



**OCEANWIDE**  
30 YEARS OF EXPEDITIONS

North Spitsbergen Explorer  
Versatile landscapes, sea ice & wildlife  
13<sup>th</sup> June – 20<sup>th</sup> June 2024



## M/V Plancius

MV Plancius was named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geographer, and minister Petrus Plancius (1552 - 1622). Plancius was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named Hr. Ms. Tydeman. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions and completely refit in 2007, being converted into a 114-passenger expedition vessel. Plancius is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, with an Ice Strength rating of 1D, top speed of 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.

# Captain Ernesto Barria

**and his international crew**

Chief Officer: **Elizbar Kadaria**

2nd Officer: **Don Buren**

3rd Officer: **Anar Babaiev**

Chief Engineer: **Daniel Liliac-Zajontz**

Hotel Manager: **Oleksandr Lyebedyev**

Assist. Hotel Manager: **Bogdan Manevski**

Head Chef: **Ivan Yuriychuk**

Ships Doctor: **Fieke Geerets**

Expedition Leader: **Jan Belgers**

Assist. Expedition Leader: **Eduardo Rubio Herrera**

Expedition Guide: **Alexander Romanovskiy**

**John Rogers**

**Koen Jongerling**

**Koen Hoekemeijer**

**Matthias Kopp**

**Tiphanie May**

## Day 1 – 13<sup>th</sup> June

### Longyearbyen - Embarkation Day

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°14.2'N / 015°36.9'E

**Wind:** S 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Cloud, **Air Temp:** 4°C, **Sea Temp:** 3°C

Today is the today! It is finally time for us to embark upon our arctic adventure! In the late afternoon we arrived at our ship Plancius, our new home for the next 8 days. She rocked gently against the pier as we climbed the gangway onto the decks. The day was suitably Arctic with clouds and mist – but with a few sunny patches too. On board we all checked in and were quickly escorted to our respective cabins. We excitedly started exploring the ship and wandering the decks enjoying the views of Longyearbyen.



Once we were all aboard, we were invited to the lounge to take part in a mandatory briefing and abandon ship drill. After we completed the drill it was time for the ship to leave. At 18:00 we cast off and were on our way out of the harbour.

Whilst the crew made sure we left the harbour soundly, our expedition leader Jan Belgers invited us back to the lounge for the Captain's Cocktails, where we met our captain Ernesto Barria, the expedition team. We celebrated our expedition with some bubbles and canapes before we were called for the final activity of the day: dinner!



We all filed down to the restaurant for a delicious buffet and an opportunity to meet all our fellow travellers. Our day was not done yet as after dinner we located the Boot Room and collected our Zodiac lifejackets and rubber boots. We were another step closer to being able to start our off-ship activities.

We spent the rest of the evening enjoying the long summer light into the evening before returning to our cabins to prepare for tomorrow's adventure!

## Day 2 – 14<sup>th</sup> June

### Smeerenburgjorden & Hamiltonbukta

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°49.5'N / 011°54.6'E

**Wind:** NW 3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 2°C, **Sea Temp:** 3°C

We enjoyed and appreciated the smooth sailing during the night. Most of us had never spent a night onboard a ship and for that reason at least some were afraid getting seasick or whatever.

During the night we sailed north following the west coast. We woke up in the Northwest corner of the main island of the archipelago and approached a narrow passage, called Sorgatted between Spitzbergen and Danskøya. The coastline and the shape of the mountains differed completely from that in the surrounding of Longyearbyen, not flat on the top, now pointy. While approaching the passage, a Polar Bear was spotted and suddenly the whole ship was awake, some of us were still in bed at that time because it was not yet breakfast time. The bear was walking on a mountain slope and was quite hard to spot, however, most of us managed to have a look by the use of binoculars. It was great to see how he continuously walked in a slow pace, probably in search for something to eat. Later he went into the Magdalenefjord, and we continued, aiming for Sorgatted.



The passage was quite narrow so details of the coastline, like a small cabin and other landmarks could be seen well. We entered the Smeerenburgfjord, named after the whaling station of Smeerenburg on Amsterdamøya. We found ourselves suddenly surrounded by several glaciers, small bays and pointy mountains - beautiful scenery. We enjoyed being on the outside decks and trying to capture the surroundings in images. While cruising our expedition staff, well trained in spotting bears, was again successful in finding a polar bear, this time high up on a moraine. While it was hard to see, some managed by using the scope. That bear, likely a female with a cub, was not active at all and just resting.

After a good breakfast we continued cruising in Smeerenburgfjord and entered the Bjørnfjord with the huge Smeerenburgreen. We spent a nice time with enjoying the spectacular scenery, with a lot of wildlife around us, Walrus and King Eiders, just to name the most special ones.

Later in the morning, we gathered in the lounge for our last mandatory meeting. We learned about Zodiac operations and how to behave in polar bear country. We sailed out of the fjord and cruised in between the many islands of the Northwest corner of Spitzbergen and entered the Raudfjord. As it was not a big distance that Plancius had to cover, we dropped the anchor soon after lunch at Hamiltonbukta.



After a good lunchbreak our expedition team offered us a Zodiac cruise in that beautiful bay. There was a lot to see, a glacier, small islands with breeding geese and a steep cliff which was home for thousands of Brünnich's Guillemots and Kittiwakes. All of us explored the area and in the end returned to the bird cliff where an Arctic Fox searching for food. It was quite hard to spot because it was well camouflaged, not having a white fur, but instead a brown summer coat one. It was not only the scenery, but also the sound at that place which was special.

We all would have liked to stay but our expedition team was planning one more activity today, which was a ships cruise in the southern part of the Raudfjord. As we cruised the sky cleared to glorious sunshine with no wind. Plancius sailed south while a lot of experienced eyes kept watching in any possible direction. They

found another polar bear, this time walking along the shoreline. With a bit of help we all managed to find the right spot. The light was perfect and the ship stable and we all watched as it entered a bay and escaped out of sight.

We continued our trip in direction of Raudfjordbreen. The landscape looked like a magazine advertisement for Spitzbergen, blue sky, no wind, white snow and a huge glacier. It was also the feeding ground for a lot of bird species, including Kittiwakes and Guillemots, to name only two. It was a great evening and for that reason the recap postponed twice, as it was much too nice to go inside. In the end, Jan offered a recap after dinner, and we learned the plans for tomorrow.

In the late evening hours, we went out of Raudfjorden in direction of our next adventures.



## Day 3 – 15<sup>th</sup> June

### Liefdefjorden – Texas Bar & Monacobreen

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°32.0'N / 012°34.4'E

**Wind:** NE 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 2°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

After a sunny and almost warm ending of our first day, we woke up with more appropriate Arctic weather. No sun, but clouds, a bit greyish and cold. Luckily, no wind so it didn't feel so cold.

As it was weekend, our Expedition Leader Jan had decided it was a good moment to visit a bar. Texas Bar was the place we went and here we were offered different level hikes. A sportive one, a medium one, and a



leisurely one for the guests that wanted to spend more time on photography and who would enjoy a gentle pacing.

Texas Bar was built in 1927 by Hilmar Nøis and Martin Petterson, Norwegian trappers who erected several other similar huts in the surrounding area. The name Texas Bar was randomly chosen and has nothing to do with being a real bar. However, in recent years guests and trappers started leaving bottles of liquor behind

and now its bottle collection wouldn't go amiss in a real bar.

The area is rugged and steep and has a lot to offer. We encountered breeding Arctic Skuas, and spotted a Ptarmigan and several beautiful flowers and mini trees such as the Arctic Willow.

After a proper leg stretch it was time for lunch as we needed to be ready soon for our afternoon Zodiac cruise at Monacobreen. This immense glacier was named by Prince Albert of Monaco back in the early 1900's when he visited on a gentleman's expedition. Aside naming Monacobreen he also named several other areas and glaciers in the area.



We boarded our Zodiacs and soon discovered how truly wide this glacier is. It is approximately 5km wide and stretches more than 40KM inland. We saw many bird species with Arctic Terns and Kittywakes the most numerous, but also Arctic Skuas and Glaucous Gulls. Here and there we also spotted Bearded seals and some boats even saw a seal "spyhopping". This behaviour is more common with whales and dolphins, but this seal clearly didn't mind copying this behaviour. Later we found some more seals resting on ice flows close to the glacier. The cold had gotten to some of us so after about 2 hours we returned to the ship.



The day wasn't over though. Because soon after we had enjoyed our warm showers, Jan announced the sighting of the white whale - the Beluga! Initially we saw a few, but soon we saw dozens and it was estimated that we could easily have seen more than 200 individuals.

And just when you think dinner is over and it is time to relax or sleep, Jan came on the PA system again 😊. This time 3 polar bears had been spotted from the bridge. Close to shore were dolphin carcasses and this

had attracted some hungry polar bears. Unfortunately, the bears weren't close to the carcasses as they were higher up resting after probably eating for many hours. Yet we could clearly see the bears and despite them being a bit distant, these bears already accumulated the total number of polar bear sightings to 7 individuals in only 2 days.

What a great day we had again! Time to sleep as tomorrow awaits another exciting day! Good night!

## Day 4 – 16<sup>th</sup> June

### Hinlopen Strait - Alkefjellet and Torellneset

**12:00 GPS Position:** 79°35.1'N / 018°39.6'E

**Wind:** SE 5, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** P. Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 1°C, **Sea Temp:** 2°C

Overnight we repositioned the ship towards the Northeast side of the largest island of Svalbard. Early in the morning we entered the Hinlopenstrait and by 7:00 we had sight of one of the most impressive rock formations of the Svalbard archipelago, Alkefjellet which translates from Norwegian as "Mountain Guillemot" due to the large number of these birds nesting on its cliffs.

The wake-up call was done as announced at 07:00 by our energetic expedition leader Jan; by 7:30 breakfast had started. Our day would start with a Zodiac cruise along the cliffs of Alkefjellet offering a unique perspective of these cliffs to our passengers. Therefore, at 08:30 the expedition staff started to prepare the

Zodiacs and all the materials and accessories needed for the cruise. One by one, ten zodiacs were launched from the aft deck using the ship's crane. Once all was checked by the staff and crew drivers, they approached our gangway and started to embark us in groups of up to 9. In this way, a small fleet of rubber boats started its approach to the southern side of the cliffs, an area where it is possible to see a waterfall dropping its water into the ocean. However, due to the time of the year, the waterfall was frozen and impossible to distinguish among the snow that still is covering the place.



Our first impression was of the giant columns of rock. What we were seeing was a cross-section through central parts of an intrusion composed of doleritic basalt. This intrusion has its origin in an ancient volcanic eruption sometime between 150-100 million years ago during the Jurassic or Upper Cretaceous. The sudden injection of the material created the columns we saw while the precise form of the rocks is due to its chemical composition. During our cruise was possible to see a horizontal layer of sediments with a clearer color. These sediments have their origin in the Permocarboniferus, a time before the intrusion of the doleritic basalt.

The cliffs are about 100 meters high and are populated by around 70,000 pairs of Brünnich Guillemots. There are also some hundreds of Glaucous Gulls and Kittiwakes and a couple of fox dens. Sadly, during our visit we did not see any of the curious foxes that live there.

Our cruise went ahead in light snow with great light conditions and a very calm sea. We enjoyed the activity very much and the last Zodiac was back to the ship around 12:00. As we were hoisting the last one on board, the sky started to turn from a dull grey color into a beautiful cobalt blue.

After a good meal, we sailed further towards the southwest area of Nordaustland, the second largest island of the Svalbard Archipelago. Here on the eastern side of the Hinlopenstrait, we found the small cape of Torellneset. Our navigation towards this cape was uneventful and our nightmares of finding it covered with ice disappeared as we approached the area. We had two reasons to visit this place. The first was to explore the unique landscape that this place offers - the polar desert. The second was to have a closer look at a colony of walrus that haul out on its gravel beach.



Under perfect weather and sea conditions, we landed at the south side of the cape. The impact of the landscape kicked in quickly. Barren and devoid from any features, the polar desert is perhaps the closest we are likely feel how it might be to visit another planet. This landscape is composed by horizontal layers of very old sediments that can be dated back to the Permocarboniferous. The keen eye can discover easily fossil-rich rocks everywhere. We divided into four groups as we have been doing it for our walking activities. The first was the leisurely group, led by Jan and Koen Jongerling. The second was the sportive group, led by Matthias and Koen Hoekemeijer. Then we had two medium groups, one led by Sasha and John while the last one led by Tiphannie and Eduardo. Each group had the chance to walk around the landing site for about an hour. All were deeply moved by the landscape, barren and desolate. Eduardo described it to his passengers as a magnificent desolation.



Eventually all the groups converged close to the place where the walrus were piled together. In silence, each group approached the walrus respectfully and enjoyed some time close to the animals. We managed to see several dozens of these Queens of the Arctic, displaying their tusks and their noise repertoire.

We returned to the ship around 18:00 and soon, dinner was announced. After dinner we enjoyed our daily recap with Jan, informing guests about the plans for tomorrow and Matthias and Tiphane, describing many interesting facts about Walrus such as their physical properties and the noises they produce.

Our day ended sailing under extraordinarily good conditions towards the Seven Islands, the place intended for our activities tomorrow.

## Day 5 – 17<sup>th</sup> June

### Sjøøyane & Pack Ice

**12:00 GPS Position:** 80°41.9'N / 020°26.5'E

**Wind:** NW 2, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Fog, **Air Temp:** 3°C, **Sea Temp:** 3°C



We again crossed the 80° North meridian at around midnight, but this time with the intention to keep going north until we reached the pack ice. One the way we planned to visit The Seven Islands (Sjøøyane) to see if a landing was possible.

As it turned out, in the open pack ice in the vicinity of The Seven Islands, a female Polar Bear with cub was spotted. Jan was on the PA even before the wake-up call to let us know. We made our way to the outside decks and watched through binoculars or the telescope. They were obviously resting, so to ensure that we did not disturb them, we kept our visit fairly short. What a

super way to start the day! We were buzzing at breakfast.



We could see the Seven Islands under the clouds, but as we turned to approach them, we immediately enveloped in a thick bank of fog. and the Captain persevered, and we slowly our way eastward, until the ice and the fog it clear that no landing was possible. At that we turned back to the north to try to find the of the ice pack. Along the way J.K educated us the *Ways of the Polar Bear* with the assistance one of us, Gert Polet, who works for the World Wildlife Fund. He showed some of the techniques used by Polar Bear researchers including the ability to extract DNA from the bear's footprint. He showed a video of a tracked female bear who had travelled on the sea ice edge from Svalbard out through Franz Joseph Land to islands off Siberia – and back. Amazing.



were  
Jan  
made  
made  
point  
edge  
on  
of



As the afternoon continued, the day remained windless. This was both a blessing and a curse. On the plus side, we made our way over the mirror-like sea past the floating sculptures of ice floes. It was again like being on another planet. But there was no breeze to blow away the fog. We kept a hopeful lookout as John gave his talk on *The History of Svalbard* and were rewarded with a brief sighting of a Bearded Seal.

The galley and dining rooms teams had prepared a special treat, so we dressed warmly and gathered on Deck 3 aft for a barbeque dinner including hot spiced wine. As soon as we had finished the expedition team got busy clearing the tables to create a dance floor. Unfortunately, neither the heat of the barbeque nor the energy of our dancing was enough to chase away the fog, but it was delicious fun. Plancius set her course westward overnight in search of clearer skies and pack ice.

## Day 6 – 18<sup>th</sup> June

### Pack Ice & Sailing the Continental Shelf

**12:00 GPS Position:** 80°41.9'N / 020°26.5'E

**Wind:** SW3, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 3°C, **Sea Temp:** 0 °C

After the BBQ last night, we appreciated the late wake -up call this morning. Jan informed us that we were sailing along the pack ice age. How exciting! After a hearty breakfast we headed up to the lounge and the outer decks. Unfortunately, we found Plancius to be bathed in fog which moved in and out at intervals. The crew and staff worked hard to spot wildlife for us as the fog density changed. Later in the morning we watched an interesting documentary about using spy cameras to watch polar bears. The footage was amazing!

After the documentary we spent some more time out on the decks or in the lounge watching the ice go by. At one moment we were clear of the ice but then we ran into a new field of ice that was much thicker. The

ship slowed to less than 2 knots, grinding against the ice floes as she pushed her way through to the clear ocean on the other side. It was exciting to see Plancius challenged, and we all rushed out on deck to enjoy

these final moments in the pack ice. Upon escaping the ice field, we began to pick up speed and started steaming our way south on a mill pond sea. As we pushed south the fog slowly cleared and we could see the way ahead finally. The sun even started peeking out and suddenly it was like we were in a different world, and it felt much more summery outside.

After a quick lunch many of us took to the decks again. There was a variety of bird life passing us by including flocks of Little Auks, Guillemots, Northern Fulmars and even one Puffin! In the late afternoon we were called back to the lounge for our final event of the day which was a climate change lecture by our AEL Eduardo. His lecture was fascinating and gave us a lot to think about.



As we steamed further south, we eventually made our way to the continental shelf where we started to see all sorts of animal activity. First, we were joined by White Beaked Dolphins all around the ship and then we started to see big blows of whales. Next thing we had a group of fin whales around. Their blows were huge without any wind. One even came right close to the ship! It was so exciting! We spent the rest of the evening looking for whales and for the grand finale we were treated to a blue whale! It was huge! We all watched it slowly swim by and considered what a wonderful day it had been. What will we see tomorrow?

## Day 7 – 19<sup>th</sup> June

### Ship Cruise & Alkhornet

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°1320'N / 013°51.6'E

**Wind:** NE 4, **Sea State:** Calm, **Weather:** Partly Cloudy, **Air Temp:** 7°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

All night long, our ship Plancius, gently rocking on the slow oceanic waves, sailed along the west coast of Spitsbergen, rounding the elongated island of Prince Karl Foreland, the westernmost island of the entire archipelago. In the morning, we had planned a landing at a place called Poolepynten – a perfectly triangular sandy cape. The morning was sunny, with a fresh, at times overly fresh, northerly wind blowing, and the water had a turquoise hue.

While we were having breakfast, the expedition team launched the Zodiacs, loading them with all the necessary equipment for our landing. The sailors lowered



the gangway... and then the first wave that washed over the platform at the bottom of the gangway swept all our plans for the morning into the sea. The thing was, the rolling was slow but quite significant and strong, causing our expedition leader to have doubts about whether to take the risk. A Zodiac approached the gangway, but only for our guides to further confirm that the operation was unsafe – the Zodiac would rise on the wave and then drop when the wave retreated. The amplitude of the oscillations was almost around 1.5 meters. No, tempting as the prospect of walking on the sand and seeing walrus for the second time during the trip was, it was not worth it.



Jan, our expedition leader, made an announcement over the PA system, informing us that the landing was cancelled. Of course, we were all a bit disappointed, but alas, such are the whims of Arctic nature. We just must accept them. We raised the anchor, lifted the gangway, returned the Zodiacs to the stern of the fifth deck, and Plancius gradually picked up speed, heading towards Alkhornet, where we had an afternoon landing planned.

The passage took three hours, but the morning's misfortune ultimately worked in our favor because it allowed us to shift our lunch to an earlier time and, consequently, to land at Alkhornet earlier than originally planned.

The landing went smoothly – the ocean swell did not penetrate this part of the fjord, so our Zodiacs glided on the water without any issues. On shore, we divided into several groups and set out to explore the area. There was a lot to see. There were historical sites, such as the remnants of blubber ovens and several graves of unfortunate whalers who never returned home from this dangerous trade. The main attraction was, of course, nature. The peak of Alkhorn itself was a gigantic vertical cliff, home to thousands and thousands of Guillemots, Kittiwakes, and Northern Fulmars. Below it lay a picturesque section of tundra, covered with a true carpet of moss and grass. Naturally, there were reindeer as well. How could they ignore such a wonderful pasture? Some reindeer allowed us to get very close and even approached us out of curiosity. Some of us were even luckier and managed to see a whole litter of Arctic Foxes. The tired mother either sat still or wandered among the rocks, while the kits ran around her in circles, playing tag with each other.



Time, though we had more of it than initially planned, inexorably came to an end, and we returned to the ship, where a farewell dinner, the captain's speech, and a slideshow with highlights of our expedition awaited us.

## Day 8 – 20<sup>th</sup> June

### Disembarkation

**12:00 GPS Position:** 78°14.0'N / 015°37.4'E

**Wind:** SSE 3, **Sea State:** Smooth, **Weather:** Overcast, **Air Temp:** 5°C, **Sea Temp:** 5°C

All too soon we arrived back in Longyearbyen. Almost half of us were staying aboard for the next voyage but for the rest it was time to say our goodbyes. The staff and crew took care of our luggage, battling the strong,

gusty wind and rain to transport it by Zodiac to the dock. We had our last breakfast aboard the Plancius then gathered the last of our things and headed for the Zodiacs ourselves. The drivers did an excellent job of keeping us as dry as possible. We said goodbye to the whole team and took the buses waiting for us to start the journey home or to our next adventure.



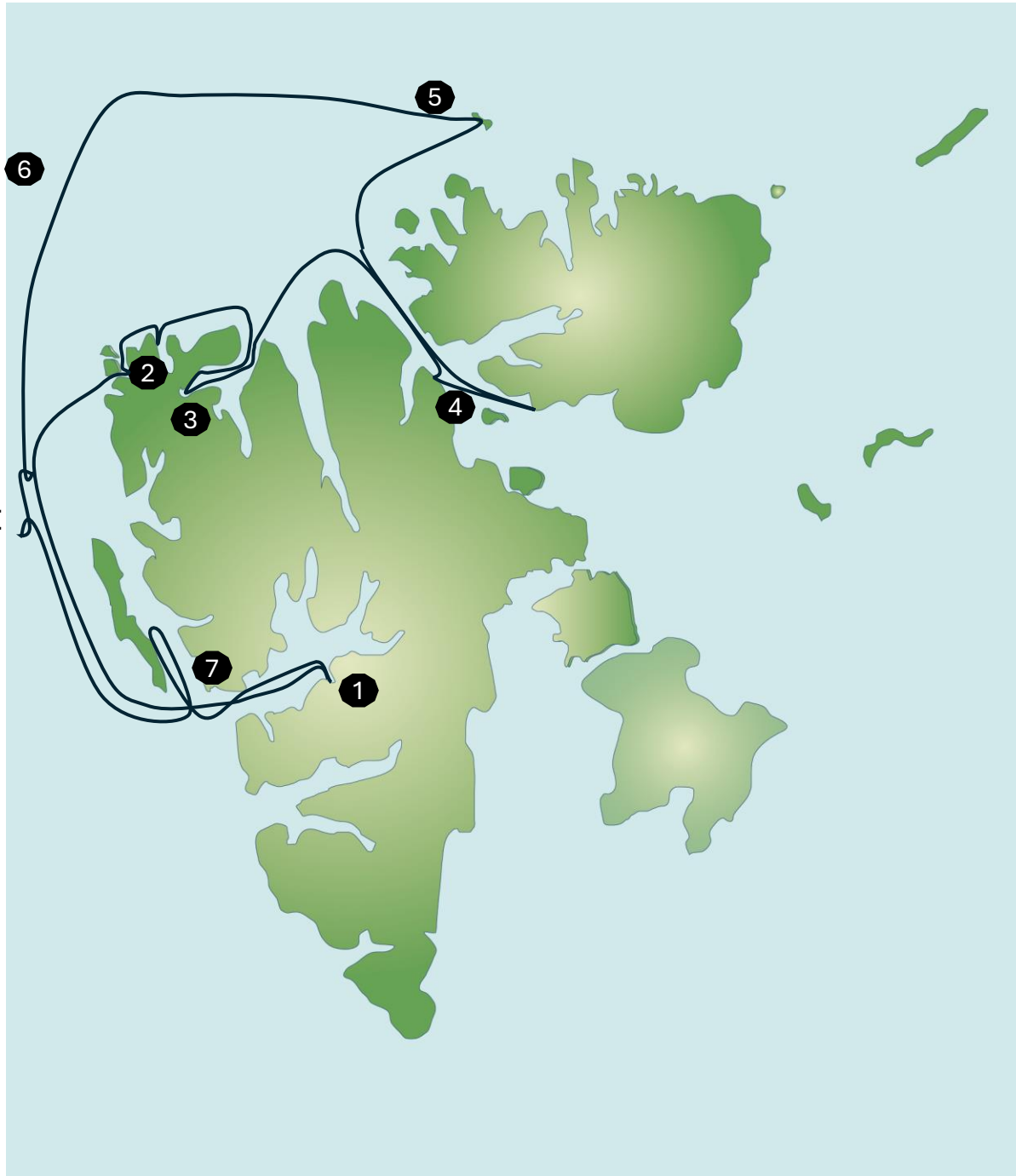
Thank you for your enthusiasm and support, but most of all for joining us on this exploratory North Atlantic voyage. We hope to see you again in the future, wherever that might be!

**Total distance sailed: 970.0 nautical miles**  
**Farthest north: 80°49.4'N / 019°48.2'E**

On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions, Captain Ernesto Barria, Expedition Leader Jan Belgers, Hotel Manager Oleksandr Lyebvedev, and all the crew and staff of M/V Plancius, it has been a pleasure travelling with you!

## Trip map PLA03-24

- Day 1: Leave Longyearbyen
- Day 2: Raudfjorden
- Day 3: Woodfjord /  
Texas Bar &  
Monaccoglacier
- Day 4: Hinlopenstretet /  
Alkefjellet & Torellneset
- Day 5: near Sjuøyane &  
Pack Ice
- Day 6: Pack Ice &  
Continental Shelf
- Day 7: Forlandsund &  
Alkhornet
- Day 8: Longyearbyen





|                          |                                 |                     |                     |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Purple Sandpiper         | <i>Calidris maritima</i>        | Meerstrandläufer    | Paarse strandloper  | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | x | x |
| Red Knot                 | <i>Calidris canutus</i>         | Knutt               | Kanoetstrandloper   | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Dunlin                   | <i>Calidris alpina</i>          | Alpenstrandläufer   | Bonte strandloper   | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Whimbrel                 | <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>        | Regenbrachvogel     | Regenwulp           | T |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Common Redshank          | <i>Tringa totanus</i>           | Rotschenkel         | Tureluur            | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Ruddy Turnstone          | <i>Arenaria interpres</i>       | Steinwälzer         | Steenloper          | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Grey Phalarope           | <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>    | Thorshühnchen       | Rosse franjepoot    | B |   |   |   |   | x |   |   |  |   |   |
| Red-necked Phalarope     | <i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>       | Odinshühnchen       | Grauwe franjepoot   | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Pomarine Skua            | <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>   | Spatelraubmöwe      | Middelste jager     | T |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Arctic Skua              | <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> | Schmarotzeraub-möwe | Kleine jager        | B | X | x | x |   |   |   |   |  | x |   |
| Long-tailed Skua         | <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i> | Falkenraubmöwe      | Kleinste jager      | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Great Skua               | <i>Stercorarius skua</i>        | Skua                | Grote jager         | B | X |   |   |   | x |   |   |  |   |   |
| Sabine's Gull            | <i>Xema sabini</i>              | Schwalbenmöwe       | Vorkstaartmeeuw     | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Black-headed Gull        | <i>Larus ridibundus</i>         | Lachmöwe            | Kokmeeuw            | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Common/Mew Gull          | <i>Larus canus</i>              | Sturmmöwe           | Stormmeeuw          | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Glaucous Gull            | <i>Larus hyperboreus</i>        | Eismöwe             | Grote Burgemeester  | B | X | x | x | x |   |   |   |  | x | x |
| Iceland gull             | <i>Larus glaucooides</i>        | Polarmöwe           | Kleine burgemeester | T |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Herring Gull             | <i>Larus argentatus</i>         | Silbermöwe          | Zilvermeeuw         | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Lesser black-backed Gull | <i>Larus fuscus</i>             | Heringsmöwe         | Kleine mantelmeeuw  | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Great black-backed Gull  | <i>Larus marinus</i>            | Mantelmöwe          | Grote mantelmeeuw   | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Kittiwake                | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i>         | Dreizehenmöwe       | Drieteenmeeuw       | B | X | x | x | x | x | x | x |  | x | x |
| Ross' Gull               | <i>Rhodostethia rosea</i>       | Rosenmöwe           | Rossmeeuw           | T |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Ivory Gull               | <i>Pagophila eburnea</i>        | Elfenbeinmöwe       | Ivoormeeuw          | B |   |   |   | x |   |   | x |  |   |   |
| Arctic Tern              | <i>Sterna paradisaea</i>        | Küstenseeschwalbe   | Noordse stern       | B | X | x | x | x | x | x |   |  |   | x |
| Common Guillemot         | <i>Uria aalge</i>               | Trottellumme        | Zeekoet             | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Brunnich's Guillemot     | <i>Uria lomvia</i>              | Dickschnabellumme   | Dikbekzeekoet       | B | X | x | x | x | x | x |   |  | x |   |
| Black Guillemot          | <i>Cepphus grylle</i>           | Gryllteiste         | Zwarte zeekoet      | B | X | x | x | x | x | x |   |  | x | x |
| Little Auk               | <i>Alle alle</i>                | Krabbentaucher      | Kleine alk          | B | X | x |   | x | x | x |   |  | x | x |
| Puffin                   | <i>Fratercula arctica</i>       | Papageitaucher      | Papegaaiduiker      | B | X | x |   |   | x | x |   |  | x |   |
| Barn Swallow             | <i>Hirundo rustica</i>          | Rauchschwalbe       | Boerenzwaluw        | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| White Wagtail            | <i>Motacilla alba</i>           | Bachstelze          | Witte Kwikstaart    | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Meadow Pipit             | <i>Anthus pratensis</i>         | Wiesenpieper        | Graspieper          | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Wheatear                 | <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>        | Steinschmätzer      | Tapuit              | B |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Blackbird                | <i>Turdus merula</i>            | Amsel               | Merel               | V |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   |
| Snow Bunting             | <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>    | Schneeammer         | Sneeuwgorst         | B | X | x |   |   | x |   |   |  | x | x |



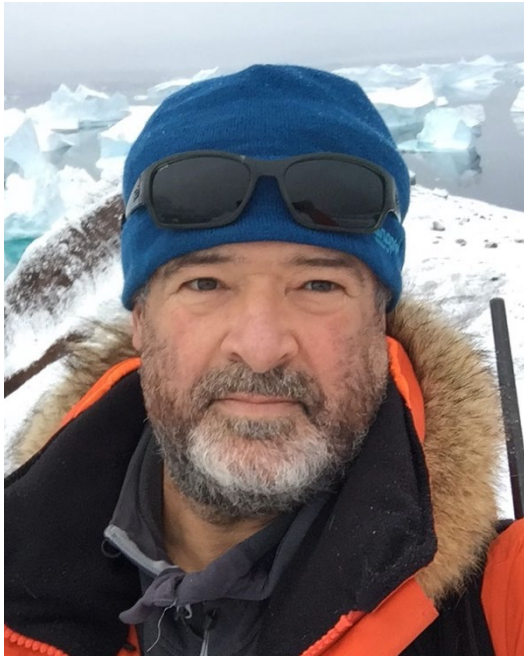




---

# Jan Belgers - Expedition Leader

---



Jan Belgers, from the Netherlands, has been working as a professional outdoor guide and expedition leader in the Polar regions for many years now. Travelling and guiding in wildernesses all over the world are his passion. His work as a guide brought him from the high mountain ranges of the Himalayas and Andes to the extreme latitudes of Spitsbergen and Antarctica.

His first experience with the Polar Regions was in 1990 when he joined a scientific expedition from Iceland to Kapp Farvell in Greenland for the “World Ocean Circulation Experiment” (WOCE). In 1992 he joined the “Winter Weddell Gyre Study” (WWGS) with the German scientific icebreaker Polarstern into the remote Weddell Sea, in the Antarctic and wintered there. During these expeditions Jan got bitten by the Polar Bug and therefore he has been returning to the Polar regions frequently, joining in more than 180 Polar expeditions.

Jan's professional background is marine ecology, but he quitted science a long time ago. Since 1998 he works full-time as a professional guide and expedition leader for Oceanwide Expeditions, in the high northern and southern latitudes.

Jan is a keen nature and outdoor enthusiast and feels at home on the sea, due to his background in marine biology. He lectures on natural history, biology and polar history and is a polar literature fanatic.

---

# Eduardo Rubio - Expedition Guide

---



I describe myself as an astronomer by profession with a passion for sharing nature's wonders. I aim to help to better understanding what scientists do with the public. Born in Guatemala (1978), I live in Switzerland since 2017. I speak English, Spanish and German.

After studying physics, I got my PhD in Astronomy from the University of Amsterdam in 2010. After a postdoctoral position I became a lecturer of physics and Astronomy as well as a guide in expedition cruise ships. Since 2018 I have worked for Oceanwide Expeditions in various roles such as guide, assistant expedition leader and expedition leader in the Antarctic and in the Arctic. Today I enjoy these trips as well as teaching undergraduate/graduate students and doing science outreach at the Planetarium of the Museum of Transport in Switzerland.

My interests vary from the history of exploration to the intricacies of astronomy. During the trips I have undertaken, I offer lectures about polar explorers, the science carried out in Antarctica (astronomy in particular), about our Universe, and the mysteries of our ocean's depths, to mention some. At sea, besides being an engaged guide and lecturer, I love to show constellations to people, pointing out their names and their lore. In every trip I made, I always aim to raise the enthusiasm of guests towards science, and their awareness towards the unique and fragile planet where we live.

---

# 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!

---

# 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 Jongerling - Expedition Guide

---



Having grown up in the Netherlands Koen always knew he wanted to live in a more rugged landscape than the rather flat lowlands that surrounded him. That is why after finishing his outdoor education in 2011, he chose to move to Patagonia, Chile to find the mountains he was longing for.

Combining his love for nature and the desire to learn more, he started guiding expeditions through the mountain ranges of Patagonia. Travelling back and forth to Europe for additional mountain courses - every time feeling more at home in the rough conditions of Patagonia. In 2017 he started his own guide company, introducing travelers to the beauty of Southern Chile.

Living in Puerto Natales he came to love the cold and extreme weather and after years of working in one of the most southern mountain ranges in the world, he could not stop looking further south to the great white continent, Antarctica.

---

# 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 ;).

---

# Matthias Kopp – Expedition Guide

---



Matthias live most of the year in Thuringia/ Germany. After school he started an apprenticeship to become a wholesale dealer but decided after a couple of years settled work right next to the home village, to do a great step in direction uncertainty. He started studying biology at the University in Jena. Matthias' main interests were Ecology and Ornithology. He wrote a diploma thesis about the breeding biology of Antarctic Skuas in the area of the Antarctic Peninsula. But also after that degree,

Matthias kept on studying those impressive animals for a couple of years. While studying both, his interest and his network brought Matthias all over the world. Thereby most impressive for him were the Polar Regions. Matthias stayed for his studies with the Skuas in total 5 summer seasons at Antarctic bases and meanwhile 10 seasons in the high Arctic as a Tour guide onboard vessels.

Currently Matthias is predominantly settled, based again in the village of his childhood, but now with wife, 3 young girls, 2 cats, a couple of bee colonies and a wide-ranging garden, who all need him. However, his wife knows that for Matthias the high summer in Germany is much too warm. For that reason, he is together with you in the high north – also to escape the heat.



---

# Tiphanie May - Expedition Guide

---



Tiphanie is an 8<sup>th</sup> generation Falkland Islander living in Stanley. She was raised on a small group of islands called Speedwell Island Group, owned and worked by her parents as a sheep farm and family crab business.

Tiph was raised surrounded by Falkland's wildlife with her family island boasting rookeries of Magellanic penguins, Gentoo penguins as well as several other breeding birds. The islands also include haul outs of South American sealions and elephant seals. Surrounded by all this wildlife it was of no surprise that she found nature

fascinating. From the penguin couple that lived under her house to the wonderful variety of creatures found in the crab pots, marine life was a theme. This led to her to travel to the UK at 16 to study to be a marine biologist.

Tiph spent 6 years in the UK studying to get her BSc (HONS) Marine Biology and MSc in Marine Biology. Using her holidays to volunteer in the Falklands for various conservation projects to gain experience. Upon completing her studies, she joined the Government Fisheries Department, spending 200 days per year at sea monitoring seabird activity and collecting research material. The sea has been a big part of her life, from a young age she worked to haul crab pots with her father's boat. Later she went on to work for an experimental sustainable fish farm which allowed her to get her RYA qualifications in Power Boat. Tiph currently works full time operating a small boat in the Falklands.

Tiphanie started working in the tourist industry at the age of 23. Having grown up with no roads her whole life, 4X4 tour driving just made sense. Tiph has worked to provide a variety of tours such as hiking, 4X4 and penguin colony visits. In 2018, Tiphanie was offered the amazing opportunity to go to Antarctica and South Georgia with Oceanwide as guide. She fell in love with the scale of the landscape and has never looked back.



## DAILY PROGRAM

# Welcome aboard!

### Day 1, Thursday, June 13 Embarkation Longyearbyen

*Your luggage will be delivered to your cabin as soon as possible. Please check to make sure you have received all your luggage!*

**\* Tea and coffee are always available in the observation lounge bar on deck 5 \***

- ±17.15 When all are on board, first meeting in the observation lounge on deck 5. Introduction to the ship & mandatory Safety and Lifeboat Drill.
- ±18.00 Departure of the Plancius. Please stay off the bridge during these operations.
- ±18.30 Welcome meeting in the observation lounge on deck 5. Have a toast with the captain, learn to know your expedition guides and hear about our plans.
- 19.30 Dinner is served in the dining room (deck 3).

After dinner, rubber boots will be distributed at the boot room on deck 3. Take thick socks with you to find the good size! You will be called deck by deck.

The first part of the evening we will sail through the large Isfjord towards the open sea. Then we head north, along the outer coast of Spitsbergen, towards the far north-west. We stay on the outside of the long and narrow island of Prins Karls Forland, as the passage between this island and Spitsbergen is too shallow. The total distance will be around 160 nautical miles (1 nm. is around 1,9 kilometres so about 300 km) and it will take us approximately 13 hours to reach our destination: Smeerenburgfjorden.

***Please note that tonight we will be sailing into the open sea. Take your seasickness medication before you really feel the movements of the vessel. Make sure that all your belongings are put away safely and that doors and drawers in your cabin are tightly closed. Walk slowly on the ship, always use one hand for yourself and one for the ship and beware of your fingers because of doors jamming!***



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 2, Friday, June 14 Smeerenburgfjorden - Raudfjorden

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 07.00          | Wake-up call.   |
| 07.30          | Breakfast buffet in the dining room (Deck 3).   |
| +/-10.00 (TBA) | Mandatory meeting in the observation lounge: guidelines, zodiac operations and our plans for today! |
| 12.30          | Lunch buffet (deck 3).  |
| +/-14.30       | zodiac cruise at Hamiltonbukta in Raudfjorden.  |
| 18.30          | Recap in the bar.   |
| 19.00          | Dinner.   |

We expect to arrive in the Smeerenburgfjorden, in the northwest of Spitsbergen, in the morning. Here we have planned a ship cruise in this beautiful fjord, with large glaciers, surrounded by jagged peaks. Often whales and other wildlife are seen in this area.

In the afternoon, we have planned a Zodiac cruise in Hamiltonbukta, in Raudfjorden. In the bay we can see bird-cliffs on which large numbers of Kittiwakes and Brünnich's Guillemots nest. Under the cliffs, fertile green slopes have developed where often reindeer graze and Arctic foxes roam around.

After the zodiac cruise we will sail out of Raudfjorden and head towards Liefdefjorden.

(TBA) To Be Announced



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 3, Saturday, June 15 Liefdefjorden

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| 07.00 | Wake-up call.  |
| 07.30 | Breakfast.   |
| 09.00 | Landing at "Texas Bar"                               |
| 12.00 | Last zodiac back to the ship                         |
| 12.30 | Lunch.   |
| 14.30 | Zodiac cruise and ships cruise near the Monacobreen. |
| 19.00 | Dinner   |

We want to spend the whole day in the beautiful Liefdefjorden. This is not only a fjord of outstanding beauty, but it is also a place which has abundant wildlife.

In the morning, we plan to land at "Texas Bar". This area has beautiful landscape and a historic hut that was used by Trappers that hunted for Polar Bears and Foxes. We will offer shorter and longer walk. For this, we split up into groups. The keen photographers and botanists will have more time in the leisurely walking group. Please note, once the groups have started, you cannot change anymore!

After lunch, we sail into deeper into the Liefdefjorden. Here we will cruise with the zodiacs near the impressive Monacobreen. The waters of the glacier front are a favourite feeding spot for thousands of Kittiwakes. Ivory gulls, Beluga's and polar bears are sometimes seen here.

Then we head of again, towards the north of Spitsbergen.



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 4, Sunday, June 16 Hinlopenstretet - Alkefjellet and Torellneset

|       |                               |
|-------|-------------------------------|
| 07.00 | Wake-up call.                 |
| 07.30 | Breakfast.                    |
| 09.00 | Zodiac cruise at Alkefjellet. |
| 12.00 | Last zodiac back to the ship. |
| 12.30 | Lunch.                        |
| 14.30 | Landing at Torellneset        |
| 17.30 | Last zodiac back to the ship. |
| 18.30 | Recap in the bar              |
| 19.00 | Dinner.                       |

In the morning, we plan to cruise with the zodiacs along the spectacular bird cliff of Alkefjellet (Auk Mountain). Here thousands of Kittiwakes and Guillemot's breed on the steep ice-capped cliffs.

In the afternoon we plan to land at Torellneset, on the second largest island of the Svalbard archipelago, Nordaustlandet. At the beach of this polar desert often walrus haul-out.

After the landing we will sail out of Hinlopen again, and head north, towards the Sjuøyane islands and the pack ice.



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 5, Monday, June 17 Sjuøyane – Phippsøya - Pack ice

- 07.00 Wake-up call.
- 07.30 Breakfast.
- 09.00 We plan to go ashore at Phippsøya, in the Sjuøyane islands.
- 12.00 Last zodiac back to the ship
- 12.30 Lunch.

In the afternoon we plan to sail towards the pack ice

- 18.30 Recap and briefing in the bar.
- 19.00 Arctic Dinner!

Today we will reach our northernmost landing at Phippsøya, in the Seven Islands archipelago, north of Nordaustlandet. Here we will be at 81 degrees north, just 540 miles (about 900 kilometres) from the geographic North Pole. Polar bears inhabit this region, along with Walruses and ivory gulls.

The island is named after C. J. Phipps, an English navigator who tried to reach the North Pole here in 1773. He only got as far as 80°48'N. One of the members of this expedition was the then just 14 years old Horatio Nelson, who, as the story goes, landed on one of the islands because he wanted to get a Polar bear skin as a present for his parents. He was discovered while fighting a bear. Fortunately, the bear was then killed and that saved Nelson's life and changed European history.

After the landing we will head towards the west, into the pack ice. As we do not know what this will bring us, no further plans have been made so far.



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 6, Tuesday, June 18 Pack ice – the Continental Shelf

07.30 Wake-up call.

08.00 Breakfast.

We continue following the pack ice edge towards the west.

12.30 Lunch.

At the latest around noon, we will leave the pack ice and sail south, following the edge of Continental Shelf

18.30 Recap

19.00 Dinner.

During the morning, we plan to stay in and around the pack.

Life on the pack-ice has an uneven distribution, it is very patchy. Sometimes there is little life, and then suddenly a lot. We therefore will be flexible in our approach. We might go out of the ice again to find a different spot where we hope to find more animals.

Be on the lookout, the more we all look, the more we will see. Whales are often swimming along the pack ice edge, and seals might be resting on ice flows, on which also Polar bears roam, in search of the seals.

We have not planned any lectures but could announce one if there is a good reason, such as the occurrence of fog.

Sometime in the afternoon we need to say goodbye to the pack ice and turn south. We will follow the edge of the Continental Shelf and hope to see more whales there. The edge of the shelf is an area where we often find whales. As the topography of the sea bottom allows biological up-welling, it provides nutrients for phytoplankton and so food for whales.

Be on the lookout!



# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 7, Wednesday, June 19 Poolepynten - Alkhornet

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 07.00    | Wake-up call.   |
| 07.30    | Breakfast buffet.   |
| 08.30    | Landing at Poolepynten  |
| 12.00    | Last zodiac back to the ship  |
| 12.30    | Lunch. During lunch, please make a choice from the evening menu and pre-order the drinks you might like to have in the evening! |
| +/-15.00 | Landing at Alkhornet  |
| 17.30    | Last zodiac back to the ship.   |

After the landing we will announce how to deliver the rubber boots back in the boot room at deck 3. You will be called deck by deck. Please clean your rubber boots before returning them!

- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| 19.00    | Dinner. We have a plated service for the last dinner. Please be on time! |
| +/-21.00 | Farewell meeting in the lounge   |

Today will be our last expedition day. In the morning, we will land at Poolepynten, which is located on the large island of Prins Karls Forland. We hope to see Walruses here, that often haul out on the beach.

In the afternoon, we plan to land at Alkhornet. Alkhornet, the "Auk Horn", is a huge bird cliff where Guillemots and Kittiwake's breed. Below the cliff there is a lush tundra where Reindeer graze and Polar Foxes roam.

After Dinner we would like to invite you all for a farewell drink in the bar.

The ship will proceed towards Longyearbyen, where we plan to arrive in the morning.





# DAILY PROGRAM

## Day 8, Thursday, June 20 Disembarkation – Farewell

07.00 Wake-up call

07.30 Breakfast

For passengers that leave the ship, please put your heavy luggage in the corridor near your cabin before breakfast, at the latest at 7.30. The crew and staff will carry the luggage and shuttle it to the pier.

Please leave your keycard holder at reception.

08.30 Time to say goodbye! All passengers leave the ship by Zodiac. Please wear waterproof clothing and lifejacket during the Zodiac shuttle.

A bus shuttle has been arranged to take you to Longyearbyen or the airport.

- For passengers flying today, check that you have put the blue label on your luggage, before you put it in the corridor. On the pier, check that all your luggage is there. You can leave your luggage on the pier; it will be picked up at the pier by a luggage truck and taken to the airport. A bus will drive you to the town center, near the Svalbard Butikken. In the afternoon, at 13.00, the bus will pick you up again at the Svalbard Butikken and take you to the airport. Here you need to pick up your luggage outside the building.
- Passengers on other flights or with a hotel, make sure you take your luggage from the pier and take it on the bus. You will be taken to the town center, near the Svalbard Butikken.

**Dear passengers, we enjoyed having you on board. Have a nice and safe journey home. Hopefully we meet again somewhere, sometime, in the Polar regions!**

**Farewell!**