



OCEANWIDE

EXPEDITIONS

Around Spitsbergen
3rd of Juli – 12rd of Juli 2019
M/V Plancius



M/V Plancius was named after the Dutch astronomer, cartographer, geologist and vicar Petrus Plancius (1552-1622). *Plancius* was built in 1976 as an oceanographic research vessel for the Royal Dutch Navy and was named *Hr. Ms. Tydeman*. The ship sailed for the Royal Dutch Navy until June 2004 when she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions and completely refit in 2007, being converted into a 114-passenger expedition vessel. *Plancius* is 89 m (267 feet) long, 14.5 m (43 feet) wide and has a maximum draft of 5 m, with an Ice Strength rating of 1D, top speed of 12+ knots and three diesel engines generating 1230 hp each.



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EXPEDITIONS

Captain Andrei Zybin

and his international crew

of 46, including:

Hotel Manager:	Zsuzsanna Varga	Hungary
Assist. Hotel Manager:	Oleksandr Lyebedyev	Ukraine
Head Chef:	Khabir Moraes	India
Sous Chef:	Ivan Ivanovic	Serbia
Ship's Physician:	Veronique Verhoeven	Belgium
Expedition Leader:	Birgit Lutz	Germany
Asst Expedition Leader:	Michelle van Dijk	The Netherlands
Expedition Guide:	Arjen Drost	The Netherlands
Expedition Guide:	Irene Kastner	Spitsbergen
Expedition Guide:	Henry Pal Wulff	Germany/Iceland
Expedition Guide:	Eduardo Rubio	Guatemala
Expedition Guide:	Tanya Bayer	Germany
Expedition Guide:	Jochem Braakhekke	The Netherlands

all welcome you on board!

Day 1 – July 3, 2019

Embarkation in Longyearbyen

GPS Position at 8:00am: 78°14'N - 015°37'E

Wind: SE 5-6 **Sea State:** slight **Weather:** overcast **Air Temp:** +8°C



The trip started at the harbour of famous Longyearbyen. The Plancius is welcoming us alongside at the pier, with mild arctic weather, slight wind and some waves greeting the passengers between 16 and 17 o'clock. Staff and crew got excited to start this trip to experience Spitsbergen and to inspect the sea ice conditions. Excited were also the passengers as they try to find, loose and again find their cabin locations and their luggage and make themselves familiar with the ship. Zsuzsanna, our hotel manager and pleasantly shining as always, starts with a small introduction about life on board and after some mandatory safety information and a safety drill we set sail at 18:35, heading out towards the open sea over Isfjorden.

At 19:00, the Captain welcomes us in the lounge with a drink and our Expedition Leader Birgit introduces herself, before the rest of the team follows her example. Birgit then shows us the actual ice charts, with a lot of red colouration in Hinlopen Street and Wijdefjord, meaning there is dense sea ice to be found there. She points out that flexibility is key and that the occurrence of sea ice is the prime example of how things simply go in the Arctic.

By now, all passengers are looking forward to dinner in the dining room, before collecting their rubber boots. As dessert, our whale spotters report a blue whale, humpback whale and a minky whale. What a start, full of wildlife!



Day 2 – July 4, 2019

Lilliehöökreen and Ny-Ålesund

GPS Position at 8:00am: 78°56.2'N - 011°55.2'E

Wind: var 0-1 **Sea State:** smooth **Weather:** partly cloudy **Air Temp:** +7°C

Our first stop during this trip was planned at the scientific settlement of Ny-Ålesund, which used to be the world's most northern coal mining village during its heydays. To get there from Longyearbyen we sailed along the west coast of Prins Karls Forland Island and early morning we finally entered the Kongsfjord (Fjord of the Kings) and the clear and blue skies gave us the chance to contemplate the three famous peaks of Svea, Dana and Norska which appeared unmistakably on the horizon.



We dropped anchor and launched the zodiacs aiming to undertake the first activity of the trip. Our visit was organized in such a way that the passengers had some free time to roam around the settlement. Despite the human presence at the settlement, there are plenty of chances of spotting wildlife and we managed to spot a lone Svalbard Reindeer, a dashing polar fox, barnacle gees, an ivory gull, lots of Antarctic terns and a few snow buntings.

Around 10:30 the souvenir shop opened its doors and our guests had the chance to buy some souvenirs, as well as the chance to send some postcards to their beloved ones. Later on, at 11:00, most of the passengers gathered around the monument that depicts the bust of Roald Amundsen (1872-1928), the most celebrated Norwegian explorer.

At this monument, Arjen told the story of Amundsen who first navigated the Northwest Passage (1903-1906), first reached the South Pole in 1911 and returning safely, thereby handing out the spare food rations to his crew. Later he organized a few expeditions aiming to reach the North Pole by plane, and together with Lincoln Ellsworth and Umberto Nobile he made the first Transpolar flight in 1926 using an airship, the Norge. After this flight, Amundsen lost his life while trying to help his colleague Nobile who was declared missing in the vicinity of the pole in 1928. After this wonderful talk we walked together towards the very mast from which the Norge expedition took off, and also from where later, the Italia expedition took off as well.

During our visit we could also see various of the research stations deployed at the settlement. Among these research stations there is for example the antennas from NASA, which are used for tracking satellites as well as to acquire telemetry data from current space missions on board the International Space Station. Other instruments constantly measure the quality of the air and its content, the behaviour and population of wild animals as well as the characterization of the marine species in the fjord.

We finish our stay in Ny-Ålesund with the last zodiac leaving the pier back to the ship at around 12:30. In the afternoon, we proceeded towards the Lilliehöökfjord. This area offers various biological and historical highlights, splendid scenery and is well protected.



It is at the end of Lilliehöökfjord where we find Lilliehöökbrean, a massive glacier with a calving front rising up to 60-70 m height. The glacier and the fjord are both named after the Swedish Commander Gustaf Bertil Lillienhök, who was a member of the Swedish Spitsbergen expedition of 1861. As we sailed into the fjord, we stopped the engines and dropped anchor at a safe distance from the glacier front. From this point, we could hear and see many growlers calving and making incredible sounds. At 15:00 we dropped the zodiacs in the water and we started our zodiac cruise. We were 10 zodiacs driven by 8 guides and 2 crew members. During our cruise, we had the opportunity to see many massive chunks of ice calving, producing a disturbance in the water that could be perceived from up to 500 m away. During the cruise we enjoyed of warm and sunny weather and we could navigate through the ice smooth and swiftly. We returned to the Plancius at 18:00 to have our daily recap and to enjoy of a good dinner. Overnight we repositioned the ship from Lilliehöökbrean towards Magdalenafjord, the place where we would do our next activities.

Day 3 – July 5, 2019

Magdalenefjorden and a first polar bear

GPS Position at 8:00am: 79°33.3'N - 011°08.6'E

Wind: 2 **Sea State:** calm **Weather:** cloudy / sunny **Air Temp:** +6°C

This morning, the sea was flat like a mirror. We sailed into Magdalenefjorden in the calmest possible weather. Some seals showed up while we were slowly floating into our anchoring position. Our Expedition Leader, Birgit wakes us up with her calm voice and the smell of toasted bread and fresh coffee signals us the start of the breakfast.

After breakfast, the crew is getting the Zodiacs ready. We are excited about what to see and what to expect. A short visit to the outside deck shows us how warm the Arctic sun can get, so we dress up in not too many layers for the announced shore activities. We board the first Zodiac and head towards the land close to Alkekongen to go ashore. Our first proper landing brings us to a rocky beach with some slippery stones in the water, but the expedition team manages to get all of us ashore with dry feet.



Arjen welcomes us with a short story about that place. In the 70ies, a group of Austrians were circumnavigating Spitsbergen by kajak and were looking for shelter in that particular bay to set up camp for their overnight stay. They secured their camp against polar bears with a trip wire, that shoots loud explosives into the air to scare the bears away in case they step into the wire. However, one member of the group needed

to go for the toilet that night and left the camp. He even managed to step over the trip wire – not the easiest task if you're half asleep – and started looking for a place behind a rock. Unfortunately, that place was already taken by a polar bear that eventually killed the man. His screaming woke up the camp and when everybody went out of their tents the bear had taken the dead body towards the sea to secure his prey so the now-widow took her video camera to record the last bits of her husband. Later the Governor of Svalbard – Sysselmannen – confiscated the tape to investigate the case. A cross, situated not far from the beach, pays tribute to that incident.

That story in mind, we divided into three groups to explore the surroundings. Birgit and Henry took their group on a longer hike up into the valley towards Alkebreen. The trail led us through some rocky passages but also some very nice moss patches. Arctic mouse-ear

and Purple saxifrage flanked our path and sprinkled some colours along our way. While walking, a single reindeer showed up, coming out of the valley heading down to the shore. Getting a glimpse on that beautiful peaceful animal got us into awe. On our way back to the beach we spotted two more reindeers, that curiously strolled around the front of our group.

Down at the beach, two harbour seals came into the bay to get a curious look onto the visitors in their habitat. Even the starting Zodiac-shuttle back to the ship didn't annoy them so they played around in the bay a while and we could get some nice pictures of them.

Being back on board, the restaurant crew welcomed us with an amazing lunch buffet to recharge our batteries from our morning landing and to prepare for some more adventures in the afternoon. During lunch time we sailed through the mesmerizing Sjørgattet Strait into the Smeerenburgfjorden. While some amazing glacier fronts calve into the east side of the fjord, almost the entire west side was covered with fast ice reaching from the shore of Danskøya wide into the fjord. The bird watchers on board



had some good time with a couple of Brunnich Guillemots until Steve discovered a polar bear. It took us a while to see, what Steve found out on the ice, but eventually we got close enough to get a good view. Our first encounter with the white fluffy king of the Arctic! The excitement on deck was sensible and the clicks of the camera shutters was amazing. Every move of this lazy fluffy bear was appreciated by us. Arjen even managed to film some bits and pieces of this bear, just to introduce this nice specimen in an amazing recap. We stayed the whole afternoon with the bear, just changed the ships position a bit to get a better view.

Straight before dinner, the expedition team waited for us with another recap, were Birgit gave us an outlook for the upcoming days and presented the most recent ice chart. Henry gave us a short introduction into glaciers while Jochem presented his glacier awareness project "Recogn.ice". The recap highlight indeed was Arjen's presentation of today's polar bear. He explained why he thought it might have been a female bear in quite a good shape and showed us stunning footage of her that he filmed earlier today. Given the fact, that it's Arjen's birthday today, this seems to be an amazing birthday present.

Watching out for wildlife can be quite exhausting, so we followed Suzanna's invitation for dinner without hesitation and enjoyed the amazing creation of Khabir and his kitchen crew.

Day 4 – July 6, 2019

Pack ice

GPS Position at 8:00am: 80°06'N - 009°51'E

Wind: var 0-1 **Sea State:** smooth **Weather:** partly cloudy **Air Temp:** +8°C

“Good morning, good morning, dear guests. Today is 6th July...” When we were woken by our expedition leader Birgit this morning, our world had changed. The weather was still very good, with bright sunshine, but the open sea was now covered in large floes of sea ice. What a sight to wake up to! Already before breakfast a Bearded Seal was found on the ice showing nicely. After breakfast a much smaller seal was found on a piece of ice and the captain managed to bring Plancius really close to this seal. Many pictures were taken and the guides were a bit puzzled by its appearance. On closer inspection it turned out to be a young Hooded Seal, a species that is quite rare in Spitsbergen waters. Throughout the day, we kept sailing through the ice, searching for wildlife, but above all enjoying this magical white world. There was hardly any wind and the sun kept shining for most of the day and many of us spent a lot of time on the outside decks watching this spectacular high Arctic scenery in gorgeous sunlight. The sea ice we saw around us was largely heavy multiyear ice that had drifted down from the pole as the local ice didn't form until late in the winter. Normally this would block this ice from coming down, but now there was just open water until late in the season. This heavy ice was difficult for the ship to manoeuvre in. Also spotting Polar Bears was more difficult, as multiyear ice often has many floes with algae on it, which can at a distance look remarkably similar to Polar Bears. Meanwhile, the captain had brought the ship well above the 80°N, a first of the season for the ship.





After lunch several Bearded Seals were found on the ice, though most of them quite far away. The Ivory Gull flying around the ship for a short while was a clear highlight for the birdwatchers on board. A little later Michelle and Arjen gave a lecture about Polar Bears and after that the bar opened with a Happy Hour, which attracted many of us to the lounge. We now went a little out of the ice, so we could cover some more distance in order to make it to our next day's destination. As it was clear that the ice was starting to break up in the north, Birgit had changed plan C to plan D and we were now going to have a look what would be possible for us to do in Hinlopenstretet, something that would have been impossible only a few days ago. Later in the evening, we were called outside again for two Walruses hauled out on the ice. Unfortunately, they didn't like our presence too much and went into the water. At the horizon the small island of Moffen was visible. Some of us stayed out late, making the most of this spectacular day, where others decided to go to bed a bit early and get some more sleep before tomorrow's early wake up call.

Day 5 – July 7, 2019

Crozierpynten and Kinnvika – research sites on both sides of Hinlopenstredet

GPS Position at 8:00am: 79°55.4'N - 016°48.7'E

Wind: var 0-1 **Sea State:** smooth **Weather:** partly cloudy **Air Temp:** +4°C

Hinlopen or not Hinlopen -that was the question we all were pondering about when we woke up. Were the ice charts we had studied yesterday still giving an accurate description of the actual conditions in the Northern part of the strait? Would it be possible to sneak past the drift ice and explore the land behind?



Indeed it was and after an early breakfast we found ourselves in Sorgfjorden in the northwestern part of Hinlopen. After a whole day on the ship we were looking forward to stretching our legs a bit and got organized in three groups. Those who were just happy putting their feet on land again stayed around the landing site at Crozierpynten. Within a short distance, polar bear poo was found as well as impressive amounts of garbage. Both were collected instantly. The poo was to be forwarded to a Dutch research project. Trawls, shoes, strings and more rubbish of uncertain origin went straight into the garbage bags that our guides had brought along. This was to be shipped back to Longyearbyen for proper discharge.

Those who were up for a walk with opportunities to take pictures set out for a stroll around the lagoon followed by a little hike up the hill for a nice view on the remains of the Swedish-Russian Arc-de-Meridian Expedition. The remaining group was quite large and obviously keen on some exercise. Thus, the long round covered quite some distance, forcing their way over driftwood, snow patches and meltwater creeks towards the plains behind the landing site. Here, characteristic features of permafrost soil structures such as stone rings and frost ditches were found. From a distance we were able to observe some reindeer that were busy searching this barren landscape for something eatable. Obviously successful, as they went on with their heads bent towards the lichen and moss sticking out between the stones.

Back on the ship, the lunch buffet was already waiting for us, and while we did not have any struggles finding something nourishing and tasty here, Plancius made way towards the Eastern shores of Hinlopenstredet, carefully avoiding the patches of drifting ice floating by.

Again, we were lucky as our team found a landing spot free from ice. Suddenly, we had reached the Svalbard Archipelago's biggest island: Nordaustlandet! Here, the landscape seemed almost moon-like. A polar desert in soft shades of rosé which still showed a remarkable selection of lichen and some flowers. The beach group set out to explore the soft slopes around the landing site whereas the remaining two groups headed for Kinnvika to have a look at a former research station built in 1957/58 by Swedish and Finnish geophysicists. The station is now abandoned but the buildings are still occasionally in use during field work projects and as rescue shelters. Thus, they were in good shape and we were able to stroll around between them while our guides kept their eyes on the surroundings looking for curious bears.

Back on the ship, dinner was served before the daily recap, and those who were not yet too tired spent the rest of the evening in the lounge for a nightcap, enjoying the view as Plancius proceeded further into Hinlopen.



Day 6 – July 8, 2019

Ship cruise Lomfjorden & Zodiac Cruise Alkefjellet

GPS Position at 8:00am: 79°37.6'N - 018°30'E

Wind: var 0-1 **Sea State:** slight **Weather:** overcast **Air Temp:** +1°C

The plan for today was a Zodiac Cruise at Alkefjellet in the morning. However, when we looked out of the window in the early morning, there was only water and fog to see. Hence, we changed plans and made our way to our second destination for the landing in the afternoon - Faksevagen. At Faksevagen we dropped the anker and waited for the fog to disappear. Unfortunately, that did not happen. Change of plans - back to Lomfjordento sail deep into the fjord. Here we found some fast ice with a lot of seals lying on the ice. This seemed to be a perfect hunting place for a polar bear. Nearly everybody had his binoculars at his eyes and tried to spot a polar bear. We found an ivory gull, hundreds of Brunnich's Guillemots, Arctic terns, Arctic skuas and nice rock formations. But no polar bear appeared.



As we arranged with "Hondius" that we share the booking of Alkefjellet in the afternoon, we made our way out of the Lomfjorden again. As we had enough time, we wanted to check with our own eyes, that it is not possible to go through the Hinlopenstrait. But the 2 days old ice charts (they are not updated over the weekends) were still right in this case. After about 2 miles a large ice barrier stopped us and as we looked back, we could see the Alkefjellet and the „Hondius“ in front of it.

We could also spot the Swedish ship "Freya" and they reported to us a polar bear climbing in the cliffs that was now probably swimming in the water. Our second officer Yaroslav spotted the polar bear and after a swim of about 300m he climbed out on an ice float and headed to the island of Tommelenøya in front of Tommelpynten. Then he started to climb up the cliffs on Tommelenøya. About 1 hour we could watch the bear going up and down the cliffs, looking for bird eggs, before he disappeared to the other side of the island.



We then had a short cargo meeting with a zodiac from Hondius. We exchanged meat and fruit and also some spare parts. Then we moved on to Alkefjellet and started our zodiac cruise at 4:45 p.m. We started at the glacier with the beautiful black (dolerite) and white rocks (limestone) above and below it. More than 60 000 breeding pairs of Brunich's Guillemots and the fantastic

rock formations and towers of the cliff were fantastic. We spotted a Glaucous gull feeding on a guillemot and also an arctic fox running around with an egg in his mouth. Lots of Kittiwakes and also some barnacle geese were to be seen. At the end we had a look at 3 small waterfalls, coming down from the icecap Odinjøkull.

Back on board, dinner was waiting. At the recap after dinner we saw a lot of happy faces. Sometimes plan „C“ turns out to be the best :-))))!



Day 7 – July 9, 2019

Liefdefjord & Worsleyhamna

GPS Position at 8:00am: 79°38.7'N - 013°35'E

Wind: var 0-1 **Sea State:** smooth **Weather:** partly cloudy **Air Temp:** +9°C

We sailed overnight, aiming to enter the famous region where Woodfjord and Liefdefjord are located. Our original plan was to visit one of the most famous cabins of the area named "Texas Bar", a cabin that is not a bar and that is not related whatsoever to the American state of Texas. Anyhow, our original plans were thwarted by the weather conditions, because at the landing site, we encountered winds gusting up to 40 knots.

Consequently, we changed our plans and decided then to explore the ice flows floating along other regions in the fjord, aiming to find a more secluded place to undertake a landing. This was very early in the morning just before breakfast. However, there was a lot of fast ice floating in this fjord system and to our surprise, we had the chance to find a very sleepy polar bear resting on top of the ice. Hence, our expedition team devised a plan to have a better view of this animal. While our officers kept a watchful eye on the Bear, the expedition team proceed to launch the zodiacs immediately after breakfast, and soon, all our guests guided by the expedition team formed an armada of zodiacs.



We approached the ice floe and started to look for a good angle to have a better view of the bear. We managed to find a few suitable spots around the ice flow, and our patience was rewarded with many good pictures. The specimen we saw was probably a young male which was not very active due to the intense heat that prevails over the day. We had also

the chance to discover a sleeping seal floating in the ice which was probably a ringed seal.

In total, we spend about 3 hours in the zodiacs, and we came back to the ship around 12:00 to enjoy a good meal.

After lunch, our original plan, was to make a zodiac cruise along



Monacobreen, a very scenic glacier located at the end of Liefdefjord. This is one of the most visited glaciers in the northern side of Spitsbergen. However, the thick and dense fast ice thwarted again our intentions and for the second time today, we had to change our original plans. We then decided to visit another small hut named "Villa Oxford", located in Worsleyhamna. Worsleyhamna is a natural little harbor located on the eastern side of Reindsdyrflya, on the northern coast of Liefdefjorden and is named after Commander Frank Arthur Worsley (1872-1943) who was a British naval officer, born in New Zealand who was the leader of a British Expedition to Spitsbergen and Franz Josef Land in 1925. (Curiously, Frank Worsley was also the captain of the Endurance, Ernst Shackleton's famous ship stranded in Antarctica). To reach the beach we had to make a relatively long zodiac ride, since the waters surrounding the area, are relatively shallow, and our vessel could not come closer to shore. Here we found a cabin, named "Oxford Villa", and the remains of a World War Two German weather station named "Kreuzritter".

This station had a tragic incident in which the station's leader died while handling explosives. We could see the grave of the German officer as well as some scattered pieces of wood that belonged to the station. The hut named "Villa Oxford" was built by Hilmar Nøis, the famous trapper who build other cabins elsewhere in Spitsbergen. It is worth to notice that from this position the British aviator, George Binney made flights to undertake the first aerial photography over some parts of Nordaustland.

At this position we could also appreciate the Reindsdyrflya, a long ridge on which it is possible to appreciate many Svalbard reindeers walking in the distance. Three groups were organized, those undertaking a long, a medium and a short walk. Each group had the chance to have a closer look at some of the fauna such as Svalbard Reindeers, a couple of Red Throated Divers and Common Eiders. It is worth to notice that a couple of the reindeers were old males displaying well developed antlers.

At the end of the landing, we went back to the ship where the crew prepared our dinner in the aft deck which this time was a delicious BBQ with drinks. All our guests very much enjoyed this dinner outside, thanks to the delicious meal as well as thanks to the wonderful weather we enjoyed.



Day 8 – July 10, 2019

Alicehamna & foggy sailing

GPS Position at 8:00am: 79°52'N - 011°56'E

Wind: NNW 2 Sea State: slight Weather: fair Air Temp: +6°C



“The last day of the trip where you can do some exercise!” We woke up within the beautiful setting of Raudfjord, with ocean terminating glaciers all around us and the fog shining a bright white light from the southern end of the fjord. Who wasn’t fully awake after Birgit her wake up call yet, might have been as surprised as Birgit herself to hear a trumpet sound through the speakers, producing the melody that’s commonly sung on birthdays. It was our Eduardo, gifting his serenade to “Birthday Birgit” and thereby to all of us.

Luckily, the tears of joy from Birgit, nor the fog could keep us from our designated plan to land at Alicehamna, where the bodily exercise was meant to take place. A total of 20 people signed up to join the long hike today, whereas the other passengers split up to do smaller hikes closer to the shore. The long hike turned out to be a proper mountain climbing expedition, with Solanderfjellet and its 334 meters of elevation above sea level as the absolute summit. Three hundred and thirty-four meters, with many snow fields and a rocky

crest to the summit. Our passengers could take off layer after layer of clothing, because this day, as most of the other days this voyage, brought us brilliant arctic summer weather. Besides that, the snow regularly surrendered to our footsteps and getting yourself out of the knee-deep footsteps is a warming challenge itself.

Regular picture- and undressing-breaks kept everybody happy and fit, as did the beautiful pair of Rock Ptarmigans we passed by. With the help of Irene and Jochem, all 20 'long-hikers' made it to the summit and, more importantly, down to the shore. The way back allowed for sliding and running through the snow fields, which resulted in an impressive time of 1 hour and 5 minutes for our way back. The way up had taken us a little bit over 1.5 hours, which is even more impressive. Well done group!

This might have been the day where we deserved our lunch the most, which, as always, tasted fabulous. Since the afternoon was fully booked for sailing, the staff fully booked the lounge and the dining room for lectures. Michelle, Henry and Irene all gave full lectures in German and in English, whereas Arjen, Eduardo and once again, Irene, gave recaps as well. Birgit and Zsuzsanna took hold of the microphone to ask for the more than deserved applause and cheering to our crew, our laundry team, the house keepers and the kitchen team! What a magical trip and how quick the days fly by!



Day 9 – July 11, 2019

Poolepynten & Trygghamna

GPS Position at 8:00am: 78°26'N - 011°55'E

Wind: W 2-3 Sea State: slight Weather: overcast Air Temp: +7°C



This morning we had a very early start as we were woken by Birgit already at 6:30. It was overcast and a bit foggy, but we were close to Poolepynten and it looked like there were Walrus on the beach. We were divided in three different groups and after breakfast we went ashore. Each group spent about an hour on shore looking at the Walrus. There were around 40 Walrus hauled out on the sandy beach next to a small cabin. Most of them were just sleeping and none seemed bothered by the presence of our little group. A few animals were in the water playing around, scratching their backs or diving to get some food. Occasionally one decided to head into the water, or crawl onto the land. It was really nice to spent some time just watching these high Arctic creatures doing what they seem to do best: laying on the beach.

Towards the end, a few large blows were seen behind the Walrus. It turned out a Fin and a Blue Whale were feeding in the distance. Even as they didn't come close, it was still nice to see the huge blows and occasionally the backs out of the water.

Back on the ship it was time for lunch, while our captain brought the Plancius back into Isfjord and into the small bay of Trygghamna. Here we went ashore for our last landing. Just

behind our landing beach, there was a small lagoon with a large glacier behind. Here we split up in two groups, one who was heading towards the lagoon and play with the small icebergs in the lagoon. The other one would walk a little further and play with the ice in the large glacier. As the glacier was calm, it was possible to walk a little up the glacier and enjoy the views from there. Back at the lagoon, many Christmas card pictures were shot of people sitting on icebergs. When everybody had returned, it was time for the Polar Plunge. Few people were crazy enough to get into their swimsuits and jump into the water. Jumping out of the freezing water was even quicker of course... On the way back to the landing site an accident happened. One of the guides, Tanja, fell over a rock and broke her ankle. Quickly she was transported back to the ship and helped by our doctor Veronique. When she walked back into the dining room, she got a big round of applause from all of us as a sign of support. Before dinner, we had our final recap where Birgit thanked all who worked onboard to make this trip successful and had a look at all the things we had done.



The evening was spent packing and with a last drink in the bar to say farewell to the new friends we made. Some of us were already leaving the ship at midnight for a very early flight, while others still had a last night on the ship.

Day 10 – July 12, 2019

Back at home port Longyearbyen

GPS Position at 8:00am: 78°14'N - 015°37'E

Wind: NW 3 **Sea State:** In Port **Weather:** partly cloudy **Air Temp:** +6°C

After a lot of commotion during the night from to the people who were on the 2:30 am flight, we woke far too early, at anchor in Longyearbyen, sad to know that we would be leaving the ship soon. Our last breakfast on board was much appreciated, as we didn't know where our next meal would be coming from. After seven days of pampering we were back at the port of Longyearbyen, and it was time to say goodbye to the crew, the expedition team, but also to new-won friends.

On the dock, we found our luggage and boarded the bus. A last farewell from expedition leader Birgit and we dispersed, each of us setting off on our travels and flights, sad to be leaving, but full with impressions of the wonderful landscapes and wildlife of the Arctic.

Most northern position:

80° 15.4'N - 010° 48.3'E

Total distance sailed on our voyage

Nautical miles: 877 nm – Kilometres: 1624 km

Upon request, here the address for the ice chart:

www.polarview.met.no/regs

And, the address for Recogn.ice, Jochem's glacier awareness project

www.recognice.org



**On behalf of everyone on board we thank you for travelling with us
and wish you a safe journey home**

