

# Spitsbergen - Realm of the Polar Bear

Naturetrek Tour Report

27 June - 7 July 2017



Bearded Seal



Pod of Beluga



Glacial scenery



Walrus on ice floe

Report & images compiled by Oceanwide & Naturetrek leaders



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Tour participants: Peter Dunn, Nick Acheson and Martin Beaton (Naturetrek leaders)  
With 106 Naturetrek clients

#### **Ortelius crew:**

Captain Ernesto Barría with an International crew of 41 including:

Dejan Nikolic	Sebia	Hotel Manager
Lillian van Meurs	Poland	Chief Steward
Heinz Hacker	Austria	Head Chef
Khabir Moraes	India	Sous-Chef

#### **Expedition staff:**

Jan Belgers	The Netherlands	Expedition Leader
Arjen Drost	The Netherlands	Assistant Expedition Leader

#### **Expedition guides:**

Bill Smith	Scotland
Tom Rivest	Canada
Szymon Niezabitowski	Poland
Mick Brown	Ireland
Jim Saulino	Great Britain
Marijke de Boer	The Netherlands

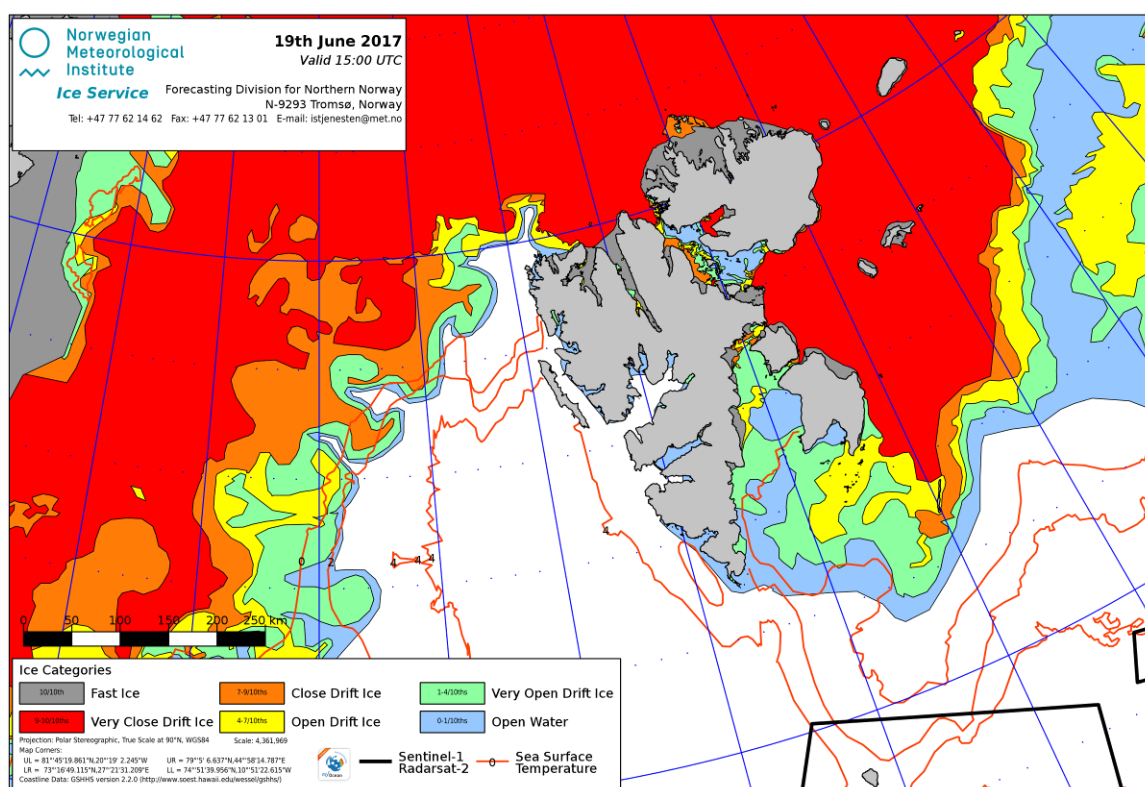
#### **Ship's Doctor:**

Véronique Verhoeven	Belgium
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## Summary

MV *Ortelius* was named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. MV *Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland, as a research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science and was named *Marina Svetaeva*. In 2011 she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel was re-flagged and renamed *Ortelius*. Now the ship is sailing as a 125-passenger vessel. *Ortelius* is 91 metres long, 17.6 metres wide and has a maximum draft of 5.80 metres, with an Ice Strength rating of UL1/1A, top speed of 13 knots and one diesel engine generating 3200 kW.

This vessel was to be our home for the ten days, taking us north into the pack ice and some of the most beautiful arctic scenery in Europe. Although we found signs of Polar Bears, alas we never saw one, no matter where we looked, and this was to become a theme for a number of ships during the same week. The reason Polar Bears were scarce was due to a late spring and the late buildup of close drift ice across the north of the archipelago which allowed many to wonder further north this year than in previous years – good for the bears but bad for the vessels that wanted to go round the north of the island to get into the fjord in the east where they den. Once we knew that we made a decision to head south to try and enter the fjord from the south but were stopped by a deep storm that raced in and halted our progress. The map below shows the great extent of solid drift ice that caused this and it was the first time Naturetrek had never found a bear and for Oceanwide it was the first time since 1981!



However we were fortunate to see at least eight magnificent Blue Whales, a rare sighting of a feeding pod of 40+ Belugas which stayed with us for at least 30 minutes, sleeping Walrus and many bird species such as Ivory Gull, Brünnich's Guillemot and Little Auk. In addition, we found 55 species of flowering plant in this harsh Arctic landscape.

## Day 1

Tuesday 27th June

### London to Oslo or Longyearbyen

The majority of the group left the UK and either overnighted in Oslo or flew straight on to Longyearbyen to join those who had flown out the day before.

## Day 2

Wednesday 28th June

### Longyearbyen

GPS position at 1600: 78°14.1'N, 015°36.6'E; Wind: calm; partly cloudy; Temperature: 11°C

Those who overnighted in Oslo continued their journey with a direct flight to Longyearbyen, where our luggage was collected to take to the ship. We were dropped off to have a few hours exploring the town and its coastline. Arctic Skuas and Barnacle Geese nested here and flocks of Common Eider flew around the fjord. Smart little Snow Buntings, the male in striking summer plumage, foraged amongst the sparse meadows of alpine meadow grass, polar foxtail, tundra grass and arctic cotton grass. The meadows and roadsides within the town were also dotted with small arctic plants easily overlooked at first. The most obvious were white tufted saxifrage, the pale yellow flower of the Svalbard Poppy, White Arctic Bell-heather *Cassiope tetragona tetragona*, and yellow-white flowers of Mountain Avens *Dryas octopetala*. But a closer look at the ground also revealed the small, dark leaves of

Polar Willow *Salix polaris*, Alpine Bistort *Bistorta vivipara*, Arctic Cinquefoil *Potentilla hyparctica hyparctica*, Mountain Sorrel *Oxyria digyna*, Arctic Mouse-ear *Cerastium arcticum*, Arctic Horsetail *Equisetum arvense alpestre*.

Eventually it was time to board the *Ortelius* which was anchored offshore, so this entailed our first of many zodiac trips. We gathered on the small pier where we met members of the expedition team who took care of our luggage and handed us lifejackets. Soon we were crossing the calm waters towards the ship. After we had made our way up the *Ortelius* gangway, we met the hotel team who showed us to our cabins. As soon as we had settled into our comfortable home for the next 10 days, most of us found themselves either on the outside decks to enjoy the views or in the bar for a coffee or tea.

Soon it was time to gather in the lecture room for several welcome briefings. One was by our expedition leader Jan Belgers, another by our hotel manager Dejan (DJ). We were also briefed by Third Officer John on ship safety and how to prepare for the worst. A drill of the general alarm (seven short blasts followed by one long blast) was made, and we all donned the SOLAS orange life jackets and mustered in the bar, guided by crew and staff. After a roll call to assure everyone was present we went out to the lifeboats and some of us actually went inside.

We returned to our cabins briefly before regrouping with Captain Ernesto Barria in the lounge for a welcoming toast of champagne or juice, before heading down to the dining room for our first scrumptious dinner, prepared by Chef Heinz and his staff. Meanwhile, *Ortelius* made her way through Isfjorden towards the open sea. After dinner, our expedition leader Jan called us to the lecture room again for a briefing on how to behave ashore in an environment friendly way. The handing out of the rubber boots was postponed until the following day as some Blue Whales were seen from the bridge! And there they were, several blows beautifully backlit against the coastline – no less than six Blue Whales were seen next to the ship for a while. What an exciting first day, and what a start to our voyage!

## Day 3

Thursday 29th June

### Kongsfjorden: New London and Ny Ålesund

GPS position at 1200: 78°57.3'N, 012°03.3'E; Wind: NW 5; Sea: moderate; partly cloudy; Temperature: 6°C

Despite the weather forecast, our overnight passage was calm and peaceful. The wake-up call at 7.30am saw us already in the Kongsfjorden and by breakfast time we were surrounded by a magnificent Arctic landscape. Before going ashore we had to attend a further two briefings concerning Polar Bear safety and Arctic protocol. By ten o'clock we were ashore and ready to explore the former mining settlement of Blomstranhavoya, or 'Marble Island', named after the Swedish 19th century chemist, Blomstrand. The rock here is over one billion years old, and was metamorphosed into marble 400,000 years ago. Between 1910 and 1913 an Englishman, Ernest Mansfield, set up some trial mining here, but the marble disintegrated on its journey back to the UK as it warmed up and was dumped overboard. Some of the buildings and steam machinery still remain today.

We split into four groups and set off in different directions in search of wildlife and wild flowers. We were not disappointed! Several bird species were seen including the hoped-for Long-tailed Skua, as well as nesting Red-throated Divers and Long-tailed Duck. Beneath our feet the tundra was covered in tough plants growing low to the ground including flowering Moss Campion, Purple Saxifrage, White Arctic Bell Heather and Mountain Avens. A lone Reindeer came close - the Spitsbergen subspecies of Reindeer (*platyrhynchus*); small stocky and

short-legged, which generally occur in small groups grazing on the sparse vegetation. A Blue Whale was seen out in the bay. Among the remains of iron and wood left from the marble mining operation we found Drooping, Golden and Tufted Saxifrages. The wind speed increased and we were called back to the landing ahead of schedule. The wind chill was significant throughout the morning.

Following lunch we set out for our afternoon landing at Ny Ålesund. This former coal mining village is now a scientific community operating under the Norwegian Polar Institute research governance. A shop offering souvenirs and Polar history books opened for us and the museum also was opened. We walked to the mast used to anchor a Zeppelin airship in 1926 and heard of the history of Arctic exploration and the attempts to reach the North Pole from Spitsbergen. There was a small colony of Arctic Terns nesting here and occasionally they would show their displeasure at our presence by diving-bombing and trying to hit our heads. The ground around the settlement was dotted with Tufted Saxifrage of which numerous plants were infected with an orange rust fungus. Some saw a sizeable group of King Eider fly out of the fjord and as we were heading back to the Zodiacs, our first Walrus moved past the landing pier, its tusks gleaming in the sunshine.

Back on board we had dinner at 7.30pm after which we cruised the Kronebreen glacier. Recap was at 9.30pm and during recap yet more Blue Whales were seen. This concluded the recap as we went to the outer decks to view the marvellous creatures in bright sunshine. The low sun highlighted their massive spouts as they moved slowly ahead of our ship. This wondrous encounter concluded our first full day in the high Arctic.

## Day 4

Friday 30th June

### The north-west: Fuglesangen and Fugleholmane

GPS position at 1200: 79°48.9'N, 011°28.4'E; Wind: WNW 2; Sea: slight; overcast; Occasional snow; Temperature: 3.5°C

We were treated to a relaxed 7.30am wakeup call, followed by a delicious breakfast at 8am. After a morning briefing we loaded up into the zodiacs at 9.30am under an overcast sky for a zodiac cruise in Fuglefjord, through the loose collection of rocky islands with their breeding residents: Arctic Tern, Barnacle Goose, Common Eider, and a pair of Great Skua. One of the male Common Eiders saw fit to display to us, or more likely to the lone female being escorted by half a dozen male Common Eiders. Eventually we wound our way to the face of the Svitjodobreen glacier with its blue chalk face. From there we wound our way around to the next fjord adjacent to Sallyhanna. Here Polar Bear tracks were visible dropping off the mountain saddles as they made their way down to the waterline, still littered with whale bones from the dead whale that was fed upon by a sleuth of Polar Bears some years ago. Three mammal species were also seen by some boats: Arctic Fox, Harbour Seal and Ringed Seal.

We returned for a delicious lunch at 12.30pm as the crew moved the boat closer to the site of our afternoon, Fuglesangen. This island is home to tens of thousands of Little Auks. At 2.30pm as the zodiacs began to arrive on the cobble beach, a light snow began to fall. As we slowly navigated the several hundred metres to the colony the snow picked up in intensity. Viviparous Alpine Meadow Grass *Poa alpine vivipara* and Polar Scurvygrass *Cochlearia groenlandica* grew in the peaty soil amongst the rocks

At 6pm we were treated to a couple of Walruses on a small ice floe. Gingerly the *Ortelius* approached into great camera range from the forecandle. Later that night several Minke Whales were seen, though as usual they were fairly shy and elusive.

## Day 5

Saturday 1st July

### Into the Pack ice north of Spitsbergen

GPS position at 1200: 79°55.8'N, 013°05.4'E; Wind: NNW 2; Sea: slight; Weather: Fair; Temperature: 4°C

Overnight the captain had brought the ship deeper into the pack ice. It was very special to be woken up by Jan and looking out of our portholes or windows to find ourselves in a completely white world. The weather and visibility were good, so after breakfast most of us went outside to enjoy this special high Arctic icescape. Several seals were seen, either swimming in the water or hauled out on ice floes. Most of the swimming ones turned out to be Harp Seals, while most Bearded and Ringed Seals were found on the ice. Around us we saw many Kittiwakes, who took advantage from the *Ortelius* which was pushing ice floes away, exposing small Polar Cod. Glaucous Gulls took advantage of that, trying to steal these small fish from the Kittiwakes. To the great delight of many birders, several Ivory Gulls were seen passing by the ship. Also several Minke Whales were seen in the open water between the ice floes.

During the day we sailed east towards the entrance of Woodfjord. Here we hoped to find Polar Bears but no matter how hard the expedition staff, helped by many guests, looked, none were to be found. As Woodfjord itself was still blocked with ice, we had to turn around. Meanwhile Marijke gave a talk in the lecture room about the identification of Arctic seals and played several of the sounds to those who managed to walk away from the stunning scenery outside.

We set course to the small island of Moffen, a bit north-east of Woodfjord. Here again the *Ortelius* had to make her way through a lot of ice, and several Polar Bear tracks were found, but none next to their owner. At a certain point we had to turn the ship westwards again, as we still had quite a long way to go, partially through the sea ice, to our destination for tomorrow. During the recap Jan explained these plans, Marijke finished her Blue Whale recap (with more underwater sounds), Arjen showed some ice charts to put the current ice situation in perspective, also on a global scale, and Bill told the story of George Martin who managed to escape from two Polar Bears by killing seals for them. After dinner many of us stayed up late to enjoy the last bits of sea ice in the midnight sun. It's always difficult to go to bed when the sun is still shining and the scenery is this spectacular.

## Day 6

Sunday 2nd July

### The mid-west: Fjortende Julibukta and Sarstangen

GPS position at 1200: 79°07.5'N, 011°49.5'E; Wind: SE 2; Sea: slight; Weather: fair; Temperature: 14°C

Bright sunshine again greeted us as we entered the Krossfjord. We split into two groups. One went ashore and the other zodiac cruised at the 'July 14th glacier'. On shore we spread out and walked in one direction on the lush vegetation beneath the nesting seabird cliffs; in the other direction we walked toward the glacier - such a contrast in a small location. The cliffs adjacent to these seabird cliffs are typically suffused with the deep orange

colour of the elegant orange lichen *Xanthoria elegans*. Below in moist, sheltered and nutrient enriched cliffs there were several spectacular 'hanging gardens', containing Drooping Saxifrage *Saxifraga cenea*, Golden Whitlow Grass *Draba alpine*, Lapland Whitlow Grass *Draba lactea*, Polar Scurvygrass *Cochlearia groenlandica* and Mountain Sorrel *Oxyria digyna*. On the lower grassy slopes we found Hawkweed-leaved Saxifrage *Micranthes hieracifolia*, Tufted Cinquefoil *Potentilla pulchella*, and in damper areas Polar Cress Cardamine *pratensis* and Pygmy Buttercup *Ranunculus pygmaeus*.

Here the influence of the North Atlantic Drift on the west side of Spitsbergen is very evident. Reindeer, Barnacle Geese and Pink-footed Geese were seen nesting and roaming around on the slopes, the vegetation providing a key component of their diet. Arctic Fox was also seen, attracted by the nesting birds. Snow Buntings were also present. The temperature on this south-facing sheltered slope rose to around 13-14°C by noon! On the glacier side, the stony moraine reminded us of the position of this glacier less than 50 years ago.

During the zodiac cruise we approached the glacier front and enjoyed the clear ice and blue ice calved from the glacier. At the outer edge of the bay we cruised beneath the low sea cliffs and had close up encounters with the Puffins and Brunnich's Guillemots which nest here. Large amounts of brash ice floated around the bay due to a recent calving of the glacier. This slowed our progress but we were all back on board in time for our 12.30pm lunch.

After lunch, we landed on the beach at Sarstangen and here we took turns to approach the Walrus herd. About 80 animals were present in this 'thigmotactic', the collective name for a group of animals gathered close together to conserve heat. A wide range of ages were present from the old scarred heavy tusked to the young short tusked, in this all-male gathering. Some were in the shallow shore water scratching and rolling around. This activity stirred up the sediment and Kittiwakes and Arctic Terns did not miss the opportunity to feed on the displaced marine life. Whilst ashore, we collected several bags of flotsam, mostly plastic, from the beach.

After dinner we had a recap covering some aspects of the day's activities and following this, some folks stayed late on deck enjoying the 'midnight sun'.

## Day 7

Monday 3rd July

### The mid-west: St. Jonsfjorden

GPS position at 1200: 78°31.1'N, 012°51.5'E; Wind: E 5; Sea: moderate; Weather: fair; Temperature: 6.5°C

Another exciting day developed early with a before-breakfast sighting of a Blue Whale off the entrance to St. Jonsfjorden, which had everyone lining the rails, cameras snapping. Zodiacs were launched at 9am and the camera-festooned passengers boarded for a landing at Gjertsenodden. There we divided into four varying ability groups.

Everyone visited the driftwood constructed cabin adjacent to the landing. The compact interior looked so intimate and inviting...a deer skin on the bunk and small stove offering comfort in such a harsh landscape.

First away were the 'long walkers' who climbed high along a moraine for a stunning view across the fjord to the glacier. Others meandered across the tundra, marvelling at the permafrost features on the landscape and the profusion of plants.

The botanists amongst the group often stopped to huddle in excited crouched groups around the most interesting of the species protruding from the rock-strewn ground. Along with the ubiquitous Polar Willow there were extensive areas of Net-leafed Willow in this area which we had not previously seen and which is far from common. In addition, there were considerable amounts of Mountain Avens and Alpine Bistort *Bistorta vivipara*, both of which feature as the principle summer food plant of the Ptarmigan indicating a prime Ptarmigan habitat. The group also discovered Tufted Sandwort *Minuartia biflora*. The hiking group discovered Polar Campion *Silene ionvolucrata*, the first and only specimen of the trip. Sightings of Arctic Skua and Reindeer provided added attraction.

*Ortelius* repositioned after lunch but the weather was slowly changing and our next intended landing at Farmhamna was cancelled (to the relief of many) due to 27 knot winds. Mick delivered his beautifully illustrated lecture 'Birds of Svalbard' in the late afternoon.

The vessel sailed on to Ymerbukta where, fortunately, conditions moderated and 10 Zodiacs were launched for a pre-dinner cruise in front of the spectacular glacier. A most enjoyable day!

## Day 8

Tuesday 4th July

### The south-west: Hornsund (first day)

GPS position at 1200: 76°58.5'N, 016°12.7'E; Wind: ESE 4; Sea: calm; Weather: cloudy; Temperature: 5°C

We went south during the night and woke up at the entrance of Hornsund near Isbjørnhamna. Here we saw the Polish research station which was established during the International Polar Year in 1957/58.

Our plan for today: spot as many species of wildlife as possible around Hornsund. Captain and expeditions team set a long and slow course along the shoreline around Hornsund. Our first sighting was of a Humpback Whale in Samarinvågen. These 13-metre long marine mammals are very acrobatic and playful. This whale showed us its beautiful tail fluke each and every time it dived into the deep waters of the fjord.

One breath-taking ship cruise later, we arrived at Brepollen 'Glacier Bay', a wide bay with an almost complete glaciated coastline. After a few minutes within this bay we spotted another whale species, but this time we saw the "toothed" white whales – Belugas! Around 14 Belugas swam in front of *Ortelius* with their little grey babies. Another encounter with a much larger pod of Belugas was made just before the recap – this time involving a group of at least 40 'white whales'.

On recap Marijke gave us more information about our encounters with the different whales and she also played the underwater sounds made by these amazing creatures. Jan also gave us detailed information about the future plans for our voyage. After dinner we enjoyed a lecture about paintings of the sea conducted by Bill Smith.



## Day 9

Wednesday 5th July

### The south-west: Hornsund (second day)

GPS position at 1200: 76°58.9'N, 016°01.9'E; Wind: SW 5; Sea: moderate; Overcast; Temperature: 7.5°C

An early wake-up call with a special happy birthday to Arjen! After breakfast the hiking group of 20 people was brought ashore. They began their walk along a gorgeous coastline, largely unexplored, and were lucky to find a 'blue' Arctic Fox with small cubs and the first specimens of the minute Polar Saxifrage *Saxifrage hyperborean*, indicating the colder climate of this south-western section of coastline. In the meantime, the *Ortelius* continued its search for wildlife within the fjord.

A Humpback Whale was soon spotted fairly close to the ship and was observed lifting its impressive flukes. At the entrance of the fjord the seas were choppy due to the increased wind and so the *Ortelius* turned around to continue our search on the opposite shoreline. Marijke gave a lecture on unusual encounters at sea: new seabird records, owls at sea, vagrant Bowhead Whales, albino dolphins, hybrid whales and Siamese twins. Just before lunch, when zodiac operations were in full swing to pick up the hikers, a Humpback Whale passed close on our starboard bow. Distant tall blows were also seen involving a group of Fin Whales, which seemed to be making their way further offshore.

After lunch a quick update was given by Jan and afternoon plans were discussed. Given the unusual ice situation around Spitsbergen this summer, we were not fortunate enough to encounter a Polar Bear even though we explored Hornsund, a well-known area where Polar Bears roam during this time of the year.

Determined not to give up, we continued our search for the elusive Polar Bear and other Arctic wildlife during the afternoon. The windy conditions made it impossible to do another landing in the late afternoon but we did find a sheltered area in Burgerbukta to organise a long zodiac cruise. The Arctic scenery was overwhelming with the stunning glaciers, interesting geology and huge boulders on the beach. On top of some of these boulders Barnacle Geese had cleverly made their nests well out of the reach of Arctic Foxes. The pretty blue icebergs also kept us all entertained.

Our scenic day was rounded off with an Arctic barbeque on the helicopter deck with excellent food and bishop's wine to keep us warm.

## Day 10

Thursday 6th July

### Bellsund: Recherchefjorden and Ingeborgfjellet

GPS position at 1200: 77°30.8'N, 014°39.7'E; Wind: SSW 3; Sea: moderate; Overcast; Temperature: 9°C

A small pod of Belugas welcomed us as we made our way into the Recherchefjorden. This special place offered us an excellent landing opportunity along the glacier where there was also a selection of small lakes. A Walrus was feeding just inshore when the first zodiacs landed. A Harbour Seal was seen in front of the glacier where Kittiwakes were resting on blueish icebergs. Arctic Skuas were chasing the Kittiwakes and Purple Sandpipers were foraging along the shore. A first-year male King Eider was spotted and there were some Barnacle Geese around too!

The small glacial moraine on which we landed, from which the glacier had retreated some 20 years ago, was almost devoid of plants illustrating the extraordinary slow rate of colonisation and growth. Looking at the edges of the valley, it was possible to clearly observe glacial retreat by comparing vegetated and non-vegetated valley sides.

Recherchefjorden has seen many of the mostly-failed industrial enterprises in Svalbard. In Recherchefjorden the Northern Exploration Company, headed by Ernest Mansfield, carried out exploitative mining on magnetite, asbestos and coal. In the end the company went bankrupt as the Svalbard climate and the short season made mining very expensive and therefore unprofitable.

After lunch we travelled towards Ingeborgfjellet. There was a considerable swell and it was not until we were close enough that we decided that we could proceed with the landing. The colony of Little Auks was reached via a little climb over rocks and then crossing a riverbed. We were not the only ones to cross the riverbed as an Arctic Fox passed within 10 metres from us. It was soon spotted by those who had already reached the colony of Little Auks. On our ascent we found the yellow Marsh Saxifrage and amongst the small cliff ledges the Polar Saxifrage. Unfortunately, the wind and swell picked up and we received orders from the Captain to return to the *Ortelius* a little sooner than anticipated. There were numerous Reindeer here, again illustrating the importance of the bird cliffs supplying nutrients to fuel the plants on which both deer and geese rely. As we walked back to the landing site some Reindeer decided to walk with us for a time which was very much welcomed! We arrived safely back on-board *Ortelius* following a rather wet and bumpy journey. In the evening we gathered in the bar and then later in the dining room to say our goodbyes to the Captain, the expedition team and the crew.

## Day 11

Friday 7th July

### Longyearbyen

GPS position at 0800: 78°13.8' N, 015°36.1' E.

When *Ortelius* arrived at the port of Longyearbyen it was hard to believe that the expedition had come to an end – it seemed like yesterday that it had all begun. The expedition voyage had been full of truly amazing wildlife sightings; the most special ones included the Walruses, the Bearded Seals and also the largest whales on the planet – those impressive Blue Whales. Also we must not forget the large pod of white whales and the two male Walruses on the ice floe just before we entered the pack ice. And those were but a few of many truly magic moments we encountered.

After this very special trip which had led us to the northern, western and southern parts of Spitsbergen, we were rich in memories and knowledge about the Arctic and its wildlife. It was sad to say goodbye to all the beautiful places we had visited and to disembark the *Ortelius*, the ship that had been our comfortable, cosy home for an unforgettable journey.

We had a few hours to explore Longyearbyen and try and find any phalaropes, which was another species obvious by its absence this year. Although unsuccessful, we did add Dunlin to the trip list, feeding with Purple Sandpipers.

The coach collected us and took us to the airport, where we were reunited with our luggage to check-in for our flight. This had been delayed but we were informed that the connection at Oslo would wait for us. In the meantime we saw our last King Eider from the lounge! The large group made it back to London at various times over the weekend, where we said our goodbyes, some vowing to return to the Arctic in search of Polar Bears again.

It must be noted that the extensive sea ice which prevented us from circumnavigating Spitsbergen and finding any bears was good news for the Polar Bears and meant that they could wander much further in search of their favourite food; seals on ice floes.

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## Map of route taken



## Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted)

	Common name	Scientific name	June/July									
			29	29	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	✓	✓	9		✓	1	9	✓	✓	✓
2	Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	✓	8					2			
3	King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>		25				1	✓	4	1	1
4	Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	✓	✓	✓	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	✓	6					4			2
6	Rock Ptarmigan	<i>Lagopus muta</i>		2								
7	Red-throated Diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>		8	3			2			2	1
8	Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Common Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>						2			3	
10	Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpina</i>										1
11	Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>	✓	✓				3			2	✓
12	Black-legged Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>				7			1			
14	Great Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>					1	1				
15	Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	✓	5	✓	10	✓	✓	✓	✓	2	✓
16	European Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	1									
17	Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	✓		10	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Great Skua	<i>Stercorarius skua</i>		3	8	1	4	3	1	✓		
19	Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1	5		6	2	2	1	✓	2	✓
20	Long-tailed Skua	<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>		1		1						
21	Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Atlantic Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	1	✓	✓	✓
25	Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	✓	✓	2		✓	3		✓		✓

## Mammals

1	Arctic Fox	<i>Vulpes lagopus</i>			1		1			3	✓	
2	Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>		1	2		6				1	
3	Bearded Seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>			1	5	1					
4	Harp Seal	<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>				✓						
5	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>		2	1			2			2	
6	Ringed Seal	<i>Pusa hispida</i>			5	✓						
7	Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>			1		15			✓		
8	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>			1	2	1			1		
9	Blue Whale	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	6	2				2				
10	Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>						1		1		
11	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>							1	3		
12	Beluga	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>							40			

## Plants

### Scientific names

### Pteridophytes

### Equisetaceae

*Equisetum arvense* ssp. *alpestre*

### English name

### Ferns and their allies

### Horsetail Family

Arctic Horsetail

### Location

Longyearbyn

Scientific names	English name	Location
<b>Angiosperms</b>	<b>Flowering plants</b>	
<b>Asteraceae</b>		
<i>Petasites frigidus</i> ssp. <i>frigidus</i>	Lapland Butterbur	Longyearbyn
<i>Taraxacum arcticum</i>	Arctic Dandelion	Krossfjorden
<b>Brassicaceae</b>	<b>Cabbage Family</b>	
<i>Cardamine bellidifolia</i> ssp. <i>bellidifolia</i>	High Alpine Cress,	Longyearbyn
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i> ssp. <i>angustifolia</i>	Polar Cress	Krossfjorden
<i>Cochlearia groenlandica</i>	Polar Scurvygrass	Longyearbyn
<i>Draba alpina</i>	Golden Whitlow-grass	Longyearbyn
<i>Draba arctica</i> ssp. <i>arctica</i>	Mealy Whitlow-grass	
<i>Draba lactea</i>	Lapland Whitlow-grass	Longyearbyn
<i>Draba oxycarpa</i>	Pale Whitlow-grass	Longyearbyn
<i>Draba pauciflora</i>	Tundra Withlowgrass	Longyearbyn
<i>Draba subcapitata</i>	Hemispherical Withlowgrass	Longyearbyn
<b>Caryophyllaceae</b>	<b>Pink Family</b>	
<i>Cerastium arcticum</i>	Arctic Mouse-ear	Longyearbyn
<i>Cerastium regelii</i>	Polar Mouse-ear	Krossfjorden
<i>Honkenya peploides</i> ssp. <i>diffusa</i>	Sea Sandwort	Recherchebreen
<i>Minuartia biflora</i>	Tufted Sandwort	St.Jonsfjorden
<i>Sagina nivalis</i>	Snow Pearlwort	Longyearbyn
<i>Silene acaulis</i>	Moss Campion Common	Longyearbyn
<i>Silene involucrata</i> ssp. <i>furcata</i>	Arctic White Campion	Longyearbyn
<i>Silene uralensis</i> ssp. <i>arctica</i>	Polar Campion	Krossfjorden
<i>Stellaria humifusa</i>	Arctic Chickweed	Longyearbyn
<b>Ericaceae</b>		
<i>Cassiope tetragona</i> ssp. <i>tetragona</i>	White Arctic Bell Heather	Longyearbyn
<b>Papaveraceae</b>	<b>Poppy Family</b>	
<i>Papaver dahlianum</i>	Svalbard Poppy	Longyearbyen
<b>Polemoniaceae</b>	<b>Jacob's Ladder Family</b>	
<i>Polemonium angustifolium</i>	Boreal Jacob's Ladder	Longyearbyen
<b>Polygonaceae</b>	<b>Dock Family</b>	
<i>Bistorta vivipara</i>	Alpine Bistort	Longyearbyen
<i>Oxyria digyna</i>	Mountain Sorrel	Longyearbyen
<b>Ranunculaceae</b>	<b>Buttercup Family</b>	
<i>Ranunculus hyperboreus</i> ssp. <i>arnellii</i>	Tundra buttercup	Longyearbyen
<i>Ranunculus sulphureus</i>	Sulphur-coloured buttercup	Longyearbyen
<i>Ranunculus pygmaeus</i>	Pygmy Buttercup	Krossfjorden
<b>Roseaceae</b>	<b>Rose Family</b>	
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	Dryas octopetala	Longyearbyen
<i>Potentilla hyparctica</i>	Arctic Cinquefoil	Longyearbyen
<i>Potentilla pulchella</i>	Tufted Cinquefoil	Akselsundet
<b>Salicaceae</b>		
<i>Salix reticulata</i>	Net-leaved Willow	St.Jonsfjorden

<b>Scientific names</b>	<b>English name</b>	<b>Location</b>
<i>Salix polaris</i>	Polar Willow	Longyearbyen
<b>Saxifragaceae</b>	<b>Saxifrage Family</b>	
<i>Chrysosplenium tetrandrum</i>	Dwarf Golden-saxifrage	Blomstrandhalvoya
<i>Micranthes hieracifolia</i>	Hawkweed-leaved Saxifrage	Longyearbyen
<i>Micranthes nivalis</i>	Alpine Saxifrage	Recherchebreen
<i>Saxifraga aurea</i>	Arctic Saxifrage	Hornsundtind (Hornsund)
<i>Saxifraga cernua</i>	Drooping Saxifrage	Longyearbyen
<i>Saxifraga cespitosa</i> ssp. <i>cespitosa</i>	Tufted Saxifrage	Longyearbyen
<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>	Marsh Saxifrage	Akselsundet
<i>Saxifraga hyperborea</i>	Polar Saxifrage	Hornsundtind (Hornsund)
<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	Purple Saxifrage	Longyearbyen
<b>Scrophulariaceae</b>	<b>Figwort Family</b>	
<i>Pedicularis hirsuta</i>	Hairy Lousewort	Longyearbyen
<b>Cyperaceae</b>	<b>Sedge Family</b>	
<i>Carex bigelowii</i> ssp. <i>artisibirica</i>		St.Jonsfjorden
<i>Carex fuliginosa</i> ssp. <i>misandra</i>	Nodding Sedge	Blomstrandhalvoya
<i>Carex glacialis</i>	Ridge Sedge	St.Jonsfjorden
<i>Carex nardina</i> ssp. <i>hepburnii</i>	Cushion Sedge	Longyearbyen
<i>Eriophorum scheuchzeri</i> ssp. <i>articum</i>	Polar Cotton Grass	Longyearbyen
<b>Juncaceae</b>	<b>Rush Family</b>	
<i>Luzula confusa</i>	Northern Wood-rush	Longyearbyen
<b>Poaceae</b>	<b>Grass Family</b>	
<i>Alopecurus ovatus</i> ( <i>magellanicus</i> )	Poar foxtail	Longyearbyen
<i>Deschampsia alpina</i>	Alpine Hair-grass	Longyearbyen
<i>Festuca viviparoides</i>	Viviparous Fescue	Longyearbyen
<i>Poa alpina</i> var. <i>alpina</i>	Alpine Meadow-grass	Longyearbyen
<i>Poa alpina</i> var. <i>vivipara</i>	Viviparous Alpine Meadow-grass	Longyearbyen

### Notes:

1. The Plant list is based on *The Flora of Svalbard* by Olaf I. Ronning cross referenced with the Norwegian Polar Institutes Flora.
2. The list is arranged Alphabetically by family for ease of reference
3. Location simply indicates the first location the plant was seen. Most plants were found at numerous locations.
4. The late season meant that few grasses or sedges were in flower to enable accurate identification.



## Pictures from the Tour



Walrus haul out



Atlantic Puffin



Arctic Fox



*Silene involucreta*



Brunnich's Guillemots



Zodiac cruise





Hiking at Blomstranhavoya



Glaucous Gull



Little Auks



Return to Longyearbyen