



Science & Education Report

MS Spitsbergen

03 - 10.06.2025

Svalbard in the Spring
— Return of the Sun





Science & Education Program

Our Science and Education Team accompanied you during your expedition to the remote nature of the North East Atlantic.

We had the opportunity to explore Svalbard's natural snow-covered beauty, exceptional wildlife, and rich history. We enjoyed lectures and interactive activities onboard and explored our destinations from Land and the Sea.



Lectures & Workshops

We had a wonderful time onboard with a diversity of lectures and workshops. Together we learned about the history, geology, animals and birds of Svalbard. In total we had 7 lectures, 4 tiny talks, 7 workshops, and 3 art sessions!

History

Over the course of this trip, guests were able to view the skeletal and ruinous structures left behind by industries and peoples who were in Svalbard long ago. The weight of history was great in such places. The vast piles of whale bones, the elaborate and copious structural remains, and even the twisted tracks of railways, all provided evidence of the intensity and breadth of industry which once blossomed in these islands.



Culture

Through its somewhat unique status as a land void of endemic culture for much of its history, Svalbard presents a fascinating case study of a place formed and shaped fairly recently by a multitude of diverse and different cultures. Places such as Ny-Alesund typified this, and showed the way in which people of all backgrounds and cultures simultaneously call this archipelago home, whilst united in a common and culture-bridging pursuit of scientific research.






Geology

Svalbard's dramatic geological story only peaked through the blanketed the landscape. The archipelago's ancient sedimentary rocks, formed over millions of years from tropical seas to polar conditions, were visible in the steep mountain faces, exposed cliff sections and intertidal areas. Much later they were compressed violently by the converging continents while forming the Caledonian Mountain Range, until the rocks yielded, either breaking or folding. All this happened long before the ice took care of the final sculpting of the landscape.

Permian / Carboniferous sediments in the Inner Kongsfjord, partly layered, partly folded. Much later eroded by ice.
Above: Altocumulus clouds, partly Cumulonimbus (rain)



Beautiful cirrus clouds, photographed over 79° north above the island of Moffen. The name cirrus is derived from a Latin word meaning “lock of hair”, due to their wispy appearance. They allow the sun’s heat to penetrate our lower atmosphere, but prevent the energy from escaping back into space. Thanks to them, the weather on May 25 was as warm as it can be at this very high latitude!

NASA Globe Cloud Observer

Together with our Environmental Scientist Jeanne you observed the clouds and submitted your observations to NASA GLOBE Observer on 3 occasions.

These cloud observations can help NASA improve our understanding of Earth’s atmosphere and climate by providing valuable data for scientific research and climate modelling.

You conducted two NASA Globe Cloud Observer citizen science projects. That means three submissions went to NASA for climate study in areas you visited, at sea, along our voyage. Below is a link to our data.

[View our data](#) on the global map

iNaturalist

Throughout our expedition, we documented the flora and fauna of Svalbard and uploaded all our findings to the iNaturalist platform.

During our voyage, we submitted 69 observations of 40 different species. This effort contributes to the creation of a comprehensive understanding of the current distribution of species in the archipelago and can aid researchers in their ongoing studies and conservation efforts to protect these species.

View our data submitted on our [iNaturalist project](#)



Wildlife List - Birds





Wildlife List — Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Northern Fulmar	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boréal
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Great Skua	Große Raubmöwe	Grand Labbe
<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Arctic Skua (Parasitic Jaeger)	Schmarotzerraubmöwe	Labbe parasite
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Black-legged Kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle
<i>Larus hypervoreus</i>	Glacous Gull	Eismöwe	Goéland Bourgmestre
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic Tern	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne Arctique
<i>Alle alle</i>	Little Auk	Krabbentaucher	Mergule nain
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Atlantic Puffin	Papageitaucher	Macareux moine
<i>Cephus grille</i>	Black Guillemot	Gryllteiste	Guillemot à miroir
<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Brünnich's Guillemot (Thick-billed Murre)	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brünnich

Wildlife List — Shore birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Pink-footed Goose	Kurzschnabelgans	Oie à bec court
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Barnacle Goose	Weißwangengans	Bernache nonnette
<i>Branta bernicla</i>	Brent Goose	Ringelgans	Bernache cravant
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Common Eider	Eiderente	Eider à duvet
<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>	King Eider	Prachteiderente	Eider à tête grise
<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	Long-tailed Duck	Eisente	Harelde kakawi
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	Red-throated Diver (Red-throated Loon)	Sternaucher	Plongeon catmarin
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Common Ringed Plover	Sandregenpfeifer	Pluvier grand-gravelot
<i>Calidris canutus</i>	Red Knot	Knutt	Bécasseau maubèche
<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Purple Sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer	Bécasseau violet
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	Dunlin	Alpenstrandläufer	Bécasseau variable
<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	Sanderling	Bécasseau sanderling

Wildlife List — Land birds



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	Snow Bunting	Schneeammer	Bruant des neiges



e-Bird

During our Wildlife Watches, our Team conducted detailed seabird surveys, recording observations for the citizen science platform eBird. We recorded 23 different species of birds in 19 checklists.

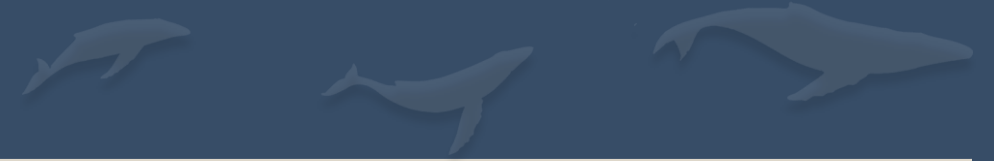
This initiative helps contribute valuable data to global bird conservation efforts, enhancing our understanding of seabird populations and their habitats.

View our data on our [e-Bird trip report](#)



Wildlife List - Marine Mammals

Wildlife List — Marine Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Common minke whale	Zwergwal	Rorqual à museau pointu
<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>	Beluga whale	Weißwal	Béluga
<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	Bearded seal	Bartrobbe	Phoque Barbu
<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	Walrus	Walross	Morse
<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	Polar bear	Eisbär	Ours polaire

Species Spotlight

We were sailing through the scenic Smeerenburgfjorden when the announcement “Polar Bear!” was heard around the ship. On the ice was a healthy specimen of the majestic and charismatic emblem of the Arctic. Although we were at least a kilometre away, we saw a fine healthy polar bear walking away from their shoreside evening feast of seal. We watched him with binoculars and cameras for some distance along the shore until he was out of sight. Then, moments later, an arctic fox ran in the opposite direction across the ice causing us to look away from our first bear. We were rewarded, not only with our little fox who’d also been feasting on the remains of the seal, but up on a ridge was a second bear, sleeping off their meal. As an extra treat, we also were able to a closer look at the whole encounter on the ship’s GSS high magnification camera!



Wildlife List - Land Mammals



Wildlife List — Land mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>	Svalbard Reindeer	Rentier	Renne du Spitzberg
<i>Vulpes lagopus</i>	Arctic Fox	Polarfuchs	Renard Arctique

THX



Thank you for
joining us!