



# OCEANWIDE

EXPEDITIONS

## Expedition Log Arctic Academy

13-22 July 2022

On board of  
***M/V Ortelius***



*M/V Ortelius* was named after the Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598) who published the first modern world atlas, the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (Theatre of the World) in 1570. *MV Ortelius* was built in 1989 in Gdynia, Poland, as a research vessel for the Russian Academy of Science and was named *Marina Svetaeva*. In 2011 she was purchased by Oceanwide Expeditions. The vessel was re-flagged and renamed *Ortelius*. Now the ship is sailing as a 108-passenger vessel. *Ortelius* is 91 m long, 17,6 m wide and has a maximum draft of 5,80 m, with an Ice Strength rating of UL1/1A, top speed of 12 knots and one diesel engine generating 3200 kW.



# Captain Mika Appel

and his international crew of 51 (15 Nationalities)

Including

First Officer:	<b>Maikel Overbeek</b>	[Netherlands]
First Officer:	<b>Mladen Svic</b>	[Croatia]
Second Officer:	<b>Anika Albrecht</b>	[Germany]
Third Officer:	<b>Eline Schuurman</b>	[Netherlands]
Chief Engineer:	<b>Aleksandr Bondarev</b>	[Lithuania]
Hotel Manager:	<b>Volodymyr Cherednychenko</b>	[Ukraine]
Assistant hotel manager	<b>Andy Juodvirsis</b>	
Head Chef:	<b>Heinz Hacker</b>	[Austria]
Sous Chef:	<b>Ivan Ivanovic</b>	[Serbia]
Sous Chef:	<b>Norman Estrada</b>	[Philippines]
Ship's Physician:	<b>Linda Doomen</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Leader:	<b>Jan Belgers</b>	[Netherlands]
Assist. Expedition Leader:	<b>Michelle van Dijk</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Karoline Baelum</b>	[Denmark]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Marion Van Rijssel</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Florence Kuyper</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Frits Steenhuisen</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Hans Verdaat</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Annette Scheepstra</b>	[Netherlands]
Expedition Guide:	<b>Ronald Visser</b>	[Netherlands]

**Welcome you onboard!**

## **Introducing the Arctic Academy**

The Arctic Academy is a collaboration between SEES.nl (Scientific Expedition Edgeøya Spitsbergen), Oceanwide Expeditions and SNP natuurreizen. Together they made it possible that this very special expedition could take place.

During this expedition scientists and tourists travelled together to one of the most remote places of the arctic region. The primary goal of the SEES expedition was scientific research on Edgeøya. The secondary goal was to inform a wide and general public about this research and what is happening in the arctic regions. Hence that besides scientist the ship also carried journalists, artists and tourist.

This logbook is written during the expedition by the guides of Oceanwide Expeditions. It aims to give an impression of what happened during the expedition. In no means it aims to be a scientific report nor it has journalistic ambitions. With this logbook we would like to present the participants of the Arctic Academy and the SEES expedition a lasting memory of this special voyage.

On behalf of the Arctic Academy,

Jan Belgers

Expeditionleader Oceanwide Expeditions

Maarten Loonen

Scientific expeditionleader

# Day1 – Wednesday July 13, 2022

## Embarkation Longyearbyen

16:00 GPS position: 78°09.5 N / 015°32.10' E

AirTemp:12°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: NW3 Sea state: 2

After a long-awaited departure (a few years for most of us) and a lot of hassle because of the SAS strike most of us were able to make it to Longyearbyen, the largest settlement in the Arctic Archipelago of Svalbard. Our ship for the next 9 days, the *M/V Ortelius*, brings us together to explore and research the polar environment of the high Arctic.

Longyearbyen is one of the northernmost settlements in the world. It started as a mining town and is named after John Munro Longyear (1850-1922), whom started in 1906 the Arctic Coal Company. Still coal is being mined on Spitsbergen but production has decimated and is mostly used for combined heat and power production in the settlements of Longyearbyen and Barentsburg. The ship was moored at the coal quay and we could see the heaps of freshly mined coal. The crew welcomed us on board we were brought to our cabins by the friendly hotel staff.



We started with the mandatory safety drill and headed out at 18:00 for Edgeøya during that. We had dinner in the restaurant while sailing through Isfjord. After dinner we Captain's welcome and got from Jan and Maarten information about the trip and the plans for the coming days. Meanwhile some researchers started working on making the lab on the helicopter deck ready.

# Day2 – Thursday July 14, 2022

## Sørkapp & Stellingfjellet

12:00 GPS positie: 76°43,9' N / 017°38,3' E

AirTemp:7°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: NE5 Sea state: 3

We had a bit of swell from the West during the night but nothing serious even when we rounded Sørkapp our ship remained calm. Fog surrounded us most of the day preventing us from going out in the zodiacs to enjoy the enormous amount of Brunnich's guillemots that are breeding on the cliffs of Stellingfjellet. and going for a stroll in the surrounding area. So, we had our first series of lectures during the afternoon. After 6 hours of sailing we arrived at Kapp Lee. The sky had cleared up a little, but also the wind had increased a lot. We stayed at anchor at Kapp Lee during the rest of the evening and night.



During all the sailing time, there was continuously scouting and counting by the birds and mammals' team on the bow of the ship. In the box that was specially put up there for the SEES expedition they were continuously scouting and counting during all the sailing hours – also during night time, unless the fog prevents them for seeing anything. Meanwhile the lab team was working hard to make the lab ready on the helicopter deck. The lab was needed for some experiments with different kind of zooplankton and for the first

analysis of the samples taken on land and sea.

Before diner we had our daily recap in the bar where Jan and Maarten were reflecting on the past day, and presenting the plans for the up-coming day.

After again a lovely dinner we spent some more time in the lecture room to listen to some more interesting lectures. Maarten was strict in allowing the speakers not more then 15 minutes of time each, so all scientist were able to present their work, leaving also enough time for questions.

# Day 3 – Friday July15, 2022

## Edgeøya: From Kapp Lee to Negribreen

12:00 GPS position: 78°12,1' N / 021°07,2' E

AirTemp:9°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: E5 Sea state: 0,5

### Plan ABCD

Many of us woke up early to enjoy the view from the ship to Kapp Lee. The fog was nowhere to be seen so the skies were very clear ..... which made us able to spot our first polar bear on land! It was exciting to see this bear, which was the first polar bear ever for many of us. But a polar bear on land means no landing, so we switched to plan B: trying to land straight in front of Rosenbergdalen. During breakfast a group of guides went out for a scouting mission to look at the landing conditions. They came back soaking wet. The surf originating from the swell from the South-West that rolled unhindered through Storfjorden made a safe landing impossible. We started the main engine up for plan C: again and headed North to Sundneset in the mouth of Freemansundet. A distant bear



was spotted on Edgeøya on the other side of the sound but that was at a safe distance. Our guide team went on shore near Würzburger hytta and scanned the area, many curious reindeer so it looked promising....however. The two distant bears and our side of Freemandsundet started walking in our



direction was the message that came from the bridge. And by the time the scout team was back in the zodiacs they were too close to continue with the landing. Back to Kapp Lee to see how the situation had developed there with mixed results: an active bear was rolling on its back feet up in the air which was very nice to witness, but it made science on land impossible.

So we came to plan D, we sailed over to Negribreen (black glacier) where we all went out for a stunning evening zodiac cruise with huge icebergs from black to white and lots of blue's, a curious walrus, two rather rare bird species (ivory and sabine's gull) and to top it off with a lonely beluga diving underneath one of the zodiacs!



# Day 4 – Saturday July 16, 2022

## Rosenbergdalen

12:00 GPS position: 78°05,3' N / 020°45,5' E

AirTemp:15°C!! Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: NE1 Sea state: 0

We made it! After the scouting zodiac deemed it feasible to land, we could do where we came for: science and excursions in Rosenbergdalen. The weather was really nice and the views were stunning. The different groups spread out over the valley floor. The vegetation group started to look at the changes in their vegetation plots compared to 2015. The reindeer researchers were walking into the valley trying to find ancient reindeer antlers. Other researchers and tourists



were collecting plastics to analyse

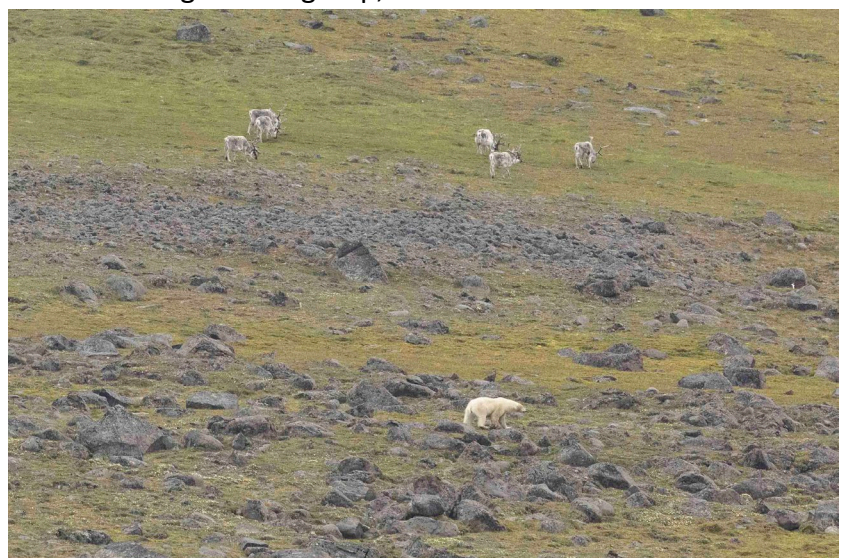
their origin. There were also groups walking for longer and a bit shorter hike. The weather was great and we all enjoyed the plants, the reindeer, birds with their offspring and the beautiful surroundings.

After eating our lunch in the outdoors, a bear was spotted from the bridge walking to the South and for safety reasons we needed to abandon our activities on land and start evacuate and go back to the ship. The wind had picked up making getting into the zodiacs a wet experience. We decided to first evacuate

the hiking groups and tried to let the researcher continue their work. With less people on land – which enables us to evacuate faster if needed - and the bear not showing any interest two groups of scientists continued with their work. However, the bear decided to check out the vegetation what was happening in Rosenbergdalen and walked in the direction of the vegetation group, so an immediate evacuation was needed. They hastily gathered their stuff to be picked up at the shore line. Just some minutes after everybody was in the zodiacs the young female polar bear showed up on the shoreline having followed the group all the way.....

After this exciting polar bear encounter that gladly end with a safe evacuation, both for us and the polar bear.

In the evening Annette told us more about the polar bears and their behaviour and she showed us some impressive short movies made by the Dutch polar bear expert Jouke Prop.



# Day 5 – Sunday July 17, 2022

## Kapp Lee

12:00 GPS position: 78°05,0' N / 020°45,5' E

AirTemp:9°C Sea Temp:6°C Weather: overcast Wind: N6 Sea state: 3

During breakfast we sailed the short distance from Rosenbergdalen to Kapp Lee. The weather looked promising and we were very glad to be able to get on shore. The place where it all started in 1968 with the polar bear research of the 4 idealistic and adventures students Erik Flipse, Ko de Korte, Piet Oosterveld and Paul de Groot. The four of them stayed for 14 months at Kapp Lee, trying to mark polar bears.

Because of the polar bear situation and the wind picking up (as was expected), we did not wander off. The Arctic Academy enjoyed the walrus haul out, the archaeologists surveyed the remains of the old pomor hut, vegetation plots were sampled and the search for ancient reindeer remains continued while a large number of live reindeer walked



around. A bumpy zodiac drive brought us back to the ship and we enjoyed lunch while underway to Sundbukta. Before we could get into the zodiacs a bear showed up on the shoreline walking in the direction of where we wanted to start our work....another no go but we could watch it nicely from the ship. Meanwhile the wind was howling so we did not dare to go on the water anymore and

instead had three lectures.

In the evening we were all fascinated by the stories of Ko de Korte, about his stay at Kapp Lee more than 50 years ago.





# Day 6 – Monday July 18, 2022

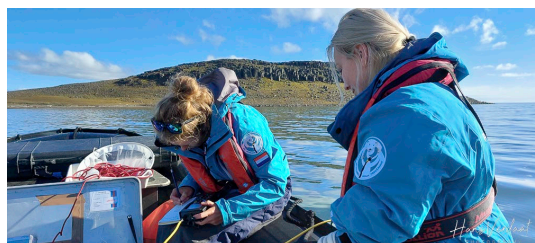
## Around Sundbukta, Split up

12:00 GPS position: 78°12,3' N / 020°56,5' E

AirTemp:11,5°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: SSE3 Sea state: 0,5

Today the logistics got so complicated because of polar bears that we had to split scientist and the Arctic Academy.

In the morning a small group did science on the big lake of Zorellvatnet while lectures were held on board. During the afternoon we all went out, some for a zodiac cruise around Ureinskagen while others sampled the small lakes on that island. The island is made entirely out of dolorite



and looked quite barren but we saw seals, lots of birds including a great northern diver and some of us even went for a look at a polar bear.

After dinner another small group of scientists went for the small lakes near the Würzburgerhytte, which were visited also during SEES 2015 while the Arctic Academy could attend some more lectures. Everybody was back on board around midnight, a long and successful day!



Ronald J.W.Visser

# Day 7 – Tuesday July 19, 2022

## Edgeøya: Russebukta

12:00 GPS position: 77°36,3' N / 020°55,5' E

AirTemp:12°C Sea Temp:6°C Weather: cloudy Wind: W4 Sea state: 2

The day started promising! We had sailed a bit further south during the night and we were anchored near Russebukta where we had planned a lot of activities on shore. When the first zodiacs left there was still quite some wind but the third



attempt to land the



glacier and reindeer groups was successful. During the shuttling of the rest of the passengers and scientist the wind died down and the weather became really nice.

Overcast

with some raindrops but warm and

not so much wind. We all spread out to do our thing, collecting plastic or antlers, drill in lakes, picking mushrooms, you name it and we have a scientist studying it ;-). Meanwhile there were also hiking groups spread out over the tundra and they encountered, visited and enjoyed both the locals (reindeer, arctic fox) as the imported ones (the scientists). After a long day in the field we were all back on the ship just before 19:00 where we had a BBQ on the helideck!



# Day 8 – Wednesday July 20, 2022

## Stellingfjellet in the fog > transit

12:00 GPS position: 76°24,2' N / 016°30,5' E

AirTemp:6°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: fog Wind: E5 Sea state: 3



During the night we sailed South West and, in the morning, we woke up near Stellingfjellet though we needed a gps to find that out, as thick fog was surrounding us. The weather forecast indicated that no improvements were expected, so we decided to continue sailing so we could already be in Hornsund in the afternoon. We stayed on board and had lectures, a workshop with the social scientist and a bit of relaxation after the long (hike) day yesterday.



is stunning because of the collision eons ago with Greenland. The decision to continue paid off ☺

After dinner though we had 24knots of wind when we went for a stroll to Gnålodden. A perimeter was set up by the guides and we could freely roam around and visit the hut where the famous female trapper Wanny Wolstad once lived and the remains of an old Pomor cabin and grave. The Arctic skuas clearly indicated when we came too close to their nest.

Late afternoon we sailed into the big fjord of Hornsund with stunning views! We were back at the west coast where the geology



## Day 9 – Thursday July 21, 2022

### Bellsund, Ingeborgfjellet and van Muydenbukta

12:00 GPS position: 77°44,3' N / 014°26,5' E

AirTemp:12°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy morning, fair in afternoon Wind: SW2 Sea state: 1

Thick fog surrounded us when the guide team was making plans for the day, but luck was with us again! During breakfast the clouds lifted and we made a landing at the bird cliffs of Ingeborgfjellet where thousands of little auks flew around us and we could enjoy the sounds they make like “drunken sailor-men”

During lunch the captain repositioned the ship and we had both a zodiac cruise and hiking opportunities that afternoon on the flat areas in Van Muydenbukta, a place littered with old whalebones and unfortunately also modern plastics. But that

created work for the scientists on this last outing of this incredible trip!



© Annette Scheepstra

# Day 10 – Friday July 22, 2022

## Longyearbyen

12:00 GPS position: 78°09.5 N / 015°32.10' E

AirTemp:10°C Sea Temp:5°C Weather: cloudy Wind: NW3 Sea state: 2

It was now time to say farewell to our great adventure, to our safe floating home and to our lovely new friends! This morning *Ortelius* was alongside the post at Longyearbyen ready for us to disembark, which was a dry landing compared to our embarkation and our landings throughout the trip. Once we had enjoyed our last breakfast on board we were able to disembark at 09.00 am, for our bus to town and later to the airport.



**On behalf of Oceanwide Expeditions,  
Captain Mika Appel and the Officers,  
all Crew, Expedition Team and Hotel Team,  
it has been a pleasure travelling with you!**

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