MS FRAM: 11–24 May 2026

Sublime Svalbard – From Hamburg via Norway's Springtime Fjords

Credit:Yuri Choufour/HX

History & Culture: Svolvær

Tucked beneath dramatic granite peaks, Svolvær is Lofoten's vibrant heart: a fishing town where stockfish traditions meet a thriving arts scene. We were fortunate to call here on 17 May, Norway's Constitution Day, joining locals in *bunads* as marching bands, flag-waving children, and joyful songs filled the streets in true community spirit.

History & Culture: The Polar Museum

Housed in an 1830s customs warehouse on Tromsø's waterfront, the Polar Museum chronicles Arctic exploration, sealing traditions, and the legacies of Roald Amundsen and Fridtjof Nansen. It mirrors Tromsø's identity as Norway's Gateway to the Arctic', a vibrant cultural hub where polar heritage, Sámi influence, and seafaring history converge.

History & Culture: Ny-Alesund

At nearly 79°N, Ny-Ålesund is the world's northernmost year-round research station; once a coal-mining outpost, now an international hub for Arctic science.

In 1926, Roald Amundsen, American Lincoln Ellsworth, and Italian Umberto Nobile took the Norge airship over the North Pole from here; the mooring mast and Amundsen's bronze bust honor Svalbard's exploration legacy.

History & Culture: *Syttende Mai* (May 17th)

Celebrating Norway's Constitution Day in the heart of Trollfjord was unforgettable. Between the waffles, the parade on deck, and the towering mountains, it perfectly captured the Norwegian spirit of 'sharing and caring'. Here's to the beauty of this landscape. And may the trolls keep our journey safe!

Art Corner

We enjoyed a relaxing and creative time on our Norwegian cruise, bringing our memories to life.

NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer

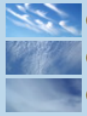
We collected four observations for NASA during this voyage and obtained one match so far for our observations.

View our data on the global map

GLOBE Cloud Observations Paired with NASA

Total Satellite Comparisons: 403

Useful Resources: How to Read My NASA GLOBE Clouds Satellite Comparison Table, How to Compare My Cloud Observations with

	GLOBE	
	2026-05-16 12:18:00	2026-05-16 12:09
	65.12	64.7 to 65.5
	11.81	11.46 to 12.26
	Overcast (>90%)	Broken 70.82%
	 Cirrus Cirrocumulus Cirrostratus Opacity: Translucent	Cover: Isolated 17.07% Altitude: 6.2 (km) Phase: Ice 245.43 (K) Opacity: Transparent
	 Altocumulus Altostratus Cover: Broken (50-90%) Opacity: Opaque	Cover: Broken 53.74% Altitude: 4.32 (km) Phase: Ice/Water Mix 257.36 (K) Opacity: Translucent
	 Cumulus Cover: Scattered (25-50%) Opacity: Opaque	Cover: Few (0.01%) Altitude: 1.69 (km) Phase: Water 274.98 (K) Opacity: Transparent
	GLOBE Photos North East South  West Up Down 	***VIIRS NOAA-20*** Worldview  Worldview Tutorial
	Sky Conditions Sky Visibility : no report Sky Color : no report **Surface Conditions** Snow/Ice : No Standing Water : Yes Muddy : No Dry Ground : No Leaves on Trees : No Raining or Snowing : No	Are there any comments you would like to add? Be sure to add the name of the satellite for our record.

NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer

This table shows how our observation from the ground (blue column) compared to the NOAA-20 satellite's observation (white column) on 12 May while in Esbjerg, Denmark.

View our data on the global map

Underwater Drone

While navigating the secluded waters of Fjærland, we caught a glimpse into the hidden world of the inner fjords. We discovered a thick 'soup' of copepods at a depth of 70m, yet found a stark, urchin-filled seafloor closer to the pier. These features are typical of fjord ecosystems, shaped by the heavy deposit of fine sediments from glacial meltwater. It was a pleasure to share these discoveries with such an inquisitive and enthusiastic group!

iNaturalist

Thanks to your efforts, we recorded over 120 opportunistic observations representing nearly 65 different species!

Reflecting the peak of the spring season, plants were our most-spotted organisms (accounting for over 60% of sightings), followed by birds and mammals.

By sharing your data on iNaturalist, you are contributing to a global, open-access database that fuels scientific research and conservation monitoring. These records are vital tools for researchers tracking species distribution and assessing ecosystem health.

You can view the project and also upload your observations from our voyage by clicking here.

eBird

Your onboard Ornithologist, Enzo, completed 36 eBird checklists of 72 different species during our 14-day voyage. The most abundant species was the little auk, followed by the European shag. If you want to review the complete records, please use the following link:

View our data on our eBird trip report

White-Beaked Dolphins

Here is a video of the white-beaked dolphins sighted off Bjørnøya ('Bear Island').

Geological Highlights – Norway

During this voyage we sailed along the geological spine of the North Atlantic.

Along Norway's coast, we stepped on billion years old Precambrian gneisses. Further, the Caledonian mountain belts recorded a continent collision dating from over 400 million years ago.

Geological Highlights Norway & Svalbard

From south to north, Norway's fjords and Svalbard's glaciers revealed the immense sculpting power of ice across the ages.

Geological Highlights – Bjørnøya

Passing south of Bjørnøya (Bear Island), the voyage skirted one of the most remote outposts of the Barents Sea. The isolated island marks a geological transition between mainland Norway and Svalbard, with steep sea cliffs exposing ancient sedimentary rocks shaped by Arctic uplift, faulting, and relentless marine erosion.

Giving us a first peek into Svalbard's geology, Bjørnøya displays fantastic strata of sandstones, limestones, and shales. From deck, we were able to observe how tectonic activity opens faults and disturbs nicely deposited sedimentary layer cakes.

Geological Highlights – Svalbard

In Svalbard, layered sedimentary rocks and uplifted fault blocks expose an impressive archive of past climates and ecosystems: sandstones, shales, limestones, and mudstones were the background of our northernmost activities.

Climate Change Survey

How do you feel about climate change?

As an experiment, we conducted a survey on our guests' views and feelings on the subject of climate change. In the long run, we would like to gather enough data for a scientific statistical study in the microcosm of our ship.

Thank you to the **78 participants** who answered the survey. On **our** cruise, we found that **71%** of our guests consider climate change a serious problem caused by humans. **You can view the results and interpretations at this link.**

The results will continue to evolve the more data we collect.

70.8%
believe climate change is a serious human-caused problem

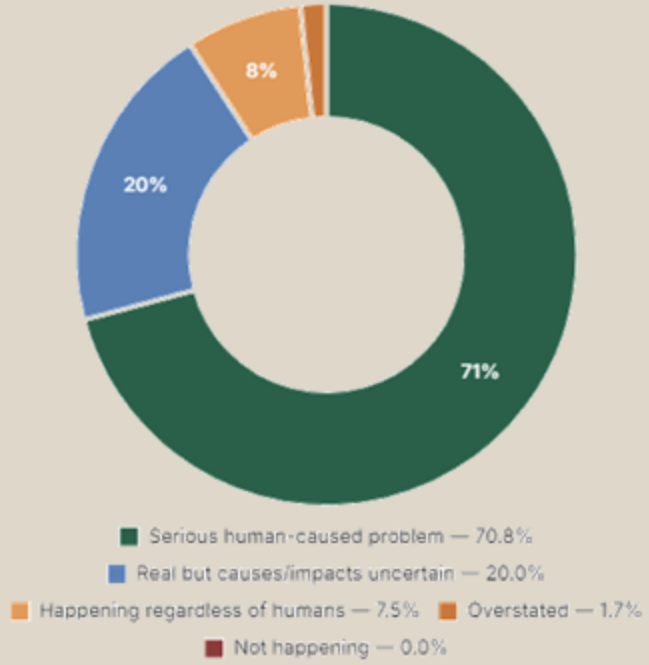
54%
feel "concerned but hopeful" when hearing about climate change

37%
see some damage as unavoidable but still believe meaningful action matters (Q3)

7.95
average personal worry score out of 10 — vs 4.39 perceived for the general public

81%
are willing or very willing to make major lifestyle changes (Q7 scores 4–5)

When you hear about climate change, what best describes your reaction?



Visit the IPCC website

Climate Change IPCC FAQ

IPCC Summary report

Guest Scientists WAVE Project

Dr Lauren McWhinnie and PhD student Alanna Frayne from Heriot-Watt University in Scotland recently conducted 51 hours of visual surveys aboard MS Fram for Project WAVE. By tracking Arctic whale distribution and abundance, their research aims to minimize vessel impact on marine life. The team recorded seven species while sailing in Arctic waters, including two rare sightings of Svalbard's endangered white whales (belugas), a population of fewer than 600 individuals. Supported by HX Foundation and HX Expeditions, the WAVE team thank you all for your contribution to protecting these unique animals and invite you to follow their progress in the years ahead by scanning this QR code.

Wildlife List — Marine Mammals

Credit: Yuri Choufour/HX

Wildlife List – Marine Mammals

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Delphinus delphis	common dolphin	Gemeiner Delfin
Tursiops truncatus	common bottlenose dolphin	Großer Tümmler
Grampus griseus	Risso's dolphin	Risso-Delfin
Megaptera novaeangliae	humpback whale	Buckelwal
Balaenoptera acutorostrata	common minke whale	Zwergwal
Delphinapterus leucas	beluga whale	Weißwal
Lagenorhynchus albirostris	white-beaked dolphin	Weißschnauzendelfin
Ursus maritimus	polar bear	Eisbär
Halichoerus grypus	grey seal	Kegelrobbe
Phoca vitulina	Harbour seal / common seal	Seehund
Pusa hispida	Ringed seal	Ringelrobbe
Erignathus barbatus	Bearded seal	Bartrobbe
Odobenus rosmarus	walrus	Walross
	unidentified seal	Nicht identifizierte Robbe

Wildlife List – Land Mammals

Credit: Yuri Choufour/HX

Wildlife List – Land Mammals

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Rangifer tarandus	reindeer	Rentier
Vulpes lagopus	Arctic fox	Polarfuchs

Wildlife List — Birds

Credit: Yuri Choufour/HX

Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Morus bassanus	northern gannet	Basstölpel
Fulmarus glacialis	northern fulmar	Eissturmvogel
Chroicocephalus ridibundus	black-headed gull	Lachmöwe
Larus argentatus	European herring gull	Silbermöwe
Larus canus	common / mew gull	Sturmmöwe
Larus fuscus	lesser black-backed gull	Heringsmöwe
Larus hyperboreus	glaucous gull	Eismöwe
Larus marinus	great black-backed gull	Mantelmöwe
Rissa tridactyla	black-legged kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe
Stercorarius longicaudus	long-tailed jaeger	Falkenraubmöwe
Stercorarius pomarinus	Pomarine Skua/Jaeger	Spatelraubmöwe
Stercorarius skua	Great Skua	Skua

Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Sterna hirundo	common tern	Flussseeschwalbe
Sterna paradisaea	Arctic tern	Küstenseeschwalbe
Alca torda	razorbill	Tordalk
Alle alle	little auk	Krabbentaucher
Cepphus grylle	black guillemot	Gryllteiste
Fratercula arctica	Atlantic puffin	Papageitaucher
Uria aalge	common murre / guillemot	Trottellumme
Uria lomvia	Brünnich's guillemot / thick-billed murre	Dickschnabellumme

Wildlife List – Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Anas crecca	green-winged teal	Krickente
Anas platyrhynchos	mallard	Stockente
Aythya fuligula	tufted duck	Reiherente
Mareca penelope	Eurasian wigeon	Pfeifente
Somateria mollissima	common eider	Eiderente
Somateria spectabilis	king eider	Prachteiderente
Anser anser	greylag goose	Graugans
Anser brachyrhynchus	pink-footed goose	Kurzschnabelgans
Branta bernicla	brant goose	Ringelgans
Branta canadensis	Canada goose	Kanadagans
Branta leucopsis	barnacle goose	Weißwangengans
Tadorna tadorna	common shelduck	Brandgans
Cygnus olor	mute swan	Höckerschwan
Mergus merganser	common merganser	Gänsesäger
Mergus serrator	red-breasted merganser	Mittelsäger

Wildlife List – Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Actitis hypoleucos	common sandpiper	Flussuferläufer
Arenaria interpres	ruddy turnstone	Steinwälzer
Calidris maritima	purple sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer
Haematopus ostralegus	Eurasian oystercatcher	Austernfischer
Numenius arquata	Eurasian curlew	Großer Brachvogel
Tringa nebularia	common greenshank	Grünschenkel
Ardea cinerea	grey heron	Graureiher
Grus grus	common crane	Kranich
Gulosus aristotelis	European shag	Krähenscharbe
Phalacrocorax carbo	great cormorant	Kormoran
Gavia stellata	red-throated loon	Sterntaucher

Wildlife List – Landbirds

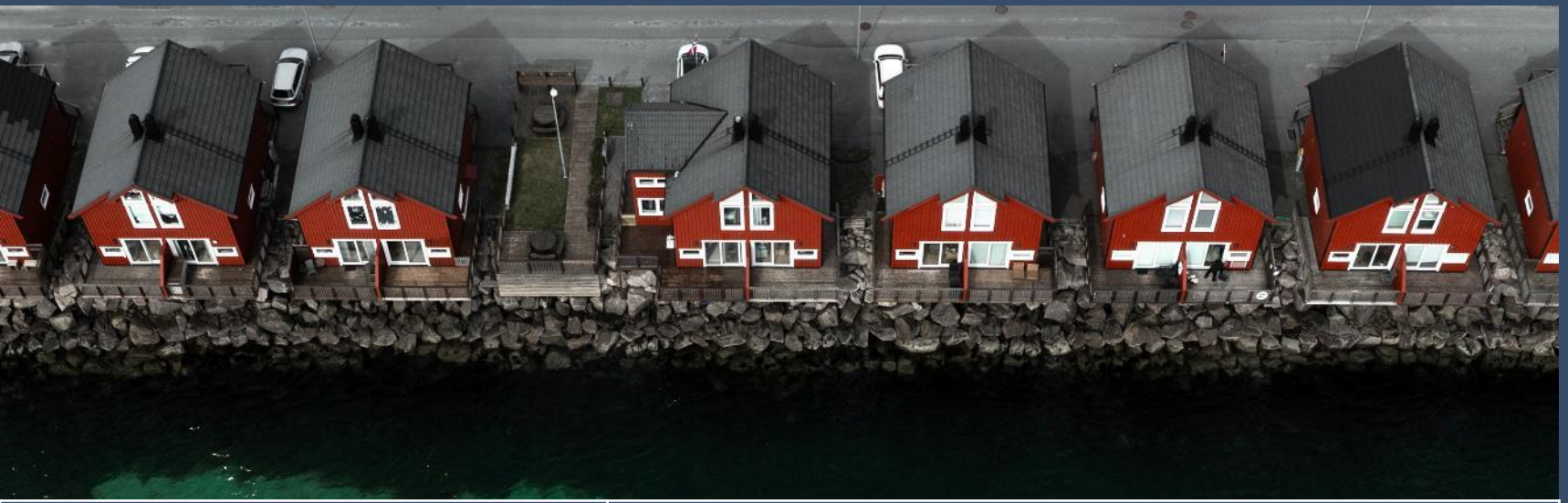
SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Haliaeetus albicilla	white-tailed eagle	Seeadler
Circus cyaneus	hen harrier	Kornweihe
Corvus corax	northern raven	Kolkrabe
Corvus cornix	hooded crow	Nebelkrähe
Corvus corone	carrion crow	Rabenkrähe
Pica pica	Eurasian magpie	Elster
Columba palumbus	common wood pigeon	Ringeltaube
Columba livia	rock dove	Felsentaube
Alauda arvensis	Eurasian skylark	Feldlerche
Hirundo rustica	barn swallow	Rauchschwalbe
Delichon urbicum	common house martin	Mehlschwalbe
Anthus petrosus	Eurasian rock pipit	Strandpieper
Motacilla alba	white wagtail	Bachstelze
Turdus merula	common blackbird	Amsel
Turdus pilaris	fieldfare	Wacholderdrossel
Turdus iliacus	redwing	Rotdrossel

Wildlife List – Landbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Turdus philomelos	Song thrush	Singdrossel
Sylvia atricapilla	Eurasian blackcap	Mönchsgrasmücke
Troglodytes troglodytes	Eurasian wren	Zaunkönig
Erithacus rubecula	European robin	Rotkehlchen
Ficedula hypoleuca	European pied flycatcher	Trauerschnäpper
Muscicapa striata	spotted flycatcher	Grauschnäpper
Oenanthe oenanthe	northern wheatear	Steinschmätzer
Cyanistes caeruleus	Eurasian blue tit	Blaumeise
Parus major	great tit	Kohlmeise
Periparus ater	coal tit	Tannenmeise
Sturnus vulgaris	common starling	Star

Wildlife List – Landbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Passer domesticus	house sparrow	Haussperling
Carduelis carduelis	European goldfinch	Stieglitz
Chloris chloris	European greenfinch	Grünfink
Fringilla coelebs	common chaffinch	Buchfink
Linaria cannabina	common linnet	Bluthänfling
Spinus spinus	Eurasian siskin	Erlenzeisig
Phylloscopus trochilus	willow warbler	Fitis
Phylloscopus collybita	chiffchaff	Zilpzalp
Plectrophenax nivalis	snow bunting	Schneeammer



What data?	How much data?
NASA GLOBE Cloud Observer	4 observations, 1 match
iNaturalist	100+ observations
ebird	36 checklists, 72 species
Happywhale	0 submissions
Climate Change Survey	78 participants
WAVE Project Guest Scientists	Seven (7) reported including minke (1) and humpback whales (2), belugas (20–30) and white-beaked dolphins (+100), walruses (25), bearded seals (15), and grey seals (20).

In Summary

Our springtime expedition along the Norwegian coast to Svalbard was a remarkable journey into some of the region's most remote waters. Mirroring the renewal of the spring season, our Citizen Science initiatives flourished, yielding vital data for species reports that contribute directly to global biodiversity monitoring.

Key scientific highlights included spectacular sightings of puffins and white-tailed eagles in Honningsvåg, white-beaked dolphins near Bjørnøya, and memorable encounters with bearded seals and polar bears during our first day in Hornsund, Svalbard.

Thank You!

The MS Fram Science and Education Team extends heartfelt thanks for choosing HX Expeditions to explore the Norwegian coast and Svalbard during springtime. Your participation not only supports the ongoing work of researchers but also enables them to join our voyages, carry out meaningful studies, and access essential logistical resources that are often difficult to secure.

We are deeply appreciative of your genuine curiosity and shared enthusiasm for the natural world: from birds and marine mammals to flowers, lichens, mosses, and even the microscopic life found in a drop of water.

It was a true joy to exchange ideas, reflect on history over coffee, and marvel together at the diverse ecosystems we encountered. We hope this journey will remain among your most treasured memories.

Credit: Yuri Choufour/HX


Thank you for your participation!