



# OCEANWIDE

EXPEDITIONS

## Around Spitsbergen, in the realm of polar bears and ice

6 July – 15 July, 2023

On board *m/v Plancius*



Plancius was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was originally named “Hr. Ms. Tydeman.” The vessel was completely rebuilt as a passenger vessel in 2009 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). She is 89m long, 14.5m wide, and has a maximum draft of 5m. Her ice class is 1D, and she averages a cruising speed of 10,5 knots using three diesel-electric engines.

## **Captain Remmert - Jan Koster**

And his international crew of 49 sailors

Chief Officer:	<b>Romanas Vicas</b>	[Lithuania]
Second Officer:	<b>Yaroslav Pyetukhov</b>	[Ukraine]
Third Officer:	<b>Martin Hansson</b>	[Sweden]
Hotel Manager:	<b>Volodymyr Cherednychenko</b>	[Ukraine]
Head Chef:	<b>Ivan Yuriychuk</b>	[Ukraine]
Sous Chef:	<b>SergiySklyarov</b>	[Ukraine]
Ships doctor:	<b>Anna Buijze</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Leader:	<b>Philipp Schaudy</b>	[Austria]
Ass. Expedition Leader:	<b>Eduardo Rubio Herrera</b>	[Guatemala]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Koen Jongerling</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Jess Owen</b>	[United Kingdom]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Elizabeth Robinson</b>	[United States]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Ben Frederiks</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Chris Long</b>	[New Zealand]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Sasha Romanovsky</b>	[Russia]

**We welcome you on board!**

## Day 1 – Thursday 6th of July, Longyearbyen, embarkation day

**12h00 GPS Position: 78°14.6'N / 015°32.6'E**

**Wind: NW2 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Clear Sky • Air temperature: 16°C • Sea temperature: 7°C**

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We began arriving in Longyearbyen in the afternoon, having travelled from all over the world to reach the spectacular archipelago of Svalbard. Once everyone was on board, we took part in all the necessary safety briefings. Third Officer Martin showed us where the important safety features of the ship were. We then spent some time familiarising ourselves with the layout of Plancius, enjoying the views outside as we set sail.

Before dinner, Captain Remmert wished us well on our journey with a toast in the lounge. Expedition Leader Philipp introduced himself and the expedition guides and told us about his plans for the trip. We then set off to the restaurant for a delicious first buffet dinner. Just as everyone had finished their meal and getting ready to relax for the evening, a huge fin whale (the second largest animal in the world) surfaced close to the ship. Some people even saw it from the dining room window.

A few hours later, we had a special encounter with two species of whale: a humpback and a blue whale! The blue whale was huge and surfaced close to the bow, so we could clearly hear its blow. What an incredibly special start to the trip.



## Day 2 – Friday 7th of July, Ny-London and Ny-Alesund

**09h00 GPS Position: 78°57.4'N / 012.01.7'E**

**Wind: NW2 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Clear • Air temperature: 16°C • Sea temperature: 8°C**

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Summery hot weather, complete calm, and not a single cloud in the sky marked the morning of our first truly expedition day. We woke up and leisurely made our way to the restaurant, where breakfast awaited us. Meanwhile, Plancius slowly cut through the glassy waters of Kongsfjorden. Some of us, driven by curiosity, gathered at the bow to observe the surrounding landscapes and take photographs. The group of ornithologists was already scanning for local bird species.

Across from Ny-Ålesund, the northernmost inhabited settlement in the world, lies the large island of Blomstrandhalvøya. On this island stands Ny-London, a tiny piece of land that never became a populated place. To this day, you can still see two cabins, remnants of a steam engine, and an old rusty crane. All of this is nothing but a monument to an ambitious yet failed marble mining project. It is precisely there that we planned to have our landing.

Before embarking on our first expeditionary shore trip, we had to listen to a safety briefing and the rules of conduct in the constant presence of the threat of polar bears. Philipp, our expedition leader, gathered everyone in the observation lounge and provided a detailed explanation of how to behave on land and how to properly disembark from the Zodiacs.

Before we knew it, we were on the shore. The Zodiacs shuttled back and forth, transporting passengers while the guides loaded their rifles. Meanwhile, we folded our life jackets into a large orange bag and looked around with interest. The guides divided us into three groups: long hikers, medium hikers, and leisurely hikers. We each set off on our own paths. We had about an hour and a half, so we had to hurry.

The beauty was all around us! The Arctic landscape was so stunning and diverse. The fjord was surrounded by mountains, their slopes here and there still covered in loose summer snow. Enormous glaciers majestically flowed into the sea, continuing their journey as icebergs in the distance. The entire surface of the fjord was dotted with these icy blocks.

In a way, it's sad because it's their final journey. On the other hand, one can only rejoice for the water droplets that once evaporated from the ocean's surface, fell as snow on the glacier's top, and after spending thousands of years in cold captivity, are preparing to become part of the ocean once again. For them, it's a homecoming. For us, it's an opportunity to delight our eyes with the harsh beauty of the Arctic.

The terrain was rocky, but even in such inhospitable conditions the low-growing northern vegetation asserts its right to live. Mountain avens was in blossom on the





green carpets of polytrichum moss, with its white flowers standing out vividly against the dark green leaves. Moss campion bloomed, painting the once-green moss cushions in shades of purple. Alpine bistort flowers stretched upward with their bright yellow cups. In some narrow crevices between boulders, the purple saxifrage still bloomed. This plant is the first to flower as soon as the ground is freed from its snowy blanket. In July the time of the purple saxifrage passes, but it refuses to accept it and persistently continues to bloom in shady places.

On the hill, there sat a pair of long-tailed skuas. We did not approach too closely, observing them from a distance, as we didn't want to disturb the young parents. Everywhere we heard the chirping of snow buntings, the only songbirds in these latitudes. The small bird, resembling a sparrow, flitted back and forth, pecking at whatever it could find.

The red-throated diver is almost motionless by contrast. It glides gracefully across the surface of the pond, with its pointed beak and dignified presence. It's a rare bird, so we photographed it from a distance. It was accompanied by long-tailed ducks. They all nest on tiny islands in the middle of the pond where Arctic foxes can't reach them.

Then our time was up. We returned to the landing site, put on our life jackets, and headed back to the ship. The tables were already set, and the buffet was overflowing with food. After lunch we docked in Ny-Ålesund. Once a notorious Norwegian coal mining settlement, it is now one of the leading research centers for studying the Arctic's nature. The gangway was lowered, and we disembarked at the pier.

The settlement is incredibly tiny. It only takes ten minutes to cross it from one end to the other. Nevertheless, it has its own museum, shop, and the world's northernmost post office. In the center of the village stands a bust of Roald Amundsen. It was from here that this legendary Norwegian polar explorer began his trans-Arctic flight to Alaska via the North Pole, etching his name forever into the annals of the World history. And just a few hundred meters from the western border of the settlement, the same iron

mast still stands from which Amundsen and the other members of his crew boarded their airship, the "Norge."

Barnacle geese wandered across the tundra, fearing no one. But the Arctic terns dive-bombed our heads, eager to peck at us. Some succeeded. The only way out was to raise our hands, or better yet, a stick.



But then we witnessed not just a whirlwind but a whole tornado of Arctic terns! They screamed, flapped their wings, and took turns attacking an unfortunate fox. With its tail between its legs and ears flattened, it raced for dear life toward the nearest shelter. It found refuge under an old narrow-gauge steam train that still stands by the pier as a



monument to Ny-Ålesund's coal mining past. We returned to the ship, and soon the Plancius cast off its moorings, setting course northward.





### Day 3 – Saturday 8th of July, Liefdefjorden, Monacobreen, Bockfjorden

08h00 GPS Position: 79°31.8'N / 012°27.4'E

Wind: SW4 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Partial clouds • Air temperature: 8°C • Sea temperature: 8°C

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In the morning we arrived at Liefdefjorden. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining, and the visibility was amazing. The wind was noticeably stronger than the days before, but that did not dampen our spirits. We made our way to the end of the fjord, to Monacobreen, a highlight for many visitors that come to Svalbard due to its stunning views and size. We had a Zodiac cruise planned that would bring us closer to the glacier walls and give us the liberty to explore the fjords coastlines.

We started our operations at 09:15. Everybody was eagerly waiting at the gangway to get into a Zodiac. We had our first Zodiac cruise instructions from our drivers who taught us what to do and what not to do. When all Zodiacs were ready, we made our way to the east side of the glacier wall. Here many were amazed by the grand size of Monaco glacier and its heavily crevassed features.

We made our way to the west of the glacier, where we found many kittiwakes flying in front of the glacier wall, along with Arctic terns sitting on small icefloes called “growlers.”

Some small carvings were observed, but



nothing too big yet. Getting closer to the Glacier Ida in the small inlet/fjord directly next to Monaco Breen, we found ourselves looking against a wall of ice 70m tall with hundreds of birds flying in front of it. This was a sign that this area of the glacier was active and that pieces of ice fall off frequently. Waiting just a small while in the area, we saw a big piece fall off. This made all the birds look for food where the calving happened. Shortly afterward we made our way back to the ship to round up the morning activity and have lunch.



In the afternoon, we passed again through Woodfjorden and entered Bockfjord, where we had a landing planned. We encountered a lot of wind, which made the Zodiac operations challenging – but nothing that our expedition team could not work with.

At the coastline we divided ourselves again into three hiking groups. There were many boulders, which made hiking quite difficult. Everybody found their preferred group and made their way to the first noticeable attraction, a dead Arctic fox that farther up on the hill. Still in its winter coat, it very likely died during the last winter. Its fur was in great shape and made an excellent example of how the foxes look in the winter.

Farther up the hill, we found many flowers: Arctic bell heather, mountain avens, fringed sandwort, moss campion, and hairy lousewort. A paradise for botany fanatics and nature lovers in general. The medium and long hiking groups made their way to the main attractions, which was the natural hot springs. This was situated on the hill and surrounded by a light sand, sinter terraces that have been deposited from the mineral rich waters. These terraces are fragile, so we were asked to not step on them while we were there. The holes were small and colorful and made for beautiful pictures, together with the Red Devonian sandstone hills that were standing on the other side of the fjord.



A bit farther on from the springs, the medium group saw a pair of rock ptarmigans walking around the boulder field. They were a bit shy, but we got good views of them from a distance. The way down was as challenging as the way up, with many big boulders and streams to cross. Luckily everybody got down safely and happy with all the amazing things that we had seen. Getting back to the ship was a bit easier this time, though nobody made it back completely dry.

During the recap, it was explained that we would go to the pack ice the next day. Eduardo explained to us why ice is blue, demonstrating how blue and red photons work. He also played us a moving piece of classical music by Ludovico Einaudi called “Elegy for the Arctic” in front of a glacier.

After dinner we were spoiled and a blue whale showing itself at the entrance of the fjord. It fluked multiple times, diving deep underneath the water to look for krill and other crustaceans. Around 23:00 we passed by the Island Mofen, which meant that we had passed by the 80 North latitude, only 600 nautical miles away from the North Pole. What a way to end and a perfect day!

## Day 4 – Sunday 9th of July, Pack ice and Polar bear encounter

09h00 GPS Position: 80°37.0'N / 017°34.2'E

Wind: W3 • Sea: Ice • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: 1°C • Sea temperature: 1°C

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After our wakeup call, we were able to see a beautiful sun shining outside. The mist surrounding the ship made it just the more mysterious and magical. During the morning, we started to see more and more ice around the ship. It kept on building up until we could see nothing more than sea ice and mist.

As our fear of seeing nothing but Arctic mist rose, the weather gods must have heard us: the dreadful yet mystical conglomeration of low-hanging water particles spread out, and we could see the pack ice in all its glory. Fields of ice stretched to the horizon in various shapes and sizes.

One of our guides, Elizabeth, lifted her binoculars and almost instantly spotted a polar bear on a stretch of ice. Some say Minnesotans are known for their exceptional eyesight. All we know is that she made this morning a spectacular one.

Plancius turned her bow to the fearsome animal. The chunky warrior was invested with devouring the remains of a walrus. A magnificent sight to see two prime Arctic animals on one small stretch of ice. Not long after that, a second bear was spotted heading toward the feast. To our surprise, the animals would not fight each other, rather giving each other turns to eat the now bloody carcass.

This method of tolerating one another provides the animals with less chance of being hurt and improves the rate of survival during summer. Similar behavior can be observed at the buffet of our ship's restaurant. The rate of survival on board is thus significantly improved among hungry passengers.



Besides a few growls to one another, the two bears were minding their own business. At one point we could witness the approach of another fine specimen. A slender and pristine white female made her appearance. The entrance to the scene was not only noticed by the baffled passengers. The two male bears seemed stunned as well, sniffing and puffing towards the enticing female.

The female seemed quite interested in Plancius. After some much-needed rolling in the snow, she made her way to the aft of the vessel, approaching at a distance so close we could meet her eye to eye. What a sight to see these normally solitary animals interact on that small stretch of ice! Even the bird lovers could rejoice, as the scene was filled with ivory gulls, scavengers dressed in plumage of purest white.

After a few hours on deck, we would have frozen if it were not for the hot chocolate (with a little something extra) provided by Andy and friends. Warm and satisfied, we sailed farther into the pack ice.

In the evening, we were treated to an informative mini lecture by Chris on the different types of ice in the polar regions. Philipp explained the plan for the next day, which looked promising, and Elizabeth showed us some of her fine photography and video footage from earlier that day. All in all, an incredibly exciting day.





## Day 5 – Monday 10th of July, Oxfordhalvøya, Palanderbukta

**12h00 GPS Position: 79°45.8'N / 021°31.6'E**

**Wind: NE3 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: 2°C • Sea temperature: 5°C**

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The gloomy and cold morning greeted us with a wind that was eager to sneak under our collars, dampening any desire to be outside in the fresh air. But we were not giving up so easily. After a whole day spent on a ship amidst the ice of the Arctic Ocean, we had two landings planned. So we woke up, had breakfast, and off we went!

Plancius slowly moved along the Vahlenbergfjorden until it reached the Oxfordhalvøya Peninsula. The anchor was dropped and the Zodiacs were lowered into the water. In groups of ten, we descended into the Zodiacs, settled onto the pontoons, and grabbed onto the safety lines. The motors roared, the wind tousled our hair, salty sea spray flew in all directions. We sped forward, cutting through the waves.

We stepped onto shore, looked around, and couldn't believe our eyes. Is this Spitsbergen? Instead of sharply peaked mountains and flower-covered tundra, we saw a completely lifeless yellowish ground, low mountains with perfectly flat summits, and stretches of vast glaciers reaching the sea. This was Nordaustlandet, the Northwest Land, the second-largest island in the archipelago and a true Arctic desert.

Sand, rocks, and ice — that's all it consists of. Nevertheless, could there be a more suitable place to fully appreciate the ascetic and minimalist beauty of high latitudes? Nordaustlandet is famous for being home to two ice domes, Vestfonna and Austfonna. As for the latter, it is the third-largest ice dome on our planet.

We divided into groups and set off. Silence surrounded us, disturbed only by the sound of the wind and the crunching of our footsteps. Along the way, we occasionally came across sparse vegetation: Svalbard poppies, swaying with their snowy white flowers and bending to the ground under the gusts of wind. The spider plant, resembling a creature from a horror movie, scared us with its red shoots that resemble spider legs. Moss campion remained as purple as ever, while mountain avens stretched its white flowers here and there.

Suddenly, someone in our group noticed a barely discernible moving dot traversing the plain. It was an Arctic fox sniffing around in search of something to feast upon. An Arctic skua circled above it, flapping its wings menacingly, making it clear to the fox that it should make itself scarce.

Out of nowhere, a pair of Spitsbergen reindeer appeared, walking toward us. We froze in place. They approached closer, observing us with curiosity, and then gracefully trotted away, disappearing from sight.

We returned to the ship, had lunch, and rested up for the next landing. Today's lunch was vegetarian, which is perhaps for the best. In the evening a barbecue was scheduled, so for now we enjoyed some plant-based food.

Plancius continued along the Vahlenbergfjorden toward the west, then turned south into the Palanderbukta and dropped anchor across from the Zeipelodden Valley. Enough sleeping. It was time to get dressed, grab our cameras, and disembark!



The landscapes in Palanderbukta were no less picturesque than those in Oxfordhalvøya. As we ascended the slope, we suddenly came across whale bones: old, weathered, covered in lichens, and porous. Moss was growing around them. It became immediately clear that they had been lying here for a very long time. How did they end up here? The secret lies in the fact that the coastline used to be right here.

During the last glaciation, under the enormous weight of the glacier, the Earth's crust bent downward. When the glacier retreated, the Earth's crust, relieved of the burden of the icy armor, began to arch backward and rise upward. As a result, the coastline started to shift. And so it happened that the whale washed ashore thousands of years ago now lies a few hundred meters from the present-day shore.

What is that white amid the rocks? We approached and found the skeleton of a polar bear. Even the left canine tooth was preserved in its upper jaw.

The time came to return. We were all tired but satisfied. How wonderful it was to stroll along the shore after a whole day on board. In the evening, a barbecue awaited us on the aft deck. We dressed warmly, took our seats at the tables, and eagerly indulged in the meat. Above us on the fourth deck, our chef Ivan skillfully wielded tongs and a knife, flipping the meat sizzling on the coals. It's hot in his "kitchen," the meat crackled, and the smoke carried a pleasant aroma.





## Day 6 – Tuesday 11th of July, Alkefjellet, Viberbukta

09h00 GPS Position: 79°34.3'N / 018°37.7'E

Wind: SE4 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Partly Cloudy • Air temperature: 2°C • Sea temperature: 3°C

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After yesterday's lunar landscape, it was time for us to be reminded about places where life can thrive plentifully. Hence we set course for a place called Alkefjellet, a cliff that stands out of the water on the northeast coast of Lomfjordhalvøya. It is here where thousands of Brünich's guillemots nest together, sharing the little spaces left at the top of the highly eroded cliffs.

The night before, we were concerned about the weather for the coming days, since a warm front was expected to arrive to the northern part of the archipelago, bringing with it several banks of fog. Therefore to our delight, the day broke with blue skies and some distant clouds that were hanging high in the sky. We approached the cliffs without problems and under excellent weather conditions.

Shortly after 9:15, the convoy of small boats departed Plancius, heading to the southeast corner of Lomfjordhalvøya, where numerous waterfalls descend toward the sea. The scene was of a special beauty. Black dolomite columns emerged from the surface of the ocean. Here and there between the columns, we could see little crevices where water from the glacier above runs into waterfalls.

As we moved from the southeast to the northeast, the cliffs started to become higher and their coloration changed. From black dolomite, the cliffs turned white-yellowish with some green spots where grass grows and some spots where snow has not have melted. The first color is due to the guano of the thousands of birds that nest here. Every summer these cliffs get a thick coat of guano, and over hundreds of years these cliffs eventually change color.



As if the landscape itself would not be breathtaking and unforgettable, the noise of the place is truly magical. The area receives the visitor with a loud cacophony of bird's chirps that simply overwhelms any other sounds around us. Thousands of guillemots squeaking and screeching in unison can make an everlasting impression.

As we drove, the sounds became louder and also the numbers of birds flying above us. We reached the northernmost end of the cliff, and a lonely Arctic fox appeared, carrying prey on its mouth. The animal had not fully adopted the summer camouflage, and its tail revealed its movements against the background. This fox climbed high until reaching the base of the cliffs and disappeared toward its den.



The grand finale of this impressive Zodiac cruise was a peek to the front of the Odinbreen glacier, a small glacier that descends into the ocean at this location. The black and white of the columns was soon replaced by the endless succession of blues, greens, and whites of the ice.

Here at this place where ice meets the ocean, something very colorful and interesting happens: the murky under glacier rivers carrying sediments meet the blue waters of the Hinlopen Strait, producing a beautiful contrast of colors. The whole morning left us with deep and lasting impressions of the majestic place. Shortly before noon, the last passengers returned to Plancius, ready to enjoy a good meal from our restaurant.

As we were disembarking the last Zodiac boat, a thick layer of fog started to enclose everything around us, covering any landmark visible from the ship. As we sailed farther south into Hinlopen strait, we realized this fog bank was larger and thicker than expected. Consequently, we decided to abort the landing we had planned for the afternoon. Instead we decided to sail farther south, aiming for a place clear of fog.

We sailed toward an open bay located at the southwest part of Nordauslandet under the name of Viberbukta. Under the fog we feel powerless because none of our possible activities can take place. Nevertheless, fog is an excellent excuse to offer a lecture.



Koen spoke during the early afternoon about the history of Svalbard, giving a superb lecture about the past and present of this beautiful archipelago.

Around 16:00 the fog lifted and we could see land again. We decided to launch our Zodiacs and attempt our landing at Viberbukta as planned. We launched initially two Zodiacs for scouting the place. Due to the fact that most of the bay of Viberbukta is not surveyed, the shuttle from Plancius to shore was longer than usual. As we came close to the shore, we started to scout for polar bears and soon. We realized there was a mysterious shape behind a dune located in front of our planned landing site. As we came closer, this mysterious shape lifted its head in a way that only one animal does: a polar bear. We immediately aborted any attempt of landing here and we instead decided to take guests on a Zodiac cruise to see the bear.

We then had the chance to approach the shore of Viberbukta and were lucky enough to see two bears behind the dunes of this polar desert landscape. We spent one hour enjoying the views of these distant bears before we came back to the ship.

As we left Viberbukta, we started to sail towards Bråsvelbreen, a 45km long and 20km wide glacier located in the southern part of the region of Austfonna in Nordauslandet. Bråsvelbreen means "the sudden swell glacier" in Norwegian due to the multiple and spectacular waterfalls. These waterfalls are part of a drainage system to transport ice from central parts towards the coast from the ice cap. The waterfalls drop water from a height of about 25-30m above the ice cliffs.

This part of our passage was extremely beautiful in terms of the icy landscape, the icebergs floating in the water, and the light we had around was very special. This was one of the most spectacular evenings on board since the beginning of our trip.

The day concluded with an extraordinary sight. Shortly before midnight, when most of the ship was already sleeping, an announcement on the PA system came through: a polar bear was sighted on one of the floating icebergs around the ship. A pandemonium broke out and most of our guests came out from bed to witness another polar bear. We believed this one was a healthy male having a siesta after feeding on a dead seal. This sight marked the end of yet another very intense day in our arctic expedition around Spitsbergen.





## Day 7 – Wednesday 12th of July, Kapp Lee/ Walrus – Russe Bukta

09h00 GPS Position: 78°07.1'N / 020°47.1'E

Wind: NE3 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: 6°C • Sea temperature: 2°C

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After breakfast we quickly found out from Phillip that our plans were changed due to the mist outside. As there was not even a coastline to see, this was a likely outcome. We were told that the ship would keep on sailing west through the strait to see if the mist would lift at a certain point. It didn't take longer than an hour and the mist started to lift, reminding us of the beautiful scenery we were surrounded by.

The plans were to land at Kapp Lee. Here we got the chance to see walrus lying on one of their known haul out points. As we were a little bit delayed, the plans were made so that the ship was split into two groups, each had a chance to see the walrus for about an hour in total.



The outing started shortly after the announcement, when our expedition team was ready to receive the first group on the beach. It was an easy landing on a sandy beach just about 300m away from the group of walrus laying further ahead. After everybody arrived and we got our instructions, we started to walk along the beach in the direction of the animals. This particular group was made out of purely male walrus, as they normally only haul out in groups of the same sex.

To make sure not to scare the walrus into the water, we approached very quietly and slowly made a long line out of everybody facing the walrus. Seeing that the group was relaxed with us being there, we were led by Phillip to get a few meters closer. This happened a couple of times until we were only around 60m away from them.

A few of them went into the water, and a couple of them came out replacing their spots. Their presence surely made a big impression on us and especially in our noses. Walrus are known to leave a strong odor after having eaten a couple of dozen kilos of mussels and other shellfish. After having spent some time with these huge creatures, we retreated to our Zodiac landing area to return to the ship.

The second group started to arrive as well at that moment and gathered around Phillip for the same instructions. Approaching the walrus, we could see and sense that they were already quite relaxed with us being there, so we got to the 60m line quite quickly. While taking pictures of the harem and the swimming walrus, we got exciting news: there was a group of belugas coming our way into the bay. Phillip quickly let the bridge know to advise the people on the ship to look into the bay with binoculars and telescopes. From the beach we got a really good view of the belugas and were able to estimate the size of the group.

The group was made of around 6 to 8 individuals with calves by their side who still were more of a grey colour instead of the white colour of the adults. A sighting that not many people get to see knowing that there are only about 500 individuals living around Svalbard. After this great experience, the second group also went back to the Zodiacs to get back to the ship for our well-deserved lunch.

Our afternoon activities were still a little bit unsure, as there was still some mist on the coast. But this luckily got worked out, as the fog was not a problem at our next landing site. The following site we visited was called Russebukta. A beautiful bay in a relatively flat area surrounded by many green mosses, flowers, black basalt rocks, and a lot of wildlife. A paradise that we got to explore. The landing was a bit tricky, with some big steps getting up to the first plateau, but from there it was mostly spongy green moss which was very comfortable to walk on.



The long hike was able to get ahead of the other groups and experienced a beautiful encounter with Arctic foxes. Two foxes had a small quibble and got physical with each other. There were also a couple of Svalbard reindeer with large antlers grazing in the large open fields. Finally we made it to a high viewpoint where a lake was observed that was filled with geese. Mainly pink-footed geese were observed, but there were also a couple of barnacle geese. There even seemed to be two fully white barnacle geese, which is a rare sight.



The participants of the middle group made their way directly to the small lake that was situated a little bit above the starting point. Here there were multiple birds spotted like the barnacle goose, arctic tern, grey phalarope, and the long-tailed duck. The hike kept on going over the mossy tundra, where flowers like cotton grass and drooping saxifrage gave a beautiful color to the green fields. At the highest point, the same two reindeer were spotted with the large antlers and the far lake filled with pink footed goose.

Hiking in the slower group never means you see less, and this time this was certainly not the case. Taking a different route further to the east, similar birds and flowers were observed, along with an amazing discovery: the skeleton of a fully grown polar bear. The bones were a little bit scattered among the area, but many were found and observed. The cranium and lower jaw bones were almost completely intact, which gave a great insight into the gigantic teeth the bear uses to hunt its prey.

## **Day 8 – Thursday 13th of July, Treskelen Threshold and Burgerbukta**

**09h00 GPS Position: 76°59.7'N / 016°04.0E**

**Wind: NE6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: 5°C • Sea temperature: 5°C**

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This morning we woke to Philip's friendly wakeup call at 7.15 to find that it was very windy outside. We continued to enter Hornsund Fjord as we enjoyed a leisurely breakfast, but the wind direction for our morning landing was not workable. As we went farther in the fjord, we set out to go on shore at Treskelen Threshold.



The Zodiacs dropped us onto an interesting beach of stones and Siberian driftwood. We split into our groups and set off to explore. To north and south there were fascinating rock formations of marble, sandstone, conglomerate stone, and some crazy red layers sandwiched all together as well. From the layers of rock by the shore side



we climbed up towards the mountainous piles of moraine boulders where we found a couple of small lakes and wetland areas.

Eventually our exploration led us back to the stony beach, and onto a Zodiac where we were transported back to our good ship Plancius for a delicious lunch.

After lunch we cruised the Hornbreen glacier before anchoring just off Burgerbukta West fjord. Here we lowered Zodiacs and cruised in gusty winds toward the distant Paieribreen Glacier. As we entered the fjord, the wind dropped and the mountains towered above us on each side. High up on the sides were hanging glaciers with tumbling waterfalls appearing from springs in the rockface far below their icy source.

We arrived at the carving front of the main glacier and were met by a solid 25m wall of blue ice cracked and crinkled by the pressure of millions of years of glacial movement. We witnessed two small carvings throughout our time there, and we had such fun driving through the brash ice from previous carvings. When we turned the engine off and sat quietly, we could hear the distinct popping noise the trapped air bubbles make as they escape their icy prison of so many years.



Shortly before 6pm, we drove full speed back to the ship over the glassy calm ocean . Some puffins circled across the Zodiacs. Tired but happy guests climbed back up the gangway. At the recap we learned about the movement of Svalbard over the last 500 million years with Koen, and Chris told us stories about exploring crevasses..

#### **Day 9 – Friday 14th of July, Alkhornet**

**08h00 GPS Position: 78°13.042'N / 013°51.460'E**

**Wind: NE6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Clear sky • Air temperature: 13°C • Sea temperature: 8°C**

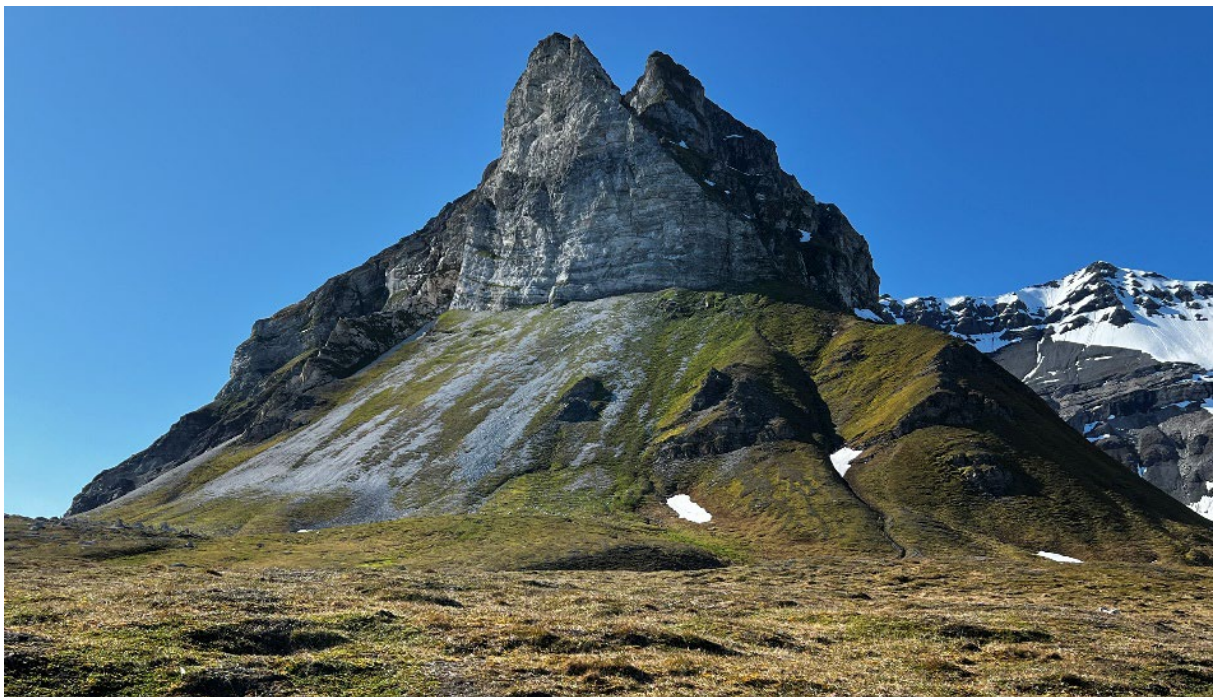
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This morning we woke up to find windy conditions that made it impossible to carry out our initial landing plans at Ingeborgfjellet, so instead we set off to find shelter in Recherchebreen.

Unfortunately, a technical hitch with our Zodiac crane meant we were unable to land there either, so in true expedition style we set off to our next planned landing in the afternoon. In the meantime, the expedition team gave some short lectures in the lounge about seals, icebergs, and space experiments in Svalbard. Sasha then showed us a charming short documentary about his time living and working in Pyramiden.

In the afternoon we were able to land at a beautiful place called Alkhornet, where a spectacular mountain face towers over 600m above the sea. It is home to hundreds of seabirds nesting on the cliff edge, particularly kittiwakes and Brunnich's guillemots. We split into our usual hiking groups for the final time and enjoyed fantastic close-up views of Svalbard reindeer. The groups that climbed up the hill spotted an Arctic fox hunting on the bottom on the nesting seabirds.

After our hikes, some brave guests took a cold dip in the ocean. We call this the "polar plunge." Then we returned to Plancius and celebrated our last evening together with the captain, enjoying a fantastic slide show from Elizabeth. This enabled us to relive our wonderful experiences over the last ten days.



**Day 10 – Saturday 15th of July, Arrival back into Longyearbyen**

**08h00 GPS Position: 78°14.6'N / 015°32.6'E**

**Wind: NW3 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Clear sky • Air temperature: 14°C • Sea temperature: 7°C**

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After a final wonderful buffet breakfast, we said farewell to Plancius and its team and began our journey home. Our wildlife encounters on this trip have been truly



spectacular. For many of the guides, it was their best whale and polar bear sightings. For the most part, the weather was fantastic. We loved making our voyage together.



**Total distance sailed: 1092 nautical miles**  
**Northernmost position: 80°36.3'N / 017°40.0'E**

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Remmert Jan Koster, Expedition Leader Philipp, Hotel Manager Volodymyr Cherednychenko, and all the crew and staff of M/V Plancius, it has been a pleasure travelling with you.





**Around Spitsbergen onboard M.V. Plancius**

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Longyearbyen         | 9. Alkefjellet                |
| 2. Blomstrandhalvøya    | 10. Vibebukta (Bears. Again.) |
| 3. Ny-Ålesund           | 11. Bråsvellbreen             |
| 4. Monacobreen          | 12. Kapp Lee (Walrus)         |
| 5. Jotunkjeldene        | 13. Martinodden               |
| 6. Pack ice (and Bears) | 14. Treskelen                 |
| 7. Oxfordhalvøya        | 15. Burgbukta West            |
| 8. Zeipelfjellet        | 16. Alkhornet                 |

English Name	Latin	German	French	Dutch	Breeding / Transient / Vagrant	06/Jul	07/Jul	08/Jul	09/Jul	10/Jul	11/Jul	12/Jul	13/Jul	14/Jul
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Sterntaucher	Plongeon catmarin	Roodkeelduiker	B		X					X		
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boréal	Noordse stormvogel	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kurzschnabalgans	Oie à bec court	Kleine rietgans	B							X		
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Weisswangengans	Bernache nonnette	Brandgans	B		X	X				X		
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Graugans	Oie cendrée	Grauwe gans	V							X		
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Stockente	Canard colvert	Wilde eend	T							X		
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eiderente	Eider commun	Eidereend	B			X				X	X	
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Prachteiderente	Eider à tête grise	Konings eider	B			X	X			X		X
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Scheckente	Eider de Steller	Stellers eider	V							X		
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Eisente	Harelde boréale	Ilseend	B		X	X				X		
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	Alpensneehuhn	Lagopède alpin	Alpensneeuwhoen	B		X	X						
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Austernfischer	Huïtrier Pie	Scholekster	V							X		
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Sandregenpfeifer	Grand Gravelot	Bontbekplevier	B							X		
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Meerstrandläufer	Bécasseau violet	Paarse strandloper	B		X	X		X		X	X	
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Steinwäzler	Tournepière à collier	Steenloper	B		X							
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Thorshühnchen	Phalarope à bec large	Rosse franjepoot	B		X					X		
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Spatelraubmöwe	Labbe pomarin	Middelste jager	T				X					
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarotzerraub-möwe	Labbe parasite	Kleine jager	B		X			X			X	X
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Falkenraubmöwe	Labbe à longue queue	Kleinste jager	B		X	X						
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Skua	Grand Labbe	Grote jager	B		X				X			X
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	Goéland bourgmestre	Grote Burgemeester	V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Heringsmöwe	Goéland brun	Kleine mantelmeeuw	B					X				
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle	Drieteenmeeuw	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Elfenbeinmöwe	Mouette blanche	Ivoormeeuw	B		X	X	X			X		
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne arctique	Noordse stern	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brünnich	Dikbekzeekoet	B	X					X		X	
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Grylleteiste	Guillemot à miroir	Zwarte zeekoet	B	X					X		X	X
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbentaucher	Mergule nain	Kleine alk	B	X	X	X	X					
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papageitaucher	Macareux moine	Papegaaiduiker	B	X	X	X					X	X
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Steinschmätzer	Traquet moteux	Tapuit	B							X		
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	Bruant des neiges	Sneeuwgor	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

## MAMMALS

English	Latin	German	French	Dutch	Breeding / Transient / Vagrant									
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walross	Morse	Walrus	B					X	X	X		X
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bartrobbe	Phoque barbu	Baardrob	B	X	X				X			
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringelrobbe	Phoque marbré	Ringelrob	B				X		X			
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Seehund	Phoque commun	Gewone zeehond	B			X	X				X	
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Zwergwal	Petit rorqual	Dwergvinvis	T		X	X					X	
Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Seiwal	Rorqual boréal	Noordse vinvis	V									
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blauwal	Baleine bleue	Blauwe vinvis	T	X		X						
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Finnwal	Rorqual commun	Gewone vinvis	T	X								
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Buckelwal	Baleine à bosse	Bultrug	T		X						X	
Beluga	<i>Dephinapterus leucas</i>	Weisswal	Béluga	Beloga	B							X		
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Eisbär	Ours blanc	Ijsbeer	B				X		X	X		
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Polarfuchs	Renard polaire	Poolvos	B		X	X		X	X	X		X
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	Svalbard Renntier	Renne du Spitzberg	Rendier	B		X			X	X	X		X

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# Philipp Schaudy - Expedition Leader

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

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

adventures.

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

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

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

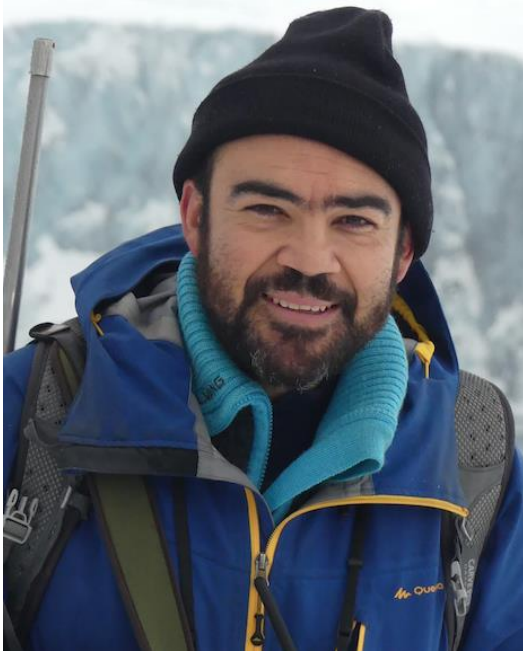
Today I live with my family at 750 meters above sea level in a small village near Graz. A place where snow is falling at Christmas. Nevertheless, I am back in the Arctic every summer. Sure thing!



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# Eduardo Rubio – Assistant Expedition Leader

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Eduardo describes himself as an astronomer by profession with a passion for sharing nature with others.

After studying physics, he got his PhD in Astronomy from the University of Amsterdam in 2010. After a postdoctoral position he became a lecturer of physics and Astronomy as well as a guide in expedition cruise ships. In 2018 he decided to become a full-time guide for Oceanwide Expeditions in the Antarctic and in the Arctic.

His interests vary from history of exploration to the intricacies of astronomy. During the trips he has undertaken, he offer lectures about polar explorers, the science carried out in Antarctica (astronomy in particular), about our Universe, and the mysteries of our ocean's depths, to mention some. At sea, besides being and engaged guide and lecturer, he loves to show constellations to people, pointing out their names and their lore. In every trip he made, he always aim to raise the enthusiasm of guests towards science, and their awareness towards the unique and fragile planet where we live. Born in Guatemala (1978), he speaks English, Spanish and German.

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# Koen Jongerling - Expedition Guide

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Having grown up in the Netherlands Koen always knew he wanted to live in a more rugged landscape than the rather flat lowlands that surrounded him. That is why after finishing his outdoor education in 2011, he chose to move to Patagonia, Chile to find the mountains he was longing for.

Combining his love for nature and the desire to learn more, he started guiding expeditions through the mountain ranges of Patagonia. Travelling back and forth to Europe for additional mountain courses - every time feeling more at home in the rough conditions of Patagonia. In 2017 he started his own guide company, introducing travelers to the beauty of Southern Chile.

Living in Puerto Natales he came to love the cold and extreme weather and after years of working in one of the most southern mountain ranges in the world, he could not stop looking further south to the great white continent, Antarctica.

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# Jess Owen - Expedition Guide

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Jess is from the South East of England and lives on the Isle of Skye in Scotland. Since graduating from a degree in Wildlife and Media, Jess has been working in environmental research and education roles with wildlife conservation charities in the UK, with a focus on marine mammals and birds. Jess is a passionate science communicator, wildlife guide, and nature enthusiast. She has delivered lectures, workshops, tours, school lessons, and training courses to a wide variety of audiences on subjects such as birds, insects, marine mammals, marine and terrestrial conservation,

citizen science, and gardening for wildlife. She is particularly passionate about citizen science and helping inspire people to become connected to their local wildlife and active in its conservation.

Jess now specialises in whales, dolphins, and porpoises, having worked as a marine mammal surveyor and whale watching guide since 2015. This work has taken her to the Bay of Biscay, the West Coast of Scotland, the Southern Ocean, the Falkland Islands, and the Antarctic Peninsula and she is very excited to be returning to Antarctica this season.

When she is not out at sea, Jess spends her time gardening, reading, making films, snorkelling, and bird watching, and loves to spend time with her nieces and nephew.



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# Elizabeth Robinson – Expedition Guide

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Elizabeth was born and raised in Minnesota, a state in the middle north of the United States. Minnesota is known for having over 10,000 lakes and nature around every corner; something she took full advantage of growing up. Before the age of eighteen, Elizabeth travelled to all fifty US states, and became a Junior Park Ranger at over thirty National Parks.

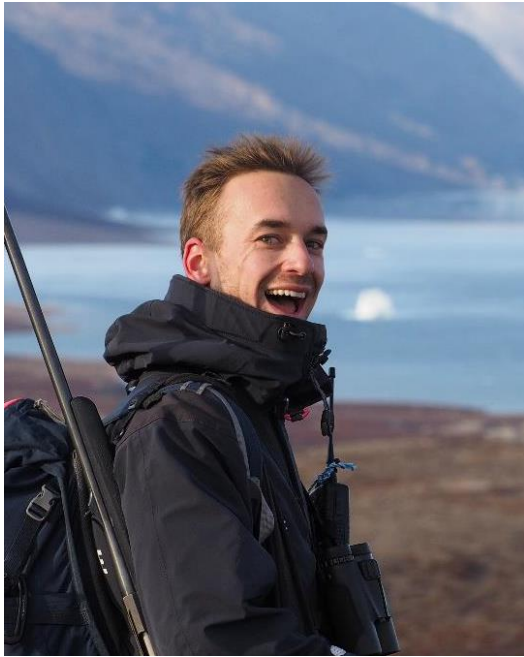
She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Mammalogy, accompanied by additional degrees in Psychology, English Writing and Environmental Studies. Her undergraduate research focused on African elephants and squirrels. Recently, she graduated from the University of Bristol (UK) with a Master of Science degree in Global Wildlife Health and Conservation. Her dissertation focused on cetacean conservation and understanding how policy is integrated within conservation efforts.

Elizabeth has lived and studied whales in many places such as Hawaii, British Columbia, Alaska, Norway, and the UK. She has previously worked as an orca kayak guide, a snorkel guide in Hawaii, a wildlife documentary co-producer, and a marine mammal researcher. She has spent the last eight years studying species such as orcas, humpback whales, right whales, porpoises, and pinnipeds. She is passionate about cetacean conservation, specifically endangered species. Elizabeth currently calls both the US and the UK home and is happiest at sea.

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# Ben Fredriks - Expedition Guide

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Discovering Spitsbergen in 2013 was like a dream coming true for Ben. During his studies in marine biology he conducted fieldwork which took him to the world's most Northern settlement: Ny-Ålesund. Here he fell in love with the Arctic Archipelago, and he has been returning to the Arctic ever since.

In the past, Ben worked on different scientific topics: Arctic shipping and the effect of oil spills in Arctic Regions. Ben is very interested in the Arctic biology/ecology and history, which makes Spitsbergen a perfect place for him to work, because it is filled with all

of it!

Since 2015 Ben works as a hydrographic surveyor on the North sea, but since his first visit to Spitsbergen he has caught the "Arctic virus" and is always looking forward to another adventure in the polar regions!

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# Chris Long – Expedition Guide

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Chris grew up as a part of New Zealand's remotest family two long days hike from the nearest road at a place called Gorge River, on the South Islands West Coast, New Zealand.

His family lives as self-sufficiently as possible in a small cabin surrounded by the jungled rainforest, the rough rugged coastline, and an emerald green river. Most of their food came from a huge vegetable garden or was fished from the ocean. This wild untouched natural corner of New Zealand was Chris's home for the first 17 years of his life, until, one day, he set out to explore

what the rest of the world had to offer.

Since leaving Gorge River Chris has set out to see, explore and experience as much of the globe as possible. This constant search for adventure has seen him travel to over 60 countries on all seven continents. Along this journey, he spent two full summer seasons living and working as a field trainer at Scott Base, a New Zealand research station in Antarctica, as well as multiple voyages to the Ross Sea and East Antarctica.

Chris is also no stranger to the arctic. He once sailed the notorious northwest passage across the top of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska and spent much of the covid pandemic living with 150 husky dogs in Tromso, northern Norway, enduring two long cold dark arctic winters training for long distance dog races.

Since recently returning to New Zealand, he has published an autobiography and is training for his commercial fixed-wing pilot's license.



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# Alexander Romanovskiy - Expedition Guide

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Alexander Romanovskiy comes from Saint-Petersburg, the Northern capital of Russia. He was born in 1981. After having graduated from the boarding school Alexander entered Saint-Petersburg State University, where he spent 5 years studying physical geography, ecology, regional geography and international tourism. Afterwards he was working on his PhD thesis in Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, doing geoecological researches.

In the year of 2011 however, Alexander decided to pause his scientific career and start doing something completely different, which means working in tourism and traveling the world. He spent 2 seasons working as a trekking guide in Fann mountains (Tajikistan), 1 season on Novolazarevskaya Antarctic scientific station (Queen Maud Land, Antarctica) working as a member of a guesthouse crew.

Since February of 2012 most part of the year he spends on Svalbard. For five seasons in a row Alexander has been living and working as a guide in a ghost town of Pyramiden. In 2016 a new page in Alexander's guiding career was opened: he started working as a naturalist guide on cruise ships in polar regions of the world – Svalbard and Antarctica.

3 to 4 months a year Alexander dedicates to his main passion – traveling the world. No public transport, no hotels, only hitch-hiking and staying overnight with locals or sleeping in a tent. This way he has already visited almost all Soviet republics, Middle East (Iran, Turkey), Asia (China), South America (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay), and it is hopefully far not the end! The world is big, friendly and interesting to explore!

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## Anna Buijze – Ship's doctor

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Anna Buijze is a skilled doctor from The Netherlands with years of experience in Emergency Medicine. At the moment she is in training for becoming an Emergency Medicine specialist. She works both at the University Medical Centre of Groningen (UMCG) and the Medical Centre of Leeuwarden (MCL). She also has a degree as a medical examiner of divers.

She has a lot of diverse interests, enthusiasm and passion to diligent work. She enthusiastically welcomes new opportunities to explore the world and widen her knowledge in expedition medicine.



## DAILY PROGRAM

# Welcome aboard!

Date: Thursday 06<sup>th</sup> June 2023

Day: Day 1

**Embarkation.** Once you have found your cabin, please feel free to explore the ship.

**when all are on board** we will cast off. Please listen to announcements for our **mandatory safety and lifeboat drill** in the Lounge/Bar – Deck 5.

**thereafter** **Welcome Aboard Briefing** in the Lounge/Bar – Deck 5.

19.30 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.

**thereafter** You will get your **rubber boots** in the boot-room (Deck 3 forward). Listen to **announcements** – we will call you by deck.

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### IMPORANT FOR TOMORROW IN KONGSFJORD:

It is forbidden to use transmitting devices like mobile phones, Bluetooth, etc. around the village of Ny Alesund. Please turn devices off today when you go to bed.

# Put mobile phones into flight-mode.

# Turn transmitting function on cameras, etc. off.

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*Let us probe the silent places, let us seek what luck betide us;  
Let us journey to a lonely land I know.  
There's a whisper on the night-wind, there's a star a gleam to guide us,  
And the wild is calling, calling . . . let us go.*

*Robert Service, The Call Of The Wild*





## DAILY PROGRAM

# KONGSFJORD

Date: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 2

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**IMPORANT FOR KONGSFJORD:** Don't use transmitting devices like mobile phones, Bluetooth, etc

# Put mobile phones into flight-mode.

# Turn transmitting function on cameras, etc. off.

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- 07.15**      **Wake up call.**
- 07.30**      **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 08.30**      **Mandatory** briefing in the lounge on **how to behave in Polar Bear country and on Zodiac operations.**
- thereafter**      **Landing: Blomstrandhalvøya.** This morning we intend to land on the north side of Kongsfjord at a derelict mining place. We will stroll through the tundra in hiking groups. Keep eyes open in the search for red-throated divers, reindeer and long-tailed skuas that are nesting in the area.
- 13.00**      **Lunch-Bufferet** for one hour in the Dining Room.
- 15.00**      **Landing: Ny Ålesund.** The northernmost permanent settlements in the world was established in 1917 as a mining settlement. Today, Ny Ålesund is a centre for Arctic research and a famous historical site. From here Amundsen, Ellsworth & Nobile flew over 90°N in the airship *Norge*.
- Stay on the gravel roads at all times. Transmitting devices need to be switched off.
- 17.00**      We meet at the **bust of Roald Amundsen** to walk to the anchoring mast of the *Norge* and to hear some more of the history.
- 19.00**      **Recap** of today and briefing for tomorrow in the lounge.
- 19.30**      **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy!

*Adventure is just bad planning.*

*Roald Amundsen (1872 - 1928), polar explorer.*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# LIEFDEFJORD

Date: Saturday 08<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 3

**Liefdefjorden, Woodfjorden, Bockfjord.** Today we will wake up in Liefdefjord, one of Spitsbergen's most beautiful fjords. Depending on the fast-ice still remaining in the inner fjord, we will adjust our activities of today on the area around Liefdefjorden, Woodfjorden and Bockfjord. **Please listen to announcements.**

- 07.15**      **A wonderful good morning.** Philipp's voice will stop our sleep.
- 07.30**      **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 12.30**      The **lunch-buffet** is waiting for us in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 18.30**      **Recap** of today and **briefing** for tomorrow in the lounge.
- 19.00**      **Dinner!** Enjoy 😊.

What is the secret of the Arctic?  
You must live through the long night, the storms, and the destruction of  
human pride.  
You must have gazed on the deadness of all things to grasp their livingness.  
In the return of the light, in the magic of the ice, in the life-truths of animals  
observed in the wilderness...  
lies the secret of the Arctic and the overpowering beauty of its lands.

Christiane Ritter (1898-2000). *A Woman in the Polar Night*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# A DAY IN THE PACK ICE

Date: Monday 09<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 4

**Expedition day in the pack ice!** Northwest of Nordaustland we will encounter the pack ice, a spectacular Arctic Wonderland. Please join us on deck in the search of wildlife – it is a brilliant experience unto itself to navigate in the pack ice.

If we have the luck to encounter wildlife, please **keep noise levels low** (voices down; close doors gently) for the best opportunities of finding and remaining with it.

- 07.45**      **Pack-ice-sleep-in** 😊.
- 08.00**      **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 12.30**      The **lunch-buffet** is waiting for us in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 18.30**      **Recap** of today and **briefing** for tomorrow in the lounge.
- 19.00**      Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is ready!

BE A SEAGULL  
Take the breath  
Of the wings of morning  
Lift your eyes  
To the canyons  
Of the skies  
And fly!

*Richard Bach, 1970, Jonathan Livingston Seagull*





## DAILY PROGRAM

# NORDAUSTLAND

Date: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 5

**Nordautland:** We plan to spend the day on Svalbards second largest island (14.443 km<sup>2</sup>). We have arrived in the polar desert. The bareness and stunning landscapes of Nordautland are fascinating. Nevertheless, some plants like the Svalbard Poppy and Purple Saxifrage are found on this rugged island. The landscape attracts with gentle sloped and massive icecaps are covering most of the island.

We plan to **get ashore twice** on Nordautland and want to explore the landscape in our well-known hiking groups. **Walking is generally easy at both locations.** Except for the **mountain goats** in the afternoon: up and down through **loose gravel**.

- 07.15** A wonderful **good morning!**
- 07.30** **Breakfast buffet** for one hour.
- 09.00** **Landing: Wahlenbergfjord**
- 12.30** **Lunch buffet** for one hour.
- 15.00** **Landing: Palanderbukta**
- 18.30** **Today & tomorrow.** Recap & briefing in the lounge.
- 19.00** Summer in the Arctic! It's **BBQ** tonight 😊 and we eat outside ...

*What is the secret of the Arctic?*

*You must live through the long night, the storms, and the destruction of human pride.*

*You must have gazed on the deadness of all things to grasp their livingness. In the return of the light, in the magic of the ice, in the life-truths of animals observed in the wilderness...*

*lies the secret of the Arctic and the overpowering beauty of its lands.*

*Christiane Ritter (1898-2000). A Woman in the Polar Night*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# HINLOPENSTRET

Date: Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 6

- 07.15**      **Rise and shine.** Wake up call.
- 07.30      Let's get a bite. **Breakfast.**
- 09.00      **Zodiac cruise: Alkefjellet.** This morning we would like to visit the "Auk Mountain", so named due to the enormous number of Brünnich's guillemots breeding along these 100m high basaltic cliffs. We intend to do a Zodiac cruise following the whole spectacular cliff. **Dress warm**, we are not getting ashore.
- 12.30      **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 15.00**      **Landing: Torellneset or Wahlbergøya.** In southern Hinlopen we have two potentially good places for walrus. If our friends are at home we will visit the animals in two groups. **Both groups will get the same amount of time with the walrus.**
- The first 5 boats:** We are **going for a short stroll first.** After that we visit the walrus.
- The second 5 boats:** We are **going to the walrus first.** After that we go for a short stroll. There will be the possibility to get back to the ship right after the walrus visit.
- 18.30**      Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00      Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!

*Men wanted for hazardous journey.  
Small wages. Bitter cold.  
Long months of complete darkness.  
Constant danger.  
Safe return doubtful.  
Honour and recognition in case of success.*

*Ernest Shackleton (1874–1922) newspaper announcement before his  
Endurance Expedition*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# Edgeøya & Barentsøya

Date: Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 7

We plan to spend today on the islands **Barentsøya** and **Edgeøya**. We have left the polar desert behind and find relatively rich tundra. The landscape is great for hiking and we want to explore the islands in our well-known walking groups. However, on Edgeøya we might find **walrus** on shore. If our friends are at home (and no bears are around) we plan to visit them in the afternoon.

**Attention!** Both islands are quite “contaminated” by bears, and it happens regularly that we are changing to plan B, C, D or E. There are a couple of good landing spots on Barents- and Edgeøya. If we find a bear on land at one potential landing site, we will continue to the next one. Generally we intend to land on both of the islands.

- 07.15** A wonderful **good morning!**
- 07.30** **Breakfast buffet** for one hour.
- 09.00** **Landing: Barentsøy**
- 12.30** **Lunch buffet** for one hour.
- 15.00** **Landing: Edgeøya**
- 18.30** **Today & tomorrow.** Recap & briefing in the lounge.
- 19.00** **Dinner** is waiting for us.

*A lonely seagull flies the winds  
Majestic... soaring...gliding wings  
A single screech sounds from the sky  
Come fly with me... come here and fly*

*Author unknown*





# DAILY PROGRAM

## HORNSUND

Date: Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 8

- 07.15**      **Good morning!**
- 07.30**      **Breakfast** – enjoy!
- 09.00**      **Landing: Gåshamna, Hornsund.** Today we will be exploring Hornsund, Spitsbergen's most southerly and arguably one of the most beautiful fjords. We intend to land on the western side of Gåshamna, a wide bay that has been witness to different phases of Spitsbergen's history. Remains of a 17<sup>th</sup> century English whaling station and foundations of Pomor houses (Russian hunters) are found in the area. If weather permits the mountain-goats can climb a very (!) steep mountain to gain some great views. The other hikes are on easy terrain.
- 12.30**      **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 15.00**      **Zodiac Cruise: Burgerbukta, Hornsund.** Today's afternoon we plan a Zodiac cruise in beautiful Burgerbukta, a smaller side arm of Hornsund, with great glacial scenery. Please dress warmly!
- 18.30**      **Recap and briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00**      **Dinner.** Bon Appetite!

*"We need the tonic of wildness... At the same time that we are earnest to explore and learn all things, we require that all things be mysterious and unexplorable, that land and sea be indefinitely wild, unsurveyed and unfathomed by us because unfathomable. We can never have enough of nature."*

*Henry David Thoreau (Walden: Or, Life in the Woods)*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# BELLSUND & ISFJORDEN

Date: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 9

- 07.15**      **Good morning, wake up!**
- 07.30**      **Breakfast** for one hour in the dining room.
- 09.00**      **Landing: Ingeborgfjellet, Bellsund.** This morning we plan to go ashore at the majestic Ingeborgfjellet. Our intention is for visit a little auk colony on a massive scree slope. For those who wish, we will provide a lovely walk that will surely include reindeer and birdlife. There is also the opportunity to remain with the little auks for the whole landing time.
- 12.30**      **Lunchtime!**
- 15.30**      **Landing: Alkhornet, Isfjorden.** This afternoon we intend to land at picturesque Alkhornet in the bay Trygghamna. We find lush vegetation, birdlife, reindeer and maybe even a polar fox. It is a great place to roundup an extraordinary voyage.
- Bring your swimsuit.** If you ever wanted to take a swim in the Arctic-ocean, this is your chance at the end of our landing. We bring towels. Enjoy!
- 18.30**      **Farewell Cocktail with Captain & last official meeting.** Please join us for a toast on our voyage!
- 19.30**      **The Last Supper.** Bon Appetite!

*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 (1902 - 1968)*



## DAILY PROGRAM

# LONGYEARBYEN

Date: Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2023

Day: Day 10

**For the 7 passengers leaving at night.** Please put your check-in luggage into the corridors latest at 11 PM. The crew will bring it on shore for you.

**07.15** For a last time: **A wonderful good morning.**

**Important:** Please put your check-in luggage into the corridors before you go to breakfast! So that we can bring it on shore.

**07.30** **Breakfast is available** in the restaurant.

**08.30** **Last landing: Longyearbyen.** The busses will bring you to your hotels.

**Important:** Please identify your luggage on shore. Bring it to the bus yourself, to be sure it is travelling in the same bus as you.

*Have you suffered, starved and  
triumphed,  
grovelled down, yet grasped at glory,  
Grown bigger in the bigness of the  
whole?*

*"Done things" just for the doing,  
letting babblers tell the story,  
Seeing through the nice veneer the  
naked soul?*

*Have you seen God in His splendours  
heard the text that nature renders?*

*The simple things, the true things,  
the silent men who do things --  
Then listen to the Wild -- it's calling  
you.*

*Robert William Service „Call of the  
wild“*