

TRIP NOTES

VOYAGE INFORMATION

Voyage Name	Complete Northwest Passage
Voyage Code	FNW001S
Dates	24 August-22 September 2023
Duration	30 days / 29 nights
Start	Toronto, Canada
Finish	Anchorage, USA
Ship	<i>Sylvia Earle</i>
Forms Due	24 May 2023

Welcome to Aurora Expeditions' **Complete Northwest Passage** expedition.

On this epic voyage inspired by Roald Amundsen's historic expedition, we attempt to sail the full length of the Northwest Passage, carving our way west through the labyrinthine maze of waterways that hug the fabled islands of Arctic Canada until we reach the Beaufort Sea. Building on our classic Northwest Passage voyage, we visit historical sites explored by heroic explorers, meet the incredible folk that call this region home, and search for enigmatic wildlife found in this unique corner of the world. Pack ice may halt our voyage through the passage, so brace yourself for a genuine expedition where adventure awaits at every turn.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Day 1	Arrive in Toronto for an overnight at stay.
Day 2	Embarkation day.
Days 3	Sisimiut
Day 4	Ilulissat
Day 5	Qeqertarsuaq (Disko Island)
Day 6	At sea, Qikiqtarjuaq
Day 7	Isabella Bay
Day 8	Sillem Island
Day 9	Pond Inlet, Tremblay Sound
Day 10	Bylot Island, Navy Board Inlet
Day 11	Dundas Harbour, Croker Bay
Day 12	Beechey Island, Radstock Bay
Days 13-17	Expedition Cruising
Day 18	Cambridge Bay
Day 19	Johansen Bay, Edinburgh Island
Day 20	At sea
Day 21	Jesse Harbour, Banks Island
Day 22	Smoking Hills, Franklin Bay
Day 23	At sea
Day 24	Herschel Island
Day 25	Point Barrow
Days 26-28	At sea
Day 29	Disembark in Nome, fly to Anchorage.
Day 30	Depart Anchorage.

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VOYAGE HIGHLIGHTS

- Stand in awe of Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Hike on Devon Island, the world's largest uninhabited island, which features stunning geology, fjords and glacial valleys to explore
- On Beechey Island, visit memorials and graves of explorers from John Franklin's expedition
- Keep watch with the hope of spotting iconic Arctic wildlife including musk ox, polar bears, beluga whales, walrus and perhaps narwhal

EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- All airport transfers mentioned in the itinerary.
- One night's hotel accommodation including breakfast, in Toronto on Day 1.
- Charter flight from Toronto to Kangerlussuaq on Day 2.
- Flight (group allocation) from Nome to Anchorage on Day 29.
- Onboard accommodation during voyage, including daily cabin service.
- All meals, snacks, tea and coffee during voyage.
- Beer, house wine and soft drinks with dinner.
- Captain's Welcome and Farewell receptions including four-course dinner, house cocktails, house beer and wine, non-alcoholic beverages.
- All shore excursions and Zodiac cruises.
- Educational lectures and guiding services provided by our expedition team.
- Complimentary access to onboard expedition doctor and medical clinic (initial consultation).
- One 3-in-1 waterproof, polar expedition jacket.
- Complimentary use of Muck Boots during the voyage.
- Comprehensive pre-departure information.
- Port surcharges, permits and landing fees.
- Gratuities for ship's crew and local guides.

EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- International or domestic flights – unless specified in the itinerary.
- Transfers – unless specified in the itinerary.
- Airport arrival or departure taxes.
- Passport, visa, reciprocity and vaccination fees and charges.
- Travel insurance or emergency evacuation charges.
- Hotel accommodation and meals – unless specified in the itinerary.
- Optional excursions and optional activity surcharges.
- All items of a personal nature, including but not limited to alcoholic beverages and soft drinks (outside of dinner service), laundry services, personal clothing, medical expenses, wi-fi, email or phone charges.

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DETAILED ITINERARY

Aurora Expeditions operates in remote and challenging environments, and in the spirit of expedition travel, we encourage you to adopt a flexible and adventurous attitude when joining our voyages. This itinerary is a guide only and is subject to change due to weather, sea state and other conditions beyond our control.

Day 1 **Toronto**

Having made your way to Toronto Airport, check-in at Westin Toronto Airport Hotel for an overnight stay. At our welcome briefing this evening, enjoy a drink and meet fellow expeditioners. A representative from Aurora Expeditions will provide you with important information about biosecurity and also about the charter flight to Kangerlussuaq tomorrow. You will receive Aurora Expeditions cabin tags for your luggage. Please clearly label the tags with your name and ship cabin number.

Accommodation: Westin Toronto Airport Hotel (or similar)

Day 2 **Kangerlussuaq**

After breakfast at the hotel, board our charter flight to Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, where our vessel *Sylvia Earle* awaits. After boarding, there is time to settle into your cabin before our important safety briefings. The sailing out of Søndre Strømfjord, with its towering mountains on both sides, is magnificent. This evening, meet your expedition team and crew at the Captain's Welcome Dinner.

Day 3 **Sisimiut**

Greenland's second largest town, Sisimiut is located approximately 54 kilometres (33.5 miles) north of the Arctic Circle, meaning that during summer, you can experience the midnight sun here. The town is famous for the old blue church with the gate made of whale bone. In the cosy museum next door to the church, you will find an excellent reconstruction of an Inuit turf house as well as exhibits of local history and early life in Greenland.

Sisimiut offers hiking trails with various degrees of difficulty. The easier trails take you through the town itself, its outskirts and into the mountains, where you will find spectacular vantage points.

Approximately 4,500 years ago, the Saqqaq culture arrived from Canada and settled in the area. They lived here for approximately 2,000 years, after which they mysteriously disappeared from the area. The Dorset culture arrived around 500 CE and stayed until the 1200s until they were replaced by the Thule culture, and today, the majority of the population of Sisimiut are descendants of the Thule culture.

Day 4 **Ilulissat**

Known as the 'birthplace of icebergs', this region produces some of the most dazzling icebergs found anywhere in the Arctic. Hike past the husky sledge dogs to the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Icefjord and stand in awe of its immensity. Sermeq Kujalleq, also known as Jakobshavn Glacier, is the most productive glacier – not only in Greenland but the entire Northern Hemisphere. It produces 20 million tonnes of ice each day, all floating into the Ilulissat Icefjord and Disko Bay. Conditions permitting, enjoy a Zodiac cruise at the mouth of the fjord and kayak through sea ice and icebergs. An optional 90-minute helicopter flight over the icefjord is a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Optional helicopter flight (90 mins): this excursion is the only way you can get close to the gigantic glacier. The 12-seater helicopter departs from Ilulissat Airport and sweeps over hills, lakes and ice fjords. Land on the mountain at Kangia, in the middle of the preserved area, where you can revel in the incredible surroundings. On the return flight

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to Ilulissat, fly above the edge of the glacier with breathtaking views of the massive icebergs drifting in the fjord. The views of some of the largest icebergs that become stranded on a moraine underneath the water, just outside the town, offers a wonderful finale to this excursion. (Additional charge applies).

Day 5 Qeqertarsuaq (Disko Island)

This compelling island seems to have more in common with Iceland than Greenland. While most of the interior is mountainous and glaciated, its beautiful shorelines boast black sandy beaches, unusual basalt columns, hot springs and dramatic lava formations. On a guided hike, enjoy a diversity of Arctic flora. Zodiac cruise in Disko Bay, a hotspot for marine life including humpback, fin, minke and bowhead whales. The small friendly village has a fascinating historical museum.

Day 6 At sea, Qikiqtarjuaq (Baffin Island)

Our team of experts entertain us with informative talks about wildlife, geology and epic tales of early explorers such as Franklin and Amundsen. Reaching the coast of Baffin Island, we may encounter Greenland's famous icebergs. Keep watch for humpback, sei, sperm and fin whales, as well as various species of seals such as ring and harp seal.

Day 7 Isabella Bay

Farther north along the east coast of Baffin Island we visit Isabella Bay, an important summer and autumn feeding ground for a large population of bowhead whales.

Day 8 Sillem Island

We sail around Sillem Island, with glacial features on all sides. A slow cruise offers the chance to see many glaciers, discharging cascades as well as a variety of seals and other arctic wildlife.

Day 9 Pond Inlet (Mittimatalik), Tremblay Sound

The picturesque hamlet of Pond Inlet, overlooking Eclipse Sound, is surrounded by scenic mountain ranges and numerous glaciers and fjords. Travellers come to marvel at the abundant wildlife hoping to see narwhals, beluga and orca whales, ringed and harp seals, caribou and the occasional polar bear. Explore churches and visit the Natinnak Centre to see exhibits showing the culture and history of the local Inuit people. Husky dog pens are near the landing beach.

In the afternoon, we visit Tremblay Sound and enjoy a ship cruise. The area is well-known to attract narwhals that spend summer here. If we are extremely lucky, we may catch a glimpse of these notoriously shy creatures that are related to whales and dolphins.

Day 10 Bylot Island, Navy Board Inlet

This morning, we sail along coastline of Bylot Island. Covered with mountains, icefields, steep cliffs, snowfields and glaciers, Bylot provides nesting habitat for large numbers of thick-billed murres and black-legged kittiwakes. A total of 74 unique species of arctic bird thrive on this island. Due to the richness of the wildlife and the beauty and diversity of the landscapes in the area, a large portion of the island was also included in the Sirmilik National Park, established in 2001.

We also plan to visit nearby Navy Board Inlet, an arm of Lancaster Sound that is uninhabited. The inlet is part of Sirmilik National Park and provides stunning views of Bylot and Devon islands, with awe-inspiring scenery including mountains, picturesque fjords, inlets, glaciers, and icebergs. Marine animals including polar bears, narwhal and

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whales, seals and seabirds frequent the area so keep your cameras and binoculars ready to hopefully spot some wildlife.

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Day 11 Dundas Harbour, Croker Bay

Croker Bay features a number of active glaciers, and a Zodiac cruise, at a safe distance, is a thrilling adventure. In Dundas Harbour, we plan to anchor and Zodiac ashore, keeping watch for walrus that are often seen in the bay, for a walk across tundra where it is possible to encounter musk ox, enjoy birdwatching, and visit ancient semi-subterranean Thule huts and a former Royal Canadian Mounted Police outpost.

Day 12 Beechey Island, Lancaster Sound

At the western end of Devon Island lies Beechey Island. Named after Frederick William Beechey, the island has many of Canada's most important Arctic relics and is a designated Canadian National Historic Site. Sir John Franklin's first winter, 1845-46, was spent here during his attempted to sail through the Northwest Passage aboard HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, with perilous results – the first three of his men died here. Roald Amundsen landed at Beechey Island in 1903, during the first successful voyage to fully transit the Northwest Passage from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.

Days 13–17 Expedition cruising

In true expeditionary style, our itinerary for the following days is entirely dependent on unpredictable sea ice. The following are places we hope to visit.

Prince Leopold Island, Port Leopold

On the southern side of Lancaster Sound opposite Beechey Island lie the towering bird cliffs of Prince Leopold Island—the most important bird sanctuary in the Canadian Arctic, with approximately 500,000 birds nesting pairs here in summer. Ringed seals are often spotted on the sea ice. Nearby Port Leopold is a historic site where British explorer James Clark Ross wintered in 1848 while searching for the missing Franklin expedition. The ruin of a century old Hudson's Bay trading post can be found there, and polar bear often lurk nearby. The shallow gravel beds attract beluga whales, which come to moult in this part of the Arctic each summer.

Cunningham Inlet

On the north coast of Somerset Island, when factors such as weather and whale behaviour align, you might see the amazing spectacle of hundreds of beluga whales shedding their skin on shallow sandy banks. The local scenery makes for excellent guided walks, where waterway trails lead to waterfalls and higher ground.

Coningham Bay

Across from Victoria Strait, Coningham Bay lies on the shores of Prince of Wales Island. This is a polar bear hotspot where the majestic creatures come to feast on beluga whales that are often trapped in the rocky shallows at the entrance to the bay. It is not unusual to find the shoreline littered with whale skeletons – and very healthy-looking polar bears!

King William Island

In 1859, a Franklin expedition tent camp was discovered at Cape Felix. Remains attributed to the Franklin expedition have been found at 35 different locations on King William Island and on nearby Adelaide Peninsula. South of Cape Felix, in Victoria Strait, we hope to visit Victory Point and get close to where the HMS Erebus and HMS Terror were abandoned in 1848.

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Day 18 **Cambridge Bay**

A large town by local standards, Cambridge Bay is the administrative and transportation hub of the region. It is the largest stop for passenger and research vessels traversing the Northwest Passage and unofficially marks the midpoint for voyages of the Northwest Passage. Zodiac ashore for an exploration of this Inuit settlement located in the high arctic. Enjoy a walk through the village, where you can visit the local church, visitor centre and support the local community by purchasing some locally made handicrafts.

In the old town, we plan to visit the ancient archaeological sites of the Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Thule people.

Wildlife abounds in this area, and you might see caribou, musk ox and seals. The tundra is ablaze with wildflowers and birds including jaegers, ducks, geese and swans visit the area in large numbers.

Day 19 **Johansen Bay, Edinburgh Island**

Edinburgh Island is a small and uninhabited island in Canada's Nunavut region. The scenery consists of colourful flowering shrubs, beaches tinged in stunning ochres, while the surrounding cliffs shaded in rich, deep tones. We hope to enjoy a Zodiac excursion within an estuary of at the northeast end of Johansen Bay and up the river towards the lake. A possible walk to a lookout overlooking the lake offers spectacular views over lakes, sea and mountains. Wildlife including caribous, reindeer, arctic foxes, hares and peregrine falcons frequent the area.

Day 20 **At sea**

Enjoy the many facilities aboard the *Sylvia Earle* as we continue along the shores of the Canadian High Arctic. Enjoy panoramic views from one of the observation lounges, attend informative talks from our onboard experts or sweat it out in the gym or the sauna.

Day 21 **Jesse Harbour, Banks Island**

Located in the north of Canada's Northwest Territories, Banks Island, the fifth largest island in Canada, is home to approximately 60 per cent of the world's population of Lesser Snow Geese. Arctic foxes, wolves, polar bears, caribous, musk ox and many birds are also found here. Grizzly bears are occasionally spotted and bowhead whales are often seen offshore. The dramatic cliffs on the southeast coast feature colourful yellow, white and red quartzites, while, on the west coast is characterized by long, sandy offshore bars. Nelson Head cliffs features ancient Precambrian rock that is almost 2 billion years old.

Day 22 **Smoking Hills, Franklin Bay**

The smoking Hills in Canada's Northwest Territories have been smouldering, sending plumes of gas across the landscape, for centuries. Technically sea cliffs, you would be forgiven for thinking that the multicoloured fiery natural phenomenon is the set to an apocalyptic movie depicting the end of the world. The smoke is caused by layers of combustible, sulphur-rich lignite (brown coal) that ignites and emit sulphurous gas into the air, when exposed to erosion and landslides, which also creates a dazzling colouration of the rocks.

Day 23 **At Sea**

As we continue our journey west, sailing through waters named after famous explorers such as Amundsen Beaufort, keep a close watch for marine wildlife including Beluga whales that are often seen here.

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Day 24 Herschel Island

Lying 5 km (3.1 mi) off the north coast of the Yukon in the Beaufort Sea, Herschel Island has a heritage of natural and natural importance. Its dry polar climate is home to a unique number of arctic plants, animals and sea life. More than 100 other species of birds live or migrate here, and the western arctic's largest colony of black guillemots nest in Pauline Cove. The island is also a habitat for musk oxen, caribou, arctic and red foxes. Seals are often spotted on the sea ice, while bowhead and beluga whales frequent the waters. Apart from the dazzling wildlife and historic buildings found on the island, it is the stunning wildflowers, flourishing in the 24 hours of midnight sun daylight, that most visitors remember.

Day 25 Point Barrow

Point Barrow, or 'Nuvuk' in the local Inuit language, is a headland on the Arctic coast in the U.S. state of Alaska. It is the northernmost in the United States, and where we enter the country. The North Pole is only 1,122 nautical miles (2,078 km /1,291 mi) away. The area is home to the Inupiat, an Inuit tribe that have lived in the area for more than 1500 years. Bowhead whales migrate through the region, so keep a close watch for a glimpse of them. A bowhead whale's jawbone sits on the shore on the outskirts of Utqiagvik town, formerly known as Barrow. The of the whale is in the form of an archway that faces the Chukchi Sea, symbolising the important relationship between the Inupiat and the sea.

Days 26-28 At sea

Continuing west along the northern coast of Alaska to where the U.S and Russia are only 100 km (60 miles) apart, separated by the Bering Sea, there is ample time to reflect on our adventures while scanning the water for marine life. Enjoy a massage in the wellness centre, share, edit and submit pictures in our photo competition and attend final lectures from our team of onboard experts. Celebrate an unforgettable voyage at the Captain's Farewell Dinner on board.

Day 29 Disembark in Nome, fly to Anchorage

In Nome, farewell your expedition team and crew after sharing a once-in-a-lifetime voyage together. After disembarking, we transfer to the airport for flight to Anchorage for an overnight stay.

Accommodation: Hilton Hotel Anchorage (or similar)

Day 30 Depart Anchorage

Transfer to the airport for your onward journey.

NOTE: At the conclusion of the voyage, we do not recommend booking flights departing Ushuaia prior to 12.00 pm on the day of disembarkation in case there are delays.