



NORTH SPITSBERGEN EXPLORER

Polar Bears, Bowhead Whales, Sea Ice and More

Longyearbyen – Longyearbyen

10th – 17th June 2025

On board *m/v Plancius*



M/V *Plancius* was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named “Hr. Ms. *Tydeman*”. The vessel was completely rebuilt as a passenger vessel in 2009 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). M/v *Plancius* is 89 m long, 14.5 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, ice class 1D, 10,5 knots average cruising speed and has 3 Diesel- Electric engines.



Captain Artur Iakovlev (Russia)

and his international crew of 50 sailors

Chief Officer:	Don Buren	[Netherlands]
Second Officer:	Giovanie Simene	[Philippines]
Third Officer:	Aleksandrs Spiridonovs	[Lathvia]
Hotel Manager:	Oleksandr Lyebiedev	[Ukraine]
Asst. Hotel Manager:	Victoria Bridgwood	[UK]
Head Chef:	Bawa Gaurav	[India]
Sous Chef:	Oleksii Shvets	[Ukraine]
Ships doctor:	Francis Screech	[UK]
Expedition Leader:	Jan Belgers	[Netherlands]
Asst. Expedition Leader:	Michelle van Dijk	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Eduardo Rubio Herrera	[Guatemala]
Expedition Guide:	Koen Hoekemeijer	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	Mark Whiffin	[UK]
Expedition Guide:	Marco Rosso	[Italy]
Expedition Guide:	Christophe Gouraud	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Matthias Kopp	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Clara Iacchetti	[Argentina]

WELCOMES YOU ON BOARD!

Day 1 – Tuesday, June 10. Longyearbyen, Embarkation

20h00 GPS Position: 78°14.8'N / 014°58.4'E

Wind: NE-2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Part. Cloudy • T Air: 3°C • T Sea: 4°C

The air buzzed with excitement as we gathered on the pier of Longyearbyen, nestled in the stark, stunning wilderness of Svalbard. A cloudy Arctic sky, the buzzing noise of the zodiac engines and quite a busy embarkation added adrenaline to the beginning of our voyage.

The ride out to *M/V Plancius* was exhilarating. The zodiac skimmed over the choppy water, rising and falling with each swell as it made its way to the ship anchored just offshore. Once on board we had the opportunity to familiarize ourselves with the ship's layout—its winding corridors, cozy cabins, and the various decks that would soon become our floating home. Friendly crew members and expedition staff, always smiling and welcoming, were quick to introduce themselves, offering help and answering questions as we explored.



Soon, we gathered in the panoramic lounge, its large windows offering great views of the surrounding landscape. There, we attended the mandatory safety drill, followed by an informative presentation by our Expedition Leader Jan, outlining the voyage

ahead—our route, the planned landings, and what to expect in the coming days.

Afterwards, we headed to the dining room for our first dinner on board. The atmosphere was warm and lively, with the hum of conversation and clinking cutlery filling the space. Over a

delicious meal, we began to settle in, bonding with fellow passengers and sharing the growing anticipation of the journey into the Northern area of the Svalbard archipelago.

Day 2 – Wednesday, June 11. Smeerenburgfjorden and Ytre Norskøya

12h00 GPS Position: 79°39.3'N / 011°16.1'E

Wind: WNW-2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • T Air: 4°C • T Sea: 3°C



Our first full day of expedition cruising in the Arctic! And what a beautiful scene to greet us – nice sea and spectacular, snow-covered mountains of the North-West coast of Spitsbergen on our starboard side. We soaked it all in before heading for breakfast, after which we gathered in the lounge to receive our mandatory for

zodiac and polar bear safety. Both are absolutely essential and as we listened carefully it became clear, if we hadn't realised fully before, just why they call this expedition cruising. We were truly in the Arctic and it's not a theme park!





After this we were able to relax whilst Plancius transported us into Smeerenburgfjorden. As we turned into the fjord from the open sea a fabulous vista opened out in front of us. Beautiful ice bound jagged peaks on either side and, at the far end, the majestic glacier itself. We slowly made our way in with everyone out on deck, taking the scenery and wildlife. In the water we spotted Brunnich's and Black Guillemots, Common Eider and a few Atlantic Puffins, joined by a curious Harp Seal. Arctic Skuas were seen chasing a poor Black-legged Kittiwake, trying to steal the food that had just been swallowed. In the distance, while observing the crevassed 3-km wide terminus of Smeerengburgbreen a small pod of Belugas were visible to the trained eyes. It was a quiet yet magical moment, witnessing these elusive whales in their icy habitat.

We then sailed through the channel to Smeerengburg itself, an old whaling station on the end of spit of land. Several centuries ago it was a hive of activity with up to 300 men working there during the arctic summer, catching whales and walrus and rendering the carcasses to extract the oil from the blubber, which was then distributed, sold and widely used in western Europe.

We dragged ourselves and went down to an excellent lunch whilst we sailed to our afternoon of destination.



We dropped anchor off the coast of a small island in the northwest of Svalbard: Ytre Norskøya. The afternoon was calm and the anticipation high as we prepared to set foot on this historic and remote outpost used for centuries by whalers to spot whale blows.

Following a briefing from Jan, we disembarked and met up with the expedition team onshore. The group split into three: the "Contemplators" stayed low to explore the coastal

areas at a slower pace, while the other two groups ascended a scenic hill on the eastern side of the island. The view from there was truly spectacular—sweeping Arctic landscapes as far as the eye could see. Michelle shared fascinating insights into the local vegetation, while Marco offered a geological perspective on the land beneath our feet.

Some of us pushed further uphill with Michelle, Koen, Marco, and Mark, eventually reaching the island's summit at 150 meters above sea level. Meanwhile, others followed Christophe to get a closer look at the thriving colonies of Little Auks and Atlantic Puffins. Remarkably, this site is home to the northernmost known breeding population of Atlantic Puffins—an extraordinary wildlife highlight.

As if the day needed anything more, we were lucky enough to be visited by a curious Arctic fox, much to the delight of the hikers.

Back on board *Plancius*, we enjoyed another superb dinner, followed by the daily recap in the



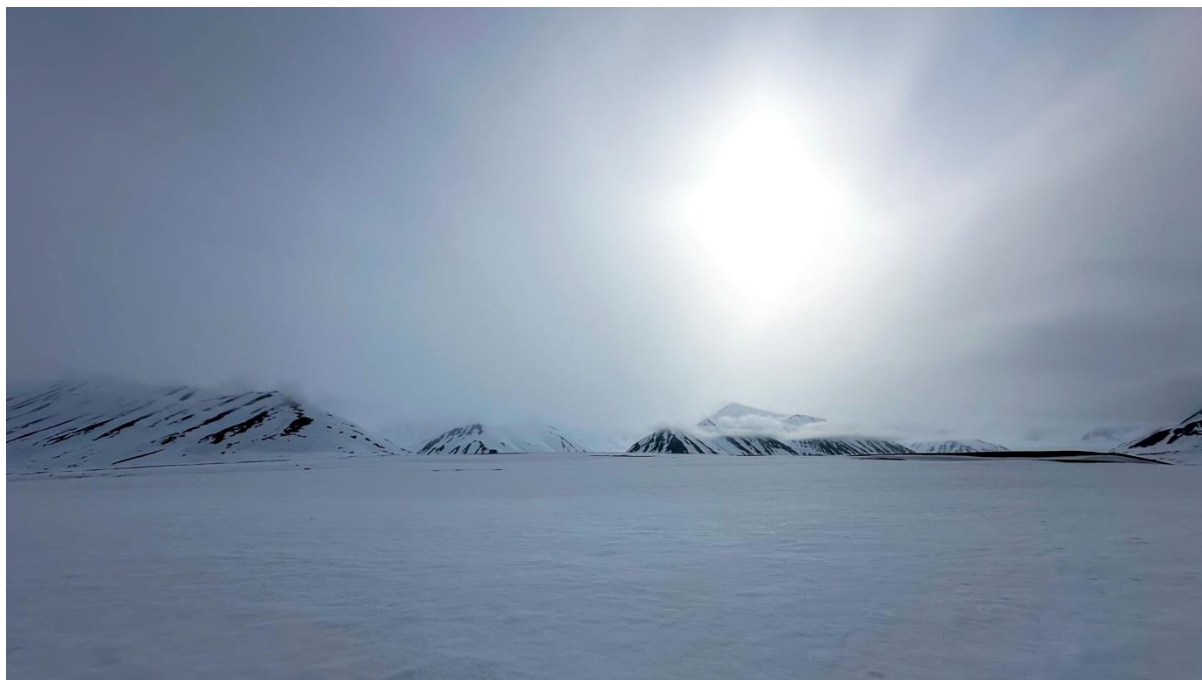
observation lounge with Jan and the expedition team. Afterwards, the ship gently cruised into the scenic Raudfjorden, bathed in the soft light of the Arctic evening. A good night's rest awaits, as we look forward to another day of adventure in the unforgettable wilderness of Svalbard.

Day 3 – Thursday, June 12. Mushamna and Liefdefjorden

12h00 GPS Position: 79°40.2'N / 014°08.8'E

Wind: ENE-1 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • T Air : 6°C • T Sea : 3°C

Today we woke up for our first full activity day and as such we were very excited. We enjoyed breakfast and then we slowly started to prepare for our first landing and snowshoe hike. During wintertime Svalbard gets significant snowfall and much of the snow is still covering the breathtaking landscapes in June.



Before we could land at Mushamna in Woodfjorden, the expedition team first needed to scout the area for the presence of polar bears. From the ship no bear was spotted, however with quite a lot of *deadground* around a check on land was required. We could see the armed guides walking into several directions to ensure our safety.

Then it was time to board the zodiacs and go on land. The team had put lots of snowshoes out and after a short *struggle* most of us were geared up and ready to go. The sportive hikers left first and the rest of us followed. The weather was great, a little drizzle, but also low hanging clouds that created a beautiful mystic atmosphere with the sun shining vaguely behind them. Walking in the virgin snow was fantastic and seeing tracks of polar bears, reindeers and foxes was very thrilling.





Mushamna has probably the largest and best-looking trapper hut in all Svalbard. It was erected in 1987 by Kjell Reidar Hovelsrud. What regular trapper huts look like can also be seen here as the hut that was built in 1927 by Hilmar Nøis however this hut is not in use anymore and is now considered a historic relic.

While we were all on our hikes a radio call from the bridge came in. A polar bear had been spotted swimming in the waters close to the hut. A polar bear can cause a serious threat to our safety and as such an evacuation plan was put to practice. While we were walking back to the landing site, the bear had come to shore. But to our luck the bear didn't want to be close to us. We could see it walking parallel to us while looking sideways every now and then to check our location only to move on further inland.



Once we were back on the ship we had a good view on the bear and it was impressive to see how fast they can walk and how easy they climb steep slopes in the deep snow.

After a while we left the bear and we started making our way to Liefdefjorden, the fjord of *love*. But first things first, lunch time!

For the afternoon a zodiac cruise was planned in Liefdefjorden where we could see beautiful glaciers, stunning ice formations and endless landscapes. The weather was near perfect with no wind at all and sunny skies.



The reflections in the water were perfect and with mild temperatures it was a wonderful afternoon. We spotted a bearded seal resting and *posing* on an ice flow whereas we also observed many bird species. It was a lovely afternoon.

Recap was a fun one. Koen talked briefly about Belugas, but the highlight was Eduardo who creatively explained to us why ice sometimes looks blue and green and he did this with the help of his expedition fotons ;).



Then we enjoyed another delicious meal, but the day wasn't over yet. During dinner gracious M/V Plancius had set course to a small island called Moffen where we could see dozens of walrus hauling out, Sabine's gulls and even an Ivory gull was spotted.



After a full day it was now time to enjoy a well-deserved sleep! Good night!

Day 4 – Friday, June 13. In the Pack Ice of Northwestern Svalbard

12h00 GPS Position: 80°00.9'N / 004°48.5'E

Wind: SSE-3 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • T Air: 5°C • T Sea: 0°C

A peaceful and serene scene awaited us this morning: the ship gently resting at the edge of the sea ice, surrounded by a vast frozen landscape stretching all the way to the horizon. A quiet, cloudy sky hung above us—not dramatic, not gloomy, just a soft Arctic grey that made everything feel still and timeless. We had plans to stay here for the whole day (and the following days) moving along the ice edge, and over the continental shelf on the search for bowhead whales, polar bears, ivory gulls and any other wildlife we would encounter.

We spent the morning navigating through the sea ice, scanning the horizon for signs of Arctic fauna. Northern fulmars, Brent geese, Atlantic puffins and the most seen, Little auks, kittiwakes



and guillemots accompanied us. Around 10:30 our expedition leader, Jan, showed us our tracks during the night and our current position, we had reached our northern latitude this morning at 80° 11,3°N! As the morning scouting was still infructuous Koen gifted us with a



lecture on polar bears, he told us about their distribution, morphology, reproduction habits and their struggle to move around and find preys in this increasing warming Arctic environment.

We enjoyed another excellent lunch at the dining room. Some of us went for a recovering nap while the rest stayed in the outer

decks, the lounge and the bridge scouting for more wildlife! The afternoon brought us a fascinating presentation by Marco on Sea Ice and its dynamics. He introduced us to the marvellous world of ice, taught us about its physics, its formation and the threats the arctic ocean is suffering in the current warming scenario. So interesting, so fragile!

As the Plancius continued her way alternating between the fast ice and open waters, the clouds lingered peacefully overhead, even some sun rays heated us while scouting on the outer decks.

The day ended with the daily recap hosted by Jan and the expedition team, followed by a satisfying dinner. After dinner we watched a documentary on polar bears, it was made with the help of spy cameras which are a great tool to film these dangerous, mighty and curious animals. Our luck wasn't the best for wildlife, but being in the pack ice with the warm light of the sun through the clouds and the peaceful weather was something we will never forget.



Day 5 – Saturday, June 14. Drifting Pack Ice in the Fram Strait

12h00 GPS Position: 79°39.5'N / 001°57.1'E

Wind: NNE-2 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • T Air : 2°C • T Sea : -1°C



The day began with the gentle wake-up call from our esteemed expedition leader, Jan. Yet, the early morning light revealed that some of our fellow adventurers had already embraced the Arctic dawn. Throughout the night, we had been navigating the edge of the pack ice at a deliberate pace, and by morning, we found ourselves in a captivating expanse of ice—neither too open nor too dense—creating an ideal habitat for the true monarch of the Arctic: the polar bear.

With keen eyes scanning the icy wilderness, our hopes were high. And then, in the early morning light, our guide Mark spotted a distant, yellowish dot on the horizon. As the *Plancius* edged closer, the dot transformed into the majestic form of a polar bear. Unperturbed by our presence, it moved purposefully across the ice, seemingly on a mission. Eventually, it paused at an older



kill, offering little sustenance. For us, however, it was a mesmerizing spectacle—watching the bear leap from one ice floe to another, swim effortlessly, and traverse the ice with a relaxed grace. At times, it even appeared to pose atop a pressure ridge, as if aware of our eager gazes and cameras.



After some time, the bear continued its solitary journey, and we, in turn, set off in search of more wildlife encounters. The surrounding scenery was breathtaking—vast expanses of ice under the soft Arctic light. Later, our expedition team invited us to embark on a zodiac cruise through the pack ice—a surreal experience of drifting in a

small boat amidst the ever-shifting ice floes. The area teemed with birdlife: Northern Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Little Auks, and both Brünnich's and Black Guillemots graced our path.

As the chill set in, the opportunity for a Polar Plunge presented itself. Many of us, driven by a mix of exhilaration and daring, seized the moment. The water temperature hovered around -1°C, a stark contrast to the warmth of our anticipation. Some leaped into the frigid waters with abandon, while others gingerly eased in from the gangway. Each participant emerged with a rush of adrenaline and a triumphant smile, the cold quickly forgotten in the warmth of shared camaraderie and accomplishment.

Later, we gathered on the back deck for a high Arctic BBQ under the expansive sky. Specially prepared tables allowed us to savour delicious fare amidst the frosty landscape. As the evening progressed, the BBQ transformed into a lively celebration, with music and dancing that continued late into the night, echoing the joy and unity of our unforgettable Arctic adventure.



Day 6 – Sunday, June 15. Sailing back to the Continental Shelf

12h00 GPS Position: 78°31.2'N / 002°35.7'E

Wind: SW-4 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • T Air : 3°C • T Sea : 1°C



Our third day in the ice began in the stillness of the Arctic morning as the ship cruised westward through a mosaic of pack ice. The scene was quintessentially polar—drifting floes under an arctic sky, dotted with life. Harp seals were abundant, their curious faces peeking from leads in the ice, while a few graceful Ivory gulls swept passed, all to soon disappearing against the vast white expanse.

By midday, the vessel departed the ice edge and turned southward, setting course for the edge of the continental shelf west of Svalbard. The sea grew rougher than in recent days, a reminder of the wildness of these northern waters. As the ship rolled southward, guests split their afternoon between scanning the ocean from the bridge in hopes of

spotting elusive whales or attending one of two insightful lectures. One explored the lives of whales themselves, while the other delved into the complex relationship between whales and humans.

Wildlife sightings during the passage south were sparse, with a few Atlantic Puffins bobbing in the waves or flying laps around the ship, a single Snow Bunting appearing improbably far from land, and a handful of elegant Long-tailed Skuas briefly investigated the ship before continuing on their course.



Late in the afternoon, the ship reached the edge of the continental shelf and began to trace a southerly route along the shelf edge. These nutrient-rich waters, stirred by upwellings created by the underwater bathymetry, held the promise for encounters with marine giants. Spirits were high with the hope of seeing cetaceans taking advantage of this feeding zone.



During the evening recap, Jan outlined the plans for the final landings of the expedition, while Clara shared her experiences of diving beneath the Arctic surface, painting a vivid picture of the hidden marine life below the ice. Marco followed with an engaging explanation of the powerful ocean currents that influence the Svalbard region. As the session concluded and guests turned to dinner, excitement returned to the deck. A pod of White-beaked Dolphins made a brief but thrilling appearance just before the meal. Then, as dinner concluded, four Fin Whales were spotted near the ship, offering stunning close-range views of these massive mammals, second in size only to the Blue Whale —the perfect crescendo to a day that began in silence and ended in awe.

Day 7 – Monday, June 16. Poolepynten and Alkhornet

12h00 GPS Position: 78°19.1'N / 012°24.4'E

Wind: NNW-4 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Part. Cloudy • T Air: 6°C • T Sea: 4°C



After a few days sailing in the western coast of Svalbard, early in the morning M/V *Plancius* moved slowly, easing into Forlandsundet—the narrow channel that separates the island of Spitsbergen from Prins Karls Forland.

A quiet morning with calm seas and low clouds, only disturbed by the occasional squeak of the glaucous gulls. The surrounding mountains unveiled their outlines slowly, softened by the lingering mist. Along the shoreline, scattered patches of drift ice rested among weathered stones, and further up the slope, small groups of reindeer moved quietly across the tundra. Their pale coats blended with the muted colours of the land, heads lowered as they grazed on sparse vegetation uncovered by the short Arctic summer.

After a short shuttle, we landed at Poolepynten, an interesting sandbar on the eastern coast of Prins Karls Forland, named after Jonas Poole, an English explorer and early whaler. The strip of land stretched low and narrow between the sea and the sky, its sandy surface scattered with driftwood, kelp, and bones bleached by wind and time. Quietly and



accompanied by our guides, we walked toward a small group of walrus hauled out near the beacon. Their large, heavy bodies were lying close together on the gravel, some resting, others occasionally shifting or lifting their heads. A few gave low grunts or snorted, but most stayed still, seemingly unbothered by our presence at a respectful distance. The smell was strong and unmistakable, a mix of sea and animals. We stood quietly, watching them in the grey light, taking in the size and calm of the group without causing a disturbance.



Walrus are social and highly adapted marine mammals, well suited to life in the Arctic. The ones found around Svalbard belong to the Atlantic subspecies, slightly smaller than their Pacific relatives. Both males and females have long tusks, which they use not only for defence and dominance but also to help pull themselves out of the water onto ice or land. A thick layer of blubber insulates them against the cold and

serves as an energy reserve during periods of fasting. Their whiskers (vibrissae) are incredibly sensitive, allowing them to detect clams and other small invertebrates on the seafloor—their main source of food. Despite their size and bulk, walrus are agile in the water and spend much of their time swimming, diving, and foraging beneath the surface.

In the afternoon we moved to Trygghamna, a shelter fjord in the Northwestern corner of Isfjorden. The sun was shining and temperature had arose in the mean time and we found



ourselves hiking in a lush green tundra located at the foot of a beautiful bird cliff. The Precambrian meta-carbonate of Alkhornet made the perfect scenario for a wonderful stroll around ice wedges, rushing stream, shiny boulder and the ever present Svalbard Reindeer grazing around.

Unfortunately it was time to go back to the ship, where words of appreciation by captain Artur and EL Jan were spent to thank all of us for this fantastic trip in the high Arctic.



Day 8 – Tuesday, June 17. Longyearbyen, Disembarkation

08h00 GPS Position: 78°13.9'N / 015°37.6'E

Wind: E-3 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Overcast • T Air: 4°C • T Sea: 3°C

A grey blanket of soft clouds over the port of Longyearbyen greeted us this morning. Our ship, *MV Plancius*, rested gently at anchor, its silhouette softened by the misty air, signalling the tranquil conclusion of our expedition.

After our last breakfast on board, we packed up and headed to the gangway to disembark. We said goodbye to the crew who had supported us throughout the trip and to the fellow travellers we'd gotten to know along the way. Our last zodiac ride, across still waters, brought us to the jetty of the northernmost city in the world. Some of us took time to explore the quiet town of Longyearbyen, while others got ready to catch their flights home. As we took one last look at *Plancius*, anchored in the bay, we thought back on the memorable experiences we shared, and maybe even started thinking about our next adventure.

Total distance sailed on our voyage: 878.5 nm
Northernmost position: 80° 10.4'N / 004° 56.3'E

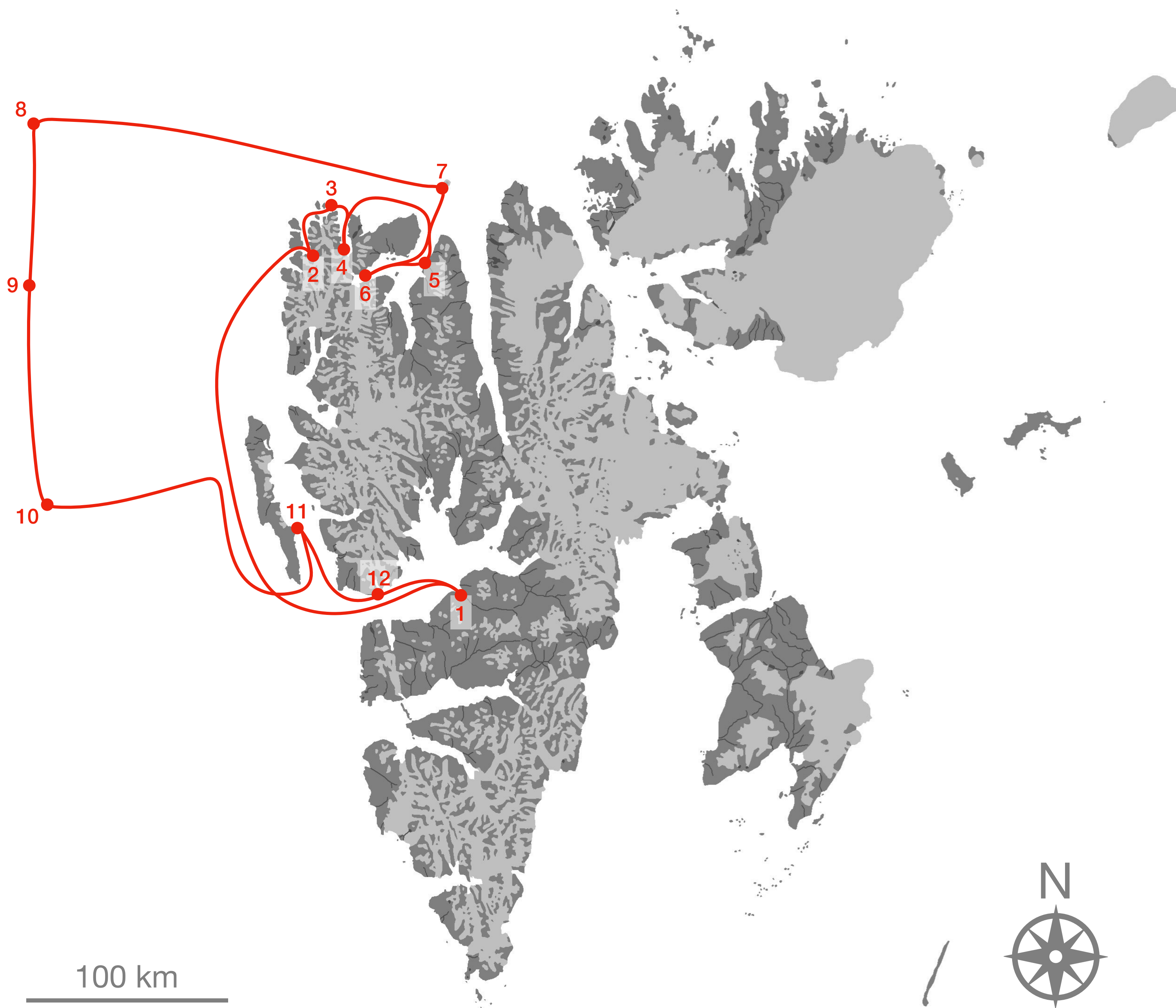
On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, the Captain, Crew and Expedition staff would like to thank you for pleasant times, it has been a pleasure travelling with you.



North Spitsbergen Explorer

10-17 June 2025

- *MV Plancius* -



1- Longyearbyen

2- Smeerenburgfjorden

3- Ytre Norskøya

4- Raudfjorden

5- Mushamna

6- Liefdefjorden

7- Moffen (northernmost position: $80^{\circ}11,2N$)

8- Pack-ice

9- Pack-ice (polar plunge at $79^{\circ}34,4N$ / $001^{\circ}41,9E$)

10- Pack-ice

11- Poolepynten

12- Alkhornet

Birds and Mammals of Svalbard

English Name	Scientific	10-jun	11-jun	12-jun	13-jun	14-jun	15-jun	16-jun	17-jun
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>								
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	X						X	
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>								
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>								
Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>								
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>		X	X				X	X
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	X	X	X				X	
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>								
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>								
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>			X	X			X	
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>								
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>								
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>								
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>								
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>								
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>								
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	X	X	X				X	X
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>			X					
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>								
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>			X		X			
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>								
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>								
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	X		X					
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>								
Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>							X	
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>								
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>								
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>								
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	X	X	X				X	

Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>								
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>				X	X			
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>								
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>								
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>							X	
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>						X	X	
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>								
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>								
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>		X	X	X			X	
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>				X	X	X		
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>		X	X		X		X	
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>			X			X		
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>								
Common/Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>								
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>								
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>								
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		X						
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>								
Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ross' Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>								
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>								
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>		X		X				
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>								
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>								
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>								
Northern Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>					X			
European Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>								
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	X	X	X			X	X	X

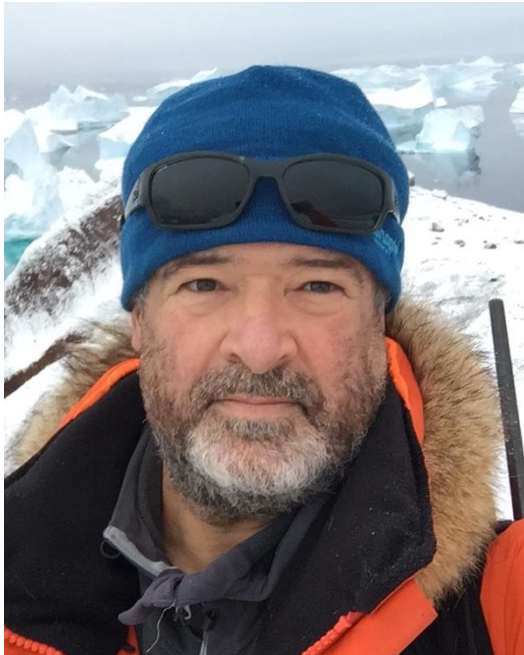
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>								
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>								
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>								
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>								
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>								
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>								

MAMMALS

English	Scientific	10-jun	11-jun	12-jun	13-jun	14-jun	15-jun	16-jun	17-jun
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>			X				X	
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>		X	X					
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>				X				
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>		X	X			X		
Hooded seal	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>					X			
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>							X	
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>			X					
Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>								
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>								
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>						X	X	
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>								
Bowhead whale	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>								
Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>								
Narwhal	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>								
Northern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>								
Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>								
White-beaked Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>						X	X	
Beluga	<i>Dephinapterus leucas</i>		X						
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>			X		X			
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>		X					X	

Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	X	X	X				X	X
Sibling vole	<i>Microtus rossiaemeridionalis</i>								
Short tailed Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>								

Jan Belgers – Expedition Leader



Jan Belgers, from the Netherlands, has been working as a professional outdoor guide and expedition leader in the Polar regions for many years now. Travelling and guiding in wildernesses all over the world are his passion. His work as a guide brought him from the high mountain ranges of the Himalayas and Andes to the extreme latitudes of Spitsbergen and Antarctica.

His first experience with the Polar Regions was in 1990 when he joined a scientific expedition from Iceland to Kapp Farvell in Greenland for the “World Ocean Circulation Experiment” (WOCE). In 1992 he joined the “Winter Weddell Gyre Study” (WWGS) with the German scientific icebreaker Polarstern into the remote Weddell Sea, in the Antarctic and wintered there. During these expeditions Jan got bitten by the Polar Bug and therefore he has been returning to the Polar regions frequently, joining in more than 180 Polar expeditions.

Jan's professional background is marine ecology, but he quitted science a long time ago. Since 1998 he works full-time as a professional guide and expedition leader for Oceanwide Expeditions, in the high northern and southern latitudes.

Jan is a keen nature and outdoor enthusiast and feels at home on the sea, due to his background in marine biology. He lectures on natural history, biology and polar history and is a polar literature fanatic.

Michelle van Dijk – Asst. Exp Leader



Is nearly a local, since she is the owner of Longyearbyen Camping, world's northernmost camping site. Working as a guide, this campsite has been her home base since 2004.

Living in a tent, she spends three months a year on Spitsbergen guiding day trips, trekking & expedition cruises. These days she mainly works on ships, as guide or expedition leader.

She believes that there is no better way to get closer to a place than to work there, she also lived in Sweden & Iceland.

Her first visit of Spitsbergen was back in 2001 and instantly she fell in love with this remote archipelago.

Although she picked plants as her specialism, Michelle is a generalist. She took the course Arctic & Antarctic studies at Groningen University and recently she published a book about Sjef van Dongen, who took part in the rescue operation after Nobile's airship crashed in 1928.

Michelle has been working as a guide on Antarctica, the Falklands, Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Jan Mayen, South Georgia, Spitsbergen and Sweden.

Eduardo Rubio-Herrera Exp. Guide



I describe myself as an astronomer by profession with a passion for sharing nature with others.

After studying physics, I got my PhD in Astronomy from the University of Amsterdam in 2010. After a postdoctoral position I became a lecturer of physics and Astronomy as well as a guide in expedition cruise ships. Since 2018 I have been working for Oceanwide Expeditions in the Antarctic and in the Arctic in several roles including guide, Assistant Expedition Leader and Expedition Leader in the Arctic and the Antarctic. Today besides working for Oceanwide I split my time teaching

undergraduate students and making astronomy outreach at the largest planetarium of Switzerland at the Swiss Museum of Transport in Lucerne.

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

Koen Hoekemeijer – Exp. 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 ;).

Mark Whiffin - Expedition Guide



Mark holds a Master's Degree in Conservation Biology and is an ornithologist and birder with extensive field experience. His passion for birds and travelling started from a very young age in East Sussex, England and expanded from there.

After finishing studying at university, he participated in, and led numerous expeditions and scientific research projects to remote areas of the world in search of birds with a particular emphasis on threatened and endemic species.

Mark first visited Antarctica in 2018 employed by the British Antarctic Survey, and subsequently spent five years living and working on Bird Island, South Georgia as a Zoological Field Assistant working with the penguins and petrels. He developed a deep love for the Southern Ocean, its scenery and the birds that call it home, "seeing the first Cape Petrels on any trip always gives a feeling of arriving home".

In his free time Mark enjoys trekking, running or cycling. He is also a keen photographer and videographer who enjoys documenting and sharing his passion for birds, travel and wild places, his images have been used various NGOs, employers, newspapers and online. He looks forward to sharing your expedition with you.

Marco Rosso – Expedition Guide



Marco was born in the region of Prosecco & Tiramisù in Northern Italy. He graduated in Mechanical Engineering at the University of Padua, his native city, and subsequently achieved a master's degree in "Turbomachinery and Fluid Dynamics" at the Von Karman Institute in Brussels, Belgium.

Currently he is studying Earth Science at Stockholm University, Sweden.

After a few years working in the automotive industry, he decided to embark himself on a new quest. For two years he backpacked from the tropical forests of Central America, through the snowy peaks of the Andean Cordillera, rolling all the way down to the tip of South America.

The raw and powerful beauty of Patagonia convinced him to swap Mother Nature wonders for mankind artifacts. Fascinated by applied geophysics, he therefore decided to use his deep and broad knowledge in thermodynamics and fluid mechanics to satisfying his innate curiosity, thereby started to study Earth Science.

During the last decade he has been living in Puerto Natale, Chile; leading groups as a trekking guide and tour leader in some of the most beautiful and rugged trails of Patagonia and since a couple of years has started to join expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic on board of Oceanwide vessels.

Christophe Gouraud – Exp.Guide



Christophe was born in France and has been passionate about birds ever since he was a child. After spending five years in Canada studying ecology, Christophe travelled to Alaska. He lived on the tiny Middleton Island as a research assistant to study the ecology of seabirds, mainly the Black-legged Kittiwake. He explores polar and tropical regions since 2007 and joined many cruises from Spitsbergen to the Russian Far East, from Antarctica to South Georgia, and from Amazonia to the Seychelles.

Christophe also worked with birds as a biologist field worker in Morocco, United Arab Emirates and Kazakhstan. Christophe found another way to travel by inventorying collections of birds that have been collected worldwide during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Matthias Kopp – Expedition Guide



Matthias lives most of the year in Thuringia/ Germany. After school he started an apprenticeship to become a wholesale dealer but decided after a couple of years to settle into work right next to the home village.

He started studying biology at the University in Jena. Matthias' main interests were Ecology and Ornithology. He wrote a diploma thesis about the breeding biology of Antarctic Skuas in the Antarctic Peninsula but also after that degree, Matthias kept on studying those impressive animals for a couple of years. While studying, both his interest

and his network brought Matthias all over the world. Most impressive for him were the polar regions. This led to Matthias staying for his studies with the Skuas for a total of 5 summer seasons in Antarctic bases, as well as 10 seasons in the high Arctic as a tour guide onboard different vessels.

Currently Matthias is predominantly settled, based again in the village of his childhood, but now with wife, three young girls, two cats, a couple of bee colonies and a wide-ranging garden, who all need him. However, his wife knows that for Matthias the high summer in Germany is much too warm. For that reason, he is together with you in the polar regions.

Clara Iachetti – Expedition Guide



Clara is Argentinean, who is born in Buenos Aires. Since she was a child Clara loved the ocean and the adventure. In 2011 she obtained her bachelor's Marine Biology-oriented degree in Biological Sciences, at the Universidad de Buenos Aires and a European M.Sc. in Marine Environment and Resources (MER) in 2012. Since 2012 she has been working in the Austral Centre of Scientific Investigations (CADIV- CONICET) at Ushuaia, Tierra de Fuego (Argentina). Firstly, on her PhD on plankton dynamics, then with her postdoctoral project on harmful algal blooms, and

nowadays as a researcher at CADIC. For the last 10 years she has participated of several research expeditions to the South Atlantic and Antarctica, even spending some time in the Shetland Islands, at the Argentinean Base "Carlini".

On top of her scientist career, she is a member of Beagle Secretos del Mar, a non-profit organisation that supports marine conservation in which she is responsible for the education program, lecturing and diving. Living in Ushuaia (and previously in Bariloche) has also led her passion towards mountaineering, mainly backcountry skiing and climbing.

Francis Screech – Ships Doctor



Francis is a medical doctor from the UK who works in southwest England. He specialises in anaesthetics and has extensive training in emergency medicine, critical care and expedition medicine. Francis has an academic interest in performing high quality medicine in cold, remote and snowy places!

Recently he has been lucky enough to work on expeditions across the world including the Svaneti mountains in Georgia, Mt. Kilimanjaro, cycling around South Africa, ski touring in the French Alps, trekking to Everest Base Camp, and summiting Island Peak in Nepal. Next month he will be supporting a high-altitude research trip to Bolivia with Edinburgh University. These provide an exciting distraction from hospital medicine!

Francis is also a qualified Physiotherapist, so is able to blend this knowledge with his medical training to help provide holistic healthcare to the expedition participants.

When not in cold and high places, he also uses these same skills to provide pre-hospital medical care at major UK music festivals each year, while also hoping to have plenty of time to enjoy the music!

Francis is at his happiest in the sea, surfing peeling right handers on a quiet Cornish beach, or on the hunt for fresh powder while ski touring. He is very excited to join you all on this incredible adventure – what a privilege!



Welcome aboard!

Day 1, Tuesday, June 10 Embarkation Longyearbyen

Your luggage will be delivered to your cabin as soon as possible. Please check to make sure you have received all your luggage!

*** Tea and coffee are always available in the observation lounge bar on deck 5 ***

- ±17.15 When all are on board, first meeting in the observation lounge on deck 5. Introduction to the ship & mandatory Safety and Lifeboat Drill.
- ±18.00 Departure. Please stay off the bridge during these operations.
- ±18.30 Welcome meeting in the observation lounge on deck 5. Have a toast with the captain, learn to know your expedition guides and hear about our plans.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the dining room (deck 3).
- +/- 21.00 Handing out rubber boots in the boot room (deck 3). We will call you deck by deck.

After dinner, rubber boots will be distributed at the boot room on deck 3. Put on your boots in your cabin with thick socks, to find the good size! Change the size when too tight or too loose. You will be called deck by deck.

The first part of the evening we will sail through the large Isfjord towards the open sea. Then we head north, along the outer coast of Spitsbergen, towards the far north-west. We stay on the outside of the long and narrow island of Prins Karls Forland, as the passage between this island and Spitsbergen is too shallow. The total distance will be around 150 nautical miles (1 nm. is around 1,9 kilometres so about 280 km) and it will take us approximately 13 hours to reach our destination: Smeerenburgfjorden.

Please note that tonight we will be sailing into the open sea. Take your seasickness medication before you really feel the movements of the vessel. Make sure that all your belongings are put away safely and that doors and drawers in your cabin are tightly closed. Walk slowly on the ship, always use one hand for yourself and one for the ship and beware of your fingers because of doors jamming!



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 2, Wednesday, June 11 Smeerenburgfjorden - Ytre Norskøya

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 07.00 | Wake-up call. |
| 07.30 | Breakfast buffet in the dining room (Deck 3).
When you go to breakfast, check on a paper at the reception, on which departure flight you will be (morning or afternoon), and mark this on the paper. We need this information for ordering shuttle buses. |
| 08.30 | Mandatory meeting in the observation lounge: guidelines, zodiac operations and our plans for today! |
| 09.30 | Ships cruise in Smeerenburgfjorden. |
| 12.30 | Lunch buffet (deck 3). |
| 14.00 | Landing on the island of Ytre Norskøya. |
| 18.30 | Recap in the bar. |
| 19.00 | Dinner is served. |
| 20.30 | Ships cruise in Raudfjorden |

We expect to arrive in Smeerenburgfjorden, in the northwest of Spitsbergen, in the morning. Here we plan to have a ships cruise in this magnificent fjord, in front of the large Smeerenburgbreen (glacier).

In the afternoon we have planned a landing on the island Ytre Norskøya, a rugged, rocky island with a lot of wildlife, history and stunning scenery. 17th century whale hunters from the Netherlands had a whaling station on the island. Fair walkers might walk to the 150 m. high top of the island, the Utkiken, to enjoy the views from the top.

After dinner we planned another ships cruise in Raudfjorden, another majestic fjord. Often whales are spotted in this area.

Late in the evening we will sail out of Raudfjorden and head towards Liefdefjorden.

TBA* is To Be Announced



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 3, Thursday, June 12

Liefdefjorden

07.00	Wake-up call.
07.30	Breakfast.
08.30	Short meeting in the bar on the landing.
09.00	Landing at Mushamna
12.00	Last zodiac back to the ship
13.00	Lunch.
14.30	Zodiac cruise and ships cruise near the ice edge of the fast ice in the fjord.
19.00	Dinner

We plan to spend the whole day in the beautiful Liefdefjorden. This is not only a fjord of outstanding beauty, but it is also a place which has abundant wildlife.

In the morning, we plan to land at Mushamna. This area has beautiful landscape and a hut that was used by Trappers. We will offer shorter and longer snow hikes. For this, we split up into groups. The keen photographers will have more time in the leisurely walking group.

Please note, once the groups have started, you cannot change anymore!

After lunch, we sail into deeper into the Liefdefjorden. Here we will cruise with the zodiacs near the edge of the fjord ice. Ivory Gulls, Beluga's and Polar Bears are sometimes seen here.

In the evening, we head of again, towards the northeast of Spitsbergen.



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 4, Friday, June 13

The pack-ice

07.30 Wake-up call.

08.00 Breakfast.

Around breakfast time we plan to be at the ice edge.

12.30 Lunch.

18.30 Recap.

19.00 Dinner.

Today will be the first of three days near and in the pack ice. Bear in mind, the pack-ice is not stationary, and its limits change all the time. We therefore will be flexible in our approach. We might go out of the ice again to find a different spot where we hope to find more animals. Life on the pack-ice has an uneven distribution, it is very patchy. Sometimes there is little life, and then suddenly a lot.

Be on the lookout, the more we all look, the more we will see. Whales are often swimming along the pack ice edge, and seals might be resting on ice flows. With some luck we might even meet the King of the Arctic, the Polar Bear.

As we do not know what the day will bring us, no activities have been planned yet. We also have not planned any lectures but could announce one if there is a good reason, such as the occurrence of fog.



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 5, Saturday, June 14

Pack ice, day 2

07.30 Wake-up call

08.00 – 09.00 Breakfast

After breakfast we will explore the pack ice again and search for wildlife.

12.30 Lunch

We continue exploring the ice

18.30 Recap

19.00 Arctic dinner!

Today we plan to stay in and around the pack-ice for the whole day again. In this area there are chances of seeing Bowhead Whales, Harp and Hooded Seals and of course Polar Bears. Be on the lookout, not only towards the ice, but also towards the sea near the ice edge, where whales can be found.



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 6, Sunday, June 15 Pack ice – the continental shelf

07.30 Wake-up call.

08.00 Breakfast.

We continue following the pack ice edge towards the west.

12.30 Lunch.

At the latest around noon, we will leave the pack ice and sail southeast, following the edge of Continental Shelf

18.30 Recap

19.00 Dinner.

During the morning, we plan to stay in and around the pack.

Life on the pack-ice has an uneven distribution, it is very patchy. Sometimes there is little life, and then suddenly a lot. We therefor will be flexible in our approach. We might go out of the ice again to find a different spot where we hope to find more animals.

Be on the lookout, the more we all look, the more we will see. Whales are often swimming along the pack ice edge, and seals might be resting on ice flows, on which also Polar bears roam, in search of the seals.

We have not planned any lectures but could announce one if there is a good reason, such as the occurrence of fog.

Sometime in the afternoon we need to say goodbye to the pack ice and turn towards Spitsbergen. We will follow the edge of the Continental Shelf and hope to see more whales there. The edge of the shelf is an area where we often find whales. As the topography of the sea bottom allows biological up-welling, it provides nutrients for phytoplankton and so food for whales.

Be on the lookout!



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 7, Monday, June 16 Poolepynten - Alkhornet

07.00	Wake-up call.
07.30	Breakfast buffet.
09.00	Landing at Poolepynten
11.00	Last zodiac back to the ship
12.30	Lunch.

During lunch, you have the possibility to pre-order the drinks you might like to have in the evening! After lunch you will be asked to pay your bar bill at reception.

+/-14.30	Landing at Alkhornet
17.30	Last zodiac back to the ship.
18.30	Farewell meeting in the lounge
19.30	Dinner. We have a plated service for the last dinner. Please be on time!

Today will be our last expedition day. In the morning, we will land at Poolepynten, which is located on the large island of Prins Karls Forland. We hope to see Walruses here, that often haul out on the beach.

In the afternoon, we plan to land at Alkhornet. Alkhornet, the “Auk Horn”, is a huge bird cliff where Guillemots and Kittiwake’s breed. Below the cliff there is a lush tundra where reindeer graze and Arctic Foxes roam.

At 18.30 we would like to invite you all for a farewell drink in the lounge.

After dinner we will announce how to deliver the rubber boots back in the boot room at deck 3. You will be called deck by deck.

The ship will proceed towards Longyearbyen, where we plan to arrive in the morning.



DAILY PROGRAM

Day 8, Tuesday, June 17 Disembarkation – Farewell

07.00 Wake-up call

07.30 Breakfast

All passengers, please put your heavy luggage in the corridor near your cabin before breakfast, at the latest at 7.30. The crew and staff will carry the luggage to the pier.

Please leave your keycard holder at reception.

As we will be at anchor, we will shuttle you by Zodiac to the pier. Keep your waterproof jacket and trousers out of the luggage, and wear this, with the inflatable life jacket, during the zodiac shuttle!

08.30 Time to say goodbye! All passengers leave the ship by Zodiac.

Buses have been arranged to take you to Longyearbyen or the airport.

- For passengers flying early today (SK4491), check that you have put the blue label on your luggage before you put it in the corridor. On the pier, check that all your luggage is there and take it on the bus to the airport.
- Passengers on the afternoon flight (SK4425), put a yellow tag on your luggage. Check your luggage on the pier. The luggage will go into a luggage truck to the airport where you will pick it up before your flight. You will be taken to the town center, near the Svalbard Butikken. In the afternoon, at 13.00, the bus will pick you up again at the Svalbard Butikken and take you to the airport. Here you need to pick up your luggage outside the building.
- Passengers who are going to a hotel in Longyearbyen, please put a red label on your luggage and make sure you take your luggage from the pier and take it on the bus. You will be taken to the town center, near the Svalbard Butikken.

Dear passengers, we enjoyed having you on board. Have a nice and safe journey home. Hopefully we meet again somewhere, sometime, in the Polar regions!

Farewell!