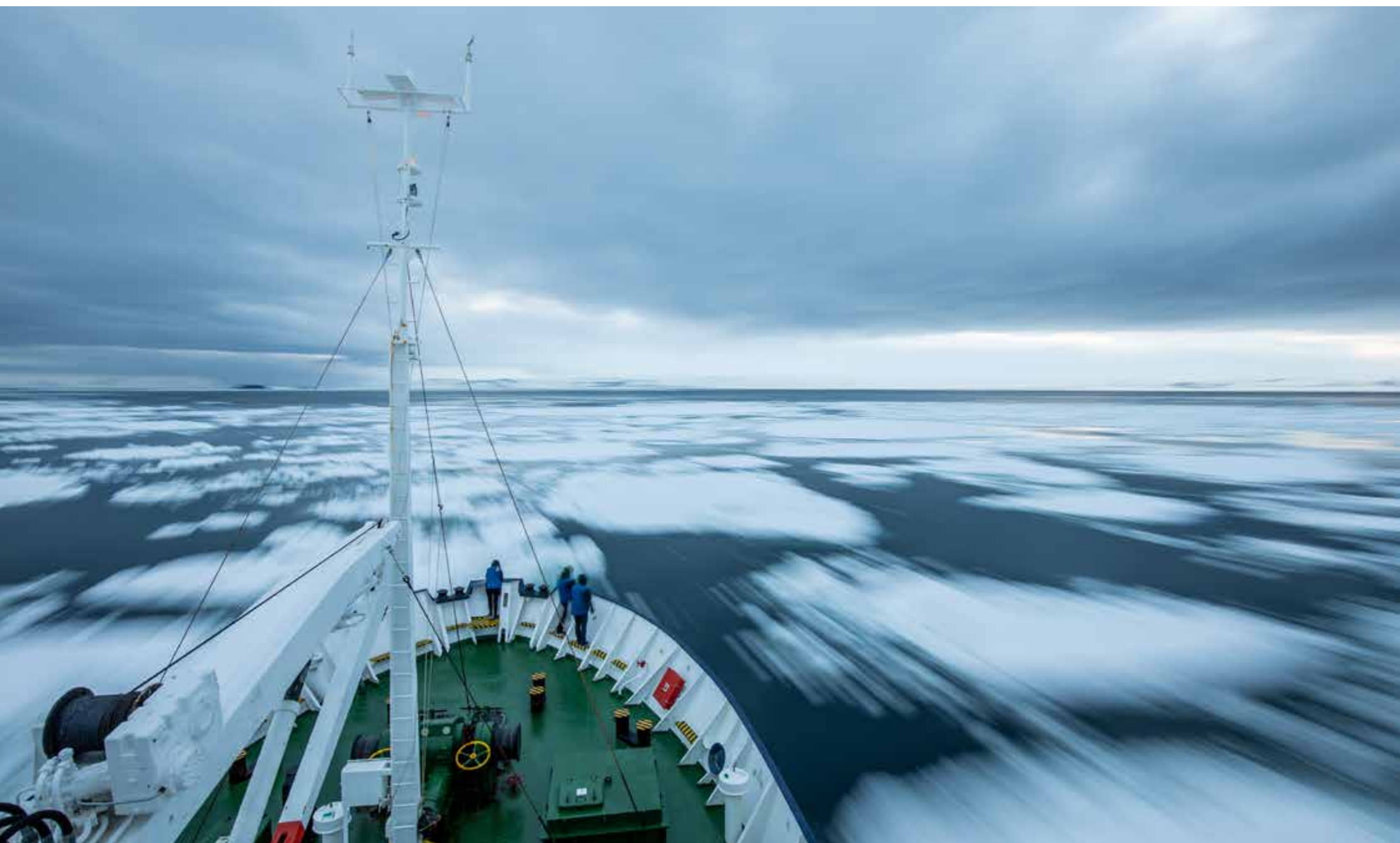




Northern Svalbard Explorer



30 August – 9 September 2019 | Polar Pioneer



About Us

Aurora Expeditions embodies the spirit of adventure, travelling to some of the most wild and remote places on our planet. With over 27 years' experience, our small group voyages allow for a truly intimate experience with nature.

Our expeditions push the boundaries with flexible and innovative itineraries, exciting wildlife experiences and fascinating lectures. You'll share your adventure with a group of like-minded souls in a relaxed, casual atmosphere while making the most of every opportunity for

adventure and discovery. Our highly experienced expedition team of naturalists, historians and destination specialists are passionate and knowledgeable – they are the secret to a fulfilling and successful voyage.

Whilst we are dedicated to providing a 'trip of a lifetime', we are also deeply committed to education and preservation of the environment. Our aim is to travel respectfully, creating lifelong ambassadors for the protection of our destinations.



DAY 1 | Friday, 30 August 2019

Longyearbyen

Position:	22:00 hours	Course:	1267°
Latitude:	78° 08' N	Speed:	11.9 knots
Longitude:	13° 06' E		

Wind Speed:	Near calm	Air Temp:	8°C
Barometer:	1002.6 hPa & falling	Sea Temp:	4°C

Low cloud and a gunmetal sky greeted those of us who flew in to Longyearbyen on 30 August. With Autumn upon us, the surround of hillsides was awash with golds and rusts from tundra vegetation turning with the Fall. Indeed, as we head out on new adventures, we can expect the pointy mountains, for which Spitsbergen is named, to be crisp with new dustings of snow. At 78° North and with a chill in the air, we have well and truly arrived in the high Arctic.

Those who arrived earlier with a day or two up their sleeve, may have spotted Svalbard reindeer grazing on the slopes, or snow buntings fossicking among the last blooms of Arctic cotton.

Our afternoon before embarkation offered time to gain some sights of this unique frontier town—residents with a rifle slung over a shoulder, the polar museum with its impressive displays, the sledging dogs, and other highlights of a town first established for its rich seams of coal, the infrastructure of which can be seen the slopes surrounding town. Even back in the early 1900s, luxurious European vessels brought well-to-do tourists to this isolated coastline to experience adventure in the Arctic. Now, Longyearbyen houses a university and its main industry has transitioned into ship-based and land-based tourism.

By 1700 we arrived at Bykaia pier, ready to begin our Arctic adventure. Here, Robyn ticked us off one list, Michael and Anne nabbed a mugshot and ticked us off another, then up the gangway we clambered, where the friendly Aurora team guided us to our cabins—not that

many needed directions, as 30 of our 54 passengers have travelled with Aurora Expeditions before (how nice to have you back again ☺)

Expedition Leader Christian Genillard brought us together in the bar to talk about our plans for our voyage, our sturdy ice-strengthened ship, to introduce the 9-strong Aurora team, and to address fundamentals of safety at sea.

The sound of seven-short-one-long from the ship’s horn was our cue to don bulky orange lifejackets and gather at the muster stations. We soon discovered the ambience and intimacy of a polar class lifeboat.

Soon after 1900 we slipped our moorings and turned our nose out of Adventfjorden, passing Longyearbyen’s ‘Doomsday’ Seed Vault accessed via a 120 metre-long tunnel built into the mountain side where the temperature remains a constant -18°C. Rain showers swept across the mountains, offering an atmospheric start to our voyage.

Our delicious first dinner together, prepared by chefs Al and Bert and served by Aliona and Natasha, was interrupted by the call for whales. Sure enough, a fin whale, the second largest whale species, was off our starboard flank, lolling about in the fjord.

After dinner Kayaking guide Daniel brought his 12 hardy paddlers together for a fit-out of gear, while others onboard managed a spot of jacket and gumboot exchange before the weary travellers bedded down for a good night’s sleep.





DAY 2 | Saturday, 31 August 2019

Lilliehöökgreen, 14 Julibukta

Position:	21:15 hours	Course:	343°
Latitude:	79° 14' N	Speed:	9.2 knots
Longitude:	10° 48' E		

Wind Speed:	4 knots	Barometer:	1006.6 hPa & falling
Wind Direction:	SSE	Air Temp:	6°C
		Sea Temp:	4°C

Day One of outings and so many things to see and do! Okay, so the morning was a tad drippy, but being a hardy bunch, there was no stopping the kayakers launching off and the Zodiacs filling with eager adventurers. We were at Lilliehöökgreen, a large curved glacier that runs about 7 kilometres from one end to the other. With the low light the blues of the glacier were vibrant; we could see where recent calvings had taken place, with whole sections of ice torn from the calving face of this massive glacier.

Why was this ice so blue? In past decades, Lilliehöökgreen, as with all Svalbard glaciers, was larger and higher, with much additional ice pressing down on the lower section of the glacier literally squeezing the air bubbles from the ice to create clear ice. Light penetrates deeply into clear ice and the only light wave to reflect back is blue, making clear ice appear blue. The calving front of Lilliehöökgreen is the base of what was once an even bigger glacier.

Febes made the call for a bearded seal on an ice floe, then did a quick retake when he realised that it was in fact a juvenile walrus. What! Never before have we seen a walrus in this fjord. Was the young fella lost? Walrus are generally gregarious animals, staying in a herd of either all males, all females, or females with young. Pups are nursed for 2–3 years and weaning takes place very slowly. We calculated by the short tusks that this walrus was a junior of around 3–4 years old.

Our kayakers spent a sublime if soggy morning crunching through brash ice, soaking up the auditory wonder of raindrops on water, air bubbles continually popping from the ice, and the crack and boom from calvings near and far.

Back onboard we peeled off saturated layers, hung them out to dry and got ourselves warmed up with hot cuppas.

Our chefs prepared a tasty lunch then it was all quiet around the decks until Christian made the call for an afternoon outing at 14 Julibukta. The rain had stopped and here we did a delightful Zodiac cruise around bird cliffs to see small groupings of puffins—perhaps 30 in all—perched on ledges. The breeding is over and it may only be weeks before these endearing little birds flap their way south to spend the winter.

From the Zodiacs we could see reindeer grazing up on tundra-rich slopes fertilised by the guano from the bird cliffs above. Hundreds of kittiwakes are still in residence on cliff ledges, and way up in the mist, obscured from sight, are the nests of Northern fulmars, the last bird to leave Svalbard for the winter months.

We were quick to discover that wherever there are bird cliffs there is likely to be foxes in residence. We were not disappointed. Kayakers, hikers and beachcombers all had fabulous views of Arctic fox, patrolling the slopes below the bird cliffs in hopes of a tasty meal, or settling down for a nap. The foxes are now pale in colour, moulting their tawny summer coat, their new white thick winter coat slowly growing through.

The reindeer were in top conditions, bulking up on rich vegetation before the lean winter months. We spent a delightful couple of hours at this picturesque site.

Before dinner we gathered in the bar to meet our good Captain Aleksandr ‘Sasha’ Evgenov, who gave a welcoming speech and wished us good weather and good wildlife. Oh, but speaking of wildlife, did we mention the blue whale that interrupted Captain’s Drinks, slowly cruising past the ship? At 30-plus metres, half the length of our ship, and weighing in at 100 tons or more, the blue is the largest creature ever to have lived on earth. What a day!





DAY 3 | Sunday, 1 September 2019

Hamiltonbukta, Moffen Island

Position:	21:30 hours	Course:	60°
Latitude:	80° 31'N	Speed:	11.6 knots
Longitude:	19° 19'E		

Wind Speed:	8 knots	Barometer:	1007.9 hPa & falling
Wind Direction:	NE	Air Temp:	4°C
		Sea Temp:	4°C

Our bear spotters were earnestly at work on the bridge from the early hours, but the fog that filled Raudfjord put paid to the chances of spotting a bear onshore. Christian modified plans and we headed close to the mouth of Raudfjord to take a cruise and landing at Hamiltonbukta.

One of the Zodiacs began their cruise with a lone puffin bobbing in the water with a fish in its bill. Another Zodiac had a bearded seal in sight. A small flock of barnacle geese flew by. Then the call came from Anne who had spotted an Arctic fox on the slopes beneath the bird cliffs. You beauty! Not just any Arctic fox, no; this was the rarer of two distinct Arctic fox morphs.

We had seen the white morph during our visit to 14 Julibukta, transitioning from its tawny summer coat to a white winter coat; now we were treated to the rare blue morph, still sporting its chocolate brown summer coat. By late October both morphs will be in their prime, wearing a plush winter coat, but that of the blue grows silver rather than white, with brushings of dark at the tips. In the old trapping days, the blue fox fetched the greatest price of all for its rarity and beauty: only 1 fox in every 10 families is a blue.

‘Little Blue’ scampered industriously across the tundra, patrolling the base of bird cliffs for any fallen morsels. With the guillemots having already vacated the cliffs, and many kittiwake chicks now fledged and down on the water, these are the last weeks for an Arctic fox to fatten up and stock his winter larder by caching food in rocky crevices across the slopes, ready for the lean, dark months. As a result of the harsh climate and sporadic food source, the Svalbard fox is a very small specimen at 2–4 kgs (smaller than an average house cat), and is short lived, surviving 3–5 years.

Daniel and his kayaking team were out there somewhere in the fog. Even though we could hear their dulcet voices skimming across the water from a great distance, it wasn’t until we had landed ashore on a sandy spit that our awesome paddlers emerged into sight, applying a happy rainbow of colour to a somewhat monochrome day.

We enjoyed a relaxed time ashore, hearing calvings from nearby Hamiltonbreen, spending time with Michael to hone our skills photographing Arctic terns feeding in the shallows, admiring purple sandpipers dottering amongst rocks and lashings of seaweed thrown ashore from a recent storm, and tracking polar bear footprints across the sand!

Back onboard we ate another tasty lunch before arriving at Moffen Island. What a treat to see two large groups of walrus totalling way in excess of 100 animals. Some were lolling in the water but most were hauled out on this sandy island that sits just above sea level and encircles a large lagoon. Walrus are thigmotactic creatures or, in other words, they love to pile up beside and on top of one another—the more the merrier!

These males, at around 1,500 kgs with tusks up to a metre long, are capable of devouring thousands of bivalve molluscs (clams of different variety) in a single meal. After a big feed walrus will come ashore and sleep. For days. And days.

Walrus were hunted voraciously in earlier years, exploited for their tusks, blubber and even for their tough hides used as machinery belts, so much so that in 1952, when walrus were granted protection, numbers around Svalbard were down to a few hundred. Since then they have made a positive comeback and numbers are on the increase each year.

At our recap Christian talked about good weather and not so good weather. For now, it’s nor’east ho’ in search of pack ice, seals and a certain large white furry sea mammal.







DAY 4 | Monday, 2 September 2019

Northern Svalbard sea ice surrounding Karl XII Øya

Position:	21:00 hours	Course:	Parked against the ice '	Wind Speed:	13 knots	Barometer:	1011.9 hPa & falling
Latitude:	80° 42'N			Wind Direction:	NE	Air Temp:	0°C
Longitude:	23° 32'E					Sea Temp:	-2°C

Our early start to the day was rewarded with the thrilling call of ‘Polar Bear’! We were in the pack ice north of Karl XII Øya, and there in the far distance, a female bear striding across the ice. We watched her take to the water and swim toward us. Captain slowed the ship to a dead halt as the bear proceeded to travel in our direction. She came up on an ice floe just metres away, looked up at those of us peering down from the bow, had a good shake, then rolled and rolled in the snow to dry her fur. A total crowd pleaser! Cameras worked overtime as we saw her in various standing, sitting and jelly roll poses, including confirmation that she was indeed female. This youngish bear, perhaps 6 or 7 years old, was in tip top condition—a good weight, a beautiful healthy coat, no battle scars on her face, bold and curious to discover who or what we were. Finally she took to the water. We will not follow bears in the water so as to avoid causing them stress; instead, we continued on our merry way. What a totally exhilarating wildlife start to a mega day in the far north-east.

It was also the morning of our farthest north, amid the pack ice north of Karl XII Øya at 80°44.257 N, 25°07.869 E. Karl XII Øya is the archipelago’s northernmost island, visited by Swedish explorer Dr Otto Nordenskjöld in 1861, who named the island in honour of the Swedish king.

Our bear spotters well and truly earned their lunch with binoculars on the bridge and more on the bow scouring the ice in search of another bear. They did find a walrus out on the ice, tenderly nursing its young pup. A female walrus with remain with her young for 2–3 years, with weaning taking place slowly as the pup learns from its mother how to forage for clams. Being out on a frozen deck in 1° Celsius air is hungry work, and we all welcomed Al and Bert’s delectable lamb curry and dhal. Simply scrumptious, thanks to our wonderful chefs and galley team!

In the afternoon, Captain found an icy niche for the ship and lowered the gangway for a Zodiac cruise amongst the sea ice. Some of the surround is first year pack ice, still frozen from last winter. Pieces displaying pressure ridges where blocks of ice are piled up on top, are the result of multi-year pack ice where ice persists from one season to the next, and the following winter more sea ice freezes beneath, pushing up the original layer. Multi-year pack ice can be a whopping 6 metres in height!

This was the perfect place for Zodiac cruisers and paddlers to launch themselves onto the sea ice—literally. The Zodiacs hurtled themselves up onto an ice floe, followed by the kayaks under paddle power. These 12 ‘marine mammals’ and their trusty guide drew a spectator crowd as they delivered their colourful craft up on the ice. Michael took a unique group photo while Alena provided plenty of ‘Zen’ with a stand-up Yoga session — how many can say they’ve taken part in Yoga, on the Arctic Ocean, on an ice floe!

We weaved our way back to the ship, stopping to look at the formation of sea ice and the stunning blues within the ice. Back onboard, Hotel Manager Anne was a huggable sight with lashings of hot chocolate ready at the tag board. So good to wrap cold hands around a warm and entirely delicious drink, spiked with a little something extra!

Once all had thawed out, Gary presented a wonderful lecture on Arctic mammals where we learned more about the remarkable life of the polar bear.

In striking evening light, beneath a snow-laden sky opening up to a hint of blue sky, we parked amongst the pack ice to marvel at a frozen wonderland.



Bengtsenbukta

Position:	22:00 hours	Course:	229°	Wind Speed:	18 knots	Barometer:	999.9 hPa & steady
Latitude:	80° 09' N	Speed:	10.3 knots	Wind Direction:	NNE	Air Temp:	0°C
Longitude:	15° 32' E					Sea Temp:	2°C

Christian’s morning call at 0530 had some roll over and continue dreaming, while others sleepily dragged themselves out of bed. The kayakers were soon out on the back deck, ready for a one-way paddle, with the wind behind them. So, too, the Zodiacers cruised along the shoreline of Bengtsenbukta with an icy wind at their backs, past a vista of sedimentary rock, much of it shattered by the cycle of freeze and thaw, displaying very little vegetation. Nordaustlandet is the polar desert, where precipitation is a fraction of that on the west side of Svalbard.

Two glaciers headed the bay and for the Aurora team, we were astonished to see the extent of glacial retreat in the last year or two. We passed by two different kinds of ice: pans of sea ice, distinctly white and flat, and beautiful pieces of glacial ice dappled with snow, most of which is clear ice, though it appears blue to our eyes.

Clear ice is indicative of very old ice, often from the lower part of the glacier where ice from above presses down with such pressure that air bubbles are squeezed out of the ice. These air bubbles act as tiny mirrors, reflecting white; without air bubbles, the light penetrates more deeply into clear ice and refracts back only blue light waves, giving clear ice its blue hue.

The air was brisk, but paddlers and Zodiacers felt fully alive out there in the morning freeze, surrounded by a vast landscape leading up to Nordaustlandet’s icecap, itself divided into east and west caps, collectively making it the world’s third largest icecap after Antarctica and Greenland.

A single red-throated diver flew over the Zodiacs, then Jukka spotted three reindeer grazing on the barren slopes.

Our good ship met us at our farthest point and we were ever grateful for this strong, warm cocoon in which to retreat.

After breakfast we headed out again, this time for walks across the countryside. Near the beach we happened upon the desiccated remains of a headless polar bear, and surmised that the bear had died from starvation, either through old age or an inability to hunt for other reasons. Jukka and Febes led the long walkers up to the brow of the highest hill for stunning views across to Rijpfjorden and down across Bengtsenbukta. They spotted small families of red throated divers in nearby tarns. The snow covering gave the rocky terrain an added feeling of vastness and remoteness, and more than a hint of how this far-flung place might look and feel in the dark winter months.

Christian, Robyn and JB led the medium walkers to a saddle for glorious views in either direction, then across the slopes to where a family of reindeer grazed on the opposite side of a small canyon. The male wore an impressive rack of antlers, while the female’s antlers were small with few branches. The calf, with no antlers, stayed close by its parents. During the walk the flora lovers spotted a lone cluster of purple saxifrage, and wondered at how such sparsity of tundra might sustain a reindeer. Even with snow covering the permafrost, reindeer are able to dig down to find vegetation and roots, but in situations where heavy rainfall turns to solid ice, the surface becomes potentially impenetrable and the risk of starvation increases.

The beachcombers walked with Gary and Michael, examining the fabulous array of sedimentary rocks, and learning about this fascinating corner of the world.

Back onboard we weighed anchor and set a course for northern Spitsbergen. Our afternoon was highlighted with wonderful presentations from Michael on the importance of light in photography and from Gary on Arctic seals.







DAY 6 | Wednesday, 4 September 2019

Texas Bar, Monacobreen

Position: 21:00 hours
Latitude: 79° 56' N
Longitude: 14° 38' E

Course: 223°
Speed: 10.3 knots

Wind Speed: 13 knots
Wind Direction: W

Barometer: 999.9 hPa & rising
Air Temp: 2°C
Sea Temp: 3°C

It was a winter wonderland out there, with mountains and landscape doused in fresh snow, our decks thick with the stuff. Our Russian crew were out with snow shovels building up a sweat to clear the decks ready for our morning outing to Texas Bar. It was here in Liefdefjorden that we found shelter from winds scouring the coast.

Texas Bar is a satellite hut built in 1927 by two notable Norwegian trappers Hilmar Nøis and Martin Pettersen. Throughout the Norwegian trapping era, which began in earnest in the 1920s through to the second world war when pelt prices dropped, these satellite huts were used in addition to a larger main hut. The trappers’ lease might extend to an area 30 kilometres long (or 3 Norwegian miles as such a measure was then known).

The satellite huts provided a refuge during field work. Few trappers grew rich, but to offer an idea of demand, in 1925 when a Longyearbyen miner earned 10–15 kroner per day, a blue fox pelt fetched 800–1,000 kroner.

Nowadays Texas Bar lives up to its name with a well-stocked “top shelf” supply left by various visitors who come here intrigued by this quaint, renovated cabin. It was a welcome opportunity for us to stretch our legs with vigorous walks, climb to a high point for spectacular views, make snow angels, and generally revel in this crispy, crunchy stuff called snow.

A sizable flock of pink-footed geese flew over, geese, ducks and landbirds readying for their departure from Svalbard for the winter. Jukka and Febes’ long walkers spied many goose prints and also fox prints. We all simply loved ‘being out there’.

Our kayakers had their own special adventure when they entered a sleepy lagoon where eider ducks were lolling on the water, there to discover two walruses hunting these unsuspecting ducks. Daniel described how the walrus would dive, then come to the surface amongst the ducks, mouths open, as a whale might when bubble netting and lunge feeding. What an incredible sight! For self-preservation of craft and persons, our kayakers kept their distance from those pointy tusks, but were able to look on and marvel at this fantastic sight.

Ilya and JB’s Zodiac cruisers were also lucky to see the two walruses in the lagoon, or see them making their way out along the coastline. What a morning, topped off by some exquisite black-blue bergs near the mouth of the lagoon, and crystalline ice boulders washed up on the shoreline.

After lunch we headed out again, this time for a Zodiac cruise along Monacobreen, named in honour of Prince Albert 1 of Monaco who funded a major mapping expedition here in the early part of the 20th century. The biggest physical feature is of course named after a major sponsor, though the expedition cartographer did his family proud, naming the surrounding glaciers for his siblings: Emmabreen, Idabreen, Hannabreen and Ericbreen.

We enjoyed an awesome cruise with the air having risen from a frigid 0°C to a balmy afternoon maximum of 4°C! Barnacle geese and long-tailed ducks flew over. The blues of the glacier were magnificent, and those blue, blue icebergs were a mecca for birdlife with kittiwake adults and chicks, Northern fulmars and glaucous gull adults and chicks feeding around the ice. We cruised the length of the glacier, stopping to watch hundreds of kittiwakes congregate at the glacier edge in an area of outwash. Some even spotted a bearded seal.

A magical, snow-spangled day.



DAY 7 | Thursday, 5 September 2019

Oxfordhalvøya, Alkefjellet

Position: 22:30 hours **Course:** At drift, Hinlopen Strait
Latitude: 79° 38' N
Longitude: 19° 12' E

Oxfordhalvøya, or Oxford Peninsula, at the head of Wahlenbergfjorden was named for scientific expeditions run by Oxford University in 1923 and 1924. The huts from that expedition stand in silhouette along an exposed ridgeline.

Zodiacs and kayaks set off for a morning exploration of Kløverbladbukta, or Cloverleaf Bay in Oxfordhalvøya, named for its distinct shape. Snow covered the polar desert which at first appeared totally devoid of life. Undulating hills gave way to the ice caps of Vestfonna and Austfonna, which together comprise the great icecap of Nordaustlandet.

It wasn't long into our cruise and paddle when we discovered a big flock of birds on the water—eider ducks gathering to fly south for the winter. Then the silhouette of a Svalbard reindeer appeared on the ridgeline along with three more reindeer in the distance. It beggared belief that there could be enough vegetation to sustain these large animals. Around the bay we sighted two more reindeer, the adult male in the process of shedding velvet from its antlers.

A young bearded seal made an appearance, his snout coppery from fossicking amongst iron-rich sediments.

We went ashore at Bodleybukta and took a walk up to the ridgeline for beautiful views of Bodleybreen. The beachcombers busied themselves with fossicking along the shoreline, discovering many tiny clusters of saxifrage foliage turned red with the autumn but which, when the surround of gravel was brushed away, were entirely green below the surface.

After lunch we made our way into Palanderbukta where our plans to land beside a glacier were foiled by a thick band of brash ice pushed up against shore. Simply reaching shore by Zodiac was out of the question. Nonetheless it was an opportunity to gaze upon the ice and discover a mother walrus nursing her pup, while onshore were the remains of a tiny trapper's hut built in the 1920s.



Wind Speed: 11 knots **Barometer:** 999.9 hPa & steady
Wind Direction: S **Air Temp:** 3°C
Sea Temp: 1°C

With Plan B in action we motored west across Hinlopen Strait to the striking dolerite cliffs of Alkefjellet. In the height of the breeding season Alkefjellet is home to 60,000 pairs of Brunnich's guillemots each raising their single chick. All but a handful of guillemots have flown south, though some of us spied the occasional guillemot still perched on ledges of these 100-metre pinnacle cliffs.

Glaucous gulls with their large tawny chicks were in full force, and we happened upon several feeding on kittiwake carcasses in the water or up on ice. The cliffs were still home to a good many nesting kittiwakes, and as we know, where there are bird cliffs there are likely to be Arctic foxes. A treat was in store.

Gary's Zodiacers spotted the first fox digging a tunnel in a snow bank at the base of the bird cliffs. The fox would disappear head first, then magically reappear. Peter in Robyn's Zodiac spotted the next: a parent with his or her kit down on the gravel shoreline, the parent making short work of a dearly departed glaucous gull chick. The fox kit was under clear instruction to stay back while the parent fed, but grew impatient with waiting and bounded away across the slopes.

Next thing, Christian's Zodiacers spotted three more fox kits, and so it went on until we had tallied 9 fox in all. Kits tumbled down the snow slopes making it into play, then set about patrolling the base of the bird cliffs. Our own dinner was put back so we could stay out to watch this thrilling display on life beneath the bird cliffs.

Another awesome Arctic day!







DAY 8 | Friday, 6 September 2019

Bråsvellbreen, South-West Nordaustlandet

Position:	22:45 hours	Course:	0°	Wind Speed:	9 knots	Barometer:	1002.6 hPa & steady
Latitude:	79° 16' N	Speed:	6.3 knots	Wind Direction:	NNW	Air Temp:	0°C
Longitude:	21° 26' E					Sea Temp:	-2°C

At 180 kilometres in length, Bråsvellbreen is the longest glacier in the northern hemisphere. From where we gazed out from the ship it went on forever, the top of the glacier rising up to the curve of Austfonna, Nordaustlandet’s main ice cap.

Out into Zodiacs and kayaks we forged to not only gain an intimate sense of this mammoth wall of ice, but to explore the large surround of sea ice made all the more pristine with its covering of brilliant white snow. The sky was steely with patches of blue, the Arctic sun at its most mellow, illuminating the glacier front while silvering the sea ice.

Michael gave us helpful tips on how we might capture this spectacular vista of ice, then the temptation to land on the sea ice was all too great. One by one, Zodiacs nosed up onto the ice and we alighted onto ice to experience the crunch of snow and ice beneath our feet.

Our paddlers made brilliant time as well and had a unique view of the sea ice and glacier from right down on water level.

Back onboard, our chefs had prepared delectable pizza after which we spent the afternoon in the sea ice. Ringed seals made an appearance, and even a trio of walrus gallivanted in the water.

Gary presented on Arctic ecology where he spoke about the processes that shape and perpetuate the Arctic landscape and make it, well... Arctic. Gary talked about glaciers, and also the permafrost which is prone to becoming waterlogged due to just the upper metre of surface remaining unfrozen. Gary showed us images of the patterning of the land that results from continual freeze and thaw that shatters and sorts rocks, creating distinct polygons.

Right before our evening recap we spotted a polar bear way off in the distance on the sea ice. We watched and watched but he seemed to keep his distance.

We went ahead with a short recap, then congregated on the back deck for a fabulous barbecue. Captain “parked” the ship in the sea ice, and with the sun tracking low in the west and gilding the ice, there could be no more beautiful a place to stoke the coals and enjoy an array of meats, vegetable and seafood kebabs, and salads. Warmed by Anne’s delicious gluwiein and dance music, with dinner prepared by Al, Bert, Aliona and Natasha, we donned party hats and forgot about the cold, keeping warm on the dance deck! Thank you to our fantastic hotel team for such a treat.

Our bear spotters were on the bridge and lo’ and behold, while our distant bear was still far away, a second close bear was ambling in our direction. Christian made the call and we gathered on the bow and bridge in dimming evening light as this magnificent creature made his way to within 50 metres of us.

He sniffed the air, at the same time inspecting the nooks and crannies of the sea ice in the way of a bear on the lookout for seal. We watched the bear glide through an open lead then lithely pull himself from the water back up onto the ice. There was debate as to how many bears were in sight but we stayed with our tally of one close and one distant bear. Our close bear was in top, well rounded form.

Finally we set a course through the sea ice, Captain manoeuvring the ship like a Zodiac as we weaved between large pans of ice, our ice-strengthened ship shuddering as we firmly pushed our way through.

With camera cards brimming with images of bears, glaciers, sea ice and Arctic sunsets, we agreed it was a very fine day playing in the sea ice.







DAY 9 | Saturday, 7 September 2019

Ardneset (Wahlbergøya), Faksevagen

Position:	21:45 hours	Course:	325°	Wind Speed:	21 knots	Barometer:	1003.9 hPa & steady
Latitude:	80° 02'N	Speed:	11 knots	Wind Direction:	WNW	Air Temp:	5°C
Longitude:	17° 16'E					Sea Temp:	0°C

Our morning with walrus at Ardneset on the SW corner of Wahlbergøya was pure magic. Initially two walrus were hauled out on the point, but by the time we were ready to load kayaks and Zodiacs, an additional three had come ashore and were doing what walrus love to do: pile up together to sleep.

Ardneset was covered in a carpet of fresh, crunchy snow right down to the gravelly beach, covering the many logs of driftwood that beach here after their long voyage from as far as Siberia.

We landed 300 metres from the walrus then approached them quietly as a united group. At thirty metres Gary drew a line in the snow and it was here we relaxed to watch and photograph these mighty creatures. It wasn't all about sleep: the walrus were surprisingly active, raising their tusks, slapping their flippers around, having the occasional biff with a neighbour. Two even reared up for some half-hearted jousting before deciding it was all too energetic .

Purple sandpipers fossicked along the shoreline while out at sea the golden light became more and more stupendous. Our lovely ship floated on an oily calm ocean beneath a painted sky, the surround of snow-covered islands, ice floes, kittiwakes and fulmars wheeling by, added up to a landscape lover's nirvana.

Jukka led a delightful circuit walk along the ridgeline, with time to gaze out at all that splendour. There was something extra special about this remote locale—a debut landing site for all in the Aurora team.

We shifted to Faksevagen in Lomfjorden for an afternoon outing—again, a picturesque bay cloaked in snow with a greeting party of tbearded seals. Our paddlers were swallowed up by giant mountainsides as they made their way to mud flats resulting from the receding glacier. Here they pulled their kayaks ashore and spent leisurely time in this unusual surround, with sunlight illuminating the mountainsides.

On the opposite side of the fjord we divided into hikers and beachcombers, and each had a wondrous afternoon. Our hikers ascended quickly then disappeared over a high ridge where they were able to look down upon the glacier.

The snow around them was patterned with hundreds of tracks from ptarmigan, then, out of the blue, nine ptarmigan—possibly a female with her large brood of young. Ptarmigan remain in Svalbard all winter and undergo transition with their darker summer plumage giving way to all white winter feathers.

Down upon the shoreline, our beachcombers were marvelling at the volume and range of prints through the snow: glaucous gull, fox, reindeer—tracks that would otherwise have been obscure to us without the snow. Purple sandpipers and glaucous gulls were busy in the shallows and shoreline feeding on small aquatic crustaceans called copepods.

Our beachcombers then enjoyed Zodiac cruises with close sightings of a family of reindeer. The male reindeer were losing the velvet from their antlers and this process was clearly causing irritation as they scraped their antlers in the snow and even used a hoof to rub at the pesky material. It is remarkable to think that each spring a full set of antlers grows in 6 weeks, while each winter after the October rut, they shed that rack of bone.

Ten somewhat deranged passengers and two Aurora staff who ought to know better completed the day's activities by hurling themselves off a perfectly good ship into zero degree water. Shortly afterwards it was up the gangway and a beeline to the sauna!









DAY 10 | Sunday, 8 September 2019

Fuglefjorden, Magdalene Fjord–Gravneset

Position:	21:30 hours	Course:	178°	Wind Speed:	4 knots	Barometer:	1006.6 hPa & steady
Latitude:	78° 54' N	Speed:	12 knots	Wind Direction:	SE	Air Temp:	3°C
Longitude:	10° 13' E					Sea Temp:	3°C

Beautiful Fuglefjord is oddly named given there are no bird colonies in the vicinity, though smaller glaciers to the west are named after bird species. Nonetheless, on our morning Zodiac cruise and paddle there were kittiwakes and Arctic terns aplenty, busily foraging around the blue, blue ice of Svitjodbreen.

The sun peeped through to illuminate patches of the snow-covered mountains which were formed 600–1,000 million years ago and comprise granites and metamorphic host rocks called migmatites. The fjord’s surround of mountains and those throughout the north west inspired the naming of Spitsbergen when Dutch navigator Willem Barents first sighted land on 17 June 1596, while in search of a navigable seaway to China. Spitsbergen, translating to ‘pointed mountains’ must have looked to Barentz much as it did to us when he wrote ‘high land and entirely covered with snow’.

We meandered through brash ice, some spending time at the glacier front hoping for a calving. Arctic terns and their chicks rested on ice floes while kittiwakes flew across the glacier, attracted by several small calvings. Our paddlers looked a picture as they worked their way through the ice, all of us admiring the morning light which turned the entire fjord into an artist’s palette of blues, greys and silvers.

Back onboard we had arrived at the pointy end of the voyage. It was time for briefings and settlement of accounts as we motored toward Magdalena Fjord. We had time after lunch for engine room tours, hosted by our electrical engineer Valentin. As well as being fascinating, it was mighty hot and noisy down in that part of the world!

At Magdalena Fjord, snow softly fell and we could see why this site with its excellent harbour has always been a popular site to visit, dating right back to the first ship-based tourism in Svalbard at the start of the twentieth century when comfortable ships brought well-to-do European passengers to this remote corner of the world to admire the ice and win themselves plenty of bragging rights.

Gravneset where we went ashore is the final resting place for 130 whalers, many of them British, who worked and died here, their deaths mainly due to scurvy and other disease. The burial sites date from the early 17th century to the late 18th century. Bowhead whales in the fjord were the premium whale to hunt because they were slow moving and floated when killed. But the bowheads close to shore were soon gone and in 1623 the shore station was abandoned with the move to pelagic whaling, though the area was still used as a graveyard.

Our hikers took this last opportunity to stretch their legs with a walk over the hill to the nearby glacier, while the beachcombers visited the modern-day cabin used by the Sysselman (Governor of Svalbard) during the height of the summer when visitation to the site is high.

With snow continuing to fall our beach combers spent relaxed time studying the detail of the place before making their way back aboard.

We gathered in the bar to farewell this remarkable ship and its Captain Sasha who has been a mainstay of Aurora Expeditions from its first season in 2001. Captain spoke at length about his time on the ship, about old friends and new, he spoke of our voyage and wished us well. The Aurora team presented him with a brass ship’s clock and plaque while Mark read out a moving poem he had written to honour the Captain.

Certificates were issued to our hardy kayakers and our crazy polar plungers, then Christian thanked the Aurora team, and most especially thanked each of you, our passengers, for embracing this special voyage to the icy north.





Captain My Captain

By Mark Cochrane

Captain my Captain
How sad it must be
For over twenty years
You've worked with me.

I'm tough as they come
Double hulled as you know.
I'll go anywhere
You want me to go.

My name's 'Pioneer'
And you know only too well,
It's you who's in charge
When I'd take any swell.

There's others who've steered me
They're young and they're smart
But it's you who took care
You're part of my heart.

Captain oh Captain
I can't say enough
You know I love you
We're of the same stuff.

Strong winds and hard rain
And ice on the bow
You help me break through
You are my power!

I've two great strong engines
Looked after by crew
And they'll both bust their guts
To do it for you.

I have been your love
I know this for sure
I'll miss you my Captain
When we both head for shore.

Times will go by
And we'll both see our day
When there's no ocean waves
And no summer's day.

But wherever you go
I'll be there for you
You cared for me greatly
And I really love you.





Longyearbyen

Position:	08:00 hours	Course:	Dockside at Longyearbyen	Wind Speed:	10 knots	Barometer:	999.9 hPa & falling
Latitude:	78°13'N			Wind Direction:	S	Air Temp:	2°C
Longitude:	15°36'E					Sea Temp:	2°C

By John 'JB' Barry

Awaking from slumber heralds a view of the snow-clad slopes of Longyearbyen. Just as these slopes have been transformed so have we. The peppering of snow mirrors the impressions that have occurred in our own minds through our time in the High Arctic. Consciousness is shaped through experiences and insight and these have been afforded us aplenty.

The *Polar Pioneer* has provided a warm sanctum to visit this realm. For some of us she is an old friend and her corridors, bar and dining rooms have echoed with laughter and stories. New friendships have been made and bonds forged. Tummies have been filled and extremities warmed. But it is not for these rustic comforts that we have come – it is for what lies beyond her walls, and here she has been a great enabler – providing a portal into a world of childhood dreams.

Etched into our memory are the many bombardments to our senses:

- the growl of the twisted and tortured glacial cliffs
- the almost deafening silence sitting amongst the snow-clad slopes
- the cacophony of crackles and pops of liberating air amongst the brash
- the thunderous blow of a blue whale
- the squelch of a polar bear paw a mere 5 meters away on the snow
- the gentle swish as the kayak glides through the ink black surface of a still fjord
- the stabbing chill of the polar plunge
- the gentle tickle of snow on an exposed cheek

- the stench of a walrus haulout infused by unceasing belching and flatus
- the freshness of the crisp polar air
- sculptured icebergs of crystal blue
- the farcical behaviour of the walrus - nimble and fluid in water but blubbering and blundering on land
- mountain vistas resplendent in the evening light
- reindeer eking out an existence in the sparsely vegetated slopes of the polar desert
- the seemingly effortless glide of the fulmar sailing on unseen air currents above the waves
- the paradoxically cute arctic fox tearing the flesh from a juvenile glaucous gull carcass or agilely negating the steep bird cliffs
- the misty soup of frizzle that is setting around us as the sea is freezing and the door is closing
- an inquisitive polar bear rolling in the snow and ambling up to the *Polar Pioneer*. The seemingly endless expanse of ice that extend to the horizon reminds us that she resides and thrives in an almost alien world. Although me meet briefly and possibly this is her first encounter with humans it is sobering to think that our hand has stretched this far and is wreaking havoc in her kingdom.

Thus, we leave changed. More learned than when we entered. More attune to the natural rhythm of life that still plays on around us if only we care to see. We are now ambassadors of this special place. May we help it linger a little while longer.

But now the coach has arrived and it is our time to go.





Kayaking Log

by Daniel Stavert

Kayaking Guide: Daniel Stavert

Paddlers:

Michael Bowman	Wren Hudgins	Chris Linn	Rhonda Nelson
Sue Emmott	Sally Johnson	Iain Linn	David Whalley
Leigh Hudgins	Kay Kramer	Cath Moore	Jenny Whalley

DAY 2 (AM): Lillehöökbrean – Distance: 4.1 kms

In the chilly morning at Lillehöökfjorden, the kayakers took to the water for the first time. The huge front of the glacier loomed in the mist and fog to the north of the ship, and the surface of the sea was almost completely covered in swirling currents of brash ice. Setting out, the kayak team cut through this slowly freezing ocean, breaking a path through that hissed and fizzed with escaping air bubbles. With the crackling ice, the booming glacier, and the atmospheric fog rolling through the bay, the first paddle of the trip felt very Arctic indeed. This sense was expanded when a large dark shape on an icefloe turned out to be a resting walrus. It regarded Zodiacs and kayaks with a benign eye as the team floated gently in the cold sea.

DAY 3 (AM): Hamiltonbukta – Distance: 7.2 kms

DAY 4 (PM): Karl XII Øya – Distance: 5.9 kms

Polar Pioneer had steamed into the lee of a large icefloe a few kilometres north of Karl XII Island. Whilst the Zodiac passengers piled into their vessels. the kayakers also scrambled down their trusty ladder and were soon away, snow blowing in the light breeze and the white floes shifting and drifting in the current. A true Arctic dreamscape. A short paddle through this ever-moving landscape and the paddlers found a large icefloe already occupied by the rest of the ship’s passengers. With a quick run-up and some assistance from Michael, the kayakers were soon out of their boats and standing on the frozen ocean. Beneath their feet were a few metres of frozen water and then a hundred more to the ocean floor. Soon the chill polar air began to seep in and the team got back into their kayaks and slid into the ocean like the marine mammals they are. The return to the ship was another glorious paddle in the silence and serenity of ice.

DAY 5 (AM): Bengtsenbukta – Distance: 4.57 kms

An early morning call from Christian, and seven brave paddlers ventured out onto the windy Zodiac operations deck to suit up for kayaking. A speedy launch into the lee of the ship and the team was away. Initially paddling across eighteen-knot winds and some good surging swell, they reached the shelter of a lee shore where they were rewarded with a beautiful downwind run, the breeze ushering them deeper into the fjord and further along the ice-strewn shoreline. Arriving at the glacier face at the back of the fjord, the kayakers found that the ship had repositioned itself close by and it was only a simple cross-wind paddle to home, clambering up the ladder in time for coffee and breakfast.

DAY 5 (PM): Bengtsenbukta – Distance: 5.74 kms

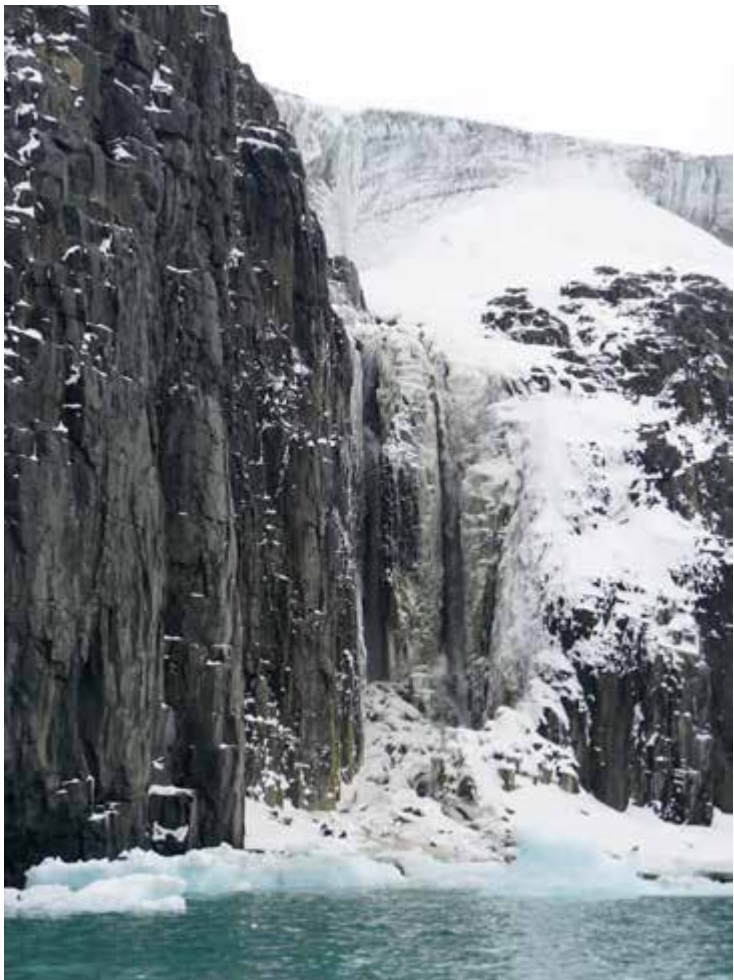
After a cold and windy morning, the team was down to four hardy souls. Sliding down the ladder, the two double kayaks followed the breeze towards the other side of the bay. There they found a sea of brash: the broken up remains of thousands of tons of icebergs and sea ice floes compressed together against the cliff and glacier in a tight jumble of deep glowing blues and bright blinding white. The team followed the edge of this mass, watching giant ripples of swell roll through. The mist and snow muted the rumbles and groans as the ice lifted and subsided. Reaching the far shore, the team weaved amongst small, grounded icebergs like gleaming jewels. After a quick stop ashore, and completing the circumnavigation of the bay that had been unfinished business from before breakfast, the team headed for the ship. A well-deserved lunch waited after a full day’s paddling completed before midday.

DAY 6 (AM): Texas Bar – Distance: 4.74 kms

Walking out onto the back deck in the morning, Daniel could barely find the kayaks. The storm of the night had buried them so deeply in the snow. The first task of the day was to dig them out before the team could launch. Soon, though, the kayakers were paddling along the shoreline, the snow pooling on the surface of the sea making a soft whispering sound as the kayaks gently cut through. The team marvelled at the twisted and tortured layers of rock, highlighted by the crisp clean snow. Huge chunks of black ice drifted in the shallow water, themselves covered in a blanket of white. Entering a lagoon, the paddlers found themselves in an even calmer place. Ducks moved in groups out on the mirrored surface and sandpipers picked along the shoreline. In the cold air there was a sudden exhalation and two walrus surfaced, launching up vertically in amongst the ducks. With a flurry of feathers and agitations the birds slid and scampered out of the way and the walrus subsided, only to resurface and try again a moment later. Incredibly, it seemed they were attempting to catch the ducks. The team watched for a few minutes, and then respectfully turned and left the huge seals to their unusual activity. A quick landing at Texas Bar, resulting in awe at the beauty of the bay, and some very cold hands, and the team scrambled back to the warmth of the kayaks and on to *Polar Pioneer*.

DAY 6 (PM): Monaco Glacier – Distance: 8 kms

Leaving Texas Bar the kayakers could see a patch of clear sky out to the west and a glint of ice glowing in the light. Christian directed the expedition out towards the better weather and soon the kayakers were in the water at Monaco Glacier. The grey of the morning and the thick falling snow became a memory of the past as the paddlers moved into a landscape of crisp blues and the sharp edges of the glacial face. The brash ice surged in the swell and sun shone down on the immensity of the mountains. The temporary nature only enhanced its startling beauty. The team moved quietly along this ever-changing landscape, paddling from its southern to its northern edge. With two hours quickly flying past, the team turned for the ship. Another incredible paddle with few words capable of describing such beauty in such incredible light.



Kayaking Log (continued)

DAY 7 (AM): Oxfordhalvøya – Distance: 8.5 kms

A chilly morning greeted the team as they descended the ladder at Oxfordhalvøya. Setting off, the team quickly gained shelter in the protected waters of the natural harbour. There, dozens of Arctic terns swooped and dove amongst the red rock and mudstones. The calm waters harboured hundreds of other birds: kittiwakes, eider ducks, glaucous gulls, and purple sandpipers, all using the shore as a sheltered space to feed and gather before the end of summer. Winter was certainly felt in the air as the team paddled amongst the snowclad hills. A cold morning on the water, held at bay by a thermos of hot chocolate and a continuous pace as the team completed their circumnavigation of the bay.

DAY 7 (PM): Alkefjellet – Distance: 4.2 kms

In the late afternoon light the team left the ship to explore the dark dolerite bird cliffs of Alkefjellet. The black rock and white snow made a startling contrast with the glowing blue sea that rolled calmly below. The kayaks moved slowly past this grand architecture, watching young guillemots plummet into the sea, hundreds of kittiwakes wheeling and crying out, all above the glowing blue sea. On the shore and on the rocky ledges, Arctic fox could be seen padding softly through the ice and snow. The grand scale, serene water, wildlife, and freshly fallen snow set the scene for a blissful paddle in an incredible landscape.

DAY 8 (PM): Bråsvellbreen – Distance: 5.75 kms

With a sudden call to arms, the kayak team assembled on the back deck and were soon at sea. To the east the broken white ice pack, to the west the massive glacial face of Bråsvellbreen loomed high above, its length stretching out to the horizon in an unbroken wall of ice. The paddlers set a path between these two immense landscapes in the space between the land-based glacier and the frozen ocean. This narrow lead of water let the kayakers experience the meeting of these two worlds.

Glancing back up the lead, the team could see a wall of mist and snow slowly moving along the ice face. With the wind freshening the team returned to the ship, arriving just as *Polar Pioneer* began to vanish into blue grey cloud.

DAY 9 (AM): Ardnaset (Wahlbergøya) – Distance: 3.8 kms

With only a short time this morning, a small team assembled on the back deck and paddled away from *Polar Pioneer* to investigate the shoreline and wildlife of Ardnaset. From the ship a steady eight to ten-knot wind kept the sea looking ruffled, but as soon as the kayaks were in the water the wind dropped and the ocean turned to glass. The mirrorlike conditions and the surround of crisp white mountains made for blissful conditions as the team approached the shore. A quick landing directly onto fresh snow and the kayakers were walking along the beach towards the walrus hauled out on the snow-covered gravel point. Whilst these huge seals were endlessly fascinating, the cold air soon made itself known and the paddlers returned to their cosy craft.

DAY 9 (PM): Faksevangen – Distance: 4.9 kms

Seven paddlers ventured out into the afternoon waters of Faksevangen, a sheltered cove off the edge of Lomfjord. The *Polar Pioneer* nestled in a cirque of snowclad hills as the paddlers left it in their wake. Making for the closest shore, the team moved deeper into the bay. Everywhere they looked the beautiful light of the afternoon caught another feature to be remarked upon, or gazed at silently. The golden light on the high cliffs. The pure whiteness of the fresh fallen snow on the hills. The clarity of the air. Reaching the deepest part of Faksevangen, Jenny suggested a landing and so the team took to their feet on the wash of the braided stream beds. A cup of hot chocolate and Baileys made the stop even more worthwhile as the paddlers roamed amongst the mudflats, seeing reindeer in the distance. Soon it was time to leave and although some folk required a little assistance from Daniel to escape the sticky mud, they were soon all on their way home to the ship and the rigours of the polar plunge.

DAY 10 (AM): Fuglefjord – Distance: 5.2 kms

The final paddle of the trip and the team concentrated hard on getting the weather right. Thanks to some efficient concentration the clouds began to part, allowing glowing patches of golden light to wander amongst the monochrome hills. The team moved out amidst crunching ice, a neat bookend to the trip, causing most of the team to reflect on the first paddle also in deep brash ice. Paddling deeper into the fjord, the glacier loomed larger and larger. The muffled explosions and occasional splashes caused the paddling to pause with conversation suspended as the team waited to see if the glacier would calve. Drifting in the ice and mirrored water, the kayakers took one final look around at the astonishing mountains. The snow, rock and ice, and the golden light of autumn was a true privilege to be witness too. The final paddle home was a joy amidst the ever-present brash ice, followed by a wonderful demonstration of grace and style as each team showed what they had learned exiting their kayaks and climbing the ladder for the final time.





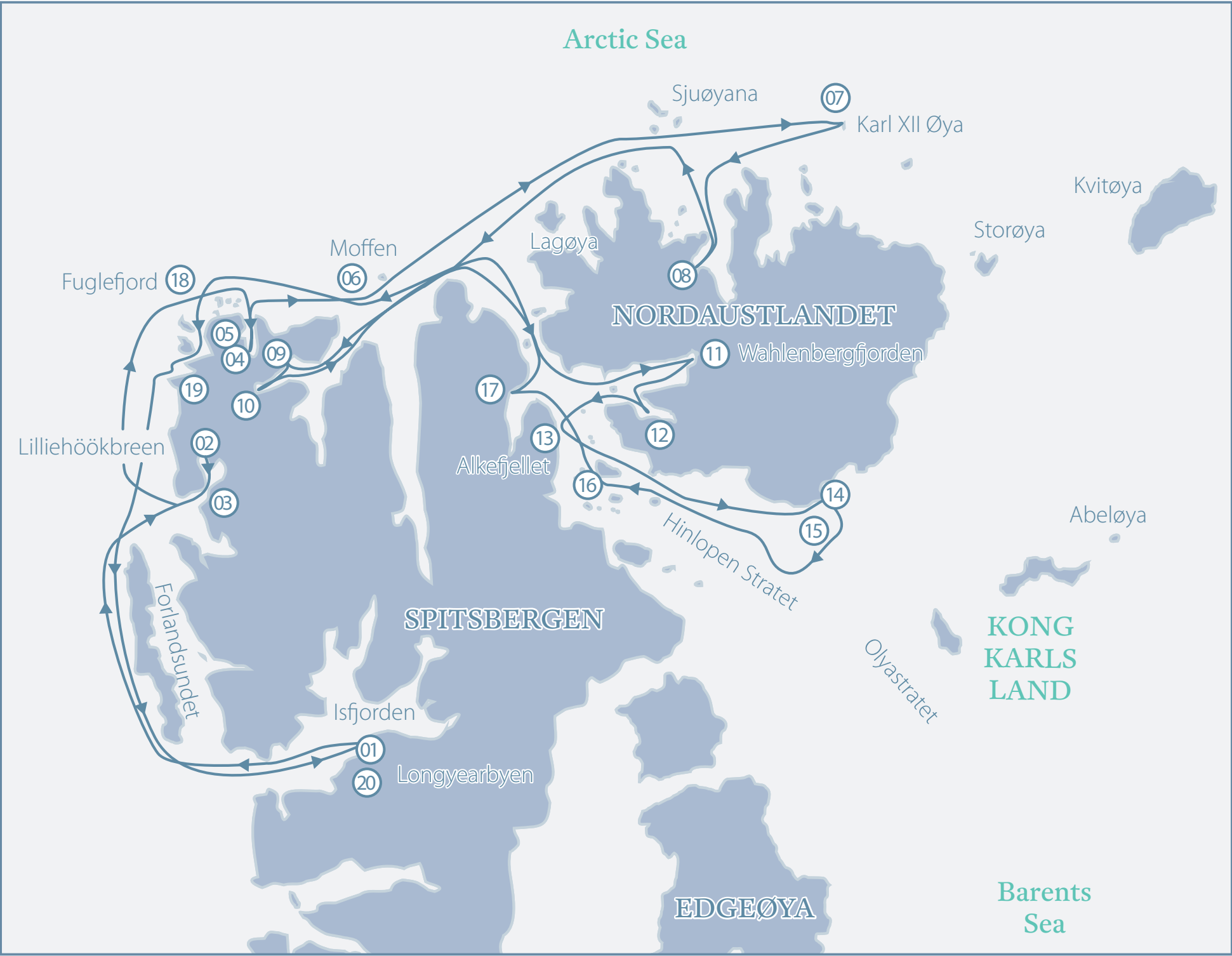




Northern Svalbard Explorer

30 August – 9 September 2019 | Distance Travelled: 1,480 nautical miles (2,738 kilometres)

Northernmost point of voyage: 80°44.257 N, 25°07.869 E the pack ice north of Karl XII Øya



Destinations

- | | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| 01 Longyearbyen | 06 Moffen Island | 11 Wahlenbergfjorden | 16 Ardneset-Walrus |
| 02 Lilliehöökbreen | 07 Bear hunt in ice around Karl XII Øya | 12 Palanderbukta | 17 Faksevangen |
| 03 14 Julibukta | 08 Bengtsenbukta | 13 Alkefjellet | 18 Fuglefjord Zodiac cruise |
| 04 Raudfjord-foggy | 09 Monaco Glacier | 14 Bråsvellbreen Zodiac cruise | 19 Magdalene Fjord |
| 05 Hamiltonbukta | | 15 Ship cruise-Sea Ice off Bråsvellbreen | 20 Longyearbyen |



Bird species log

	August – September										
	30	31	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Red-throated Diver					X		X				
Northern Fulmar	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pink-footed Goose						X	X				
Barnacle Goose			X		X	X					
Common Eider			X			X	X	X	X	X	
Long-tailed Duck						X	X				
Sanderling	X										
Purple Sandpiper		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Pomarine Skua		X			X						
Arctic Skua	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Long-tailed Skua								X			
Great Skua							X				
Glaucous Gull	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Black-legged Kittiwake	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Ivory Gull		X		X		X	X	X			
Arctic Tern	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
Brunich’s Guillemot			X		X		X		X	X	
Black Guillemot		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		
Little Auk		X		X	X						
Atlantic Puffin		X	X	X					X	X	
Svalbard Ptarmigan									X		
Snow Bunting		X			X	X	X			X	



Black-legged Kittiwakes



Juvenile Kittiwake



Black Guillemot



Svalbard Ptarmigan

Mammal species log

	August – September											
	30	31	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	
Arctic Fox	X	X	X			X	X					
Reindeer		X			X	X	X		X			
Polar Bear				X				X				
Ringed Seal			X		X		X	X		X		
Bearded Seal		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Harp Seal				X				X				
Walrus		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Blue Whale		X										
Fin Whale	X											
Minke Whale		X				X						
Humpback Whale		X					X					



Atlantic Walrus



Polar bear



Arctic fox



Svalbard Reidneer



Polar bear



Expeditioners

Sohail Ahmed
Andy Alt
Alena Antonova
Robert Baker
Margaret Barr
Michael Bowman
Alison Brewster
Linda Broschofsky

Lynn Brown
Cheryl Casey
Graeme Casey
Alison Cochrane
Mark Cochrane
Tanya Daish
Barbara Davie
Des Davie

Christiane Delongueville
Sue Emmott
Helen Flanders
Helen Gilbert
John Glaetzer
Margy Glaetzer
Meryl Gover
Jez Hann

Harry Higgs
Ian Hodge
Sally Hodge
Jenny Holliday
Rich Holliday
Leigh Hudgins
Wren Hudgins
Sally Johnson

Kay Kramer
Chris Linn
Iain Linn
Jill Lowes
Leo Lubransky
Heike Lueder-Schirmer
John Maxon
Cath Moore

Rhonda Nelson
Peter O'Brien
Steve Pacak
Coral Robinson
Jenny Rout
Armin Schirmer
Mike Shepherd
Rosemary Shepherd

Stan Slaughter
Graham Snell
Lyndall Steed
Helen Tiffin
David Whalley
Jenny Whalley



Expedition Team Polar Pioneer Crew

Expedition Leader: Christian Genillard
Deputy Expedition Leader: Robyn Mundy
Senior Naturalist: Gary Miller
Expedition Guide: Jukka Ikonen
Expedition Guide: Justin Febey
Kayak Guide: Daniel Stavert
Doctor: John Barry
Chef: Allan Estoque
Second Chef: Bert Cruz
Hotel Manager: Anne Oyasaeter

Master: Aleksandr 'Sasha' Evgenov
Chief Mate: Vladimir Zimin
Second Mate: Evgenii Aleksandrov
Third Mate: Aleksandr Kiselev
Radio Operator: Ilia Liamzin
Chief Engineer: Evgeny Petukhov
Second Engineer: Pavel Voronov
Third Engineer: Aleksei Moiseev
Fourth Engineer: Yurii Horobets
Electrical Engineer: Valentin Lomachenko
Boatswain: Aleksandr Agafonov
Able Seaman: Rashit Ganiev

Able Seaman: Igor Popp
Able Seaman: Vasilii Berlizev
Motorman: Vladimir Zhukov
Head Stewardess: Svetlana Fedorova
Stewardess: Aleksandra 'Sasha' Belusova
Stewardess: Uliana Koval
Stewardess: Ekaterina Rumiantseva
Stewardess: Natalia Trofimova
Stewardess: Elena Liukshina
Russian Crew Chef: Denis Zhenchevski
Yoga Instructor: Alena Antonova

With Thanks

Andy Alt
Michael Baynes
Alison Brewster
Linda Broschofsky
Mark Cochrane
Alison Cochrane
Christiane Delongueville
Helen Gilbert
Margy Glaetzer
Meryl Gover
Ian Hodge
Sally Hodge
Jenny Holliday
Rich Holliday
Leo Lubransky
Gary Miller
Cath Moore
Robyn Mundy
Rhonda Nelson
Peter O'Brien
Daniel Stavert
Helen Tiffin
Jenny Whalley
David Whalley





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