

# Spitsbergen

## Triplog



# s/v Antigua

September 25. - October 3. 2014

The SV Antigua was built in 1957 in Thorne (UK) and served for many years as a fishing vessels, until it was completely re-built in the early 1990s in the Netherlands as a barkentine and equipped as a passenger ship. A barkentine has three masts with square sails on the foremast.

*with*

*Captain – Joachim Schiel*

*First Mate – Annick Terpstra*

*Second Mate – Linda Eitelhuber*

*Chef – Alex Hülsman*

*Chief Service – Nadine Hugo*

*Service – Jana Maxova*

*Service – Bart Ensing*

*Expedition leader – Michelle van Dijk*

*Guide – Ben Frederiks*

*Photography Guide – Arjan Bronkhorst*

September 25.

## Longyearbyen

Position at 14 o'clock: 78°14' N 15°36' E

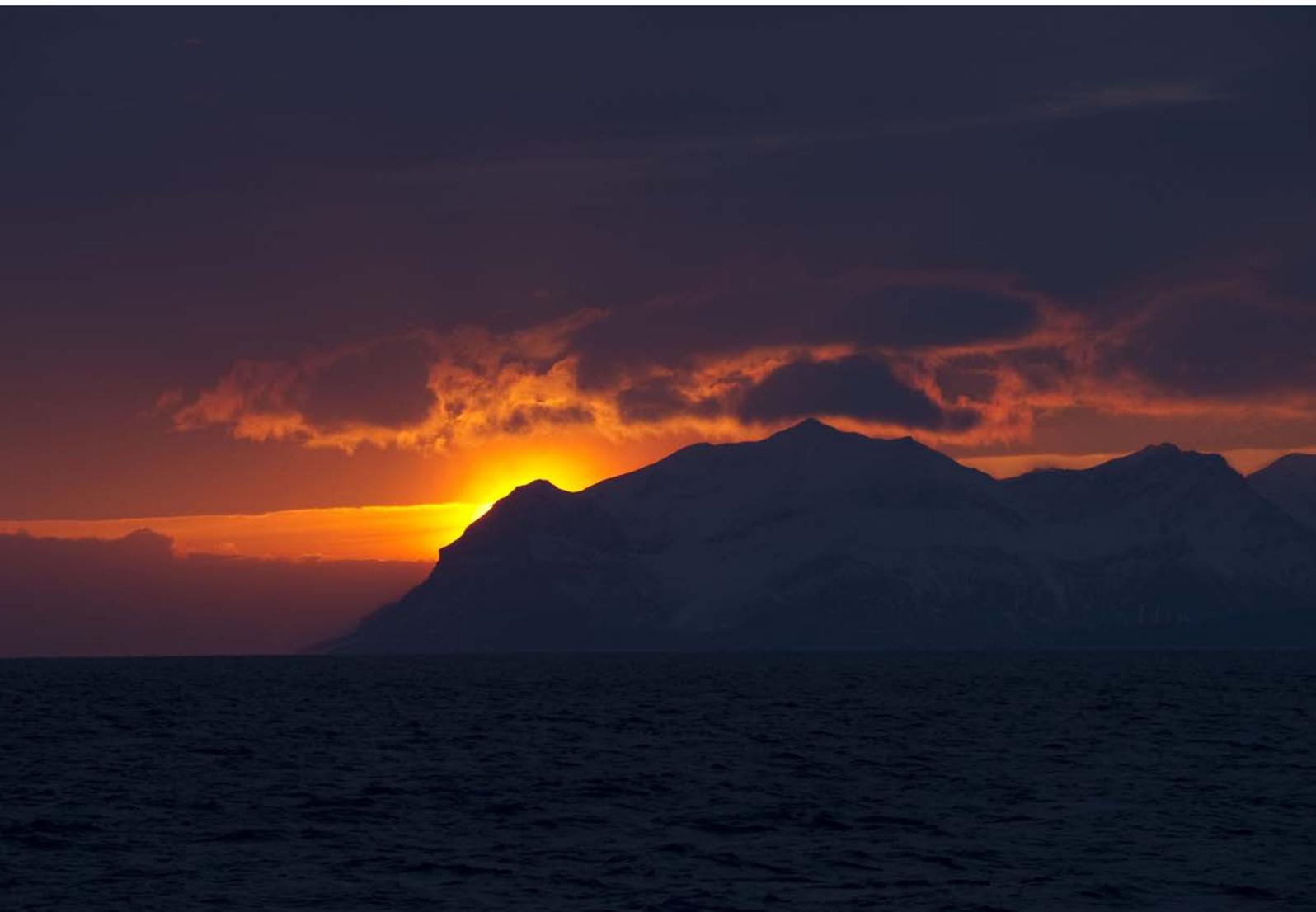
Temperature: 6 °C

Shortly before 2 pm most of the passengers arrive at s/v Antigua, a blue sailing vessel that was going to be our home for the upcoming ten days. We all had to visit our captain Joachim at the wheel house. After that we were welcomed inside with coffee or tea and biscuits. Captain Joachim introduced the crew and gave us a board-safety briefing telling that we are not allowed to fall overboard or make bonfires on the ship. All three guides introduced themselves. Expedition leader Michelle van Dijk spend every summer on Spitsbergen working as a guide since 2004. Ben Frederiks just spend his second summer on Spitsbergen, working as a young marine researcher based in Ny Ålesund and Photography guide Arjan Bronkhorst is an all-round photographer guiding this photography trip on s/v Antigua since four years. Then our expedition leader Michelle took over and gave a brief introduction about what to expect.

At dinner time we had good winds, so we pulled the sails and sailed out of Isfjord.

After dinner it was movie time. Our ship Antigua is part of AECO (Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators) and therefore a little movie was shown about the do's and don'ts on land.

Basically in all comes down to common sense. Leave nothing but foot prints, take nothing but photographs.



September 26.

## Van Keulenfjord: Åhlstrandhalvøya & Recherchefjord

Position at 8 o'clock: 77°33,1' N 015°04,3' E

Temperature: 3 °C – overcast



Early in the morning we set foot on the shores of Cape Toscana, this very first landing of the expedition brought us right to the doorstep of Bamsebu, an old, but very solid constructed cabin. The cabin used to be located at another bay, however, in the 1930's it was used as a Norwegian station for the hunt on white whales, or beluga's. The success the station back in its old glory days was well visible, eight large piles of whale bones were neatly located along the beach, a remnant of an old business. This way, it provides the possibility to make great pictures of beluga bones. The hut Bamsebu is well constructed, the window covers for example have large iron nails sticking through them to avoid sociopathic polar bears from entering the premises by window. And the hut is reinforced with large beams, making it look like it could last for centuries.

We walked along the piles of bones, amazed by the amount of animals that laid there and we wondered what the site would have looked like around the time of production. A bit further, at the other side of the peninsula, there is a little beach with an old winch and boat. After a stroll along the beach we returned to the Antigua. Time for lunch!

In the afternoon we arrived at the Recherchebreen, the Antigua weight anchor and our guides Michelle, Ben and Arjan went ashore to see if any polar bears would join our landing. Joachim, the skipper, went in a zodiac to see if there was space in between the ice to manoeuvre towards the glacier by boat. Unfortunately the amount of icebergs was numerous and too dense to get close to the glacier by boat. No polar bears were spotted in the area, which meant we could get ashore at the little strip of land which was deposited by the glacier during its thousand's year of existing. So off we went!

A thundering sound roared the air at the moment we set foot on the beach, the glacier was calving and a huge fountain was created by the enormous piece of ice which fell down in the water. Even though being blocked by some low muddy hills we could still see the enormous fountain created, it was huge! So in a bit of a rush we headed towards the glacier, hoping for more falling pieces of ice.



Whilst watching the rumbling glacier, we got message from the Antigua that a polar bear was spotted directly below the glacier. And it was true, a large polar bear rested on a land spit, great to see, even from a large distance. After a few hours of making amazing images we went back to the ship, dinnertime!



A big surprise as well, the Northern lights-night-watch-team (which is made entirely of enthusiasts who like to see the northern light) gave a yell, Northern lights! Everyone rushed out to take a look. It was still a bit cloudy, but large penetrating patches of greenish white curtains appeared in the sky. Just amazing to see. All with all it was a very good second day.





September 27.

## Van Mijenfjord: Midterhuken, Berzeliusdalen & Akseløya

Position at 8 o'clock: 77°39,7' N 014°44,2' E

Temperature: 4 °C – Slightly overcast

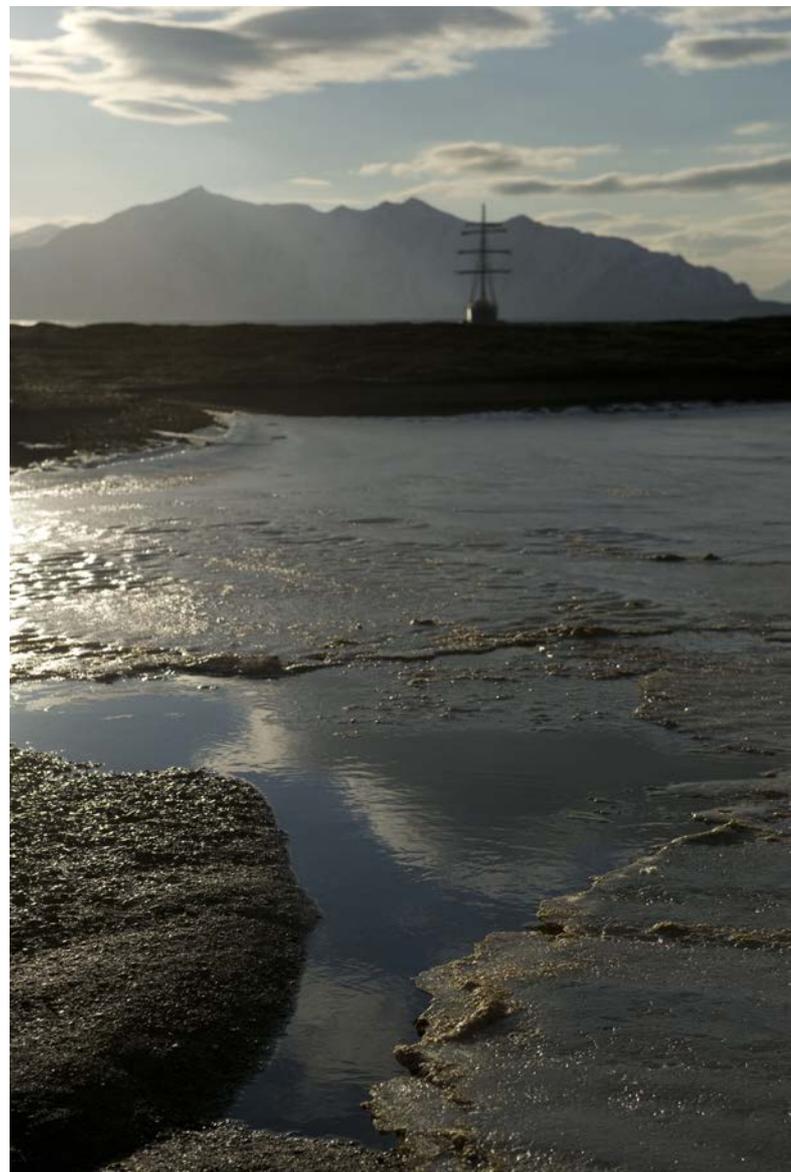


Overnight we had anchored at Midterhuken. After breakfast we made a little ships cruise through Mariasundet along an extraordinary looking mountain. The lines of the different layers were extra visible because of the snow and Michelle explained that this was caused by a crash between Spitsbergen and Greenland around 60 million years ago.

We anchored south of Berzeliusdalen, a broad valley with an autumn coloured tundra with grazing reindeer. Ben took the hiking group over the moraines towards the impressive Fridtjovbreen. Michelle & Arjan took the photographers to an old wooden stranded research vessel. After that they made a stroll over the tundra where a cripple reindeer was spotted. At closer look, it turned out that he missed half a leg.

In the afternoon we went ashore at Akseløya and were welcomed by a dead seal. We walked between the different layers of the same kind that we saw on the mountain before. It was an out-of-this-world experience. Some layers contained fossil shells. At our walk we saw a ptarmigan sitting next to a cairn. While sailing out of Van Keulenfjord we experienced the strong tidal current and the beautiful sunset which coloured the snow pink.

After dinner Michelle gave a lecture on Polar bears, so we learned about their behaviour, reproduction and how to see if it is male or female. Just when the lecture was done, the first northern lights appeared and with the time it got stronger and stronger until a whole curtain appeared in front of the ship.





September 28.

## Kapp Borthen & Hornsund: Gåshamna

Position at 8 o'clock: 77°10,6' N 014°33,2' E

Temperature: 3,5 °C – light snow



This morning it was quite a challenge to wake up after a bumpy night. The Antigua had set sail overnight towards Kapp Borthen. This particular evening the sea had a bit of a swell, making us all experiencing the effect of rolling while sleeping.

The landing at Kapp Borthen became an action landing because of the swell. Our guides went first to catch the zodiac. This time it was captain Joachim himself who brought us ashore. In between the waves we had to leave the zodiac quick. And we managed all to get ashore without wet feet. The beach was full of ice blocks, so we amused ourselves very well while waiting for our fellow passengers. In the distance we could see a wreck of an German airplane that made an emergency landing at 14 September 1942. It was strange to see it here laying at the Arctic tundra.



After lunch we continued sailing towards Hornsund. When we entered the fjord, Michelle explained to us that this particular area was often used by sailors during history. It's convenient location at the lower west-coast of Spitsbergen, makes it the very first option to seek shelter. Therefore, many old huts and foundations can be found of Pomor hunters who were active in the area. Pomors are hunters from the Russian coastal mainland who came to Spitsbergen centuries ago.

Also the English did arrive in the area. Back in the early days, whalers would process the whales in this bay. In Gåshamna, at the eastern side of the bay whalebones have been dumped around 350 years ago. Due to the Arctic climate these bones are still very well visible. Species of moss and lichen create green hills in which the bones slowly disappear. The hills are surrounded by a bright coloured moss which only grows when there are enough nutrients, in this case the overgrown soil was containing remnants of blubber. In this case blubber from 350 years ago! Plants still thrive on it! The photo group stayed near the bay and the whale bones, while the hiking group continued west, where they found an empty polar bear bed. Its white fur was laying all around the moss. Pretty lucky that the nest was empty, but it does prove that these animals are all around in the area.

In the evening we were alarmed by the watch team, the Northern light showed up again! Green curtains showed up all across the horizon and the Antigua was right in the middle of it. Lasting for 2 hours it gave us all the chance to make great pictures of it, before slowly fading away in the wintery night.





JOTUR

September 29.

## Hornsund: Gnålodden + Brepollen

Position at 8 o'clock: 76°56,5' N 015°49,1' E

Temperature: 3,5 °C – overcast



During breakfast we left Gåshamna and sailed towards Gnålodden. Gnålodden was also known by the Pomors. They were there in the 18. and early 19. century. From 1932-1937 this place was used by trappers Wanny Woldstad and Anders Saeterdal. Wanny Wolstad became famous because she was the first female trapper on Spitsbergen. In some years, she even brought her two sons. After they left the area, it was used by other trappers until 1971. These trappers hunted polar bears and foxes. Now that the trappers are gone, the chance of seeing foxes has increased. Upon arrival a curious blue fox came to see what was going on. A blue fox is also an arctic fox, but instead of having a brown summer coat and a white winter coat, it is grey year round. It is rare in Spitsbergen and therefore highly wanted by trappers. We took a look around the area and understood why Wanny had picked this place for trapping. A little pond in front of the cabin and a marvelous view over the fjord. The beach was decorated with ice sculptures. In summer, when it is decorated with flowers and flying birds, it must be even more special. A little later, we saw foxes scavaging along the shoreline. One white fox came very close and sniffed at Edith her camera bag.





While the first zodiacs returned to the ship, nine of us were so brave to go for a swim.

In the afternoon we sailed to the innerfjord of Hornsund. Captain Joachim parked the ship in front of the glacier Brepollen. The whole afternoon we could enjoy the view at the glacier. Most of us from the deck, but it was also possible to climb the mast and see the ice from a different angle.

After dinner Ben gave a presentation about life as a polar researcher. He spend two summer seasons in Ny Ålesund to work on projects about the effect of industrial pollution in the Arctic ocean.



September 30.

## Hornsund: Burgerbukta & Isbjørnhamna

Position at 8 o'clock: 77°01' N 016°05,5' E

Temperature: 2,5 °C – sunny



Icebergs in all sizes surrounded the Antigua during the early hours of Tuesday, pounding and scraping along the ship. Overnight the size of the icebergs grew a bit too big (living room size) so the captain and crew moved the ship to the other side of the fjord. Then we laid at east side of the Burgerbukta entrance. Once Burgerbukta was filled by one large glacier, over the decades the glacier retreated and two new fjords appeared, the Eastern- and Western Burgerbukta. After breakfast we dressed ourselves warm and took place in one of the zodiacs... The first two zodiac tours explored the Eastern Burgerbukta! The fjord was filled with ice that was gently pushed aside by the zodiac as we proceeded further towards the glacier. Huge deep blue icebergs fitted perfectly in the landscape with their extraordinary sculptures, which was good material for pictures. The tour was beautiful and the advice to dress warm was one to follow, in the end it became a bit chilly, time to get some coffee on board the Antigua. In the meanwhile, the Antigua had moved into the Western Burgerbukta, close to the large glacier where it lay for a few hours, giving us the chance to film the ship enclosed in an icy bay. As the icing on the cake, it began to snow, making a perfect winter wonderland!

After lunch we headed towards Isbjørnhamna where a Polish research station is located. Big swell and a lot of ice made it a bit of a bouncy ride but it was beautiful to watch the ship riding the waves! At our destination we did another landing, not to visit the Polish station, but to walk towards the glacier and watch the bay in front of Hansbreen. Due to the waves and the swell at the landing site it was a bit of a rough landing, but luckily nobody but Ben got wet boots, so we could continue our hike.

After the hike we were picked up by the Antigua on the inner side of the glacier bay, where it was more sheltered, so we would spend the evening in a calm and beautiful surrounding.

This was very pleasant since this evening was Captains dinner! On this special occasion everybody dressed nicely and captain Joachim gave a speech. The kitchen and service crew had prepared a great menu for everyone. A captain's cocktail, delicious food and nice drinks are the best recipe for a good evening!

After dinner we were called from outside, the Northern lights had showed up again, in all its glory and this time even with some red light. The perfect way to finish yet another day.





October 1.

## Sailing the West coast

Position at 8 o'clock: 77°00,9' N 015°36,7' E

Temperature: 1 °C – overcast – Wind force 6 SE



After Captain's dinner, Northern lights and life at the bar, we had a good sleep in the calm bay in front of Hansbreen. This morning we could sleep in a bit because today we did not have to be on deck, dressed for landing at 9.15 h. Today was a true sailing day, we could use the southerly winds to sail up North. Almost everyone helped with setting the sails. At some stage the ship made a speed of 9 knots. It was hard to imagine that there was almost twice as much wind as the day before. Now under sail we all felt well, in contrary to yesterday when we made only 4 knots against the wind. The only challenge was to walk on deck and in the salon as the ship was heeling.

At coffee time at 16.00 h a delicious cherry cake was served and after that Michelle planned to give a lecture about the discovery of Spitsbergen but all of a sudden the wind picked up and the ship heeled even more. After one hour of fun sliding the floor from one side to the other, it became very hard to stand or walk, so sitting was the only option. The door to the deck was closed, so everyone who was outside was

invited to join the captain in the wheelhouse, and everyone who was inside stayed inside. Michelle and Bart joined in insiders while Ben was with the others in the wheelhouse watching the waves.

During dinner it was bit more quiet, but after the dessert more wind was expected while sailing into Isfjord. The good news was that we would overnight at the quay in Barentsburg.



October 2.

## Isfjord: Barentsburg & Ymerbukta

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°03,8' N 014°11,9' E

Temperature: 3,5 °C – overcast



After a rough and exiting night we arrived in the late evening at the docks of Barentsburg. Still dazzled by the storm we were struck in that late afternoon it was quite a relieve to be moored in front of the Russian settlement. The aftermath of this night was comfortable and silent and we all slept babies, or bunnies... (or anything cute and fluffy, just to say we slept really good!) After breakfast Michelle announced a guided city walk at this Russian settlement.

Barentsburg was erected and owned by a Dutch mining company, the NeSpiCo (Nederlandsche Spitsbergen Company). From 1921 till 1932 the NeSpiCo conducted its business in the area in the quest for coal. The village was build to be one of the most modern and sophisticated villages of Spitsbergen, it was even fancier than Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund. When the coal price dropped, the Russian state owned company Trust Arcticugol bought Barentsburg (and also Rijpsburg at Bohemanflya) from the Dutch, continuing the mining activities.

And thus, from 1932 onwards there was a permanent Russian occupation on Spitsbergen, the second (next to Norway) nation permanently inhabiting the archipelago.



When we entered the scientific part of Barentsburg, a friendly geologist opened the door of his research centre and invited us in to take a look.

After experiencing the mix of old Soviet times with a very modern style of renovation at Barentsburg in the morning, we set sail to Ymerbukta on the other side of the Isfjord for our afternoon landing.





This nice bay is home to the Esmarkglacier. We landed in the vicinity of the large clump of ice and used the opportunity to make a group picture with the all of us. Also the crew came over for the same purpose. So we all took a picture of the crew that made our trip in the Arctic possible. While doing so, a ringed seal appeared behind us, followed by a second one, staying with us for a long time.

The hike-group went towards the mountains and took an energetic stroll amongst the moraines created by the glacier. On the way back the group was fairly close to the side of the glacier and took some great pictures of icy and frozen ponds surrounded by huge deep blue glacial ice. A great view and well worth the effort. The other group admired the deep blue ice caves and crevasses of the glacier front before turning around for our final homeward stretch to Longyearbyen.

Around 7 in the evening we were all back on board the Antigua and enjoyed our very last dinner on the Antigua, yes, the very last.

The next day the ship was moored in Longyearbyen, it was a great trip but time flew by.





October 3.

## Longyearbyen

Position at 8 o'clock: 78°14' N 15°36' E

Temperature: 5 °C – overcast

After a final, good Antigua-style breakfast it was finally time to say goodbye during the morning. Luckily we had good weather, and could experience the best of Spitsbergen's Southern region, an area not much visited by cruise ships, so even more special! Hard to believe that the trip had come to an end and that so much beautiful Arctic experience could fit into a mere 9 days!

Most of us had another couple of hours to explore Longyearbyen and to go shopping before a bus would take us to the airport, others spent another night or two in town. Many of us knew already now that this was not our last visit to the Arctic.



Triplog is by Michelle van Dijk and Ben Frederiks.

Photographs by Arjan Bronkhorst.

This triplog can be found on <http://www.spitsbergen-svalbard.nl>

The SV *Antigua* will continue to sail in Spitsbergen's waters in the years to come; the other sailing ships of the Tallship Company fleet, *Mare Frisium*, *Artemis*, *Elisabeth* and *Atlantis*, sail the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the IJsselmeer and the Canary Islands.

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Lectures & Sailing		
25/Sep	Sailing	
26/Sep	Photography	Arjan
27/Sep	Polar bears	Michelle
28/Sep	Photography	Arjan
29/Sep	Life as a Polar researcher	Ben
01/Oct	Sailing	
02/Oct	Photography end presentation	Everyone

Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	Latin	27	28	29	30	1	2
<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Arctic Fox	Poolvos	Polarfuchs/ Eisfuchs			x		x			
<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bearded Seal	Baardrob	Bartrobbe		x			x	x		
<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Polar Bear	IJsbeer	Eisbär		x	x					
<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	Spitsbergen Reindeer	Spitsbergen Rendier	Spitzbergen-Rentier		x	x	x				
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	Harbour seal	Gewone Zeehond	Seehund								
<i>Phoca hispida</i>	Ringed seal	Ringelrob	Ringelrobbe								x
<i>Aurora borealis</i>	Northernlight	Noorderlicht	Nordlichter		x	x	x	x	x		



