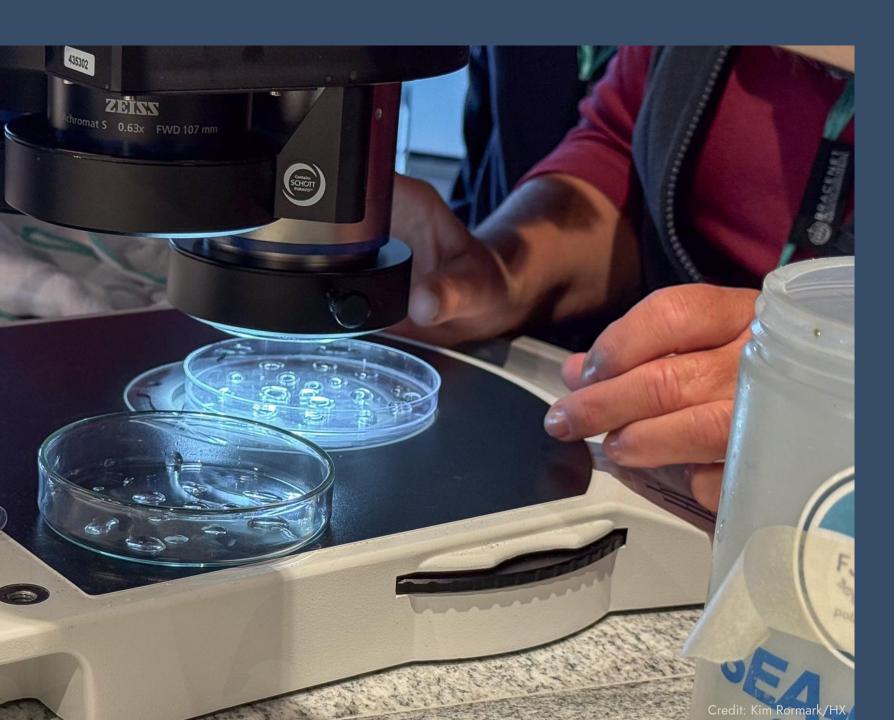


# MS Fridtjof Nansen

Alaska and British Columbia (Southbound)

09 Sept 2025 - 25 Sept 2025





# Science & Education Program

From the remote Pribilof and Aleutian Islands to Kodiak's sheltered bays and the forested fjords of Southeast Alaska, the Science and Education Team journeyed with you down the North Pacific coast, sharing the wonders of this remarkable region.

Through lectures, hands-on workshops, and cultural experiences ashore, we explored wildlife, local traditions, and the natural forces that continue to shape these landscapes.

We hope that shared moments, such as seeing seabirds at St. Paul, spotting whales along the Alaska Peninsula, or sailing quietly through Misty Fjords, have deepened your appreciation for this coast and sparked a lasting curiosity about the natural world.



# Science & Education Program

Aboard HX vessels, we are guests in Alaska's wild and ever-changing landscapes, but through citizen science, you have become part of something bigger. Science is for everyone, happening everywhere, every day, and your participation makes a difference.

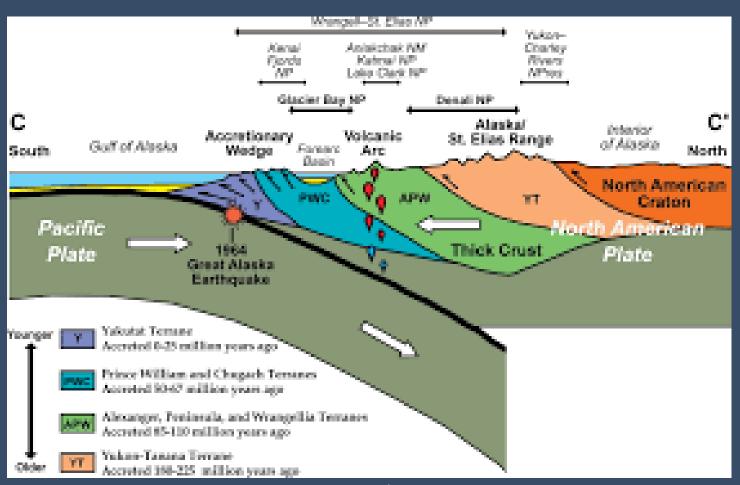
By observing wildlife, collecting data, and contributing to global research projects, you have forged a deeper connection with the ecosystems of the North Pacific coast.

This journey doesn't end here. You have the tools to keep exploring, documenting, and protecting nature wherever you go. Together, we can turn curiosity into action, fostering a future where people and the planet thrive.

# Geology

Southeast Alaska is one of the most geologically complex regions in North America, shaped by the interplay of accreted terranes, plutonic intrusions, and active tectonics. Much of its foundation is built from a collage of terranes, distinct fragments of crust that were transported by plate motion and sutured onto the margin of North America over hundreds of millions of years.

Among these, the Alexander terrane, Wrangellia, and the Chugach terrane are particularly prominent. These terranes contain a mixture of volcanic, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks that formed in environments ranging from volcanic island arcs to oceanic crustal fragments.



Credit: USGS

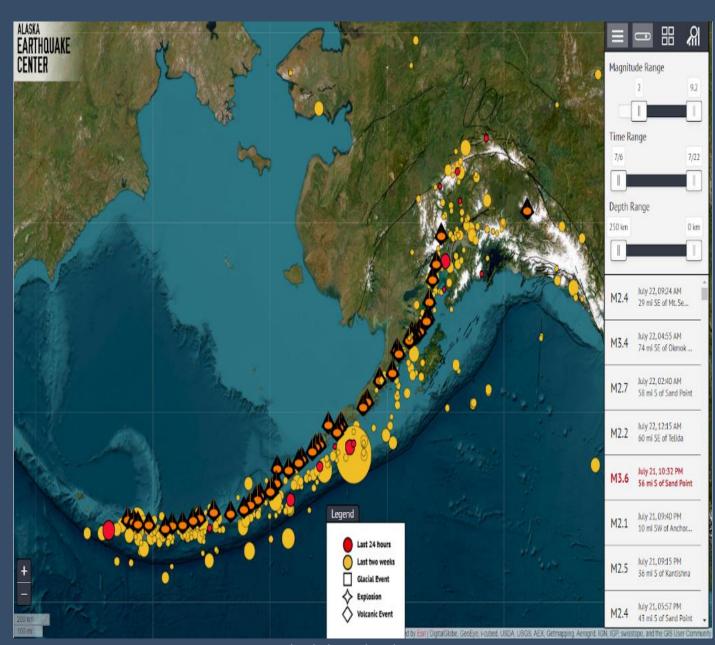
# Geology

The Aleutian arc spans approximately 2,500 kilometres from mainland Alaska to Russia, forming a classic volcanic island arc above a subduction zone. Here, the Pacific Plate subducts beneath the North American Plate at the Aleutian Trench.

The Aleutians are one of the most active tectonic regions in the world. Volcanism defines the geology of the Aleutian arc. The islands are composed mainly of Quaternary volcanic rocks, including basalt, andesite, and dacite, reflecting partial melting of the subducted slab and overlying mantle wedge.

More than 40 active volcanoes line the arc, including Mount Shishaldin, Pavlof, and Cleveland, which regularly erupt and pose hazards to air traffic. Stratovolcanoes dominate, though some shield volcanoes and caldera complexes also occur.

The islands themselves are built from stacked volcanic sequences interbedded with marine sediments. These strata are uplifted and deformed by ongoing tectonics, while frequent earthquakes—many exceeding magnitude 7—illustrate the immense energy released by the subduction system. The Aleutian subduction zone is also capable of generating large tsunamis, as evidenced by those recorded in 1946 and 1957.



Credit Alaska Earthquake centre

# Cryosphere

Icy Bay, situated on the southeast coast of the Gulf of Alaska, is a dramatic landscape shaped almost entirely by ice. It was once filled by three large tidewater glaciers—the Guyot, Yahtse, and Tyndall—descending from the St. Elias Mountains. These glaciers carved a deep fjord system, grinding the bedrock and transporting vast amounts of sediment to the bay.

Over the past century, rapid retreat has transformed lcy Bay: where ice once filled the valley, open water now dominates, with towering ice cliffs at the glacier termini. Today, the bay remains dotted with icebergs calved from the glaciers, while floating sea ice, seasonal snow, and persistent glacial ice continue to define the environment.

The ongoing retreat serves as a living laboratory for studying climate change, glacial dynamics, and their impact on marine ecosystems.



# Arts, Crafts & Creativity

Alaska's beauty is more than something to be seen—it's something to be felt, interpreted, and expressed. Through watercolour painting, wildlife origami, and clay modelling, you transformed inspiration into art, capturing the essence of this remote and breathtaking world.

No prior experience was needed—just an open mind and a willingness to explore creativity in new ways. From delicate brushstrokes to carefully folded paper, each creation became a personal tribute to the landscapes and wildlife that surrounded us.

More than just an artistic escape, these sessions provided a space to connect, sharing stories, laughter, and quiet moments of reflection as the icy world drifted by. May these creations serve as reminders of this journey, sparking inspiration long after you've returned home.









#### Wildlife Watch

As we journeyed from the remote islands of the Bering Sea along the Alaska Peninsula and south toward Vancouver, you were invited to step out on deck and take in the shifting seascape, with rugged coastlines, wide bays, and skies alive with birdlife. Yet the most memorable moments often came in stillness, as we scanned the horizon together in quiet anticipation.

Along the way, we encountered an incredible range of birds: tufted puffins nesting on the cliffs, bald eagles soaring above the forest, red-legged kittiwakes, black-footed albatrosses gliding far offshore, and many others. Each sighting brought the North Pacific coast to life, reminding us that even the most remote stretches of ocean and shoreline pulse with energy, pattern, and purpose.

These encounters were more than fleeting impressions. They were invitations to look closer, to stay curious, and to care for the fragile web of life that depends on these northern waters.

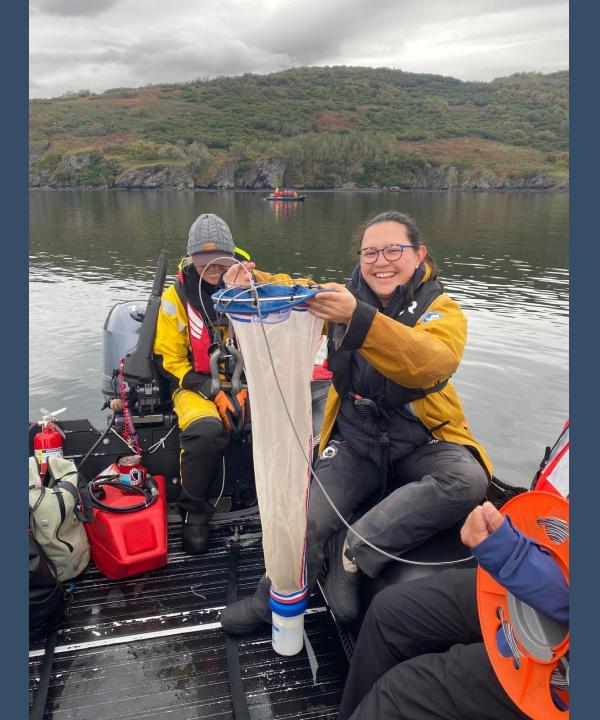


#### **Science Boat**

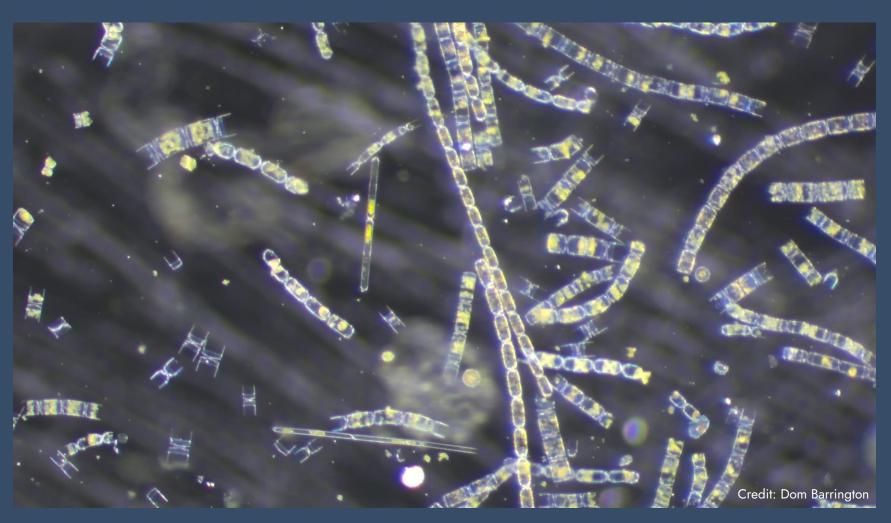
Over eight science boat sessions in Unga Village, Kodiak Island, and Icy Bay, we moved beyond observation into hands-on exploration of Alaska's coastal waters. With each drop of the net, each cast of the CTD, and each reading of the Secchi disk, guests became part of the scientific process.

Through the plankton net, we revealed the tiny organisms that sustain marine life. The CTD device revealed the ocean's hidden structure, including its temperature, salinity, and depth. At the same time, the Secchi disk provided a simple yet powerful measure of water clarity, linked to the abundance of phytoplankton at the base of the food web.

These sessions weren't just about data collection; they were about curiosity, discovery, and connection. Science isn't something distant; it is a way of seeing, questioning, and understanding the world around us. As you return home, may this journey inspire you to keep exploring, keep asking questions, and never stop being amazed by the natural world.







# Plankton Samples

Back in the science centre, we brought the ocean into focus examining our water samples under the microscope to uncover the hidden world of **phytoplankton** and **zooplankton**.

Using microscopes, we projected magnified images onto the screen, allowing everyone to see the intricate details of these tiny organisms. Smaller binocular microscopes offered a hands-on experience, inviting you to search for life in each drop of water.

The samples revealed a world dominated by phytoplankton and zooplankton, forming the foundation of the marine food web. What seemed invisible to the eye became a vivid reminder that even the smallest life forms shape this vast and wild ecosystem.



#### **CTD**

Beneath the surface, the ocean holds stories of change, stories revealed through science. With the CTD device, you helped uncover key details about Alaskan waters, measuring salinity, temperature, and depth to paint a picture of ocean conditions.

Lowered on a tethered line, the CTD captured water column profiles, offering insights into how glacial melt shapes fjords, how currents mix the sea, and where phytoplankton thrive. These data are not just numbers—they are puzzle pieces in understanding a changing climate.

Each measurement taken adds to a growing body of research, helping scientists track long-term shifts in Alaskan ecosystems. By participating, you've played a role in unravelling the mysteries of these remote waters, one drop at a time.

#### **Depth Profile: Icy Bay**



#### Depth Profile: Unga Village

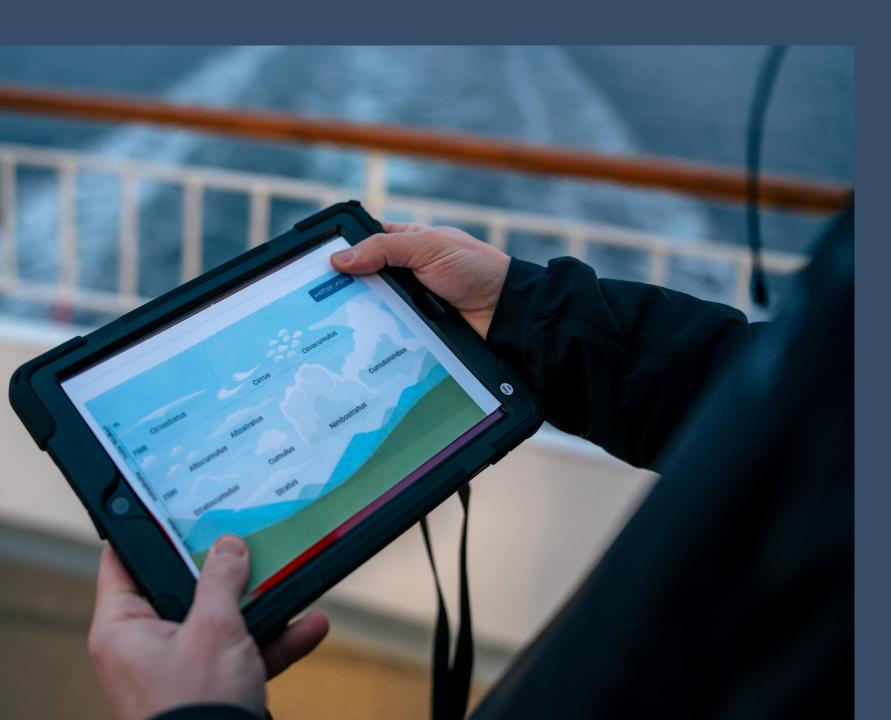


Our CTD data from tis voyage highlights the importance of the local environment on the conditions of the ocean.

Icy bay shows a very low level of salinity, as a result of the relative closed system with significant fresh water influx from the melting glaciers in the area. The CTD data also confirms the physical samples taken during the plankton tows that there was very little if any plankton in the samples.

The Unga sample, by way of contrast, was a more open environment and subjected to strong tidal flows, which has provided for a fairly uniformly mixed profile.

Temperature (°C)
Salinity (PSU)



# NASA Cloud Observer

During our voyage, we contributed to NASA's **GLOBE Cloud Observations**, collecting data on:

- September 10<sup>th</sup> (At-sea)
- September 12<sup>th</sup> (St Paul)
- September 17<sup>th</sup> (Kinak & Kunak)
- September 18<sup>th</sup> (Uyak Bay, Kodiak Island)

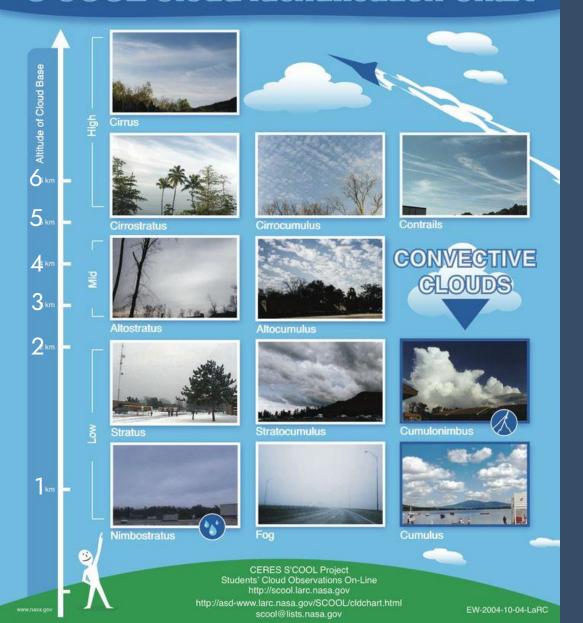
By comparing your ground-based observations with satellite measurements, scientists can refine cloud classifications, enhance climate models, and improve weather predictions, advancing our understanding of Earth's atmosphere and climate.

Curious to continue? You can observe and submit data from home using the GLOBE Observer app, transforming everyday cloud-watching into real scientific impact.

<u>View our data</u> on the global map



#### S'COOL Cloud Identification Chart



#### NASA Cloud Observer

**High Clouds** (Base above 6,000 meters):

**Cirrus**: Thin, wispy clouds composed of ice crystals. They often appear as delicate streaks or feathery wisps high in the sky.

**Cirrostratus**: Thin, sheet-like clouds that cover large portions of the sky. They can create a halo around the sun or moon.

**Cirrocumulus**: Small, fluffy clouds in a regular pattern, resembling fish scales or ripples.

**Medium Clouds** (Base between 2,000 and 6,000 meters):

**Altocumulus**: Puffy, grayish-white clouds with rounded edges. They often form parallel rows or patches.

**Altostratus**: Thick, grayish clouds that partially obscure the sun or moon. They lack the distinct features of cirrostratus.

**Low Clouds** (Base below 2,000 meters):

**Stratus**: Uniform, grayish clouds that cover the sky like a blanket. They can bring drizzle or light rain.

**Stratocumulus**: Low, lumpy clouds with defined edges. They often appear in rows or patches.

Nimbostratus: Thick, dark gray clouds associated with steady rain or snow.

Remember that these cloud types can vary in appearance and behaviour, but this basic classification helps meteorologists understand weather patterns and atmospheric conditions. If you'd like to explore more examples, you can check out NASA's On-Line Cloud Chart.

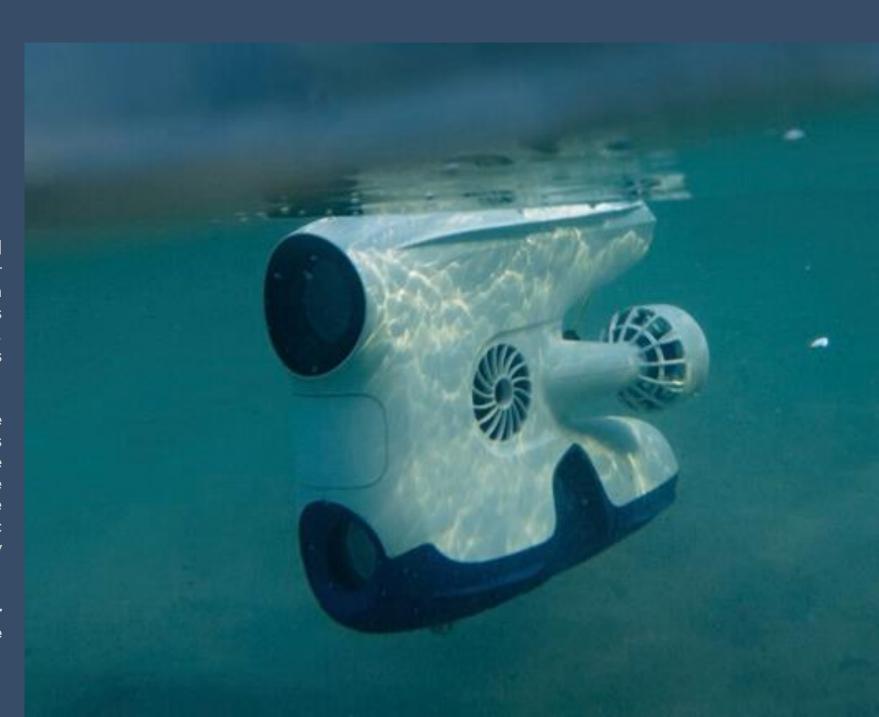
View our data on the global map

# Underwater Drone

While exploring Geographic Harbour and Kukak Bay, we deployed our underwater drone, opening a window into the hidden world beneath Alaska's coastal waters. This technology allowed us to observe marine life, seafloor habitats, and submerged landscapes in ways impossible from above.

Each dive revealed new perspectives. We saw carpets of rockweed and acorn barnacles covering the seafloor, clusters of Alaska blue mussels, and drifting jellyfish such as the Aequorea and the crystal jelly. These glimpses remind us how vibrant and dynamic these ecosystems are, even in waters that may appear still and empty from the ship.

View the highlights from our underwater drone footage on HX Underwater Drone Footage YouTube Channel



#### iNaturalist

Throughout this voyage, you played a vital role in documenting the incredible biodiversity of Alaska.

By capturing and submitting images of wildlife and plants, you contributed to a global effort to track species distribution and monitor ecosystems along some of the North Pacific's most remote and ecologically rich coastlines.

Together, we gathered:

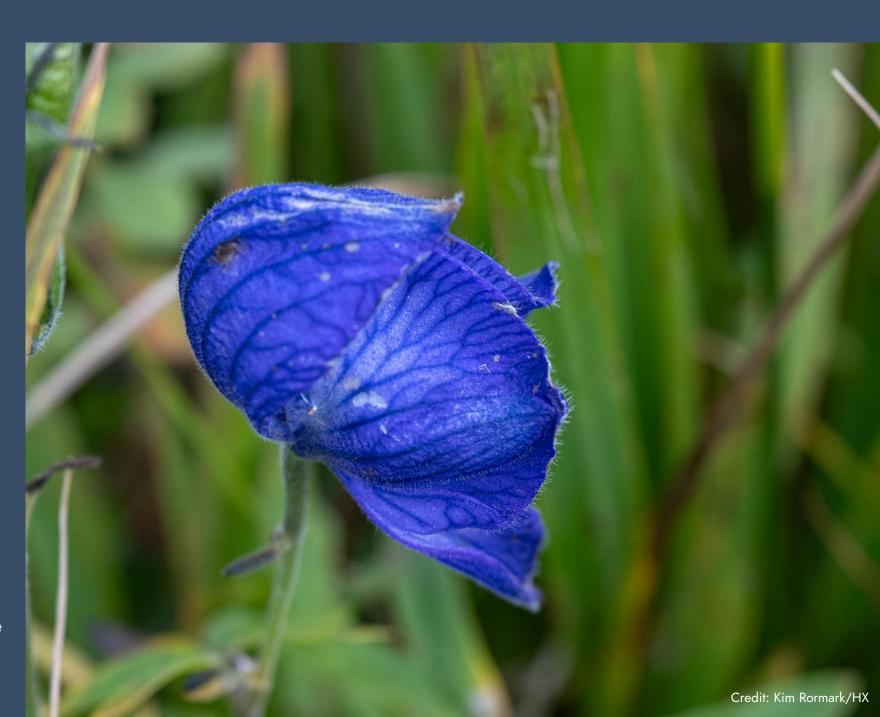
**208** Observations

91 Species Identified

**9** Observers Participating

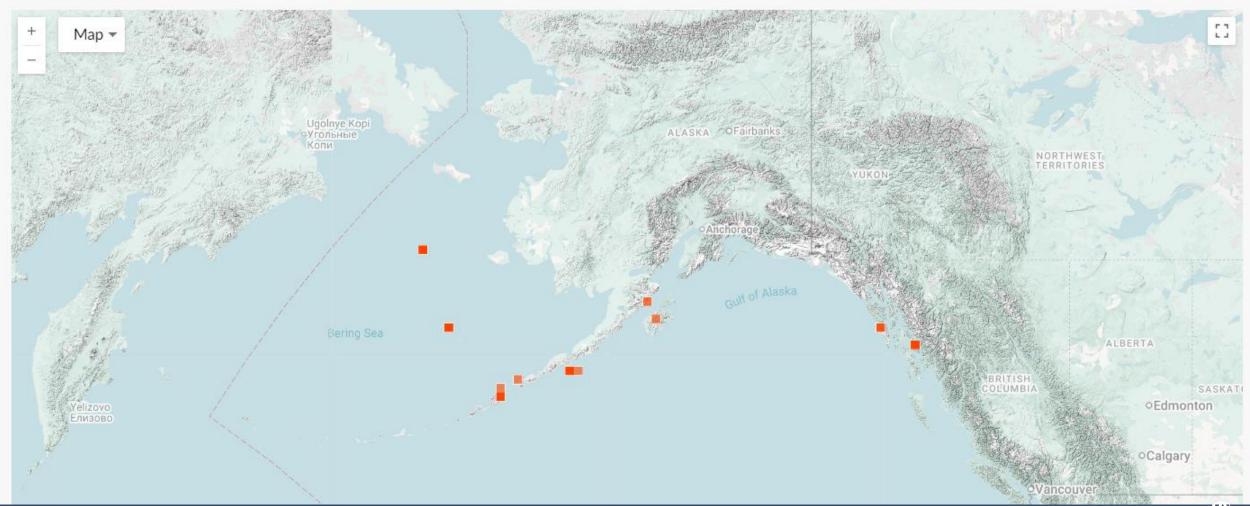
Click on the **link** to view our collective data and see the impact of your contributions:

View our data on the iNaturalist website



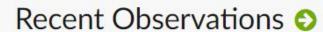
#### FNALA2510 – MS Fridtjof Nansen 9-25.9.2025

#### Map of Observations



#### FNALA2510 – MS Fridtjof Nansen 09-25.9.2025













View All



#### eBird

Bird-watching isn't just a hobby, it's a powerful tool for science. eBird, a global citizen science platform, allows bird enthusiasts to record and share sightings, contributing valuable data for research and conservation.

During our voyage, our onboard ornithologists conducted wildlife watches, completing 19 checklists and recording 37 bird species along the way.

Every entry adds to a growing database that helps scientists track migration patterns, monitor populations, and understand bird behaviour in different regions, including Alaska & British Columbia.

View our data on the eBird website

#### FNALA2510 -Alaska and British Columbia (Southbound)

9 - 25 Sep 2025 (17 days)

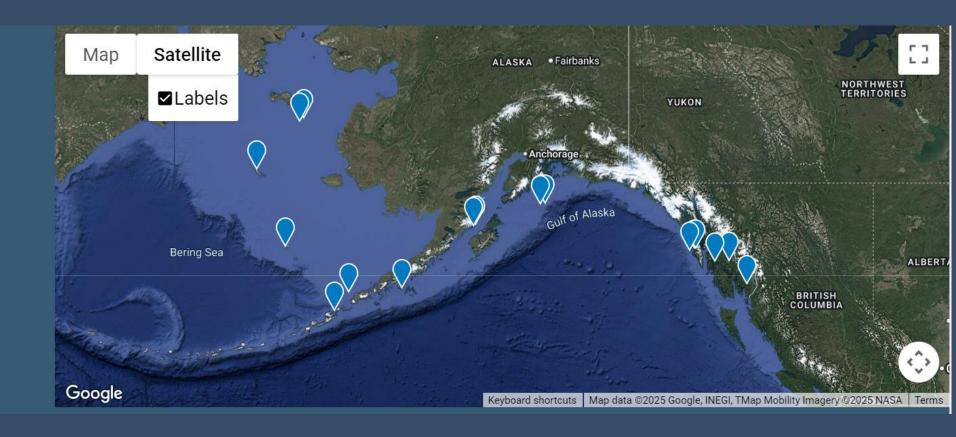
Public

Alaska, United States

Aleutians East Borough |

Aleutians West Census Area |

Bethel Census Area |



## Happywhale

5 species of whales, dolphins and porpoises were encountered during this voyage. The Expedition Team uploaded a total of 20 ID pictures of humpback whale flukes and killer whale dorsal fins to Happywhale, out of which 1 has already been identified as a known individual in the Happywhale catalogue.

These findings are a valuable contribution to science, helping to enhance our understanding of whale populations on a global scale.

Guests from this trip were also encouraged to submit their own photos of individual whales to Happywhale, contributing to their worldwide catalogue of identified whales.

View the MS Fridtjof Nansen's submissions to Happywhale during our voyage:

https://happywhale.com/user/11891;svy=1 32813





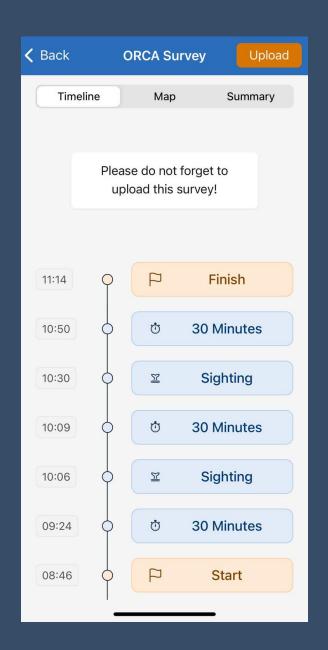
#### ORCA

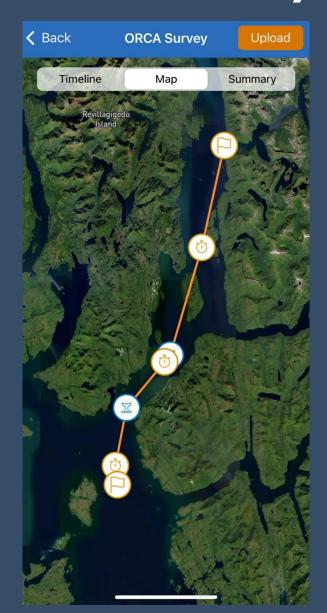
Daniela Tamayo, ORCA Ocean Conservationist, recorded sightings of marine mammals during this voyage.

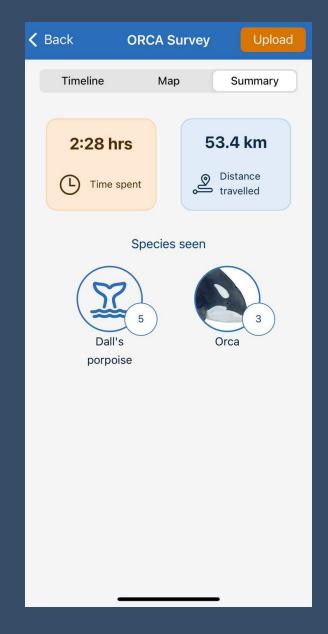
Using ORCA's OceanWatchers App, multiple sightings were registered all across Alaska and British Columbia:

- 168 individuals including humpback whales, fin whales, killer whales, Northern fur seals, Steller's sea lions, Dall's porpoise and harbour porpoise.
- 17 survey sessions.
- 1682 minutes of active surveying.
- 583.20 kilometers surveyed.

## **ORCA** surveys







### **Guest Scientist Report**

# Plankton analysis with the PlanktoScope

As part of the SOOP project, which aims to improve data collection across broader spatial and temporal scales, plankton samples and CTD measurements were collected aboard the Science Boat in remote and rarely studied regions of Alaska.

To assess plankton diversity, the PlanktoScope was used, a tool that provides rapid insights into the different plankton species present in the samples. Salinity and temperature data were then used to explore how changing environmental conditions affect the composition of both phytoplankton and zooplankton communities



Credit: Katharina Kordubel/SOOP



### Unga, U.S.

56°09′54"N 160°58′43"W 15.09.2025

Salinity 32.8 PSU Temperature 10.6°C

At Unga, results from the PlanktoScope analysis showed that the phytoplankton community was dominated by various types of diatom chains, mainly *Chaetoceros* spp., with a few rare dinoflagellates also present.

The zooplankton community was abundant and primarily composed of different copepod species.

These findings suggest stable marine conditions, with warm, saline, and clear waters that favor the growth of diatoms, thriving in well-lit, nutrient-rich conditions. The abundance of copepods can be linked to the availability of diatoms as food source, supporting a diverse and productive planktonic food web.

### Kodiak, U.S.

57°55′42"N 153°85′57"W 18.09.2025

Salinity 31 PSU Temperature 11.4°C

In Kodiak waters, the phytoplankton community was primarily dominated by *Thalassiosira* spp., observed under environmental conditions typical for September.

The smaller zooplankton appeared sparse, with few organisms detected in the sample, indicating a low abundance in this in this sampling location.

This likely points to a recent phytoplankton bloom. *Thalassiosira* species are known to grow quickly when sunlight and nutrients are available. However, zooplankton populations often take more time to respond and grow, so their numbers may still be catching up.





# lcy Bay, U.S. 60°07′96″N 141°39′59″W

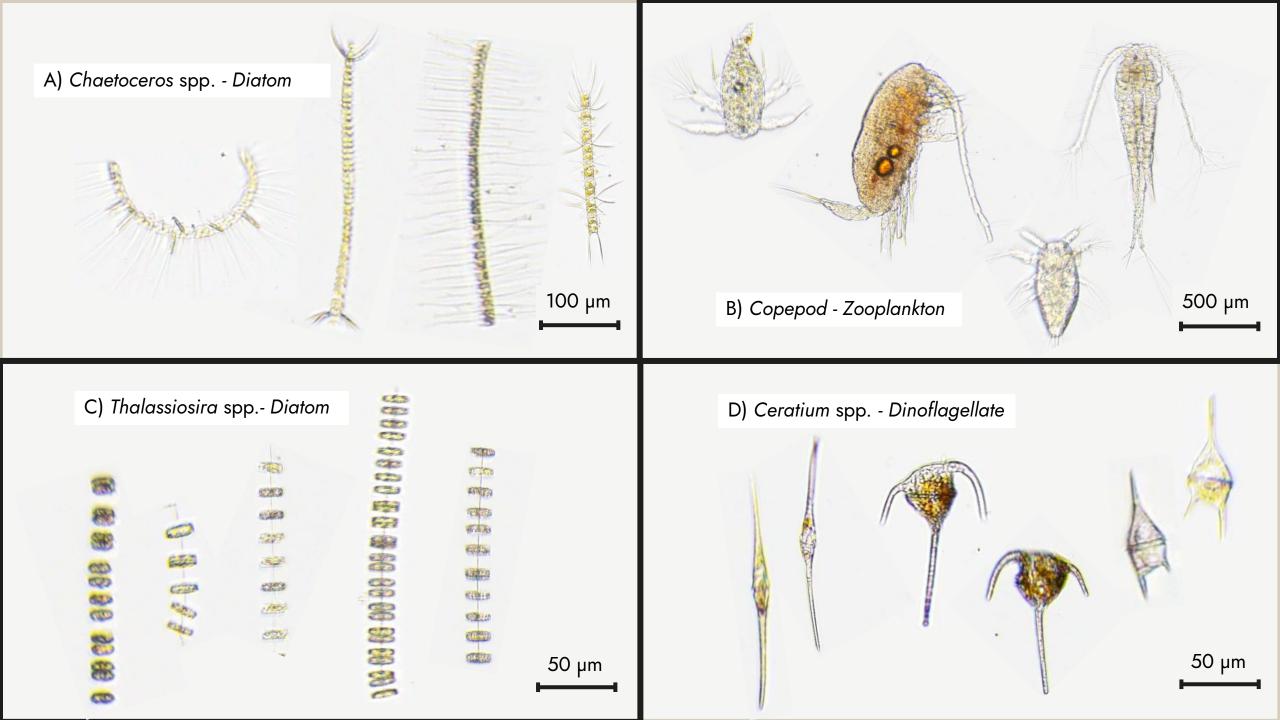
60°07′96″N 141°39′59″W 20.09.2025

Salinity 26 PSU Temperature 3.6°C

The vicinity of the glaciers in Icy Bay had a significant impact on water salinity and temperature. The influx of cold freshwater resulted in low salinity and cool temperatures. Additionally, the glacial melt contributed to high amounts of sediments in the water.

Our samples showed high levels of particles and very low plankton density, with the community dominated by a few dinoflagellates.

This reflects the physical and ecological influence of glacial meltwater, diluting seawater, reducing light penetration due to turbidity, and limiting nutrient availability. Such conditions are generally unfavorable for diverse plankton, allowing only a few tolerant species to persist.





## Wildlife List — Land Mammals

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Ovibos moschatus	Muskox	Moschusochse	Bœuf musqué
Alopex lagopus	Arctic Fox	Polarfuchs	Renard arctique
Vulpes vulpes	Red Fox	Rotfuchs	Renard roux
Ursus arctos	Brown bear	Braunbär	Ours brun
Mustela erminea	Ermine/Stoat	Hermelin	Hermine
Microtus abbreviatus	Insular Vole	Inselwühlmaus	Campagnol de St. Matthews
Spermophilus parryii	Arctic Ground Squirrel	Arktische Ziesel	Écureuil terrestre arctique
Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis	Sitka Deer	Sikta-Hirsch	Cerf de Sitka



# Wildlife List — Marine Mammals

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Megaptera novaeangliae	Humpback whale	Buckelwal	Baleine à bosse
Balaenoptera physalus	Fin whale	Finnwal	Rorqual commun
Orcinus orca	Killer whale, orca	Schwertwal, Orka	Orque
Phocoena phocoena	Harbor porpoise	Schweinswal	Marsouin commun
Delphinapterus leucas	Beluga, white whale	Beluga, Weißwal	Béluga
Eumetopias jubatus	Steller Sea Lion	Stellerscher Seelöwe	Lion de mer de Steller
Callorhinus ursinus	Northern Fur Seal	Nördliche Seebär	Otarie à fourrure du Nord
Phoca vitulina	Harbour Seal	Seehund	Phoque commún
Enhydra lutris	Sea Otter	Meerotter	Loutre de mer



# Wildlife List — Seabirds

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Stercorarius parasiticus	Parasitic Jaeger	Schmarotzerraubmöwe	Labbe parasite
Fratercula cirrhata	Tufted Puffin	Gelbschopflund	Macareux huppé
Fratercula corniculata	Horned Puffin	Hornlund	Macareux cornu
Aethia pusilla	Least Auklet	Zwergalk	Starique minuscule
Aethia cristatella	Crested Auklet	Schopfalk	Starique cristatelle
Aethia psittacula	Parakeet Auklet	Rotschnabelalk	Starique perroquet
Cepphus columba	Pigeon Guillemot	Taubenteiste	Guillemot colombin
Uria lomvia	Thick-billed Murre	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brünnich
Uria aalge	Common Murre	Trottellumme	Guillemot marmette
Rissa tridactyla	Black-legged Kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle
Rissa brevirostris	Red-legged Kittiwake	Klippenmöwe	Mouette des brumes
Larus smithsonianus	Herring Gull	Kanadamöwe	Goéland hudsonien
Larus hyperboreus	Glaucous Gull	Eismöwe	Goéland bourgmestre
Larus glaucescens	Glaucous-winged Gull	Beringmöwe	Goéland à ailes grises
Phoebastria immutabilis	Laysan Albatross	Laysanalbatros	Albatros de Laysan
Phoebastria nigripes	Black-footed Albatross	Schwarzfußalbatros	Albatros à pieds noirs
Fulmarus glacialis	Northern Fulmar	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boréal
Ardenna grisea	Sooty Shearwater	Dunkler Sturmtaucher	Puffin fuligineux

# Wildlife List — Seabirds

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Ardenna tenuirostris	Short-tailed Shearwater	Kurzschwanz-Sturmtaucher	Puffin à bec grêle
Phalacrocorax urile	Red-faced Cormorant	Rotgesichtscharbe	Cormoran à face rouge
Phalacrocorax pelagicus	Pelagic Cormorant	Meerscharbe	Cormoran pélagique
Nannopterum auritus	Double-crested Cormorant	Ohrenscharbe	Cormoran à aigrettes

# Wildlife List – Waterbirds

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Bucephala islandica	Barrow's Goldeneye	Spatelente	Garrot d'Islande
Melanitta americana	Black Scoter	Pazifiktrauerente	Macreuse à bec jaune
Melanitta deglandi	White-winged Scoter	Höckersamtente	Macreuse à ailes blanches
Melanitta perspicillata	Surf Scoter	Brillenente	Macreuse à front blanc
Phalaropus lobatus	Red-necked Phalarope	Odinshühnchen	Phalarope à bec étroit
Histrionicus histrionicus	Harlequin Duck	Kragenente	Arlequin plongeur
Mergus merganser	Common Merganser	Gänsesäger	Grand Harle
Mergus serrator	Red-breasted Merganser	Mittelsäger	Harle huppé
Podiceps grisegena	Red-necked Grebe	Rothalstaucher	Grèbe jougris
Gavia pacifica	Pacific Loon	Pazifiktaucher	Plongeon du Pacifique
Gavia immer	Common Loon	Eistaucher	Plongeon huard
Ardea herodias	Great Blue Heron	Kanadareiher	Grand Héron
Limosa lapponica	Bar-tailed Godwit	Pfuhlschnepfe	Barge rousse
Phalaropus lobatus	Red-necked Phalarope	Odinshühnchen	Phalarope à bec étroit
Calidris ptilocnemis	Rock Sandpiper	Beringstrandläufer	Bécasseau des Aléoutiennes

# Wildlife List — Landbirds

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Falco peregrinus	Peregrine Falcon	Wanderfalke	Faucon pèlerin
Calcarius lapponicus	Lapland Bunting / Longspur	Spornammer	Plectrophane lapon
Plectrophenax nivalis	Snow Bunting	Schneeammer	Plectrophane des neiges
Corvus corax	Common Raven	Kolkrabe	Grand Corbeau
Columba livia	Rock Pigeon	Felsentaube	Pigeon biset
Lagopus muta	Rock Ptarmigan	Alpenschneehuhn	Lagopède alpin
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald Eagle	Weißkopf-Seeadler	Pygargue à tête blanche
Falco columbarius	Merlin	Merlin	Faucon émerillon
Megaceryle alcyon	Belted Kingfisher	Gürtelfischer	Martin-pêcheur d'Amérique
Colaptes auratus	Northern Flicker	Ostgoldspecht	Pic doré
Cyanocitta stelleri	Steller's Jay	Diademhäher	Geai de Steller
Pica hudsonia	Black-billed Magpie	Hudsonelster	Pie d'Amérique
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American Crow	Amerikakrähe	Corneille d'Amérique
Corvus corax	Common Raven	Kolkrabe	Grand Corbeau
Poecile rufescens	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	Rotrückenmeise	Mésange à dos marron
Antigone canadensis	Sandhill crane	Kanadakranich	Grue du Canada

# Wildlife List — Landbirds

Scientific Name	English	Deutsch	Français
Regulus satrapa	Golden-crowned Kinglet	Indianergoldhähnchen	Roitelet à couronne dorée
Troglodytes pacificus	Pacific Wren	Pazifikzaunkönig	Troglodyte de Baird
Cinclus mexicanus	American Dipper	Grauwasseramsel	Cincle d'Amérique
Sturnus vulgaris	European Starling	Star	Étourneau sansonnet
lxoreus naevius	Varied Thrush	Halsbanddrossel	Grive à collier
Turdus migratorius	American Robin	Wanderdrossel	Merle d'Amérique
Leucosticte tephrocotis	Grey-crowned Rosy Finch	Schwarzstirn-Schneegimpel	Roselin à tête grise
Calcarius Iapponicus	Lapland Longspur	Spornammer	Plectrophane lapon
Plectrophenax nivalis	Snow Bunting	Schneeammer	Plectrophane des neiges
Plectrophenax hyperboreus	McKay's Bunting	Beringschneeammer	Plectrophane blanc
Junco hyemalis	Dark-eyed Junco	Winterammer	Junco ardoisé
Melospiza melodia	Song Sparrow	Singammer	Bruant chanteur

