



Spitsbergen

04th-12th June 2016

SV Antigua



The SV *Antigua* was built in 1957 in Thorne (UK) and served for many years as a fishing vessel, until it was completely re-built in the early 1990s in the Netherlands as a barkentine and equipped as a passenger ship. A barkentine has three masts with square sails on the foremast.

With

Captain – Maarten van der Duijn Schouten

First mate – Robert

Second mate – Alwin

Chef – Sascha

Hotel manager – Jana

Service – Alexandra

Service – Maike

Expedition leader – Rolf Stange

Guide – Birgit Lutz

Saturday, 04 June – Longyearbyen

14.00 Uhr: 78°14'N, 15°35'E. sunny, 3°C

We go onboard the SV Antigua in bright sunshine, and still get the chance to stroll around the town of Longyearbyen, as the last guests arrive in the early evening. We explore the two museums, the church, the art gallery and the many shops with nice souvenirs, and return to the ship for the Captain's Introduction and Dinner.

At 830 pm we start our voyage along the coast of Spitsbergen, and the first great wildlife sighting already happens when we are sailing still right in the Isfjord: Captain Maarten spots a blue whale (Blauwal, blauwe vinvis), and he manages to stay around him for a while. We see the immense blow of the biggest animal of the world, of which today only a few thousand are alive, as they have been hunted intensely in the past. What a joyful beginning of our voyage.



Sunday, 05 June – Forlandsund: Engelsbukta. Kongsfjord: Ny Ålesund

0800: 78°48,8 N, 011°21,6 E, sunny, 3°C

We have made our way up into the Forlandsund, the seaway between the island of Prins Karls Forland and Spitsbergen, which is only navigable for smaller ships like us. We get a polarbear and AECO briefing from Rolf, and a zodiac briefing by Captain Maarten, and after that we have our first landing.

We land in the Engelsbukta, named after the english whaling activities in the bay in the 17th century. We see the remains of a blubber oven at the shore, with a grave on top of it, and some more graves of whalers, while two curious



harbour seals (Seehunde, gewone zeehonden) watch us from the water. We then split in two groups and have our first walk over the tundra. We see an arctic fox (Polarfuchs, poolvos), snow buntings (Schneeammern, Sneeuwgorsen) and purple saxifrage (roter Steinbrech, zuiltjes steenbreek) – and we learn that the tundra is wet ground. After some silent moments in which we can enjoy the silence of the Arctic, we return to the ship.



In the afternoon we sail on to Ny-Alesund. Rolf takes us on a guided tour through the settlement, before we can enter the shop for 45 minutes to buy some souvenirs, hats and postcards. After that Rolf takes us further to the mooring pole, where Roald Amundsen moored his airship, the Norge, before his expedition to the North Pole with Umberto Nobile and Lincoln Ellsworth in 1926. Also Nobile used this pole later for his expedition with the Italia in 1928 – a lot of history involved in this place.

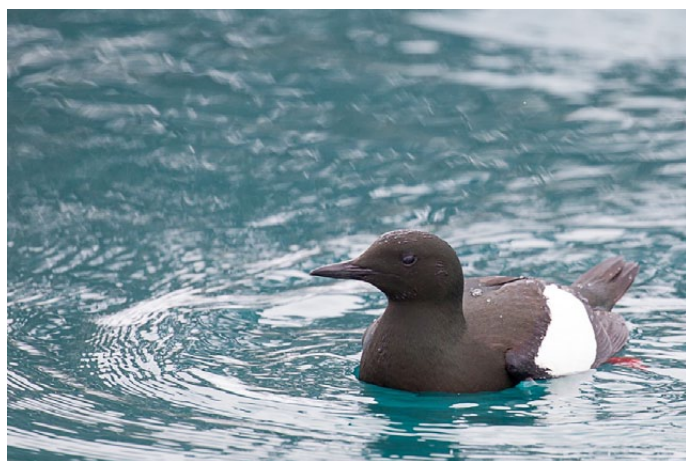
Birgit then takes the group for a little longer walk further out and back into town, and after some more free time we are back at the ship for dinner.

On our way further to the North we encounter some nice icebergs and we sail around a beautiful light blue one.

Monday, 06 June – Raudfjord: Hamiltonbukta, Ayerfjord, Alicehamna

0800: 79°48,2 N, 011°51,3 E, sunny, 2°C, in the evening snowfall

During the night we have travelled up to the North, into the Raudfjord, where we wake up in beautiful weather. We see many tracks of polar bears in the snow, but no bears themselves. We go on a zodiac tour through the Hamiltonbukta, through the whispering glacier ice and see puffins (Papageitaucher, papegaaiduikers), an arctic fox (Polarfuchs, poolvos), a bearded seal (Bartrobbe, Baardrob), Brünnich's guillemots (Dickschnabellummen, Kortbekzeekoeten) and black-legged kittiwakes (Dreizehenmöwen, drieteenmeeuwen).



While one group is on the water, the other half is hearing Birgit's lecture about plastic pollution in the world's oceans and especially on Spitsbergen, and she introduces us to the plastic monitoring project for the AWI, that is done on the Antigua this season. Several of us immediately want to get involved in the project.

We see an arctic fox (Polarfuchs, poolvos) also from the ship, and after lunch we depart from the Hamiltonbukta for some cruising further into the Raudfjord. Deep in the fjord we first meet some icefloes and cruise silent through them, and then we reach the ice edge. Captain Maarten parks the ship for a while with the bow in the ice and we use the time for an arctic swimming! Even Rolf joins in a very fancy swimsuit.

On the way out of Raudfjord we try to find a polar bear, which some of us thought to have seen, but we have no success, and we go to Alicehamna for a landing.

We split in two groups and offer a snow shoe hike, as the slopes are still snow covered. The snowshoers go with Rolf and walk up a little hill to enjoy the great view from up there, the non-snowshoers go with Birgit and sink deeply into the snow, while trying to go from Raudfjordhytta (built in 1927 by the Swedish trapper Stockholm Sven) up to the grave of Skipper Erik Mattilas from Tromsø, who died in the spring of 1908 of scurvy, while wintering here. We see a purple



sandpiper (Meerstrandläufer, Paarse strandloper) and snow buntings (Schneeammern, sneeuwgorzen).

Both groups enjoy their hike and we return late for dinner, while the weather is turning and it starts snowing. We enjoy the silent snowfall while being at anchor in Alicehamna.



Tuesday, 07 June – Liefdefjord: Monacobreen, Lernerøyane

0800: 79°37,0 N, 013 53,9 E, overcast, 4,5°C

In the morning we wake up in an overcast, icefree Liefdefjord and sail along the impressive glacierfronts of Monacobreen and Seligerbreen. Until some years ago they were connected in one 5 km long glacierfront. Due to the retreating of both glaciers the front is nowadays divided in two. We pass some massive icebergs with the Antigua and step then into the zodiacs, to explore the icy world even closer. While we are in the boats, a massive calving happens, and we can see and feel the high waves caused by the ice masses in a safe distance.

Before lunch we continue drifting through the glacier ice in the fjord, and approach a bearded seal resting on the ice.

Then we continue to the Lernerøyane, where we see eight King Eider pairs (Eiderente, Eider eend). On the biggest island we land – first Rolf, Birgit and Maike check out for polar bears and make a path through the snow, then we follow and do a „circumwalking“ of the whole island. We see a Rock Ptarmigan (Alpensneehuhn, Sneeuwhoen) and the rare Ivory Gull (Elfenbeinmöwe, Ivoormeeuw), and enjoy the view towards Monaco- and Seligerbreen. We then continue to



the Andøyane to look again for polar bears, but do not find any and continue further to Mushamna. We find the bay filled with ice and anchor close to the ice edge for the night.



Wednesday, 08 June – Woodfjord: Mushamna, Reinstrandodden

0800: 79°39,6 N, 014°16,7 E, Schneefall, 2°C

We wake up in Mushamna, and no bear has shown up. So we split up in two groups, the lazy stonewatchers go with Rolf along the beach to the hut and find a walrus (Walross, walruss) at the beach. The crazy bigfoots go on snowshoes with Birgit along the coast towards the Trapperhut outside Mushamna and then to the next hut at Varfluesjoen. As the road is long and the snow deep, the Antigua comes to pick us up after some kilometers, so we can all go together on a second landing in the afternoon.



After lunch we are at the Reinsdyrflya and split again up in two groups; the lazy rockwatchers go with Rolf a round at the beach, and the crazy bigfoots go with Birgit into the white plain of the Reinsdyrflya and enjoy the feeling of almost walking alone over an icecap. The snowy tundra is still rather wet under the snow and the bigfoots encounter quite some water on their way back to the ship, which delays them quite a bit.



Nevertheless almost all of us go out again with Birgit, Maarten, Robert and Alwin for the beachcleaning for the Alfred-Wegener-Institute for Polar and Marine Research. The beach is cleaned quite quickly, as there is – compared to other beaches – not such a lot of garbage. But then Captain Maarten pulls on the edges of an orange network of plastic ropes lying on the beach: an enormous ropetender, dug in the sand, which has almost become a part of the beach. It is 5,60 x 1,80m big, and as we later on discover, weighs more than a 1000 kilogramm. Around 15 of us help to dig the monster out the sand, together with Alwin and Robert, who help by pulling with the zodiacs. It takes 2 hours of hard work of digging with shovels, using the axes, pulling with hands and boats, until the monster is released – an another two hours to get the heavy thing onto the ship. But with lots of endurance we make it, and in the end the monster lies defeated on our deck. For that success, Maarten announces a round of drinks on him, and then the anchor is lifted and we leave the Woodfjord.



Thursday, 09 June – Woodfjord: Worsleyhamna. Liefdefjord: Måkeøyane

0800: 79°42,21 N 013°44,7 E, Regen, 2°C

The next morning though we wake up again only around two miles away from our last anchoring site – high waves and a wind of force 7 on the nose had made it rather uncomfortable to leave the Woodfjord in westerly direction, and so we have returned here to wait for better weather. Weatherwise there is indeed room for improvement: the sky is covered with heavy clouds and it is raining. So we listen to Birgits lecture about her skitour to the North Pole, and after lunch we sail further to the third group of islands in the Woodfjord, the Makeøyane.

We split in two groups and go rounds of 1,5 hours with Rolf and Birgit. We see lots of Arctic Terns (Küstenseeschwalben, Noordse Stern), an Arctic Skua (Schmarotzerraubmöwe, Kleine Jäger), Grey Phalaropes (Thorshühnchen, Rosse Franjepoot), Red-throated Divers (Sterntaucher, Roodkeelduiker), Common Eiders (Eiderenten, Eidereenden) and Long-tailed ducks (Eisenten, Ijseenden). And it is hard to believe, but some have still not enough from beachcleaning, and in a very short time we have again two bags full of garbage.

After the coffee Rolf holds a lecture about Spitsbergen in Winter, and then we lift the anchor and try again to leave the Woodfjord in westerly direction.



Friday, 10 June – Northwest Spitsbergen: Fuglefjord, Smeerenburg, Magdalenefjord

0800: 79°45,8 N, 011°28,2 E, snow, 2°C

We were successful – we have left the Woodfjord, and it was good that we had waited, as the sailing was a lot nicer than it would have been the night before. We wake up in the Fuglefjorden and see the front of the Svitjodbreen appearing in the fog. Rolf holds a lecture about the whaling in Spitsbergen and how life used to be in Smeerenburg in the old whaling times. Especially impressive are his pictures about the shoes the whalers were wearing: simple leather shoes. As we later go on land in Smeerenburg, in a wet snowfall and bitter cold wind, we can hardly imagine how the men were suffering when they did their job, without rubberboots and windproof jackets.

First we approach five walrus who are resting on the beach, while two more are in the water. We stand there for some time and observe these lazy giants, who do not seem to be bothered by us at all.

After that, Rolf guides us from blubber oven to blubber oven and tells some more details about Smeerenburg on land, and which oven belonged to which merchant chamber.



After this windy round around Smeerenburg we return for a good lunch to the ship, very happy that we do not have to fear of scurvy, like the early sailors had to.

Sailing to the entrance of Magdalenefjord, we find ourselves again in dense fog and snowfall, and Rolf decides to leave the Northwest corner, which seems to remain hidden in clouds and fog. Like this we can make it to the Isfjorden to see the abandoned russian settlement of Pyramiden tomorrow.



While sailing southwards through the fog, Rolf first gives a lecture about walrus and then Birgit shows a movie about Sjef van Dongen, the dutch polar hero that helped in the rescue operation for Umberto Nobile in the 1920s.

In the evening we can enjoy the art of Sascha and his kitchen team: We have the Captain's Dinner! Captain Maarten holds a little speech and we have a toast on our voyage, and then we enjoy Saschas food. In between the courses we get out on deck and get the opportunity to take a picture of the whole crew together. Birgit then gives out the rewards for our help with the beach cleaning: Cups from the Alfred Wegener Institute, with polar foxes or Spitsbergen design, which we really deserve after the action with the sea monster! A nice evening, and not yet our last!

Saturday, 11 June – Isfjord: Skansbukta, Pyramiden

0800: 78°27,6 N, 015°48,4 E, sunny, 6 °C

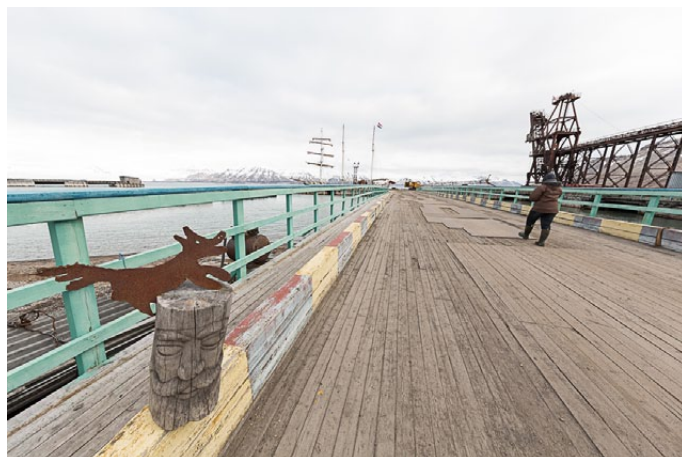
We wake up in bright sunshine! In the morning we land in Skansbukta, where we have for the first time a stationary landing: We can roam around free in the area, while Rolf and Birgit watch at the sides. We see the remains of the old gypsym mine from 1918, which was reestablished again in 1930, but not long in use. There are some old railroad tracks, a pile of gypsym, a hut which is today used by the Sysselmannen, some fossiles and the wreck of a wodden boat on the shore. After a while five reindeer come to visit us, they seem very curious and run from the end of Skansbukta through the water towards us. A silent, peaceful landing in sunshine.



After lunch we get quite a different experience – we visit Pyramiden, the nowadays abandoned russian mining settlement. Rolf guides us through the streets of that ghost town, explains the Spitsbergen Treaty and the life in Pyramiden, and we even get into one of the buildings: The big cultural house at the top of the central Prospekt, of course with a Lenin statue in front. We see the old theatre, the sports hall, the bibliothek and the cinema. After that we have some coffee in the bar of the hotel and get the chance to buy some souvenirs – we slowly return to civilization.

In the evening we sail back to Longyearbyen, and our wonderful journey has come to an end.





Sunday, 12 June – Longyearbyen

08.00: 78°14'N, 15°35'E.

After a final *Antigua*-breakfast, it was time to get ready for disembarkation. It was hard to believe that our arctic adventure was over. Most of us had some hours or even a full day to explore Longyearbyen before we went home.

Many of us knew already now that this was not to be our last visit to the far north.

Total distance (Longyearbyen-Longyearbyen): 538 Seemeilen = 996 Kilometer

Text: Birgit Lutz

Photos, layout, maps: Rolf Stange.

This triplog is available on www.spitsbergen-svalbard.com, together with photo collections from our trip and 360 degree panoramas from the Arctic and Antarctic.

**The crew of *SV Antigua* thank you for joining us
during an exciting week in Spitsbergen!**

We wish you all the best and hope to see you again, somewhere between the poles!

The *SV Antigua* will continue to sail in Spitsbergen's waters in the years to come; the other sailing ships of the Tallship Company fleet *Artemis*, *Elisabeth* and *Atlantis*, sail the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Ijsselmeer and the Canary Islands.

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05 June	Good behaviour in the arctic and polar bear safety	Rolf
05 June	Ny Ålesund: past & present. North pole expeditions.	Rolf (on shore)
06 June	Plastic pollution	Birgit
09 June	North pole expeditions	Birgit
09 June	Spitsbergen: the arctic winter	Rolf
10 June	17th century whaling	Rolf
10 June	Walruses	Rolf
11 June	Pyramiden: past & present. The Spitsbergen Treaty.	Rolf (on shore)

1	Longyearbyen	10	Liefdefjord: Andøyane (looking for polar bears)
2	Isfjord (Blue whale)	11	Woodfjord: Mushamna (anchor, landing)
3	Engelskbukta	12	Woodfjord: Reinstrandodden (landing, beach cleaning)
4	Kongsfjord: Ny Ålesund	13	Woodfjord: Worsleyhamna (anchor)
5	Raudfjord: Hamiltonbukta (Zodiac cruise)	14	Liefdefjord: Måkeøyane (landing)
6	Raudfjord: Ayerfjord (ship cruise, ice edge)	15	Fuglefjord: Svitjodbreen (ship cruise)
7	Raudfjord: Alicehamna (landing, snow shoes)	16	Amsterdamøya: Smeerenburg
8	Liefdefjord: Monacobreen (ship & Zodiac cruise)	17	Isfjord. Billefjord: Pyramiden
9	Liefdefjord: Lernerøyane (ship cruise, landing)	18	Isfjord. Billefjord: Skansbukta



