

# Iceland Circumnavigation

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 2 August – 11 August 2022









# Reykjavik

DAY 1 | Tuesday 2 August

Position at 1700 on 2 August

Latitude: 64.1466° N

Longitude: 21.9426° W

Course: Docked

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 6 knots NW

Barometer: 1022

Air Temp: 8°C

Explore. Dream. Discover.

—Mark Twain

Icelandic:

Velkominn!

Welcome!

Here we are in the vibrant capital city of Iceland, Reykjavik. Home to around 123,000 people, it has a vivid nightlife, modern museums, world-class restaurants, galleries, shops and bars.

The warm and stable *Greg Mortimer* beckoned us on board, where we had a welcome buffet prepared by our Food & Beverage Team. The stewards helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our “home away from home”.

After a welcome briefing from our Expedition Leader, Howard, some handy hints from Rosie, speeches from our Hotel Director, Patrice and Doctor Maria, we had a series of briefings. We learnt about AECO guidelines (Association of Arctic Expedition Cruising), and the “Zodiac three-step”, which will soon become second nature. A lot of information to take in, but necessary so that we could get started with our adventure early the next morning.

Finally it was time for the all-important safety drill. Seven long blasts and one short blast of the ship’s horn signalled us to grab our bulky orange lifejackets, our beanies and warm clothing, and muster in the lecture theatre. We followed our crew up to Deck 7 where the polar class life vessels sit (they can hold 136 people each, for five days). Our briefings finished for the night, we headed to the dining room for a delicious dinner prepared and served by our amazing Hotel Team.

Down at the expedition desk, the jacket exchange ensued, so now we are kitted out to face whatever weather Iceland throws our way.

Under the evening light, we were given the all-clear to pull away from the wharf and begin our circumnavigation of Iceland.

Despite the challenges of travel, there was a definite buzz of excitement in the air!

Together we total 106 expeditioners, (41 Australian, 25 British, 32 American, 3 Canadian, 2 Belgian, 1 Chinese and 1 New Zealander) along with 84 crew from all around the globe. In addition, we have 19 expedition team members

with variety of specialities, including polar exploration, mountaineering, geology, botany, history, cetaceans, marine biology, terrestrial biology, photography, medicine, and kayaking. We also have three local Icelandic guides to share their knowledge of their homeland with us.

After the many hours of travel to reach the frozen north of the world, it’s finally time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and enjoy the marvels of this beautiful land.





# Snæfellsnes Peninsula

DAY 2 | Wednesday 3 August

Position at 0800 on 3 August

Latitude: 64.8443° N

Longitude: 22.6533° W

Course: Anchored

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 7.5 knots NW

Barometer: x 1023

Air Temp: 8°C

Life is the essence of a never-ending adventure,  
Exciting never boring,  
Otherwise,  
There is no life.

Icelandic:  
Já = Yes  
Nei = No

—Anonymous

Today, we explored the Snæfellsnes Peninsula in western Iceland, named for the dormant volcano and glacier Snæfelljökul at its tip. It was here that the mythical hero Bardur Snæfellsas is rumoured to have hidden a box of treasures and the heroes in Jules Verne's novel *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* started their descent.

The day's excursion started with the *Greg Mortimer* anchoring offshore from the tiny harbour of Stykkishölmur. Once our flotilla of Zodiacs had ferried us ashore, we were distributed amongst three buses for our tour, with two buses proceeding around the peninsula in an anti-clockwise direction and the third bus going around clockwise. The tour has been recounted in the anti-clockwise direction, so just reverse the order of events if you were on the other bus.

Our first stop (or the last – but let's not labour that point any more) was at a shark museum, where we were entertained by a presentation from our enthusiastic host. This museum is dedicated to the processing and consumption of the Greenland shark, a rare deep-water species that lives for over 400 years and grows to 7 metres. The flesh of this shark is toxic, but it can be eaten if it is left to ferment for six weeks and then hung out to dry for 3-4 months. Well... it can be eaten if you take a tiny portion, soak it in strong liquor before eating and follow it up quickly with a shot of that same liquor.

We then proceeded along the coast past the village of Grundarfjörour, to visit some lovely waterfalls and look out over the picturesque and pointy Kirkjufell (church) mountain. After returning to Grundarfjörour for a much-needed pit stop, we continued to our lunch stop at Malarrif. This was a scenic place to eat lunch, with the majestic peak of Snæfell behind us and rugged lava pinnacles along the shoreline. Before long, it was back on the bus for our final stop of the day at Arnarstapi. There, we had a short walk above a rugged cliff face full of nesting kittiwakes. Just offshore, a dramatic rock arch looked ready to collapse, while the nearby statue of Bardur Snæfellsas looked like it had been built to last a thousand years.





# Látrabjarg

DAY 3 | Thursday 4 August

Position at 0800 on 4 August

Latitude: 65.35.917° N

Longitude: 24.02.630° W

Course: 136.2°

Speed: 9.3 knots

Wind Speed: 4.7 knots SE

Barometer: 1028

Air Temp: 8°C

The landscape conveys an impression of absolute permanence. It is not hostile. It is simply there.

—Edmund Carpenter

Icelandic:

Ég kem alveg af fjöllum

Literally: "I come completely from the mountains."

Overnight the *Greg Mortimer* travelled 85 nautical miles across Breiðafjörður, towards Iceland's westernmost town Patreksfjörður. Surrounded by steep majestic cliffs, this charming and vivid town deep in the Westfjords is home to a small community of 700 people who pride themselves on the amazing landscape, friendly community, and rich history.

During breakfast our skilled bridge team maneuvered the ship alongside, making for an easy walk down the gangway and onto buses. The 90-minute bus ride to Látrabjarg (Iceland's and Europe's westernmost point) was filled with commentary by our wonderful Icelandic guides as we climbed up precarious roads cut into the steep scree slopes on either side.

Látrabjarg is one of the highest cliffs in Europe and each summer millions of seabirds flock here to nest and breed. The cliffs are made of old, preglacial lava formations, which were built up in repeated eruptions around 12-14 million years ago. Between the layers of lava are old soil horizons that are more readily eroded than the lavas which make good shelves for nesting birds.

We arrived at the 14 kilometres long sea cliffs around mid-morning and went off to explore. Harbour seals and a few puffins were a hot attraction by the lighthouse while nesting kittiwakes, razorbills and large black common ravens entertained us along the cliffs. Many of us found a comfy spot for lunch while Jocelyn explained the flora we were seeing: including northern grass of Parnassus, (edible!) wild thyme and windmill fringed gentian.

Before long it was back on the bus and back to town for free time. Some of us took a stroll around town, catching sight of humpbacks in the harbour while others took advantage of an afternoon onboard relaxing. Our kayak group enjoyed a full day of paddling in Patreksfjörður, admiring the many birds before hiking up through a gorge to a waterfall.

Before dinner we gathered in the lecture theatre for our daily recap and briefing. Jocelyn opened the stage with some Q & A, which led to Snowy sharing his knowledge about puffins. Dani educated us on how we can participate in some of the Citizen Science projects onboard and how we can stay involved once we get home.



To finish Howard gave us a rundown of tomorrow's plan exploring the Westfjords: Djúpavík and Hólmavík, then it was off to the restaurant for another delicious meal.





# Djupavik, Holmavik

DAY 4 | Friday 5 August

Position at 0800 on 5 August

Latitude: 65.9949° N

Longitude: 21.5594° W

Course: Anchored

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: x 4.6 knots SE

Barometer: 1024

Air Temp: 8°C

Vaðlaheiðarvegavinnuverkfærageymsluskúraútidyralyklakippuhringur

Yep, this is Iceland's longest word! It means “key ring of the key chain of the outer door to the storage tool shed of the road workers on the Vaðlaheiði,” from which you might be able to glean that it's largely for show!

Who would have thought that in the far reaches of remote northwest Iceland we could see a feeding humpback whale within minutes of viewing an avant-guard art installation? Our pictures stand witness to the contrasts that Iceland is bringing to us.

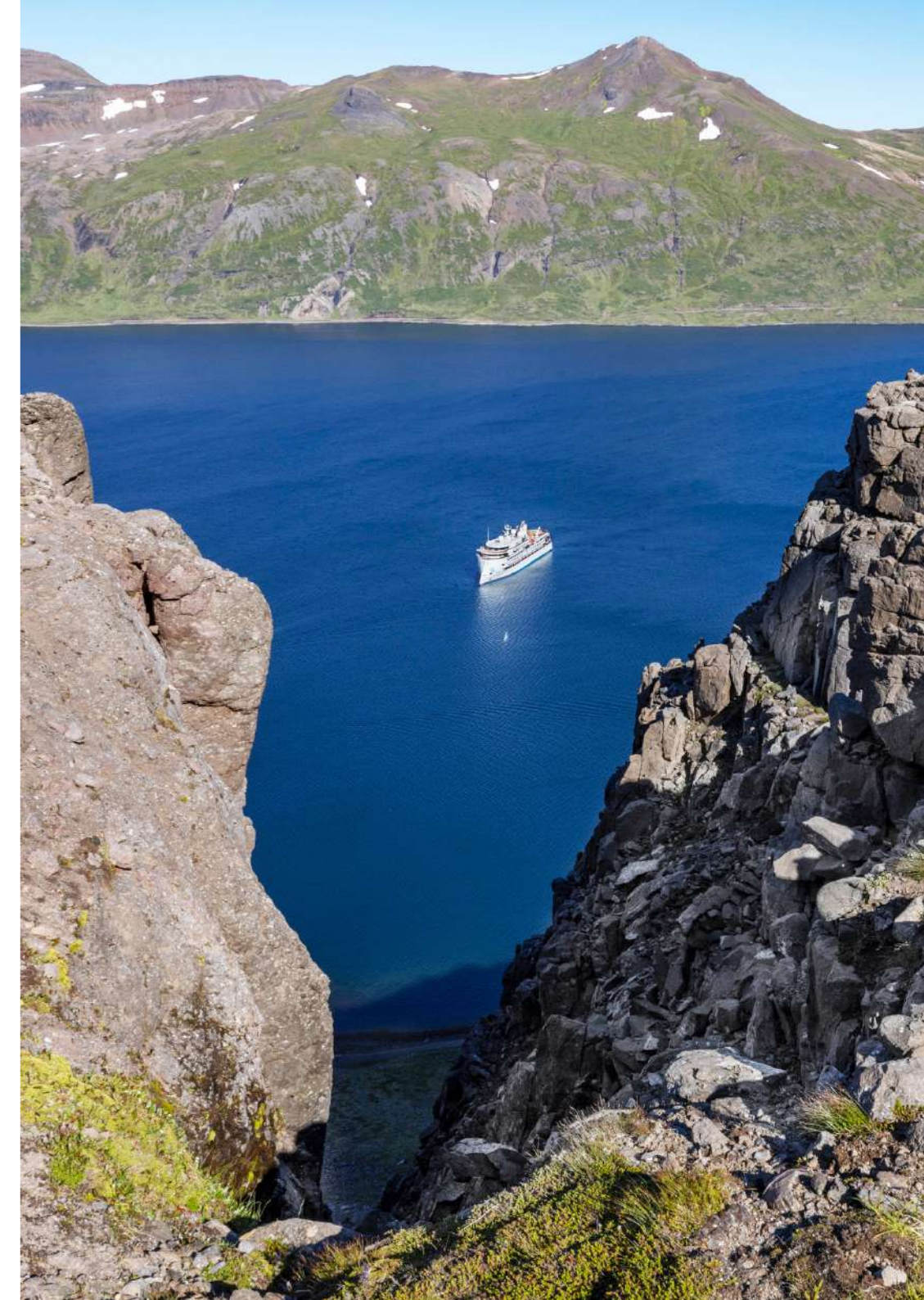
Our morning at Djupavik, or deep bay, for most began with a Zodiac cruise where we were treated with spy-hopping harbour seals and eider ladies with young. We then headed around to land on the beach in front of the village centre, where everyone scattered to follow their Djupavik bliss—heading to the hotel for coffee and cake, meandering up the road and trail for a bit of a nature walk, or exploring the abandoned herring factory which now hosts creative exhibits as well as the odd concert by nationally famous musicians. The jellyfish hanging inside an emptied fuel tank was a particularly noteworthy installation.

A few keen shoppers took advantage of a pop-up shop hosted by a young local entrepreneur selling hand-collected shoreside treasures including 200 year old coal lumps, calcite nodules, and a variety of shells and coral bits.

Not all decided to explore the town-based options; the intrepid group of long hikers struck out from shore first thing and were led on a truly elevated experience—reaching up and over the waterfall along the heights of the fjord—and returning to the shore to be picked up by four UberZodiacs for their ride back to the ship.

After lunch the ship repositioned to the community of Holmavik, where we were able to delve into Icelandic culture and mythology at the Sorcery Museum before heading out to explore the town or take a walk up into the hills overlooking the harbour.

On a freshly groomed path, hikers were treated to a variety of plant life including orchids, moon ferns, and the lovely ever-present wild thyme. On our return to the jetty there were gesticulations and squawks from the staff radios about whales in the harbour so everyone was keen to get out and see what the commotion was about—indeed there was a humpback whale surfacing and blowing surprisingly close to the harbour entrance. Schools





# Akureyri, Goðafoss, Húsavík

DAY 5 | Saturday 6 August

Position at 0800 on 6 August

Latitude: 65.41.267° N

Longitude: 18.04.506° W

Course: Docked

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 2.4 knots SE

Barometer: 1019

Air Temp: 10°C

I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and sky,  
And all I ask is a tall ship, and a star to steer her by.

—John Mansfield

Icelandic:  
Ratljóst  
Enough light to navigate

Waterfalls, hot springs, gods and trolls!

Today's full-day excursion began for some of us at the botanical gardens of Akureyri. Hardy Arctic flowers blossomed under shady trees of both native and foreign origin as we meandered along gentle winding paths in the morning light.

Others headed straight to Goðafoss. Goðafoss, the waterfall of the gods, rushes down a rocky channel chiselled by nature. These falls bear witness to the turning point in Icelandic history, when, in 1000, lawspeaker Þorgeir Ljósvetningagoði's renounced paganism and threw his statues of the Norse gods into the churning waters. It is said that Odin's likeness is captured in the rocks, but we had trouble identifying him.

And then Mývatn (midge lake in Icelandic, although the midges spared us for the most part) and beyond, with its beautiful birdlife. Some of us soaked in the thermal baths nearby, the most hedonistic with a glass of beer or wine.

The others forged ahead to the seething mud and fumaroles of Námaskarð, followed by Dettifoss, the most powerful waterfall in Iceland and probably the whole of Europe, and walked up to a crater, graced by the presence of snipes and other birds.

Those who had been to the baths went on to Dimmuborgir. The geological explanation of the crazy twisted rock formations that rise up throughout the area has something to do with the interactions of lava and scalding waters during long-gone volcanic events, but our Icelandic guide Baldur maintains that it was really a cohort of trolls caught out in the sunlight and turned to stone where they stood.

We avoided ambush by the trolls and got back to the ship, where Joselyn shared her insights into the plants and mosses of Iceland and how they adapt to this unique wind-swept and sea-battered environment. Suzanne then told the mythological story of the origin of the mountains and lakes in her introduction to Norse myths and Icelandic folk beliefs.

A succulent barbecue was prepared and eaten on deck. The sea was like glass, the reflections of the setting



sun broken only by the leaps of white-sided Atlantic dolphins frolicking in the dusk and the sleek silhouettes of humpback and minke whales rising out of the water from time to time. Clusters of puffins accompanied the quiet progression of the ship as the expeditioners started to make their way down to bed.



# Barbecue Night

DAY 5 | Saturday 6 August





# Grímsey Island

DAY 6 | Sunday 7 August

Position at 0800 on 7 August

Latitude: 66.31.971° N

Longitude: 018.02.261° W

Course: Anchored

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 10.3 knots E

Air Temp: 11°C

Barometer: 1019

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, the furrow followed free: we were the first that ever burst into that silent sea.

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Icelandic:

Takk

Thanks

Puffins as far as the eye could see!

This set the tone of the day. Grímsey Island, the most northern point in Iceland, is just inside the Arctic Circle. But it was much more than just a mark of Iceland's inclusion to the polar region, it contains some of Iceland's (and Europe's) most spectacular bird cliffs.

This small island, 40 kilometres off Iceland's rugged north coast, was surrounded by thousands of puffins and kittiwakes on the water, in the air and nesting on the lush green cliffs of the island. A quiet sort of town with only 60 inhabitants year-round, but one filled with life. Some expeditioners hiked the steep cliffs to see the birds while others made a detour to the orb that recognizes Iceland's claim to the Arctic.

Out on the ocean, Zodiacs carefully weaved their way between thousands of rafting puffins and the show from water level was equally as spectacular. Fascinating geology and a landscape of burrows and nests lined the coastline.

This was truly a haven for all types of birds: puffins, kittiwakes, Arctic terns, fulmars, gulls and sand pipers to name just a few. The water was clear and as we idled along, you could see the lush kelp forests below the surface. A visual overload, both above and below.

The kayakers explored all the nooks and crannies around the coastline, investigating a number of shallow sea caves and tidal channels, enjoying the peaceful paddle as they moved in stealth observing the multitude of birds rafting on the surface. What a great way to get up close and personal with nature.

The afternoon was our chance to take the plunge, and all systems were go, Zodiacs in the water, jumping platform in place, safety staff at the ready, photographer poised, but nature had different ideas. With too much swell and chop around the gangway, the call "Abort Abort" came from the deck. Jumpers would have to hold on to their courage for another day.



But we knew we were in whale rich waters, so we were excited to see what the afternoon might bring. The observation deck became alive as we searched the ocean for signs of whales, dolphins and other creatures that might make an appearance.

White beaked dolphins were a standout, surfacing everywhere on all sides. To accompany our search, hot chocolates were a plenty, so all we had to do now was enjoy the marine life. What better way to make our way along Iceland's north-eastern coast?





# Seyðisfjörður

DAY 7 | Monday 8 August

Position at 0800 on 8 August

Latitude: 65.15.821° N

Longitude: 014.00.132° W

Course: Docked

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 5.6 knots SE

Barometer: 1018

Air Temp: 14°C

Að leggja höfuðið í bleyti

translates to “to lay your head in water.” While “on a pillow” might be the more logical place to rest your head, this phrase suggests you put it in water to soak when you need to spend some time working something out or coming up with a new idea. This is kind of like saying, “sleep on it.”

Icelandic:

Jæja!

Let’s start moving!

Early morning saw us pull into sleepy Seyðisfjörður on Iceland’s eastern coast. The town, consisting of a collection of brightly colourful houses and shops, was flanked by a crescendo of waterfalls on every side of the fjord.

We hopped into Zodiacs and kayaks and took off to explore some waterfalls and canyons along the northern end of the fjord. Along the way, we ran into what looked like a fish farm. This contained the remnants of a British ship carrying oil - SS El Grillo, sunk by German bombers in World War Two of which clean-up operations are still ongoing – remnants of Seyðisfjörður’s past, when it was used as a base for British/American forces during World War II. Further up the fjord, we disembarked into a shallow cove and headed up a number of canyons for a walk along different waterfalls and river basins. Cat took the fast walkers and headed up for a 7 kilometre circuit to the uppermost reaches of the waterfalls and were treated to fantastic vistas over the whole fjord. Others meandered along, taking time to try the wild blueberries, the bitter local Icelandic berries, and admiring the shiny coats of the wild horses and sheep. The kayakers enjoyed a long paddle along to the mouth of the fjord, admiring Vestdalseyri – the site of the world’s first modern industrialised whaling station, rocky coves, kelp beds and seabirds.

Back on board for lunch, then it was time for some free time in the afternoon. The charming town is known for its wooden buildings, colourful pavements, and alternative cultural scene with a technical museum and arts centre. Some chose to take a guided walk with Thor and Gudrun around the town, finishing in a local bar, while others headed up and took a longer walk up to one of Seyðisfjörður’s 25 waterfalls on the outskirts of the town. The kayakers took the opportunity to paddle up-river, investigating the rapids and the grasses on the banks of the Fjarðará river.

Howard had one further surprise up his sleeve. The polar plunge! Over 30 of our company took the plunge into Iceland’s frigid and clear waters at the mouth of Seyðisfjörður – some hardy expeditioners having second and third jumps!





# Polar Plunge

DAY 7 | Monday 8 August





# Siglufjörður

DAY 8 | Tuesday 9 August

Position at 0800 on 9 August

Latitude: 66.22431° N

Longitude: 017.48026° W

Course: 250.1°

Speed: 14.6 knots

Wind Speed: 28.5 knots SE

Barometer: 1008

Air Temp: 8°C

Yes, in countless ways, Iceland is a fascinating, mysterious, contradictory land.

—Roger K Sandness

The day started with the RAT tests for all and a little overcast with light rain.

We docked in Siglufjörður with plans for walks, kayaking and a visit to the Herring Museum.

After breakfast, the long walkers headed out on a hike lead by Hodei, Jack and Dave up to a view point. The trail ran up along the avalanche defence berms, the ground was even but relatively steep but the team of 20 rose to the challenge, were in good spirits and were rewarded for their efforts with a panoramic view of the port and the surrounding mountains.

The walkers descended into the town with plenty of time to visit the Herring Museum. The Herring Museum, spread over three large buildings, gave an insight into a bygone industry that still existed along Iceland's rugged northern coast including Siglufjörður, well into the 1950s.

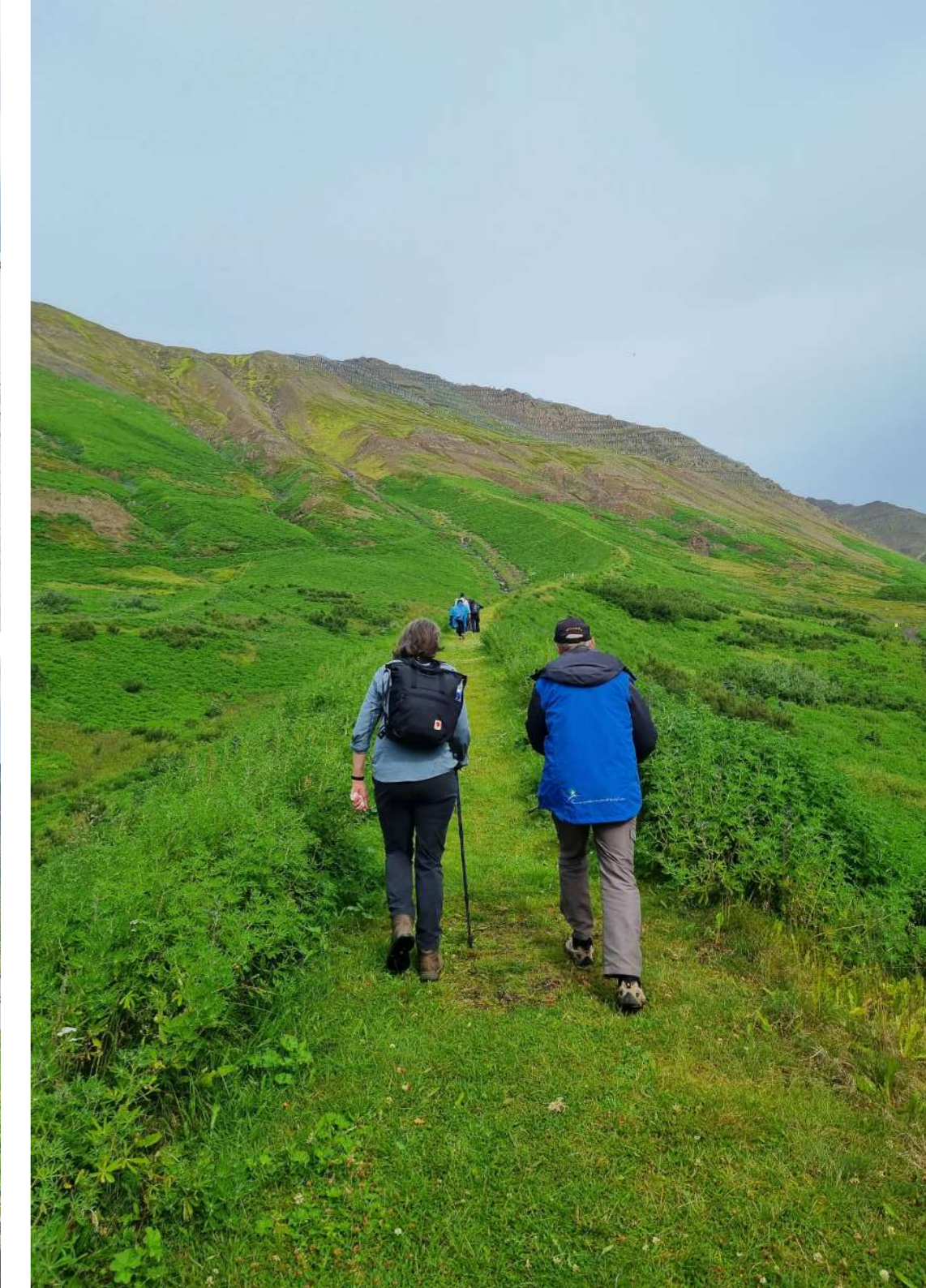
The kayakers headed out over to the opposite side of the fjord from the port, and cruised along the shore visiting many small waterfalls and were followed by harbour seals along the way.

We left Siglufjörður at lunch time and set course for Drangey Island. On the way to Drangey, several minke whales were seen off the bow.

On approach to Drangey, we were in luck. The Governor allowed us to Zodiac cruise around the small island. It was an atmospheric afternoon, with on-and-off rain squalls, as we investigated the rocky coastline and sea caves in our Zodiacs – admiring the many colourful jellyfish, while puffin and kittiwake colonies lined the sea stacks and were perched precariously on clifftops.

We were in for a further treat. We were permitted to land on a small pontoon to hear more about the island, and its dark history of 'nesting' (seabird hunting) and the weather experiences year-round on this rocky outcrop off Iceland's coast.

Back on board, Snowy finished the day with a humorous explanation of *Greg Mortimer's* X-BOW® with its unique hydrodynamic qualities, before another delicious dinner.





# Isafjordur

DAY 9 | Wednesday 10 August

Position at 0800 on 10 August

Latitude: 66°04.092'N

Longitude: 023°07.151'E

Course: Docked

Speed: 0 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots N

Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: 11°C

## Gluggaveður

This word gets a lot of traction in Iceland: It means “window-weather.” As in, the kind of weather that’s nice to look at, but not experience.

This morning we woke up to find ourselves at the wharf in the small north-western town of Isafjordur, with calm but overcast and slightly damp conditions. Just after breakfast a small group of long walkers headed down to the mud room to take a ride across the fjord by Zodiac where they took a track and headed up into the surrounding forest to a beautiful waterfall. Eventually they made their way past the avalanche barriers and back into town, a long 7 kilometre or so journey in total.

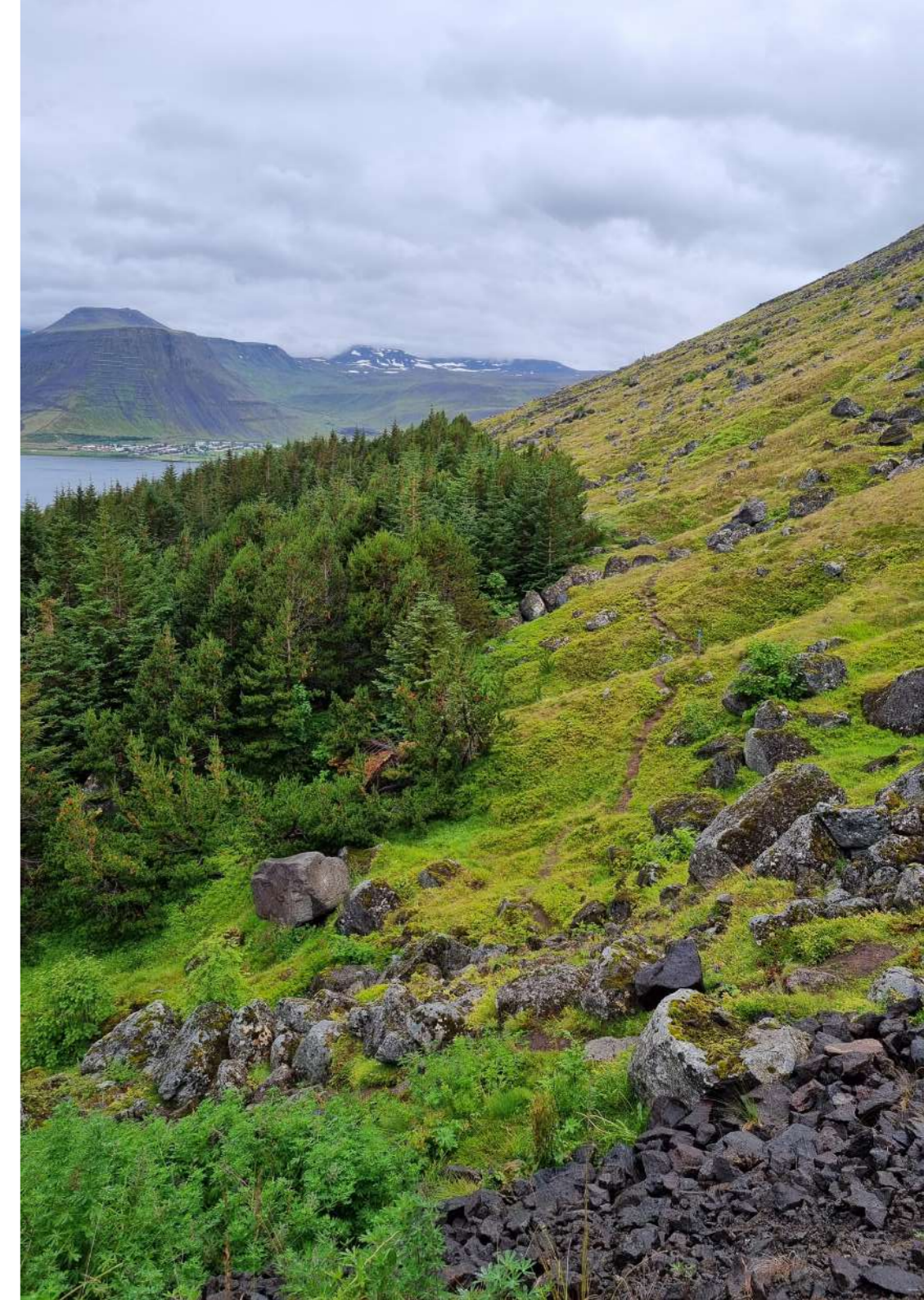
A larger group of medium walkers headed off from the dock through the port area and on through town, eventually heading up to a path above some of the newer houses on the outskirts of Isafjordur below the towering hillsides. Most eventually made it up along one of the newly constructed avalanche barriers to a point among the trees which offered a great view over the town area and fjord beyond.

The other walkers either made their own way around the town, taking in various sights of interest, or joined one of our Icelandic guides for an informative stroll through the old district featuring many small wooden houses and shops selling tempting treats and souvenirs. No matter which group we joined, everyone was thankful that the light drizzle cleared up and we could enjoy a fine morning.

Some of the kayakers also headed out for one last paddle, getting a close look at some of the birdlife and taking in the views of the township from the shoreline in the calm and quiet harbour.

After returning to the ship we cast off the lines and set sail on our 200 nautical mile journey to Reykjavik just before lunch. During the afternoon, Dani gave us a very informative lecture about the whales we have encountered during the trip and a summary of the results from Happy Whale of the actual individuals we saw and managed to photograph. From four good, clear photos of the humpback tail flukes, three of them had been seen and catalogued previously, all in Iceland, while one is totally new to the project - a great result.

Before our farewell dinner we gathered for drinks and toasts from our Captain, Maxim, and many more of the crew and Expedition Team. And finally to end the day, we gathered one last time in the lecture room to enjoy the voyage slide show put together by Scott, with contributions from many others, which was a great recollection of so much of what we did and saw over the past days.





# Reykjavik

DAY 10 | Thursday 11 August

Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard MV *Greg Mortimer*. We hope to see you on the high seas again someday!





# Kayaking Log

**Kayak Masters:** [Sigurd Davidsen](#), [Liz MacNeil](#), [Eamon Larkin](#)

<b>Number of Paddlers:</b> 13	<b>Total Paddle Outings:</b> 10	<b>Total Distance Paddled:</b> 59km (31.8Nm)
<b>Paddlers:</b> Alex and Caroline Mudd Georgia, Annie, and Thomas Mudd	Mark and Margie Chellew Jim and Debbie Osterholt Fabian Lebrija	Robert (Ian) and Carol Hughes Ronald Chik

## Thursday 4th

**AM:** [Location – Patreksfjordur](#), [Distance 7.77 km \(4.2 Nm\)](#)

We saw a lot of amazing scenery as we entered Patreksfjordur and we were keen to paddle amongst it. Most other expeditioners boarded buses while we fitted ourselves into the kayaks. The ship was pulled up alongside the pier; it was unusual to slide out of the back of it, in port, for our first paddle.

The obvious direction for us was against the wind up towards the high cliffs on our right.

We hugged the rocky shoreline past the edge of town to gain some shelter. A lot of seaweed and sea grass appeared in the clear water below us. As we left the township behind, the cliffs became steeper and more covered in greenery. We rested occasionally when we could. We passed a small creek draining into the fjord and had to stop up ahead to admire a 6 metre waterfall pouring over a rocky green wall. We hauled out onto the rocks. Leaving the kayaks to rest on the shoreline, some of us walked carefully up the small creek we had passed earlier. Up through the grasses, mini waterfalls and flowers, we were out of the wind completely now and enjoying the sunshine and sounds of the flowing creek. After returning to the kayaks, we headed our noses for home and the wind pushed us along. Of course, we still had to steer and enjoy the view into the fjord from this direction. So many jellyfish we passed on the journey back to the ship. Paddle number one completed we could eat and rest and be back out this afternoon.

**PM:** [Location – Patreksfjordur](#), [Distance 3.59 km \(1.94 Nm\)](#)

Over lunch the wind had picked up considerably in the middle of the fjord. There would be no crossing it or going against it again this afternoon. We decided to go with it, and found the only shelter behind the main harbour, and in front of the town. Cruising past town we saw some of our fellow expeditioners walking around. It is not a big settlement and relies heavily on fishing and the fish farms that dot the edge of the fjord. Soon we had glided past the town and saw hundreds of Arctic terns flying on a grassy headland. Most likely a nesting site. In perfect timing there was an easy beach to land on. We watched the terns diving for fish when a whale was spotted in front of us. We soon loaded into our Zodiac and we were able to see it as we returned to the ship, a nice bonus to a short afternoon paddle outing.

## Friday 5th Aug

**AM:** [Location – Djupavik](#), [Distance 3.5 kms \(1.9 Nm\)](#)

From the aft of the ship, we could see and feel the wind was strong coming off the land. There was a sheltered bay on one side, so we transported the kayaks over to it. No sooner had we launched off the beach, a small harbour seal appeared nearby. Hugging the calmer waters along the shore we continued over kelp gardens, between rocks and spotted another seal. It is the beauty of paddling that the marine life is not scared away by engine noises. We rounded a corner and the old, abandoned herring factory came into view. It closed after the herring industry dried up all across Iceland. Now repurposed as a gallery with a hotel next door, it has become an interesting destination for tourists and locals. We pulled up onto the beach and walked up to explore the factory. Inside was an art installation with a marine animals theme. The highlight for many was the large empty oil tank, now delipidated and letting light and rainwater in. Inside was an installation of several giant jellyfish hanging in the dim light. We returned to the kayaks but unfortunately had run out of time to continue paddling. However, on the way back to the ship a minke whale was spotted by the kayak Zodiac and we watched the beautiful creature swim in front of the factory before returning for lunch.

**PM:** [Location – Hólmavik](#), [Distance 3.6 km \(2Nm\)](#)

This afternoon we paddled alongside the small village of Holmavik. Leaving from a rocky cove, we negotiated our way around some rocky islets that were inhabited by a plethora of different seabirds. There were kittiwakes, terns, black beaked gulls, guillemots, ducks and more. It was a popular and raucous spot. We waved hello to some locals curious no doubt at the colourful addition to their coastline. We had a brief rest in the town harbour before heading back to the *Greg Mortimer*. On the return a humpback whale appeared. It put on a little display just for the kayakers and then later for the returning Zodiacs. It was hard to leave, but eventually we did, as did the whale. A short but sweet paddle.

## Sunday 7th Aug

**AM:** [Location – Grimsey Island](#), [Distance 8.1 kms \(4.37Nm\)](#)

We were not certain we could paddle at Grimsey Island. It is after all very exposed, far off the North of Iceland in the Greenland Sea. Today we were in luck. The wind was not too strong, and we had good shelter once we had reached the western shoreline. Grimsey is a steep island with many high bird cliffs, which gave us protection and thousands of birds to see, and hear, and at times smell.

We hoped to see puffins here and we were not disappointed. There were thousands of puffins, kittiwakes and guillemots, and I am sure others. The coast gave the kayakers opportunities to weave in and out of rocky coves and behind little rock islands. Moss, algae and grass clung to the steep walls that towered beside us, and below us seaweed swayed. Watching the puffins return to their nests or take-off from the water was a highlight. Along the way a couple of dark caves gave an opportunity to paddle in slowly. On reaching the end of the island's west coast, it was clear how lucky we were on our sheltered side. The open sea around the corner would not be good for us so we returned the way we came, enjoying the view from the other direction.

## Monday 8th Aug

**AM:** [Location – Seydisfjordur](#), [Distance 11.3 kms. \(6 Nm\)](#)

The destination for all the expeditioners this morning was the lovely waterfalls at Seydisfjordur. We would go there too but in our kayaks. It was a pleasant paddle to the falls from the ship but they had appeared too soon and we were loving the paddle, so we went on past the waterfalls and explored a little further. They would still be there on our return. The great thing about kayaking a new area is the unexpected discoveries. We soon came across our own little waterfall spilling into the fjord from a 8 metre drop. Some of us paddled in under the waterfall. Well, the person in the rear of the boat stayed dry; the one at the front, not so much. Dry-suits are great! From here the team split into two groups. One returned to walk up alongside the main waterfall, the other continued paddling, to explore further. The latter group paddled on past more small cliffs with nesting kittiwakes, eventually running out of time and turning back. The other group made it to the main falls and took a stroll up into this beautiful area. To fully experience the place, Thomas took a swim in a pool under one cascade, in his drysuit naturally. Satisfied with the outing we all made our way back to the ship one way or another.

**PM:** [Location – Seydisfjordur](#), [Distance 2.6 kms](#)

The ship stayed at the pier this afternoon, which gave us all the chance to wander around the cute and creative town. A few of us decided to discover the town from the water first. The wind had picked up in the fjord so it made sense to stay in the shelter of the town and its harbour area. Seydisfjordur has a lagoon in the centre of town, which we could access by paddling under a low bridge. A small harbour seal was spotted in the harbour funnily enough. In the town lagoon we could view the central part of town and hear the music that was playing at the groovy little cafes. It was a colourful and artistic town and we added to that colour in our suits and kayaks. Some locals also had kayaks along the waterfront or tucked beside their houses. Under another bridge and we were now heading upstream against a freshwater river. Not for long though, as it became shallow quickly and little rapids pushed us back into the lagoon. It was fun to see others from the ship walking around or picnicking in town. The weather was great, sun was shining, perfect ingredients for a lazy afternoon paddle.

## Tuesday 9th Aug

**AM:** [Location – Siglufjordur](#), [Distance 6 kms.](#)

Again the ship was docked alongside the small, historic town of Siglufjordur. We paddled away from town across the other side of the fjord to what was the remains or ruins of the old herring factory. Not much was left on the site that was once the reason the town developed. We were again pleasantly surprised at the beauty of this stretch of the fjord. As we made our way along it, we found little rocky coves and many waterfalls spilling over the small cliffs. In the background huge mountains loomed large on both sides of the fjord. Up until the early 70's, this town was accessible only by boat. Now we could see a long road tunnel emerging out of the side of one of the mountains. Another ship was anchored in the fjord it was called "The World" so Margie said we should paddle around the World. So we did, sort of. We crossed over to the other side, well clear of the large ship and headed for home, our stylish ship.

**PM:** [Location – Drangey Island](#), [Distance 7.8 kms. \(4.2Nm\)](#)

When I asked our group what their favourite outing was, Drangey island was high on the list. It was spectacular paddling around this little island. As soon as we arrived, we knew it would be amazing. The sea was glassy calm, there was no wind or swell, and the tall cliffs of the island reached up into the foggy heavens above. Again, there were thousands of birds nesting around the island and the noise and smell were constant.

Archways, rocky islets, and dramatic rock stacks were the features of this paddle. There was an eeriness here also highlighted by the fog rolling in slowly across the sea from the south, a reminder that the weather was not so calm in other parts of Iceland. As we rounded one edge of the island a seal popped up to inspect our progress, then another and again another about 20 metres ahead of us. Or was it the same seal. It was amusing to think we were being watched by a small navy of seals from ahead, beside and behind us. These sleek sentries of the seas appeared and disappeared silently around us like guardians of the island. We had circumnavigated Drangey Island. and would not likely ever forget it. We returned to the ship in awe of this place. A big thank you to the owners for allowing us to experience it.

## Wednesday 10th Aug

**AM:** [Location – Isafjordur](#), [Distance 4.6 kms. \(2.5Nm\)](#)

Isafjordur is large enough to have an airport albeit a small one. As we left the ship for our last paddle, we could see the runway on one side of the fjord very close to the water. Well, naturally, as not much off this part of Iceland is flat, mountains dwarfed us again on either side. Behind the town avalanche protection barriers were in place high above. We paddled slowly into the main harbour, the focal point of the town. A local kayak company was on the water too and gave us a wave as we passed. A last paddle is always a little sad as you realise you won't be so close to the water again each day. The group found a beach to haul out on and from there could walk into town or directly back onto the ship, while the kayaks were towed back.







# Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	02 to 11 August										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Great Northern Diver					•						
Northern Fulmar	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Northern Gannet			•	•	•						
Greylag Goose					•		•				
Brent Goose											
Whooper Swan				•	•						
Mallard		•	•	•	•						
Tufted Duck											
Common Eider		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Harlequin Duck					•						
Common Scoter					•						
Common Ringed Plover		•	•								
European Golden Plover								•			
Dunlin								•			
Purple Sandpiper		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Ruddy Turnstone						•					
Common Snipe					•						
Red-necked Phalarope			•			•					
Common Redshank		•			•						
Eurasian Oystercatcher		•	•			•		•			
Whimbrel		•				•	•				
Black-tailed Godwit		•						•			
Arctic Skua		•			•	•	•				
Herring Gull									•		
Glaucous Gull		•	•	•	•	•		•	•		
Great Black-backed Gull		•	•		•	•	•				

Bird Species	02 to 11 August										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Lesser Black-backed Gull		•									
Black-headed Gull		•	•	•	•		•	•	•		
Iceland Gull		•	•								
Black-legged Kittiwake		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	
Arctic Tern	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Black Tern					•						
Common Guillemot			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Brunich's Guillemot			•	•	•	•					
Black Guillemot				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Razorbill								•			
Little Auk				•							
Atlantic Puffin		•	•		•	•		•	•		
European Shag		•	•	•	•		•	•			
Great Cormorant		•									
Rock Pigeon							•	•			
Northern Wheatear			•								
Meadow Pipit		•			•				•		
European Starling		•		•	•						
Common Redpoll				•	•						
Eurasian Blackbird		•			•					•	
Common Raven		•	•	•	•					•	
White Wagtail	•	•	•	•	•			•	•		
Snow Bunting			•	•		•	•				
Wigeon					•						
Redwing					•		•	•			

Mammal Species	02 to 11 August										
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Common/Harbour Seal			•	•					•		
Grey Seal		•	•						•		
Common Minke Whale			•	•	•				•		
Humpback Whale			•	•	•	•			•		
White-beaked Dolphin				•	•	•			•		





# Flora Sightings



Bog bilberry



Moss campion



Sea mayweed



Alpine bartsia



Clustered lady's mantle



Mountain avens



Yellow saxifrage



Lesser clubmoss



Common butterwort



Dwarf willow



Wild thyme





## Expeditioners:

Larry Alldredge

Penny Anderson

Albert Barnfield

Margaret Barnfield

Margaret Barr

Victoria Benson

Bruce Board

Patricia Bradbury

Robyn Bury

Caroline Cambourieu

Mark Chellew

Margie Chellew

Ronald Chik

Francis Contreras

Michael Cooper

Julie Cronin

Jim Cundy

Maria Cundy

Penny Day

Paul de Bruyn

Lindsay Doig

Gingy Ferguson

Bud Ferguson Jr

Mary Lou Finlan

Martha Flanders

Jed Ford

Jerri Ford

Dianne Garbin

Orlando Garza

Rosemary Garza

Michelle Gilbert

Jim Gilbert

Sigrid Gray

Bob Hampson

Narelle Hampson

Katie Harber

Ruth Harris

Nathan Harris

Grant Holmes

Ian Hughes

Carole Hughes

David Hull

Finty Hunter

Jenni Jiear

Gary Jiear

Evan Jones

Lorna Jones

Phil Kimberlee

Harold Kuskin

Joan Kuskin

Therese Lavender

Fabian Lebrija

Harry Lee

Larry Long

Juana Mae Long

Craig MacLeod

Carrie MacLeod

Martine Maher

Pat McCormac

Karen Mckernan

Donald McKinley

Moira McKinley

Brigitte Meslage

Dawn Moore

Georgia Mudd

Annie Mudd

Thomas Mudd

Alex Mudd

Caroline Mudd

Jim Osterholt

Debbie Osterholt

Malcolm Patch

Lynette Patch

Gillian Pegler

Lachlan Pegler

Christine Penny

Barbara Powley

Oksana Prokopenko

Pauline Reynolds

Chantal Reynolds

Doug Ring

Neridah Rooseboom

Vanda Rudge

Benoit Schmutz

Eva Schonstein

Mark Schwecke

Diana Scott-Waine

Moira Sibbald

Niranjale Silva

Royston Smith

Caroline Smith

Sandy Thomas

Jennifer Thomson

Jack Throne

John Upchurch

Sandy Upchurch

Didier Van den eynde

Justine Waddington

Michael Wexler

Sandy Wexler

Heather Wheat

John Williams

Lisa Williams

David Willison

Joanne Willison

Roxy Wolfe



## Expedition Team:

Expedition Leader: Howard Whelan

Assistant Expedition Leader: Cat Ardagh

Onboard Expedition Manager: Rosie Leaney

Marine Biologist & Citizen Science: Dani Abras

Biologist: Joselyn Fenstermacher

Iceland Expert: Suzanne Lapstun

Expedition Guide/Naturalist: John Kirkwood

Expedition Guide/Naturalist: Graeme Snow

Expedition Guide: Hodei Orueta

Expedition Guide: Justine Bornholdt

Icelandic Guide: Guðrún Gunnarsdóttir

Icelandic Guide: Birkir (Thor) Magnusson

Icelandic Guide: Baldur Gyllfason

Kayaking Guide: Eamon Larkin

Kayaking Guide: Liz MacNeil

Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen

Kayaking Guide: Kristján Sveinssen

Photography Guide: Scott Portelli

Medic/Expedition Guide: David Palmer

Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu

Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Gabriel Hernandez

Mudroom Support/Wellness Therapist: Dasha Vasiljeva

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Maxim Makarovskiy

Chief Officer: Oleg Kapko

Safety Officer: Goran Goles

Second Officer: Sergii Voina

Bosun: Oscar Antonio Castejon Torres

Deck Cadet: Vlad Nicolescu

Ship Doctor: Maria Suarez

Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk

First Engineer: Ion Toma

Hotel Director: Patrice Degron

F&B Manager: Ulises Jose Cantillo Zapata

Chief Purser: Liza Merillo

Executive Chef: Christiand Pineda

Head Waiter: Diogenes Encinares

Hotel Controller: Richard Cayeta

IT Officer: Nataniel Vibares

Receptionist: Jelyn Merilo

Receptionist: Jeremiah Castillo

Head Stateroom: Florante Jr. Jimenez Lusong

Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier

Able Seaman: Bobby Penuliar Payumo

Able Seaman: Hardik Rao

Able Seaman: Ajay Fnu

Able Seaman: Joel Valdevieso Noble

Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre

## Photography thanks to:

Scott Portelli

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Justine Bornholt





