



MS Spitsbergen

2026.06.09 - 2026.06.16



Legend



— HX Expedition

50 km

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Day 1 - Embarkation in Longyearbyen

Guests boarded MS Spitsbergen in Longyearbyen on 9 June, arriving under bright sunshine that gave way to cloud and wind as the afternoon drew in. Once guests had settled into their cabins, the safety drill brought everyone together on deck for the first time, followed by the welcome dinner. The Expedition Leader and Hotel

Manager set out the voyage ahead in an introductory presentation, outlining what lay in store across the days to come. We cast off from Longyearbyen and entered Isfjorden, the mood on board light and expectant. Expedition boots had yet to be collected, but there was no shortage of anticipation for what the archipelago had to offer.

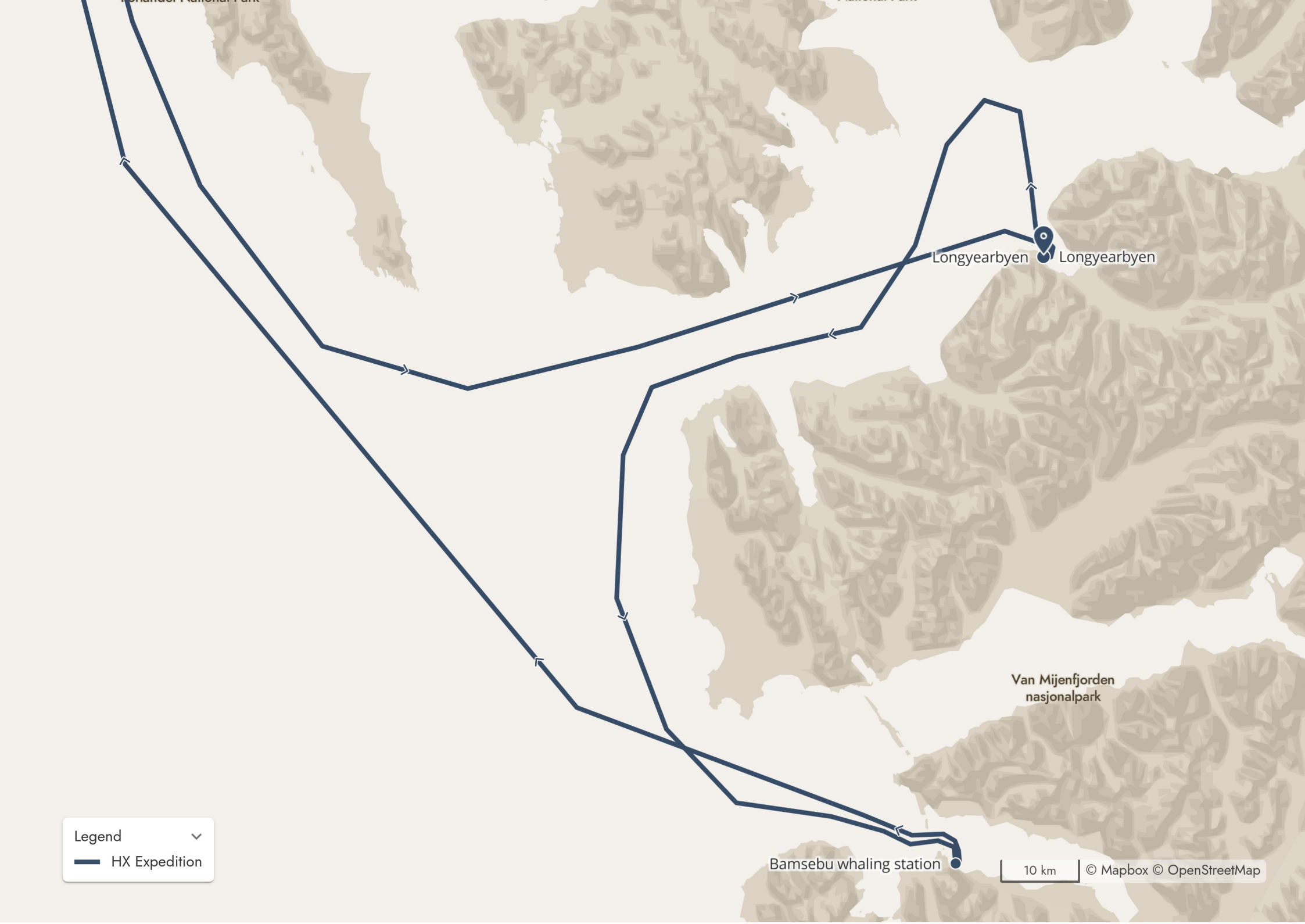


Day 2 - Bamsebu

The morning was spent at sea, with AECO briefings underway and guests collecting their expedition boots at last. In the afternoon, we made the first landing at Bamsebu under cloudy but calm skies. Stepping ashore, guests entered a landscape shaped by centuries of Arctic hunting: overturned rowboats once used for beluga hunts lay

scattered across the site, and beluga skeletons could still be found along the shoreline. Harbour seals lounged on nearby rocks while reindeer grazed quietly across the tundra. Sandpipers and eider moved along the headland, and the site held a stillness that spoke of its own long history.





Legend

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Longyearbyen

Van Mijenfjorden
nasjonalpark

Bamsebu whaling station

10 km

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Day 3 - Lilliehöökreen

We spent the morning on an expedition boat cruise at the breathtaking Lilliehöökreen, marvelling at its immense 9 km glacier front. Freshly calved ice floes drifted across the water, creating perfect haul-out spots for bearded and harbour seals, which we observed resting peacefully among the ice. The scale and beauty of the glacier made for a setting of rare scale and drama, with towering

walls of blue ice stretching across the horizon. Some guests had the opportunity to kayak in the icy waters, gaining a close and unhurried perspective beneath the glacier's face. It was a serene stretch of the Arctic, where dramatic ice and unhurried wildlife encounters sat side by side.

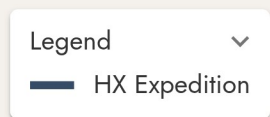


Day 3 - Signehamna

In the afternoon, fog led us to adjust our plans, swapping a landing for an expedition boat cruise near Signehamna at Nilspytten. This change rewarded us with a lively wildlife spectacle along the bird cliffs. Hundreds of black-legged kittiwakes and Brünnich's guillemots

filled the air above us, creating a constant flurry of movement and sound as they nested along the steep rock faces. During our exploration, a lone walrus swam past the expedition boats, a quiet highlight of the outing.





5 km

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Day 4 - Smeerenburgreen

We began the day with an early wake-up call for a truly special moment, our first polar bear sighting. After briefly disappearing, the bear reappeared and moved across the island and into the snow, offering an extended and unhurried sighting as it moved around the island and played in the snow. It was in excellent condition, which was reassuring to see. We then continued to Smeerenburgreen for

an expedition boat cruise under bright sunshine. This area, once shaped by extensive glaciation and near historic whaling sites, revealed sweeping U-shaped valleys and broad fjords. With clear skies and calm water, we could take in the full scale, history, and beauty.



Day 4 - Smeerenburg

In the afternoon, we travelled further north through Smeerenburgfjorden to visit Smeerenburg, also known as Blubbervtown, and once again stepped back through Svalbard's hunting past. This famous 17th-century whaling station offered a powerful glimpse into the harsh conditions endured by early hunters as we explored the site on guided walks. Although the walrus were

absent from their usual haul-out, we were treated to a few individuals swimming along the shoreline, along with sightings of red-throated divers nearby. Tracks in the sand told their own story, with numerous polar bear footprints, including those of a mother and cub, adding a sense of recent Arctic presence to this historic landscape.

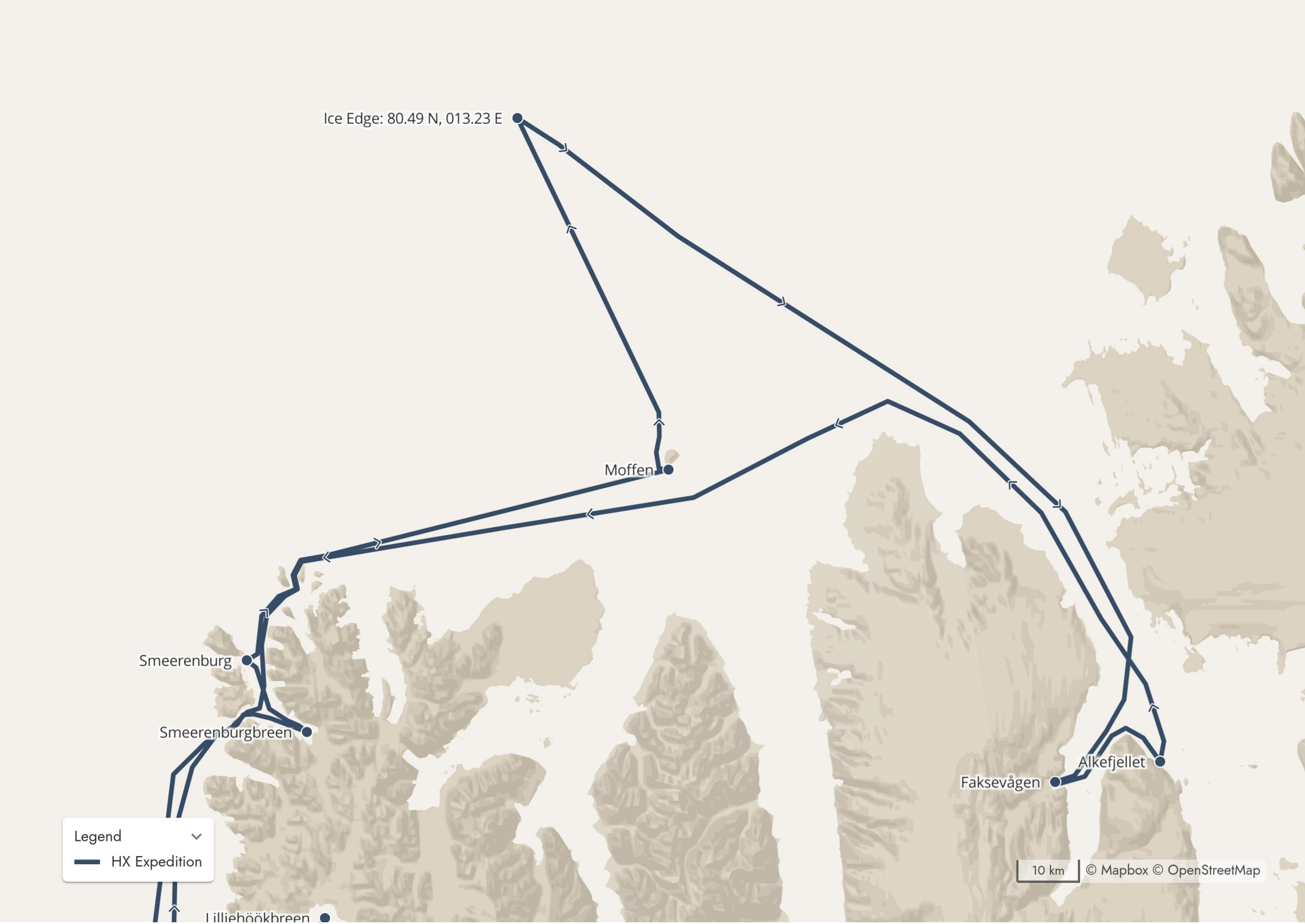


Day 4 - Moffen Island

We continued an action-packed day by sailing further north to Moffen Island, a well-known walrus haul-out site, and crossed 80 degrees north for the first time, a milestone for everyone on board. From the

ship, we observed groups of walrus resting along the sandy shoreline, while others moved through the water around us, offering close, unhurried views of these Arctic animals.





Day 5 - Ice Edge

We sailed north through the night and woke to blue skies, with the ice edge stretching out ahead of us. During the morning wildlife watch, we encountered fin whales and birdlife, drawing our attention to what lay ahead. Launching the expedition boats, we moved into this remarkable environment at 80.4 degrees north, roughly 1,000 km from the North Pole. A large iceberg nearby held a resting ivory gull,

a highlight for keen birders. Reaching the ice edge, we took in the scale and productivity of this vital ecosystem, carefully weaving between ice floes and navigating carefully between the floes. We then enjoyed a barbecue lunch on deck before increasing winds prompted our return south.



Day 6 - Faksevågen

Day 6 began with a windy Lomfjord, the ship pushing hard against the current while we worked to anchor. Fortunately, we managed to get the ship in place and could begin our operations. It became a day that showed what the Arctic tundra demands when the weather turns — and what it rewards in those who persist with gusts of wind

strong enough to blow us off balance at times. Despite this, many guests were still able to reach the viewpoint, which felt well earned in those conditions. The beauty of the landing site was in the details, with varied geology and plant life all around, for those who could pause long enough against the wind to look.



Day 6 - Alkefjellet

In the afternoon we sailed onwards to Alkefjellet, where we were met with more wind and swell, forcing a change of plans — an expedition boat cruise had been the intention. Nevertheless, we were still able to marvel at the sheer scale of Alkefjellet. This several-kilometre-long section of cliffs towers hundreds of metres up, with impressive

columns of dolerite intrusions carved by glaciers. Birds filled the sky and the water below us, adding to the atmosphere of this dramatic place. Despite the conditions, we once again braved the winds outside to take in the sight of this dramatic, unrelenting place.



Day 7 - Ny Ålesund

We moored at Ny-Ålesund under a low overcast that gradually lifted as the morning progressed. Some guests joined guided walking tours through the settlement, tracing the mining history and the series of accidents that brought operations to an end. The area has since become one of the world's most northerly centres for scientific research. Others browsed the souvenir shop, sent postcards to friends

and family, or walked out to the mast and dog yard for a photograph by the 'polar bear danger' sign, with Arctic terns circling overhead. As we departed Ny-Ålesund, skies had cleared and the fjord lay calm. Minke whales appeared off the bow — lunge feeding and head-lobbing in conditions that could hardly have been better.

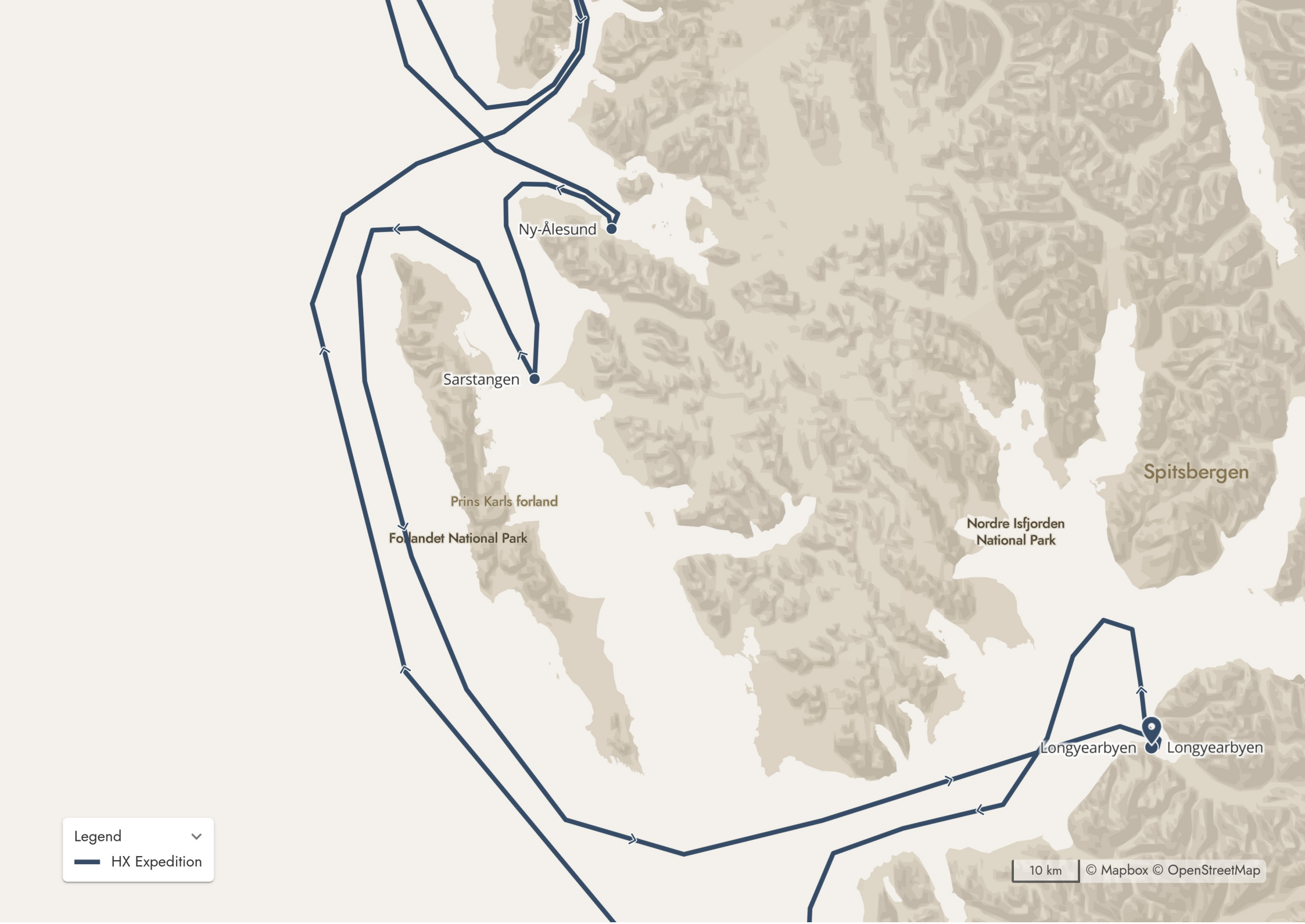


Day 7 - Sarstangen

Sailing to Sarstangen, the good weather continued. As we approached our landing site it became clear that, this time, a land approach to the walrus haul-out would be possible with about 50 male walrus hauled out on the sandy spit. It was a fitting close to the voyage. We led groups quietly towards the haul-out, and the

silence was not only out of respect for not disturbing the walrus, but also from the overwhelming feeling of seeing these 1.5-tonne beasts lying in the sun, burping, grunting, rolling in the sand, or cooling off in the water. As we left, we stayed in silence and awe, taking in the 360-degree views under clear skies.





Ny-Ålesund

Sarstangen

Prins Karls forland

Fouløyet National Park

Nordre Isfjorden
National Park

Spitsbergen

Longyearbyen Longyearbyen

Legend
HX Expedition

10 km © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap



Day 8 - Longyearbyen

Longyearbyen emerged on a bright morning as MS Spitsbergen made its final approach. Guests gathered for a last breakfast on board before the farewells began, and one by one they made their way down the gangway to the waiting coaches. It had been a swift week — faster than any of us would have wished. Looking back across

those seven days, the voyage had moved through much of Svalbard: whaling stations and the ice edge, old trapping huts and open tundra, with wind, swell, and shared discovery along the route. The memories from those days take time to fully settle — which is perhaps the measure of a voyage well spent.





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