

# Svalbard Odyssey

Aboard *MV Greg Mortimer* | 10 July - 20 July 2022







# Longyearbyen

DAY 1 | Tuesday 12 July

Position at 1600 on 12 July

Latitude: 79°15.593'N

Longitude: 015°29.839'E

Course: Anchored at Longyearbyen

Speed: 0.0 knots

Wind Speed: 9 knots NW

Barometer: 1010

Air Temp: 7°C

Little do you know your own blessedness; for to travel hopefully is a better thing than to arrive, and the true success is to labour.

—Robert Louis Stevenson, *Virginibus Puerisque*, 1881

Here we are inside the Arctic Circle, at 79° north. Surrounded by spectacular mountains in the picturesque small coal-mining town of Longyearbyen, we got off our tour buses at the wharf knowing that this will be our last glimpse of civilisation for a while.

From now on, we are more likely to encounter a fox, reindeer or polar bear than another human-being.

We were greeted by the Aurora Expeditions team who took our photographs and helped us onto the Zodiacs for a shuttle to the ship (getting in and out of the lifejackets and the trusty Zodiacs will soon become second nature!).

The warm and stable *Greg Mortimer* beckoned us on board, where we had our first experience of the mudroom, and then 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, and a speech from our Hotel Director, Patrice, we had 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 5 days!). With the safety drill completed, we were all clear to lift anchor. Our briefings finished for the night, we headed to the dining room for a delicious dinner prepared by our talented galley team and served by our smiley and welcoming wait staff.

Even though we have faced countless challenges to get here, there was still a buzz of excitement in the air – or maybe one of relief to finally be able to begin this Arctic adventure! We are very happy and relieved to welcome every single one of you aboard and can't wait to explore Svalbard together.

Together we total 65 passengers. (36 Australians, 18 from the UK, 6 Americans, 2 Canadians, 1 Swiss, 1 Chinese and 1 from Israel) along with 83 crew from all around the globe.

In addition, we have 20 expedition team members with a variety of specialties, including polar exploration, polar bear safety, mountaineering, geology, botany, history, cetaceans, marine biology, terrestrial biology, photography, medicine and kayaking.

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





# Magdalenefjorden

DAY 2 | Wednesday 13 July

Position at 1700 on 13 July

Latitude: 78°53.612'N

Longitude: 010°07.402'E

Course: 000.5°

Speed: 8.4 knots

Wind Speed: 5.4 knots N

Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: 1° C

A first walk in any new country is one of the things which makes life on this planet worth being grateful for.

—Charles William Beebe

Overnight we headed out of Isfjorden and up the west coast of Spitsbergen – Svalbard's largest island. Gloomy, atmospheric fog greeted us outside as we found our way to the restaurant for breakfast. Once revived by several mugs of hot drink, it was time for introductory briefings. Howard explained procedures for embarking and disembarking Zodiacs, then Cat led us through the do's and don'ts for when we go ashore. Kayakers met Liz, Eamon and Sigurd to be fitted out with booties, dry bags and drysuits.

Briefings over, lunch eaten, the Bridge had steered us carefully into Magdalenefjord, a 10-kilometre long fjord that cuts straight into Spitsbergen's west coast. The air was heavy with moisture, with an array of lichens and mosses meeting the shorelines. Magdalenefjord is often accessible year-round and doesn't freeze during the winter because of the influence of the West Spitsbergen current connected to the Gulf Stream. Over here in the west, weather systems from the Greenland Sea deposit their rainfall and precipitation as the storm systems hit the jagged mountain ranges along the coast. Our scout party headed off first and carefully checked the surrounding slopes for any activity; before calling us ashore to Gravneset 'grave-peninsula', a natural harbour that was frequently used first by the whalers during the 17th century and later by the Pomors – the Russian overwintering parties. It is also likely that Willem Barentsz visited Magdalenefjord in 1596 and claimed the land for the Netherlands.

Ashore we checked out the final resting place for 130 whalers who worked and died here (their deaths mainly due to scurvy and other diseases), and the remains of blubber ovens from the whalers' shore station. Bowhead whales in the fjord were the most lucrative given their slow movements and floated when they were killed. However, with the arrival of pelagic whaling and once the bowheads near shore had gone; the shore station was abandoned although the area was still used as a graveyard, repairs and for fresh water.

We split into three groups for a hike. Howard's fast-long walk immediately headed off around Trinityhamna and along the shoreline of nearby Gullybukta and found impressive views of Gullybreen glacier around the corner. Piotr and Jack's medium-long walk followed close behind, scrambling over the rocks and spoke about the spectacular scenery of the fjord, caused by the pronounced uplift of the area and glacial erosion. Joselyn and Cat's

group meandered along the shoreline, admiring the colourful wildflowers and extensive vegetation – mosses, mountain sorrel, saxifrage, and scurvy grass.

Picked up by Zodiac drivers, we investigated the innermost reaches of the fjords and glaciers. On the far side of Gullybukta, we found a haul out of juvenile male walrus, who can weigh up to 1.5 tonnes when they mature. It was also stark to see the retreat of Waggonwaybreen and Gullybreen as we steered among the brash ice. Little auk colonies way up high on the far side of the fjord at Alkekongen led us searching for any slight movement on the slopes from arctic foxes, although several obliging harbour seals posed for photos.

A delicious dinner prepared by our dining team was interrupted by a call from the Bridge, confirmed by Howard. Minke whales. We rushed to the outdoor viewing platforms on Deck 8 and the Sun Deck on Deck 7. Dani and John were there to answer all our marine mammal questions, while what looked like a pod of minkes fed on the baitfish. John also spotted a fin whale and harp seals – truly rare sightings in Svalbard!





# Northern Pack Ice

DAY 3 | Thursday 14 July

Position at 0900 on 14 July

Latitude: 81°11.317'N

Longitude: 019°30.371'E

Course: 048.1°

Speed: 6 knots

Wind Speed: 1.1 knots N

Barometer: 1021

Air Temp: 3° C

The ice and the long moon-lit polar nights with all their yearning, seemed like a far-off dream from another world; a dream that has come and passed away. But what would life be worth without its dreams?

—Fridtjof Nansen, *Farthest North*

After wonderful day in Magdalenafjorden we set off north towards the ice edge. Another day of our expedition started with a hearty breakfast and then we went out on the deck to look for wildlife. The weather was beautiful at the beginning of the day, and we managed to get to the pack ice before noon leaving Spitsbergen south of us.

Before lunch we had an opportunity to listen to Piotr's lecture about history of Svalbard. We learned how Svalbard was accidentally discovered by the Dutch explorer Willem Barentsz in the 16th century. We also heard about periods of whaling, trapping, mining, and scientific expeditions that took place on Svalbard for some 400 years. After lunch, John Kirkwood gave us another lecture about sea ice and ocean currents and what the global sea currents mean for life in different parts of the world.

During the day a thick fog rolled in. Spotting wildlife got a bit trickier, but we managed to see a beautiful large walrus and a bearded seal lazing on the ice, as well as some harp seals and ivory gulls. Navigating through the ice we made it to 81° 30' north. We anchored our ship at 81° 27 minutes north where we performed our traditional polar plunge. A group of brave men and women voluntarily decided to jump into ice cold water, just for a few seconds, to feel like a walrus or a seal. Every daredevil jumping off the ship received a big applause from the rest of the expeditioners who were observing the whole event from the top deck. After the plunge, the hot sauna and hot tub were waiting for those who wanted to warm up.

By the end of this eventful day navigating through the Arctic Ocean, we made our way to the lounge where we could have a drink and enjoy some canapes. A daily recap followed with lots of new facts from Joselyn and Piotr, and a call for contributions to the voyage slideshow. Our Expedition Leader Howard gave us a plan for the following day. We were making our way south-east towards an island of Kvitoya.

Another day full of unknown adventure was ahead of us, but what we did know, was that we had to make our way to the dining room for our last adventure of the day – delicious dinner prepared and served by our wonderful crew. Our day in the high arctic was about to be complete.





# Polar Plunge

DAY 3 | Thursday 14 July





# Kræmerpynten, Andréeneset

DAY 4 | Friday 15 July

Position at 0900 on 15 July

Latitude: 80°27.236' N

Longitude: 033°11.462' E

Course: 129.8°

Speed: 6 knots

Wind Speed: 11.1 knots NE

Barometer: 1025

Air Temp: 0°C

For some time our conversation lingers upon that major predator.

Until we have spotted him, his name is taboo, deep respect for the mystery and power of the animal.

—*The Land Beyond The Northcape*

We left the magic world of yesterday's icy sea behind us and returned south today. An overnight journey brought us to the remote shores of Kvitøya, it means white island. It emerged slowly out of the mist, revealing a rocky shoreline with an immense snow cap mountain behind, as we approached.

Our first outing was at a place named Kræmerpynten. There was an impressive glacier in the middle of a couple of rocky headlands. To the north, the island disappeared into the fog. We set out in Zodiacs and to our delight, we spotted a polar bear, with two cubs. They were happily sitting and pawing on a patch of ice. We approached very cautiously and did not disturb them. Beside us, small groups of walrus popped up occasionally observing us. Finally, the cold weather convinced us to retreat to the warmth of the ship and a hearty lunch.

We had an informative lecture from Dani about the amazing bears we had just seen, it made us appreciate them even more.

We steamed around to the complete other side of Kvitøya to a historic place called Andreeneset. It was here that three Swedish adventurers met their fate in 1897, but were not discovered until the 1930's. They had walked across the pack ice in search of land, and here they found it. However, they were not alone on this distant island, and possibly perished at the paws of their polar neighbours.

We were not alone either as we neared the coast in our Zodiacs. We were delighted to see a polar bear, strolling along the water's edge and eventually finding a cosy resting spot on some rocks. It posed occasionally for us, and some great photos were surely taken. In the next bay two more polar bears were sighted resting on the ice and the rocks. What a day, six bear sightings! A small rocky point was a haul-out for 30 or more walrus all bunched together in and out of the water. It was an impressive spectacle.

With the wind in our faces, we returned to the *Greg Mortimer* and in our recap learned more from Dani about the wonderful world of the walrus. We also learned more about the X-BOW® technology of our ship and the advantages it gives us in these Polar areas.

There were There were birthday celebrations for Lesley C at dinner tonight, as we saw the end of another great day. "Happy Birthday, Happy Polar Bear day !"





# Brasvellbreen & Wilhelmoya

DAY 5 | Saturday 16 July

Position at 0900 on 16 July

Latitude: 80°27.236' N

Longitude: 033°11.462' E

Course: 110.7°

Speed: 3.2 knots

Wind Speed: 11.1 knots NE

Barometer: 1025

Air Temp: 0°C

For the animal shall not be measured by man. In a world older and more complete than ours, they move finished and complete, gifted with extensions of the senses we have lost or never attained, living by voices we shall never hear.

—Henry Beston (1888-1968)

Author 'The Outermost House'

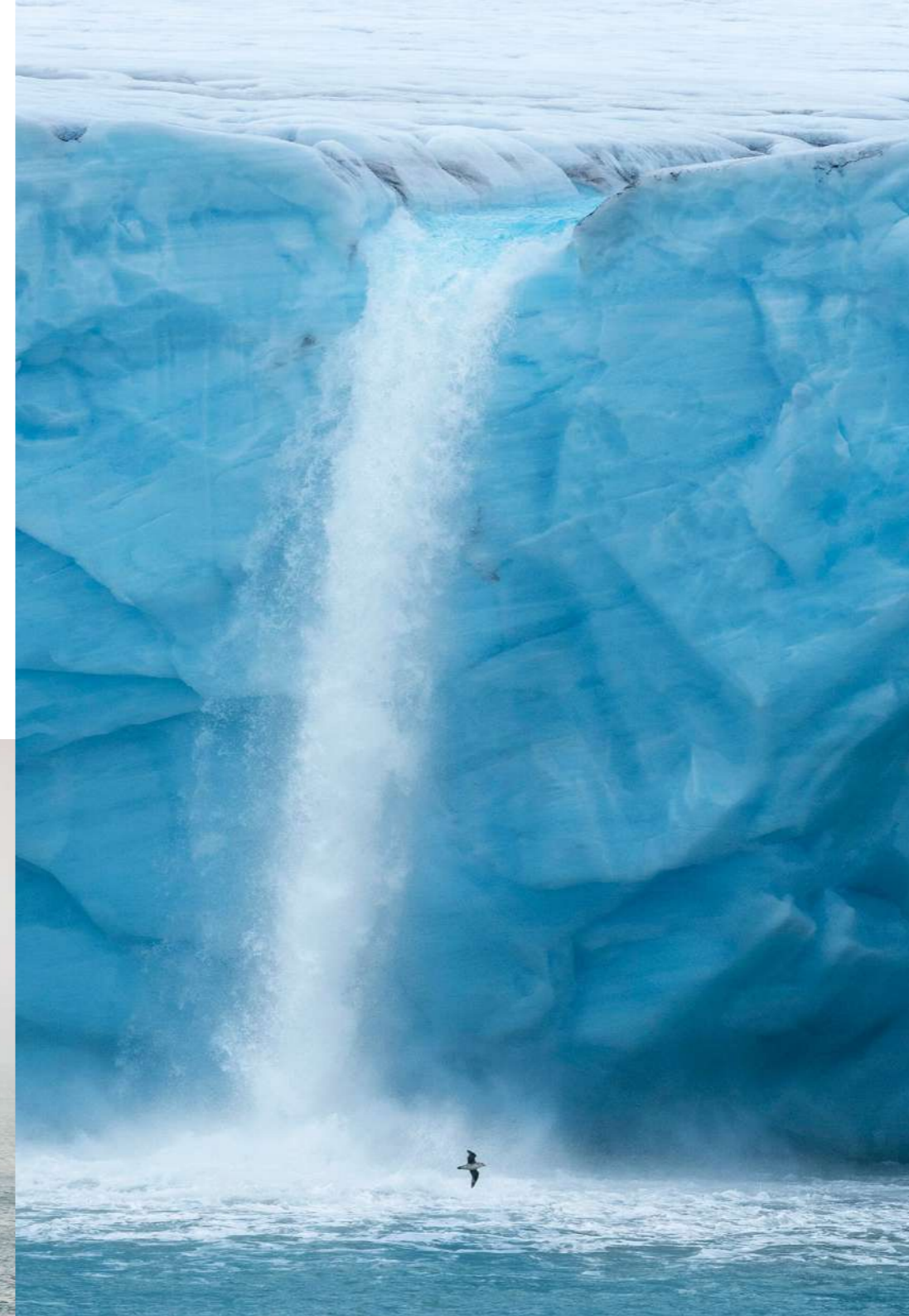
After our six-bear day at Kvitøya, it was time to continue our planned circumnavigation of the Svalbard archipelago by travelling along the coastal ice cliffs of Nordaustlandet. This large island has four ice domes, the largest of which (Austfonna) is the third largest ice dome on Earth (after Antarctica and Greenland). Until recently, few people had seen these 160km-long coastal ice cliffs due to a thick year-round cover of sea-ice.

At the southern tip of Nordaustlandet, we came to a broad glacial tongue known as Bråsvellbreen, which developed in 1937-38 when the ice dome surged about six nautical miles into the ocean. This surge created a floating ice shelf that has survived to the present day, but which has retreated in recent years. Our Captain, Oleg Klaptenko, first navigated this coastline in 2008 and has recorded a glacial retreat of three nautical miles over the past 14 years.

The ice cliffs were an impressive sight from our Zodiacs: with ice caves at the waterline and numerous waterfalls cascading from the top of the ice shelf. Separate Zodiac flotillas cruised to the east and the west, where each group was treated to its own ice calving. Almost at the same time, two massive sections of ice cliff collapsed into the sea kilometres apart: leaving us to debate who had seen the bigger ice calving. Fortunately, the water at each glacial face was quite deep as no large waves were generated by either calving and no large chunks of ice exploded out. Still, we were all glad to witness these awesome events from a safe distance.

The wildlife highlights of the morning were the ivory gulls that flew by and the ringed seals who popped their heads out of the water to watch the Zodiacs go by. These tiny seals once bred on the sea ice that used to be here year-round. They now face an uncertain future as sea-ice is no longer a year-round presence, and its winter extent and thickness continue to decline with each passing decade.

In the afternoon, we cruised towards Wilhelmoya, where we were unable to land because the dense fog made it impossible to determine if there were any polar bears present. Instead, Howard took us to the nearby Bjornsundet, a small bay that was ideal for kayaking and Zodiac cruising. This turned out to be a gem of a place, with some dark icebergs, a great diversity of birdlife, spectacular ice cliffs and a gnarly old glacier at the end.





# Palanderbukta, Gyldenoyane & Alkefjellet

DAY 6 | Sunday 17 July

Position at 0900 on 17 July

Latitude: 79°32.91'N

Longitude: 21°04.09'E

Course: 247.7°

Speed: 4.6 knots

Wind Speed: 10 knots NE

Barometer: 1026

Air Temp: 3°C

“Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant.”

—Robert Louis Stevenson

An Imposing landscape shrouded in mist as we awoke in Palanderbukta this morning. The sea was calm and silent, and the atmosphere had a very Arctic feel to it. It was a morning filled with exploration as we split into groups to traverse the nearby terrain. While some opted for the longer walks and the views from above, a small group explored the shoreline, discovering fossils and the remains of sea creatures embedded within. A diverse range of flora emerged from between the geology made up of volcanic, igneous and limestone rocks.

The landscape also revealed the remnants of debris that had travelled on the ocean currents to land on this beach maybe even thousands of kilometres from where it started its journey. We walked the beach and winding glacial estuaries collecting the flotsam and jetsam to bring back to the ship and dispose of appropriately, as well as logging the data for our citizen science program. Every little bit counts. It was good that we could do our small part to keep this place pristine.

As we headed once again into the mist, our destination was Gyldenoyane. We navigated the fjords to a small island, unaware that we were heading to something special. The call came over the radio, a polar bear had been spotted on the north end of the island. The message was heard loud and clear as we quickly made our way north and gathered together before quietly watching the bear from our Zodiacs. The bear unperturbed by our presence would sometimes lift its head to see what was going on but quickly went back to sleep.

When we got back to the ship and we were leaving the site, the bear had decided to come across the other side of the island and treat us to one more glimpse of its presence as it traversed the shore, investigating every nook and cranny in its path. It was a great send off before we made our way further into up the fjord. Wherever we looked nature was putting on a show, and not to mention the stunning landscape with vivid colours, rocky terrains, and imposing glaciers, shrouded by an Arctic mist that refused to reveal the entirety of this beautiful place. Time passed by so quickly and it wasn't long before we were heading back onboard and dreaming of the next adventure.

But the day was not over yet, after an early dinner we headed for the famous Alkefjellet bird cliffs. Waterfalls pouring off the steep cliffs as hundreds of thousands of birds were in a flurry around the top of the ridge line.





# Texas Bar, Idabreen

DAY 7 | Monday 18 July

Position at 0900 on 18 July

Latitude: 79°36.89'N

Longitude: 12°42.14'E

Course: 032.9°

Speed: 4 knots

Life in not measured by the breaths we take. But by the moments that take our breath away.

—Author unknown

What a stunning day! Opening the curtains to clear blue sky and sparkling sunlight sure does get the juices flowing. Everyone was excited to get to shore and explore. The historic trappers hut at Texas Bar came complete with spare socks dried and ready on the line as well as a full complement of adult beverage bottles, silent witnesses to good times gone by.

After learning a bit about the area's history, the walking groups began to depart, striking out along the coast to see what this bit of terra firma had to offer. Even before coming ashore, it was evident that flowers would be among the many points of interest during the day. It was easy to pick out the bright pink moss campion flowers from the water and once ashore, several folks got right into their photographic projects, bringing out macro lenses and angling for the best light and perspectives. The walks followed the coastline then ascended across an open rocky slope where incredible views could be had of the surrounding fjord and glacier systems. Remains of an old fox trap reminded us of why Texas Bar was an historic focal point, but the expansive vistas brought us back to the moment and the variety of reasons for current curiosity and interest. Some soaked up the sun while taking in the vast views of craggy mountains, streaming glaciers, and meltwater ponds. Others searched the bird cliff slopes for fox activity while kittiwakes and snow buntings serenaded in the background. Eyes on the ground revealed a surprising diversity of flowers and plants showing off their polar adaptations, including a local "forest" of Arctic willow—the leaves barely visible amongst the protective mats of moss in which it was growing. From the long hiker group Snowy reported a sighting of some Svalbardian two-cheeked tourons, basking in the calm waters of a secluded bay-- what an unusual species to get to add to the wildlife sighting list!

After a quick return to the ship for a bit of nourishment, we returned to the water and cruised the active front of Idabreen glacier. It was an idyllic afternoon, a chance to focus on glacial landscapes and formations as well as take bets on when a calving might occur next. A huge agglomeration of kittiwakes were fluttering and feeding at the glacier's edge, and they helped identify when bits of ice began to fall as they suddenly would startle and circle around before settling back to their focused feeding zone. Drifting in the brash ice, listening to the sounds of melt water and popping air bubbles that were thousands of years old, made for an incredibly peaceful backdrop that no one seemed to want to leave.

Wind Speed: 9 knots SW

Barometer: 1028

Air Temp: 9°C

We did eventually make it back to the ship, and enjoyed a longer recap touching on plant adaptations, the underwater gardens of Alkefjellet, and the Svalbard treaty before adjourning to dinner. For an extra treat, after dinner Joselyn invited folks into the lounge to view video and photos of zooplankton found when sampling seaweed during a Zodiac cruise and a handful of keen expeditioners got a chance at a hands-on session to view the creatures up close and personal. What a full day of new experiences, lucky us!





# Signehamna, Lilliehöökreen

DAY 8 | Tuesday 19 July

Position at 0900 on 19 July

Latitude: 79°16.212'N

Longitude: 11°34.322'E

Course: 064.8°

Speed: 3.2 knots

Wind Speed: 5.4 knots NW

Barometer: 1029

Air Temp: 8°C

We have striven, we have sought and we have found. Of course our little expedition is not in the same realm as those of the great polar explorers of the past but it is a little taste and sets us apart from 99% of the people we meet every day. Perhaps we can retain some of the beauty, serenity and timelessness of the far northern world we have travelled in. Better still that we can take it back to our everyday lives.

—Ian Collier, Aurora passenger, Arctic season 2005

We awoke this morning to sunny skies, little wind and an amazing +8°C temperature - such a change from previous days. We arrived at Signehamna around breakfast time and even before we got ashore, there was a sighting of a bearded seal in the water on the Zodiac ride to shore. Soon after there was also a ringed seal seen so it was a good morning for marine mammals.

After landing at the beach, we split into different walking groups to explore the area of gently undulating ground around a small lake surrounded by low hills on one side and some other higher peaks on the other. The short walk group explored the gentle slopes between the beach and the next small bay over, where they were able to get a Zodiac pick-up for a cruise beneath the bird cliffs where large numbers of black-legged kittiwakes were nesting.

Meanwhile, the long/fast and medium walking groups both headed inland towards the lake and the remnants of the World War II era German weather observation station, which operated until it was bombed by Norwegian aircraft in 1943. There's not much left of it today apart from some pieces of timber, wire and rope, the occasional piece of broken glass or pottery and an assortment of rusting metal drums and containers spread around.

At this point the long walkers headed off across the valley to scale the steep peak to the north, along the top and back around to the low ground, with amazing views in all directions. The medium walkers instead continued along the shore of the small lake and eventually to a slightly lower vantage point, with views over the lake and to the glacier front in the distance (actually, the site of the afternoon's Zodiac cruise - Lilliehöökreen).

Just as both groups headed back towards the landing site at the beach, we crossed paths with a group of about seven Svalbard reindeer grazing on the vegetation found on the tundra. Three of the males had impressive sets of antlers and came close enough for us to get good views and photos.

Over lunch we repositioned just a few miles to the impressive, seven mile long glacier front of Lilliehöökreen. The sun was shining and it was glassy calm on the water as we dropped our boats and cruised along in front of the wall of broken ice. It was especially active in the warm conditions and everyone was treated to close-up views





# Longyearbyen

DAY 9 | Wednesday 20 July

Position at 0900 on 20 July

Latitude: 79°15.593'N

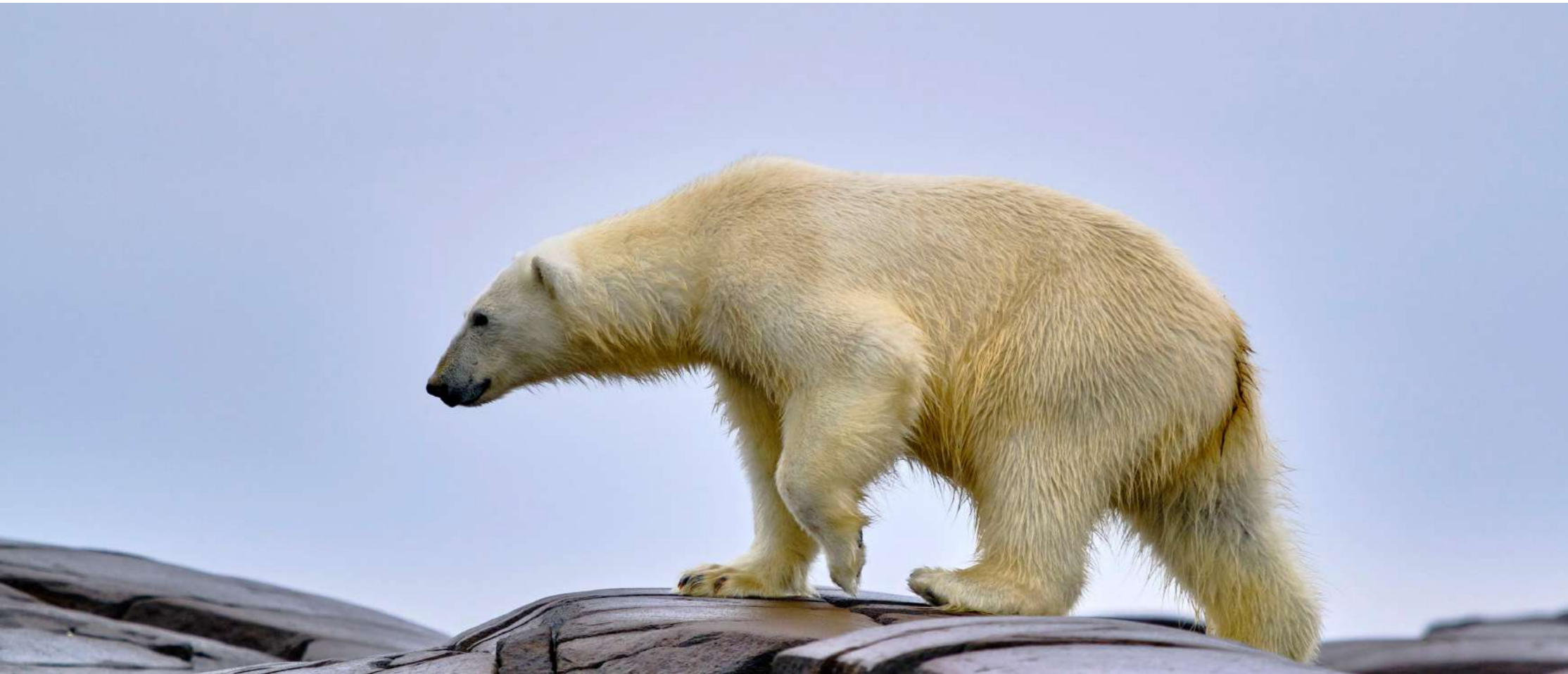
Longitude: 015°29.839'E

Course: Docked  
Speed: 0.0 knots

Wind Speed: 8 knots from NW  
Barometer: 1015

Air Temp: 9°C

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





# Kayaking Log

By Eamon Larkin & Liz MacNeil

Kayak Masters: Daniel Stavert, Liz MacNeil, Eamon Larkin, Sigurd Davidsen

Number of Paddlers: 18      Total Paddle Outings: 6      Total      Distance Paddled: 44.1km (23nm)

Paddlers:	Tim & Ann Gillespe	Nanco Van Der Maas	Jer & Wendy Heard
Clare & Peter Hamilton	Jennifer Jones	Heidi Bullough	Matt & Hank Stern
Craig Cooper	Catherine Eva	Kevin Kaatz	
Rudi Mahne	Susan Hald	Rachel & Richard Rothery	

## Wednesday 13th July am: Briefings and equipment

We gathered for the first time as a kayak group and had a briefing about how the program would work and what to expect. Soon we were in the mud room squeezing into drysuits and trying on paddling gear. The hard part over, we look forward to a paddle this afternoon.

## Wednesday 13th July pm: Magdalenefjord - 7.5 km

Perfect conditions for our first outing in the kayaks. A sheltered fjord in the northiwest of Svalbard Magdalenefjord did not disappoint. We were spoilt with spectacular views of mountains that reached high up into the clouds and glaciers on three sides of the fjord. After a few more safety briefs on the water, we glided deeper into the fjord passing small bergy bits and brash ice. Plenty of black guillemots and some kittiwakes greeted us as we floated by. The group stopped for some photos in front of a strikingly beautiful blue bergy bit. We met some harbour seals soon after and returned to the ship content with our first day of kayaking.

## Saturday 16th July pm: Wilhelmøya -Distance 6.7 km (3.6nm)

We anchored about two kilometres from the medium sized rocky island of Wilhelmøya. Or so we were told, as we could not see it through the heavy fog that enveloped our ship. Loaded with navigation devices the guides bravely headed out into the direction of the island. Soon enough we saw the rocky mountains and coastline ahead of us. The sense of mystery was heavy as we drifted just off the shore watching carefully as we rounded every corner.

The sea was glassy calm. Just being out paddling in the fog was surreal. We concluded this shorter paddle at a waterfall/creek that ran down the rocky hillside breaking the eerie silence of this place. We called for a Zodiac taxi to return safely back to the ship and the kayaks were towed away quickly disappearing from sight.

## Sunday 17th July am: Palanderbukta - Distance 9.6 km (5.2nm) - Orcas

Two paddle groups were formed this morning. The fog of the previous day had disappeared completely. We headed out into the sunshine and calm seas of this enormous fjord. The "Orcas" group of paddlers made some good distance to the further, small glacier of Ericabreen. We heard sounds in the distance like a call of a howler

monkey, but more likely it was groups of walrus. We continued cautiously and kept our eyes open. As we neared a rocky beach, we saw small groups of walrus swimming calmly off the shoreline. We stayed in a close bunched group and avoided our tusked neighbours. Dan in our safety Zodiac had scouted ahead and cleared the landing area, resulting in a short but steep walk up a hill in our paddle gear. The oddest thing to encounter up on this Arctic hill was the fossils of shells and corals and plant life in so many of the small rocks. Amazing! From up high we could see clearly over two glaciers up to the icecap beyond. The ship looked tiny from here. Returning to our kayaks we paddled back amongst the brash ice and admired the spikey glacier of Palanderbreen.

## Sunday 17th July am: Palanderbukata - Distance 8.3km (4.5nm)

It was great to be a Beluga cruiser today! Separating from the Orcas, we headed towards the big blue icy glacier on the southern side of the fjord. Meandering through the ice along the glacial face was our plan, as well as making a landing and exercising our legs a bit. Navigating through the brash and ice, we came across a young walrus who was just as curious about us as we were about it... stoke levels were high as we came together in a raft and watched as it swam in front of us. After photo shoots solidifying our next profile pics in front of the glacier, we made our way towards the shore where we met up with John K and Jack, and went for a walk to the glacier. What a wonderful surprise! It was so cool seeing all the ice blue river channels carving crevasses as they flowed their way down the glacier. Some waded by the pools, others looked at fossils and all the flora/fauna along the way. With a surprise Zodiac ride back to the ship, we shared our tales of glacial adventures with the rest of the team.

## Sunday 17th July pm: Gyldenøyane – 5.2km (2.8nm)

Although we did not reposition the ship very far from Palanderbreen, the weather had changed completely. The clouds had set in and a light rain had begun. The sea was still calm and the islands of Gyldenoyane looked like they would be an interesting place to paddle. We rounded the first corner and found ourselves in a channel with many small rock skerries, tiny rocky islets scattered between two bigger islands. It was here that we learned from Dan about how these dolerite formations were formed many eons ago. It was also here we heard that there was a polar bear on another part of the largest island. We voted yes to paddling around to get a glimpse of it from a safe distance. As we rounded each point and headland the rain increased to soaking level, but in our dry-suits we were well protected. The rain was enjoyable and refreshing. It stopped and the colours of the sky returned. As we got closer to the bear's location, we heard that it was now moving about. So we thought it wise to swap the kayaks for a Zodiac and cover the last couple of kilometres safer and quicker. The reward for our effort was the most spectacular and very active polar bear viewing of the trip. It was strutting around sniffing at everything. What a performer; what an awesome day!

## Monday 18th July am: Texas Bar

Team Beluga - Distance 4.6km (2.5 nm) | Team Orca - Distance 8.4km (4.53nm)

It was a bluebird day: the waters were calm and the stoke level was high. Breaking into our regular two groups (Orcas and Belugas), it was great to have so many people on the water. Paddling around ice with views of the glacial fjords, both groups made their way towards the shoreline. The Orcas paddled a bit further towards the point, whilst the Belugas headed for a protected lagoon. Along the shore, the metamorphic and igneous rock was amazing to look at. The mirror-like reflections were glistening in the glassy waters and along on the rock wall whilst we paddled by kittiwake rookeries along the cliff and watched as a mother eider duck took care of her ducklings. Making it to shore, we met up with Dan and Isabel at the Texas Bar, where tales of trapping and geology were shared with us. Walking up the hill, we had 360° views of the glacial fjords surrounding us. What an amazing day to paddle in Svalbard.

## Tuesday 19th July am: Signahamna - Distance 6.7 km (3.6nm)

It is always a little sad to set out for your final kayak of the trip. That was the case today for some of our group. We were saying farewell to some, while others were staying on for the next voyage. This was a kayak and landing with a short walk. We headed the opposite direction to the Zodiacs and were quickly in a quiet, peaceful rhythm. A steep mountain rising sharply out of the fjord loomed next to us as we chatted and paddled. Camouflaged perfectly against the rock and soil were six reindeer, stags we think, grazing and contouring around the steep slopes above us. We entered a small, sheltered bay and after it was cleared, we made a landing. Disturbing the water as we exited our kayaks attracted the attention of a couple of Arctic terns. They hovered in front of us like speedy angels, then would dive quickly into the water catching small fish or copepods. Beautiful, mesmerizing.

A short walk uphill onto a ridge revealed a meltwater lake and spectacular views over the fjord back to the ship. Our kayaks looking very colourful down below us. We learnt about the weather stations that used to be here and their role and importance in World War II. Setting off in our kayaks again, we explored the next bay and just floated together chatting, not wanted the outing to end.









# Bird and Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	10th to 20th July										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Red-throated Diver											
Great Northern Diver						•					
Northern Fulmar	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Pink-footed Goose		•					•	•			
Barnacle Goose				•			•			•	
Brent Goose											
Common Eider	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	
King Eider											
Long-tailed Duck								•			
Svalbard Ptarmigan		•									
Ringed Plover											
Golden Plover											
Sanderling											
Purple Sandpiper		•						•	•		
Ruddy Turnstone											
Grey Phalarope								•			
Pomarine Skua											
Arctic Skua		•		•			•			•	
Long-tailed Skua											
Great Skua						•					
Sabine's Gull											
Glaucous Gull		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Great Black-backed Gull											
Black-legged Kittiwake	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Ivory Gull				•		•				•	

Bird Species	10th to 20th July										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Arctic Tern	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Common Guillemot											
Brunich's Guillemot	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	
Black Guillemot	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Razorbill											
Little Auk	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	
Atlantic Puffin	•	•		•				•		•	
Snow Bunting	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	

Mammal Species	10th to 20th July										
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Arctic Fox		•									
Svalbard Reindeer		•								•	
Polar Bear						•		•			
Ringed Seal							•			•	
Bearded Seal					•					•	
Harp Seal				•	•						
Harbour/Common Seal				•							
Walrus				•	•	•		•			
Common Minke Whale			•	•							
Fin Whale				•							





# Flora Sightings



Alpine Knotweed



Hairy lousewort



Moss campion



Arctic Mouse-ear



Boreal Jacob's-ladder



Moss campion



Pale whitlow-grass



Crustose lichen



Fruiting lichen

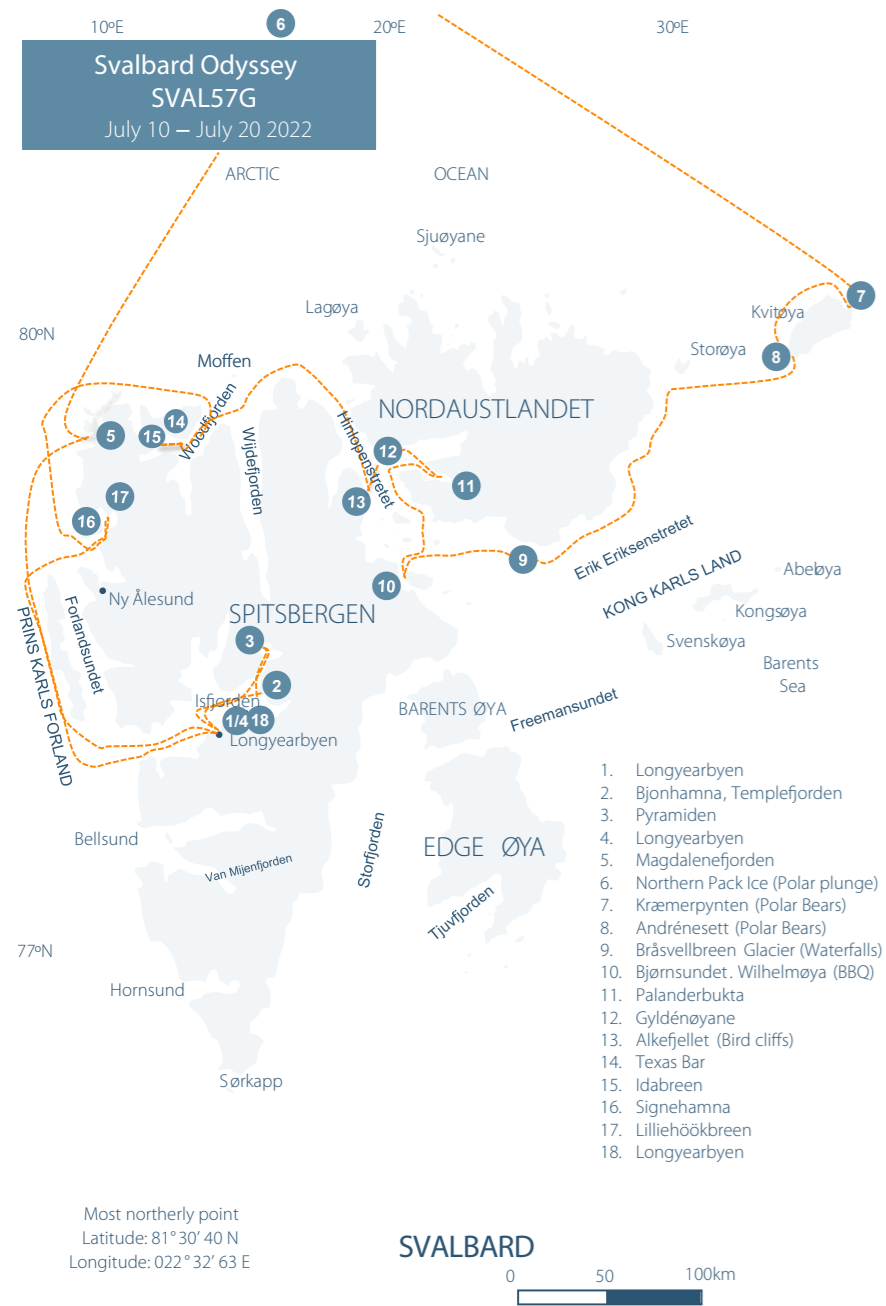


Polar willow (female)



Purple saxifrage









## Expeditioners:

Kim Abkin	Wendy Heard	Hank Stern
June Allwood	Valerie Hodgson	Marlene Stern
Reed Allwood	Howard Hyslop	Jeremy Stern
Belinda Brown	Delphine Hyslop	Matthew Stern
Heidi Bullough	Jo Jackett	Alena Stern
Hugh Chisholm	Jennifer Jones	Jennifer Suzuki
Lesley Chisholm	Annette Keesing	Val Swaine
Alison Collins	Jiaxi Luo	John Thompson
Graham Collins	Rudi Mahne	Jayne Thompson
Craig Cooper	Chris Makris	Karen Trowbridge
Stephen Dabbs	Maria Makris	Nanco van der Maas
Bob Davies	Cheryl Marshall	Steve Wentworth
Tina Davies	Kevin Marshall	Russell Willmer
Chris Eyles	Noel McKay	Chin Wong
Win Eyles	David Melzer	
Andrew Gidley-Baird	Kate Nightingale	
Janet Gidley-Baird	Linda Oliver	
Tim Gillespie	Barry Philippson	
Ann Gillespie	Adele Philippson	
Annette Haifer	Martin Plummer	
Susan Hald	Fin Power	
Clare Hamilton	Glenda Ramsay-McKay	
Peter Hamilton	Richard Rothery	
Mike Harrington	Rachel Rothery	
Jer Heard	Catherine Southward	

## 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
Historian: Piotr Damski
Firearms Manager: Jeff Nagel
Expedition Guide/Naturalist: John Kirkwood
Expedition Guide/Naturalist: Graeme Snow
Expedition Guide/Naturalist: Isabelle Howells
Expedition Guide: Justine Bornholdt
Expedition Guide: Jack Alscher
Lead Kayaking Guide: Daniel Stavert
Kayaking Guide: Eamon Larkin
Kayaking Guide: Liz MacNeil
Kayaking Guide: Sigurd Davidsen
Photography Guide: Scott Portelli
Special Guest Photographer: Peter Eastway
Medic/Expedition Guide: John Barry (JB)
Zodiac Master: Sergei Hincu
Mudroom/Shopkeeper: Reza Rusooly
Mudroom Support/Wellness Therapist: Dasha Vasiljeva

## Senior Officers & Heads of Department:

Master: Oleg Klaptenko	IT Officer: Nataniel Vibares
Chief Officer: Oleg Kapko	Receptionist: Jelyn Merilo
Safety Officer: Goran Goles	Receptionist: Marie Anney Reynoird
Second Officer: Sergii Voina	Head Stateroom: Florante Jr. Jimenez Lusong
Bosun: Oscar Antonio Castejon Torres	Able Seaman: Muhammad Karier
Deck Cadet: Vlad Nicolescu	Able Seaman: Bobby Penuliar Payumo
Ship Doctor: Maria Suarez	Able Seaman: Hardik Rao
Chief Engineer: Sergiy Melnyk	Able Seaman: Ajay Fnu
First Engineer: Ion Toma	Able Seaman: Joel Valdevieso Noble
Hotel Director: Patrice Degron	Able Seaman: Giovanni Dela Torre
F&B Manager: Uysal Berrak	
Chief Purser: Liza Merilo	
Executive Chef: Christiand Carlos Mini Pineda	
Head Waiter: Diogenes Encinares	
Hotel Controller: Richard Cayeta	

## Photography thanks to:

Scott Portelli	Joselyn Fenstermacher
Liz MacNeil	Peter Eastway
Dani Abras	John Barry







