

# SVALBARD 2011

## Expedition Brochure



### **A spectacular 10 day Arctic cruise** perfect for naturalists and photographers

- ✓ See the incredible Arctic landscape of Svalbard
- ✓ Experience the amazing polar bear and walrus
- ✓ Escape from the pressures of daily life on a privately chartered 12 berth icebreaker with like-minded people and a wonderful crew
- ✓ Come and experience a true wilderness experience
- ✓ Make a donation to Polar Bears International, who lobby for the continued protection of the polar bear against the effects of climate change - this will be included in your trip cost
- ✓ Be guided by one of the most experienced and award winning wildlife photographers and conservationists on the planet.

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## Introduction

Svalbard is an incredible place. A land of ice and home to the great Arctic wanderer, the polar bear, Svalbard is an Arctic wilderness like no other. Our expedition to Svalbard will be one of discovery, with no set agenda and no time pressure, we will explore far beyond where other ships go. Last year we were alone for most of the trips, surrounded by nothing but ice and relying on the expertise of our Captain, Per Engwall, a man with unsurpassed knowledge and passion for these waters.

In 2011 we will be running two 10 night cruises around Svalbard on the M/V Stockholm, a wonderful 12-berth ice strengthened vessel. At this time of the year the 24 hour midnight sun will begin to wain and at the end of the second trip we may see a Svalbard sunset. This light means that we can take advantage of all opportunities presented to us, whether this be a polar bear / walrus encounter, cruising through the spectacular pack ice or the polar ice cap of Austfonna or hiking in the superb mountain landscape. We will explore on foot or by Zodiac, always under the guidance of our superb co-Expedition Leaders Lisa Strom and Andy Rouse. Our trips last year were an amazing success and we have learnt many lessons from them. This brochure will hopefully tell you all you need to know and we welcome you on this incredible voyage of discovery to inspiring Svalbard.

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## Svalbard, polar bear central

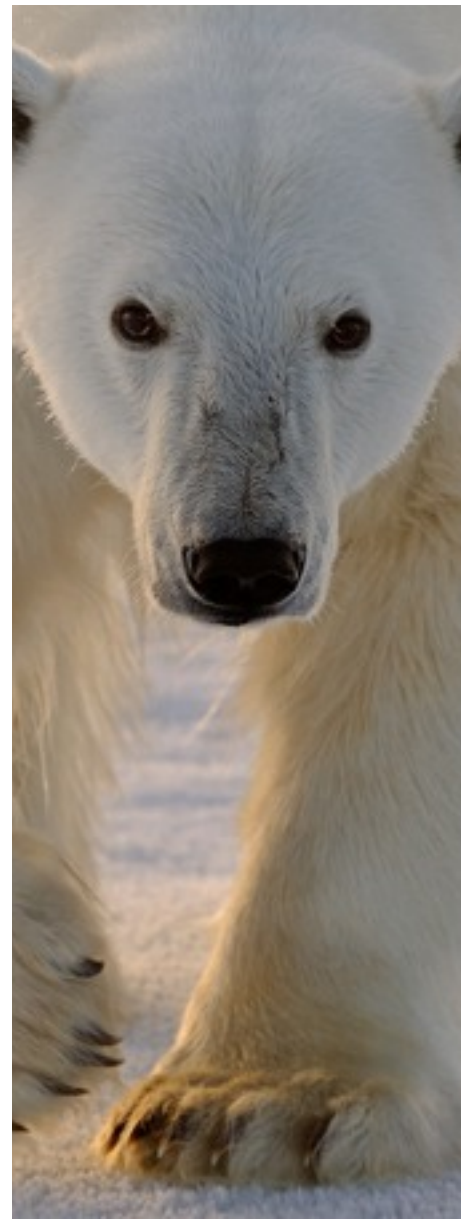
The isolated and spectacular Svalbard archipelago lies just 600 miles from the North Pole off the north coast of Norway. Only inhabited by man in the last hundred years or so, the islands' capital is Longyearbyen, a small town on the edge of Isfjorden (The Ice Fjord) in a mountainous setting. There is very little other occupation of the islands with the exception of a few small communities and Barentsburg, a Russian coal-mining outpost. The remainder is icy mountains, immense glaciers and deep fjords and is home to polar bears, walrus, seals, whales, Arctic fox and reindeer. This is a dramatic and harsh land. The Arctic pack ice reaches the northern and eastern parts of the archipelago. During the 4 months of the Arctic summer when the sun never sets, the frozen expanses are freed and amenable to exploration.

## The itinerary

There will be no set itinerary on these cruises. In general though we will head to find the pack ice, which is to the north east of Svalbard at this time of the year. If time and ice conditions permit we will visit the spectacular ice cliffs of Austfonna, and incredible spectacle. The ship will operate sometimes for 24 hours and other times we will shut down at night in the ice or in a sheltered harbour, often this can be the best time for bears to visit the ship. Having no fixed itinerary frees us from the constraints of the modern world and you will quickly find yourself at home on board.



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## The bears

The polar bears of Svalbard are incredible and your first encounter with one will be something that you will never forget. Bears are at home in the pack ice and this is the reason why we will spend a lot of time amongst the ice. We may find bears swimming, feeding or just walking their “easy miles”. When we do we will approach them safely and respectfully, always allowing them to continue undisturbed as we are only guests in their domain. Encountering a bear on the pack ice is something special and we want to ensure it is a positive experience for all concerned. You will receive a full safety briefing on boarding the ship and during a polar bear encounter; your safety and that of the bear, will be our paramount concern at all times. Polar bears are numerous on Svalbard and we have the best ship, guides and Captain to find them and ensure that you come back with photographs of which you can be proud.

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## The M/S Stockholm

There are many ships that take tourists to Svalbard, all of these have more than double the capacity of the Stockholm. But what she lacks in size she makes up for in character and, because of her small size, she can go many places where larger ships fear to tread. Her beautiful, traditional lines are also less scary to polar bears too! She is an icebreaker to Lloyd's class A1 standard and was built in 1953 by the Finboda shipyard in Stockholm for the National Maritime Administration. She was completely refitted in 1999 as an ice-strengthened tourist vessel and carries a maximum of 12 clients. Accommodation on board is in 6 twin berth cabins, all are en suite with a toilet, shower, washbasin and your own porthole (to see the outside world). The cabins are cosy but comfortable and have power for re-charging batteries and laptops.

Central to the ship is the communal mess area, a place to share stories and experiences of the day. The food is excellent, really hearty Swedish fare and we can cater for special diets if we know in advance. Meal times are flexible depending on what we find. Upstairs you will find a lovely wood paneled bar (remember this is an all-inclusive trip) and above that the bridge remains open to visits throughout the voyage. The intimacy and character of this ship is like no other in these waters, you will really feel like home.

The ship has full safety equipment including immersion suits for each passenger and the zodiacs will be crewed by experienced seamen. When on land we will be armed at all times as polar bears are dangerous animals.

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## Life on board

The social nature of this trip means that it is fully inclusive, i.e. all beers and wine are included in your trip cost. In addition we will also try to have informal BBQ's on deck and also on the pack ice during our voyage. We will also have a bad shirt night and a Tat competition for awful souvenirs. This trip is so much more than just cruise, it is a fun adventure and it is vital that you are able to participate socially with other members of the group. As you can see by these pictures it is really a fun ship to be on!



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## The Weather

The weather in this region is changeable. You should expect it to be no warmer than 5C and usually it is much closer to freezing or below. The wind chill on deck can be significant so you will need to be prepared. Again Andy will send out a full briefing document well before the trip.

Several of you have asked about the sea conditions and these are impossible to predict. Last year we had some rough days when traveling up the coast but we also had incredibly flat calm weather too. In the ice the water is generally flat with little swell. If you suffer from sea sickness you will need to be prepared for this and take appropriate medication.

## Physical Fitness

You will not need any high degree of physical fitness to participate in the cruise, although please note that the ship has steep staircases and no disabled facilities. After the success of last year's hikes (see image below) Andy is planning to run



several hikes during each cruise of between 1 and 4 hours in length, and for these you will need to be physically fit. These are completely optional and you will only be allowed on these hikes if we are sure that your fitness is up to it. We will also have several short, flat hikes that everyone can do. The scenery of Svalbard is just stunning and hiking is an exhilarating way of seeing it.

Since we will be cruising in a very remote area it is essential that you advise us before booking of any pre-existing medical condition that requires regular medication. This will be treated in confidence and assessed by our qualified medical team before accepting your booking. It is in your interest to be completely honest with us, [click here to email us](#) with any health concerns.

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## Cost

The cost for this incredible 10 day small ship wilderness adventure will be £7950 per person based on two persons sharing. This does not include flights at this stage as SAS have yet to publish their 2011 schedules. We will be booking a group flight however nearer to the time, the cost will be approximately £500 return from London. As an ATOL 6330 bonded tour operator Wildlife & Wilderness will handle all of your flight arrangements and we will be in contact when the flight schedules are published. Regional departures are possible from the UK. With this years schedule we do not need a hotel in Longyearbyen, if that changes for next year we will need to add approximately £150 per person.

The deposit will be £3000 per person, which has been necessitated by the number of last minute cancellations recently. Please note the terms and conditions overleaf.

### **The cost includes:**

Private transfers in Spitsbergen

10 day photographic voyage through the Svalbard archipelago on the M/S Stockholm ice strengthened vessel on a full board basis inclusive of all drinks

Services of Andy Rouse and Lisa Strom as your expedition leaders

### **The cost excludes:**

Passport, visa (not required by British nationals), insurance, medication

Meals other than stated above

Items of personal expenditure

Any additional accommodation in Oslo if required

Any statutory increases beyond our control

Any fuel surcharges not yet expected for the ship

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## Dates

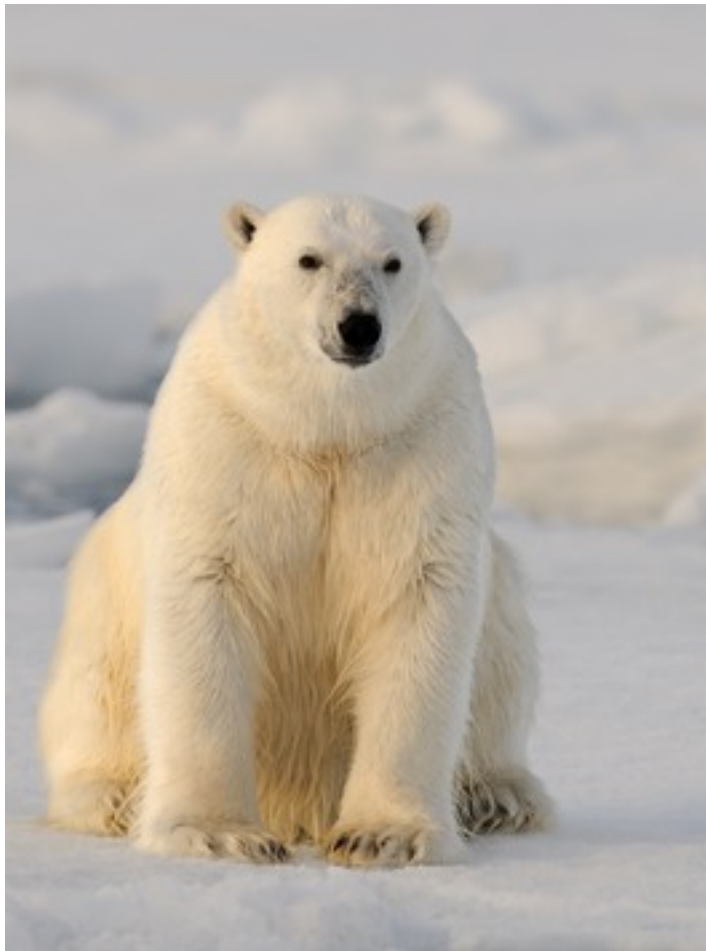
The dates for next year are as follows, please note that these are the ship charter dates and we will advise travel dates nearer to departure:

Svalbard Explorer 1 - 19th August 2011 - 29th August 2011

Svalbard Explorer 2 - 29th August 2011 - 8th September 2011

## Booking your place

Demand for our trips is very high and we take great care in ensuring that everyone on board has a similar interest. Therefore please [click here to email me](#) with your preferred date, number of places required and most importantly a few paragraphs about yourself and your interests. It is essential that we get the right social mix for the trip and those that have been with us before will tell you that this policy works well. So I look forward to hearing from you and welcoming you on this amazing trip!



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## Terms and Conditions

Everyone has our terms and conditions, these are a summary of ours. On registration you will be sent our full terms and conditions, by booking the trip and paying your deposit you accept these conditions.

1. Once you have paid your deposit it is totally **non-refundable** under any circumstances. Similarly once you have paid your final balance the total amount is **non-refundable**. By paying your deposit you agree to these conditions.
2. In any dispute the decision of Andy Rouse Wildlife Photography Ltd and Wildlife & Wilderness Ltd will be final and no discussion will be entered into.
3. Prices are quoted on current rates from our ground agents and we reserve the right to apply a surcharge should an unexpected local rate increase occur. We will of course try to avoid this at all costs. By committing to the trip and paying the deposit you agree to this surcharge if it is necessary, if you decide not to pay it and pull out then you will not be entitled to any refund.
4. All materials and photographs within this brochure are the copyright of Andy Rouse Wildlife Photography Ltd and this may not be printed or distributed in anyway without prior written consent from Andy Rouse or his representatives.
5. Payments by credit card are subjected to a 2.5% additional fee which will be advised my Wildlife & Wilderness at booking time.
6. In order to cover yourself for an unfortunate change of personal circumstance or an unforeseen medical condition we strongly suggest that you take out sufficient travel insurance to cover this eventuality.
7. A full set of terms and conditions will be sent prior to booking.