

Spitsbergen: Bowhead Whales and Polar Bears | Trip Report | June 23 – 30, 2022 | by Gerard Gorman



With guide, Gerard Gorman and participants: Alison, Audrey, Brian, Dwight, Fiona, Jennifer, Jim, Joan, Joyce, Kay, Mike, Pollyanna, Susan, Todd and Wendy.



The Svalbard archipelago is a place of land, sea and ice. To the west is the Greenland Sea, to the east and south the Barents Sea and to the north the Arctic Ocean. It is remote place, sometimes a harsh place, but always a magical place. Here wildlife is tough - birds, mammals, plants, they have all evolved not only to survive but to thrive in extreme conditions, especially the ones that live here all year round, like Polar Bears, Walruses, Bowhead Whales and Ivory Gulls. We visited precious Arctic environments and habitats and observed wonderful wildlife. The landscapes of Spitsbergen, the main island where we began our adventure, and the sites at which we landed during our cruise, at first often appear barren but in truth, are rich and awe-inspiring. The glaciers and seascapes, too, are unforgettable. The remarkable marine and land birds, mammals and plants constantly enthralled us. Our ship, the M/V Hondius, was perfect for such a trip. It sails on LSMGO. It operates as a 176-passenger vessel with eighty-three cabins. This state-of-the-art ship carries 369m³ of fresh water and has a water plant producing 70m³ per day. The overall facilities are ideal. We ate very well, sampling a range of fine international dishes, often with a Scandinavian but also a Dutch element (the ship's head chef was from the Netherlands).



Pre-Tour: Tues., Jun. 21 – Wed., Jun. 22

Several of our party arrived on Spitsbergen a day or two early, staying in Longyearbyen, the 'capital city' of the Svalbard islands. Longyearbyen has around 2300 inhabitants and is regarded as the world's most northerly town with a population of over one thousand. It lies at 78 degrees N and 15 degrees E, which is roughly half-way between the North Pole and the Arctic Circle. Local time is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT). Though we were not yet 'officially' on our tour, some of us went on a pre-tour walk to birding sites along the shore of the Adventfjorden, the stretch of sea that the city lies by. Others visited the Svalbard Museum where the natural and cultural heritage of the area is presented and there is a shop with books, maps and souvenirs. We also met for a pre-tour dinner

Thurs., Jun. 23 Longyearbyen | Spitsbergen

[GPS position at 8am: 78°14.0' N, 015°37.4' E. Wind: SE 8. Sea State: Moderate. Weather: Cloudy. Air Temp: +5°C. Sea Temperature +6°C]

It was a clear, cold, but very windy morning, and later that was to prove significant. Nevertheless, after excellent buffet breakfasts, we all set off at 8am for a walk along the waterfront road of the Adventfjorden. We began to see birds even before we had left the settlement. Snow Buntings were everywhere. Indeed, these delightful little songbirds were the only passerine species we would see on the entire trip – an indication of just how far north we were. A pair of Parasitic Jaegers were breeding at the edge of town and dive-bombed anyone who went too close to their nest. The brackish marshes and pools along our route hosted nesting Arctic Terns, Barnacle Geese, dozens of Common Eiders, and shorebirds such as Common Ringed Plovers and Purple Sandpipers. Black-legged Kittiwakes and Glaucous Gulls, the latter the main avian predator here, were plentiful. Dovekies, Common and Thick-billed Murres and Black Guillemots were watched flying between their colonies high on inland cliffs and rich feeding areas of plankton bloom and fish out at sea. We reached the 'Dog Kennels' a well-known birding hot-spot. Numerous Common Eiders were nesting here – presumably, they felt protection from predators by being by the barking Huskies in their cages. Like many of the birds we would see in the coming days, these ducks were confiding, almost tame. A few Barnacle Geese were nesting on islets here, too. The bulk of the breeding population of this attractive, 'pied' goose breed in the Arctic. Photographic opportunities were excellent, so we clicked away with our cameras. It was getting windier so after two hours we headed back to be ready in good time to board our cruise ship. We assembled at the dock at 4pm, boarding being planned for 5pm.



All the passengers, just over one hundred, were given drinks and pizza (we were amazed at how quickly the tall stacks of pizza boxes arrived and amused at how high they were!) while we waited for news. Finally, it was announced that the captain of the *Hondius* and his crew had decided that it was too dangerous to board the ship by the Zodiac inflatable boats - there was no other way to get onboard as the vessel was moored out in the fjord. Exceedingly high winds meant that the unprecedented decision to postpone embarkation was made. We would hear later that wind speeds were recorded from the bridge of the ship as gusting up to fifty-six knots. The usual operating limit for the Zodiacs that are used to transport passengers is twenty-five knots, and so embarkation was clearly very risky. We would also find out how the situation had been exceptional, the first time ever that passengers had not been able to board the *Hondius* due to such poor weather. In the evening we therefore checked into a local hotel for a night on land. It was disappointing, but the right decision as safety had come first. Late that night we got word that we should all be ready at 6am when buses would take us to the dock. The weather and sea conditions were going to improve, and we would be able to begin our cruise adventure.

Fri., Jun. 24 Embarkation in Longyearbyen | Isfjord ship cruise | Skansbukta

GPS position at 8am: 78°16'.7 N, 015°25'.6 E. Wind: SSE 6. Sea State: Slight. Weather: Cloudy. Air Temperature: +2 °C. Sea Temperature: +4.9 °C.

At 6am buses arrived, and we were soon at the dock. At 7am we were in the Zodiacs and transferring to the ship. It was all organized efficiently and safely. We were on our way! We said goodbye to the waterfront Snow Buntings (they had already become real favorites of ours) as we watched Northern Fulmars, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Dovekies and many Thick-billed Murres flying low over the sea. We also saw our first Atlantic Puffins - we would get more and better views of these favorites later during our cruise. After having settled into our cabins, we set-off, the vessel heading in a north-northeasterly direction. After a welcoming, excellent buffet breakfast, the Expedition Leader, Ship Hotel Manager and Chief Officer, gave various briefings, including one on safety regulations. Importantly, we were also informed of how we should conduct ourselves in regard to the environments and wildlife of the Arctic. As would happen several times in the days ahead, the briefing was suddenly interrupted when a cetacean was sighted from the ship. It was a pod of Minke Whales which appeared and then disappeared. Things settled down and the expedition team continued to introduce themselves. There were impressively qualified and experienced individuals from many countries - experts on seabirds, whales, seals and Polar Bears, for example. At 1pm we had our first onboard lunch. It was a high-standard buffet, which included something to suit all diets – it was already clear that none of us would be losing weight on this trip. Black-legged Kittiwakes and



Northern Fulmars followed the ship, as they are known to do, riding the breeze, hanging in the air, sometimes flying quite close. In the afternoon we took to the Zodiacs and landed at a spot called Skansbukta. As soon as we were on this dry land, we encountered groups of Reindeer (called Caribou in North America) the most northerly of all deer. The two are actually the same species (*Rangifer tarandus*) but they differ in some important respects. Caribou in North America are wild, on average larger and have never been domesticated. Eurasian Reindeer are smaller and, although they roam free, they are not truly wild as they were domesticated in northern Europe around two thousand years ago.

The Reindeer on Spitsbergen are the smallest subspecies. Birds included Black Guillemots, Glaucous Gulls, Arctic Terns, Common Eiders, and a single Purple Sandpiper. And we were wrong when we thought that we had left the Snow Buntings behind on Longyearbyen, as they soon appeared. We never tired of them. There were also historical artifacts at Skansbukta, including the remains of hunter's and trapper's wooden huts, broken mining carriages, rusting rails and a wrecked wooded ship on the beach. The botanists amongst us found plants, especially saxifrage species - Tufted, Drooping, Snow and Northern Golden - and Woolly and Hairy Louseworts, Pale Whitlow-grass, Sulphur Buttercup, Mountain Sorrel and Arctic Bell Heather. Before we went back to the *Hondius*, we went close to the cliffs in the Zodiacs. Northern Fulmars, Kittiwakes, Atlantic Puffins, Dovekies and Thick-billed Murres were all nesting high on ledges and endlessly flying back and forth and sometimes landing on the sea around us. Thick-billed Murres are the most northerly breeding auk/guillemot species, not skilled in the air, but skilled in the sea, where they dive to catch for small fish and squid. Plants found today included a 'tree', the Polar Willow. This dwarf shrub thrives on the tundra where it reaches a maximum height of 5cm and is a common food of Reindeer. At 7pm there was an event, 'Captain's Cocktails', when the ship's captain Artur Iakovlev from Russia gave a welcome speech. He was taciturn but made a great impression, his experience shining through. This event was followed by a buffet dinner before we moored for the night in the scenic Magdalenefjorden. Those who watched from the deck (there was 24 hours of 'daylight' and wildlife was always active) knew it was worth going out at any time, to spot birds, whales, or just to enjoy the spectacular land and sea vistas.

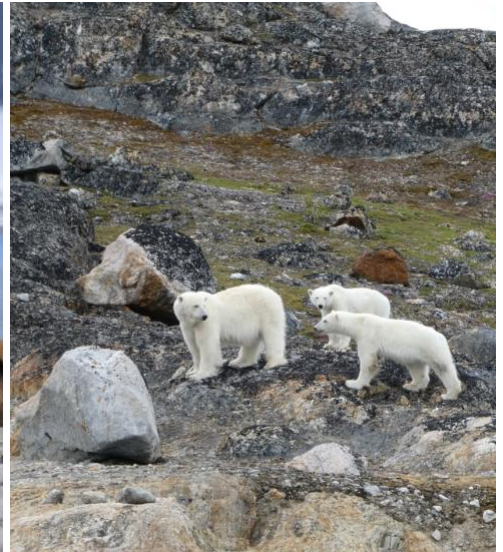


Sat., Jun. 25

Magdalenafjord | Gullybukta | Gravnesodden & Waggonwaybreen Glacier

GPS position at 8am: 79°33.9' N, 010°56.1' E. Wind: Light. Sea State: Calm. Weather: Sunny. Air Temperature: +10°C. Sea Temperature: +7.4°C.

After breakfast, we set off in the Zodiacs for a quick transfer to another land site called Gullybukta. As soon as we disembarked, we sensed an unpleasant odor wafting towards us. We soon realized where it was coming from - a group of over thirty Walruses were resting on the shore. We carefully walked towards these iconic bulky marine mammals, and they were an astonishing sight, being crammed together, with disputes occasionally breaking-out. Thigmotaxis, that is 'bodies in close contact,' is common for these goliaths. One or two also wallowed in the sea. Arctic Fox tracks dotted the patches of snowy ground and those interested in botany occasionally crouched down to take photographs of plants. Birds here included a pair of Parasitic Jaegers and the now familiar Arctic Terns which fearlessly swooped down on anyone who strayed near their nests in the shingle and pebbles. A Red-throated Loon squatted on its nest at the edge of a pond. We also found the bones of a mammal and after some debate concluded that they were from a Reindeer. We then cruised in the Zodiacs to the nearby mighty Waggonwaybreen glacier. This magnificent river of ice, which sluggishly slopes down into the sea from the mountains above, was simply stupendous. On the way we saw Harbor Seals resting on rocks and swimming in the clear blue water. We could hear the wall of ice creaking and groaning, and now and then chunks of ice crashed from it into the sea. Some of us got views of King Eiders here, drakes and ducks, but they were wary, much more so than their cousins the Common Eiders, and flew off before we could get decent pictures. King Eiders drakes have an orange-colored frontal bill shield which could be seen as they took off. In the afternoon we visited Gravnesdodden, just across the bay. The name of this place relates to the graves of long-lost whalers found there, and there were indeed relicts of a whaling station. Parasitic Jaegers and Common Eiders, heavily built marine diving ducks, were ever present. Another Red-throated Loon as also seen, first on the sea, then in flight. Certain intrepid and hardy folks (including ladies from our group but shamefully, none of the men!) later took a 'polar plunge' here, rushing into the icy water for a quick dip! This is apparently a tradition amongst visiting groups, but not one that appeals to everyone. Our evening dinner was a surprise, too, not a buffet but an *alfresco* barbecue on the poop-deck. Furthermore, our caterers announced that all drinks including wine and beer were 'on-the-house' (or we might say 'on-the ship'). After midnight, another pod of Minke Whales was seen from the bow by some of the more intrepid passengers.



Sun., Jun. 26

Danskøya | Smeerenburg | Virgoamna | Ytre Norskoya

GPS position at 8am: 79°43.9' N, 011°01.7' E. Wind: Light air Sea State: Smooth. Weather: Sunny. Air Temperature: +7.6°C. Sea Temperature: +4.0°C.

This morning we visited a former Dutch whaling station called Smeerenburg (the English named it 'Blubbertown'). Indeed, in places the remains of blubber ovens and whale bones still lay on the beach. The main reason to visit this place was, however, to see more Walrus as they often haul out here. It did not take long to find them, around fifty of these huge marine mammals were resting on a sand bank and frolicking in the water. It was good to see that they were around as they were almost exterminated in Svalbard during the 19th century by hunters but have since recovered after becoming a protected species in 1952. Birds seen were a Red-throated Loon, again on a nest, two Great Skuas, four Parasitic Jaegers, Common Ringed Plover, nesting Arctic Terns (which as usual were feisty) and more Glaucous Gulls. 'Glaucous' is from the Greek *glaukos* which means bright or glowing. Indeed, these large larids are very pale with no dark colors at all when in their adult plumage.

We also cruised around Virgoamna bay in the Zodiacs and heard an astonishing story of how a scheme to reach the north pole by hot-air balloon was launched from a peak above there in 1897. The bizarre plan tragically failed. We returned for a break and lunch on the ship. In the afternoon we went in the Zodiacs again, cruising the fjord near Ytre Norskoya. We encountered more Harbor Seals and looked for Polar Bears. The bears did not oblige this time, but we did find the carcass of a small whale, probably a Beluga. An Arctic Fox scampered away as we approached the shore. It was a little chilly here, but the *Hondius* crew had anticipated that, arriving in another Zodiac to deliver hot-chocolate, served with either cream or rum, and cookies. A remarkable and welcome gesture! The cliffs were alive with colonies of nesting Thick-billed Murres, Black Guillemots, Dovekies, Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars and Atlantic Puffins. A lone Great Skua, big and bulky, surveyed the scene but was harassed and chased away by the gulls. Atlantic Puffins occasionally landed on the sea close to our boats, and then we understood why folk-names for these birds include *Sea Parrot* and *Sea Clown*. Another interesting name, Fulmar, derives from Norse and meant 'foul gull' as these birds have a habit of ejecting a smelly material from their stomachs at predators, including humans. They may look like gulls but actually belong to the petrel family. When we set out from Longyearbyen, many were pale, even white, but most of those following the ship as we headed north were darker, the so-called 'Blue Fulmar.' This is an example of polymorphism, color-variation which is not related to sex or subspecies variation. Back on the ship we prepared for dinner, but then an excited call went out, loud and clear, from the bridge. A mother Polar Bear and her two cubs had been found not far away by another boat. Dinner was



postponed, as everyone rushed to get their gear and put on their waterproofs. We were soon in the Zodiacs, in remarkably rapid time, and watching these fantastic mammals which were resting on an island. Perhaps they had just eaten their fill? We edged closer by boat but did not land, of course. The cubs were quite big, around two years old. We returned for a later than usual dinner, but no one minded at all. It was one of the highlights of the trip, we had seen the 'King' (in this case 'the Queen' and her young) of the Arctic. As another brilliant day ended, some went to bed, whilst others remained on deck taking advantage of the 24-hour light to scan the seascapes of floes, pancake ice and patches of water within the ice called polynyas.

Mon., Jun. 27 In the Sea Ice | Heading West

GPS position at 8am: 81°25.3' N, 015°16.9' E. Wind: SSW 3. Sea State: Ice. Weather: Rainy. Air Temperature: 0°C. Sea Temperature: +1.8°C.

We had sailed overnight from the island of Danskøya to the edge of the drifting pack-ice of the Arctic Ocean. This was yet another world, silent, a little eerie but beautiful. It was incredible and a privilege to be here, at 81 25. 829 N, 015 17. 069 E. We were woken by a call from the bridge at 6.15am. No one complained: a Polar Bear with its kill, a seal, had been spotted on the ice. We rushed to the deck, binoculars and cameras at the ready. It was amazing, we were in the Arctic watching a bear on floating pack ice. About 2000 of these majestic animals are believed to survive in the Svalbard archipelago. The word 'Arctic' is derived from *arctos*, the Greek for 'bear.' The constellation of the Great Bear, *Ursa major*, points to the North Star. How appropriate. In addition, to delight of the birders, Ivory Gulls were in attendance, waiting to scavenge on the seal. The birders amongst us were overjoyed as this gull is highly sought, being extremely hard to find outside the high Arctic - most Ivory Gulls rarely venture south of the July isotherm of 5 degrees C. One pure white adult even flew close to the boat.

Later, our only Iceland Gull, another rarity, was seen by those who had remained on deck. But back to the Polar Bear: the captain steered the ship as close as he safely could, and everyone was elated at the views. This mighty mammal was unperturbed by our presence, and the Zodiac navigators were careful not to go too close and stress the bears. We had now seen four different Polar Bears in two days. The captain now began to move the ship out of the sea ice, which was becoming too thick to enter. In the afternoon, the expedition team held a series of lectures, but one was interrupted when a Bowhead Whale was spotted. Everyone rushed to the windows or to the deck outside. The whale surfaced briefly and dived by the edge of the pack-ice. On the last view it raised its huge flukes



up out of the water before disappearing into the icy depths. Wonderful. Once again, we were honored; we were watching one of the most mysterious mammals of the Arctic Ocean, a truly Arctic cetacean, which may live to two hundred years old. Bowheads are endangered and it is thought that less than one hundred live in the Svalbard region. As the day ended, we headed westwards, towards the Greenland Sea in search of more wildlife of the pack-ice.

Tues., Jun. 28

Another day in the Sea Ice | Heading North

GPS position at 8 am: 79°32.8' N, 005°28.5' E. Wind: SSE 2-3. Sea State: Ice. Weather: Foggy. Air Temperature: +2 °C. Sea Temperature: +3.1°C.

The routine was clear. Before, after, and between meals we scanned the Arctic ice and ocean for wildlife. There were good vantage points from which to do this on the ship. The bow was a favourite place, but it was often chilly there, and other more sheltered places were frequently selected, even inside, where the hot coffee and tea machine was conveniently at hand (and often used). This morning we saw more Dovekies than ever, they were everywhere! It seemed that this area of ice floes was where they preferred to feed. Yet, from here, they had hundreds of miles to fly to their colonies on cliffs on coastal mountains. Dovekies are known as 'Little Auks' in British English, and this a good descriptive name as they are indeed the smallest auk species at around eight inches in length, with stubby bills and short tails. Here, they made up for their modest size by being numerous. Now and then single Hooded and Harp Seals were spotted by keen observers, too. Interestingly, the seals were more wary of us than the other mammals and birds. Indeed, many bird species, particularly shorebirds and the almost omnipresent Snow Bunting (a folk name is *Arctic Sparrow*) often appeared 'tame'.

In the afternoon, another call went out from the bridge (they had sharp eyes for wildlife, not only for navigation): '1000' Harp Seals had hauled out onto the ice. This seal is highly marine, not often seen in coastal waters or on shore. It was another astounding sight, seeing so many together was rare according to the crew. The experts on board believed that, with so many individuals present, it was probably a mating and pupping site. The seals were of various ages, some with characteristic dark faces and a 'harp-shape' on their back, others were less marked, some spotted, meaning juveniles and there were also pups, smaller with clean white fur. Once again, our huge ship was skillfully maneuvered in order to facilitate good views for the passengers. The final number of Harp Seals estimated was two thousand – an impressive figure. Later, interesting and informative lectures were held on the Walrus and on seabirds. It had been yet another exciting day in the Arctic ice!



Wed., Jun. 29 Ingeborgfjellet | Calypsobyen.

GPS position at 08 am: 77°44.3' N, 014°23.6' E. Wind: SSE 2-3. Sea State: Calm. Weather: Mist. Air Temperature: +5 °C. Sea Temperature: +6°C.

We had moved steadily away from the Arctic Ocean pack-ice overnight, as it was time to head in a return direction. Thus, we now were able to use the Zodiacs again. We landed at Ingeborgfjellet on Spitsbergen, at a spot called Camp Millar. Remnants of wooden huts, built by the Northern Exploration Company in 1910 as part of a project mining for gold, still stood here. Once again, wonderful wildlife delights awaited us. From high ground we watched two pods of Belugas, around a dozen animals in total, leisurely moving, swimming, diving and surfacing in the bay. Belugas, the white whales of the north, are a true Arctic species that (like Bowheads and Narwhals) lack dorsal fins. This is an adaptation that allows these species to forage beneath closed ice. There were the usual Arctic birds, gulls, terns, and as ever little Snow Buntings. A flock of Pink-footed Geese flew over, too. We were able to get close to grazing Reindeer, some with huge sets of antlers (both Reindeer sexes have antlers). At one point a couple grazed too close to a nesting pair of Parasitic Jaegers and were attacked, dive-bombed mercilessly, by these spirited, gull-like birds. The Parasitic Jaeger is termed 'Parasitic,' because it is a kleptoparasite, an 'avian pirate' that chases and harasses other birds in order to force them to disgorge their recently caught food. These birds are not brood-parasites, which lay their eggs in the nests of other birds as cuckoos and cowbirds do. Interestingly, like Northern Fulmars, Parasitic Jaegers are polymorphic, with two color phases, dark and light. Most of the birds we observed were the light plumaged form.

We were already making our way back to the beach owing to rain when the expedition team instructed us to head as quickly as possible to the Zodiacs and evacuate. A Polar Bear had been seen making its way towards us. It was exciting stuff. The bear was a way off, but had started to run, so it was best to take no chances. When they are hungry and desperate, these bears can be dangerous. The team, though armed, had no desire to hurt the animal (and certainly not to kill it) and they did not need to do so, as soon everyone was safely off the land in the boats and on the sea. In the end, the bear lost interest and moved away, having never really gotten that close. After lunch, when everyone on board swapped stories about the bear (sometimes a little embellished!) we boarded the



Zodiacs again. Our destination was Calypsobyen, a strange name, too exotic for the Arctic perhaps, but the explanation is simple. This place was named after HMS Calypso, a British Navy ship which surveyed the area in 1895. Here a tundra-like plateau, with rugged mountains and another majestic glacier in the distance, had a highly adapted flora, some in bloom. Remarkably, as the habitats often look desolate when one first lands on a beach, there are over 150 species on Svalbard's islands. In addition, there are also mosses and lichens. A team of Polish researchers, studying permafrost and glaciers, were based in old wooden huts here. They were grateful to receive a box of wine and basket of fruit from our expedition team – there are no supermarkets nor Amazon deliveries here! Plants recorded today included the delightfully named Polar Bear Sedge and the lovely yellowish-white Svalbard Poppy. As this was our final night on board, the captain gave again a short speech, and we were treated to 'Captain's Cocktails' again. He thanked us and we thanked him.

Thurs., Jun. 30 Disembarkation at Longyearbyen

GPS position at 8 am: 78°14.0' N, 015°38.0' E. Wind: Light. Sea State: Foggy. Weather: Calm. Air Temperature: +6°C. Sea Temperature: +7.2°C.

We transferred back to land at Longyearbyen after breakfast, taking a five-minute ride in the zodiacs, landing at around 9am. We had come full circle after sailing for a total of 831.1 nautical miles and reaching a northmost position of 81°22.08' n, 014°09.90' e. We had enjoyed Svalbard's arctic beauty and come away with precious memories which we tried to summarize. Joyce most enjoyed looking for and photographing arctic plants, Susan liked the dovekies, the walruses and being at 81.26 latitude. Audrey most enjoyed the polar bears and Mike the Atlantic Puffins, also the polar bears and arctic scenery; Fiona liked the arctic fox, 'swarms' of auks and the seascapes; Joan most liked the arctic terns, polar bears and just being amongst the ice; Jim's favorites were the ivory gulls, polar bears and the ice, and Brian's the ivory gulls, arctic fox and, again, also being in the ice; Wendy most liked the dovekies, the polar bear at its seal kill and the 'jelly-fish', Dwight was intrigued by the behavior of the arctic terns, the polar bears and was fascinated by the 24 hours of daylight; Todd's favorites were the arctic terns, especially as he learnt that they perform the greatest migration of any bird, some covering 20,000 miles per year, the walruses and just being close to the northern ice-cap, and Alison adored comical-looking Atlantic Puffins, the polar bears and was impressed by the efficiency of our evacuation when a bear approached; Pollyanna also liked the Atlantic Puffins, the polar bears and very much appreciated the ship's facilities and crew; Jennifer also liked the Atlantic Puffins, the polar bears and was captivated by arctic ice. All in all, this inaugural naturalist journey's trip to the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard was a great success. A huge thank you from me to everyone involved. Gerard.

Photo Credits: The Hondius (Gerard Gorman - GG), Polar Bear (Erwin Vermeulen), Boat Birders (Michael Lambert - ML), Puffin (ML), Better Moments Sign (Brian Elliott - BE), Gull (BE), Female Common Eider (GG), Snow Bunting (GG), Fox (BE), Parasitic Jaeger (GG), BM Sign 2 (BE), Scenic (BE), On the boat (GG), New friends (GG), Pup Parking (BE), Purple Buds (ML), Reindeer Horn (BE), Scenic (BE), Group Relaxing on the Beach (ML), Close-up shot (BE), Back on the boat (GG), Thick-billed Murre (GG), Black Guillemot (GG), Walrus (GG), Polar Bears (BE), Hondius from above (BE), Birding by boat (BE), Iceland Gull (NJ Stock), Polar Bear feasting (BE), Selfie! (BE), Pair by the rails (ML), Ice sheets (GG), Seal (ML), Scenic (BE), Glaucous Gull (GG), Reindeer (ML)