SVALBARD: ARCTIC WILDLIFE PARADISE

23 August - 06 September 2019

Special departures exclusively for our group, 9 people maximum.

Special expedition entirely dedicated to discover the amazing polar wildlife of the Svalbard archipelago, the last land before the north pole. On board a very comfortable still hull sailing vessel built for polar navigation, entirely chartered by our group, we will sail in the icy sea of Svalbard, surrounded by high mountains and magnificent glaciers. These waters host a rich fauna with Polar Bears, Svalbard is one of the best places in the world for the observation and photography of bears, Walruses, Seals, Whales, Reindeer and Polar Foxes. We will especially focus in the north eastern part of the archipelago, north of the island of Nordaustlandet, where the wildlife concentration is higher and the landscape is dramatic. Not only, the history of these islands is amazing and we will have the chance to visit some historical places as well. You will be accompanied by an expert guide, Piero Bosco.

PROGRAM

23 August
Arrived at your destination we will have time to visit the village of Longyearbyen, the little capital of Spitsbergen, before we embark and start our expedition.

In the afternoon we will board the SY Arctica II, at full and exclusive use of our group, this 62 feet still hull sailing yacht build for navigation in polar waters equipped with 2 zodiacs for landings, can accommodate 10 passengers in 4 comfortable cabins (2 triple cabins and 2 twin cabins, all with private bathroom/shower). Big warm saloon in the wheelhouse with large panorama windows, a water maker produces enough water for you to have a shower when you need.

In the late afternoon we will begin the navigation. Overnight on board.

24 August
At breakfast time we will find ourselves in the spectacular Kongsfjorden, a deep fjord surrounded by pointed mountains and endless glaciers.

We will visit Ny Ålesund, the northernmost settlement in the world, today the village is an international scientific research center. The tundra around the village is home of Geese, Arctic Terns and Polar Foxes.

It is a must visit the mast used by Amundsen and Nobile to anchor the airship Norge in 1926 and by Nobile to anchor the airship Italia in 1928.

If there is time and weather conditions are favorable we will disembark also in
Blomstrandhalvøya Peninsula where we will visit the remains of a marble mine, this area is good for Reindeer and Long Tailed Ducks.
Overnight on board.

25 August
During the night we will sail to the northwest corner of Svalbard, where we will explore some small mythical islands important in the history of polar exploration.

If weather conditions are favorable we will disembark at Danskøya, where the remains of the base camp of the Swedish explorer S.A. Andree who with his balloon attempted to reach the North Pole in 1897 are still visible together with the remains of the American explorer Wellmann who also tried the same enterprise but with the airship.
Later we will visit Smeeremburg on the island Amsterdamøya, famous for the remains of the XVII century Dutch whaling station, the first permanent installation of its kind in the polar history. Both of these sites are protected areas.
In the evening we will continue our navigation turning the bow towards the east.
Overnight on board.

26 August
Today we will reach the Mosselbukta bay.
Reindeers are often present in the tundra area which is perfect for an easy walk, maybe listening the story of the men of a Polar expedition commanded by A.E. Nordenskjöld who had to spend the winter there in 1872 and visiting the remains of his base camp.
Overnight on board.

27 August
Today we will reach the northernmost point of our expedition, the archipelago Sjuøyane, located at 81 degrees north, just 540 miles from the geographic North Pole. Weather conditions and ice will decide which of the seven islands that form the small archipelago we can visit. In any case Polar Bears, Walruses and Ivory Gulls are present here in good numbers.
Overnight on board.

28 August
In the morning we will find ourselves in the heart of the north coast of Nordaustlandet, wild landscape ans heavy ice make this place very special and very seldom visited.
If ice will allow us initially we will visit Alpiniøya, discovered by Captain Sora during the search for the Nobile and dedicated to the Alpini Corps. Usually around the island there are Walruses and Polar Bears are common.
A little further to the east we will explore Albertinibukta, the front of the glacier that overlooks the bay is an unforgettable sight. Ringed and Bearded Seals are often present in the surrounding waters as well as Polar Bears.
Overnight on board.
29 August
Further east, today we will be reaching the easternmost point of our expedition, we could visit Storøya off the east coast of Nordaustlandet. On this small island, characterized by tundra almost entirely covered by the ice cap. Polar Bears live here and the island host one of the largest concentrations of Walruses of the entire archipelago.
The north eastern part of Svalbard differs greatly from the western part; the alpine glaciers flowing down from the mountains to the sea of the west give way to so-called ice cap while the high pointed mountains are replaced by more rounded reliefs. The change is even more evident in the lack of vegetation and the increased presence of sea ice, the Arctic here becomes high arctic, desolate and wild environment but extremely charming. Later we will attempt to land at Kapp Laura, along the east coast of Nordaustlandet.
Overnight on board.

30 August
Changed course we will continue our expedition sailing towards northwest in direction of Foynøya and Karl XII-øya, small islands only very rarely visited are often surrounded by heavy pack ice hosting Polar Bears. We could go circumnavigate the islands characterized by steep green, rocky cliffs and the guano of the marine birds nesting here. It will be a bit late in the season and many of the birds may already have left the nest, but there are chances to observe Kittiwakes, Glaucous Gulls, Eider Ducks and Skuas.
Overnight on board.

31 August
Left the islands, we sailed to the northern coast of Nordaustlandet where there chance of spotting the rare Sabine Gull and the elegant and elusive Ivory Gull. We will enter the Duvefjorden fjord, where possibly we will visit Reliktbukta or Minebukta, both are different from what we have seen so far as the whole area is rising and the beaches can have a height of ten meters above sea level. This process began with the withdrawal of the huge ice sheet that entirely covered Nordаustlandet in the Quaternary; the ice cap present today, although it is the largest glacier in Europe, is only a little part of the original. This part of the archipelago is extremely desolate and barren, only mosses and lichens can survive. Some small lakes, with icy blue waters characterize the landscape.
Overnight on board.

01 September
During the night we will maintain a western course and reach the wide bay Nordenskiöld Bukta, still along the northern coast of Nordaustlandet. Possibly we will visit the small island Scoresbyøya, characterized by black rocks, or disembark on the coast at Sabinebukta, this whole area is good for spotting Polar Bears and Walruses.
Overnight on board.
02 September
Murchisonfjorden, at the mouth of the Strait of Hinlopen, is our goal for today. The northern coast of the fjord is covered by an extensive tundra, we are in one of the driest areas of the planet, which hold a good population of Reindeers and where was built a Swedish scientific base.

Kinnvika, the name of the base, was built during the expedition commanded by A.F. Nordenskiöld and H.W. Ahlmann at the beginning of the polar exploration. The large structure, however, was built later, during the third International Polar Year and was used from 1957 to 1959 for studies of the atmosphere. In the 60 and 80 was used as a base camp by some Swedish scientific expeditions but the station is located in a very remote area difficult to reach so in modern times was no longer used and is in poor conditions.

Overnight on board.

03 September
Weather permitting today we reach the fjord Liefdefjorden and visit the islands Andøyane or Lernerøyane. Many Eider Ducks and Geese nest here, even the rare King Eider are present in this area.

Hopefully we can get to the impressive 5 km long front of the Monaco glacier. The rich waters near the glacier are a favorite place for Kittiwakes and often Polar Bears are present in the vicinity of the glacier as well as Bearded Seals and Ringed Seals, the preferred prey of the bears.

We will continue our expedition towards the west if we will have time we can visit Raudfjord in the northern coast of Spitsbergen, a beautiful fjord dominated by spectacular glaciers inhabited by Ringed and Bearded Seals.

Overnight on board.

04 September
In the afternoon we will explore Krossfjorden, here on board the Zodiacs we will visit the impressive front of the 14th of July Glacier. In the fertile slopes adjacent to the glacier we will find a great variety of flowers and in the nearby cliffs nests an impressive number of Kittiwakes, Guillemots and Puffins. But at this time of the year they have started to migrate to the south. We will also have excellent chances to observe the Polar Foxes looking for some late born chick falling from the nest and also Bearded Seals.

Ice and weather permitting we may also visit the site of the Second World War German weather stations “Knospe” 1941-42 and “Nussbaum” in 1942-43 in Lilliehookfjorden.

Overnight on board.

05 September
Along the east coast of Prins Karls Forland is Poolepynten, named in honor of one of the first British whalers to travel to Svalbard in 1610. On the beach is one of the most studied
colonies of Walruses of the entire archipelago and if weather conditions permit, we will disembark to get closer to the big and sleepy pinnipeds. The goal of the last excursion of our expedition is St Jonsfjorden, a long, narrow fjord which host many picturesque glaciers. One of them located at the bottom of the fjord is very active and there will be excellent opportunities to watch the spectacle of icebergs that break off from the front. This area is great for Seals and Whales, the latter are spread in all the archipelago and we will have chance to meet them during navigation, especially Minki and Humpback Whales, but sometimes even the rare Right Whales. Overnight on board.

06 September
At breakfast time the boat will be anchored near Longyearbyen and after breakfast we will disembark and we will be transferred to the airport in time for our return flight.

* This expedition will visit seldom explored areas therefore the program could be changed because of ice, weather conditions or the sighting of animals; it is essential to be flexible.
Included in the price:
- Voyage aboard the ship as indicated in the itinerary in a cabin of your choice.
- All excursions and activities throughout the voyage.
- Three meals a day during the cruise.
- All the indicated transfers.

Not included:
- Flights

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<td>PRICE PER PERSON</td>
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