

## Svalbard in Summer: Under the Midnight Sun

2025.08.17 -2025.08.24



## Embarkation Day

Embarkation day in Longyearbyen began with us variously exploring this unique Arctic town. Later when we had boarded MS Fram, the afternoon program included collecting our muck boots loaned for the trip and expedition jackets, which we will keep as a fantastic souvenir. Later we all attended a mandatory safety drill in the Explorer Lounge, a requirement of maritime law, to ensure the safety of all on board.

After dinner we listened to our Expedition Leader and Hotel Manager talk about our plans for the voyage. This built the excitement so only those with the energy after our busy day, stayed and chatted with members of the Expedition Team. The others of us simply relaxed with a drink in the bar.





## Burgerbukta

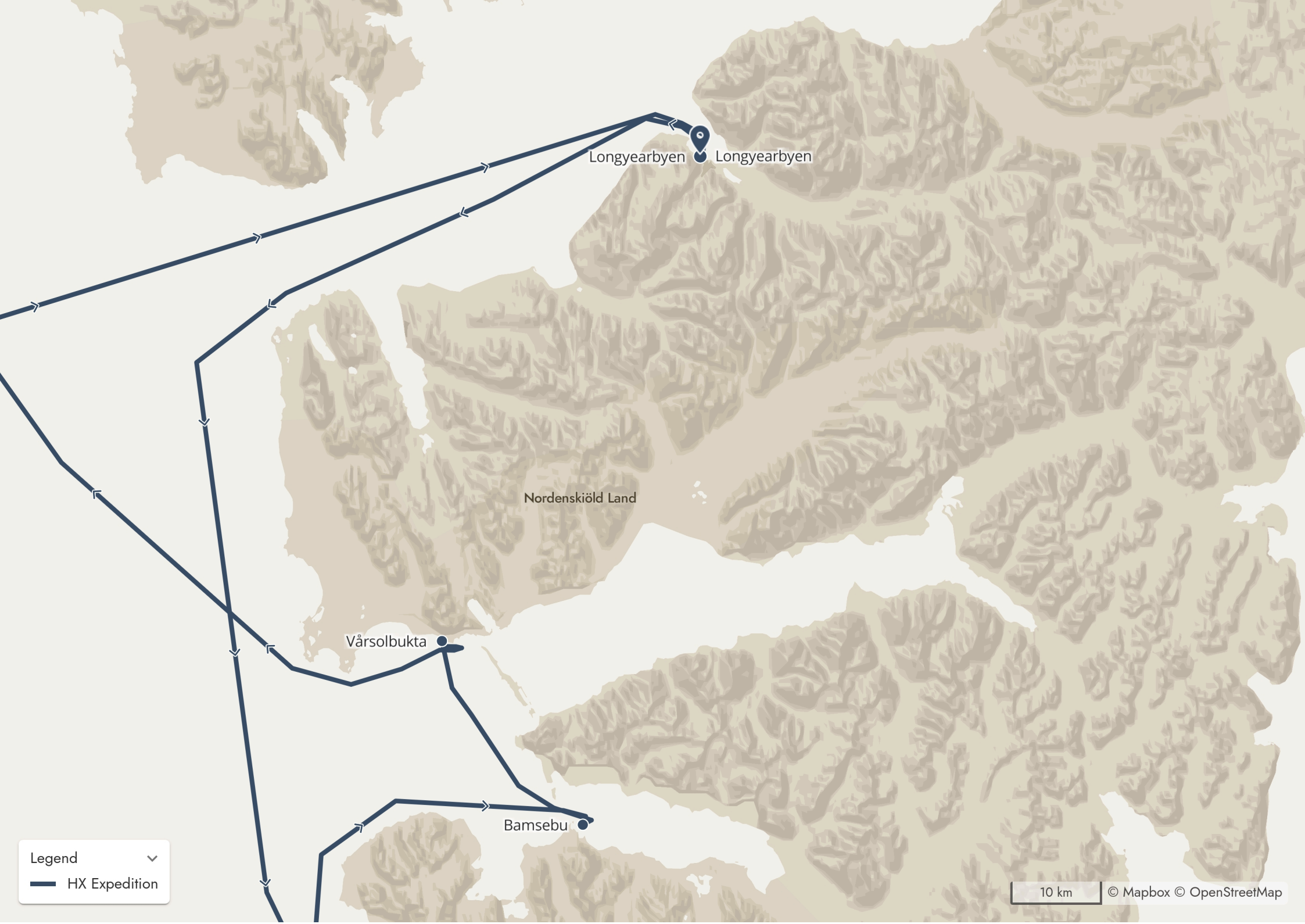
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It was a lovely morning which greeted us as the sharp peaks of Hornsund appeared in the distance. After our mandatory briefings, a guest scientist on board who specialised in acoustic marine science, took a small boat out to retrieve a hydrophone placed here in July. We sailed on to nearby Burgerbukta with only a light wind and the sun and clouds constantly changing the mood of the landscape.

Our landing took us high on the rock moraine and we faced wonderful views including the splendid blue, black and white Kvalfangerbreen. We concluded the day with the Captain's welcome, where we formally met the officers, crew and Expedition Team.







Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen

Nordenskiöld Land

Varsolbukta

Bamsebu

Legend



— HX Expedition

10 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

## Bamsebu & Vårsolbukta

This morning we entered Bellsund then Van Keulenfjorden and our landing was at the privately owned hut, Bamsebu. Built by beluga whale hunters in approximately 1930, multiple heaps of whale bones lie as testimony along the beach. The scenery was stunning and some of us went on a hike to the other side of the peninsula. Others took the chance to walk to the hut and onwards where there were the remains of a polar bear skeleton and even further, a beautiful viewpoint. In the afternoon at Vårsolbukta there was excitement and

frustration. A polar bear was observed by the Expedition Team when they were scouting on shore. The landing was cancelled to ensure we did not disturb the bear as well as for our own safety. We tried our hardest to see the bear from the ship, however it was tucked away out of sight. A little later it emerged from its original place and swam along the coast, but only a few of us with very powerful cameras or binoculars spotted it again. However, we were entertained and educated later with a really interesting polar bear lecture .









## Magdalenafjorden & Smeerenburg

Although our arrival at Magdalena Fjord was very scenic, the story of the place was somewhat sinister. This old whaling station with its remnants of blubber cookers in which whale oil was produced, also had a very large graveyard. This once had over 130 graves from the 1800s and onwards and from the beginning, many were damaged by polar bears. Others however had been disturbed by early Arctic tourists, taking bones for souvenirs. In the late afternoon we visited a

very large whaling station further north at Smeerenburg. It's blubber cookers had more intact remains and it was fascinating that this station was closer to the size of a small village than the tiny Graveneset. Our real delight was our chance to stand quietly and observe the walrus hauled out on the beach. We only stayed for a very short time of course, to prevent any disturbance of these fascinating animals.







## Monacobreen, Texas Bar & Moffen

We spent the morning cruising or kayaking in front of the incredible Monacobreen (glacier) named after Prince Albert of Monaco who sponsored a number of famous Arctic expeditions in the early 20th century. Our science boat was also launched again. After lunch we sailed to a different area of the bay known as Leifdefjorden (Love Fjord) for our landing at the trappers' hut, affectionately known as Texas Bar. Many of us also took part in a short hike. To reflect its history and name, although the hut was stocked with a collection of

alcoholic drinks from around the world, we weren't tempted and left them for posterity, as part of the story of the place. By late evening we reached the island of Moffen where we stopped to enjoy watching the charismatic walrus hauled out on the sand. To prevent any disturbance of these super animals, we moved slowly away after half an hour watching them in and out the water, leaving them peacefully living their walrus lives.











Moffen, Norway - Aug 21, 2025

Alicehamna, Norway - Aug 22, 2025

## Alicehamna & Fuglefjorden

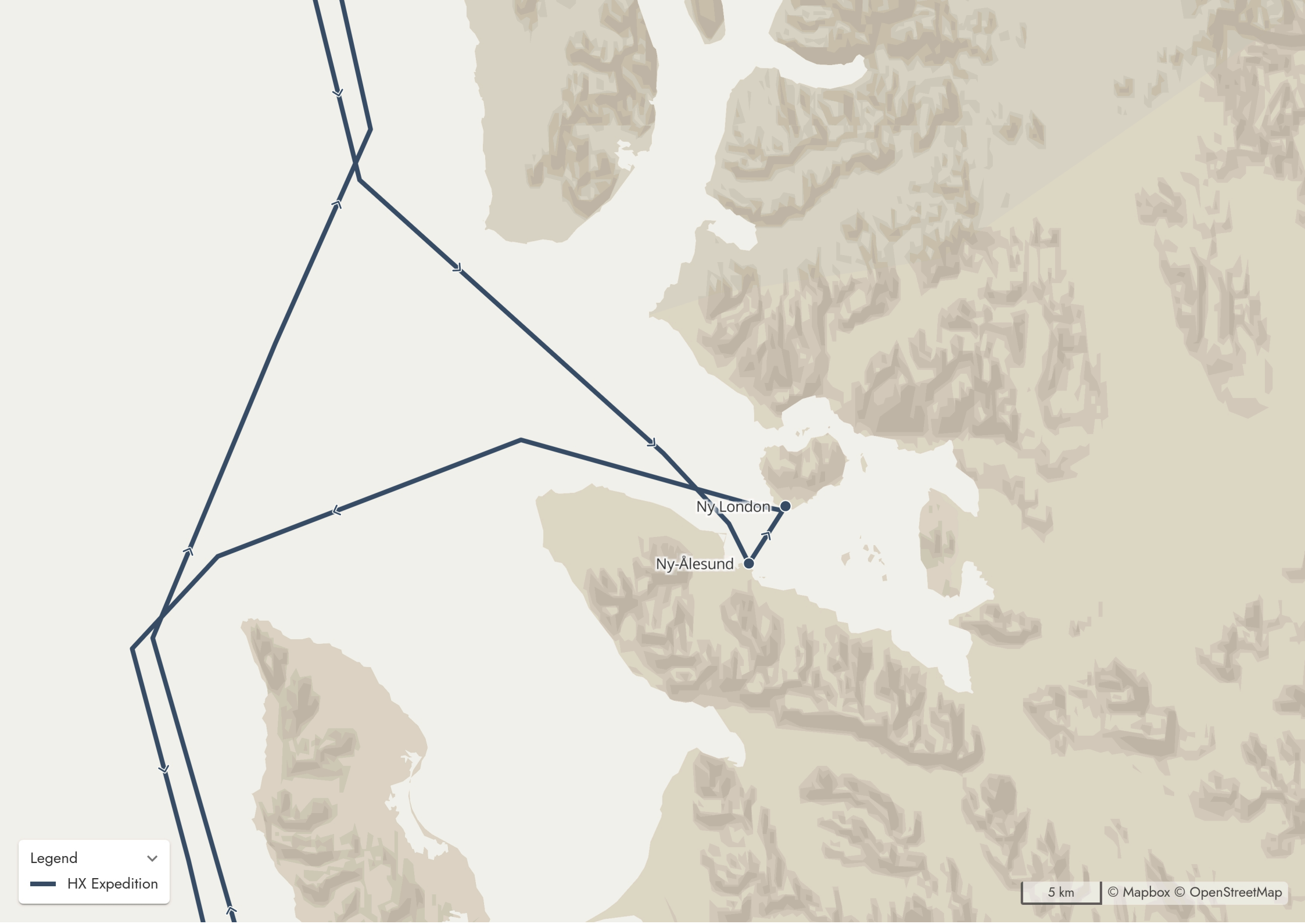
This morning brought us to Raudfjorden, Red Fjord - named for the deep iron red of the mountains. We visited historic graves and a trapper's hut built in 1927 by the famous 'Stockholm' Sven, a Swedish trapper, who, disfigured in an accident spent many winters here. Some of us enjoyed a hike in the challenging rocky terrain and the views were spectacular and worth the effort. The beach cleaning work by the hiking group was tremendous! Also some intrepid individuals

took part in a polar plunge in the Svalbard sunshine. In the afternoon we had a zodiac cruise to an active glacier - Svitjodbreen in Fuglefjorden. It was a beautiful afternoon, perfect for such a peaceful outing in magnificent scenery. The chunks of brash ice caused by the actively calving glacier were plentiful and added to the atmosphere as we slowly pushed our way through. Our kayakers also went out this afternoon and had a wonderful time.









Ny-London

Ny-Ålesund

Legend  
HX Expedition

5 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



## Ny-Ålesund & Ny London

Our final day provided us with a wonderful blend of history, nature, excitement and inevitably, souvenirs. Yes, we had reached Ny-Ålesund, where we participated in guided walks to learn about the history of this fascinating ex-coal mine, now a multinational research settlement. The day was interrupted in a very exciting way - 12 gleaming white beluga whales arrived at the stern of the ship and for over half an hour gently swam and even seemed to sleep close to the ship. This meant our departure for our short trip across Kongsfjorden was delayed but nobody minded! Later we arrived at the interesting

and remarkably complete former marble mine of Ny London where we had a short landing. In the evening, after returning our muck boots, we enjoyed an exuberant Captain's Farewell, a lovely final dinner and a happy evening with friends old and new. However the story didn't stop there because at approximately 18:30 there was an announcement from the Captain that whales had been spotted near us. Sure enough there were and we were treated to the sight of the fastest whale in the world, the fin whale and two minke whales.









## Disembarkation Day

Alongside in Longyearbyen, our time together on MS Fram drew to a close. Our early morning disembarkation ended a journey shaped by exploration, learning, and shared experiences in the unique wild Arctic environment of Svalbard. As we stepped ashore, we took with us memories of spectacular and diverse landscapes, wonderful

wildlife and friendships made with fellow travellers and crew. Whether our first or for some, a repeat voyage, despite the early morning departure, there was a sense of energy and inner joy and warmth amongst us all.







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