



**Around Spitsbergen, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice
Longyearbyen, Spitsbergen
24th July – 2nd August 2022
On board 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 Ernesto Barria

and his international crew of 47 sailors

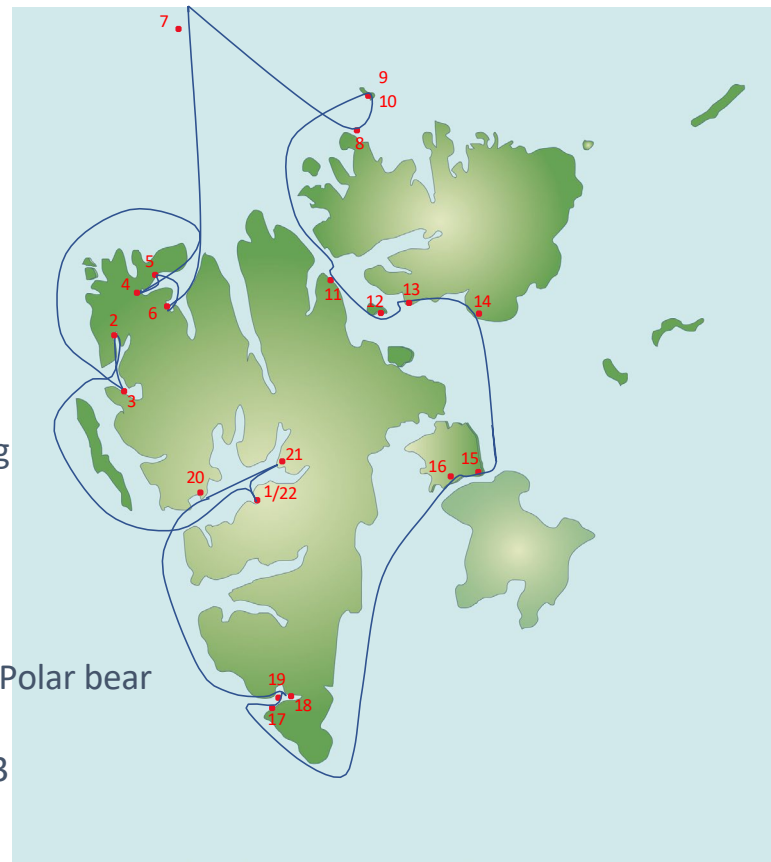
Chief Officer:	Romanas Vicas	[Lithuania]
2 nd Officer:	Yaroslav Pyetukhov	[Ukraine]
3 rd Officer:	Martin Hansson	[Sweden]
Chief engineer:	Floris Oskam	[The Netherlands]
Hotel Manager:	Oleksander Lyebyedyev	[Ukraine]
Asst. Hotel Manager:	Thijs de Lint	[The Netherlands]
Head Chef:	Ivan Yuriychuk	[Ukraine]
Sous Chef:	Sergey Sklyarov	[Ukraine]
Ships doctor:	Tijmen Brink	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Leader:	Philipp Schaudy	[Austria]
Asst. Exp. Leader:	Michael Green	[UK]
Expedition Guide:	Daniels Karin Amby	[Sweden]
Expedition Guide:	Chloé Maréchal	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Gérard Bodineau	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Marie Manceau	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Philipp Konietzko	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Kamilla Oliver	[France]

- TRIP MAP -

Svalbard 2022

M/V Plancius 24/07 – 2/08

- 1: 24/07 **Longyearbyen** - Embarkation
- 2: 25/07 **Liliehöökreen** - Zodiac cruise
- 3: 25/07 **Ny Ålesund** - Landing
- 4: 26/07 **Monacobreen** - Ships cruise
- 5: 26/07 **Texas Bar** - Landing + hiking
- 6: 26/07 **Bockfjord** - Landing + hiking
- 7: 27/07 **Sea Ice**
- 8: 28/07 **Chermsideøya** - Landing + hiking
- 9: 28/07 **Phippsøya** - Landing + hiking
- 10: 28/07 **Barbecue**
- 11: 29/07 **Alkefjellet** - Zodiac cruise
- 12: 29/07 **Walbergøya** - Walrus
- 13: 29/07 **Torellneset** - Zodiac cruise with Polar bear
- 14: 29/07 **Bråsvellbreen** - Ship cruise
- 15: 30/07 **Kapp Waldburg** - Polar bear 2&3
- 16: 30/07 **Barentsøya** - Landing + hiking
- 17: 31/07 **Gåshamna** - Landing + hiking
- 18: 31/07 **Samarinvågen** - Zodiac cruise
- 19: 31/07 **Humpback whales**
- 20: 1/08 **Alkhornet** - Landing + hiking
- 21: 1/08 **Fredheim** - Landing + hiking +polar plunge
- 22: 2/08 **Longyearbyen**- Disembarkation



First and foremost, we THANK YOU for your interest and friendship.

The guiding team would like to point out how exceptionally exemplary your group has been on shore and onboard zodiacs. We were able to successfully “listen” to the arctic silence, which is always a challenge and rarely works out, and perform beautiful hikes!

We greatly appreciated the spontaneity with which, without us having to ask for it, many of you picked up detritus on beaches. Thanks to your careful attention, we were able to give meaningful recaps and conferences of high scientific level.

You have been an easy-going and cheerful group of passengers. It is for us the best of rewards to see you guys go back home not only happy of what you saw, but also better equipped to understand the uniqueness and fragility of polar regions. You are now ambassadors of the arctic: share your experience and help protect this magical environment!

We hope that you are now infected by the “polar bug” and that you will soon come back onboard!

The expedition team.

Texts: Expedition team members **Text edits:** Marie Manceau

Photos: Gérard Bodineau, Marie Manceau, Phil Konietzko, Karin Amby, Chloé Maréchal

Day 1 – Friday 24th of July 2022, Longyearbyen

GPS position at 8am: 78°13.8' N / 015° 36,2' E

Wind: WSW 2 Sea: Calm Weather: Overcast Temperature: 11°C



We get our first glimpse of Plancius from the bus. She awaits us quietly at Longyearbyen's wharf. Her bright blue hull contrasts with the dull, colorless surroundings: the city has been imprisoned for days in a thick fog and the Isfjord, on the flanks of which Longyearbyen is nested, seems to be composed only of shades of grey and brown. The black mines and muddy hangars of Longyearbyen are certainly not quite as charming as the colorful traditional houses of Oslo, but the city is nevertheless the proud "capital" of Svalbard. A light rain greets us, but also the much warmer "welcome onboard!" of crewmembers, who take care of our luggage and show us the way to our cabins. We readily start exploring the ship, striding along corridors and decks, excited like kids discovering a new playground. We rapidly find our way to the restaurant, the reception, the bridge, or the observatory lounge.

We gather in the latter for a briefing. We are introduced to our expedition leader **Philipp Schaudy**, charismatic Austrian man who has been travelling to polar regions by all possible means since the 70's (and to Spitsbergen for the

first time 20 years ago). He studied as a geographer and lived several years in Spitsbergen. A few minutes later, our hotel manager **Alex** explains the rules of life onboard, and our first officer **Yaroslav** details specific security elements.

A drill, necessary simulation of the ship's evacuation in case of an emergency, follows Yaroslav's presentation. The exercise is just finished when we feel movement: the ship slowly backs away from the wharf! It is the beginning of our polar adventure.



Philipp invites us to the lounge again. This time around is however not so serious, as crew members distribute champagne glasses and munchies. Our captain Ernesto Barria, exceptionally experienced sailor from Chile, raises his glass to a beautiful cruise. Philipp then introduces us to the ship's doctor, **Tijmen**, from the Netherlands, and to his team of expedition guides. His assistant, **Michael**, from the UK, is a well-traveled polar guide and diver. He advises us to take pictures... but also to take the time to observe our surroundings with our own eyes... Cameras are not always faithful to memories, and certainly not to the grandeur of polar landscapes! **Gérard**, from France, has explored the coasts of Spitsbergen during 30 years and his fellow team members sometimes joke he has been coming for so long he actually invented the place! **Marie** from France is a biologist specialized in animal adaptation to polar regions. **Karin**, from Germany, is an experienced botanist and musher who lived in Longyearbyen for nine years. **Chloé** is a marine biologist and diver; though she is originally from France, she now lives in Bodø near the Lofoten Islands. **Phil**, from Germany, is an adventurer and hiker who has been guiding in the arctic for the past 7 years (he also translates all recaps and conferences in German). **Kamila**, from Poland, is a nuclear physicist who recently decided to live her dream and move to Greenland, where she teaches in a small village.

As Philipp jokes, all members of the expedition team are badly infected by the infamous polar virus. These passionate fellows all spend their time hopping from one pole to the other! Their goal is to contaminate us with the virus... we already have a feeling they will be successful!

Day 2 – Saturday 25th of July 2022, Lilliehöök Glacier, Ny Ålesund

GPS position at 8 am: 79° 63,1' N / 011° 26,4' E

Wind: Calm Sea: Calm Weather: Foggy Temperature: 7°C



Today, Phillip wakes us up at 7.00am for our first day of activities. Due to thick fog, Phillip offers a plan B, which, as it would later turn out, is a wonderful alternative. But first, after breakfast, we watch mandatory briefings about safety on shore and onboard zodiacs, information useful for our future days of adventures. We then directly practiced! We board zodiacs for a cruise along the face of the Lilliehöök Glacier. We see and hear many calving events, that occur when pieces of the glacier front fall into the water, spraying ice and causing impressive waves.



As we make our way through icebergs and brash ice deposited in the sea by the glacier, we are surrounded by seabirds including gulls, arctic terns and black guillemots. The ice around zodiacs makes clicking noises sounding like the cracks and pops of breakfast cereal. This is due to popping air bubbles trapped in the

ice during its formation. Two hours pass on this enjoyable beginning to our voyage. Too soon, we return to the ship for lunch, and a journey to the afternoon destination.

Following lunch, the ship slowly berths alongside the wharf of Ny Ålesund, a small settlement today used by scientists from different countries to conduct research on various aspects of the polar environment. However, Ny Ålesund has a rich history related to both coal mining and polar exploration. Mining activity stopped in the 1960's,

after several fatal accidents. But perhaps more exceptional is the connection of Ny Ålesund with the Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen: it is from here that he began his aerial expeditions to the North Pole. Before plunging into a historical tour, we walk around the colorful wooden buildings,



visiting the shop, the museum, and posting postcards from the most northerly post office in the world. At the dog shed, working dogs are basking in the dim sun, a few reindeers graze the tundra, and several harbor seals are spotted in the bay. Arctic terns however make sure we don't stick around too long, as they noisily fight for food and defend their territory. We soon find out why: a chick is strolling in front of the shed, eagerly waiting for its food. We then



gather in front of the statue of Amundsen's bust, where Michael gave a talk about the adventures of the famous explorer both in the North and in the South. After a short walk to "the mast", a metallic tower located a few hundred meters away from the village, on which Amundsen launched his airships Norge and Italia to become the first person to visit the North pole (he was actually also the first

person to reach the South pole), we make our way back to Plancius. We board the ship at 18.30 and while it starts sailing, we quickly change and head to the exploratory lounge for the "recap" of the day. Philipp briefed us about his plan

for the following day activity, Kamilla explained why the ice is blue, and Chloe showed us pictures illustrating the recession of the Lilliehöök Glacier over the last century. What a wonderful first day to begin our voyage!

Day 3 – Sunday 26th of July 2022, Monacobreen, Texas bar, Sverrefjellet

GPS position at 8 am: 79° 55,2' N / 012° 39.5' E

Wind: Calm Sea: calm Weather: Overcast Temperature: 7°C

While we were sleeping, Plancius made her way around the northwest corner of Svalbard, and we wake up to the sound of ice bumping against her hull. We are in front of the huge Monaco glacier (Monacobreen in Norwegian) before breakfast time, and the early risers are already on decks to get a view of the ice



and the beautiful glacier front. Monacobreen was named after the Duke Albert I of Monaco, who led the expedition that mapped the glacier in 1906/07. After breakfast, we continue sailing further north and reach “Texas Bar”, a site named after a small cabin located on the western side of Liefdefjorden (the love fjord). The hut is an old trapper cabin build in 1927 by one of Svalbard’s most famous trappers, Hilmar Nøis. Nowadays, the cabin is owned by the Governor of Svalbard, but it is still open, and occasionally used by locals and scientists. And even though it is not a real bar, visitors



traditionally bring alcohol such that a shelf in the hut is filled with bottles from all over the world. We land for the first time, disembarking zodiacs according to procedures we learned onboard, drop our life jackets in a giant orange bag, and have some time to visit the cabin before Philipp gives us a small introduction about the area. We then split in three groups.



Fast hikers climb a rocky slope to reach a little hill where they enjoy a wonderful view. The intermediate hikers follow a similar route but further down, having more time to stop for photographs and enjoy observing numerous species of flowers and other interesting sightings. The contemplative group strolls quietly on the beach and makes his way slightly uphill to

observe plants and birds. Each group enjoyed a couple of minutes of arctic silence: everyone stops talking and moving, as quiet as possible. It is amazing

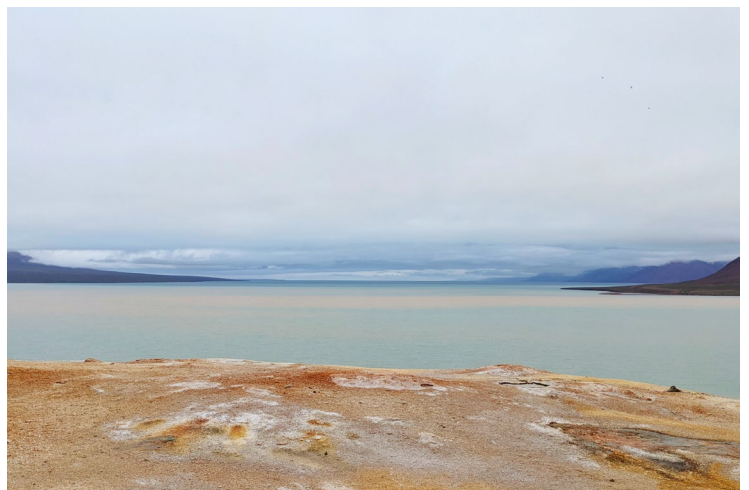
how silent a place can become. The only noise one can hear is the circulation of the blood in one's ear.



Back at the ship, we enjoy a delicious lunch buffet and a bit of time to rest while we sail into Bockfjord, a small branch of Woodfjord. The landscape is quite astonishing, red

sandstone sedimentary rocks flanking one side of the fjord, and old dark

metamorphic rocks the other side. We are heading for the "hot springs" of Jotunkjeldene. It is actually just a tiny hole from which a little stream of water runs out, transporting minerals to the surface that deposited in sinter terraces. The latter, easily visible from the landing site, represent a



good target for the medium hiking group. The fast group continues higher, reaching a plateau of erratic rocks and an old moraine overlooking a glacier. The leisurely group takes its time, looping over a few hundred meters across the tundra, observing a lot of plants, and stones that are remains of the only volcano of Svalbard, called the Sverrefjellet. This volcano erupted in the vicinity about 100.000 years ago and can still be seen, but it has been covered by ice-aged glaciers and lost its typical volcanic shape.



Back on Plancius, Philipp tells informs us about plans for the next day, which will be spent navigating the ice, up north. Gerard shows different permafrost features, and Karin uses photographs to help us identify many of the flowers we have seen. It has been a

long day, and we now look forward to having a good shower, dinner and night of sleep. Good night Plancius!

Day 4 – Monday 27th of July 2022, In the pack ice

GPS-Position at 8 am: 81° 22.9' N / 012° 16,3' E

Wind: Variable Sea: Calm Weather: Foggy Temperature: 2°C



As usual we wake to the dulcet tones of Philipp –though some of us actually wake up to the sound of Plancius' hull rubbing against ice floes: today, we are in the ice! Plancius follows the edge of the gigantic white landscape, and just before breakfast, Captain Ernesto Barria engages the ship further in, the ice being not too dense. The landscape is mesmerizing. Ice floes, which are large patches of broken sea ice with various geometrical shapes, surround the ship. Many contain turquoise pools of water, rivaling in beauty.

The expedition team starts a constant watch at the bridge, scanning carefully each ice floe in search for wildlife. A difficult task though, as the fog comes and goes, reducing visibility. All morning long, Plancius gently sails at low pace within pack ice. It carefully avoids denser areas but stays at a short distance from those, such that guides, officers and “ABs” (which stands for “Able Seamen”, the fantastic sailors that drive zodiacs during shuttles and help us board at the gangways”) have the opportunity to scan the area.

Seabirds surround the ship: black guillemots, fulmars, kittiwakes, and little auks are often spotted. From time to time, we observe hooded or harp seals, some jumping in the water as the ship approaches, some remaining calm and watching us pass by. Seals are predated on by polar bears, and thus give us



hope that we would get a glimpse of the “king of the arctic” ... But despite the joined efforts of the expedition team, the bridge team, and many passengers, who relentlessly watched the ice, the “dot” of yellow fur remained elusive. This is perhaps tough luck this

time around... or due to the fact that there is less sea ice than usual at this time of year in the area, a likely effect of global warming. Polar bears may have preferred to stay on land.

After lunch, Captain continues to sail northward, reaching the latitude of 81°35' north. This will be the northern-most latitude of our voyage, just 957 kilometers away from the North Pole. To celebrate, Alex offers hot chocolates containing “a little bit of something” ... Rhum or whipped cream, why choose? This warms our bodies and our hearts, and despite the humid and cold weather, it is a cheerful crowd that gathers on deck 6 to enjoy the drink and the astonishing landscape.

During the daily recap, Gérard explains how sea water freezes, such that it goes through a pancake-like stage. Chloé shows how rich and diverse life is in cold environments, with plenty of species of viruses, bacteria, copepods, rotifers, and at the other end of the food chain, polar cods, seals and polar bears.

Day 5 – Monday 28th of July 2022, Chermsideøya, Phippsøya

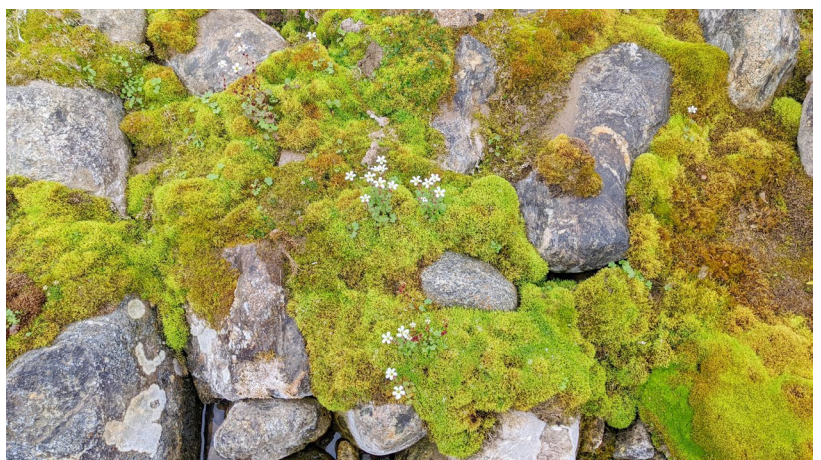
GPS-Position at 8 am: 80° 28.9' N / 020° 04.4' E

Wind: W 4-5 Sea: Slight Weather: Overcast Temperature: 5°C



This morning, we enter the eerie world of the polar desert, at the northern tip of Svalbard. Philipp chooses to land first on Chermsideøya, an island whose landscape is as barren as its name is complicated to pronounce. Its environment could be coming straight out of a beginner's painting course: it is composed of three simple layers: a sandy beach covered in driftwood, a beige delta, and a rocky slope darkened by black lichen. The latter is tipped by a kern visible from the beach, which represents the fast- hikers' goal. They quickly gather and make their way

uphill. One hour later, they are rewarded by amazing views of the delta and close by hilltops. Meanwhile, the medium-hiking group slowly climbs a stony path, at times muddy, at times dry and rocky; a typical arctic walk. Here and there, a few arctic poppies, emblematic white



flowers closely related to their European counterparts, decorate the dark ground. Aside from these sparse flowers and the occasional singing of snow

bunties, small elusive birds dwelling in the rocks, there is little wildlife, and the dull surroundings create a mysterious atmosphere. Most of us remain silent, impressed by the sharpness of such emptiness. Meanwhile, the leisurely walkers followed the beach, admiring driftwood, whale bones, and a small group of reindeers.

During lunchtime, the ship sails towards our next destination at a slow pace, as waters are poorly charted in the area. On a tiny rock barely surfacing above sea level, a dozen walruses enjoy a rest, likely after a fishing session. Why would they group on this small rock rather than bask in the kilometers of available beach space located right behind them? Sometimes, the ways of wildlife are impenetrable...



In the afternoon, we are set for a much-awaited visit of the famous seven islands land. We land at one of the largest, Phippsøya, under the same cloudy skies as in the morning. Far from taking away from our experience,

the cloud cover increases contrasts in colorless arctic landscapes, helping photographers and increasing the sensation that this is a very special place. Phippsøya is infamous for its high rate of unpleasant bear encounters, and our guides are particularly cautious, preparing firearms and equipment with high concentration. As a reminder, a polar bear skull is found on the beach. We can all observe the impressive length of the snout and huge maxillary bones: this is a head designed for predation. As usual, we split in three groups. Fast-hikers are in for some sport: the climb uphill is steep, each step painful, and their hearts are racing... but their minds are clearing from thoughts, and as always, their efforts are rewarded by breathtaking views of bird-nesting cliffs and of the whole archipelago of the seven islands. Relaxed and smiling, they finally take the time to capture the fragility and beauty of several species of flowers in their cameras. The medium group



enjoys a long walk across the delta, spotting polar bear tracks! Are those fresh? They likely date back to just a few days... With this observation, Phippsøya lives up to its reputation!



Contemplative walkers follow the beach again, this time reaching a small hut and a lake whose shores are piled with driftwood. They get lucky and witness the aerial dance of an arctic skua close to its nest, a behavior rarely observed as this bird otherwise jealously guards its territory and attacks whoever gets too close –human being included.

At the daily recap, Karin follows up on her previous presentation of Svalbard plants to mention rarities observed in the morning,

and Phil explains how cruise ships work together with the Government of Svalbard to clean up fishing waste from its shores. We actually happily contributed to this effort the whole day, as we picked up plastic detritus from the sandy beaches of Chermideøya and Phippsøya, with a much-awaited visit of the famous seven islands that guides threw in big bags and brought back on board. Our hotel manager Alex calls on the PA system: time to dress warmly and join the crew on the aft deck for a barbecue! This Oceanwide tradition is an enjoyable, laid-back moment, that has us laughing and dancing to modern music –for some of us, quite late in the evening!



Day 6 – Tuesday 29th of July 2022, Alkefjellet, Walbergøya

GPS-Position at 8 am: 79° 34.3' N / 018° 38,2' E

Wind: South 3 Sea: Smooth Weather: Cloudy Temperature: 7°C

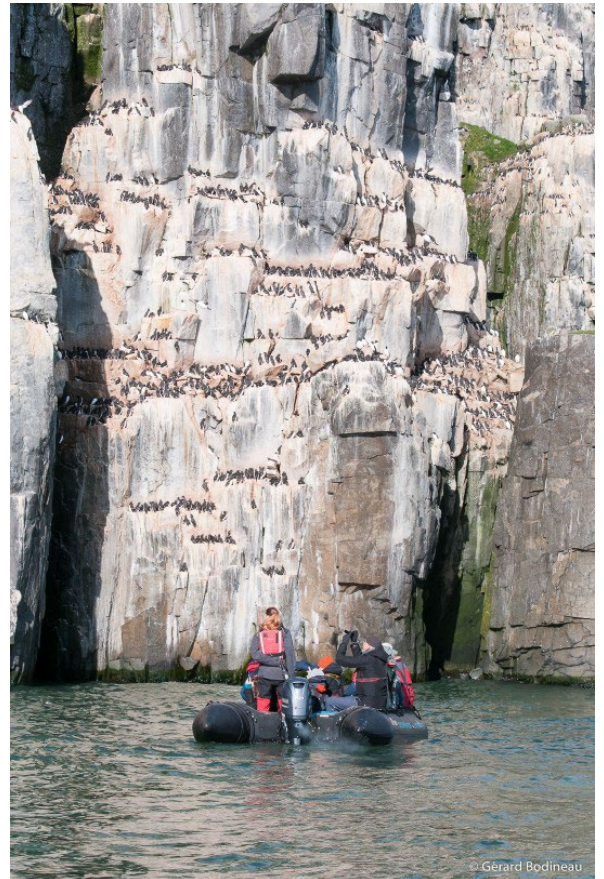


Today, as we wake up and open our cabin curtains, we all smile, observing a much-welcome change: an amazing sunshine lightens a quiet, dark blue sea. One could not hope for a better weather for our morning activity, a zodiac cruise at Alkefjellet, the world-famous bird cliffs featured in so many wildlife documentaries! One of the highlights of our trip, and conditions are perfect for it. We thus board zodiacs very excited, and Alkefjellet



definitely does not disappoint. First, we pass by beautiful waterfalls, located south of the bird cliffs, where the meltwater from Odinjøkulen cascades into the sea, creating a striking change of watercolor as we approach. A few Brunich's guillemots, *Alcidae* birds characterized by a typical bi-colored pattern (they are white in the ventrum and black in the dorsum), as well as kittiwakes, nest near waterfalls. We can also spot glaucous gulls. Though the sight is impressive, it is only a glimpse of what's to come: as we slowly follow the rock wall, the concentration of birds increases... The further north we get, the more astonishing the number of birds: more than 60 000 nest on the cliffs of Alkefjellet. The sheer size of the colony and consequently, its activity, is difficult to grasp...

The color of the cliff evolves from dark to white or pink, as the rock is covered in guano. The noise also increases, such that we can barely hear explanations of our guides... and we can definitely smell the birds too! It is something to see thousands and thousands of birds on the cliffs, in the air, in the water, all around us. The colonies are strikingly organized, taking advantage of different type of stone layers: Brünnich's guillemots stand on lower platforms created by the erosion of dolerite, a type of metamorphic rock, while kittiwakes and glaucus gulls nest higher up, sometimes as high as the upper limestone layer (the latter was split in two by the dolerite insertion, about 100-150 million years ago). Further north, cliffs do not drop directly in the water, but are eroded such that their base is covered in lush vegetation. On stone pillars close to the water, several glaucous gulls are nesting: we observe several chicks. The cruise ends in front of Odinjøkulen, also called Miribreen, small but impressive glacier. Some of us like our sunny tour so much they do not want to head back to the ship.



But onboard, the lunch buffet is waiting for us and we need to refuel for new experiences. After lunch, we land on Walbergøya, where we have the opportunity to stretch our legs in a typical "arctic desert". The first part of the walk is quite green, with lots of dense cushions of tufted saxifrage, purple saxifrage and arctic mouse-ear. The walk ends on a snow patch where we can see old bones



from a walrus and polar bear as well as



reindeer antlers. Back on the beach, it is time for the big attraction on Walbergøya: the walruses. We approach them slowly and quietly, forming a line as we stop about 50 meters away. It is a group of males, easily

recognizable by their typical tusks (females also have tusks, but much smaller). We have plenty of time to see, hear and smell these fascinating animals grouped in a “haul”.

Back on the ship, we relax in the lounge and share our experiences... At recap, Philipp suddenly tells us to get up, get dressed, and go out on decks! Straight ahead of the ship, basking on the beach of Torrelnesset near a group of walrus, is a polar bear! Finally! The animal is calm and seems to be waiting for us... Philip jumps on the opportunity. He announces that thanks to the flexibility of Alex and the hotel department team, who kindly agreed to postpone dinner, we can board zodiacs for a quick closer look. While 10 full zodiacs point at it, carefully respecting a 100 meters distance, the bear –a very large individual, is very relaxed and does not care that it has visitors. From time to time, it lifts its head, watching us... and then goes on enjoying his sunbath.



This day is one to remember... and it is not over. After dinner, it is announced that at approximately 20:40 we will reach the front of the Bråsvellbreen, an enormous surging glacier that produces giant pieces of ice. We take pictures of its numerous waterfalls and water toboggans shining in the evening light. What an end to a very full expedition day!

Day 7 – Wednesday 30th of July 2022, Freemansund, Hornsund

GPS-Position at 8 am: 78° 15.3' N / 021° 55,5' E

Wind: W 5 Sea: Slight Weather: Cloudy Temperature: 13°C



In the morning we wake up to beautiful views while sailing south along the Freemansund, a narrow straight separating Edgeøya and Barentsøya, two islands very similar in terms of geology, landscape and ecology, respectively the third and fourth largest of the Svalbard archipelago. Barentsøya was named after Willem Barents, a Dutch seafarer who discovered Spitsbergen in 1596. Edgeøya was named after Thomas Edge, a British whaler who worked in the area around 1630.

Rich tundra and hilly landscapes are inviting for hikes. The Freemansund is characterized by strong tidal currents and often, quickly drifting ice pieces. The weather and the sea are in favorable, and after a hearty breakfast, we are ready to land on Barentsøya. This barren land is known to be frequented by polar bears, and all eyes thus carefully scan our potential landing site near Kapp Waldburg. And actually... a white dot



moves on the slope above a kittiwake colony. A closer look reveals it is a polar bear, strolling across the bird cliff, perhaps eating moss and waiting for an opportunity to catch a chick or some remains. That's not the usual behavior

of a polar bear but it must be hungry. A second bear rests higher up. Kittiwakes are circling in the air, keeping the predator at bay. The landing is therefore



cancelled, and we sail further west along the Freemansund, as Philipp decides for a new landing site on Barentsøya.

However, two bears are again spotted, and Plancius continues

further west. Third time is the charm! The next landing spot is bear-free. We thus set foot on a quiet beach west of a mountain called Skarpryttaren. Many animal tracks (birds, reindeer, fox, and even polar bear) can be seen in the mud. We have an hour on land to explore the tundra, spotting reindeers grazing on the slopes. By the time we are ready to return to the ship, the wind is stronger and the zodiac ride is quite bumpy, but eventually we all get safely onboard, and as usual, enjoy a nice lunch.

The wind keeps increasing, reaching 37 knots in gusts, and the swell makes the ship's movements noticeable. A zodiac landing in these conditions is out of the question, but Barentsøya has more surprises in store. Close to a site called Sundneset, on the south-west



edge of the island, we spot three more bears, two of them walking together: a mother and her cub. Barentsøya, it turns out, is indeed a very "beary" area this year! Bears being spotted at a distance are jokingly called "pixel bears", but still, a bear sighting is always impressive.

In the afternoon, we start heading south; it is a long ride to our next destination, the Hornsund, on the western side of Spitsbergen. Quite suddenly, the fog descends, and the sea gets rough. Perfect time to get some rest, relax with a book, and listen to an interesting lecture given by Marie on the adaptive

ecology of the polar bear and recent research work on the fascinating biology of this animal. Before dinner, Philipp briefs us about the next day, and at recap, Marie explains how walrus adapt to life on sea ice, and Phil describes species that can be found on the famous “bird mountains” of Svalbard, focusing on Alkefjellet where we cruised the day before.

Day 8 – Thursday 31st of July 2022, Gåshamna, Samarinvågen

GPS-Position at 8 am: 76° 58,3' N / 016° 12,9' E

Wind: Calm Sea: Calm Weather: Cloudy Temperature: 9°C



Is this fog ever going to stop messing up with Philipp’s plans? Today, it surrounds the ship again. It is not thick however, and the landscape comes and goes... It makes for a fantastic atmosphere as we land at Gåshamna. Close to the shore of this wide, beige-colored delta, the ground is covered of remains of whaling activities, such as whale bones and cooking pots, that were used to melt oil. Whaling in Spitsbergen started around 1610 and stopped around 1670. It thus went on for a relatively short period of



time... This is explained by the fact that whalers quickly depleted wild stocks. Nowadays, whale populations still haven't recovered from this hunting frenzy. Philipp warns us that the landing may be shortened, as the fog is rapidly descending, and reduced visibility is dangerous here: a bear might suddenly appear close to the landing. As much as we are eager to see a bear, we do not want to see it in conditions that could potentially be dangerous... for us, and more likely, for the bear. After all, we are only passing by, but this land is its home. Groups thus split as usual, and all have time to observe the historical remains and enjoy the very peculiar atmosphere created by the dim light, but very quickly, passengers and guides gather again on the beach, and board zodiacs. The fog has gotten too thick.



In Spitsbergen, tough luck in one place can become good luck in another. With this shorter landing, we gain time, reaching the eastern part of the fjord earlier than expected. This gives Philipp the opportunity to change his initial plans and offer us to go to Samarinvågen, a rarely visited glacier bay. There, the fog miraculously lifts, and we are greeted by a myriad of growlers, which are pieces of ice slowly drifting in the current, and that originate from the recent calving of the glacier at the end of the bay. This glacier is Philipp's goal: we board



zodiacs for a two-hour long cruise. The waters are strangely calm, only disturbed by passing zodiacs. But we rapidly learn that Samarinbreen is nothing but quiet. It calves constantly, huge pieces of ice falling in the water. We watch patiently in front of an arch created by a former

water tunnel... Its structure is fragile, and it menaces to collapse any minute.

Some of us can't stop filming. Some of us are skeptical. Kittiwakes and a few ivory gulls flirt with the glacier front, seemingly unaware of the danger.

We wait...

In a matter of a few minutes, the amount of ice drops increases steadily... until suddenly, the entire front of the arch falls in the water with a banging noise. Some of us shout out of the top of their lungs in excitement.

In the evening, the ship relocates in front of the Brepollen. Here too, the sight is both majestic and sad: compared to maps shown by Philipp at recap, the glaciers have drastically receded. At recap, Marie explains how polar animals achieve light coloration (and explains that polar bears actually have dark skin!) and Gérard describes the processes controlling the formation of glaciers. During dinner, a few humpbacks are spotted: the whales are feeding. Alex brings our dessert to the main lounge so that we can observe them while finishing our diner!

Day 9 – Friday 1st of August 2022, Isfjord; Alkhornet, Templefjord

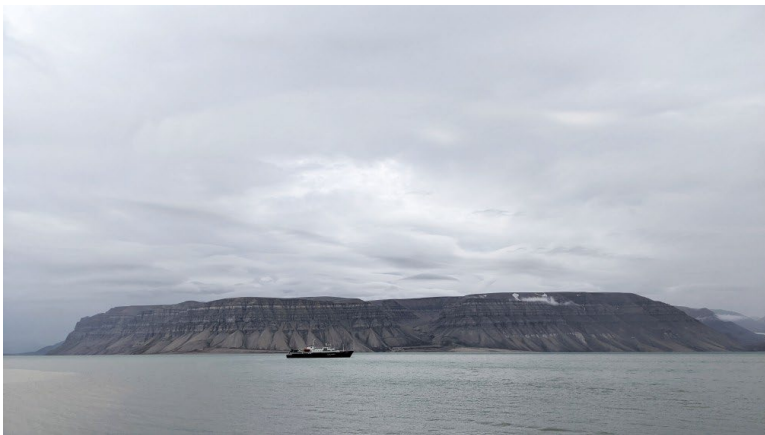
GPS-Position at 8 am: 78° 13,0' N / 013° 52,0' E

Wind: NE 3-4 Sea: Smooth Weather: Cloudy Temperature: 12°C



We are back in Isfjord this morning, and it is decidedly majestic: mountain cliffs capped with snow fill the horizon. Plancius anchors next to Alkhornet, one of the most famous “bird mountains” of Spitsbergen. The cliff is impressive, and

covered with nests: kittiwakes, glaucous gulls, and Brunich's guillemots share available spots. Thousands of birds breed in the cliffs of Alkhorneret, together creating a constant rumoring noise that accompanies our tour of the tundra. The latter is superb, varying from the bright yellows and greens of mosses to brown and black patches of rocks covered in orange lichens, an arctic explosion of colors. Here and there, light purple cardamine flowers and yellow marsh saxifrages try their best not to be grazed on by reindeer, a tough task, as the animals abound. We spot many mothers with their young, some of them still young enough that they still suck milk! According to our guides, the number of young is very high this year.



As usual, we split in three groups, fast-walkers covering a large amount of ground in the easy terrain to reach several viewpoints, medium walkers slowly approaching reindeers, and slow-walkers strolling the plain, observing flowers, mushrooms, and enjoying an "arctic silence" moment. When

we head back to Plancius, the blue ship of the Syssemenen was there: authorities make sure landings occur according to the rules.

In the afternoon, we are in Templefjord, deeper in the Isfjord, and land at a site called Freidheim. A trapper cabin and its dependencies are the only remarkable reference points of an otherwise homogeneous landscape, composed of so-called rising beaches, created by the slow rearrangement of the seabed, and an enormous delta. The cabin is called "Villa Freidheim", as it contains two stories, a luxury at



the time it was built: the cabin was owned by the trapper Hilmar Nøis who also built Texas Bar, that we visited earlier in our trip. "Villa" is quite a grandiloquent designation, though: the cabin must be no larger than twenty square meters! Fast-hikers seek high views while medium hikers stroll the raising beaches and admire many passing fulmars, that likely nest close by, and slow-hikers visit the cabin and its surroundings.

At the end of the landing, some of us are brave enough to jump into the freezing waters of the Isfjord, for a "polar plunge" that has them shout out of the top of their lungs!

Freidhem marks the end of our trip, it is time for Plancius to head back to Longyearbyen, and for the captain's cocktail. Philipp summarizes our voyage, informing us we travelled more than 2300 kilometers. Captain Barria wishes us safe travels back home, and we thank the expedition team. We drink a glass of champagne while watching Chloe's beautiful slideshow, an emotional and fun video capturing the best moments of our tour around Spitsbergen. Finally at dinner, we clap our hands while we are presented to all crew members!

Philipp Schaudy - Expedition Leader



It all started on this memorable 24th of December 1973. It was cold and snow was falling on the Austrian city of Graz. I instantly loved that. Immediately I decided to become a polar explorer but managed only to be a Christmas tree vendor in front of a supermarket in my early years.

That was a dead-end job, so I packed my rucksack and tried to find happiness abroad. I bicycled across continents, climbed mountains, paddled rivers. "To be on the road" was my motto. I took pictures of everything, gave public talks and told the audience about my

adventures.

Along the way I finished studies to become a Geographer. Not so easy with my drive to travel.

And then the addiction to the North. Again and again. Scandinavia, Iceland, Canada, Alaska and – more than 20 years ago – for the first time Spitsbergen. Suddenly I felt at home and stayed there for several years together with my wife.

Eventually we had seen enough polar nights and broke camp. Still plenty of virgin soil ahead of us. Greenland, the Russian Arctic, the North Pole, the deep South – Antarctica – and a lot in between.

Today I live with my family at 750 meters above sea level in a small village near Graz. A place where snow is falling at Christmas. Nevertheless, I am back in the Arctic every summer. Sure thing!

Michael Green –Assistant Expedition Leader



He has always loved the Sea and so joined the Navy as soon as he left School. In the Navy he became a diver and have enjoyed diving and instructing all over the world.

He joined Oceanwide Expeditions three years ago as a dive guide and have led and guided both in the Arctic and the Antarctic. He loves both equally. Antarctica is one of the most special places on this planet in my opinion.

He is in his third year of a photography art degree and love seeing your photos they are all fantastic and capture different aspects of what we are going to see.

If you need any help with your camera or your photos just ask. White balance is a favourite as our cameras aren't used to an all-white background.

He looks forward to helping you get the most from your holiday so please don't be frightened to ask any questions you may have.

His only tip for your trip is to take the time to look, then see and most importantly think.

The nicest moments are when you can be quiet and relaxed, stop listen to the silence and think where you are. Not many people get to do what you are doing so savor every second.

Karin Amby – Expedition Guide



Karin was born and raised in Dalarna, Sweden. She explored the woods around her home from an early age. Camping in tents, snow caves and wind shelters has been an important part of her life since childhood. As a teenager she became fascinated by the polar regions. White wide arid landscapes drew her north. In 2001-2004 she studied to become a guide. In her last year she did a five-week internship on Spitsbergen. That changed her life forever and in 2007 she moved permanently to the Arctic Archipelago. She stayed for nine years and learned a lot about the polar regions.

During her time in Spitsbergen she studied biology at the University Center on Spitsbergen, worked as a scientific field assistant, started her own guide company and worked in the tourist information and museum. She is a dedicated botanist with a broad knowledge of Arctic plants. She also has a burning interest in anything that grows in extreme conditions.

Karin has a special bond with water. If it's not frozen, she says it's warm enough to swim in, and if it's frozen, an ax or chainsaw can usually solve the problem. In 2016 she left Spitsbergen, went back to Sweden and worked in a refugee camp. When the camp closed, she continued her "desk-based" career for some time, but soon learned that working Monday to Friday every week was no life for her. Since 2018 she has been working as a guide for Oceanwide expeditions. When she's not on a ship exploring the polar regions, she can be found in the beautiful village of Älvdalen in Sweden. Here she spends a lot of time in nature, preferably on a dog sled or on skis. Until now she has accompanied in Sweden, Spitsbergen, Greenland and the Norwegian coast.

Chloé Maréchal - Expedition Guide

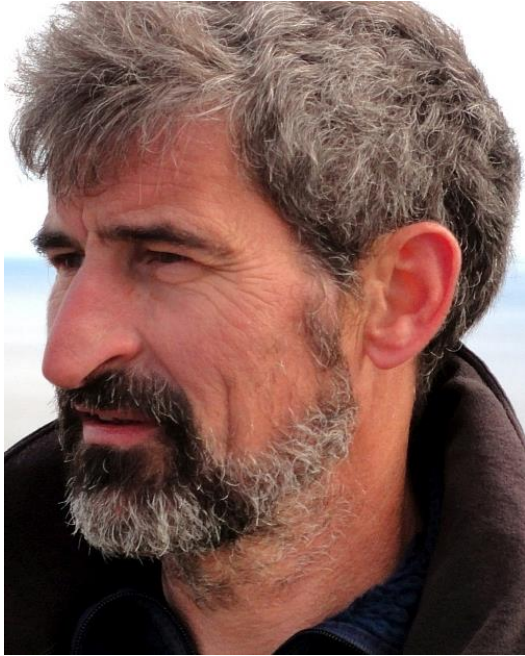


Chloé is a passionate diver fascinated by marine life and exploration. She earned a European master degree in Marine biodiversity and conservation and loves to share her expertise for the marine environment. In April 2013, she was selected as the 2013-14 European Rolex our world underwater scholar. She 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.

G rard Bodineau - Expedition Guide



Born in 1960, in Western France, G rard started to hike and camp at any season by the age of 13. After mountaineering for some years in the Alps, he discovered his passion for the Arctic in 1986. He loved it so much that he did several cross-country ski expeditions in Greenland, Nunavut and Spitsbergen. Among the most challenging one, a one month solo expedition in Spitsbergen, one to the North Magnetic Pole, one to the Geographic North Pole, and a four week sailing expedition to the Antarctic Peninsula.

For 15 years he shared his time between working as an IT specialist and guiding expeditions in the Arctic. He has been on over 60 expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctica. It is as Spitsbergen specialist that he joined Oceanwide Expeditions's team in 2004.

Since, he worked as guide and Expedition Leader in Svalbard, Greenland, Norway, Antarctica and South Georgia. He decided to do guiding as his main activity in 2009.

When not travelling, he looks after his house and backyard in Provence (Southern France) under a sunny climate.

He is most interested in glaciology and other Earth sciences as well as ornithology.

G rard speaks English and French.

Marie Manceau – Expedition Guide



After a doctorate in genetics and embryology at the University of Aix-Marseille, Marie moved to Boston in the United States to study at Harvard University the adaptation of mammals to arid environments such as the Great Plains of Nebraska and the deserts of New Mexico.

Marie leads a CNRS research team at the Institute of Biology of the Collège de France (Paris) which studies the development of embryos in extreme environments, particularly in Australian passerines and penguins.

Her interest in the latter and her taste for the great outdoors led her to visit Antarctica for the first time aboard the Plancius. Since then, Marie has been infected with the polar virus. Her research projects on penguins have led her to collaborate with the French Polar Institute (IPEV) and become a member of the scientific committee of the Paul-Emile Victor polar museum (Les Rousses). Marie joins expedition teams in Antarctica and the Arctic (Spitsbergen, Greenland) to share her knowledge of the incredible adaptive biology of polar animals for a few weeks a year.

Kamilla Oliver – Expedition Guide



Kamilla has been fascinated by nature, snow and cold since as long as she can remember. Her first career, following a PhD in Physics, was in academia. Subsequently she worked as nuclear engineer in a nuclear power plant in Cape Town and later in Germany. But she was convinced that she was meant to be driving in another lane.

After her job in Germany was axed as aftermath of Fukushima nuclear accident, Kamilla decided to hold onto her passion and switch career. Her interests led her to work as ski instructor and lead educational adventure tours on both hemispheres. She

has been fortunate to travel to the high Arctic and took part in several skiing expeditions in Russia and Svalbard.

A lifelong interest in the Polar Regions has been rewarded by employment in Greenland. Kamilla has lived on a traditional Inuit settlement in East Greenland. She had an opportunity there to learn fishing and hunting techniques and building sledges and kayak. Greenland remains her favourite destination.

Kamilla also works in a variety of art genres, including painting, drawing, seal skin embroidery and photography. Her canvasses portray penguins and polar landscapes. She jokingly asserts she is a chionophile (from the Greek word chion meaning "snow", and -phile meaning "lover"). She finds inspiration in sharing nature experiences with others.

Tijmen Brink – Ship's doctor



Please let me introduce you to one of the ship doctors. His name is Tijmen Brink, 36 years old, and he can be best described as a sportive and openminded person. Currently he is living together with his wife and son in Nijmegen (The Netherlands). He likes to go see and explore the world by travelling, meeting and getting into contact with people, and if needed, trying to help them.

After he successfully graduated as a doctor, he has been working for several surgical departments in different hospitals for about four years. Then he decided to further specialise his career

and since 2017 he has been working as a freelance General Practitioner in the Netherlands. In this way he is used to adapt himself to both different working environments and circumstances every time. He combines his work in daily practices with emergency care shifts, especially during the night. One of his best skills is to keep calm and stay focussed, even when the situations are getting more difficult or stressful. His work as a doctor enables him to help and take care of people when needed. This contributes in it being a very satisfying job for him.

His other passions in life besides his work and travelling are enjoying nature and the outside lifestyle. He loves camping, skiing, photography, diving, bouldering and crossfit. He is very excited to experience travelling the Arctic region and to combine so much things he gets inspired by in life at the same time.

Tijmen will do his utmost best to help you in any medical situation. In this he strives to make you feel as safe and comfortable as possible during your trip, especially when you are in need of (medical) help. Feel free to ask him any question. It is his pleasure to serve you as a ship doctor.

Birds seen during cruise PLA09-22 (25th July to 2nd August)

English Name	Latin	German	24 July	25 July	26 July	27 July	28 July	29 July	30 July	31 July	1st August
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Sterntaucher		✓							
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Eissturmvogel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kurzschnabelgans			✓			✓			
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Weisswangengans	✓	✓						✓	
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Ringelgans			✓						
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eiderente	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Prachteiderente		✓							
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Eisente		✓							
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Sandregenpfeifer		✓							
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Meerstrandläufer	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Thorshühnchen		✓							
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Odinshühnchen		✓							
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarotzerraub-möwe		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Skua			✓						
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Dreizehenmöwe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Elfenbeinmöwe		✓		✓	✓			✓	
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dickschnabellumme	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>	Gryllteiste	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbentaucher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papageitaucher	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓

Mammals seen during cruise PLA09-22 (25th July to 2nd August)

English	Latin	German	24 July	25 July	26 July	27 July	28 July	29 July	30 July	31 July	1st August
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walross					√	√			
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bartrobbe			√			√	√		
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringelrobbe								√	
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	Sattelrobbe				√					
Hooded seal	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>	Klappmütze				√					
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Seehund		√							
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Zwergwal									√
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Buckelwal					√			√	
Bowhead whale	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>	Grönlandwal				√					
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Eisbär						√	√		
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	Svalbard Renntier	√	√	√		√		√		√