



OCEANWIDE
EXPEDITIONS

North Spitsbergen Furthest North

M/V Hondius

16th August 2022 – 23rd August 2022



The *MV Hondius* was built in 2019 in Brodosplit, Croatia, as an expedition vessel for Oceanwide Expeditions. *Hondius* is 107.60m long, 17,60m wide and has a maximum draught of 5.3m and has an exceptionally high Ice class of PC6, a top speed of 15 knots and 3 diesel generators. The *Hondius* sails on LSMGO. Now the ship is sailing as a 176-passenger vessel with 83 cabins. Our beautiful, modern ship carries 369m³ of fresh water and has a water plant producing 70m³ per day. It is the perfect vessel for a true polar adventure!

Captain Toni Salo
and his international crew of 72
including:

Staff Officer:	Miia Holma
Second Officer:	Igor Nazarov
Second Officer:	Sven Holzhausen
Chief Engineer:	Sebastian Alexandru
Hotel Manager:	Michael Frauendorfer
Receptionist:	Karolina Guziejko
Head Chef:	Khabir Moraes
Sous Chefs:	Mihai Melinte Gaurav Bawa
Ship's Physician:	Oliver von Olnhausen
Expedition Leader:	Sara Jenner
Assist. Expedition Leaders:	Laura Mony Szymon Niezabitowski
Expedition Guides:	Annelou Hulsker Alexander Romanovskiy Ben Giunchi Bill Smith Charlotte Taplin Georgina Strange Helene De Meringo John Rogers Laura Sommerville Slava Nitikin

We welcome you on board!

Day 1: 16th August 2022

Longyearbyen

GPS position at 4pm: 78°14.5' N, 11°58.8' E

Wind: SE 26; Sea State: Choppy; Weather: Windy and Overcast; Air Temp: 6.0°C

Our Arctic adventure began on a grey, blustery afternoon. We made our way to the dock near *Longyearbyen* where *MV Hondius*, our home for the next week, awaited.

As we got onboard, we were welcomed by the hotel department and Karolina, the receptionist, who handed us the keys to our rooms. As we were discovering the vessel, we naturally made our way to the observation lounge where coffee and tea were waiting for us, but also where we will have the best view of the surrounding landscape. We anticipated spending lots of time in this space looking out the window, making sure we will not miss any sightings of wildlife, and chatting to old and new friends.



Strong winds were blowing *Hondius* directly onto the dock making the launch a very tricky and delicate manoeuvre for Captain Toni and his crew. They made it look easy. As we set sail, we received a warm welcome and orientation briefing from our Hotel Manager

Michael and Expedition Leader (EL) Sara. They gave us an overview of life on board and how to access important information concerning our daily schedules. Then came our first introduction to the Expedition Team who will be helping us to make the most of this adventure with their knowledge of flora, fauna, ice, geology, history and more. Finally, Sara showed Plan A for the voyage – with the understanding that any expedition requires constant making of Plans B, C, D and more as conditions change.



With that introduction complete we attended the mandatory safety briefing. Sara and Second Officer Sven explained the major risks and how to avoid them. The Expedition Team demonstrated how to put on the life jackets and floatation suits that are stored in our cabins in the event of an emergency. When the alarm was sounded, we all made our way to

our muster stations, either the Observation Lounge or the Restaurant. Once all of us had arrived, and confirmed that we were wearing our lifejackets correctly, we were conducted to the lifeboats just as if we were abandoning ship. Some took the chance to check out the emergency accommodation in the lifeboats. It felt good to know what to do if required.

It felt even better to head to Deck 4 for our first visit to the restaurant to sample the delicious food prepared by Chef Khabir and the galley team. Thus fortified, we were called down to the shell doors to get fitted for our Muck Boots which turned into dancing shoes as we rocked out with the Expedition Team.

As the day drew to a close there were dolphin and whale sightings, and the sun got low enough in the sky to give dramatic “sunset” or “sunrise” colours – but of course it neither set nor rose but just circled the sky. This was our first inkling of how difficult it will be to go



to bed. Sleep is useful, but you are always missing something.

Day 2: 17th August 2022 Gullybukta & Gravneset

GPS position at 4pm: 79°34.8' N, 10°46.0' E

Wind: S1; Sea State: Calm rippled; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 7.5°C



We woke up after our first night's sleep to a delicious breakfast buffet made by the fantastic chefs. We then listened to Sara talk us through the AECO guidelines, the regulations we need to follow during our expedition. Thus prepared, we embarked

on our first zodiac cruise in Gullybukta, Magdalenefjord. The expedition team took us on a splendid cruise to the glacier. We were lucky enough to see a Bearded Seal on the ice, along with two Harbour Seals doing their famous banana stance on rocks in the water!

Over lunch the officers and captain re-positioned the ship to Gravneset. This bay was used as a harbour by 17th century whalers. The remains of



blubber ovens and 130 graves on site are now highly protected to preserve them for the

future.

The afternoon activity was our first split landing/zodiac cruise. Due to the requirement to limit the number of passengers ashore, half started on land, and half with a zodiac cruise. We then switched on the beach. The first landing group were lucky enough to experience a very confident Arctic Fox foraging on the shore constantly harried by Arctic Terns, while the first cruisers had beautiful Harbour Seals swimming next to the zodiacs and a very



lazy Walrus sleeping on the sand. As the day went on, the weather started to turn quite wet, so after we got back on board, we filled our bellies with tea and hot chocolate.

At 18:45 it was time for the Captains Cocktail Party to celebrate the

beginning of our voyage. Captain Toni gave a nice speech to enthuse everyone, and we all raised our glasses, cheers! The Charlotte gave us a short recap on Bearded Seals then Bill reminded us to open our minds and engage our brains to get the most from this experience.

After a four-course dinner, none could move, but we eventually waddled to the bar to chatter about the wonderful first day on Hondius, wow.

Day 3: 18th August 2022

Monacobreen & Texas Bar

GPS position at 8 am: 79°57.2'N 13°44.5'E

Wind: S4; Sea state: Smooth; Weather: Partly Cloudy; Air Temp.: 9.0°C

We awoke in Liefdefjord to a morning of glorious sunshine. Light sparked on ice floating



on the calm sea and not much wind. Priority was breakfast, then as the conditions were ideal, the first item on the day's programme was a Zodiac cruise along the dramatic fractured front of Monacobreen Glacier. Any doubts about the effects of global warming

were dispelled by the almost continuous crash and roar as huge sections of the glacier front detached and plunged into the sea breaking up into hundreds of pieces and generating large waves. This was a dynamic dramatic illustration of the enormous forces of nature.

After this successful morning Zodiac cruise, *Hondius* motored back up Liefdefjord in ideal weather conditions. We landed on the steep shingle in



front of a picturesque, drift wood constructed, historic hut named 'Texas Bar'. This was one of several built in the Woodfjord area by the famous Norwegian trapper Hilmar Nois in the late 1920's. The most famous of which is the hut at Grahuken associated with Christiana Ritter and the book "A woman in the polar night".

Several hike options were offered including a pulse rate inducing long hike, 3 medium

hikes and the option to remain on the shoreline taking photographs and soaking up the stunning scenery.



These hikes turned out to be welcome leg stretching educational and physical exercises exploring the permafrost damaged undulating terrain. A mixture of boulders, gravel and dried mud provided challenging exercise. Each group, protected by armed Expedition guides, walked across the landscape onto the

vast expanse of a flood plain left by the retreating glacier. Enormous terminal moraines dominated the area in front of the retreating, diminishing glacier. For many it was an enlightening introduction to Arctic geological processes as we observed first-hand the awesome effects of glaciation. Huge piles of stones and gravel piled high along the courses of dried-up streams bore witness to the enormous amount of water that must flow in this area during snow melt.

The different walking groups all returned to the area of the 'Texas Bar' hut and a number of hardy souls dived, waded, or slowly walked into the sea for a 'Polar Plunge'. There was shivering from the plungers, and laughter and cries of encouragement from the spectators.



As the weather was quite pleasant in the evening, it was decided to hold a barbeque on deck. Lots of food, drink and loud music resulted in energetic dancing until late. Everyone retired exhausted after another superb Oceanwide day.

Day 4: 19th August 2022 Faksevagen & Akefjellet

GPS position at 8 am: 79°39.7'N 18°23.7'E

Wind: S6; Sea state: Slight; Weather: Partly Cloudy; Air Temp.: 8.0°C



Our day started earlier than usual today with an unexpected wake-up call at 6:30am which announced that a polar bear had already been spotted at Faksevagen, our intended landing site for this morning! Many of us

ventured out to catch a glimpse of these majestic creatures.

Within a short while, the expedition team had launched the zodiacs, and we all went for a cruise to get a closer look. A mother with two cubs could be seen ambling around the shoreline, and a larger bear was also moving around the site. It was a bit challenging to take photographs, as the wind and the swell made the ride a little bumpy. Nevertheless, we felt very privileged to enjoy this magical sight.



After the excitement of the morning, we were happy to get on board and enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Later in the morning, Sara explained how polar bears have evolved to thrive in this challenging environment. She shared some of her own experiences and shows photographs of polar bears taken over the years she has spent in the Arctic.



After lunch, we arrived in Alkefjellet, an enchanted bird cliff and nesting place of 60,000 pairs of Brunnich's Guillemots. The first zodiacs to embark guests for this cruise found the conditions a little "sporty", but with patience and persistence, we were able

to embark all guests to enjoy this incredible place. What a treat was waiting for us at the cliffs! Several Arctic Foxes could be seen roaming around the base of the cliffs, looking

for food to last them through the harsh winter season. We were also lucky enough to witness some Brunnich's Guillemot chick "jumpers" leaping from the nest into the waters below. They are quickly followed by their fathers as the female birds have already left for the season. The males take care of the chicks over the coming months while they swim, and then fledge, during their long migration to the south.



At recap, Sara told us about the plans for tomorrow, then Laura talked about the geology



of Alkefjellet, and Helene supplied with a brief overview of the auk family of birds, which include the Brunnich's Guillemots which we saw today, as well as the Puffin and the Little Auk. During recap, and all through dinner, whales could be seen blowing in the distance.

After dinner Sasha invited everyone to the lecture hall for popcorn and an evening of stories about his time as the guardian of Pyramiden, a ghost town here in Svalbard. Finally, as the sun did not set on another day of our adventures around Svalbard, we headed to bed as the Hondius set a course to the North.

Day 5: 20th August 2022 At Sea enroute Furthest North

GPS position at 8 am: 82°11.6'N 15°37.4'E

Wind: NW3; Sea state: Slight; Weather: Partly Cloudy; Air Temp.: -1.0°C



Today we arose from our warm beds in anticipation of reaching the sea ice and finally, after breakfast at 0915, we saw the first evidence of the ice edge. We added layers to protect ourselves from the cold, and outside we went to see the beautiful pack

ice. There was a wonderful aura on the ship as we first approached the ice edge.

We spent a few precious hours in and out of the ice as Szymon gave his lecture on sea ice, followed by John with Arctic history on the Quest for the North Pole. We got to 82°27.6' N, the furthest north that any Oceanwide vessel as ever been!

As we started leaving the ice, Szymon spotted two blows on the ice edge. What could it be? As we approached, Sara confirmed two Bowhead Whales!! Wow, a first for many of us. This species is very rare. It is most often spotted near the ice edge feeding. We kept a 200-metre distance and watched as they came to the surface to breathe, then dived back down beneath the surface to feed. The expedition team were all extremely excited by this sighting!

Georgina spoke about photography during her lecture, which was very helpful for all of us wanting to improve our skills.

The fantastic Hotel Team provided us with hot chocolate and rum as we ventured back into the pack ice for one last time.

Northern Fulmars circled the vessel as we watched the large pieces of ice crunching past our steel hull, the blue of the ice was captivating, we all felt in awe of this magical experience.

Charlotte then gave us a talk on Cetaceans of the Arctic, so our brains are now full to the brim with knowledge of this Arctic region.



Day 6: 21st August 2022 Seven Islands

GPS position at 8 am: 80°32.9'N 19°36.5'E

Wind: W5; Sea state: Swell; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp.: 7.9°C



Everyone awoke and immediately were apprehensive as the weather and sea-state appeared unsuitable for our intended plan, a landing and cruise at Parroya. As *Hondius* agitated in the early morning swell and as quite substantial waves swept along the sides of the

ship, our Sara and the Expedition Team were given Health and Safety food for thought! After some deliberation, it was decided to launch a staff manned Zodiac to check out the marginal conditions. Just how marginal became obvious as staff boarded the pitching craft at the shell doors and lurched over the tops of successive large rollers as they moved towards the shore. It was clear, and everyone understood why operations were cancelled. Fortunately, the ocean swell moderated as *Hondius* approached Phippsoya after lunch.

Passengers were split into two groups and Zodiacs launched. The first boats motored towards the dramatic sweeping arc of the shore curving between two massive island outcrops. This was a tombola beach created by years of violent wave action piling up the huge boulders and grading the smaller stones. An isolated old driftwood cabin formed an interesting feature on the shoreline.

As the Zodiacs cruised slowly 50 metres off the beach a group of walrus were spotted just ahead. They bobbed and dived in an excited energetic group and provided a splashy

focus for the eager photographers. Such fun.



The boats proceeded round the headland into the main channel between the islands and immediately experienced a lumpy, at times wet, wave action. We searched the boulder strewn steep hillside for the polar bear that had been seen from the Bridge. Eyes scanned the confusing mass of boulders. We were 'Looking' but not yet

'Seeing'.... where was the bear?

At last, it was spotted sprawled amongst the rocks almost completely camouflaged in tone and colour. Nearly completely motionless apart from an occasional lazy raising of the head to take in the Zodiac and passenger scene. Two boats were lucky and saw a bearded seal passing between them and the shore.



An exhilarating ride back to *Hondius*, downwind surfing across the rather large waves, was another highlight of the afternoon. This was judged to be a great cruise after the disappointment of the morning.

Recap included essential disembarkation information – please not yet! Then Sara prepared us for tomorrow before we went to dinner to continue our attempt to look like a

walrus.

The Oceanwide induced excitement continues.

Day 7: 22nd August 2022 Smeerenburg & Virgohamna

GPS position at 8 am: 79°52.4'N 11°05.5'E

Wind: N3; Sea state: Smooth; Weather: Sunny; Air Temp.: 9.0°C



We woke to a bright blue sky and sunshine, a bit windy but with an outstanding view. We were ready to get off the ship to enjoy the beautiful weather. While we were having breakfast, the expedition team was already getting splashed by the waves in the zodiacs.

The morning activity was a split landing and zodiac cruise. The cruise was to Virgohamna to view the remains of 2 attempts to fly to the North Pole. In 1897 Salomon August Andrée and 2 companions were lost when their hydrogen balloon disappeared not to be found until 1930. In the early 1900's the American, Walter Wellman, made 3 launches in his airship. All failed soon after



takeoff. Wellman gave up, but at least he lived. Along the way we watched Harbour Seals sunning on the rocks, and swimming, and were closely watched ourselves by hovering

Arctic Terns making sure we were not threats to their nests.



The landing was itself split into two activities. We walked to the ruins of Smeerenburg, which means Blubber Town. In 1630 around 200 persons from seven Dutch whaling companies were living on this little piece of land to work in this lucrative, but oh so dangerous, industry. We saw the leftovers of

blubber ovens and whale bones on the beach.

On the other side of the landing, we spent time admiring walrus hauled out, then playing and hunting in the water. These giant beasts were surprisingly active for such a big mammal that usually likes to sleep on the beach. We would have spent the whole morning there, but the Expedition Team made us go back for lunch. A group of walrus were so sorry to see us go that they followed the last zodiac a little way.

After lunch, many of us posed with many of the staff for a group photo. The afternoon included some time for serious thought and reflection on the changes in the Arctic, and our part to play, with a panel discussion on Climate Change and Global Warming.



The evening began when Captain Toni invited us to toast the success of this expedition in the Captain's Cocktail Party. The feature presentation was the delightful voyage slideshow created for us by Georgina.

The after-dinner show featured a large pod of Fin Whales and White Beaked Dolphins jumping very close to the bow.



Day 8: 23rd August 2022 Longyearbyen

GPS position at 8 am: 78°13.8'N 15°36.1'E

Wind: N1; Sea state: Calm; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp.: 5.0°C

Some of us had a head start, but only 7 days ago we all came together. We met, introduced ourselves, learned together, shared awesome experiences, and then shared the stories and pictures of those experiences. Quickly we were friends. We will always be friends, even if we soon will be distant friends. So soon we are parting.

How will we get our other friends back home to understand what it was like to be on this expedition? We can tell them about the pack ice, we can tell them about the walrus in

the water, we can tell them about 24-hour days, we can tell them cruising the glacier, and the hikes, and the seals on the ice, and the bears on the beach – but they can never really know what we know. Our smiles may help them understand, but only our *Hondius* friends can really know what we know – that this was a beautiful, wonderful, magical adventure.

So, we all wished each other farewell, knowing that we may be moving on to the next chapter of our lives, but that this chapter will never be forgotten.



Thank you all for travelling with us on this voyage, for your enthusiasm, support and good company. We very much hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

**Total distance sailed on our voyage: 1077.4 nm
Northernmost position: 82°27.6' N**

**On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Toni Salo,
Expedition Leader Sara Jenner, Hotel Manager Michael Frauendorfer
and all the crew and staff of M/V Hondius, it has been a pleasure travelling with
you.**

Svalbard 2022

MV Hondius 16/08 – 23/08

- **1:** 16/08 **Longyearbyen** - Embarkation
- **2:** 17/08 **Gullybukta** - Zodiac cruise
- **3:** 17/08 **Gravneset** - Landing + Zodiac cruise
- **4:** 18/08 **Monacobreen** - Zodiac cruise
- **5:** 18/08 **Texas bar** - Landing + hiking
- **6:** 19/08 **Faksevagen** - Zodiac cruise
- **7:** 19/08 **Alkefjellet** - Zodiac cruise
- **8:** 20/08 **The most Northern position**
- **9:** 21/08 **Phippsøya** - Zodiac cruise
- **10:** 22/08 **Smeerenburg** - Landing + Zodiac cruise
- **11:** 23/08 **Longyearbyen** - Disembarkation.



Sara Jenner – Expedition Leader



For as long as Sara could remember she has had a passion for travel and searching for the wildest and most remote places on earth.

Back in the UK when she was only 10, she remembers trading in her favourite pink bicycle for the money to start her travel fund. Every birthday and Christmas she added a little more in the kitty and finally, at 18 she realised her dream of diving at the Great Barrier Reef! At that point the travel addiction was born. Ever since Sara has been travelling the globe in search of wild and remote places and has spent many

months volunteering on wildlife conservation projects in a bid to help some of our most iconic and endangered species.

Sara's love of wildlife and the great outdoors has taken her to all seven continents and she has travelled extensively in the polar regions including the Antarctic Peninsula, Falklands, South Georgia, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Iceland, Baffin Island and Canadian High Arctic. Returning to the UK, Sara used this knowledge to work in the travel industry as a polar specialist for several years, until the travel bug hit again, when she decided to swap life on the land for a life at sea and joined the Oceanwide Expedition Team in 2016.

During 2020-2021 she worked extensively on a leopard seal identification project and took the opportunity to fulfil a lifetime dream of visiting South Georgia in winter by working on the M/V Pharos, which is deployed by the South Georgia Government as a fishery patrol vessel.

Sara is a keen wildlife photographer and when she is not wrapped up warm in the polar regions she enjoys working as a photographic guide in Botswana, on the beautiful Chobe River and Okavango Delta, so really has a life of two halves.

Laura Mony – Assistant Expedition Leader

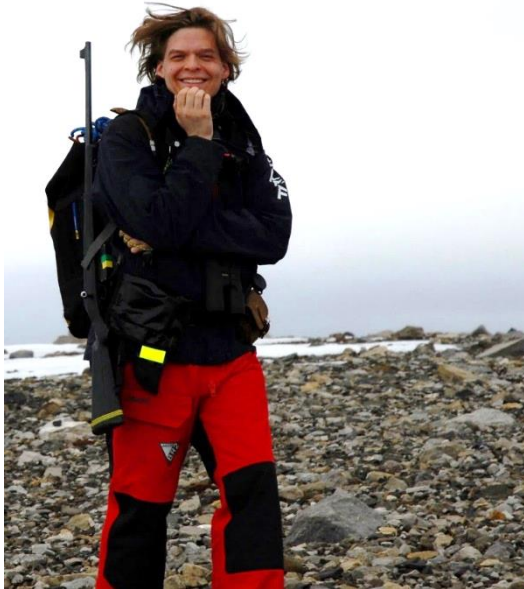


The ocean had always been part of Laura's life. She started spending time on sailboats when she was a baby and she sailed around the world crossing several oceans when she was between 12 and 14 years old. That trip increased her passion for the ocean because she discovered its vastness and its importance on the earth's dynamic.

Laura had the chance to start traveling very young and has been all over the world alone, with a backpack, with family or friends. These trips gave her the opportunity to develop an open mind and an intellectual curiosity about the climate phenomena that govern our planet.

Born in France, she grew up in the French part of Canada where she did her bachelor's degree in Geological Engineering. During her bachelor's degree, she became fascinated by the polar regions and wanted to continue her studies in that field. That is why, at the end of her degree, she left Canada for Tasmania, Australia, to do her Master in Marine and Antarctic Science. During that degree she deeply studied this fascinating continent with a specialization in geophysics and glaciology. When she is not guiding, she explores the world with her camera, or she is discovering the backcountry of Quebec with her skis. She likes to discover remote area and meet with local populations.

Szymon Niezabitowski – Assistant Expedition Leader



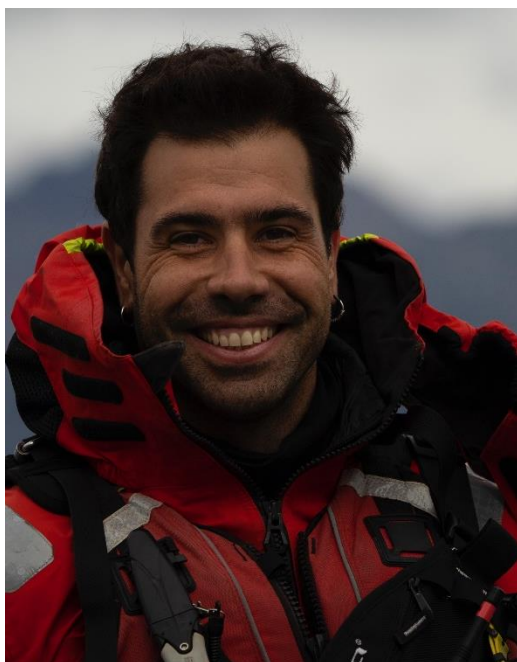
Szymon was born in Cracow, Poland. He studied Biology and Geography in Cracow where he received his graduate degree in “Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences”. His final thesis was about Volcanic Soils on Iceland.

After he finished his studies, he joined Polish Academy of Sciences and worked for the Institute of Systematics and Evolution of Animals, where he was a guide and researcher on exotic animals.

Szymon began guiding in the Arctic in 2016 on Spitsbergen and since then has also led Orca whale trips in North Norway.

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.

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!

Bill Smith - Expedition Guide



“Super Bill” as described by his colleagues and clients, is a fun-loving outdoor pursuits enthusiast, cartoonist and former Head of Art and Design Education at Ellon Academy Aberdeenshire.

Bill joined Oceanwide Expeditions as a guide when Plancius was built and over the last few years has become addicted to the Polar Regions.

He has 55 years’ experience of Art and Design Education and Design for Industry. Plus 55 years leading and instructing a range of outdoor pursuits.

Bill delights in producing humorous cartoon logs of each trip.

Charlotte Taplin – Expedition Guide



Charlotte grew up by the Coast in Cornwall, United Kingdom. From a very young age she has always been fascinated by wildlife and the ocean.

She studied Wildlife Conservation in University and since then has spent the last 7 years travelling through South America, Africa and Australasia. In 2013 Charlotte started working on research and dive vessels including a dive liveaboard boat which visited remote regions of the outer Great Barrier Reef. This was where her passion for boats began and since then she has travelled the world on ice

breaker explorer vessels. Charlotte's interest with cetaceans started in Australia in 2015 where she spent the next 3 years studying Humpback Whales, Minke Whales, Sperm Whales and Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphins.

After driving overland from South Africa to Jordan in 2015 she moved to Mozambique where she started her own backpacker hostel and worked as a Researcher studying Whale Sharks and Manta Rays. Her hobbies include scuba diving, surfing, free-diving hiking. Being surrounded by the ocean is Charlotte's favourite place to be and it is her dream to visit the Antarctic. She is so excited for the future ahead with Oceanwide Expeditions.

Georgina Strange - Expedition Guide



Georgina is a professional nature photographer and general wildlife enthusiast from the Falkland Islands. Her rather unique upbringing on a very small and remote island nature reserve has instilled a deep passion for wild places, and you'll most likely find her out on a cliff edge in a storm, revelling in the gales of wind that frequent the Falklands!

Georgina studied in England for sixth-form college, followed by an adventure to Australia for her university degree in Photography.

After managing her family's conservation trust on New Island in the Falklands for many years, regularly working with the many visiting expedition ships shoreside, Georgina swapped a land-based life for an ocean-based one and started as expedition photographer to South Georgia and the Antarctic in 2017, and to the Arctic in 2019, often switching roles to work as the on-board ornithologist to share her love of the winged creatures of the world, too!

During her off-ship season, Georgina runs her own wildlife photography tours at home to fulfil her passion for making captivating images of nature. Whenever possible, she most enjoys balancing out the time spent guiding in cold and windy places for quality time in the hotter and sunnier climes of the world!

Georgina's photography has made it to Outdoor Photographer of the Year, Bird Photographer of the Year, Wild Art Photographer and the finals of the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year, as well as several well-known nature photography magazines and smaller competitions. Always happy to share knowledge and techniques, maybe you will go home with some competition-worthy images of your special trip, too!

Hélène de Méringo - Expedition Guide



Native from Brittany in France, Hélène quickly developed a passion for nature and wildlife.

After studying biology and ecology, she multiplied missions in various latitudes, working for conservation programs in Guinea, Quebec, and research programs in New Zealand and Indonesia.

In 2008, she winters in the Kerguelen Archipelago as a volunteer biologist for the French Polar Institute and develops a real interest for island ecosystems and the polar world. A grandiose and decisive experience. She continues her experience in the Great South as an agent of the French Southern and Antarctic Natural Reserve. 8.64 cm

Since 2012, she works as an engineer in a research team focus in island ecology. This work leads her to regularly participate in on-board missions to study seabirds nesting in remote islands, particularly in the Pacific.

Since January 2019, she has been participating in cruises to the Antarctic Peninsula and the Arctic on expedition ships with Oceanwide Expedition.

John Rogers - Expedition Guide



History came early to me as my home town, Concord, Massachusetts, is famous as the site of the first battle of the American Revolution and much early American literary culture. I learned to swim in Walden Pond, of Thoreau fame. My love of the outdoors started with family holidays to lakes and mountains.

Following a move to Los Angeles to undertake a Bachelor of Science from the California Institute of Technology, I began a career in computer software development. An unexpected 3 month paid holiday, when my employer went

belly up, was spent hiking and exploring in the Canadian Rockies. With this the travel bug bit hard, and has never let go.

Another travelling holiday brought me across the Pacific to New Zealand in 1980 with the goal of living outside of the USA. A holiday romance with Jill started then and has never ended. Several long unpaid leaves have allowed me to visit every continent – the final one being Antarctica on a ship-based expedition in 2001. With this, the Antarctic bug bit hard, and has never let go.

As a member and officer of the New Zealand Antarctic Society; and a resident of Christchurch where Antarcticans are thick on the ground; and through the post-retirement completion of the Postgraduate Certificate in Antarctic Studies at the University of Canterbury; I have been able to pursue and indulge an interest in the amazing stories of Antarctic exploration, past and present.

My approach to the history of the places and people of the Antarctic is based on those stories. I hope that anyone on this voyage with specialized knowledge, or with a family connection, will help me to help others share in this fantastic legacy.

Laura Somerville - Expedition Guide



Laura is originally from Scotland, and is currently living in the eastern part of Switzerland. Her first degree was in physics, and she began her working life as an actuary, working for a life assurance company in the field of financial statistics and risk analysis. However, her passion for the natural world and for sustainability issues led her down a different path.

She has studied marine biology at the University of Glasgow in Scotland; at the University of Iceland, she studied fish ecology and marine mammals. Her interest in environmental pollution in the

Arctic led her to UNIS (the University Centre in Svalbard), where she has taken part in a research project measuring snow albedo (the “whiteness” of the snow) in the northern fjords of Svalbard. The social and economic aspects of sustainability are Laura’s current research focus, and she has studied economics and international affairs at the University of St Gallen in Switzerland, and is currently working towards a master’s in education for sustainable development at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden.

If you are interested in ice swimming, you can ask Laura about the time she trained in ice bathing and breathing techniques with Wim Hof (the “Ice Man”) in the Netherlands. She also has quite strong opinions about Scotch whisky, especially the Islay malts. She speaks English, German, French and a little bit of Spanish.

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.