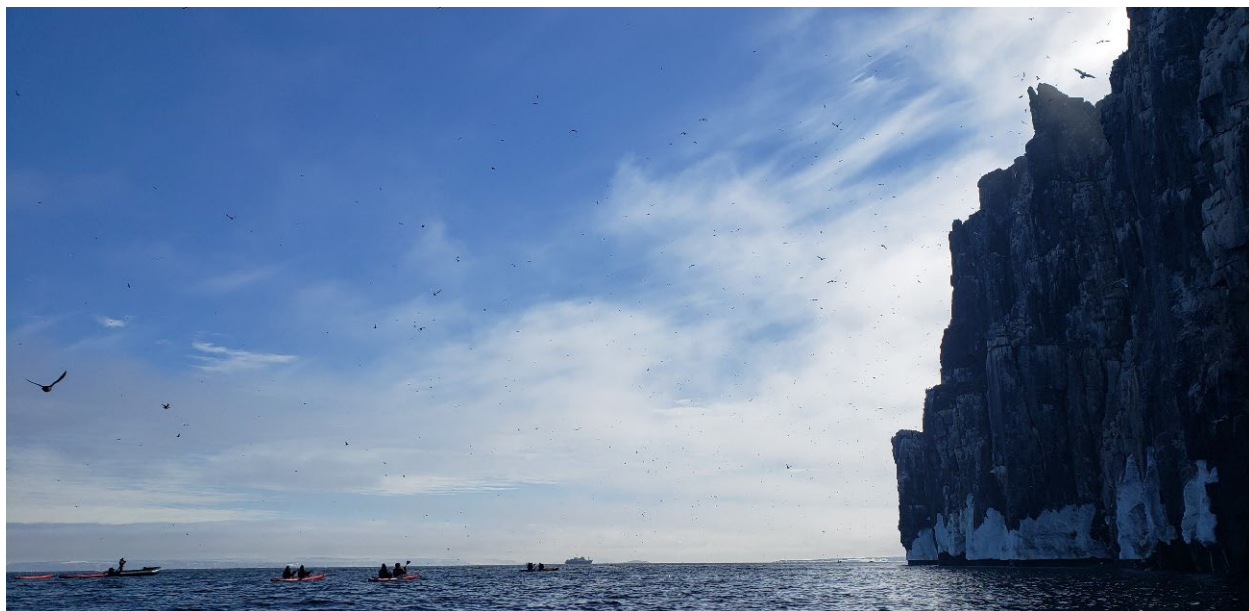
18th June - Alkafjellet

We started early in the morning, the approaching to the operation zone was made from the south, we had the full view of the mountains, the glacier and finally the cliffs of Alkafjellet.



The weather was calm, the sun was shining, and we had no wind - perfect conditions that allowed us to see and enjoy the Guillemots. Thousands of birds flying over us, swimming and landing in the proximity of our kayaks. The noise and the vibration of this animals was surrounding us during this unique experience, where we paddled beneath the cliffs. We saw an arctic fox patrolling the base of the rock towers searching for food, hiding from us.

We saw glaucus gull, northern fulmars and kittiwakes flying around and mixing in between the black guillemots. At the end of the second round of kayakers the fog was rolling in over the cliff tops and was covering the limestone tips of the cliffs, offer us a phantasmagorical view of the place.



First outing was a complete success thanks to the weather and smooth operations! What a way to experience such a magnificent landscape from a kayak as well as the zodiacs.



19th June - Chermsideøya

After a long sea day, we arrived to Chermsideøya, a sheltered bay between the islands where there was a notable coverage of sea ice still. This northern area has only been accessible due to less sea ice at this time of year in the last 20 years

which today provided a fantastic and different kayaking opportunity compared to Alkefjellet.



Moment of silence. Birds feeding on copepods drifting from the base of the ice flow, some bearded seals visiting us very quiet and shy, just swimming very close to our kayaks and checking us a few times before moving on. We paddle for more than an hour, immersed in a beautiful landscape with a mix of brash ice, mountains, and healthy sea ice. The rest of the passengers climbed one of the ridges of a hill while we were arriving to the landing. Here, the second group of kayakers were waiting for their chance to have the same experience of solitude amongst some of Svalbard's northern islands, including Chermsideøya.



- **1:** Departing from **Longyearbyen** (15/06)
- **2:** Ship Cruise at **Smeeremburg Fjorden** (16/06 morning)
- **3:** Landing at **Smeeremburg “Blubber Town”** (16/06 afternoon) Walruses
- **4:** Landing at **Texas Bar** (17/06 aborted because a Polar bear presence in the Landing area)
- **5:** Zodiac cruise and short landing at **Monaco Breen** (17/06 afternoon) Ivory Gull spotted in front of a Glaciar.
- **6:** Ship cruise at **Moffen Island** (17/06 night) Walruses
- **7:** Zodiac cruise + Kayak at **Alkefjellet** (18/06 morning) Guillemots + Arctic Fox + Glaucus Gull + Northern Fullmar
- **8:** Ship cruise at Gyldenoyane (18/6 afternoon) Polar Bear + cubs seal hunting
- **9:** **Seven islands** (19/06) Polar Bear + Walrus milking a pup
- **10:** Landing + kayaking at **Chermsideoya** (19/06 afternoon)
- **11:** At Sea the most northern position reached (20/06)
- **12:** Landing at **NY London** (21/06)
- **13:** Arriving at **Longyearbyen** (22/06)



Pablo Brandeman - Expedition Leader



Born and raised in Argentinean northern Patagonia, now living in Ushuaia, Tierra del Fuego, grew up with a Fishing Guide dad that pushed me not only into adventure activities but also into guiding and the tourism industry.

I love Skiing, Snowboarding, Skateboarding, Surfing, Paragliding, Kitesurfing, Climbing, Mountaineering, Boat driving and many other thrilling activities!

I am a well-seasoned Antarctic guide, having worn all the different hats as an expedition staff, with over 150 trips to the southern continent.

I have also worked in the Arctic region and look forward to sharing new polar experiences with my team and guests onboard.

Marcel Paul – Assistant Expedition Leader



From his teens Marcel has been a keen traveller. After camping and trekking with friends, he led groups on trekking's to Austria, Switzerland, England and Scotland. His own travels over the last 20 years brought him to all 7 continents. With his interest in history and as keen hobby photographer, the Polar Regions have always been drawing his attention.

At his first arrival to Svalbard in 2011 and a second trip in 2013, he felt connected with the remoteness of the place and the dynamics of the polar nature. At that time the idea started to grow to become a polar guide and give up a job that is keeping him indoor most of the time.

When the Dutch organised a scientific polar expedition to Edgeøya it seemed the perfect opportunity to gain more knowledge from the area by working with the scientists. He joined the expedition in 2015 as field assistant and participated in various fields of research. In 2016 he went to the Dutch polar station in Ny Alesund, again as field assistant.

From 2017 Marcel has been working as a polar guide in the Arctic followed by the Antarctic in 2018. He now spends about half the year working in both polar regions and the rest of the year is spent either at home in Holland or traveling.

Alexis Bellezze – Kayak Leader



Alexis Bellezze was born in San Luis, Argentina in 1973. He spent his childhood in the center of the country, in a rural area, then moved to the city of Mendoza close to the Central Andes and studied in the Army High School where he fell in love with the mountains and the outdoors. Then moved to Cordoba where he spent 3 years in the Air Force Academy. After that he moved to Italy where he worked and finished a paragliding course, then returned to Argentina to finish his studies as a Veterinarian. In 2006, he did a Residency in the ICU Service of the Large Animal Hospital of the Royal

“Dick” Veterinary College in Edinburgh, Scotland. In 2006 and 2008 he did an internship as a veterinarian surgeon at Milano, Italy. Then he moved to Villa La Angostura, an isolated village in the middle of the Patagonian Lake District where he works as a veterinarian surgeon and runs a kayak company in the Nahuel Huapi National Park.

Since 2018 he has been working as a Polar Kayak Guide and Expedition Guide. He has guided in the Antarctic Peninsula many times, reaching the Antarctic Polar Circle, Svalbard, circumnavigated Spitzbergen, East coast of Greenland and many rivers and lakes in Patagonia. During the last years he travelled the south and north of Chile and Argentina as a Wilderness First Responder instructor working in different environments like the jungle, the Patagonian mountain range, the windy Patagonian estepa and the desert of Atacama. Since 2014 Alexis is the owner and Director of endurance kayak & mountain expeditions based in Patagonia Argentina, offering multiple days kayak trips in this pristine area.

Alexis is divorced, has 3 children and lives in Patagonia Argentina. He likes to cook for them with fire in the wilderness and go camping when is possible.

He speaks fluently Spanish, Italian and English.

Chloé Maréchal – Expedition Guide

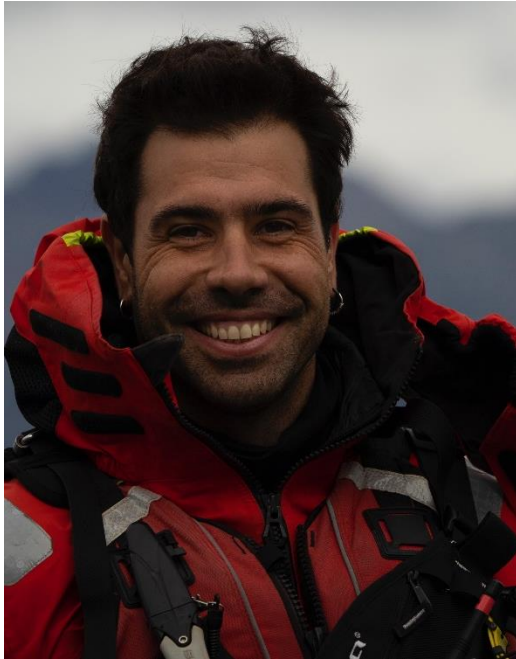


Chloé is a passionate diver fascinated by marine life and exploration. She earned a European master degree in Marine biodiversity and conservation and loves to share her expertise for the marine environment. In April 2013, she was selected as the 2013-14 European Rolex our world underwater scholar. She spent a year working side by side with current leaders in underwater fields, getting very different experiences in marine science and in the diving industry. Diving and science are not her only passion; she enjoys exploring new countries and discovering new cultures. She has been diving on all continents

and living in more than 20 countries.

Chloe now lives in northern Norway just above the polar circle. When she is not onboard, she can be found underwater: observing the ocean's inhabitants, searching for forgotten wrecks or mapping and exploring undiscovered underwater cave passages.

Ben Giunchi – Expedition Guide



Ben comes from the countryside of Argentina, known as “The Pampas”. Since a very young age he developed a love of nature and after a few years traveling around his home country he discovered his passion for Patagonia and the mountains. This provoked a fascination for glaciers and wildlife and he soon became a guide around El Calafate and El Chaltén.

Spending time with people from all across the globe whilst working as a tour leader in Argentina, encouraged him to expand his knowledge of the culture and nature of other parts of South America. This newfound knowledge, and a few technical courses in relevant aspects of wilderness guiding, took him closer to his dream... Antarctica!

As we are probably hitting a dram together, I invite you to share all the good vibes and enjoy a unique place in the world with me... WELCOME TO YOUR ADVENTURE!

Beth Hitchcock – Expedition Guide



After graduating from her Geology honours degree in 2018 at Glasgow, Beth balanced two jobs until she succumbed to full time in the guiding world in 2021. Beth worked as a deckhand / guide on a tall ship and, when on the land, as an Engineering Geologist working mainly on Scotland's road and railway networks.

On the tall ships, Beth visited many places around the Atlantic Ocean from the Azores to Cape Town and Tristan da Cunha. In the austral summers she guides on the ship when they visit Antarctica and South Georgia. These

are ideal places to interpret the landscape and explain to the guests how the glaciers and geological processes have carved what we see today. The incredible human history in these regions has a significant impact on the regional geological story and on our understanding of geology globally.

Beth also enjoys spending time in the mountains of Scotland where she works when she is not guiding on board ships. She grew up sailing around the islands of the west coast of Scotland - home to some fascinating geology where she spent many field trips during her undergraduate years. This sparked the desire to explore and embark on adventures to discover new landscapes and cultures around the world.

Slava Nikitin – Expedition guide



Slava was born in Russian town Sergiev-Posad (Moscow region). Studied in Moscow University of sport: Teacher of physical education, swimming teacher, rehabilitation, management of sport. Started to travel in school years and still looking to expand the geography of his trips. Slava's travel credo is to get closer to every new country, using the local transport or hitchhiking to find out more about local people, their culture and history. He threw down many shoes on backpacker's paths in Russia, Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Australia, Arctic and Antarctic.

So, the most of the time of his last 15 years he was traveling around the World as a photographer, writer, guide and translator. During his travels he loves to do lots of activities such as trekking mountain (Mt Elbrus (5642m), Mt Everest base camp, Mt Annapurna base camp, Mt Cook base camp etc), white water rafting, kayaking, diving, surfing, snowboarding etc. Known as photographer, travel-writer, guide and translator in Russia, he also made presentations and photo exhibitions at school and university. His mountaineering and lifeguard skills on the water and recent experience in a rescue operation are very useful for client's security in crevasse rescue team. In 2013 he got an opportunity to visit Antarctica on a sail boat for the first time and to dive (literally and mentally) in Antarctic waters. It was starting point of his idea to work in cruise industry in Antarctic and Arctic on board of the expedition ships. Afterwards he made another dream come true, he put his feet on the North Pole. At this moment, Slava spent 4 full seasons working in Polar regions (Arctic and Antarctic) on board of expedition ships as a guide and found a use for his long-time interest of sea kayaking and polar history. Slava also has presentations about: R.Amundsen, F.Nansen, R.Scott, E.Shackleton, R.Peary, F.Cook, F.Bellingshausen...

Slava very happy to share his experience and positive vibe with people.

Keechy Akkerman – Expedition Guide



Growing up in a big city (The Hague, The Netherlands) the outdoors has always fascinated Keechy, especially the Polar Regions. She has travelled to Norway repeatedly; for holidays, to work on a sheep farm, and to conduct research on the island Jan Mayen. During her studies in Biology and Geology her passion led her to follow several courses at the University Centre in Svalbard, and she fell in love with the area.

For Keechy's final internship with TNO (The Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research) in 2015, she had the amazing opportunity to participate in a scientific expedition (SEES) to Edgeøya, located in the southeast of the Svalbard archipelago. The aim of the expedition was to study the impact of anthropogenic activity in one of the most remote and pristine areas on earth, thereby highlighting the relevance of Arctic research in the context of current transitions. This expedition was in collaboration with Oceanwide Expeditions and after talking to the guides, she became very enthusiastic to work as a Polar Tour guide as well.

In 2016 Keechy moved to the UK to take on a PhD on lake ecosystems in Greenland. Her fieldwork allowed her to complete the Arctic Circle Trail in Greenland, a 10-day hike from the ice sheet to the coast. She spends most of her weekends exploring all the national parks the UK has to offer, in the form of hiking, camping, climbing and winter mountaineering. Now that she is in the final stages of her PhD, she is keen to share her love for nature and the Polar Regions as a tour guide!

Axel Brandeman – Expedition Guide



Axel was born and raised in Ushuaia Tierra del Fuego, having been born in a such special region.

Axel was always in touch with outdoors activities and wildlife.

On he's free time, he likes to skateboard, snowboard and wakeboard.

He has a closed relation with antarctica and expedition cruising since been a child, having visited Antarctica three times before reaching penguin size.

Since then he became a zodiac driver, activity logistics and naturalist.

Regis Perdriat – Expedition Guide



Regis has always been passionate about nature and wildlife conservation.

After a master's degree in Ecology, he first specialized in seabird rehabilitation after oil spills for BirdLife France. Then he joined the Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust, studying endangered species.

In Brittany he worked seven years for the Sept-Iles National Nature Reserve, driving zodiac, counting seabirds and seals in this wild and protected archipelago.

His polar experiences go as far back as 2007, when he spent 15 months working as a field researcher studying the seabirds and marine mammals of the remote Kerguelen Islands, a French subantarctic territory.

In love with those isolated environments he carried out several fieldwork missions in subantarctic islands. He finally joined the management team of French Southern and Antarctic Lands and became Head of the Southern Lands National Nature Reserve.

He now proposes his experience as a freelance biologist for scientific expeditions and share his passion for birds as often as he can. His last expeditions took him to North-East Greenland, Central Asia or Antarctic Peninsula.

Looking for him? Try outside, you should find him and his binoculars searching for birds or whales.

Abraham Wouters – Ship's doctor



Abraham (Bram) was born in Vlissingen, the 'hometown' of Ocean Wide, in the Netherlands. He grew up at the southwest coast of Holland, the province Zeeland ('Sea land'). As you see, from his birth he had a strong connection with the sea!

After finishing his study Medicine in 2013 he worked for three years in different hospitals in the Emergency Room and on various wards, before starting his specialization tot General Practitioner (GP). Since completing this in 2019, he now works as a freelance GP in primary care practices and

prisons in and around Amsterdam.

In the past, Abraham combines his passion for his work and traveling, by volunteering in different projects in Africa (Ghana, Sierra Leone), Europe (Lesbos) and Asia (Nepal, Indonesia).

The possibility of combining his majors passions; adventure and nature, with my job as an expedition doctor, is a dream come true!