

79°N

NY-ÅLESUND | KONGSFJORDEN | BIOTA

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PREFACE

I have always been fascinated by the icy landscapes of Arctica and Antarctica. That is why the idea occurred to me some years ago to make a documentary film and an illustrated book. A book about the northernmost all season inhabited village of the world. The idea turned into a serious project which I presented to the Alfred-Wegener-Institute (AWI) in Bremerhaven, Germany. AWI is running a research centre in Ny-Ålesund, Spitsbergen.



blue skies and bright sunshine for our chopper flight across the glaciers. The shots taken in these five weeks do give just a short glance at the fascinating Arctic world of Ny-Ålesund. We would have liked to have more time, as always in such situations. But our stay in this unique biota of Spitsbergen was not the last one. That's for sure.

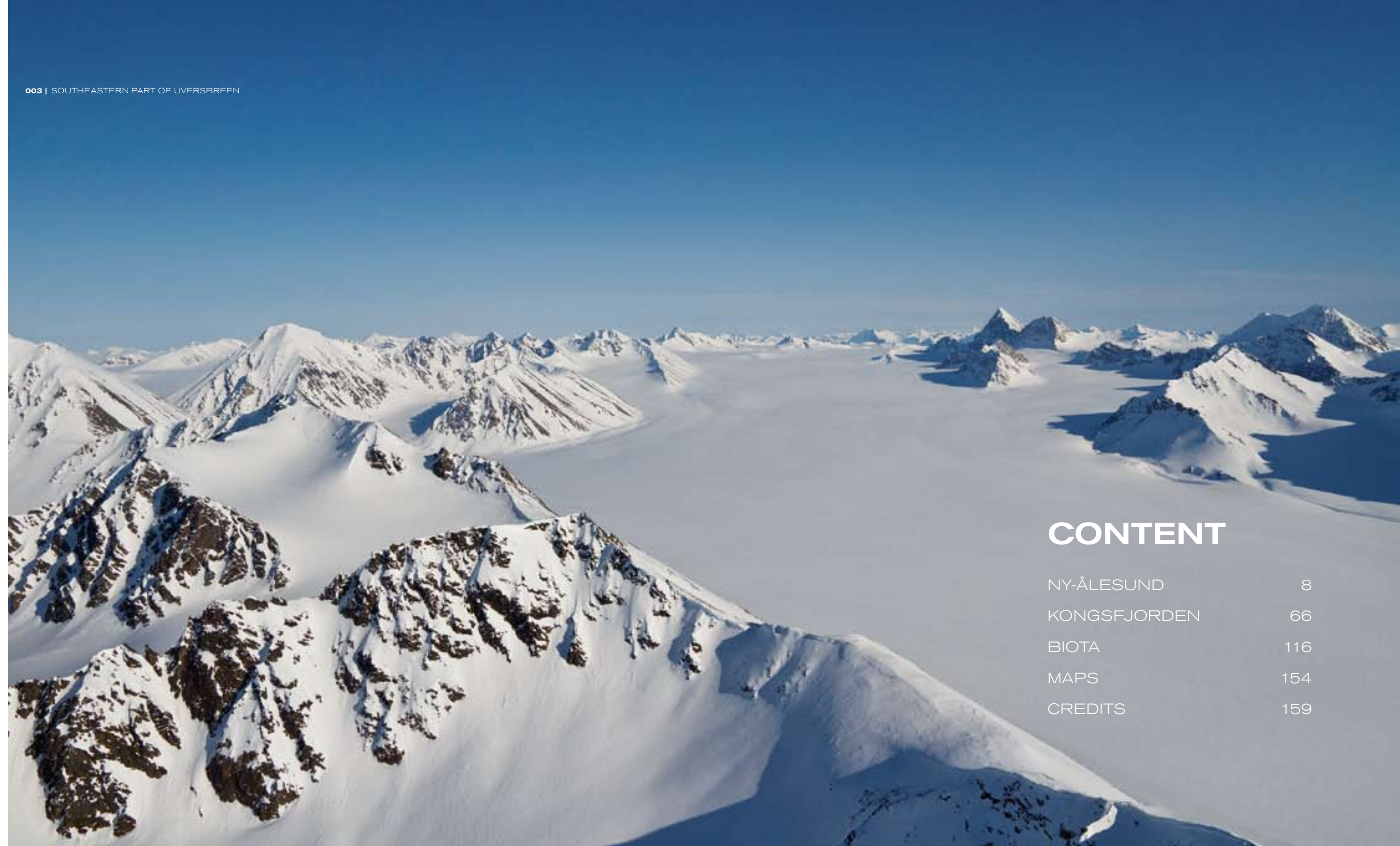
A lot of reliable partners are required to realize such a project. The first citation goes to the Alfred-Wegener-Institute and especially to three individuals: Dr. Ude Cieluch – my person of contact from the very beginning to accompany the project. Max Schwanz, who generously shared all of his tremendous experience with us – and we are speaking not only of diving. And finally, Dr. Marcus Schumacher, who was there all the time from my first stay in Ny-Ålesund and who supported our preparations with an innumerable amount of valuable e-mails. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to all the helping hands at Alfred-Wegener-Institute in Bremerhaven, media and communications branch, logistics and as well AWI Potsdam. There goes one big thank you to our three great donors - Sappi, Steiermärkische, E-Steiermark and many more in Germany, Austria and Spitsbergen, who helped raise our funds or supported us with equipment.

This illustrated book showing one of the great beautiful places of our world would not have been possible without you - thanks to all. Let's say Kongsfjord ho! and let's plunge deeply into quietness and serenity and vastness of the Arctic.

Joe Haschek

The seriously prepared project met serious interest so I was invited for a first stay at the Kongsfjord on Spitsbergen in September 2009. I spent a week's time at the French-German AWIPEV station, met the team in situ and made arrangements with the Norwegian Kings Bay AS which runs the researcher's village of Ny-Ålesund. Moreover, I checked on possibilities of diving and hiking the area. Back home in Austria I faced the difficulties of travelling far north: Assorting the equipment, queries with customs, packing and ferrying our gear on the seaway and above all: to convince my family and some future donors ... to make a one month stay at Kongsfjord true – finally, in May 2010. My two best friends - Peter Kolb and Josef Puster - and some 300 kg arctic gear accompanied me. The latter was supposed to help us collect photo and film footage on land and under water.

Unfortunately, spring of 2010 proved to be extremely mild so the fjord was ice free – an alleged effect of climate change which is more perceptible in Polar regions than in other parts of our planet. The mild weather deprived us of the possibility to get shots of Polar bears and seals – but as a substitute, the Kongsfjord decided to offer us



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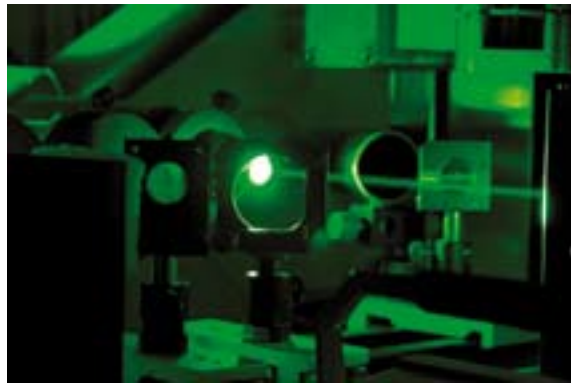




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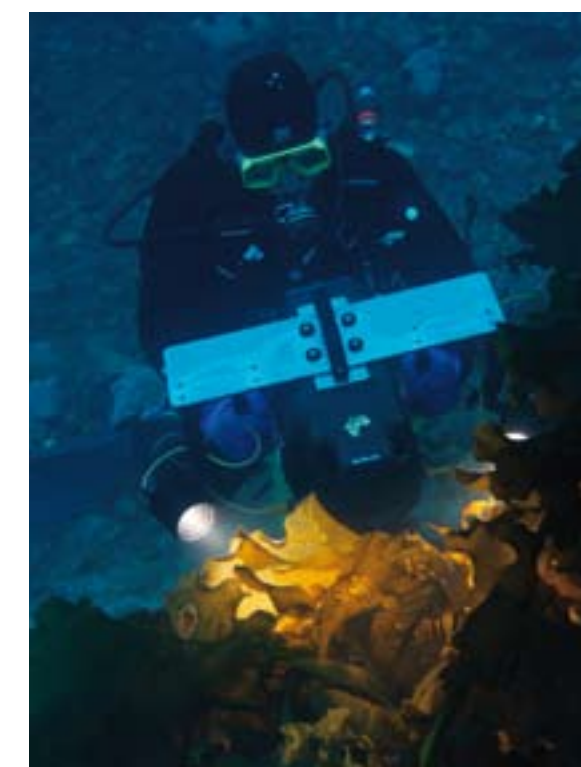
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