

The background of the slide features a deep blue underwater scene with two whales. A large, semi-transparent blue letter 'H' is overlaid on the left side of the image. The text 'Science & Education Report' is centered in white.

Science & Education Report

Circumnavigating Spitsbergen — In the Realm of the Polar Bear

MS Fram, 12 — 21 July 2026



History & Culture

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, American Lincoln Ellsworth and Italian Umberto Nobile took the Norge airship over the North Pole from here; his mooring mast and bronze bust still stand as a testament to Svalbard's exploration legacy.



Art Corner

We took time during the voyage to draw, paint, and reflect — translating the landscapes and encounters of Svalbard into something we could carry home. A quieter pursuit, and one that made the extraordinary feel a little more lasting.





NASA's GLOBE Cloud Observer

We collected one observation for NASA's GLOBE Cloud Observer during this voyage — no cloud-type match was identified on this occasion. Back home, keep watching the sky: every contribution adds to a dataset that helps scientists understand global cloud patterns and climate systems.

[View our data](#) on the global map

iNaturalist

Thanks to your efforts, we recorded over 120 opportunistic observations representing nearly 40 different species. As summer takes hold in the Arctic, plants are at their most visible — they account for almost half of our observations, followed by breeding birds and marine life.

By sharing your data on iNaturalist, you are contributing 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 the project and upload your observations from this voyage [by clicking here.](#)



Polar Willow · Polar-Weide
Salix polaris 2 9 hours ago



Tribe Poeae
1 9 hours ago



Tufted Saxifrage · Polstersteinbrech
Saxifraga cespitosa 2 9 hours ago



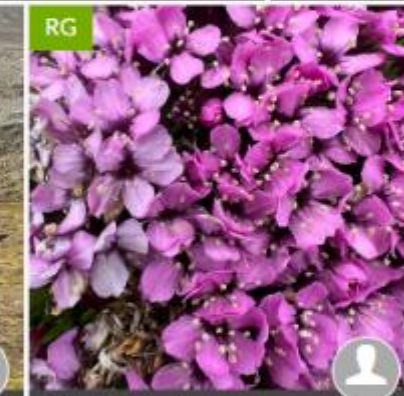
Yellow Map Lichen · Landkartenflechte
Rhizocarpon geographicum 1 9 hours ago



Nodding Saxifrage · Nickender Steinbrech
Saxifraga cernua 1 9 hours ago



Svalbard Reindeer · Spitzbergen-Ren
Rangifer tarandus ssp. platyrhynchus 2 9 hours ago



Moss Campion · Stängelloses Leimkraut
Silene acaulis 2 9 hours ago



Nodding Saxifrage · Nickender Steinbrech
Saxifraga cernua 1 8 hours ago





iNaturalist

This map brings together all observations recorded during the voyage.

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You can view the project and also upload your observations from our voyage [by clicking here.](#)



Happywhale

Although we were unable to submit any photographs to the Happywhale project during this voyage, we were fortunate to spot several marine mammals, among them minke and fin whales, walruses, and polar bears.

The photograph here shows a bearded seal — the largest seal after the walrus, and a favoured prey of the polar bear.

We hope the wildlife encounters from this voyage stay with you, and that you continue watching the horizon wherever your travels take you.

Science Boat

During this voyage, we conducted seven science boat outings between Hornsund, at the southernmost part of Spitsbergen, all the way north to the ice-edge.



Science Boat

During our science boat outings, we performed CTD measurements, collected water samples, and deployed our hydrophone to record underwater soundscapes. Among the highlights, we observed megalopa larvae of crustaceans, larval sea worms, and copepods, as well as adult individuals — and detected a copepod bloom across the archipelago.

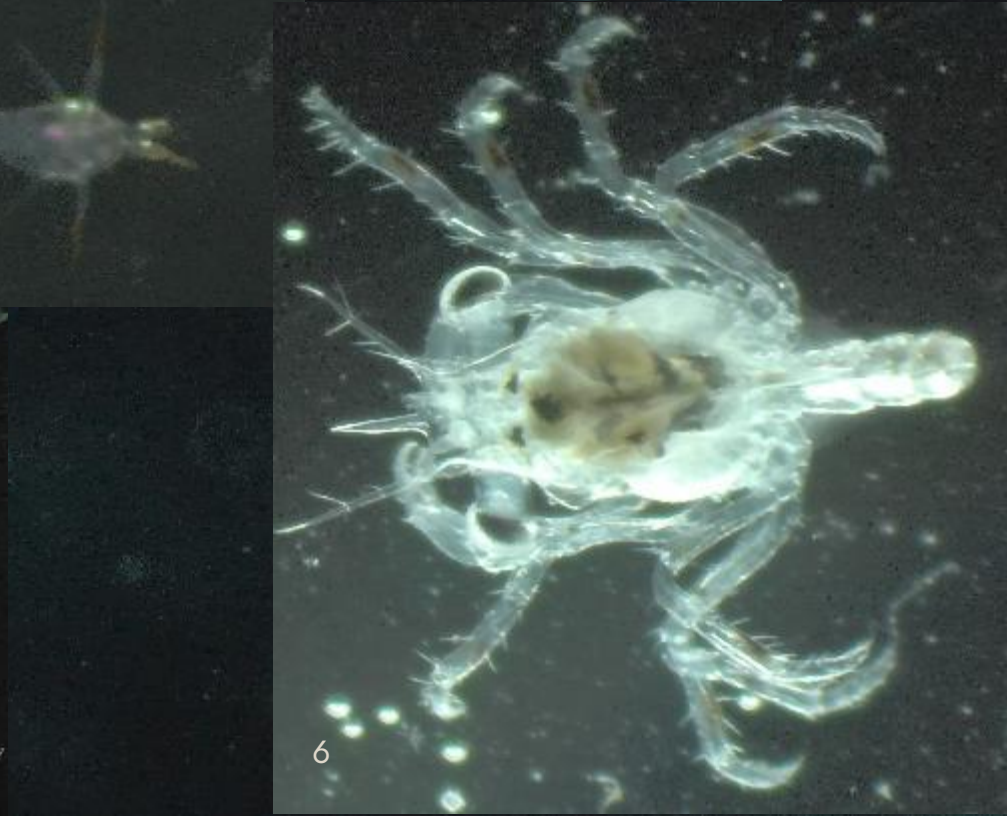
Together, these results will help us better understand the ongoing changes in the Arctic Ocean. All data will be submitted to EMODnet at the end of the voyage.



Science Boat

This collage shows different organisms of the tiny creatures found in a drop of water, all classified as zooplankton:

1. Sea worm or polychaete
2. Sea worm larvae
3. Radiolaria
4. Copepod larvae
5. Jellyfish larvae
6. Megalopa Larvae of crustacean



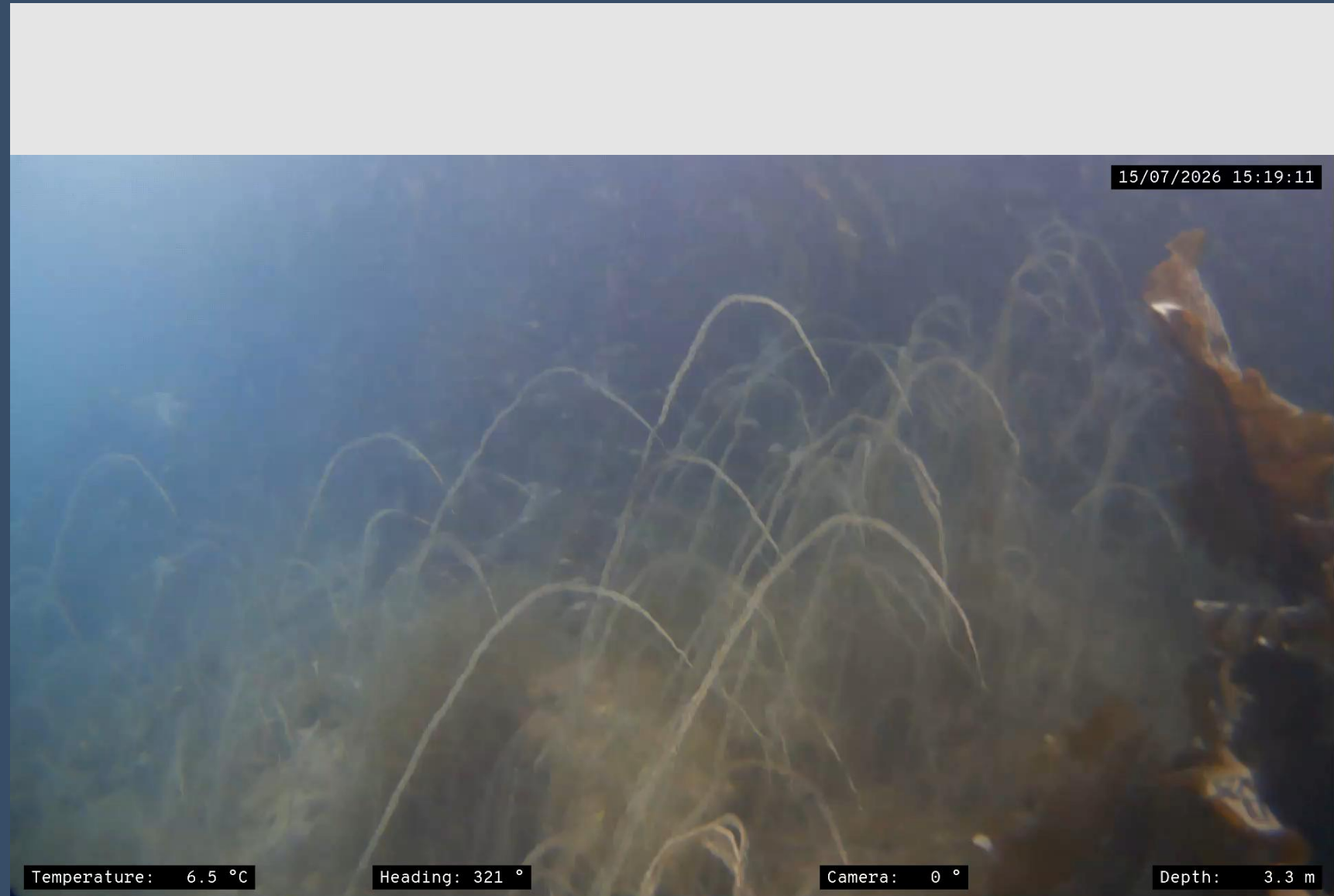
Underwater Drone

On 15 July 2026, we deployed our underwater drone in Texas Bar to document the variety of seaweed found along the rocky walls of a sheltered inner bay. What came into view was a vibrant, thriving kelp forest — composed mainly of *Saccharina* and *Laminaria* species.

Within this rich ecosystem, we also encountered sponges, ascidians, and sea snails, all benefiting from the shade the kelp provides — growing undisturbed and out of reach of predators.

Kelp forests are among the most productive and ecologically vital ecosystems in temperate and polar waters.

Highlights from our underwater drone footage are available to view [on YouTube](#)





Beach Clean-up

MS Fram is on a mission to collect ocean waste in the remote places we visit. During our voyage, we collected 30 kg of waste, most of which was gathered at Alicehamna and Bamsebu.

Geological Highlights

During this voyage, we circumnavigated Spitsbergen and encountered Svalbard's vast geological history first-hand.

A particular highlight was the ammonite fossil found in Burgerbukta, which shed light on past ecosystems and climates experienced by Svalbard over geological time.





Wildlife

List — Marine Mammals

Wildlife List – Marine Mammals

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	common minke whale	Zwergwal
<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	fin whale	Finnwal
<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	polar bear	Eisbär
<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	harbour seal, common seal	Seehund
<i>Pagophilus groenlandicus</i>	harp seal	Sattelrobbe
<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>	bearded seal	Bartrobbe
<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>	walrus	Walross
	unidentified seal	Nicht identifizierte Robbe



Wildlife List – Land Mammals

Wildlife List – Land Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Reindeer	Rentier
<i>Alopex lagopus</i>	Arctic fox	Polarfuchs

Wildlife

List — Birds



Wildlife List – Seabirds

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

Wildlife List – Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	barnacle goose	Weißwangengans
<i>Calidris maritima</i>	purple sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	red-throated diver/loon	Sternaucher
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	common eider	Eiderente
<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	long-tailed duck	Eisente
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	snow bunting	Schneeammer

Wildlife List — Landbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Lagopus muta</i>	rock ptarmigan	Alpenschneehuhn
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	snow bunting	Schneeammer
<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>	common snipe	Waldschnepfe



Wildlife List — Flora

Credit: Yuri Choufour/HX

Wildlife List — Flora

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Flavocetraria cucullata</i>	curled snow lichen	Kapuzenflechte
<i>Bistorta vivipara</i>	Alpine bistort	Knöllchen-Knöterich
<i>Saxifrage paniculata</i>	Alpine saxifrage	Schnee-Steinbrech
<i>Cerastium arcticum</i>	Arctic mouse-ear chickweed	arktisches Hornkraut
<i>Saxifrage cernua</i>	drooping saxifrage	Nickende Steinbrech
<i>Pedicularis hirsuta</i>	hairy lousewort	Behaartes läusekraut
<i>Xanthoria spp.</i>	elegant sunburst lichen	Zierliche Gelbflechte
-	feather mosses	-
<i>Silene acaulis</i>	moss campion	Stängelloses Leimkraut
<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>	purple saxifrage	roter Steinbrech
<i>Oreomecon dahliana</i>	Svalbard poppy	Svalbard-mohn
<i>Saxifraga cespitosa</i>	tufted saxifrage	Rasen-steinbrech
<i>Carex spp.</i>	sedge	-
<i>Saccharina latissima</i>	sugar kelp	-
<i>Fucus vesiculosus</i>	vesicled rockweed	-
-	-	Zackenmützenmoose

Wildlife List — Flora

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH
<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>	marsh saxifrage	Moor-steinbrech
<i>Dryas octopetala</i>	mountain avens	Silberwurz
<i>Oxyria digyna</i>	mountain sorrel	Alpen-säuerling
<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>	scurvy-grass	Gebräuliches Löffelkraut





In summary

Our summertime circumnavigation of Svalbard took us into some of the most remote waters of the Arctic. The itinerary gave us the opportunity to collect valuable data on terrestrial flora, fauna, and marine ecosystems. Among the scientific highlights: sightings of several polar bears, fin and common minke whales, walruses, reindeer, and Arctic fox. Our science boat outings drew strong engagement, as did the lectures and workshops — all deepening the connection between expedition experience and scientific understanding of the ecosystems we moved through.

What data?	How much data?
iNaturalist	110+ observations, 40 species
HappyWhale	0 submissions
CTD profiles	6 submissions

Thank you!

The Science and Education team aboard MS Fram thanks you for joining this expedition and for the active role you played in our scientific work. Your observations, curiosity, and willingness to engage made a genuine difference — not only to the data we collected, but to the researchers who depend on citizen science contributions to carry out their studies in some of the world's most remote environments.

It was a pleasure to share ideas, explore the history of these places together, and witness the ecosystems of Svalbard through fresh eyes. We hope this voyage gives you a lasting connection to the Arctic — and perhaps a reason to return.





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**Thanks for your
participation!**