

Jewels of the Arctic

Aboard *Greg Mortimer* | 22 August – 4 September 2024





Jewels of the Arctic

22 August – 4 September 2024

Longyearbyen

DAY 1 | Thursday 22 August 2024

Latitude:
78° 13.7'N
Longitude:
015° 36.1'E

Wind Speed:
10 knots E
Barometer:
1020

Course:
At anchor
Speed:
At anchor

Air Temp:
8°C

Having made our way inside the Arctic Circle, at 78° north, we were surrounded by spectacular mountains in the picturesque coal-mining town of Longyearbyen. 'Longyear Town' is the world's northernmost settlement and the largest inhabited area of Svalbard, Norway.

After our guided tour, we made our way to the *Greg Mortimer*. On approach, we realised Longyearbyen could be our last glimpse of civilisation for a while. Over the next 10 days, we are more likely to encounter a fox, reindeer, or polar bear than another human.

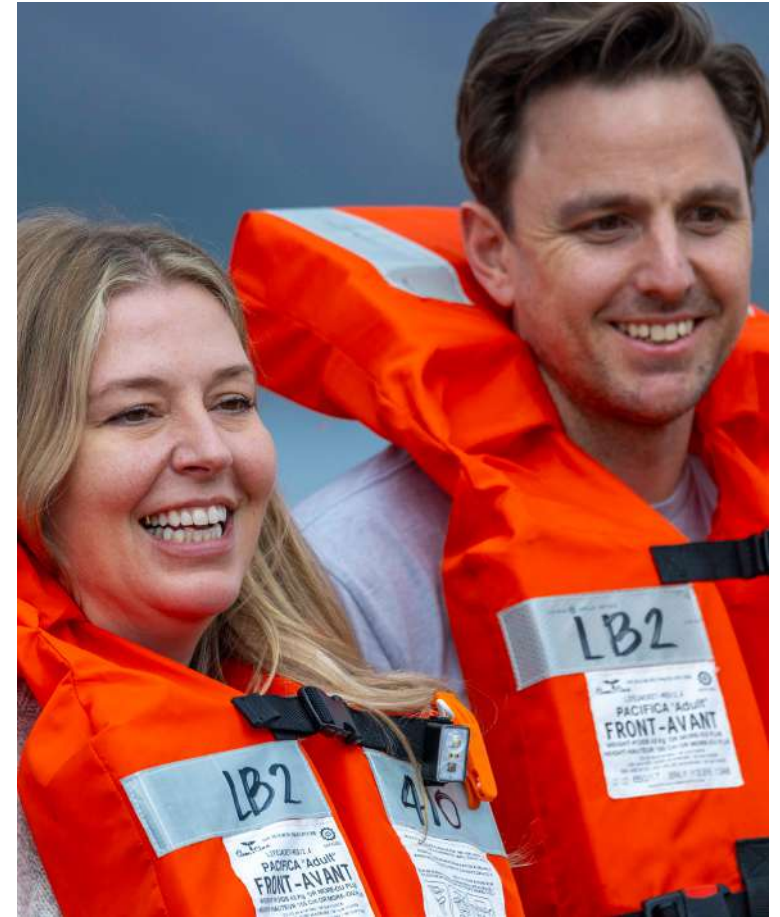
When we disembarked from the buses, we were instantly greeted

by some of the Expedition Team, and then directed to Justine and Adrian for our first photo of the trip. At the top of the gangway, the rest of the Expedition Team and crew welcomed us aboard to a waiting banquet of canapes.

After checking in and enjoying refreshments at the Elephant Island Bar, the stewards helped us navigate the decks to our cabins and settle into our 'home away from home.'

After many hours of travel to reach the frozen top of the world, it's time to kick back, breathe in the sea air, and enjoy the unique, incredible scenery of Svalbard and East Greenland.





Lilliehöökreen, 14e Julibreen

DAY 2 | Friday 23 August 2024

Latitude:
79° 06.6' N
Longitude:
011° 34.6' E

Course:
55.4°
Speed:
8.1 knots

Wind Speed:
4.2 knots E
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
5°C

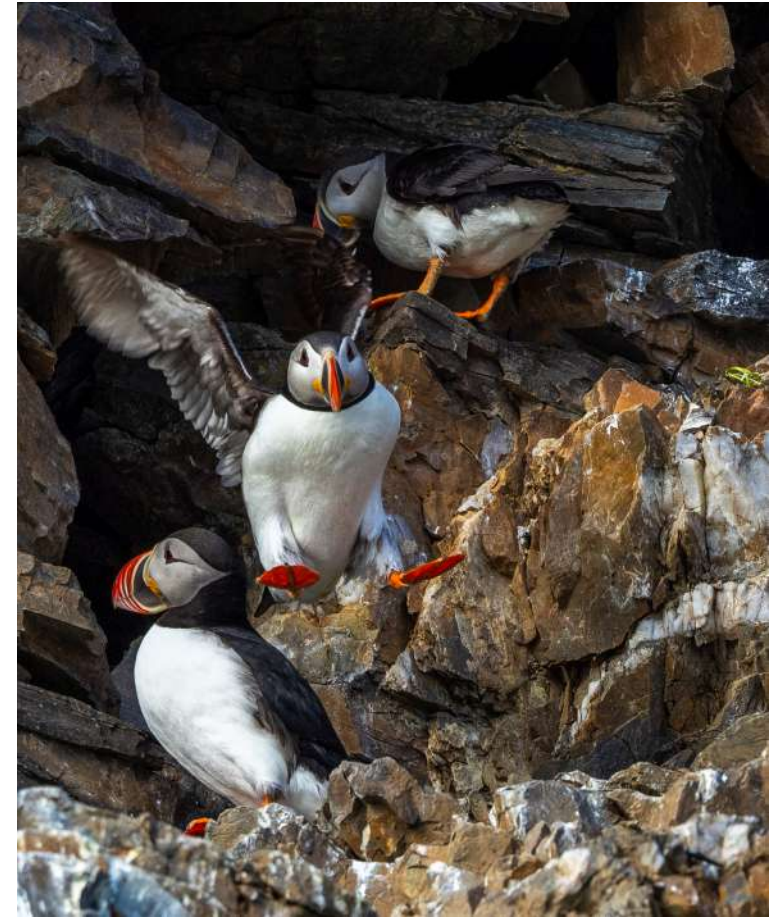
After breakfast, we gathered in the lounge for briefings led by our Expedition Leader, Christophe. These were crucial for preparing us to explore the Arctic safely. Christophe covered the basics of Zodiac operations, emphasising teamwork and safety when getting in and out of the small boats. He then moved on to polar bear safety, reminding us to stay vigilant and respect these powerful predators.

Next, we enjoyed an engaging lecture by Avi, who gave a fascinating overview of Svalbard's history. Her stories of early explorers, rich wildlife, and the region's strategic significance deepened our

appreciation for this unique environment.

In the afternoon, we watched our Expedition Team scout the area for polar bears before our outing, ensuring it was safe to disembark. Our adventure included a split landing: one group set out to see reindeer and arctic foxes on land, while another embarked on a Zodiac cruise to observe Atlantic puffins and black-legged kittiwakes. We were thrilled to witness an arctic skua attacking a kittiwake, and puffins fishing in the water—a dramatic display of arctic wildlife behaviour.







Smeerenburg, Bjørnfjorden

DAY 3 | Saturday 24 August 2024

Latitude:
79° 40.2' N
Longitude:
011° 09.3' E

Course:
395.5°
Speed:
7.6 knots

Wind Speed:
3 knots N
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
6°C

Our first destination was the famous 'Blubber Town' – Smeerenburg. Named after the early whaling period, with up to 250 Dutch men working here, boiling whale blubber. A rough job in harsh conditions, and with clothes and equipment not exactly up to 2024 standards.

Historian Jonathan led us among the remains of the houses and ovens, telling stories and facts about life up here 350 years ago. Marine Biologist, Dani, took us to the walrus colony, guided us and made sure we observed and enjoyed the animals without disturbing them. Weighing up to 1000 kilograms, the walrus is a massive and impressive animal.

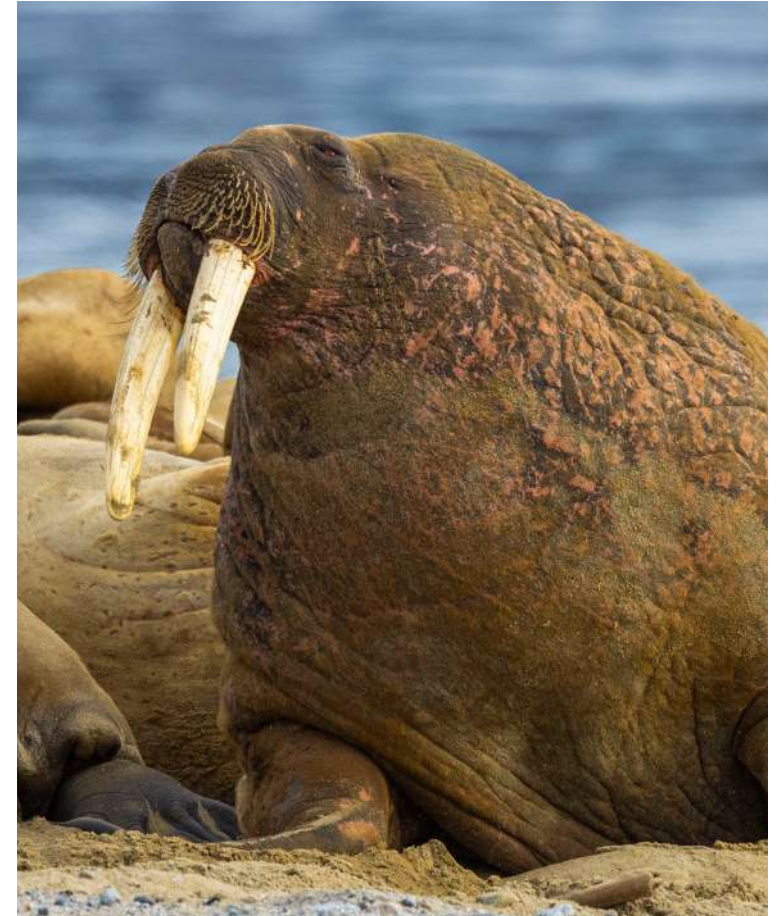
At the same time, the other half of us did a Zodiac cruise in the sound nearby, looking at harbor seals and the remains of houses and a hangar in Virgohamna. A fascinating story about André, the Swede who thought flying a silk balloon to the North Pole was a good idea; our Expedition Leader, Christophe, made us understand it did not end well.

After a lovely lunch, a Zodiac cruise in Bjørnfjorden (Bear Fjord) was next on the program. Beautiful weather and no wind made the afternoon outing spectacular. Driving the Zodiacs to the glacier front, we could hear the cracking in the ice and learned why some of it has this intense blue colour.









Hamiltonbukta, Ayerfjorden

DAY 4 | Sunday 25 August 2024

Latitude:
79° 43' N
Longitude:
012° 2.55' E

Course:
166.9°
Speed:
7 knots

Wind Speed:
0 knots
Barometer:
1006

Air Temp:
6°C

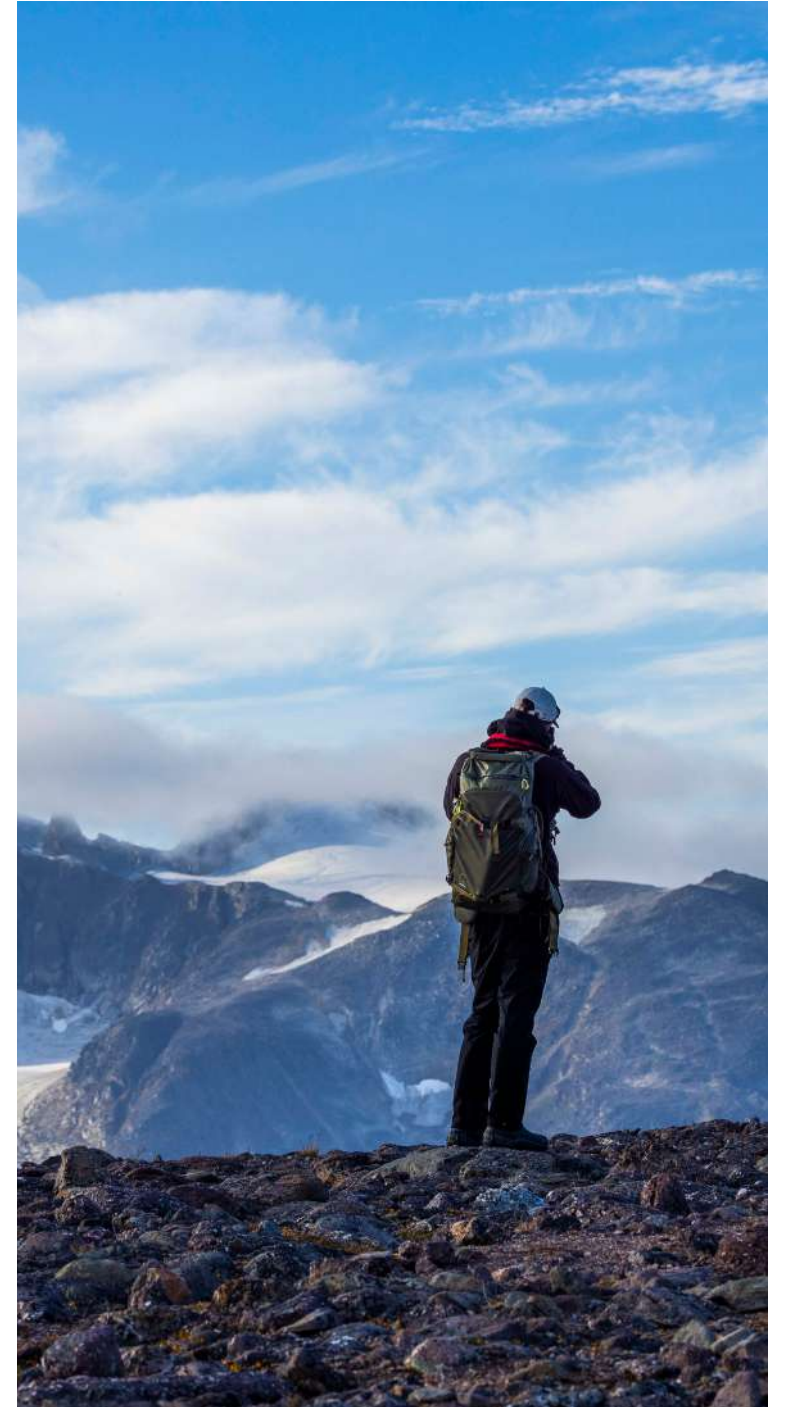
Our last day in Svalbard was one for the books, filled with breathtaking scenery and unforgettable experiences. We spent the day exploring Raudfjorden, a fjord that perfectly captures the raw beauty of the Arctic.

In the morning, we ventured out on a Zodiac exploration of Hamiltonbukta. The calm waters and towering glaciers provided a stunning backdrop as we cruised along, spotting birds and vibrant arctic flora. The glaciers seemed to glow in the soft light, creating an almost otherworldly atmosphere. All Expeditioners were in awe, capturing photos and simply soaking in the majesty of the landscape.

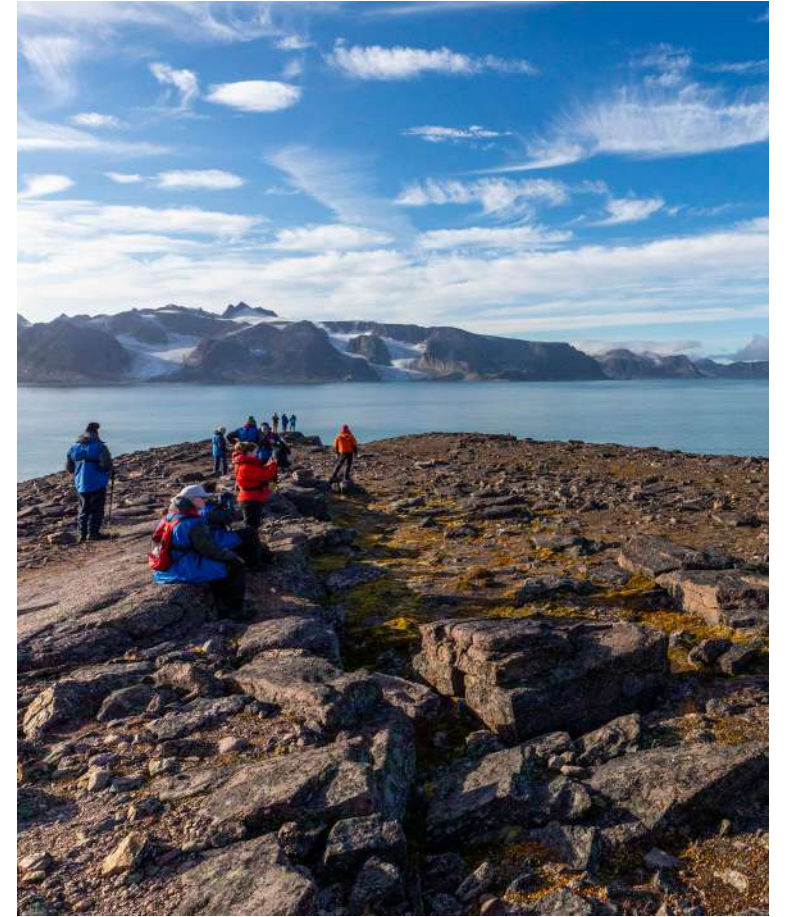
In the afternoon, Alicehamna set the stage for our afternoon hike. Once ashore, we divided into different groups, each setting off to explore a different part of the landing area.

The long hike took us to a high point, where we were rewarded with a breathtaking 360-degree view of Raudfjorden. The vastness of the fjord, framed by jagged peaks and glaciers, was a remarkable sight. The intermediate hike led to another panoramic spot, offering equally stunning views but with a slightly shorter climb. The shortest hike, a lovely interpretative walk along the beach, allowed for a more leisurely pace, with time to learn about the local ecosystem and history.











At Sea, En Route to East Greenland

DAY 5 | Monday 26 August 2024

Latitude:
5° 39.3'N
Longitude:
018° 30.5'W

Course:
213.9°
Speed:
5.9 knots

Wind Speed:
11 knots
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
4°C

After breakfast, Avi invited us all into the lecture room for a presentation on the Andree Expedition, the audacious and ultimately ill-fated balloon expedition from north-west Svalbard that attempted to fly over the North Pole. The story was made ever more interesting by having visited their launching place, at Virgohamna, only a few days prior. There we had been able to see, still present, some of the industrial infrastructure of that remarkable expedition.

Later in the morning, Adrian was up as well, and his lessons on how to tell stories and share experiences through photography were a helpful guide at this mid-point of our expedition.

After lunch, Dani continued the learning with a presentation on polar bears, deepening our understanding and appreciation of these remarkable animals.

To follow, our galley team prepared a special afternoon treat of crepe suzette, which was enjoyed by many in their favourite area on the ship.

The afternoon wasn't done yet, as some hardy folks joined Marcos and Daniel for some bird surveys and also some cloud observations for NASA. As Daniel often says, if you've done a cloud observation then you've worked for NASA, and if you've worked for NASA, then you are in effect an astronaut.





North of Shannon Island - East Coast of Greenland

DAY 6 | Tuesday 27 August 2024

Latitude:
74° 06.4' N
Longitude:
020° 28.9' W

Course:
273.4°
Speed:
13.4 knots

Wind Speed:
2.8 knots W
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
1°C

This morning the plan was to make the most of this unique opportunity to travel through sea ice just north of Shannon Island. Few of the Expedition Team have been so far up the east coast of Greenland, as it is often more congested with ice; however, on this trip we have the time and the opportunity to venture where fewer people visit.

From the observation platforms on deck 5 we were able to stand over the ocean and watch the bow of the *Greg Mortimer* cut its way through blocks of sea ice, now and then observing some harp seals. Blessed with calm wind conditions and clear skies, it was pleasant to stay out on deck for some time before getting too cold.

An attempt was made to do the polar plunge, but the currents started to become deceptively strong, so it was postponed until another day. Before the current picked up, four brave Expeditioners plunged into the icy water to show us all how it's done.

After lunch the Captain and his team took us to an area with some sturdy looking ice floes. Everyone piled into the Zodiacs and enjoyed the sea ice from another perspective, hearing from the Expedition Team about the area. We were able to step foot on the ice for an unforgettable landing, having found a solid chunk of multi-year sea ice. It was incredible to think that there was over 500 metres of water beneath our feet!











Dødemandsbugten

DAY 7 | Wednesday 28 August 2024

Latitude:
74° 06.4' N
Longitude:
020° 28.9' E

Course:
273.4°
Speed:
13.4 knots

Wind Speed:
2.8 knots W
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
1°C

As the morning sun illuminated the landscape, the ochre-red mountains towered over the ship, creating a stunning backdrop for the day's adventure. Excitement buzzed on deck 6 as cheers erupted for the brave Expeditioners participating in the polar plunge. One by one, they leaped into the icy waters, their gasps and laughter filling the air. It was a true party on the back deck, with everyone encouraging the plungers and celebrating their courage.

The afternoon was dedicated to exploring the rugged valley at Dødemandsbugten. Jonathan captivated us with stories of World War II in Greenland, explaining the country's strategic importance

between North America and Europe.

Following this historical insight, we visited a local hut before splitting into three groups to explore the area further.

Some of us spotted polar hares darting across the landscape, while others investigated the hardy plants that manage to thrive in this extreme environment. A few even discovered whale bones and a musk ox skull scattered along the beach, reminders of the region's rich wildlife. With the warm weather and bright sun overhead, it was a perfect way to spend the afternoon, stretching our legs after days at sea and absorbing the untouched beauty around us.







Geologfjord, Blomsterbugten

DAY 8 | Thursday 29 August 2024

Latitude:
75° 32.1'N
Longitude:
024° 41'W

Course:
286.4°
Speed:
2.8 knots

Wind Speed:
12 knots NNW
Barometer:
1012

Air Temp:
3°C

The plan this morning was to explore a region that not many have explored before, not even the Expedition Team! Even though we had sunshine, it was cold outside, only 3 degrees Celsius. All dressed up in our best thermals and gloves, we were excited to see what the morning would bring.

This fjord was an amazing place with a huge variety of rock types, from different time periods and various stories to tell. The reason why this place is so picturesque and presents this riot of colours, is that they are a succession of alternating sandstones, silty sandstones, mudstones, and carbonates like limestones and dolomites. This

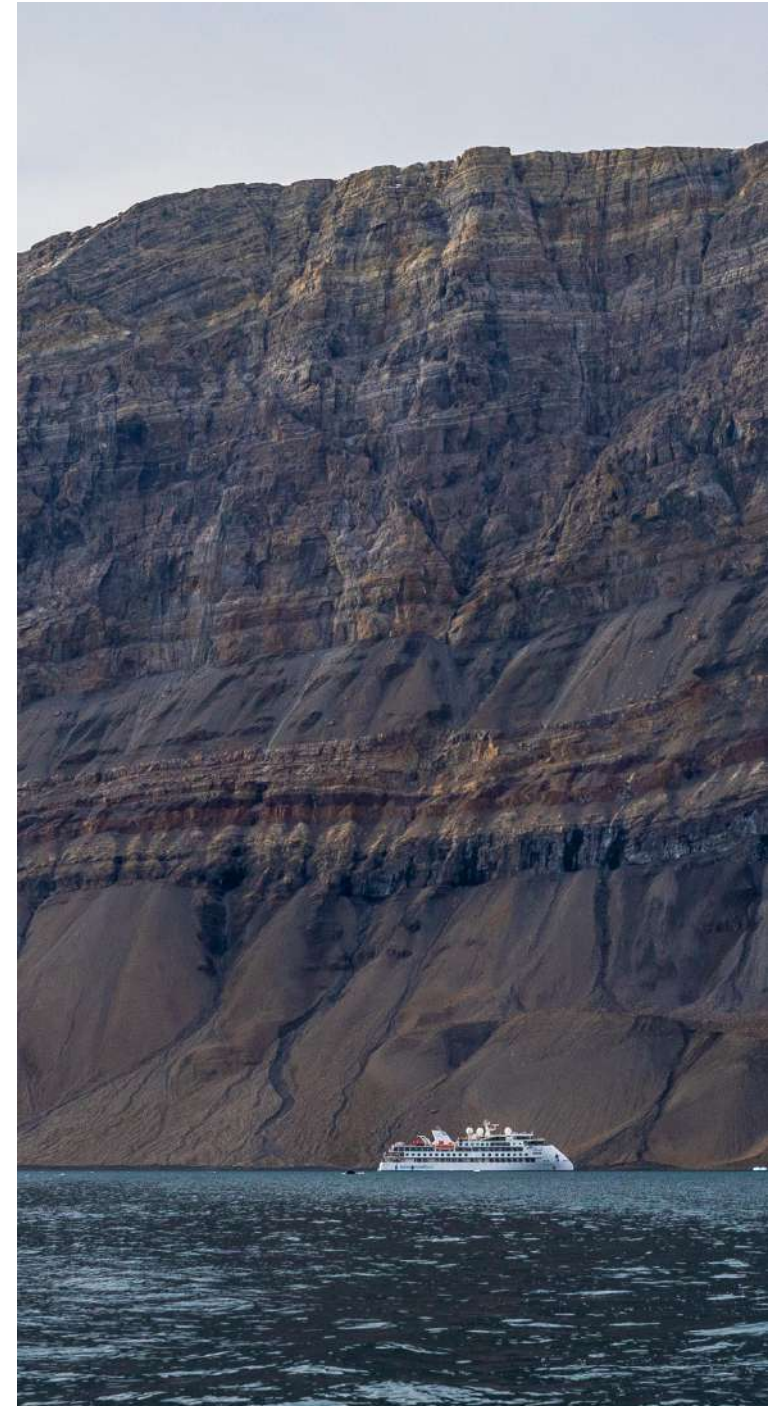
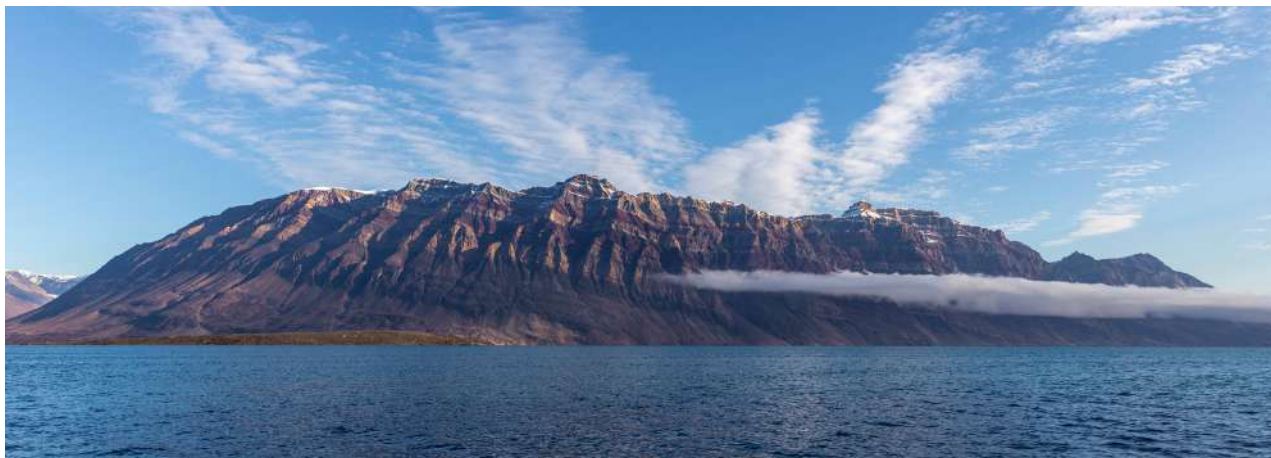
shows alternating depositional environments, due to the changes of old sea levels, temperature conditions etc. It was all deposited in a shallow ocean in what's called a continental shelf. These impressive stones represent a continuous record of more than 300 million years (from 900 to 600 million years ago). Pretty cool, don't you think?

After lunch, we had a landing planned, this time in Blomsterbugten. During the landing, we had the option to choose a long, medium, or short walk. Everyone enjoyed the flora and the spectacular views as we explored different areas of the terrain, and the long walkers were rewarded with sightings of a few musk oxen grazing.









Forsblad Fjord & Gateau Point

DAY 9 | Friday 30 August 2024

Latitude:
72° 26.4'N
Longitude:
024° 52.0'E

Course:
220.5°
Speed:
6.2 knots

Wind Speed:
7 knots S
Barometer:
1014

Air Temp:
3°C

The morning excursion was a Zodiac exploration of the Forsblad Fjord. In millpond-calm conditions we zig-zagged up the fjord, pausing where small groups of musk oxen were spotted grazing high up on the hillsides. Later, some of us had much closer views of these amazing stocky animals, which are in fact a member of the goat family. It was very enjoyable adventure seeing such commanding mountain landscapes.

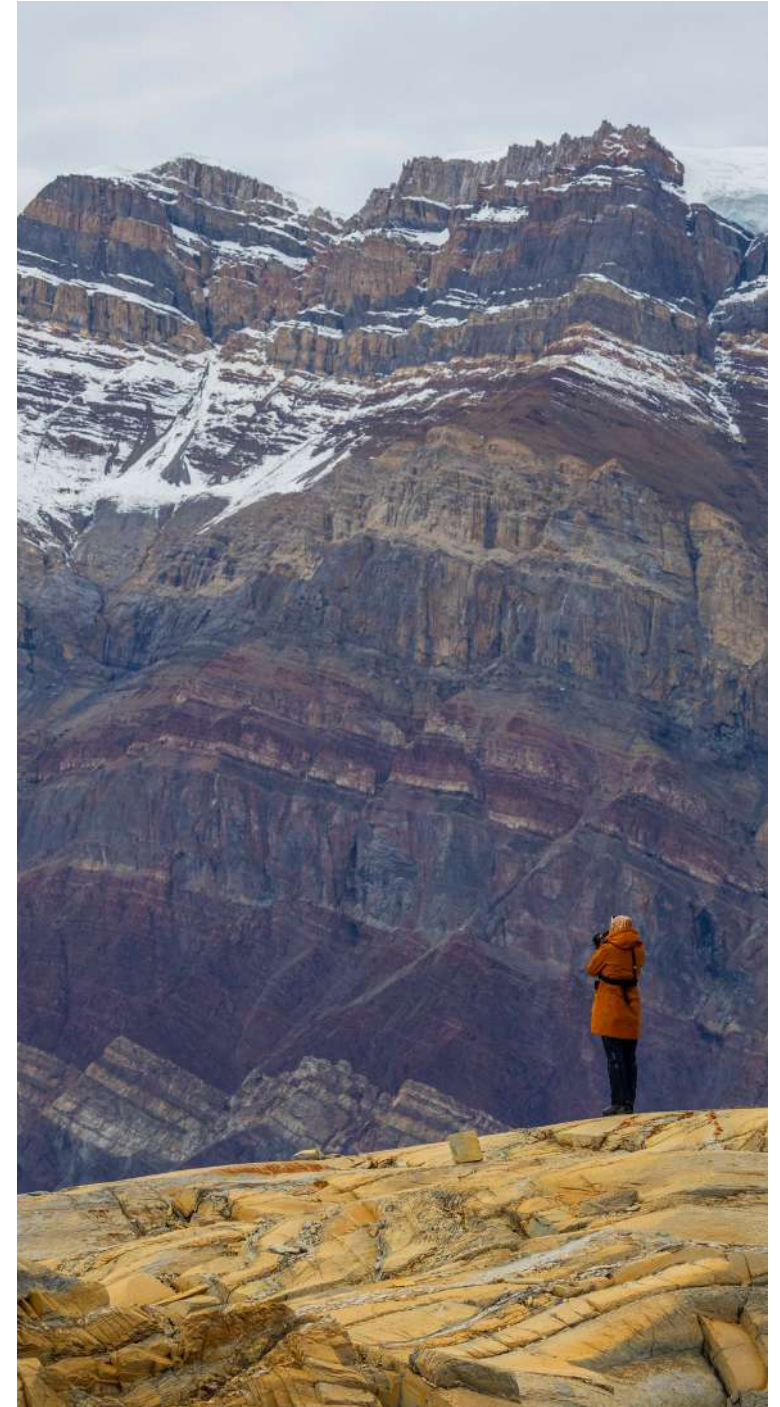
Over lunch the *Greg Mortimer* was repositioned to the famous Gateau Point. The actual feature that inspired this name was a modest-sized, rounded, but dramatically striated rock dome. Following our bear guard scouting party's recce of the site, we landed, and Christophe organised the walks. We had all been going for some 20 minutes

when our guides radios buzzed with news that Snowy had spotted a polar bear just along the coast. Our guides instructed us to begin moving steadily back to the Zodiacs. The kayakers, who had been on an extended paddle, had also landed. They were swiftly back in their kayaks and paddled back to the ship. Snowy stayed offshore in his Zodiac observing the bear as the retreat was underway, and he was able to distract it several times with loud coughs.

Once back on board we were able to get brief glimpses from deck 8 of the recumbent sleeping bear nestled in among rocks on a low ridge as the ship weighed anchor and moved away, as the Greenland regulations insist. It was a dramatic end to our afternoon's excursion.







At Sea, Ittoqqortoormiit

DAY 10 | Saturday 31 August 2024

Latitude:
70° 23.9'N
Longitude:
021° 46.9'E

Course:
227.4°
Speed:
10.2 knots

Wind Speed:
7 knots E
Barometer:
1005

Air Temp:
3°C

After breakfast, Marcos, our onboard geologist, delighted us with an intriguing presentation on East Greenland's geology. We uncovered ancient secrets embedded in the rocks we encountered along our journey, revealing the deep heritage of this land and the story of our planet's distant past—a tale etched over billions of years, and still in the making.

Next, Avi, our historian, transported us into the world of the Inuit people. Her compelling talk shed light on their unique way of life, adaptations, and incredible endurance in one of the planet's most extreme environments. We were left in awe, pondering the resilience

required to thrive in such a harsh landscape.

After yet another delicious lunch on board, we were briefed on our upcoming visit to Ittoqqortoormiit.

Stepping ashore in what is known as one of the most isolated settlements on earth was a humbling experience. Witnessing the stark beauty of this remote community, we reflected on the unique challenges faced by its residents and found unexpected connections between our vastly different worlds.







Sydkap, Bjørnøya – Scoresby Sund

DAY 11 | Sunday 1 September 2024

Latitude:
71° 02.8' N
Longitude:
25° 02.8' W

Course:
352°
Speed:
2.5 knots

Wind Speed:
15 knots W
Barometer:
1010

Air Temp:
2°C

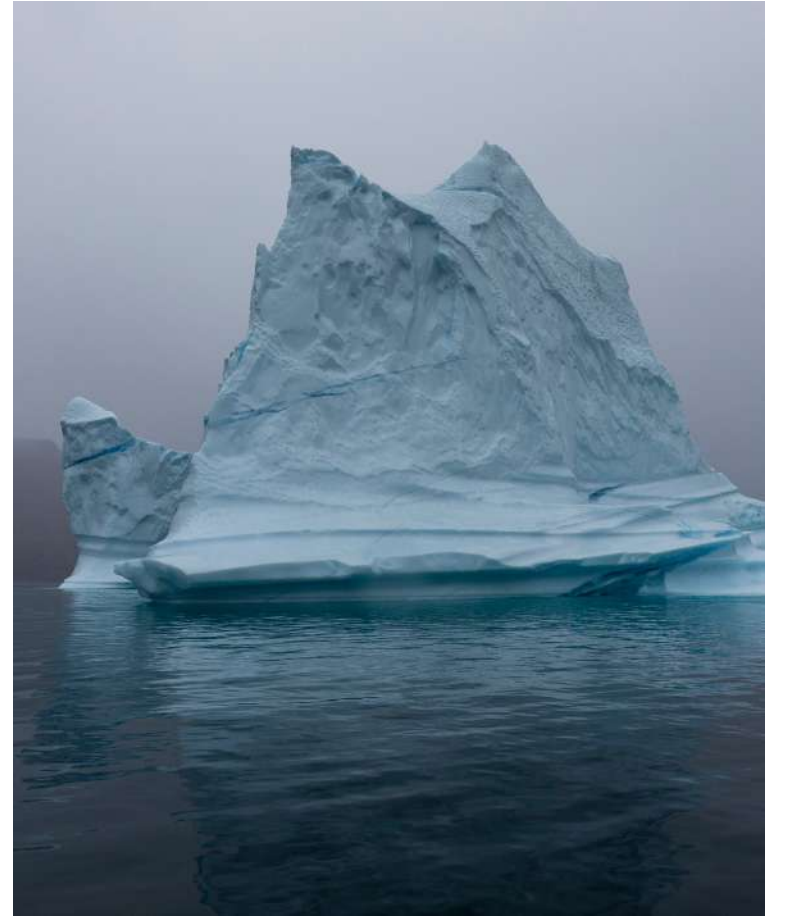
Today the wild nature of Greenland once again gave us an incredible day! In the morning we made a landing at Sydkap, a place that has been and continues to be used by Inuit hunters. Sydkap is situated deep in the gigantic and beautiful Scoresby Sund fjord system.

In Sydkap Bay and in the surrounding channels, imposing icebergs could be seen, coming from gigantic glaciers at the end of different fjords. After appreciating the giant icebergs, we returned to the comfort of our ship for a comforting lunch that the great crew had prepared for us.

After a brief break we were ready to go out again and keep exploring Scoresby Sund. The intense rain and fog also accompanied us in the afternoon, while we explored Bjørnøya (Bear Island) by Zodiacs

and kayaks. For more than two hours we cruised through narrow channels formed by spectacular geology. We could have stayed two more hours appreciating those rocks full of colourful stripes, and above them that lush arctic vegetation. In the background the steep peaks loomed imposingly through the fog, which finally decided to lower the curtain and say goodbye to us with all its mysticism. Tomorrow will be a new day in Greenland; it will also be our last day in this remote and special place. We will see what Greenland has to offer us again.







Borvig Bay, En Route to Iceland

DAY 12 | Monday 2 September 2024

Latitude:
70° 09.4' N
Longitude:
23° 52' W

Course:
105.1°
Speed:
0.6 knots

Wind Speed:
7 knots SW
Barometer:
1012

Air Temp:
2°C

Today marks our final day in Greenland, and we embrace it with an exhilarating adventure. Early this morning, we boarded the Zodiacs and set off towards Borvig Bay. The bay, surrounded by imposing glaciers, unveils a different story from the one we've been accustomed to. As we explore, the landscape reveals the dramatic changes wrought by a hotspot, which reshaped Greenland's terrain millions of years ago. The scene was dominated by impressive basalt columns rising like natural sentinels from the bay's floor. Waterfalls cascaded gracefully down the rock formations, offering a breathtaking display of nature's artistry.

In the afternoon, we were invited to the ship's bridge, where the officers provided a fascinating tour. They explained the intricacies of

navigating the *Greg Mortimer* through these icy waters, sharing their expertise and the challenges they face. It's a rare and enlightening opportunity to understand the operational side of our expedition, and the officers' explanations make the experience all the more immersive.

As we sailed towards Iceland, the arctic landscape gradually receded into the distance. Jonathan's evening talk was a highlight, as he shared intriguing details about Iceland's natural wonders, including must-see sights, activities, and the unique characteristics of this land of fire and ice. His insights ignited our excitement for the new adventures awaiting us in Iceland.







Ísafjörður, En Route to Reykjavík

DAY 13 | Tuesday 3 September 2024

Latitude:
66° 14.6'N
Longitude:
23° 21.8'W

Course:
123.9°
Speed:
8.8 knots

Wind Speed:
22 knots W
Barometer:
1015

Air Temp:
8°C

Our final full day on board the *Greg Mortimer* was spent at sea, completing the crossing of the Denmark Strait and travelling down the west coast of Iceland.

While entering the fjord towards Ísafjörður (and indeed during a geology lecture from Marcos), a pod of humpback whales were spotted ahead of the ship. As we approached, it became clear that there were several pods and that these whales were actively feeding. We had fantastic views of them diving, and in fact Dani, our marine biologist, managed to take 24 individual fluke shots, 22 of them already having been registered on the Happywhale database and two new and unknown humpbacks. It was estimated that there were

between 30 to 40 different humpbacks feeding in that area while we were there – remarkable!

After lunch, the Captain gave the okay to open the bridge and conduct tours; it was fantastic to see where everything happens on board and hear details about the workings of the ship.

With bags semi-packed, we dressed in our best and made our way to deck 5 for Captain's cocktails and canapes. In the lecture theatre, the Captain raised a toast to a wonderful adventure shared by all Expeditioners, the Expedition Team and his crew.



Reykjavik

DAY 14 | Wednesday 4 September 2024

Latitude:
64° 07.9' N
Longitude:
21° 58.3' W

Wind Speed:
30 knots W
Barometer:
1020

Course:
In port
Speed:
In port

Air Temp:
8°C

Aurora Expeditions thanks you for joining us aboard *Greg Mortimer* as we explored Svalbard and East Greenland's incredible scenery, history and wildlife. We hope to see you on the high seas again some day!



BBQ





Polar Plunge











Kayaking Log

with Kayak Guides: Vanja Davidsen, Daniel Stavert, Eduardo Larranaga

23 August 2024, AM – 14e Julibreen 4km

After a morning of briefings and gear fit-outs, the kayak team was ready to get on the water and explore. The glassy conditions of 14e Julibreen welcomed them as they donned their drysuits and set out past the marina and into their waiting kayaks. Once on the water, the team moved quickly towards the impressive glacier at the head of the bay. A series of cracks and pops heralded more dramatic sights to come. Within a few minutes the glacier began to calve. A whole series of booming reports echoed around the bay as thousands of tonnes of ice cascaded into the sea. For the next hour, every couple of minutes another boom could be heard, and its matching roll of swell caused another gentle rise and fall beneath the hulls of the kayaks. Soon it was time for the group make their first landing in Svalbard, crunching their kayaks onto the smooth cobbles and dragging their kayaks up onto the beach. From there they were able to wander up into the beautiful

flowering gardens that hide their surprising abundance in the bleak arctic landscape. The highlight of the landing as definitely a bold arctic fox that ran through the landing site, dodging around people, heedless of cameras and lenses before vanishing into the tundra. Soon the kayakers returned to their kayaks and were able to squeeze a last kilometre of paddling in before it was time to return to the ship. A great first paddle complete in Svalbard.

24 August 2024, AM – Smeerenberg 3.7km

With the *Greg Mortimer* anchored off the coast of Smeerenberg, the kayakers were keen to take advantage of the calm conditions. Already they were getting faster and smoother at putting on drysuits and getting into kayaks, so it wasn't long until both groups were away and cruising through the green sea. Within a few minutes little seal heads began to be seen popping up around them. Ringed seals, their small heads and nervous but curious



Number of Kayakers: 20
 Total Paddle Outings: 11
 Total Distance Paddled:
 67.83 km

Kayakers:
 Errol Harper
 Mirjam Cvetic
 Kathryn Lynar
 Bryn Lynar
 Alison Freeman
 Julia Freeman

Daniel Freeman
 Paul Freeman
 Guy Nation
 Alison Nation
 Sean McMahon-Carter
 Jason Hill
 Dan Slater

Robert Cole
 Karen Cole
 Ingrid Braun
 Menna Pitts
 Richard Goillons
 Sara Lindstroem
 Sajeela Cormack

expressions, are characteristic of this tiny seal. Soon another seal could be seen, the harbor seal or common seal. These are the northernmost breeding population of their family, and the kayakers kept a careful distance so as not to disturb them. Around another corner and another thing to see. The ruins of an industrial building, constructed at the end of the 19th century for the Andree Expedition, which attempted to fly a balloon over the North Pole.

Finally, the kayak family turned their noses and landed on the beach at Smeerenberg itself. There, they could walk up see the biggest seal in these areas. The walrus. Hauled up in a big messy wallow of blubber, these mighty seals lie in one big, noisy, smelly pile.

24 August 2024, PM – Bjørnøya (Bear Island) 5km

The afternoon was even sunnier and calmer than the morning as the kayakers left the ship. Paddling west towards the closest glacier, each kayaking group got a chance

to enjoy the brash ice, and the glowing, still waters. Every now and again an explosion would ring out, sometimes to no visible effect. Yet soon an even bigger explosion was heard, and some kayakers were luckier enough to see thousands of tonnes of ice come crashing into the sea. The resulting wave a dark tsunami in the water. Around every corner the kayakers found another brilliantly lit scene of endless ice and mountains, black guillemots feeding in the brash, and skuas duelling with gulls in the air above the small islands. After a long paddle in the sun, the group headed for home after an incredible day in the smooth seas and sunshine of Svalbard.

25 August 2024, AM – Hamiltonbukta 6.2km

Another day in Svalbard and the run of good weather for our paddlers continued. A little swell was at first a little daunting, but once safely away from the ship, Vanja found a protected nook and the team could launch into their kayaks in smooth seas. From there the two groups moved

down the coastline beneath towering bird cliffs and the rough rubble and talus below them. The intricate coastline made for fascinating paddling, with small coves and icy glaciers resting on the hard granite of northern Spitsbergen. With the sunshine clear overhead and the blue sky blazing down it felt almost tropical, until the glacier ice crackled and crashed against the kayak hulls and the cold blue of the glacial faces reminded the group where they were.

With such beautiful conditions the team could have kept on paddling for hours but it was time to turn in towards the middle of the cove and get back out into the swell before scrambling back on board.

25 August 2024, PM – Alicehamna 5.7km

In the afternoon of the 25th, the *Greg Mortimer* was anchored within shouting distance of Hamiltonbukta, only four miles away on the other side of the fjord. There at Alicehamna, another very different coastline lay out to be explored. Open water, bordered by the high red hills that

give Raudfjorden its name. Kayakers were soon on the water, speeding away from the ship and heading for land. For some this was a little challenging as a sudden squall of wind came in, the sea picking up into small waves. Undeterred, however, the kayakers pressed through and found themselves in the lee of the land. There they could cruise along its sheltered shore in comfort, basking in the sunshine and regrouping after the windy crossing. Towards the end of this beautiful stretch, Edu, Vanja, and Daniel found a calm, private beach and the team landed to stretch their legs and get some shore time before the long crossing to Greenland.

Despite the barren post-glacial landscape, the kayakers took time to enjoy the surprising profusion of life in the ground. From sorrel to polar willow, there was life to be found everywhere. After joining Vanja on the summit, with views right back across to the morning's paddle at Hamiltonbukta, the team returned to the shore for the run back to the waiting warmth of the ship.



28 August 2024 – Dødemandsbugten 5.5km

Launching away from the ship, the kayakers revelled in the incredible sunshine. The water glowed blue and green and the light shone over distant fjords and wild landscapes. 'This is nothing like North America,' said Sean as the team moved away from the ship.

Mountains high above the fjord and the huge waterways beyond lent a sense of scale hard to grasp. It was with a real sense of awe and gratitude that the team set out to enjoy the shoreline. A quick landing put the team on dry land for the first time in Greenland. There they could see Inuit remains from the site of the known encounter with the northeastern Greenlanders from 1823. On the shoreline were musk ox skulls and whale bones, along with hundreds of arctic fox pawprints up and down the sand. The signs of life everywhere was another huge surprise in such inhospitable-looking land. Soon back on the water, the kayakers kept paddling on before it was time to turn towards home and the warmth of the ship.

29 August 2024 – Blomsterbugten 6km

After a windy morning in Geologfjord, where kayaking had been called off, the team was ready to get back to paddling in Greenland. In the steep-sided fjord, with the incredible peak of Teufelsschloss, and its beautiful striated rock, looming high over the water, the water was calm and smooth. The kayakers were soon underway paddling towards land and into a beautiful waterfall under which they could steer their kayaks. The cold meltwater was a shock as they paddled underneath. A gorgeous coastal exploration was possible, past small coves and the main landing site where the rest of the expedition was exploring. Rounding the corner, the team was able to make out several black shapes on the hillsides: musk oxen. Once the paddlers had seen one, then more become discernible. Debates from as many as 14 to as few as four raged, but all agreed that there were many. A small beach offered a great landing and the team was able to scramble up into a beautiful garden of wildflowers and arctic trees, and from there up a fast-running creek to an

incredible waterfall. The profusion of life on shore surprising as always. From there it was a fast run home to the waiting ship and a well-earned dinner.

30 August 2024 – Alpefjord | Gateau Point 15.2 km

The team had signed up for the long haul today, opting to forgo returning home to the ship for lunch and instead spend the whole day away.

Leaving the ship and launching in the mouth of Alpefjord, the kayakers found conditions not as easy as they hoped. A reasonably strong cross wind had ruffled up the surface of the ocean into a fair chop and the completion of the crossing of the fjord was a relief to many. The reward was a landing on a beautiful strip of grey-sand beach, a small lagoon of fresh water behind the berm casting reflections of the astonishing striated mountains of Berzelius Bjerg, whose cliffs rise over 1,800 metres from the sea. From this resting place it wasn't far till lunchtime and only a shorter paddle again till the team was paddling past the strange and wonderful geology

of Gateau Point. Its layers of yellows and red and greens a testament to hundreds of millions of years of alternating eco-systems. No sooner than the kayakers were ashore and marvelling at the colours and patterns of this unique rock system, than Snowy called in on the radio that a polar bear had been spotted. With fantastic teamwork, the kayakers were soon away and onto the water as the general expedition worked to get away in their Zodiacs. An organised movement to move away from the area of the animal as the Greenland government requests. It was a dramatic and excellent way to end an adventurous, full day of kayaking in East Greenland.

1 September 2024, AM – Sydkap 5.8km

After a rainy day and a visit to Ittoqqortoormiit, the kayak team was back to almost full strength and ready to paddle. The ship lowered Zodiacs in the quiet body of water between Sydkap and the island of Ingmikêterajik. The kayakers were soon afloat and moving away from the ship, the waters smooth and glowing a deep green



in the overcast grey air. A gentle drizzle of rain convinced the team that the best place to be was in a kayak, safely dry inside their suits and warm beneath the spray skirt. Arriving on the shoreline, some kayakers quickly spotted a musk ox just above the water line. The big bull was moving quickly and galloped up the slope, his gait far more reminiscent of the giant goat that he really is, rather than any other bovine or oxen. Moving away from the shore the kayakers hopped from giant iceberg to iceberg, marvelling at the patterns of tidelines, and melt and re-freeze.

With the ship getting closer, and the shore party returning from the cold land, the kayakers re-embarked into their Zodiac and were soon cruising the last few metres back to the dry warmth of the *Greg Mortimer*.

1 September 2024, PM – Bjørnøya 6.1km

After a beautiful but wet paddle at Sydkap the kayak team were ready to keep enjoying the paddling in Greenland. Low cloud and choppy seas were an initial deterrent, but

with a short Zodiac run from the ship to the islands the team were soon paddling in the beautiful archipelago of Bjørnøya. The low, misty rain and the lush green islands felt like a completely different world from the polar desert of previous days. Eider ducks and red-throated divers swam quietly past, and huge icebergs loomed in the dark channels. The kayakers paddled quickly past mossy cliffs and trickling waterfalls, all with the immense dragon's teeth mountains of Øfjord looming grey in the misty clouds above. It was perhaps the most atmospheric of all the kayak outings so far. Following Eduardo and Vanja through this maze of islands the kayakers finally found themselves out the other side and back aboard a Zodiac. The choppy ride back to the ship making the peace and tranquillity of the Bjørnøya group a seeming dream of kayaking bliss.

2 September 2024 – Borvig Bay 4.63km

Our last day in Greenland and the kayakers scrambled to make the most of this last outing. With a reasonable swell, the team

jumped into their Zodiacs and motored into the shelter of the point. There they embarked their kayakers and were away into the smooth waters of Borvig Bay. All around the black basalts contrasted starkly with the white ice and the low cloud. It was a distinct change from the vibrant geologic striations of the previous days. The volcanic landscape a precursor to the Icelandic landscape awaiting the team on the other side of the Denmark Strait. Cruising into the bay, the kayakers passed a series of spectacular icebergs. Brilliant blues and esoteric shapes, carved by water and wind and time. The ever-present crackle of the ice was a constant soundtrack to each paddle stroke. Deeper into the bay, lay the glacier itself. Its rugged surface pitted and buckled by pressure. Furthest in of all, an incredible waterfall crashed into the ocean; the last of the summer melt before winter came and the gates of the Arctic close for travellers. A last look and moment to reflect and the kayakers were in the Zodiacs again, and flying home to return home to the warmth of the ship.





Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	August–September													
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Arctic tern		●	●	●				●	●		●		●	
Glaucous gull		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Great black-backed gull													●	
Kittiwake		●	●	●		●	●	●				●		
Ivory gull						●								
Great skua			●											
Arctic skua		●	●				●	●						
Pomarine skua						●								
Northern gannet													●	
Northern fulmar		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		●	●	
Common guillemot			●	●										
Brünnich's guillemot		●												
Atlantic puffin		●	●	●	●									
Black guillemot		●	●								●			
Pink-footed goose		●	●											
Barnacle goose						●								
Common eider		●		●					●		●			
King eider			●											
Long-tailed duck											●			

Bird Species	August–September													
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Red-throated diver			●					●						
Ringed plover								●				●		
Sanderling										●				
Purple sandpiper			●	●						●	●			
Snow bunting		●						●				●		
Raven						●		●	●	●	●			

Mammal Species	August–September													
	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	1	2	3	4
Ringed seal				●			●		●					
Common (Harbor) seal			●											
Harp seal						●								
Walrus			●											
Humpback whale													●	
Polar bear			●						●					
Arctic fox		●												
Reindeer		●												
Musk ox								●	●		●			
Arctic hare						●	●	●			●			

Map



Jewels of the Arctic

22 August – 4 September 2024



Our Expeditioners

Susan Archer	Mirjam Cvetic	Lorna Heaslop	Kathryn Lynar	Weidong Shi	Yi Yao
Steven Archer	Lili Dai	William Heaslop	Xuemin Ma	Jennifer Simpson	Xiaomin Yu
Ingrid Braun	Isabelle Erwin	Leslie Henderson	Robert Maue	Dan Slater	Liping Zhang
Sarah Bueter	Pamela Fiumano	Jason Hill	Sean McMahon-Carter	Michelle Smith	Ying Zhang
Mark Burns	Julia Freeman	Xiaobing Ji	Vivien Mitchell-Jones	Rodney Smith	Jun Zhang
Dianne Burns	Alison Freeman	Xiaohong Jiang	Patrick Mitchell-Jones	Jana Stevens	Yonghong Zhou
Elise Callander	Daniel Freeman	Mark Jones	Richard Morten	James Stevens	Shuang Zuo
Jeffrey Carter	Paul Freeman	Toni Kisely	Christopher Nalder	Zhijuan Tang	
Elena Cervantes Hernandez	Cheng Gao	Stephen Kisely	Guy Nation	Jiachuan Wang	
Lei Chen	Xuan Gao	Dale Kitney	Alison Nation	Jun Wang	
Shouwen Chen	Richard Goillon	Michael Kitney	Thao Nguyen	Xiaogang Wang	
Miao Feng Chen	Perry Gonen	Willis Lawrence	Francisco Oliveros Lara	Kejun Wang	
Elizabeth Colarik	Esther Gonen	Elsa Lawrence	Aletta Opperman	Jacqueline Webb	
Robert Cole	Chibing Guo	Sara Lindstroem	Judith Parker	Ying Wei	
Karen Cole	Li Guo	Dongmei Liu	Kirilli Parker	Catherine Worley	
Sajeela Cormack	Lei Guo	Yuangui Liu	Menna Pitts	Qiang Xu	
Wuquan Cui	Zhiyong Han	Jamie Longhurst	Emily Ristevski	Jin Yang	
Yihong Cui	Errol Harper	Bryn Lynar	Zhiming Sheng	Jifang Yang	

Expedition Team

Expedition Leader: Christophe Bouchox

Assistant Expedition Leader: Tamsin Both

Onboard Expedition Manager: Justine Bornholdt

Firearms Manager: Graeme Snow (Snowy)

Naturalist: Isabelle Howells

Geologist/Citizen Science Coordinator: Marcos Goldin

Marine Biologist: Dani Abras

Historian: Avi Schluter

Photography Guide: Adrian Wlodarczyk

Expedition Guide: Rune Kongsro

Expedition Team Manager/Guide: Sandrine Erwin-Rose

Lead Kayak Guide: Daniel Stavert

Senior Kayak Guide: Vanja Davidsen

Senior Kayak Guide: Eduardo Larranaga

Expedition Medic: Nicole Genoud

Onboard Expedition Assistant: Ari Benzo Ciria

Zodiac Master: Sergei and Chen Zhongyuan

Mandarin-Speaking Guide: Quing Qu

Senior Officers & Heads of Department

Master: Oleg Kapko

Chief Officer: Alexandru Taraoi

Safety Officer: Daniel Beto

Bosun: Bobby Payumo

Deck Cadet: Carlos Florido Carvalo Da Silva

Ship Doctor: Javier Martinez Rodriguez

Support Doctor: Juan Nicolas Diaz Rodriguez

Chief Engineer: Branimir Ujevic

First Engineer: Iurii Peretiaka

Hotel Director: Alex Barkar

F&B Manager: Rajesh Murao

Chief Purser: Pia Blanca

Executive Chef: Edgar Mangalinao

Sous Chef: Hubert Ramiro Barreto

Head Waiter: German Orlando Cayasso Wilson

Hotel Controller: Orlando Costa

IT Officer: Gerry Dcunha

Receptionist: Joy Acelar

Receptionist: Jonathan Valdez

Head Stateroom: Roniel Garcia

Spa Manager: Venila Vythilingum

Able Seaman: Angelo San Antonio

Able Seaman: Iwan Setiawan

Able Seaman: Hardik Dipakbhai Rao

Able Seaman: Roberto Ixtan Mejia

Able Seaman: Nikola Georgiev

Able Seaman: Francis Marvin Linga

Photography thanks to:


Adrian Wlodarczyk

Kayak Team





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