

Spitsbergen - An Arctic Voyage

Naturetrek Tour Report

13-25 July 2006

Report compiled by Tim Melling



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour participants: Tim Melling
 Arnold Illingworth
 Jeffrey and Heather Seddon
 Dick Parbles
 Mary Walmsley
 John and Phyll Pickett
 Nick Heal

Day 1

Thursday 13 July

We arrived at Oslo in the late afternoon and checked into the Radisson Hotel. We had a two hour walk before dinner and managed to see Great spotted Woodpecker, Siskins, Hooded Crows and Jackdaws. Four species we weren't likely to see in Spitzbergen. The same goes for the butterflies, which were flying in good numbers. Star of the show was a fine male Scarce Copper, freshly emerged with fiery orange wings. After our walk, we met up with Mary, who had spent two days in Oslo, and had dinner together.

Day 2

Friday 14 July

After a hearty breakfast we caught the 10am flight to Longyearbyen and arrived around lunchtime. A bus took us to the Polar Radisson hotel, which left us the afternoon to explore. We had to arrive a day early in Longyearbyen because the runway was closed for repairs on 15 July, but there was plenty to do and see. On the estuary we saw Barnacle Geese with goslings, Brunnich's Guillemots, Red-throated Divers, Long-tailed Ducks plus numerous Glaucous Gulls and Kittiwakes. Among the Eiders we found a single female King Eider, and Nick was lucky enough to see an adult male King Eider the following morning. Snow Buntings were breeding commonly around the town and waders on the shore were mainly Purple Sandpipers plus a few Dunlin and Ringed Plovers. In the distance we could see several Reindeer.

We also spent some time familiarising ourselves with the plants. The most obvious included Svalbard Poppy, Yellow Marsh Saxifrage and Arctic Cottongrass.

During our evening meal we saw our first Arctic Fox trotting across in front of the hotel, plus a Long-tailed Skua which did a couple of fly pasts.

Day 3

Saturday 15 July

As the sun never sets it is quite difficult to differentiate where one day ends and another begins. Nick certainly could not sleep, and was still bird watching on the estuary where he found a male King Eider and our first Ivory Gull. The Arctic Fox from the night before was also very active in the early morning.

Most people used the day to visit the museum and the church. It was amusing to watch Svalbard residents going about their daily business while being attacked by Arctic Terns. Surprisingly this behaviour didn't seem to engender any malice towards the birds. A pair of Arctic Skuas were also highly protective of their chick and attacked walkers on the road whenever the chick strayed close.

The boat boarding was from 16:00 so we used the rest of the day looking at flowers. A small patch of Boreal Jacob's Ladder near the hotel was the highlight. A small herd of unconcerned Reindeer wandered the streets of Longyearbyen, much to the delight of the photographers.

We bumped into a couple who had just disembarked from our ship, having completed a lap of Svalbard. We anxiously asked if they had seen any Polar Bears and were envious when we heard they had seen thirteen. I remember discussing that we'd be happy for good views of just one. How differently things turned out.

Our baggage was miraculously transferred from the hotel to the ship (the Grigoriy Mikheev) and we set sail at 19:00, quickly followed by a fantastic evening meal 30 minutes later. From the boat we saw literally thousands of Brunnich's Guillemots and Little Auks flying past.

Day 4

Sunday 16 July

Nick had stayed awake all night and was rewarded with two Minke Whales in the early hours of the morning. Brunnich's Guillemots and Little Auks continued to stream past in their thousands, along with smaller numbers of Puffins, Fulmars (mostly blue ones), Kittiwakes plus occasional Great and Arctic Skuas. A few of us saw our first Harp Seal characteristically porpoising through the water close to the boat.

After breakfast we took the Zodiacs and approached the 14th of July Glacier in Krossfjord. To our great delight a couple of Bearded Seals allowed close approach and posed for lots of photographs. We also visited a nesting colony of Brunnich's Guillemots along with a few Puffins. We learned that Puffins in Svalbard tend to nest on cliff ledges unlike the burrow-nesting English birds. Later we landed on the north shore among some large ice blocks on the beach where we saw our first breeding Pink-footed Geese and the ubiquitous Barnacle Geese. We also visited a small cliff beyond the browsing reach of Reindeer which was like a small rock garden. Here we found Black Fleabane, Polar Dandelions, Bluff Cinquefoil, Hawkweed-leaved and Alpine Saxifrage among the commoner plants.

After lunch we visited Ny-Alesund, reputedly the most northerly town in Europe. Here we saw an Ivory Gull (with unattractive colour rings) feeding by the dog pens, a family of Arctic Foxes with a den under one of the houses, plus a few more Reindeer. We saw plenty of nesting Barnacle Geese plus a pair of Red-throated Divers and a few Long-tailed Ducks. Most surprising was a male Blackbird, presumably having flown several hundred miles off course from Norway.

Day 5

Monday 17 July

We had an early morning wake-up call at 6:00 as we neared Moffen Island and crossed the 80th parallel for the first time. Moffen Island is a nature reserve where boats are allowed no nearer than 300m to avoid disturbing the Walruses. Here we saw about 150 Walruses, mostly hauled out on the beach, but a few in the water. The avian highlight was a beautiful Sabine's Gull which flew across in front of our boat. We then sailed south during breakfast into Woodfjord. En route we saw a couple of Minke Wales quite close to the boat. We landed in a bay called Jacobsenbukta, which was a spectacular river delta with red sandstone coloured water. We walked across the tundra looking for flowers and were not disappointed. Being much further north than Longyearbyen we found plants in full bloom that had gone over in the south. These included Arctic Bell Heather, Hairy

Lousewort, Mountain Avens and Purple Saxifrage. We also saw our first Snow Buttercups, Sulphur-coloured Buttercups and Arctic Dandelions. Birds of note included another Ivory Gull, Pink-footed Geese and our only flock of pale-bellied Brent Geese. The tiny Svalbard population of these birds winters only on Lindisfarne in Northumberland.

After lunch we sailed west to the Andoyen Islands, that are noted for their breeding Eider Ducks which Polar Bears find delicious. As we neared the islands we spotted our first two bears fast asleep. After the obligatory briefing from Tarik we set out on the zodiacs and saw our first Polar Bear, a huge male who didn't seem too enamoured by our approach. Eventually he settled down and allowed a few photographs. The second bear was even more camera shy and remained resolutely in the centre of the island away from the cameras.

We then spotted two more bears on different islands, one of which turned out to be a female with this year's twin cubs. She allowed close approach and most of us managed to photograph them. The mother tried to coax the cubs into the water but they weren't for swimming. Those who weren't completely distracted by the bears noticed a couple of Turnstones. Jeffrey also spotted our first Grey Phalarope flying around but hardly anyone saw them as we were all distracted by the bears.

We then got back on the ship and sailed towards the Monaco Glacier where we saw yet another Polar Bear, our seventh of the day. We managed to spot both Bearded and Harp Seals en route to the Monaco Glacier, which was breathtakingly spectacular. We saw great chunks of ice calve off and splash in the water among a flock of several thousand Kittiwakes, plus 8 Ivory Gulls, many Glaucous Gulls, and a single Great Black-backed Gull. Amazingly Arnold managed to spot a single Sabine's Gull among this great throng. The Captain (Alexandr Pruss) skilfully manoeuvred the boat alongside the glacier while Tim gave a racing style commentary alerting everyone on the boat as to the exact whereabouts of the Sabine's Gull.

We sailed out of Liefdefjord under the midnight sun and spotted three more Polar Bears (that were probably among those we had seen on the way in). Dick was also the first to spot Minke Whales, his first ever whales and the first of three this evening. None of us wanted to go to bed as the scenery was just too beautiful to leave. What a fantastic day!

Day 6

Tuesday 18 July

We sailed south into the Hinlopen Strait, which separates Spitzbergen from North Island. Here we headed for the picturesque basalt cliffs of Alkefjeuet (which means Auk Cliff). The water was a little choppy for the zodiacs and people were feeling seasick so we headed back to the boat. We learned that 100,000 Brunnich's Guillemots breed on these cliffs.

The weather was quite interesting as it alternated between sun and snow. Several times we witnessed a Snowbow (like a rainbow with subdued colours).

We then made a landing at an old Swedish research settlement called Kinnvika. This was on the north west tip of North Island and was a true polar desert. There was very little plant life except for Purple Saxifrage, Polar Mouse-ear and Svalbard Poppy. We also saw our only Sanderling of the trip (embarrassingly misidentified at a distance as a Little Stint!), plus Red-throated Divers, Purple Sandpipers and Long-tailed Ducks with chicks.

We were intending to make a landing on an island called Ladoya where there was a chance of Grey Phalaropes. However, the sea was too rough for zodiacs, and more interestingly, we had heard that a dead whale was on Phippsoya with 13 Polar Bears feeding off it. There was no contest. We set off north for Phippsoya, the neighbouring island of Rossoya, the most northerly island in Europe. En route we spotted three whales giving large blows and showing a small dorsal fin simultaneous with the blow, a characteristic of Fin Whale. We arrived at the target beach on Phippsoya and soon started spotting Polar Bears. The count rose and rose as we spotted yet more bears lounging around on snow patches, several with cubs. The final count was seventeen Polar Bears! The small remaining bit of whale backbone was only spotted near the end. The entire carcass had been polished off by the bears, who were lying around replete.

We then headed north to reach the pack ice.

Day 7

Wednesday 19 July

Most of us awoke before breakfast to the sound of pack ice banging against the hull of the ship (lucky the Mikheev was ice-strengthened!). We rushed on deck to see the surreal vision of a crazy paving of pack ice pieces set against a deep blue sea, with a moody mist rising and falling periodically. Even before breakfast we had spotted our first Polar Bear. After breakfast we spotted two more, although they weren't particularly close. Other distractions were two Long-tailed Skuas, two Pomarine Skuas (one dark, one light), plus several Harp and Ringed Seals. One Polar Bear had recently killed and eaten a seal and there were five Ivory Gulls and a Glaucous Gull scavenging the remains.

Fortunately Tarik had the foresight to ask the captain to position the ship upwind of the third bear. As the aroma of the delicious lunch was drifting out of the galley, the Polar Bear took the bait and approached the ship. We stood aghast as the bear came closer and closer, until eventually he was directly below the bow peering up at us.

We ate our lunch in a state of elation, all apart from Nick, who was frantically trying to buy a film from the shop while the bear was at its closest. However, he needn't have worried as the views were about to get even better. After lunch we boarded the zodiacs and the Polar Bear returned to investigate. All five zodiacs experienced this beautiful Polar Bear at just a few metres distance, and the sun came out too. It was so close we could hear him breathing and hear the crunch of his paws in the snow. Even those with snapshot cameras managed to get stunning photographs of this individual.

Soon after this we reached our furthest north (81° 46'), just 500 miles from the North Pole. At this point we had sailed right out of European waters and into the Polar Basin. We had also sailed right off the navigational charts. We then sailed south west towards Kvitoya (White Island), the most north-easterly of the Svalbard group.

Day 8

Thursday 20 July

After breakfast we arrived off the north east coast of Kvitoya, which is normally completely surrounded by pack ice, even in summer. The entire island is composed of Polar ice cap (glacier) apart from a few beaches. We landed on one such beach to the astonishment of some female Walruses guarding their calves. They had

probably never seen humans before and were both curious, but wary. On the beach we were equally astonished to find an Arctic Fox, still in partial winter pelage. We couldn't believe a fox could survive on an island which was 99.9% ice. We also found a dead Polar Bear, plus another skull, and a Bowhead Whale skull. More perturbingly, there was a live Polar Bear on the next beach along. En route back to the zodiacs we saw eight Pomarine Skuas.

We then sailed west to the south east coast of Norausandlet (North Island) where we intended to land on a small island. However, yet another Polar Bear scuppered our plans by arriving on the island before us. We contented ourselves by sailing round the island, which was brilliant as we spotted a young male King Eider and a very photogenic Polar Bear atop a spectacular glacier. This Polar Bear bore a radio collar.

After dinner we sailed west along the south coast of North Island among some spectacular ice-bergs and a clear blue sky with a midnight sun. Well over a hundred Harp Seals were seen in small groups in this stretch of sea.

Day 9

Friday 21 July

Thick morning fog thwarted our plans to sail through the sound between Spitzbergen and Barentsoya. Tarik quickly opted to explore some areas in the southern part of the Hinlopen Strait. We landed at a site called Kapp Weyprecht where we saw a Grey Phalarope, Reindeer and a Ringed Seal.

After lunch we intended to land on an island called Wilhelmshoya but again Polar Bears forced a change of plan as there were two adult bears, one with a cub where we wanted to land. A little further on we found yet another mother bear with a cub. We continued to the other side of the island where we found a bay (Binnebukta) which did not appear to have Polar Bears. It did however have good numbers of Ivory Gulls. Here we counted 38 feeding on the beach among several hundred Kittiwakes. We landed the Zodiacs and found fresh Polar Bear footprints but no bears. A walk on the tundra produced a few interesting flowers, Arctic Cinquefoil and Hairy Lousewort, plus three Ptarmigan, two with chicks. There were also nesting Purple Sandpipers with both chicks and eggs. We returned to the ship and set sail, but soon spotted yet another Polar Bear lying on his back in a snow field.

Day 10

Saturday 22 July

We sailed overnight through the Freeman Sound between Barentsoya and Edgeoya, then continued south towards the thousand islands. Here we were intending to look at some Seventeenth Century blubber ovens, but yet again a Polar Bear put paid to our plans. We had to make do with zodiac views. We also saw the macabre sight of dozens of Walrus skulls lying on the ground having had their ivory tusks removed.

We then took the zodiacs to land at Andreetangen on the south west tip of Edgeoya. This was to see a large Walrus haul out. We had to approach very stealthily, but this paid off as the Walrus in the water seemed as interested in us, as we were in them. Eventually then came to the water's edge with a few metres of us. A great photographic opportunity. En route back to the ship we found our third Grey Phalarope sitting on the water among feeding Kittiwakes.

After lunch we sailed to one of the Thousand Islands called Ekongen where we saw a 300 year old Bowhead Whale Skeleton. The birds were good here too, with several nesting pairs of Red-throated Divers, plus Long-tailed Ducks, Arctic and Great Skuas plus Black Guillemots. The vegetation was dominated by beautiful lichens and Tufted Saxifrage.

Day 11

Sunday 23 July

Overnight we sailed round the southern tip of Spitzbergen and into Hornsund. Here we visited a huge breeding colony of Little Auks and we saw an Arctic Fox trying to steal a Barnacle Goose Gosling with the parents valiantly defending their chick. We also saw some very photogenic Reindeer with large antlers. These Reindeer are of the small Svalbard race “platyrhynchos” (meaning flat nose!). These Reindeer are truly wild unlike the domesticated majority on mainland Scandinavia.

We then sailed deeper into Hornsund to see the fantastic mountain scenery above numerous glaciers. Tim spotted a distant seal in the water, which on closer approach turned out to be a Polar Bear, the first of four we were to see swimming in the water, one with a two year old cub in tow. Apparently Polar Bears often take to the water when the weather is too warm, and the day was clear, sunny, still and warm (well, warm if you're a Polar Bear). We spent the day sailing close to glaciers and small icebergs in both zodiacs and the Mikheev, taking dozens of photographs against the clear blue sky. Late in the afternoon, Phyll was first to spot yet another Polar Bear wandering along the shore. This was to be our 46th and final Polar Bear encounter of the trip.

We finished the day with an on-deck barbecue and were entertained by party tricks by the Russian crew. Notable were an Elvis impression and a very brave belly dance!!!

Day 12

Monday 24 July

Overnight we sailed back into Isfjord and landed at Alkhornet on the northern side. Here the botany was interesting with Brook Saxifrage, Pygmy Buttercup, Polar Cress, Boreal Jacob's Ladder. But the stars of the show were four Arctic Fox cubs who posed unconcernedly while we all took lots of photographs. Some people climbed up to a Guillemot colony and saw several Reindeer too.

After lunch Nick returned to his solitary vigil on the top deck and was duly rewarded as he saw three Beluga Whales among a group of Harp Seals. He tried to alert the crew to announce the sighting but the crewman could only see seals so didn't announce it.

There were plenty more eyes on the deck after this but they never reappeared, just lots of seals.

We later landed near an old Gypsum mine at Skansbukta where we saw breeding Puffins and Brunnich's Guillemots. The flowers at this site were better than anywhere else. The scree slopes below magnificent stratified rock cliffs were brimming with wild flowers. Here we saw Tufted Cinquefoil, Lobed Buttercup, Polar Dandelion, Polar Cress, Woolly Lousewort and Net-leaved Willow, but Boreal Jacob's Ladder was undoubtedly the star of the show. Unfortunately most of it was finished flowering but Mary managed to find a beautiful clump in full bloom, just before we had to return to the ship.

We then sailed reluctantly back to Longyearbyen.

Day 13

Tuesday 25 July

We awoke at the quayside in Longyearbyen and left the boat after breakfast. The morning was spent looking at yet more flowers and enjoying the occasional flypast of Longyearbyen's resident Ivory Gull.

This has been a most memorable trip. We began running out of superlatives but all agreed it had been the trip of a lifetime. Our Expedition leader Tarik Chekchak has been leading these trips for seven years and he informed us that we had doubled his previous highest total of 21 Polar Bears in one trip (our total was 47 sightings of at least 43 different bears). He also said that a Polar Bear encounter in the pack ice down to 10m is also a once-in-a-season experience. So we had experienced both quantity and quality sightings. Our total count of 64 Ivory Gulls was also well above the norm of 5 to 10 per trip.

Finally, the expedition leaders, the Russian ship crew, the cooks and the passengers were all excellent company, which combined with the wildlife, truly did make this a trip of a lifetime.

Species lists

Birds

| Common name | Scientific name | July 2006 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|-------|------|------|--------|----|-------|------------|-----|-----|------|----|
| | | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Red-throated Diver | <i>Gavia stellata</i> | 3 | | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | | 17 | | 2 | |
| Fulmar | <i>Fulmarus glacialis</i> | 10 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 5 | 20 | 40 | 100 | 100 | 100 | |
| Pink-footed Goose | <i>Anser brachyrhynchos</i> | | | 20 | 40 | | | | 46 | 30 | | 50 | |
| Brent Goose | <i>Branta bernicla</i> | | | | 30 | | | | | | | | |
| Barnacle Goose | <i>Branta leucopsis</i> | 50 | 50 | 100 | | 10 | | | | 9 | 100 | 30 | |
| King Eider | <i>Somateria spectabilis</i> | 1 female | 1male | | | | | 1male | | | | | |
| Eider | <i>Somateria mollissima</i> | 70 | 70 | 50 | 50 | 9 | | 30 | 20 | 10 | | 50 | |
| Long-tailed Duck | <i>Clangula hyemalis</i> | 4 | 2 | 4 | 8 | | | | | 2 | | 2 | |
| Ptarmigan | <i>Lagopus mutus</i> | | | | | | | | 3+2 broods | | | | |
| Ringed Plover | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> | 3 | 6 | 4 | | | | | | | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Turnstone | <i>Arenaria interpres</i> | | | | 2 | | | | | | | 1 | |
| Sanderling | <i>Calidris alba</i> | | | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| Dunlin | <i>Calidris alpina</i> | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | 4 |
| Purple Sandpiper | <i>Calidris maritima</i> | 30 | 30 | 2 | 4 | 5 | | | 15 | 2 | | 2 | 10 |
| Grey Phalarope | <i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i> | | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| Great Skua | <i>Catharacta skua</i> | | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 | | | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Pomarine Skua | <i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i> | | | | | | 2 | 8 | | | | | |
| Arctic Skua | <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> | 8 | 5 | 10 | 10 | 5 | | 4 | 1 | 12 | 4 | 2 | |
| Long-tailed Skua | <i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i> | | | | | | 2 | | | | | | |
| Kittiwake | <i>Rissa tridactyla</i> | 50 | 100 | 100 | 9000 | 500 | 50 | 30 | 200 | 200 | 500 | 500 | 50 |
| Ivory Gull | <i>Pagophila eburnea</i> | | 1 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 3 | 38 | | 1 | | 1 |
| Sabine's Gull | <i>Larus sabini</i> | | | | 2 | | | | | | | | |
| Gt Black-backed Gull | <i>Larus marinus</i> | | | | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| Glaucous Gull | <i>Larus hyperboreus</i> | 30 | 50 | 50 | 400 | 100 | 10 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 20 | 50 | 20 |
| Arctic Tern | <i>Sterna paradisaea</i> | 100 | 100 | 50 | 50 | 20 | 5 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 5 | 5 | 50 |
| Brunnich's Guillemot | <i>Uria lomvia</i> | 8 | 1000 | 1000 | 100 | 10,000 | 5 | 20 | 100 | 50 | 50 | 1000 | 10 |
| Black Guillemot | <i>Cepphus grylle</i> | 30 | 50 | 100 | 100 | 50 | 10 | 1 | 20 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 10 |
| Puffin | <i>Fratercula arctica</i> | | 20 | 100 | 20 | 20 | 2 | 2 | | 20 | 10 | 100 | |

| | | July 2006 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------------|-----------|------|------|------|-----|----|----|----|----|------|-----|----|
| Common name | Scientific name | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Little Auk | <i>Alle alle</i> | 100 | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 | 200 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 30 | 1000 | 100 | |
| Blackbird | <i>Turdus merula</i> | | | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| Snow Bunting | <i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i> | 30 | 30 | 30 | 4 | | | | 6 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 10 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Mammals

| | | July 2006 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------|----|------------|-----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Common name | Scientific name | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| Polar Bear | <i>Ursus maritimus</i> | | | | 10 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 5 | | |
| Arctic Fox | <i>Alopex lagopus</i> | 1 | 1 | 7 (5 cubs) | | | | 1 | | 1 | 4 | | |
| Svalbard Reindeer | <i>Pangifer tarandus</i> | 12 | 18 | 4 | | | | | 12 | | 10 | 15 | |
| Walrus | <i>Odobenus rosmarus</i> | | | | 150 | | | 100 | | 200 | | | |
| Bearded Seal | <i>Erignathus barbatus</i> | 1 | | 4 | 2 | | 1 | | | | 3 | 1 | |
| Harp Seal | <i>Phoca groenlandica</i> | | | 1 | 2 | | 10 | 8 | 150 | | | 2 | |
| Ringed Seal | <i>Phoca hispida</i> | 1 | 1 | | | | 2 | | 3 | | 3 | 2 | |
| Beluga Whale | <i>Delphinapterus leucas</i> | | | | | | | | | | | 3 | |
| Minke Whale | <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> | | | 2 | 5 | | | | | | | | |
| Fin Whale | <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> | | | | | 3 | | | | | | | |

Plants

| Common name | Scientific name | location |
|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Polar Horsetail | <i>Equisetum arvense ssp alpestre</i> | fairly common |
| Polar Fir Clubmoss | <i>Hyperiza selago ssp arctica</i> | Only at Jakobsenbukta |
| Dickie's Bladder Fern | <i>Chrysopteris dickieana</i> | Only at Skansbukta |
| Polar Willow | <i>Salix polaris</i> | Common |
| Net-leaved Willow | <i>Salix reticulata</i> | Only at Skansbukta |
| Alpine/Viviparous Bistort | <i>Polygonum viviparum</i> | Common |
| Mountain Sorrel | <i>Oxyria digyna</i> | Common |
| Fringed Sandwort | <i>Arenaria pseudofrigida</i> | Mainly Isfjord area |
| Tufted Sandwort | <i>Minuartia biflora</i> | Only at Jakobsenbukta |
| Tundra Chickweed | <i>Stellaria crassipes</i> | Common |
| Arctic Chickweed | <i>Stellaria humifusa</i> | Fairly common |
| Polar Mouse-ear | <i>Cerastium regelii</i> | Seen at Kinnvika and Kvitoya |
| Arctic Mouse-ear | <i>Cerastium arcticum</i> | Common |
| Nodding/Polar Champion | <i>Silene uralensis (wahlbergella)</i> | Mainly Isfjord area |
| Arctic Champion | <i>Silene furcata</i> | Mainly Isfjord area |
| Moss Champion | <i>Silene acaulis</i> | Common |
| Lapland Buttercup | <i>Ranunculus lapponicus</i> | Longyearbyen only |
| Arctic Buttercup | <i>Ranunculus hyperboreus</i> | Fairly Common |
| Snow Buttercup | <i>Ranunculus nivalis</i> | Fairly Common |
| Sulphur-coloured Buttercup | <i>R. sulphureus</i> | Jakobsenbukta, Isfjord and Wilhemoya |
| Pygmy Buttercup | <i>Ranunculus pygmaeus</i> | Fairly Common |
| Lobed Buttercup | <i>Ranunculus pedatifidus</i> | Skansbukta only |
| Svalbard Poppy | <i>Papaver dahlianum</i> | Common |
| Polar Cress | <i>Cardamine nymanii</i> | Isfjord area only |
| Polar Scurveygrass | <i>Cochlearia groenlandica</i> | Very Common |
| Golden Whitlow-grass | <i>Draba alpina</i> | Fairly common |
| Lapland Whitlow-grass | <i>Draba lactea</i> | Fairly common |
| Hemispherical W-grass | <i>Draba subcapitata</i> | Probably this sp in Isfjord |
| Pale Whitlow-grass | <i>Draba oxycarpa</i> | Probably this sp in Isfjord |
| Purple Saxifrage | <i>Saxifrage oppositifolia</i> | Very Common |
| Hawkweed-leaved Saxifrage | <i>S. hieracifolia</i> | Fairly common |
| Alpine Saxifrage | <i>S. nivalis</i> | Common |
| Yellow Marsh Saxifrage | <i>S. hirculus</i> | Common in Isfjord area, also Edgeoya |
| Drooping Saxifrage | <i>S. cernua</i> | Very Common |
| Brook/Highland Saxifrage | <i>S. rivularis</i> | Hornsund & Isfjord area only |
| Tufted Saxifrage | <i>S. cespitosa</i> | Very Common |
| Tufted Cinquefoil | <i>Potentilla pulchella</i> | Longyearbyen & Skansbukta only |
| Bluff Cinquefoil | <i>Potentilla chamissonis</i> | Krossfjord only |
| Arctic Cinquefoil | <i>Potentilla hyparctica</i> | Wilhelmsoya only |

| Common name | Scientific name | location |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mountain Avens | <i>Dryas octopetala</i> | Common |
| Arctic Bell-heather | <i>Cassiope tetragona</i> | Common |
| Boreal Jacob's Ladder | <i>Polemonium boreale</i> | Isfjord area only (3 sites) |
| Woolly Lousewort | <i>Pedicularis dasyantha</i> | Skansbukta only |
| Hairy Lousewort | <i>Pedicularis hirsuta</i> | Fairly Common |
| Black Fleabane | <i>Erigeron humilis</i> | Krossfjord only |
| Arctic Dandelion | <i>Taraxacum arcticum</i> | Jakobsenbukta only |
| Polar Dandelion | <i>Taraxacum brachyceras</i> | Krossfjord and Skansbukta |
| Northern Wood-rush | <i>Luzula confusa</i> | Common |
| Arctic Wood-rush | <i>Luzula arctica</i> | Common |
| Arctic Cottongrass | <i>Eriophorum scheuchzeri</i> | Common Longyearbyen only |
| Polar Foxtail | <i>Alopecurus borealis</i> | Common |
| Alpine Hair Grass | <i>Deschampsia alpina</i> | Common |
| Northern Oat Grass | <i>Trisetum spicatum</i> | Skansbukta only |
| Alpine Meadow Grass | <i>Poa alpina</i> | Common |
| Arctic Meadow Grass | <i>Poa arctica</i> | Common |