

The background of the slide features a deep blue underwater scene with two whales. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the Roman numeral 'IX' is positioned on the left side, with a vertical blue gradient bar passing through its center. The text 'Science & Education Report' is centered horizontally across the middle of the image.

Science & Education Report

The Ultimate Fjord & National Park Expedition MS Spitsbergen

19.08.2026 – 31.08.2026





Science & Education Programme

Our Science & Education Team accompanied you during your expedition to the remote nature of the high Arctic.

You had the opportunity to explore our destination's natural beauty, exceptional wildlife, and rich history and culture. We organised lectures and interactive activities on board, and you explored our destinations during landings and from the water.

History & Culture

East Greenland has historically been less populated than the west, but it has still been inhabited since the Saqqaq culture, the first people to come to Greenland (2,500 BCE).

In Sydka, we saw the remains of some Thule dwellings. We could imagine the entrance, built to keep the warmth in, and the main room, where the whole family would gather.



History & Culture

In Ittoqqortoormiit, we visited a community of 300 people, a great example of a small community and how they live and survive in this sometimes harsh environment.



Flavours of Greenland

During your voyage, you had the possibility to experience our destination with all senses, including taste.

During the Greenlandic dinners hosted by local chef Heidi Andersen, you had the chance to explore the ingenuity of local flavours and craftsmanship.



Geology

Hardly anywhere else on our planet are the various periods of Earth's history so obviously on display as they are in East Greenland. From the 2-billion-year-old baserock in Scoresby Sound to the nearly undamaged layers of Eleanor Sound to the seemingly fresh, but nearly 400-million-year-old conglomerates of the famous Old Red Continent — the country's development becomes clear to the eye. The stark contrast between the very old processes and the very young events — namely the ice ages which are responsible for the fjords, glaciers, moraines, and the present shape of the Arctic land masses — is nothing short of overwhelming.





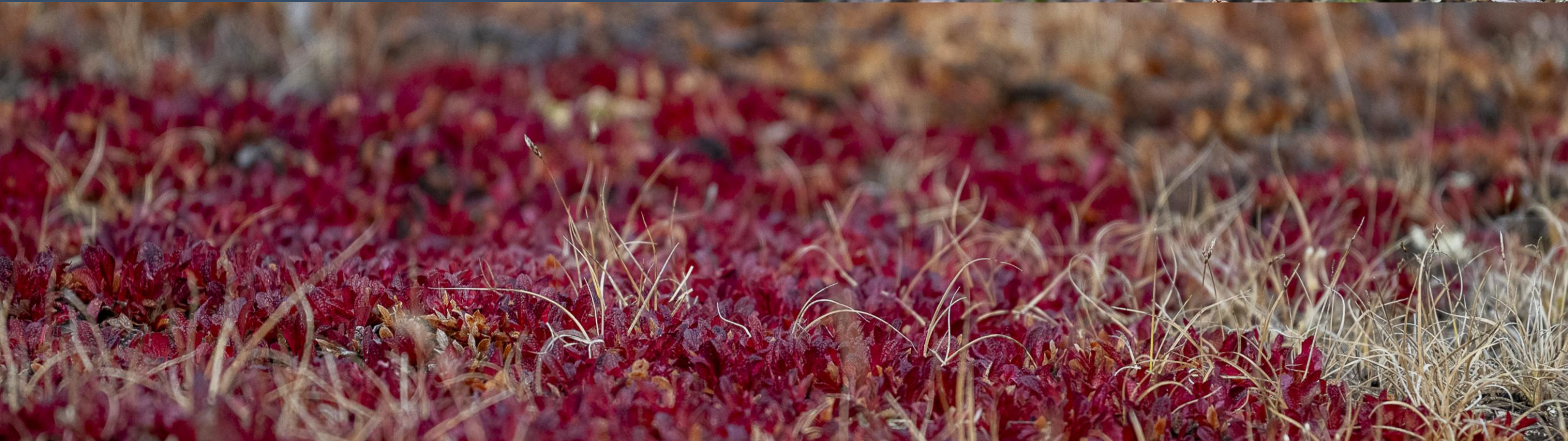
Ice

On this voyage we encountered practically no sea ice at all, but glacier ice in all its varieties. Depending on the size, the density, and the characteristics of the calving process, we could look at immense blocks of glacier surfaces that had merely detached from the glacier front, being of medium density, or marvel at deep-blue, translucent pieces of high-density blocks of ice, sitting deep in the water.

Arctic Tundra

East Greenland surpassed many of your expectations when it came to what could be found on Arctic tundra landscapes. Summer had melted the snow and revealed landscapes both green with grass, and with a surprising amount and variety of flora. Between cracks in the rocks and over the rolling hills, those who chose to take a closer look found Arctic plants.

Memorable moments included our first views of Greenland's national flower, the purple dwarf fireweed, and the changing of the bog bilberry's leaf colour from green to vibrant red as the season began to turn from summer to autumn.





NASA Globe Cloud Observer

Together with our Environmental Scientist, Steffen, you observed the clouds and submitted your observations to NASA's GLOBE Observer on two occasions, collecting 19 observations, all in sync with the satellite flyover. All participants have received positive feedback from NASA in both cases.

These cloud observations can help NASA improve our understanding of Earth's atmosphere and climate by providing valuable data for scientific research and climate modelling.

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

iNaturalist

Throughout our expedition, you and the team documented the flora and fauna of East Greenland and uploaded all findings to the biodiversity platform iNaturalist.

During our voyage, we submitted 147 observations of 75 different species. This effort contributes to the creation of a comprehensive understanding of the current distribution of species in East Greenland and can aid researchers in their ongoing studies and conservation efforts to protect these species.

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





Science Boat Sessions

45 eager participants joined our seven science boats in Jyttehavn, Rødepynt, Terrasseynt, Rype Næs, and Ella Ø to study the ecological communities and the hydrography of our destination.

You helped Guest Scientist Geir Johnsen look for algal communities with the underwater drone, and also recorded water profiles using the CTD for the marine database EMODnet.



Plankton Samples

Using the samples taken on some of the science boats, you dived into the underwater world of plankton back in the onboard Science Centre.

Despite the fjords of East Greenland being covered by ice for much of the year, we managed to find some members of the phytoplankton community, dinoflagellates (pictured) and diatoms, in our samples.

Despite their small size, plankton are essential for the development and maintenance of the wider oceanic food web.

Guest Scientist

On this voyage, we had Guest Scientist Geir Johnsen from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) on board. Professor Johnsen is interested in habitat mapping, specifically looking at what depths kelp lives.

We used our Blueye underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV) to explore and map underwater habitats at 12 locations in Scoresby Sound and Northeast Greenland National Park, from the surface down to 50 metres. The sites ranged from clear waters at fjord outlets to murky areas influenced by sea ice, glacial runoff, and sediment.

View the highlights from our underwater drone footage [on YouTube](#)



Guest Scientist

One of the key questions was how deep photosynthetic algae can grow along the East Greenland coast. Finding red coralline algae and kelp at 50 metres was a remarkable result, showing that these algae can survive and photosynthesise under extremely low-light conditions. The study also revealed a diverse range of habitats and species that provide food and shelter for many forms of marine life.

These observations help fill gaps in our knowledge of Arctic marine ecosystems and provide valuable information about the role of algae in coastal habitats. They also contribute to our understanding of how Arctic ecosystems may change as the climate continues to warm, providing important baseline information for future research and nature management.

View the highlights from our underwater drone footage [on YouTube](#)



Wildlife List — Birds



Wildlife List — Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	northern fulmar	Eissturmvogel	fulmar boréal
<i>Ardena gravis</i>	great shearwater	Kappensturmtaucher	puffin majeur
<i>Ardena grisea</i>	sooty shearwater	Dunkler Sturmtaucher	puffin fuligineux
<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>	Manx shearwater	Schwarzschnabelsturmtaucher	puffin des anglais
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	northern gannet	Basstölpel	fou de Bassan
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	great skua ('bonxie')	Skua	grand labbe
<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	pomarine skua	Spatelraubmöwe	labbe pomarine
<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	Arctic skua (parasitic jaeger)	Schmarotzerraubmöwe	labbe parasite
<i>Stercorarius longicaudus</i>	long-tailed skua (long-tailed jaeger)	Falkenraubmöwe	labbe à longue queue

Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	black-legged kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe	mouette tridactyle
<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	glaucous gull	Eismöwe	goéland bourgmestre
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	lesser black-backed gull	Heringsmöwe	goéland brun
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic tern	Küstenseeschwalbe	sterne arctique
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Atlantic puffin	Papageitaucher	macareux moine
<i>Cephus grille</i>	black guillemot	Gryllteiste	guillemot à miroir
<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Brünnich's guillemot (thick-billed murre)	Dickschnabellumme	guillemot de Brünnich
<i>Uria aalge</i>	common guillemot (common murre)	Trottellumme	guillemot marmette
<i>Alca torda</i>	razorbill	Tordalk	petit pingouin



Wildlife List — Shore Birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	common ringed plover	Sandregenpfeifer	pluvier grand-gravelot
<i>Calidris alba</i>	sanderling	Sanderling	bécasseau sanderling
<i>Calidris maritima</i>	purple sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer	bécasseau violet
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	ruddy turnstone	Steinwälzer	tournepierre à collier



Wildlife List — Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	pink-footed goose	Kurzschnabelgans	oie à bec court
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	barnacle goose	Weißwangengans	bernache nonnette
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	common eider	Eiderente	eider à duvet
<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>	long-tailed duck	Eisente	harelde kakawi
<i>Gavia stellata</i>	red-throated diver (red-throated loon)	Sterntaucher	plongeon catmarin
<i>Gavia immer</i>	great northern diver (common loon)	Eistaucher	plongeon huard



Wildlife List — Land Birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Lagopus muta</i>	rock ptarmigan	Alpenschneehuhn	lagopède alpin
<i>Corvus corax</i>	northern (common) raven	Kolkrabe	grand corbeau
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	peregrine falcon	Wanderfalke	faucon pèlerin
<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>	snow bunting	Schneeammer	bruant des neiges
<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	redpoll	Birkenzeisig	sizerin flammé
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	northern wheatear	Steinschmätzer	traquet motteux





eBird

During our wildlife watches and landings, our Ornithologist Julia and Marine Scientist Lauren conducted detailed bird surveys, recording observations for the Citizen Science platform eBird. We recorded 30 different species of birds in 21 checklists.

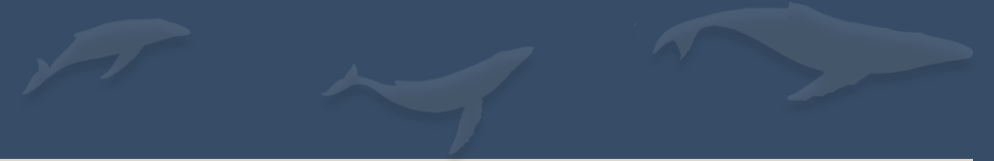
This initiative helps contribute valuable data to global bird conservation efforts, enhancing our understanding of seabird populations and their habitats.

View our data on our [eBird trip report](#)

Wildlife List — Marine Mammals



Wildlife List – Marine Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Ursus maritimus</i>	polar bear	Eisbär	ours blanc	isbjørn
<i>Pusa hispida</i>	ringed seal	Ringelrobbe	phoque annelé	ringsel
<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	common minke whale	Zwergwal	petit rorqual	vågehval
<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	fin whale	Finnwal	rorqual commun	finhval
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	humpback whale	Buckelwal	baleine à bosse	knølhval
<i>Lagenorhynchus albirostris</i>	white-beaked dolphin	Weißschnauzendelfin	lagénorhynque à bec blanc	kvitnos



Happywhale

The Expedition Team submitted pictures of the identifying features of the marine mammals that we encountered to the Citizen Science platform, Happywhale. We submitted tail fluke photographs of three humpback whales and two sperm whales for your voyage.

Happywhale allows us to follow individual whales and other marine mammals, to learn about their life history and migratory routes. This helps us better understand these fascinating creatures and contributes to their conservation.

[View our submissions](#) to Happywhale





Polar Bear

Polar bears are one of the species many of you hoped to see in East Greenland. Despite the challenges of the landscape, and the sparse distribution of polar bears in this region, we were lucky enough to see two bears on Robertson Islands, in East Greenland National Park.

The largest of any carnivore that can be found on land, the polar bear is classed as a marine mammal due to its dependence on, and connection with, life in and around the sea ice. Seeing this impressive animal in its natural habitat truly was a highlight of the voyage for many of you.

Wildlife List — Land Mammals



Wildlife List – Land Mammals



SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Lepus arcticus</i>	Arctic hare	Polarhase	lièvre arctique	polarhare
<i>Ovibos moschatus</i>	muskox	Moschusochse	bœuf musqué	moskusfe



Thanks for your participation!