

# Svalbard Odyssey

Aboard *Greg Mortimer* | 30 June – 8 July 2024





# Svalbard Odyssey

30 June – 8 July 2024



# Oslo | Longyearbyen

DAY 1 | Thursday 30 June 2024

Latitude:  
78° 11.4'N  
Longitude:  
014 33.1'E

Wind Speed:  
4 knots NW  
Barometer:  
1018 hPa

Course:  
Alongside  
Speed:  
N/A

Air Temp:  
4°C

Today, we embarked on a journey with the goal of creating a life-changing experience for generations to come. Our toast the evening before at Eight Rooftop Bar marked the beginning of this adventure together.

Upon landing in the High Arctic of Longyearbyen, we were warmly welcomed and shuttled to the *Greg Mortimer* for embarkation. On the pier, we met some of the crew, who took our first photo of the trip before boarding and settling into our cabins.

After checking in, we gathered in the lecture theatre and were introduced to our Expedition Leader, Mario, and his Expedition Team. We knew we were in for an experience of extraordinary proportions

and unpredictable events.

Before we could get underway, we proceeded into our lifeboat and safety briefing, preparing ourselves for the abandon ship drill. The sound of seven short rings followed by one long ring from the ship's signal system served as our cue to don warm clothing, bulky orange life jackets, and gather at the muster station to familiarise ourselves with our safety gear. Our safety officers and crew then guided us to the lifeboats, providing us with information on their locations.

After many hours of travel to reach the frozen top of the world, it was time to relax, learn, breathe in the sea air, and immerse ourselves in the unique and incredible surroundings of Svalbard.









# At Sea | Gravneset | Magdalenefjorden

DAY 2 | Monday 1 July 2024

Latitude:  
79° 11.4'N  
Longitude:  
009° 49.08'E

Wind Speed:  
7 knots S  
Barometer:  
1024 hPa

Course:  
6.2 knots  
Speed:  
6.2 knots

Air Temp:  
5°C

At 9.00am our first session, 'Together, We Go Further', started. First up was Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, a marine biologist, writer, and policy expert. She encouraged us to find our own personal way to climate action, identifying the meeting point of skill, passion and work-that-needs-to-be-done. In the second talk, Katja explained the science of global warming and opened our eyes to the changes that are already occurring in the Arctic.

After a quick lunch we had the choice between two interactive sessions: Extreme skier Kit Des Lauriers was up with Olympic snowboarder Bea Kim. They spoke about how athletes can contribute to preserving our environment, while Katja answered science and Svalbard-specific questions.

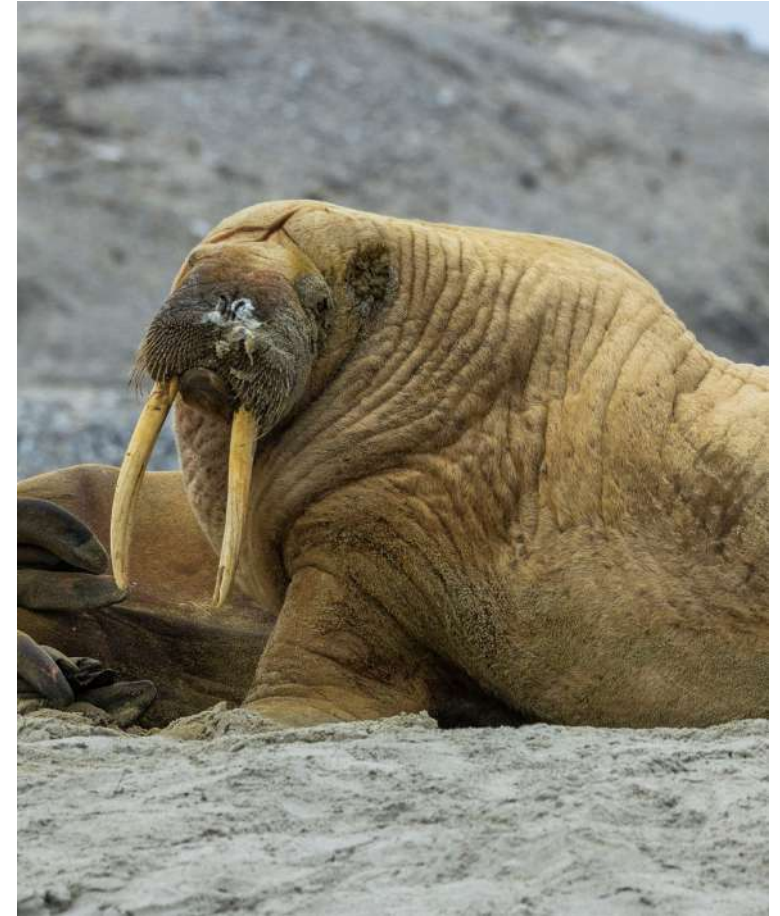
Finally, it was time to go and explore Svalbard for ourselves. We

boarded the Zodiacs and landed at Gravneset in Magdalenefjorden. The site is historically significant; in the 17th century there was a whaling station in this bay and the 130 whaler graves on the low hill behind the landing site revealed the hardships these men experienced.

The low-hanging clouds provided the appropriate backdrop. For us it was a chance to stretch our legs. Either up a moraine for a look over the Gullybreen (breen means glacier in Norwegian), or a climb onto a hill for a great view over Magdalenefjorden. We also went on a Zodiac exploration, visiting a walrus haulout and cruising along the glacier front of the Gullybreen. In the waters around us, black guillemots were picking at the water surface for food. Some people even saw a red-throated diver, or loon.











# Liefdefjorden, Monacobreen, Jotunkjeldene

DAY 3 | Tuesday 2 July 2024

Latitude:  
79° 36.6' N  
Longitude:  
012 54.9' E

Course:  
249°  
Speed:  
9.5 knots

Wind Speed:  
2 knots N  
Barometer:  
1023 hPa

Air Temp:  
4°C

We made our way overnight to Liefdefjorden on Haakon VII land. A beautiful fjord, thought to be named after a Dutch exploration vessel called *de Liefde*, meaning love.

Not long after, we heard the announcement to head down to the mudroom and get ready for our Zodiac exploration of the Monacobreen and Seligerbreen (glaciers). Just before getting on the Zodiac, we heard a loud rumbling sound and a giant piece of the Monacobreen calved off, creating a big wave and lots of brash ice and new icebergs.

As we ventured into the brash ice closer to the face of the glacier, the vastness of the landscape, the spectacular whites and deep blues and enormous crevasses left us in awe. The bearded seal we found in the middle of the brash ice was not as impressed by all of this as we

were and was just relaxing on his little bergy bit.

Back on board we quickly got a plate of food and headed to the Lunch and Learn sessions with Erin Sikorsky, and Diana Hernandez, a sociologist and scholist from Columbia University. Topics ranging from energy, health and climate justice, to food systems, human migration and political stability.

In the afternoon, Plan A turned into Plan B and we headed to Jotunkjeldene. We split up into long and medium hiking groups and some of us enjoyed a scenic kayaking exploration. We marvelled at the geology of the hot springs and the red-coloured mountains. We also identified cool plants of the High Arctic; moss campion, mountain avens, purple saxifrage, reindeer lichen and many more. Some of us even saw a rock ptarmigan. All in all, a successful exploration.















# Pack Ice, Phippsøya

DAY 4 | Wednesday 3 July 2024

Latitude:  
80° 48.3' N  
Longitude:  
023° 37.5' E

Course:  
136°  
Speed:  
10.0 knots

Wind Speed:  
4 knots N  
Barometer:  
1023 hPa

Air Temp:  
2°C

In the morning, we heard from speakers Katie Eder, Gareth Gransauil, and Olivia Dell on 'Reimagining the Future: Generational Innovation for Systemic Change'. Following the session, many of us headed up to the observation lounge on deck 8 to watch the icy landscape drift by. The room was buzzing with conversation – it was exciting to be above 80 degrees north!

After the Lunch and Learn session with the Young Leader program (Tori Smith, Tighe Brown, Pooja Tilvawala, Mackenzie Feldman), the ship repositioned to a group of islands called Sjuøyane, or the Seven Islands. The conditions were perfect for a Zodiac exploration, so we

loaded into our boats and went off for an afternoon of adventure.

It was magical. Mountains shrouded in mist, bright-green vegetation dotting the scree slopes, and hundreds of walrus swimming in the water – what more could we ask for? There was plenty of coastline around the archipelago, and without a ship in sight, it felt like real exploration.

The kayakers also got a chance to observe the walrus before going for a paddle.













# Wahlbergøya, Bråsvellbreen

DAY 5 | Thursday 4 July 2024

Latitude:  
79° 24.3'N  
Longitude:  
019° 34.2'E

Course:  
227°  
Speed:  
0.0 knots

Wind Speed:  
4 knots NW  
Barometer:  
1021 hPa

Air Temp:  
1°C

Early in the morning, while most of us were still asleep, our Expedition Leader, Mario, spotted \*our\* very first King of the Arctic - or rather our Queen of the Arctic - a healthy female polar bear. The nature of expeditions is for plans to change, so we put all Zodiacs on the water and went on an exploration to see the bear from a closer view. We took off towards a small island west of the ship, close to Wahlbergøya. It was important to not disturb the sleepy animal and we were asked to stay silent for 30 minutes (which was challenging for some).

Back on board, after the spontaneous morning excursion, Elena Doms, Stefan Helmcke and David Sandalow shared their knowledge in a conversation about scalable climate solutions. The Lunch and Learn sessions were held by Paul Lightfoot, who discussed

Patagonia's regenerative organic approach, and Manuel Piñuela who discussed Investing in nature's capital.

The afternoon was a peaceful, scenic ship cruise. We saw a second bear, walking along the coastline, more stunning geology and some observant watchers even spotted some walrus in the water. Then came time for the highly anticipated Polar Plunge. Eighty-six fearless people braved the cold and dived into the icy water, on the backdrop of the Bråsvellbreen glacier, the largest ice wall of the Northern Hemisphere (180 kilometres). Adrenaline spiked, but a crowded sauna helped warm up the chilly bodies.

The day ended with a lively BBQ celebration on deck 8, with overfilled plates, colourful outfits and a festive spirit to properly celebrate this memorable 4th of July.







# Sundneset & Kapp Lee, Edgeøya

DAY 6 | Friday 5 July 2024

Latitude: 78° 13.5' N  
Longitude: 021° 36.6' E  
Course: Ice Navigation  
Speed: 11.8 knots

Wind Speed: 2 knots SE  
Barometer: 1020 hPa  
Air Temp: 0°C

Still energised from last night's BBQ and 4th of July celebrations, we started our day with a powerful lecture series. Under the theme of 'Innovations that Inspire & Empower', Jo Opot talked about women leading climate solutions across Africa. In the second part, Dave Solomon and Evan Rappoport gave fascinating insights into what's on the horizon for climate change in terms of innovations and inventions.

We then went into the Zodiacs for our morning landing at Sundneset, where rock formations, lichens and moss invited us to set out for hikes. We enjoyed views over freshwater ponds embedded in the rugged terrain and observed reindeers grazing at a distance. The 'Würzburger Hütte', a cabin located in the bay of Sundneset, was built in 1959 for a German geo-scientific expedition. The hut was open for us to have a look at the well-preserved interior, and we imagined what it must be like to spend extended periods in these tight bunk

beds around the wood-fired stove.

Back on board we joined the Lunch and Learn session, which made us dig deep into ourselves to write a piece of poetry about a significant personal experience. Putting our thoughts into words and expressing these within the group was an emotional experience and felt highly rewarding.

After the poetry workshop we went back into the Zodiacs for our afternoon excursion to Kapp Lee, Edgeøya.

A short hike brought us up to the hill next to the landing site, which gave us magnificent views of a group of walrus resting and playing in the shallow waters. Further up the hill we gained sight of a group of reindeer on the green-brown flanks of the mountains. Another fascinating encounter with the inhabitants of this magical part of the world.













# Hansbreen, Sofiebogen

DAY 7 | Saturday 6 July 2024

Latitude:  
76° 32.1'N  
Longitude:  
015° 51.1'E

Course:  
324°  
Speed:  
11.8 knots

Wind Speed:  
2 knots SE  
Barometer:  
1020 hPa

Air Temp:  
0°C

We spent our day in Hornsund. The day was packed with activities. Morning sessions were held by Fred Upton, Neil Chatterjee, and Kathleen Rice on Leadership & Leverage – Pulling the Policy Levers with Philanthropy, followed by Megacity Climate Leadership with Amb. Eric Garcetti.

Around 11.00am we headed out on a Zodiac exploration in Hansbreen. We hugged the coastline, from the Polish research station towards the beautiful glacier. Some of us were on a Zen Zodiac, and it was an extremely special moment when we cut the radio and turned off the engine. We were in silence the whole time - just being in the moment, giving in, feeling and listening to nature at its best.

Today, Ambassador Garcetti and David Sandalow held a Lunch and Learn session in the lecture theatre, discussing India's Balancing Act & China's Conundrum: Solar Boom, Coal Gloom. On deck 8 we joined a panel discussion on High-Leverage Philanthropy with Laurie Michaels, Per Heggenes, Django Bonderman and Michael Madnick.

After a delightful lunch, we embarked on an afternoon hike at Sofiebogen. The Zodiac ride to shore had a few bumps and splashes along the way, but nothing we couldn't handle. While some were enjoying the jacuzzi onboard, many of us hiked up to the viewpoint, and it was truly rewarding! The view over the glacier we had seen from the Zodiacs earlier in the day was breathtaking. A landscape we will never forget.





















# Bamsebu, At Sea

DAY 8 | Sunday 7 July 2024

Latitude:

77° 35' N

Longitude:

014° 44' E

Course:

086°

Speed:

5.3 knots

Wind Speed:

4 knots NE

Barometer:

1014 hPa

Air Temp:

2°C

We entered Van Keulenfjorden, the southern fork of Hornsund fjord, and anchored just off the gentle slopes of Ahlstrandhalvøya.

The first Walking Softer session of the day was all about 'where to from here', a session to pull together some of the loose threads, ideas, connections and commitments made during the voyage.

Dr Elizabeth Ayana Johnson followed this up with a strong call to action on climate change, supporting her talk with a bunch of sobering statistics about the problem and wide range of ways to be part of the solution.

Then, in spite of the bitter north wind and rain, we headed off late morning to Bamsebu, 'teddy bear' in Norwegian, a hut originally built in the 1930s as a base for Norwegians harvesting the skin and blubber of beluga whales. On shore near the hut lay piles of

bleached whale bones, mute testament to the slaughter. But today was peaceful: Grazing reindeer dotted the hillside, with flighty flocks of barnacle geese and eider ducks hugging the shoreline. Incredibly, around 25 people decided to follow up their stroll with a 'polar plunge' off the beach, before returning to ship for a sauna and hot chocolate.

Bjarke Ingels led an inspiring session after lunch on 'mindfulness cities', while upstairs, Tighe Brown led a session to further explore partnership opportunities.

Meanwhile the wind, rain and swell intensified so much that the afternoon outing to Camp Millar was cancelled. The void was quickly filled with an open microphone session for some to air poetry and prose written en voyage. For others it was a welcome opportunity to chill, socialise, or simply catch up on sleep.













# Longyearbyen

DAY 9 | Monday 8 July 2024

Latitude:  
78° 11.4'N  
Longitude:  
014° 33.1'E

Wind Speed:  
8 knots SW  
Barometer:  
1013 hPa

Course:  
061°  
Speed:  
9.1 knots

Air Temp:  
9°C

Today we bid farewell to our beloved ship, its crew and each other. After an enormous week together, we leave with new perspectives, new beginnings and memories that will stay with us forever.





# BBQ









# Polar Plunge



































# Kayaking Log

with Kayak Guides: Eamon Larkin, Vanja Davidson, Eduardo Larrañaga.

Monday 01 July , PM – Magdalene Fjord 3.2 Km

After a busy morning of briefings, AECO and fitting into gear, we were very happy to get onto the water with the first group. Our first task was a big loop around the ship to warm up. After some safety information we set out. Our destination was the ice at the end of the fjord. However, we were sidetracked by some very cute harbor seals resting on the rocks. One was curious enough to swim to us and get a closer look. We returned to the icebergs and finished with a view of the glacier as we entered our Zodiac Ubers. Great first outing.

Tuesday 02 July, PM – Jotunkjeldene, Bokunfjord 5.5 km

It was very choppy waters at the ship, so we towed to a sheltered coast. We paddled with the wind along the steep and rocky shoreline. The clouds parted to reveal dramatic mountains above us. Across the bay were, rich red-coloured hillsides with snowcapped summits. An outing with majestic views.





### Wednesday 3 July, PM – Perry Oya, The Seven Islands 3.5km

Again, we towed our team to the nearby island of Parryøya. As we approached, we saw in the north a small group of walrus, so we stayed in the Zodiac and watched them from a distance. They went north and we went south to kayak. A steep but dramatic coastline that finished in a shallow and calm bay. Lovely kayaking spot and we did not want to finish. Lots of walrus on the return Zodiac to the ship.

### Friday 5 July, AM – Sundneset 1.62 km

A busy morning fitting out Group B. We had very little time to kayak after all the gear fitting and kayak fitting, but we did manage to get on the water. It was rather cold and wet, so not such a bad thing to have a short paddle. We cruised the shoreline of Sundneset and passed some small bergy bits. Back on the ship for a later lunch.

### Friday 6 July, PM – Edgeøya 2.9 km

With a decent wind at anchor, we decided to tow to a sheltered bay to begin. From here it was a slight headwind but very achievable. Cliffs loomed above us as we headed to the landing site. Near the landing two juvenile male walrus were play fighting; we gave them a wide berth and they saw us but were happy to ignore us. We made a landing and had the chance to wander around and get some views and see the old hut.

Total Distance Paddled: 16.72 km

#### Group A Kayakers:

Samir Goel

Julie Markham

Manish Vora

Darius Fisher

Stefan Helmcke

Pol Van der Pluijm

Daniel Taglienti

Amy Elaine Wakeland

Eric Garcetti

Carri Twig

Ayana Johnson

Stephanie Donner

Hollie Velasquez Horvath

Evi Lazou

Nikolaus Lazkadaris

Evan Rappoport

Bjarke Ingels

Paul Lightfoot

Annalise Lightfoot

#### Group B Kayakers:

Jennifer Loustaunau

MacKenzie Feldman

Andy Docken

Lissa Balinger

Manuel Piñuela Rangel

Holda Puron

Henk Brouwer Rogers

Fred Upton

Amey Upton

Maya Rogers

Roger Kiyomura

Django Bondeman

Erin Sikorsky

Jon Stewart

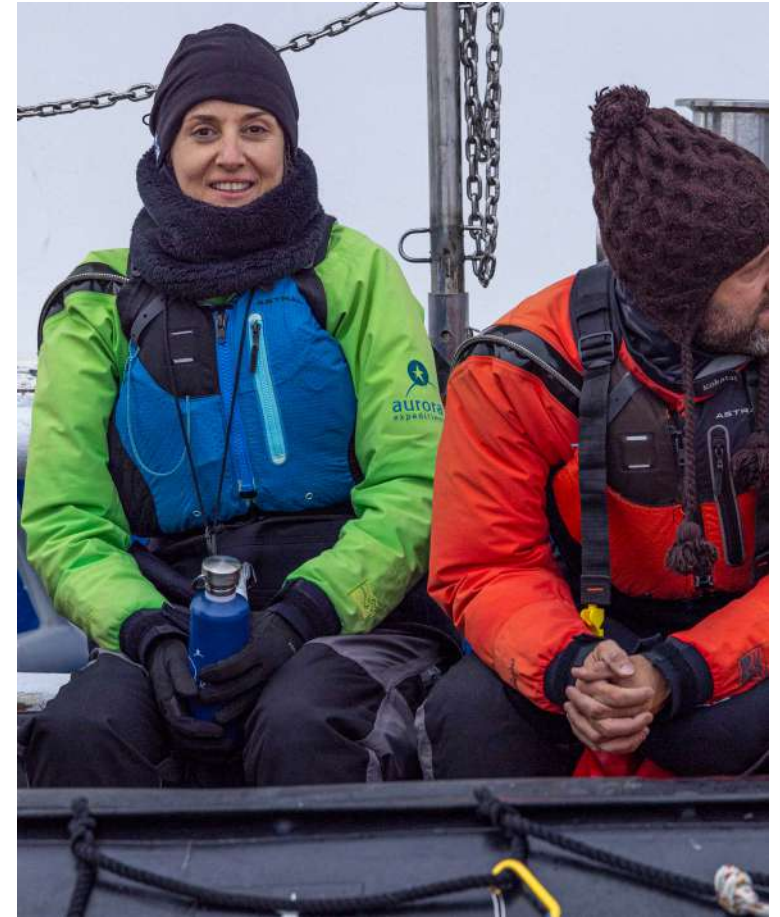
Holly Hammonds

David Sandalow

Joel Moore

Katherine Moore







# Bird & Mammal Sightings

Bird Species	June–July									
	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Arctic tern		●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Glaucous gull		●	●		●			●		
Kittiwake	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Ivory gull				●						
Great skua					●					
Arctic skua		●	●	●		●	●			
Northern fulmar	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	
Guillemot		●	●	●				●		
Brünnich's guillemot			●	●	●		●	●		
Atlantic puffin	●	●					●			
Black guillemot		●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
Little auk (Dovekie)	●			●	●		●	●		
Pink-footed goose					●	●				
Barnacle goose		●				●		●		
Common eider	●	●	●	●	●	●		●		
King eider						●				
Long-tailed duck						●				
Red-throated diver		●								
Purple sandpiper			●		●			●		

Bird Species	June–July									
	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Grey/Red phalarope					●	●				
Rock ptarmigan			●							
Snow bunting	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		

Mammal Species	June–July									
	30	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Bearded seal			●		●					
Common (Harbor) seal		●								
Walrus		●		●	●	●				
Minke whale			●							
Humpback whale			●							
Polar bear					●					
Arctic fox				●						
Reindeer	●		●			●		●		



# Map



## Svalbard Odyssey

30 June – 8 July 2024









# Our Expeditioners

Taylor Abbey	Kevin DeAllen	Braden Hansen	Samuel Locklear III	Kathleen Rice	Eileen Taglienti
Wemimo Abbey	Kim DeAllen	Lukas Haynes	Jennifer Loustaunau	Paul Rice	Daniel Taglienti
Ausama Abdelhadi	Olivia Dell	James Haynes	Michael Madnick	Henk Rogers	David Tanguay
Avril Alexander	Catharine Des Lauriers	Karen Heggenes	Paula Major	Maya Rogers	Pooja Tilwawala
Elizabeth Ballinger	Tia DesLauriers	Per Heggenes	Michelle Markham	Anita Sanchez	Alyssa Trask
Sophia Bentaher	Andrew Docken	Stefan Helmcke	Bailey Meek	David Sandalow	Travis Trask
Lisa Bezos	Elena Doms	Diana Hernandez	Caleigh Meek	Kelly Sauger	Carri Twigg
Mark Bezos	Nick Doms	Xiao hui Huang	George Merrell III	Adam Schmalholz	Frederick Upton
Cale Bonderman	Stephanie Donner	Joshua Izenberg	Marya Meyer	LuPrele Secrist	Amey Upton
Django Bonderman	Sarah Eder	Ayana Johnson	Laurie Michaels	Erin Sikorsky	Pol van der Pluijm
Vicki Booth	Mackenzie Feldman	Donna Kerridge	Katherine Moore	Vincent Smith	Lori Varga
William Booth Jr	Darius Fisher	Natalia Khalifa	Joel Moore	Jackson Smith	Hollie Velasquez Horvath
Michael Brouwer	Victoria Flaherty	Nikan Khatibi	Palmer Morse	Olivia Smith	Alexander Vilgertshofer
Edward Brown	Augustine Flaherty	Parmis Khatibi	Joanna Opot	McKenzie Smith	Kevin Vilkin
Tighe Brown	Xavier Flaherty	Beatrice Kim	Guy Patteson Franklin	McNair Smith	Manish Vora
Bjarke Bundgaard	Jacob Gagnier	Kathryn Kim	Anne Patteson Litt	David Solomon	Amy Wakeland
Kimberly Butts	Jackson Gagnier	Roger Kiyomura	Manuel Piñuela Rangel	Allison Solomon	Freeman White
Indranil Chatterjee	Isabella Gagnier	Sarah Kusnetz	Kendall Polk	Brooke Stearns	Maria Wilhelm
John Cotton	Eric Garcetti	Nikolaos Laskaridis	Holda Puron Zepeda	Taylor Stearns	Kimberly Wirthlin
Alyssa Crosby	Samir Goel	Efterpi Lazou	Jennifer Radoci	Melinda Stearns	Lauren Xie
Annette Cumming	Garth Gransauil	Paul Lightfoot	Wilder Ramsey	Glenn Stearns	Andrew Zuckerman
Brendan Davis	Dorothy Hammonds	Annalise Lightfoot	Evan Rappoport	Jonathan Stewart	



# Expedition Team

**Expedition Leader:** Mario Placidi Spring

**Assistant Expedition Leader:** Leo Soibelzon

**Onboard Expedition Manager:** Justine Bornholdt

**Firearms Manager:** Jeff Nagel

**Geological & Climate Science Specialist:** Chris Todd

**Marine Biologist:** Annette Scheffer

**Climatologist/Glaciologist:** Katja Riedel

**Geologist:** Bruno Lauper

**Historian:** Kelsey Camacho

**Photography Guide:** Adrian Wlodarczyk

**Lead Kayak Guide:** Eamon Larkin

**Senior Kayak Guide:** Vanja Davidsen

**Senior Kayak Guide:** Eduardo Larrañaga

**Expedition First Responder:** Medic: Linda Steutel

**Onboard Expedition Assistant:** Ana Prado

**Zodiac Master:** Nacho Marino

# Walking Softer Team

Vinny Smith (founder)

Tori Smith (founder)

Tighe Brown

Kim DeAllen

Alyssa Crosby

Taylor Cotton

Lukas Haynes

Alexander Vilgertshofer

Lauren Xie

Photography thanks to:

---

Adrian Wlodarczyk



# Senior Officers & Heads of Department

**Master:** Oleg Kapko

**Chief Officer:** Andrey Zakalashnyuk

**Safety Officer:** Vladimir Kolesnikov

**Bosun:** Bobby Payumo

**Deck Cadet:** Carlos Florido Carvalo Da Silva

**Ship Doctor:** Javier Martinez Rodriguez

**Support Doctor:** Eliana Caro Garzon

**Chief Engineer:** Dimitar Vasilev

**First Engineer:** Iurii Peretiaka

**Hotel Director:** Alex Barkar

**F&B Manager:** Rajesh Murao

**Chief Purser:** Pia Blanca

**Executive Chef:** Edgar Mangalino

**Sous Chef:** Hubert Ramiro Barreto

**Head Waiter:** German Orlando Cayasso Wilson

**Hotel Controller:** Orlando Costa

**IT Officer:** Ihor Yesmieniev

**Receptionist:** Joy Acelar

**Receptionist:** Jonathan Valdez

**Head Stateroom:** Roniel Garcia

**Spa Manager:** Venila Vythilingum

**Able Seaman:** Angelo San Antonio

**Able Seaman:** Iwan Setiawan

**Able Seaman:** Hardik Dipakbhai Rao

**Able Seaman:** Roberto Ixtan Mejia

**Able Seaman:** Nikola Georgiev

**Able Seaman:** Francis Marvin Linga





[facebook.com/auroraex](https://facebook.com/auroraex)



[@aurora\\_expeditions](https://instagram.com/aurora_expeditions)



[youtube.com/auroraexpeditions](https://youtube.com/auroraexpeditions)



[Aurora Expeditions \(@Polar\\_Experts\) / Twitter](https://twitter.com/Polar_Experts)