



East Spitsbergen - Summer Solstice

21st June – 28th June 2023

M/V Hondius



Hondius was built in 2019 in Brodosplit, Croatia. She is 107.60m long, 17,60m wide, and has a maximum draught of 5.3m. With a high ice class of PC6, a top speed of 15 knots, and three diesel generators, she sails on low sulfur marine gas oil (LSMGO) and has a capacity of 176 passengers in 83 cabins. This beautiful mid-century modern vessel carries 369m³ of fresh water and has a water plant producing 70m³ per day. Hondius is designed from the ground up for true polar adventure.

Captain Toni Salo

and his international crew

Staff Captain: **Elizbar Kadaria**
Chief Officer: **Matei Mocanu**
2nd Officer: **Igor Nazarov**
3rd Officer: **Giovanie Pancer Simene**

Chief Engineer: **Andrej Abakumov**

Hotel Manager: **Oleksandr Lyebyedyev**
Assist. Hotel Manager: **Alfredo Bonifaz**
Head Chef: **Bawa Gaurav**

Ships Doctor: **Veronique Verhoeven**

Expedition Leader: **Sara Jenner**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Adam Turner**
Claudio Ghiglione

Expedition Guide: **Charlotte Taplin**
Koen Hoekemeijer
Pelin Asfuroglu
Marco Rosso
Julia Baldursdottir
Erik Verheul
Simon Davies
Tanja Bayer
Paolo Bellezze
Carina Ketterer
Mikhail Barabanov
Bill Smith

Day 1 – 21st June

Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: Port

Wind: NW4, **Sea State:** Calm **Weather:** Sunny, **Air Temp:** 8°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

When we arrived at the quayside in Longyearbyen, our adventure began immediately with a Zodiac ride! Hondius, our transport and home for the next seven days, was sitting out at anchor in the fjord. In beautiful sunshine, we donned our lifejackets for the first time for the short but exciting transfer to the ship. We were greeted by the enthusiastic staff and shown to our cabins.



Once settled in, we gathered in the observation lounge for a mandatory safety drill from our Chief Officer, Matei. This included an evacuation exercise ending next to our designated lifeboat station. We then had an initial briefing from the Deputy Hotel Manager, Alfredo, before our Expedition Team Leader, Sara, invited her multi-talented team to introduce themselves to us. Sara then gave us an outline of the cruise schedule and some key safety rules. She also gave us more details on the next day's activities, including timings (Plan A) and expected weather. Then it was down to the dining room for our first taste of the excellent food on board and to meet some of our fellow travelers and members of the expedition team, who joined us for dinner. There was no stopping even after that, as we made our way down to Deck 3 to be fitted for our essential muck boots. Finally we made our way to bed, tired but excited. Our adventure had begun!



Day 2 – 22nd June

Gashamna & Burgerbukta

12:00 GPS Position: 76°57.0'N / 015°49.0'E

Wind: NW 2, Sea State: Calm, Weather: Foggy, Air Temp: 8°C, Sea Temp: 6°C

“Good morning, good morning, good morning,” said Sara over the intercom. “We have a **Blue Whale** at the 5 o'clock position of the ship.” Some of us managed to see it, along with some **Humpback Whales** in the same area. Wow, what a way to start the day!



As we enjoyed our breakfast, the expedition team were scouting the shorelines of Gåshamna for a safe landing. Gåshamna means “Goose Bay” and used to be an English whaling settlement. The scouts found a fresh walrus carcass on the beach close to our landing site. As polar bears can be attracted to the smell of a

decaying animal, a landing was no longer an option. Sara hatched an alternative plan to do a shoreline cruise to have a closer look at the walrus carcass and also check out the trapper’s hut and whale bones on the beach – all in glorious sunshine.

During lunch we repositioned to the north side of Hornsund, where we prepared for a Zodiac cruise. With the weather still gorgeous, we explored this spectacular fjord, gazing up at mountains with numerous waterfalls. And, of course, we couldn’t skip the photo opportunities at this amazing location. We then moved toward the glacier, which looked glorious in the bright sun. We were also able to experience the unique popping sound of the floating ice surrounding us. When ice melts, air escapes and creates an amazing crackling sound.

After more than two hours out on the water, it was time to make our way back to the ship. We enjoyed a delicious dinner buffet. Shortly after this, our Indian guests had an Indian / Bollywood evening planned, with dancing and singing. The Indian songs inspired many of us to join the dancing, and the party continued until midnight. What a wonderful day!



Day 3 – 23rd June

Russebukta & at sea towards Kapp Lee

12:00 GPS Position: 77°36'N / 20°58'E

Wind: NW 2, Sea State: Calm, Weather: Sunny, Air Temp: 7°C, Sea Temp: 6°C



So begins our third full day aboard the ship. In the morning, we were treated to another fine breakfast by Head Chef Bawa and his talented team, strengthening us for the morning landing. As we landed on Russesbukta, we were able to take in a vast landscape of open tundra and sedimentary mountains. We saw the first blooming flowers, such as **Buttercups**,

Purple Saxifrage and **Svalbard Poppies** and close views of **Reindeer**.

The groups were divided into short, medium, and long hikes. The short and medium hikers stayed closer to the shoreside, watching **Reindeer** and a **Polar Fox** going about their business. The long hikers went deep into the tundra for what ended up being a six-mile hike at good speed. In the warm weather, the tundra had become rather muddy, and some people got temporarily stuck. Rivers also had to be crossed – sometimes in teams of five – a unique experience for many. A proper Arctic adventure, all expertly managed by skilled guides. One of the wildlife highlights was the close sighting of **Red Phalarope** (also called Grey Phalarope), in its magnificent breeding plumage.

After lunch we sailed through open water close to Edgeoya, finding **Minke, Fin, Humpback Whales**, and even the





© Sara Jensen

elusive **Northern Bottlenose Whale**, which passed close to the ship. Pelin gave her “Introduction to the Arctic” lecture, followed by Simon and Andrew’s joint lecture on “Birds of the Arctic”. We sailed through Freemansundet and spotted **Walrus** hauled out on an ice floe. The evening was incredibly calm, with warm light illuminating the surrounding waters and mountains beautifully, showing a softer side of the Arctic. Dinner was then served, drinks ordered, and everyone enjoyed some downtime

before tomorrow’s adventures. Another beautiful day in this incredible environment.

Day 4 - 24th June

Kapp Walberg & Kapp Lee

12:00 GPS Position: 78°14’N / 021°55’E

Wind: E3, **Sea State:** Slight, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 5°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

Another day lay ahead of us, full of activities. After breakfast the first group went ashore at Kapp Walberg, while the second listened to a great lecture from Julia about Puffins. We then swapped at the beach. It was the first successful landing for our expedition leader Sara after 12 attempts: bears spotted ashore had always prevented her landing here.



We climbed up to the gully to be greeted by the incredible sight of hundreds of **Kittiwakes** nesting on both cliff faces, jostling each other to get the best site for protection from the **Arctic Fox**. One of them was around, waiting for the chance to grab a bird that flew too close to her. We reluctantly dragged ourselves away down toward the landing site. It was quite muddy in places, so we washed our muck boots in the sea before heading back onboard.



After lunch we were anchored in front of Kapp Lee, facing a big haul out of **Walrus**s. Because of the possibility of polar bears in the area, it was decided to do a Zodiac cruise instead of a landing.

On the water we found walrus lying on the beach and swimming close to our Zodiacs, curious to find out what we were doing in their territory. We were about to head back to the ship

when we got the message from a guide that they had spotted a **Polar Bear** ashore.

Sara organized a very careful approach, with the bear on a slope about 600m from the water's edge. We were all able to spot the bear resting between the rocks and looking at us. What an experience! For many guests, this was their first sighting. And to end this perfect day, our lovely crew prepared everything for the famous BBQ on the outer deck. We ate, drank, and danced the evening away.



Day 5 - 25th June

Sundneset & Mohnbukta

12:00 GPS Position: 78°09'N / 20°59'E

Wind: ENE3, **Sea State:** Slight, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 2°C **Sea Temp:** 5°C

Another early(ish) start today. As we tucked into our breakfast, the expedition team were going ashore at Sundneset to scout. As soon as they gave the all-clear, those of us doing the long hike took to the Zodiacs and met Claudio and Pelin on the shore for the start of a brisk three-hour walk. Following on behind, the medium and short walk groups started to come ashore to be teamed up with their guides.

Before long the beach was empty, as each group headed off in different directions. Among the burgeoning tundra flowers and reindeer, we had a fly over from an **Ivory Gull**. One of the groups happened on a pond that had **Red Phalaropes** swimming among a group of **King Eiders**. Gazing down among the bright sunshine and sparkling ice, it was hard to imagine a more colorful scene.



Our transit to Mohnbukta for our afternoon activity was a significant distance, so Mikhail entertained and educated us on the fascinating subject of whale acoustics. Soon after we were again Zodiac cruising toward the glacier in bright sunshine. Little did we know how fantastic the next couple of hours were to prove. In the ice in front of the glacier, we encountered a large group of white whales – **Belugas!**

They were feeding, excitedly chattering away as we approached. Unaffected by our presence, they started swimming closely around us, allowing incredible views and photo opportunities. Our most experienced guides described this as the best encounter they have ever had with this iconic Arctic cetacean. Even the many **Ivory Gulls** and **Great Skuas** had to accept the role of support to the main act. We considered ourselves privileged to have been there.

Day 6 - 26th June

Gashamna & Samarinvagen

08:00 GPS Position: 76°56'N / 016°16'E

Wind: SSE2, Sea State: Calm, Weather: Sunny, Air Temp: 8°C Sea Temp: 6°C



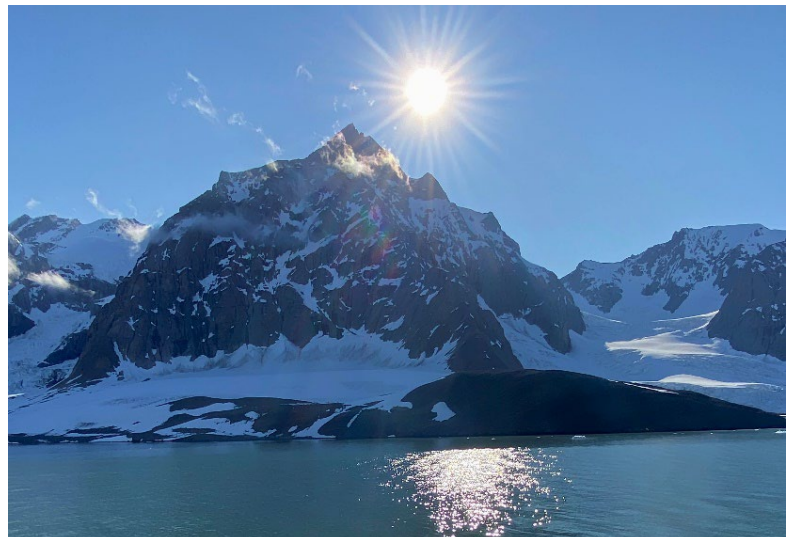
We awoke out at sea having made good progress overnight, managing to pass round the southern tip of Svalbard with no fuss. With the accompaniment of some **Fin Whales**, we closed in on our first target of the day. Our destination was an obvious one, homing back in on the fresh-looking Walrus carcass that we had found on the beach at Gåshamna, back when we were young and innocent. Unfortunately, there were no bears present. We lingered for a while, searching from the bridge and outer decks, but soon

decided to carry on deeper into Hornsund. We kept to our original plan of a morning on the ship with a lecture program consisting of Sara talking about Polar Bears and Claudio on climate change.

After an early lunch, we were soon off for our afternoon adventures of a split landing and cruise in Samarinvågen, further enticed outside by yet more **Belugas** feeding around the edge of the glacier. The cruisers enjoyed a fantastic jaunt down to the end of the fjord, complete with large areas of popping, crackling brash ice and the backdrop of a beautiful glacier.

Those on land enjoyed a short but steep hike up a small hill to obtain some breathtaking views of the fjord in the golden late-afternoon light. The landing site was large enough for everyone to find their own patch of calm, soothed by a trickling stream under the snow and a fine array of early season flowers: **Purple Saxifrage, Arctic Mouse-ear** and **Willow Grass**.

Some of us went up another slope to experience the thrill of being able to stand on, touch, and even eat a real-life glacier. For the more adventurous types in the group, there was also the chance to indulge in the always-popular tradition of a polar plunge. No fewer than 74 brave souls went into the cold water for a dip. Cold but thrilled, we then headed back to the ship to warm up and enjoy some more of the epic scenery in the fabulous evening light.



Day 7 - 27th June

Ingeborgfjellet & Bamsebu

12:00 GPS Position: 77°54'N / 015°02'E

Wind: NW3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 7°C **Sea Temp:** 8°C

We were woken up early by Sara who informed us that, although we had arrived at our morning exploration site, we couldn't see it because of the fog. She explained that this meant we would not be landing because we could not scout the area safely. So while we waited and hoped for a favorable weather change, Andrew gave his lecture on the increasing importance of wildlife photography. Everyone can extract more value from our photographs through citizen science. Coen followed up the theme with his 10 tips for better wildlife photos.



By the time we sat down for lunch, the fog was starting lift. This coincided with our arrival at Bamsebu. Sara announced the planned landing could go ahead, so it was down to our cabins for a final change into



our gear while the guides scouted on shore. At the landing site we saw a well-maintained hut, still in use, with some relics from its previous life as a base for hunting Beluga Whales. The deadly slaughter of these beautiful animals was spread along the beach in the form of skulls and carcasses of an estimated 550 animals. A somber start to our final trek across classic Arctic tundra and shoreline.

But our spirits were lightened when we came back to the landing site as pod of these fine white whales were contentedly logging just offshore. A fine and fitting way to

end our last expedition before returning to Hondius. And so, slightly sad, we gathered for the Captain's farewell cocktail and a chance to say thank you to the expedition team.

Charlotte had worked hard to prepare a slideshow, which she now shared with us. It was a beautiful summary of the things we have seen and experienced together, filled with emotional memories. It really captured the essence of the trip. Thank you, Charlotte! We then headed to the dining room to enjoy the final gala dinner and thank the hotel team that had looked after us so well.



© Sara Jensen

Day 8 – 28th 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

Our bags were packed and left outside our doors for the staff to collect. After a last breakfast, we disembarked the ship and said goodbye to Sara and all her team. And what a team! We can't thank them and the rest of the staff enough for their hard work. We left with some sadness but many great memories – **this was our adventure.**



Thank you for your enthusiasm, support, and most of all for joining us on this fantastic voyage. We hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

Total distance sailed: 926 Nautical Miles

Farthest north reached: 78°35'N

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



1. Longyearbyen - 21.06.2023
2. Gåshamna - 22.06.2023
3. Burgerbukta – 22.06.2023
4. Russebukta – 23.06.2023
5. Kapp Waldburg – 24.06.2023
6. Kapp Lee - 24.06.2023
7. Sundneset – 25.06.2023
8. Mohnbukta – 25.06.2023
9. Samarinvågen – 26.06.2023

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.

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.

Erik Verheul - Expedition Guide



Erik has a lifelong passion for snow and ice. As a kid, every winter he was out on the ice, skating, as much and often as he could. Later his curiosity led him to explore the African and South American continents. But here too it was the snow-capped volcanoes that had his special interest, and he climbed some of the most beautiful ones. Therefore, it was inevitable that one day his attention shifted to the North, to Jan Mayen, Spitsbergen, and the Northern Pack Ice.

During his first visit to Spitsbergen in 2008, it was the memorial stone on Amsterdam Island that told him the story

of the discovery of- and the first two wintering's on the island. And that started his passion for the Arctic history. The adventures of the first explorers, the terrifying stories in the diaries of the winterers and the incredible stories of the whalers all made him want to find out more and more about these fascinating times.

In "normal" life Erik works as a civilian for the Royal Netherlands Navy. He holds a master's degree in telecommunications management and works as a consultant communication and information systems. But even with this nine to five office job adventure lured around the corner. He managed to convince his admiral to equip a scientific expedition to Jan Mayen, four hundred years after the discovery of the island. In 2014 the Zr. Ms Zeeland set sail to the North. Like Spitsbergen, Jan Mayen has an old Dutch memorial stone too, and while the scientists did their research, Erik's skills as a stone carver came in handy for the renovation of this memorial stone.

The history of the Arctic is not a dull summary of events, everything that happens there seems to end up with a fascinating story. Erik likes to share these stories with you whenever he can. Whether you like it or not.

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.

Carina Ketterer – Expedition Guide



This is Carina, she grew up in the swiss capital of Bern far away from the sea. Her studies in renewable energies and environmental engineering gave her a curiosity in energy production and civil engineering. She would like to share this curiosity with you! Carina is a sports nut and runs triathlons in her spare time. But don't worry, she has vowed to slow down the tours to half-tempo.

Carinas favorite animal since childhood, was the penguin. In 2019 she finally hopped on a boat to the Antarctic to see them in their natural habitat. That journey bore in her a new fascination with these cute animals and their

dominion.

Being the happiest outside, Carina chose to make the world her workplace and to become an international guide for Oceanwide Expeditions.

Carina is a passionate and optimistic person who always likes to learn new things and has a broad interest in geography, history, archaeology, the arts and the natural sciences. As the cheesy Instagramposts say: "The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". So step up and let Carina share her passion for civil engineering and penguins with you and take part in your once in a lifetime adventure!

Mikhail Barabanov – Expedition Guide



Born in St Petersburg, Russia, but raised in Luxemburg, Mikhail now lives in Switzerland, where he delights in camping all over the local mountainscape.

He spent quite some time in the academic world, obtaining master's degrees in Marine Mammal Science and in Ecology and Nature Conservation. After working for several field seasons as a scientist in distant places on marine mammals and birds, he was keen to pursue a way to combine his passion for travelling, outreach and the higher latitudes.

His deep interest for the polar regions was formed on a visit to Antarctica with Oceanwide in 2018 as part of a university course. At the time, he was stunned by the pristineness and the vibrance of life found in the Southern Ocean and wanted to find a way to return in a professional capacity. As he prefers the world's colder regions, Oceanwide provided the opportunity to immerse himself in the polar world.

No stranger to adverse weather and difficult living conditions, Mikhail is always looking to find places and moments that exude true calm and serenity. As an avid photographer and videographer, he is always seen carrying his gear around from place to place, trying to improve his craft and capture wildlife in their natural behaviour.

Usually in high spirits, he works as a guide on a variety of expeditions, on which he can be found always ready to help and looking to increase his savoir-faire in all things ocean and wildlife.

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.

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.



East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Welcome Aboard!

Date: Wednesday 21st 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

17:30+/- 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

18:30+/- We would like to invite you to Captains Cocktails in the **Observation Lounge** on Deck 5. 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 and you will meet your Expedition Team.

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

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Thursday 22nd June 2023

Day 2: Hornsund, Gåshamna and Burgerbukta

- 06:30 Wake- up call.
- 07:00-8:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:00 **MANDATORY** AECO, Zodiac and Polar Bear Safety Briefing in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance will be checked.
- 09:30+/- Please can the International Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gåshamna.
- 10:45+/- Please can the Pollina Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gåshamna.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:15+/- Please can the International Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Burgerbukta.
- 14:30+/- Please can the Pollina Group be ready at the She doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Burgerbukta.
- 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.

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



DAILY PROGRAM

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Saturday 23rd June 2023

Day 3: Edgeøya, Russesbukta

07:15 Wake- up call.

Please note: If you wish to do the long hike at Russesbukta please sign up at reception before going to breakfast.

07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

09:00 For those wanting to go for a Long Hike please be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3. This hike will be 3-4 hours long and will be walking at a good pace.

10:00 For those wishing to take a medium hike or leisurely walk please be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3.

13:00-14:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

14:30 Pelin invites you to Observation Lounge for a lecture titled 'An Introduction to the Arctic'.

16:30 Simon and Andrew invite you to a joint presentation about the Birds of Svalbard.

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.

"Mystery creates wonder and wonder is the basis of man's desire to understand..." -
Neil Armstrong



East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Saturday 24th June 2023

Day 4: Freemansund, Kapp Waldberg and Kapp Lee

- 07:00 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:30 We hope to take the **Blue** Group ashore at Kapp Waldberg.
08:45 Bee will give a presentation in the Lecture Room for the **Red** Group about 'Puffins'.
- 10:00 We hope to take the **Red** Group ashore at Kapp Waldberg.
11:15 Bee will give a presentation in the Lecture Room for the **Blue** Group about 'Puffins'.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:00+/- For those wanting to go for a **long hike** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3. This hike will be 3 hours long and will be walking at a good pace.
- 15:00 For those wishing to take a **medium hike** or a **leisurely walk** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3.
- 18:30 Please join the expedition team in the Observation Lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served.

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves" - Edmund Hillary



DAILY PROGRAM

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Sunday 25th June 2023

Day 5: Sundneset and Mohnbukta

- 06:30 Wake- up call.
- 07:00-8:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:00 For those wanting to go for a **long hike** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3. This hike will be 3 hours long and will be walking at a good pace.
- 09:00 For those wishing to take a **medium hike** or a **leisurely walk** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 13:15 Mikhail invites you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture about 'Marine Mammal Acoustics'.
- 15:15+/- We invite the **Blue** group for a Zodiac cruise of Mohnbukta.
- 15:30+/- We invite the **Red** group for a Zodiac cruise of Mohnbukta.
- 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.
- 20:30 Bill invites you to the lecture room for his presentation "Arctic whaling death and destruction."

"The difficult is what takes a little time; the impossible is what takes a little longer"
– Fridjof Nansen



DAILY PROGRAM

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Monday 26th June 2023

Day 6: Hornsund, Samarinvågen

- 07:45 Wake- up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09:15 Sara welcomes you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture about Polar Bears.
- 11:00 Claudio invites you to the Observation Lounge for a presentation about Climate Change.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 13:15+/- We invite the **Blue** group for a landing at Samarinvågen.
- 13:30+/- We invite the **Red** group for a Zodiac cruise at Samarinvågen.

GROUPS WILL SWAP DURING THE AFTERNOON

We hope to offer a Polar Plunge at the end of the activity so please wear your swimwear under your waterproof clothing. We provide the towels so please do not bring them from your cabins.

- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the Observation Lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant.

*"An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered."
- G. K. Chesterton*



DAILY PROGRAM

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Tuesday 27th June 2023

Day 7: Ingeborgfjellet and Ashrahalvøya

06:30 Wake- up call.

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

07:45+/- For those wanting to go for a **long hike** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3. This hike will be 3 hours long and will be walking at a good pace.

08:30+/- For those wishing to take a **medium hike** or a **leisurely walk** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3.

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

14:00+/- For those wishing to take a **medium hike** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3.

14:15+/- For those wishing to take a **leisurely walk** please be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3.

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.

"A journey is a person in itself, no two are alike and all plans, safeguards, policies and coercion are fruitless. We find after years of struggle that we do not take a trip, a trip takes us."

- John Steinbeck



DAILY PROGRAM

East Spitsbergen

Summer Solstice

Date: Wednesday 28th June 2023

Day 8: Longyearbyen

07:00 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.

07:30-08:30 A breakfast buffet is served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

08:30+/- Please be ready for disembarkation by Zodiac from the shell doors on Deck 3, but listen for announcements before approaching the shell doors.

09:00 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." - Thorton Wilder