



North Spitsbergen Explorer
Into the Pack Ice – Polar Bear & Whale Special

28 June – 7 July, 2026

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 Matei Mocanu

and his international crew of 49 sailors

Chief Officer:	Sjoerd van Hoek	[Netherland]
Second Officer:	Aleksandrs Spiridonovs	[Lettland]
Third Officer:	Antti Liginell	[Finland]
Hotel Manager:	Jeroen Barnes	[Netherlands]
Head Chef:	Gaurav Bawa	[India]
Sous Chef:	Donal Cielo	[Phillipines]
Ships doctor:	Sjoerd Verschoor	[Netherland]
Expedition Leader:	Philipp Schaudy	[Austria]
Ass. Expedition Leader:	Chloé Marechal	[France]
Expedition Guide:	Ursula Tscherter	[Switzerland]
Expedition Guide:	Daniels Karin Amby	[Sweden]
Expedition Guide:	Isabelle Schulz	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Katrin Frosin	[Germany]
Expedition Guide:	Ross Wheel	[United Kingdom]
Expedition Guide:	Nathalie Ansel	[France]

WE WELCOME YOU ON BOARD!

Day 1 – Sunday 28 June, Longyearbyen, embarkation day

08h00 GPS Position: 78°14.1'N / 015°37.1'E

Wind: NNW2 • Sea: calm • Weather: partly cloudy • Air temperature: +8°C



Many of the guest arrived at Longyearbyen on the day of embarkation. Throughout the afternoon the luggage was shuttled from the key out to *MV Plancius* on anchor in the bay. By 4pm there was an eager line of guests waiting to embark on the Zodiac journey! Our luck with the weather meant that we could save our wet zodiac journeys for later in the trip.

Once on board the evening went by quickly as we were busy with familiarisations, safety briefings, cocktails with Captain Matei Mocanu and of course a lovely first dinner. As we set off out of Isfjord in the evening, and northward towards our first scheduled activity of the trip, there was time to enjoy the views of the flat table-topped mountains in the late evening light.

Day 2 – Monday 29 June, Lilliehöök glacier & Camp Zoe landing

08h00 GPS Position: 79°16.2'N / 011°39.4'E

Wind: N2 • Sea: calm • Weather: partly cloudy • Air temperature: +9°C

The low hum of the *MV Plancius* engines is still with us when Philipp, our expedition leader, wakes us early this morning. We are entering Krossfjorden. The scenery unfolding around us is nothing short of spectacular: long glacial tongues flow down between steep, jagged peaks. Shades of blue and white, stark and mineral, mirror perfectly in the calm waters of the fjord. The weather is kind to us.



After attending the mandatory AECO briefing, reminding us of Arctic regulations and how to dress appropriately for each landing, we board the zodiacs and set off toward **Lilliehöök Glacier**. For nearly three hours we cruise through the fjord, the immense glacier stretching out before us.

As we reach the ice front, our zodiacs glide into the brash ice; the surface crackles and

sparkles all around us. Deep, muffled rumbles announce dramatic calving events. Arctic terns, kittiwakes, and northern fulmars immediately converge on the freshly broken ice, nature's buffet in action. We are about to head back towards *MV Plancius*, when 3 bearded seals are spotted. Lazily sprawled on an ice floe, one seems to pose nonchalantly for our photographers, while another, far more active, keeps diving and playfully resurfacing in front of us. Lunch awaits us shortly after we return on board. In the afternoon, there is just enough time to sort through a few photos before the guides invite us back into the zodiacs for a short transfer to **Camp Zoe**.



The cabin was built for entrepreneur Ernst Mansfield and named in honour of his daughter, Zoe. It was originally intended for mineral prospecting, an activity that was very popular in Svalbard at the beginning of the 20th century.

Almost upon arrival, attention quickly shifts from the cabin itself to a group of reindeer chasing

each other up the hillside. After a few photos, Ursula opens a window into the fascinating world of Arctic plants for those opting for a relaxed walk. One by one, magnifying glasses are passed around to examine mosses, lichens, and tiny flowers in remarkable detail.

A more motivated hiking group heads off in the reindeer's direction. Once the animals disappear, the group continues upward, led by Chloé, toward a high viewpoint. A third group chooses a slower-paced walk to several scenic overlooks, where Nathalie and Ross share insights into the Arctic tundra ecosystem.

The day concludes with the evening briefing for the next day, followed by a short introduction to the Arctic by Nathalie and to bearded seals by Ursula, a fitting end to a day immersed in ice, wildlife, and history.

Day 3 – Tuesday 30 June, Texas Bar & Jotunkjeldene & Gråhuken

08h00 GPS Position: 79°31.4'N / 012°20.4'E

Wind: NW32 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: +11°C

In the morning, we visited **Texas bar**, a little cabin built by the famous trapper Hilmar Nøis. Texas bar is a so-called satellite station. Hilmar's main station was in Sassendalen, and he used Texas bar for a few days at the time looking after his traps in the area around it. Today the cabin is used for recreational purposes by the locals. While we came ashore there was two walrus swimming in the water close to the landing site. At first, we all met at the cabin and had a look inside, then we divided in our three hiking groups. The mountain goats headed up the hills and got a beautiful view of Monacobreen and Liefdefjorden. The medium hikers stayed a bit lower in the terrain and saw many beautiful plants and flowers. On the way back from their viewing point, they saw polar bear footprints in the mud. The leisurely group spent more time around the cabin listening to trapper stories. Afterwards they went for a little walk to get the

view of the meandering river reaching the sea and the little island Hesteskoholmen. At Texas bar we also saw Svalbard rock ptarmigan, snowbuntings and arctic skuas.

In the afternoon we sailed into **Bockfjorden** for our second landing this day. We visited Jotunkjeldene, Svalbard's "hot" springs. Already from the landing site we could see the yellowish cone that has been created where the "**hot**" **spring** is. On the beach we divided into three hiking groups, the sportive group who went for a longer walk on the slopes of the mountain Smørstabben. From the highest point of their hike, they had a beautiful view of the glaciers Friedrichbreen and Adlfbreen on the way they also saw Svalbard rock ptarmigan. The medium groups explored the lowland around Jotunkjeldene and got to see lots of interesting plants for example the Mountain avens (*Dryas Octopetala*). The leisurely group also conquered the difficult terrain and went up to Jotunkjeldene and could admire the beautiful sinter terraces and see the water slowly flowing out of the wells. The temperature in Jotunkjeldene is approximately 24 degrees, and they are not only warming up the area around they are also home to one of Chloés favourite creatures, the water bear (Tardigrade). This is a tiny organism that can withstand a broad range of temperatures and can live in very many different habitats.

In the evening after dinner, we sailed past Gråhuken, where Christiane Ritter was wintering during her time in Spitsbergen. Isabelle and Nathalie told us about Christianes life and read a few passages from her book, "*A woman in the polar night*" a true classic in the polar literature.

Day 4 – Wednesday 1 July, Pack Ice Day

08h00 GPS Position: 80°31.8'N / 013°51.2'E

Wind: NW3 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: -1°C

Good morning, *MV Plancius*, we have reached the pack ice! At 7 am we find ourselves at the most Northern point of our journey yet. The voice of our Trip leader Philipp wakes us with news that immediately pull us from our cozy bunks "there is a **Blue whale** by the front of the ship". Rubbing the sleep from our eyes, with pillow marks still on our cheeks, everyone grabs their coats and cameras and quickly joins the early birds already watching on the bow. Thank god the batteries were charged overnight! The fear of missing this sight settles quickly, as we get a spectacular view of not one, but two blue whales surfacing close to the boat. The sound of the whale-blows alert



everyone to quickly move from one side of the railing to the other when the whales re-appear from their shallow dives. A group of seabirds is circling and diving into the water

close by, adding to this rare sight. The whales sometimes surface so close to ship, that we can ascertain the colouration patterns on their backs. And all of this before 8 am!

When we get the call that breakfast is ready, everyone is reluctant to leave, The whales are still nearby, what if we miss another glance? Those who hold out before their first coffee a little longer get rewarded with the lifting of the tail fluke. In Blue whales, this often indicates a deeper dive, and we bid farewell to them at this point. Time for breakfast, at last.



With so much excitement to start the day, most people take to watching out from the bridge and bow. The weather has changed from the mild temperatures of the coast the last days, and it even snows a little as we move further into the ice. Packed into coats, scarfs and thick gloves, eyes scan the horizon in all directions. A dark spot pops up, then another, suddenly a few more. The uncanny sight of roughly **20 harp seals** surfacing, pushing their heads out of the water, and swimming backwards. These behaviours make them easily identifiable even from a distance. The motion of popping their heads up and down in the water is often described as “bottling” - floating along like a glass bottle at sea. They move by right at the front of the ship and eventually dive off. Time for a warm tea or coffee.

We progress further towards pack ice, the sea ice getting denser, and get treated to sunshine just after lunchtime.

A welcome source of warmth on the cold bridge around midday, and the added light makes for great photography conditions of the beautiful **frozen landscape**. In the early afternoon, more harp seals are spotted, first far from the port side, and eventually right by the front of the ship. We can easily observe them, just meters from us, as they twirl and splash while passing along. They keep appearing at various distances for the rest of the day and into the night.

As the afternoon progresses, we keep scanning the horizon until a black dot appears in the binocular field. As the ship gets closer, the mysterious dot turns into a resting **walrus**. Its ice floe is stained by faeces, and upon closer inspection we find our first **ivory gull** of the trip feeding on them. Truly nothing goes wasted in this ecosystem. The walrus appears to be relatively young, which can be indicate by the short tusks. Walrus tusks keep growing for their entire life and can reach a meter in length. Soon after, we also pass a bearded seal resting on an ice flow with the common orange colouration visible on its back. Just before we meet for the recaps of the day, a few lucky people spot a minke whale lunge feeding and moving between ice floes further away. Minkes are known for being relatively elusive, and soon it disappears from our view. Before dinner our guide Chloé gives us an introduction into the fascinating world of sea ice formation, and Ursula teaches us more about the true star of the day; the

blue whale. It is not everyday you get to see the biggest animal that has ever lived outside your window (or porthole) for breakfast!

Truly a big day for all, and now back to the cabin to edit the gigabytes of photos taken today. Let's see what tomorrow brings.

Day 5 – Thursday 2 July, Wildlife at the edge of the pack ice

08h00 GPS Position: 80°53.4'N / 017°10.41'E

Wind: SW4 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: +3°C

After yesterday's full day in the **pack ice** with many sightings of whales, seals and birds we all did get up in the hope that today would bring the first sighting of a polar bear. A glimpse out of the window when getting up, offered quite a different view than yesterday. As the *MV Plancius* sailed slowly but steadily through open water with smaller and larger ice floes in-between. After a half an hour of extra sleep and the daily breakfast we all spread out on the outer deck, in the lounge and the bridge to scout the ice which slowly became denser.

Unfortunately, as the morning progressed, a dense fog started to unfold covering the ship and the wider area like a linen and decreasing the visibility range considerably. However, the silence, the special light as well as the fog created a truly magic world we surely enjoyed. But as the hours passed and the concentration it takes to scout the water and ice surfaces declined, we were happy to hear the bing-bong announcing Ross' lecture on birds. While fulmars, Brünnich's guillemots and little auks flew outside, Ross introduced us to some of the bird species most likely to be encountered around Svalbard. Like the beautiful kittiwakes we saw during the zodiac cruise off **Lillihöökbreen**. The Arctic tern which migrates south to sub-Antarctic waters covering yearly distances of 70'000 km! And of course the Northern fulmar who loves to fly by at eye level when standing out on the top deck. Their beauty is not obvious at first sight but close-ups views through binoculars reveal their unique subtle elegance. Belonging to the tube-noses, they carry a tube on top of the beaks to extract salt. Ross presented many more species, some of which we hope to see in coming days.

During the day we slowly cruised through the area, found higher densities of ice floes and even escaped the fog from the morning. Despite the dozens of eyes, binoculars and cameras scouting the area close and far, we only got to see harp seals and little auks flying in the air or sitting on the water. Not that we didn't enjoy these animals but to be honest, we were all strongly hoping for a bear.

After lunch Chloé offered an exciting workshop taking a close look of phyto- and zooplankton. The little microscope with a screen was ideal to share the beauty of those creatures at the beginning of marine food web. Like dinoflagellates or juvenile copepods. Later in the afternoon, Nathalie presented interesting insights into the long history of Svalbard first discovered by William Barentzs. Soon after countless sealers followed to hunt seals and walrus at that time abundant throughout the Archipelago.

Returning to Europe the news about the plentiful whales in these northern waters spread quickly, leading up to the overexploitation of large whales in the 16th and 17th century.

After recap, when Ursula gave insights into the life of harp seals and Chloé into the planktonic life below the sea ice, we headed to the aft deck where a tasty outdoor barbecue was served. We all enjoyed this special diner in the cold. To show respect to the Arctic wildlife we abstained from a party and dancing with loud music.

Later, many of us gathered in the lounge. A sense of low spirit lied in the air. The polar bear had not appeared on our second day in the ice. We knew that the chances to see one will become nil as we soon had to leave the pack ice heading south. And then, out of the blue, the bing-bong sounded



over the speakers announcing a **bowhead whale** close to the ship! I, the writer, stayed back for a moment to watch people jumping up, grabbing jackets, hats, gloves, binoculars and cameras and walking fast to the closest door to step out on deck. It was fun to see the behavioural change from low spirits to total excitement. We were then treated with a long and exceptional sighting of a true Arctic whale species. Swimming close to the ship, it's pronounced round head appeared and we could hear its exhale. To our surprise it threw its flukes during every surfacing, lifting the tail high into the air. We were watching quietly in awe of this exceptionally majestic animal.

Now, we could all go to bed. Happy and fulfilled.

Day 6 – Friday 3 July, Landing at Torellneset and Faksevangen with Polar Plunge & Zodiac cruise at the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet

08h00 GPS Position: 79°22.1'N / 020°40.8'E

Wind: SSW4 • Sea: calm • Weather: foggy • Air temperature: +2.7°C

The Arctic rewarded us with another unforgettable day, filled with the breathtaking landscapes of eastern Spitsbergen and remarkable wildlife encounters from morning until evening.

Our morning began with a landing at **Torellneset**, a broad gravel spit on the eastern edge of the Hinlopen Straight renowned for its walrus haul-out. As we approached the beach, the unmistakable shapes of Atlantic walruses came into view, resting in a tightly



packed group along the shoreline. Some slept peacefully, while others could be seen shuffling and heaving themselves into a more comfortable position, often clambering over their neighbors with little regard for personal space. Their long ivory tusks and whiskered faces gave each animal a distinctive character. Once hunted almost to extinction in Svalbard, walruses are now a conservation success story, and seeing a healthy haul-out is a reminder of the resilience of Arctic wildlife when given protection. Around us, the windswept coastline, polished by sea and ice, hinted at the powerful forces that continue to shape this remote wilderness.

In the afternoon we ventured into the sheltered waters of **Faksevågen**, deep within Lomfjorden. Here, the atmosphere changed completely. Towering mountains rose directly from the fjord, their layered rock faces telling a geological story hundreds of millions of years in the making. Patches of vibrant tundra added subtle greens, reds and golds to the otherwise rugged landscape, while glaciers clung to distant valleys. During our walk ashore, Svalbard reindeer grazed calmly across the tundra, seemingly untroubled by our presence. Smaller and stockier than their mainland relatives, these hardy animals are perfectly adapted to surviving the long Arctic winter. The stillness of the fjord, interrupted only by the calls of snow bunting and purple sandpiper, made this a wonderfully peaceful afternoon. Before returning to the ship, a handful of brave adventurers embraced one of the classic expedition traditions; the **polar plunge**. With plenty of cheers and encouragement from those watching ashore, they dashed into the chilled Arctic waters, emerging moments later exhilarated with their accomplishment. It was a refreshing finale to a memorable visit to this beautiful corner of Svalbard.

As evening approached, we set out by zodiac for one of Svalbard's most iconic natural spectacles; the soaring **bird cliffs of Alkefjellet**. The dramatic basalt columns, formed by ancient volcanic activity, rise almost vertically from the sea, creating perfect nesting ledges for many species of seabirds. Long before the cliffs came into view, the air was filled with the calls of tens of thousands of Brünnich's guillemots as they wheeled overhead or crowded shoulder to shoulder on the narrow rock ledges. Birds streamed continuously between the cliffs and the sea, as the adults returned to their carefully protected egg perched precariously on the cliff edges. Amongst the chaos of guillemots, opportunistic glaucous gulls lined the ledges looking for an easy meal and



an Arctic fox was sighted patrolling the base of the cliffs. Cruising quietly beneath this living wall of birds was an extraordinary sensory experience, the constant movement, the chorus of calls, and the sheer scale of the colony reminding us just how productive the Arctic summer can be.

Today offered a perfect cross-section of Svalbards wilderness: mighty walrus hauled out on remote shores, peaceful tundra alive with reindeer, magnificent mountain scenery, and one of the worlds greatest seabird colonies. It was a day that captured both the grandeur and the intimacy of the High Arctic, leaving us with lasting memories of this remarkable corner of the world.

Day 7 – Saturday 4 July, Pack Ice Day

08h00 GPS Position: 80°33.4'N / 012°00.7'E

Wind: W2 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast and foggy • Air temperature: -2.2°C

Back to the Ice we go!

After a really adventure packed day yesterday, we headed back to the pack ice. This time we went into the pack ice further east in search of the elusive polar bears.

As we wake, our portholes show us a slightly foggy scenery. The slower morning is welcomed to recharge and rest our legs and minds from the excitement the day before. Many of us spent our morning eagerly scanning the landscape of broken up ice floes for any



sign of something furry and yellow. Standing quietly on the bridge and top deck, binoculars follow the horizon line, sometimes being distracted by a kittiwake flying by. As we near midday, the clouds clear and our faces get warmed by the stunning polar sunshine. The sea is completely calm, and the ocean around us mirrors the blue sky and clouds above. It is hard to take our eyes off a landscape so remote and serene. As we slowly move through the ice floes and hear them crunch against each others edges, or read books from the library in the lounge, the speaker echoes; "Hot chocolate on the top deck". Yes, please! It turns out this hot chocolate served in the sunshine can

also contain rum and copious amounts of cream (on demand). Not a bad view for a hot drink, or two, or three...

In the afternoon, Ursula introduces us to the world of Baleen Whales, their fascinating feeding mechanisms and history of whaling. She shares many photos and videos of her past encounters with Minke whales and makes sure by the end we learn to love and admire them almost as much as she does. Then, we follow the journey of a blue arctic fox from Svalbard with Ross, over the pack ice we are floating through all the way to Ellesmere Island in just 76 days! Next, Isabelle takes us for a dive in the Arctic, and we explore the wonderful world of sea kelp (the giant algae we saw in the water below Alkefjellet). After dinner almost all of us squeeze into the bridge and onto the top deck, a group effort of scanning the ice and water surface. Finally we see some movement on the ice where a few harp seals have hauled out, and we watch them glide into the water and splash and play close by. As we get engulfed by fog in the late evening, it is time to bid the ice world farewell, and head back to the mainland for another day.

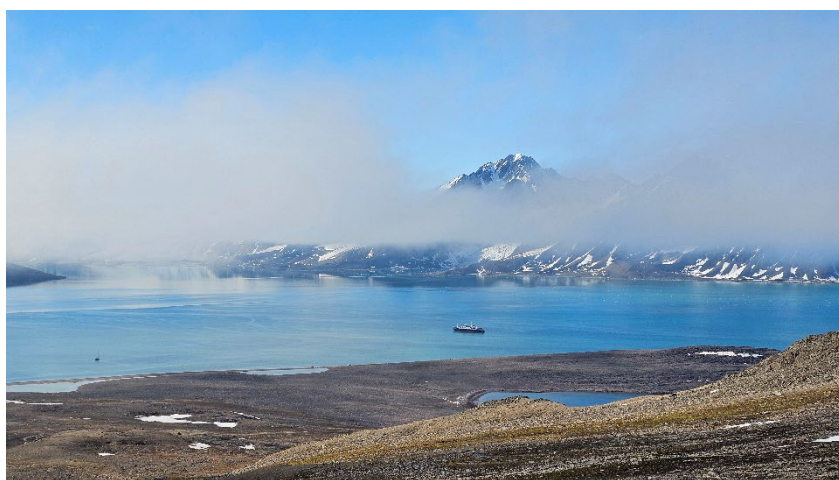
Day 8 – Sunday 5 July, Morning landing at Alicehamna, ship cruising at Fuglefjorden and Smeerenburgfjorden

08h00 GPS Position: 79°44.4'N / 012°09.9'E

Wind: WNW2 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: +9°C

This morning finds us at **Alicehamna**, in Raudfjorden. Under a brilliant blue sky and with pleasantly mild temperatures, we awaken to one of the most spectacular landscapes of the voyage, where jagged alpine peaks and magnificent glaciers surround the fjord.

Our Zodiacs bring us gently ashore when an excited shout rings out: "Sea angel!" Thanks to the crystal-clear water, Chloé successfully collects one of these remarkable pelagic molluscs, along with several sea cucumbers and jellyfish, giving everyone a rare opportunity to observe Arctic marine life up close.



We take turns visiting **Raudfjordhytta**, a historic trapper's hut that offers a glimpse into the challenging lives of those who once overwintered in these remote surroundings. Afterwards, the leisurely and medium hiking groups climb the hillside to a cairn overlooking the bay. Along the way,

Philipp points out a 17th-century whaler's grave, a reminder of the region's rich and

often harsh history. At the summit, another sailor's grave lies in this peaceful setting, overlooking the fjord. Meanwhile, the long hiking group embarks on a more demanding ascent to a higher viewpoint, rewarded with spectacular panoramic views after an energetic hike.

Following lunch, the Captain treats us to a scenic cruise along the northern and western coasts of the archipelago. Under perfect weather conditions, *MV Plancius* sails among the islands, through **Fuglefjorden** and into **Smeerenburgfjorden**. Binoculars are constantly in use as everyone scans the coastline for wildlife and takes in the magnificent scenery. Eventually, a dense bank of Arctic fog rolls into Magdalenefjorden, enveloping the landscape and transforming the bright afternoon into a mysterious white world.

During the evening recap, Chloé introduces us to the fascinating world of Arctic plankton and explains the biology of the delicate sea angel we encountered earlier in the day. Kati follows with an engaging presentation about beluga whales, while Ursula reveals the stories behind the life-sized animal illustrations that have accompanied us throughout the ship, decorating the walls of *MV Plancius* and bringing Arctic wildlife indoors.

Day 9 – Monday 6 July, Landing Valentinryggen & Gjerstadodden

08h00 GPS Position: 78°33.5'N / 013°10.6'E

Wind: NNW2 • Sea: calm • Weather: partially overcast • Air temperature: +10°C

MV Plancius glides gently to the head of **St. Jonsfjorden**. The final day of our voyage lies ahead, and everyone eagerly boards the Zodiacs for a morning landing at **Valentinryggen**.

As on previous days, we divide into three hiking groups. The leisurely walkers enjoy a relaxed stroll along the shoreline to a spectacular beach facing the glacier front. The beach and the surrounding waters are dotted with grounded icebergs of every imaginable shape, size, and shade, creating a stunning natural sculpture gallery.

The medium hiking group ventures higher onto the tundra, taking in sweeping views and Arctic flora before making their way down to the iceberg-strewn beach to join the others for photographs.

Meanwhile, the so-called "mountain goats" set off on a steeper ascent, carefully zigzagging up the slope between mountain avens and campion moss. A reindeer makes a brief appearance before disappearing over the ridge. At the summit, the reward is breathtaking: a spectacular panorama unfolds as the group walks along a ridge between two glaciers.

Eventually, all three groups reunite on the beach. As the perfect finale to the morning, we witness an impressive glacier calving, watching huge blocks of ice thunder into the sea.

Back on board, the familiar "ding-dong" announces another delicious meal, and we gather in the restaurant to enjoy lunch together.



In the afternoon, we make another landing at **Gjerstadodden**, still within St. Jonsfjorden. As we come ashore, a harbour seal poses gracefully on a nearby rock, seemingly unfazed by our presence. Everyone enjoys prolonged views and plenty of excellent photo opportunities.

The leisurely walkers set off on a tundra flora walk and are soon rewarded with the sight of several reindeer grazing peacefully, including a young calf still wearing its white winter coat. The medium and long hiking groups climb onto a moraine to gain a higher vantage point overlooking the glacier. From above, the glacier reveals an entirely different character: dramatic seracs, deep crevasses, and intricate ice formations become strikingly visible.

Both hiking groups are also treated to the delightful spectacle of a fluffy snow bunting chick, busily practising its first attempts at flight. As the walks continue across the lush tundra plain, more reindeer are spotted feeding in this remarkably rich Arctic landscape.

Back aboard *MV Plancius*, the Captain invites everyone to a **farewell cocktail**. As we raise a glass together, Ross presents a wonderful slideshow, revisiting the highlights and unforgettable wildlife encounters from each day of the voyage.

The expedition concludes with an excellent farewell dinner, during which the hardworking crew is introduced and warmly thanked for making this remarkable Arctic adventure such a memorable experience.

Day 10 – Tuesday 7 July, Arrival back to Longyearbyen

08h00 GPS Position: 78°20.2'N / 015°26.7'E

Wind: S1 • Sea: calm • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: +10°C

This morning we arrive in Longyearbyen, where our journey together comes to an end. As we enjoy one final breakfast on board, our luggage is already being transferred ashore from *MV Plancius*. Before long, it is time to say goodbye to the ship that has been our comfortable home in the Arctic over the past days.

With countless unforgettable memories to take home, we look back on an extraordinary expedition. Together, we have explored spectacular landscapes, encountered remarkable Arctic wildlife, experienced the pack ice, and shared many special moments along the way. Now it is time to bid farewell to *MV Plancius*, to the wonderful crew who looked after us each day, to the Expedition Team who shared their knowledge and enthusiasm with us, and of course, to one another.

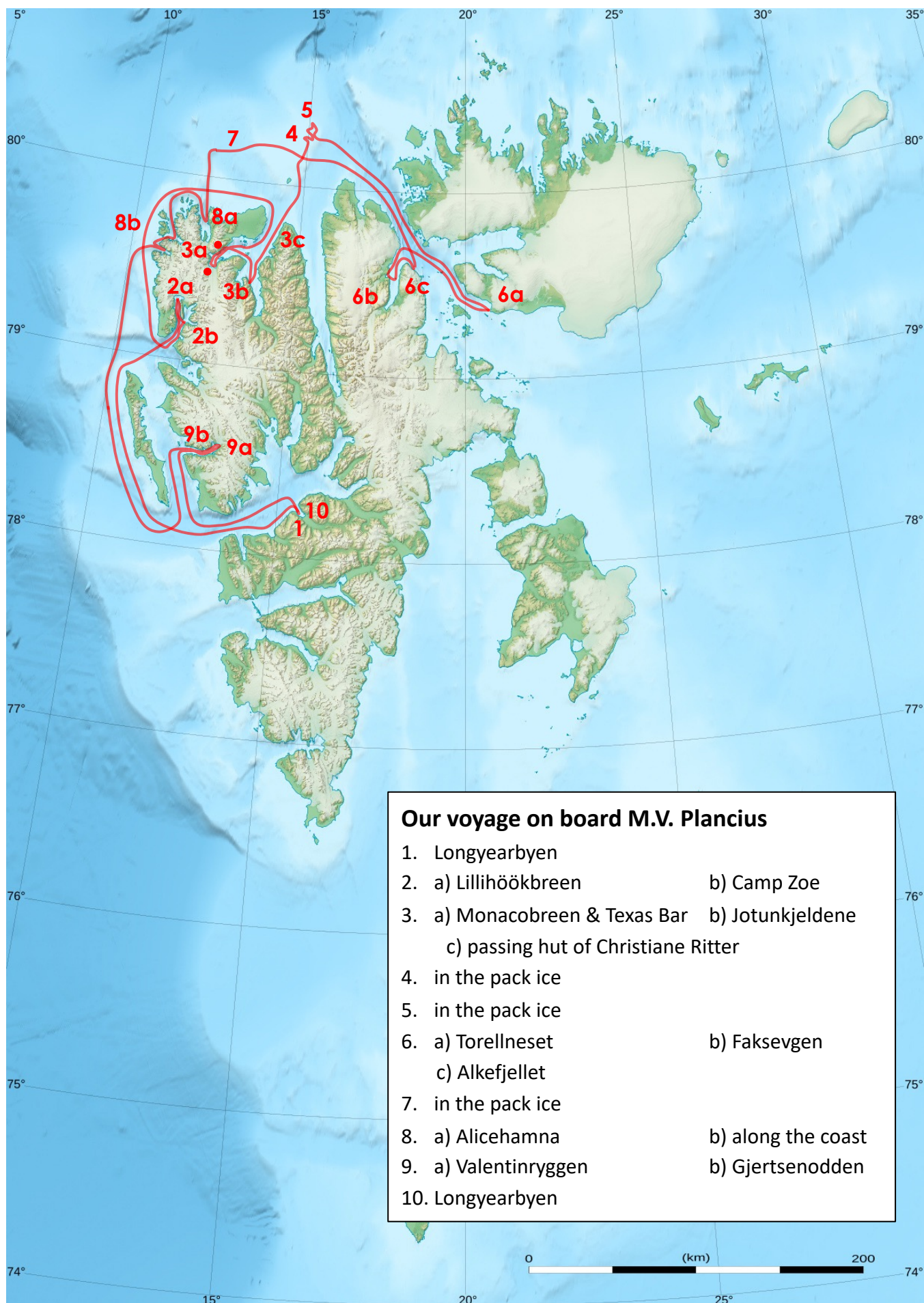
On behalf of the entire Oceanwide crew and Expedition Team, we would like to thank you all for joining us on this journey. Thank you for your enthusiasm, your curiosity,

your flexibility, and for the many wonderful moments we have shared. It has been a true pleasure to travel with you.

We wish you a safe journey home and hope to welcome you aboard again on another expedition someday, perhaps back in the Arctic, perhaps in Antarctica, or at another fascinating destination somewhere in the world. Until then, we wish you all the very best and many more unforgettable adventures.



Total distance sailed on our voyage: 1,212 nm
Northernmost position: 81°17.7245'N, 024°56.72'W



Birds and Mammals of Svalbard and Franz Josph Land

[illegible]

Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Spatelraubmöwe	Labbe pomarin	Middelste jager	T										
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarotzerraub-möw	Labbe parasite	Kleine jager	B		x	x			x		x	x	
Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	Falkenraubmöwe	Labbe à longue queue	Kleinste jager	B										
Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Skua	Grand Labbe	Grote jager	B										
Sabine's Gull	<i>Xema sabini</i>	Schwalbenmöwe	Mouette de Sabine	Vorkstaartmeeuw	B										
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	Lachmöwe	Mouette rieuse	Kokmeeuw	V										
Common/Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>	Sturmmöwe	Goéland cendré	Stormmeeuw	V										
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	Goéland bourgmestre	Grote Burgemeester	B	X	x	x	x		x		x	x	x
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Polarmöwe	Goéland arctique	Kleine burgemeester	T										
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Silbermöwe	Goéland argenté	Zilvermeeuw	V										
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Heringsmöwe	Goéland brun	Kleine mantelmeeuw	V										
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Mantelmöwe	Goéland marin	Grote mantelmeeuw	B										
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle	Drieteenmeeuw	B	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ross' Gull	<i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>	Rosenmöwe	Mouette de Ross	Rossmeeuw	T										
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>	Elfenbeinmöwe	Mouette blanche	Ivoormeeuw	B				x						
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne arctique	Noordse stern	B	X	x	x			x		x	x	x
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Trottellumme	Guillemot de Troil	Zeekoet	B										
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brünnich	Dikbekzeekoet	B	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Black Guillemot	<i>Cepphus grylle</i>	Gryllteiste	Guillemot à miroir	Zwarte zeekoet	B	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbentaucher	Mergule nain	Kleine alk	B	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Papageitaucher	Macareux moine	Papegaaiduiker	B	X	x	x					x		
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Rauchschwalbe	Hirondelle rustique	Boerenzwaluw	V										
White Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	Bachstelze	Bergeronnette grise	Witte Kwikstaart	V										
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Wiesenpieper	Pipit farlouse	Graspieper	V										
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Steinschmätzer	Traquet moteux	Tapuit	B										
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Amsel	Merle noir	Merel	V										
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	Bruant des neiges	Sneeuwgors	B	X	x	x			x		x	x	
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Birkenzeisig	Sizerin flammé	Barmsijs	V										
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	Spornammer	Bruant lapon	Ijsgors	V										
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Wacholderdrossel	Grive litorne	Kramsvogel	V										
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Rotdrossel	Grive mauvis	Koperwiek	V										
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Bergfink	Pinson du Nord	Keep	V										
Gyrfalcon	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	Gerfalke	Faucon Gerfaut	Giervalk	V										

MAMMALS

English	Latin	German	French	Dutch	Breeding / Transient / Vagrant										
Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walross	Morse	Walrus	B			x	x		x		x		
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bartrobbe	Phoque barbu	Baardrob	B		x		x	x					
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringelrobbe	Phoque marbré	Ringelrob	B										
Harp seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	Sattelrobbe	Phoque du Groenland	Zadelrob	T				x	x		x			

Philipp Schaudy – Expedition Leader



It all started on this memorable 24th of December 1973. It was cold and snow was falling on the Austrian city of Graz. I instantly loved that. Immediately I decided to become a polar explorer but managed only to be a Christmas tree vendor in front of a supermarket in my early years.

That was a dead-end job, so I packed my rucksack and tried to find happiness abroad. I bicycled across continents, climbed mountains, paddled rivers. "To be on the road" was my motto. I took pictures of everything, gave public talks and told the audience about my adventures.

Along the way I finished studies to become a Geographer. Not so easy with my drive to travel.

And then the addiction to the North. Again and again. Scandinavia, Iceland, Canada, Alaska and – more than 20 years ago – for the first time Spitsbergen. Suddenly I felt at home and stayed there for several years together with my wife.

Eventually we had seen enough polar nights and broke camp. Still plenty of virgin soil ahead of us. Greenland, the Russian Arctic, the North Pole, the deep South – Antarctica – and a lot in between.

Today I live with my family at 750 meters above sea level in a small village near Graz. A place where snow is falling at Christmas. Nevertheless, I am back in the Arctic every summer. Sure thing!

Deutsch

Alles begann an jenem denkwürdigen 24. Dezember 1973. Es war kalt und Schnee fiel in dicken Flocken auf die österreichische Stadt Graz. Das gefiel mir auf Anhieb. Sofort entschloss ich Polarforscher zu werden, schaffte es in jungen Jahren jedoch nur zum Christbaumverkäufer vor einem Supermarkt.

Das hatte keine Zukunft. Und so packte ich meinen Rucksack und suchte mein Glück in der Ferne. Ich durchquerte per Fahrrad Kontinente, kletterte auf Berge, paddelte auf Flüssen. „Unterwegs sein“ war das Motto. Ich fotografierte alles, hielt Vorträge und erzählte dem Publikum von meinen Abenteuern. Nebenbei schloss ich das Studium zum Diplomgeographen ab. Gar nicht so einfach bei meinem Reisedrang.

Und dann die Sucht nach dem Norden. Wieder und wieder. Skandinavien, Island, Kanada, Alaska und – vor über 20 Jahren – erstmals Spitzbergen. Ich war plötzlich angekommen und verbrachte mit meiner Frau mehrere Jahre auf der Insel.

Irgendwann hatten wir genug Polarnacht intus und brachen die Zelte ab. Noch immer viel Neuland voraus. Grönland, die Russische Arktis, der Nordpol, der tiefe Süden – die Antarktis – und jede Menge dazwischen.

Heute lebe ich mit meiner Familie auf 750 Meter Seehöhe in einem kleinen Dorf nahe Graz. Dort wo zu Weihnachten der Schnee fällt. Jedoch im Sommer bin ich nach wie vor jedes Jahr in der Arktis. Na klar!

Chloé Maréchal – Asst. Exp. Leader



Chloé is a dedicated diver with an insatiable passion for marine life and exploration. Armed with a European master's degree in Marine Biodiversity and Conservation, she's on a mission to share her expertise and promote the conservation of the marine environment. But here's the twist—while everyone else is busy oohing and aahing over flashy dolphins and majestic whales, Chloé's heart belongs to the unsung heroes of the ocean—the often underrated world of plankton and the mysteries of unseen microbes. She's here to show that even the tiniest organisms can have big personalities!

In April 2013, Chloé's dedication and skills were recognized when she was chosen as the prestigious 2013-14 European Rolex Our World Underwater Scholar. This remarkable opportunity allowed her to work alongside renowned leaders in the fields of marine science and diving industry, providing her with diverse experiences and invaluable insights. During this transformative year, her first encounter with Antarctica left an indelible mark, igniting a lifelong passion for polar exploration.

Chloé isn't just a science nerd with a thing for plankton. She's an adventurous soul with an insatiable curiosity. She's dived across all continents, lived in 20 countries, and now sails on her 12-meter aluminum boat. Together with her partner she has recently crossed the challenging waters of the North Sea.

Currently, Chloé calls northern Norway her home, residing just above the polar circle. When not guiding, she explores underwater wonders, uncovers forgotten wrecks, and maps uncharted underwater caves. Her passion for the ocean, sailing, and work with Oceanwide Expeditions fuel her relentless pursuit of adventure.

Deutsch

Chloé ist eine leidenschaftliche Taucherin, die von der Unterwasserwelt und ihrer Erforschung fasziniert ist. Sie hat einen europäischen Masterabschluss in Meeresbiodiversität und -erhaltung erworben und liebt es, ihr Fachwissen über die Meeresumwelt weiterzugeben.

Im April 2013 wurde sie als europäische Rolex Our World Underwater-Stipendiatin 2013-14 ausgewählt. Sie arbeitete ein Jahr lang Seite an Seite mit führenden Unterwasserforschern und sammelte dabei ganz unterschiedliche Erfahrungen in der Meereswissenschaft und der Tauchbranche. Tauchen und Wissenschaft sind nicht ihre einzige Leidenschaft; sie erkundet gerne neue Länder und entdeckt neue Kulturen.

Sie hat bereits auf allen Kontinenten getaucht und in mehr als 20 Ländern gelebt. Chloé lebt jetzt in Nordnorwegen, direkt oberhalb des Polarkreises. Wenn sie nicht an Bord ist, kann man sie unter Wasser antreffen: Sie beobachtet die Meeresbewohner, sucht nach vergessenen Wracks oder kartiert und erforscht unentdeckte Unterwasser-Höhlengänge.

Ursula Tscherter – Expedition Guide



I grew up far from the oceans in landlocked Switzerland when in the 70s, when exploitative whaling was still happening, the dream of my childhood evolved; to meet whales in their natural environment. It came true in 1993 and changed my life radically. I gave up my original profession as a teacher for Craft and Art and spent the next 20 summers in Eastern Canada studying whales. As the director of the Swiss-Canadian ORES Foundation I combined scientific research and education for international audiences leaving deep imprints in many peoples' lives.

I am a true minke whale enthusiast. I thousands of hours I observed these mind-blowing whales and studied their habitat use, hunting and breathing ecology using photo-identification. At 50 years I obtained my Master in Marine Mammal Science at the University of St Andrews (Scotland). I nourished my urge to learn more from the oceans and whales in various research projects in Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. In 2008 I started to work as an expedition guide and lecturer in Antarctica and later in the Arctic. When at home I produce life-sized

foldable animals, which I carry to schools and ships. Visit my lectures to meet some of them.

Just as strong as my urge to learn and explore is my need to share my knowledge and fascination with others to raise environmental awareness. Please join or approach me at any time, as I love to answer questions and to be on deck on the lookout for wildlife.

Deutsch

Ich bin weit weg von den Ozeanen in der Schweiz aufgewachsen, als in den 70er Jahren der Hoch-Zeit des Walfanges, der Traum von meiner Kindheit entstand; Wale in ihrer natürlichen Umgebung zu sehen. Dieser wurde 1993 wahr und veränderte mein Leben radikal. Ich gab meinen ursprünglichen Beruf als Lehrerin für Handwerk und Kunst auf und verbrachte die nächsten 20 Sommer in Ostkanada, um Wale zu studieren. Als Direktor der schweizerisch-kanadischen ORES Foundation kombinierte ich wissenschaftliche Forschung und Bildung für internationales Publikum und hinterließ tiefe Spuren im Leben vieler Menschen.

Ich bin ein echter Zwergwal-Enthusiast. Ich beobachtete tausenden von Stunden diese geistesreichen Wale und untersuchte ihre Lebensraumnutzung, Jagd und Atemökologie mittels Foto Identifikation. Mit 50 Jahren erwarb ich meinen Master in Marine Mammal Science an der University of St Andrews (Schottland). Ich nährte meinen Drang, in verschiedenen Forschungsprojekten in Australien, Neuseeland oder Südafrika mehr von den Ozeanen und Walen zu lernen. 2008 begann ich als Expeditionsführer und Dozent in der Antarktis und später in der Arktis zu arbeiten. Zu Hause produziere ich lebensgroße faltbare Tiere, die ich zu Schulen und Schiffen mitbringe. Besuchen Sie meine Vorträge, um einige von ihnen zu treffen.

Genauso stark wie mein Drang zu lernen und zu erforschen ist mein Bedürfnis, mein Wissen und meine Faszination mit anderen zu teilen, um das Umweltbewusstsein zu schärfen. Bitte kommen sie zu mir bei Fragen oder Schließen sie sich an, ich liebe es Fragen zu beantworten und an Deck auf der Suche nach Wildtieren zu sein.

Karin Amby Daniels – Exp. Guide



Karin was born and raised in Sweden where she lives with her family and her sled dogs.

In her childhood she spent a lot of time out in the forest with her sisters, trying how strong the ice on the stream was, or how high she could climb the trees. With her parents she would go fishing, picking berries and mushrooms. As she got older the weekends were spent in tents and wind shelters in nature together with her scout friends.

As a teenager she got interested in the polar regions and read every book she could find on the topic. In 2004 she had an internship as guiding student in Longyearbyen Svalbard and instantly knew she had found her place to be. In 2007 she packed her backpack skis and bicycle and moved to there permanently. During her time in Svalbard she studied Arctic Biology at the Universitycenter in Svalbard, got over her fear of dogs and fell totally in love with dogsledding and Arctic Botany. She also started her first guiding company offering fatbike trips around Longyearbyen. Nine years later she left Svalbard with her partner, 2 kids, 16 pieces

of luggage and one dog. Trying to have a "Normal" job in Sweden. She did however find out quite fast that sitting in an office was not for her.

Since 2018 she has worked as a expedition guide, mainly in the Arctic with Svalbard and Greenland as her main destinations. But she has also been guiding in Northern Norway, Antarctica, Scotland and the Faroe islands. When she is not on a ship she swaps her amazing expedition team colleagues for four legged ones. Working with dog-sled assisted multi day ski trips in Sweden.

She has a big passion for botany and all living things that stay on land year round in the polar regions.

Deutsch

Karin ist in Dalarna, Schweden geboren und aufgewachsen. Schon früh erkundete sie die Wälder rundum ihres Zuhauses. Camping und Schneehöhlen sind seit ihrer Kindheit ein wichtiger Teil ihres Lebens. Als Teenager war sie fasziniert von den Polarregionen. Weiße weite, karge Landschaften zogen sie an und schliesslich in den Norden.

Von 2001 bis 2004 machte sie eine Ausbildung zum Expedition-Guide welches sie mit einem fünfwöchigen, lebensverändernden Praktikum in Spitzbergen beendete.

2007 zog sie aus, um das arktische Archipel zu ihrem neuen Zuhause zu machen, und blieb für die nächsten neun Jahre.

Während dieser Zeit studierte sie Biologie an der Universität in Spitzbergen, arbeitete als wissenschaftliche Feldassistentin, machte sich selbstständig und arbeitete nebenbei in der Touristen-Information sowie im Museum.

Sie ist eine engagierte Botanikerin mit einem breitem Wissen über arktische Pflanzen und einer Passion für alles, was unter extremen Bedingungen wächst.

Karin hat eine besondere Bindung zu Wasser. Wenn es nicht gefroren ist, ist es warm genug zum schwimmen. Wenn es gefroren ist, kann eine Axt oder Kettensäge das Problem lösen!

2016 verließ sie Spitzbergen und kehrte zurück nach Schweden. Sie arbeitete dort in einem Flüchtlingslager. Als das Lager geschlossen wurde, setzte sie ihre "Schreibtisch-basierte" - Karriere für einige Zeit fort, fand aber bald heraus, dass die Arbeit von Montag bis Freitag kein Leben für sie war.

Seit 2018 arbeitet sie nun als Guide für Oceanwide-Expeditionen. Wenn sie nicht auf einem unserer Schiffe ist, um die Polarregionen zu erkunden, findet man sie im schönen Dorf Älvdalen, in Schweden. Hier verbringt sie viel Zeit in der Natur, am liebsten auf dem Hundeschlitten oder auf Ski.

Isabelle Schulz – Expedition Guide



Isabelle Schulz is a marine biologist whose career has taken her from research expeditions in the Southern Ocean and Red Sea to leading research stations in the Arctic and Caribbean.

After studying Marine Biology in Germany, Isabelle completed her PhD in Marine Ecology at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), where she investigated the role of iron in regulating phytoplankton growth in the Southern Ocean.

She subsequently spent four years as a postdoctoral researcher at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia before moving to Brussels, where she worked in marine science policy, helping to strengthen collaboration in European marine research and ocean governance.

She later served as Station Leader of the French-German research station AWIPEV in Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard, where she spent 18 months coordinating logistics, supporting international research projects, ensuring safe field operations and contributing to long-term environmental monitoring programmes in the High

Arctic.

After her time in the Arctic, Isabelle decided it was time to warm up and moved to the Caribbean. As Field Station Manager at the Central Caribbean Marine Institute (CCMI) on Little Cayman, she oversaw the operations of a remote marine research station supporting research, conservation, and education programmes.

Today, Isabelle has come full circle, returning to the polar regions as an expedition guide after a couple of years in the tropics. She enjoys sharing stories from life and work in remote environments and inspiring others to appreciate the fascinating wildlife and landscapes of the polar regions

Deutsch

Isabelle Schulz ist Meeresbiologin, und ihre berufliche Laufbahn führte sie von Forschungsexpeditionen im Südlichen Ozean und im Roten Meer bis hin zur Leitung von Forschungsstationen in der Arktis und der Karibik.

Nach ihrem Studium der Meeresbiologie in Deutschland promovierte Isabelle in Meeresökologie am Alfred Wegener Institute, wo sie die Rolle von Eisen bei der Regulierung des Phytoplanktonwachstums im Südlichen Ozean untersuchte.

Anschließend arbeitete sie vier Jahre lang als Postdoktorandin an der King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi-Arabien, bevor sie nach Brüssel zog. Dort war sie im Bereich der meereswissenschaftlichen Politik tätig und trug dazu bei, die Zusammenarbeit in der europäischen Meeresforschung sowie die Meeresgovernance zu stärken.

Später übernahm sie die Leitung der französisch-deutschen Forschungsstation AWIPEV in Ny-Ålesund auf Svalbard. Dort koordinierte sie während eines 18-monatigen Aufenthalts die Logistik, unterstützte internationale Forschungsprojekte, sorgte für sichere Feldforschungseinsätze und wirkte an langfristigen Umweltbeobachtungsprogrammen in der Hocharktis mit.

Nach ihrer Zeit in der Arktis beschloss Isabelle, sich etwas wärmeren Regionen zuzuwenden, und zog in die Karibik. Als Leiterin der Forschungsstation des Central Caribbean Marine Institute (CCMI) auf Little Cayman verantwortete sie den Betrieb einer abgelegenen Meeresforschungsstation, die Forschungs-, Naturschutz- und Bildungsprogramme unterstützte.

Heute hat sich für Isabelle der Kreis geschlossen: Nach einigen Jahren in den Tropen ist sie als Expeditionsleiterin in die Polarregionen zurückgekehrt. Sie teilt mit Begeisterung Geschichten aus ihrem Leben und ihrer Arbeit in abgelegenen Regionen und inspiriert andere dazu, die faszinierende Tierwelt und die beeindruckenden Landschaften der Polargebiete zu schätzen.

Katrin Frosin – Expedition Guide



Katrin is a marine ecologist and commercial diver with a fascination for extreme and vulnerable marine ecosystems and the cryptic creatures inhabiting them. Originally from Düsseldorf, Germany, she spent many years studying, travelling and exploring different Ocean environments, eventually settling on the shores of the beautiful Eryri National Park in North Wales, UK.

After being introduced to the Ocean at a young age as a young diver, a fascination was sparked that eventually grew into a career centering marine ecosystems and the conservation efforts to protect and support them. Today, Katrin works in and around the Sea and has spent countless hours observing and surveying some of the world's most dynamic and quickest changing marine habitats. Her previous background as a diving instructor first allowed her to share her passion by teaching guests about local marine wildlife and the importance of protecting and respecting them. She now combines her academic, teaching and commercial skills to introduce people to the unique and beautiful marine species of polar regions, which are at the forefront of environmental change. Katrin is especially interested in the ecology of

benthic marine species as well as trophic ecosystem structures, and the temporal threats and changes affecting them. Recently, she found a renewed fascination of documenting invertebrate species diversity, for which she commonly utilizes macro photography. After all, in the sea every part of the Foodweb is important, from the smallest plankton and krill to the largest Whales crossing the world's deepest Oceans.

If you are interested in discussing marine animals you may see on the shore or from deck, be sure to start up a conversation with her. Be aware you may be met with more enthusiasm and fun facts than you bargained for!

Deutsch

Katrin ist eine Meeresbiologin und Berufs-Taucherin mit einer besonderen Begeisterung für extreme und gefährdete marine Ökosysteme und die oft gut versteckten Lebewesen, die dort zuhause sind. Ursprünglich aus Düsseldorf, hat sie viele Jahre damit verbracht, verschiedene Meere zu bereisen und zu erforschen, bevor sie schließlich ihr Zuhause an den Ufern des wunderschönen Eryri-Nationalparks in Nordwales fand. Schon als junge Taucherin kam Sie mit dem Meer in Berührung; eine Erfahrung die sie so geprägt hat, dass sie schließlich zu einer Karriere mit Fokus auf Marine Ökosysteme und deren Schutz und Erhaltung führte. Heute arbeitet sie sowohl wissenschaftlich als auch praktisch rund um das Wasser und hat viele Stunden damit verbracht, marine Lebensräume zu dokumentieren, die zu den dynamischsten und sich am schnellsten verändernden Ökosystemen der Welt gehören.

In ihrer vorherigen Tätigkeit als Tauchlehrerin konnte Katrin ihre Begeisterung an Gäste weitergeben und sie für die Vielfalt der heimischen Unterwasserwelt sensibilisieren – für den respektvollen Umgang mit- und Schutz dieser empfindlichen Lebensräume. Heute verbindet sie ihre akademischen und beruflichen Kompetenzen, um Menschen die vielfältigen Meeresarten der Polarregionen vorzustellen, welche besonders stark vom Klimawandel betroffen sind. Ihr besonderes Interesse gilt benthischen Lebewesen, den komplexen Nahrungsnetzen im Meer und den Veränderungen und zeitlichen Bedrohungen, denen sie ausgesetzt sind. Sie widmet sich mit Begeisterung der Dokumentation der Artenvielfalt wirbelloser Tiere, wofür sie häufig Makrofotografie einsetzt. Denn im Meer ist jeder Teil der Nahrungskette wichtig, von dem kleinsten Plankton und Krill, zu den größten Walen die die tiefsten Welt-Ozeane durchqueren.

Wenn Sie neugierig auf die Meeresbewohner sind, die sich vom Ufer oder vom Deck aus beobachten lassen, sprechen Sie Katrin gerne an. Seien Sie allerdings vorbereitet – Sie erhalten möglicherweise mehr spannende Fun Facts als Sie erwarten!

Ross Wheeler – Expedition Guide



Ross lives in a small town in Cornwall which is located in the southwestern corner of the UK. As he grew up in a coastal town he has always been fascinated by marine wildlife and the marine environment.

Having completed an undergraduate degree and master's degree in environmental sciences/conservation biology at Plymouth University he then went on to use this passion and education to work as an environmental consultant and researcher in the coastal and marine field.

This progressed into the offshore sector where he worked as a marine mammal observer and passive acoustic monitoring operator in the offshore seismic and renewable industry sectors. This role took him to a wide range of areas throughout the North Atlantic, Central Africa and Southern Africa where he conducted marine mammal and sea bird surveys aboard various survey vessels. After a few years in this industry he then moved into the environmental compliance side of the cruise ship industry where he continues to work for six months of the

year today. Whether he is working on ships around the world, volunteering for conservation-based organisations or travelling in his 'time off' he is constantly seeking opportunities to photograph wildlife in their natural environment.

Feel free to ask him any questions about marine mammals, seabirds or anything environmentally related with the shipping industry.

Deutsch

Ross lebt in einer kleinen Stadt in Cornwall, im Südwesten des Vereinigten Königreichs. Da er in einer Küstenstadt aufgewachsen ist, faszinieren ihn Meereslebewesen und die Meeresumwelt seit jeher.

Nach dem Abschluss seines Bachelor- und Masterstudiums in Umweltwissenschaften/Erhaltungsbiologie an der University of Plymouth nutzte er seine Leidenschaft und Ausbildung, um als Umweltberater und Forscher im Küsten- und Meeresbereich zu arbeiten. Später wechselte er in den Offshore-Sektor, wo er als Beobachter von Meeressäugern und Betreiber passiver akustischer Überwachung in den Offshore-Sektoren für Seismik und erneuerbare Energien tätig war. Diese Arbeit führte ihn in viele Regionen des Nordatlantiks sowie nach Zentral- und Südafrika, wo er Meeressäuger- und Seevogelerhebungen an Bord verschiedener Forschungsschiffe durchführte.

Nach einigen Jahren in dieser Branche wechselte er in den Bereich Umwelt-Compliance in der Kreuzfahrtindustrie, in dem er heute sechs Monate im Jahr tätig ist. Ob an Bord von Schiffen weltweit, beim freiwilligen Engagement in Naturschutzorganisationen oder auf Reisen in seiner Freizeit – Ross sucht stets nach Gelegenheiten, Wildtiere in ihrem natürlichen Lebensraum zu fotografieren. Man kann ihn gerne zu Meeressäugern, Seevögeln oder allen umweltbezogenen Themen der Schifffahrtsindustrie befragen.

Nathalie Ansel – Expedition Guide



Nathalie is a historian and art historian by training. She quickly realizes that her passion for history and culture must be experienced and shared in the field. So, she sets off and crosses the oceans to follow in the footsteps of the great explorers.

Her life is transformed the first time she sets foot on the Arctic ice. This majestic, ever-changing, and challenging environment overwhelms her.

Her particular interest lies in Svalbard and Greenland, where she explores Inuit culture and how indigenous peoples adapt to this extreme environment. She is also interested in all the men and women who have shaped the history of the polar regions, such as trappers, whalers, and explorers. Her curiosity goes beyond human boundaries and extends to other creatures inhabiting the Arctic, from seabirds to cetaceans, studying their ability to adapt to this unique ecosystem.

With a wealth of experience in sharing knowledge, Nathalie conveys her passion through lectures, where she enthusiastically addresses topics ranging from history to ethology.

Deutsch

Nathalie ist ausgebildete Historikerin und Kunsthistorikerin. Schnell erkannte sie, dass ihre Leidenschaft für Geschichte und Kultur vor Ort erlebt und geteilt werden muss. So machte sie sich auf den Weg und überquerte die Ozeane, um den Spuren der großen Entdecker zu folgen.

Ihr Leben veränderte sich, als sie zum ersten Mal das arktische Eis betrat. Diese majestätische, sich ständig verändernde und herausfordernde Umgebung überwältigte sie. Ihr besonderes Interesse gilt Svalbard und Grönland, wo sie die Inuit-Kultur erforscht und untersucht, wie sich indigene Völker an diese extreme Umwelt anpassen.

Sie interessiert sich auch für all die Männer und Frauen, die die Geschichte der Polarregionen geprägt haben, wie etwa Trapper, Walfänger und Entdecker. Ihre Neugier geht jedoch über die menschliche Welt hinaus und erstreckt sich auch auf andere Lebewesen der Arktis – von Seevögeln bis zu Walen – deren Fähigkeit sie untersucht, sich an dieses einzigartige Ökosystem anzupassen.

Mit ihrer großen Erfahrung in der Wissensvermittlung teilt Nathalie ihre Leidenschaft in Vorträgen, in denen sie mit Begeisterung Themen von Geschichte bis hin zur Ethologie behandelt.



WELCOME ABOARD!

Day 1, Sunday 28th June 2026

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

When all are on board

Mandatory safety and lifeboat drill in the Lounge/Bar – Deck 5.
Please listen to announcements.

Meanwhile We are ready to cast off. Plancius is leaving Longyearbyen.

Thereafter **We invite you to our Welcome Aboard Briefing** in the Lounge/Bar on Deck 5. Please listen to announcements.

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

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

*Let us probe the silent places, let us seek what luck betide us;
Let us journey to a lonely land I know.
There's a whisper on the night-wind, there's a star agleam to guide us,
And the wild is calling, calling . . . let us go.*

Robert Service, The Call Of The Wild



LILLIEHÖÖKBREEN & CAMP ZOE

Day 2 | Monday 29th June 2026

- 07.15 A wonderful good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30 **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 08.30** **Mandatory briefing** in the lounge on how to behave in **Polar Bear country** and how to get ashore (and back) safely with our **rubber boats** (Zodiacs).
- thereafter** **Zodiac cruise: Lilliehöökreen.** We are in the innermost area of Lilliehöökfjord, where magnificent Lilliehöökreen is spilling into the sea. We plan to go for a Zodiac cruise along the beautiful glacier front. Please **dress warm**, we are not getting ashore.
- 13.00 **Lunch** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 15.00** **Landing: Camp Zoe.** This afternoon we are planning our first landing at an old cabin at Camp Zoe. The hut was erected in 1911 by a British mining company. Once on shore, we will split into different hiking groups, to explore the area. Flowering plants and nice views over the fjord-system can be expected. It generally is easy to walk.
- 18.30** Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy!

something feels so cold against my skin
the coldness goes so well with the state I'm in
barefoot in the snow
what do you do
where do you go
barefoot in the snow

part of a song by Susi Varming
(Norwegian artist, grew up in Longyearbyen)



LIEFDEFJORD & BOCKFJORD

Day 3, Tuesday 30th July 2026

07.00 Good morning! **Wake up call.**

Ships-Cruise: Monacobreen, Liefdefjorden. Today's morning we will spend in the innermost part of Liefdefjord (Love-Fjord), one of the most picturesque fjords of northern Spitsbergen.

With the wake up call we will be at the impressive glacier-front of Monacobreen. **Come out on deck** and enjoy the scenery! (We will stay until 08.00)

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

09.30 Landing: Texas Bar, Liefdefjorden. After our visit at Monacobreen, we want to get ashore on the northern side of Liefdefjorden, at a small trapper's cabin called "Texas Bar". We will split into groups and explore the landscape in different walking groups. Except for the strenuous hike, walking here is easy.

13.00 **Lunch** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.

15.30 Landing: Bockfjord. Named after a German surveyor, Bockfjord is a smaller branch of Woodfjord. Here we find the only visible traces of volcanism in Spitsbergen, including the pyramidal volcanic ruin of Sverrefjellet and sinter terraces deposited from the warm mineral-rich waters. We plan on three hiking options here for terrific views and exploration. On the medium and especially on the long walk the terrain is getting more difficult (blockfields), the further we hike.

19.00 Recap of today and briefing for tomorrow.

19.30 Dinner is served in the Dining Room. Bon Appetite!

"Glaciers are delicate and individual things, like humans. Instability is built into them."

*Will Harrison
John Steinbeck (1902 - 1968)*



IN THE PACK ICE

Day 4 | Wednesday 01st July 2026

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

Important! If we have the luck to encounter polar bears or other marine wildlife, please **keep noise levels low** (voices down; close doors gently) – for the best opportunities of remaining with the wildlife.

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

*"One does not discover new parts of the world,
without the courage
of leaving all coastlines behind.*

André Gide



IN THE PACK ICE II

Day 5 | Thursday 02nd July 2026

Overnight we will sail in northeastern direction and **stay in the polar pack**. We will be staying with the ice for the whole day in the search for more wildlife.

Important! If we have the luck to encounter polar bears or other marine wildlife, please **keep noise levels low** (voices down; close doors gently) – for the best opportunities of remaining with the wildlife.

- 07.45** **Another pack-ice-sleep-in** 😊.
- 08.00** **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 12.30** The **lunch-buffet** is waiting for us in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 18.30** **Recap** of today and **briefing** for tomorrow in the lounge.
- 19.00** **BBQ** on the back deck! We are eating outside 😊.

"Many times I have thanked God for a bite of raw dog."

Robert Peary (1856 - 1920), polar explorer.



HINLOPENSTRETET

Day 6, Friday 03rd July 2026

- 07.00 Good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.15 **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 08.30** **Landing: Torellneset.** In southern Hinlopen, Torellneset is a very good place to see walrus. If our friends are at home and wind & weather in our favour, we will visit the animals in two groups. **Both groups will get the same amount of time with the walrus.**
- The first 4 boats:** We are **going for a short stroll first.** After that we visit the walrus.
- The second 4 boats:** We are **going to the walrus first.** After that we go for a short stroll. There will be the possibility to get back to the ship right after the walrus visit.
- 12.00 **Lunch** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 14.00** Early **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 15.30** **Landing: Faksevangen, Lomfjord.** During lunch we will be sailing northwards and into Lomfjord. We intend to land in a little bay called Faksevangen. The landscapes are beautiful and we invite you to stretch your legs in our three hiking groups.
- Bring your swimsuit.** If you ever wanted to take a swim in the Arctic-ocean, this is your chance at the end of our landing. We bring towels. Enjoy!
- 18.30 **Dinner** is waiting for you. Enjoy 😊
- Thereafter **Zodiac cruise: Alkefjellet.** After dinner, we would like to visit the "Auk Mountain", so named due to the enormous number of Brünnich's guillemots breeding along these 100m high basaltic cliffs. We intend to do a Zodiac cruise following the whole spectacular cliff. Please **dress warm**, we are not getting ashore. (The first three boats will have a German speaking driver)

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

David Livingstone (1813-1873)



IN THE PACK ICE III

Day 7 | Saturday 04th July 2026

Overnight we will **sail towards the northwest** and reach the **polar pack around 07.00**. We will be staying with the ice for the whole day in the search for more wildlife.

Important! If we have the luck to encounter polar bears or other marine wildlife, please **keep noise levels low** (voices down; close doors gently) – for the best opportunities of remaining with the wildlife.

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

*A journey is a person in itself; no two are alike.
And all plans, safeguards, policies and coercion are fruitless. We find after
years of struggle that we do not take a trip;
a trip takes us.*

John Steinbeck (1902 - 1968)



RAUDFJORD and the NORTHWEST

Day 8 | Sunday 05th July 2026

- 07.15** A wonderful good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30** **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 09.00** **Landing: Alicehamna.** Overnight we are sailing towards Raudfjord, where we plan to get on shore close to an old trappers cabin at Alicehamna, to discover an area that already has been known (and used) since the whaling period, 400 years ago. It is an easy landing and it is generally good to walk for all groups.
- 12.30** **Lunch** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- Afternoon** **Ships cruise: Northwest-Spitsbergen.** We will sail along the coasts of northwestern Spitsbergen, into the fjords and around the islands – in the search for wildlife. The area is rugged and picturesque at the same time.
- 18.30** Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00** **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy!

Please note: Today is the last day to buy ships-souvenirs at reception.

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

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



SANKT JONSFJORD

Day 9 | Monday 06th July 2026

- 07.15** **Rise and shine.** Wake up call.
- 07.30** Let's get a bite. **Breakfast.**
- 09.00** **Landing: Valentinryggen.** Overnight we will be sailing into Sankt Jonsfjord - a 20-kilometre-long fjord, cutting into the west coast of Spitsbergen. Situated between two glacier-bays, Valentinryggen is a very pretty spot in the bottom of the fjord. We invite you for hikes with beautiful views over the area.
- 12.30** **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 14.30** **Landing: Gjertsenodden.** We plan our last landing on the north side of Sankt Jonsfjord. Again, we will land close to an old trapper cabin. Once on land, we will split into our well know groups with different targets. It is a nice and easy landing and a good place to say goodbye to Svalbards wilderness.
- 18.00** **Farewell Cocktail with the Captain & last official meeting.** Please join us for a toast on our voyage!
- 19.00** **The Last Supper.** Bon Appetite!

BE A SEAGULL
Take the breath
Of the wings of morning
Lift your eyes
To the canyons
Of the skies
And fly!

Richard Bach, 1970, Jonathan Livingston Seagull



DAILY PROGRAM

LONGYEARBYEN

Day 10, Tuesday 07th July 2026

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

Important: Please put your check-in luggage into the corridors **before** you go to breakfast – latest at 07.45. The crew will bring it on shore. Please **identify your luggage** on shore, to be sure it's off the vessel and bring it to your bus (to the airport) or to the luggage truck (for the evening flight).

RED tags: All booked on SK4491 at 10.45 – your luggage goes with you to the airport.

BLUE tags: All booked on SK4497 at 19.35 – your luggage goes into a luggage truck. You get your luggage back at the airport.

ORANGE tags: All staying in hotels in Longyearbyen – your luggage goes with you on the bus.

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

Thereafter **Last landing: Longyearbyen.**

09.00 **The bus** for all booked on **SK4491 at 10.45** is leaving to the airport.

The bus into town is leaving. (For all booked on SK4497 at 19.35 and all who stay in Longyearbyen today)

17.45 **The bus from Longyearbyen to the airport (for flight SK4497 at 19.35)** is leaving from the central parking lot. Your **luggage** will be delivered by the luggage truck.

*Have you suffered, starved and
triumphed,
grovelled down, yet grasped at glory,
Grown bigger in the bigness of the
whole?*

*"Done things" just for the doing,
letting babblers tell the story,
Seeing through the nice veneer the
naked soul?*

*Have you seen God in His splendours
heard the text that nature renders?*

*The simple things, the true things,
the silent men who do things --
Then listen to the Wild -- it's calling
you.*

*Robert William Service „Call of the
wild“*