



MS Spitsbergen

2026.06.16 - 2026.06.23



Legend

— HX Expedition

Day 1- Longyearbyen

We began embarkation in Longyearbyen in true expedition style — with no gangway available, guests transferred out to MS Spitsbergen by expedition boat, a fittingly active introduction to the week ahead. Once on board, we ran the mandatory safety drill before the Expedition Leader and Hotel Manager offered a warm welcome and orientation to the ship. The day already felt full, and then the evening

delivered an unexpected highlight: word reached us that the Sysselmeister had been chasing a polar bear from the outskirts of Longyearbyen. Though at some distance, the bear was clearly visible through binoculars, cameras, and scopes — guests were quick to find their angles, each determined to secure that first sighting. A promising start to what lay ahead.

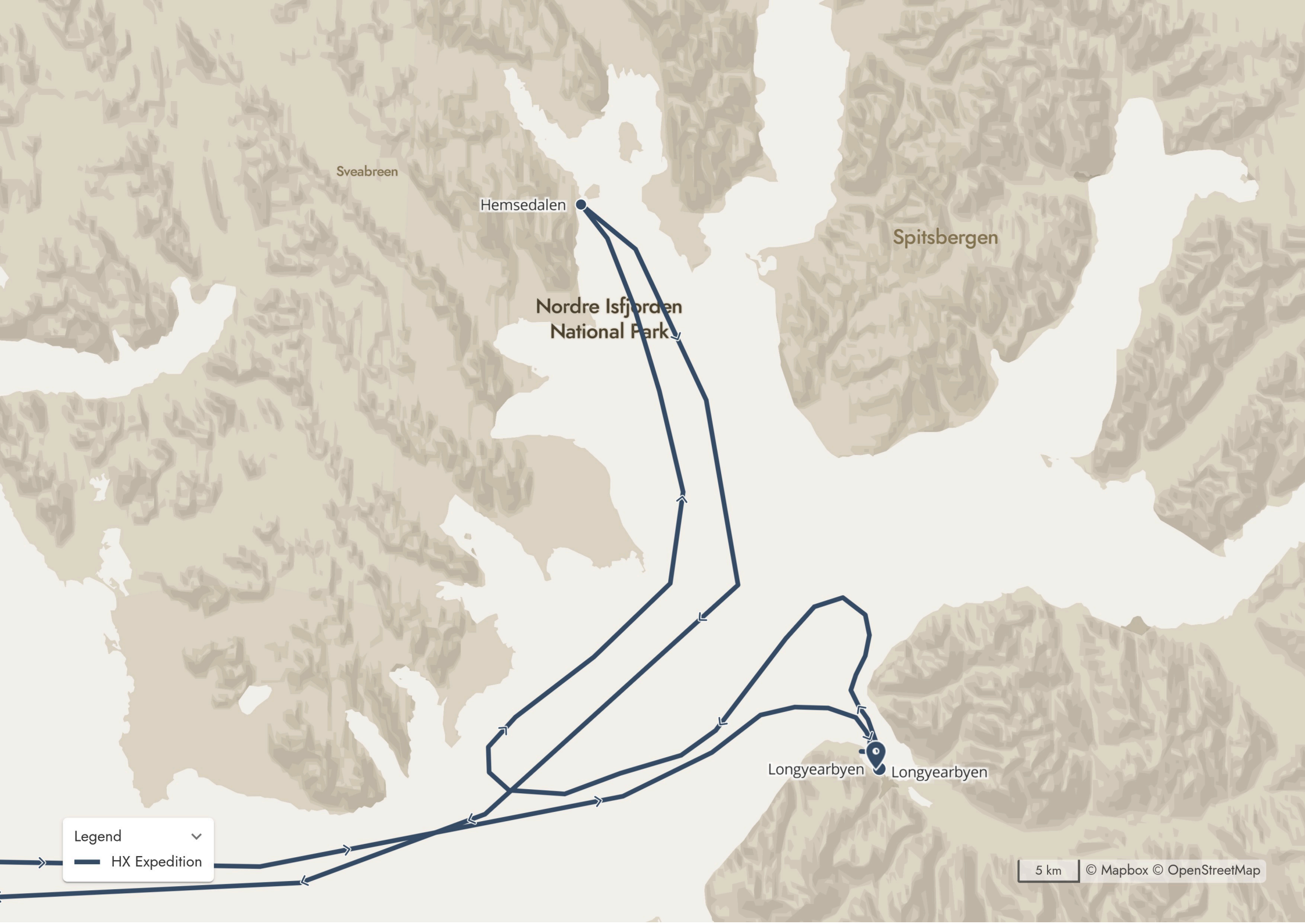


Day 2 - Hemsedalen

Our first full day on board opened with a well-stocked morning at sea. We ran a comprehensive briefing programme — covering the science programme, AECO guidelines, kayak operations, and more — before the afternoon brought our first landing site: Hemsedalen, tucked into the quieter reaches of Ekmanfjord within Isfjord. We led guests on guided walks across Arctic tundra that surprised many with its richness — sheltered from the harshest winds, the vegetation here

was far more varied than the open terrain suggests. Crossing clay-like permafrost plains, the groups arrived at the base of a lively waterfall fed by spring meltwater cascading from above. Some ventured higher, stopping short of the summit when a protective goose nest blocked the route — redirecting the group toward sweeping views, scattered reindeer, and the full sensory experience of the Arctic: wind, mud, and all.





Sveabreen

Hemsedalen

Nordre Isfjorden
National Park

Spitsbergen

Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen

Legend ▼
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Day 3 - Fjortende Julibukta

We began with an overcast morning in Fjortende Julibukta, and notably, no WiFi. A rare and welcome disconnection from the outside world. The first kayak group headed out in the morning, gliding quietly through the calm Arctic waters. For the rest of us, we cruised slowly along the bird cliffs, where nests appeared almost at eye level,

an uncommon, eye-level perspective. Swathes of birds filled the air, and we observed puffins, guillemots, kittiwakes, and a variety of geese. On land, reindeer were spotted grazing, and a lucky few even caught sight of an Arctic fox. A peaceful, wildlife-rich start to the day.



Day 3 - Camp Zoe

In the afternoon, we sailed north, deeper into Krossfjord for our second adventure of the day, a landing at Camp Zoelt would prove to be one of the day's most memorable moments. With researchers staying in the cabin, we relocated our landing site further north, aiming to walk across to Camp Zoe instead. We set off over undulating hills carpeted with mountain avens, Arctic bell heather,

and moss campion, a fine start to the hike. Along the way, however, a steep ravine challenged our plans and ultimately prevented us from reaching the cabin. With the attempt abandoned, we embraced the scenery and completed our walks. Later, we sailed toward the glacier at the fjord's end before passing back by our planned landing site, finally catching a satisfying view of Camp Zoe itself.



Day 4 - Smeerenburgreen

Overnight, we sailed north from Krossfjord into Smeerenbergfjord, waking to calm but foggy conditions in front of Smeerenburgreen. Large snowflakes drifted through the air, lending the crossing a genuinely Arctic character. Despite the low visibility, we continued our cruising operations, moving through moody views of the seven-kilometre glacier front and blue hues associated with the glacial ice.

We carefully navigated through brash ice near the glacier's edge. Wildlife made frequent appearances too, with bearded and harbour seals popping their heads above the water, surfacing alongside us before slipping under again. The area was also rich in birdlife, including common eiders, black-legged kittiwakes, and black guillemots.





Day 4 - Polar Bear Sighting

After leaving our cruising site and sailing towards Smeerenburg, excitement built quickly as we had our first sighting of a polar bear. We watched as the bear emerged from the water and climbed onto a small island we were passing. Guests moved quickly to the deck, binoculars and cameras raised, while others took in the view from inside. The bear remained on the island for quite some time, giving

us an excellent opportunity to observe its behaviour as it searched for food. At times it disappeared behind a low ridge, only to reappear moments later before even playing in the snow. After watching this healthy, well-conditioned bear for over an hour, we continued north towards Smeerenburg, thoroughly satisfied by the encounter.



Day 4 - Smereenburg

After a wonderful time with the polar bear, and once we were confident it was not heading toward our planned landing site, we sailed the short remaining distance to Smereenburg. The Expedition Team went ashore first under low cloud and drifting fog to scout the area, and conditions initially allowed operations to begin. Our first group landed and spent a few minutes with the walrus hauled out

along the shore. Unfortunately, not long after, a member of the Expedition Team spotted a polar bear in the distance from their vantage point. Safety always comes first, and this meant an immediate evacuation of the landing site. An abrupt end, but a clear reminder of the wild Arctic we are privileged to explore.

★ Polar Bear in Fuglegattet, Norway - Jun 19, 2026





Polar Bear in Fuglegattet



Smeerenburg



Polar Bear at Albertøya



Danskøya

Smeerenburgbreen



Raudfj

Legend



— HX Expedition

3 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap

Day 5 — Ice Edge

Our day at the ice edge began with a remarkable wake-up call, with the ship surrounded by sea ice under calm conditions. After adjusting our plans in the morning to find more stable conditions, we launched the expedition boats into a frozen landscape of genuine remoteness. Cruising along the ice edge, just 1,000 km from the North Pole, we zigzagged between floes of all shapes and sizes, carefully navigating

through the shifting sea ice. At times we nudged into thicker patches, at times beaching the expedition boats on floes — nothing the boats could not handle. Seals appeared here and there, resting on the ice or slipping quietly into the water. The stillness, the scale, and the raw Arctic environment made it a moment that will stay with those who were out on the water.



Day 6 - Jotunkjeldene

We awoke to a clear, sunny, and windless morning, perfect for our landing at Jotunkjeldene, the Giants' Springs. The area opened onto long views stretching both ways through Bockfjorden, where the geology spoke for itself. Striking Old Red Sandstone formations created a dramatic landscape. We landed to explore the two hot springs, the northernmost in the world. Mineral deposits surrounded

the springs, while the warmer temperatures supported unique vegetation found only in this area. Snow buntings and ptarmigans were spotted on the upper slopes, the ptarmigans shedding their winter plumage, and bright orange sunburst lichens adorned the rocks. Those who ventured higher to the viewpoint...were met with panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and a nearby glacier.



Day 6 - Mushamna

The afternoon matched the morning in every respect, the weather holding clear as we moved to Mushamna. We split into guided walk groups, and all had a clear view of a lone walrus hauled out along the beach near the landing site. For many, this was the close-range walrus encounter that Smeerenburg had denied us. We explored the variety of cabins for which Mushamna is famous, including the historic Nøis cabin, a traditional trapper's cabin, and the Hovelsrud cabin,

among the largest and best-maintained cabins in Svalbard, still used for trapping today. No visit to Mushamna is complete without a look at its famous outhouse. Nearby lakes teemed with birdlife, from Arctic terns to red-throated divers, while the longer hiking groups crossed tundra, snowfields, rivers, and lakes to enjoy broad views across the surrounding landscape.





Ice Edge - 80.30N 012.28E

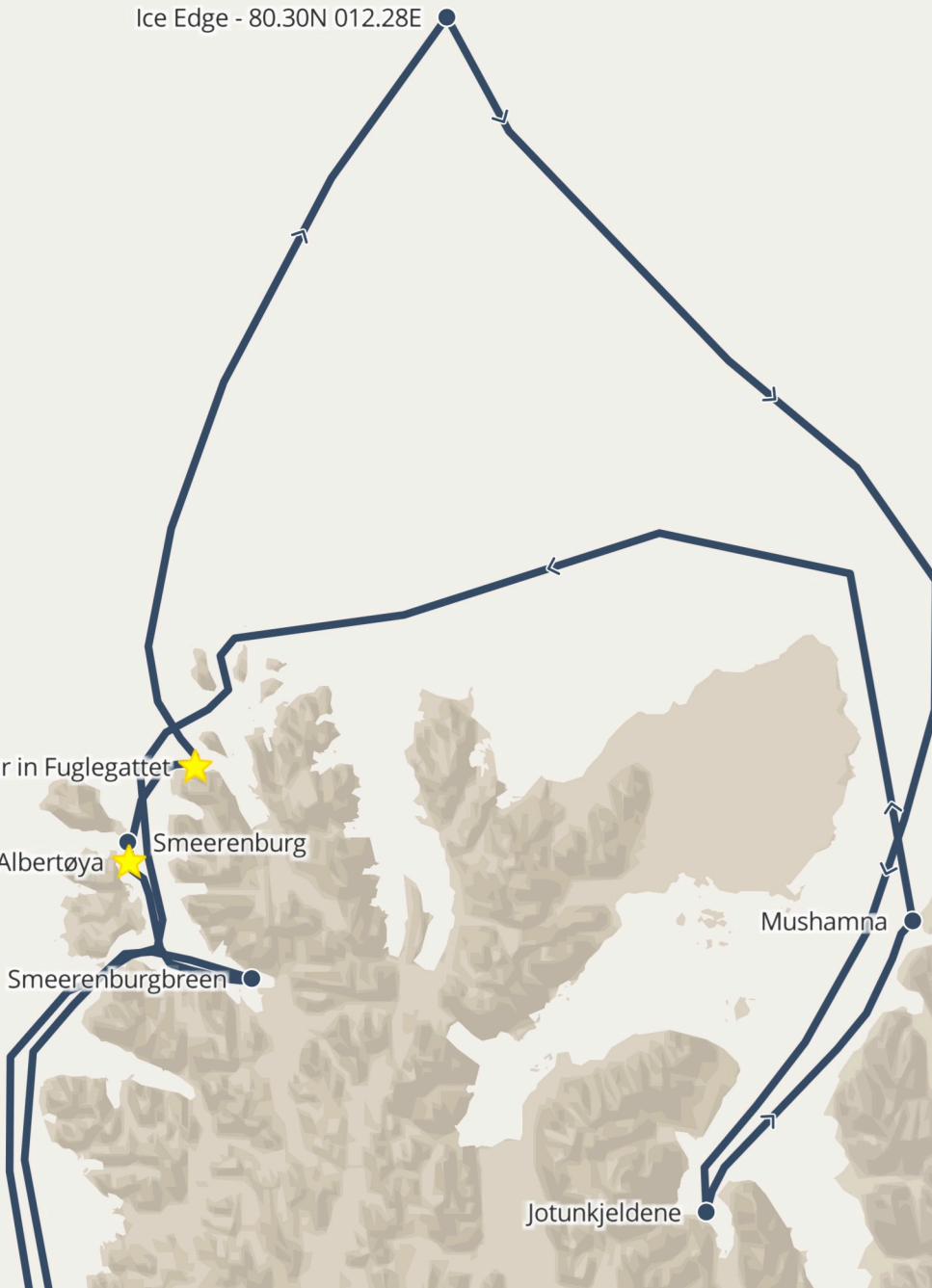
Polar Bear in Fuglegattet
Polar Bear at Albertøya
Smeerenburg
Smeerenburgbreen

Mushamna

Jotunkjeldene

Legend 

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Day 7 - Kongsvegen Glacier

During the night we sailed south along the west side of Spitsbergen and awoke in Kongsfjorden to begin our final cruising operation at the Kongsbreen and Kongsvegen glaciers. Calm waters greeted us once more, perfect for exploring the fjord by expedition boat. We set off toward the glacier and before long were weaving through brash ice and larger icebergs calved from the face. Weaving through the

ice, we marvelled at the iceberg sculptures, their brilliant blue hues glowing beneath overcast skies. We were also fortunate to spot bearded seals resting on flatter ice, giving us clear views against the glacier and sandstone mountains behind. As this marked our final zodiac outing, many savoured these final moments on the water before returning on board.

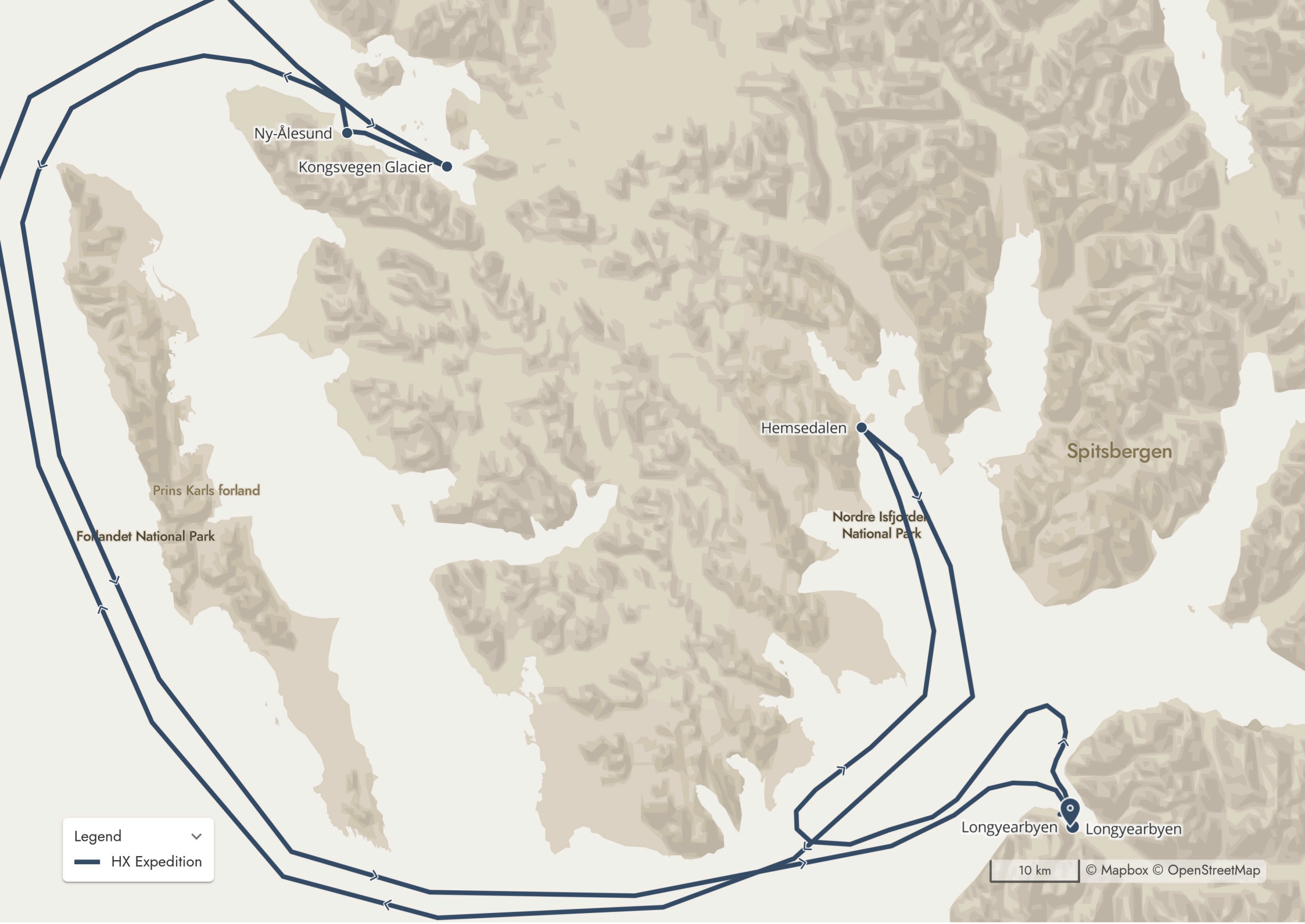


Day 7 - Ny-Ålesund

We arrived at a busy pier in Ny-Ålesund and were swiftly moored alongside, the gangway opened within minutes. We led guided walking tours through the settlement, tracing its mining history and the sequence of accidents that brought operations to an end. Other guests explored independently — the gift shop and post office drew steady custom, while others made their way out to the mast and dog

yard. The 'polar bear danger' sign attracted the expected cluster of photographers, and at least one Arctic fox was spotted moving through town. As we departed, a pod of beluga whales surfaced alongside — a composed and fitting send-off as MS Spitsbergen set course for Longyearbyen.





Ny-Ålesund

Kongsvegen Glacier

Hemsedalen

Spitsbergen


Prins Karls forland


Forlandet National Park

Nordre Isfjorden
National Park

Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen

Legend 

 HX Expedition

10 km

© Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



Day 8 - Longyearbyen

We awoke moored in Longyearbyen, sunlight breaking through the cloud and catching the hillside one final time. After a last breakfast together on board, the time came to farewell guests as they were called to the coaches. The gangway saw a steady procession of bags and goodbyes. Seven days had taken us from the bird cliffs of Fjortende Julibukta to the silence of the ice edge; from trappers'

cabins deep in the fjords to polar bears encountered at close range more than once. Every day delivered something the one before had not. We watched guests depart for the airport already carrying the look of people replaying what they had just experienced — a sure sign that Svalbard had done what it always does.





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