



Around Spitzbergen, in the realm of Polar Bear and Ice

Port Longyearbyen

7 Juli – 16 Juli, 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 Christophe Colaris

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:	Koen Hoekemeijer	[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]
Expedition Guide:	Frits Steenhuisen	[Netherlands]

WE WELCOME YOU ON BOARD!

Day 1 – Tuesday 7 July, Longyearbyen, Einschiffung

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

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

Many guests arrived in Longyearbyen on the morning of embarkation day, where they spent the day exploring the town and enjoying their first impressions of Svalbard before the voyage began. In the afternoon, everyone gathered at the pier for the start of the embarkation process. Luggage was shuttled from the quay out to the anchored MV *Plancius* in the bay, and by 4pm an eager group of guests was ready and waiting for their first Zodiac transfer to the ship.

Once on board, the evening passed quickly as guests settled into expedition life. The programme included ship familiarisations, essential safety briefings, a welcome cocktail with Captain Christophe Colaris, and, of course, our first wonderful dinner together. As MV *Plancius* departed Isfjord and began her journey north towards our first scheduled activity, there was time to relax and admire the breathtaking scenery.

The late evening light highlighted the distinctive flat-topped mountains surrounding the fjord, offering a spectacular first glimpse of the Arctic landscapes that awaited us.

Day 2 – Wednesday 8 July, Lilliehöökreen, Signehamna, Ny Ålesund

08h00 GPS Position: 79°21.8'N / 011°40.8'E

Wind: NNE-3 • Sea: calm • Weather: Partly Cloudy • Air temperature: +9°C

Today marked the first full day of our Svalbard expedition and we started with a spectacular ship cruise along the magnificent **Lilliehöökreen**. This vast tidewater glacier, stretching across the Lilliehöökfjorden, greeted us with towering ice cliffs glowing in shades of blue and white. As we quietly admired the glacier from the ship, we kept a watchful eye for wildlife and listened to the occasional crack and rumble of calving ice, an unforgettable introduction to the Arctic wilderness.

Following our glacier cruise, we gathered for the mandatory AECO guidelines and zodiac safety briefing in the lounge, ensuring that everyone was well prepared for the exciting days of exploration ahead.

Our first landing took us to **Signehamna**, a beautiful bay on the North side of Krosfjorden, surrounded by rugged mountains, raised beaches and colourful tundra. Dividing into three hiking groups, we explored the landscape at different paces, taking time to appreciate the rich Arctic flora, geological features and signs of the area's



fascinating history. Along the way we encountered Svalbard's hardy birdlife and enjoyed sweeping views across the fjord, while learning how glaciers, post-glacial uplift and the harsh polar climate have shaped this remarkable environment.

During our afternoon transit to Ny-Ålesund in Kongsfjorden, the wildlife continued to surprise us. Several minke whales surfaced around the ship. Their sleek backs briefly



breaking the calm waters before disappearing beneath the surface. The highlight came when a magnificent humpback whale appeared, treating us to prolonged views as it travelled through the fjord, a wonderful reminder of the rich marine life that thrives in these Arctic waters during the summer months.

Arriving at **Ny-Ålesund**, one of the worlds northernmost permanent settlements, we stepped ashore to explore this unique international research community. Our guides shared the remarkable story of Roald Amundsen and the historic airship expeditions that departed from here in the 1920's in pursuit of the North Pole. We also learned about the cutting-edge scientific research conducted today, from climate monitoring and atmospheric studies to glaciology and Arctic ecology, highlighting to Ny-Ålesund's vital role in understanding our rapidly changing planet.

As the evening drew in, we remained on deck for a scenic cruise through Krossfjorden. Surrounded by dramatic mountain peaks, impressive glaciers and the soft light of Arctic Summer, we reflected on a day that perfectly captured the diversity of Svalbard, from immense glaciers and abundant wildlife to fascinating history and world-leading science. It was a memorable start to our expedition, leaving us eager to discover what tomorrow would bring.

Day 3 – Thursday 9 July, Day in the Pack ice

08h00 GPS Position: 80°31.0'N / 011°16.6'E

Wind: NNW2 • Sea: calm • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +3°C

After a very quiet night on a flat calm ocean the MV *Plancius* reached the **pack ice** edge around 08:00 in the morning. Soon the ice became denser until we were in an area with mostly 8/10 pack ice cover. Ice cover is measured in tenths, with 0/10th and 1/10th is open water with little drift ice, 8/10th and 9/10th is dense pack ice. Total ice cover is called fast ice (10/10th).



Besides being in the pack ice because of the beautiful scenery we are of course here with another reason: to find a Polar bear. The pack ice is the place where seals hang

out and therefore it is also the place where polar bear will hunt for food. We saw several seal species throughout the day; ringed seal, bearded seal and harp seal. The latter being an 'invasive' guest from the ice east of Greenland. The absence of ivory gulls was a ominous sign for not finding any polar bear during the day. Ivory gulls follow polar bears and scavenge on the carcasses of seals. Especially during the morning foggy weather came and went, which didn't help with finding a polar bear. When the day progressed, the visibility improved greatly and towards the evening it was even very clear. Several times during the day we changed position in the ice but that didn't improve our luck. Every detail in the ice that looked slightly different from the white and blue around it was check out but no bears where found. What we did find was a respectful number of logs and even whole trees in the pack ice. These logs and trees originate from Siberia where they are transported by the rivers from the forested areas further south, all the way to the shelf seas (Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, ...) and the Arctic Ocean. The ice than brings them in the direction of Svalbard. Once here, they often strand on the shore, hence the large amount of wood in some areas of the coast. Is there a better place for hot chocolate with rum and cream than in the middle of the pack ice? Probably not. Therefore, William and Marleen served the hot chocolate on the top deck behind the bridge while we still enjoyed the scenery of the ice.

During recap Frits gave short introduction on ice formation, ice(berg) physics and the changes in ice cover around Spitsbergen in recent years due to climate



warming. You now know that only about 10% of floating ice is above the water surface and, thus, 90% is below. He also gave an example of the rapid changes in glaciers and how the lose mass. The area near Kongsvegen and Kronebreen in Kongsfjorden where we were yesterday changed greatly in the last 10 years. Where the captain took the ship near the glacier, there was still glacier about ten years ago. Katie then gave a presentation about the Beluga whale. She told use about their adaptation to life in the Arctic pack ice and about their diet. Special attention was given to Beluga called Hvaldemir which was found by Norwegian fisherman while he was still carrying a harness which bore the writing "Property of St. Petersburg".

We were able to stay in the pack ice until close to midnight before the MV *Plancius* had to go back south for the next day. By that time the light was beautiful and the ice-scape looked almost magical. I say almost magical because it is really just physics.

Day 4 – Friday 10 July, Monacobreen, Liefdefjorden, Bockfjorden and Gråhuken

08h00 GPS Position: 79°31.7'N / 012°29.2'E

Wind: light air • Sea: calm • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +6°C

In the morning we visited beautiful **Monacobreen** and **Seeligerbreen**, until 2015 the glaciers were merged and shared the same glacier front that measured 5 km in length. Today the glaciers have retreated and are separated by the mountain Stortingspresidenten. During our cruise in Monacobreen we saw thousands of kittiwakes in front of and on the glacier. Belugas were swimming by the kittiwakes, and some came close to our boats. We also saw some nice calving events at Monacobreen. In front of Seeligerbreen there was a lot of beautiful brush ice and some of us took the opportunity to bring some real glacier ice back to the ship for their drinks.

In the afternoon we sailed into Bockfjorden for our second activity this day. We visited **Jotunkjeldene**, Svalbard's "hot" springs. 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 mountain goats went for a long walk on the slopes of the mountain Smørstabben climbing many many boulders. From the highest point of their hike, they were rewarded with a beautiful view of the glaciers Friedrichbreen and Adolfbreen. The medium group explored the lowland around Jotunkjeldene and found an adventurous route back to the landing site. During their hike they saw something very rare, a hybrid between a Common eider and a King eider. The leisurely group also conquered the difficult terrain and managed to get 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°C, and the Bockfjorden area is the only place in Svalbard where we still have traces of vulcanism going on. In the background we could see the inactive volcano Sverrefjellet.



In the evening after dinner, we sailed to **Gråhuken**, where Christiane Ritter, together with her husband and another hunter, was overwintering during her time in Spitsbergen in 1934. We went

ashore to see the cabin up close. Isabelle and Nathalie told us about Christiane's life and read a few passages from her book, *A woman in the polar night*, a true classic in the polar literature. This allowed everyone to vividly imagine Christiane Ritter's challenging life in this remote place and to immerse themselves in her experience.

Day 5 – Saturday 11 July, Chermisideøya, Phippsøya

08h00 GPS Position: 80°31.6'N / 019°25.7'E

Wind: SE6 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +6°C

This morning we woke up once again to a beautiful sky, no wind and calm seas. What a privilege to have such conditions yet again.

Today we would start our activities with a landing at **Chermsideøya**. Chermsideøya is a barren, 14-square-kilometer island off the northern coast of Nordaustlandet in Svalbard. Separated from the mainland by the Beverlysundet strait, it is part of the Nordaust-Svalbard Nature Reserve and is primarily known for its rugged arctic terrain, diverse birdlife, and unique historical geoglyphs.

After breakfast we boarded the zodiacs and left the ship to go ashore. We landed on a sandy beach and enjoyed the surroundings and lovely weather until all us were on land. As usual Phillip gave us a short explanation of where we were before he and the other hike leaders started explaining where they intended to go and what we would target to see.



The long hikers went up onto the ridge where they tried to reach some stunning viewpoints. The leisurely and medium hikers took it a bit slower and decided not to take a route too steep. The terrain itself was challenging enough as in some places



we had to hop from one big boulder to the next. However we did enjoy the challenge and with such stunning scenery we had a lovely hike. The leisurely group had a day at the beach and they decided to collect a large pile of human trash that had washed up onto this pristine Svalbard beach.

This trash has not been left behind by visitors, but has been transported by ocean currents and it eventually found its way onto the beach.



After a lovely warm morning we made our way back to the ship for a well deserved lunch.

In the afternoon the team had planned another landing. We had made our way further north and we were targeting to land on **Phippsøya**, one of the so called *Seven Islands*. Phippsøya is the largest island in the *Sjuøyane* archipelago, located just 540 nautical miles



(1,040 km) from the North Pole. The expedition team had informed us that Phippsøya is a *beary* place and as such it needed to be scouted extensively. While the team went on land, we could see some walrus on the beach and here and there we also spotted them in the water.



The weather was still wonderful so we hastened to get ready and set foot on the island. We splitted in our usual hiking groups and the medium hikers were the first ones to have a look at the big blubbery walrus who were resting on the beach.

The team briefed us thoroughly on how to approach walrus so we wouldn't disturb them. Walrus don't have good eyesight so if they are surprised they usually feel spooked and might go into the water. However these walrus seemed deep asleep so got enjoy seeing them from close distance.



We all enjoyed our landing on Phippsøya and many of us ended the hike with a 5 min *Arctic silence* before heading back to the ship.

The hotel team had not prepared a traditional restaurant meal, instead we were invited to come to the aft deck for a barbeque and outside dinner. It was a lovely

evening and soon after we had finished eating the tables were cleared as to create a dance floor! Our legs were pretty tired, but some of us still had the energy and strength to make some amazing dance moves! For others it was time to sleep!

Good night everyone!



Day 6 – Sunday 12 July, Torellneset, Alkefjelet and Bråsvellbreen

08h00 GPS Position: 79°25.0'N / 020°18.5'E

Wind: SSE5 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +6°C

We wake up to glorious sunshine and blue skies as MV *Plancius* glides smoothly towards **Torellneset**. Even before we board the Zodiacs, the first walrus are already in sight. Once ashore, one group enjoys a short walk while the rest of us begin a slow and silent approach to the walrus haul-out along the beach.

The landscapes of Nordaustlandet are strikingly different from the rugged, mountainous coastline of western Spitsbergen. Here in the northeast, the mountains are low and rounded, sculpted by the glaciers that covered the region during the last Ice Age. Vegetation is sparse, with only a few drooping saxifrages and hardy Svalbard poppies adding touches of colour to the tundra. In the distance, we enjoy a clear view of Vegafonna, the nearest ice cap.



Watching the walrus is an absolute treat. They lie scattered across the beach, often piled on top of one another, grunting, scratching, gently sparring, or perhaps simply playing. We are especially fortunate to spot two calves: one born last year, already sporting tiny tusks and frequently casting

curious glances around, and a much younger calf born this season, snuggled close against its mother's side. We spend a wonderful amount of time observing these magnificent animals before quietly making our way back. By now, clouds have begun to gather and the wind is picking up.



As MV *Plancius* cruises between the barren islands during lunch, the familiar "ding-dong" announcement echoes through the ship. This time it brings exciting news, Philipp, our Expedition Leader, has spotted a **polar bear**. We all rush out onto the decks. At first, it is little more than a creamy speck against the dark basalt of a stark, rocky island. As the ship draws closer, the bear comes into clearer view, calmly wandering across the landscape in search of food. Above its head, a flurry of Arctic terns circles relentlessly, diving and calling as they fiercely defend their nests. Judging by the birds' determination, it seems the bear may well have enjoyed an egg for lunch today.

Reluctantly, we leave the bear behind, knowing that another exciting excursion awaits us later in the afternoon.



By the time we arrive at **Alkefjellet**, the weather has changed dramatically. Strong winds whip across the sea, grey clouds fill the sky, and a heavy swell rocks MV *Plancius* as the Zodiacs are launched. Conditions may not look inviting, but we are all incredibly glad we decide to go.

Alkefjellet is simply breathtaking. Towering cliffs of dramatic basalt columns rise vertically from the sea, becoming even more impressive the closer we get. The experience is wonderfully immersive. Around 60,000 pairs of Brünnich's guillemots

crowd the narrow cliff ledges, nesting shoulder to shoulder. Adults face the rock while carefully sheltering their newly hatched chicks. The air is alive with birds; thousands take off and return in an endless stream, filling the sky and surrounding us with their deafening calls. High above, glaucous gulls stand watch from the cliff tops, ever alert for an unguarded egg or chick. It is a truly unforgettable Zodiac cruise.

Back on board, Kati gives an informative recap about walruses, while Ross shares fascinating insights into the lives of Brünnich's guillemots.

Yet this remarkable day is still not over. During the evening briefing, Philipp announces that our captain has one final surprise in store: a scenic cruise to the magnificent **Bråsvellbreen**. This glacier forms the southernmost outlet of Austfonna, Europe's largest ice cap, whose calving front extends for more than 200 kilometres.

Long before we arrive, the glacier dominates the horizon. Icebergs, some as tall as MV *Plancius*, drift silently past as we approach. The sight is unlike anything we have experienced so far towering ice cliffs rising over 30 metres above the sea, with countless waterfalls cascading from the glacier into the Arctic Ocean below. Bathed in the soft evening light, we spend the next hour slowly cruising along this spectacular ice front, taking in its immense scale and beauty. It is difficult to comprehend the sheer size of Austfonna, the third-largest ice cap in Europe.

The powerful winds have built up impressive waves, adding even more drama to the already unforgettable scenery. Reluctantly, we finally leave the decks and head below, bringing another extraordinary day in the High Arctic to a close.

Day 7 – Monday 13 July, Negeribreen, Sundneset und Dunerbukta

08h00 GPS Position: 78°33.0'N / 019°19.4'E

Wind: SSN3 • Sea: Slight • Weather: Clear • Air temperature: +9°C

For some of us, this morning starts earlier than others. We were told last night that we will pass through the **Heleysundet** strait on our journey south from Bråsvellbreen, the immense ice wall we cruised the night before. Passing through this narrow channel between small islands is a special treat, as ships cannot always travel here. The difficult and shallow waters mean that ships have to drive with the strong current to pass though safely at the right time of day and tide level. For those of us who wake early to take in the scenery it pays off, as we spot another polar bear on one of the small islands we pass. We take some time to soak up the dramatic landscape, barren islands and many birds before we reach the other side. Quickly back to the bunk for a little more rest, before we get the usual morning call.

As we wake (again), we are reaching **Negribreen**, a big glacier complex on the east coast of Spitzbergen. Huge quantities of ice of all shapes, sizes and shades of blue and white float by as we near the impressive front. Time for another zodiac cruise! Given the weather forecast of strong winds, we are amazed by relatively calm conditions and full sunshine welcoming us on the water. The next two hours pass quickly, floating between some of the biggest ice bergs we have encountered so far, many ivory gulls soaring above us, and even a quick sighting of beluga whales for some lucky zodiacs in the back. As we decide to go back to MV Plancius, we find it hard to bid our goodbyes to this ice world. However, some cold fingers and toes are



asking for a hot cup of tea or coffee in the lounge.



In the afternoon, we find a sheltered bay on the east coast where we can land for another explore at **Dunerbukten**. The landscape at this site is different to what we have encountered up to now, barren hills and a mix of sedimentary and basalt rock greet us. We become familiar with the infamous Svalbard mud, which

we avoid as we hike through the little hills by the shore. We find many polar bear and deer tracks, even a full set of reindeer antlers, and learn about the permafrost layers that have broken and eroded the ground here. A stark reminder of the effects of climate change on the remote shores of these Islands. As the winds pick up further we are glad to gather in the lounge with a hot drink and have Koen tell us some facts

about the star of yesterday, the polar bear! Now it is time to head far south, to the south -west, and we prepare for stormy seas on the way.

Day 8 – Tuesday 14 July, Gåshamna, Samarinbreen and Treskelen

08h00 GPS Position: 76°57.3' N, 015°45.2'E

Wind: NW7 • Sea: rough • Weather: overcast • Air temperature: +4°C

A chilly wind greets us as we approach the landing site at **Gåshamna** in Hornsund this morning. The Zodiac ride is lively, with waves keeping everyone alert, but once ashore the groups quickly split up for the morning's activities. Our self-proclaimed "mountain goats" set off to climb a nearby ridge for sweeping views over Hornsund, while the remaining groups wander among the fascinating remnants of a 17th-century whaling station.



Gåshamna is a textbook example of an early whaling settlement: a sheltered bay offering calm waters, a gentle slope where whale carcasses were processed, and a small hill that served as a lookout. Whale bones still lie scattered across the landscape, a poignant reminder of the brief but devastating period in the 17th century when intensive hunting drove many of the coastal whale populations to the brink of extinction for their valuable blubber. The circular stone foundations of the old tryworks are still visible, built from rocks and gravel and once held together with whale oil and blubber.

After a brisk and windy morning, a warm lunch on board is especially welcome. Our captain then treats us to another memorable ship cruise, taking us close to the magnificent front of **Samarinbreen** Glacier.

The afternoon brings a complete change of mood as we board the Zodiacs once again beneath brilliant sunshine and an intensely blue sky. Before us unfolds the

breathtaking panorama of **Treskelen**, a truly exceptional sight, as these dramatic alpine peaks are so often hidden behind clouds. Every hiking group reaches spectacular viewpoints overlooking snow-dusted summits, vibrant green tundra, and countless ponds reflecting the surrounding mountains like mirrors.



The long hikers continue into an area rich in geological treasures. Large blocks of sedimentary rock dominate the landscape, and fossilised shells appear with remarkable frequency. Along the way, we also come across several enormous polar bear footprints, a clear reminder that we are only visitors in this wilderness. It

is a long walk, but every step is rewarded, and cameras return filled with unforgettable images.

Back on board, it is already time for the evening recap. Frits shares the fascinating results of his research into mercury and PFAS levels in seals, offering an unusual glimpse into the realities of field science from sampling techniques and equipment to laboratory findings. Ross then revisits yesterday's remarkable observations of ivory gulls at Negribreen, explaining just how exceptional these sightings were. Nathalie rounds off the session with a journey through Svalbard's history, revealing the stories behind some of the archipelago's place names.

After dinner, we enjoy one final ship cruise along the important glacier front of Brepollen. Bathed in the evening light, it provides a perfect ending to another unforgettable day in Svalbard.

Day 9 – Wednesday 15 July, Alkhornet and Dahlbrebukta

08h00 GPS Position: 78°08.6' N, 013°37.2'E

Wind: SW5 • Sea: moderate • clear sky: Overcast • Air temperature: +10°C



After another somewhat swelly night, we wake to our morning call still en route to our morning landing. Before us, the impressive rock face of the **Alkhornet** peak appears in the mist. It is foggy and still windy outside, but as we enter the Zodiacs to take the short shuttle to shore, the

sun breaks through the clouds and a rainbow welcomes us on the lush green land ahead. We were told that this landing and high cliffs of 417 metres are home to over 10.000 breeding pairs of brünnich's guillemot as well as many Kittiwakes, and to no surprise we can hear them calling high up as we start our walks. Before we are able to cover much distance, we encounter some reindeer grazing on the plentiful vegetation that covers all of the hillside below the bird cliff. Quietly we observe them as they feed close to us, unbothered by our presence and excitement. An arctic skua is nesting on the ground and fiercely defends its nest area against an intruding reindeer. We watch the show for a while, then make our way higher up across streams and beautiful moss beds. Our knees thank us for the soft floor after a few days of rocky hikes. The wet landscape has allowed many mushrooms to sprout between the carpets of box saxifrage bathing the landscape. Compared to our visits to Northern sites, we feel as though we are walking through a luscious land of fairies. We are never far from reindeer for the rest of the hike, stopping often to observe them, and even spotting a young calf laying in the moss.

In the afternoon MV *Plancius* is set on course for our afternoon landing. Philips voice pulls us from our post-lunch fatigue with news of a **blue whale** off the bow of the ship. For 30 minutes we get to watch the huge blows and diving behaviour of the largest animal that has ever lived on earth.

Eventually, we say goodbye and head for our final destination,

Dahlbrebukta.

Here, we find ourselves in a bay close to the Dahlbreen glacier. We hike up to the viewpoint and take in the breathtaking



scenery of a glacier front one last time. It doesn't really get old, so we try to capture the view in our last few photos and head back to the bay. Finally, it is time for the **polar plunge**! The cold water is amplified by the glacier nearby as we run into the waves. At least the air feels warm after we get out, and we get a VIP spot on the first zodiacs back for the last zodiac shuttle of the trip.

In the evening we gather in the lounge for a farewell of Philip and the hotel team with prosecco, we thank the captain and get to enjoy the infamous slideshow from Ross we have been hearing about for the whole trip! While we slowly cruise towards Longyearbyen over the rest of the evening we take in the views in the lounge, before our bunks call us one last time.

Day 10 – Thursday 16 July, Arrival back in Longyearbyen

08h00 GPS Position: 78°15.9' N, 015°17.5'E

Wind: NE2 • Sea: calm • Weather: Overcast • Air temperature: +7°C

This morning we arrive in Longyearbyen, where our journey 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: 1,302 nm
Northernmost position: 80°40.7'N, 012°33.2'E

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Christophe Colaris, Expedition Leader Philipp Schaudy, Hotel Manager Jeroen Barnes and all the crew and staff of M/V *Plancius*, it has been a pleasure travelling with you.



Birds and Mammals of Svalbard and Franz Josph Land

English Name	Latin	German	French	Dutch	Breeding / Transient / Vagrant	7-Jul	8-Jul	9-Jul	10-Jul	11-Jul	12-Jul	13-Jul	14-Jul	15-Jul	16-Jul
Great Northern Diver	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Eistaucher	Piongone Imbrin	Ijsduiker	V										
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Stermtaucher	Piongone catmarin	Roodkeelduiker	B										
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boréal	Noordse stormvogel	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Gannet	<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Basstölpel	Fou de Bassan	Jan-van-gent	T										
Whooper Swan	<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Singschwan	Cygne chanteur	Wilde zwaan	T										
Bean Goose	<i>Anser fabalis</i>	Saatgans	Oie des moissons	Taigarietgans	V										
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Kurzschnabelgans	Oie à bec court	Kleine rietgans	B										
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Weisswangengans	Bernache nonnette	Brandgans	B	X	X								
White-fronted Goose	<i>Anser albifrons</i>	Blässgans	Oie Reuse	Koigans	V										
Greylag Goose	<i>Anser anser</i>	Gaugans	Oie cendrée	Grauwe gans	V										
Brent Goose	<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Ringelgans	Bernache cravant	Rotgans	B										
Snow Goose	<i>Chen caerulescens</i>	Schneegans	Oie des neiges	Sneeuwgans	V										
Eurasian Wigeon	<i>Anas penelope</i>	Pfeifente	Canard siffleur	Smient	T										
Eurasian Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Krickente	Sarcelle d'hiver	Wintertaling	B										
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Stockente	Canard colvert	Wilde eend	T										
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Spießente	Canard pilet	Pijlstaart	B										
Tufted Duck	<i>Aythya fuligula</i>	Reiherte	Fuligule morillon	Kuifeend	T										
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Eiderente	Eider commun	Eidereend	B	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	Prachteiderente	Eider à tête grise	Konings eider	B				X						
Steller's Eider	<i>Polysticla stelleri</i>	Scheckente	Eider de Steller	Stellers eider	V										
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Eisente	Hareldé boréale	Ilseend	B										
Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Trauerente	Macreuse noire	Zwarte zee-eend	B/T										
Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>	Schellente	Garrot à oeil d'or	Bridkuiker	V										
Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus mutus hyperboreus</i>	Alpenschneehuhn	Lagopède alpin	Alpensneeuwhoen					X						
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Austernfischer	Hultrier Pie	Scholekster	V										
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Sandregenpfeifer	Grand Gravelot	Bontbekplevier	B										
European Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	Goldregenpfeifer	Pluvier doré	Goudplevier	B										
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	Bécasseau sanderling	Drieteenstrandloper	B										
Pectoral Sandpiper	<i>Calidris melanotos</i>	Graubruststrandläufer	Bécasseau tacheté	strandloper	V										
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Meerstrandläufer	Bécasseau violet	Paarse strandloper	B		X		X	X		X	X		
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Knutt	Bécasseau maubèche	Kanoelstrandloper	B										
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Alpenstrandläufer	Bécasseau variable	Bonte strandloper	B										
Whimbrel	<i>Numerius phaeopus</i>	Regenbrachvogel	Courlis corlieu	Regenwulp	T										
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Rotschenkel	Chevalier gambette	Tureluur	V										
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Steinwälzer	Tournepierre à collier	Steenloper	B										
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>	Thorsühnnchen	Phalarope à bec large	Rosse franjepoot	B										
Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>	Odinshühnchen	Phalarope à bec étroit	Grauwe franjepoot	B										
Pomarine Skua	<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Späteiraubmöwe	Labbe pomarin	Middelste jager	T										
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Schmarotzerraub-möw	Labbe parasite	Kleine jager	B				X	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>	Sturmöwe	Golënd cendré	Stormmeeuw	V										
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Eismöwe	Golënd bourgmestre	Grote Burgemeester	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Iceland gull	<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Polarmöwe	Golënd arctique	Kleine burgemeester	T										
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Silbermöwe	Golënd argenté	Zilvermeeuw	V										
Lesser black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Heringsmöwe	Golënd brun	Kleine mantelmeeuw	V										
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>	Mantelmöwe	Golënd 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>	Eifenbeinmöwe	Mouette blanche	Ivoormeeuw	B				X			X			
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne arctique	Noordse stern	B	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Common Guillemot	<i>Uria aalge</i>	Trottellumme	Guillemot de Troil	Zeekoet	B										
Brünnich'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>	Grylleište	Guillemot à miroir	Zwarte zeekoet	B	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	Krabbenataucher	Merque nain	Kleine alk	B	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>	Steinschnäitzer	Traquet moteux	Tapuit	B										
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	Amstel	Merle noir	Merel	V										
Snow Bunting	<i>Pedrophenax nivalis</i>	Schneeammer	Bruant des neiges	Sneeuwgors	B	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Redpoll	<i>Carduelis flammea</i>	Birkenzeisig	Sizerin flammé	Barmsijs	V										
Lapland longspur	<i>Calcarius lapponicus</i>	Spomammer	Bruant lapon	Ijgors	V										
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	Wacholderdrossel	Grive litorne	Kramsvogel	V										
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Rottrossel	Grive mauvis	Kopenwiek	V										
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>	Bergfink	Pinson du Nord	Keep	V										
Curlew	<i>Falco rusticolus</i>	Gefalke	Façon Gerfaut	Glaauk	V										

MAMMALS

[illegible]

Beluga	<i>Devinapterus leucas</i>	Weisswal	Béluga	Beloege	B	X		X		X		
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Eisbär	Ours blanc	Ijsbeer	B							
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Polarfuchs	Renard polaire	Poolvos	B							
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Caribou tataricus platyrhynchus</i>	Svalbard Reintier	Renne du Spitzberg	Rendier	B	X					X	
Sibling vole	<i>Microtus rossiaemeridionalis</i>	Südfeldmaus	Campagnol des champs	Oostelijke veldmuis	B							
Short tailed Vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>	Erdmaus	Campagnol agreste	Aardmuis	B							

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!

Koen Hoekemeijer – Asst. Exp. Leader



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 ;).

Deutsch

Koen Hoekemeijer wurde 1974 in den Niederlanden geboren. Wenn es um die Natur und die Tierwelt geht, war Koen ein ziemlicher Spätzünder, denn er war schon immer eher für das Nachtleben und sonnige Strände zu begeistern. Das änderte sich jedoch, als er 2009 in Costa Rica seine Leidenschaft für die Tierwelt und die Fotografie entdeckte. Während dieser Reise sah Koen zum ersten Mal Buckelwale, in die er sich sofort verliebte. Er wollte nicht nur mehr und andere Arten von Walen an Orten auf der ganzen Welt sehen, sondern auch lernen, wie man diese erstaunlichen Kreaturen besser fotografiert. Mit der Liebe zu Walen und zur Fotografie wuchs auch seine Leidenschaft für alle Arten von Wildtieren.

Seit diesem denkwürdigen Urlaub im Jahr 2009 reist Koen um die Welt, um die schönsten Orte der Welt zu sehen und zu fotografieren. Normalerweise von Booten, Jeeps oder einfach mit dem Gesicht im Schlamm, aber seit 2016 auch unter Wasser. Schnorcheln in der Gegenwart von Walen und Orcas macht Koen einfach glücklich.

Zu seinen Lieblingstieren gehören Wale, Orcas, Pinguine, Tiger und Jaguare. Aber zwischen den Safaris macht er auch gerne Straßenfotografie und fängt das Leben und die Porträts von Menschen auf der ganzen Welt ein.

Koen ist davon überzeugt, dass Reisen nicht nur das Leben bereichert, sondern auch bescheidener und wertschätzender macht und eine neue Perspektive und ein neues Verständnis ermöglicht. Koen hat den prestigeträchtigen WWF Frans Lanting Fotowettbewerb gewonnen, und im Jahr 2020 gewann er den Ellen Fitzgibbon Memorial Fotowettbewerb. Koen's Traum ist es, eines Tages einen Vizsla-Hund zu haben und eine kleine Hütte irgendwo in Nordnorwegen zu besitzen, umgeben von Schnee und Bäumen.

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.

Frits Steenhuisen – Expedition Guide



Frits Steenhuisen is an environmental scientist at the Arctic Centre of the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He specializes in spatial analyses and computer modelling to study pollutant behaviour in polar environments on different scale levels. His main research topics include global mercury emissions and the distribution and effects of heavy metals and organic pollutants, such as mercury and PFAS, on local ecosystems.

Frits develops and runs a global mercury emissions model that contributes to the Global Mercury

Assessments for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). His research also extends to the distribution of radionuclides in the Arctic, conducted for the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority. Much of his work is tied to the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), where he represents the Netherlands.

In addition to his pollutant research, Frits's work includes drone photogrammetry for archaeological survey and the use of remote sensing imagery to study vegetation changes in relation to climate change.

Frits's connection to the Polar Regions dates back to the early 1990s, starting with an expedition to "Het Behouden Huis," the wintering site of Willem Barentsz on Novaya Zemlya. Since then, he has participated in numerous field studies and student expeditions across Spitsbergen/Svalbard, Greenland, and Antarctica. In addition to his research, Frits serves as a guide and expedition leader on ships navigating both the Arctic and Antarctic.

Outside of his scientific endeavours, Frits is passionate about photography and (sea) kayaking, activities that allow him to further explore and document the polar landscapes he studies.



WELCOME ABOARD!

Day 1, Tuesday 07th July 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.

Thereafter 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 a gleam to guide us,
And the wild is calling, calling . . . let us go.*

Robert Service, The Call Of The Wild



KROSSFJORD & KONGSFJORD

Day 2, Wednesday 08th July 2026

- 07.00** **Wake up call.** A wonderful good morning!
- Ships cruise: Lilliehöökreen.** Before and during breakfast we will sail to magnificent Lilliehöökreen, to see the massive glacierfront from the ship, before we are heading for our morning-landing.
- 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** **Landing: Krossfjord, Signehamna.** We plan to get ashore at Signehamna on the west side of Krossfjord. Once on land, we will split into different groups to explore the country. A bit inland are the remains of the German weather stations "Knospe" and "Nussbaum", which was used in the years 1941 and 43. The topography is undulating but generally easy.
- 13.00** **Lunch-Buffer** for one hour in the Dining Room.

IMPORTANT: Radio silence in Kongsfjord! For all transmitting devices in Kongsfjord and our visit in Ny Ålesund this afternoon (Mobile phone, cameras, laptops, ...),
TURN OFF BLUETOOTH AND WIFI

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

- Please stay on the **gravel roads** at all times.
- The souvenir shop will be open **until 16.30 and from 17.30 onwards**.
- 17.00 German speakers and **17.30 English speakers**. we meet at the **bust of Roald Amundsen** (in the middle of the village) to walk to the anchoring mast of the *Norge* to hear the history behind it.
- **From 18.00** Zodiac shuttle back to the ship, **18.30 Last Zodiac**.

- 19.00** **Recap of today and briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.30** **Dinner** is served. Bon Appetite!

"I am prepared to go anywhere, provided it be forward."
David Livingstone (1813-1873)



DAILY PROGRAM

IN THE PACK ICE

Day 3 | Thursday 09th 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



LIEFDEFJORD & BOCKFJORD

Day 4, Friday 10th July 2026

- 07.15 Good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30 **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 **Zodiac-Cruise: Monacobreen.** Today we wake up in beautiful Liefdefjorden (Love fjord), where majestic Monacobreen dominates the scenery and spills into the sea. If wind and weather are in our favour, we will go for a Zodiac cruise along the 5-kilometre-wide glacier front. Please dress really warm, we will not get ashore.
- 12.30 **Lunch** is served in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 15.00 **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.
- 18.30 **Recap of today and briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00 **Dinner** is served in the Dining Room. Bon Appetite!

What is the secret of the Arctic?
You must live through the long night, the storms, and the destruction of
human pride.
You must have gazed on the deadness of all things to grasp their livingness.
In the return of the light, in the magic of the ice, in the life-truths of animals
observed in the wilderness...
lies the secret of the Arctic and the overpowering beauty of its lands.

Christiane Ritter, A Woman in the Polar Night, 1934-5



CHERMSIDEØYA & PHIPPSØYA

Day 5, Saturday 11^h July 2026

- 07.15 Good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30 **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 09.00** **Landing: Chermsideøya.** This morning we wake up the far north of the Svalbard archipelago. We have arrived in the polar desert and we intend to land on the barren island of Chermsideøya. Walking is generally easy and we will offer exploration on this remote island in our three hiking groups.
- 12.30 **Lunch** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 15.00** **Landing: Phippsøya.** The Sjuøyane (Sevenislands) are the northernmost islands of the archipelago. These islands are locked in pack ice most of the year and often landings are not possible before the end of summer. We will land on an easy beach and invite you get a feeling of this far-off island in our walking 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** Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00 **BBQ** on the back deck! Enjoy and bring your dancing rubber-boots 😊.

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

Robert Peary (1856 - 1920), polar explorer.



HINLOPENSTRETET

Day 6, Sunday 12th July 2026

- 07.15 Good morning! **Wake up call.**
- 07.30 **Breakfast** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room.
- 09.00 **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 5 boats:** We are **going for a short stroll first.** After that we visit the walrus.
- The second 5 boats:** We are **going to the walrus first.** After that we go for a short stroll. There will be the possibility to get back to the ship right after the walrus visit.
- 12.30 **Lunch** buffet for **one hour** in the Dining Room. Enjoy your meal.
- 14.30 **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 four boats will have a German speaking driver)
- 18.30 **Recap & briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00 **Dinner** is waiting for you. 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)



STORFJORDEN

Day 7, Monday 13th July 2026

Approx 04.00 Heleysund. We are passing the narrow passage of Heleysund, where tides are strong as a river. The passage is taken only by a few very experienced captains.

07.15 A wonderful good morning. Wake up call.

07.30 Breakfast buffet for one hour.

09.00 Zodiac cruise: Negribreen. The glacier Negribreen has one of the longest glacier fronts of Spitsbergen and ice bergs are usually found nearby. If conditions are in our favour (wind and waves) we intend to do a Zodiac cruise at the glacier. Please dress warm, we are not getting ashore. (The first five boats have German speaking guides)

12.30 Lunch is waiting for us.

14.30 Landing: Eastcoast Spitsbergen. Depending on the wind we will face this afternoon, we plan to land in one of the bays on the east coast of Spitsbergen. Glacial moraines dominate the landscapes of this seldom visited areas. Mohnbukta and Dunérbukta are two potentially sheltered bays for this afternoon.

18.30 Daily **recap & briefing** for tomorrow.

19.00 Enjoy your meal. **Dinner** is served!

*A ship, that lies in the harbour, is safe.
But therefore ships are not built.*

Saying from England



HORNSUND

Day 8, Tuesday 14th July 2026

- 07.15** **Good morning!**
- 07.30** **Breakfast** – enjoy!
- 09.00** **Landing: Gåshamna, Hornsund.** Today we will be exploring Hornsund, Spitsbergen's most southerly and arguably one of the most beautiful fjords. We intend to land on the western side of Gåshamna, a wide bay that has been witness to different phases of Spitsbergen's history. Remains of a 17th century English whaling station and foundations of Pomor houses (Russian hunters) are found in the area. In different hiking groups we invite you to explore the area.
- 12.30** **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 15.00** **Landing: Treskelen, Hornsund.** In the afternoon we plan to get ashore on the north side of Hornsund on a land-spit called Treskelen. Interesting geological formations and great views of the mountainous scenery are waiting for us.
- 18.30** **Recap and briefing** for tomorrow.
- 19.00** **Dinner.** Bon Appetite!

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)



ISFJORDEN & FORLANDSUND

Day 9 | Wednesday 15th July 2026

- 07.15** **Rise and shine.** Wake up call.
- 07.30 Let's get a bite. **Breakfast.**
- 09.00** **Landing: Alkhornet, Isfjorden.** This morning we intend to land at picturesque Alkhornet in the bay Trygghamna (west of Ymerbukta). We find lush vegetation, birdlife, reindeer and maybe even a polar fox.
- 12.30 **Lunch** is waiting for us.
- 15.30** **Landing: Dahlbrebukta, Forlandsundet.** We plan our last landing in Dahlbukta, a pretty glacial bay in the entrance of St. Jonsfjorden. It is an easy landing and a good place to say goodbye to Svalbards wilderness.
- 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** **Farewell Cocktail with the Captain & last official meeting.** Please join us for a toast on our voyage!
- 19.30 **The Last Supper.** Bon Appetite!

*"And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."*

T.S. Eliot



DAILY PROGRAM

LONGYEARBYEN

Day 10, Thursday 16th 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 SK4493 at 17.15 – 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 SK4493 at 17.15 and all who stay in Longyearbyen today)

15.00 **The bus from Longyearbyen to the airport (for flight SK4493 at 17.15)** 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"*