



North Spitsbergen, In Search of Polar Bear & Pack Ice - Summer Solstice

14th June – 21st June 2023

M/V Hondius



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 vessel carries 369m³ of fresh water and has a water plant producing 70m³ per day. In many ways, the Hondius is the perfect vessel for a true polar adventure!

Captain Toni Salo

and his international crew

Staff Captain: **Elizbar Kadaria**

Chief Officer: **Matei Mocanu**

3rd Officer: **Giovanie Pancer Simene**

Chief Engineer: **Andrej Abakumov**

Hotel Manager: **Oleksandr Lyebyedyev**

Assist. Hotel Manager: **Alfredo Bonifaz**

Head Chef: **Ralf Barthel**

Ships Doctor: **Veronique Verhoeven**

Expedition Leader: **Sara Jenner**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Adam Turner**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Claudio Ghiglione**

Expedition Guide: **Bill Smith**

Expedition Guide: **Anthonie Luteijn**

Expedition Guide: **Andrew Crowder**

Expedition Guide: **Charlotte Taplin**

Expedition Guide: **Koen Hoekmeijer**

Expedition Guide: **Pelin Asfuroglu**

Expedition Guide: **Marco Rosso**

Expedition Guide: **Julia Baldursdottir**

Expedition Guide: **Simon Davies**

Expedition Guide: **Tanja Bayer**

Expedition Guide: **Paolo Bellezze**

Expedition Guide: **Esther Josten**

Day 1 – 14th June

Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: 78°13.7'N / 015°36.02'E

Wind: W 5, **Sea State:** Slight, **Weather:** Partly Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 1°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C



When we arrive at the quayside in Longyearbyen, our adventure begins immediately with a Zodiac ride! Hondius, our transport and home for the next seven days, is sitting out at anchor in the fjord. In a chilly wind, we don our lifejackets for the first time and enter the Zodiacs for the transfer to the ship. Our luggage is already on board, and we are

greeted by the enthusiastic staff before being shown to our cabins.

Once settled in, we all gather in the observation lounge for a mandatory safety drill from our Chief Officer, Matej, which includes an evacuation exercise ending next to our designated lifeboat station. We then have an initial briefing from the Deputy Hotel Manager, Alfredo, before our Expedition Team Leader, Sara, invites her multi-talented team to introduce themselves to us.

Sara then gives us an outline of the cruise schedule and some of the key safety issues. Then it is down to the dining room for our first taste of the excellent food on board, meeting some of our fellow travellers and members of the expedition team who join us for dinner. There is no stopping even after that, as we



make our way down to Deck 3 to be fitted for our essential muckboots. Finally, we make our way to bed, tired but excited. Our adventure has begun!

Day 2 – 15th June

Gullybukta & Gravneset

12:00 GPS Position: 79°57.0'N / 010°87.0'E

Wind: NW 3, Sea State: Calm, Weather: Cloudy, Air Temp: 0°C, Sea Temp: 5.7°C



First thing in the morning sees us still heading north in Northwest Spitzbergen National Park after setting off from Longyearbyen last night. We are soon turning east into Magdalenefjorden and our first destination of the trip. As the incredible scenery surrounds us, we all gather in the lounge for the vital AECO, Zodiac, and polar bear safety briefings. These briefings keep us safe and also increase our anticipation of the places we will

visit.

As soon as the briefings are concluded, we go straight into the action with a short, mid-morning Zodiac cruise towards Gullybukta. We see a burping, farting, smelling pile of sleeping walrus on the beach at the entrance to the little bay on the south side of the fjord. Accompanied by Arctic terns, black guillemots, and eiders, it is a perfect little introduction to wonderful Svalbard, the Zodiac operations, and the incredible sights we will enjoy throughout the trip.



After a good lunch, we head out again for our first full afternoon with a split landing / Zodiac cruise at Gravneset and the fine glacier of Wagonwaybreen. On the land, we are treated to a nice little walk, all the time dodging the aggressive Arctic terns that are settling down to breed on the shingle ridge. We enjoy some moments of self-reflection as we gaze across the small fence at the site of 130 whaler's graves, wondering about

the incredibly hard lives of the 17th century whalers interred at this remote location. The Zodiac cruise part of the afternoon takes us deeper into the fjord, past a fine selection of wildlife from resting Harbour Seals perched on their rocks in classic 'banana' pose, to an excellent mixed flock

of Common and King Eiders – an excellent total of 41 Kings is a great aggregation and singing Snow Buntings spaced evenly along the hillsides, hoping to attract a mate.

After fantastic views of the glacier and some wonderfully twisted iceberg shapes deep in the fjord, we happily head back to the ship for another sumptuous meal and to bask in the memory of some wonderful sights on our first full day. It is not over though, as after dinner we continue our way north towards our next destination and the alluring promise of the ice-edge. We enjoy some flat, glass-calm seas in the glorious evening light, all the time surrounded by thousands of Little Auks and Brunnich's Guillemots whizzing around, also making the most of the fantastic evening.

Day 3 - 16th June

Smeerenburg/Virgohamna & Ytre and Indre Norskoya

12:00 GPS Position: 79°43.5'N / 011°22.00'E

Wind: NNW 1, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Sunny, **Air Temp:** 6°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C



Waking up north of the Smeerenburgfjord, we make our way into the to the peninsula of Smeerenburg at Amsterdamøya. Captain Toni positions Hondius just between Amsterdamøya and Danskøya. Activity of this morning is split Zodiac Cruise and a landing at Smeerenburg.

The cruise takes us along Virgohamna, where we find historical remains from the several different attempts to reach the North Pole. The most important, but also most tragic, was the attempt of Salomon August Andréé, Knut

Frænkel and Nils Strindberg with a Balloon. They all died on Kvitøya, after their balloon crashed in the pack ice.

We also hear stories about Walter Wellmann, just when we pass some remains of these times. A lot of harbour seals are lying on the rocks, looking like bananas, and some of us are lucky to spot a Minke whale during the cruise. We go ashore at Smeerenburg, which means 'blubber town'.



© Sara Jensen

About 20 brown and blubbery Walrus are snoozing on the eastern end of the peninsula, and we get the chance to observe and photograph them while they yawn, roll and scratch themselves. Not a lot of action while they are digesting their clams.

Turning around, we can see a lot of Arctic Terns mating, since their breeding season has just started. Of course, this place is mainly known as one of the largest land whaling stations in the 17th century. Starting in 1616, the mainly Dutch whalers built solid houses and ovens for cooking the blubber that is extracted from the whales. We walk along the line of the ovens and are really stunned about the good condition of some of the 400-year-old blubber ovens.

During the walk along the coastline, we also pick up a lot of plastic. Mainly fishing-related rubbish like nets, buoys and pieces of plastic boxes. This is very dangerous for the birds and other animals, Sara tells us in the recap. 'They eat this and die of starvation'. After a fully packed morning, we return to the ship and enjoy lunch.



The ship travels further to the north. Just north of the Smeerenburgfjord, the islands of Klovningen and Ytre & Indre Norsky appear. Hondius positions itself between these three islands, and we go for a long Zodiac cruise all together. There are birds everywhere: Black and Common Guillemots, Puffins, Fulmars and Arctic Terns, Eider Ducks and Barnacle Geese. Some of us are lucky to spot two Bearded Seals, and one of them is singing to attract a female! Others can witness a Glaucous Gull trying to eat a sculpin in one piece. The gull struggles for 15 minutes, but then finishes the meal successfully. After 2 - 2,5 hours of cruising, we are happy to be back on the ship and enjoy a hot cup of coffee. In the recap Sara tells us we will be in the pack ice in about an hour, and we will also cross the 80° N this evening.

After dinner, we hurry up to go out on the bow or to the bridge. The ice is fantastic, and Captain Toni safely navigates Hondius through it. At 20:40 p.m. we cross the 80° and Captain Toni himself

does the announcement. Many of us have come to north with this aim and there are a lot of happy faces on the bridge. Let's see what happens next.

Day 4 - 17th June

Amongst the Pack Ice

12:00 GPS Position: 80°10.0'N / 010°08.00'E

Wind: E 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 2°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C



Another dawn with great expectation as Hondius motors away from the Svalbard coast into the drift ice. The most eager of us, festooned with binoculars and cameras, line the ship bulwarks before breakfast hoping to be the first to sight a polar bear. Breakfast is consumed rather quickly as we all seek to get outside to savour the stunning vastness of a seascape totally

studded with ice-flows. Countless interesting asymmetric white shapes set against the swirling ever changing the dark leads. It is a mesmerising hypnotic experience staring down at this visual feast. In the extreme distance to the south, the mountains are tinged with a faint hint of orange. Photography is the morning priority amid the gentle throb of the ship's engines, punctuated by the constant click of the shutters of the cameras. First sign of life on the ice... A diminutive harp seal, then over the next few hours as we cruise backwards and forwards through the ice, three more seen at a distance plus one sighting of a Minke whale.



At 10 am the lecture programme begins, with Pelin delivering a masterful fact-filled presentation on the Arctic. Her energy and enthusiasm totally captivate us all as she issues a deluge of information carefully structured and easily digested. It is terrific... A master class lecture presentation. This is followed by Marco with a powerfully rendered explanation of sea ice as we meander through it. If he was going to talk about ice, no-where better to do it than on an expedition vessel sliding through it. He succeeds in the difficult task of making graphs understandable and interesting. These presentations were highly educational, and we sit... 'looking, seeing, thinking, listening, hearing, understanding' as we follow Bill's advice on how to maximise the Oceanwide voyage.

Another break for lunch...another tantalising display from our chef Ralf of high-quality food prepared to tempt even the most disciplined of us! It is as well that there are no weighing machines on board!!! Hondius continues to cruise its search pattern through the ice, although with little expectation of a bear sighting, as the floes in this area were thinner and more spread-out.

Afternoon lecture programme begins with Charlotte enlightening us with her extensive knowledge of whales. We all benefit greatly from the breadth and experience of this diverse guide team. A voyage on Hondius is not only adventure and fun but highly informative. This is followed by Sarah with her beautifully illustrated presentation on polar bears. Few of us have realised how complex these creatures were until this lecture. Sarah conveys clearly the bear's extreme isolation as they wander on the ice and how supremely adapted they are to survive in this frozen vastness.



Highlight of recap talks before dinner for most of us was Claudio's amazing story of the impressive fox which crossed 4500 km of the frozen ocean from Svalbard 1 March to Canada 4 July 2018.

BBQ on the after-deck is a muted

affair, then after in the busy lounge there is much excitement at the cry "WHALE" when Bill sighted a Minke whale surfacing on the port side 200 metres from Hondius at 9.30 pm.

Another interesting sighting occurs shortly after at 10.00 pm as Hondius alter its course to give us an excellent photo opportunity of a bearded seal resting on a small ice-flow. We all think that is the day finished in terms of sightings until...BINGO! At 11.15 pm an excited announcement from our expedition leader Sarah to say that a small bear is sighted on the shore at Hamiltonbukta at the entrance to Raudfjorden. This has us all clutching cameras and binoculars and scurrying to the outside decks. We sit observing at this location until 12.30 am, then Hondius moves out into open sea, and we can all relax and retire for the night.

Day 5 - 18th June

Amongst the Pack Ice

12:00 GPS Position: 80°20.08'N / 011°21.02'E

Wind: SW 2, **Sea State:** Calm **Weather:** Overcast **Air Temp:** 3°C **Sea Temp:** 5°C



As the day unfolds, you find yourself in the midst of a captivating Arctic adventure. The expedition team continues its search for polar bears amidst the changing pack ice, where open water intermittently surrounds you. The fog adds an element of challenge to the search, but the team remains vigilant, scanning the surroundings for any signs of these majestic

creatures. Amidst the icy landscape, a delightful surprise awaits us. A juvenile Ringed Seal is spotted resting on the ice, its sleek form blending harmoniously with the surroundings. Its presence provides a glimpse into the diverse wildlife that calls the Arctic home. Shortly after, an Ivory Gull gracefully takes flight around the ship, its pristine white feathers contrasting beautifully against the Arctic backdrop. As the day progresses, we have the opportunity to attend enlightening lectures from the expedition team. Andrew shares insights into the importance of wildlife photography, allowing you to appreciate the power of capturing and documenting the Arctic's natural wonders. Bill delves into the somber topic of death and destruction in the Arctic, shedding light on the Whaling past times.

After the engaging lectures, a delicious lunch awaits, indulging our senses and leaving us feeling pleasantly drowsy. We retire for a nap, letting the soothing rhythm of the ship's movement lull us into a peaceful slumber. As the afternoon unfolds, our thirst for knowledge is further quenched. Adam shares his knowledge of the Last Polar Explorer, immersing us with the rich history of Arctic exploration. Claudio's lecture on climate change raises



awareness about the pressing environmental issues affecting the Arctic and emphasizes the importance of conservation efforts. At 3pm Sara surprises us with a delightful treat: rum and hot chocolate on the bow, allowing us to savor the moment while immersed in the breathtaking

beauty of the Arctic ice. As the day winds down, dinner is served, and with satisfied bellies, slowly, the ship heads south, making its way back to Svalbard in time for a planned landing tomorrow.

Day 6 - 19th June

Signehamna & 14 Julibukta

08:00 GPS Position: 79°16.02'N / 011°34.05'E

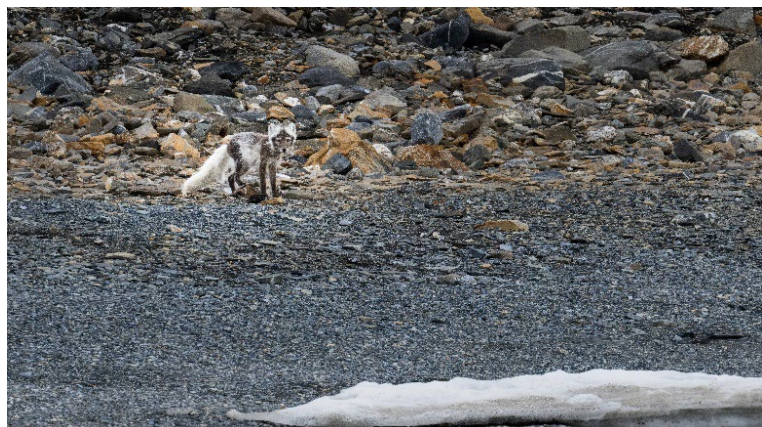
Wind: WSW2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 2°C **Sea Temp:** 6°C



After two days in the ice, we are happy to once more feel land underneath our feet. Our morning activity is split. Half of us attend a lecture with Esther to learn about the history of Svalbard, while the other half of us make a landing on Signehamna, and then of course we switch.

On land in Signehamna, our expedition guides function as cairns, making clear which path is safe for us to take. On our path we are met with cultural remains of two weather stations from the 1940s that played a role in World War II. It was in fact in 1941 that the Germans that put up the first station and were able to send daily information on the weather back home, giving them an advantage in the war. A couple of purple spots on the ground grab our attention, to our delight we see this year's first blooming of purple saxifrage.

After a delicious lunch, it is time to head out again. Our second activity is a split landing and Zodiac cruise in 14. Julibukta, named by Prince Albert of Monaco after the French National Day. Both from ashore as well as from the Zodiac cruise, we get panorama views of the colossal glacier 14. Julibreen. On an iceberg in front of it, dozens of kittiwakes



pose for hundreds of photos. But those are not the only birds we see. As we cruise along the coast, we observe a colony of Brünnich's Guillemots, nesting on narrow ledges, so narrow that they form a single row on the nest, turning their backs towards us, which serves as protection

from aerial predators. Additionally, we spot a few puffins, unmistakable by their colourful beaks and faces.

As usual, we gather in the observation lounge just after 6 pm. Sara briefs us on tomorrow's plans, and the expedition teams hold recaps and answers some of our questions from the question box.

Day 7 - 20th June

Gjertsenodden & Poolepynten

12:00 GPS Position: 78°31.03'N / 012°47.09'E

Wind: E2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 8°C **Sea Temp:** 6°C



Our last day in Svalbard starts with an early morning call from our Expedition Leader Sara. After a quick and delicious breakfast, we head out to St Jonsfjorden. Half of us land in Gjertsenodden to stretch our legs with fast and medium hike options, while the rest of us go on one-and-a-half-hour-long Zodiac cruise near Gaffelbreen Glacier. It feels great to hike up to higher point and enjoy the magnificent views of the St Jonsfjorden. We also get some exciting sightings: a Rock Ptarmigan

and a Polar Fox foraging on the shore! Our guides made sure to keep us in a tightly knit group just in case a Polar Bear sprung upon us! Those of us in the Zodiac cruise are delighted to see and photograph King Eiders. Such a pleasure to see these colorful birds in their element!



After another delicious meal on board, we go for our last expedition landing in Svalbard. We land in Poolepynten, in Prins Karls Forland, a narrow long island in West Spitsbergen. Highlight of the landing are Walruses. These giant gentles like to haul out in this beach during summer months. We get to observe their behavior on land but also in water. Two big walruses slowly come out from the water in front of our very eyes. Such a spectacle to watch! But one must admit, they have quite a strong odor. After

spending an hour watching walruses, we reluctantly catch our zodiac ride back to Hondius. Time to get ready for Captain's farewell cocktail.

Koen was preparing a slideshow for us all, and tonight is the night he shares it with us. It is a beautiful display of everything we have seen and experienced past week. It makes us feel emotional and nostalgic and really summed up all the magnificence of this trip. Thank you Koen! After the slideshow, we head to the dining room to enjoy the final four-course dinner the chefs put on for us. A delightful ending of our Svalbard Expedition!



Day 8 – 21st June

Disembarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: 78°10.12'N / 014°19.28'E

Wind: SW 1, **Sea State:** Slight, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 4°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

Well, the final day is here. Our bags are packed and left outside our doors for the staff to collect. After breakfast at 0900, we disembark the ship and say goodbye to Sara and all her team. We can't thank them enough for all their knowledge and guidance on this trip. We will be back!

Thank you all for travelling with us on this voyage and 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: 720.5 Nautical Miles

Furthest North: 80°20.08'N / 011°21.02'E

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





1. Longyearbyen - 14.06.2023
2. Magdalenafjorden: Gullybukta & Waggonbaybreen - 15.06.2023
3. Smeerenburg/Virgohamna
4. Ytre Norskoya
5. Ice Edge - 17.-18.06.2023
6. Signehamna - 19.06.2023
7. 14. Julibukta - 19.06.2023
8. Gjertsenodden - 20.06.2023
9. Poolepynten - 20.06.2023

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, Weddell Sea, Ross Sea, Falklands, South Georgia, NZ and Australian Sub Antarctic Islands, 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.

Adam Turner -Assistant Expedition Leader



Adam was brought up in countryside of Essex, England. He began sailing at the age of 9 and began working on the local river aged 12 before leaving school.

By 16 he had a small fishing boat and was working on boatyards and taking tourists to see the local seal colonies as well as helping out on the local Lifeboat.

Adam then joined HM Forces and was posted to Northern Ireland and in the UK, he also served in Kenya as a boat operator. In 2002 Adam joined the Police and spent several years on a specialist unit working across the UK

with his search dog Charley.

Since being a young lad Adam had dreamt of working in the Antarctic like his Uncle had done in the late 1980's, and in 2014 Adam left the Police to work as Boating Officer for British Antarctic Survey at King Edward Point, South Georgia where he spent just over a year.

Adam studied at Middlesex University and often gives lectures on history, in 2017 he was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society, while working as a guide and Consultant.

In 2020 Adam began working fulltime for Oceanwide Expeditions as Field Operations Manager.

Adam holds a commercial masters certificate and instructs in several marine disciplines, he enjoys diving, climbing, kayaking and outdoor activities.

Claudio Ghiglione – Assistant Expedition Leader



Claudio was born in Italy in 1983. He is a marine ecologist specialised in polar regions, expedition guide and nature photographer.

Interested in science and nature since he was very young, he graduated first in *Marine Environmental Sciences* (BA) and then in *Marine Science* (MA). In March 2017 he obtained a *PhD in Earth, Environmental and Polar Sciences* run in cooperation with the Italian National Antarctic Museum (Italy) and the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge (UK).

For several years he worked as a polar researcher focusing his work mainly on the South Pole (Antarctica); his objective is to analyse and evaluate information used for ecological modelling and possible future scenarios following global warming. During his academic career, he actively takes part in some scientific expeditions both in Arctic and in Antarctica in cooperation with Norway and England.

His passion for travel, mainly to cold and often inhospitable places, and his career as a photographer led him to travel a lot, creating and managing – often in complete autonomy – itineraries and logistics. In 2017 – thanks to his professional experience, the skills acquired over the time and the need to spend more time on the field – he starts working full time as a guide Oceanwide.

Specialised in nature, scientific and travel photography, Claudio uses his photos as a means of telling stories to draw attention mainly to his main subjects, namely animals, nature and environment. In the 2019 he published his first book ‘Polar Lights’ with whom he shares the passion for nature photography.

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 58 years’ experience of Art and Design Education and Design for Industry. Plus 58 years leading and instructing a range of outdoor pursuits.

Bill delights in producing humorous cartoon logs of each trip and operates as an Artist / Designer / Illustrator / Cartoonist

Aside from his artistic commitments Bill is qualified instructor in a range of Royal Yachting Association disciplines including sailing, windsurfing and powerboating. He is also a British Canoe Union Open Canoe Instructor and British Caving Association Local Cave leader. He is a safety expert in these fields.

During the winter at home Bill is a National Patroller for the British Association of Ski Patrollers and in addition is a member of Member of the Federation Internationale de Patrolles De Ski.

As Bill lives in the North-west of Scotland he is President of Lochinver Highland Games Committee and former Chieftain Assynt Highland Games.

Bill is an Honorary Member Assynt Crofters Trust and recently awarded Honorary Lifetime Guardian of Island of South Georgia.

Anthonie Luteijn – Expedition guide



Anthonie is a passionate surfer and a life-long ocean lover. He loves to travel and discover different places around the world. He enjoys the cultural and nature diversities of different countries, and he likes to meet and connect with the people he meets along the way.

Anthonie grew up, right on the beach, in the southwestern coastal province of The Netherlands, called Zeeland. For his studies, he moved to Delft where he completed his bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and his master's degree in Hydraulic Engineering at the Technical University of Delft. He has a coastal specialisation, which embraces a great interest in oceanography. During this study program, he took part in several projects around the world and conducted research on an artificial fish migration river in the Netherlands.

In the summer months, Antonie enjoys sharing his passion for the oceans as a surf coach. He sees the ocean as a diverse and unique place which feels like home. Out at sea on the ship he enjoys sharing this passion with everyone on board.

One of the projects he has done was on the plastic waste problem in Indonesia. By creating a real-world, coupled economic-environmental model, focusing on one of the plastic polluted rivers.

He is very much looking forward working as an expedition guide on board with Oceanwide this season. The polar regions are incredibly unique places in the world to visit. And Antonie thinks it is a privilege for everyone to take these life-long memories home and to share the experiences with family and friends!

Andrew Crowder – Expedition Guide



Andrew is an experienced naturalist with a life long history of observation, study and sheer enjoyment of wildlife. His interest in natural history started as a young boy watching birds and they remain his first passion. Focusing mainly on Western Palearctic species, he has travelled extensively and accrued a wealth of knowledge. As part of that journey of discovery, he has also developed self-taught skills in wildlife photography.

Andrew has always been drawn to the sea and is a CMAS Class 2/BSAC qualified Advanced Scuba Diver; he has had the privilege of experiencing incredible marine life which few others get to see. Time spent exploring the underwater world helped spawn his other main interest: cetaceans. Andrew has over twenty years of experience with these amazing animals, undertaking scientific surveys and guiding on cruise ships in UK, European and Polar waters.

Andrew recognises that few wildlife encounters spark such an emotional reaction in humans as when they see whales and dolphins. He uses his knowledge and enthusiasm to help more people share such inspirational experiences and thereby promote the conservation of our precious natural world.

Charlotte Taplin – Expedition Guide



Charlotte grew up by the Coast in Cornwall, United Kingdom. From a young age she has always been fascinated by wildlife and the ocean. She studied Wildlife Conservation at University and then spent the next 10 years travelling through South America, Australasia and Africa. Charlotte's love for boats began in 2013 where she worked on research and dive vessels visiting remote regions of the Great Barrier Reef. Her interest in Marine Biology grew in Australia and New Zealand while studying Humpback, Minke and Sperm Whales.

After driving overland in a land rover from South Africa to Jordan she then moved to Mozambique in 2018 where she started her own backpacker hostel. In her spare time Charlotte worked as a Researcher studying Whale sharks and Manta Rays along the Coast of Mozambique. During 2020-2022 she worked as a Deckhand/Divemaster on superyachts and ice breaker explorer vessels. Her hobbies include scuba-diving, surfing, free-diving and hiking. Being surrounded by the ocean is Charlotte's favourite place to be and she is so excited to have started her first season with Oceanwide in 2022.

Koen Hoekemeijer – Expedition Guide



Koen Hoekemeijer was born in 1974 in The Netherlands. When it comes to nature and wildlife Koen was quite a late bloomer as he had always been more into nightlife and sunny beaches. But that all changed when he discovered his passion for wildlife and photography in 2009 in Costa Rica. It was during this trip that Koen saw his first humpback whales and he fell in love with them instantly. Not only did it make him eager to see more and different types of whales in locations all over the world, but he also wanted to learn to take better photos of these amazing creatures. And with the love for whales

and photography, came a broader passion for all sorts of wildlife.

Since that memorable vacation in 2009, Koen has been travelling the planet to see and photograph the world's most beautiful places. Usually from boats, jeeps or simply face down in the mud, but since 2016 also underwater. Snorkeling in the presence of whales and orcas is bringing Koen pure happiness.

Among his favourite animals are whales, orcas, penguins, tigers and jaguars. But in between safaris, he also likes to do street photography and capture life and portraits of people all over the world.

Koen believes that travelling does not only enrich your life, it also makes you more humble, more appreciative and it provides new levels of perspective and understanding. Koen has won the prestigious WWF Frans Lanting Photo contest, and in 2020 he won the Ellen Fitzgibbon Memorial Photography competition. It's Koen's dream to one day have a Vizsla dog and own a small cabin somewhere in northern Norway surrounded by snow and trees ;).

Pelin Asfuroglu – Expedition Guide



Pelin was born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey.

Growing up in a very big city, she was amazed by the stories she read about the adventures of early explorers and mountain climbers who travelled to the most remote places in the world.

She discovered her real passion for great outdoors at age 17 when she first started paragliding.

Thanks to the great extracurricular student activities offered in her University, she ended up spending most of her time paragliding, mountain climbing, caving and sailing. During the long summer holidays, she worked as a trekking/mountain guide in diverse locations throughout Turkey.

Her love of outdoors has taken her so many wonderful places in the world; from the Himalayan Mountains to the Amazon rainforests. Pelin finally settled in Chilean Patagonia in 2013 where she has worked as an outdoor guide leading multi-day hiking and wildlife trips.

Her interest in Polar Regions was kindled when she first travelled to Antarctica. In other words, she caught the Polar Fever.

Pelin holds a Master's degree in History from the University of Leiden. She specially is interested in Polar Exploration history and loves to share her knowledge with the guests.

Marco Rosso – Expedition Guide



Marco was born in the country of Pasta & Pizza. He graduated in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Padua, his native city in Italy and after a few years working in the industry he decided to embark himself on a quest.

For two years he carried his tent and camping equipment, backpacking from the steamy jungle of Mexico and Central America, through the snowy peaks of the Peruvian Andes and the dry highlands of Bolivia; rolling all the way down to the tip of South America.

The raw and powerful beauty of Patagonia convinced him to swap Mother Nature wonders for mankind and machine artifacts.

During the last seven years he has been leading groups as a trekking and camping guide in some of the most beautiful and rugged trails of Patagonia such as Torres del Paine W trek, Paine Massif O Circuit, Fitz Roy and Cerro Torre circuit as well as the southernmost trekking in the world, Dientes de Navarino trail.

One step further from Patagonia lies the Antarctica peninsula, where he is willing to share with you an incredible camping experience in this truly pristine and untouched environment.

Júlia Baldursdóttir – Expedition Guide



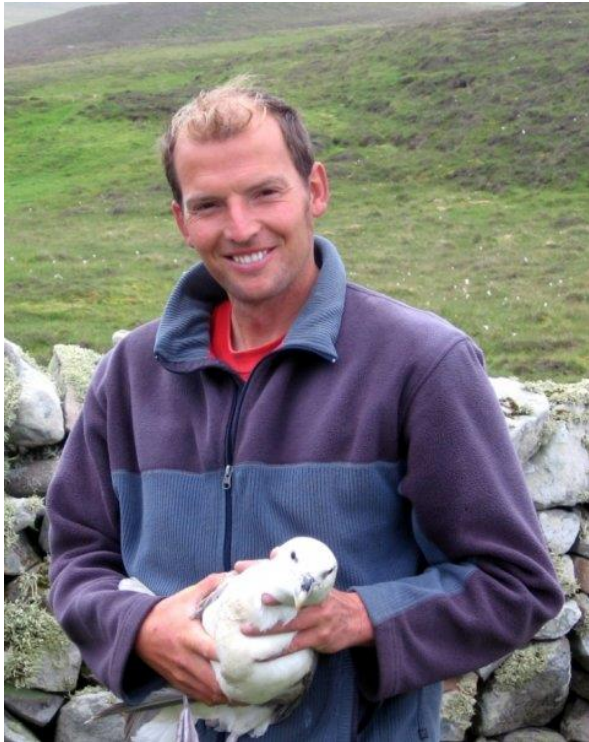
Born in Iceland into a family of nature loving, tree hugging explorers, Júlia developed a love for the arctic nature and for travelling at a very young age. Age 15 she moved to Berlin where she studied linguistics and later psychology.

Initially a side job in 2013, tour guiding quickly grew into a passion for Júlia and soon became a full time job, both on land and on sea. In 2016 she enrolled in a Tour Guiding Program at the University of Iceland and became a nationally certified Tour Guide. For almost a decade, she has travelled in arctic

regions, especially in Greenland and in Iceland.

It is probably no surprise that when she is not on a vessel, Júlia spends most of her free time exploring the world on her own. In spite of (or, perhaps, because of) the months spent in the colder region of the world every year, when travelling for pleasure, Júlia is particularly drawn to the sunny Caribbean, though of course her other big passion, salsa dancing, doubtlessly plays a large role in that as well.

Simon Davies - Expedition Guide



Simon is a life-long birder and naturalist and after achieving a Masters degree in Ecology focusing on seabirds he has undertaken a broad range of wildlife related contracts around the world.

His career has predominantly been focused on birds (with the only notable 'blip' coming during a year researching Meerkats in South Africa) during which his focus has ranged from research to conservation to guiding and much in between. Most recently he has been working in Scotland and Sweden studying both breeding birds and migratory species through ringing/banding, a wide range of surveys and other tracking methods.

He is an experienced guide, having led bird and wildlife tours in Australia and many tours, walks and talks in his native UK, enthusiastic about sharing the wide range of seabirds in the colonies he loves.

Among the recent studies he has participated in has included putting geolocators on Black Guillemots in Scotland to find out where they are foraging, fixing satellite transmitters on migratory wading birds in Australia to track their movements as they move up and down the East Asia flyway and affixing geolocators on Great Reed Warblers in Sweden to work out migratory routes.

A large part of his recent work has also been training others in bird ringing/banding and surveying, hopefully inspiring others to a career in research or conservation.

The vast majority of his spare time is also spent birding and wildlife watching and he has undertaken many trips around the world including Australia, Europe, India, Venezuela and the USA, always chasing the next bird!

Tanja Bayer – Expedition Guide



Tanja was born 1966 in Germany and lives in Oberursel. Since 2009 she has been travelling and working on different ships to the Antarctic Peninsula as a Diver and Doctor.

Since 2015 she is working for Oceanwide Expeditions as Ship's Physician and Dive guide, in this Arctic Season for the first time as Expedition Guide. She loves the Polar Areas and their fascinating fauna and flora, fighting their live in this harsh environment. Especially the marine mammals, the glaciers and the historic sites with their stories are her favourite topics.

She likes to show the people the nature, going on a nice and safe hike and have fun! When diving she gets fascinated by the colourful and diverse life underwater. In Germany she owns a Dive center and Diving School, plans and leads Diving Expeditions all around the world. If there is some time left, she works as Emergency Doctor and locum.

Tanja speaks German and English.

Paolo Bellezze – Expedition Guide



Born in Argentina (Dec 80') and raised in Italy, Paolo finally moved to Scotland where he settled in 2006. Nowadays, when not at sea, he splits his time between Argentina and Scotland.

Before expedition cruises Paolo spent 12 years working shoreside in merchant shipping. He was a Product Manager for a Norwegian company developing Voyage Planning and Marine Weather Forecasting Systems for merchant ships.

He also started Paragliding at the age of 14 and has been very involved in the sport as a school owner instructing both beginners and advanced courses for over 20 years. When not paragliding, Paolo likes to sea kayak and he mixes Field Guide with Kayak Guide roles onboard.

In 2021 he started working full time in expedition cruises, since then he has guide in several expeditions such as Antarctica, South Georgia, Falklands, Greenland West coast, Greenland East coast, Iceland, Faroes Islands and British Isles.

Aside from sea kayaking and flying he is into hiking, motorbikes and spending time with friends. He is passionate about polar regions and sharing the experience with our guests.

“Happiness is only real when shared” (Chris McCandless)

Languages: English, Spanish, Italian.

Esther Josten – Expedition Guide



The place she calls home is a small village in a western German hillside area called Eifel. It's surrounded by extinct volcanoes, vast forests and steep valleys. From this base she started exploring the world and found my great passion in the travel industry and outdoor life.

She studied International Tourism Management in the Netherlands, lived in France, Spain, and New Zealand for a while. She worked as a guide for over 7 years now and in many different countries. My recent time I spent working as an outdoor guide and

skipper for a small locally owned tour company in the beautiful fjord lands of Southern Norway.

What she loves about her job is not only getting out into nature and being in touch with the elements, but also the meaningful connections with people from all corners of the world. Travelling opens our eyes and expands our horizon. She personally takes a lot of inspiration from all the beautiful people and experiences along the way. Besides all natural beauties our planet offers, she is fascinated by its' history, cultures and languages. And at the end of the day, she believes there's nothing better than sharing stories and memories with your travel companions and eventually with your beloved ones back home.

She is grateful for all the opportunities and chances she has been given in life and she loves to share her enthusiasm and knowledge with other passionate globetrotters. One of her biggest motivations for every tour is to help create a truly unforgettable experience for the travellers she guides.

Veronique Verhoeven – Ship's doctor



No one wants to get sick on the ship!!

....but if you do, you are in the good hands of ship's doctor Veronique.

When she was nine years old, her grandma gave her for Christmas a book on Christopher Columbus, which fascinated her so much that she decided she wanted to become an explorer too.

For years she fell asleep at night dreaming of future great adventures.

However, soon she found out that many of these explorers die young, poor and miserable, and she decided to change career.

That is how she ended up being an emergency doctor and a Professor in general practice at the University of Antwerp, Belgium.

Her first experience in the polar regions was a trekking expedition with scientists in Svalbard in 2005, where she acted, besides as the doctor, also as a cook and a watch keeper for polar bears at night. Since this wonderful experience, she has returned to the Arctic and the Antarctic every year, with Oceanwide Expeditions.

Among her hobbies are whitewater kayaking, kitesurfing and playing the oboe in an orchestra.



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice
Welcome Aboard!

Date: Wednesday 14th June 2023

Day1: Embarkation – Longyearbyen

Please make yourselves at home in your cabins and check you have received all your luggage! Tea/coffee is available in the bar located on Deck 5.

PLEASE LISTEN FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

17:15+/- Ship safety briefing, in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance to this is **MANDATORY**.

After the briefing the emergency alarm will be sounded, and you will need to go back to your cabin and get your life jacket.

All guests accommodated on Deck 3 (Cabins 301-337) will go to **MUSTER STATION A** which is the Restaurant on Deck 4

All guests accommodated on decks 4, 6, and 7 (Cabins 401-414, 601-619, 701-714) will go to **MUSTER STATION B** which is the Observation Lounge on Deck 5

18:15+/- The Hotel Manager and Expedition Leader will do a welcome briefing, to orientate you to life on board and explain the plan for the forthcoming days. This will take place in the **Observation Lounge** on Deck 5.

19:30 Buffet dinner in the **Restaurant** on Deck 4.

21:00+/- The Expedition team will hand out your rubber boots. You will be called deck-by-deck to Deck 3, so please listen to announcements. Bring your thick socks to find the best-sized boots for you!

Daily programmes will be displayed around the ship and on TV screens.

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page” - St. Augustine



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Thursday 15th June 2023

Day 2: Magdalenafjord

- 07:00 Wake- up call.
07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:30 **MANDATORY** AECO, Zodiac and Polar Bear Safety Briefing in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance will be checked.
- 10:15+/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Gullybreen.
- 11:15+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Gullybreen
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:15+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Landing at Gravenesodden.
- 14:30+/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Waggonwaybreen.

Groups will swap during the course of the afternoon.

We hope to offer a **POLAR PLUNGE** at the end of the landing so please wear your swimwear under your waterproofs. Please do not bring the towels from your cabin, we provide the towels.

- 19:00 Please join the expedition team in the Observation Lounge for daily recap and Captain's Cocktails.
- 19:30 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

"How can you expect a man who's warm to understand one who's cold ?" - Alexander Solzhenitsyn"



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Friday 16th June 2023

Day 3: Smeerenburg, Virgohamna and Ytre Norskoya

- 06:45 Wake- up call.
- 07:00-08:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:15+/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Landing at Smeerenburg.
- 08:30+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Virgohamna.
- Groups will swap during the morning.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:15 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors for a Zodiac cruise at Ytre Norskoya.
- 14:30 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors for a Zodiac cruise of Ytre Norskoya.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the Observation Lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 20:15 Pelin invites you to the Lecture Room for a presentation titled 'An Introduction to the Arctic'

*"The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it."
- Robert Swan*



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Saturday 17th June 2023

Day 4: Ice Edge

07:45 Wake- up call.

08:00-09:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

We will spend the day along the ice edge looking for wildlife, therefore encourage you on the outside decks to help us search.

PLEASE NOTE: The lecture program is subject to change depending on wildlife sightings, so please listen to announcements.

09:15 Marco invites you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture about Sea Ice.

11:15 Sara welcomes you to the Observation Lounge for a presentation about Polar Bears.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

15:00 Charlotte invites you to the Observation Lounge for a presentation titled 'Whales of the Arctic'.

18:15 Daily recap in the Observation Lounge.

19:00 Dinner will be served.

"the ice and the long moonlit polar nights, with all their yearning, seemed like a far-off dream from another world, a dream that has come and passed away. But what would life be without dreams?"

- Fridtjof Nansen



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Sunday 18th June 2023.

Day 5: Ice Edge

07:45 Wake- up call.

08:00-09:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

We will spend the day along the ice edge looking for wildlife, therefore encourage you on the outside decks to help us search.

PLEASE NOTE: The lecture program is subject to change depending on wildlife sightings, so please listen to announcements.

09:15 Andrew invites you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture about ‘The Growing Importance of Wildlife Photography’.

11:15 Bill invites you to the Lecture Room for a presentation titled ‘Arctic whaling – death and destruction’.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

14:00 Adam invites you to the Lecture Room for a presentation titled ‘The Forgotten Englishman’ the story of Benjamin Leigh Smith, Polar-Explorer’.

16:00 Claudio invites you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture about Climate Change.

18:15 Daily recap in the Observation Lounge.

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

“but who wants to be foretold the weather? It is bad enough when it comes, without our having the misery of knowing about it beforehand.”

- Jerome K. Jerome



North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Monday 19th June 2023

Day 6: Signehamna and 14. Julibukta

- 06:30 Wake- up call.
- 07:00-08:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 07:45+/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Signehamna.
- 08:15 Esther will offer a presentation in the lecture room to the **Blue** Group, titled 'Amundsen – A life's dream and the bitter aftertaste of victory'.
- 09:30+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Signehamna.
- 10:30 Esther will offer a presentation in the lecture room to the **Red** Group, titled 'Amundsen – A life's dream and the bitter aftertaste of victory'.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:00+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at 14. Julibukta.
- 14:15+/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac cruise at 14. Julibukta.

GROUPS WILL SWAP DURING THE AFTERNOON

- 18:15 Daily recap in the Observation Lounge.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

“Glittering white, shining blue, raven black, in the light of the sun the land looks like a fairy tale. Pinnacle after pinnacle, peak after peak, crevassed, wild as any land on our globe, it lies, unseen and untrodden.”- Roald Amundsen



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Tuesday 20th June.

Day 7: St Johns fjorden, Gjertsnodden and Poolepynten.

06:30 Wake- up call.

07:00-08:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

08:00+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gjertesnodden.

08:15 +/- Please can be the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac cruise in St Johns fjorden.

GROUPS WILL SWAP DURING THE MORNING.

12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

14:00+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Poolepynten.

15:30+/- Please can be the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Poolepynten.

During the afternoon/evening you can settle your accounts with the Hotel Department, they will announce when they are ready to process payments. We will collect your rubber boots before dinner, please listen for announcements.

18:45 Captain's Farewell Cocktails in the Observation Lounge and a viewing of the slideshow, which will be available after dinner in the Lecture Room.

19:30 Final Gala Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

"People do not decide to be extraordinary. They decide to accomplish extraordinary things." - Sir Edmund Hillary



DAILY PROGRAM

North Spitsbergen

In Search of Polar Bears and Pack Ice – Summer Solstice

Date: Wednesday 21st June 2023.

Day 8: Longyearbyen.

07:45 Wake up call.

Please leave your large luggage in the corridor outside your room for the staff to collect before going to breakfast.

Crew and staff will bring it to the pier, where you will need to personally identify it and bring it your bus.

08:00-09:00 A breakfast buffet is served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

09:30+/- Please be ready for disembarkation but listen for announcements before approaching the gangway.

Buses will be departing from the quayside to the town.

Thank you all for a wonderful voyage, for your company, good humour, and enthusiasm. We hope to see you again in the future and share more adventures with you.

"it's when you are safe at home that you're having an adventure. When you're having an adventure, you wish you were safe at home." - Thornton Wilder