

## DIVE LOG OTL 4-24 + OTL5-24

Svalbard – Bjornoya – Hopen 25.6. - 10.7.2024



### **DIVE TEAM**

**Dive Team Leader:** Henrik Enckell

**Dive Guides:** Clara Iachetti, Tanja Bayer, Gonzalo Sabbatini

**Divers and Snorkelers:** Angel Yanagihara, Debra Andal, Holly Bourbon, Logan Hytten, Valerie Elliott, Eduarda Schumacher Rhein Schirato, Sofia Schumacher Rhein Schirato, Susanne Schumacher Schirato, Valerie Elliott, YiHsin Lin, Augusto Gomez, Bartosz Charbski, Jarrod Jablonski, Kirill Egorov, Matthew Levin, Dan Orr, Sergio Rhein Schirato, Paul Williams

## Tuesday 25th June 2024

The first say at sea, and we already are making our way North. The divers had time to unpack their dive gear in the Heli hangar on Deck 6. Every diver got a box and some hangers. We assembled the BCDs and the weight belts. Now we are ready for the first dive!

## Wednesday 26th June 2024

**Raudfjord/Ayerfjorden. - 79° 41.438'N / 012° 06.484' E**

### Dive 1

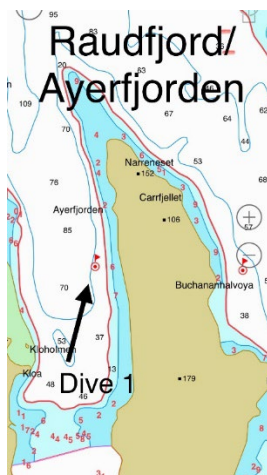
In the very southern end of Ayerfjorden we found some red and black rocks at the Western shoreline of Buchananhelvøya. After the ship anchored, the divers and snorkelers placed their gear in 4 Zodiacs, donned dry suits and headed to the Gangway. In four Zodiacs we made our way to the first dive site. Visibility was not great, but this was meant to be a check dive for procedures and gear.

Luckily the divers also saw some sea stars, sea urchins and small fish.

The snorkelers went along the Old Red stone and the black stone, nearly looking like marble. At the surface they found jellyfish and some small shrimps on the stones.

Everybody managed the first dive or snorkel and now we are ready for more underwater adventures,

The water temperature was 4°C.



## Thursday 27th June 2024

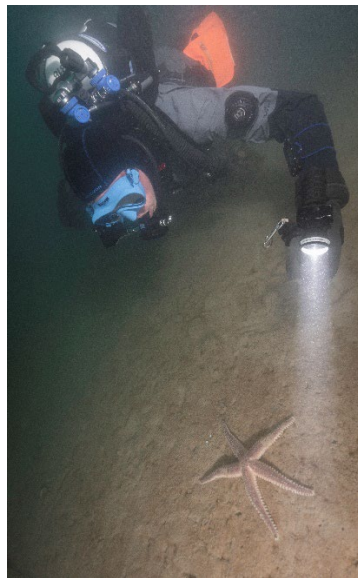
## Texas Bar / Liefdefjord. - 79° 36.483'N / 012° 40.466'E

### Dive 2

In the morning, all divers and snorkelers had fun during the Zodiac Cruise in front of Monacobreen and Seligerbreen. After the ship anchored before Texas Bar, we prepared for our second dive. A little bit west of the landing site, we found some rocky wall above the surface and map and checking with the depth gauge showed 24m just about 50m from the wall. A steep slope with a lot of kelp could be seen beneath the water. The kelp was covered by sand, but if you had a closer look, you could identify skeleton shrimp, trumpet stalked jellyfish, various species of anemones, scallops, sea stars, bridle Stars and sea urchins! In the water column we could again see a lot of comb jellies (Ctenophores), some of them with iridescent blue green pulsating cilia bands - beautiful!

The water temperature was 5°C.

After the dive we had time to land at Texas Bar and have a look into this historic hut.



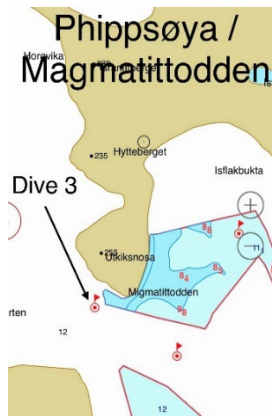
**Thursday 28th June 2024**

## Phippsoya / Seven Islands - 80° 39.839'N / 020° 42.836'E

### Dive 3 Morning

In the morning, standby was at around 8:30am. Those of us diving prepared our gear and loaded the Zodiacs. We could see the seabed from the ship, and this was at least 14m deep! The best visibility conditions up to now. We were all so eager to put our heads underneath the water! The diving site was south of the landing site. There was a neat westward current, therefore we planned our dive to go with the current, with the shore on our right shoulder. Up to 10-12m kelp were all over, hiding a very diverse ecosystem, we could see many anemones, some nudibranchs, some fish and, in the water column, we could again see a lot of Ctenophores and small

jellyfish!! Visibility was amazing, perfect place for photos and videos! Dives lasted around 30min, and water temperature was 1°C. After the dive, some of us joined the rest of the guests at the landing site!

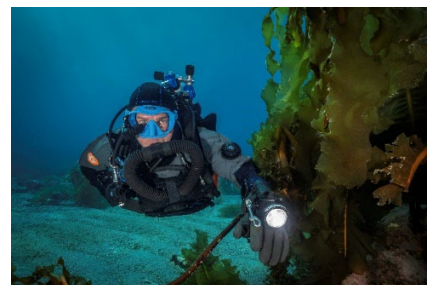


**Parryoya / Seven Islands. - 80° 39.842´N / 020° 43.532´E**

### **Dive 4 Afternoon**

In the afternoon, around 2pm, we started getting ready for the second dive of the day, this time at Parryoya. Not so far away from our morning dive, visibility conditions were still amazing and now the fog had lifted so light conditions were even better than in the morning! Dives lasted around 40 minutes, with the maximum depth between 15 and 10 meters depending on the couple. The water temperature was 2°C. Sandy bottom and kelp patches alternated through the coastline and there was no current. Therefore, it was the perfect moment for macro photographs and underwater landscapes!

After the dive, some of us had the chance to go to the landing site and experience a polar desert, we could free roam on a surveyed perimeter, what a fantastic place!

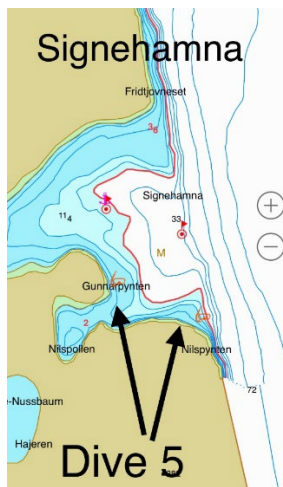


**Sunday 30th June 2024**

**Signehamna / Lilliehookfjorden - 79° 15.928'N / 011° 34.744' E**

### **Dive 5 Morning**

Those of us diving started loading up the zodiacs at around 8:30. The diving site was outside the bay where the landing site was located. Visibility didn't seem to be very good on the surface but, for sure, we needed to check how it looked like once in the water. Therefore, we got all geared up on the Zodiacs and jumped in. Although visibility was low, some of us stayed 40 minutes in the water! water temperature was around 2°C. After the dive some of us joined the rest of the guests in the landing site and some joined the science boat! What a busy morning!



**Wednesday 3rd July 2024**

**Hornsund/Adriabukta - 76° 59.897'N / 016° 12.422' E**

### **Dive 6**

Yesterday we started our second part of the trip. Besides the divers and snorkelers, about 20 other passengers stayed on board for the next trip.

We spend some time in Longyearbyen and in the early evening we started sailing south.

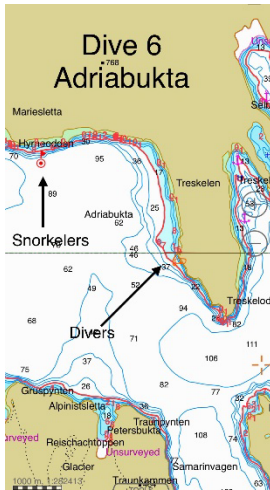
In the morning, we went into the Hornsund and the Captain manoeuvred the ship deep into Vestre Burgabukta. We all went for a beautiful Zodiac Cruise along the "Paierlbreen". The highlight of the morning was a pod of seven belugas on the coastline not far from the ship. Besides that, we had eider ducks, kittiwakes, an Arctic skua and nice pieces of ice along our cruise.

The ship then went a little bit further into the Hornsund to Adriabukta, a bay in front of Treskelen, which means "threshold". Behind that piece of land, a lot of glaciers end in a sort of pool, which is called Breepollen. So, it was not easy to find clear water with all these glaciers around.

For the snorkelers the only place to go were some shallow rocks and a piece of ice. But they still had fun and on the way to the sites we had two humpback whales in

front of the Zodiac. The divers chose a sight on the southern side of Treskelen and found about 5m of visibility deeper on the ground. From the diving site (photo) we could perfectly see Hornsundtind, a 1429 m high carbonate massive standing directly on the south shore of Hornsund. Hornsundtind is the highest mountain in southern Spitsbergen (photo).

After the dive some divers went ashore for a short walk around the landing site.



**Thursday 4th July 2024**

**Bjornoya / Sorhamna- 74° 21.732' N / 019° 09.872' E**

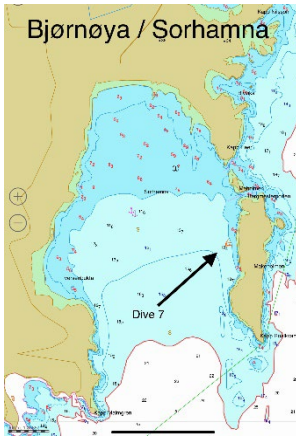
### **Dive 7**

It took us about 15 hours from Hornsund to get to Bjornoya, nearly in the middle between Svalbard and the northern coast of Norway. It is very rare to visit this island on an expedition around Svalbard. And, on this rugged rock in the Arctic ocean, the weather can be very tough with wind and swell especially at the southern tip. When we arrived at Bjornoya in the early morning, there was only a little swell and wind. Everybody was excited to dive this place, where not many non-scientific divers had dived before. Maybe none at all!

Our first dive was in the Bay of Sorhamna on the western side of the Island of Makeholmen. On the steep cliffs above the dive site, kittiwakes, guillemots and glaucous gulls were nesting. Under water, we found a lot of beautiful kelp until 12m and some big Arctic cod swimming around. On the sandy ground, crabs, especially hermit crabs scurried to and fro. Between the kelp, big yellow, orange, and white sponges were found. There was a lot of life in the kelp and large fields of tunicate. What a wonderful dive and visibility was up to 20m.

After the dive all divers went on a Zodiac cruise along the bird cliffs. The sound of hundreds of birds flying around was just mind blowing. On our ride through the waves, we also went through some caves and spotted the remains of the wreck of the Petrozavodsk which sank here, because the helmsman fell asleep!

What a great morning at this remote island!



### **Dive 8 and Snorkel afternoon:**

#### **Bjornoya Radio - 74° 30.337'N / 018° 59.931' E**

Our Plan A for the afternoon was a landing at Kvalrossbukta, also in the southern part of the island of Bjornoya. Because of the big swell, we decided to head to the northern coast of the island, to the Norwegian Weather Station of Bjornoya Radio. After several attempts to reach them via email and phone, our Captain got hold of them on the radio and we were allowed to go ashore.

The snorkelers went out to the eastern side of the Bay Herwighamna. Arriving at this calm bay we saw many puffins all around us. So, we christened it Puffin Bay.

The snorkelers went in a rocky fjord with good visibility but not easy navigation for the Zodiac. But it worked and all snorkelers had fun.

We also discovered an old net in the rocks and a pink fender on a beach. We collected the fender and cut some pieces from the net. Then Augusto instructed us for his film shoot. It was a lot of fun.

For the diving party we chose a rocky area, West from the landing site. The site had better visibility and went up to 14m deep.

After that we still had time to go ashore and visit the station. After shopping in the small post office at the weather station, most of us went for a walk to the cliffs of Puffin Bay and took some beautiful pictures of the clowns of the sky!

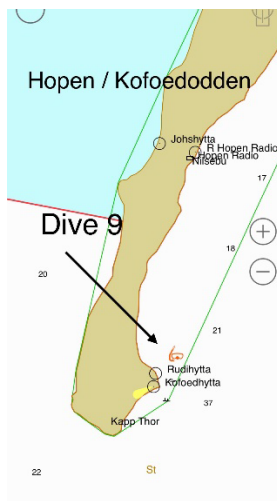


**Friday 5th July 2024**

**Hopen / Kofaelodden - 76° 27.691'N / 024° 59.788' E**

### **Dive 9 Morning**

In the morning, we arrived at Hopen, which is a very long and slim island southeast of Svalbard. Checking the conditions, we had about 2-3 knots around the ship. We were at anchor at Kofaelodden, a prominent headland. Again, this was a place where hardly any non-scientific diver might have dived before. So, we decided to get out and find some place where we could hide from the strong current. Just north of the headland we found that place with a depth of 12-14m. Visibility was not great, because of several streams coming down from the mountains. Nevertheless, the divers went down close to each other in buddy teams or groups of three and found a nice kelp ground at the bottom. All the typical invertebrates could be found here, and a sea raven was seen. Divers were happy about the dive, but fingers had to be warmed up before going ashore. There was still plenty of time to explore the tundra with great mountains and a blue sky above. Again, we were so lucky with the weather and sea conditions.



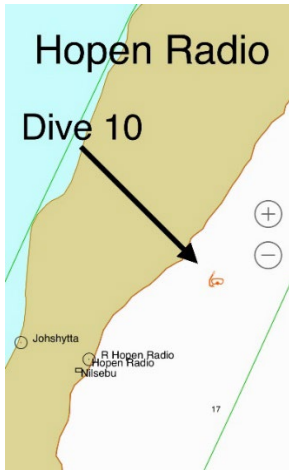
**Friday 5th July 2024**

**Hopen Radio - 76° 31.105'N / 025° 04.884' E**

### **Dive 10 Afternoon**

For our afternoon dive, it took us some time to choose the dive spot. None of us had ever dove in this area, therefore it was an expedition day! The coastline was sandy and sloped gently, we had to sail inwards to look for a deeper area, which had better visibility. From the site we could see a lovely waterfall in the cliffs, we found an area, 700m far away from the shore, which sloped from 7 to 14m. We were only a few diving this afternoon, we jumped in the water and hoped visibility would get better with the depth, but this was not the case! Anyway, we managed to take some nice pictures of crabs and kelp and we stayed under water for 30 minutes. After our dive we went straight back to Ortelius.





**Saturday 6th July 2024**

**Edgeoya / Habenichtbukta 77° 32.248'N / 020° 45.756' E**

**Dive 11 Afternoon**

This morning there was no dive because we went to a place called Andr etangen where we visited a hut and saw many walruses, in the water and on ice, a beautiful morning. In the afternoon, we had planned to land at Russebukta/Habenichbukta, but while we were heading there, the expedition staff spotted a bear walking on the shore! As we stopped the ship and offloaded the Zodiacs, we prepared for our dive of the day. We planned to go to a rocky island far from the shore, so we stayed far away from any possible interactions with the bear, but after our dive we were going to get closer to the shore to try and see it from a closer distance! We got to dive around a nice rocky island, around 9 to 14m deep. The water temperature was 2  C and dives lasted 35 minutes approx. Once we were back on the surface, we got closer to the shore where the rest of the guests had just found the polar bear and were now approaching gently. The bear was very curious, it went down to the shore and then went back to where his apparent meal was. We could also see an arctic fox around the bear and some of us saw a reindeer! What an incredible afternoon!



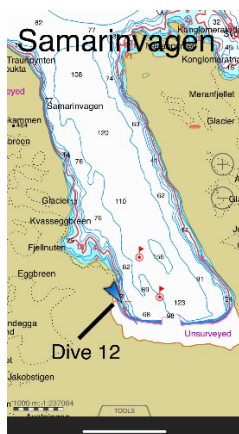
**Sunday 7th July 2024**

**Samingruvagen - 76° 54.628'N / 016° 15.268' E**

### **Dive 12 Afternoon**

After a windy morning with lectures, we arrived at Samingruvagen. This is a fjord to the south if you are sailing into Hornsund. So, we are back to the west coast of Spitzbergen. 3 Glaciers go into the fjord and at its very end there was still some fast ice. The divers drove to a small hill on the southern side of the fjord. Entering the water at the cliff, it did not look very clear. But visibility cleared up at about 10m depth. There was a lot to see on the rocky bottom. Sea urchins, a nudibranch named flabellina pellucida, sea stars, brittle stars and some moss animals, looking like corals.

After the dive we had some time to do a short Zodiac cruise along the glaciers and the fast ice. What a great day, although it was sometimes raining. But as divers this never bothers us! 😊



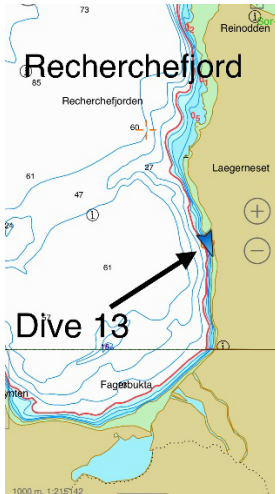
**Monday 8th July 2024**

**Recherchefjord - 77° 30.845'N / 014° 45.814' E**

### **Dive 13 Morning**

In the morning we had about 40 knots of wind at the entrance of the Bellsund. Our Plan A, landing on the northern side of the fjord, was therefore not possible. Captain and EL found a sheltered place on the other side and we moved into Recherche Fjord. This fjord ends with the Recherchebreen on the eastern side, In front of the Glacier is a glacial lake. We decided to dive about 1 nm away on the eastern moraine of the Glacier. A smooth slope went down to about 20m and on the bottom the divers found a lot of Jellyfish upside down. Visibility was first not so great, but cleared up further down. In the depth of 2m there was "Jellyfish soup", many different Jellyfish!!! All divers were impressed by this very strange dive through the Jellyfish.

After the dive we went ashore and the divers climbed onto some icebergs to take pictures. What a great Plan B!



**Tuesday 9th July 2024**

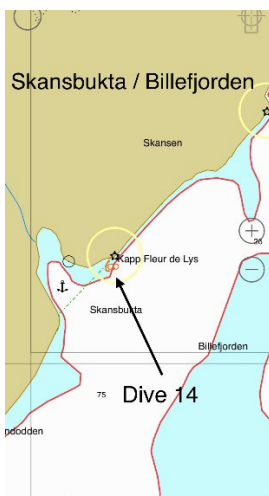
**Skansbukta / Billefjorden - 78° 31.443'N / 016° 06.138'E**

### **Dive 14 Morning**

For the last day of the trip we decided to play around in Isfjord. Ortelius sailed into the Isfjord during the night and our first anchoring was on Skansbukta. This is a very nice bay with mountains of sedimental rock. There used to be some Gypsum mining in the 1930s. You can still see a hut, leftovers of the mining and a shipwreck. Divers and snorkelers ventured around the corner in the Billefjorden towards Kapp Fleur de Lys. They found a place with a nice wall and some depth. Visibility down there was great. Of course it was a little bit dark, but small sculpins everywhere and one diver was lucky to see a ray on the ground.

The snorkelers played around at the beach just below the cliff with the puffins. They had a lot of fun just being in the water and enjoying the puffins and the scenery!

Back on the ship everybody decided to rinse their gear and finish the diving of the trip with this great dive and snorkel.



**On the 2 trips we saw 14 different dive sites, did 123 dives and 24 snorkels!**

**Thank you for diving and snorkeling with us and we hope  
to see you all back on board!!**