

Svalbard in Depth

Aboard *Sylvia Earle* | 27 June – 10 July 2023





Longyearbyen

DAY 1 | Tuesday 27 June

Position at 0600

Latitude: 78° 11.4'N

Longitude: 014° 33.1'E

Course: 061°

Speed: 9.7 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots SW

Barometer: 1013

Air Temp: 10°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

We started the day with a skip in our step knowing we were only hours away from our in-depth adventure around Svalbard! After a hearty breakfast, we said goodbye to our luggage and met in the hotel lobby for our tour around Longyearbyen.

Our journey took us to the outskirts of town to view the Svalbard Global Seed Vault, home to a seed bank of over 4,000 plant species, along with a visit to the eclectic Svalbard Museum. We spent time at Camp Barentz, where we enjoyed a presentation in the large *lavvo* - a traditional building common in northern Norway. Here we heard tales of living in the remote Arctic before we met the camp's friendly huskies.

Before we knew it, the time had come to make our way to the ship. As we approached the wharf, we could see the *Sylvia Earle* at anchor, the ship's X-Bow making it hard to miss.

At the port we were welcomed by Expedition Leader Howard and Assistant Expedition Leader Dot, who helped us put on our lifejackets for a quick Zodiac shuttle to the ship. We embarked via the mudroom and were greeted by more friendly team members, who showed us to our lockers and steered us up to Deck 4. Once we reached mid-ship we were stopped by Justine and Scott, who took our first portrait on board the *Sylvia Earle*.

During check-in, we had time to enjoy embarkation refreshments before the ship's crew helped us navigate the decks to our cabins - our home away from home for the next 14 days. Howard then called us into the Lecture Theatre to welcome us aboard.

To start, Howard told us how Aurora Expeditions came to life and why their egalitarian style of travelling is what truly makes every one of us get the absolute best out of each day we share in this expedition.

We were then introduced to a multi-skilled Expedition Team who were eager to share their knowledge and were as excited as we were! Justine helped us settle into life on board, along with Hotel Director Singh and ship's doctor, Dr Gino, made sure we knew how to stay healthy during our voyage.

To keep the ball rolling we went straight into a mandatory Zodiac briefing. We learned about the 'Zodiac three-step', which would soon become second nature.

Finally, it was time to receive our lifeboat and safety briefing and ready ourselves for the abandon ship drill. The sound of seven-short-one-long rings from the ship's signal system was our cue to don warm clothes, bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster station to sample our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew guided us to the lifeboats to familiarise us with their whereabouts.

The polar class life vessels can each hold 136 people for five days!

Before dinner there was time to exchange expedition jackets and for kayakers to meet their guides Ivan and Wes. There was no time wasted!

Equipped with a healthy appetite, we made our way to the Gentoo Restaurant to enjoy a delicious dinner prepared by our talented galley team and served by our welcoming waiting staff.

Together we total 84 Expeditioners from Australia (19), Canada (2), China (4) Germany (1) Israel (1), Malaysia (4), New Zealand (2), Netherlands (2), Norway (1), Portugal (1), Spain (1), UK (18), and USA (27), an international Expedition Team and 84 ship's crew from around the globe.

After hours of travel to reach one of the planet's best kept secrets, it's time to catch up on sleep and then prepare ourselves for an expedition we will never forget.



Akseløya, Bamsebu

DAY 2 | Wednesday 28 June

Position at 0700

Latitude: 77° 43.6' N

Longitude: 014° 20.8' W

Course: 060°

Speed: 11.6 knots

Wind Speed: 12 knots ENE

Barometer: 1010

Air Temp: 8°C

First up was to complete mandatory briefings and then do bio security and Muck Boot fitting before we set off on our morning Zodiac cruise along the Akseløya spit. Here we saw eider duck, black guillemot and barnacle geese. In the water we spotted a pod of beluga whale, which surfaced several times. Beluga eat a wide variety of prey, more diverse than most cetaceans. They eat mainly fish species, such as herring, cod, and salmon, as well as invertebrates such as octopus, squid, crab, and snails and bottom-dwelling worms.

Towards the end of our cruise, we were rewarded with a view of a group of walrus hauled out on the beach: we approached them from downwind, which resulted in a great wildlife encounter. The walrus has played a prominent role in the cultures of many indigenous Arctic peoples, who have hunted it for meat, fat, skin, tusks and bone. The population has rebounded since the hunting of the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the afternoon we made a landing at Bamsebu, a hunting cabin surrounded by the remains of hundreds of beluga whale bones and some old hunting boats. The hut featured bear-resistant boarded windows complete with protruding nails to prevent any bear ripping down the shutters. The cabin had a supply of firewood and a pile of deer antlers. From the cabin, Howard led a walk to the northwest across the tundra to the Zodiac pick-up point.

We didn't spot any polar bears, but we did see many Svalbard reindeer including a calf. Svalbard reindeer are a small subspecies of reindeer that have lived here for at least 5,000 years and have become well adapted to the harsh climate, being found on nearly all non-glaciated areas of the archipelago. By 1925, they had almost become extinct due to over-hunting in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Over recent decades their population has increased and as of 2019, the total population across the archipelago is approximately 22,000. They are the only large grazing mammal in the European High Arctic and this makes them exceptional for studies concerning the introduction of pollutants to changing ecosystems. Their diet consists of lush tundra vegetation of vascular plants, including grasses, herbs, sedges and deciduous shrubs.

After dinner, Daniel Free alerted the bridge that there was a large whale nearby. When we approached, we saw that it was a blue whale, and so John woke the ship for a once-in-a-lifetime viewing of the biggest animal that's ever lived on the planet.



Gnålodden, Samarinbreen

DAY 3 | Thursday 29 June

Position at 0700

Latitude: 76°58.2'N

Longitude: 015°37.7'E

Course: 058°

Speed: 8.1 knots

Wind Speed: 4 knots ESE

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 6°C

Naming of Hornsund

They brought a piece of Deeres horne aboard, therefore I called this sound Horne Sound.

—Poole, 1610, The Place-Names of Svalbard

We woke up in Hornsund today, the southernmost fjord in Spitsbergen. The name comes from an English expedition in 1610. When one of the sailors went ashore and returned to the ship with a reindeer antler, the fjord was named Hornsund (Antler Sound).

Our landing site for the morning was Gnålodden. This name means 'nagging sound,' which comes from the sound of the bird cliffs in the area. Even though the jagged peaks of the mountains were shrouded in mist, we could still see plenty of birds flying around and hunting. During the morning, the sun broke through the clouds and opened up the landscape a bit more. There was a lot of green vegetation and a variety of flowers (especially purple saxifrage), showing that summer was in full swing.

On the beach was a trapper's cabin that is most notable for being one of the satellite stations of Wanny Woldstad. She was a Norwegian hunter from Tromsø and was the first female trapper in Svalbard. Her main station was located at Hyttevika, on the outside of Hornsund, but she had two small secondary cabins at Isbjørnhamna and Gnålodden.

Hornsund was historically a trapper's paradise due to the amount of ice that comes into the fjord each year. Because of the movement of the sea currents, plenty of drift ice fills the fjord in the winter. This attracts a big population of ringed seal, which is a great incentive for polar bears to swing by. The bears follow the sea ice in general, so Hornsund becomes a polar bear highway.

We were also lucky enough to witness a family of foxes playing on the hillside, which was incredible to watch! It was as if they were putting on a performance, rolling around in the grass and then lounging on a boulder.

In the afternoon we headed to the south side of Hornsund for a Zodiac cruise in front of Samarinbreen – a truly impressive glacier front with plenty of ice and stunning views. There were lots of icebergs in the fjord, and we witnessed a few calvings. With over 1,000 glaciers and 60 per cent of the archipelago covered in ice, Svalbard is still in an ice age. It was fascinating to listen to the crackling and popping ice in the bay.



Kapp Lee, Negribreen

DAY 4 | Friday 30 June

Position at 0700

Latitude: 77°57.4'N

Longitude: 020°32.5'E

Course: 026°

Speed: 13.6 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots NNW

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 5°C

Nature is an infinite sphere of which the center is everywhere, and the circumference nowhere.

—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

Another magical day experiencing the raw nature of the north. We started out wreathed in clouds as we approached Kapp Lee, a landing that the whole team was excited about. Magically, the fog lifted as we approached the coastline and we realised we were about to be treated to a Svalbard rarity: A Sunny Day.

Well briefed about the importance of polar bear awareness, we loaded into Zodiacs for the short cruise to the beach and were almost immediately treated to fantastic views of two walrus, both hauled out en masse on the beach, and frolicking in the shallow waters around our landing site. Walrus can be really curious, so our drivers continued on with extreme caution – a 2,000-kilogram animal with long tusks should be treated with plenty of respect when you are in a small inflatable craft!

Once on the beach, we separated into groups and quietly approached the walrus that were hauled out on the beach. The chorus of sounds from their communal chitchat came across as practically musical, and it would have been easy to spend the whole day there. We were, however, anxious to make the most of the beautiful weather and see a bit more of the area, so many of us embarked on a hiking adventure to be remembered. Whether it was the reindeer peppered across the hillside, the glaciated peaks standing tall on the other side of the water, the abundant moss campion around the landing, or the close encounters with Svalbard mud, this excursion proved to be one for the books.

Hats off to Benjamin and Dennis for handling a literally sticky situation with good cheer!

Our afternoon could not have been more different, or more mystical. Arriving at Negribreen in light fog, we gaped in amazement at the sheer length of the glacier front here. Many hundreds, if not thousands, of icebergs lay calmly in the still waters, and as we lowered the Zodiacs the fog reached tendrils of silver-grey into the air, shrouding us in magic and mystery.

We cruised quietly, soaking up the ever-changing, ephemeral icescape, and admiring the rare ivory gulls that perched obligingly on icebergs for our cameras and appreciation. A truly Arctic day.



Russebukta, Freemansundet

DAY 5 | Saturday 01 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 77°57.1'N

Longitude: 021°06.3'E

Course: 011°

Speed: 4.3 knots

Wind Speed: 5 knots W

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 8°C

Believe me, my young friend, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats... simply messing.

—Water Rat to Mole from *The Wind in the Willows*

Shrouded in fog, we woke to a true expedition day on board the *Sylvia Earle*. Overnight we had moved across the Storfjorden from Negribreen to Diskobukta, where we waited for clearing in the weather. As the fog continued to be thick and impenetrable, we ended up moving further south along the coast of Edgeøya to Eusebia for a Zodiac cruise.

On the way south, Heather taught us about the amazing skills and life of 'the achiever of the impossible', the bold arctic fox. She shared her extensive knowledge about these incredible animals, which can walk thousands of kilometres over the frozen Arctic Ocean, adapt quickly to new prey and hunting grounds, and even engineer their environment around their dens. Who would have thought that one of the smallest foxes on earth walks with the polar bears in the cold winter and can withstand temperatures down to -70°C (-94°F)?

In Russebukta we had an atmospheric experience of gliding through the dense fog and investigating the calm waters and rocky coastline. Reindeer, eider, guillemot, bunting, fulmar and walrus were among some of the wildlife we encountered. The area around the walrus haulout gave us a remarkable chance to see these grandiose animals up close in the water. The curious nature of these beasts made it a special moment as we could hear the huffing and puffing while they swam around on the surface, close to the Zodiacs.

Back aboard the *Sylvia Earle*, we enjoyed a delicious lunch before powering down for the afternoon. Avi gave a lecture on 'Svalbard Through a Thousand Years' touching on some of the complex stories of the archipelago. From Russian hunters, to European whalers, to Norwegian trappers, to industrial mining and through to modern day, with the Spitsbergen Treaty and the importance of tourism. Svalbard may have started out as a place where humans have profited by harvesting and subtracting natural resources for their own benefit, but today we are hopefully looking at a future for conservation and protection of the environment and the wildlife that call these remote islands home.

In the late afternoon, the weather gods smiled at us as the fog lifted and revealed the beautiful cliffsides of Edgeøya. Kelsey gave us an interesting introduction to the Pomor people and recounted one of the gruelling

ventures from that era at recap. Going through Freemansundet, the evening was spent looking for wildlife from the Observation Deck.

Around 10.00am our first polar bear of the trip was spotted! Spirits were high under the arctic midnight sky.

As true explorers, we have seen how the weather can change and how it directs our decision-making when travelling in the Arctic. With all our new-acquired knowledge and experience from this expedition day, we are looking forward to yet another adventure tomorrow.



Ormholet, Kiepertøya

DAY 6 | Sunday 02 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 78°39.0'N

Longitude: 021°28.2' E

Course: 271°

Speed: 5.8 knots

Wind Speed: 14 knots E

Barometer: 1020

Air Temp: 3°C

It's strange how hungry for a treat you get on an Arctic journey

—Roald Amundsen

It was another early wake-up call, but not your average Sunday. A first look out of the window we realised it was a typical foggy Svalbard morning, but that wasn't going to stop us from exploring. Shortly after breakfast, we layered up with extra clothes and headed to the mudroom. As we stepped off the ship, we could feel the cold air biting at our faces, but our excitement for the day ahead kept us warm.

In a convoy of Zodiacs, we cruised our way through the channels of Ormholet. Bird cliffs marked the opening of the main channel, where we spotted barnacle geese, kittiwake, glaucous gull and black guillemot nesting on some 100–150-million-year-old dolerite columns. The vegetation had extensively grown along the cliffs thanks to the birds' guano.

Further ahead, the fog was denser and the water ran through the channels with a much stronger force, making it a lot of fun for our Zodiac drivers. During the cruise we witnessed an arctic skua harassing a kittiwake for its lunch, but the kittiwake was too quick and managed to outfly the skua.

The pack ice gathered on the east side of the channels, which allowed us to have a good play through the sea ice that hugged the shoreline. Our exploration continued until mid-morning, when the increasing chill in the air reminded us that it was time to head back to the ship. Howard was not joking when he said the cold can infiltrate our layers and sink into our bones!

Back on board we enjoyed a hot cuppa, a hot shower and a buffet lunch to ready us for more adventures.

Cruising north after lunch, we rapidly encountered dense chunks of sea ice, which slowed our journey down but made for true arctic scenery. We could hear the ice crashing alongside the ship, and we even spotted a few bearded seal along the way. The time had come for us to get our sharp eyes out and find a bear!

Around 2.00pm, thanks to Jane, a super-relaxed female bear was spotted on the northeast side of Kiepertøya; the bear seemed to be resting over a treasured carcass and was unfazed that we were there. The Captain stopped the ship at the edge of the ice, about 350 metres away, while we patiently waited and watched for her to make her next move. In between some thick fog, we could see some leg stretching/arctic yoga movements, which were a delight to observe.

We spent the entire afternoon and evening watching the polar bear slowly move around her meal and find some new spots to rest. It's not every day that we get to enjoy a delicious dinner while watching a polar bear only a few hundred metres away. We left her around 9.30pm and started making our way north again to see what we could find next.



Torellneset, Bråsvellbreen

DAY 7 | Monday 03 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 79°20.1'N

Longitude: 020°50.1'E

Course: 305°

Speed: 4.7 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots NW

Barometer: 1023

Air Temp: 4°C

The kayak is without comparison the best one-man vessel to be found.

—Fridtjof Nansen

So, how do you describe the day of a lifetime? We awoke to a cloudless sky, crystal-clear ocean and luminous ice. Not a ripple disturbed the water.

Early risers were treated to beluga before breakfast. Those who kept more refined hours awoke to Howard's gentle call and prepared to depart for the morning's adventure. Kayakers took advantage of the perfect conditions to paddle across the bay in their silent flotilla, exploring an other-worldly ocean of ice and calm waters. The rest of us zipped ashore in Zodiacs and headed off on walks, of the long, medium and 'beachcomber' variety. Long walkers covered plenty of ground, reaching some large inland lakes. Medium walkers and beachcombers went straight to the walrus of Torellneset, named after Otto Torell, a geologist who led several expeditions to Svalbard and was one of the first people to realise that earth had undergone a series of ice ages that had shaped northern landscapes. Some of us enjoyed an extended stay with the walrus, while others strolled along the beaches or headed inland to see what they could find.

Back on the ship, we traded stories about ancient whale bones, rare birds, mountain lakes, jellyfish and those tusky, bewhiskered beasts on the beach. Our aim after lunch was to kayak or Zodiac cruise along the magnificent ice cliffs of Bråsvellbreen.

As we cruised eastwards towards that destination, we noticed large numbers of walrus clustered on impossibly small ice floes. It was then that eagle-eyed Clare Rathbone spotted a polar bear striding across a small ice floe. She immediately alerted the Expedition Team who soon spotted Clare's bear, by then back in the water and swimming towards a much larger ice floe. When he reached that floe, he lifted himself out on to the ice, revealing that he was carrying an unfortunate walrus calf that he must have killed on the nearby floe. Clare's bear became our bear as we watched him slowly devouring his catch, carefully ripping open the skin and tearing off small pieces of blubber. Ivory and glaucous gulls waited on the scraps while our bear finished his meal and lay down for a nap. It was time to leave him in peace and to continue our journey to Bråsvellbreen for our kayak paddle or Zodiac cruise.

We arrived at Bråsvellbreen to a mirror-like ocean decorated by ice of all shapes and sizes and overlooked by ice cliffs that stretched to the horizon. Waterfalls spilled from the ice cliffs as kayakers glided across the smooth waters



Polar Plunge

DAY 7 | Monday 03 July





At Sea – Storøya, east of Nordaustlandet

DAY 8 | Tuesday 04 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 79°07.9'N

Longitude: 028°39.2' E

Course: Various, ice navigation

Speed: 8.9 knots

Wind Speed: 16 knots NE

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 4°C

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.

—T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding'

We woke up to a beautiful morning with absolutely clear skies. The bright sunshine was reflected from thousands of ice floes as we were making our way to the northeast of Svalbard, to the remote island of Storøya.

A delicious breakfast was followed by a briefing from Howard, where he described our plans for the upcoming day. The plan was to get as close as we could to Storøya island and look for some polar bears, and possibly make a landing on the island.

Straight after the briefing, Avi gave us a great lecture about the arctic balloon expedition of Salomon August Andrée – a dramatic story about a team of three Swedes who were driven by their desperate dream to fly to the North Pole in a balloon. The courage and commitment of those men is fascinating, even though the results of the expedition are very sad. The story is full of dramatic details; the relationships between the men and their loved ones are especially touching. It is one of those stories which you can dig into for a long time and find out more and more.

Later in the day we could see the location on the horizon where those brave men had finished their final leg – Kvitøya, the 'White Island' – a big, white lens-shaped island rising from the sea, completely covered with ice and snow. You don't need to approach close to see how inhospitable and harsh the land is.

Right before lunch the whole ship turned completely silent. We'd spotted a polar bear mum with two cubs! What an amazing encounter! They were hanging out on a big ice floe relatively far from the island, probably hoping to catch some seals. It was amazing to observe the cubs playing and repeating their mum's moves. The "cuteness-o-meter" on the bridge was definitely overheated! All us expeditioners were on the open decks, taking hundreds of photos and videos – a moment like this is a rare occasion.

In the afternoon we saw another amazing polar bear on the ice floe! This day just turned into a polar bear festival! It is interesting how quiet it gets on a ship when we approach a bear – everyone does a great job trying not to make noise.

Right before dinner, Howard gave us another update - it appeared that ice conditions are changing every day and we have a chance to work our way through Hinlopenstretet - the passage between Nordaustlandet Island and Spitsbergen Island.

We hope to make a complete a circumnavigation of Spitsbergen, the biggest island of the archipelago! Looking forward to new adventures ahead!



Bjørnsundet, Ardnaset–Wahlbergøya

DAY 9 | Wednesday 05 July

Position at 0600

Latitude: 79°05.4'N

Longitude: 021°22.5'E

Course: Various, ice navigation

Speed: 5.7 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots S

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 7°C

The ice was here, the ice was there, the ice was all around;
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Rime of the Ancient Mariner

A typical Arctic day seems to have lost all meaning for us, as the superb weather continues to showcase this stunning landscape. The still air and clear skies set the mood for this morning's journey of exploration. Surrounded by sea ice racing in the strong currents, we set out into the fjord at Bjørnsundet. Navigating through the rapidly moving ice floes was our first real challenge, as we pushed ice to create a lead to sections of open water. Our efforts were rewarded with sightings of ringed seal, bearded seal and sleepy walrus resting on the drifting sea ice. As we headed north towards the glacier, the kayakers headed south for an adventure of their own. They weaved through ice and played in whirling currents, putting their skills to the test.

The amazing weather continued to follow us to a place called Wahlbergøya. The scene was set: long walkers, medium walkers, and beach combers, each on their own separate path. For those on high the 360-degree views across an icy vista were nothing but spectacular, reaching as far as the eyes could see. But today, all roads led to walrus, and a large haulout gave us so many different perspectives of these huge pinnipeds. Laying on their backs with tusks held high, the walrus collective spread across the beach. While these sleeping giants lay still, a group frolicked in the water, where we could hear the deep breaths as they emerged from below the surface.

With every step we inched closer, a whisper of conversation and a cautious approach kept these goliaths in their afternoon slumber. All our efforts made for a unique wildlife experience. As the beachcombers retreated from the front lines, they grabbed pieces of debris and rubbish from the surrounding landscape. Every little piece counts towards keeping Svalbard beautiful.

Kayakers ventured into the ice, covering some miles, while conditions were perfect for navigating to some small islands, looking for seals and passing some walrus along the way. It was simply a beautiful paddle, finishing off with a visit to the walrus hauled out on the beach.

The Arctic just keeps on giving and we all feel privileged to be here in this amazing place. Each day brings something new and amazing and the more we explore, the more we experience the true essence of being in this remote icy wonderland.



Alkefjellet, Eolusneset

DAY 10 | Thursday 06 July

Position at 0600

Latitude: 79°32.3'N

Longitude: 019°11.6'E

Course: 359°

Speed: 5.2 knots

Wind Speed: 3.6 knots E

Barometer: 1020

Air Temp: 9°C

And yet, there is only one great thing, the only thing, to see in huts and on journeys: the great day that dawns, and the light that fills the world.

—Inuit poem

Wow! What a day. We witnessed enough marvels today to fill an entire voyage logbook. Alas, we have to give each day it's due, and the Arctic holds many wonders that speak to each of us individually. Our day began in typical expeditionary form... great plans change in a minute, seek opportunity at every turn, and remember that whatever path you're on probably goes some place interesting that you were not expecting. As the ship was approaching the highly anticipated Alkefjellet bird cliffs, a bear was spotted on a small islet east of Alkefjellet, and being expeditioners, we changed course to investigate. The day was incredibly sunny and very warm, and there we found what we assume was a healthy, immature polar bear basking in the sun, on a dark, rocky basaltic ridge. The bear would play hide and seek with us, ducking down behind little swales and tucking into little nooks, only to climb up high again to find that perfect little rest spot. At one point the bear magically appeared on a smaller islet right next to the original. Not seeing a second bear we all deducted that it must have swum there when we lost sight of it.

We observed the bear for as long as we could afford to and then sailed across the strait to get in close, just south of Alkefjellet. We quickly boarded our Zodiacs and kayaks to begin touring along the cliffs to the north, beginning with the lower-lying dark dolerite cliffs and ending with the higher and towered limestone cliffs of Alkefjellet. Upon first seeing the southern end of the cliffs, we could see a large waterfall waiting for us to the north, and as we neared, we realised that the cliffs were not all that small and that there were numerous waterfalls all along the cliffs. Once in close we could see dancing colours of the spectrum and rainbow within the torrents of water. What a magical, picturesque experience. Had we been earlier, the position of the sun might have been lower and we might have missed the rainbows. Thanks, bear! Thanks, expeditionary mentality!

The waterfalls and the sunshine... magical, yes! But also bittersweet. These waterfalls are normally not here. If, anything, there may be a few trickles. This is a bleak reminder and testament to how quickly the Arctic is changing. Svalbard is experiencing four times the sea-ice loss as Antarctica, and this appears mostly related to rises in ocean and air temperatures.

As we worked our way quietly along the cliffs, the numbers of nesting Brünnich's guillemot increased, and we were engulfed from the air and from the water. As the dramatic towers of Alkefjellet rose above us, so did the

examples of how the guillemot play out their lives and social dramas they endure. We cannot help but put our minds to understanding what they are thinking, or why are they doing that? It was difficult to leave Alkefjellet, but we were soon on our way to get north to Eolusneset.

On a hill at Eolusneset, we set to harnessing our imaginations towards the human dramas that played out here, rather than the dramas of seabirds. Sorgfjorden, the adjacent fjord to Eolusneset, was a central jump-off point for whalers from the 1600s through to the 1800s. This site holds numerous gravesites of those whalers. Most died because of the rigours and dangers of whaling, and some of those dead may have lost their lives in a sea battle fought nearby in 1693, where three French war ships attacked some 40 Dutch whaling vessels. When the whalers would set out on their hunting expeditions, they would make sure to pack enough raw wood materials to build enough coffins for those who would perish. It's hard not to reflect, when we, by comparison, in our modern times, might be sure to pack some extra cold medicine, just in case.

As the visit to Eolusneset started to wind down, a number of the team with many helping hands set out to contribute to the Clean Up Svalbard Campaign. All involved managed to pick up an estimated 80 to 100 kilograms of garbage. Much of it was fishing nets and plastic forms of pollution. We believe it to be the best clean-up haul we have done to date. I overheard that a number of us really felt fulfilled about being able to give back to this sacred land.

Our day came to a close with some appropriate presentations regarding what we had seen and experienced throughout the day. Heather ('what a wizard!') was able to take us through one billion years of Svalbard geology in eight minutes. 'Okay, Okay'; it was eight-and-a-half minutes. Then John followed up with a well-rounded introduction to the Brünnich's guillemot, with more about its nesting habits and the behaviours we witnessed that day. Howard concluded with our plans for the next coming day.

Giddy from the wonders of the day, our chefs and servers made sure we were well taken care of, and as we tucked ourselves in, we wondered... 'how could we possibly top this day!'



Texas Bar, Monacobreen

DAY 11 | Friday 07 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 79°37.4'N

Longitude: 013°02.2'E

Course: 242°

Speed: 7 knots

It's strange how hungry for a treat you get on an Arctic journey

—Roald Amundsen

How lucky are we? It was another day with beautiful weather and sunshine. This time we woke up in Liefdefjorden, right outside of the famous Texas Bar. Nestled into a bay with sharp mountains, glaciers, and vibrant flowers, it's no wonder the trappers Hilmar Nøis and Martin Pettersen Nøis decided to build their hut in this location.

The hut was built in 1927, and the choice of name is still a mystery. However, the place lives up to its name. Inside the hut we found not only the typical décor of bunk beds, a modest table and chair, but also a well-stocked bottle supply! The tradition nowadays is to leave a bottle and take a bottle.

It must have been a lovely place to spend some quiet time in the hunting days. Personally, I've been there once during the winter, several years ago. The fjord was covered in ice and snow, and I arrived by snowmobile. What a contrast to today's summery weather and warm temperatures! Some of us were even walking around in shorts and T-shirts.

We split into our exploration groups and set off to some lovely sights: plenty of flowers like moss campion and mountain avens, a variety of lichens, and fascinating geology. The birds circling around us were one of the main reasons the area is so fertile and full of life: their helpful guano!

After some time on the beach, a few people decided it would be fun to go swimming. It was a refreshing dip (a second polar plunge?) and a great thing to do before heading back to the ship. Our intrepid leaders Howard and Jeff even decided to join in on the fun, and ran into the cold sea.

Our second activity of the day was an incredible Zodiac cruise at Monaco glacier. What an ice wall! Measuring about 5 kilometres across, the impressively blue ice provided lots of great views. We saw some calving events, and many of us saw a bearded seal resting on the ice. Arctic terns swooped and dived into the bay as they looked for food.

The kayakers had some incredible paddle trips today: first at Texas Bar, where they paddled along colourful, layered cliffs. It was a truly peaceful experience. On their afternoon paddle, they headed for Monaco glacier and enjoyed time among the brash ice and icebergs.

Wind Speed: 2.5 knots S

Barometer: 1020

Air Temp: 14°C

The day ended with a fun game of trivia in the lecture theatre, where we got to put all our new knowledge to the test. Another wonderful day in the Arctic!



Bruceneset, Hamiltonbukta

DAY 12 | Saturday 08 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 79°46.5'N

Longitude: 012°03.0'E

Course: 166°

Speed: 4.2 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots NW

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 12°C

Polar night, Longer and darker than any other night

Polar day, Longer and brighter than any other day

Polar landscape, Greater and mightier than any other landscape

A time I shall always carry within me and give expression to.

In reverence to the country, the light and the dark.

—Inger Johanne Qvam Hafsmo Fra 'Arctic light in oil on Canvas'

Today was a classic expedition day of true adventure and surprises. Filled with bacon and pancakes, we set out in the morning to experience Bruceneset/Alicehamn, a landing with a supposedly sheltered bay and a beautiful knoll to summit. After being regaled with exciting tales of death by scurvy and the hazards of whaling as a career, we were well prepared for viewing the graves at this landing. We may have been less prepared for the sight that awaited us shortly before midday though. Just as we were starting to think about heading back to the ship, a series of whoops and yells echoed down from the peaks above. Those of us who glanced up high were perplexed. Is it a reindeer; is it a tree; what can be plummeting down that snowfield up there?! Judicious use of the ever-present binoculars revealed the truth: the long hikers were descending from their high point in true expedition style, upon their backsides, hollering all the way, led by our fearless and fun-loving Expedition Leader Howard.

In the meantime, the kayakers were enjoying the peaceful waters of the northeastern bay.

Once all giggles were back on the ship, we upped anchor and headed around the corner to Hamiltonbukta, renowned as a lovely place to Zodiac cruise and kayak. Hopes high and hearts at peace, we headed under the laughing bird cliff and wove our way through the shallow waters of the tidewater glacier valley. With propellers still more or less intact we cruised the glacier fronts, keeping a healthy distance, before dashing off up the coast to try and spot an elusive arctic fox. Mr Fox stayed hidden, but we were getting very involved with the various diverse jellies drifting beneath our boats when an exciting call came through. Sergei had spotted a bear on the ice on the far side of the ship!

Throwing jellyfish questions to the wind, we zipped the Zodiacs to full speed and charged practically the full length of the fjord, arriving just in time to observe a beautiful young bear testing the thinning ice, treating us to a fun display of 'bear yoga' before slipping into the water and swimming towards the distant shore. A fantastic end to another remarkable Svalbard day.



St Jonsfjorden, Alkhorneret-Trygghamna

DAY 13 | Sunday 09 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 78°31.2'N

Longitude: 012°36.8'E

Course: 102°

Speed: 9.3 knots

Wind Speed: 7 knots N

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 9°C

The great hurrah about wild animals is that they exist at all, and the greater hurrah is the actual moment of seeing them. Because they have a nice dignity, and prefer to have nothing to do with me, not even as the simple objects of my vision. They show me by their wariness what a prize it is simply to open my eyes and behold.

—Annie Dillard, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek

During the night, we managed to navigate down along the northwestern corner of Spitsbergen and arrive at St Jonsfjorden. Here we went for a Zodiac cruise along the glacier fronts. The rumbling glacier gave us a few calvings, with impressive sound effects. While cruising through the low-hanging clouds, we had some special encounters with bearded seal lying on the ice. The kayakers commented on the stunning geology and enjoyed gliding through the icy water.

After lunch we made it to Alkhorneret, where we had an incredible landing at the bottom of the bird cliff. The cacophony of bird calls was truly an experience as we walked up on the hillside. The sun was out, and the tall peak stood out in a majestic manner. Here we saw Brünnich's guillemot, kittiwake, arctic fox and lots of reindeer. This was our final landing site in Svalbard before heading back to Longyearbyen.

This evening we celebrated our trip at the Captain's Farewell Cocktail followed by the Farewell Dinner in the Gentoo Restaurant. The evening's grand finale was Scott's and Andreas' slideshow which took us down memory lane as we recalled the many different landing sites, the remarkable wildlife we have encountered, the impressive Zodiac cruises, the sticky mud session, the interesting Citizen Science projects, and the many stories we have heard along the way. Certificates were given out, T-shirts awarded to the polar-plunging community, and adventures cherished.

We have successfully circumnavigated the island of Spitsbergen, collecting small gems of incredible experiences on the way. From the steep cliffs of the south to the barren, ice-covered north, the *Sylvia Earle* has enabled us to visit remote destinations and widen our horizons. Needless to say, this has truly been a Svalbard in-depth voyage. What seemed like foreign place names have now become familiar sites full of memories. Unknown birds have become companions on our Zodiac cruises, small dots on the horizon have turned into incredible bear encounters, and strangers have become friends on board our floating home.

We wish you all safe journeys home and hope that you will take a little bit of Svalbard with you in your hearts. As Norwegian polar explorer, Fridtjof Nansen said: "Strange. There is always sadness on departure. It is as if one cannot after all bear to leave this bleak waste of ice, glaciers, cold and toil..." (1912).



Longyearbyen

DAY 14 | Monday 10 July

Position at 0700

Latitude: 78°11.4'N

Longitude: 014°33.1'E

Course: At anchor in Longyearbyen

Speed: At anchor in Longyearbyen

Wind Speed: 2 knots NW

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 12°C

We have striven, we have sought and we have found. Of course our little expedition is not in the same realm as those of the great polar explorers of the past but it is a little taste and sets us apart from 99% of the people we meet every day. Perhaps we can retain some of the beauty, serenity and timelessness of the far northern world we have travelled in. Better still that we can take it back to our everyday lives.

—Ian Collier, Aurora passenger, Arctic season 2005

Aurora Expeditions sends out a big thank you to you all for your great humour, infectious enthusiasm and smiling faces. It was a pleasure having you on board and being able to share some of the pleasures that Svalbard had to offer. May your memories live long and bright.



Kayaking Log

Kayak Masters: **Ivan Klochkov, Wes McNeil**

Number of Paddlers: 10

Total Paddle Outings: 15

Total Distance Paddled: 74 km

Paddlers:

Nancy Jensen

Desmond (Dez) Wichems

Christine (Chris) Wichems

Christopher (Shawn) Bradley

Katherine (Kate) Bradley

Emma Broadfield

Rodney (Rod) Wilson

Lina Stock

David Stock

Charmian Perston

June 28th, AM. Akseløya Spit

On this first morning we needed to fit our drysuits, paddle equipment and kayaks to be prepared for our first outing in the afternoon. Following all the fittings, we were able to test our clothing on a short Zodiac tour. Lots of beluga and walrus were spotted!

June 28th, PM. Bamsebu - Distance: 3 km

The moment we had been waiting for... our chance to get into our kayaks. We started this excursion by towing our kayaks to the beach at Bamsebu. After touring the huts, old whaling boats and the remains of the early-1900s beluga-processing camp, we slipped into our kayaks on the beach and paddled northwest to the natural harbour of Fleur de Lysthamna. To get there we paddled along a rocky little coast with some shallows and rock gardens. The cloud ceiling was low, but it was clear enough to see the coastal mountains in the distance, minus their summits obscured by the clouds. Conditions were calm with a light wind pushing us along from the east. It turned out to be a delightful first paddle. We landed on a beach near some old, upturned whaling boats from the 1930s, and then towed our kayaks back to the ship.

June 29th, AM. Gnålodden - Distance: 4.5 km

This morning we were able to paddle from the ship to the landing site of Gnålodden. A site that epitomises the sense of Spitsbergen, where there is an old trapper's hut and gravesites, rich with human history and also huge bird cliffs, arctic fox and an iconic spire rising up through the clouds. We first paddled around the rocky coast and through a number of rock gardens, watching the birds and learning how to read the swells and look for routes through the rock gardens. We ended our outing with enough time to take in the other wonders of Gnålodden. Wes and Ivan towed the kayaks back to the ship.

June 29th, PM. Samarinbreen - Distance: 6 km

This afternoon as we entered into the fjord of Samarinvågen the fog began to lift, and by the time we were paddling, it started to reveal the huge peaks and glaciers all around us. We paddled from the ship south towards Samarinbreen, the main glacier. At first, we were paddling in open, glassy water. The closer we got to the glacier,

the more the brash ice thickened. We ended the outing by negotiating the edges of some heavy brash ice, under a bluebird sky and sunshine, with an incredible mountain-glacier backdrop. To finish, we towed back to the ship.

June 30th, PM. Negribreen - Distance: 4 km

As we sailed north in Negribreen, the largest glacier on Spitsbergen, the fog wrapped itself around us. At first impression, it looked like we might not have the visibility to have this paddle session. Thankfully, as we approached the glacier the fog thinned enough to make the paddle reasonably navigable. We set out from the ship in calm waters and meandered around large icebergs and brash ice, with Bråsvellbreen as an ominous backdrop. There was not a breath of wind and it was very quiet except for the popping of the ice. This paddle was an ethereal experience with the deep, icy mist and fog hanging in the air, blanketing all the wild shapes and sculptures. Occasionally, we would see the head of a seal pop up to check us out, then slip away. This paddle turned out to be a magical mystery tour.

July 1st , PM. Bråsvellbreen - Distance: 2 km

We arrived later than expected to Bråsvellbreen, due to an amazing polar bear-viewing opportunity, which ate up a few afternoon hours. This put us in to a bit of a time pinch to do an outing, but Bråsvellbreen is such an outstanding paddle, we just had to do it, even if it was a short outing. On our way, the fog lifted and the sun was in full blossom as we paddled under blue skies along the third-largest ice cap cliff in the world. The cliffs are solid, unbroken faces of white and blue ice, with waterfalls cascading all along its edge. We paddled along slowly, taking in its majesty and paddling further out and through the brash ice, and near a number of bergy bits before being towed back to the ship, to get ready for our polar plunge and barbecue.

July 3rd, AM. Torellneset - Distance: 6.5 km

What a glorious sunny and calm morning. All the kayakers were more than ready for a paddle following our weather and polar bear cancellations. We towed to Augustabukta, to the north of Torellneset, to avoid where the walrus were swimming. Once in our kayaks we paddled towards the landing site, but on second assessment it looked like doing a crossing to the islands to the west would be a beautiful open-water experience. We headed straight across to the island of Perthesøya, a 3.5-kilometre crossing, then paddled north a short way to Berghausøya. As we made our way across, we could look back and see the amazing backdrop of the icecap and glacier of Mariebreen. On the way, we stopped to get a nice photo in front of the *Sylvia Earle* and Ivan demonstrated how to make a landing on flat sea ice near the rocky island. After a little playing around and circumnavigation of the small islet of Berghausøya, we rafted up and towed the kayaks to shore for a landing where everyone could have a visit to the walrus haulout.

July 5th, AM. Bjørnsundet - Distance: 6 km

At first we were worried that this paddle might not happen. As the ship passed through the narrow bottleneck at Bjørnsundet, the current picked up significantly, and brash ice and small bergy bits swept by the marina. It was a calm and beautiful sunny day, except for the strong current. Eventually the ship was able to position itself with a little less current and away from the brash. We launched our kayaks from the ship and headed south, out of the main channel and current, and into some mild brash ice where the current was almost non-existent. From

here we played around and discovered that by staying closer to the shores of Wilhemøya, we could use the eddy areas to stay out of the strongest currents. So, we headed north and deeper into Bjørnsundet. We had to vary our route a bit, to avoid getting too close to Walrus hauled out on a few of the ice floes. At one point we found a large, grounded berg in a mild current and were able to play on its eddies and currents like we were whitewater paddlers. We continued north to see more of the rocky shores and bays. Finally, we towed our kayaks back to the ship. All in all, for what we thought might be a cancellation it was a truly delightful and long paddle.

July 5th, PM. Ardneset-Wahlbergøya - Distance: 5 km

Another sunny, glassy, and warm afternoon. We towed our kayaks to the west of the landing site at Wahlbergøya, and towards the small archipelago of islands of Vaigattoyane. We began paddling in open water and started paddling to Palenderøya, then along its flanks to some smaller islands to the north. We kept paddling to the north and worked on a few paddle techniques. The remainder of the paddle was a meandering tour of the edges of the brash ice, playing with some mild currents, mixed with diversions to avoid distant walrus that we spotted out on the ice.

July 6th, AM. Alkefjellet - Distance: 4 km

We were a little late getting to Alkefjellet, as we were distracted, as we usually are, by a polar bear-viewing opportunity, among some small islets to the northeast. The timing turned out to be in our favour, as we would soon find out, as the position of the sun and light would more enhance this spectacular place. We towed our kayaks to the southern end of the Alkefjellet, where the cliffs are a little shorter, and worked our way north to the cliffs' climax where the cliffs rise to 100 metres and are inundated by the estimated, 60,000 breeding pairs of Brünnich's guillemot. When we first arrived at the southern end, we were surprised by how many small waterfalls danced down the cliffs. Here was where the sun added its magic to the whole scene, as rainbows reflected off the waterfalls. We paddled along slowly, taking in the breathtaking scenes, and stopping often, just to wonder. Halfway through our traverse we came to a huge cascade, where the wind and spray from the waterfall would just about knock you over. We finished our paddle beneath the highest points, and most ominous towers of Alkefjellet. This was a magical paddle that will not be easily forgotten.

July 6th, PM. Eolusneset - Distance: 5.5 km

This was another gorgeous sunny day. We towed deep into the bay to the south of Eolusneset, to escape a little chop and wind. The terrain here is more low-lying and the bay acts as a natural harbour and is actually a tiny fjord named Sorgfjorden. Sorgfjorden is rich with whaling and sealing history since the late 1600s. This was a peaceful paddle, following a snow-capped beach, interrupted by a few little glacial streams. Occasionally there would a small collapse of the snowfield edge. Our paddle took us back north towards our landing, to see some of that old history, monuments and gravesites.

July 7th, AM. Texas Bar - Distance: 5 km

The kayakers landed at Texas Bar, to tour the hut. Ivan and Wes prepared the kayaks on the beach. We then paddled the rocky coastline southwest up Liefdefjorden, to a small, shallow bay adjacent to Hornbækpollen. The bay was glass-calm. We played around in the shadows and worked on a few advanced strokes, such as the draw. It was then that Dez decided to demonstrate his understanding of the wet exit and re-entry procedure given in the

briefing at the very beginning of the trip. We all agreed to give him an A+. He was able to re-enter his kayak quite fast. After the excitement we continued around a point and continued down the coast to the southwest, passing some small caves and small icebergs. Monacobreen, Seligerbreen and Idabreen glaciers shone in the distance... our destination for the afternoon.

July 7th, PM. Monacobreen - Distance: 6 km

The conditions at Monacobreen were premium today with blue skies, glassy waters, no wind, and amazing reflections. We launched right from the ship and headed towards the glacier, while tucking behind one of the newly exposed islands that less than ten years before, had been beneath the glacier. We used this island as a breakwater, in case there was a calving of the glacier. After determining that we were at a safe-enough distance, we passed between two of the islets to then paddle along the glacier to see the impressive towers and jumbled faces of this glacier. We continued, and soon had to weave further away from the glacier as we negotiated brash ice and a number of larger bergy bits. We paddled the length of the glacier and looped back around to finish back at the ship. Yet one more aesthetic paddle!

July 8th, AM. Alicehamna- Bruceneset - Distance: 6 km

We were greeted with a nice sunny morning, but a bit more wind and swell than we had been experiencing. We towed north to just shy of Kapp Svensksund. Then we paddled south, overlooking the steep cliffs and small peaks surrounding Raudfjorden. We paddled a nice distance in following seas, working on our ruddering and surfing techniques. We eventually landed at Bruceneset, and Wes escorted the paddlers on a hike to the high point that overlooked where we had been paddling, and to see the grave and memorial there.

July 8th, PM. Hamiltonbutka - Distance: 6.5 km

We towed our kayaks north of Hamiltonbutka to a shallow tidal bay, just south of Hornbækfjellet. We entered the bay on a slipstream of current and then proceeded to float around somewhat aimlessly. We were transfixed by a mass variety of tiny floating jellyfish-like creatures called ctenophores. These tiny transparent bodies have little comb-like plates filled with tiny cilia that move and diffract light, like prisms in iridescent waves. It was hard to pull ourselves away from our light-pulsating friends, but we knew more wonders were in store around the corner. We continued to paddle south and explore the little archipelago of islands that make up Hamiltonbutka. These bedrock islands have some nice little passages to paddle through and small hidden bays. It made for some fun paddling and towards the end we paddled in some brash ice and looked out upon Hamiltonbreen glacier. We completed our outing by towing our kayaks back to the ship.

July 9th, AM. St Jonsfjorden - Distance: 4 km

This was our final paddle of the trip. It was a short outing, but the paddlers made it count. We paddled into the bay to the south of Konowbreen to get our final little paddle along a glacier face, rocky shores and in the brash ice. This was a reflective paddle, thinking back on all we had experienced. Paddling lazily around a newly revealed island, observing some distant seals and finally taking a quiet moment to punctuate this sacred place we call the Arctic.





Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	June-July													
	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Red-throated Diver						•	•		•	•	•	•		
Northern Fulmar	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pink-footed Goose		•		•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	
Barnacle Goose	•		•	•	•	•			•	•				•
Common Eider	•		•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•
Long-tailed Duck	•				•									
Rock Ptarmigan	•											•		
Ringed Plover		•												
Sanderling	•						•			•				•
Dunlin	•													
Purple Sandpiper	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	•	•		•
Ruddy Turnstone										•				
Red-necked Phalarope					•	•								
Grey (= Red) Phalarope		•			•	•								
Arctic Skua	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Great Skua		•	•							•				
Glaucous Gull	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Black-Headed Gull				•										
Kittiwake	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ivory Gull		•		•	•	•	•	•	•					
Arctic Tern	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Brünnich's Guillemot	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Black Guillemot	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•
Little Auk	•	•	•		•		•		•	•	•			•
Atlantic Puffin	•	•	•		•							•	•	•
Snow Bunting	•	•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•		•



Mammal Species	June-July													
	27	28	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Arctic Fox			•									•	•	
Reindeer	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•		•	•	
Polar Bear					•	•	•	•		•		•		
Ringed Seal		•		•					•					
Bearded Seal			•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	
Walrus	•			•	•	•	•		•					•
UNID Seal						•								
Minke Whale					•					•	•	•		
Humpback Whale		•	•											
Fin Whale										•		•		
Blue Whale		•										•	•	
UnID Baleen Whale		•											•	
Beluga	•						•			•				
Harbour Porpoise			•											



**Svalbard in Depth
SVD001S
27 June – 10 July 2023**

Most northerly point
Latitude: 79° 57' N
Longitude: 016° 4' E



- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Longyearbyen | 14. Bjornsundet |
| 2. Akseløya | 15. Ardnese-Wahlbergoya |
| 3. Bamsebu | 16. Alkefjellet |
| 4. Gnalodden | 17. Eolusneset |
| 5. Samarinbreen | 18. Texas Bar |
| 6. Kapp Lee | 19. Monacobreen |
| 7. Negribreen | 20. Bruceneset |
| 8. Russebukta | 21. Hamiltonbukta |
| 9. Ormholet | 22. St Jons fjord |
| 10. Kiepertøya | 23. Alkhomet-Trygghamna |
| 11. Torellneset | 24. Longyearbyen |
| 12. Brasvellbreen | |
| 13. Storøya | |





Expeditioners:

Michael Aw

Loraine Beaver

Richard Beaver

Priscilla Bishop

John Bishop

Kate Bradley

Shawn Bradley

Elizabeth Braman

Marit Brand

Emma Broadfield

Ronny Brunvoll

Steven Byrne

Malva Canonico

Jackson Carter

Mari-Alice Cea

Andrew Conway

Megan Cook

Carole Creedon

Michael Creedon

Danny Du

Andrew Flebbe

Doris Ford

Danielle Free

Daniel Free

Ruben Gamoo

Xiaohuan Gao

Jason Gillespie

Carmen Gomez

Emily Greene

Amelya Grey

Alison Hart

Jackie Hirsch

Michael Hirsch

Milan Holecek

Nancy Jensen

Khaw Khoon

Stephen Klasen

Suzanne Klasen

Andreas Koester

Jia Yong Koh

Priya Kuladeva

Jane Lee

Stephen Lee

Fei Liu

Charlotte Lockwood

Kay Lucas

Dennis Lund

Kim Lund

Fiona McLean

David Mortimer

Bonnie Newman

Caleb Orr

Michelle Orr

Elsie Ostiller

Hayley Peacock-Gower

Charmian Perston

John Perston

Martin Price

Louise Price

Hu Qian

Clare Rathbone

Gareth Reid

John Ridley

Jenny Ridley

Nancy Riley

Ron Rothacker

Gregory Sara

Judith Sara

Nahem Seguias Ferrero

Lina Stock

David Stock Jr

Mark Stoke

David Thomas

Jennifer Thomas

Ton Tjia

Tom Vass

George Vaughan

Sandra Vaughan

Judith Walker

Benjamin Whitehead

Chris Wichems

Desmond Wichems

Rod Wilson

Linda Ziffrin

Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Dot Robertson

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Marine Biologist & CS Coordinator: John Kirkwood

Local Expedition Guide/Historian: Kelsey Camacho

Historian: Aviaaja (Avi) Schluter

Ecologist/Geologist: Heather Chrystie

Firearms Manager: Jeff Nagel

Photography Guide: Scott Portelli

Expedition Medic: David (from Dunedin) Palmer

Expedition Guide: Thomas Gov

Kayak Guide: Ivan Klochkov

Kayak Guide: Wes McNeil

Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ari Benz Ciria

Photography thanks to:

Scott Portelli

Wes McNeil

Ivan Klochkov

Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Arsen Prostov

Second Officer: Matko Zagorac

Safety Officer: Clyde James Houston

Ship Doctor: Gino Tiraboschi

Chief Engineer: Praveen Kumar Kaushal

First Engineer: Adrian Trasca

IT Officer: Nathaniel Vibares

Hotel Director: Balvant Singh

Head Bartender: Restlie Dimasaka Baldemor

Head Waiter: Naif Khan

Chief Purser: Mark Walsh

Executive Chef: Suresh Pai Karkala

Sous Chef: I Gusti Ketut Purnawirawan

Hotel Controller: Rey Satuito Nolasco

Receptionist: Jonalyn Rivera Ecija

Receptionist: Jaypee Alota Abonitalla

Head Steward: Anil Kumar Kashyap

Bosun: Leo Francis Magnaye Marzan

Able Seaman: Anthony John Narvaez Brosas

Able Seaman: Eduardo Caranoo Aloyan

Able Seaman: Nestor Fernandez Arangorin

Able Seaman: Rajiv Mahajan Rauniyar

Able Seaman: Luis Fernando Alvarez Santos

Able Seaman: Ferdy Noel Diaz Roque





