

## **Kayaking Log**

### **Ortelius Base camp 05, 2-7-24 to 10-7-24**

#### **Loel Collins**

This journey had an explorative feel. Our intention being to explore the potential for kayaking in two of the most southerly Island in Svalbard, Bjorn Oya an Hopen.

#### **2-6-24 No kayaking**

#### **3-6-24 No kayaking**

**4-7-24.** We anchored at the southern tip of Bjornoya, The small bay is very sheltered. Beforehand, we undertook a recce under the cliffs and bays on the southernmost tip of the island. The impressive cliffs and occasional pebble and boulder beaches under the high cliffs mean this part of the coastline is very exposed, inaccessible and confronting. In these conditions, a light wind, slight swell, and some tidal movement on a flooding tide made for challenging conditions. The eastern side of the bay was also prone to small tidal races between the island between the small islets in the middle of the eastern aspect of the bay. The area was ideal for experienced intermediate kayakers but was too exposed for our kayak group. As such, we decided to offer kayaking until the next day.

**5-7-24** We arrived off the southern tip of Hopen Island. The southern tip of Hopen is exposed to the slight southerly swell and a noticeable southerly 4km tidal flow on the flooding tide, this created sections of wind overtime, this differs from the tidal predictions at the meteorological station a short distance up the eastern coast of the island. The area around the southern headland appeared to have a tidal constant of +3 hours and slack water constant of around 30mins. The area looked suitable for a strong intermediate group on the basis of tidal movement alone, this would be exacerbated in the stronger conditions.

Kayaking in the afternoon. This area of the coastline had almost no tidal movement, but was susceptible to the slight swell working over isolated boulders causing moving point breaks on the 'boomers' as the tidal varied in height and water depth. We elected to kayak, with a lot of caution as we moved between these breaks as the swell allowed. We put in at the southern headland about 1.5km south of the station and move northeast below the cliffs towards the station. We passed the station and continued under the larger, very active cliffs NE of the station towards a waterfall on the shoreline. We continued towards the headland which appears to have some rough water caused by tide and swell off the point. We elected to end our exploratory paddle short of the rough water and to return to the ship. We were some of very few paddlers who have had the opportunity to kayaking of Hopen Island.

#### **6-7-24 No kayaking**

**7-7-24** No kayaking this morning the high wind lessened in the afternoon and enabled us to go kayaking in Honsund. We started on the west side of the bay in front of the Samarin Glacier and took the opportunity to kayak eastward across the bay a short distance in front of the glacier to a small headland. We navigated our way through the grounded bergs before crossing in front of the fast ice at the foot of the glacier. As we continued, it became clear we could make it back to Ortelius, so we paddled all the way back to the ship into the strengthening head wind.

**8-7-24** In the morning we offered kayaking in the bay and lagoon in front of the glacier at Fragerbukta & Bamsebu. The lure of a walk on the moraine field in windless, warm conditions was too much. So no kayakers this morning.

In the afternoon, the wind had increased and with it a bit of a short swell was running directly onto the landing beach at Bamsebu. We explored alternative landing sites in the bay to the west and a possible kayak location. Unfortunately, the conditions were cold and windy, preventing us from getting afloat in the afternoon.

**9-7-24** In the morning we took the opportunity to paddle NE from Skansbukta under the cliffs. The wind picked up as we paddled, forcing us to return to the bay crossing beneath the small cliffs towards the back of the bay for the polar plunge.

**10-7-24 No Kayaking**