



# THE

## Science & Education Report

# MS Spitsbergen

7 – 17 April 2026

The Scottish Isles – Island Hopping in  
the Hebrides





# Science & Education Programme

Our Science and Education Team accompanied you during your expedition to the remote communities and impressive nature of Scotland.

We had the opportunity to explore our destination's natural beauty and rich culture. We organized lectures and activities on board and explored our destinations through landings, expedition experiences, and from the water.

# History & Culture

While exploring the region, we noted how the Hebrides blend Norse and Gaelic heritage, shaped by clans, fishing, and seafaring. Islands like Islay and Arran reflect whisky traditions and crofting life, while Stornoway anchors Gaelic culture. Harbours such as Tobermory and Oban highlight maritime history, trade, and enduring island identity. We also shared the rich history of tweed from our Historian, Mike.





# Beach Clean-Up

On Thursday, 9 April, in Islay, we had a very successful beach clean-up!

In total, we collected 19.5 kg of trash that we brought to the Islay dumpster to be recycled.

Thank you for helping care for the beautiful places we visit!



# Geology of Scotland

Kilt Rock is famous for its basalt columns, formed by volcanic activity around 60 million years ago. The island's geology is similar to that of the Giant's Causeway, with striking hexagonal basalt formations created by slowly cooling lava.

These unique structures are a testament to the volcanic processes of the Paleogene Period, during the opening of the North Atlantic.

# Guest Scientist – Sally Tapp

We were joined by Sally Tapp, from Sea Watch, on this voyage. She conducted 11 surveys while on board and collected valuable data about the presence (and absence) of marine mammal species during our voyage.

You can get the app and conduct your own surveys here: [Report a Sighting – Sea Watch Foundation](#). You can also see the sightings she submitted here [Sightings Viewer](#)





# SPBRI2612 MS Spitsbergen The Scottis...

Apr 7, 2026 - Apr 17, 2026

## Overview

415  
OBSERVATIONS

193  
SPECIES

85  
IDENTIFIERS

**Most Observations**

 **1st** mattgledhill 260

 julia1153 90

 quakquak 51

 davis\_ashley 9

 lizbowey 4

 kathrin12345 1

**Most Species**

 **1st** mattgledhill 131

 julia1153 45

 quakquak 28


 davis\_ashley 5


 lizbowey 2


 kathrin12345 0


 **Most Observed Species**


Gorse

 Maidenhair Spleenwort

 European Herring Gull

 Eurasian Oystercatcher

 Beard Lichens

 Common Murre

# iNaturalist

Throughout our expedition, we documented the flora and fauna of the Scottish isles and uploaded our findings to the iNaturalist biodiversity platform.

During our voyage, we submitted 415 observations of 193 different species! This effort contributes understanding of the geographical distribution of species and aids researchers in their ongoing studies and conservation efforts to protect these species.

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



# NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer

Together with our Environmental Scientist Jean, you observed the low-level cloud coverage of the sky and identified stratus with the help of the NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer on 2 occasions.

These submissions help NASA improve our understanding of Earth's atmosphere and climate by providing valuable data for scientific research and climate modelling.

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

# Under the Microscope

Often there is more to see than meets the eye when we take the time to look a little closer.

During our time together, you took part and engaged in several discovery sessions and Explorer Labs in our Science Centre, where we took the time to dig a little deeper.



# Small Spotted Cat Shark Dissection

This voyage discovered a small shark that had washed ashore. Zoe led a dissection of it, as it was in excellent condition for close study. Together we examined its external and internal anatomy, exploring the features that have defined sharks for 450 million years.



# Shark Dissection

We took turns feeling the shark's rough protective skin and felt its denticles that are like a cat's tongue. We looked at its tiny teeth under the microscope and explored organ by organ.

We thank our little shark for its contribution to science!





# Science Boats

While in Loch Nevis we braved some strong winds and impressive bursts of rain in our Science Boats!

We collected oceanographic data with our CTD and phytoplankton and zooplankton samples to look at in the lab.

Thanks to all 18 of our participants for helping collect this valuable data!

# Plankton Samples

We explored the microscopic world of plankton, the tiny organisms that drift in our ocean. Samples were collected at Loch Nevis during our two science boat sessions.

We collected a large number of photosynthetic phytoplankton and marvelled at the gorgeous diatoms. We also saw the reproductive bloom in zooplankton. We saw some wee beasties, like the barnacle larvae, polychaete worms, and the mysterious sea anemone larva (pictured right).



# Explorer Labs

Throughout our trip you had the opportunity to explore different aspects of Scotland under the microscope.

On our self-guided Explorer Labs, you explored the intertidal ecosystems and how armour and attachment are crucial to survival in these ecosystems!

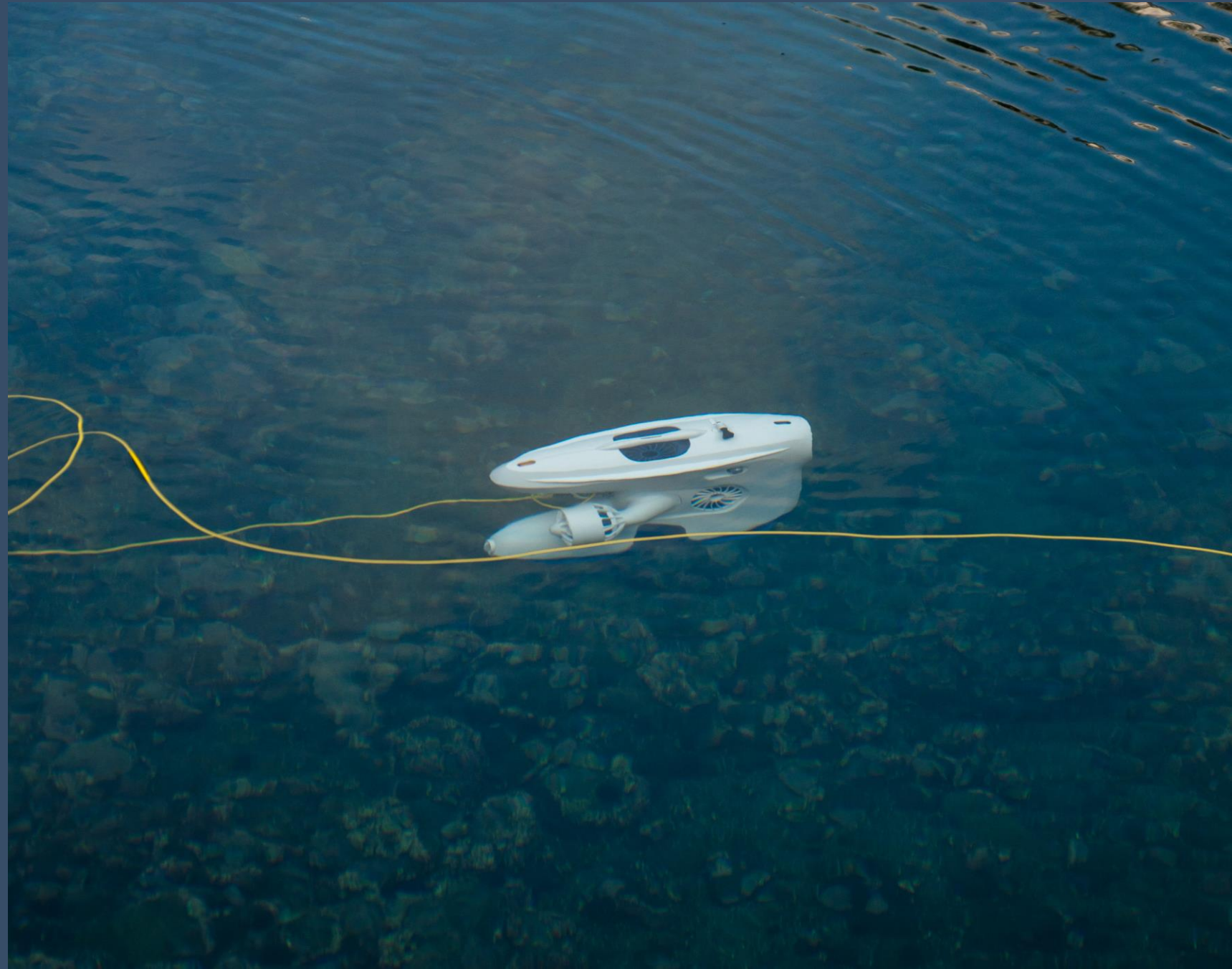


# Underwater Drone

We used a Blueye Pioneer underwater drone to explore the underwater world of Scotland in Colonsay on 16 April.

Along the jetty, we found a myriad of seaweeds and kelps occupying this foreign structure, and a lone sea star as well.

View the highlights from our underwater drone footage [on YouTube](#)



# Wildlife List — Birds





# Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	<b>northern gannet</b>	Basstöpel	fou de Bassan
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	<b>great cormorant</b>	Kormoran	grand cormoran
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	<b>European shag</b>	Krähenscharbe	cormoran huppé
<i>Larus canus</i>	<b>common gull</b>	Sturmmöwe	goéland centré
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	<b>European herring gull</b>	Silbermöwe	goéland argenté
<i>Larus marinus</i>	<b>great black-backed gull</b>	Mantelmöwe	goéland marin
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	<b>lesser black-backed gull</b>	Heringsmöwe	goéland brun
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	<b>black-legged kittiwake</b>	Dreizehenmöwe	mouette tridactyle
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	<b>black-headed gull</b>	Lachmöwe	mouette rieuse
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	<b>common tern</b>	Flusseeschwalbe	sterne pierregarin
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	<b>northern fulmar</b>	Eissturmvogel	fulmar boreal
<i>Uria aalge</i>	<b>common guillemot (common murre)</b>	Trottellumme	guillemot marmette
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	<b>Arctic puffin</b>	Papgeientaucher	macareux moine
<i>Alca torda</i>	<b>razorbill</b>	Tordalk	petit pingouin
<i>Cephus grylle</i>	<b>black guillemot</b>	Gryllteiste	guillemot à miroir
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	<b>great skua</b>	Skua	grande labbe

# Wildlife List – Shore Birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	<b>grey heron</b>	Graureiher	héron cendré
<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	<b>little egret</b>	Seidenreiher	sigrette garzette
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	<b>mute swan</b>	Höckerschwan	cygne tuberculé
<i>Anser anser</i>	<b>greylag goose</b>	Graugans	oie cendrée
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	<b>common shelduck</b>	Brandgans	tadorne de Belon
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	<b>mallard</b>	Stockente	canard colvert
<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>	<b>great crested grebe</b>	Haubentaucher	grebe huppé
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	<b>common eider</b>	Eiderente	eider à duvet
<i>Gavia immer</i>	<b>great northern diver (common loon)</b>	Eistaucher	plongeon huard
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	<b>Eurasian oystercatcher</b>	Austenfischer	huïtrier
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	<b>common redshank</b>	Rotschenkel	chevalier gambette
<i>Grus grus</i>	<b>common crane</b>	Kranich	grue cendrée

# Wildlife List – Land Birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	<b>white-tailed eagle</b>	Seeadler	pygargue à queue blanche
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	<b>golden eagle</b>	Steinadler	aigle royal
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	<b>common buzzard</b>	Mäusebussard	buse variable
<i>Corvus cornix</i>	<b>hooded crow</b>	Nebelkrähe	corneille mantelée
<i>Corvus corone</i>	<b>carrion crow</b>	Rabenkrähe	cornielle noire
<i>Corvus corax</i>	<b>northern (common) raven</b>	Kolkrabe	grand corbeau
<i>Picus viridis</i>	<b>Eurasian green woodpecker</b>	Gruenspecht	pic vert
<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	<b>feral pigeon</b>	Stadttaube	pigeon domestique
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	<b>common wood pigeon</b>	Ringeltaube	pigeon ramier
<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	<b>Eurasian treecreeper</b>	Waldbaumläufer	grimpeur de bois

# Wildlife List – Land Birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	<b>Eurasian rock pipit</b>	Strandpieper	pipit maritime
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	<b>meadow pipit</b>	Wiesenpieper	pipit farlouse
<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	<b>pied wagtail</b>	Trauerbachstelze	bergeronnette de Yarrell
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	<b>European robin</b>	Rotkehlchen	rougegorge familier
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	<b>house sparrow</b>	Haussperling	moineau domestique
<i>Turdus merula</i>	<b>Eurasian (common) blackbird</b>	Amsel	merle noir
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	<b>Eurasian wren</b>	Zaunkönig	troglodyte mignon
<i>Pariparus ater</i>	<b>coal tit</b>	Tannenmeise	mesange noire
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	<b>Eurasian blue tit</b>	Blaumeise	mesange bleu
<i>Parus major</i>	<b>great tit</b>	Kohlmeise	mésange charbonnière
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	<b>European starling</b>	Gemeiner Star	étourneau sansonnet
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	<b>European goldfinch</b>	Stieglitz	chardonneret elegant
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	<b>common chaffinch</b>	Buchfink	pinson des arbres
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	<b>Eurasian skylark</b>	Feldlerche	alouette des champs
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	<b>sand martin</b>	Uferschwalbe	hirondelle de rivage
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	<b>willow warbler</b>	Fitis	pouillot fits

< My Trip Reports

# Scottish Isles MS Spitsbergen SPBRI262

7 – 17 Apr 2026 (11 days) Public

Scotland, United Kingdom

Argyll and Bute | Eilean Siar | Highland |  
North Ayrshire | South Ayrshire

Julia Schroeder,

Science & Education Coordinator MS Spitsbergen

Share Edit



# eBird

During our Wildlife Watches, our Ornithologist, Julia, conducted detailed bird surveys, recording observations for the Citizen Science platform eBird. We recorded 57 different species of birds in 15 checklists.

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

## Narrative

Owners and editors of a Trip Report may write a narrative.

Add narrative

DATA FOR: Group (all people)

57  
Species Observed

15  
Checklists

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

**Wildlife**

**List – Mammals**



# Wildlife List – Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	<b>common bottlenose dolphin</b>	Grosser Tümmler	grand dauphin
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	<b>harbour seal, common seal</b>	Seehund	phoque commún
<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	<b>grey seal</b>	Kegelrobbe	phoque gris

THANKS



Thanks for your participation!