



Svalbard

Trip log

17th July – 27th July 2008

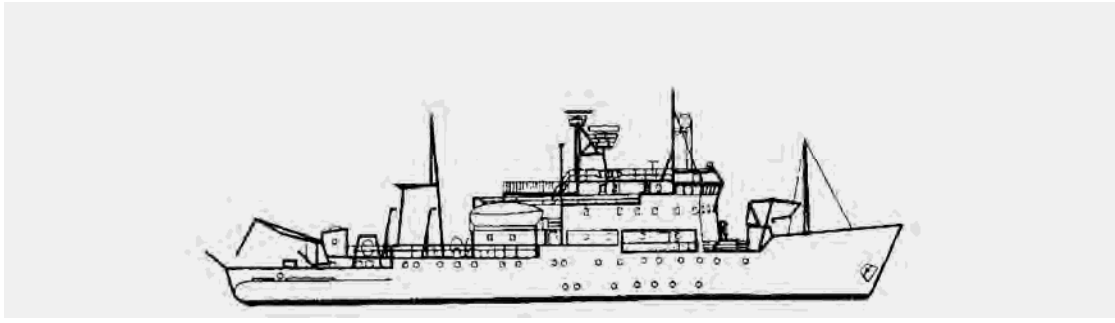
On Board



M/V Professor Multanovskiy

The Professor Multanovskiy is an ex-research vessel from the Arctic and Antarctic Institute in St. Petersburg, Russia. She was built in 1983 in Finland, and was designed as an ice strengthened ship. She measures 71.6 metres (236 ft) in length and 12.8 metres (42 ft) across the beam. She draws 4.5 metres (15 ft) which enables her to move into relatively shallow waters. Her tonnage is 2140 t. Oceanwide Expeditions is fully responsible for the management and operation of the Professor Multanovskiy.

Professor Boris Pompevich Multanovskiy was born in Russia in 1876. He was a meteorologist famous for his long-term forecasts. On the Kamtchatka Peninsula there is a wonderful mountain named after him, too. He died in the USSR in 1938.



With

Captain: Igor Stetsun

and his crew of 19 from St. Petersburg, Russia

Expedition Leader – Nicola Boll (Germany)

Guide – Michelle van Dijk (Netherlands)

Guide – Elke Morgner (Germany)

Hotel Manager – Caroline van Dijk (Netherlands)

Chef – Jocelyn Wilson (New Zealand)

Sous Chef – Ryan Murray (New Zealand)

Ship's Doctor – Dr. Paul Harris (Great Britain)

Nature Trek Escort – David Tattersfield

Nature Trek Escort – Paul Marshall



17. July 2008 - Longyearbyen

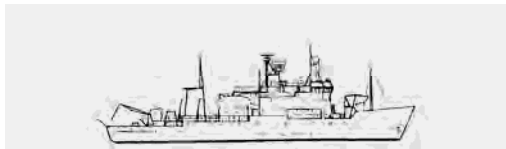
0715 Position: 79°04'N/11°25'E

air temperature: 11°C, sunny

On a sunny afternoon we arrived in Longyearbyen airport. After a bus ride into town and a short walk back to the harbour it was time to board the *Professor Multanovskiy*, our home for the next ten days to come. Before we left the pier, we were welcomed and introduced to the ship and staff by Nicola Boll, our expedition leader from Germany. Our guides Michelle van Dijk and Elke Morgner completed the team together with the two chefs Jocelyn Wilson and Ryan Murray, Hotel manager Caroline van Dijk and the Ship's doctor Dr. Paul Harris. We had already met our two Nature trek escorts David and Paul on the travel to Longyearbyen.

After a short break we gathered in the bar to get a compulsory introduction to safety on board and lifeboat procedures. Some minutes later we found ourselves in the lifeboats, with warm clothes and life jackets. This life boat drill, which has to be done within 24 hours after departure, brought us close together. Finally, it was time for a first, good and well-deserved Multanovskiy-dinner.





18. July 2008 - Kongsfjord with Ny-Ålesund, Blomstrandhalvøya and Kongsvegen

0715 Position: 78°57'N/11°53'E

air temperature: 8 °C (later 15°C!!!), tropical

We awoke to another day with amazing weather in Kongsfjorden. Soon after breakfast we launched the zodiacs for our first landing on Blomstrandhalvøya and Camp Mansfield, named after the founder of the Northern Exploration Company who, between 1911 and 1920 unsuccessfully tried to establish a marble industry here. Beautiful cushions of flowering moss campion could be spotted all around the place and the botanists amongst us were eager to explore the rich tundra vegetation. On our way to the marble breaking site we even saw Svalbard reindeer, an Arctic skua, that was nesting on the peninsula and best of all a pair of Long-tailed Skuas. Some Eiders were also spotted. The group separated and some of us went a bit further uphill whilst the others enjoyed the view across the fjord.



During lunch we sailed to the other side of Kongsfjorden and landed in the scientific community of Ny Ålesund, the northernmost year-round settlement in the world. Here scientists from all over the world study such diverse topics as glaciology, arctic flora and fauna, atmospheric conditions and global warming. At the peak of summer Ny Ålesund may “swell” to a population of over a hundred people. We were lucky

that Elke knows Marcus Schumacher, the director of the German-French research station AWIPEF, who gave us an extraordinary welcome at the harbour and introduced us to the settlement.

We saw the tame arctic foxes with their cubs playing around their den under one of the houses. Whilst on the other side of the road one of the dutch researchers was sitting amongst several Barnacle Goose goslings. After some time in the settlement we went to a special place in the history of Arctic exploration. Located on a lonely plain outside the settlement was the mast that held the famous airship Norge-1, in which Amundsen, Nobile, and Ellsworth flew across the North



Pole from Ny Ålesund to Nome, Alaska, in 1926. On our way around we could once more enjoy the rich vegetation and found, amongst other species, flowering *Ranunculus hyperboreus* and *Saxifraga nivalis*.

Back on board the Professor Multanovskiy there was a buzz about the dining room as we chatted and exchanged our impressions of our first full day of expedition. After dinner Captain Stetsun took our ship on an evening cruise to the glacier front of Kongsvegen before setting the course northwards to our next destination



www.arcticstation.nl



19 July 2008 - Smeerenburgfjorden

0715 Position: 79°45' N 11°03' E

air temperature: 13°C, partly clouded

7 o'clock wake up call and again it looked beautiful outside. Enjoying the 20 km long Smeerenburgfjorden view we saw a huge Pirate ship coming so we decided to move north and come back later.

The place that we were heading has the most promising name Fuglesangen, which means 'the birdsong'. While Nicola was doing a briefing in the bar Elke & Michelle took a Zodiac to secure the Island and find the best bird cliffs. It was not an easy place to land, but no pain no gain and although the rocks at the shoreline were very slippery and the slopes were not easy to walk, it was worth it.



We started with the view across the fjord, which was changing with the light, then the nasty rocks which actually appeared much friendlier when we took a closer look at the colourful lichens. As soon as we came around the corner towards the bird cliff, David pointed out the Scurvy Grass.

But called by the sound of Little Auks the birders among us had to walk on. It was beautifully to see thousands of Little Auks living on the rocks. All of a sudden there was a Great Skua, the air was filled with screaming Little Auks and it took a while before peace returned.



In the afternoon we went back to our original landing spot: Smeerenburg.

Smeerenburg means Blubber town and is an old Dutch whaling settlement from the 16th century.

In its great days, Smeerenburg was a busy and populous place for a couple of months each year, and its inhabitants in a full

season may have numbered 1000 to 1200 at the most. Besides some remains of the blubber ovens and wood laying around, there is not much left of it. It was very interesting to see the yellowish vegetation that is caused by the blubber that 'fertilized' the site.

We split up into three groups. The slow group took a closer look to the vegetation and met a Finnish man with a kayak who planned to paddle around Spitsbergen in six weeks. The other two groups visited the grave of the Dutch whalers, came across a reindeer and a lot of mud. The middle group found Polar Bear tracks and a Red-throated Diver, the quickies ran off to Salad Mountain, where they found Scurvy Grass but no Mountain Sorrel – no mixed salad.

Besides the salad they saw a pair of Glaucous Gulls with a chick, a pair of Arctic Skuas and an Arctic Fox track in the snow.



After our delicious dinner we had to drink some coffee, because Nicola & Michelle did a lecture together on whales & whaling history on Spitsbergen.

Not long after the lecture, the fog came up and it was time to go to bed.



20 July 2008 Northern Spitsbergen

0715 Position: 80°09'N/11°02'E

air temperature: 7 °C icy

This morning we experienced common Svalbardian summer conditions with low hanging clouds as we made our way into the sea ice. Everyone was on deck looking for Polar Bears, but we could see no sign of them. Still it was more than worth watching. A Fin Whale, a group of Harp Seals and several Bearded Seals on the ice floes close to the boat were just some wildlife sightings to mention. Our chief mate managed to park the ship so close to the ice floe that we could almost touch the seals. Careful scanning of the ice revealed two beautiful adult Sabine's Gulls and a stunning Ross's Gull – a real rarity!



One hour before dinner we reached our northernmost position at 80°19'N and celebrated with vodka on the front deck. During dinner the world's northernmost fashion show uncovered hidden talents among the crew including also our youngest passenger Mathilde.



Afterwards a lecture about the geology of Svalbard was announced, but this one had to be delayed because of still another Fin Whale sighting. Two whales at a position of about 80°06'N 11°01'E were eating their dinner in close vicinity to the ship. We got some wonderful views and the photographers amongst us were busy capturing this amazing scene.



21 July 2008 Krossfjorden

0715 Position: 79°07' N 11°45' E

air temperature: 8°C clouded

After a decent breakfast we got ready to take a closer look at the 14th July-Glacier, named by the expeditions organized by Albert I, Prince of Monaco after the National Day of France. At this moment the glacier was quite active so our Zodiac driver had to find a way through lots of ice bits.



The next challenge was the landing with low tide, but we all managed to get ashore with dry feet thanks to our wellingtons. Again we split up into three groups, the mountaineers among us went with Elke to see the glacier from above, they even succeed in walking on it. Nicola took the middle group into the moraines but most of us went with Michelle as the easy going group. I wonder if that had anything to do with the celebration of our northernmost point yesterday...

The easy going group enjoyed the view of the glacier at sea level and saw it calf, while Michelle explained that a Glacier is a frozen river that flows and how they balance between retreating and surging. Then we went across a little rivulet so we could get close to a 'stand alone' ice block which acts as an ice machine because ice cubes came rolling down all the time.

On the way back to the ship we slowed down at the little Icebergs to picture them.

Soup & hot-dogs were waiting for us and last but not least.....

'The Great N.Z. Apricot and Peanut Slice'

Ingredients:

250g pkt *super wine biscuits*
3/4 cup *crunchy peanut butter*
3/4 cup *dried apricots – chopped*
3/4 cup *dessicated coconuts*
1/2 cup *condensed milk*
200 g *butter – melted*
grated rind of 2 oranges

Icing:

1 cup icing sugar
2 tbsp orange juice

Method:

Crush biscuits- finely or a bit chunky

Add the peanut butter, apricots, coconut, condensed milk, butter and orange rind and stir until mixed evenly.

Press into a baking paper lined 20 cm x 30 cm tin and refrigerate for 2 -3 hrs or until firm. Ice and cut into slices to serve.

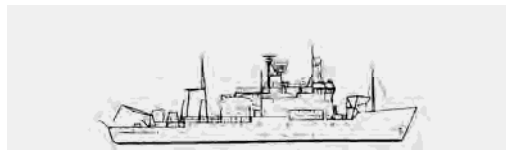
Enjoy! - Joss Wilson - Chef

The afternoon landing was on the other side of the glacier. A 'hanging garden' for our botanists and a bird cliffs for the ornithologists. A group of Barnacle Geese with chicks came down the slope and past at a short distance on their way to the water. Pink-footed Geese flew over and the background music was made by thousands of Kittiwakes.



When after an hour the zodiacs left for the bird cliffs and the Guillemots, the botanists still hadn't enough and stayed a little longer with the beautiful Arctic flora. Such a horn of plenty.... Not even possible to list on this page - see plants list.



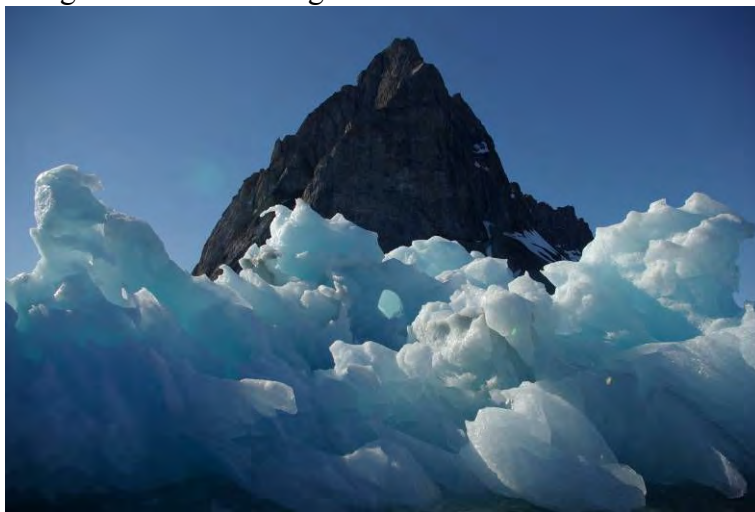


22 July 2008 Hornsund

0715 Position: 77° 29'N/13° 21'E

air temperature: 6 °C , sunny

The day started a little bit foggy but with incredibly calm seas and already before breakfast people could be seen up on the deck. We were still on our way southwards and the first part of the day went by watching for any sign of wildlife and listening to a lecture about Polar Bears. At lunchtime we arrived in Hornsund and slowly the fog disappeared, unravelling a breathtaking silhouette of steep mountains. By the time we were ready to board the zodiacs the surrounding landscape had changed into perfect summer Arctic scenery with blue sky; a sunlit beach underneath a rich bird cliff and snowcovered mountains and glaciers in the background.



On a day like this it was easy to understand why Hornsund is considered to be one of the most beautiful fjords in Spitsbergen. We landed in Gnålodden where we found the old trapper-hut occupied by two Polish researchers, who would spend a week at this site to study the vegetation underneath the bird cliff. Our group spread into two, one stayed near the hut whilst the others went on a hike along the

slope and beach to get a view into Vestre Burgerbukta and after some nice hours on shore we once again entered the zodiacs to cruise around in Vestre Burgerbukta, which was filled with colourful blue icebergs.

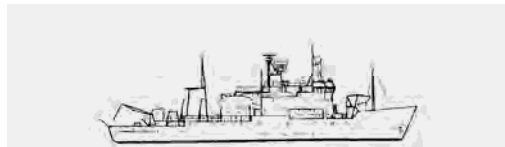
Excitement reached its heights when we heard Elke announcing Paul's sighting of the "big white one". A male Polar Bear was walking over the snow-covered slopes heading towards Gnåluken. All zodiacs came together at a safe distance to the shoreline, but still close enough to allow good views and some (or rather many!!!) nice shots of the King of the Arctic. The bear noticed us, but did not care about his audition at all and kept



on walking straight towards the trapper hut, so one of the zodiacs went off to warn the researchers about their coming visitor.



At dinner we shared our impressions of this fabulous day and after the delicious meal people continued to view each others pictures, enjoying the calm and sunny evening as the southwestern coast of Spitsbergen showed itself from its best side whilst we passed it on our way towards Edgeøya.



23 July 2008 Storfjorden

0715 Position: **76°59' N 18°46' E**

air temperature: 4°C fresh northerly winds

Sailing from Hornsund to Edgeøya took a while. There was therefore time to get to know the boat a little better. Excursions to the bridge and the engine room taught us that there are always two people on watch working in four-hour shifts. Although there are two engines with capacity of 1500 horsepower each, there is only one propeller which speed is controlled at the bridge. You can say that the bridge is the head and the engine room is the heart of the ship. In the engine room is not only the main engine, but they also heat the water and air for ventilation. Even the biological sewage system is controlled by the engine crew.

Just when Chief Engineer Alexander ended the demonstration of the special Russian telephone to call to Putin, and we where free to look around, we heard the noise being reduced which meant that the ship was slowing down. Chief Engineer used the other telephone to call to the bridge and after that he pointed at a picture of a Polar Bear. Of course we all went up immediately and saw the bear walking at the ice. It was already our second bear, this time spotted from the bridge while we were following the ice edge. Third officer Roman stopped the ship so we had more time to observe it. Later, when the bear disappeared into the water, we continued sailing to Edgeøya.



At first it seemed that because of the ice it wasn't possible to do the landing at Habenichtbukta, but the sister ship Polar Pioneer just left that bay and had a chat in Russian with our crew, about where was the best place to cross the ice.

Habenichtbukta is called after a German geographer from Gotha. Five Zodiacs were ready to bring us to the shallow bay but they had to be very careful because this bay already broken some Zodiac propellers because of its shallowness in combination with the Basalt rocks.

Next to our landing site there were some remains of English whalers and Russian Pomors. We split up in three groups. Nicola stayed at the beach, Elke went with the majority in a north west direction and had third officer Roman as an assistant. Michelle took the 'exercise group' around the bay to the hut at the south side, where Norwegian trappers occasionally wintered. On the way to the hut we had to pass two ponds. Some of us got wet feet because of the boggy tundra, but you only get wet once and we saw Eider, Red-throated Divers and some Arctic Skuas.

Near the hut was also a lovely waterfall that found its way through the Basalt rocks. While we were enjoying this Basalt, Elke called us on the radio. Her group had seen a (third) Polar Bear ashore, to the north of the group. No time for birding any more, we had to get back to the Zodiacs before the bear might appear at the same place. It took us approximately one hour to get back. Elke & Nicola were guarding with rifles & signal pistols while David held Nicola's Zodiac. We got into the Zodiac as quickly as possible and returned to the ship.



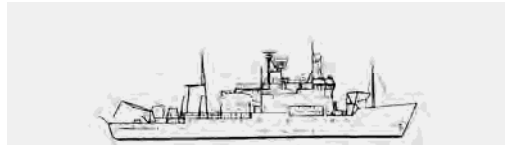
At the ship Caroline welcomed us with the words that we were a bit to early, because she was organizing a BBQ as a surprise and that was now spoiled. Anyway, it did not harm the party, the food was excellent again! Much more than we could eat, even much more than we could try...

People were dancing the most silly dances and everybody had a good time.



Although the ship should not sail when the party is on deck, suddenly the drift ice appeared and we had to lift anchor to avoid a dangerous situation.

Although nobody expected it in the morning, day seven turned into a real Arctic adventure!

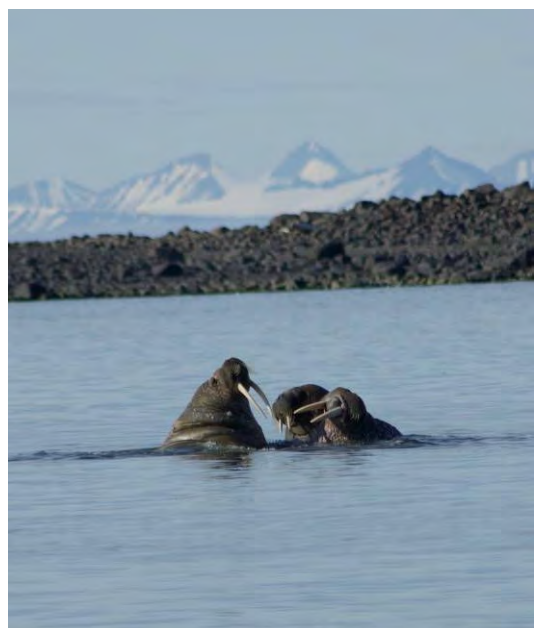


24 July 2008 Edgeøya-Kapp Lee

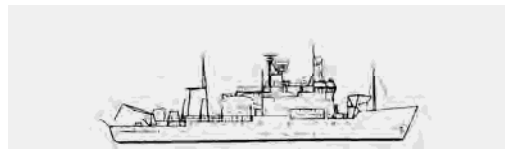
0715 Position: 78° 12'N/21° 25 'E

air temperature: 5 °C, low hanging clouds

During the early morning we entered Freemansundet, a narrow strait between Edgeøya and Barentsøya on our way towards the ice. Low hanging clouds surrounded our ship and when we arrived at the eastern side of the strait conditions still had not changed so we decided to turn back. As soon as we came closer to the northwestern coast of Edgeøya the fog vanished and we could spot a colony of Walrus on the sandy beach of Kapp Lee. After a short briefing about how to approach Walrus we got into the zodiacs and went ashore. Arriving at a safe distance to the colony we gathered the whole group before we started to walk slowly and quietly towards these impressive animals. The majority of Walrus sunbathed and were not disturbed by our presence so we got the chance to come quiet close to them. For a long while we just stood there watching and



far too soon it was time to get back to the ship for lunch. In the afternoon we continued our way back to the west coast of Spitsbergen passing the area of drift ice which we went through two days earlier. This time we experienced the ice in a totally different setting, thick fog created a mysterious scenery and even though we could not see very far people gathered on the decks to experience the calm and magic atmosphere. This afternoons program included lectures about the history of Spitsbergen and arctic vegetation and afterwards we could enjoy yet another delicious dinner in the restaurant.



25 July 2008 South Cape and Bellsund

0715 Position: 76° 40'N 15° 23 'E

air temperature: 6 °C, fresh fog, wet but no wind

We came around the south cape, heading north again. We took our time to eat our breakfast because the beautiful view was wrapped in fog, so it didn't distract us. We still had some hours to go before we should reach Bellsund, therefore the cancelled bridge & engine room excursions were on again. Nicola told us where we could look for velocity, depth, radar, GPS coordinates, weather conditions and that when we look at the clinometer, 35' is no problem for the ship, only for the people on it. (During the bridge excursion it was only 3'). Of course we all had found the chartroom including the officers and some of us already had used one of the communication possibilities.



After the excursions escort Paul did a presentation of Kamchatka.

As soon as we entered Bellsund the fog lifted. At three o'clock we arrived in Recherche Fjorden where we went to see the Recherche breen. It calfs into a lagoon and we walked around stranded icebergs. Some of us didn't feel the need to go out

for a walk and they went with Michelle for a Zodiac ride.



A reindeer with huge antlers grazed on the mountain slope. After that we went to the other side of the bay where there was an old hut that was used to mine.

By the time that we got back for the Russian dinner the weather got better again.

After food the weather was so nice that we just had to do another landing. We went to Ahlstrandodden aka Bamsebu. A hut with a very special Polar Bear defence, the wood is nailed with sharp nail-points facing outside. Around 1920 here was a Beluga whaling station and



heaps of Beluga bones laid upon the beach. Some younger leftover was situated next to our landing place and an Ivory Gull was just having his dinner. Although it didn't look that good and the smell was awful, it must have tasted very good, because it didn't fly away when we came back to the Zodiacs.

When the sun disappeared, it was time to go back to the ship and try to look for the Polar Bear that our sister ship, Polar Pioneer, had seen at Kapp Martin. Unfortunately when we got there it was foggy, but most people had already gone to bed anyway, so they didn't have to be woken up again.





26. July 2008 Diabasodden and Skansbukta

0715 Position: 78° 17'N 15° 16 'E

air temperature: 8 °C, cloudy

In the early morning we arrived in Tempelfjorden just outside Diabasodden, which would be our first landing site for this day. Already onboard the “extreme hikers” were sorted out and driven to shore a little bit further away so that they could walk back towards Diabasodden, a trek along which they saw the nice water fall Hyperittfossen.



The others landed close to a camping site and a little hut and walked up to the bird-cliffs, whilst the botanists studied the rich vegetation (including our first sighting of Spider Flower) that was growing along the sheltered cliffs.



After lunch the ship moved to Billefjorden with its fantastic scenery of carboniferous and permian sedimentary rocks, which form impressive cathedral-like cliffs in the background of Skansbukta - our second landing site for this day. With the sea birds nesting in the cliffs, Northern Jacob's Ladder growing along the slopes and the sun shining as if it knew that this day would be our last, we wandered around in our own pace and could say goodbye to Svalbard and its breathtaking nature. Caroline surprised us with a hot chocolate break and some nice cookies before we went for a zodiac cruise beneath the bird cliffs. In the evening we all gathered in the bar with Champagne to celebrate our last briefing and shortly afterwards Caroline called us for our farwell dinner.



Birds

Species	July 2008									
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Red-throated Diver		1	4				2			
Northern Fulmar	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Pink-footed Goose					6		c350		14	
Barnacle Goose		c30	16		12	102	8		18	
King Eider								1	1	1
Common Eider		✓	✓		✓				✓	✓
Long-tailed Duck							10			
Ptarmigan		1								
Purple Sandpiper	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Grey Phalarope				2						
Great Skua	2	2	1	2	2	2			2	
Pomarine Skua				1						
Arctic Skua	2	6	6		2	5+	1		3+	
Long-tailed Skua		3								
Black-legged Kittiwake	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ivory Gull		2		1	1				2	
Ross's Gull				1						
Sabine's Gull				2						
Glaucous Gull	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arctic Tern	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Brunnich's Guillemot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Razorbill	1									
Black Guillemot	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Atlantic Puffin	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Little Auk	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Snow Bunting	✓	✓	✓		✓				✓	✓

Mammals

Species	July 2008									
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Polar Bear						1	2			
Arctic Fox		7								
Svalbard Reindeer		4	1		2		1			4
Walrus			2				2	c30		
Bearded Seal		3	2	8	4			2		
Harp Seal				c50						
Minke Whale		4	4	2	1	1				
Fin Whale			1	3		5+				

Last Name	Email Address
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Ryan Murray – Sous-Chef	muzzacliff@hotmail.com
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Michelle van Dijk – Guide	michelle@spitsbergen-svalbard.info www.longyearbyen-camping.com
Elke Morgner – Guide	elkemorgner@gmx.de
Roman Mukhin - 3. Officer	stuffonly@mail.ru

We would like to thank all of you for the nice atmosphere on board, on the tundra and in the zodiacs and hope to see you again-somewhere between the poles!

Total distance: (Longyearbyen to Longyearbyen)
1123,8 Seamiles = 2022,8 Kilometer

Michelle van Dijk – Photos, Text & Layout, Elke Morgner – Text & Layout;
 Nicola Boll & Paul Marshall - Overview

Further information: www.oceanwide-expeditions.com
www.naturetrek.co.uk