



# **The Ultimate Arctic Discovery**

## **Spitsbergen, Greenland, Jan Mayen**

### **M/V Hondius**

**01<sup>th</sup> August 2022 – 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022**



The *MV Hondius* was built in 2019 in Brodosplit, Croatia, as an expedition vessel for Oceanwide Expeditions. *Hondius* is 107.60m long, 17,60m wide and has a maximum draught of 5.3m and has an exceptionally high Ice class of PC6, a top speed of 15 knots and 3 diesel generators. The *Hondius* sails on LSMGO. Now the ship is sailing as a 176-passenger vessel with 83 cabins. Our beautiful, modern ship carries 369m<sup>3</sup> of fresh water and has a water plant producing 70m<sup>3</sup> per day. It is the perfect vessel for a true polar adventure!

**Captain Toni Salo**  
and his international crew of 72

**including:**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Chief Officer:              | <b>Matei Mocanu</b>  |
| Staff Officer:              | <b>Miia Holma</b>  |
| Second Officer:             | <b>Igor Nazarov</b>  |
| Third Officer:              | <b>Sven Holzhausen</b>   |
| Chief Engineer:             | <b>Sebastian Alexandru</b>   |
| Hotel Manager:              | <b>William Barnes</b>  |
| Assist. Hotel Manager:      | <b>Michael Frauendorfer</b>  |
| Head Chef:                  | <b>Khabir Moraes</b>   |
| Sous Chefs:                 | <b>Mihai Melinte</b><br><b>Gaurav Bawa</b>   |
| Ship's Physician:           | <b>Veronique Verhoeven</b>   |
| Expedition Leader:          | <b>Sara Jenner</b>   |
| Assist. Expedition Leaders: | <b>Laura Mony</b><br><b>Laurence Dyke</b>  |
| Expedition Guides:          | <b>Alexander Romanovskiy</b><br><b>Ben Giunchi</b><br><b>Charlotte Taplin</b><br><b>Edward Bekker</b><br><b>George Hirn</b><br><b>Georgina Strange</b><br><b>John Rogers</b><br><b>Laura Sommerville</b><br><b>Mikhail Barabanov</b><br><b>Slava Nitikin</b> |

**We welcome you on board!**

# Day 1: 01<sup>st</sup> August 2022

## Longyearbyen

**GPS position at 4pm: 78°14.0' N, 015°37.4' E**

**Wind: SE 4/6; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Grey and rainy; Air Temp: +10°C**

Our Arctic adventure began on a grey drizzly afternoon – let's be honest, it was raining. Happily, the weather cleared as the afternoon advanced. We made our way to the dock near *Longyearbyen* where *MV Hondius*, our house for the next week, waited.

As we got onboard, we were welcomed by the hotel department and Albert, the receptionist, who handed us the keys of our room. As we were discovering the vessel, we naturally made our way to the observation lounge where coffee and tea were waiting for us, but also where we will have the best view of the surrounding landscape. We anticipated spending lots of in this space looking out the window, making sure we will not miss any sightings of wildlife, and chatting to old and new friends.



Aboard and reunited with our luggage, Expedition Leader (EL) Sara and Second Officer Igor commenced the mandatory ship safety briefing. We were shown how to put on the life jackets and floatation suits that are stored in our cabins in the event of an emergency. When the abandon ship alarm was sounded, we all made our way

to our muster stations, either the Observation Lounge or the Restaurant. Once all of us had arrived, and confirmed that we were wearing our lifejackets correctly, we were conducted to the lifeboats just as if this was a real, but very unlikely, emergency. Some took the chance to check out the emergency accommodation.

Afterwards, as we set sail, we received a warm welcome and orientation briefing from our Hotel Manager William and EL Sara – an overview of life on board and how to access important information concerning our daily schedules. This was our first introduction to the Expedition Team who will be helping us to make the most of this



adventure with their knowledge of flora, fauna, ice, geology, history and more.

This was followed by our first visit to the restaurant to sample the delicious food prepared by Chef Khabir and the galley team.

Thus fortified, we were called down to the shell doors to get fitted for our Muck Boots which turned into dancing shoes as we rocked out with the Expedition Team. As the day ended, we headed to bed to be well rested and dream of adventures to come.

## **Day 2: 02<sup>nd</sup> August 2022**

### **Lilliehookbreen, Krossfjord**

**GPS position at 8 am: 79°17.4'N 011°37.3'E**

**Wind: NE 2; Sea state: Slight; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp.: 6C**

Overnight we sailed north, to reach Krossfjord - a 30km-long fjord graced with impressive peaks rising to over 1,000m and heavily glaciated valleys. Krossfjord forks into Möllerfjord to the East and Lilliehöökfjord to the West, divided by the mountainous



spit of land, Kong Haakons Halvøya. Our very first excitement for the day, before breakfast had even started, was the sighting of our very first Polar Bears!



A beautiful mother bear and her cub were sighted, swimming across Lilliehöökfjord. We observed them quietly from the ship's decks until they eventually reached a spot on shore where they could clamber out and continue their search for food on foot. The female bear was noted to be wearing a

radio collar, showing that she is a known and tracked bear.

After the excitement of these incredible creatures gracing our morning, we enjoyed breakfast with spectacular views before continuing to our anchorage/drift position for the morning at the front of Lilliehöökbrean. A quick round of important briefings about AECO, Polar Bear safety and zodiac safety followed, from our Expedition Leader, Sara and AEL, Lawrence and then it was time to embark upon our very first zodiac outing of the trip!

Weather conditions were perfect for cruising, with virtually no wind and a slightly overcast sky - perfect for appreciating the ice at close quarters! We navigated through the brash ice in zodiacs to the front of Lilliehöökbrean, the largest (11km wide!) and most actively calving glacier in this fjord system. This glacier was photographed in 1906 by the Duke Albert I of Monaco (who charted the fjord in the same year) and was subsequently photographed, for comparison, in 2006 by his great-grandson, Duke Albert II of Monaco - the glacier has retreated by an alarming 40% within that century, meaning that where we anchored our ship in the morning would technically be almost within the glacier itself, if you were to refer to those charts!



We were treated to many bird species during our hour on the water, including many Arctic Terns (both nesting on the small islets at the western side of the glacier, and feeding around the icy waters), a pair of Great skuas, many Northern fulmars, Black guillemots, a few Brünnichs guillemots swimming by and several Glaucous gulls. Some of us were also treated to a pair of beautiful Ivory gulls, who appeared on an iceberg towards the end of the cruise! The icebergs were small but

spectacular in their formations, with one or two in particular having been carved into intricate shapes - a process most likely accelerated by the fairly unusual rainfall experienced in Svalbard the day before. After an hour or so on the water it was time to head back to the ship for a delicious buffet lunch and a quick rest before our next little adventure.



Fortende Julibukta, Krossfjord Over lunch we repositioned Hondius to the beautiful bay known as “Fourteenth of July” (named for the French National Day, Bastille Day, by the Duke of Monaco I). Here, we had the glacier front of Fjortende Julibreen to one side and a small cliff-front packed with little clusters of nesting Brünnichs guillemots and Atlantic puffins to the opposite side. In the middle: our absolutely gorgeous landing site!





Backed by a stunning mountain landscape and rather lush vegetation (by Arctic standards!), the Fjortende Julibukta landing site offered us a chance to stretch our legs in the sunshine, with a casual stroll along the beach towards the glacier-front, enjoying the sights of nesting Arctic skuas along the way. To the opposite

side, the high cliffs were packed with seabird colonies, (mostly Black-legged Kittiwakes), their ever-present cries echoing around the bay. We sat and watched them as they circled high in the sky, calling to each other and to their chicks on the nest, bringing food and fending off the kleptoparasitic behaviours of the pirates of the sky - the Arctic Skuas!

At the northern end of this landing site we also had the beautiful “hanging gardens” to enjoy: a small cliff carpeted with many plants, including Drooping saxifrage, Alpine and Hawkweed-leaved saxifrage, Moss campion and many others. The bird cliffs above provide the essential fertilizers to create such a lushly vegetated site.

Our landing was combined with a zodiac cruise in the most wonderful sunshine! We cruised slowly past the smaller bird cliffs, which afforded us great views of the Puffins and Guillemots and we also took a cruise through some more brash ice at the glacier front, encountering Kittiwakes resting on bergy bits and, for a few lucky souls, a couple of seals (a Harbour seal and a Bearded seal).



We stayed and enjoyed the sunshine here until early evening before heading back to the ship to get spruced up for Captain's Cocktails! Captain Toni introduced himself and welcomed us to this special trip. During and after dinner we had yet more excitement... Blue whales were sighted to the ship's Starboard side during dinner service! Their enormous blows gave away the first clue to the species. Immediately after dinner, (just when we thought the day couldn't pack in anymore!) we spotted many Fin whales, a Minke whale and a Walrus...AND White-beaked dolphins! What an extraordinary day.

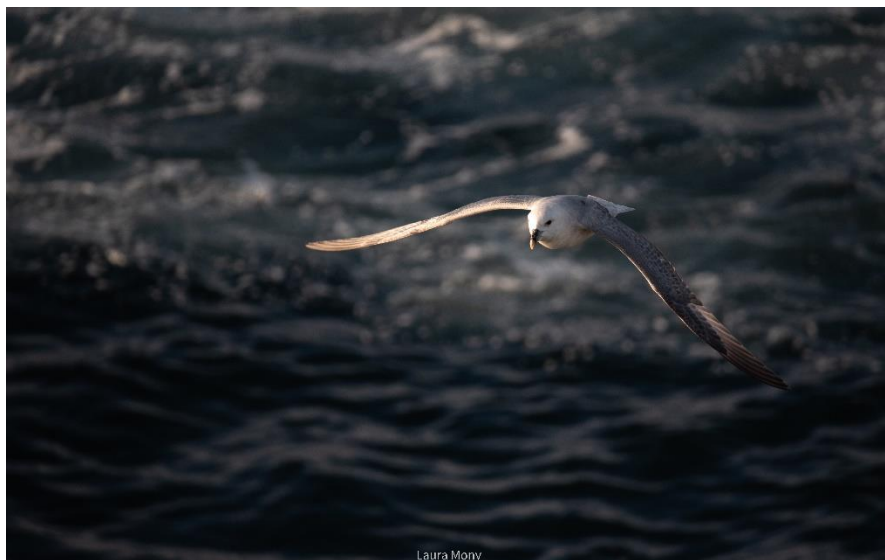


## **Day 3: 03<sup>rd</sup> August 2022**

### **At Sea enroute to Greenland and Pack Ice**

**GPS position at 8 am: 77°32.1' N, 000°53.0' E**

**Wind: NNW2; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Fog and cloud; Air Temp: -1°C**



As we woke up to Sara's soft voice, our sleepy eyes were paralleled with the foggy climate outside our windows. The boat moved calmly through the fog as the Expedition Team searched through

binoculars for the slightest evidence of a blow or a tail of a whale in the distance. As we



filled our bellies with hot croissants at breakfast, we became eager for the day ahead. Puffins, Fulmars and Little Auks circled the vessel as we sailed onto the Greenland Sea.

At lunchtime, 1230 we witnessed our first evidence of the pack ice, the only thing that crossed our minds were Polar Bears, we were all hoping to spot one in the ice. So up on deck we went armed with binoculars and tea to keep us warm! As the ship broke through the ice it was slightly unnerving before it quickly



became normal. It was beautiful watching the ice and hearing the cracking of the ice. The Hotel Staff provided us with yummy rum and hot chocolate, wow what a treat!



We started to leave the ice at 1630, all feeling in sense of awe and amazement of this desert landscape.

At 1815 the Expedition Team gave some exceptionally interesting recaps on Whale sizes, famous Cartographers, Seal identification and the famous Amundsen. Dinner was

fabulous as always and followed by a drink at the bar while watching the ocean pass us by.

## Day 4: 04<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### At Sea and approaching Greenland

**GPS position at 08 am: 74°48.4' N, 14°30.0' W**

**Wind: NNE 4; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Fog; Air Temp: +1.0°C**



The sea had again remained very gentle through the night, hardly rocking our cradles at all. We slept in (by expedition standards anyway) and enjoyed the leisurely breakfast. The day was filled with watching out the windows and learning from the Expedition team. First up was Laurence's Introduction to Greenland, followed by

Georgina on Photography, giving us tips and tricks to get the best out of our cameras. Lunch was delightful – loved the curry! Then Laura explained the seasonal changes and key climate role played by Sea Ice in the Arctic Ocean. One of our own, guest lecturer Joost Broeke completed the talks with his presentation on Climate Change in the Arctic.

The completion was timely, as just about that time we got our first look at Greenland off the starboard bow. Soon the sun came out and we were all on the bow, top deck, or one of the other outside viewing points.



The appearance of Greenland whetted anticipation for the Briefing. At it, Sara surprised

us by revealing that she had experienced an extremely stressful day despite the calm conditions. It transpired that the permit required to enter Northeast Greenland National Park had been delayed by Greenlandic Government IT issues. Without the permit our plans would need to change, and she had spent the day working out plans B through Z in anticipation. But, hurray, the permit had been delivered with only minutes to spare. So, it was on to plan A – a ships cruise and a long walk for our first day in Greenland.

The Recap featured Scottish Laura explaining the concept of "Umwelt" and how our human perception makes us see our planet as Blue instead of the actual Violet. Shasha made sure that we were up-to-speed with nautical terminology with his humorous explanations. At dinner we sang birthday greetings to Christian and Michael. The evening was spent entering the pack ice while the light got better and better – making the day stretch far into tomorrow for many of us.

## Day 5: 05<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### Kejser Franz Josephs Fjord & Kap Ovibus

**GPS position at 08 am: 73°17.9' N, 23°09.3' W**

**Wind: Calm; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Fog; Air Temp: 0°C**



This morning we had an unexpectedly early wakeup call from Sara telling us about "a Polar Bear on the sea ice at 3 o'clock" at 4 o'clock! Many of us made our way outside to enjoy the sight of the King of the Arctic in the beautiful light of early morning. What a start to our time in Greenland!



Much later, after a tasty breakfast, we were excited to discover what the day held for us. Plans had been left flexible the night before, in order to assess the ice conditions that awaited us in Kejser Franz Josefs Fjord. In the morning, it became clear that there was so much ice around the landing site that it would not be accessible for our zodiacs; this meant that our plan for the day was to do a ship's cruise in the morning, and to attempt a landing later, in the afternoon.



We enjoyed the beautiful fjord scenery and the experience of sailing in the ice-filled fjord, which has a certain meditative quality. We enjoyed a lecture by Laura on the theme of Sustainability, which offered an alternative perspective on this topic, focusing on how happiness may offer an alternative way to motivate lifestyle changes towards more sustainable choices. We were then treated to John's lecture on the Quest for the



North Pole, and some of the historical characters who were involved in that race.

After our buffet lunch on board, we were finally able to set foot on Greenland! Half of us were brought to shore by zodiac boats, and the others enjoyed a short zodiac cruise in the bay to admire the Musk Ox, and then we swapped around to

make sure everyone had the chance to explore all that this area had to offer. At the start of our landing at Kap Ovibus, sunshine greeted us on the white sandy shore, and the hillsides decked with a wide variety of arctic flowers; however, as time progressed, the mist rolled in, and visibility came and went. This is quite a feature of East Greenland,



where the weather is quite changeable and fog and mist may roll in at any time, and low cloud may shroud the hillsides or dissolve

into picturesque ribbons. Exhilarated to have landed in the East Greenland national Park, we were happy to get back on board.

After hearing our plans for tomorrow from Sara, we headed down to a tasty dinner. After dinner, many of us enjoyed the evening out on deck, watching this fascinating landscape roll by at a leisurely pace, either out on deck, or from the warmth of the cozy bar, and we looked forward to another exciting day.

## Day 6: 06<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### Blomsterbugten & Noa Dal

**GPS position at 08 am: 73°19.8' N, 025°20.3' W**

**Wind: N3; Sea State: Calm; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 3.0°C**

After Sara's wake-up call and a hearty breakfast we were craving a workout to make up for our previous days at sea. Luckily, the scout team was able to send the message 'coast clear'. The early morning fog layer had lifted significantly, and visibility was no longer a safety issue.



Our plan for today was to venture into the Noa Valley and hike alongside the Noa Lake. This area was rugged and rocky, and wild with wildflowers.



The long hike started with a climb up to a mountain pass from where we had a bella vista of the reddish coloured Noa Sø (Lake). Laurence set a really good pace and smaller groups each with 2 guides were formed. We scrambled down and traversed a short stretch of technical terrain directly at lake level, after which we gained some altitude. Edward gave some instructions on how to walk on uneven terrain and led part of the way going up in zig zag.





And then the miracle happened; Laurence spotted a herd of Musk Ox in the distance. They were grazing on green terraces as we approached them very carefully without making any noise. During the last ice age, they were distributed throughout much of the northern

hemisphere's glaciated areas but the current range is much smaller.

Today wild herds are restricted to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland and North East Greenland National Park. Arctic Canada, Nunivak Island, Northern Alaska and Dovrefjell and Femundsmarka in Norway.

The musk Ox must have sensed us though as they started making their way away from us. Still, we were all able to see them quite well. After a pleasant short stop, we started returning making a kind of loop. On the way back we passed by a beautiful higher lake where a red throated loon was spotted.



Quite tired, but well rewarded, we got back to a col with a great view of the fjord with the ship in the

background waiting for us. From there it was an easy descent back down to the shoreline and a zodiac shuttle back to the Hondius. Mission accomplished.

After lunch we explored the Antarctic Sound, Narvhal Sound and the head of the Kong Oscar Fjord. We came by massive vertical red, grey and yellow coloured steep rock faces rising vertically out of the water, it was very impressive.

After recap it was barbie time on the aft deck accompanied by free drinks and scooped ice cream as desert, what an end to the day!

## **Day 7: 07<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **Segelsälskapet & Kong Oscar Fjord**

**GPS position at 08 am: 72°26.0' N, 28°53.3'W**

**Wind: E3; Sea State: Smooth; Weather: Fog; Air Temp: 6.0°C**



An early start to today! Those with a serious enthusiasm for hiking left the ship in the early hours of the morning with a “pack breakfast” and a sense of adventure! Lead by Lawrence, Ben, Sara and George we went ashore at one of East Greenland’s most spectacular sites. Unrivalled for photogenic geological features, Segelsälskapet greets you with a striking coastline, boasting layers and folds of limestone and sedimentary sandstone rock, coloured pinky-red from Iron oxides and beautifully metamorphosed into parallel lines and folds. The rocks in this region are dated between 600 and 900 million years old, with the metamorphosis that formed the way they

look today set at around 400 million years ago.

Our landing was split into one long hike, two shorter hikes and an option to stay around



the beach area and enjoy the rocks with our Geologist, Laura! The long-hikers' day began with quite some low cloud and fog shrouding the views, but by mid-morning we were all treated to some of the most incredibly beautiful scenery many of us have ever seen. As the fog lifted and thinned, the sun started to burn through and slowly the tops of the mountains were revealed, their icy caps like icing on grand and luxurious cupcakes! This part of the world truly is spectacular.



All of our walking trails revealed more lush vegetation and Arctic flora still in bloom, including Cotton grasses, Arctic Harebell, Arctic Fireweed with its gorgeous pink-purple blooms, and a carpet of Dwarf birch, some with flowers or catkins. We traversed streams and strolled past picturesque glacial ponds and the long hikers had a chance to cool tired feet in

the icy waters, crossing back to the landing site via a small flood plain at the end of the walk.

We spotted some wildlife during our landing, including an ermine! A Stoat, in its summer coat, scampered past those of us on the long hike! Of the feathered variety, we saw the Common Raven in





all his black-plumaged glory, Red-throated divers/loons, Barnacle geese, Snow bunting, to name a few, as well as a pair of Ptarmigan with a large family of 18 chicks!



By 12.30 we were back on board Hondius and very much ready for a delicious lunch. For the afternoon we cruised SE through the beautiful Kong Oscar Fjord, heading for Liverpool Land and our next planned stop tomorrow, the settlement of Ittoqqortoormiit. Laura presented a lecture on

ROCKS! and its certain that we all left this place with a much higher appreciation of Geology than what we had when we arrived!

## **Day 8: 08<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **Liverpool Land Coast and Ittoqqortoormiit**

**GPS position at 08 am: 70°28.3' N, 21°59.1' W**

**Wind: N 1; Sea: Slight; Weather: Fog and Cloud**

**Air temperature: 2.5°C; Water temperature: N/A**



We woke up to a foggy, eery view of Ittoqqortoormiit, the wind was up to 25 knots, so we sat snugly in the dining room while we stocked our empty bellies with croissants and bacon. The Expedition Team warned us of very windy weather, so we knew

there was a possibility of a late landing. Laurence produced a fantastic lecture on glaciers, it was fascinating to all. After lunch we were able to start operations. The first zodiac was launched with all the staff and shortly afterwards the first group of passengers were shuttled to the beach. Unfortunately, the zodiac was swallowed by a large wave, so we quickly had to abandon the operation.



After re-evaluation and intense scouting of the nearby beaches, Sara and the team found another landing spot, so the trip was back on! All passengers made it to rocky shore, all eager to visit this intriguing town of the Inuit community. We were all able to explore the town and it felt wonderful to be free to roam for a few hours. The locals were extremely friendly, and the huskies put a smile on our faces just as the sun's golden beams started to stream through the percolating clouds. We saw how the local community went about their daily lives accepting the recent delivery from the Royal Arctic Line with all their supplies for the next year.





The time to leave came around along with our eager minds to listen to the recap. Georgina answered a question about slime mould and Laura about Earth's geology. Dinner was delicious as always and John at the bar kept our drinks flowing. A truly delightful day.

## Day 9: 09<sup>th</sup> August 2022 Vikingbukta & Danmark Ø

**GPS position at 08 am: 70°27.6 ' N, 25°17.1' E**

**Wind: Calm; Sea State: Calm; Weather: Overcast and Drizzle; Air Temp: 4.0°C**

The day started like every each of them: with the good morning call of Sara and her information about place and conditions. We lowered the zodiacs and began with our activities by cruising in the Vikingbukta. As we cruised the sun started lifting the fog and making the little bit of rain disappear – almost.

We all recognized the changing of the vicinity's bedrock. Someone said, "it looks like on the south coast of Iceland, the rocks!" And it is true, the rocks are related, it's the same volcanic hotspot which passed under Greenland around 60 million years ago. This whole landscape has risen out of the sea over the last 15,000 years as the glaciers from



the last ice age have retreated. This process is called Isostatic Rebound. We see the coastline of the last Ice Age marked by the edges of a lot of beautiful waterfalls.

Then, next minute a beautiful Ivory Gull landed on a nearby

iceberg. What a show.

Cruising in the two branches of this fjord showed us two glaciers. One was covered



almost totally by debris falling from the faces of hard basalt and soft ash layers. One highlight of the cruise was the close approach to the fantastic basalt columns on the cliff



sides. They are formed when a lava flow cools quickly – likely under water. The rapid crystallization creates the six-sided, long columns.

Another highlight was the hotel crew

serving hot chocolate with cream aboard the zodiac! Their wonderful service always brings “thank you very much” – and this time a lovely smile from the heart - from all of us!

The afternoon session started with a delay due to ice conditions and a reported polar bear at our landing zone. Therefore, it was necessary to scout a larger area than normal to make sure it was a safe landing. Turning a



negative into a positive, our expedition team climbed to the highest points to have an excellent overview and give us a large area to roam. Many of us used the boulders and little cliffs to climb to the guides. Our reward was an incredible 360-degree view of a world made of volcanism covered by the first fresh snow of the season.

Near the centre of our area sat a hut which was built in 1967 by a mining company. Some artefacts remained inside, along with plenty of graffiti and messages from modern



visitors.

The next highlight of the day was the Polar Plunge! We all stripped off and put our bare bodies into and under the glossy, icy water. Our breath was taken away by the cold, but our smiles got ever bigger.

During recap Sasha got a question from the Question Box, 'Is the Captain single?'. He dodged the question then broke us into laughter by adding 'Notice that I also have long hair, and I may not be in charge of the ship, but I can drive the zodiac!'.

## Day 10: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2022 Sydkap & Ingmikertikajik

**GPS position at 08 am: ?° ??' N, ?° ??' W**

**Wind: ??; Sea State: ??; Weather: ??; Air Temp: ??°C**

Our morning at Sydkap started early for some of us: a 5:30am wake-up call beckoned the hikers for six hours of adventure out on the hillside, while the rest of us slumbered on a little longer. After a leisurely breakfast, there was a choice of medium, short or beach walks for those who chose not to join the long hike.



Once ashore we all had the chance to marvel at the remains of both winter and summer



houses used by the Thule - ancestors of modern Inuit peoples. The foundations of a winter settlement were just up the hill from the landing site, while the remains of tent rings used for their summer tents was just a short walk down by the beach.

All along the walk enjoyed the view over the dazzling array of icebergs collected in the waters around us. As the icebergs break off the



nearby Daugaard Jensen glacier they become grounded here as they are too large to be able to float out to sea. They remain here until they are sufficiently melted to float freely. Some of these icebergs were estimated to be about 100m high above the water, which means that their entire height would be approximately 1km, when we consider that only approximately 9% of an iceberg is visible above the water, the other 91% being concealed beneath the waves.



In the afternoon we took a short zodiac ride round the corner to our landing site at Ingmikertkajik. Here, we enjoyed the freedom to roam over the flat part of the island. We were blessed with several sightings of arctic hares, some of which



were so tame as to allow themselves to be photographed at quite close range. Some of us were even lucky enough to witness a mother hare feeding a young one, before they both hopped off together around the hillside.

Also on the island was a remarkably well-preserved winter settlement of Thule people. Here, we could really appreciate how it must have been to live here, in small homes with whalebone roofs, heated by lamps of blubber. The houses were nestled close to each other on a small plateau overlooking the icebergs.



Close by, there was another small islet with long-tailed ducks, eider ducks and arctic terns. Ringed plovers and snow buntings were also seen.

During the course of the afternoon, the German icebreaker and polar research vessel “Polarstern” came into view, with scientists also launching their helicopter in the area.

Once all were safely back on board, we raised the anchor and set sail, cruising through the majestic icebergs, which stretched as far as the eye could see. After a tasty dinner, some of us headed up to the bar for a nightcap while others remained outside to bid a final farewell to the glorious mountains, glaciers and icebergs of Greenland, as we head towards Jan Mayen.

## **Day 11: 11<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **At sea enroute to Jan Mayen**

**GPS position at 08 am: 70°14,2`N 021°10,7`W**

**Wind: SE3; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 3.0°C**

Overnight we left Greenland and sailed into the Norwegian-Greenland sea on our way to the Island of Jan Mayen.

We were lucky weatherwise to still be far away from Jan Mayen because a storm was hitting the island as we approached. This gave a big swell at our position resulting in the



occasional seasickness for some. Our bridge spotters did a good job at cheering people up and getting them out on deck to watch sea life. Get out of your cabin!

Best time was spent outside on deck or on the bridge as there was a lot of wildlife to see both in and over the ocean. At 08.45

we spotted Blue Whales at the 10:00 o'clock position and the show kept going with Humpback Whales soon after. Sometimes only one, but often in groups of five or more from 100 to 500 meters from the ship. We slowed down to get better views. It was a very pretty morning.

There were interesting morning lectures by Mikhail on Bird Migration: 'the why and how' followed by Edward's lecture on 'crevasses, glacier travel, climbing Mont Blanc and ski trips in the High Arctic'. After our buffet lunch we enjoyed more lectures; Canadian Laura about the 'geology of Jan Mayen' and guest lecturer Joost Broeke on 'Jan Mayen, the history of the now Norwegian outpost'.

The last talk was interrupted when a many Humpback and Fin Whales crossed our path. Just amazing, and again the bridge spotter guides did a great job.

Happily, the swell eased off in the afternoon and most people felt better.



Regarding birds we spotted Northern Fulmars, Arctic Skua's, Kittiwakes, Little Auk and Puffins. Then, after a fantastic plated dinner, unexpectedly, just before 10:00 PM a Great Cormorant, normally a coastal bird, showed up, dove under the ship from stern to bow and travelled with us through the night sitting and sleeping near the bridge. This was probably a lost juvenile in need of a rest. We were all able to get a good close look and many photos. A day at sea, but it was a very busy one!

## Day 12: 12<sup>th</sup> August 2022

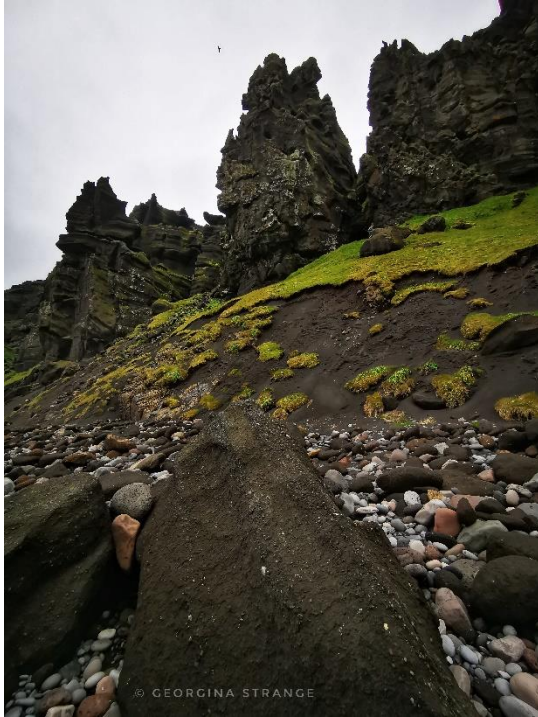
### Jan Mayen

**GPS position at 08 am: 70°38.0' N, 08°42.7' W**

**Wind: WNW3; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 4.0°C**

Jan Mayen! We arrived at this very remote and inaccessible island early in the morning, to give ourselves the best chance of being able to land at this notoriously difficult site. The sea and the air were full of northern fulmars. These majestic birds have been our constant companions during this voyage, and we have often enjoyed the sight of their playful swooping around the ship's mast or in front of the bow, as they play with the air currents our passage generates. Now, we have the chance to see one of the places where the fulmars come to nest, and the cliffs around Jan Mayen are filled with nesting fulmars.





After an initial scouting mission, the expedition team reported that conditions were borderline. However, the forecast predicted that the weather would improve over the course of the day. After a leisurely breakfast, we were treated to Charlotte's lecture in the lounge, where she talked about humpback whales and shared some of her experiences with these majestic creatures.

Luckily, the weather forecast proved to be correct and after lunch we were indeed able to all set foot on the island of Jan Mayen. Named for a Dutch whaling captain, the island is now

under Norwegian stewardship. After a somewhat sporty disembarkation from the zodiacs, assisted by no less than six members of the expedition team - we were all safely ashore and could explore freely.

Unlike all our other landings during our trip, Jan Mayen is a place where there is no possibility of encountering a polar bear, therefore our usual routine of always having armed members of the expedition team nearby can be put aside. The beach was covered with surf-polished lava stones and led us to a site with some small buildings, and a monument to 7 Dutchmen lost in 1634. From here the road led out up the hill to a beautiful viewpoint and onwards towards the airstrip and the meteorological station on the other side of the island.



After a good leg stretch, we all returned back to the landing spot to return to *Hondius*.

Shortly after our arrival back on board, we were treated to wine and canapés to celebrate our successful landing. Then during dinner, many of us were tempted outside between courses to take photographs of the island while sailing away, as we were also treated to a view of the top of the volcano, which was very lucky, as this is often covered by mist and cloud. And then we sail onwards for a couple of days on our return journey to Spitsbergen!

## Day 13: 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### At Sea enroute to Svalbard

**GPS position at 08 am: 72°52.0' N, 04°07.5' W**

**Wind: N2; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 5.0°C**

Today we woke up to a grey, cloudy morning with a hint of fog around. Everyone was feeling a bit sleepy from the fantastic day at Jan Mayen yesterday. At 0930 Laurence presented a very interesting lecture on Arctic Bathymetry, followed by John with Whaling, a Savage History. The boat slowly rocked in the smooth waves as Northern Fulmars circled the vessel.



Sara and Charlotte entertained us with their talks on Musk Ox and Walrus and Edward had us in awe with his avalanche and crevasse knowledge. At the daily recap the Expedition Team amazed us with our questions we had regarding whales and mushrooms.

As we watched out the windows with our cups of coffee, we looked back on the last two weeks and could feel the sense of gratitude for the

things we had seen. Dinner came around far too quickly, but as always, dinner was delicious. This was then followed by the fantastic and one and only Sasha who shared his personal, touching, funny and truly fascinating stories of his time in Pyramiden as a keeper of the ghost town.

## Day 14: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022

### At Sea enroute Svalbard

**GPS position at 08 am: 76°06.9' N, 5°17.3' E**

**Wind: N3; Sea State: Slight; Weather: Overcast; Air Temp: 4.0°C**



This morning we were greeted with beautifully calm sailing yet again (we have been so lucky this trip!) The skies remained grey for the most part during the day, but we were very grateful to not have any ocean swell to speak of. The early part of the day was relatively

quiet in terms of wildlife sightings, with just our familiar feathered followers - the Northern Fulmars - in our wake.

Presentations by our Chief Engineer, Sebastian (with an exciting virtual tour of the engine room and components) and subsequently Laura kept us entertained until lunch time. Another delicious buffet lunch by our wonderful hotel team and then time for a little nap before we started to see more wildlife around the ship.

The first ocean visitors were a small pod of White-beaked dolphins, and by the end of this day at sea we had spotted around 5 separate pods of these acrobatic marine mammals! Bird life slowly started to increase, too, with Black-legged



Kittiwakes joining the Fulmars. Soon enough we were graced with amazing whale



sightings, including several very exciting views of Sperm whales!

Lots of fun was had by all in the lounge at Happy Hour with the Oceanwide Quiz...and more whales seen from the windows! Our whale and dolphin sightings continued right throughout dinner and into the late evening as we approached the continental shelf in Svalbard waters, with many more White-beaked dolphins and Fin whales, some coming very close to the ship and the last pod of dolphins for the evening bow-riding with *Hondius* to finish off a blissful day at sea. All in all, we saw between 20 and 30 whales in the latter part of the day!

George also formed part of our evening entertainment, with his animated presentation of stories in the Lecture room after dinner!

## **Day 15: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **Poolepynten & Alkhornet**

**GPS position at 08 am: 78°26.0' N, 11°55.2 ' E**

**Wind: NNW1; Sea State: Calm; Weather: Cloud; Air Temp: 7.0°C**

We arrived overnight to Svalbard in continuing gentle conditions. The light was striking as we divided into our colour groups for the zodiac ride to the shore.



The morning landing was a relatively short stroll down the driftwood strewn beach to stand silently and observe the huddle of snoozing walrus. The occasional raised head or flipper scratch gave us slight changes to record with our snapping cameras.



The walruses may have been placid, but the setting was superb. In the calm airs, the small lakes and the fjord reflected the mountains; flocks of Kittiwakes and Arctic Terns settled on the lakes and circled overhead while small groups of Little Auks passed through; the beach was a patchwork of wood, flowers, droppings and debris; and a few wandering reindeer completed the scene. A wonderful snapshot of Svalbard.

The *Hondius* relocated while we ate, and some did a walrus imitation in their beds.





A chill wind blew across the basin in front of Alkhornet for the afternoon landing, but the rain stayed away, and the scenery remained sublime. The Expedition Team scouted for our safety and took up their positions around the perimeter. We had the freedom to roam within the protected area, dominated by the triangular rock

face above. The bird cliffs were active, with many species sighted including a couple of Arctic Skua in residence in the middle. The foxes and hares remained elusive, while the reindeer pranced, danced scurried and posed as we climbed to their level. A super way to complete our voyage.

Then out came the glad rags as we celebrated with all the crew at the Captain's Cocktail Party. Captain Toni cast a spell to force us to return, while we hoped that his magic would work. Then Mikhail's slideshow brought back memories and made us laugh. Dinner was done in style, and we celebrated then commiserated into the night.





## **Day 16: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2022**

### **Longyearbeyn**

**GPS position at 08 am: 78°14.5' N, 11°58.8' E**

**Wind: NNW1; Sea State: Calm; Weather: Sun; Air Temp: 6.0°C**

Right from the beginning we knew that there would be an end. This didn't make it any easier. Every expedition is a once-in-a lifetime experience, even for those who have had the pleasure of multiple expeditions. Our group, our adventures, our images, our laughs, and our memories, will be ours forever – shared only with those who were there.

With this knowledge to give us fortitude we shared fond farewells – until we meet again.



**Thank you all for travelling with us on this voyage; for your enthusiasm, support and good company. We very much hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!**

**Total distance sailed on our voyage: 2384.1 nm  
Northern most position: 78°26.8' N**

**On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Toni Salo,  
Expedition Leader Sara Jenner, Hotel Manager William Barnes  
and all the crew and staff of M/V Hondius, it has been a pleasure travelling with  
you.**