



THE

Science & Education Report

MS Spitsbergen

17 - 27.04.2026

The Scottish Isles – Highlights of the
Hebrides





Science & Education Program

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, 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 reflected 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 learned more about the rich history of Tweed from our historian, Mike.





Beach Clean-up

On Thursday the 19th of April in Islay, we had a very successful beach clean up, with 16 people joining for an hour! In total we collected 51.5 kg of trash that was brought to the Islay dumpster to be recycled.

During the hikes, the hikers also managed to collect 10.5kg of trash from various places!

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.



About

Members 19

Join our project to see the flora and fauna discovered on your expedition! Get help identifying your own discoveries and see what fellow-passengers and your Expedition Team, have found whilst out exploring. No time to upload your photos on your voyage? Then no problem, you can still join the project and then

[Read More >](#)

[Your Membership](#)

[Edit Project](#)

[Project Journal](#)

iNaturalist

Throughout our expedition, we documented the flora and fauna of Arctic Norway and uploaded all our findings to the iNaturalist biodiversity platform.

During our voyage, we submitted 882 observations of 255 different species! This effort contributes to the creation of a comprehensive understanding of the geographical distribution of species and can aid researchers in their ongoing studies and conservation efforts to protect these species.

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

Overview

882
OBSERVATIONS

255
SPECIES

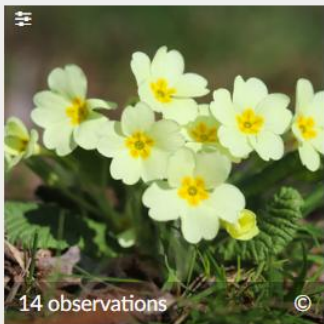
--
IDENTIFIERS

15
OBSERVERS

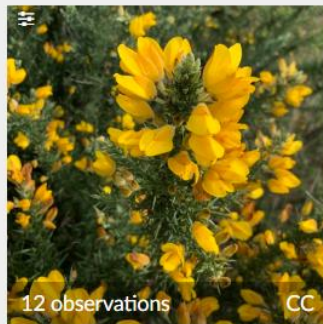
[Stats](#)



22 observations CC
Lesser Celandine · Scharbockskraut · Ficaire
Printanière
(*Ficaria verna*)



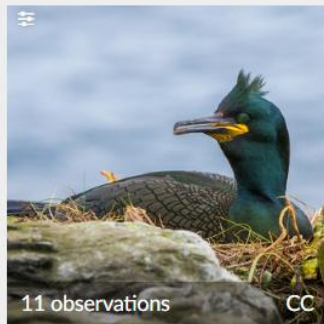
14 observations ©
Primrose · Stängellose Schlüsselblume · Primevère
Commune
(*Primula vulgaris*)



12 observations CC
Gorse · Stechginster · Ajonc d'Europe
(*Ulex europaeus*)



12 observations CC
Ramsons · Bärlauch · Ail des Ours
(*Allium ursinum*)



11 observations CC
European Shag · Krähenscharbe · Cormoran
Huppé
(*Gulosus aristotelis*)

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 in our Science Centre, where we took the time to dig a little deeper.





Science Boats

While in Loch Nevis, Isle of Gigha, and Colonsay we braved perfect sunny weather to do some Citizen Science! We collected oceanographic data with our CTD and both Phytoplankton and Zooplankton samples to look at in the lab. Thanks to all 25 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 during our three science boats.

We collected a large amount of photosynthetic phytoplankton and marveled 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 magnificent crab megalops (Pictured right).





Zooplankton

The wee beasties were abundant and spectacular! As Spring returns to Scotland, the reproductive period has begun for many species. We saw many Meroplankton (larval forms of larger organisms), and could even see the heart beats and digestive movements within some of them. We had Barnacle larve (left), Crab Zoea (top left), and teenage barnacles (above, the oval one) and Polychaete worms (above, the pointy one). What a treat to watch them dance around our petri dishes!

Underwater Drone

We used a Blueye Pioneer underwater drone to explore the underwater world of Scotland in Islay, Stornoway, and the Isle of Eigg on the 24th April. Along the jetty and harbour in Eigg, we found a myriad of seaweeds occupying this foreign structure, small fish amongst the kelp forest 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>	Northern gannet	Basstölpel	Fou de Bassan
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	great cormorant	Kormoran	Grand Cormoran
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	European shag	Krähenscharbe	Cormoran huppé
<i>Larus canus</i>	common gull	Sturmmöwe	Goéland centré
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	European herring gull	Silbermöwe	Goéland argenté
<i>Larus marinus</i>	great black-backed gull	Mantelmöwe	Goéland marin
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	lesser black-backed gull	Heringsmöwe	Goéland brun
<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Iceland gull	Polarmöwe	Goéland arctique
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	black-headed gull	Lachmöwe	Mouette rieuse
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic tern	Kuestenseeschwalbe	Sterne arctique
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	common tern	Flusseeschwalbe	Sterne pierregarin
<i>Sternula albifrons</i>	little tern	Zwergseeschwalbe	Sterne naine
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Northern fulmar	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boreal
<i>Uria aalge</i>	common guillemot (common murre)	Trottellumme	Guillemot marmette
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Arctic puffin	Papgeientaucher	Macareux moine
<i>Alca torda</i>	razorbill	Tordalk	Petit Pengouin
<i>Cephus grille</i>	black guillemot	Gryllteiste	Guillemot à miroir
<i>Stercorarius skau</i>	great skua	Skua	Grande Labbe

Wildlife List – Shore birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	grey eeron	Graureiher	Héron cendré
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	mute wwan	Höckerschwan	Cygne tuberculé
<i>Branta bernicla</i>	brant goose	Ringelgans	Bernache cravant
<i>Anser anser</i>	greylag goose	Graugans	Oie cendrée
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>	common shelduck	Brandgans	Tadorne de Belon
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	mallard	Stockente	Canard colvert
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	common eider	Eiderente	Eider à duvet
<i>Gavia immer</i>	great Northern diver (common loon)	Eistaucher	Plongeon huard
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	red-throated diver (loon)	Sternaucher	Pongeon catmarin
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian oystercatcher	Austenfischer	Huïtrier
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Eurasian curlew	Grosser Brachvogel	Courlis cendré
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Eurasian whimbrel	Regenbrachvogel	Courlis courlieu
<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	common redshank	Rotschenkel	Chevalier gambette
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	Northern lapwing	Kiebitz	Vanneau huppé
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	common snipe	Bekassine	Békassine de mareis
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	Steinwaelzer	Tournepierre à collier
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	dunlin	Alpenstrandlaeufer	Bécasseau variable
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	Flussuferlaeufer	Chevalier guignette

Wildlife List – Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>	white-tailed eagle	Seeadler	Pygargue à queue blanche
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	golden eagle	Steinadler	Aigle royal
<i>Buteo buteo</i>	common buzzard	Mäusebussard	Buse variable
<i>Corvus cornix</i>	hooded crow	Nebelkrähe	Corneille mantelée
<i>Corvus corone</i>	carrion crow	Rabenkrähe	Cornielle noire
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Northern (common) raven	Kolkrabe	Grand corbeau
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Rook	Saatkrähe	Corbeau freux
<i>Columba livia domestica</i>	feral pigeon	Stadttaube	Pigeon domestique
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	common wood pigeon	Ringeltaube	Pigeon ramier
<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Eurasian treecreeper	Waldbaumläufer	Grimperaus de bois

Wildlife List – Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Anthus petrosus</i>	Eurasian rock pipit	Strandpieper	Pipit maritime
<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	meadow pipit	Wiesenpieper	Pipit farlouse
<i>Motacilla alba yarrellii</i>	pied wagtail	Trauerbachstelze	Bergeronnette de Yarrell
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	European robin	Rotkehlchen	Rougegorge familier
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	house sparrow	Haussperling	Moineau domestique
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	song thrush	Singdrossel	Grive musicienne
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Eurasian wren	Zaunkönig	Troglodyte mignon
<i>Pariparus ater</i>	coal tit	Tannenmeise	Mesange noire
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Eurasian blue tit	Blaumeise	Mesange bleu
<i>Parus major</i>	great tit	Kohlmeise	Mésange charbonnière
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European starling	Gemeiner Star	Étourneau sansonnet
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	European goldfinch	Stieglitz	Chardonneret elegant
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	common chaffinch	Buchfink	Pinson des arbres
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Eurasian skylark	Feldlerche	Alouette des champs
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow	Rauchschwalbe	Hierondelle rustique
<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Western house martin	Mehlschwalbe	Hierondelle de fenetre
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	sand martin	Uferschwalbe	Hirondelle de rivage
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	willow warbler	Fitis	Pouilot fits

Scottish Isles MS Spitsbergen SPBRI263

17 – 27 Apr 2026 (11 days)

Public

Scotland, United Kingdom

Argyll and Bute | Eilean Siar |

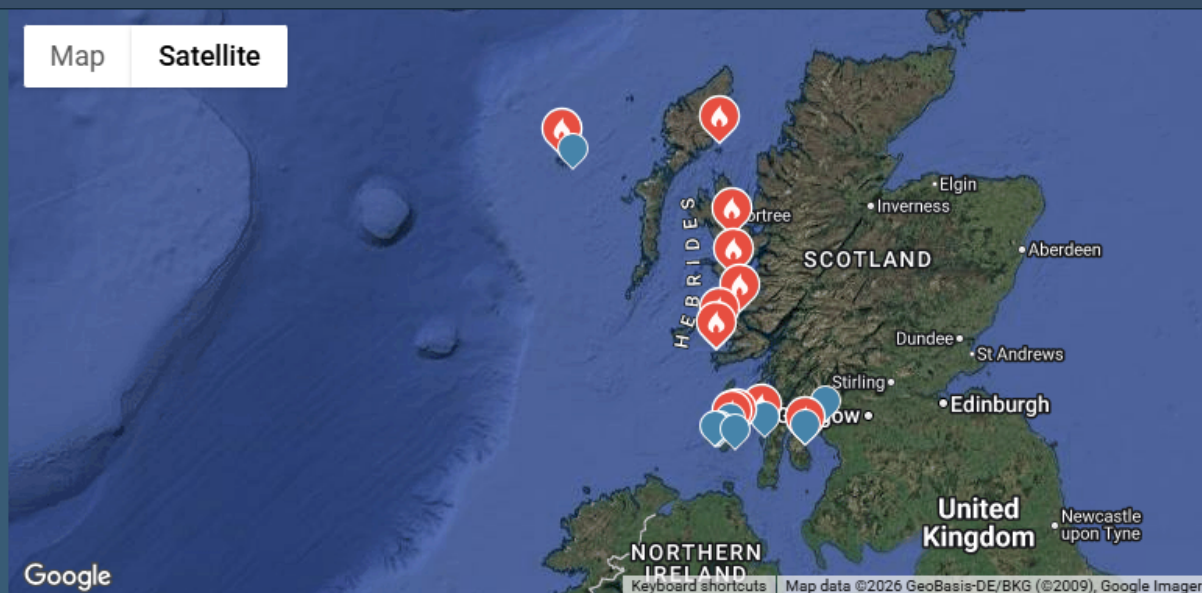
Highland | North Ayrshire

Julia Schroeder, Fiona Sharp,

Margaret Mary McNeill

Share

Edit



eBird

During our Wildlife Watches, our ornithologist Julia conducted detailed bird surveys, recording observations for the citizen science platform eBird. We recorded 81 different species of birds in 31 checklists.

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

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

Narrative

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

Add narrative

DATA FOR: Group (all people)

80

Species Observed

31

Checklists

Species Observed

29 Greylag Goose *Anser anser*

1 Brent Goose *Branta bernicla*

17 Mute Swan *Cygnus olor*

Wildlife List — Mammals



Wildlife List – Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	common bottlenose dolphin	Grosser Tümmler	Grand dauphin
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	common dolphin	Gemeiner Delfin	Dauphin commun
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	harbour seal, common seal	Seehund	Phoque commún
<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	grey seal	Kegelrobbe	Phoque gris

THE



Thank you for your participation!