



## Around Spitsbergen, In the Realm of Polar Bear & Ice 22<sup>nd</sup> July – 31<sup>st</sup> July 2024



### M/V Plancius

M/V *Plancius* was named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geographer, and minister Petrus Plancius (1552 - 1622). M/V *Plancius* was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named Hr. Ms. Tydeman. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions and completely refit in 2007, being converted into a 114-passenger expedition vessel. M/V *Plancius* is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, with an Ice Strength rating of 1D, top speed of 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.

# Captain Ernesto Barria

**and his international crew**

Chief Officer: **Elizbar Kadaria**

2nd Officer: **Don Buren**

3rd Officer: **Anar Babaiev**

Chief Engineer: **Sebastian Alexandru**

Hotel Manager: **Oleksandr Lyebedyev**

Assist. Hotel Manager: **Lilianna Teresa Van**

Head Chef: **Khabir Moraes**

Ships Doctor: **Antoine De Winter**

Expedition Leader: **Christophe Bouchoux**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Pierre Gallego**

Expedition Guide: **Jakub Matecki**  
**Emily Clarke**  
**Paolo Bellezze**  
**Andrea Schwetz**  
**Koen Hoekemeijer**  
**Esther Josten**

## Day 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> July

### Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°13.7'N / 015°36.1'E

**Wind:** SE 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 9°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C

Today is the day, and it is finally time for us to embark upon our Arctic adventure! In the late afternoon, we arrived at our ship, M/V *Plancius*, our new home for the next ten days. She rocked gently against the pier as we climbed the gangway onto the decks. The day was suitably Arctic, cloudy with a chilly wind – but we were warm and comfortable aboard. We all checked in and were escorted to our respective cabins. After that, we could explore the ship, wander the decks, and get familiar with our new home.



Once we were all aboard, we were invited to the lounge to take part in a mandatory briefing and an abandon ship drill. During the drill we cast off and were on our way out of the harbor.

Whilst the crew made sure we left the harbor soundly, our expedition leader, Christophe, invited us back to the lounge for the Captain's Cocktails, where we met our captain Ernesto Barria, and the expedition team. We celebrated our expedition with some bubbles and canapes before we all enjoyed our first dinner onboard!



We all filed down to the restaurant for a delicious buffet and an opportunity to meet some of our fellow travelers. Our day was not done yet! After dinner, we located the boot room and collected our rubber boots. We were another step closer to being able to start our off-ship activities.

The rest of the evening was spent enjoying our first evening cruise and the never-ending daylight before returning to our cabins to prepare for tomorrow's adventure!

## Day 2: 23<sup>rd</sup> July

### Kronebreen & Ny-Ålesund

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°52.0'N / 012°33.4'E

**Wind:** SE 5, **Sea State:** Smooth, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 10°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C



Today, we were awakened by a very gentle “good morning” from our expedition leader, Christophe. We had entered Kongsfjorden, the “King’s Fjord,” and first saw the majestic glaciers surrounding us. At the end of this 30km long fjord, we found ourselves in front of the towering front of Kronebreen, the “Crown Glacier,” our first stop for a zodiac cruise. But before starting our adventures outside, we had to attend our mandatory briefings. After breakfast, we headed to the lounge, where Christophe first talked about our Zodiac procedures and how to wear the life vest. He then proceeded with the polar bear safety briefing to make our landings as safe as possible for us and the polar bears. Eventually, we watched the AECO briefing, which gave us an overview of the dos and don’ts here in Svalbard.



Finally, we were ready to head out and board our Zodiacs. The sky cleared up, and we even got some sunshine while we were cruising through the brash ice, listening to the popping and crackling of the air bubbles released from within the ice. Our expedition guides took us all along the glacier front, where we observed several bird species and beautiful blue bergy bits.

It was then time to get back onboard Plancius for a delicious lunch prepared by our top chef, Khabir, and to reposition the ship to Ny-Ålesund, the international research station. We had to switch the Bluetooth and Wi-Fi settings off on all of our devices to not interfere with the research carried out on plate tectonics.

We were lucky enough to get a spot by the pier, so right after another – and finally our last – mandatory briefing, we were free to roam the northernmost permanent settlement in the world! We had enough time to explore the small but interesting town with its quaint souvenir shop and the interesting museum.



We then joined Paolo and Esther on a tour that took us back in time. They told us the story of the great explorer Roald Amundsen whose bust commemorates his visits to Ny-Ålesund in 1925 and 1926 when he set out to reach the North Pole. The first attempt was with two sea planes and even though this attempt failed, and the six men barely made it back alive, it only took a few months until Amundsen initiated the next attempt. This time they were going by airship. The Italian built and American financed airship “NORGE” departed from Ny-Ålesund on May 11, 1926, and overflew the North Pole in the early morning on May 12<sup>th</sup>. They landed in Teller, Alaska, on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Full of admiration for these heroic Arctic explorers, we wandered back to the ship where we had some time to relax before our first recap. Paolo gave us a quick overview of the history of Svalbard and Christophe took the time to explain some maritime concepts and units to us.

It was then time for dinner, and after that we got to relax in the lounge with a drink to share impressions of our first day.

## Day 3: 24<sup>th</sup> July

### Liefdefjord, Monacobreen & Texas Bar

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°34.7'N / 012°36.0'E

**Wind:** SW 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, rain, **Air Temp:** 6°C, **Sea Temp:** 7°C

As we woke up to our expedition leader's voice at 7:15 a.m., we had the impression that we had teleported to a completely different world than we had experienced yesterday. The main cause for this delusion was the



weather—a heavy, dark mist enveloped the whole landscape, and rain drizzled continuously. This is how we were welcomed to Liefdefjorden, the beginning of which hosted a huge, complex glacier—Monacobreen. The plan for the morning was to cruise with Zodiacs along its mighty ice front.

After breakfast, we embarked on the Zodiacs and headed towards the glacier. It is a true monster; with an area of 400 km<sup>2</sup>, a length of 40 km,

countless tributary glaciers merging into a single ice tongue, and an ice cliff width of ca. 5 km, it is one of the largest glaciers of its kind in Svalbard! Its name is related to Prince Albert I of Monaco, who initiated numerous research expeditions to Spitsbergen in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As we cruised towards the ice cliff, we sought the holy grail of the birding community, the ivory gull, and spotted it within the first 30 minutes of our cruise! This white gull is a rare sight as its favorite habitat is pack ice covering the Arctic Ocean, and its global population is estimated not to exceed 14 thousand pairs.

As the glacier roared from time to time, reminding us it's a living being, we observed numerous marine birds typically observed in this region of the world—kittiwakes, glaucous gulls, and common guillemots. Monaco Glacier and the neighboring Seliger Glacier showed us some spectacular calving, causing huge fountains of water to splash for tens of meters. Even though the weather was suboptimal, we were happy to experience Svalbard's different face and another close encounter with living ice.

We headed back to M/V *Plancius* for well-deserved hot teas and coffees and went straight for lunch. In the meantime, the ship repositioned some miles to the north, closer to our afternoon destination. This time we landed next to an original trapper cabin. The rumor has it that the trapper who built it was a huge fan of wild west movies, which would explain its name – Texas Bar. Inside you could find a considerable number of liquor bottles, apparently a must during longer stays at this place.



We were divided into three groups – the leisurely, medium and long hikers, all exploring the area at our own pace. The leisurely group strolled around the landing spot and photographed everything interesting, whereas the remaining groups made longer distances and focused on reaching high points to observe the area from a different perspective. Our expedition team introduced us to everything interesting they could spot – from stones and plants to glaciers and old fox traps. All of us enjoyed the first hike of the expedition, despite the drizzle we will long remember the cloud-shrouded landscape of northwest Spitsbergen.

## Day 4: 25<sup>th</sup> July

### Cruising the Pack Ice

**12:00 GPS Position:** 81°08.7'N / 019°28.8'E

**Wind:** S 4, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 7°C, **Sea Temp:** 0°C

Our expedition leader, Christophe, woke us up at 7.45 this morning, a little later than in the last days. It was 5 degrees Celsius outside and surrounding us was thick fog. After breakfast, however, it cleared up, and we could actually see the beginning of the pack ice. The *Plancius* slowly made her way through the first ice floes, and soon, we were in the middle of the pack ice. We were lucky to spot some bearded seals near the ship; we gathered on the outer decks to observe them in their natural habitat on the ice and capture some photos.

Many of us continued scouting for more wildlife on the ice. We were told to look for something yellowish when trying to spot a polar bear. Polar bears are not white but appear almost yellow against the ice. Many different bird species were observed, including northern fulmars, kittiwakes, guillemots, and an ivory gull.



Just before lunch, Jakub, our glaciologist, was about to start his lecture in the lounge about the future of ice when there was an announcement from the bridge that two bowhead whales were seen in the pack ice. We quickly grabbed our cameras and headed out on the decks. They were still far away, but it was possible to see them, especially with binoculars, and identify them as the rare high Arctic whale. Less than 100 live around Svalbard, so we felt privileged to spot them. Jakub's lecture was postponed until the afternoon as we enjoyed the beauty outside on the decks. After lunch, we continued our search for the polar bear on ice, and eventually, Jakub could give us his fascinating talk about the future of the ice.





Later in the afternoon, we were invited onto the upper outer deck to enjoy some warm apple cider. As usual, we listened to the daily recap from Pierre, who discussed the bowhead whale, and Koen talked about the bearded seal. Christophe gave us an idea about the upcoming day, and we went for a delicious dinner soon afterward. There was another announcement that the team on the bridge had found two hooded seals on an ice floe. We were able to have a perfect view. As the *Plancius* slowly moved out of the sea ice, the sunlight was beautiful, hitting the clouds and sea.

The highest latitude we reached today was: 81°25.104"N  
022° 48,280"E.

## Day 5: 26<sup>th</sup> July

### Rossøya & Isflakbukta (Phippsøya)

**12:00 GPS Position:** 80°45.6'N / 020°14.4'E

**Wind:** S 4, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 8°C, **Sea Temp:** 3°C

After a day in the pack ice, we made our way southwards overnight. This morning's destination was a unique and rarely visited place: Rossøya, the northernmost island in the archipelago of Sjuøyane (Seven Islands). This is also Norway's northernmost point, only 1024 km from the North Pole. It felt strangely mild for being at 80°N. Today's plan was a long Zodiac cruise around Rossøya followed by a 6.5km crossing to Tavleøya and the northern tip of Phippsøya; we cruised the best part of 23km in total. We looked for wildlife and found puffins, black guillemots, common guillemots, and a small colony of little auks. The weather was perfect, with no wind and mild temperature, but a 0.5m swell sometimes made the long ride bumpy. One day, we will look back at a map and realize how remote this location was.



Once back onboard the *Plancius*, we enjoyed our lunch as we gently cruised to our next destination, Isflakbukta, on the island of Phippsøya. We landed by a trapper's hut, and three hikes were organized: leisurely, medium, and long.

This island's main feature is the raised beaches caused by isostatic rebound, a geological feature only found in certain places. Here, large ice caps once pressed the earth's crust down with their weight, and once removed by melting and retreat, they left the crust to rise slowly again. This lifted the beaches over millenia, and now we can see some areas tenths of meters higher than the water level.

The leisure and medium walks explored the lowlands of Isflakletta while the long hikers headed up a low mount at the foot of Høgberget. From this 123m promontory, the views north towards Eidsbukta, West to Horgvika, and back to the landing site were stunning, and those taking the energetic walk were well rewarded. A five-minute silence was taken, and we could hear the wind whispering and the birds' distant calls. We could see a small flock of eider ducks bathing in the sea from above.

On our way back down to the landing site, Cristophe radioed to say he had observed a walrus climbing onto the beach; some of us were lucky enough to witness this spectacular sight. After returning to *Plancius*, Captain Ernesto Barria took us past a small rocky island west of Parryøya, where dozens of walruses were hauled out. There were females, calves, and juveniles. We gave them plenty of distance, ensuring they were undisturbed, but we could see them clearly, some even approaching closer to look at us. It was a perfect ending to our long day of activities. We then began sailing south for the second half of our journey. Alkefjellet awaits us tomorrow; well, that is, 'Plan A' weather permitting. We feel the next few days will be very special with wildlife.





## Day 6: 27<sup>th</sup> July

### Alkefjellet & Tommelen

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°34.3'N / 018°41.6'E

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

Today was absolutely action packed!

We had been at anchor for much of the night, but in the early morning, the engine was started, and the anchor heaved. We woke up in Hinlopen strait, and our outing this morning was a Zodiac cruise along the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet. The original name of this place was 'Mount Guillemot,' for obvious reasons! About 65.000 breeding pairs of Brünnich's Guillemots use this dolerite intrusion to lay their cone-shaped egg on narrow ledges. Both parents sit for 32 days and feed the chick for three weeks, until the day arrives when it has to jump down from the cliff. The birds have found a natural fortress on these cliffs to help defend against predators. The rocky columns in the northern part of the cliff resemble skyscrapers, making the entire bird colony somewhat of a vivid city where everyone is busy and noisy, as guillemots seem to rush to their everyday duties. Cruising among the clouds of



birds flying above our heads was an experience to remember. As we continued our cruise along the base of the cliff, we saw a polar fox at its end! It was scavenging just at the shoreline, from time to time, hiding between angular boulders deposited at the foot of the mountain. Our Zodiacs had fantastic photographic opportunities – the fox was posing like it knew it was his five minutes of fame. We then said farewell to the fox and continued our cruise towards the north, where soon afterward, we faced a

spectacular glacier steeply descending from the highlands down to the sea. Around 11 AM, we headed back to the ship, where a well-prepared lunch was soon served. Under good weather, Alkefjellet had a memorable experience, which was one of the expedition's highlights!

After lunch, Plancius turned south. Since we have yet to spot a polar bear, our expedition leader Christophe and captain Ernesto decided to explore a group of small rocky islands further south in the Hinlopen strait with hopes of showing us the king of the Arctic. The bridge and expedition teams scanned the area with binoculars, and their efforts were almost immediately rewarded - they found a polar bear just six kilometers from the Guillemot mountain! We rushed to the outside decks with binoculars and the longest lenses to capture this magnificent animal. It was peacefully sleeping on top of a rocky island, Tomellen, raising its head occasionally. We were all very excited when Christophe announced at 1:15 PM that we would drop all zodiacs so we could get a little closer! It

took a little while to get to the animal as all the Zodiacs moved slowly together as a raft. As we did not want to disturb its siesta, we stayed at a safe distance and remained as quiet as possible. What a spectacle it was! At some point, our sleeping bear stood up, demonstrated its healthy-looking profile, and looked somewhere over the horizon as if it posed for photographs. At this moment, we knew that this might be the opportunity we came here for – to take a dream picture of their royal majesty, and most of us did. And then, to make this day even more special, we saw a minke whale nearby! We left the bear alone and



undisturbed. We continued a bit further south in the zodiacs to briefly peek into a glacier bay of Tomellbreen. This five-kilometer-wide glacier has recently retreated from the sea to the land. That was the end point of our beautiful cruise, another highlight of our expedition!

At about 4 PM, we returned to the ship and gathered in the lounge at 6 PM for a recap. This evening's dinner was unlike any previous one. *Plancius* is anchored in the bay of Tomellbreen for a polar BBQ on the outside decks! We ate and danced until late, celebrating perhaps the best day of our voyage so far!

## Day 7: 28<sup>th</sup> July

### Torellnesset & Bråsvellbreen

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°21,3'N / 020°43.2'E

**Wind:** E 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Fog, **Air Temp:** 6°C, **Sea Temp:** 3°C

“This too shall pass” is used to give us strength and resilience when the going gets tough and reminds us that the bad times will not last forever. The phrase is also used as a reminder to enjoy the good times fully because these also won't last forever. This was the case for us and the end of clear sunny skies. This morning, we woke up to thick fog, and visibility was heavily reduced. As Paolo will later explain, fog forms when a parcel of air is cooled down to its dew point by moving over a cold surface. In this case, mild, southerly winds run for thousands of miles of the North Atlantic, collecting moisture as they move and suddenly cooling in the colder sea temperatures around Svalbard. Our plans to land in Torellnesset have been put on hold; we were anchored not too far from the coast but could not see anything. We waited for conditions to improve slightly, and Christophe and Pierre headed out scouting on a zodiac to see the actual visibility at sea level and closer to shore around the walrus colony.



They came back with great news. The visibility by the coast and at sea level was better. Ultimately, the expedition team organized a zodiac cruise in waves, leaving half of the guests onboard and taking turns visiting the walrus. It was an effective use of the limited, safe options available. We could not land in these conditions for the risk of encountering a polar bear, but visibility was good enough to let us view the walrus from the water.

Once everybody was back onboard, we sailed to our next destination; we knew the chances of a fog-free afternoon were extremely low, but still. Capt. Barria and his bridge team took us to the largest glacier front in Svalbard and one of the largest in the world, the Brasvellbreen. Unfortunately, the visibility did not improve; we were at the minimum possible safe distance from the glacier front thanks to the radar and instruments on the bridge, yet we could not see it. We could hear the waves crashing against its ice wall, but without being able to see it. As we sail along the glacier front, we enter an area with giant icebergs and bergy bits while having a 2.5m swell. There was no wind, and the sea was smooth, but the swell made navigation between the icebergs very demanding for the bridge team. They showed off their seamanship during such ice navigations; it was impressive to witness.

In the afternoon, we also enjoyed a detailed lecture on the polar bear. We had the opportunity to learn about this protected species' biology, taxonomy, habitat, reproduction, and past and current status. We also learned of the expedition leader Christophe's firsthand encounters with this animal and his 20 years of experience guiding in and around apex predator territories.

Overall, it was a day well-traveled by all, making the absolute best of adverse weather conditions.

## Day 8: 29<sup>th</sup> July

### Kapp Waldberg & Kapp Leestasjon

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°12.7'N / 021°23.6'E

**Wind:** W 4, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Rain, **Air Temp:** 7°C, **Sea Temp:** 10°C

As usual, our expedition leader, Christophe, woke us up at 7.15 am; it was 5 degrees Celsius outside. We were positively surprised by the view because we could see land and no more fog surrounding us. Soon after breakfast, we prepared to go on land, visiting a site called Kapp Waldburg on the island of Barentsøya. The landscape looked very interesting; there was a large area of tundra in the foreground and a canyon with a ridge in the background, and in between, some more canyons were visible. We arrived with the zodiacs at our landing beach, and Christophe organized us into three groups to visit a kittiwake colony that was nestled on the steep canyon walls ahead of us. On our walk there, we encountered some Svalbard reindeer grazing on the tundra and some nice creeks coming down from the canyons. We had already observed that a wall of fog was gradually coming in. However, we still managed to reach our main attraction point: the kittiwake colony. Very soon after arriving at the kittiwakes unfortunately our operation had to be cancelled because the





fog was too thick and visibility was poor, so Christophe called us back to the landing site where we jumped back into the Zodiacs returning to *Plancius* once more.

Back onboard, Esther entertained us with a lecture about the history of whaling in Svalbard. After that, we had lunch, and just as we finished, we heard an announcement from Christophe that we must get dressed quickly because a polar bear had been spotted from the bridge, walking along the beach of our next landing site, Kapp Lee, on the island of Edgeøya. Hence, we jumped into the Zodiacs, and there we were: suddenly in the vicinity of a polar bear. All the

Zodiacs stayed together, and Christophe assessed the situation. The bear was walking along the beach, sniffing and looking for something to eat. He took a short break but decided to keep on searching. Once the bear arrived at the shore, he played with some kelp, chewing it in a very photogenic way.

Then the bear got slightly too curious about us and decided to enter the water and swim towards us. That was the moment for us to leave the bear and move on to another bear at the other end of that beach, resting up on a hill. When we arrived with the Zodiacs, we saw some reindeer grazing close to the polar bear, but neither species seemed interested in each other. So, we continued to observe the walrus which were hauled out together. We did some Zodiac carousels so everyone could view the walrus well without disturbance. When we decided to leave them, we took another look with the zodiacs to the other side of the island, but there was nothing else to see. So, Christophe decided to have another last look in the bay by the walrus, and it turned out that the bear was descending from his sleeping spot on the hill towards the shore. He took a good look at us, and we at him, but soon after, he decided to go up again and rest.



In the meantime, two walrus appeared in the water, and we observed them for a while. Happy and excited, we returned to the ship and had a lot of great stories to exchange and photos to look at. We enjoyed happy hour in the lounge and an excellent recap from Esther about the plants of Svalbard and Emily about the reindeer. Our Expedition leader briefed us about the next day's plans, and he eventually confirmed that the two bears we had seen were both males. We enjoyed another delicious dinner in the restaurant and went to bed feeling very content with the day.

## Day 9: 30<sup>th</sup> July

### Hyrneodden & Burgerbukta

**12:00 GPS Position:** 77°01.0'N / 016°04.8'E

**Wind:** NE 1, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 10°C, **Sea Temp:** 4°C

Rounding the southernmost point of Spitsbergen, we entered the majestic Hornsund this morning. Thick fog benches covered many small bays along the approximately 30km long fjord. Our initial plan was to visit Gåshamna, but Christophe took us to Hyrneodden instead since the visibility there seemed very poor. Once we arrived on land, the fog slowly lifted, and the incredible panorama surrounding us opened. Like every time, we got to choose between three different hiking options on land.

The more arduous tour was accompanied by Pierre and Paolo and consisted of a steep uphill hike that led us to a point with the best views over the bay. The medium hike with Emily, Jakub, and Andi, got to see some Arctic skuas and took a closer look at permafrost stone patterns while enjoying a nice panorama of the nearby glacier. Today, the leisurely stroll was very popular, and many of us just wanted to take our time to soak up the stunning landscape around us. As usual, the walk was guided by Christophe, additionally, we had Esther and Koen, who kept us safe and told us a lot of interesting stories about the vegetation in this area and the “breathing cycle” of the earth, how small patches of moss push away even large rocks when the water that they contain freezes in winter and therewith expands. We learned that we found ourselves in the high-arctic zone here, the so-called “Svalbard Poppy zone.” Even though this vegetation zone is named after this hardy little flower, they are difficult to find; after a good scan of the area, we finally found a couple of fine specimens. Besides this iconic plant, we even discovered tiny Polar Willows, miniature trees creeping over the ground.

We all returned to the landing site after our walks to witness a truly spectacular sight: The Polar Plunge! The brave passengers among us stepped outside their comfort zone, removed their warm layers of clothing, and ran into the ice-cold fjord! Many of us stayed ashore to watch the show.

After all the swimmers had embraced the elements, we returned to the comfort of our dear *Plancius*, where a hot shower and a delicious lunch awaited us.



In the afternoon, we went out on our Zodiacs for the last time on this journey, which took us all around Spitsbergen, the largest island of Svalbard. On our small boats, we circumnavigated large icebergs and stopped in front of the towering mountain walls surrounding Vestre Burgerbukta. We learned more about the fascinating geology of this place and why the waterfalls here are red, due to the iron oxide in the rocks gets washed out with the water. We advanced to the end of the bay, where we reached the beautiful glacier Paierlbreen. Many of the place names here actually have Austrian origin, as the fjord was first mapped on an expedition led by Count Hans Wilczek in 1872. Some names are derived from members of his expeditions, others from friends and family, such as Luciakammen and Mariekammen, after Wilczek's two daughters.

In front of the majestic glacier, we enjoyed the Arctic silence one last time before we made our way back to the ship. There, we shortly met the crew of the Sysselmeister, the Governor of Svalbard, who regularly checks whether the expedition ships have all of their correct paperwork and are abiding by the rules. We passed without problems!



The evening program for this last day of our incredible tour consisted of a glass of prosecco for most of us and some beautiful speeches by Captain Ernesto and Christophe. As a beautiful memory for us to take home, Koen prepared a video full of memories of our voyage that we watched all together! Many of us had tears in our eyes. We enjoyed our last dinner together before we packed our bags and started preparing for our journey home.



## Day 10: 31<sup>st</sup> July

### Disembarkation

09:00 GPS Position: 78°13.7'N / 015°36.1'E

Wind: E 2, Sea State: Calm, Weather: Sunny, Air Temp: 11°C, Sea Temp: 5°C

All too soon we arrived back in Longyearbyen and it was time to say our goodbyes. The staff and crew took care of our luggage, placing it carefully on the dock. We had our last breakfast aboard *Plancius* then gathered the last of our things and headed for the gangway. We said goodbye to the whole team onboard and alighted the bus waiting for us to start the long journey home or to our next adventure.

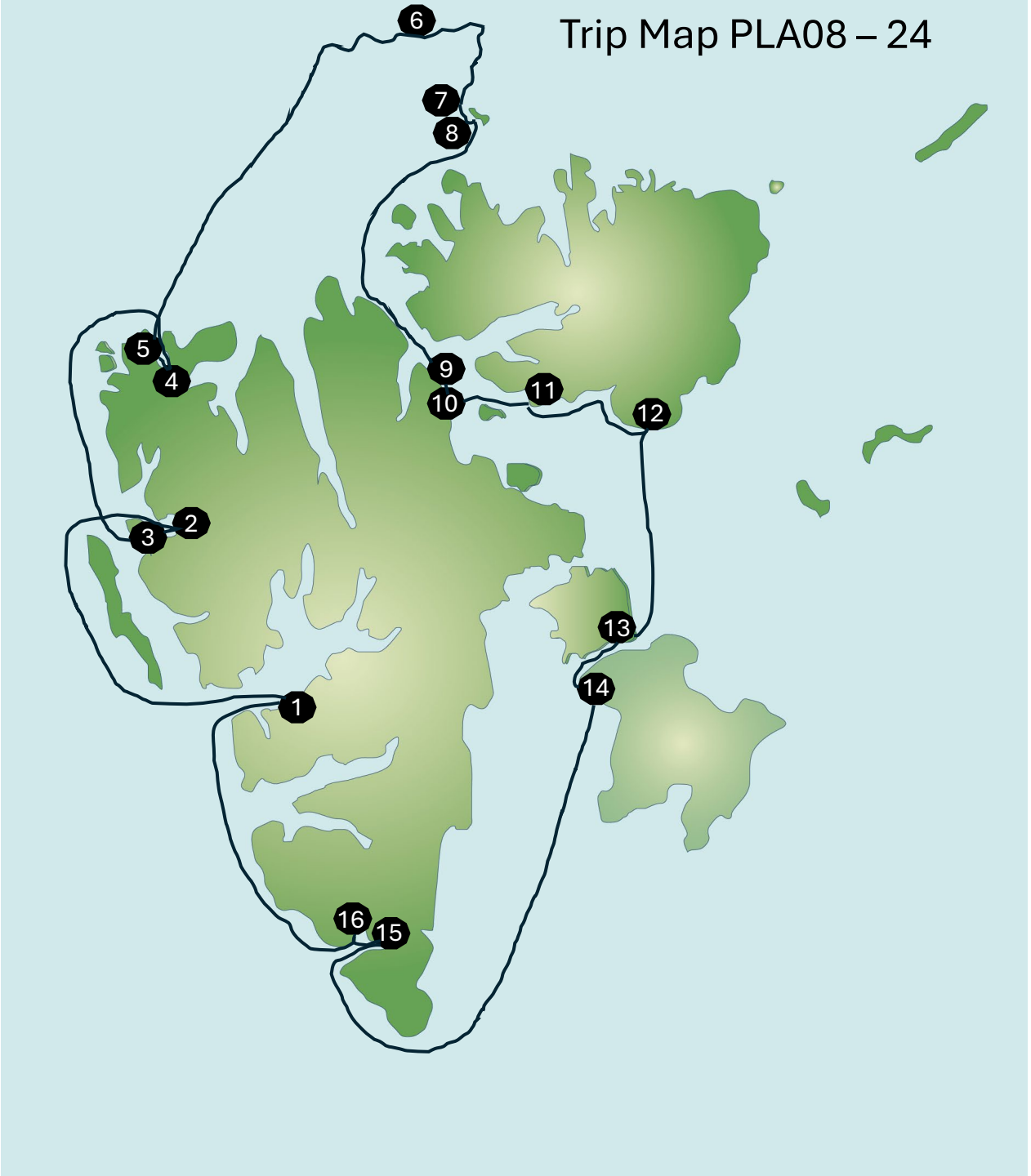


Thank you for your enthusiasm and support, but most of all for joining us on this exploratory North Atlantic voyage. We hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

**Total distance sailed: 1,157 nautical miles**  
**Farthest north: 81°25'N**

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria, Expedition Leader Christophe Bouchoux, Hotel Manager Oleksandr Lyebyedyev, and all the crew and staff of M/V Plancius, it has been a pleasure travelling with you!

No.	Time	Location	Activity
1	PM	Longyearbyen	Boarding
2	AM	Kronebreen	Zodiac cruise
3	PM	Ny Ålesund	Landing
4	AM	Monacobreen	Zodiac cruise
5	PM	Texas Bar	Landing
6	AM/ PM	Pack Ice	Ship cruise
7	AM	Rossøya / Tavleøya	Zodiac cruise
8	PM	Isflakbukta	Landing
9	AM	Alkefjellet	Zodiac cruise
10	PM	Tommelen	Zodiac Cruise
11	AM	Torelneset	Zodiac cruise
12	PM	Brasvellbreen	Ship cruise
13	AM	Kapp Waldberg	Landing
14	PM	Kapp Leestasjon	Zodiac cruise
15	AM	Hyrneodden	Landing
16	PM	Pairlebreen	Zodiac cruise
1	AM	Longyearbyen	Disembark



English Name	Latin	German	Dutch	Breeding / Transient / Vagrant	22-Jul	23-Jul	24-Jul	25-Jul	26-Jul	27-Jul	28-Jul	29-Jul	30-Jul	31-Jul
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Eistaucher	Ijsduiker	V										
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Sterntaucher	Roodkeelduiker	B										
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Eissturmvogel	Noordse stormvogel	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Bassstörpel	Jan-van-gent	T										
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Singschwan	Wilde zwaan	T										
Breast Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Saatgans	Taigarietgans	V									X	
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kurzschnabelgans	Kleine nielgans	B								X	X	
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Weisswangengans	Brandgans	B		X						X		
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Blaassgans	Kolgans	V										
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Graugans	Grauwe gans	V										
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Ringelgans	Rotgans	B										
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>	Schneegans	Sneeuwgans	V										
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Pfeifente	Smient	T										
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Krickente	Wintertaling	B										
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Stockente	Wilde eend	T										
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Spießente	Pijlstaart	B										
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Reiherente	Kuifeend	T										
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eiderente	Eidereend	B		X	X		X	X	X	X		
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Prachteiderente	Konings eider	B					X					
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Scheckente	Stellers eider	V										
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Eisente	Ilseend	B		X								
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Trauerente	Zwarze zee-eend	B/T										
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Schellente	Briduiker	V										
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	Alpensneehuhn	Alpensneeuwhoen	B										
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Austernfischer	Scholekster	V										
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Sandregenpfeifer	Bontbekplevier	B		X								
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Goldregenpfeifer	Goudplevier	B										
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	Drieteenstrandloper	B										
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Graubruststrandläufer	Gestreepete strandloper	V										
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Meerstrandläufer	Paarse strandloper	B		X						X		
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Knutt	Kanoestrandloper	B										
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Alpenstrandläufer	Bonte strandloper	B										
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Regenbrachvogel	Regenwulp	T										
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Rotschenkel	Tureluur	V										
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Steinwäzler	Steenloper	B										
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Thorshühnchen	Rosse franjepoot	B										
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Odinshühnchen	Grauwe franjepoot	B										
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Spätelraubmöwe	Middelste jager	T			X							
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarlozerraub-möwe	Kleine jager	B		X	X			X			X	
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Falkenraubmöwe	Kleinste jager	B		X	X							
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Skua	Grote jager	B										
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	Schwalbenmöwe	Vorkstaartmeeuw	B										
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Lachmöwe	Kokmeeuw	V										
Common/Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Sturmmöwe	Stormmeeuw	V										
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	Grote Burgemeester	B	X	X	X		X			X		
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Polarmöwe	Kleine burgemeester	T										
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Silbermöwe	Zilvermeeuw	V										
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Heringsmöwe	Kleine mantelmeeuw	V										
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Mantelmöwe	Grote mantelmeeuw	B										
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Dreizehenmöwe	Drieteenmeeuw	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ross' Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	Rosenmöwe	Rossmeeuw	T										
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Elfenbeinmöwe	Ivoormeeuw	B		X	X					X		
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	Noordse stern	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Trochellumme	Zeekoet	B				X	X			X		
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dickschnabellumme	Dikbekzeekoet	B		X	X		X	X				
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Gryllteiste	Zwarze zeekoet	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbentaucher	Kleine alk	B					X				X	
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papageitaucher	Papegaaiduiker	B	X	X	X		X	X			X	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Rauchschwalbe	Boerenwaluw	V										
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Bachstelze	Witte Kwikstaart	V										
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Wiesenpieper	Graspieper	V										
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Steinschmätzer	Tapuit	B										
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Amstel	Merel	V										
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	Sneeuwgors	B		X			X					
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Birkenzeisig	Barnsijjs	V										
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	Spornammer	Ijsgors	V										
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Wacholderdrossel	Kramsvogel	V										
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Rotdrossel	Koperwiek	V										
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Bergfink	Keep	V										
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	Gerfalke	Giervalk	V										



## MAMMALS

[illegible]

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# Christophe Bouchoux

## Expedition Leader

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Christophe Bouchoux is French. His background is sixteen years of backpacking as a naturalist around the world on the five continents. He is a big lover of our planet, nature and wildlife. He worked (and still does sometimes) as a guide in India and Nepal and as a trilingual guide in Finnish Lapland between reindeer herders, frozen lakes and river, northern lights and snowmobiles. He still guides groups of naturalists in search of whales, moose and musk ox in Scandinavia and particularly in Norway.

He recently started to work in polar region and worked as a guide in the Arctic: Svalbard, Franz Joseph land, and East Greenland; and Antarctic zone: Falklands, South Georgia, and Antarctic peninsula. His main subject is the history of polar conquest. When he is not in « cold » regions, Christophe spends his time in his jungle lodge in south Nepal near Bardia National park, home of the Bengal tiger.

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# Pierre Gallego – Expedition Guide

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Pierre is a veterinarian specialized in marine mammal medicine. He has been working in the field of marine biology for 18 years, and has been organizing marine mammal research internships around the world since 2004. He represents the Government of Luxembourg at the International Whaling Commission and CCAMLR, and works with numerous international NGOs to promote marine mammal conservation and to fight cetacean captivity.

He is currently carrying out his PhD with the Oceanology Lab of the University of Liege, Belgium. His PhD thesis deals with pollutants and stable isotopes in humpback

whales off Ecuador and Mozambique.

He is a keen birdwatcher and enjoys photography. The ocean is his passion, and water is his element!



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# Jakub Małecki – Expedition Guide

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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.

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# Emily Clarke – Expedition Guide

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Emily grew up by the ocean and has always found it a source of inspiration and wonder. She has a strong sense of adventure and embraces opportunities whenever they arise, which has resulted in some amazing journeys.

A passion for wildlife conservation, travel and working with people has led her to work onboard expedition vessels.

Familiar with life at sea, Emily divides her time between two fairly different roles. The first as an expedition guide, and the second as a Marine Mammal Observer in the oil and gas industry,

working onboard seismic vessels; protecting marine mammals from anthropogenic sound sources in the ocean.

Emily has over 15 years' experience working with wildlife, both in natural habitats and in rehabilitation. She has spent over ten years working with gorillas, which saw her travel to remote parts of Africa collecting data on wild gorillas, and taking part in conservation and community development projects addressing human-wildlife conflicts.

During her time off, Emily enjoys paddle boarding, kayaking and diving, in-between preparing her latest lectures and planning her next adventure.

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# Paolo Bellezze – Expedition Guide

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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.

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# Andi Schwetz – Expedition Guide

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Andi was born in Budapest and grew up in Germany. Andi has always been fascinated by animals and nature, especially marine mammals ever since she was a child. She wanted to be a whale researcher, became a whale expert, without studying at a university, but through passion. She initially graduated in sociology, but then ran her own cocktail bar for 10 years. However, her enthusiasm for sea creatures never left her and she began to travel the world to be close to these fascinating animals and to observe them.

As a scuba and freediver, she was able to get particularly close to many whale species and experience adventures. For example, she has already swum with orcas three times in Arctic Norway. She came to Oceanwide because she wanted to share her passion with heart and enthusiasm. She was already able to gain experience as a trainee in Antarctica in the spring of 2023. The polar regions with their special fauna exert a very special attraction on her. She is also interested in landscape photography and has great tips for successful mobile phone photography. Another passion of hers is yoga, which she also practices as a yoga instructor. She speaks English, German, Hungarian, and a little bit of Spanish and French. Andi is looking forward to more great adventures as a team member of Oceanwide!



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# Koen Hoekemeijer - Expedition Guide

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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. Snorkelling 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 ;).

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# Esther Josten – Expedition Guide

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The place she calls home is a small village in a western German hillside area called Eifel. It's surrounded by extinct volcanoes, vast forests and steep valleys. From this base she started exploring the world and found my great passion in the travel industry and outdoor life.

She studied International Tourism Management in the Netherlands, lived in France, Spain, and New Zealand for a while. She worked as a guide for over 7 years now and in many different countries. My recent time I spent working as an outdoor guide and

skipper for a small locally owned tour company in the beautiful fjord lands of Southern Norway.

What she loves about her job is not only getting out into nature and being in touch with the elements, but also the meaningful connections with people from all corners of the world. Travelling opens our eyes and expands our horizon. She personally takes a lot of inspiration from all the beautiful people and experiences along the way. Besides all natural beauties our planet offers, she is fascinated by its' history, cultures and languages. And at the end of the day, she believes there's nothing better than sharing stories and memories with your travel companions and eventually with your beloved ones back home.

She is grateful for all the opportunities and chances she has been given in life and she loves to share her enthusiasm and knowledge with other passionate globetrotters. One of her biggest motivations for every tour is to help create a truly unforgettable experience for the travellers she guides.

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# De Winter Antoine – Medical doctor

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I'm Antoine de Winter, your ship's doctor, bringing 13 years of medical experience across diverse environments. From bustling urban centres to remote outposts, I've tended to a wide array of patients, all while immersing myself in various cultures and societies through my background in anthropology.

Beyond my medical and anthropological pursuits, I possess a profound appreciation for nature's silent landscapes and the allure of adventure. Whether it's the serene beauty of untouched wilderness or the thrill of exploring uncharted territories, I find solace and inspiration in the great outdoors.

I've been working from Bruxelles to Canada, up to Mayotte and the Indian ocean. From social to emergency. I do appreciate the company of others and go to meet other people and culture.

Can't wait to navigate the challenges and wonders that lie ahead, fostering camaraderie and forging memories that will endure beyond the bounds of this expedition. Here's to a successful voyage filled with discovery and meaningful experiences.

## German

Ich bin Antoine de Winter, Ihr Schiffsarzt, und bringe 13 Jahre medizinische Erfahrung in unterschiedlichsten Umgebungen mit. Von geschäftigen Stadtzentren bis zu abgelegenen Außenposten habe ich mich um eine Vielzahl von Patienten gekümmert und dabei durch meinen anthropologischen Hintergrund in verschiedene Kulturen und Gesellschaften eingetaucht.

Über meine medizinischen und anthropologischen Aktivitäten hinaus hege ich eine tiefe Wertschätzung für die stillen Landschaften der Natur und den Reiz des Abenteuers. Ob es die ruhige Schönheit unberührter Wildnis oder der Nervenkitzel ist, unerforschte Gebiete zu erkunden, ich finde Trost und Inspiration in der freien Natur.

Ich habe von Brüssel bis Kanada, bis Mayotte und dem Indischen Ozean gearbeitet. Von gesellig bis Notfall. Ich schätze die Gesellschaft anderer und gehe, um andere Menschen und Kulturen kennenzulernen.

Ich kann es kaum erwarten, die Herausforderungen und Wunder zu meistern, die vor uns liegen, Kameradschaft zu fördern und Erinnerungen zu schaffen, die über die Grenzen dieser Expedition hinaus Bestand haben werden. Auf eine erfolgreiche Reise voller Entdeckungen und bedeutsamer Erfahrungen.



# Welcome aboard!

Day 1 / Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024

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

**When all are on board**

**Please listen to announcements for timings:**

**Introduction to the ship** by our hotel manager Aleks and **mandatory safety briefing and lifeboat drill** in the Lounge/Bar – Deck 5.

**Thereafter we invite you to our Welcome Aboard Briefing** in the Lounge/Bar – Deck 5.

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

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

**IMPORTANT: Before you go to bed tonight.**

For all transmitting devices in Kongsfjord tomorrow morning (Mobile phone, cameras, laptops, ear pods ...),

**# turn off bluetooth**

**# turn off wifi**





# Kongsfjord

Day 2 | Tuesday 23rd July 2024

**IMPORTANT:** For all transmitting devices in Kongsfjord today:

# turn off bluetooth

# turn off wifi

(Mobile phone, cameras, laptops, ear pods ...)

**07.15**      **Wake up call.** A wonderful good morning!

**07.30**      **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.

**08.30**      **Mandatory** briefing in the lounge on how to behave in **Polar Bear country** and how to get ashore (and back) safely with our **rubber boats** (Zodiacs).

Followed by our first zodiac cruise in Kongsfjord

**12.30**      **Lunch-Bufferet** for one hour in the Dining Room.

**13.30**      **Mandatory** briefing about Ny Ålesund

## When the gangway is prepared

**Landing: Ny Ålesund.** The northernmost permanent settlement in the world was established in 1917 as a mining settlement. Today, Ny Ålesund is a centre for Arctic research and a famous historical site. From here Amundsen, Ellsworth & Nobile flew over 90°N in the airship *Norge*.

- **Feel free** to leave (and come back to) the ship any time.
- Please stay on the **gravel roads** at all times.
- The souvenir shop will be open for us from 13:30 until 14.30.
- **15.30** we meet at the **bust of Roald Amundsen** (in the middle of the village) to walk to the anchoring mast of the *Norge and Italia* and Paolo will tell the story of Amundsen.
- **17.00** be **back on board**, we are leaving Ny Ålesund

**18.30**      **Recap of today and briefing** for tomorrow.

**19.00**      **Dinner** is served. Bon Appetit!

"I am prepared to go anywhere, provided it be forward."

David Livingstone (1813-1873)



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Liefdefjord

Day 3 | Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024

- 07.15      Good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30      **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 09.00      **Zodiac cruise: Monacobreen.** Today we wake up in beautiful Liefdefjorden (Love fjord), where majestic Monacobreen dominates the scenery and spills into the sea. If wind and weather are in our favour, we will go for a Zodiac cruise along the 5-kilometre-wide glacier front.
- 12.30      **Lunch** is waiting for us. Enjoy your meal.
- 14.30      **Landing: Texas Bar, Liefdefjorden.** This afternoon we want to get ashore on the northern side of Liefdefjorden, at a small trapper's cabin called "Texas Bar". We will split into groups and explore the tundra in different walking groups. Except for the strenuous hike, walking here is easy.
- 18.15      Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00      Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!

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

*Author unknown*



## A DAY IN THE PACK ICE

Day 4 | Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

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

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

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

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

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



## Rossøya and Phippsøya (Seven Islands)

Day 5 | Friday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2024

Today we will explore the Seven Islands.

- 07.15**      **Good Morning**, good morning.
- 7.30          **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 9.00          Zodiac cruise around **Rossøya**, the northernmost islet of the whole archipelago of Svalbard. A very seldomly visited place with birds and good potential for other wildlife.
- 12.30        The **lunch-buffet** is waiting for us in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 14:30        Landing on **Phippsøya**, the largest island in the heart of the seven islands. It offers a good variety of landscapes and good chances to see walruses.
- 18.15**       **Recap** of today and **briefing** for tomorrow in the lounge.
- 19.00        Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!

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

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





## DAILY PROGRAM

# HINLOPENSTRETET

Day 6 | Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> July 2024

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

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

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



# TORELLNESET & BRÅSVELLBREEN

Day 7 | Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024

- 07.15**      **Rise and shine.** Wake up call.
- 07.30**      **Breakfast.** Let's get a bite.
- 09.00**      **Landing: Torellneset or Ardnaset** (depending on weather). In southern Hinlopen, both landings are very good places to see walrus. If our friends are at home, we will visit the animals in two groups. **Both groups will get the same amount of time with the walrus.**
- The first 5 boats:** We are **going for a short stroll first**. After that we visit the walrus.
- The second 5 boats:** We are **going to the walrus first**. After that we go for a short stroll. There will be the possibility to get back to the ship right after the walrus visit.
- 12.30**      **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 14.30**      **Ship's cruise along the Bråsvellbreen.** Plancius will sail along the glacier front of this gigantic glacier. Together with Austfonna they form a glacier front of about 180 km. Beautiful waterfalls falling from the top of the glacier can be observed.
- 18.15**      Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00**      Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!



# Kapp Waldburg & Kapp Lee

Day 8 | Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July 2024

- 07.15**      **A wonderful good morning.** Wake up call.
- 07.30**      Breakfast buffet for one hour.
- 09.00**      **Landing: Kapp Waldburg.** In the morning we would like to take you to a beautiful landing spot which is a kittiwake colony. Thousands of kittiwakes nest here and the site is frequently visited by arctic foxes trying to steal eggs or chicks. This site also attracts polar bears on a regular basis.
- 12.30**      **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 14.30**      **Landing: Kapp Lee.** During lunch we will be sailing south and intend to land on southwestern Edgeøya, at Kapp Lee. It is one of the biggest walrus colonies and a historical place (Pomors trappers, science and oil industry...)
- 18.15**      Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00**      Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!

*What is the urge to travel? I think it comes from the desire to see what is behind the next hill; a sense of adventure and restlessness.*

*Peter Schmidt Mikkelsen, Sirius man 1977 - 1979*



# DAILY PROGRAM

## HORNSUND

Day 9 | Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> of July 2024

**07.15**      **Good morning!**

**07.30**      **Breakfast** – enjoy!

**09.00**      **Landing: Gåshamna, Hornsund.** Today we will be exploring Hornsund, Spitsbergen's most southerly and arguably one of the most beautiful fjords. We intend to land on the western side of Gåshamna, a wide bay that has been witness to different phases of Spitsbergen's history. Remains of a 17<sup>th</sup> century English whaling station and foundations of Pomor houses (Russian hunters) are found in the area. In different hiking groups we invite you to explore the area.

**Bring your swimsuit.** If you ever wanted to take a swim in the Arctic-ocean, this is your chance at the end of our landing. We bring towels. Enjoy!

**12.30**      **Lunch** is waiting for us.

**14.30**      **Zodiac cruise: Burgerbukta, Hornsund.** This afternoon we are going on a zodiac cruise in one of the most beautiful fjords of South Spitsbergen. With its high cliffs, this place gives a taste of Greenland... for a future cruise 😊

**18.15**      **Farewell Cocktail with Captain & last official meeting.** Please join us for a toast on our voyage!

**19.00**      **The Last Supper.** Bon Appetit!

*Where does the white go when the snow melts?*

*Author unknown*





# DAILY PROGRAM

## LONGYEARBYEN

Day 10 | Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2024

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

**Important:** Please put your check-in luggage into the corridors before you go to breakfast! The crew will bring it on shore. Please **identify your luggage** on shore, to be sure it's off the vessel.

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

**09:00** **Bus From Plancius to Town**

**From Town to airport :**

12:30	Tag	(SK4425),	<b>TURKOISE</b>
15:00	Tag	(SK4491),	<b>ORANGE</b>
15:45	Tag	(DY391),	<b>BLUE</b>
17:30	Tag	(DY391),	<b>Red ribbon</b>

**If you stay in town. No tag and take your luggage with you in the bus to Town at 9:00**

**On behalf of Captain, Crew and Staff, have a safe journey home!**