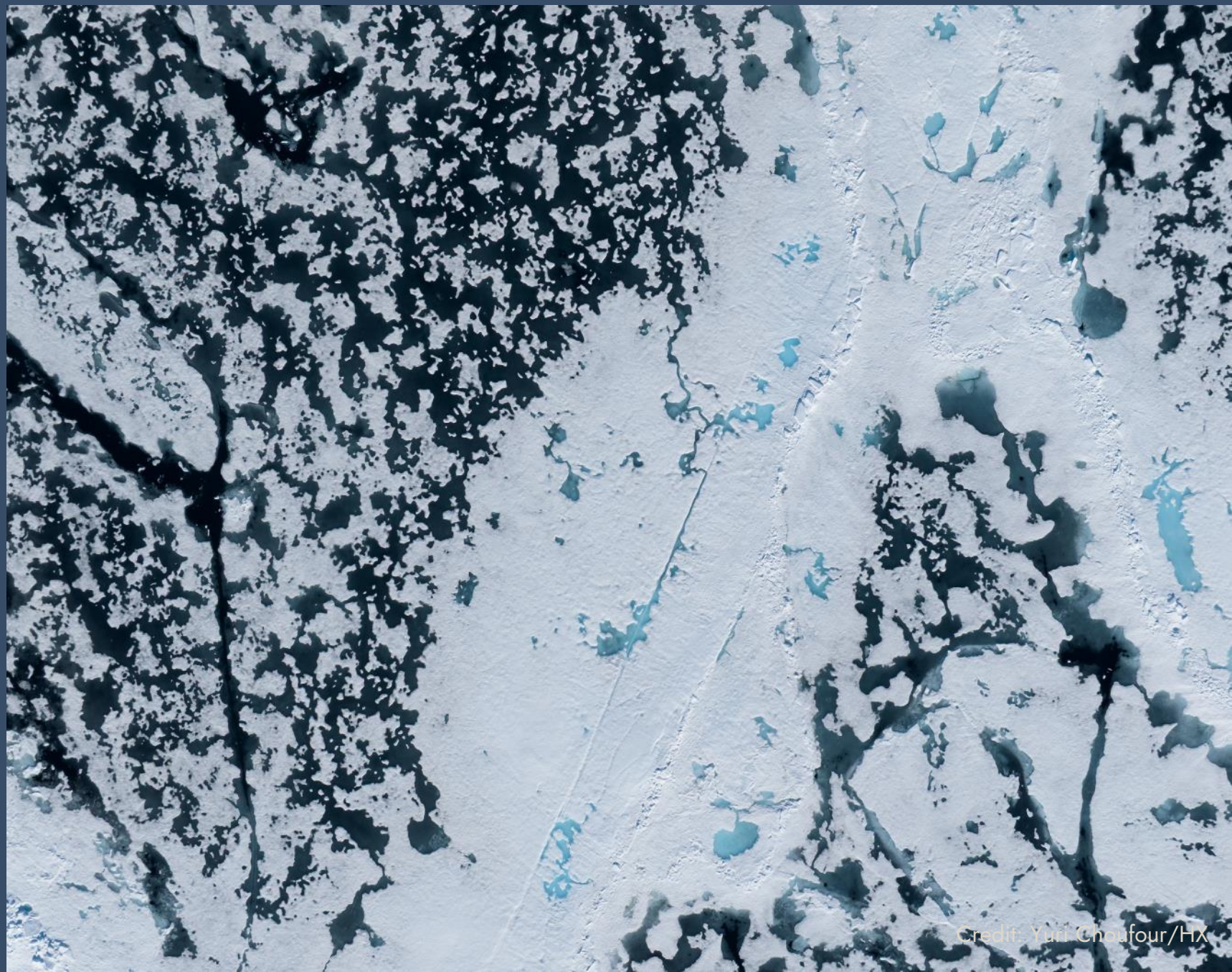
MS Fram, 31 May – 7 June 2026

Svalbard in Springtime, the Return of the Sun



Science & Education Programme

On this voyage, we collected data for three Citizen Science projects: eBird, iNaturalist, and the Secchi Disk Project. You joined us for six lectures across topics ranging from birds to rocks, and took part in four discovery sessions on board.

We were also joined by two Guest Scientist projects working alongside us at sea. The WAVE project tracked Arctic whale distribution and abundance, with the aim of minimising vessel impacts on marine life. A team from the University of Tasmania (UTAS) joined us to refine the content of the Arctic learning courses they are developing, drawing on what you would like to see covered.

Many of you were deeply engaged with the science side of the voyage, and we thank you for that curiosity. What follows is a summary of our Science & Education Programme.

Lectures & Discovery Sessions

6 lectures
4 discovery sessions
2 Citizen Science projects
4 science boat sessions
2 Guest Scientist projects

Wildlife watch

24 species:

- 8 mammals
- 16 birds

History & Culture: Ny-Ålesund

Ny-Ålesund

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, the American Lincoln Ellsworth, and the Italian Umberto Nobile flew the airship Norge over the North Pole from here. Amundsen's mooring mast and bronze bust still stand in Ny-Ålesund as a tribute to Svalbard's exploration legacy.

iNaturalist

Thanks to your efforts, we recorded 42 opportunistic observations representing nearly 28 species.

By sharing your data on iNaturalist, you contribute 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.

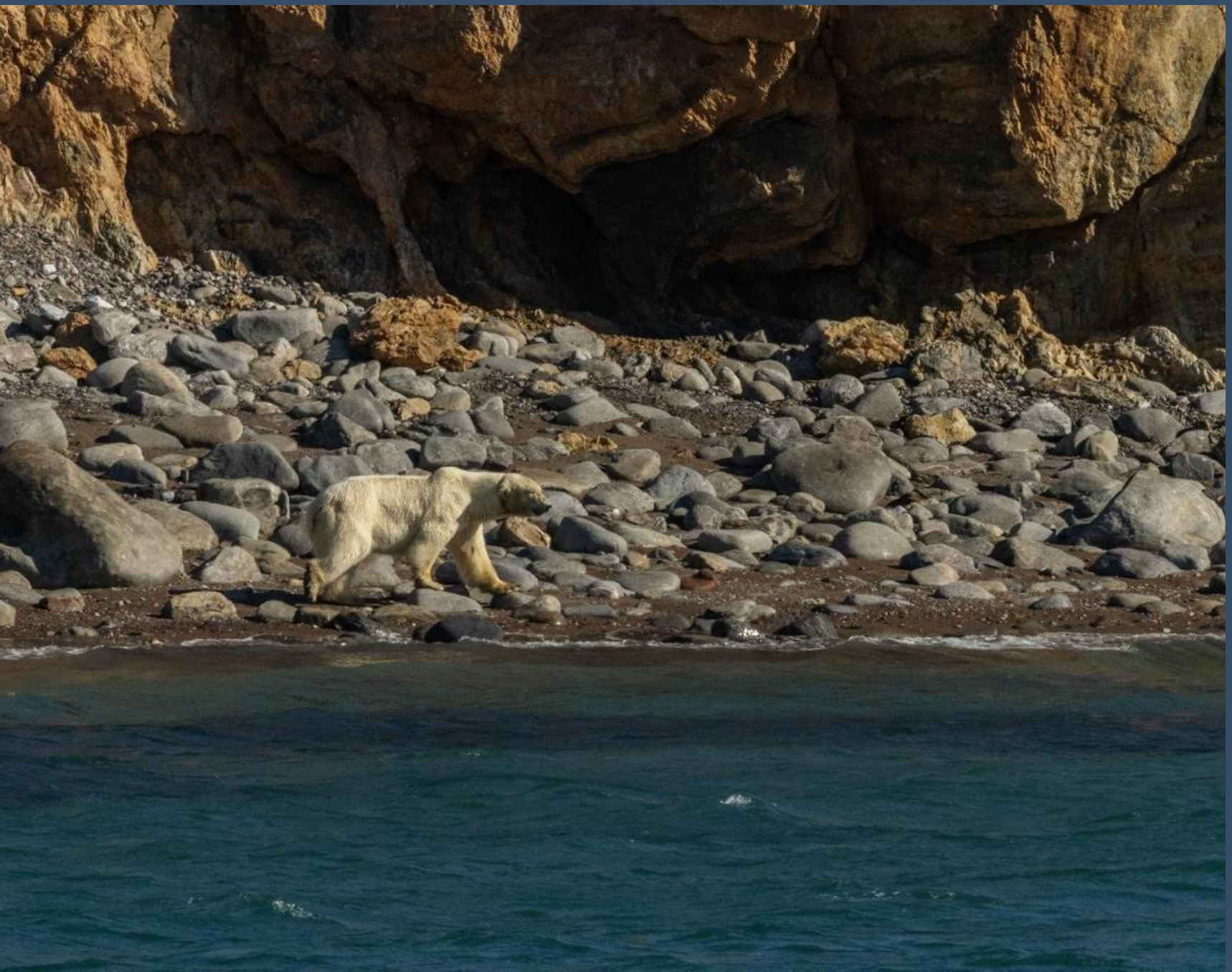
You can view our voyage project, and upload any additional observations, via the link below:

FRSVA261 20260531-20260607 Svalbard in Spring · iNaturalist

eBird

Our onboard ornithologist, Jonathann, completed 10 eBird checklists across 16 species over this seven-day voyage. The most abundant species was the Brünnich's guillemot, followed by the little auk and the black-legged kittiwake. To see the full record, view our eBird trip report at the link below.

View our data on our e-Bird trip report



Mammals

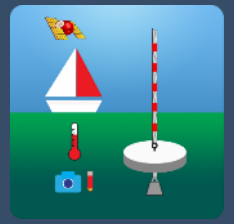
We did not submit any fluke photos to Happywhale during this voyage, but we were fortunate to encounter several marine mammals — a rare hooded seal, a ringed seal, and walruses among them. A polar bear sighting late in the voyage was a welcome final highlight.

We hope you keep watching the horizon for wildlife once you are home. We would be delighted to welcome you back on board.

Science Boat

We ran four science boat sessions during this voyage — at Bamsebu, Calypsobyen, Bjørnfjorden, and Mushamna. At each, we took Secchi Disk measurements to document the turbidity and clarity of the water and to estimate phytoplankton abundance.

Date	Location	Depth (m)
02.06.26	Bamsebu	9.0
02.06.26	Bjornfjorden	3.1
02.06.26	Mushamna	7.8



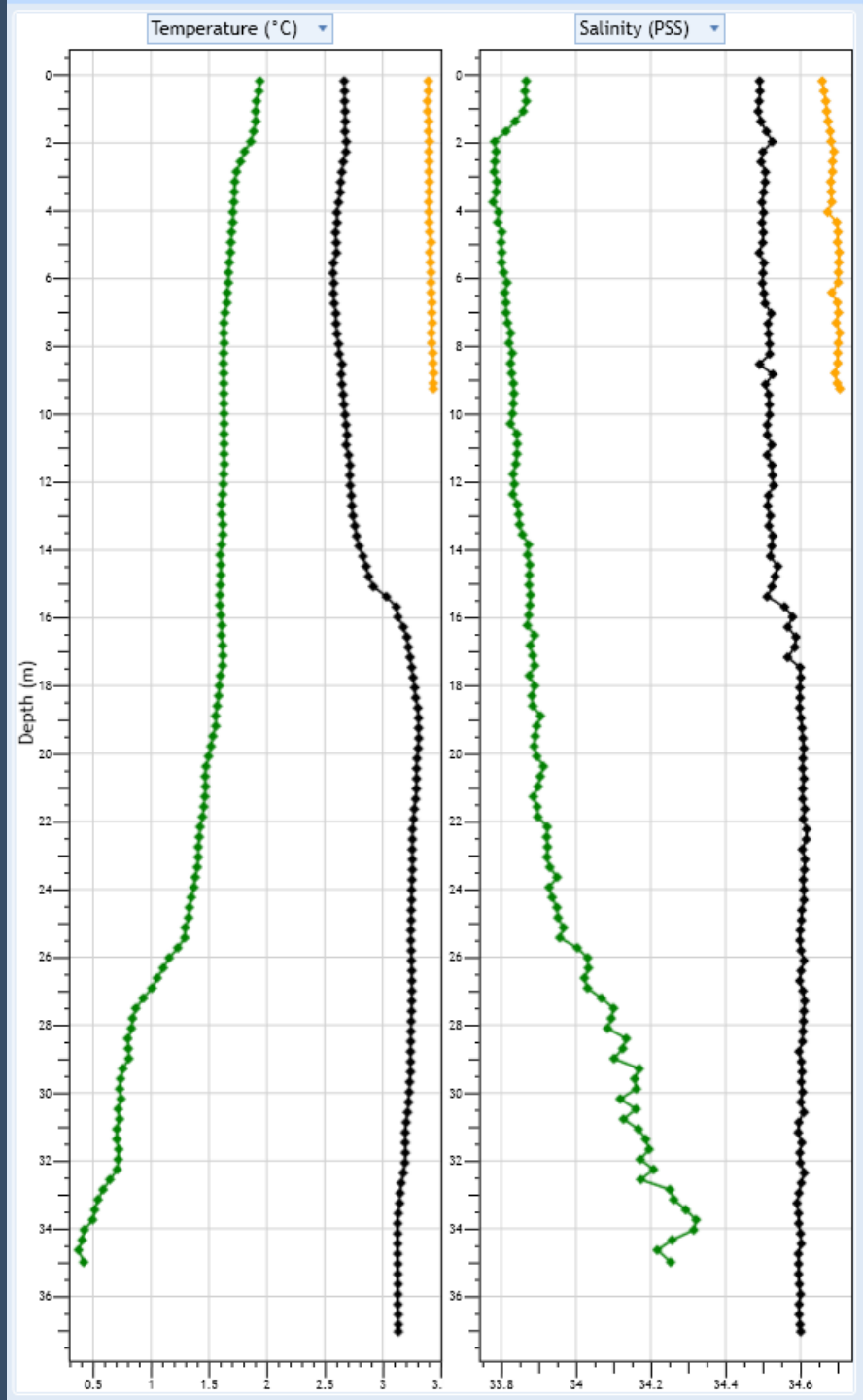
View our data submitted to the Secchi Disk Project

CTD Profiles

How to read the profiles

- The y-axis shows depth, increasing downwards — readings further down the graph correspond to deeper water.
- The left-hand graph shows temperature; the right-hand graph shows salinity.
- Each line represents a separate CTD cast, plotted together for comparison.

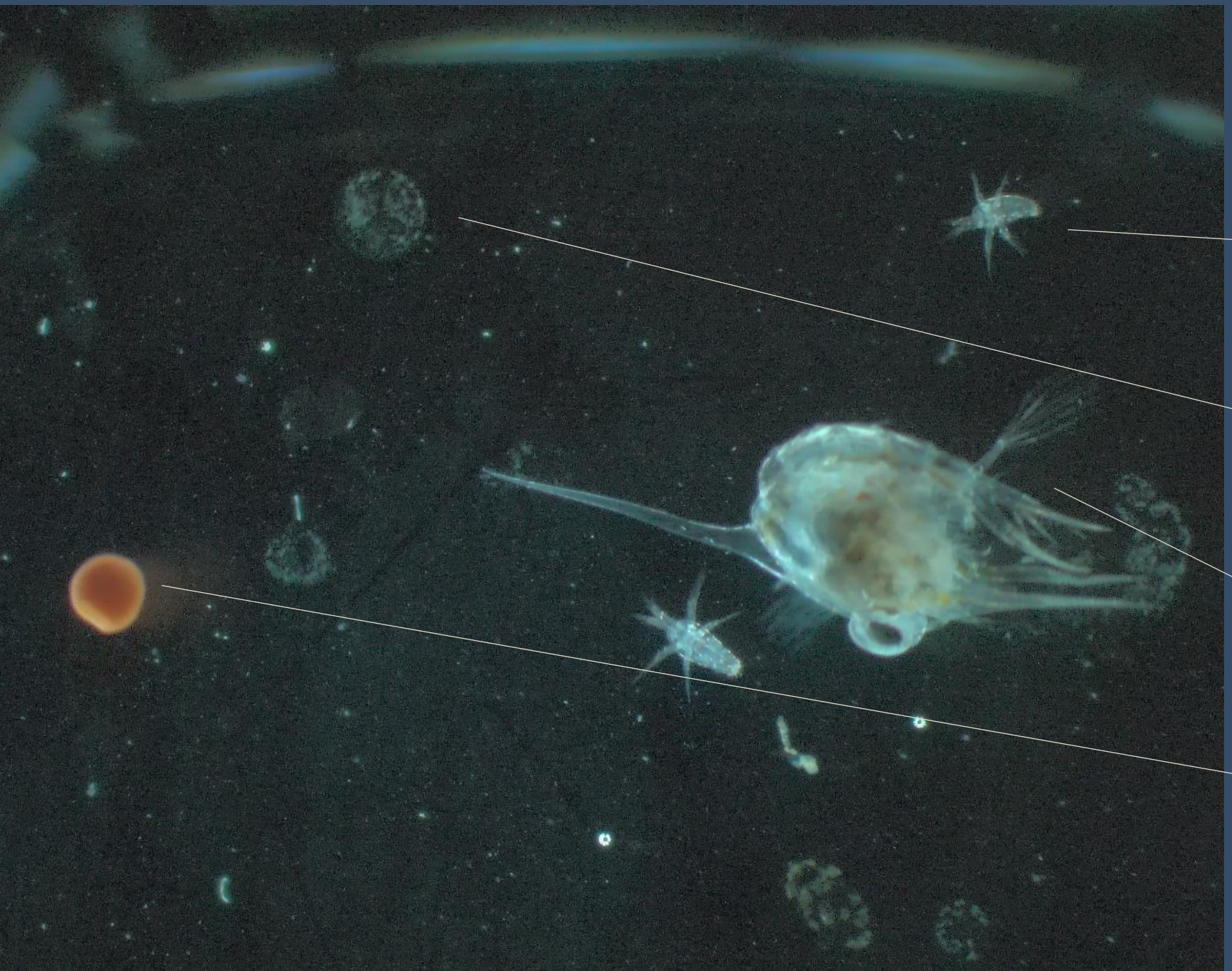
To interpret a single cast, pick one line and follow it from the surface value at the top down through the water column.



Cast legend

- Green line: 2 June, Bamsebu
- Black line: 2 June, Calypsobyen
- Yellow line: 3 June, Gravnesodden

Plankton Samples



Plankton Samples:

copepod larvae

algae

crab larvae

sea cucumber larvae

Plankton Samples: crab larvae

Climate Change Survey

On board, we ran a guest survey on views and feelings about climate change. Over time, with enough data gathered across voyages, we hope to build a meaningful statistical picture of the perspectives travelling with us.

Our thanks to the **83 guests** who took part on this voyage — about half of those on board. Of those who responded, 72% considered climate change a serious problem caused by human activity. You can view the results and interpretations on this link.

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

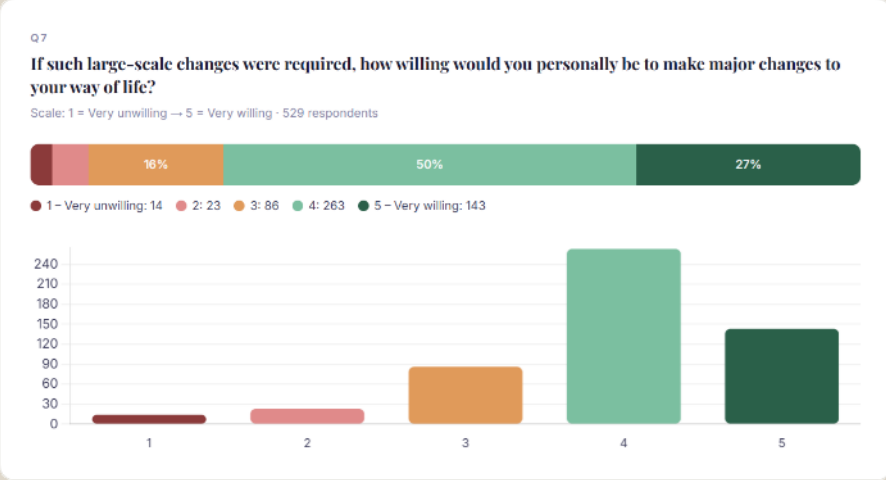
72.0%
believe climate change is a serious human-caused problem

50%
feel "concerned but hopeful" when hearing about climate change

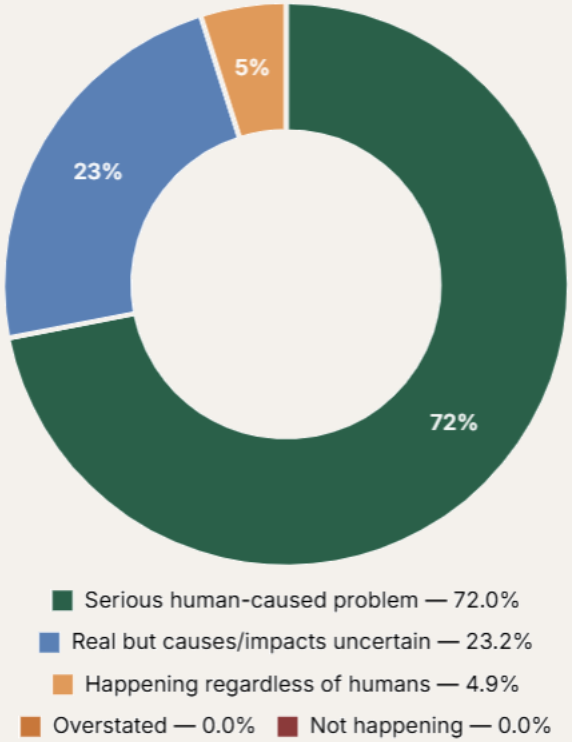
56%
see some damage as unavoidable but still believe meaningful action matters (Q3)

7.34
average personal worry score out of 10 — vs 4.67 perceived for the general public

74%
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

Alanna Frayne, MSc, from Heriot-Watt University in Scotland recently completed 24 hours of visual surveys aboard MS Fram for Project WAVE. By tracking Arctic whale distribution and abundance, the WAVE team's research aims to minimise vessel impacts on marine life. During our Arctic sailings, the team recorded five species: humpback whale, minke whale, hooded seal, ringed seal, and walrus.

Supported by the HX Foundation and HX Expeditions, the WAVE team thanks you for your contribution to protecting these animals, and invites you to follow their progress in the years ahead — scan the QR code to stay in touch.

Credit: Lauren McWhinnie/HX

Guest Scientists — WAVE Project

Keep up to date with the project at www.wave-arcticwhales.com

Saw something on your expedition? Send your photos to l.mcwhinnie@hw.ac.uk

Credit: Lauren McWhinnie/HX

Transforming Expedition Travel Through Science Education: The HX–UTAS Model

Dr Annaliese Jacobs Claydon (UTAS)

Ms Jemma Foster (UTAS)

2 June 2026

HX | University of Tasmania Learning Programme

The HX | University of Tasmania learning programme is a step change in science-based education within expedition cruising, blending academic rigour with hands-on exploration. Our shared aim is to develop dedicated learning courses across every itinerary HX offers.

The Svalbard course is currently in development and will be released over the coming months. As guests on this voyage, you will be among the first to gain access. Please contact HX once the Svalbard module is live to receive your access details.

Your feedback and suggestions during this voyage have shaped the work directly, as we extend our successful Antarctic programme into HX's Arctic destinations.

Wildlife list — birds

Wildlife list — seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Alle alle	little auk/dovekie	Krabbentaucher
Cepphus grylle	black guillemot	Gryllteiste
Fratercula arctica	Atlantic puffin	Papageitaucher
Fulmarus glacialis	northern fulmar	Eissturmvogel
Larus hyperboreus	glaucous gull	Eismöwe
Rissa tridactyla	black-legged kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe
Somateria mollissima	common eider	Eiderente
Stercorarius parasiticus	Arctic skua / parasitic jaeger	Schmarotzerraubmöwe
Stercorarius skua	great skua	Skua
Uria lomvia	Brünnich's guillemot / thick-billed murre	Dickschnabellumme

Wildlife list – waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Anser brachyrhynchus	pink-footed goose	Kurzschnabelgans
Branta bernicla	brant goose / brent goose	Ringelgans
Branta leucopsis	barnacle goose	Weißwangengans
Calidris maritima	purple sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer
Gavia stellata	red-throated diver/loon	Sterntaucher
Somateria spectabilis	king eider	Prachteiderente

Wildlife list – landbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Lagopus muta	rock ptarmigan	Alpenschneehuhn
Plectrophenax nivalis	snow bunting	Schneeammer

Wildlife list — marine mammals

Wildlife list — marine mammals

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
Megaptera novaeangliae	humpback whale	Buckelwal
Lagenorhynchus albirostris	white-beaked dolphin	Weißschnauzendelfin
Ursus maritimus	polar bear	Eisbär
Phoca vitulina	harbour seal, common seal	Seehund
Pusa hispida	ringed seal	Ringelrobbe
Odobenus rosmarus	walrus	Walross

Wildlife list — land mammals

Wildlife list — land mammals

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

Thank you

The MS Fram Science & Education Team extends our heartfelt thanks for choosing HX Expeditions to explore the western Svalbard archipelago this spring. Your participation supports the work of researchers on board and beyond — it is what makes meaningful studies possible, alongside the logistical access that fieldwork in the Arctic so often relies on.

We were grateful for your genuine curiosity and shared enthusiasm for the natural world — for birds and marine mammals, for flowers, lichens and mosses, and for the microscopic life found in a single drop of water.

It was a pleasure to exchange ideas with you, to reflect on history over coffee, and to marvel together at the ecosystems we encountered. We hope this journey stays with you for a long time to come.


Thanks for your participation!