WILDLIFE TRAVEL

all our profits are donated to nature conservation













7th to 18th July 2027 (11 nights)

SVALBARD

Polar Bears and wildlife of the High Arctic

An awe-inspiring arctic cruise, circumnavigating Spitsbergen and exploring the spectacular land of the ice bear.

The archipelago of Svalbard lies well north of the Arctic Circle, midway between the North Cape (the northernmost point on mainland Europe) and the North Pole. During our voyage, we will attempt to circumnavigate the largest island of Spitsbergen, although our exact route will depend on the extent of the summer sea ice.

Inevitably, the species diversity up here is pretty low: the islands are home to just 165 species of vascular plants and only three land mammals, but this is more than made up for by the sheer numbers, especially of the marine life. Around 850,000 pairs of Brünnich's Guillemots and over a million pairs of Little Auks nest amongst the islands' cliffs, with several species of seal and whale abundant in the rich waters. The human population is outnumbered by that of the world's largest land predator, the Polar Bear

As we travel around the archipelago, we will make daily excursions out to explore the various islands and fjords, enjoying spectacular glaciers, wonderful views and travelling up to the bleak but wildlife-rich expanses of the polar pack ice.

We will spend time at vast seabird colonies and Walrus haul-outs, visit the world's most northerly village, sail amongst icebergs calved off from the third largest ice cap in the world, and cruise the edge of the pack ice where Polar Bears hunt Ringed Seals, attended by scavenging Ivory Gulls.

PRICE £8,495
single room supplement £200
(Oslo hotel only)

Full Board

TOUR LEADER Phil Saunders

PAYMENT
deposit £750
instalment £2,500
due on confirmation of holiday
balance due 7th April 2027

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

Day 1 flight to Oslo
Day 2 flight to Longyearbyen
board m/v *Hondius*
Days 3-10 Circumnavigation of Spitsbergen, perhaps reaching as far as 80° N, ice conditions permitting
Day 11 return to Oslo
Day 12 flight to UK

Group size min 2, max 10

The Manor House, Broad Street, Great Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6DH
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ITINERARY

The planned cruise itinerary is to complete a full circumnavigation of Spitsbergen. The itinerary given below is for guidance only. The actual program may vary depending on ice, weather and wildlife conditions, while landings are subject to site availabilities, permissions and environmental concerns per AECO regulations. In case we cannot complete a full circumnavigation, the expedition leader will devise a suitable program.

Day 1 Wednesday 7th July. Today we make our way to Oslo, where we will spend the night in an airport hotel. ***You may prefer to fly out early and spend some time in Oslo, meeting up with the group at Oslo airport in the morning of Day 2***.

Day 2 Thursday 8th July. Our morning flight takes us from Oslo up across the Arctic Circle to **Longyearbyen,** the administrative capital of the Svalbard archipelago. Here we have time to explore, getting our first taste of the Arctic, with family groups of Barnacle and Pink-footed Geese feeding around town, while Snow Buntings twitter amongst the buildings, including the interesting Svalbard Museum.

In the afternoon, we board the **M/V Hondius,** our home for the holiday, and set sail.

Days 3-10 Friday 9th to Friday 16th July. As we head out of Isfjorden, the boat will pass over some deeper water, where we will keep our eyes open for our first whales of the trip.

Heading north along the west coast, we expect to sail to Ny Ålesund, the northernmost settlement on earth. Close to the community is a breeding ground for Barnacle Geese and Arctic Terns, while Long-tailed Duck and Red-throated Diver may be found on the protected lagoons, and the diminutive Svalbard Reindeer can often be found browsing the flowering tundra.

Depending on the weather, we may now sail into Liefdefjorden, cruising near the 5km long face of the impressive Monacobreen Glacier. The waters of the glacier front are a favourite feeding spot for thousands of Black-legged Kittiwake, sometimes joined by the ghostly Ivory Gull, while Beluga may be found beneath the melee.

We will travel north, up into the pack ice at 80 degrees north, just 540 miles from the geographic North Pole. Polar Bears inhabit this region, followed by Ivory Gulls, keen to scavenge from the bears' kill, while Harp Seals and the elusive Bowhead Whale may be found along the edge of the ice.

In the Seven Islands, north of Nordaustlandet, we will visit Phippsøya, where Walrus haul out on a sheltered beach, and search for the delicate Svalbard Poppy on one of the northernmost spots in Europe.

Heading south into Hinlopen Strait, we'll navigate the ice floes of Lomfjordshalvøya in our zodiacs and explore the bird cliffs of Alkefjellet, home to thousands of Brünnich's Guillemots, where Arctic Foxes hunt amongst the seabirds. On the east side of Hinlopen Strait, we may attempt a landing at Palanderbukta on Nordaustlandet.

The plan is to sail through Freemansundet, the strait between Barentsøya and Edgeøya, before travelling round the southern edge of the archipelago. Cruising the side fjords of the Hornsund area of southern Spitsbergen, we will take in the spire-like peaks that give Spitsbergen, the 'pointed mountains' its name. There are 14 sizeable glaciers in the area, as well as more opportunities for spotting seals, Polar Bears and Minke Whales.

In the evening of Day 10 we will arrive back in Longyearbyen.

Day 11 Saturday 17th July. We will disembark after breakfast, and spend the rest of the day re-familiarising ourselves with the relaxed town of Longyearbyen. We may explore the town's mining heritage, visit the stately parish church, or walk out to the lagoon on the edge of town, where

Barnacle Geese and Common Eiders gather to moult, while recently fledged Purple Sandpipers feed on the muddy margins.

In the afternoon we will head back to the airport, for our flight back to Oslo, and another night in the airport hotel, returning to the UK the next day (**Day 12 Sunday 18th July**).

TOUR LEADERS

Phil Saunders is a professional ecologist and excellent all-round naturalist with a particular interest in birds and invertebrates. He joined Wildlife Travel in 2018 and has led a number of our holidays from Dorset to Costa Rica.

During our time onboard *Hondius*, we will be led by a team of excellent expert guides from Oceanwide Expeditions.

ACCOMMODATION AND MEALS

For our Svalbard cruise, we will be travelling aboard the m/v *Hondius*, a purpose-built expedition vessel, part of the Oceanwide Expeditions fleet.

Hondius is the first-registered Polar Class 6 vessel in the world, meeting the latest and highest Lloyd's Register standards for ice-strengthened cruise ships. The ship carried 170 passengers in 80 cabins, with 57 crew, 13 guides and 1 doctor.

Our accommodation is in twin cabins, en-suite, with a port hole. Superior cabins and suites may also be available, at a higher price, and there may be single spaces available in three- or four-berth shared cabins, at a reduced cost: speak to us about the various options and costs.

All meals onboard are included: special diets can be catered for.

Excursions are in 'zodiacs': small, open, rigid inflatables. Warm rubber boots are provided for the excursions. Waterproof clothing (including waterproof trousers) are a requirement for this itinerary.

In Oslo, we will spend two nights in a comfortable hotel close to the airport, using the airport shuttle bus to get to and from the hotel: breakfast and dinner are included in Oslo.

GROUP TRAVEL

The group flights are with Scandinavian Airlines, from London Heathrow (Terminal 2) to Longyearbyen, with connecting flights in Oslo, as follows:

6th July	depart London Heathrow 15.35, arrive Oslo Gardermoen 18.45
7th July	depart Oslo Gardermoen 08.35, arrive Longyearbyen 12.45
17th July	depart Longyearbyen 19.45, arrive Oslo Gardermoen 22.40
18th July	depart Oslo Gardermoen 13.15, arrive London Heathrow 14.35

It is possible to fly to Oslo from several other regional airports, with direct flights from Manchester (with Scandinavian Airlines) and Edinburgh (with Norwegian), and connecting flights via Amsterdam with KLM from Bristol, Birmingham, Newcastle, Norwich and Leeds Bradford. Contact us to discuss options.

WEATHER

There may be some rain or snow flurries, and it can be windy, although the weather at this time of year is generally calm and surprisingly mild, with average summer temperatures between -5° and +5° Celsius. You will need good waterproof and windproof layers and warm weather clothing, including thermals, for this trip. There is 24 hour daylight in the Arctic summer.

HEALTH AND FITNESS

Excursions will be by 'zodiac' inflatables, accessed from the ship by a steep gangway, with a step down into the inflatable. Landings will be 'wet landings', stepping directly from the zodiac into the shallow water on the beach.

Most walking will be at a slow pace, to give us the time to enjoy the scenery and wildlife. To see the best of the wildlife, it will be necessary to walk on rough, slippery terrain, with snow and ice, and up/down slopes, sometimes relatively steep.

You will need to be steady on your feet, able to climb stairs and hold onto hand rails whilst moving around the ship.

The sun can be very strong, and sun protection is essential.

We are travelling in VERY remote areas, with the nearest medical facilities a considerable distance away: there is a small hospital in Longyearbyen, but any serious health problems would require a flight back to Norway.

PASSPORT AND ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Norway follows Schengen area rules. Your passport must be issued less than 10 years before the date you enter the country and valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave.

If you hold a British passport, you are able to travel to the Schengen area (including Norway) for up to 90 days in total in any 180-day period without a visa.

At Norwegian border control, you may need to show proof of your accommodation, proof of travel insurance and/or a return ticket, and you may be asked to prove you h ave enough money for your stay.

For up-to-date information, check **www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/norway** where you can also sign up for email alerts for your destination.

PRICE

£8,495 per person, £200 single room supplement (Oslo hotel only: contact us for single occupancy of a twin cabin onboard *m/v Hondius*), full board

INCLUDED: Flights and local transport, as specified in the itinerary. Two nights hotel accommodation and nine nights onboard m/v *Hondius*. Full board basis: all meals from dinner day 1 to breakfast day 12 EXCEPT lunches in Longyearbyen (days 2 and 11). Services of leaders and guides. Tips for boat crew/expedition guides.

NOT INCLUDED: Meals: lunches in Longyearbyen day 2 and day 11. Refreshments. Travel insurance. Laundry and any items of a personal nature.

PAYMENTS

Deposit amounts are shown on page 1 of the holiday information pack. **Payments should be made by bank transfer to Sunvil,** using the details given on the booking form, or by posting a cheque made payable to Sunvil Holidays, to the address given on the booking form. Please **DO NOT post any payments to our Cambourne address.**



BOOKING YOUR HOLIDAY

If you have any queries about your holiday or need to talk to someone about your booking, please contact us here at Wildlife Travel. We can make sure that you are given the correct the information and get your questions answered more quickly. We would ask that you **please DO NOT contact Sunvil direct**, to avoid confusion.

COMPLETING THE BOOKING FORM

We do sometimes have more than one set of dates for the same destination, so please make sure you fill in the 'destination' and 'dates' for the holiday you wish to book on.

Please also make sure you complete the section concerning health and fitness: write 'none' if this is the case, but please don't leave that section blank.

If possible, **please fill in the booking form electronically**, by typing directly into the pdf form, save your changes, and then **email the form back to us at wildlifetravel@wildlifebcn.org**. Alternatively, you can post a paper copy to Sunvil Holidays, using the address given on the booking form. Please **DO NOT post bookings to our Cambourne address.**

SUNVIL HOLIDAYS

This holiday is booked through our tour operator, Sunvil Holidays, CAA-ATOL Licence 808, a member of ABTA (V6218), IATA and AITO. All payments are made to them, and your money and booking are protected accordingly.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Please ensure you have read all the information given in the holiday leaflet and booking pack, paying particular attention to the entry requirements, health and fitness information, and details of what is and isn't included in the holiday price.

In order to ensure that this holiday suits you, it is imperative that you read the information on health and fitness in the holiday leaflet, and in the 'general information' section of the booking pack, and **let us know of any issues that may affect your participation in the holiday PRIOR TO BOOKING**.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is compulsory for our trips outside the UK. You should ensure that any pre-existing medical conditions are covered. We recommend having insurance in place as soon as your booking is confirmed, in the event of your cancellation.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

Your booking should be acknowledged with a week, usually sooner. **If you have not heard back from us within a week of sending your booking form, please let us know**: emails and post both go astray, and we wouldn't want you to lose your place on a trip.

You will receive a welcome letter from us, which will tell you if the holiday has already reached minimum numbers or not. Please **DO NOT arrange any additional travel or accommodation that you may need** until the holiday has been confirmed as going ahead.

When the holiday reaches the minimum numbers to be confirmed, we will send you a confirmation letter, including a confirmation invoice from Sunvil, with details of payments due, flights or trains included in your booking, and an ATOL certificate where appropriate.

thank you for travelling with us

www.wildlife-travel.co.uk

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