



## North Spitsbergen Explorer

12<sup>th</sup> June 2026 – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026

On board *m/v Ortelius*



*M/V Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland as a special-purpose research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science. She was originally named “Marina Svetaeva” after a well-known Russian poet. The vessel was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions in 2011, re-flagged in The Netherlands, and re-named Ortelius. She was extensively re-fitted in 2019 and complies with the latest SOLAS-regulations (Safety Of Life At Sea). *M/V Ortelius* is 91.25 m long, 17.2 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5.4 m. She has ice class UL1 (Equivalent to 1A), 10.5 knots average cruising speed and propulsion is 6 ZL 40/48 SULZER. Ortelius is named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the Theatrum Orbis Terrarum (Theatre of the World) in 1570. Her home port is Vlissingen.



## Captain Ernesto Barria

[Chile]

and his international crew of 53

Chief Officer:	<b>Don Buren</b>	[The Netherlands]
Second Officer:	<b>Sander Witsenburg</b>	[The Netherlands]
Third Officer:	<b>Ian Vicente</b>	[Philippines]
Chief Engineer:	<b>Andrej Abakumov</b>	[Lithuania]
Second Engineer:	<b>Ionut Daraban</b>	[Romania]
Third Engineer:	<b>Twan Boeije</b>	[The Netherlands]
Fourth Engineer:	<b>Sanne Van Beers</b>	[The Netherlands]
Chief Electrical Engineer	<b>Stefan Kirov</b>	[Bulgaria]
Hotel Manager:	<b>Volodymir Cherdnychenko</b>	[Ukraine]
Assistant Hotel Manager:	<b>Charlotte Laumen</b>	[The Netherlands]
Head Chef:	<b>Heinz Hacker</b>	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	<b>Edward Nunag</b>	[Philippines]
Sous Chef	<b>Sergiy Sklyarov</b>	[Ukraine]
Bosun:	<b>Eniano Agarin</b>	[Philippines]
Bosun:	<b>Lauren Malatag</b>	[Philippines]
Bartender:	<b>Raquel Queri</b>	[Philippines]
Ship's doctor:	<b>Marieke Timmerman</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Leader:	<b>Ali Liddle</b>	[United Kingdom]
Assistant Expedition Leader:	<b>Pippa Low</b>	[United Kingdom]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Allan White</b>	[Falkland Islands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Claudio Ghiglione</b>	[Italy]
Expedition Guide:	<b>George Kennedy</b>	[Australia]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Marco Rosso</b>	[Italy]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Koen Hoekemeijer</b>	[The Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Alexander Romanovski</b>	[Russia]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Enric Sangra</b>	[Spain]

**WE WELCOME YOU ON BOARD!**

## Day 1 – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> June, Longyearbyen, Embarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: 78°14.6' N / 015°32.6' E

Wind: N 3 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: +7.0°C

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The sky above Adventfjorden was covered by a thick layer of clouds. At times they would sink lower, turning into fog and making the airport staff nervous; at other times they would rise higher, giving us a chance to admire the still snow-covered peaks on the far side of the fjord from Longyearbyen. The local residents, ignoring the otherworldly beauty around them, which had long since become familiar to them, hurried about their business, while those of us who had arrived in Longyearbyen the day before enjoyed the views and gradually grew accustomed to the cold realities of the far Arctic as we wandered along the pedestrian street in the center of the settlement, sat in cafés, or simply looked out at the street from the hotel window.

From time to time, the hum of a low-flying aircraft reached our ears, announcing the arrival of yet more travelers in Spitsbergen. Each plane, with its arrival, seemed to breathe life into the deserted airport — it would instantly come alive, filling with people, bustle, joy, and anxiety: many were worrying about the success of their upcoming journeys around the archipelago. Would the weather be kind? Would we manage to see whales? And, of course, everyone was tormented by the main question: would we manage to see a polar bear?

Ortelius was moored at the coal pier — a distant dock you could not even reach on foot, because that is prohibited. After all, what if a bear suddenly appeared from behind the cliff and you did not have a rifle with you? So a shuttle was arranged for us, departing from the main pier at 4:00 p.m. — safe, and no need to walk for half an hour.

And there she was, our ship! Standing there beautifully at the pier. The sailors were busy, members of the expedition team were hauling our luggage back and forth, and the hotel manager and his charming assistant were gradually collecting our passports.



Since it was impossible to check everyone in at once, a queue formed in front of the gangway. Pippa, the expedition leader's assistant, kept a strict eye on us, making sure we boarded in groups of ten. It must be said that the process moved very quickly, so within about a quarter of an hour we were all on board.

Once we had all received the keys to our cabins and made sure that all our suitcases were with us as well, the mandatory part began — the safety briefing, followed by the abandon ship drill. We all gathered in the observation lounge on Deck 6, where a video covering all aspects of safe life on board was shown to us, after which Chief Officer Don addressed us. Then we were told to return to our cabins and, once the signal was given, take our orange life jackets and come back to the observation lounge.

The alarm sounded, and one of the watch officers addressed us over the loudspeakers, instructing us to begin the procedure for abandoning the ship. Needless to say, it was also



made clear that all of this was taking place purely for training purposes. We were escorted to the lifeboats and then dismissed.

After putting our life jackets back in their place, we went out onto the open decks to watch the sailors busily winding up the mooring lines with the winches. The engine roared, Ortelius gently rocked,

and slowly began to move away from the pier. The journey had begun!

After some time we were invited back into the observation lounge, where refreshments and a glass of champagne awaited each of us. Our hotel manager Vova spoke to us, as did our expedition leader Ali Liddle, and, of course, Captain Ernesto Barria himself.



And so, amid the bustle and in a fairly intense rhythm, the first couple of hours of our stay aboard Ortelius passed. At 7:30 p.m. we were invited to dinner, and after dinner we were given our Muck Boots.

Meanwhile, Ortelius had left Isfjorden and set course north!

Forward, toward adventure!

## Day 2 – Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June, Fuglefjorden & Alicehamna

12:00 GPS Position: 79°47.1'N / 011°23.5'E

Wind: NE 3 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Cloudy • Air Temperature: 0.0°C

This early morning found us off the north-west corner of the Svalbard archipelago in very good weather. The mountains to the east of us looked magnificent. At around 06:30 Captain Ernesto turned Ortelius in towards the land for a scenic transit through a narrow channel called Sörgattet (Southern Strait). These waters are only for the most competent mariners as the channel is peppered with shoals and rocky reefs. As we made our way through, the land on our starboard side was Spitsbergen, the largest island in Svalbard. And off to our port side was the island of Danskøya (Danes Island). Many of us were really torn when the breakfast announcement came!

Exiting the east end of the channel, we entered Smeerenburg Fjord, with the mighty Smeerenburg Glacier visible at its head a few miles to the south-east of us. Ortelius was turned north while the expedition team scoured the land for polar bears. As we drew level with the north-east corner of Danskøya, Expedition Guide George spotted something moving just

above the shoreline near Cape Pike. It was a polar bear! By then, Expedition Leader Ali was just about to start with a session of mandatory briefings in the bar, which is where we were all gathered. Although the bear was a very distant one, she quickly decided to get everyone outside for a look. The guides moved around the decks, giving guests instructions on how to find it in the vast landscape, using large boulders with an obvious shape and distinctive snow patches as reference points.

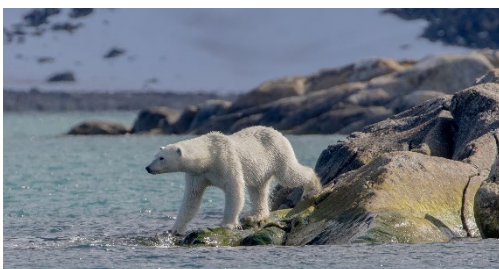


Over the course of 30 minutes, as the polar bear slowly walked south along the shoreline of Danskøya, it seemed as though everyone had eventually gotten their eyes on it. For many, this highlighted what a challenge it is to find polar bears in the vast Arctic wilderness. With it getting further away from us, the decision was made

to resume our course and continue northwards out of the fjord. Ali called everyone back to the bar for the mandatory briefings on Zodiac Operations, Polar Bear Safety and the Arctic Visitor Guidelines.

As the briefings came to an end, Ortelius was slowly entering Fuglefjorden (Bird Fjord) with the large island of Fugløya (Bird Island) off our port side. The Expedition Team was already mobilised and clad in full outdoor gear, and was collecting the firearms before heading out to the Zodiac deck. One by one the Zodiacs were lowered and, over the public address system, Ali invited us to go out for a Zodiac cruise. At last, it was time to climb into our outdoor gear and get outside for a more up-close and personal experience with Svalbard's nature. Soon we were descending the gangway and boarding the marvellous Zodiacs. Since it was our first Zodiac excursion of the voyage, the drivers gave a safety briefing before getting down to the fun of cruising and exploration.

Initially we spent our time around the south end of Fugløya, where Common Eiders, Black Guillemots, Snow Buntings, Glaucous Gulls and Brünnich's Guillemots were the main bird species seen. A few Puffins were also spotted, the charming and colourful "little clowns of the Arctic". A few Harbour seals popped their heads up for a look now and then, surprising and delighting guests with their brief appearance. It was cold, just as it should be in the high Arctic. After all, we were just 613 nautical miles (1,135 km) from the North Pole.



And then..... over the staff radios came the call of polar bear! Assistant Expedition Leader Pippa found it on a small un-named rocky island off the south end of Fugløya. The Zodiacs all turned in that direction and moved closer. As the boats passed through the narrow channel between the two islands, the bear entered the water, splitting the fleet of Zodiacs in two.



It swam across the channel and climbed out on to the rocks of Fugløya. It was a beautiful female bear. The Zodiac drivers did their best to manoeuvre into good viewing positions, while all the time taking instructions from the Expedition Leader that ensured we were operating within the strict laws and guidelines of the Svalbard territory. Boat speeds had to be minimal, and we were not allowed to pursue the bear. We had to maintain a distance of 500 metres at all times. When the bear was in the water, we had

to back off even more. And she did return to the water. After walking part way along the rocky shoreline of Fugløya, our beautiful polar bear decided it was easier to swim. She was last seen heading across the channel to the mainland.

At this point Ali instructed her team to leave the area so the bear could swim in peace, as per the guidelines. It was a brief but fantastic encounter with the one animal we had all hoped to see on this voyage. Now we had seen two, and it wasn't even lunch time on our first day. Incredible! The Zodiac drivers whisked us across the water and deeper into



Fuglefjorden where we got up close and personal with a magnificent glacier front named Svitjodbreen (Svitjod is an old name for the central part of Sweden, and 'breen' is Norwegian for 'glacier'). We took a drive along the front of the glacier, taking the opportunity to have our photo taken with this breath-taking backdrop. All too soon it was time to head back to the ship, as lunch beckoned. After a thrilling high-speed ride back to Ortelius, we were soon climbing up the gangway and heading back to our cabins to peel off all the layers that had kept us warm outside. It had been a very exciting morning, and the dining room was filled with chatter.

Following lunch there was a little down time as we continued around the north coast towards Raudfjorden (Red Fjord), named so because of red-coloured sediments found on the east side of the bay. The sun shone down on the dramatic landscape that was close off our starboard side as we travelled around the coast. At around 15:45 Ortelius slowed to a stop in Alicehamna (Alice Harbour), and the Zodiacs were lowered. The Expedition Team headed ashore and soon declared the area safe for a landing. By 16:15 the first guests were descending the gangway for a choppy ride ashore, created by a moderate wind that blew in to the fjord. The weather changed quickly and soon it was overcast and cold.

Once ashore we divided into groups for long, medium and leisurely hikes. The long hikers headed off first, escorted by Expedition Guides Marco and Allan. There was a circular route that reached a viewpoint with fantastic scenery in all directions. From their lofty perch they saw several reindeer and a couple of Rock Ptarmigan. The wind up at the viewpoint was bitterly cold so it wasn't a place to dwell too long. Descending to the coast, they circled back to the landing site via the hilltop grave of Norwegian Captain Erik Matillas who died from scurvy while overwintering in 1907-08. The final stop on the way back to the landing site was the preserved wooden hut built in the 1920's by Swedish trapper Sven Olsen, commonly known as 'Stockholm Sven'.



The other groups focused on the beach area and lower elevations, also taking in the hut and grave site. They focused more on the geology and flora, with the latter dominated by the beautiful Purple Saxifrage. They also saw some Arctic Terns, Purple Sandpipers, Snow Buntings and Arctic Skuas. After 2½ hours the

biting cold was being felt by many, who spoke enthusiastically about seeing the hot chocolate machine in the bar. The Zodiacs ferried us all back to the warmth of Ortelius through the choppy waters, and no sooner was everyone back on board, dinner was announced. After dinner we joined Ali in the bar to hear all about the plans for tomorrow. And so ended a truly remarkable first day in Svalbard.

## Day 3 – Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June, Texas Bar & Monaco Glacier

12:00 GPS Position: 79°36.6'N / 012°43.1'E

Wind: Var 3-4 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Cloudy • Air Temperature: +2.0°C

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The day began under overcast, but beautiful Arctic conditions as Ortelius sailed deep into Liefdefjorden, calm seas creating perfect mirror-like reflections of the surrounding mountains. With hardly a ripple disturbing the water, guests gathered on deck to enjoy one of those rare Svalbard mornings when the landscape seemed

almost impossibly serene.

The first destination of the day was Texas Bar, one of Svalbard's most famous historic trapping cabins built by the Nois family of trappers in 1927. The expedition team offered long hikes for those eager to explore further into the surrounding landscape, two medium hikes; one tailored toward photography enthusiasts, and a leisurely walk for those wanting a gentle leg stretch to enjoy the breathtaking scenery.

The historic cabin attracted plenty of attention. Inside, visitors discovered the eclectic collection of drinks traditionally left behind by travelers over the years, creating a unique and ever-changing display that has become part of Texas Bar's character and charm.

The tundra surrounding the cabin was alive with colour. Purple and Tufted Saxifrage were in flower, adding vibrant patches of colour to the rocky landscape. Equally striking were the countless fluffy seed heads of Mountain Avens, remnants from the previous summer that still covered large areas of the ground. Behind the cabin, a pair of Arctic Skuas were clearly beginning to establish a nesting territory. Meanwhile the singing Snow Buntings provided the contrast soundtrack to the morning, accompanied by the occasional pair of Pink-footed Geese flying over.



For those on the short and medium hikes, an Arctic Fox delighted the photographers as they moved across the rocky slopes and tundra. Meanwhile, the long hikers enjoyed a spectacular climb to a jagged ridgeline, perched 300m above the shoreline, with stunning views of Monacobreen Glacier.

After a morning of activities, many some brave chose to participate in one of expedition cruising's most memorable traditions: the polar plunge. Cheers and laughter echoed across the shoreline as brave participants ran into the frigid Arctic waters before making a rapid return to dry land and dry towels.

After returning to Ortelius for lunch, the ship repositioned to our afternoon destination at Monacobreen glacier, one of the most impressive tidewater glaciers in the region. As the ship

approached the glacier front, signs of Arctic wildlife quickly appeared. Black-legged Kittiwakes dotted the ice, while Common Eiders and Black Guillemots paddled through the calm waters between the floating bergs.



Once the Zodiacs were launched, guests headed out for a closer look at Monacobreen's towering ice face. The glacier's brilliant blue crevasses and heavily fractured front revealed a landscape in constant motion. Throughout the zodiac cruise, the glacier regularly reminded everyone of its power as chunks of ice calved from the face,

crashing into the fjord below, sending waves rolling across the water. The water was littered with ice from the glacier, some crystal clear, others dirty with sediment picked up by the glacier. The range of shades of blue in the ice kept everyone's cameras clicking.'

After a wonderful cruise amongst the ice, we returned once again to the warmth of Ortelius. As the ship departed Liefdeforden and continued its voyage through the Arctic wilderness, the evening recaps given by expedition guides on geology, glaciology and Arctic Foxes allowed guests to reflect on a day that perfectly captured the magic of expedition cruising in Svalbard. Spectacular scenery, exceptional wildlife encounters, fascinating history, and unforgettable personal memories had combined to create a day that few would soon forget.

#### Day 4 – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June Hinlopenstretet: Bjornsundet & Wijkanderøyane

12:00 GPS Position: 78°59.4'N / 020°21.4'E

Wind: E 1 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Clear • Air Temperature: +3.0°C



This morning we woke up to friendly skies and calm seas. Our plan A for the morning was a zodiac cruise around Wahlbergøya. It's an island situated in the Hinlopen Strait between Spitsbergen and Nordauslandet. Our intention was to cruise the beautiful scenic shore line and pass by a haul out of walrus to observe these magnificent big blubbery animals. However, when we

arrived in the area it seemed the walrus weren't at home this morning. As such our expedition leader Ali decided to continue sailing south to our afternoon's destination; Wilhelmøya.

As we continued sailing the cloud cover really opened up and with the warmth of the bright sun rays and little wind, it was incredibly nice to be out on deck and take in the stunning scenery. M/V Ortelius gracefully navigated through patches of sea ice, while we could observe many areas of fast ice as well. Fast is ice that is connected to the mainland and to be able to witness the fast ice in mid-June is truly special.



On the bridge the expedition team were continuously scouting the area in search of wildlife. We saw many seals lying on ice floes, whereas big flocks of Brünnich's Guillemots regularly flew past the ship. We enjoyed this ship's cruise tremendously.



Right before lunch Pippa spotted something on the ice that looked creamy colored and seemed to be moving. How she ever spotted that will remain a mystery, but with her many years of experience she definitely has a very well-trained spotting vision.

The bear must have been at least more than 5km away, but she got it! And to make ensure

this was not just a lucky moment, she soon after spotted a second bear. Our excitement grew as we were very keen on seeing more of these resilient and magnificent creatures. The ship approached slowly, but the fast ice became a natural border. In Svalbard it is not allowed to break the fast ice with a ship as it is an eco-system in itself where seals find resting places and bears might roam in search of food.



It was decided to do a zodiac cruise and hope for the bears to move a bit closer into our direction. However, our guides made us aware that we should not just focus on the bears alone, but that we should also enjoy the experience of cruising along the fast ice, taking in the fantastic landscapes and enjoy seeing

bear footprints for example.



At some point the bears stood up and seemingly they were walking into our direction. But soon they changed course once again and they remained so called pixel bears. After some time, the bears approached each other and through binoculars it looked as if there was a short amorous encounter. We got some action after all!

Then it was time to return to the ship. We had a recap where Pippa talked about the walrus and George entertained us with geopolitical stories involving the council of Arctic countries.

After dinner Ali invited us to go onto the outside decks as it was a gorgeous evening with beautiful patches of sea ice and fabulous views.

Little did we know that the best part of the day still lay ahead of us. Within minutes after Ali's announcement George spotted a polar bear on a small island ahead of the ship.

The bear was difficult to see as it had laid down, but every now and then it lifted the head. While our bridge team was



maneuvering the ship into a better position, a second bear was spotted... And then a third bear walking on the ice and then a fifth and sixth bear walking together towards the water side! What an incredible ending of the day!

Most likely there is a carcass somewhere on the island that has attracted all these bears. Polar bears have an incredible sense of

smell and they can smell a carcass from more than 30 km away. What a day, fantastic landscapes, sunny skies and in total 8 polar bears sighted! It doesn't get much better than this!

Good night everyone!

## Day 5 – Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, In the Pack Ice

12:00 GPS Position: 80°36.9'N / 013°20.9'E

Wind: N 4 • Sea: Ice 7/10 • Weather: Overcast • Air Temperature: -1.3°C

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An early wake-up call came once again today. At around 7:00 a.m., the bridge and expedition staff spotted several distant blows near the edge of the sea ice to the north. The water vapour lingered in the air for several seconds, suggesting the presence of the largest marine mammals in Arctic waters. A few minutes later, the sighting was confirmed: a fin whale and a pair of blue whales had been spotted from the bridge. Ali promptly announced the marvelous discovery over the PA system, a little earlier than the scheduled wake-up call.

The blue whale is the largest animal ever known to have lived on Earth, reaching lengths of up to 30 meters (98 feet) and weighing more than 150 tons. Despite its enormous size, it feeds mainly on tiny krill, filtering them from seawater through specialized baleen plates. Blue whales are generally peaceful and spend much of their time swimming alone or in small groups. They are famous for their long-distance migrations between feeding and breeding grounds and for their deep, low-frequency calls, which can travel hundreds of kilometers underwater. Although once heavily hunted, blue whales are now protected and remain among the most remarkable creatures in the world's oceans.

Soon afterwards, breakfast was served and MV Ortelius began entering the pack ice, a unique landscape that can truly be appreciated here in the High Arctic. Sea-ice floes stretched out on both the port and starboard sides of the ship as she made her way into the realm of the polar bear. At first, the floes were relatively small, only a few meters across and about a meter thick, but they quickly became larger and brighter. Later, we learned that the increasing albedo effect of the sea ice was reflecting between 85 and 90 percent of the incoming solar radiation.



Sunglasses were essential while walking around the outer decks and taking the first photographs of the day among pressure ridges and melt ponds scattered across the surface of the ice. As MV Ortelius ventured deeper into the pack ice, the first polar bear of the day was spotted. However, the animal was not keen to share its environment with us and spent the next half hour steadily moving

away from the ship. The decision was made to leave the bear undisturbed, and we continued northward, accompanied by occasional flocks of kittiwakes and Brunnich's guillemots. The ever-changing sunlight cast shifting shades of grey and brilliant highlights across the extraordinary Arctic landscape before us.

By mid-morning, we gathered in the lounge, where Marco shared fascinating insights into the formation and dynamics of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean. Lunch was served shortly afterwards, followed by a brief period of rest before we returned to the lounge for Pippa's lecture on polar bears—the iconic animals of the Arctic.

Meanwhile, the expedition staff continued their diligent search for wildlife from the bridge. Eventually, their efforts were rewarded. Expedition Leader Ali, assisted by the staff team, spotted two polar bears resting on the pack ice. Captain Ernesto and Chief Officer Don skillfully maneuvered the ship to approach the bears quietly and respectfully.



The bears, a male and a female, soon stood up and began wandering away from the ship, moving together in what appeared to be an amusing and intriguing mating dance. At times they moved farther away, while at others they approached the ship, coming surprisingly close. Everyone, armed with smartphones and powerful camera lenses, was able to capture these precious moments that will undoubtedly be cherished forever.



As the sunlight slowly faded into the endless Arctic horizon, the bears eventually settled down to rest on the sea ice while the ship remained at a respectful distance. The day concluded with a short recap led by Ali, who outlined the plans for the following day and invited everyone to the helideck for a special Arctic dinner.

The Arctic barbecue was prepared and served by the friendly galley and restaurant team. Although the evening was cold and breezy, everyone enjoyed warm food, good company, and lively conversation outdoors. A glass of mulled wine and the pale glow of the midnight sun during the Arctic summer solstice provided a welcome touch of warmth.

The Arctic barbecue was prepared and served by the friendly galley and restaurant team.

It was certainly another unforgettable day of an expedition filled with endless surprises.

## Day 6 – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June, In the pack ice & At Sea

12:00 GPS Position: 80°39.4'N / 012°42.3'E

Wind: NE 3 • Sea: Calm • Weather: Fog • Air Temperature: -2.0°C

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The morning began in absolute, breathtaking stillness. As the gentle wake-up call echoed through the ship at 0745, many of us woke to a sensation that has become rare in modern travel: complete silence. Throughout the night, the ship's engines had been turned off, allowing us to drift in harmony with the frozen world. We had spent the night suspended in the embrace of the pack ice, stationary, quiet, and entirely at the mercy of the Arctic currents.

Stepping out of our cabins, we were greeted by a radiant, blinding sun reflecting off the endless white landscape. Nature treated us to a spectacular, unexpected phenomenon—a vibrant fogbow, or "white rainbow," spanning across the ice, casting an ethereal glow over our

morning. After fueling up at the breakfast buffet in the dining room, everyone eagerly bundled up and headed out to the observation decks around 10:00 AM. There, cutting through the vast frozen desert, we spotted a familiar silhouette on the horizon: our sister ship, the Hondius. The two vessels exchanged distant, warm greetings across the frozen expanse before we continued our slow, deliberate push forward through the floes.



At 11:00 AM, the morning's intellectual journey began as Allan gathered us in the lounge to present the legendary Fridtjof Nansen – Arctic Drift Expedition. Hearing how Nansen intentionally froze the Fram into this very same pack ice between 1893 and 1896 gave us a profound appreciation for the historic, unforgiving waters we were currently navigating.

"By noon, the expedition leader, Ali, delivered a bittersweet announcement: our time in the

deep pack ice was drawing to a close. We had only a few hours left before the bow would turn back toward the rugged coastlines of Svalbard."

To celebrate our final hours in the ice, the galley team surprised us with Mexican-themed lunch buffet featuring fresh tortillas and an array of flavorful toppings that warmed everyone up from the inside out.

By early afternoon, we officially left the ice edge behind. The afternoon became a dual pursuit of education and wildlife spotting. While keeping a sharp lookout on the horizon for whales against the backdrop of the reappearing Svalbard peninsula, we enjoyed two spectacular presentations. First, Koen held an insightful photography workshop in the lounge, teaching us how to better capture the unique exposure and contrast of polar landscapes. Shortly after, Sasha took the stage to share deeply personal, fascinating stories of his past life as the manager of Pyramiden—the haunting, abandoned Soviet ghost town on Svalbard.



We concluded this magnificent day at 18:30 with our daily recap in the lounge. As the ship sailed southward, the expedition team briefed us on the grand finale awaiting us tomorrow: a planned landing to see the magnificent colonies of walrus on the fantastic shores of Prince Karls Forland. Anticipation is high as we head into dinner, looking back on a perfect Ice Day and looking forward to the wild coastlines ahead.

## Day 7 – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June, In the pack ice

12:00 GPS Position: 78°15.5'N / 012°36.4'E

Wind: SE 4 • Sea: Smooth • Weather: Rain • Air Temperature: +2°C

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After an early breakfast, we made a morning landing at Poolepynten, arriving ashore in the soft light of the Arctic day. Our goal was to observe the walrus haul-out, and we were rewarded with excellent views of these remarkable animals resting along the shoreline. The calm atmosphere allowed us to appreciate both their impressive size and the unique wildlife spectacle that makes this site so special. It was a memorable start to the day and a wonderful opportunity to experience one of Svalbard's most iconic species in its natural habitat.



As the weather began to deteriorate, we repositioned the ship and adjusted our plans accordingly. Despite the challenging conditions, the afternoon brought an unforgettable experience when we landed at Alkhornet. What followed were two extraordinary hours exploring the tundra beneath the dramatic bird cliffs. The highlight was undoubtedly the Arctic

foxes: several adults were actively foraging, while playful cubs could be seen around their den, providing exceptional wildlife encounters and countless photographic opportunities. Surrounded by spectacular scenery and abundant birdlife, the landing at Alkhornet became one of the standout moments of the voyage, a perfect reminder of the resilience and richness of Arctic nature even in unsettled weather.

Time flies when you're having fun and after a week full of adventure, fantastic hikes, zodiac cruises and wildlife, our last evening onboard began. Ali invited us to the bar for our so-called Captain's Cocktail during which we toasted the trip together with the captain, the hotel managers and the expedition team. Marco had made a fantastic slide show which was shown at the end and right before dinner. It was a wonderful video and a beautiful memory to take home with us.



After dinner we enjoyed the outside scenery while the ship steadily made its way back to Longyearbyen. What a fantastic trip it has been!

## Day 8 – Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June – Longyearbyen, Disembarkation Day

08:00 GPS Position: 78°14.6' N / 015°32.6' E

Wind: NE 2 • Sea: Rippled • Weather: Overcast/Snow • Air Temperature +2°C

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It was a quiet, peaceful Spitsbergen morning. Ortelius was slowly making her way into Adventfjorden. Light snow drifted through the air, reflecting the gentle sadness of the farewell that lay ahead. Many of us had woken up early so that, while enjoying a morning cup of coffee in the bar on Deck 6, we could savor the final moments of the voyage.

The outlines of the airport and the metal structures along the shore, remnants of the era when coal mining was still active, became increasingly distinct. Stretching along the mountainside was the old aerial tramway, now preserved solely as a cultural heritage site.

And there was the coal pier. It seemed as though only yesterday a bus had brought us there and we, filled with excitement and anticipation for the journey ahead, had climbed the gangway aboard Ortelius. And now here we were again, mooring at the same pier so that we could leave our temporary, yet so painfully familiar floating home.

Ali, our expedition leader, woke us at 7:15 a.m. We placed our packed suitcases outside our cabin doors and headed for breakfast, while members of the expedition team collected our luggage and arranged it in neat rows on the pier.

Soon the bus appeared in the distance once again. Slowly pulling up to the gangway, it opened its doors, and we took our seats, saying goodbye to the expedition team. Our unforgettable adventure had come to an end. Polar bears, Arctic foxes, walruses, seals, ice, cliffs, tiny flowers, Zodiacs, decks, binoculars, cameras, and rubber boots—all of it was now becoming part of the past.

But it is never too late to return.

So, until next time, Ortelius! Until next time, Spitsbergen! This is not goodbye.

**Total distance sailed on our voyage: 868 nautical miles**

**Most northern point sailed: 80°39.524' N, 012°51.939' E**

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria, Expedition Leader Ali Liddle, Hotel Manager Volodymir Cherdnychenko and all the crew and staff of *M/V Ortelius*, it has been a pleasure and a privilege travelling with you.



## **Your Oceanwide Expeditions Team**

**Sasha, Allan, Ali, Dr. Marieke, Claudio, Koen, Pippa,  
Enric, Marco, George**

# North Spitsbergen Explorer

*M/V Ortelius 12/06 – 19/06/26*

- 12/06 1) **Longyearbyen** - Embarkation
- 13/06 2) **Fuglefjorden** - Zodiac Cruise
- 3) **Alicehamna** - Landing/Hike
- 14/06 4) **Texas Bar** - Landing/Hike
- 5) **Monacobreen** - Zodiac Cruise
- 15/06 6) **Hinlopenstretet** - Cruise Navigation
- 7) **Wilhelmøya** - Zodiac Cruise
- 16/06 8) **Pack Ice**
- 17/06 9) **Pack Ice**
- 18/06 10) **Poolepynten** - Landing/Zodiac Cruise
- 11) **Alkhornet** - Landing/Hike
- 19/06 12) **Longyearbyen**- Disembarkation



## Birds and Mammals of Svalbard - OTL 04

English	Latin	Dutch	German	12-Jun	13-Jun	14-Jun	15-Jun	16-Jun	17-Jun	18-Jun
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Ijsduiker	Eistaucher							
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Roodkeelduiker	Sterntaucher							
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Noordse stormvogel	Eissturmvogel	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Jan-van-gent	Basstöpel							
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Wilde zwaan	Singschwan							
Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Taigarietgans	Saatgans							
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kleine rietgans	Kurzschnabelgans				✓			✓
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Brandgans	Weisswangengans		✓	✓	✓			✓
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Kolgans	Blässgans							
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Grauwe gans	Graugans							
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Rotgans	Ringelgans				✓			
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>	Sneeuwgans	Schneegans							
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Smient	Pfeifente							
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Wintertaling	Krickente							
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Wilde eend	Stockente							
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Pijlstaart	Spießente							
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Kuifeend	Reiherente							
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eidereend	Eiderente	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Konings eider	Prachteiderente							
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticta stelleri</i>	Stellers eider	Scheckente							
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Ilseend	Eisente							
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Zwarte zee-eend	Trauerente							
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Brilduiker	Schellente							
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>hyperboreus</i>	Alpensneeuwhoen	Alpensneehuhn							
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Scholekster	Austernfischer							
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Bontbekplevier	Sandregenpfeifer			✓		✓		✓

European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Goudplevier	Goldregenpfeifer								
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Drieteenstrandloper	Sanderling								
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Gestreepte strandloper	Graubruststrandläufer								
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Paarse strandloper	Meerstrandläufer		✓		✓				✓
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Kanoetstrandloper	Knutt								
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Bonte strandloper	Alpenstrandläufer								
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Regenwulp	Regenbrachvogel								
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Tureluur	Rotschenkel								
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Steenloper	Steinwälzer								✓
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Rosse franjepoot	Thorshühnchen								✓
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Grauwe franjepoot	Odinshühnchen								
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Middelste jager	Spatelraubmöwe								
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Kleine jager	Schmarotzerraub-möwe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Kleinste jager	Falkenraubmöwe		✓					✓	
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Grote jager	Skua		✓	✓					✓
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	Vorkstaartmeeuw	Schwalbenmöwe								
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Kokmeeuw	Lachmöwe								
Common/Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Stormmeeuw	Sturmmöwe								
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Grote Burgemeester	Eismöwe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucooides</i>	Kleine burgemeester	Polarmöwe								
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Zilvermeeuw	Silbermöwe								
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Kleine mantelmeeuw	Heringsmöwe								
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Grote mantelmeeuw	Mantelmöwe								
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Drieteenmeeuw	Dreizehenmöwe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ross' Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	Rossmeeuw	Rosenmöwe								
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Ivoormeeuw	Elfenbeinmöwe				✓	✓			
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Noordse stern	Küstenseeschwalbe	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Zeekoet	Trottellumme	✓						✓	
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dikbekzeekoet	Dickschnabellumme	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Zwarte zeekoet	Gryllteiste	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Kleine alk	Krabbentaucher	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papegaiduiker	Papageitaucher	✓	✓				✓	✓
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Boerenzwaluw	Rauchschwalbe							
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Witte Kwikstaart	Bachstelze							
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Graspieper	Wiesenieper							
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Tapuit	Steinschmätzer							
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Merel	Amsel							
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Sneeuwgor	Schneeammer		✓	✓				✓
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Barmsijs	Birkenzeisig							
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	Ijsgors	Spornammer							
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Kramsvogel	Wacholderdrossel							
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Koperwiek	Rotdrossel							
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Keep	Bergfink							
Gyr Falcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	Giervalk	Gerfalke							

## MAMMALS

English	Latin	Dutch	German	12-Jun	13-Jun	14-Jun	15-Jun	16-Jun	17-Jun	18-Jun
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walrus	Walross			✓	✓			✓
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Baardrob	Bartrobbe			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringelrob	Ringelrobbe				✓			
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	Zadelrob	Sattelrobbe					✓		
Hooded seal	<i>Cystophora cristata</i>	Klapmuts	Klappmütze					✓		
Common /Harbour seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Gewone zeehond	Seehund		✓					✓
Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Dwergvinvis	Zwergwal	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Sei Whale	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Noordse vinvis	Seiwal							
Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blauwe vinvis	Blauwal					✓	✓	
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	Gewone vinvis	Finnwal					✓		
Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Bultrug	Buckelwal							✓

Bowhead whale	<i>Balaena mysticetus</i>	Groenlandse walvis	Grönlandwal							
Sperm Whale	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Potvis	Pottwal							
Narwhal	<i>Monodon monoceros</i>	Narwal	Narwal							
Northern Bottlenose Whale	<i>Hyperoodon ampullatus</i>	Butskop	Entenwal (Dögling)							
Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	Orka	Schwertwal (Orca)							
White-beaked Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>	Witsnuitdolfijn	Weisschnauzendelphin	✓				✓	✓	
Beluga	<i>Dephinapterus leucas</i>	Beloega	Weisswal							✓
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Ijsbeer	Eisbär		✓		✓	✓		
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Poolvos	Polarfuchs			✓				✓
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>platyrhynchus</i>	Rendier	Svalbard Renntier	✓	✓					✓
Sibling vole	<i>Microtus rossiaemeridionalis</i>	Oostelijke veldmuis	Südfeldmaus							
Short tailed Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>	Aardmuis	Erdmaus							

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# Ali Liddle – Expedition Leader

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Originally from the UK, Ali spent 15 years living in the Falkland Islands where she worked as a Primary school teacher both teaching out in 'camp' and at the school in Stanley.

Latterly, she was employed as Education Officer for Falklands Conservation and shared her time between classroom teaching and conservation. In 1997, she spent 9 months living on South Georgia where she ran the Post Office and took every opportunity to hike, ski and explore the surrounding peaks and coastline.

She has published three books to date: *Plants of the Falkland Islands* and two art and craft books for children using penguins and albatross as the inspiration. Ali is a keen runner, having completed three marathons in the Falkland Islands and two in the UK, and she also enjoys cycling, hiking and camping. Ali has been working on Antarctic and Arctic expedition cruises with Oceanwide for more years than she cares to remember and works on all of the Oceanwide vessels at some point during the year. She has recently relocated from Northumberland to the Isle of Skye where she is renovating a cottage and enjoying the hiking opportunities of the island.

Her particular interest is natural history and the wildlife, and she enjoys sharing her knowledge of and passion for the polar regions.

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## Pippa Low – Asst. Exp. Leader

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Pippa is a skilled expedition leader, naturalist, lecturer, photographer, diver, and skipper with over 18 years of global guiding experience. Originating from the Scottish Highlands, she specializes in marine mammal science, including a Masters in Humpback Whale physiology.

Her extensive travels as a guide have taken her from Scotland to Australia, Indonesia, New Zealand, and predominantly to the polar regions of the Arctic and Antarctic. A skilled skipper and powerboat instructor, Pippa excels in navigating the world's most rugged environments, ensuring both adventure and safety for her guests.

Pippa has also worked as a field guide and skipper for natural history productions, facilitating immersive experiences that highlight the beauty and complexity of these ecosystems while sharing her knowledge and passion for storytelling.

Pippa is dedicated to sharing her passion for wildlife and wild spaces, whether on a ship, zodiac, ashore, or underwater. As a passionate photographer, Pippa is dedicated to helping guests capture stunning moments of wildlife and landscapes. She revels in the unpredictability of nature, making every expedition a unique experience.

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# Allan White - Expedition Guide

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Allan was born and raised in the Falkland Islands. He's a fifth generation Islander, and a descendant of one of the original British colonists in 1840. His higher education was completed in England, after which he embarked on a military career.

He joined the British Army aged 17. After serving in West Germany for two years during the Cold War period, he completed deployments in Northern Ireland, Cyprus as a United Nations peace-keeper, and with British Forces South Atlantic Islands. He left the Army to settle back in the Falklands.

While working as a Port Agent, Allan worked with the late Lars-Eric Lindblad, the inspirational pioneer of the small-ship expedition cruising concept. He encouraged Allan to become a Zodiac driver and go to sea for a year. Thirty years later, he's still at it. His voyages have taken him all over the world, with particular focus on the Polar regions. His travel experience ranges from 90° North to 78° South.

In the Falklands, Allan and his wife owned and operated their own tourist lodge for over a decade. More recently they managed a privately owned island, where they were the sole residents for almost 5 years, with thousands of albatrosses, penguins and seals for neighbours.

Allan is an experienced guide and Zodiac driver, with a keen interest in natural history and heroic age polar exploration. He lives in the Falklands capital Stanley, with his wife Jacqui.

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# Claudio Ghiglione – Asst. Exp. Leader

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Claudio was born in Italy in 1983. He is a marine ecologist specialised in polar regions, expedition guide and nature photographer.

Interested in science and nature since he was very young, he graduated first in *Marine Environmental Sciences* (BA) and then in *Marine Science* (MA). In March 2017 he obtained a *PhD in Earth, Environmental and Polar Sciences* run in cooperation with the Italian National Antarctic Museum (Italy) and the British Antarctic Survey in Cambridge (UK).

For several years he worked as a polar researcher focusing his work mainly on the South Pole (Antarctica); his objective is to analyse and evaluate information used for ecological modelling and possible future scenarios following global warming. During his academic career, he actively takes part in some scientific expeditions both in Arctic and in Antarctica in cooperation with Norway and England.

His passion for travel, mainly to cold and often inhospitable places, and his career as a photographer led him to travel a lot, creating and managing – often in complete autonomy – itineraries and logistics. In 2017 – thanks to his professional experience, the skills acquired over the time and the need to spend more time on the field – he starts working full time as a guide Oceanwide.

Specialised in nature, scientific and travel photography, Claudio uses his photos as a means of telling stories to draw attention mainly to his main subjects, namely animals, nature and environment. In the 2019 he published his first book ‘Polar Lights’ with whom he shares the passion for nature photography.

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# George Kennedy – Expedition Guide

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George is an Australian social scientist specialising in polar geopolitics. He completed a Masters in Anthropology at Monash University in 2016 and a Graduate Diploma in Antarctic Governance at the Australian Institute for Marine and Antarctic Science in 2021. Since completing his studies, George has worked within the policy office of the Australian Antarctic Division, collaborating with other Antarctic Treaty Parties to develop sustainable tourism practices, environmental protection frameworks and fisheries management strategies.

Prior to his political studies, George worked as an ALS Paramedic in Australia, as well as a community development coordinator for conservation organisations in Latin America. George has a passion for travel, boats, and motorcycles. Over a three-year period, he rode a motorcycle from Patagonia to Mexico, exploring Latin America on two wheels. It was during his time in Patagonia that his passion for the Polar Regions developed, working closely with conservation organisations in Tierra del Fuego and visiting Antarctica for the first time in 2017. George has been guiding in Antarctica and the Arctic since 2019, sharing stories of its incredible wildlife, landscapes and, of course, its unique politics!

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# Marco Rosso – Expedition Guide

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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 Natales, Chile; leading groups as a trekking guide and tour leader in some of the most beautiful and rugged trails of Patagonia and for four years has started to join expeditions to the Arctic and the Antarctic on board of Oceanwide vessels.

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# Koen Hoekemeijer – Exp. 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. 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 ;).

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# Alexander Romanovskiy – Exp. Guide

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Alexander Romanovskiy comes from Saint-Petersburg, the Northern capital of Russia. He was born in 1981. After having graduated from the boarding school Alexander entered Saint-Petersburg State University, where he spent 5 years studying physical geography, ecology, regional geography and international tourism. Afterwards he was working on his PhD thesis in Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, doing geocological researches.

In the year of 2011 however, Alexander decided to pause his scientific career and start doing something completely

different, which means working in tourism and traveling the world. He spent 2 seasons working as a trekking guide in Fann mountains (Tajikistan), 1 season on Novolazarevskaya Antarctic scientific station (Queen Maud Land, Antarctica) working as a member of a guesthouse crew.

Since February of 2012 most part of the year he spends on Svalbard. For five seasons in a row Alexander has been living and working as a guide in a ghost town of Pyramiden. In 2016 a new page in Alexander's guiding career was opened: he started working as a naturalist guide on cruise ships in polar regions of the world – Svalbard and Antarctica.

3 to 4 months a year Alexander dedicates to his main passion – traveling the world. No public transport, no hotels, only hitch-hiking and staying overnight with locals or sleeping in a tent. This way he has already visited almost all Soviet republics, Middle East (Iran, Turkey), Asia (China), South America (Argentina, Chile, Paraguay), and it is hopefully far not the end! The world is big, friendly and interesting to explore!

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# Enric Sangrà Mòdol – Exp. Guide

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**“Connecting Science with People”** – This is Enric’s mission.

He holds a **Master’s degree in Scientific Communication** from Valencian International University and a **Bachelor’s degree in Geology** from the University of Barcelona. With extensive experience as a science communicator in various research institutes in Spain, he has worked closely with researchers to effectively communicate their discoveries.

Enric is passionate about **making Earth Science accessible to the public**. He bridges the gap between researchers and society, transforming complex scientific results into clear and engaging messages. His skills led him to become one of the ten finalists in the national scientific monologue competition in Spain, "Solo de Ciencia," where the country’s top science communicators were selected.

Enric’s expertise spans a wide range of Earth Science topics, from geology to environmental issues. **He is really excited about guiding in polar regions**, where the unique geological features, including ancient rock formations, meteorite-rich fields, and glacial landscapes, offer invaluable insights into Earth’s history. By sharing the fascinating stories of these remote regions, Enric brings the Earth’s geological history to life, making science both accessible and engaging for all audiences.

Enric’s hobbies are always outdoor sports, including alpinism, mountaineering, hiking, climbing, trail running, and backcountry skiing. His favorite spots are the Catalan and Aragonese Pyrenees, where he has summited Aneto (3,404 m) during the winter period.

**Ask him anything about geology and of “quartz” he will give you the best explanation.**

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# Marieke Timmerman - Ships Doctor

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This is the **ship's medical doctor** for everybody on board: passengers, staff and crew. She is from the Netherlands. After medical school, she worked as a resident in surgery for a year. After that, she worked as a resident in ENT (ear nose throat): research and clinics for four years. Furthermore, she was a doctor in a nursing home. In 2014 she started her training becoming a General Practitioner (GP) and with a lot of pleasure she works as a GP in Hilversum and Haarlem (the Netherlands) nowadays. This is her seventh expedition to Arctica/ Antarctica as a doctor and

hopefully not her last!

In her days off, she loves to do sports (tennis, padel, kitesurfing, to the gym, skiing), go to the beach which is nearby her house, meeting up with friends and to travel.

## **Many medical problems can be prevented:**

*Seasickness* is a common problem in these waters. It is easier to prevent it than to treat it. Please let her know if you have any questions or if you need medication.

*Accidents and injuries:* always one hand for the ship, one hand for yourself. Carry your things in a backpack or around your neck for example, to have both hands free when moving around a sailing ship with so many stairs, heavy doors and slippery decks. And watch out for your fingers with slamming doors!

On a ship, *contagious diseases* are easily spread around, like Covid19. Please wash your hands after every toilet visit and before every meal and use the alcohol suspenders in front of the restaurant. Furthermore, cough in your elbow instead of your hand.

## WELCOME ABOARD!

*Luggage will be delivered to your cabin. Please make check to make sure you have received all your luggage. If you have any extra luggage in your cabin – please notify a crew member.*

**\*\* Tea and coffee are always available in the lounge on deck 6 \*\***

±1700 **Welcome & safety briefing** - Please join us in the **lounge (deck 6)** for a **mandatory** safety briefing and lifeboat drill. **All passengers must attend.** Thank you.

### **Lifeboat Drill**

**All guests** please collect your orange lifejackets from your cabin and proceed to the passenger MUSTER STATION in the **lounge (deck 6)**.

1845 **Welcome Meeting.** Please join your hotel manager Volodymyr in the **lounge (deck 6)** for an introduction to our ship Ortelius.

1900 The meeting will be followed by welcome drinks with Captain Barria and a chance to meet the Expedition team and learn more about our voyage around North Spitsbergen.

1930 **Buffet Dinner** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4)

**After dinner we will issue rubber boots. Please listen for announcements.**

*We will sail into open sea this evening and the ship may move – please secure your belongings and be careful when moving around the ship. Take your seasickness medication before we head out into open sea- the doctor will be available in the lounge after dinner to assist.*

- 0715      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0730      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0830      **Mandatory AECO briefing, Polar Bear safety briefing and Zodiac briefing. All passengers please attend.**  
Please be prompt at the meeting. The sooner we finish the meeting, the sooner we can get out and explore!
- TBA      **Fuglefjorden.** This morning we hope to take you out on a zodiac cruise in Fuglefjorden. There are small islands at the entrance to the fjord where we sometimes see puffins and other Arctic bird species and at the end of the fjord we will cruise past the Svitjodbreen glacier. Please dress warmly for your cruise.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- TBA      **Buchananhalvøya.** Further down into Raudfjord we come to the peninsula where we hope to take you ashore to explore the area. We will divide into our hiking and walking groups so we can all enjoy the landing at a pace that suits us.  
**Long Hikers** please come to the gangway first and everyone else can follow straight away afterwards.
- 1900      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.
- 1930      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4) Please be prompt as this is plated service. Thank you.



# North Spitsbergen Explorer

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Texas Bar and Monacobreen

- 0715      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0730      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0830      **Texas Bar.** This morning we hope to take you ashore at Texas Bar where there is one of the best trapper huts in Svalbard. Maybe the bar will be open!  
It is also a really good place hike in the lower hills so we will offer our usual hiking groups.  
At the end of the landing we will offer you the chance to take a Polar Plunge – a swim in the Arctic waters! We'll bring the towels, you bring the insanity!  
**Long hikers** please come to the gangway first.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- TBA      **Monacobreen.** This afternoon we hope to take you out on a zodiac cruise at the impressive Monacobreen. This is one of the most iconic glacier fronts in Svalbard. This is named after Prince Albert I of Monaco, for his 1898-1907 oceanographic expedition to map the area. Dress warmly and enjoy the ice. We will be looking for seals and other wildlife.
- 1830      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4)

0745 **Wake up call** - Good Morning!

0800 **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).

TBA **Wahlbergøya.** This morning we hope to take you on a zodiac cruise in the area around Wahlbergøya. This island sometimes has walrus on the beach and we may find some in the water. It is a very scenic location so we will go exploring and see what we find.. Please dress warmly for the cruise.

1230 **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).

## Expedition Afternoon

In the afternoon we will sail further south towards the island of Wilhelmøya and Bjørnsundet. We hope to find some ice in between the islands, and we will see what we find in the area. What we find will dictate our plans for the afternoon. Please listen for announcements.

1830 **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.

1900 **Buffet Dinner** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4)

We will be arriving at the ice edge before breakfast and will spend the day in the ice enjoying the frozen wilderness and looking for wildlife. Please join us on deck to help with the search and experience the Arctic pack ice.

If we find any special wildlife, we postpone presentations during the day.

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1100      **Sea Ice.** We will be sailing through sea ice today in search of wildlife but if you would like to learn more about the ice and how it forms then please join Marco in the Lounge.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1500      **Polar bears.** We have already been very lucky to see polar bears on this voyage but if you would like to learn more about these iconic Arctic animals then please join Pippa in the Lounge.
- 1830      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.
- 1900      **Special Arctic Dinner** is served on Deck 6 on the heli deck. Dress warmly and join us for our BBQ!

During the morning we will navigate the pack ice once more before leaving the ice at lunchtime.

- 0745      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0800      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1100      **Fridtjof Nansen – Arctic Drift Expedition.** Nansen sailed the Fram up into the pack ice to find out about the drift of the pack ice between 1893 and 1896. Please join Allan in the lounge to hear of his expedition.
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 1430      **Photography.** Koen will be in the lounge to give a photography presentation so if you would like to learn more about improving your skills and images then please join him in the Lounge.
- 1630      **The Ghost Town of Pyramiden.** Sasha was the manager of the abandoned coal mining town of Pyramiden on Svalbard. If you would like to hear his stories then please join him in the Lounge.
- 1830      **Recap** – Please join the Expedition team in the lounge (deck 6) for our daily recap and briefing.
- 1900      **Dinner** is served in the dining room.

- 0645      **Wake up call** - Good Morning!
- 0700      **Breakfast Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- 0800      **Poolepyntyn.** We hope to go ashore at Poolepynten to see the walrus that often haul out on the beach. We need to do this in small groups. You will all have the same amount of time on shore and will have a chance to explore the beach and lagoon area.
- 0800      **Red Group to the gangway to go ashore.**
- 0830      **Green Group to the gangway to go ashore.**
- 0900      **Blue Group to the gangway to go ashore.**
- 1230      **Lunch Buffet** is available in the **dining room** for 1 hour (deck 4).
- TBA      **Alkhornet.** This afternoon we hope to go ashore at Alkhornet where we will explore the area in our hiking groups. There is a huge cliff where over 60,000 kittiwakes nest along with Brünnich's guillemots. It is often a good place to see reindeer feeding on the grassy slopes and we sometimes see Arctic foxes amongst the rocks below the cliffs.  
**Long hikers** please come to the gangway first.
- 1845      **Captain's Cocktails.** Please join us in the Lounge for a farewell drink with Captain Barria and the expedition team. We will also explain plans for disembarkation in Longyearbyen and look back on our voyage.
- 1930      **Farewell Dinner** is served in the **dining room** (deck 4)

- 0715      **Wake up call** - Good Morning! Please place your large check in luggage outside your cabin before you go to breakfast.
- 0730      Breakfast Buffet is available in the dining room for 1 hour.
- 0900      All guests on Flight **SK4425 (12:35)** will take a bus from the ship to town. Please put a **BLUE LABEL** on your luggage. Your bus to the airport will leave town at **10:45**
- 0900      All guests on Flight **SK4493 (19:40)** will take a bus to town. Please put an **ORANGE LABEL** on your luggage. Your bus to the airport will leave town at **17:30**
- 0900      All guests on Flight **DY391 (21:10)** will take a bus to town. Please put an **RED LABEL** on your luggage. Your bus to the airport will leave town at **19:30**
- 0900      All guests staying in town take the bus to town and make your way to your hotel. Please do **NOT** put any label on your luggage. Take it on the bus with you.

From the Captain, all the crew and the Expedition Team on board the MV Ortelius, we wish you safe onward travel, and thank you for sharing this incredible voyage with us. We look forward to sailing with you again in the future.