



**Around Spitsbergen -
Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice
10th – 19th August 2023
M/V Hondius**



Hondius was built in 2019 in Split, Croatia. She is 107.6m long, 17.6m wide, and has a maximum draught of 5.3m. With an ice class of PC6, a top speed 15 knots, and three diesel generators, she sails on low sulfur marine gas oil and has a capacity of 176 passengers in 83 cabins. This beautiful vessel is designed from the ground up for polar adventure.

Captain Ernesto Barria

and his international crew

Staff Captain: **Elizabar Kadaria**

Chief Officer: **Mikael Svedberg**

2nd Officer: **Don Buren**

3rd Officer: **Giovanie Simene**

Chief Engineer: **Andrej Abakumov**

Hotel Manager: **Michael Barnes**

Assist. Hotel Manager: **Albert Don**

Head Chef: **Ralf Barthel**

Ships Doctor: **Nathan Hudson-Peacock**

Expedition Leader: **Marcel Paul**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Adam Burke**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Phillipa Low**

Expedition Guide: **Andrew Crowder**

Expedition Guide: **Bitao (Jerry) Zhao**

Expedition Guide: **Chris Long**

Expedition Guide: **Hazel Pittwood**

Expedition Guide: **Hong (Rose) Li**

Expedition Guide: **Jakub Malecki**

Expedition Guide: **Jess Owen**

Expedition Guide: **John Rogers**

Expedition Guide: **Koen Hoekemeijer**

Expedition Guide: **Martin Anstee**

Expedition Guide: **Paolo Bellezze**

Expedition Guide: **Rico Behike**

Expedition Guide: **Sahsa Romanovskiy**

Day 1 – 10th August

Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: 78°14.0'N / 015°36.5'E

Wind: SE 5, **Sea State:** Rippled, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 9°C, **Sea Temp:** 11°C

After travelling from all over the globe, we finally arrived in Longyearbyen to begin our Arctic adventure. Longyearbyen is the largest settlement on Svalbard, with roughly 2,500 inhabitants, of which 30% are non-Norwegians. It was founded by John Monroe Longyear in 1906 as a mining settlement. With the



closure of the many of the coal mines on Svalbard, Longyearbyen transitioned from a mining settlement to a “normal” town, with a hospital, school, pubs, and cultural life that is impressive for such a small settlement.

Longyearbyen also houses a small university centre that teaches and does research in Arctic technology, geophysics, biology, and geology.

We were shuttled in the Zodiacs, in slightly windy conditions, from the pier to our new home, the beautiful *M/V Hondius*. We boarded *Hondius* and began exploring the ship. When everyone had arrived, we attended our mandatory safety briefings. We were shown how to put on our life jackets and where to gather and board lifeboats.

Captain Ernesto then welcomed us with the Captains Cocktails, including juice, bubbles, and canapes. We toasted the voyage together. Expedition Leader Marcel then introduced himself, and the expedition team and told us what to expect from our journey.

Next we were invited to the restaurant to enjoy our first meal on board. After dinner we were called to Deck 3 to be fitted for the rubber muck boots that will keep our feet warm and dry when leaving and re-boarding the Zodiacs.





Many of us went to unpack and rest after a long day of travel and excitement. Some of us went onto the outer decks to enjoy the beautiful scenery as we sailed out of Isfjorden, admiring glaciers, mountains, and icebergs. In the pleasant and calm conditions, some Fin Whales and Humpback Whales were spotted in the distance. We all went to bed well fed and excited to see what

spectacular wildlife and experiences the trip would bring.

Day 2 – 11th August Ny-Ålesund and 14 Julibukta

12:00 GPS Position: 79°00.0'N / 020°50.7'E

Wind: SE 1, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 9°C, **Sea Temp:** 9°C

Today was the first full day of our trip, and everyone was excited to leave the ship to begin exploring the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard! Before we could do that, there was the important matter of mandatory briefings. These provided us with information to ensure our safety during the voyage, along with protecting this special place and its flora and fauna. The first briefing was a video covering the regulations of the Association of Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO). This was followed by two short presentations from Expedition Leader Marcel, one regarding Zodiac safety and the second Polar Bear safety. We were also advised of the restrictions relating to taking mobile phones ashore at Ny-Ålesund, the scientific community we would be visiting this morning. Once imparted with this knowledge we could finally go ashore there!



The many of us in the Chinese groups were very excited to visit the Chinese research station. We took lots of photographs outside the building, with our country's flag in hand and big smiles on our faces! Others of us from Italy, India, and the Netherlands also sought out their nation's research buildings. This is indicative of what a unique place Ny-Ålesund is – a community of scientists from around the world joining together in this settlement to research the Arctic. A point of real

historical interest here was the mast used by expeditions led by Amundsen and Nobile to try and reach the North Pole using airships, the *Norge* in 1926 and *Italia* in 1928. Wildlife highlights included an Ivory

Gull circling the husky kennel, male Svalbard Reindeer with impressive antlers, and two Arctic Foxes. After buying some souvenirs at the shop and sending our postcards, it was time to return on board *Hondius* to continue our journey.

Shortly after lunch, we arrived at Fjortende Julibukta (otherwise called 14th of July Bay). This beautiful area was named in honour of French National Day during the exploration of the area funded by Prince Albert I of Monaco in the early 1900s. We enjoyed the opportunity to stretch their legs on shore, and view the impressive 14th July glacier from the land, walking within a perimeter of guides. Glaciologist Jakub was stationed towards this river of ice and



enthusiastically shared his immense knowledge. Everyone also had the chance to go for a Zodiac cruise to view the glacier from the water and to pass by the seabird cliffs. Atlantic Puffins were a highlight: these beautiful birds with their colourful beaks and bright orange feet whizzed over our heads. Their close relatives, the Brunnich's Guillemots, were also seen along with Black-legged Kittiwakes and Glaucous Gull. In terms of mammals, a confident Harbour Seal surfaced very close next to a couple of lucky Zodiacs, whilst on land an Arctic Fox was observed running quickly across the mountainside. All agreed this was a wonderful first day of our

expedition in Svalbard!

Day 3 – 12th August

Seven Islands

12:00 GPS Position: 80°39.6'N / 020°53.8'E

Wind: NE 3, **Sea State:** Rippled, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 4°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C

We woke on the morning of day three just as *Hondius* slid slowly into the passage between Phippsøya and Parryøya Islands, in the Seven Islands. These islands are the northernmost part of Svalbard, so there was no land north of us all the way to the north pole.

After breakfast we put on our warmest clothes and loaded the Zodiacs for a cruise with the promise of Walrus. Sure enough, as we drove westwards towards a small island just offshore from Parryøya, we began to see these majestic sea creatures hauled out on the island and swimming in the sea. There was a large group of them, perhaps over 100 altogether. The groups in the water seemed to take turns to approach closer to the Zodiacs while bobbing their heads to get a good look at us. Perhaps they didn't like what they saw because they always retreated again, back toward their island. The wind was brisk and the sea state choppy, so we didn't stay with the Walrus very long.



We slowly cruised back towards Phippsøya where we finished our Zodiac cruise by navigating along the long sandy beach past an old hut. On this beach we found a small group of very relaxed Walrus hauled out up on the soft sand. So relaxed were they that the entire time we watched them they barely moved a flipper.

Back on the ship it was time for lunch. After lunch it was time for the day's planned landing. The scouts went out to the chosen site, but immediately returned. The site was not suitable for landing due to many very fresh bear tracks found there -

indicating the strong possibility of the presence of a bear somewhere nearby.

We were delayed while the ship was repositioned. The new site, on Phippsøya, was scouted and found to be free of bears. The landing was back on, and this time we were successful. Everyone had their turn ashore to get a closer look at the Walrus. While on the beach we noticed that it was almost literally covered in plastic rubbish, including a huge fishing net. We were not able to collect all of it, but many of us worked to make this beach a little bit cleaner. Towards the end of the afternoon a fog bank began lowering over the island and it was time to head back to the safety of the ship and away from the barren polar desert of Phippsøya Island.



Dinner was served and we headed out towards the open ocean once more, this time in search of pack ice. What would tomorrow have in store for us???

Day 4 – 13th August

Ice Edge

12:00 GPS Position: 81°02.2'N / 024°32.3'E

Wind: ENE 3, **Sea State:** Ice, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** -1°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

What do you know about the color gray? It seems you truly come to appreciate this hue only once you've ventured into the Arctic. The gray skies looming over our ship displayed an array of shades. Aft, a dark gray cluster of layered clouds enshrouded the Spitsbergen land that was no longer visible to us, while ahead, the same layered clouds displayed an almost white hue. How can this be, you may ask? Well, it's quite simple: the color of clouds is directly influenced by what lies beneath them, whether it's the land or water surface. If it's dark, bare rocks, the clouds above will be dark as well, but if it's snow or ice, the clouds will be bright and white. This was how intrepid explorers of polar latitudes in times past gained insight into where to steer their frigates or barks.

Hondius was headed northeast towards the pack ice of the Arctic Ocean. A moderate wind was blowing, and the small waves attacked the ship's port side. Judging by the almost white hue of the sky directly on course, there wasn't much distance left to the pack ice.



And here it was, the eternal ice! At first, we encountered solitary ice floes, melancholically drifting aimlessly, swaying on the waves. But then, before our eyes, small clusters of ice floes emerged, followed by larger groups, and finally, a vast white expanse appeared – a field of ice floes colliding and brushing against each other. This was the real Arctic! Once, we read about it in geography textbooks, and now we were seeing it with our own eyes!

From the early hours of the morning, our guides took turns on the Bridge, peering into the distance and adjusting the lenses of their binoculars. Yes, one of the objectives for this day was to venture into the ice, but another equally important goal was to spot a white and fluffy representative of the local fauna! Therefore, our guides, exerting maximum effort and sparing no strain on their eyes, section by section, scanned the ice's surface. There, a uniquely shaped floe; here, a lone harp seal lounging on an ice floe; over there, a black-legged kittiwake perching. And look, who's that strolling lazily from foot to foot? Let's take a closer look... It's a Polar Bear!!!

We were just finishing breakfast when Marcel, our expedition leader, made the long-awaited announcement: "Friends, we have just spotted a Polar Bear! Dress warmly and head out to the open decks, while we approach it more closely." Immediately, we rushed to put on warm clothing. Meanwhile, Ernesto, our captain, skillfully navigating between the ice floes, steered the ship towards the bear.

And there it was, right nearby! We all rushed to the deck, aiming our binoculars, camera lenses, and phone cameras at it. But wait, why do we keep saying "bear" all the time? As it turned out, this was a young, beautiful, and graceful female polar bear!

She turned out to be curious: pacing back and forth along the ship's sides, occasionally stopping to raise her head, sniffing the air, and trying to understand what strange and unfamiliar scents were wafting from different corners of this perplexing floating contraption. What were these mammals standing and gazing at her?



We stood there, clicking the shutters of our cameras, occasionally moving from one deck to another to get a better view. After some time, our furry friend lost interest in us. She hopped from one ice floe to another, moving on to her own business. We watched her go and headed indoors to warm up, have hot tea, show off our fresh photos to each other, and watch the videos we had captured on our phones.

Soon, our guides Jakub and Jerry invited us to join them in the lecture room and observation lounge, respectively. They had planned to give us a lecture on the nature of ice and its various forms, but things took an unexpected turn! Captain Ernesto had found us another bear! Naturally, the lecture had to be postponed. Once again, we dressed warmly and hurried to the open decks. This time, it was a male bear, approximately the same size and age as the female we had encountered earlier. His curiosity about who we were and what we were all about seemed even greater than that of our morning guest. He circled the ship, sniffing the air, and posed eagerly for photos. He stretched his neck, sat down, lay on the ice,



and jumped from one floe to another. Quite some time passed before his curiosity subsided. Continuously looking around, he gradually melted into the boundless expanse of the eternal ice.

Hondius continued forging her path, slowly parting the small ice floes and navigating around the larger ones. Midday had come and gone. Lunch began and ended, after which Jakub and Jerry called us to re-join them for the lecture, but, once again, fate had other plans. This time, it was a Walrus, another prominent member of the Arctic fauna. Huge and unwieldy, it had hauled itself onto an ice floe, where it slept peacefully, occasionally shifting its

weight. We approached it so closely that even without binoculars, one could make out its lengthy tusks. The Walrus lazily opened its eyes, lifted itself onto its front flippers, and bestowed upon us a look brimming with disdain. Then, it reclined on the ice once more and promptly dozed off.

A small group of four ivory gulls sat nearby. These rare and beautiful birds intermittently approached the walrus, trying to figure out if it could be their next meal. Realizing that they had absolutely no chance of eating the walrus, they perched for a while longer before fluttering up into the sky and disappearing.

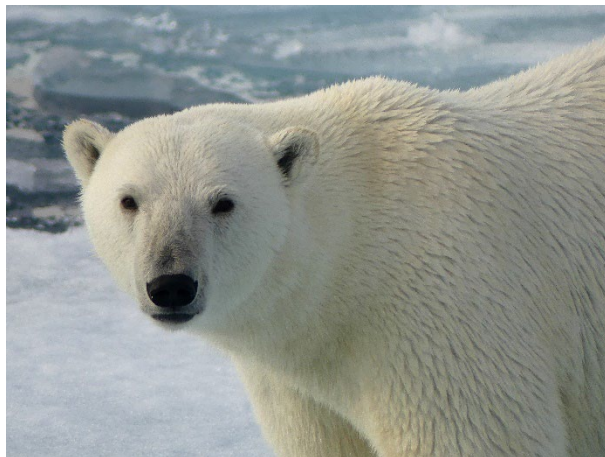
We returned to the observation lounge and lecture room, where Jerry and Jakub were eagerly awaiting us, ready to share their knowledge about the nature of ice, but... alas! Before we could even settle in, a new announcement echoed through the ship that a Polar Bear was approaching. We looked out the window and indeed, there he was, a magnificent specimen, heading straight towards us! With cameras in hand and jackets hastily zipped up, we hurried to the open decks, taking up positions of anticipation. But it seemed the bear was no fool; he knew a thing or two about satire and irony. Just about a hundred meters shy of the ship, he found a more comfortable ice floe, settled in, and dozed off. There's a suspicion he wasn't sleeping at all, but lying there, casting sneaky glances at us from under his eyelids, quietly chuckling to himself as he observed us standing there freezing, cameras at the ready.



A comical scene had unfolded: the ship stood amidst a vast expanse of eternal ice, a Walrus napped on its left side, a Polar Bear lounged on its right, while in the lecture room, Jakub lay on the couch, gazing at the ceiling, contemplating and trying to understand what was happening and when it would all end.

The hotel department decided to surprise us: in celebration of crossing the 81st parallel, they treated us all to ice cream. Tables were set up on the ship's deck, plates of colorful chocolate and vanilla ice cream scoops were served, and despite the cold weather, we eagerly indulged in this treat, periodically glancing to check if the bear had awakened. Nope, still sleeping, that rascal! Well, so be it, we'd have to move on.

After enduring the cold outside for a while longer, we finally retreated indoors. An announcement was made about the start of the lecture on the nature of ice. *Hondius* set off and slowly continued its journey northeast, navigating through tightly packed ice floes. Jakub surveyed the attentive audience, took a deep breath to deliver his welcoming words and delve into the world of ice, but then – oh, what a nuisance! – the bear woke up.



"Damn it!" Jakub muttered through his teeth and, informing everyone that he was going for negotiations with the bear, left the lecture room. And what did we do? Well, we went after our jackets and cameras, too. And this time, let me tell you, it was truly worth it!

The bear approached very close. For those of us with massive telephoto lenses on our cameras, we had to quickly switch lenses because the bear just didn't fit in the frame! By the way, upon observing the bear in all its detail, we realized it was our morning guest. Whether it was because he really

liked us or he had some additional questions about our essence, he went out of his way to follow us for

a whole six kilometers, just to take another stroll right under our noses. Having thoroughly filled up our SD cards, he eventually wandered off.

The rest of the day unfolded in a relaxed manner. Jakub and Jerry, now with no competitors to vie for our attention, finally told us about the nature of ice. In the evening, the daily recap took place, followed by dinner.

After dinner, Sasha, one of the guides, gathered those interested in the lecture room, where he shared stories of his life in the Soviet ghost town of Pyramiden, accompanied by a presentation of his photos and videos.

Around 11 o'clock at night, an announcement rang out that, believe it or not, we had found two more bears! Though already experienced and tired, we still went to see them. A huge, fearsome white bear was tearing at the carcass of either a seal or a walrus, feasting on its bloody dinner. Meanwhile, another bear was sneaking in the direction of the first, pondering on the go whether it would be safe to join the feast.

By nighttime, the weather had really cleared up. The sun shone brightly, and a calmness prevailed. A wonderful and unforgettable day!

Day 5 – 14th August

Kvitoya

12:00 GPS Position: 80°03.8'N / 033°05.8'E

Wind: NNE 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Sunny, **Air Temp:** 0°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

Today was a day filled with anticipation, fear, disappointment, and finally, triumph. Our journey took us from the icy waters of the Arctic Ocean to the remote and treacherous island of Kvitoya in eastern Svalbard. This island, rarely visited by humans, is known for its polar bears, ice-choked waters, and harsh weather conditions. It was also the final resting place of three brave explorers from the Andree balloon expedition to the North Pole.



Our day started early, as we set out to reach Andreeneset, at the western tip of Kvitoya. This is the place where Andree and his team perished and were discovered 303 years later. The anticipation among the crew was palpable, as we knew that this would be a significant moment for all of us. However, as we approached the landing site, our excitement turned into disappointment. A Polar Bear was spotted in the vicinity, making it too dangerous for us to land. Adding to our misfortune, dense sea ice floes had also entered the area, making

it impossible for us to cruise near the site. It was a somber moment, as we realized that nature was not on our side today.

Despite this setback, our expedition team quickly changed gears, making the best of the situation. John, one of our knowledgeable guides, gave a captivating lecture on the history of North Pole exploration. His words took us on a journey through time, reliving the triumphs and tribulations of those who came before us. Hazel, another expert in her field, shared her extensive knowledge about Walruses and their importance in the Arctic ecosystem. These lectures provided a much-needed distraction from our disappointment, but deep down, we couldn't help but feel a pang of longing to set foot on the hallowed grounds of Andreeneset.



After lunch, we sailed towards our second destination - the eastern tip of Kvitoya, a place called Kraemerpynten. This tiny stony area seemed insignificant compared to the grandeur of Andreeneset, but we were determined to make the most of it. Our expedition leader, Marcel, led the way as our guides scouted the area both on land and from our trusty Zodiacs. It was here that our luck finally turned around.

Marcel declared that we would be able to land on Kvitoya after all. It was an exhilarating moment, filled with a mix of relief and excitement. The weather was on our side, with the sun shining brightly, casting a warm glow on the icy landscape. A subtle mist enveloped the top of the ice cap, giving the whole scene a mystical ambiance.

We hopped into our Zodiacs and cruised along the icy cliffs of Kvitoya, the shimmering ice glistening in the sunlight. The journey to the shore felt like a dream, as we marveled at the untouched beauty that surrounded us. Finally, we set foot on the island's edge, standing at the precipice of the ice cap. Jakub, our expedition's iceman, served as our guide, answering our questions about the nature and state of the ice cap. It was a humbling experience, as we stood in awe of the vastness before us.



As we returned to our ship, a sense of joy and happiness swept over us. We had accomplished what few had the opportunity to do - we were the first ship to land on Kvitoya this year. It was a moment that would forever be etched in our memories. In the evening, as we gathered for the daily recap presentations by the expedition team, we couldn't help but beam with pride. We had overcome the obstacles thrown our way and emerged victorious.

Our day ended with a delicious dinner, shared amongst newfound friends. We laughed and toasted to the wonders of the Arctic, reveling in the triumph of conquering Kvitoya. It was a day filled with a rollercoaster

of emotions, a day that reminded us of the unpredictable nature of the Arctic, and a day that strengthened the bonds between us.

Day 6 – 15th August

Austfonna

12:00 GPS Position: 79°20.8'N / 025°43.1'E

Wind: NE 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Sunny, **Air Temp:** 2°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

Another day of the expedition cruise started when Marcel's voice woke us at 07:15 am. During the night, the ship had been repositioned towards Isispynten which is a part of the Isisøyane or the Isis islands. They were covered by the icecap of Austfonna which covers a large part of Nordaustlandet. Austfonna is the third largest glacier by area and volume with the ice being almost 600 meters thick at the thickest point. However, with the retreat of Austfonna, Isisøyane appeared and it was evident that the Isisøyane were actually islands. They were named in 2009.

The plan for the morning was to undertake a zodiac cruise in the area. However, thick fog called for plan B.

While the ship was moving south, Rico invited everybody to a lecture about his overwintering in a trapper's cabin at the West coast of Svalbard. He took us with him on a journey which started by getting the idea of staying overwinter in a cabin away from civilisation through the planning and actually staying together with his family and dogs. Not

being able to resupply, they needed to bring all food, spare parts and fuel with them – a total of 2-3 tons of equipment. Staying in a trapper's cabin meant that they also were hunting reindeers and trapping foxes. By reading up on how to store food, they also managed to have apples and other fresh supplies for a few months in addition to peas and radish sprouts.



Just after Rico was finished, Marcel announced that conditions had improved sufficiently for us to go on the planned Zodiac cruise along the glacier front of Austfonna – a bit further south than planned. Austfonna has been very active lately, moving the glacier front a few kilometres into the ocean. The results of this activity could clearly be seen: ice blocks and small icebergs in all sizes and colours in addition to the glacier front which presented itself as very rugged and split up. When moving close to such an active glacier front, it is important to keep a safe distance, because the glacier can calve at any

time leading to ice blocks flying to the air as dangerous projectiles and flood waves that can overturn a

Zodiac. Cruising through the ice, we could observe the impact of the amount of air bubbles in the ice: Many air bubbles mean that light cannot penetrate deeply into the ice and, hence, the light is reflected almost immediately. Since light is white, the reflected light also appears as white. Less air bubbles mean that light can penetrate further into the ice and – very much as in water – only blue wavelengths are reflected back and the ice appears blue. With even fewer air bubbles, light will penetrate through the ice and the ice appears clear. A bonus during this Zodiac cruise was Marcel serving us hot chocolate with some fixings. What else could we ask for: blue sky, sunshine, a magnificent glacier front, small icebergs and hot chocolate, Lunch was delayed a bit so that we could enjoy the experience at its fullest – that is what an expedition is about.



It seemed that fog was returning, but we enjoyed lunch under sunny conditions with Austfonna looming in the background. After lunch and a short break, Jakub invited us to the lounge for a presentation on the future of glaciers and ice with the reference to climate change – something which is extremely relevant on Svalbard where temperature increase occurs four times faster than in the rest of the world. Just in time – at the end of Jakubs lecture – a few humpback whales were spotted in front of the ship. We could observed them feeding as we slowly sailed past them.

Soon we could see how the character of the glacier front changed from a rugged and crevassed terminus to a more smooth front without crevasses. We had reached Bråsvellbreen – a more slowly moving part of Austfonna. The lack of crevasses means that meltwater can reach the glacier front without



disappearing in crevasses forming some magnificent water falls when falling into the sea. Bråsvellbreen marks the end of the long glacier front of Austfonna and soon the barren land characterizing the polar desert of Nordaustlandet could be seen in Vibebukta.

The eventful day was not over, yet. After the recap, we all were invited for a BBQ on the aft deck. The chef and his crew had prepared a wide range of delicacies. Benches and tables invited us to enjoy both the food with the glacier front in the background. Soon the dancing shoes came on ... no

wait, still the same rubber boots we use for going ashore were worn and dancing music was filling the aft deck. The are rumours that some souls continued the party into the early morning hours.

Day 7 – 16th August

Palanderbukta and Alkefjellet

12:00 GPS Position: 79°34.3'N / 020°43.0'E

Wind: NW 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 4°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

As we went down to breakfast this morning, we sailed into the bay looking towards Palanderbukta, our target landing site. We headed out in the Zodiacs in our chosen hiking groups; the long hikers went first for a strong, fast, three-hour trek, followed by the main group of people looking to tackle the



medium effort walk. Finally, the remaining guests landed for the easy walk. After a safety briefing from our guides, we set out into the 'polar desert' – now a barren, stony terrain, covered by snow and ice in winter which shatter the rocks into ever smaller pieces. Many of us trekked far enough to walk on the edge of the glacier before returning back to the beach. When we arrived, the wind was blowing much stronger and we quickly had to board the zodiacs before a wet ride back to *Hondius*.



We had a long transit to our afternoon activity so, after lunch, Martin entertained us with a lecture on Auks (not Orcs), which we were going to see during the afternoon. With the wind still blustery we headed out towards the impressive cliffs of Alkefjellet for a Zodiac cruise. The cliffs are the nesting site for thousands, upon thousands, of Brunnich's Guillemots and what an impact they had on us. The noise, the smell and the giddy sight of countless birds flying to and fro from the ledges that they cling too in almost overwhelming numbers amazed us. In the

water below we were able to spot the occasional newly fledged chick with a concerned parent, anxious to

keep their precious offspring safe from the marauding Glaucous Gulls patrolling the cliff face on the wing. On the ground we saw several Arctic Fox, quartering the slopes in the hope of catching a meal amongst the seething mass, to take back to their cubs in nearby dens or to stash it for survival in the harsh winter ahead. Add in the incredible geology of the cliffs themselves, including waterfalls, we set off back to *Hondius*, wide-eyed and breathless from our experience. Wow!



After recap, we went down to dinner and as we came towards the end of another delicious meal, Marcel announced that Polar Bears have been sighted ashore at Wahlberg øya. Quickly leaving for the outer decks or the Bridge, our guides help us to spot four different bears – all quite distant and requiring binoculars or telescopes to view satisfactorily. Two were swimming together in the sea, the other two were lying down sleeping. All of them were in the area to feed on a whale carcass, washed up on the shore. Our guides explained that these more distant views are a more typical polar bear encounter around Svalbard, and we realised just how lucky we were earlier in the trip. But still, four bears in one area! A great way to finish a great day!

Day 8 – 17th August

Kapp Lee and Kapp Waldburg

12:00 GPS Position: 78°10.1'N / 021°03.1'E

Wind: W 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 10°C, **Sea Temp:** 10°C

The morning started with mixed feelings. The weather was clear and mild, and we had arrived at a beautiful area, our landing site for the morning, Kapp Lee. But the Expedition team had found a Polar Bear. It was asleep on the slope above the landing site and, whilst everybody got to see the bear, it meant we could not land.

Despite the news, everybody was in good spirits as they enjoyed another great breakfast. The reason being that we could still disembark the ship and head out for a Zodiac cruise to see the numerous Walrus on the beach.

There are three huts at Kapp Lee. The first, an octagonal cabin called Karosaelen or “the carousel,” was built in 1904 by trappers. The other two huts were built in the 1960s connected to oil exploration. The green vegetation was a welcome sight after several days of monochrome landscapes.



Out on the Zodiacs, we went towards the shore and some spectacular views of Walrus. On more than one occasion, these curious animals popped up out of the water only meters away from us. It was a very special wildlife encounter with these huge charismatic animals. On shore three Reindeer were grazing around the huts, and some were lucky enough to see an Arctic Fox on the beach. After a cruise along the coastline, and more Walrus, it was time to head back past the loafing Kittiwakes on the rocks and the whale bones, to *Hondius*.

Many people ventured onto the outside decks into the glorious sunshine. It was a struggle to drag ourselves inside away from the beautiful weather for lunch.

Over lunch we sailed to another wonderful spot called Kapp Waldburg, a wide sweeping coastal area leading to two gullies in the otherwise sloping cliffs. Great news, no bears, which meant, of course, that we could land and stretch our legs.

On landing we were greeted by the expedition team, lifejackets were removed, and we walked across the tundra to the gullies, passing Reindeer as we did. On arrival at the mouth of the gully, the noise really hit us. The calls and squabbling of hundreds, if not thousands, of nesting Kittiwakes. These white and grey gulls nest on the sheer cliff edges, building their nests on tiny rock ledges. Most of the nests contained one or two half-grown, gorgeous, chicks begging for food, adding to the substantial noise.



Where there are seabirds in Svalbard there are often Arctic Foxes, and this was no exception. The difference here was that the four or five foxes in the area were really not fazed by us and were running around between and around us to get to where they wanted to be. Which was at the base of the cliffs



waiting for any birds that fell from the nests. For the foxes there was also time for play and we were delighted to watch them tumbling together in the sunshine from time to time, or basking in the sun meters from us with eyes closed. Such a huge privilege to see these beautiful animals at close quarters.

Many agreed that we didn't have enough time with so many photos to take! Nevertheless, it was time to leave. Back to the ship we went and to an interesting and entertaining recap from Marcel, Martin and Sasha.

It was then time for a very tasty evening meal, maybe a couple of drinks and to reflect with friends on a fantastic day in this very special environment.

Day 9 – 18th August

Burgerbukta and Gnålodden

12:00 GPS Position: 79°04.0'N / 015°50.9'E

Wind: NW 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 11°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C

Our long transit from Kapp Waldberg meant a relaxed morning with some time to try to sort through all our photos. It was not nearly enough time, but it was certainly fun to look back at all the foxes.

As we worked, *Hondius* cruised into Hornsund, a large fiord in the south of Spitsbergen. This area is noted as a miniature version of Svalbard as it holds all the major features of the archipelago. We anchored deep



inside the dramatic valley of Burgerbukta. With steep, rugged mountains on both sides, we began our Zodiac cruise. The peaks were draped in hanging glaciers generating numerous long cascades and waterfalls splashing into the sea. Some of these were truly remarkable as they were springs that “sprang” directly from the rocks just above the waterline. A torrent of water and foam suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The end of the valley was filled with the now familiar sight of the blue-white face of a large glacier calving into the sea. The popping of the brash ice and the iceberg sculptures

delighted us. It seems that the Hotel Team just can't stop trying to feed us, and Marcel and Ralf arrived delivering cinnamon buns and hot apple cider.

Over lunch *Hondius* shifted to the mouth of the bay and we were off to make our landing at Gnålodden. We have become accustomed to Svalbard's beautiful landscapes, but this place was at the top of the list.

It had everything: the huge, towering rock of mountain above; the flocks of whirling birds; more adorable Arctic Fox kits playing on the slopes; the rocky coastline with plenty of outcrops to climb; the meadow-like tundra with some remaining wildflowers; and the sunlight glistening off the sea. We were free to wander over the whole area finding hidden gems to suit our own tastes.



The constant calls from the birds help us understand the name Gnålodden, means “mumuring” in Norwegian. At the base of the rock strand, one of the huts occupied by Wanny Woldstad. At the age of 39 she moved her family, including two school-age sons, to Hornsund. There they spent five years – summer



and winter – hunting and trapping. During this time, they shot 77 Polar Bears. Killing Polar Bears for their fur seems unthinkable today, but we must remember that those were different times and admire her spirit and toughness.

The bittersweet fact that this was the last activity of our expedition gave us some sad moments, but soon we were popping the cork on bubbles for the Captain's Farewell cocktail party, saying our big Thank Yous to all the staff, and talking about all our memories over drinks and dinner. Somehow every day is long and full, but the expedition is over in a

flash. How does this happen?

Day 10 – 19th August

Longyearbyen - Disembarkation Day

8:00 GPS Position: 78°13.8'N / 015°36.1'E

Wind: NW 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 5°C, **Sea Temp:** 9°C

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

Thank you for your enthusiasm, support, and good company. We hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

Total distance sailed: 1201 Nautical Miles

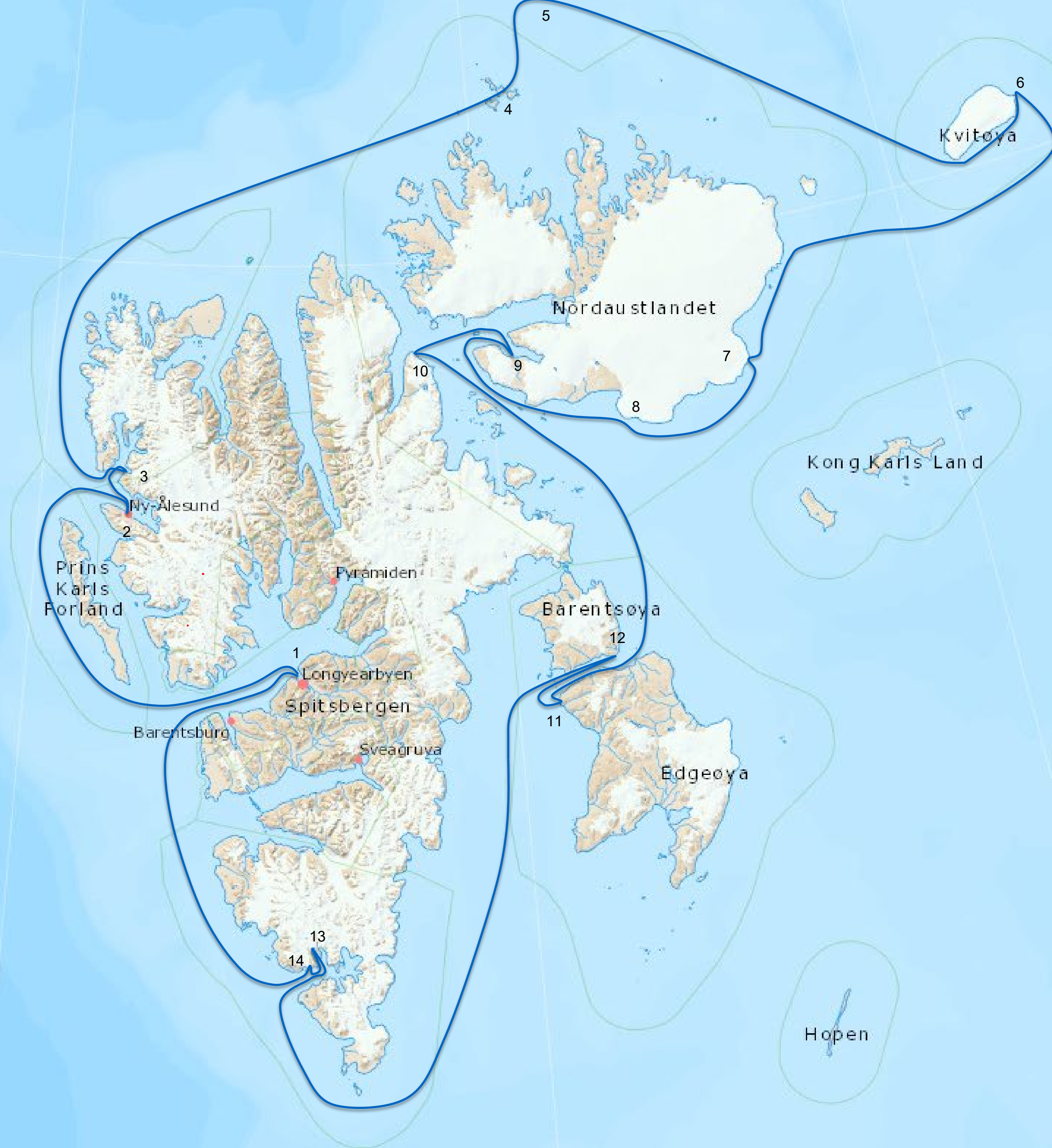
Furthest north: 81°04'

**On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria,
Expedition Leader Marcel Paul, Hotel Manager Michael Barnes,
and all the crew and staff of M/V Hondius, it has been a pleasure travelling with you!**



Hondius, 10 – 19 Aug 2023

1. Longyearbyen (day 1)
2. Ny Alesund (day 2)
3. Fjortende Julibukta (14th July Bay) (day 2)
4. Seven Islands (day 3)
5. Ice pack (day 4)
6. Kvitoya – Kraemerpynten (day 5)
7. Austfonna ice cap (day 6)
8. Brasvell Glacier (day 6)
9. Palanderbukta (day 7)
10. Alkefjellet (day 7)
11. Kapp Lee (day 8)
12. Kapp Waldburg (day 8)
13. Burgerbukta (day 9)
14. Gnalodden (day 9)



Marcel Paul - Expedition Leader



From his teens Marcel has been a keen traveller. After camping and trekking with friends, he led groups trekking to Austria, Switzerland, England, Wales, and Scotland.

His own travels over the last 30 years brought him to more than 65 countries on all 7 continents.

With his interest in history, ice, cartography, exploration, and as a keen hobby photographer, the Polar Regions have always been drawing his attention.

At his first arrival to Svalbard in 2011 and a second trip in 2013, he felt connected with the remoteness of the place and the dynamics of the polar nature. At that time the idea started to grow to become a polar guide and give up a job that was keeping him indoors most of the time.

When the Dutch organised a scientific polar expedition to Edgeøya it seemed the perfect opportunity to gain more knowledge about Spitsbergen, the uniqueness of the islands and their eco systems by working with the scientists.

He joined the expedition in 2015 as field assistant and participated in various fields of research. In 2016 he spent time in the summer at the Dutch polar station in Ny Ålesund, again as field assistant. From 2017 Marcel has been working as a polar guide in the Arctic followed by Antarctica in 2018.

Today he still spends about half the year onboard with Oceanwide whilst sailing around Spitsbergen, Greenland, Jan Mayen, Antarctica, Falklands, and South Georgia. The rest of the year is spent either at his homes in Holland and Slovakia or traveling with his wife and their dog.

Adam Burke – Assistant Expedition Leader



Adam has always had a love of the outdoors and adventure, from an early age he dreamt of visiting exotic places and immersing himself in other cultures.

This love of the outdoors led him to work teaching adventurous activities and for over fifteen years this pursuit has given him the opportunity to live and work all over the globe. He has taught sailing in Australia, paddle sports on Europe's rivers and led expeditions in Africa.

After spending five years teaching white water safety & rescue and boat handling techniques to the fire brigade, he moved on to providing marine science support in Antarctica. He has spent over five years living between the Antarctic continent and the island of South Georgia, including overwintering twice.

Whilst providing science support he spent his time in Antarctica managing boating operations and helming RIBs for diving operations. This covered understanding environmental changes and its effects, wildlife monitoring and counting as well as water sampling for a long-term data collection.

Adam enjoys travelling with his partner who shares the same values and love of the outdoors. This has taken them from deserts to rain forests and ultramarathons in the mountains.

Pippa Low – Assistant Expedition Leader



Pippa has worked as a marine guide and skipper for 10 years, primarily in Scotland, Australia, New Zealand and the polar regions. A marine scientist specialising in marine mammal research and conservation, she splits her time between the hemispheres, and loves showing the public the marine world and all it has to offer.

Growing up on the coast of the incredible Moray Firth sparked a love for the marine world and its inhabitants. Spending every spare minute in, on or under the water; professional life reflected this love from a young age, becoming an instructor in various marine disciplines and going on to study Marine biology at university in Scotland, then later, Australia.

Upon completion of her degree, Pippa has worked as a marine mammal observer, scientific diver and research assistant on various research projects; including photo ID, migration, distribution and behavioural studies on a range of marine mammals. She has developed a keen interest in marine mammal conservation through outreach and research.

After working in the Ross Sea region of Antarctica as a research assistant, she fell in love with Antarctica. Pippa now works as a full-time guide and assistant expedition leader in both the Arctic and Antarctica. In-between seasons, she still finds time to work on research projects.

Andrew Crowder – Expedition Guide



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

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

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

Jerry Zhao - Expedition Guide



Jerry has been in love with nature and wildlife and traveling all his life. Soon after completed his degree in Business Administration at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Jerry began a career in the travel industry. Jerry first started as an international travel consultant and tour leader and led exclusive small high-end groups throughout Europe.

He then became partner in an international traveling consulting firm and focused on route planning and employee training.

As he searched for more adventure, He collected skills and knowledge while he traveled around to world. Finally, his step stopped at Polar regions, and joined Oceanwide Expeditions as Expeditions Guides, He has guided expeditions to the North Pole, Svalbard, Greenland, Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia many times.

Along the way as he spent more time in polar regions, learns more about polar regions, he is more interested in polar regions. He has self-studied the geography, wildlife and history of the Polar regions. He is beginning to learn wildlife photography.

When he is not in polar regions, he likes to spend his time in the forest, dessert, and plains in Northwestern part of China. He loves nature, wildlife, and he loves to share all that he knows to everyone who comes across.

Chris Long – Expedition Guide



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.

Hazel Pittwood - Expedition Guide



Hazel grew up in the county of Dorset on the South coast of the UK. A childhood spent pond dipping, bug hunting and exploring the countryside and coast nurtured her love of the natural world.

She has worked in practical conservation and community engagement roles for a variety of habitats, including heathland and coastal nature reserves. Hazel also has experience surveying rare protected species and is a trained wildlife rescue volunteer and marine mammal medic.

Whilst she is broadly learned about the natural world, Hazel has specialised in marine mammals and seabirds since 2014. At that time, she began volunteering as a marine mammal and seabird surveyor, collecting sightings data regarding these animals for UK based conservation charities. In 2017 she worked on a passenger ship travelling between the UK and Spain across the Bay of Biscay for six months, delivering talks and leading wildlife watching sessions out on deck.

Hazel has been working as a guide and lecturer on cruise ships for over three years. This role has taken her to Norway and Svalbard, Iceland, Alaska, Canada, the Faroe Islands, the Canary Islands, the Caribbean and Central America. She is a World Cetacean Alliance certified responsible whale watching guide, championing the highest standards of wildlife experiences.

The polar regions host an incredible diversity of seabird and marine mammal species, and Hazel looks forward enhancing your encounters with these incredible animals with her knowledge, skills and enthusiasm.

Rose Li Hong - Expedition Guide



Originally from China, Rose Li Graduated from Wuhan college with a major in Interior Design. She has worked on well-known international cruise ships since 2014 as an expedition guide and in Asia as a VIP services shift leader and Head cruise ambassador on a Mediterranean cruise line.

She has worked in the polar regions since 2017, as expedition guide, Zodiac driver, Chinese interpreter and guest services manager.

She has many talents such as dancing, drawing, skiing, hosting, and loves creating new activities. Her two academic passions are history and geology.

During her spare time, she has continued to develop her passion for traveling, and has visited more than 40 countries and looks forward to visiting many others in the near future.

Jakub Małecki - Expedition Guide



Jakub was born in Poland in 1985. As a kid, he dreamed of becoming an astronaut, but later his focus shifted towards astronomy. Eventually, he obtained a masters and doctoral degree in Earth Sciences and became a glaciologist. As he puts it, researching remote, glacier-covered regions is almost like landing on another planet, so the childhood dream has partly come true.

Since 2007 Jakub has been studying glaciers across the world, either directly or remotely, i.e., using satellite or aerial images. His main interest is how glaciers respond to changing climate in different environmental settings. Most of his glaciology work Jakub carries out on Svalbard, the arctic archipelago located midway between Norway and the north pole, where he fell in love with ice. Since then, Jakub joins expeditions to remote regions on an every-year basis.

Jakub considers public education by the science community at least as important as delivering new knowledge, so he is a keen glaciology communicator, book author and a frequent guest to the Polish media outlets and science festivals where he comments on polar and mountain affairs. Apart from glaciology, Jakub is a huge enthusiast of planetary sciences and space exploration and tries to play the ukulele.

Jess Owen - Expedition Guide



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.

John Rogers - Expedition Guide



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

His first career was in computer software development which allowed for numerous extended travelling holidays in the USA and then to New Zealand – where he still lives. The travelling continued with visits to every continent

– the final one being Antarctica in 2001 as a passenger and then for several seasons as a guide.

Along the way John has managed several trips north of the Arctic Circle backpacking, river rafting and exploring in Alaska, Norway and Iceland.

John's approach to the history is to concentrate on the stories of the places and people who inhabit and have explored to the extremes of the earth. Polar history is filled with remarkable stories of adventures, perseverance, triumph and defeat. He encourages anyone on this voyage with specialized knowledge, or with a family connection, to help him others share in this fantastic legacy.

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 ;).

Martin Anstee - Expedition Guide



Martin has been a keen naturalist and wildlife photographer for most of his life.

Martin has been an active Bird Ringer since the year 2000 and particularly enjoys studying/ringing and just being around seabird colonies.

Martin has used a camera since an early age and has combined his love of the outdoors and seabird habitats with photography. Martin has just spent a month in Zimbabwe and Botswana photographing other wildlife.

Martin has combined this with a career in the Police Service, firstly in the UK where he was, amongst other roles, a wildlife crime officer. His last role in The Police was as a Police Sergeant in The Royal Falkland Islands Police.

Martin lived in the Falkland Islands, Stanley, for just over two years, leaving to return to the UK in November 2021. In his two years Martin was a volunteer with Falklands Conservation, he helped with The Falkland Islands Seabird Monitoring Program (FISMP) in particular counting Seabirds and ringing Black browed Albatross. Martin was also involved in fieldwork for a Striated Caracara (Johnny Rook) study. As a result Martin has visited most of the larger (and some of the smaller) outlying islands that form part of The Falkland Islands.

This is also where Martin started his career as a guide, he enjoyed sharing his knowledge of the Islands and the wildlife which he continues to do to this day.

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.

Rico Behlke - Expedition Guide



Rico Behlke was born in Germany but moved to Svalbard in 2004 (a good example of the Svalbard “virus”, since he planned to stay for 5 months).

He obtained a PhD in space physics and works now at the world’s largest satellite station where one his working areas is sustainability – in space. In addition, he is interested in Arctic history, glaciology and the physics of snow and ice which he had put to use as a member of the glacier and avalanche rescue group of the Red Cross on Svalbard.

Rico started working for Oceanwide Expeditions in 2007 and has joined expeditions around Svalbard, to Greenland and to Antarctica.

Rico enjoys spending time with his family (which also includes 7 sledge dogs) and is a member of the local mens choir.

Together with his family, he overwintered several times at a remote trappers cabin at the West coast of Svalbard bringing all supplies for 1 year.

Living on Svalbard, Rico looks forward to sharing his knowledge and passion about the polar regions, but also wants raise awareness on how climate and political change impacts Svalbard.

Alexander Romanovskiy - Expedition Guide



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!

Nathan Hudson-Peacock

-Ship's Doctor



Dr Nathan Hudson-Peacock is an emergency department doctor based in London, with a special interest in remote expedition medicine. As an Advanced Life Support and Wilderness Medicine instructor, he is passionate about showing the next generation of medics the wonders of taking medicine outside of the four walls of the hospital and into the great outdoors. Through his work as an expedition doctor, Nathan has been privileged enough to work all over the world, often supporting groups of scientists to some of the most remote places on the planet, that very few, if any, people have ever visited. However,

this work has led to him witnessing first-hand the impacts of human activity on our home planet: nature desperately clinging on to its last few remaining wild places, and countless people being forced from their homes due to extreme weather events. As a result of this experience, Nathan has developed a niche interest in the climate crisis and the specific role that healthcare professionals can play in the path to climate justice. In 2020, he founded the award-winning non-profit organisation, Eco Medics, which brings together a community of similarly passionate healthcare professionals. In 2021, he was welcomed as a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and as a Fellow of the Royal Society for Arts for his contributions to this field, and in 2022, he was invited to stand on the red circle to give a TEDx talk on the climate health crisis to a highly engaged audience in London and online. This talk concluded with the powerful message that reducing consumption of animal products is the single most effective, immediately actionable, step that individuals can take to combat the climate and biodiversity crisis.

And so, his final words are these: “Very few people will ever dream of visiting such a remote and beautiful part of the world, let alone actually see it. So, cherish these wonderful memories, and ask yourself: what will you personally do to help preserve this paradise for generations to come?”



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Welcome Aboard!

Date: Thursday 10th August 2023

Day 1: 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

17:00+/- Ship safety briefing, in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance to this is **MANDATORY**.

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

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

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

18:15+/- 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.

20:30+/- 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

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Friday 11th August 2023

Day 2: Ny-Ålesund and 14. Julibukta

- 07:00 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:30 **MANDATORY** AECO, Zodiac and Polar Bear Safety Briefing in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance will be checked.
- 09:30 We hope to disembark you by the gangway on Deck 4 for a landing at Ny Ålesund. Please listen to announcements for exact timings.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

**No mobile phones, Bluetooth and/or GPS devices to go ashore.
(SEE NOTICES ON THE SHIP)**

Please be back onboard by 12 o'clock at the latest.

- 14:15+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at 14. Julibukta.
- 14:30+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at 14. Julibukta.

Groups will swap during the afternoon.

- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the 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

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Saturday 12th August 2023

Day 3: Seven Islands

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-08:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09:00 +/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Phippsøya.
- 09:15 +/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Phippsøya
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:00 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Parryøya.
- Rose will do a presentation about Plastic Pollution in the Lounge, which will be given in English and translated into **Mandarin**.
- 16:00 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Parryøya.
- We hope to do a **beach clean-up** today, so we encourage guests to wear gloves and bring a small bag with them for small pieces of marine rubbish, we will provide bags for large pieces of rubbish.
- Rose will do a presentation about Plastic Pollution in the Lounge, which will be given in English and translated into **Mandarin**.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

"It must be remembered that the men whose desires lead them to the untrodden paths of the world have generally marked individuality." - Sir Ernest Shackleton



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Sunday 13th August 2023

Day 4: Ice day

- 07:45 Wake- up call.
- 08:00-9:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- We will spend the day along the ice edge looking for wildlife, therefore we encourage you onto the outside decks and on the bridge to help search.
- Please note:** The lecture program is subject to change depending on visibility and wildlife sightings, so please listen to announcements.
- 09:15 Jakub invites you to the Lecture Room for his presentation titled 'An Introduction to Ice - why do we need it?' this will be given in English
- 09:15 Jerry will give a presentation in the Observation Lounge about Ice in the North, this will be given in Mandarin.
- 11:15 Pippa will give a lecture about Polar Bears in the Observation Lounge, this will be given in English and translated into Mandarin
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:30 John invites you into the lecture room for his lecture on the quest for the north pole. This will be given in English and translated into Mandarin.
- 16:15 Hazel will give a lecture in the lounge on the Wonderful Walrus, this will be given in English and translated into Mandarin.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 20:30 Please join Sasha in the Lecture Room to hear tales about his time living in Pyramiden, this will be given in English only.



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitøya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Monday 14th August 2023

Day 5: Kvitøya

- 09:30 John invites you into the lounge room for his lecture on the quest for the north pole. This will be given in English and translated into Mandarin.
- 11:00 Hazel invites you into the lounge room for her lecture on Walrus. This will be given in English and translated into Mandarin.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14.00 +/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a zodiac cruise and a possible quick landing at Kraemerpynten, Kvitøya.
- 14.15 +/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a zodiac cruise and a possible quick landing at Kraemerpynten, Kvitøya.
- 17.30 Happy hour in the lounge, please join us to toast and celebrate. reaching Kvitøya! All drinks are half price!



- 18.30 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 20.00 We will show a documentary about polar bears in the lecture room, this documentary is in English with subtitles in Mandarin.

"It must be remembered that the men whose desires lead them to the untrodden paths of the world have generally marked individuality." - Sir Ernest Shackleton



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitoya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Tuesday 15th August 2023

Day 6: Isispynten, Austfonna Icecap & Brasvelbreen

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-08:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09:00 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a zodiac cruise at Isispynten.
- 09:15 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Isispynten.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

During the afternoon we will be sailing past the Austfonna Icecap this impressive icecap is one of the largest glaciers in the Arctic.

- 14:00 Our “ice man” Jakub invites you to the lounge for his lecture on The future of Ice. This will be in English and translated into Mandarin.
- 16.00 Rico invites you to the lounge to share his stories from his two overwinterings in a trapper’s cabin on Spitsbergen. This will be in English and translated into Mandarin

In the late afternoon or early evening, depending on ice conditions, we hope to sail past the Brasveldbreen. An impressive 45km long glacier front, with a chance to see dramatic waterfalls cascading over the ice.

- 18.15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

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DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitøya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Wednesday 16th August 2023

Day 7: Palanderbukta & Alkefjellet

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|-------------|--|
| 07:15 | Wake- up call. |
| 07:30-08:30 | Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4. |
| 09.00 | Please can the long hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a long hike at Palanderbukta |
| 09:15 | Please can the medium hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a long hike at Palanderbukta |
| 09.30 | Please can the leisurely hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a long hike at Palanderbukta |
| 12.30-13.30 | Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4. |
| 14.30 | Martin will give a lecture in the lounge about Guillemots and little auks given in English and translated into Mandarin. |
| 16.00 | Please can the Red Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a zodiac cruise at Alkefjellet |
| 16.15 | Please can the Blue Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Alkefjellet |
| 19.00 | Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap. |
| 19:30 | Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4. |

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DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitøya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Thursday 17th August 2023

Day 8: Kapp Lee & Kapp Waldberg

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07.30-08.30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08.45 Please can the long hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a long hike at Kapp Lee
- 08.55 Please can the medium hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a medium hike at Kapp Lee
- 09.00 Please can the leisurely hikers be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a short hike at Kapp Lee
- 12.30-13.30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14.30 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Kapp Waldberg
- 16.00 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Landing at Kapp Waldberg
- 18.15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

“It must be remembered that the men whose desires lead them to the untrodden paths of the world have generally marked individuality.”- Sir Ernest Shackleton



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitøya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Friday 18th August 2023

Day 9: Burgerbukta & Gnalodden

- 07:45 Wake- up call.
- 08.00-09.00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09.30 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a zodiac cruise at Burgerbukta
- 09.45 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Burgerbukta
- 12.30-13.30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

During the afternoon we will give you the opportunity to do a polar plunge. Please wear your swimming clothes under you clothing and get ready for a dip in the Arctic water. We will provide towels, do NOT bring towels from your cabin please.

- 14.00 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gnalodden
- 15.30 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gnalodden

This afternoon 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.

- 18:30 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 dinner will be served in the restaurant on Deck 4.

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

- Jerome K. Jerome



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

Kvitøya, In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

Date: Saturday 19th August 2023

Day 10: Longyearbuyen

07:15 Wake up call.

Please leave your large luggage in the corridor outside your room for the staff to collect **no later than 07:30!!**

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

You can leave your hand luggage in the room; you will have to keep this hand luggage with you the rest of the day.

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

08:45 +/- Please be ready for disembarkation via the gangway at deck 4. please listen for announcements before gathering at reception.

Buses will be departing from the quayside to town.

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