

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

Science & Education Report

The Ultimate Fjord and National Park Expedition

MS Spitsbergen

09.09.2026 – 21.09.2026





Science & Education Programme

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

Together, we explored the natural beauty, exceptional wildlife, and rich history and culture of our destination. We organised lectures and interactive activities on board, and we explored our destinations during landings and from the water.

History & Culture

We began our voyage in Heimaey, in the Westman Islands, where we learnt about the community's resilience following the 1973 volcanic eruption, when the entire population was evacuated within hours. Lava buried a third of the town, and the islanders later rebuilt much of it. We also visited Iceland's Westfjords, where we learnt about the fishing communities that have shaped life in this remote corner of the country for centuries.



History & Culture

From Iceland, we crossed into East Greenland, one of the most isolated and sparsely populated regions on Earth. We landed at Sydkap, where we saw the remains of Thule culture settlements, traces left by the ancestors of today's Greenlandic Inuit, who hunted and lived along this coast for centuries before any European set foot there.



History & Culture

We also visited Ittoqqortoormiit, one of the most remote settlements in the Northern Hemisphere and home to one of the smallest and most isolated communities in Greenland. Founded in 1925, when a group of Inuit relocated here from Tasiilaq, it remains a place where traditional hunting continues much as it has for generations.



Flavours of Greenland

During our voyage, we experienced our destination with all our senses, including taste.

At the Greenlandic dinners hosted by local chef Heidi Andersen, we explored the ingenuity of local flavours and craftsmanship.



Geology — Shaping the Earth

The topography we see today was shaped by the most recent processes in Earth's history, namely the ice ages. Yet these processes acted on rock that had itself endured the most powerful events across thousands of millions of years.

Plate tectonics, largely the collision of the northern continents, left a metamorphic imprint that is visible across the landscape, wherever you look. This stands in stark contrast to the ever-present glaciers and icebergs that, although receding, are a constant reminder that we are in the far north.



Geology – Deep Time

On this voyage, we saw geological settings from vastly different windows of time. While the rocks of Iceland are wild and spectacular in their origins, they are remarkably young compared to everything in Greenland.

Few places on our planet display the periods of Earth's history as clearly as East Greenland. The bedrock in Scoresby Sund is up to 3,000 million years old, a timespan that is hard to imagine. Mountain ranges that once dwarfed the Himalayas in Devonian times are long gone, yet they live on in the bright red rocks of Rødepynt.

When we took a moment to reflect, this put many things into perspective, and we came away with a new outlook.





NASA Globe Cloud Observer

Together with our Environmental Scientists, Heleen and Steffen, we observed the clouds and submitted our observations to NASA's GLOBE Cloud Observer on four occasions, collecting six observations in sync with the satellite flyovers. At present, the NASA GLOBE Observer app needs an update, and until then it does not work with the latest-generation smartphones. We encourage you to keep trying.

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. Thank you for your contribution.

Longitude	-21.34	-21.84 to -21.04
Total Cloud Cover	Overcast (>90%) 	Overcast (98.48%) 
High Clouds		
		Cover: Broken 88.96%  Altitude: 4.1 (km) Phase: Ice/Water Mix 256.61 (K) Opacity: Opaque
Mid Clouds		
	 Stratus  Stratocumulus Cover: Overcast (>90%)  Opacity: Opaque	Cover: Few (9.53%)  Altitude: 1.96 (km) Phase: Water 268.33 (K) Opacity: Opaque
Low Clouds		

Sky and Surface Conditions	North	East	South	West
Sky Conditions				

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

Arctic Tundra

East Greenland surpassed many of our expectations of what the Arctic tundra could hold. Summer had melted the snow, revealing landscapes green with grasses and a surprising abundance and variety of flora. Between cracks in the rocks and across the rolling hills, those of us who took a closer look found Arctic plants.

Memorable moments included purple saxifrage still in bloom, the vibrant red leaves of bog bilberry in their autumn colours, and a rich carpet of mosses and lichens.



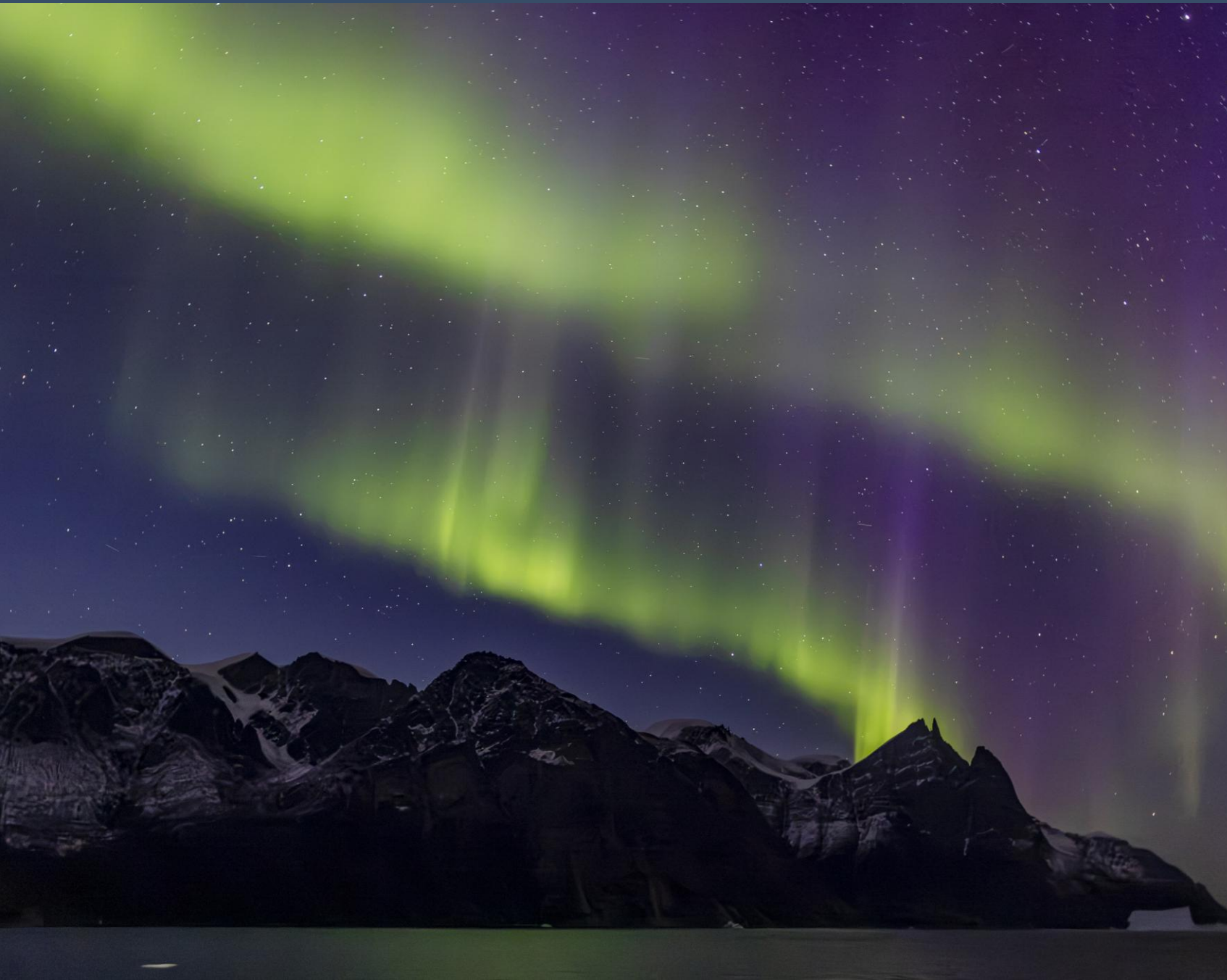
iNaturalist

Throughout our expedition, we documented the flora and fauna of East Greenland and uploaded our findings to the Citizen Science platform iNaturalist.

During our voyage, we submitted 326 observations of 110 different species. This effort contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the current distribution of species in East Greenland and supports researchers in their ongoing studies and conservation efforts to protect these species.

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





Aurorasaurus

We were fortunate to see spectacular displays of the Northern Lights on several nights during our voyage. We uploaded our observations to Aurorasaurus, contributing to aurora research.

If you would like to contribute your own observations, it is not too late.

Visit [Aurorasaurus](#) to learn more about the project and submit your photos!



Science Boat Sessions

A total of 54 guests joined our seven science boat sessions at Sydkap, Rødepynt, Rype Næs, Charcot Bay, and Ittoqqortoormiit, where we studied the ecological communities and the hydrography of our destination.

Together, we monitored ocean clarity through the Secchi Disk Citizen Science project, contributing to important research on the distribution of phytoplankton blooms, and we collected water profiles for the marine database EMODnet.

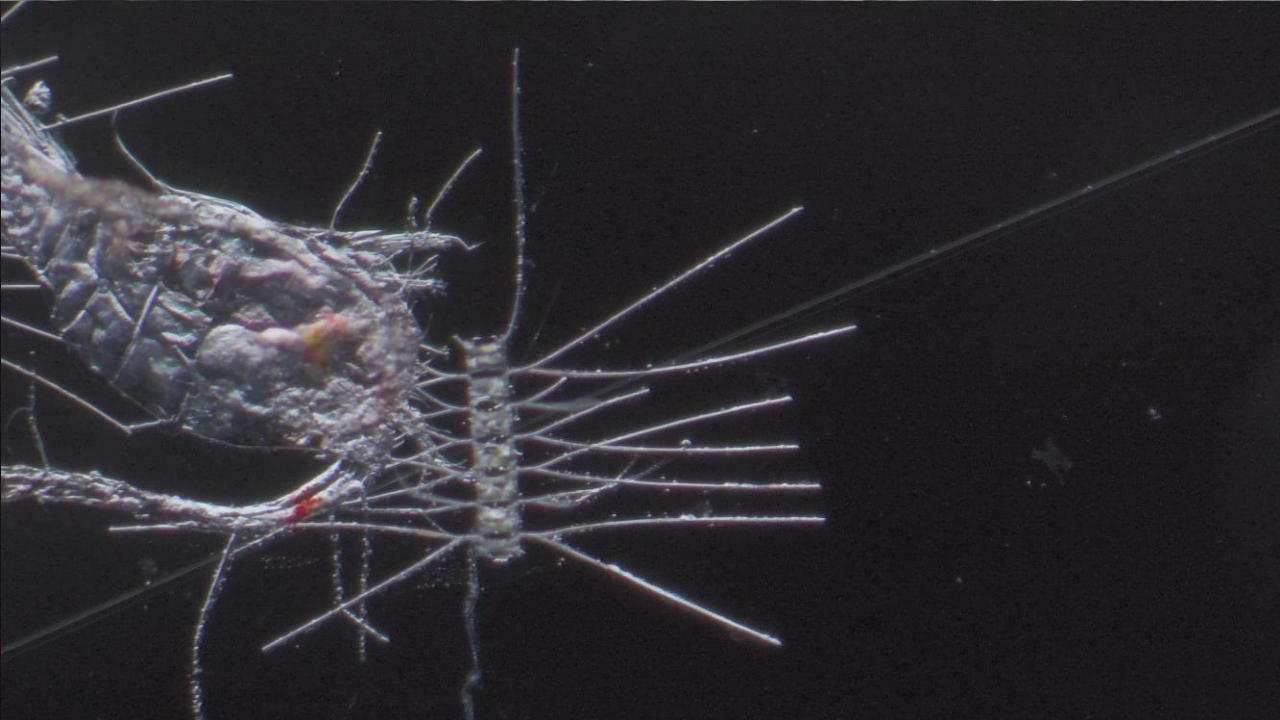


Plankton Samples

Using the samples we collected on some of the science boat sessions, we dived into the underwater world of plankton back in the onboard Science Centre.

Although the fjords of East Greenland are covered by ice for much of the year, we managed to find members of both the zooplankton and phytoplankton communities in our samples, such as copepods and dinoflagellates.

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



Underwater Drone

We used our underwater drone to explore the marine environment of Iceland and Scoresby Sund, from intertidal zones to kelp forests, and from glacial bays to dark depths where only marine snow drifted.

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



Wildlife List — Birds



Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>	Northern Fulmar	Eissturmvogel	Fulmar boréal	Havhest
<i>Ardenna grisea</i>	Sooty Shearwater	Dunkler Sturmtaucher	Puffin Fuligineux	Grålire
<i>Morus bassanus</i>	Northern Gannet	Basstölpel	Fou de Bassan	Havsule
<i>Stercorarius skua</i>	Great Skua	Große Raubmöwe	Grand Labbe	Storjo
<i>Stercorarius pomarinus</i>	Pomarine Skua (Pomarine Jaeger)	Spatelraubmöwe	Labbe pomarin	Polarjo
<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>	Black-legged Kittiwake	Dreizehenmöwe	Mouette tridactyle	Krykkje
<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Black-headed Gull	Lachmöwe	Mouette rieuse	Hettemåke
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	European Herring Gull	Silbermöwe	Goéland argenté	Gråmåke
<i>Larus canus</i>	Common Gull	Sturmmöwe	Goéland cendré	Fiskemåke
<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>	Glaucous Gull	Eismöwe	Goéland Bourgmestre	Polarmåke
<i>Larus glaucoides</i>	Iceland Gull	Polarmöwe	Goéland arctique	Grønlandsmåke
<i>Larus fuscus</i>	Lesser Black-backed Gull	Heringsmöwe	Goéland brun	Sildemåke
<i>Larus marinus</i>	Great Black-backed Gull	Mantelmöwe	Goéland marin	Svartbak
<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>	Arctic Tern	Küstenseeschwalbe	Sterne Arctique	Rødnebbterne
<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	Atlantic Puffin	Papageitaucher	Macareux moine	Lunde

Wildlife List – Seabirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Cephus grylle</i>	Black Guillemot	Gryllteiste	Guillemot à miroir	Teist
<i>Uria lomvia</i>	Brünnich's Guillemot (Thick-billed Murre)	Dickschnabellumme	Guillemot de Brünnich	Polarlomvi
<i>Alca torda</i>	Razorbill	Tordalk	Petit Pingouin	Alke
<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>	European Shag	Krähenscharbe	Cormoran huppé	Toppskarv



Wildlife List — Waterbirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>	Whooper Swan	Singschwan	Cygne chanteur	Sangsvane
<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>	Pink-footed Goose	Kurzschnabelgans	Oie à bec court	Kortnebbgås
<i>Branta leucopsis</i>	Barnacle Goose	Weißwangengans	Bernache nonnette	Hvitkinngås
<i>Somateria mollissima</i>	Common Eider	Eiderente	Eider à duvet	Ærfugl
<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>	Great Cormorant	Kormoran	Grand Cormoran	Storskarv

Wildlife List — Shorebirds

SCIENTIFIC NAME	ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS	NORSK
<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	Common Ringed Plover	Sandregenpfeifer	Pluvier grand-gravelot	Sandlo
<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>	European Golden Plover	Goldregenpfeifer	Pluvier doré	Heilo
<i>Calidris alba</i>	Sanderling	Sanderling	Bécasseau sanderling	Sandløper
<i>Calidris maritima</i>	Purple Sandpiper	Meerstrandläufer	Bécasseau violet	Fjæreplytt
<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Ruddy Turnstone	Steinwälzer	Tournepierre à collier	Steinvender
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Common Redshank	Rotschenkel	Chevalier gambette	Rødstilk
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Eurasian Oystercatcher	Austernfischer	Huîtrier pie	Tjeld

Wildlife List — Land birds

SCIENTIFIC NAME		ENGLISH	DEUTSCH	FRANÇAIS
<i>Lagopus muta</i>	Rock Ptarmigan	Alpenschneehuhn	Lagopède alpin	Fjellrype
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Northern (Common) Raven	Kolkrabe	Grand corbeau	Ravn
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>	Northern Wheatear	Steinschmätzer	Traquet motteux	Steinskvett
<i>Acanthis flammea</i>	Redpoll	Birkenzeisig	Sizerin flammé	Gråsisik
<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Redwing	Rotdrossel	Grive mauvis	Rødvingetrost
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	Peregrine falcon	Wanderfalke	faucon pèlerin	vandrefalk
<i>Columba livia</i>	Rock Dove	Felsentaube	Pigeon biset	Klippedue (Bydue)



eBird

During our wildlife watches and landings, our Ornithologist, Julia, conducted detailed bird surveys, recording observations for the Citizen Science platform eBird. We recorded 35 different species of birds in 18 checklists.

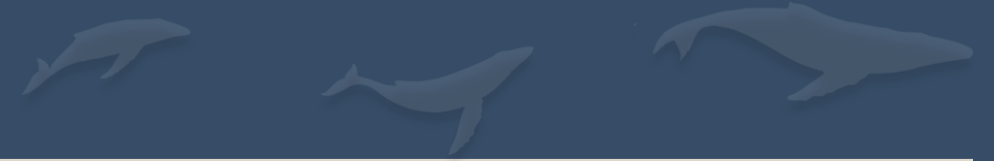
This initiative contributes valuable data to global bird conservation efforts, enhancing our understanding of seabird populations and their habitats.

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>Phoca vitulina</i>	Harbour Seal, Common Seal	Seehund	Phoque commun	Steinkobbe
<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



Polar Bear

The polar bear was one of the species many of us hoped to see in East Greenland. Despite the challenging landscape and the sparse distribution of polar bears in this region, on our penultimate day we were fortunate to see an adult female with her cub in Vikingebugt.

The largest land carnivore, the polar bear is classed as a marine mammal because of its dependence on life in and around the sea ice. Seeing this impressive animal in its natural habitat was a highlight of the voyage.

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	boeuf musqué	moskusfe

A large, jagged iceberg floats in the ocean, featuring a prominent natural archway. The sky is a mix of soft pinks, purples, and blues, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The water is dark, and a small boat with people is visible in the distance through the arch. The text "Thanks for your participation!" is overlaid in white, bold font. A large, semi-transparent "IX" is also visible on the right side of the image.

Thanks for your participation!