

THE

Science & Education Report



MS Spitsbergen

27.4 – 7.5.2026

The Scottish Isles – Highlights of
the Hebrides





Science & Education Program

Our Science & Education Team accompanied you during your expedition to the remote, varied communities of the Inner and Outer Hebrides and the impressive nature of these islands.

To add texture to our explorations, our excursions, and our nature landings, we brought you lectures and activities to celebrate the diversity of the region through which we travelled.

History & Culture

While exploring this region, we encountered places steeped in the cultural history of the Hebrides — a rich and often stark tapestry ranging from Viking raids and settlement to clan rule and bloodthirsty battles, all influencing the way the islands are owned and managed today.

Islands like Islay and Arran offered a window into whisky traditions and crofting life. Elsewhere, we discovered smaller, lesser-known distilleries, among them Tobermory on Mull.

Stornoway offered insight into maritime and fishing history, alongside the story of Tweed and how it has become one of the most celebrated and protected brands of the Hebrides.





Beach Clean-up

On Wednesday 29 April in Islay, we ran a successful beach clean-up, with 10 guests joining for an hour. In total, we collected 29 kg of waste, which was brought to the island's waste collection point for disposal.

Thank you for helping care for the places we explore.



Geology of Scotland

We visited the island of Staffa on 5 May. It is celebrated for its connection to Felix Mendelssohn, the Romantic composer whose visit to the island inspired his overture 'Fingal's Cave'.

Geologically, however, it is equally remarkable for its basalt columns, formed by volcanic activity around 60 million years ago. These hexagonal formations mirror those of the Northern Irish Giant's Causeway, shaped by slowly cooling lava during the opening of the North Atlantic.

Event in progress



SPBRI2614 MS Spitsbergen The Scottish Isles 27 A...

Apr 27, 2026 - May 7, 2026

About

Leave 13

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

Project Members Only

Project Journal

Overview

273
OBSERVATIONS

135
SPECIES

62
IDENTIFIERS

10
OBSERVERS

Stats

Recent Observations

[View All](#)

RG

Eurasian Oystercatcher
Haematopus ostralegus 3 a day ago

RG

Common Ringed Plover
Charadrius hiaticula 2 a day ago

Eurasian Whimbrel
Numenius phaeopus 1 6 hours ago

RG

Corn Crake
Crex crex 2 4 hours ago

iNaturalist

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

We submitted 298 observations across 141 species — data that helps researchers understand how wildlife is distributed across this region and supports ongoing conservation efforts.

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

Under the microscope

The natural world rewards those who step back from the view and look more closely.

During our voyage, you joined several Discovery Sessions in our Science Centre, where we explored the detail and complexity of the landscapes and wildlife surrounding us.





Science Boats

At Tobermory, the Isle of Iona, the Isle of Eigg, and Colonsay, we headed out in characteristically brisk Scottish conditions to gather Citizen Science data. Using our CTD, we collected oceanographic readings alongside phytoplankton and zooplankton samples for analysis in the lab. Our thanks go to the 26 guests who joined us and contributed to this work.

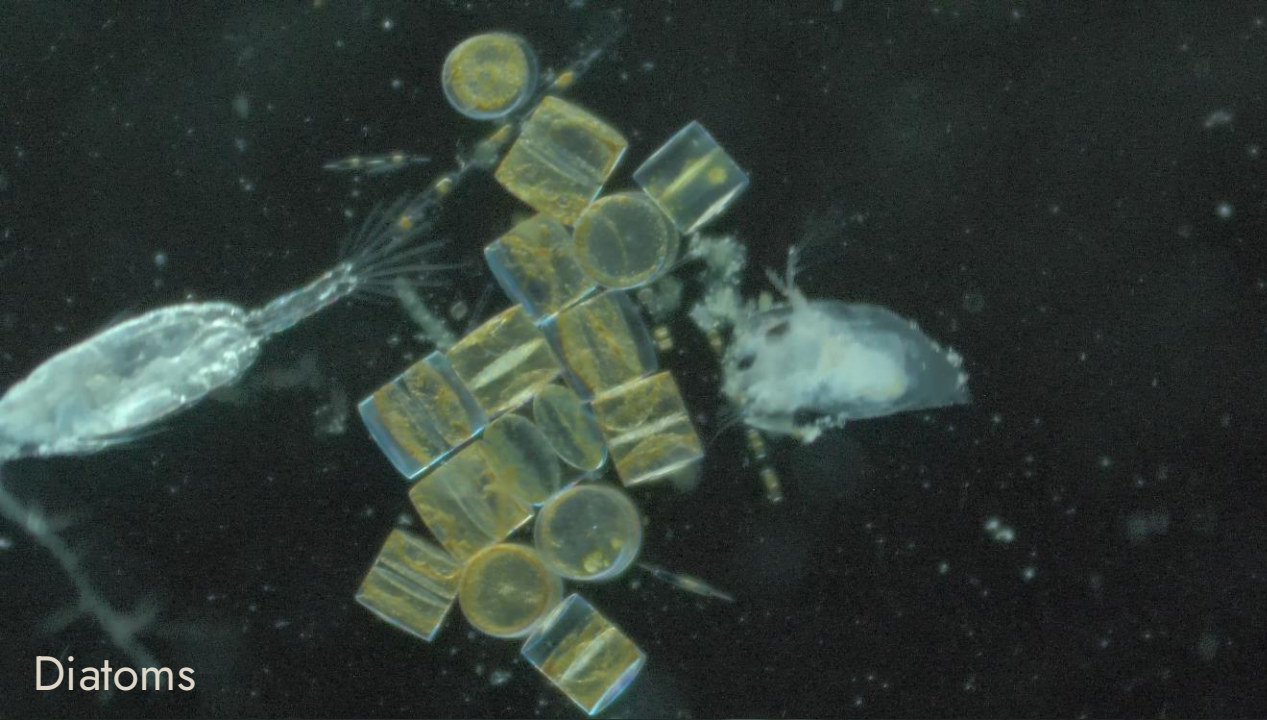
Plankton Samples

We explored the microscopic world of plankton — the tiny organisms that drift through the ocean. During our science boat outings, we gathered samples to examine in the lab.

We found a significant number of zooplankton species, feeding on the abundant phytoplankton in Scottish waters. Among them was a range of crustaceans: copepods, Daphnia water fleas, anemone larvae, and even the shed exoskeleton of a barnacle larva (pictured right).



Crab Megalops



Diatoms

Harpacticoid Copepod



Sea Anemone Larvae



Crab Zoea

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 cendré
<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>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	black-headed gull	Lachmöwe	mouette rieuse
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic tern	Kuestenseeschwalbe	sterne arctique
<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	common tern	Flussseeschwalbe	sterne pierregarin
<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	Sandwich tern	Brandseeschwalbe	sterne caugek
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	northern fulmar	Eissturmvogel	fulmar boréal
<i>Uria aalge</i>	common guillemot (common murre)	Trottellumme	guillemot marmette
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Arctic puffin	Pappeientaucher	macareux moine
<i>Alca torda</i>	razorbill	Tordalk	petit pingouin
<i>Cephus grille</i>	black guillemot	Gryllteiste	guillemot à miroir
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	great skua	Skua	grande labbe

Wildlife List – Shore birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Cygnus olor</i>	mute swan	Höckerschwan	cygne tuberculé
<i>Anser anser</i>	greylag goose	Graugans	oie cendrée
<i>Branta canadensis</i>	Canada goose	Kanadagans	bernache du Canada
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	mallard	Stockente	canard colvert
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	common eider	Eiderente	eider à duvet
<i>Mergus serrator</i>	red-breasted merganser	Mittelsäger	harle huppé
<i>Gavia arctica</i>	black-throated diver (Arctic loon)	Prachttaucher	plongeon arctique
<i>Gavia immer</i>	great northern diver (common loon)	Eistaucher	plongeon huard
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	red-throated diver (red-throated loon)	Stern-taucher	plongeon catmarin
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	European shag	Krähenscharbe	cormoran huppé
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	grey heron	Graureiher	héron cendré
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian oystercatcher	Austernfischer	huître-pie
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	common ringed plover	Sandregenpfeifer	pluvier grand-gravelot
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	European golden plover	Goldregenpfeifer	pluvier doré
<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>	northern lapwing	Kiebitz	vanneau huppé
<i>Calidris alpina</i>	dunlin	Alpenstrandläufer	bécasseau variable
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	Steinwälzer	tourne-pierre à collier

Wildlife List – Shore birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	common sandpiper	Flussuferläufer	chevalier guignette
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	common redshank	Rotschenkel	chevalier gambette
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	whimbrel	Regenbrachvogel	courlis corlieu
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	common snipe	Bekassine	bécassine des marais

Wildlife List – Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	ring-necked (common) pheasant	Fasan	faisan de Colchide
<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>Columba livia domestica</i>	feral pigeon	Stadttaube	pigeon domestique
<i>Columba palumbus</i>	common wood pigeon	Ringeltaube	pigeon ramier
<i>Cuculus canorus</i>	common cuckoo	Kuckuck	coucou gris
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Eurasian skylark	Feldlerche	alouette des champs
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow	Rauchschnalbe	hirondelle rustique
<i>Delichon urbicum</i>	western (common) house martin	Mehlschnalbe	hirondelle de fenêtre
<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>Prunella modularis</i>	dunnock	Heckenbraunelle	accenteur mouchet
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	European robin	Rotkehlchen	rougegorge familier

Wildlife List – Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	northern wheatear	Steinschmätzer	traquet motteux
<i>Saxicola rubicola</i>	European stonechat	Schwarzkehlchen	tarier pâtre
<i>Turdus merula</i>	Eurasian (common) blackbird	Amsel	merle noir
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	song thrush	Singdrossel	grive musicienne
<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	mistle thrush	Misteldrossel	grive draine
<i>Turdoides reinwardtii</i>	Eurasian blackcap	Weißaugen-Schwatzhäherling	cratérope à tête noire
<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>	sedge warbler	Schilfrohrsänger	phragmite des joncs
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	common chiffchaff	Zilpzalp	pouillot véloce
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	willow warbler	Fitis	pouillot fitis
<i>Regulus regulus</i>	goldcrest	Wintergoldhähnchen	roitelet huppé
<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Eurasian wren	Zaunkönig	troglodyte mignon
<i>Parus major</i>	great tit	Kohlmeise	mésange charbonnière
<i>Pariparus ater</i>	coal tit	Tannenmeise	mésange noire
<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	Eurasian blue tit	Blaumeise	mésange bleue
<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Eurasian treecreeper	Waldbaumläufer	grimpereau des bois
<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	western (Eurasian) jackdaw	Dohle	choucas des tours
<i>Corvus corax</i>	northern (common) raven	Kolkrabe	grand corbeau

Wildlife List – Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Corvus cornix</i>	hooded crow	Nebelkrähe	corneille mantelée
<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	rook	Saatkrähe	corbeau freux
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European starling	Gemeiner Star	étourneau sansonnet
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	house sparrow	Haussperling	moineau domestique
<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	common chaffinch	Buchfink	pinson des arbres
<i>Linaria cannabina</i>	Eurasian linnet	Bluthänfling	linotte mélodieuse
<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	redpoll	Birkenzeisig	sizerin blanchâtre
<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	European goldfinch	Stieglitz	chardonneret élégant
<i>Chloris chloris</i>	European greenfinch	Grünfink	verdier d'Europe
<i>Spinus spinus</i>	Eurasian siskin	Erlenzeisig	tarin des aulnes

Scottish Isles MS Spitsbergen SPBRI264

27 Apr – 7 May 2026 (11 days) **Public**

Scotland, United Kingdom

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

Julia Schroeder,

Science & Education Coordinator MS Spitsbergen,
Lauren Peach

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DATA FOR: Group (all people) ▾

74

Species Observed

+1 other taxa

29

Checklists

e-Bird

During our wildlife watches, our Ornithologist Julia conducted detailed bird surveys, recording observations for the Citizen Science platform eBird. We recorded 74 bird species across 29 checklists.

This data contributes to global bird conservation efforts, deepening our understanding of bird populations and their habitats.

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

Wildlife List — Mammals



Wildlife List – Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	harbour porpoise	Schweinswal	marsouin commun
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	common dolphin	Gemeiner Delfin	dauphin commun
<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>	white-beaked dolphin	Weissschnauzendelfin	lagénorhynque à bec blanc
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	harbour seal, common seal	Seehund	phoque commun
<i>Halichoerus grypus</i>	grey seal	Kegelrobbe	phoque gris



Wildlife List – Other Fauna



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	Eurasian Red Squirrel	Eurasisches Eichhörnchen	Ecureuil d'Eurasie
<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Brown Hare	Fedlhase	Lièvre d'Europe
<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	European Rabbit	Wildkaninchen	Lapin de garenne
<i>Capreolus capreolus</i>	Roe Deer	Reh	Chevreuil européen

THANK

Thank you for your participation!

