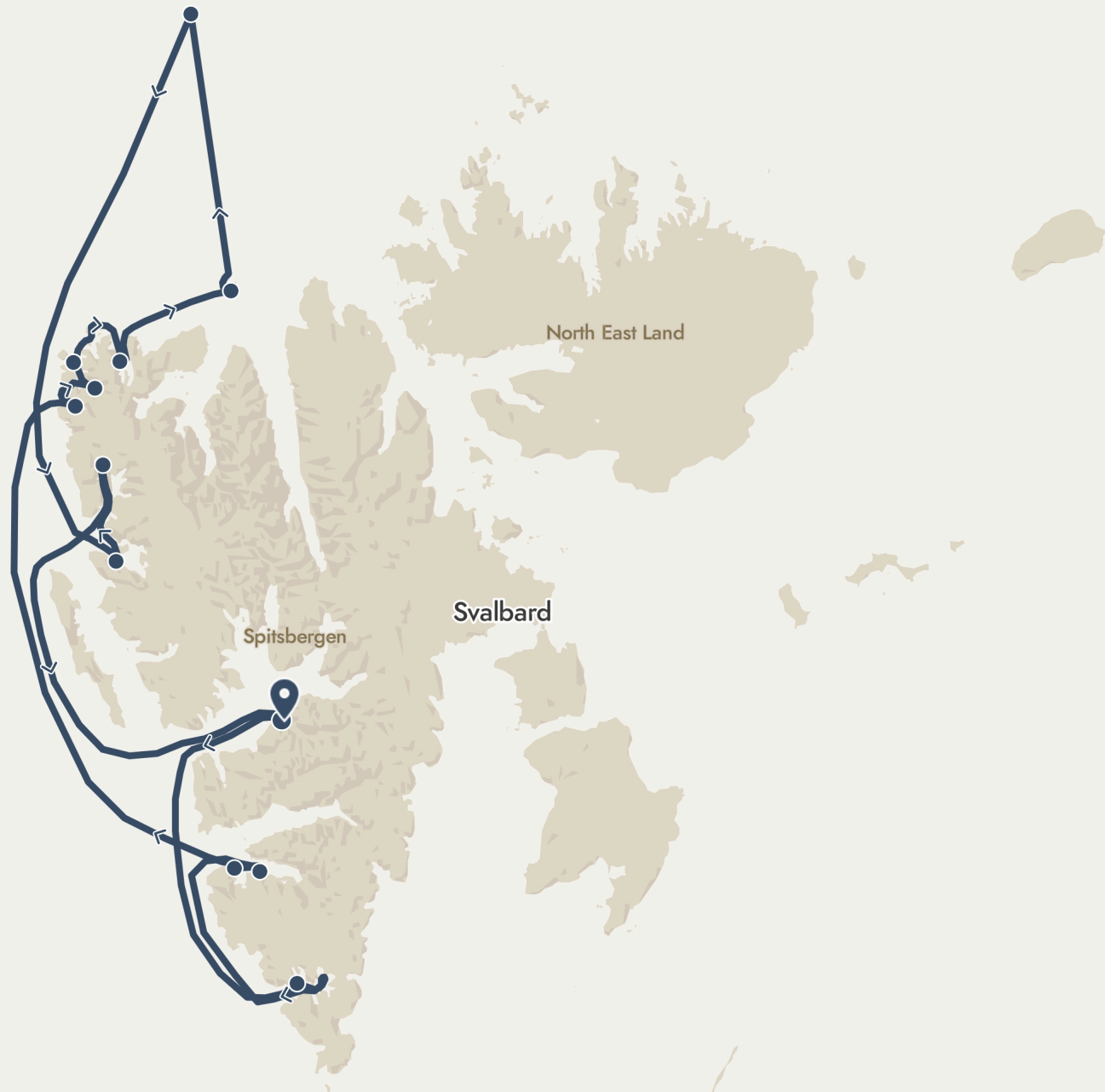


MS Spitsbergen

2025.06.03 - 2025.06.10

Greenland
Sea

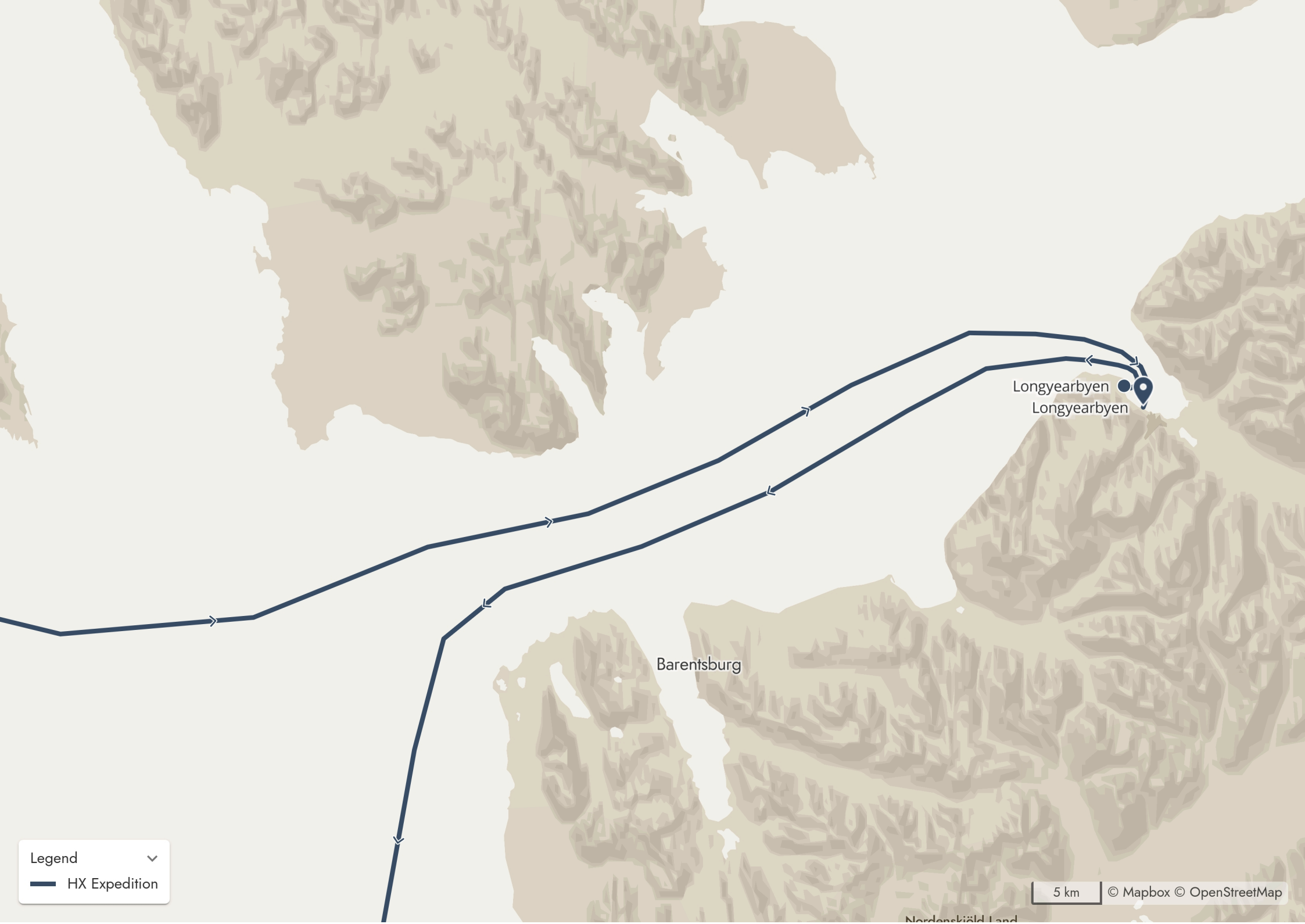


Legend

— HX Expedition

50 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



Longyearbyen

Barentsburg

Nordenskiöld Land

Legend

HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Departing Longyearbyen

The journey began in Longyearbyen, a remote Arctic town surrounded by snow-capped peaks and icy fjords. Under the constant glow of the Midnight Sun, the harbour buzzed quietly as MS Spitsbergen prepared for departure. Luggage was brought aboard, guests explored the ship, and the crew offered warm welcomes and clear guidance.

The Spitsbergen itself is a blend of comfort and function: observation decks, panoramic lounges, and an atmosphere of anticipation. After

the mandatory safety briefing, the Expedition Team introduced themselves with contagious enthusiasm, sharing what lies ahead over the next seven days.

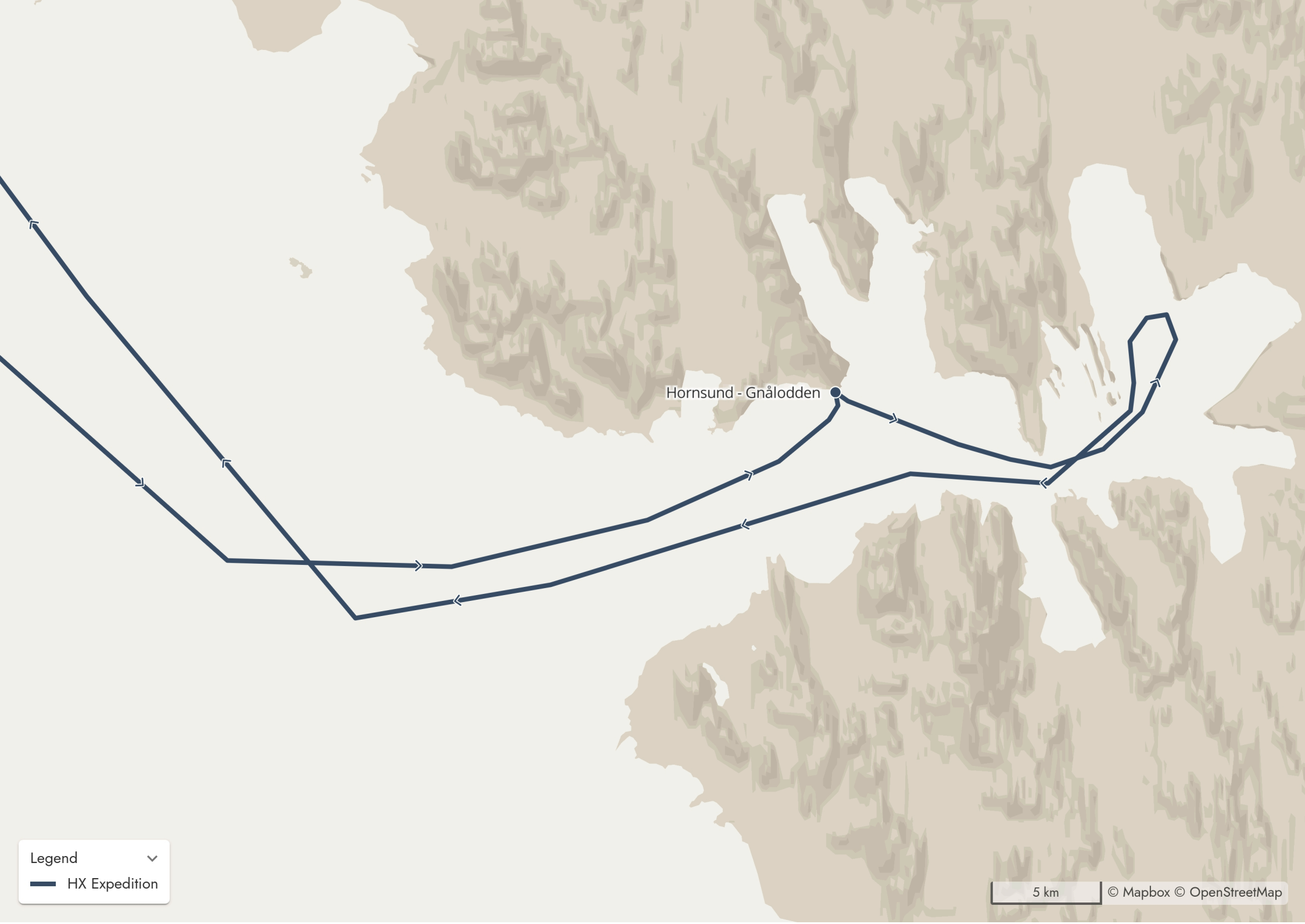
As the ship eased away from the dock, Longyearbyen slowly faded into the distance. The Arctic seascape opened up, still, silent, and vast. A few seabirds traced the ship's path while the first glaciers appeared on the horizon. The sense of isolation was striking yet strangely calming. The expedition had begun.



MS Spitsbergen at the small coal harbour in Longyearbyen.



Leaving Longyearbyen behind.



Hornsund - Gnålodden

Legend

— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Hornsund and Gnålodden Landing

The morning unfolded peacefully aboard MS Spitsbergen as the ship glides through the icy waters of Hornsund. Inside, warmth and anticipation fill the lounge as the AECO briefings begin. The Expedition Team outlines the rules of Arctic exploration, how to move carefully on land, respect wildlife, and tread lightly in this fragile environment.

By early afternoon, the weather begins to shift. As the ship nears Gnålodden, the wind picks up, sharp and cold, slicing down from the

mountains and across the water. Bundled in layers, guests board the Zodiacs with hoods pulled tight and eyes squinting against the chill. The ride to shore is bumpy, the wind whipping through the narrow bay as seabirds wheel overhead, seemingly unbothered.

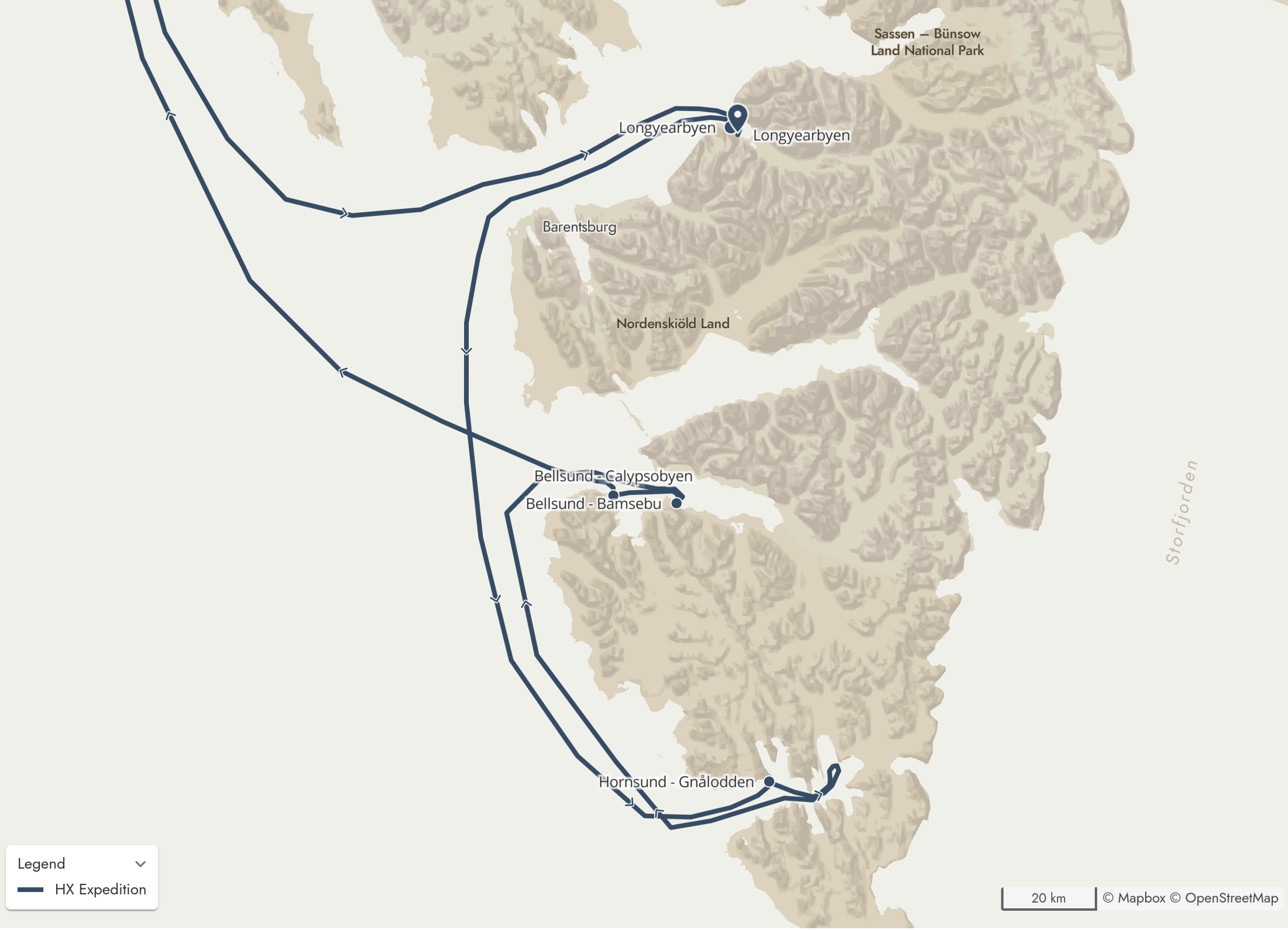
On land, the air is raw and biting. The old trapper's hut stands stoic against the wind, a reminder of the harsh conditions faced by those who once lived here. Despite the cold, there's a sense of exhilaration; the wildness of Gnålodden is palpable.



Gnålodden, towering bird cliffs above.



The old trappers cabin at Gnålodden.



Bellsund and Bamsebu - Wind and whale bones!

The day began with strong winds sweeping across Bellsund as MS Spitsbergen approached the historic shores of Bamsebu. Zodiacs bounced across the swell, spray flying and getting ashore required steady footing and quick coordination with the crew.

Once on land, the wind continued to press in from the sea, cold and persistent. Bamsebu stood solid against it, the old wooden hut weathered but intact, surrounded by scattered whale bones and rusted remnants of Svalbard's hunting past. Despite the conditions, the landing provided an opportunity to explore. Some guests chose to

stay near the hut, listening to the guides discuss the site's whaling history and the lives of the trappers who once overwintered there. Others, more adventurous, set off on a longer hike inland, winding through rocky terrain and patches of tundra, past grazing reindeer and distant geese flying by.

By the time the group returned to the ship, the wind was still strong, but spirits were high - the kind of morning that tests layers and balance but leaves a lasting impression of Arctic resilience.



Beluga whale bones at Bamsebu.



Bamsebu in Bellsund.

Nordenskiöld Land

Bellsund - Calypsobyen

Bellsund - Bamsebu

Legend



— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Bellsund – Calypsobyen in the Afternoon

After a windswept and challenging morning at Bamsebu, the afternoon brought a welcome change. As MS Spitsbergen sailed further along the coast of Bellsund, the wind began to ease and the skies lightened.

The landing at Calypsobyen was smooth, and the site itself offered a striking contrast to the morning's raw exposure. Once a mining settlement, the area is now dotted with weathered buildings and equipment, slowly being reclaimed by the Arctic landscape. The soft

light added warmth to the otherwise stark terrain, and the quiet allowed for an almost meditative walk among the remains of early 20th-century industry.

Some guests joined an afternoon hike, following the guides inland along gentle slopes and open tundra.

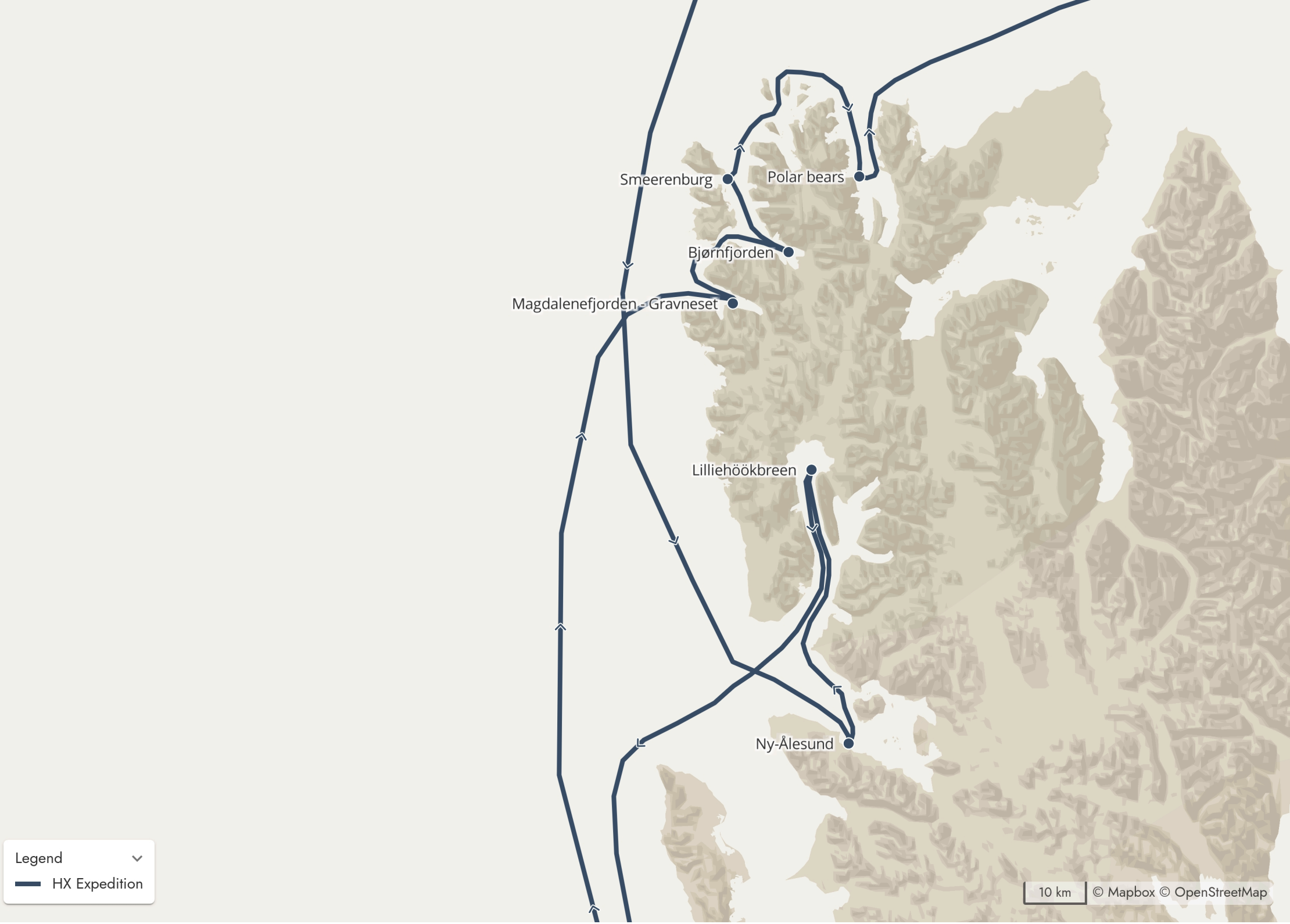
By evening, everyone was back aboard, the contrast between the day's two landings highlighting the unpredictable nature of the Arctic: wild and relentless one moment, calm and inviting the next.



Calypsobyen, an old mining camp.



Viewpoint over Calypsobyen.



Legend

HX Expedition

Gravneset, Magdalenefjorden

In the afternoon, MS Spitsbergen arrived at the stunning Magdalenefjorden under calm skies and light winds. The landing at Gravneset was smooth, offering a dramatic mix of glacier views and Arctic history. Guests explored the old whalers' graves and walked along the beach, surrounded by towering peaks and drifting ice.

Conditions were ideal, and the Expedition Team offered both

kayaking and a polar plunge. Kayakers paddled quietly past small icebergs, getting a close-up view of the glacier's face. Meanwhile, a group of brave souls took the polar plunge, a quick, freezing dip into the Arctic Ocean, which was met with gasps and laughter.

It was a memorable afternoon in one of Svalbard's most iconic fjords — a perfect blend of history, adventure, and raw polar beauty.



MS Spitsbergen anchored outside Gravneset.



Some brave passengers did the polar plunge!



Smeerenburg

Polar bears

Bjørnfjorden

Nordvest-Spitsbergen
National Park

Magdalenefjorden - Gravneset

Legend
HX Expedition

5 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Morning Zodiac Cruising in Bjørnfjorden

This morning offered a change of pace: a Zodiac cruise through the icy waters of Bjørnfjorden. With no landing planned, the focus shifted to sea exploration. Conditions were ideal: light winds, flat water, and a soft, overcast sky that made the blue tones of the ice pop with eerie beauty.

Zodiacs glided quietly between floating chunks of glacier ice, some the size of small boats. Seals were spotted, lifting their heads

curiously as we passed. The towering glacier front loomed ahead, groaning and cracking in the distance, reminding everyone of the raw power shaping this place.

The stillness was broken occasionally by the distant rumble of ice calving into the sea, a sound that echoed through the fjord and sent ripples across the water. It was a cold, calm, and awe-inspiring morning, pure Arctic wilderness, experienced up close.



Zodiac cruising in Bjørnfjorden.



Bearded seal.

Afternoon Landing at Smeerenburg

In the afternoon, MS Spitsbergen anchored off Smeerenburg, on the northwest coast of Spitsbergen, a site steeped in Arctic whaling history. The weather held steady, with cool air and manageable winds, making for a smooth landing.

The highlight of the visit was the walrus haul-out on the beach. A group of these massive animals lay piled together, snorting, grunting, and occasionally shifting their weight with surprising clumsiness. Guests kept a respectful distance while watching the herd. Some slept, while others lifted their heads and eyed the group with lazy curiosity.

Expedition staff shared stories of Smeerenburg's past as a 17th-century Dutch whaling station, pointing out the remains of old blubber ovens and telling tales of the harsh life once lived here. But today, the walrus stole the show, a living, breathing reminder of the Arctic's resilience and wild character.

A gentle return to the ship ended a day that balanced silent, icy fjords in the morning with the raw, noisy presence of wildlife in the afternoon. Classic Svalbard at its best.



Landing at Smeerenburg.



Walruses at Smeerenburg.

Evening Wildlife Spotting in Raudfjorden

Just when the day seemed complete, MS Spitsbergen sailed into Raudfjorden under the soft glow of the Arctic evening light. The water was calm, the landscape painted in shades of grey and blue, quiet

until the call came over the PA system: polar bears spotted on the coast.



Polar bear in Raudfjorden.



Polar bear in Raudfjorden.



Early Morning at Moffen & 80° North

The day began early as MS Spitsbergen approached Moffen Island under soft morning light. From the deck, guests gathered quietly with binoculars and cameras, watching a large group of walrus haul out along the island's pebbled shore. The animals lay in a tangled heap, occasionally shifting or lifting their heads. Their sheer size and presence were a striking sight in the stillness of the high Arctic.

Moffen is a protected nature reserve, so no landing was permitted, but the distant view was more than enough. The walrus, undisturbed by our presence, continued their slow, grunting rest while Arctic terns and skuas circled overhead.

Shortly after, the ship crossed 80° North, deep in the realm of ice and polar wildlife.



Busy Science Centre on our way to the ice edge.



Walrus at Moffen island.

81 Degrees North!

Moffen (80 Degrees North!)

Legend



HX Expedition

10 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Late Afternoon at the Ice Edge, 81° North

In the late afternoon, MS Spitsbergen pushed even farther north, reaching the edge of the sea ice at an incredible 81° North. The landscape transformed into a surreal world of drifting ice floes stretching to the horizon, a vast, frozen frontier where the ocean meets the Arctic pack ice.

Guests lined the decks in hushed awe, wrapped in layers against the

biting wind. The ship slowed as it reached the ice edge, and distant shapes on the floes kept everyone alert, hopeful for another glimpse of a polar bear.

It was the northernmost point of the voyage, a powerful and humbling moment that few will forget. Standing at 81° North, surrounded by nothing but sea and ice, it truly felt like the top of the world.



The ice edge at 81 degrees north!



The ice edge at 81 degrees north!

Windy Morning in Ny-Ålesund

The morning arrival in Ny-Ålesund came under a low sky, with wind sweeping across Kongsfjorden and a steady drizzle falling over the deck of MS Spitsbergen.

Despite the weather, guests bundled up and headed ashore to explore the world's northernmost settlement. A guided walk through the town offered insight into Ny-Ålesund's transition from a coal mining outpost to a modern Arctic research station. The historic airship mast stood quietly in the grey light, a lonely monument to past

polar ambitions.

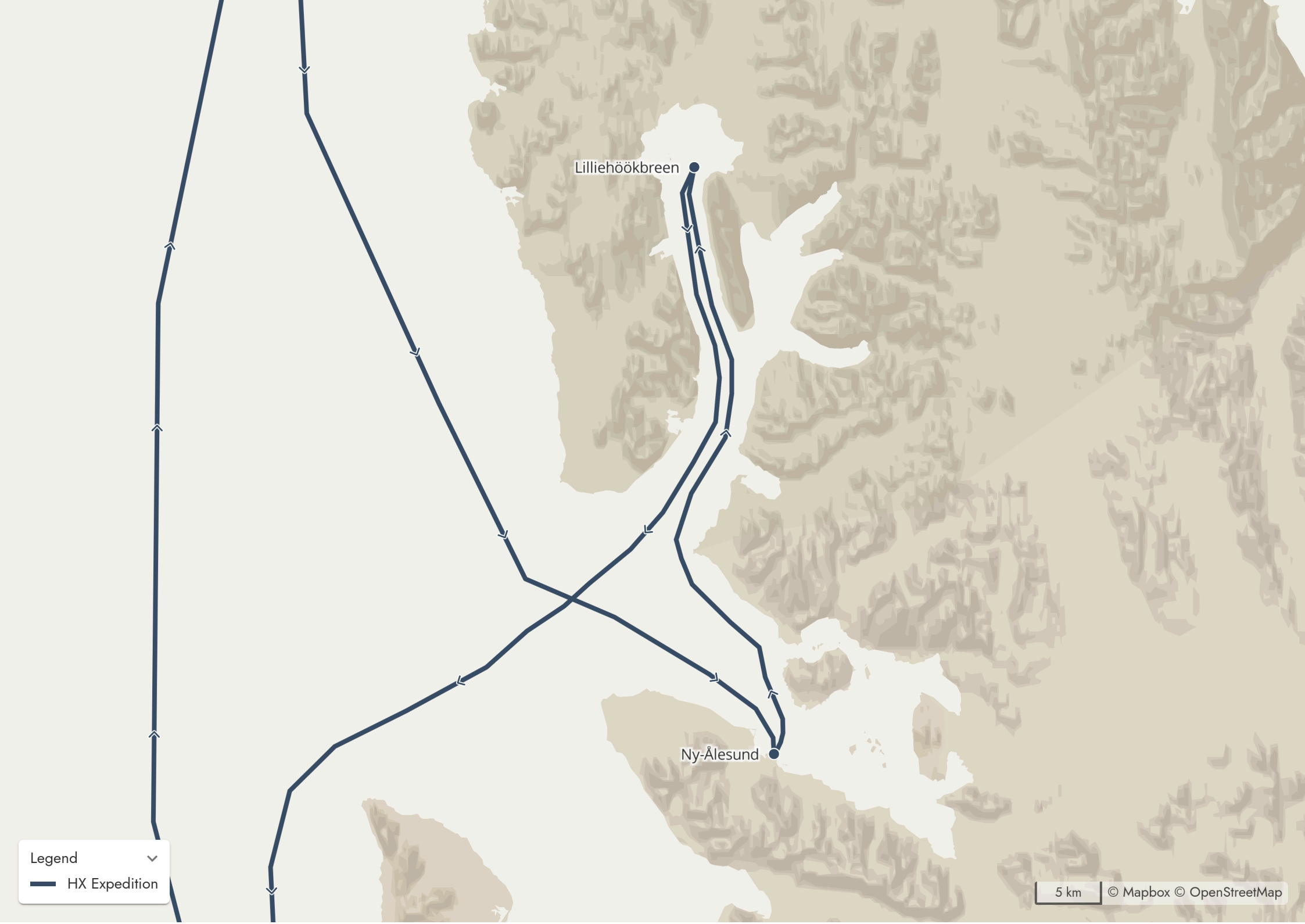
Some guests made a quick stop at the museum and post office before returning to the warmth of the ship, faces red from the chill and rain.

Even in less-than-ideal conditions, Ny-Ålesund left an impression, a resilient place shaped by science, history, and the ever-present power of the Arctic weather.



Guest looking at the polar bear danger sign.





Lilliehöökbeen

Ny-Ålesund

Legend



— HX Expedition

5 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Afternoon Zodiac Cruise at Lilliehöök Glacier

In the afternoon, MS Spitsbergen entered the striking Lilliehöökfjorden, its waters calm, despite the grey skies lingering from the morning. Conditions were favourable enough for a zodiac cruise. Soon, guests were out on the water, gliding quietly toward the towering face of the Lilliehöök Glacier.

The glacier stretched across the fjord, an immense wall of blue and white ice, fractured and creaking under its own weight. Icebergs and brash ice drifted in the bay, creating a maze through which the Zodiacs carefully navigated. The air was cool and still, with the

occasional distant crack of ice calving, a deep, echoing sound that reminded all of the glacier's slow but powerful movement.

Birdlife was active, and a bearded seal was resting on an ice floe. We also were treated to hot chocolate from our bar boat in front of the glacier!

It was a fitting final excursion, peaceful, reflective, and deeply Arctic. A moment to pause and absorb the silence before the journey back to Longyearbyen began.



Bearded seal.



Zodiac cruising at Lilliehöök Glacier.



Lilliehöökreen

Ny-Ålesund

Prins Karls forland

Prins Karls forland National Park

Indre Wijdefjorden
National Park

Spitsbergen

Nordre Isfjorden
National Park

Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen

Barentsburg

Legend



— HX Expedition

10 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



Disembarkation in Longyearbyen

In the early morning hours, MS Spitsbergen returned to where the journey began, Longyearbyen. The harbour was quiet under a low sky, the mountains around the town dusted with fresh snow and partially veiled in mist.

After breakfast, guests said goodbye to the ship, crew and Expedition Team that had guided them through a week of unforgettable Arctic moments. Bags were rolled down the gangway, final photos taken,

and handshakes and hugs exchanged.

Though the expedition had come to an end, the memories remained vivid: the chill of the polar plunge, the distant shape of a bear on the ice, the roar of glaciers calving, and the strange beauty of a land where weather, wildlife, and history shape every step.

Svalbard leaves its mark: wild, quiet, and unforgettable.



MS Spitsbergen.



Thank you for an amazing expedition!



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