



Around Spitsbergen - In the realm of Polar Bear & Ice

1st - 10th August 2023

M/V Hondius



Hondius was built in 2019 in Split, Croatia. She is 107.6m long, 17.6m wide, and has a maximum draught of 5.3m. With an ice class of PC6, a top speed 15 knots, and three diesel generators, she sails on low sulfur marine gas oil and has a capacity of 176 passengers in 83 cabins. This comfortable, structurally advanced vessel is built from the ground up for polar adventure.

Captain Ernesto Barria

and his international crew

Staff Captain: **Elizabar Kadaria**

Chief Officer: **Mikael Svedberg**

2nd Officer: **Igor Nazarov**

3rd Officer: **Giovanie Simene**

Chief Engineer: **Andrej Abakumov**

Hotel Manager: **Michael Barnes**

Assist. Hotel Manager: **Albert Don**

Head Chef: **Gawa Baurev**

Ships Doctor: **Simon Cole**

Expedition Leader: **Sara Jenner**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Adam Burke**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Marcel Paaul**

Expedition Guide: **Beth Hitchcock**

Expedition Guide: **Bitao (Jerry) Zhao**

Expedition Guide: **Charlotte Taplin**

Expedition Guide: **Chris Long**

Expedition Guide: **Hong (Rose) Li**

Expedition Guide: **Jakub Malecki**

Expedition Guide: **John Rogers**

Expedition Guide: **Koen Hoekemeijer**

Expedition Guide: **Martin Anstee**

Expedition Guide: **Mengxiao Liu**

Expedition Guide: **Paolo Bellezze**

Expedition Guide: **Sasha Romanovskiy**

Day 1 – 1st August

Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

12:00 GPS Position: 78°08.1'N / 015°37.1'E

Wind: S 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 10°C, **Sea Temp:** 11°C

Today marked the long-awaited day that we could board Hondius and set off on our expedition to the Arctic. We were picked up from our hotel in Longyearbyen and travelled the short distance to the vessel. When we arrived, the crew had already taken the luggage to our cabins, so we were able to walk up the gangway easily and were shown to our cabins. The next challenge was to find our way to the lounge,



where we started by having introductions to safety on board. It is essential to have an abandon ship drill to leaving port. For this we donned our big orange lifejackets and made our way to the lifeboat boarding areas, so that we were familiar with the procedure.

Next was the welcome briefings from our hotel manager and expedition leader to familiarise ourselves with the comforts on board and possible adventures we had all come for. Our expedition leader, Sara, introduced us to our voyage, what to expect,

and the expedition team members. It was the perfect way to answer all the questions we had about the voyage. Following this was the Captain's cocktails. This gave us a strong feeling of eagerness to start the trip as we marvelled at the possibilities of what we may have the chance to experience.

It was nice to be looking back to the land from Hondius as we dopped the mooring lines and set off from the quay. Longyearbyen, like all the settlements, in Svalbard was originally a mining town. The mining potential was first noted in 1901 by John Munro Longyear who was visiting as a tourist with his family. By 1906 he had opened a mine in Adventdalen, where Longyearbyen lies today. Byen is the Norwegian work for city. Although Longyearbyen has a history rich in coal mining stories, today Svalbard is known largely for its tourism and science research which are both growing industries in the archipelago.



One of the notable features as we left Longyearbyen was the horizontal layering of the mountains around us. These are made up of ancient sediments laid down 40 to 60 million years ago. The occasional coal layer represents Svalbard's bygone era of swamps and woodlands.



As we set off into the bright evening light, we enjoyed a delicious buffet dinner in the restaurant, all the while keeping an eye out the big windows for wildlife and to watch the scenery.

The final activity of this long and exciting day way to collect rubber boots, which we call muck boots, from the expedition store. This completed our preparation for landings in Svalbard as we will be boarding Zodiacs most days. After boot distribution we retreated to our cabins, for some via the bar, and settled

into our home for the coming 10 days.

Day 2 – 2nd August

Ny-Ålesund and 14 Julibukta

12:00 GPS Position: 79°00.0'N / 020°50.7'E

Wind: ESE 2, **Sea State:** Smooth, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 7°C, **Sea Temp:** 4°C

The morning of day two started with our first breakfast, just after wake-up call at 7:15am by Sara. Then it was up to the observation lounge for our second mandatory briefing – this time about polar bear safety, Zodiacs, and other AECO arctic rules. Chris finished with an explanation about the Wifi and Bluetooth free zone in Ny Ålesund. The radio telescopes in Ny Ålesund are reading signals from outer space, discovering stars and galaxies. A Bluetooth or Wifi signal from our phones is 10,000 times stronger than these radio waves from space. Therefore, we were required to turn off our phones to avoid disrupting the incredible research that is being done in the world's northernmost permanent settlement.



Shortly after 9:30am we scanned out of the ship at reception and walked down

the gang way and onto the main street of Ny Ålesund. Within this fascinating town we found many different research buildings, most representing a different country. The Chinese group were excited to see the Chinese station and many pictures were taken outside the main steps. Holland, Germany, Norway, France, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, and the United Kingdom were all represented.

To support the research effort, and welcome us, there is also a fire station, bar, dining building, shop, museum, and other logistical buildings. Of course, we had to buy some souvenirs, and many Krona were spent at the cozy, yellow painted, wooden gift shop in the main street.

By 11:45am it was time to head to the ship, and the gangway was lifted at 12 sharp. Hondius set sail down Kongfjorden for Krossfjorden and Fjortende Julibukta, our destination for the afternoon landing.



This time it was a wet landing, so we put our muck boots on and loaded the Zodiacs through the shell doors. On shore we wandered along the beach, gazing at the large ice bergs washed high up along the shore from tsunamis caused by carvings of the nearby Fjortende Julibreen Glacier. (Remember “Breen” means “Glacier” in Norwegian.)

While half of us were on land, the second group of Zodiacs set out to explore the coastline in search of wildlife. It wasn't long before Puffins were spotted nesting along the top of the cliffs. There were also ledges with black and white Guillemots lined up protecting their chicks from Glaucous Gulls. Soon their chicks will take the giant leap into adulthood, jumping from the cliffs into the water below, where they will still be fed for a while by their parents before learning to feed themselves.



The second half of the Zodiac cruise took us near to the glacier, exploring the brash ice while listening to the popping sound of melting icebergs. Halfway through the afternoon the groups swapped and the Zodiac explorers went ashore, while the shore party went Zodiac cruising. With this system nobody misses out.

Eventually it was time to go back to the ship. After recap it was dinner

time! As the evening went by, we enjoyed a drink in the bar under the late evening and midnight sun.

Day 3 – 3rd August

Magdalenafjord

12:00 GPS Position: 79°33.6'N / 011°03.9'E

Wind: NE 5, **Sea State:** Rippled, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 6°C, **Sea Temp:** 9°C

This day, as every day on Hondius it seems, begins with a scrumptious breakfast. Excitement fills the air as we prepare for our Zodiac cruise to Waggonwaybreen, an ice-filled wonderland nestled within the majestic Magdalenefjord. Our first destination is Graveneset, a historically significant site where we pay homage to the memory of 130 whalers from the 17th and 18th centuries. The serene atmosphere and remnants of past whaling activities evoke contemplation about humanity's relationship with nature.



As the Zodiacs draw near Waggonwaybreen, we find ourselves surrounded by ice formations and crystalline blue glaciers. Cameras click incessantly as we take in the surreal beauty of this Arctic landscape. En route to our next stop, we spot adorable Harbour Seals hauled out on the rocks near the shoreline. We maintain a respectful distance to observe these charming creatures in their natural habitat, capturing photographs for precious memories.



Back aboard, John gave us a fascinating lecture on the polar exploration in the Arctic, helping us to appreciate what they experienced and endured. Just as we were finishing a delectable lunch, excitement reached new heights as a polar bear was spotted swimming near our planned landing.

We quickly gathered on deck, binoculars in hand, to witness this magnificent creature in its natural element. The polar bear swam playfully, interacting with some seaweed, captivating our attention with its grace

and strength. As the polar bear made its way to the shoreline, the expedition team promptly launched the Zodiacs for a closer encounter. We maintained a safe distance to respect the bear's space and minimize any disturbance to its natural behavior.

After spending considerable time observing the polar bear, we directed our attention to Smeerenburg where a group of walrus was hauled out. Their distinctive tusks and wrinkled hides presented a fascinating sight. As we approached the walrus from the sea, we were met with a pungent smell that filled the air. It was a stark reminder of the unique wildlife encounters that are synonymous with the Arctic region.

This was all followed by a recap with the expedition staff and a buffet dinner where we couldn't help but feel utterly satisfied by the day's events.



Day 4 – 4th August

Monacobreen and Texas Bar

12:00 GPS Position: 79° .36'3N / 012°42.3'E

Wind: SW 1, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 8°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C



The harsh Arctic morning: peaks of the mountains, shrouded in fog, that encircle Lifdefjord, icebergs frozen chunks, motionless upon the water, a gloomy sky veiled by gray clouds, and complete calmness – such a scene could only be glimpsed by looking out through the porthole or window. Disconnected and infused with a sense of hopelessness, Sara's rendition of "Good morning, good morning, good morning!" harmoniously interwove with the fabric of this picture. Hondius silently

cut through the water's surface, approaching the location of our morning landing – Texas Bar.

While we had breakfast, our guides had already boarded the Zodiacs and sped off to the shore for reconnaissance and scouting. But how could it be otherwise? This is the Arctic; behind every boulder, in every depression, a dangerous white predator might be slumbering. Hence it's imperative to ensure with

certainty that in the places where we are to stroll and admire the beauty of the northern wilderness, none of them are present.



And here we are on the shore! Clad with lichen-covered rocks, sparse tundra vegetation, a pebble beach, a tiny cabin nearby, with a wooden plank inscription on its wall that reads "Texas Bar." If you step inside, you can see a row of empty bottles from strong spirits – that's where this name comes from! The cabin is inhabited: locals occasionally stop here for a break, to hunt rock ptarmigans and foxes, and sometimes use it as a base for kayaking and skiing trips.

Contrary to the weather forecast, visibility was good. Only from time to time did fog start to accumulate in the valley of the nearby glacier, swirling, thickening, yet not daring to launch an attack and engulf the entire coastline, along with the place of our landing. In the dense blanket of clouds, now and then, a gap forms here and there, through which the sun peers dazzlingly, causing the icebergs to sparkle.

We wandered through the tundra, striving to etch every corner, every cliff, every plant into memory, attempting to ascend every hill where one of the guides stood. Glaucous Gulls lazily flapped their wings above us, occasionally breaking the silence with their ominous squawking – mournful and drawn out – sending a slight shiver down the spine.

Overhead the Blacklegged Kittiwakes, Arctic Terns, and Brunnich's Guillemots darted to and fro. An Arctic Skua, perched on a massive boulder, would periodically take off and chase after a passing Kittiwake. Although late in the Arctic summer, flowers still had the power to bring us joy. Granted, a significant portion had already faded, yet a shortage of this geobotanical delight was hardly noticeable.



Yellow Mountain Saxifrage formed cushions around us, here and there, one could still spot belated blooms of Mountain Avens. Minuscule Knotweed, drooping Saxifrage with its melancholic air, and believe it or not, Purple Saxifrage too!



Unbelievable as it might sound, even this Saxifrage, whose blooming season spans the end of May and the beginning of June, hadn't completely withered yet. However, the Woolly Lousewort had already faded, taking on a truly haunting appearance: leaves and stems turned reddish, resembling cobweb clusters and threads enveloping the stem, now even more visible than before. All of this evoked the thought that the same planet that is the homeland of this parasitic plant is the same one from which the terrifying Xenomorph creature of Ridley Scott's "Alien" film hails. On the bright side, Arctic Mouse ear

and Fringed Sandwort were in full bloom around, unquestionably adding a touch of vibrancy to this eerie tableau.

Besides everything else, our guides brought four bags of towels to the shore. Why, might you ask? Well, to encourage the bravest among us to get into the water and have a polar plunge! There were quite a few brave souls among us! We barely had enough towels. The water wasn't just cold; it was achingly cold! When you entered, it took your breath away. Step by step, a bit further... And now you can dive! Inhale deeply and – splash! – you plunge in headfirst. You emerge on the shore and, miraculously, you don't feel any cold! Our body's protective mechanisms kick in! All pores of the skin seal shut to minimize heat loss. All set, now you can dry off with a towel, get dressed, and head back to the ship where lunch is just about to be served!



While we had lunch Hondius ventured deeper into Liefdefjord, approaching the stunning Monaco glacier. This glacier is famous not only for its picturesque beauty but also for its high activity. This implies a decent



chance of witnessing calving. No shore landings were planned. Instead, in order to approach the glacier at a safe distance and examine it in detail, our guides arranged a Zodiac cruise for us. We cruised in the Zodiacs to explore unforgettable views and, perhaps, some adventures. We moved forward, maneuvering around massive (by Spitsbergen standards) icebergs and slowly making our way through brash ice. It wasn't always easy to move steadily; our guides had to occasionally

engage reverse gear, make sharp turns, and perform other expert maneuvers. Birds circled above us, as always. They ranged from cheerful Kittiwakes to ominous Glaucous Gulls, Arctic Terns, and even rarer avian residents like the Great Skua and Ivory Gull.

And what about the glacier? The glacier truly held our attention, as if it were alive. There was a constant deep rumble, occasionally escalating into thunder. We witnessed huge chunks breaking off here and there from the glacier's front, sending sprays soaring to the sky, transforming into icebergs upon crashing into the sea. Each of these chunks, aside from the spray, caused a tsunami-like wave, but, at a safe distance, we were in no danger.

In the midst of the cruise, out of nowhere, Sara appeared on a Zodiac with a flag and started treating everyone to hot chocolate. Naturally, the eager ones didn't keep her waiting, so a genuine flotilla of boats formed around her. We had to wait a bit. No big deal, there was plenty of hot chocolate for everyone!



We returned to the ship just before dinner. An open-deck barbecue was planned, but alas, the Arctic nature showed its character – it started to rain, so the barbecue had to be moved indoors to the restaurant. Well, no big deal! We had a fantastic dinner in the restaurant as well.

A truly fascinating day. And most importantly, this isn't the end yet! There will be more days, more new adventures! Raise the anchor! Full speed ahead!

Day 5 – 5th August

Ice Edge

12:00 GPS Position: 81°10.5'N / 022°18.6'E

Wind: SE 6, **Sea State:** Ice, **Weather:** Rain, **Air Temp:** 1°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

Today we got to sleep in a bit with our wakeup call only being at 07:45am. It was going to be our day on the ice edge searching for wildlife with our main goal of spotting more polar bears. We reached the ice around 07:00aa and members of our expedition staff were already at the bridge with their binoculars to scan the ice floes for bears. Searching for bears feels a bit like finding that



needle in a haystack, but we know they're here and with their yellowish coloured fur we should be able to spot one sooner or later. But first we enjoyed breakfast.

After breakfast we had time to spend on the outside decks while soaking in this vast and seemingly endless vista of ice floes. At 09:15 Sara invited us all to join and attend her interesting presentation about polar bears. She had hardly started when she got a



message from the bridge, a polar bear had been spotted. What better way to interrupt a polar bear presentation by the main character itself!

The bear was very active. It was walking on the ice and often disappearing out of our sights as it was swimming too. At times we were expecting it to climb out of the water, but instead it decided to dive and swim under the ice floes to the other side. With the ice not being very strong this late in the season, the bear may have chosen this way to avoid using unnecessary energy. Climbing on the ice takes a lot of energy and this bear was clearly avoiding doing so. After some time, we lost sight of the bear and, in order not to disturb it in its search for food, we decided to move away. We thought we had left the bear behind, when it suddenly resurfaced quite close the ship and looked briefly at us before diving back in. Polar bears can hold their breath for 2-3 minutes and with all this ice around you can easily lose them.



Sara continued her lecture while the staff on the bridge continued the search. Murphy's Law certainly applies when looking for bears as right before lunch time Sasha spotted our second bear of the day. It was asleep on a larger ice floe and the Captain decided to 'park' the ship in the ice hoping the bear would wake up sooner or later. We all ran out of the

dining room to get a look, but when we saw the bear was not very active, we returned for a relaxed lunch.

Observing wild animals is amazing, but it also requires patience. We knew that this bear would become more active sometime, we just didn't know when. So we decided to observe from a distance waiting for it to wake up. In the meantime, lectures were organized in the observation lounge and we were visited

by a Minke Whale. Throughout the day, the Kittiwakes entertained us with the swooping dives to feed near the ship.

By afternoon the rain from the morning was replaced with clear and sunny skies. To our surprise, an ice cream station appeared on the bow and we all enjoyed a delicious treat. This bear must have really enjoyed the day off on Saturday, as it hardly moved. A few times we got very excited when it stood up, only to be disappointed shortly after when the bear laid down again. Maybe it knew that we were waiting for it?



Around 19:00 Murphy's Law struck again. After almost 6 1/2 hours of waiting, the bear got up on its feet and started walking just as a plated dinner was served in the dining room. Unfortunately, our patience wasn't rewarded as the bear walked in all kinds of directions, but never in the direction of our ship. Nevertheless, it was a great day and although the second bear didn't do what we hoped, it was still amazing to see a polar bear in its natural environment. Knowing that tomorrow will be a more active day meant that it was time to get some sleep!

Day 6 – 6th August

Alkefjellet and Wahlbergøya

12:00 GPS Position: 79°35.8'N / 018°29.5'E

Wind: S 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Foggy, **Air Temp:** 5°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C

Today was a day of changes. From the early hours of the morning, our expedition leader was up making decisions based on the weather. Our original plan was to land in Parrypøya and then Zodiac cruise Phippsøya in the afternoon. However, as is often the case with these very northern islands in Svalbard, something got in our way. This time it was the weather. The fog was thick.

To make sure we would still make it to the next land and a good place to explore, Sara made the decision early, then we raced on down into the Hinloppenstrait. It was a journey in fog all the way. Initially we had nearly two knots of current with us which helped up make good speed. We passed over a



stark color change in the water where cold, dense, fresh, sediment rich glacial water was meeting the northern ocean currents. There was an increase in bird life, but no mammals broke the glassy surface.

As we made our way south, Charlotte gave a great introduction to the different types of whales that are found in Svalbard. It is very useful to be able to learn about what to look out for and fascinating to know more about the incredible surroundings. The whales are an essential part of the ecosystems here. Charlotte was able to share her knowledge of these incredible species that she has gained through her vast experience in their home: the oceans of the world.



We arrived within a mile of Alkefjellet at 11:00am, however it was still nowhere to be seen. The fog had not yet burnt off and there was not much wind to blow it away. Regardless of this problem, we optimistically prepared for the cruise. Sure enough, by the time we were loaded into the Zodiacs, the impressive mount guillemot, or Alkefjellet, was visible. We would soon see how these cliffs get their name.

We started at the east end of the cliffs where a glacier pours down a steep slope to the sea from a higher plateau area. The crevassed glacier was laden with sediments, accumulated from higher in the mountains and brought down on this conveyor belt system. To the right of the glacier, the cliffs showed an interesting color change. At the base of the cliffs are white-layered rocks, while sitting directly on top are black rocks forming vertical pillar structures. Again, at the upper cliffs, the hard white parallel layers of white rock reappear. This is what we call an intrusion. A large volume of magma pushed its way in between some limestone layers at a time when the Atlantic Ocean was beginning to open. This tough black dolerite rock is what forms the impressive cliffs of Alkefjellet. The neat horizontal layers are a favorite perching place for the birds, making this sea cliff home to over 60,000 breeding pairs of Brünnich's Guillemots.



As we went to the south along the sea cliffs, we came across many of these smart black and white birds in the water. The Brünnich's Guillemot come to Svalbard, here in the high arctic, every summer for

breeding. They travel out to sea during the winter months, where they spend their time fishing off the coast of Greenland and Labrador. It is in August that the young will start jumping from the cliffs in synchrony and heading to the water to begin the long swim to the open water.

Many don't survive this jump or the long swim, during which time they must also learn to fly. This leads to our next observation. As we moved south along the cliffs, Arctic Foxes were spotted. They are in the perfect place for picking up any dead or injured birds that fall to the base of the towering cliffs.



As we were plodding along the coastline, observing the beautiful, small fluffy Arctic Foxes scurrying around, a swimming Polar Bear was spotted! This is an unusual sight at the steep cliffs of Alkefjellet. The small birds and eggs with not make much more than a snack for the top predator in the Arctic. We observed the bear from a distance as it swam, carefully getting out of the way. The playful foxes were giving a great show. By now there were four squabbling in the grassy slopes below the cliffs.

The Polar Bear climbed ashore, which gave us a fantastic opportunity to observe it and its behavior. It was so impressive to see the animal from up close as it walked up the slope and across the scree. What enormous animals they are! After three quiet and slow 'drive-bys' in the Zodiacs, we withdrew to make sure not to intrude. It was a rare experience to get close enough to see how the bear moves, without disturbing it. It moved on and so did we, towards the Guillemot cliffs.



The ceiling of birds, going-and-coming from the cliffs, made us feel that we were inside a dome lined by accelerating birds. Occasionally a large group of Guillemots would take off in synchrony and fly out to sea together in search of crustaceans and small fish. The black rocks have turned white with every digested fish that the Guillemots deposit on the cliffs. This all plays a role in the ecosystem here, providing essential nutrients to create the bright green patches of vegetation below Svalbard's bird cliffs.



As the fog rolled in again, surrounding the upper towers of the sea cliffs, we were left with an eerie and atmospheric scene with the soundtrack of squawking birds echoing round the cliffs.

Day 7 – 7th August

Palanderbukta, Hinlopen Strait and Bråsvellbreen

12:00 GPS Position: 79°34.3'N / 020°41.8'E

Wind: ESE 6, **Sea State:** Rippled, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 5°C, **Sea Temp:** 6°C

Today we woke up to the soft sound of Sara's voice: "good morning, good morning, good morning." We had expected fog, but luckily it was clear made our planned landing at Palanderbukta on North East Land,



the second biggest island in Svalbard of nearly 15,000 square kilometers. It is pretty much a desert with very little soil and vegetation.

The long hikers landed first, all eager for a fit, fast and furious hike. They set off into the distance, their legs moving like pistons. The medium and short hikers followed shortly afterwards, followed by lastly the Sino Star group doing scholastic research. They soon found that the area was littered with beautiful fossils, including snails, shells, Brittle Stars and coral. This area lifted was 60 metres above sea level 12,000 years ago when they heavy ice melted

at the end of the ice age, hence the reason for the whale skulls far up the beach. The fresh air made us feel alive, and after the hike and a fabulous lunch we were all ready for a nap.

This afternoon began as an expedition afternoon looking for wildlife. We visited the whale carcass at Wahlbergoya. A bear feeding on it was seen from the Bridge. Bad luck for us, the bear had slipped away as we approached. We continued our search and, what do you know, a bear was spotted sleeping on one of the small rocky islands! As we got our eyes and binoculars onto it, more bad luck, as the fog poured in and swallowed up the bear.



As recap and dinner rolled on, we slowly edged closer to Brasvelbreen, a 180km long ice cap in Svalbard. Beautiful ice bergs eerily past the ship with their greatness, Brasvelbreen loomed in the distance and eventually later in the evening, the ice cap showed itself in all its glory and might. Wow, what a sight! Now it was time to wander into sleep as yet another fantastic day was ending.



Day 8 – 8th August

Freemansundet and Russebukta

12:00 GPS Position: 77°54.0'N / 020°46.1'E

Wind: E 2, **Sea State:** Rippled, **Weather:** Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 10°C, **Sea Temp:** 7°C

This morning was the one morning that we actually didn't want to find a bear, because we were hoping to land on Kapp Wahlberg. Kapp Wahlberg is a beautiful place with a canyon that is home to thousands



of breeding Kittiwakes. We are allowed into the canyon and the birds allow us to come close and often we also see Arctic Foxes there. You can imagine it's a great place for them to find food and feed their kits.

But it is also a very beary place, and this morning we, unfortunately, scouted a bear too close to the landing site to be able to run a safe operation. As the scouted bear was not actively walking, the captain and Sara decided to move on and

look for other wildlife while we transferred to our next location.

What happened in the following hours was quite unique and incredible. We spotted bears everywhere (a total of 6), but they were either far up the slopes, or they were high up on the shoreline, making it difficult for us to get a good look from our Zodiacs.

Then we passed by Kapp Lee, where we had our most thrilling encounter. Two bears, presumably a mother and cub, were walking on the beach towards a large colony of Walrus. Walrus are usually not prey for the bears, as the risk of getting injured is too great. Walrus tusks are sharp and can be up to one meter long, so being perforated by such a tusk can be fatal to a bear. However, the young bear walked straight towards the Walrus, which alerted them and we could clearly see many of the Walrus were raising their heads to see what the bear would do. The young bear's mother had probably taught it already that attacking Walrus is not a good idea. The young bear had a look, but then decided not to get too close.

It was a wonderful moment to see two Polar Bear walking on the beach in the bright sun with all those Walrus lying on the beach. After lunch it was time to stretch our legs. With that delicious coconut mousse still in our bellies, it was also good to do a bit of a workout. We landed at Russebukta and this time we were lucky because we didn't find a bear ;). The weather was still gorgeous and perfect for some hiking. In Russebukta you can find many very old whale bones, but today our attention was drawn to the many



flowers in bloom. The fluffy Cottongrass looked like white silky streetlights in the bright rays of the summer sun.

While walking across the boggy tundra, we saw several birds including Purple Sandpipers, Snow Bunting and Arctic Skua. More impressive was finding ourselves approaching several reindeer. We took our time to move closer to them slowly. When you don't make any sudden moves, you can approach them quite closely. The



Svalbard reindeer are endemic and, after they were hunted almost to extinction, they are now making a good comeback. Their numbers are estimated to exceed 20,000 animals which is a fantastic improvement. We were able to get close enough to see that they are really cute with their big dark eye patches and beautiful big brown eyes that stare at you curiously.

After dinner it was time for some classic relaxation, a movie, and popcorn. This evening the selected feature was *Happy Feet*. The lecture room was sold out and the popcorn irresistible. It was another wonderful day in the Arctic, but now it's time to enjoy a well-deserved rest. Good night and see you tomorrow.

Day 9 – 9th August

Gåshamna and Burgerbukta

12:00 GPS Position: 76°56.6'N / 018°49.2'E

Wind: NE 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Sunny, **Air Temp:** 6°C, **Sea Temp:** 8°C



We have had so many wonderful days full of wildlife on our expedition, but today was all about the landscape, with a little history too.

We landed at the broad valley of Gåshamna to make our selection from the usual choices of long, medium, or short walks. All of the walkers made their way along the shoreside hills for views of the mountains all around

Hornsund reflected in the calm sea. Some continued past the ruins of the hunting settlements of the Pomors. They came from eastern Siberia from the year 1600 or so to establish summer camps for hunting Walrus, Arctic Fox and Polar Bear. It is remarkable that the ruins are so well preserved.

The long hikers then set off up the slope to make a loop through the hills, while the medium group descended to the coast to idle by the tide pools and watch the shore birds. Before we returned to the landing site there was more history, as just behind the beach were the remains of several “blubber ovens”

used to render whale blubber into oil to light the cities of Europe. The piles of whale bones nearby stood in mute testimony to the true cost of this trade.

Over lunch Hondius shifted across the sound to Burgerbukta. She anchored deep inside the dramatic valley with steep, rugged mountains on both sides where we began our Zodiac cruise. The peaks were draped in hanging glaciers generating numerous long cascades and waterfalls splashing into the sea. Some of these were truly remarkable as they were springs that “sprang” directly from the rocks just above the waterline. A torrent of water and foam suddenly appeared out of nowhere. The end of the valley was filled with the now familiar sight of the blue-white face of a large glacier calving into the sea. The popping of the brash ice and the iceberg sculptures delighted us. It seems that the Hotel Team just can’t stop trying to feed us, and Sara and Carol arrived flying the Oceanwide flag and delivering ice cream cones.



The bittersweet fact that this was the last activity of our expedition gave us some sad moments, but soon we were popping the cork on bubbles for the Captain’s farewell cocktail party and talking about all our memories over drinks and dinner.

Day 10 – 10th August

Longyearbyen - Disembarkation Day

8:00 GPS Position: 78°14.0'N / 015°36.5'E

Wind: NE 2, Sea State: Slight, Weather: Cloudy, Air Temp: 9°C, Sea Temp: 10°C

Well, the final day is here. Our bags are packed and left outside our doors for the staff to collect. After breakfast at 0900, we disembark the ship and say goodbye to Sara and all her team. What a team! We can't thank them enough for all their knowledge and guidance on this trip.

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

Total distance sailed: 1231 Nautical Miles

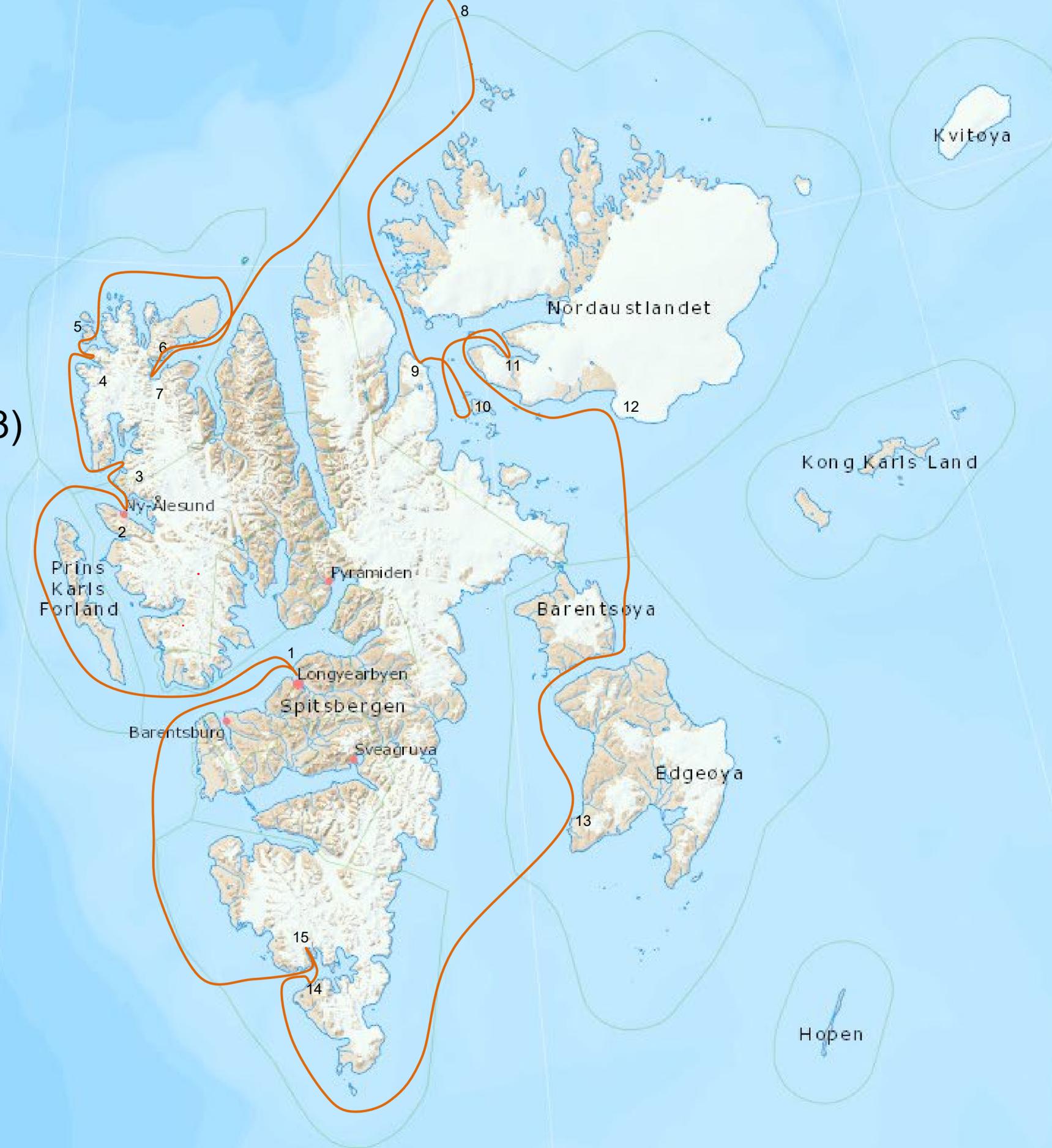
Furthest north: 81°10.6'N / 22°34.0'E

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



Hondius, 1 – 10 Aug 2023

1. Longyearbyen (day 1)
2. Ny Alesund (day 2)
3. Fjortende Julibukta (14th July Bay) (day 2)
4. Magdalenafjorden – Waggonway Glacier (day 3)
5. Virgohamna (day 3)
6. Texas Bar (day 4)
7. Monaco Glacier (day 4)
8. Pack ice (day 5)
9. Alkefjellet (day 6)
10. Wahlbergoya (day 6)
11. Nordaustlandet – Palanderbukta (day 7)
12. Nordaustlandet – Brasvell Glacier (day 7)
13. Edgeoya – Russebukta (day 8)
14. Gashamna (day 9)
15. Burgerbukta (day 9)



Sara Jenner – Expedition Leader



For as long as Sara could remember she has had a passion for travel and searching for the wildest and most remote places on earth.

Back in the UK when she was only 10, she remembers trading in her favourite pink bicycle for the money to start her travel fund. Every birthday and Christmas she added a little more in the kitty and finally, at 18 she realised her dream of diving at the Great Barrier Reef! At that point the travel addiction was born. Ever since Sara has been travelling the globe in search of wild and remote places and has spent many

months volunteering on wildlife conservation projects in a bid to help some of our most iconic and endangered species.

Sara's love of wildlife and the great outdoors has taken her to all seven continents and she has travelled extensively in the polar regions including the Antarctic Peninsula, Falklands, South Georgia, Spitsbergen, Greenland, Iceland, Baffin Island and Canadian High Arctic. Returning to the UK, Sara used this knowledge to work in the travel industry as a polar specialist for several years, until the travel bug hit again, when she decided to swap life on the land for a life at sea and joined the Oceanwide Expedition Team in 2016.

During 2020-2021 she worked extensively on a leopard seal identification project and took the opportunity to fulfil a lifetime dream of visiting South Georgia in winter by working on the M/V Pharos, which is deployed by the South Georgia Government as a fishery patrol vessel.

Sara is a keen wildlife photographer and when she is not wrapped up warm in the polar regions she enjoys working as a photographic guide in Botswana, on the beautiful Chobe River and Okavango Delta, so really has a life of two halves.

Adam Burke – Assistant Expedition Leader



Adam has always had a love of the outdoors and adventure, from an early age he dreamt of visiting exotic places and immersing himself in other cultures.

This love of the outdoors led him to work teaching adventurous activities and for over fifteen years this pursuit has given him the opportunity to live and work all over the globe. He has taught sailing in Australia, paddle sports on Europe's rivers and led expeditions in Africa.

After spending five years teaching white water safety & rescue and boat handling techniques to the fire brigade, he moved on to providing marine science support in Antarctica. He has spent over five years living between the Antarctic continent and the island of South Georgia, including overwintering twice.

Whilst providing science support he spent his time in Antarctica managing boating operations and helming RIBs for diving operations. This covered understanding environmental changes and its effects, wildlife monitoring and counting as well as water sampling for a long-term data collection.

Adam enjoys travelling with his partner who shares the same values and love of the outdoors. This has taken them from deserts to rain forests and ultramarathons in the mountains.

Marcel Paul - Assistant Expedition Leader



From his teens Marcel has been a keen traveller. After camping and trekking with friends, he led groups on trekking's to Austria, Switzerland, England and Scotland. His own travels over the last 20 years brought him to all 7 continents. With his interest in history and as keen hobby photographer, the Polar Regions have always been drawing his attention.

At his first arrival to Svalbard in 2011 and a second trip in 2013, he felt connected with the remoteness of the place and the dynamics of the polar nature. At that time the idea started to grow to become a polar guide and give up a job that is keeping him indoor most of the time.

When the Dutch organised a scientific polar expedition to Edgeøya it seemed the perfect opportunity to gain more knowledge from the area by working with the scientists. He joined the expedition in 2015 as field assistant and participated in various fields of research. In 2016 he went to the Dutch polar station in Ny Alesund, again as field assistant.

From 2017 Marcel has been working as a polar guide in the Arctic followed by the Antarctic in 2018. He now spends about half the year working in both polar regions and the rest of the year is spent either at home in Holland or traveling.

Beth Hitchcock – Expedition Guide



After graduating from her Geology honours degree in 2018 at Glasgow, Beth balanced two jobs until she succumbed to full time in the guiding world in 2021. Beth worked as a deckhand / guide on a tall ship and, when on the land, as an Engineering Geologist working mainly on Scotland's road and railway networks.

On the tall ships, Beth visited many places around the Atlantic Ocean from the Azores to Cape Town and Tristan da Cunha. In the austral summers she guides on the ship when they visit Antarctica and South Georgia. These

are ideal places to interpret the landscape and explain to the guests how the glaciers and geological processes have carved what we see today. The incredible human history in these regions has a significant impact on the regional geological story and on our understanding of geology globally.

Beth also enjoys spending time in the mountains of Scotland where she works when she is not guiding on board ships. She grew up sailing around the islands of the west coast of Scotland - home to some fascinating geology where she spent many field trips during her undergraduate years. This sparked the desire to explore and embark on adventures to discover new landscapes and cultures around the world.

Jerry Zhao - Expedition Guide



Jerry has been in love with nature and wildlife and traveling all his life. Soon after completed his degree in Business Administration at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Jerry began a career in the travel industry. Jerry first started as an international travel consultant and tour leader and led exclusive small high-end groups throughout Europe.

He then became partner in an international traveling consulting firm and focused on route planning and employee training.

As he searched for more adventure, He collected skills and knowledge while he traveled around to world. Finally, his step stopped at Polar regions, and joined Oceanwide Expeditions as Expeditions Guides, He has guided expeditions to the North Pole, Svalbard, Greenland, Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia many times.

Along the way as he spent more time in polar regions, learns more about polar regions, he is more interested in polar regions. He has self-studied the geography, wildlife and history of the Polar regions. He is beginning to learn wildlife photography.

When he is not in polar regions, he likes to spend his time in the forest, dessert, and plains in Northwestern part of China. He loves nature, wildlife, and he loves to share all that he knows to everyone who comes across.

Charlotte Taplin – Expedition Guide



Charlotte grew up by the Coast in Cornwall, United Kingdom. From a young age she has always been fascinated by wildlife and the ocean. She studied Wildlife Conservation at University and then spent the next 10 years travelling through South America, Australasia and Africa. Charlotte's love for boats began in 2013 where she worked on research and dive vessels visiting remote regions of the Great Barrier Reef. Her interest in Marine Biology grew in Australia and New Zealand while studying Humpback, Minke and Sperm Whales.

After driving overland in a land rover from South Africa to Jordan she then moved to Mozambique in 2018 where she started her own backpacker hostel. In her spare time Charlotte worked as a Researcher studying Whale sharks and Manta Rays along the Coast of Mozambique. During 2020-2022 she worked as a Deckhand/Divemaster on superyachts and ice breaker explorer vessels. Her hobbies include scuba-diving, surfing, free-diving and hiking. Being surrounded by the ocean is Charlotte's favourite place to be and she is so excited to have started her first season with Oceanwide in 2022.

Chris Long – Expedition Guide



Chris grew up as a part of New Zealand's remotest family two long days hike from the nearest road at a place called Gorge River, on the South Islands West Coast, New Zealand.

His family lives as self-sufficiently as possible in a small cabin surrounded by the jungled rainforest, the rough rugged coastline, and an emerald green river. Most of their food came from a huge vegetable garden or was fished from the ocean. This wild untouched natural corner of New Zealand was Chris's home for the first 17 years of his life, until, one day, he set out to explore

what the rest of the world had to offer.

Since leaving Gorge River Chris has set out to see, explore and experience as much of the globe as possible. This constant search for adventure has seen him travel to over 60 countries on all seven continents. Along this journey, he spent two full summer seasons living and working as a field trainer at Scott Base, a New Zealand research station in Antarctica, as well as multiple voyages to the Ross Sea and East Antarctica.

Chris is also no stranger to the arctic. He once sailed the notorious northwest passage across the top of Greenland, Canada, and Alaska and spent much of the covid pandemic living with 150 husky dogs in Tromso, northern Norway, enduring two long cold dark arctic winters training for long distance dog races.

Since recently returning to New Zealand, he has published an autobiography and is training for his commercial fixed-wing pilot's license.

Rose Li Hong - Expedition Guide



Originally from China, Rose Li Graduated from Wuhan college with a major in Interior Design. She has worked on well-known international cruise ships since 2014 as an expedition guide and in Asia as a VIP services shift leader and Head cruise ambassador on a Mediterranean cruise line.

She has worked in the polar regions since 2017, as expedition guide, Zodiac driver, Chinese interpreter and guest services manager.

She has many talents such as dancing, drawing, skiing, hosting, and loves creating new activities. Her two academic passions are history and geology.

During her spare time, she has continued to develop her passion for traveling, and has visited more than 40 countries and looks forward to visiting many others in the near future.

Jakub Małecki - Expedition Guide



Jakub was born in Poland in 1985. As a kid, he dreamed of becoming an astronaut, but later his focus shifted towards astronomy. Eventually, he obtained a masters and doctoral degree in Earth Sciences and became a glaciologist. As he puts it, researching remote, glacier-covered regions is almost like landing on another planet, so the childhood dream has partly come true.

Since 2007 Jakub has been studying glaciers across the world, either directly or remotely, i.e., using satellite or aerial images. His main interest is how glaciers respond to changing climate in different environmental settings. Most of his glaciology work Jakub carries out on Svalbard, the arctic archipelago located midway between Norway and the north pole, where he fell in love with ice. Since then, Jakub joins expeditions to remote regions on an every-year basis.

Jakub considers public education by the science community at least as important as delivering new knowledge, so he is a keen glaciology communicator, book author and a frequent guest to the Polish media outlets and science festivals where he comments on polar and mountain affairs. Apart from glaciology, Jakub is a huge enthusiast of planetary sciences and space exploration and tries to play the ukulele.

John Rogers - Expedition Guide



History came early to John as his home town of Concord, Massachusetts, is famous as the site of the first battle of the American Revolution and much early American literary culture. He learned to swim in Walden Pond, of Thoreau fame. His love of the outdoors started with family holidays to lakes and mountains.

His first career was in computer software development which allowed for numerous extended travelling holidays in the USA and then to New Zealand – where he still lives. The travelling continued with visits to every continent

– the final one being Antarctica in 2001 as a passenger and then for several seasons as a guide.

Along the way John has managed several trips north of the Arctic Circle backpacking, river rafting and exploring in Alaska, Norway and Iceland.

John's approach to the history is to concentrate on the stories of the places and people who inhabit and have explored to the extremes of the earth. Polar history is filled with remarkable stories of adventures, perseverance, triumph and defeat. He encourages anyone on this voyage with specialized knowledge, or with a family connection, to help him others share in this fantastic legacy.

Koen Hoekemeijer – Expedition Guide



Koen Hoekemeijer was born in 1974 in The Netherlands. When it comes to nature and wildlife Koen was quite a late bloomer as he had always been more into nightlife and sunny beaches. But that all changed when he discovered his passion for wildlife and photography in 2009 in Costa Rica. It was during this trip that Koen saw his first humpback whales and he fell in love with them instantly. Not only did it make him eager to see more and different types of whales in locations all over the world, but he also wanted to learn to take better photos of these amazing creatures. And with the love for whales

and photography, came a broader passion for all sorts of wildlife.

Since that memorable vacation in 2009, Koen has been travelling the planet to see and photograph the world's most beautiful places. Usually from boats, jeeps or simply face down in the mud, but since 2016 also underwater. Snorkeling in the presence of whales and orcas is bringing Koen pure happiness.

Among his favourite animals are whales, orcas, penguins, tigers and jaguars. But in between safaris, he also likes to do street photography and capture life and portraits of people all over the world.

Koen believes that travelling does not only enrich your life, it also makes you more humble, more appreciative and it provides new levels of perspective and understanding. Koen has won the prestigious WWF Frans Lanting Photo contest, and in 2020 he won the Ellen Fitzgibbon Memorial Photography competition. It's Koen's dream to one day have a Vizsla dog and own a small cabin somewhere in northern Norway surrounded by snow and trees ;).

Martin Anstee - Expedition Guide



Martin has been a keen naturalist and wildlife photographer for most of his life.

Martin has been an active Bird Ringer since the year 2000 and particularly enjoys studying/ringing and just being around seabird colonies.

Martin has used a camera since an early age and has combined his love of the outdoors and seabird habitats with photography. Martin has just spent a month in Zimbabwe and Botswana photographing other wildlife.

Martin has combined this with a career in the Police Service, firstly in the UK where he was, amongst other roles, a wildlife crime officer. His last role in The Police was as a Police Sergeant in The Royal Falkland Islands Police.

Martin lived in the Falkland Islands, Stanley, for just over two years, leaving to return to the UK in November 2021. In his two years Martin was a volunteer with Falklands Conservation, he helped with The Falkland Islands Seabird Monitoring Program (FISMP) in particular counting Seabirds and ringing Black browed Albatross. Martin was also involved in fieldwork for a Striated Caracara (Johnny Rook) study. As a result Martin has visited most of the larger (and some of the smaller) outlying islands that form part of The Falkland Islands.

This is also where Martin started his career as a guide, he enjoyed sharing his knowledge of the Islands and the wildlife which he continues to do to this day.

Mengxiao Liu - Expedition Guide



Mengxiao is from Beijing and graduated from Institute of Technology Carlow in Ireland. She has a background in Sport Science and Nutrition.

Mengxiao has spent her life fascinated by the natural world. She has also been in love with hiking and snow-sports.

She has previously worked as a tour leader and organised teenagers' scientific expedition to the polar regions at a scientific and educational organization. At her first arrival to Svalbard in 2015 she knew she was home. At that time the idea started to

grow to become an expedition guide.

She gained more knowledge about wildlife and polar environment by travelling with scientists while she was a tour leader. Mengxiao joined the Oceanwide family in 2019 and is excited to share the unforgettable moments with you.

Paolo Bellezze – Expedition Guide



Born in Argentina (Dec 80') and raised in Italy, Paolo finally moved to Scotland where he settled in 2006. Nowadays, when not at sea, he splits his time between Argentina and Scotland.

Before expedition cruises Paolo spent 12 years working shoreside in merchant shipping. He was a Product Manager for a Norwegian company developing Voyage Planning and Marine Weather Forecasting Systems for merchant ships.

He also started Paragliding at the age of 14 and has been very involved in the sport as a school owner instructing both beginners and advanced courses for over 20 years. When not paragliding, Paolo likes to sea kayak and he mixes Field Guide with Kayak Guide roles onboard.

In 2021 he started working full time in expedition cruises, since then he has guide in several expeditions such as Antarctica, South Georgia, Falklands, Greenland West coast, Greenland East coast, Iceland, Faroes Islands and British Isles.

Aside from sea kayaking and flying he is into hiking, motorbikes and spending time with friends. He is passionate about polar regions and sharing the experience with our guests.

“Happiness is only real when shared” (Chris McCandless)

Languages: English, Spanish, Italian.

Alexander Romanovskiy - Expedition Guide



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

In the year of 2011 however, Alexander decided to pause his scientific career and start doing something completely different, which means working in tourism and traveling the world. He spent 2 seasons working as a trekking guide in Fann mountains (Tajikistan), 1 season on Novolazarevskaya Antarctic scientific station (Queen Maud Land, Antarctica) working as a member of a guesthouse crew.

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

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

Simon Cole - Ship's Doctor



Simon Cole grew up in Somerset and worked in a cheese factory after leaving school. He went to St George's Hospital Medical School (MB BS 1989), and then underwent Basic Surgical training in London and Edinburgh (FRCS 1993). Full time research followed, (MD 2003) before Higher Surgical Training in SE Thames (CCST, FRCS(Gen) 2003) with Fellowships in South Africa (2002/3). Early in his training (1993/4) he worked at the Royal London Hospital and was part of the receiving team for HEMS, which kindled a lifelong interest in Trauma.

His first Consultant post (2004-6) was at Oxford University Hospitals. He moved to Scotland in 2007, to work in the Highlands, initially at Dr Gray's Hospital, Elgin and developed an interest in Remote Rural Healthcare. He moved to work between Inverness and Remote Rural Hospitals in the Highlands and Islands, spending time in Caithness, Orkney, and on the West Coast. He has worked in Falklands to cover Leave in 2022 and 2023.

He also pursued an interest in military Surgery, with a first overseas deployment (Solomon Islands, Regional Assistance Mission, 2007). He served as a Medical Officer (Sqn Ldr) on 612 Sqn RAF Medical Reserves (2010-18).

Since leaving the Air Force he has had three deployments as a contractor with Iqarus on Damage Control Surgery teams:

- Op MINUSMA (UN Peacekeeping) Timbuktu, Mali embedded with Swedish Armed Forces (18 mos. 2018-20)
- Op Cattalo (Logistics) Duqm, Oman (4.5mos., 2021) embedded with British Armed Forces. EU Training Mission to Mozambique, Chimoio, Mozambique (6wks 2023).

Simon is married with two adult children, and enjoys dining, the theatre, cricket, rugby and the mountains in his free time.



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice
Welcome Aboard!

Date: Tuesday 1st August 2023

Day 1: Embarkation – Longyearbyen

Please make yourselves at home in your cabins and check you have received all your luggage! Tea/coffee is available in the bar located on Deck 5.

PLEASE LISTEN FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

17:15+/- Ship safety briefing, in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance to this is **MANDATORY**.

After the briefing the emergency alarm will be sounded, and you will need to go back to your cabin and get your life jacket.

All guests accommodated on Deck 3 (Cabins 301-337) will go to **MUSTER STATION A** which is the Restaurant on Deck 4

All guests accommodated on decks 4, 6, and 7 (Cabins 401-414, 601-619, 701-714) will go to **MUSTER STATION B** which is the Observation Lounge on Deck 5

18:15+/- We would like to invite you to Captains Cocktails in the **Observation Lounge** on Deck 5. The Hotel Manager and Expedition Leader will do a welcome briefing, to orientate you to life on board and explain the plan for the forthcoming days and you will meet your Expedition Team.

19:30 Buffet dinner in the **Restaurant** on Deck 4.

20:45+/- The Expedition team will hand out your rubber boots. You will be called deck-by-deck to Deck 3, so please listen to announcements. Bring your thick socks to find the best-sized boots for you!

Daily programmes will be displayed around the ship and on TV screens.

“The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page” - St. Augustine



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Wednesday 2nd August 2023

Day 2: Ny-Ålesund and 14. Julibukta

- 07:00 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:30 **MANDATORY** AECO, Zodiac and Polar Bear Safety Briefing in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance will be checked.
- 09:30 We hope to disembark you by the gangway on Deck 4 for a landing at Ny Ålesund. Please listen to announcements for exact timings.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

**No mobile phones, Bluetooth and/or GPS devices to go ashore.
(SEE NOTICES ON THE SHIP)**

Please be back onboard by 12 o'clock at the latest.

- 14:15+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at 14. Julibukta.
- 14:30+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at 14. Julibukta.

Groups will swap during the afternoon.

- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

*"How can you expect a man who's warm to understand one who's cold?"
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn"*



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Thursday 3rd August 2023

Day 3: Magdalenefjord, Smeerenburg and Virgohamna.

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-8:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:45+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise in Magdalenefjord.
- 09:00+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for Zodiac Cruise in Magdalenefjord.
- 11:45 John invites you to the Lecture Room for a Lecture titled 'A Quest to the North Pole', this will be given in **English**.
- 11:45 Jerry will give a short presentation about Ny-Ålesund in the Observation Lounge, this will be given in **Mandarin**.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:00+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Smeerenburg.
- 14:15+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Virgohamna.
- Groups will swap during the afternoon.**
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

*"The difficult is what takes a little time; the impossible is what takes a little longer"–
Fridjof Nansen*



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Friday 4th August 2023

Day 4: Texas Bar and Monacobreen.

- 06:45 Wake- up call.
- 07:00-8:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:00-08:15 Please can all passengers, except those in the Sino Star Group, be ready for a landing at Texas Bar.
- 08:30 Lu Zhang invites the **Sino Star Group** for a presentation about Polar Remote Sensing in the Lecture Room.
- 10:30+/- Please can the **Sino Star Group** be ready at the shell doors for a landing at Texas Bar.
- We hope to offer a **POLAR PLUNGE** at the end of each group so please wear your swimwear under your waterproofs. Please do not bring the towels from your cabin, we provide the towels.
- 11:30 Beth will give a presentation about the Geology of Svalbard in the Observation Lounge, this will be given in **English** and translated into **Mandarin**.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:15+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Monacobreen.
- 14:30+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for Zodiac Cruise at Monacobreen.
- 18:00 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 18:30 Dinner will be served.

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



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Saturday 5th August 2023

Day 5: Ice Edge

07:45 Wake- up call.
08:00-9:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.

We will spend the day along the ice edge looking for wildlife, therefore encourage you on the outside decks and on the bridge to help search.

Please note: The lecture program is subject to change depending on visibility and wildlife sightings, so please listen to announcements.

09:15 Sara will give a lecture about Polar Bears in the Observation Lounge, this will be given in **English** and translated into **Mandarin**.

11:15 Charlotte will give a lecture about Seals of Svalbard in the Lecture Room, this will be given in **English**.

11:15 Mengxiao will give a lecture about Seals of Svalbard in the Observation Lounge, this will be given in **Mandarin**.

12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

14:15 Oceanwides' Resident Wildlife Artist, Kerry Newell, invites you to the Observation Lounge for an introductory presentation, this will be given in **English**.

16:15 Jakub invites you to the Lecture Room for his presentation titled 'An Introduction to Ice - why do we need it?' this will be given in **English**.

16:15 Jerry will give a presentation in the Lounge about Ice in the North, this will be given in **Mandarin**.

18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.

19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

"the ice and the long moonlit polar nights, with all their yearning, seemed like a far-off dream from another world, a dream that has come and passed away. But what would life be without dreams?"- Fridtjof Nansen



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Saturday 6th August 2023

Day 6: Seven Islands

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-08:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:30-08:45 Please can all guests, except the Sino Star Group, be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Parryøya.
- 09:00 Rose will do a presentation in the Lecture Room to the **Sino Star Group** about Plastic Pollution in Mandarin.
- 10:30+/- Please can the **Sino Star Group** be ready at the Shell Doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Parryøya.
- 11:45 Rose will do a presentation about Plastic Pollution in the Lounge, which will be given in English and translated into **Mandarin**.
- We hope to do a **beach clean-up** today so encourage guests to wear gloves and bring a small bag with them for small pieces of marine rubbish, we will provide bags for large pieces of rubbish.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:30+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Phippsøya.
- 14:45+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise of Phippsøya.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 20:00 Please join Sasha in the Lecture Room to hear tales about his time living in Pyramiden, this will be given in **English only**.

"It must be remembered that the men whose desires lead them to the untrodden paths of the world have generally marked individuality." - Sir Ernest Shackleton



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Monday 7th August 2023

Day 7: Palanderbukta, Hinlopen Strait and Bråsvellbreen

- 06:45 Wake- up call.
07:00-08:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 08:00+/- Please can the **long hikers** be ready at the shell doors for a landing at Palanderbukta. (This will be a 3-3.5-hour hike at a fast pace).
- 08:30+/- Please can the **medium hikers** be ready at the shell doors, this will be a 2-2.5-hour hike.
- 08:45+/- Please can those wishing to do a **leisurely walk** for about 1-1.5 hours be ready at the shell doors.
- 09:30+/- Please can the **Sino Star Group** be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Palanderbukta.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:30 Jakub invites you to the Observation Lounge for a lecture titled, 'The Future of Ice', this will be given in **English** and translated into **Mandarin**.
- An expedition afternoon in the Hinlopen Strait, looking for wildlife around the different islands, please listen to announcements.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

After dinner we will ship cruise Bråsvellbreen, a small section of the 160km ice cliff of Austfonna. Austfonna, with the adjacent Vegafonna, occupy approximately 8,450 km² combined, therefore, amongst the largest glacial systems outside of Antarctica and Greenland.

*"An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered. An inconvenience is only an adventure wrongly considered."
- G. K. Chesterton*



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Tuesday 8th August 2023

Day 8: Kapp Waldburg

- 07:45 Wake- up call.
- 08:00-09:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 10:00 Marcel invites you to the observation lounge for a presentation titled 'M/V Hondius – Behind the Scenes'. This will be given in **English** and translated into **Chinese**.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the restaurant on Deck 4.
- 13:00-13:15 Please can **all passengers, except the Sino Star Group**, be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Kapp Waldburg.
- 13:15 Rose invites the **Sino Star Group** to the lecture Room for a presentation about Plastic Pollution, this will be given in **Mandarin**.
- 14:30 Please can the **Sino Star Group** be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Kapp Waldburg.
- 16:00 Rose invites **all passengers, except the Sino Star Group** to the Observation lounge room for a presentation about Plastic Pollution, this will be given in **English and translated into Mandarin**.
- 18:15 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the restaurant on Deck 4.
- 20:30 There will be a screening of the animated musical comedy, 'Happy Feet', in the Lecture Room.

"You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore"
- Christoph Columbus



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Wednesday 9th August 2023

Day 9: Gåshamna and Burgerbukta.

- 07:15 Wake- up call.
- 07:30-08:30 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09:30+/- Please can the **long hikers** be ready at the shell doors for a landing at Gåshamna. (This will be a 2.5-3-hour hike at a fast pace).
- 09:45+/- Please can the **medium hikers** be ready at the shell doors, this will be a 2-hour hike.
- 10:00+/- Please can those wishing to do a **leisurely walk** for about 1-1.5 hours be ready at the shell doors.
- 10:15+/- Please can the **Sino Star Group** be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Gåshamna.
- 12:30-13:30 Buffet lunch will be served in the restaurant on Deck 4.
- 14:15+/- Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Burgerbukta.
- 14:30+/- Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the Shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac Cruise at Burgerbukta.

During the day you can settle your accounts with the Hotel Department, they will announce when they are ready to process payments. We will collect your rubber boots before dinner, please listen for announcements.

- 18:45 Captain's Farewell Cocktails in the Observation Lounge and a viewing of the slideshow, which will be available after dinner in the Lecture Room.
- 19:30 Final Gala Dinner will be served in the restaurant on Deck 4.

"but who wants to be foretold the weather? It is bad enough when it comes, without our having the misery of knowing about it beforehand."

- Jerome K. Jerome



DAILY PROGRAM

Around Spitsbergen

In search of Polar Bear and Pack Ice

Date: Thursday 10th August 2023

Day 10: Longyearbyen

07:00 Wake up call.

Please leave your large luggage in the corridor outside your room for the staff to collect **no later than 07:15**.

Crew and staff will bring it to the pier, where you will need to personally identify it and bring it your bus.

You can leave your hand luggage in the room; you will have to keep this hand luggage with you the rest of the day.

07:30-08:30 A breakfast buffet is served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.

08:30 +/- Please be ready for disembarkation by Zodiac, but please listen for announcements before approaching the shell doors.

Buses will be departing from the quayside to town.

Thank you for a wonderful voyage, for your company, good humour, and enthusiasm. We hope to see you again in the future and share more polar adventures with you.

"it's when you are safe at home that you're having an adventure. When you're having an adventure, you wish you were safe at home." - Thornton Wilder