



OCEANWIDE
EXPEDITIONS

Expedition Log North Spitsbergen

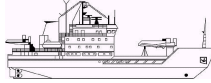
21st June – 28th June 2006

M/V Grigoriy Mikheev

ГРИГОРИЙ МИХЕЕВ



The *Grigoriy Mikheev* was built in 1990 in Finland and was designed as an ice strengthened oceanographic research vessel. Of steel construction, measuring 66m (210 ft) long, 12.8m (42 ft) wide, with a displacement of 2,000 tons, she is ideal for the Antarctic region. This former research vessel of the Hydrological Institute in St. Petersburg is manned by an enthusiastic Russian crew so we know that we are in extremely capable hands. During the northern summer she cruises the water of the Arctic Ocean.



With

**Captain – Aleksandr Pruss
and his Russian Crew of 18**

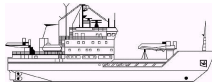
including

1st Mate – Andrey Postnikov
Zodiac Driver – 2nd Mate Valeriy Kovalev
Zodiac Driver – 3rd Mate – Andrey Ivanov
Zodiac Driver – Radio Engineer – Roman Aleksakhin
Zodiac Driver – Able Seaman – Ruslan Kuzmenko
Zodiac Driver – Able Seaman – Igor Voyko
Cabin Stewardess – Alina Zurikhina
Cabin Stewardess – Marina Tattar
Dining Room Stewardess – Lyudmila Santimova
Dining Room Stewardess – Nataliya Dudinskaya

and

Expedition Leader – Rolf Stange (Germany)
Dive Master – Mike Murphy (UK originally)
Dive Master – Piotr Szyszka (Australia)
Guide/Lecturer – Delphine Aurès (France)
Guide/Lecturer – Troels Jacobsen (Denmark)
Hotel Manager – Jan de Ceuster (Belgium)
Head Chef – Nathan Russ (New Zealand)
Sous Chef – Beverley Howlett (Scotland)
Ship's Physician – Dr. Greg Coffey (UK)

**And 33 of us from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, The Netherlands,
Poland, South Africa, Switzerland, and UK.**



21st June 2006 – Longyearbyen

Position at 17.00: 78°14' N / 15°39' E

Air temperature: 8°C, light westerly, light cloud.

Most of us arrived in Svalbard by plane in the afternoon after a bit of delay from Oslo and Tromsø. Our expedition staff picked us all up in the airport and took us by bus to the pier. Due to the plane delay we boarded immediately.

The ship was lying alongside the pier when we arrived and everybody acquainted themselves with their new home for the next seven days. We also met our fellow travellers and our Expedition Leader, Rolf Stange, for an introduction to the rest of the staff. The ship set sail at 19.00. Just before leaving we underwent the compulsory and important lifeboat drill; warm clothes, bright orange life jackets and then up to the lifeboats. Our officers and guides explained the procedure. We decided right then that we would better never have to use those life-boats in earnest. Having successfully completed the drill we settled down for dinner. Many of us enjoyed the views in the early evening sunshine as we headed out of the massive Isfjord and north on the west side of mountainous Prins Karls Forland.

22nd June 2006 – Krossfjord - Fjortende Julibukta, Kongsfjord – Ny Ålesund and Kongsbreen

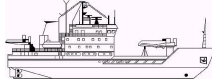
Position at 07.45: 79°07' N / 11°47' E

Air temperature: 7°C, westerly breeze, scattered cloud.

The morning wake up call came late in the morning at 7.00. Our good ship Grigoriy Mikheev was heading into Kongsfjorden (Kings Bay) where we were to visit the northern most town in the world: Ny Ålesund at 78°56 N. In the morning however, we made our first landing in the adjacent Krossfjord in a small bay called Fjortende Julibukta (14th of July Bay), named in honour of the French National Day by a French Expedition. Here we started out with a bit of zodiac cruising along a small but very nice cliff inhabited by a small bird colony. There are much larger bird colonies in Svalbard than here, but it is one of the very few places this far north where one can find the Razorbill nesting. Also on the upper part of the cliffs, we saw puffins, which are also not very numerous so far to the north. Plenty of Brünnichs Guillemots and Barnacle Geese were also to be seen here. Further into the bay we landed below a much larger and higher bird cliff, which had given nutrition enough for a multitude of flora to grow here. For Svalbard standards this is like a tropical rainforest! Several Snow Buntings were curiously following every move we made among the great many species of mosses, lichens, grasses, etc. A bit down the coast there were a few Svalbard Reindeer milling around and high up close to the bird colony an Arctic Fox on the prowl was spotted.

Boarding the zodiacs again our guides had already spotted a few Bearded Seals on ice floes in the bay. That was to be an amazing close encounter with this the second largest seal in the Arctic. Amazingly enough they did not seem to want to leave their floes and carefully we managed to get very close to three of them. What an





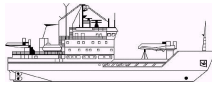
amazing wildlife encounter on our very first excursion! We also cruised along the impressive Fjortende Julibreen (bre=glacier) soaking in the many shades of blue in the ice. In the meantime the divers went on a different adventure: After everyone had departed for shore, the divers geared up and set off in two zodiacs cruising a further two miles up into Krossfjorden. Mike and Pete were the two divemasters and they were accompanied by eleven very excited divers, all extremely eager to get wet!!! This was their "check-out" dive, where they could adjust their weights and equipment in the protected safety of a small calm sandy bay. Within minutes they were all in the water, it was milky due to the glacial runoff, but at about 7 meters the visibility cleared, and they found themselves onto a beautiful wall that dropped to a ledge at 25 meters and then descended into the abyss. The wall was covered with colourful sea anemones, soft corals and kelp. It was a great dive to start the expedition. This was not the last great glacier of the day, but first we paid Ny Ålesund a visit.



Ny Ålesund is a small community consisting of scientists from all over the world who conduct a variety of research in the fields of atmospheric studies, glaciology, biology etc. A short walk took us into the centre of this historic village passing several Barnacle Geese. There was also an interesting little museum about the early days of Ny Ålesund, when coal mining determined everything here. Life must have been hard for the miners in these harsh conditions; work was usually carried out in a kneeling position deep under the surface. The museum also explained all the modern research conducted from this place. We headed for the lattice mast erected in the early part of the 20th century by the intrepid explorers Amundsen and Nobile, who tried to reach the North Pole by a dirigible airship in 1926 and 1928. The mast is only a few hundred meters from the settlement but our expedition staff insisted that everybody stayed close to the rifle in case of an unwanted Polar Bear encounter. Luckily there were no polar bears around and we could enjoy the stunning scenery and Rolfs in depth talk

about the historic perspectives of polar exploration involving Ny Ålesund.

After dinner we headed deeper inside Kongsfjorden in order to explore the impressive Kongsbreen glacier. Our captain took the ship very close the northern glacier front giving us the best possible view. Several larger icebergs, which had recently calved from the glacier, could be seen. Normally a quite unusual phenomenon here in Svalbard as there are no great iceberg producing glaciers here. Beautiful blue "bergy-bits" were shining in the fantastic evening sunlight, which provided us with the best possible view of the great mountains: the famous Three Crowns of Svea, Dana, and Nora (Sweden, Denmark, and Norway respectively) with the characteristic almost similar pyramid shape standing cloudless and awe-inspiring. After this great experience the ship headed towards the fjord entrance and to the north.



23rd June 2006 – Liefdefjord: Andøyane, Texas Bar, Monacobreen

Position at 07.30: 79°44' N / 13°55' E

Air temperature: 5°C, calm, partly cloudy.

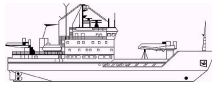


At 7.30 Rolf once again made the wake-up call announcing that we had made good speed throughout the night and already had arrived in the mouth of the Liefdefjord, a branch of the Woodfjord, on the North West coast of Spitsbergen.

It was to be an eventful morning as we started out with a pod of Beluga whales in the middle of breakfast. They are very timid creatures in this region and very difficult to approach. The captain did his very best for a few minutes till they all disappeared as quick as they came. Just after the Beluga call Rolf had spotted our first Polar Bears of the trip on the very islands that we had planned to visit: Andøyane (Duck Islands). Everybody got into the zodiacs and we headed towards the island where the bear was lying sleeping close to the beach. As we approached we saw two small cubs lying close to their resting mother. Carefully we approached and got a very good look at these great animals. We stayed around for as long as Rolf felt appropriate so not to disturb the little family and left them as they headed off. They bear encounters of the day were not yet over as we had already spotted a fourth bear on the same island. A short circumnavigation of the island revealed this bear quite close to a small beach. It did not seem to mind us at all and came steadily closer till it eventually settled down less than 100 meters from all our five zodiacs (the divers had forgotten all about diving for a short time).

The mornings excursion was not yet over as the zodiacs finally turned away from the bear infested island towards another one in this little island group. Again a Polar Bear prevented a landing – number five of the morning so far. We started to search for an island without a bear (what a luxury problem!) and after having cruised a rather large island with yet another reported bear, we found a small one which was “uncontaminated”. Here we made a landing on the reddish rocks of the app. 350 mio. years “Old Red” sediment layers, which can be found numerous places





around the world. The Duck Islands is named appropriately as we saw several Common Eiders around the island along with some already looted nests. Yet another bird species was also seen on the island: The small Grey Phalarope - a favourite among birders. Both the colourful female and the duller male was seen relatively close up. Normally males are the colourful (and selfish) ones in the animal kingdom, but when it comes to the phalaropes it is opposite. The female runs the show and has the brightest plumage. The plant life was also thriving on this small island. Beside the numerous lichens and mosses of different colours, flowering species were in full bloom and included Sulphur-coloured buttercup, Tufted saxifrage, Polar willow, Arctic bell-heather, Hawkeed-leaves saxifrage and spread communities of purple saxifrage- Mountain avens,

The divers also enjoyed the look of the bears. After the zodiac cruise, Mike and the divers took off to find a new site to dive, as the bears had taken over the island that Mike had previously dived around. It was not long before a place was found and within minutes the divers entered the water. It was a gradual slope starting at 4 meters and running down to about 20. It was a nice dive with plenty of 'critters' to see, including isopods, nudibranchs and shrimp and visibility of 7 – 8 meters. After the dive was finished Pete suggested they do a little more cruising to see if we could spot anymore bears, no luck, but they were all more than happy with the five they had already seen.

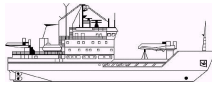
A fantastic morning was over with both great sightings of whales and our first six Polar Bears.

After returning to the ship we headed deeper into the Liefdefjord where we landing at the relatively recent trappers hut "Texas Bar"! For reasons not meant for lesser men to



understand, it is named after the US state of Texas by the Norwegian trapper who built it. Here we enjoyed a really good walk up the hills to see the fantastic view over the fjord and the close by glacier tongue. Some took it to the extreme joining Rolf on a true mountain climb with a spectacular view as a result. Others went not quite as high but still enjoyed the view and the tundra flora.

After all the land walkers had left for Texas Bar, Mike and Pete decided to try a wild card dive at an island just south of the landing sight. It turned out to be OK but with limited visibility. There were hundreds of brittle stars and some very pretty sea anemones. As soon as the dive was over, Pete took the divers who were interested in going ashore to the landing site. Still clad in their dry suits, they managed quite a climb and thoroughly enjoyed the excursion.



All back on board, the captain rammed the fast ice and went a few hundred meters further into the fast ice in front of the magnificent Monaco Glacier. What a spectacle when the ship cut its way through the 40-50 cm thick ice cover! Fast ice normally also means seals and we were not to be disappointed. Maybe around 100 seals, mainly Bearded Seals and some Ringed Seals lay next to their breathing holes all around. We also saw the Polar Bear with at least one cub and number nine of the trip was sleeping far away close to the far shore. Dinner was scheduled as a “surprise dinner” and consisted of a BBQ on the front deck with complementary entertainment from two of our Russian friends. Belly dancing and Elvis impressions in the high arctic!

The ship left the ice again in the evening heading north and the party continued in the bar to the early morning hours. What a fantastic day it had been!

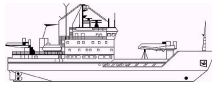
24th June 2006 – Hinlopen Strait: Alkefjellet and Torellneset

Position at 06.45: 79°49' N / 17°55' E

Air temperature: 2°C, breeze, snow.

In the morning the ship was still steaming south through the Hinlopen Strait in order to reach the famous bird cliff Alkefjellet south of the Lomfjorden. Here, some 100.000 Brünnichs Guillemots nest among the towering basalt pillars.

Overnight the weather had turned for the worse and the morning offered a solid snowfall and low cloud. This did, however, not deter us from a zodiac cruise along this magnificent bird cliff. It is indeed a fantastic place to zodiac cruise as the water is deep right up to the sheer cliff face and the birds in places nest only a few meters above sea level. Not only Brünnichs Guillemots nest here. The Glaucous Gulls and Kittiwakes are also plentiful here, although



obviously not in such great numbers. The Glaucous Gull is one of the largest predatory/scavenging birds in the arctic, and here they live the good life with plenty of prey around. Alkefjellet however, has more than wildlife to offer. The spectacular basalt columns upon which the birds nest is part of an intrusion of basalt in the otherwise limestone rock. This intrusion occurred 150-100 million of years ago and has now left the interface between the two rock types almost knife sharp as a text book example of the incredible forces of nature. After about 1½ hours cruising we headed back to the ship wet and somewhat cold but none of the less content with the morning's experience.

We came back to the ship relatively early and before lunch Delphine gave a lecture on the sea birds of Svalbard.

During lunch we steamed southeast towards Torellneset on the southwest corner of Nordaustlandet. The area is known to be quite desert like with very little vegetation. However, one big attraction is to be found here too: Walrus. Another Oceanwide vessel, *Professor Molchanov*, had been in the area during the morning and unfortunately had to report that nobody was home in the normally regular haulout site. They did report on Walrus in the water of the beach and we took advantage of that information. The zodiacs were launched for a cruise along the beach on the look out for Walrus. Indeed, two animals suddenly appeared rather close to the zodiacs and we managed to get to see them for the first time. Unusually so, they were not particularly curious and swam closer to the beach where they occasionally surfaced. The snow started to fall again and the wind picked up as we gave up and sailed back to the *Mikheev*.

In the late afternoon Jan opened his "Ship Shop" and Troels gave a lecture on the magnificent Walrus.

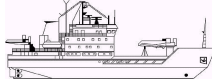
25th June 2006 – Sjuøyane: Phippsøya and Martensøya. The Polar pack ice

Position at 07.00: 80°40' N / 20°57' E

Air temperature: 2°C, light breeze, snow showers.

In the morning we found ourselves the furthest north so far. Over night the ship had relocated to the Sjuøyane (Seven Islands), which is the northern most island group of Europe. Here we made a landing on Phippsøya, named after the British commander John Phipps who led a British expedition to Svalbard in 1773. Phippsøya is the largest of this very remote group of small islands. Since our luck with Walrus the day before had been rather limited, Rolf had decided to try once again, and on Phippsøya there is a regular haulout site during most of the summer. Once again we were a bit disappointed to find no Walrus on the beach. Instead, we split up into two groups. Rolf took the leisurely party along the beach and up a small saddle for a great view over the bay, whereas Delphine and Troels headed inland for another saddle. The scenery was absolutely spectacular as the snow showers were interrupted by a bit of sunshine changing the light constantly. The snow cover was still quite deep and the hikers in particular had to struggle with knee-deep snow for quite a while. It all added up to a great morning's landing.

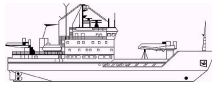
There were no depth soundings on the chart between Phippsøya and Martensøya, but Mike knew that the diving was good. With only four divers, Mike and Pete cruised between the islands and found what they thought would be a suitable site. The dive turned out to be the best yet, with good visibility and plenty of marine life. The seabed was lined with small and large boulders with kelp everywhere, but as the depth increased, there was less kelp and much more animal life to see. A small wall dropped to 20 meters; there were crustaceans, and small fish, amphipods and soft corals, sea anemones and clams, extremely diverse marine life. Six smiling divers returned to the ship.



The plan was then to head north into the polar pack ice. However, *Mikheev* had hardly turned the corner before a large group of Walrus surprisingly was spotted on the adjacent Martensøya. Rolf immediately changed the plan and, to the somewhat limited delight of our galley staff, postponed lunch a few hours. The anchor was lowered and we all headed for the beach. Finally our bad luck concerning Walrus had run out – indeed completely turned around to the category of “incredible luck”. About twenty Walrus were already on the beach and at least twenty more on the approach to the beach as we landed. Carefully and well organized we headed for the haulout but where “interrupted” by about ten Walrus swimming closer to us. We turned our attention towards them and were richly rewarded. They were very curious and investigated us just as we investigated them. The only obvious difference was the thousands of photos the two-legged took of their swimming counterparts. They were very active engaging in play-fighting and other spectacular displays all the time. At one time Rolf tried to gather people around for another approach on the haulout but failed as another couple of Walrus joined the group that had been watching us for a while now. Slowly but surely we all ended up more or less on the waterline with the Walrus only a few meters away. None of them showed any sign of fear and just kept on following us. It was an outstanding wildlife encounter by any standards and one of the most sensational encounters of Walrus our staff had ever experienced. After about two hours of intense Walrus watching and photography we simply had to leave. It was not easy for our staff to drag us out of there as the Walrus followed us along the beach towards the zodiacs. The plan was still to head north for another essential of our Arctic experience: The Polar pack ice.

At 17.00 we were still steaming full ahead towards the north and as no ice was in site Rolf decided to give a talk on ice answering all questions so that we knew what was coming.





The ice was far north this year and we did not see it before 81°19' N where our captain also spotted about five Fin Whales close to the ice edge! This was really a remarkable sighting. First of all it was very early in the season and although Fin Whales have been reported near the ice edge before, the ice edge is usually somewhat further south at this time of year. Troels speculated that it could have been one of the most northern sightings of Fin Whales ever! On top of that we even got a very good look at these giants as our captain carefully circled a couple of times around them.

Finally we had reached the ice slightly later than expected – but what can one do when Walrus and Fin Whales keep spoiling the plans. Not until after dinner we reached our northern most position at 81°28.5' N (only 947,3 km from the North Pole!) and from here we also went on a zodiac cruise among the loose pack ice. A bit of snow and a bit overcast but that did not hamper our great impression of this eerie "ice-scape". We got a great look at four beautifully white Ivory Gulls flying around with the dark sky as background as well as footprints of the otherwise elusive Polar Bear.



As soon as the land folk left in their zodiacs, the divers headed out for a piece of ice they could safely dive around. There was nothing large in the way of bergs, but a flat piece of ice with a small hump on it became the chosen site. Soon the divers were all in the water, swimming and diving around the

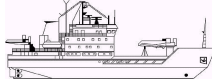
ice. It was perhaps only two meters thick, still allowing the light to shine through. Everyone enjoyed themselves tremendously, and two bottles of champagne miraculously appeared, making the event truly "Champagne on Ice"

At around 23.00 we returned to the ship where Jan had prepared a delicious hot chocolate with a bit of something in. What a wonderful way of ending an outstanding day!

26th June 2006 – Raudfjord: Hamiltonbukta, Amsterdamøya: Smeerenburg

Position at 08.00: 80°12' N / 13°14' E Air temperature: 3°C, calm, overcast but clearing.

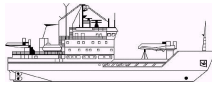
We had been quite far to the north the previous day and did not arrive in Raudfjord until around 10.30 o'clock in the morning. We anchored off the very picturesque Hamiltonbukta with great pointed mountains on the sides and the relatively small but very dramatic Hamiltonbreen at the end. We started a sunny zodiac cruise on the northern side along the beautiful cliffs looking for foxes and bears. Tracks from both species were everywhere to be seen in the snow on the hillside but none of the beasts themselves where to be seen. Foxes and bears are particularly attracted to this place because of the bird colonies on the mountainsides at the mouth of the fjord. Instead we spotted a nice Reindeer with great antlers high on the steep hillside. We headed a bit further into the system and landed at small peninsula where we



climbed the hill to get the fantastic view over the bay. At the landing site the remains of a reindeer that had been eaten here recently was found confirming the notion that foxes and bears have been around the bay very recently. The landing was just a little more than half an hour in duration and we continued to cruise

the impressive glacier front. We also spotted a Bearded Seal in the water among the ice floes. The water was very murky, runoff from the glacier, so Mike took the divers to the eastern tip of the bay, where the water was seen to be much clearer. It was a very good dive, with perhaps 10 – 12 meters of visibility. A gentle slope running down to about 17 meters, lots of life with interspersed kelp beds. A shorthorn scorpion fish was seen together with the usual benthic marine life.

During a well-deserved lunch the *Mikheev* proceeded further to the southwest for our afternoon landing. Amsterdamøya is a very famous place in Svalbard history as it was the home of the largest whaling station of the arctic in the 17th century. The Dutch blubber ovens now surrounded by lots of drift wood originating from Siberia allowed only a vague idea about what life might have been like here in the early days. The principal quarry of the whalers was the Greenland or Bowhead Whale, which was hunted to the verge of extinction and has not since recovered in numbers. It is in the family of the Right Whales, as they were the right one to pursue, being a slow-moving animal, which could be approached closely. Whalers worked from quite small sailing ships and made voyages of several years. The actual pursuit and capture of the whales was accomplished from rowing boats carrying about six men. Once the boat had managed to approach within a few meters of a gentle giant hand harpoons were thrown into its body, and when the whale was finally exhausted it was killed with hand lances. The Bowhead whales were towed back to camp, where the oil and the baleen were extracted. Now only the few remains of this once important economic society remains. We pondered around the site trying to imagine how the place must have been like almost 400 years ago as Rolf and Troels told the story of the whalers. Just as the on-site lecture was over one passenger realized that a Walrus was lying on the beach on the far side of a short (but deep) melt water river. Troels immediately suggested the animal was dead as parts of a certain anatomical feature was visible. This normally occurs when large dead animals of the male sex decompose. He crossed the deep water, only to find that the big bull was apparently only having happy dreams as it stretched and scratched before going back to sleep.



We were back on the ship in the early evening and before dinner the course was set to go further into the very scenic Fuglefjord (Bird Fjord) with its massive glacier. The captain went to great length to accommodate our hope to see another glacier front close up. Slowly and carefully he brought the ship very close to the Svitjodreen ice front while we made a toast to the trip on the bow.



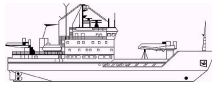
27th June 2006 – Isfjord: Alkhornet

Position at 09.00: 78°09' N / 13°09' E

Air temperature: 6°C, calm, slightly overcast

After a night of sailing south we found ourselves in the mouth of Isfjord when the wakeup call came at 7.30. Our first landing on this our last day was to be at Alkhornet on the northern side of Isfjord. Alkhornet is famous for its majestic high cliff with thousands of birds nesting, but also for the lush tundra below the rocks. The divers were also in for a treat. Sagaskjeret located close to Alkhornet was the last dive and the conditions were near perfect. No wind, flat seas with the sun trying to peep through the clouds. The two zodiacs dropped anchor near the rocks and within minutes, all eleven divers slipped into the water. The visibility was quite good and several of the divers found a small wall that had been hiding from them for three days. Lots of life and small fish, colourful and some interesting gulleys. It was a great dive to end the expedition with.

The “land crabs” got the first look at Glaucous Gull chicks with a parents standing guard at the landing beach, and as we headed into the tundra we saw quite a few Reindeer here and there on the slopes. We approached carefully, waited and hoped for them to come closer to us. Indeed, the large male came ever closer while continuously eating away. We all got a fantastic look at this animal as it passed us at only about 20 meters distance. Rolf had already told us that Alkhornet is also well known for its Arctic Foxes. It is a virtual heaven for foxes here, as prey is abundant. We headed along the tundra for a small ridge, which is often inhabited by a fox family while looking at impressive frost patterned ground with rather deep natural trenches around caused by ice wedges below. The group halted a couple of hundred meters from the ridge to scan the rocks for any sign of foxes. Suddenly Rolf called out that four cubs ran around the far point of the ridge. Slowly and carefully we all approached and eventually got a really good look at this small family consisting of no less than five cubs! Having spent a good half an hour watching them we split into groups again. Rolf went hiking in the hills and Delphine and Troels stayed with the foxes for a while. The hikers came up rather high on the hill side getting an impressive view over the lower tundra landscape combined with ten more Reindeer and several foxes on the steep slopes. The fox watchers crept a little closer and sat down waiting for the now sleeping cubs to wake up. Having waited some 15 minutes Delphine suddenly spotted a parent coming running from behind us towards the den. It took a



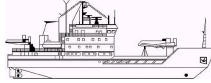
big circle around us and headed for the ridge. Here it coincidentally met a pair of nesting Pink Footed Geese that got very upset about a fox coming that close to their nests. They stood their ground and chased the fox away; a remarkable and very rare experience. Eventually the divers joined us for a slightly different angle on three sleeping cubs that hardly bothered looking our way. Another outstanding wildlife encounter that could hardly get any better on our second last landing of the trip!

In the afternoon Rolf got the idea to make landing in a place he had never visited before: A pioneer last landing at Bohemanneset just northwest of Longyearbyen, on the other side of



Isfjord. Coincidentally, the anchor site was precisely 1300 km south of the North Pole. Bohemanflya is also the name of a coal-bearing claim covering this peninsula. It was claimed by a Norwegian in 1899 and was first sold to Mr. Longyear himself, then a group of Dutch investors and finally to a Russian state company in 1932. It was only a very limited production (if any at all) but it was easy to see why the claim was made. The coal seam was lying very close to the surface and clearly visible in many places. At the landing site there was also a couple of huts. The interesting one of the two was used by the famous Norwegian Hjalmar Johansen (among other exploits he had joined Nansen on his Franz Josef Land overwintering) and the German journalist Theodor Lerner (as in Lernerøya where the divers made a dive in Leifdefjord) who overwintered here in 1907-08. There were quite a lot of traces of the prospecting including what appeared to be a test shaft and further inland a drilling facility. Also to be found on the tundra behind the huts was a grave, properly marked with a cross. On closer inspection however, the many big rocks laid upon it to prevent animals from gaining access had crushed the coffin, and the skull from an unknown trapper was visible.

We split up in groups one last time and Troels headed a bit inland to begin with visiting the inland prospecting sites and on the walk we also found a typical fox mount with a den. A single and quite distressed small fox cub was calling and calling. We did not approach much



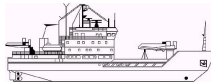
and left it alone rather quickly. Rolf and Delphine took it a bit slower and included a bit of a history lesson, but generally made it the same way around as the first group. Up in the hills they saw a pair of King Eiders on a little lake.

After dinner the *Mikheev* went on one last excursion of the trip and cruised along the beautiful Wahlenbergreen. What a tremendous way of ending our trip to Svalbard.

28th June 2006 – Longyearbyen

Position at 09.00: 78°14' N / 15°39' E

Everybody left the ship at 9 am and headed to town to do the last shopping before the afternoon flight. The last impressions of this great experience had yet to be really comprehended for most. It is always sad to leave after a good experience but the memories will live on.



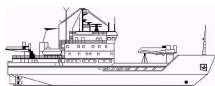
1. Krossfjord: **Fjortende Julibukta**
2. Kongsfjord: Ny Ålesund
3. Kongsbreen
4. Liefdefjord: **Andøyane**
5. Texas Bar / *Lernerøyane*
6. Monacobreen
7. Hinlopen Strait: **Alkefjellet**
8. Torellneset
9. Sjuøyane: **Phippsøya**
10. Martensøya (Walrus)
11. **Ice/Furthest North**
12. **Hamiltonbukta**
13. Amsterdamøya: Smeerenburg
14. Fuglefjord
15. Isfjord: Alkhornet/ *Sagaskæret*
16. Bohemanneset



Format legend:
Landings/*Dive sites*
/combined landing or
Zodiac cruise & dive
site)

DIVE SITES

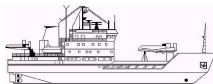
Krossfjorden	79° 09.43'N 011° 50.77' E
Andøyane	79° 39.75' N 013° 23.26' E
Texas Bar	79° 36.55'N 012° 44.23' E
Alkefjellet	79° 34.52'N 018° 29.33' E
7 Islands	80° 41.82'N 021° 01.13' E
Ice Dive	81° 28.22'N 019° 58.84' E
Hamiltonbukta	79° 48.53'N 011° 51.80' E
Sagaskjæret	78° 12.86' N 013° 56.76' E



Species list for North Spitsbergen aboard Grigoriy Mikheev 21-28 June 2006

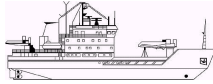
Common English Name	Latin name
Red-throated diver	<i>Gavia stellata</i>
Northern Fulmar	<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>
Pink-footed Goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>
Barnacle Goose	<i>Branta leucopsis</i>
Common Eider	<i>Somateria mollissima</i>
King Eider	<i>Somateria spectabilis</i>
Long-tailed Duck	<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>
Great black-backed Gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>
Ruddy turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
Purple Sandpiper	<i>Calidris maritima</i>
Grey Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus fulicarius</i>
Arctic Skua	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>
Kittiwake	<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>
Ivory Gull	<i>Pagophila eburnea</i>
Arctic Tern	<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>
Brunnich's Guillemot	<i>Uria lomvia</i>
Black Guillemot	<i>Cephus grylle</i>
Little Auk	<i>Alle alle</i>
Razorbill	<i>Alca torda</i>
Puffin	<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>
Snow Bunting	<i>Plectrophenax nivalis</i>

Walrus	<i>Odobenus rosmarus</i>
Bearded seal	<i>Erignathus barbatus</i>
Ringed seal	<i>Phoca hispida</i>
Polar Bear	<i>Ursus maritimus</i>
Arctic Fox	<i>Alopex lagopus</i>
Spitsbergen Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus</i>
Fin Whale	<i>Balaenoptera physalis</i>
Beluga	<i>Delphinapterus leucas</i>



Some of the flowering plants species observed during the trip

Common name	Latin name
Polar Willow	<i>Salix polaris</i>
Net-leaved willow	<i>Salix reticulata</i>
Snow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus nivalis</i>
Arctic Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus hyperboreus</i>
Sulphur-coloured Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus sulphureus</i>
Lobe leaved buttercup	<i>Ranunculus affinis</i>
Mountain Avens	<i>Dryas octopetala</i>
Hawkweed-leaved Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga hieracifolia</i>
Purple Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i>
Alpine Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga nivalis</i>
Bog Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>
Drooping Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga cernua</i>
Tufted Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga cespitosa</i>
Polar stoloniferous saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga platysepala</i>
Svalbard Poppy	<i>Papaver dahlianum</i>
Viviparous Knotweed	<i>Polygonum viviparum</i>
Mountain Sorrel	<i>Oxyria digyna</i>
Alpine Sandwore	<i>Minuartia rubella</i>
Moss Campion	<i>Silene acaulis</i>
White Arctic Bell-heather	<i>Cassiope tetragona</i>
Hairy Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis hirsute</i>
Wolly Lousewort	<i>Pedicularis dasyantha</i>
Arctic Cotton-grass	<i>Eriophorum scheuchzeri</i>
Nodding Lychnis	<i>Silene wahlbergella</i>
Scurvy-Grass	<i>Cochlearia officinalis</i>
Arctic Mouse-Ear Chickweed	<i>Cerastium arcticum</i>
Golden Whitlow-grass	<i>Draba alpina</i>
White whitlow-grass	<i>Draba fladnizensis</i>
Arctic Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla hyparctica</i>



Total length of this trip
962 nm / 1781,6 km / 1113,5 statute miles

Text by Troels, Mike and Rolf (www.spitzbergen.de)
Maps and photos by Troels, Peter, Rolf and Delphine
Species list and e-mail list by Delphine
Staff hero pics by various

Oceanwide Expeditions
Bellamypark 9
NL-4381 CG Vlissingen
The Netherlands

Tel. +31 118 410 410
Fax +31 118 410 417
Web www.oceanwide-expeditions.com



