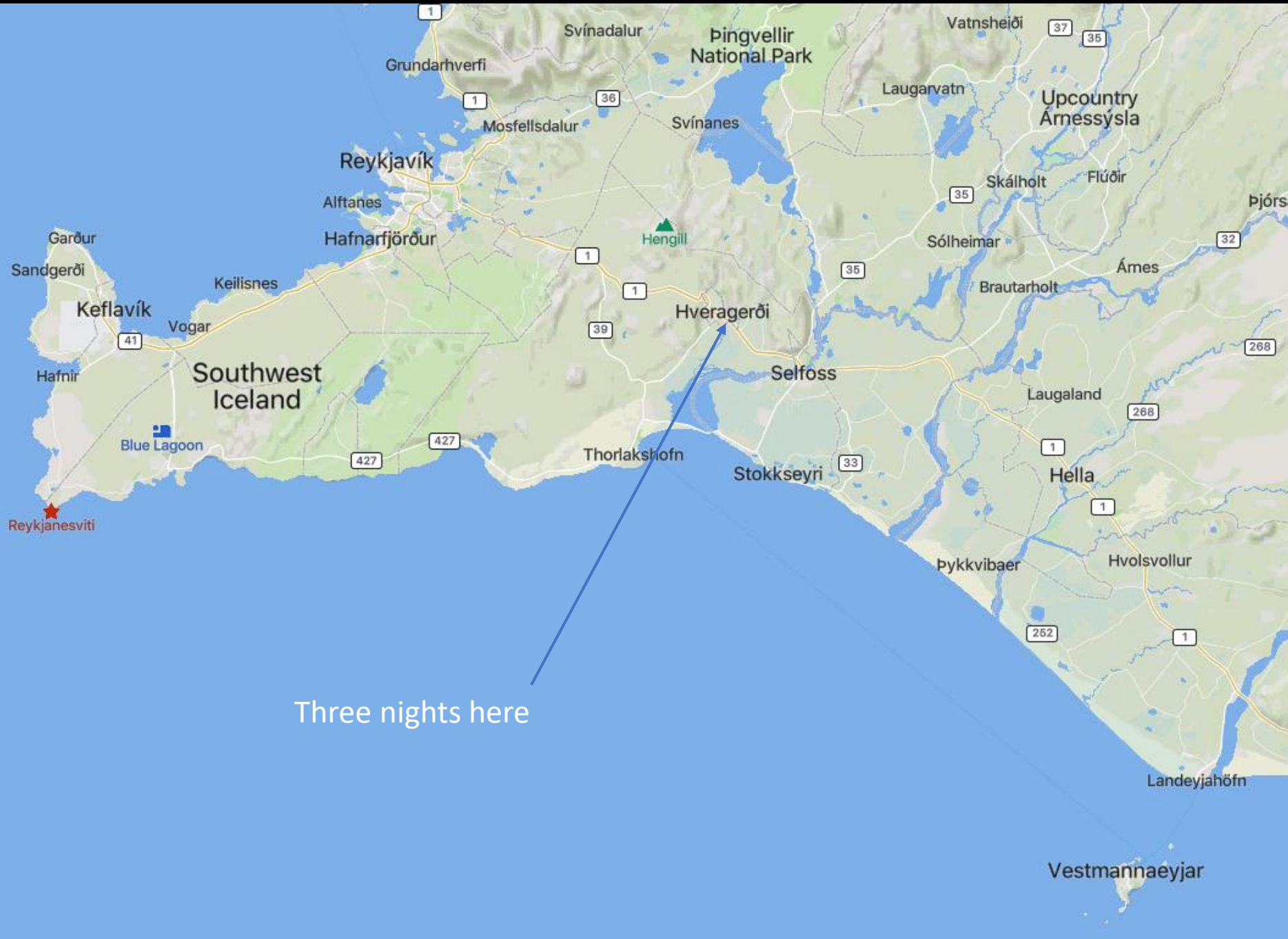




Iceland and Greenland

September 2023



Arrived at the international airport at Keflavik

Took a southern coastal route to our hotel at Hverageroi

Did some bird spotting on the way

Three nights here

Glaucos Gull
Juvenile and adult





© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Great Northern
Divers still in their
breeding plumage

Eurasian Wigeon



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



Harlequin ducks – plumage not at their best – post molt

This was a view from my hotel window. I left the UK just as 30 degree C temperatures were being reached. Unfortunately it was rainy and grey when we arrived in Iceland and it remained that way for the following two days.

The hillside near the hotel was covered in hot springs.





© PhilJGPhoto.uk

First full day on Iceland. Low cloud obscured almost all of the tops of the mountain scenery.



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Tufted Ducks



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Whooper Swans



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



Borsteinn Erlingsson (1858–1914) was an Icelandic poet. He graduated from Menntaskólinn í Reykjavík in 1883 and went to Copenhagen to study law. He never finished law school but during his time in Copenhagen his poems became known in Iceland. He returned to his home country in 1895 and died of pneumonia in Reykjavík in 1914.





© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Northern Fulmar

Red-breasted Merganser



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Afternoon trip to Vestmannaeyjar

Heimaey is an Icelandic island. At 13.4 square kilometres (5.2 sq mi), it is the largest island in the Vestmannaeyjar archipelago, and the largest and most populated island off the Icelandic coast. Heimaey is 4 nautical miles (7.4 km; 4.6 mi) off the south coast of Iceland.



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

It is the only populated island of the Vestmannaeyjar islands, with a population of 4,414. The Vestmannaeyjar Airport and the Westman Islands Golf Club taken together cover a good portion of the island.

In January 1973, lava flow from nearby Eldfell destroyed half the town and threatened to close its harbour, its main income source. An operation to cool the advancing lava with sea water saved the harbour.



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Gannet and Fulmar

Images taken during the ferry crossing of about 40 minutes to Vestmannaeyjar (the Western Isles)



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



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07:52

96

www.google.com/search?q...

Images

Attractions

Camping

Day trip



Vestmannaeyjar

Weather averages

10°/7°C

High/low • Sep

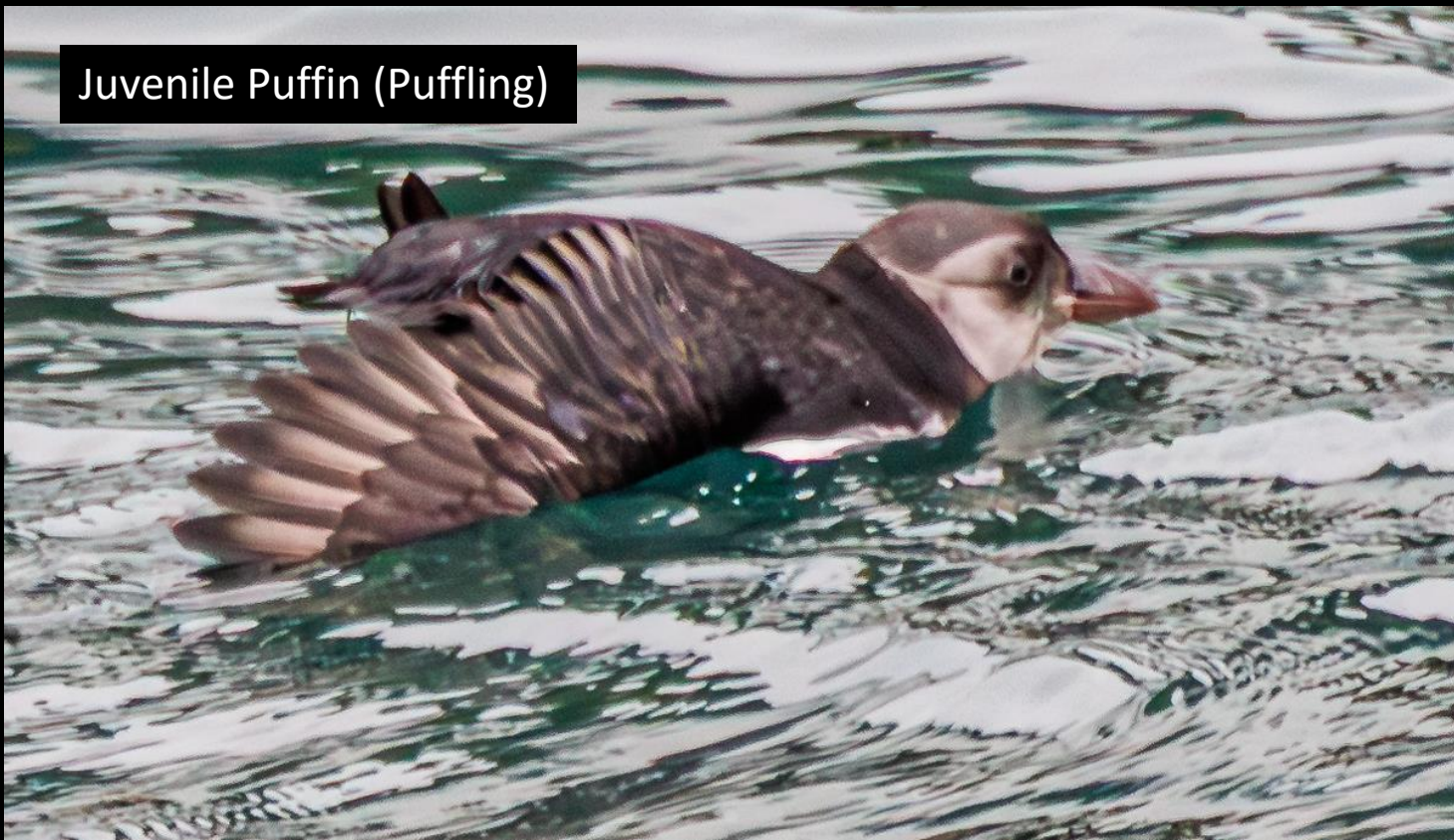
Vestmannaeyjar (Western Islands) is an archipelago off Iceland's south coast, formed by underwater volcanic eruptions. The youngest island, Surtsey, was formed in 1963. Heimaey is the largest and only inhabited island. It has 2 volcanoes, Helgafell and Eldfell. Interactive displays at Eldheimar Museum, in Heimaey Town, chronicle Eldfell's devastating 1973 eruption, when some 400 buildings were destroyed.

Eldfell

At 01:00 on 23 January 1973, a volcanic eruption of the mountain Eldfell began on Heimaey. The ground on Heimaey started to quake and fissures formed. The fissures grew to 1,600 metres (5,200 ft) in length, and lava began to erupt. Lava sprayed into the air from the fissures. Volcanic ash was blown to sea. Later, the situation deteriorated. When the fissures closed, the eruption converted to a concentrated lava flow that headed toward the harbour. The winds changed, and half a million cubic metres of ash blew on the town. During the night, the 5,000 inhabitants of the island were evacuated, mostly by fishing boats, as almost the entire fishing fleet was in dock.

The encroaching lava flow threatened to destroy the harbour. The eruption lasted until 3 July. Icelanders sprayed the lava with six million tons of cold seawater, causing some to solidify and much to be diverted, thus saving the harbour. During the eruption, half of the town was crushed and the island expanded in length. The eruption increased the area of Heimaey from 11.2 km² (4.3 sq mi) to 13.44 km² (5.19 sq mi). Only one man died in the eruption

Juvenile Puffin (Puffling)



Heimaey is home to around 4,500 people, and eight million puffins every summer. Many millions of other birds migrate there for breeding and feeding.

Most people on the island live off fishing. During an annual festival, people are allowed to catch a few puffins to share at the festival, or to eat at home.





© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Northern Wheatear



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Feral Pigeon



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Church in the harbour entrance at Heimaey





Black Guillemot

© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Northern Wheatear



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

A distant Raven

Great Skua



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

From the ferry back to the mainland Iceland

Great Northern Diver



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Second day on Iceland

Gullfoss ("Golden Falls") is a waterfall located in the canyon of the Hvítá river in southwest Iceland.



The people on the rocks on the left give a sense of scale



The Hvítá river flows southward, and about a kilometre above the falls it turns sharply to the west and flows down into a wide curved three-step "staircase" and then abruptly plunges in two stages (11 metres, and 21 metres) into a crevice 32 metres deep. The crevice, about 20 metres wide and 2.5 kilometres in length, extends perpendicular to the flow of the river. The average amount of water running down the waterfall is 141 cubic metres per second in the summer and 80 cubic metres per second in the winter. The highest flood measured was 2,000 cubic metres per second.



Geysir sometimes known as **The Great Geysir**, is a geyser in southwestern Iceland. It was the first geyser described in a printed source and the first known to modern Europeans. The English word *geyser* (a periodically spouting hot spring) derives from Geysir. The name *Geysir* itself is derived from the Icelandic verb *geysa* ("to gush"). Geysir lies in the Haukadalur valley on the slopes of Laugarfjall lava dome, which is also the home to Strokkur geyser about 50 metres (160 ft) south.



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Eruptions at Geysir can hurl boiling water up to 70 metres (230 ft) in the air. However, eruptions are nowadays infrequent, and have in the past stopped altogether for many years at a time. When I was there the eruptions occurred about every four minutes



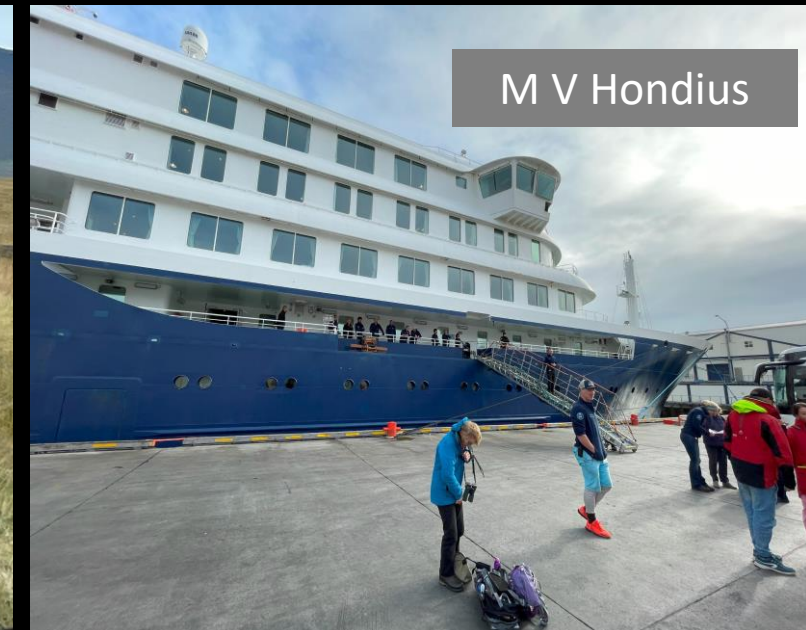
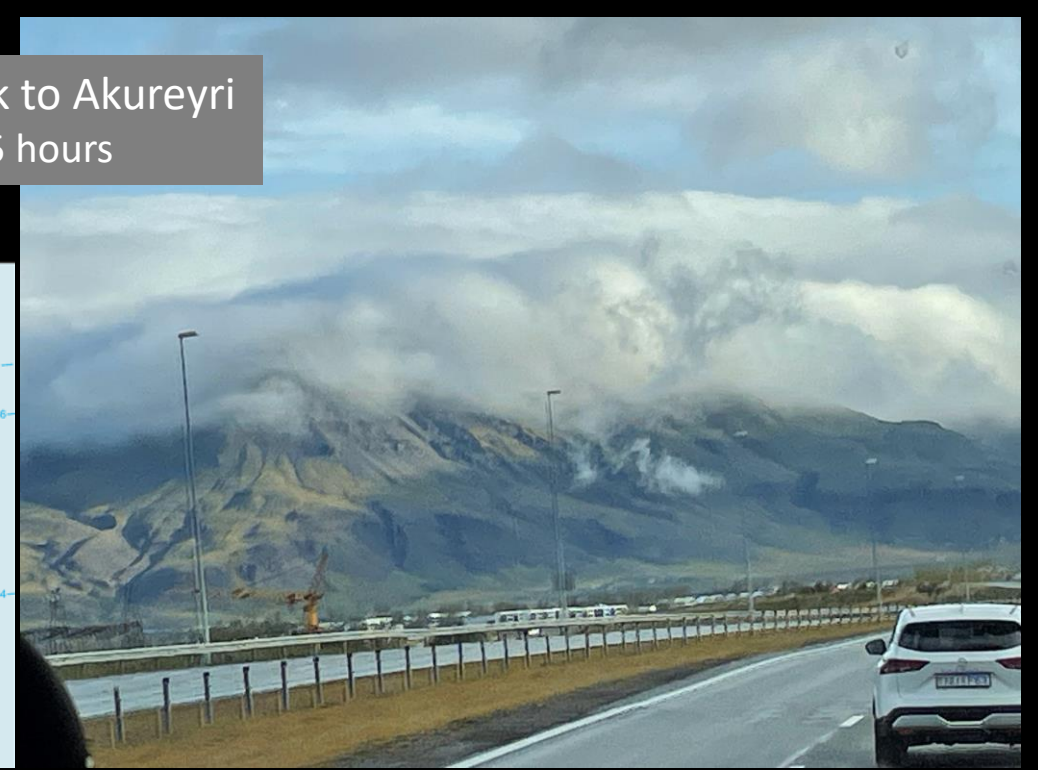
The fault line separating the American and European Plates



Vegetation along the fault



The coach trip north from Reykjavik to Akureyri
Over 300 kilometres and about 5 hours





DAILY PROGRAM

East Greenland Scoresby Sund

Aurora Borealis

Welcome Aboard!

Date: Saturday 9th September 2023

Day 1: Embarkation – Akureyri

Please make yourselves at home in your cabins and check you have received all your luggage! Tea/coffee is available in the bar located on Deck 5.

PLEASE LISTEN FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

+/-1715 Ship safety briefing, in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance to this is **MANDATORY**.

After the briefing the emergency alarm will be sounded, and you will need to go back to your cabin and get your life jacket.

All guests accommodated on Deck 3 (Cabins 301-337) will go to **MUSTER STATION A** which is the Restaurant on Deck 4

All guests accommodated on decks 4, 6, and 7 (Cabins 401-414, 601-619, 701-714) will go to **MUSTER STATION B** which is the Observation Lounge on Deck 5

+/-1815 We would like to invite you to the Captains Welcome in the **Observation Lounge** on Deck 5. The Hotel Manager and Expedition Leader will do a welcome briefing, to orientate you to life on board and explain the plan for the forthcoming days and you will meet your Expedition Team.

+/-1930 Buffet dinner in the **Restaurant** on Deck 4.



East Greenland Scoresby Sund Aurora Borealis

Date: Sunday 10th September 2023

Day 2: At sea – en-route to Greenland

- 07:30 Wake-up call.
- 08:00-9:00 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant, Deck 4.
- 09:15 **MANDATORY** AECO, Zodiac, and Polar Bear Safety Briefing in the Observation Lounge on Deck 5. Attendance will be checked.
- 11:00 The Expedition Team will hand out your rubber boots. You will be called deck-by-deck to Deck 3, so please listen to announcements. Bring your thick socks to find the best-sized boots for you!
- 11:30 **MANDATORY** kayak briefing in the Lecture Room.
- 12:00-13:00 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 13:30 Please join Mikhail in the Lounge for a lecture about bird migration titled: 'Impossible Journeys'.
- 15:00 Please join Laurence in the Lounge for his presentation: 'The largest island on Earth - An introduction to Greenland'.
- 16:30 Please join Koen in the Lounge for a lecture 'An introduction to Photography'.
- 18:30 Please join the Expedition Team in the Lounge for the daily recap.
- 19:00 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant on Deck 4.
- 21:00 Please join Simone in the Lecture Room for the introduction to her workshop on sound recordings called 'Listening to Polar Landscapes'.



A 28-hour crossing of the Denmark Strait to reach Scoresbysund on Greenland

The lifejackets were for use on the zodiacs. Different life vests were available for abandoning ship together with a survival suit



Muckmaster boots for zodiac cruises and landings



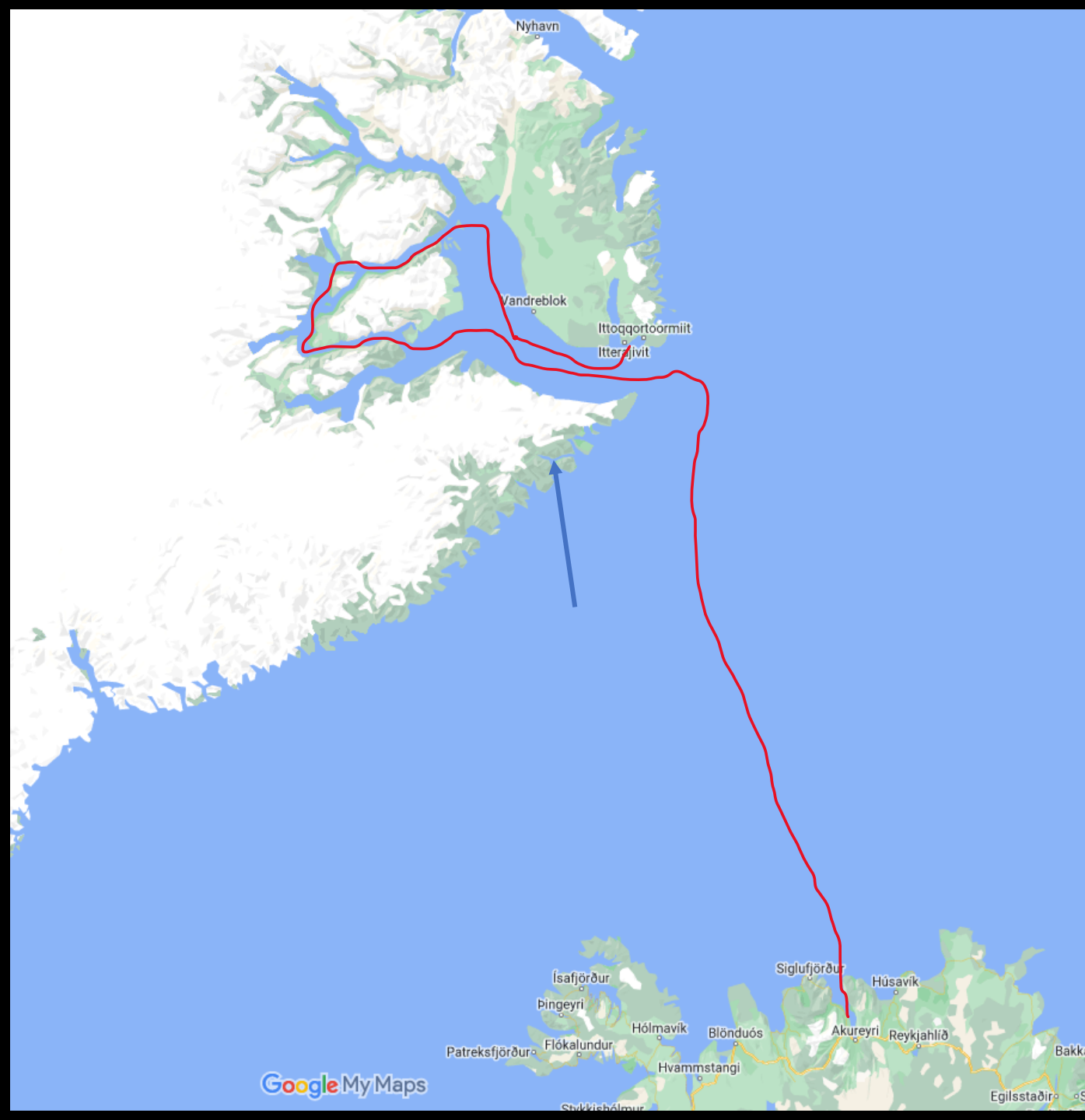
We were very lucky to see and photograph Orcas close to the ship whilst crossing the Denmark Strait.

Orcas are not whales but are a member of the dolphin family.



Photo courtesy of
the ship's report





Scoresby Sund (English: *Scoresby Sound*, Greenlandic: *Kangertittivaq*) is an inlet system of the Greenland Sea on the eastern coast of Greenland. It has a tree-like structure, with a main body approximately 110 km (68 mi) long that branches into a system of fjords covering an area of about 38,000 km² (14,700 sq mi). The longest of these extends 340–350 km in from the coastline. The depth is 400–600 m in the main body, but this increases to up to 1,450 m (4,760 ft) in the fjords.

The red line in Scoresbysund shows our first four full days in Greenland

Our fifth and final day was at Romerfjord marked with an arrow

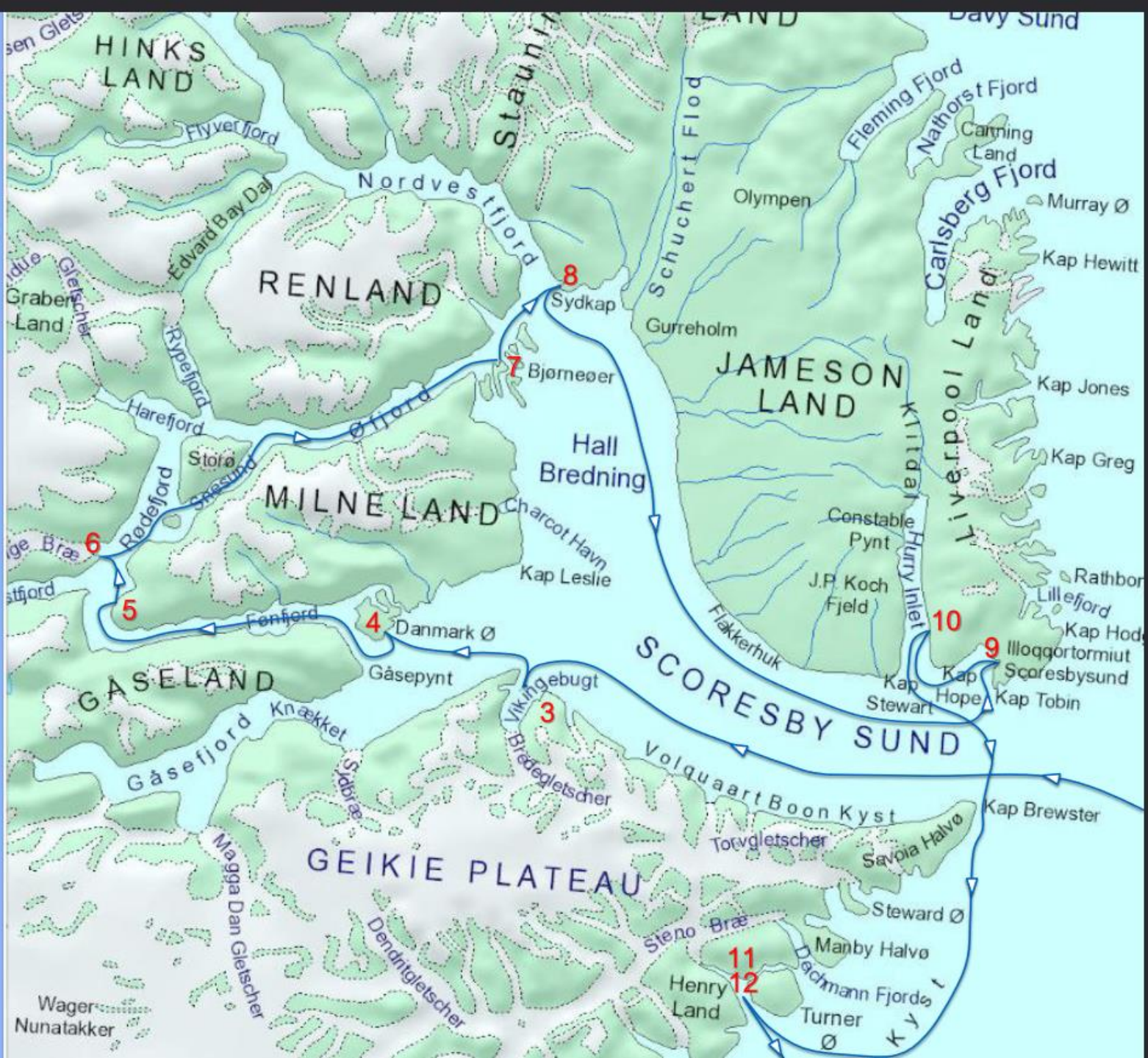
A Map from the ship's report

EAST GREENLAND SCORESBY SUNN

Aurora borealis

Hondius 9 Sep – 17 Sep 2023

1. Akureyri (Day 1)
2. At Sea (Day 2)
3. Vikingebugt (Day 3)
4. Danmark Ø (Day 3)
5. Røde Ø (Day 4)
6. Langenæs, Rødefjord (Day 4)
7. Bjørneøer (Day 5)
8. Sydkap / Ingmikertikajik (Day 5)
9. Ittoqqortoormiit (Day 6)
10. Nøkkedal, Hurry Fjord (Day 6)
11. Rømer Fjord (Day 7)
12. Rømer Fjord, Turner sund (Day 7)
13. At Sea (Day 8)
14. Akureyri



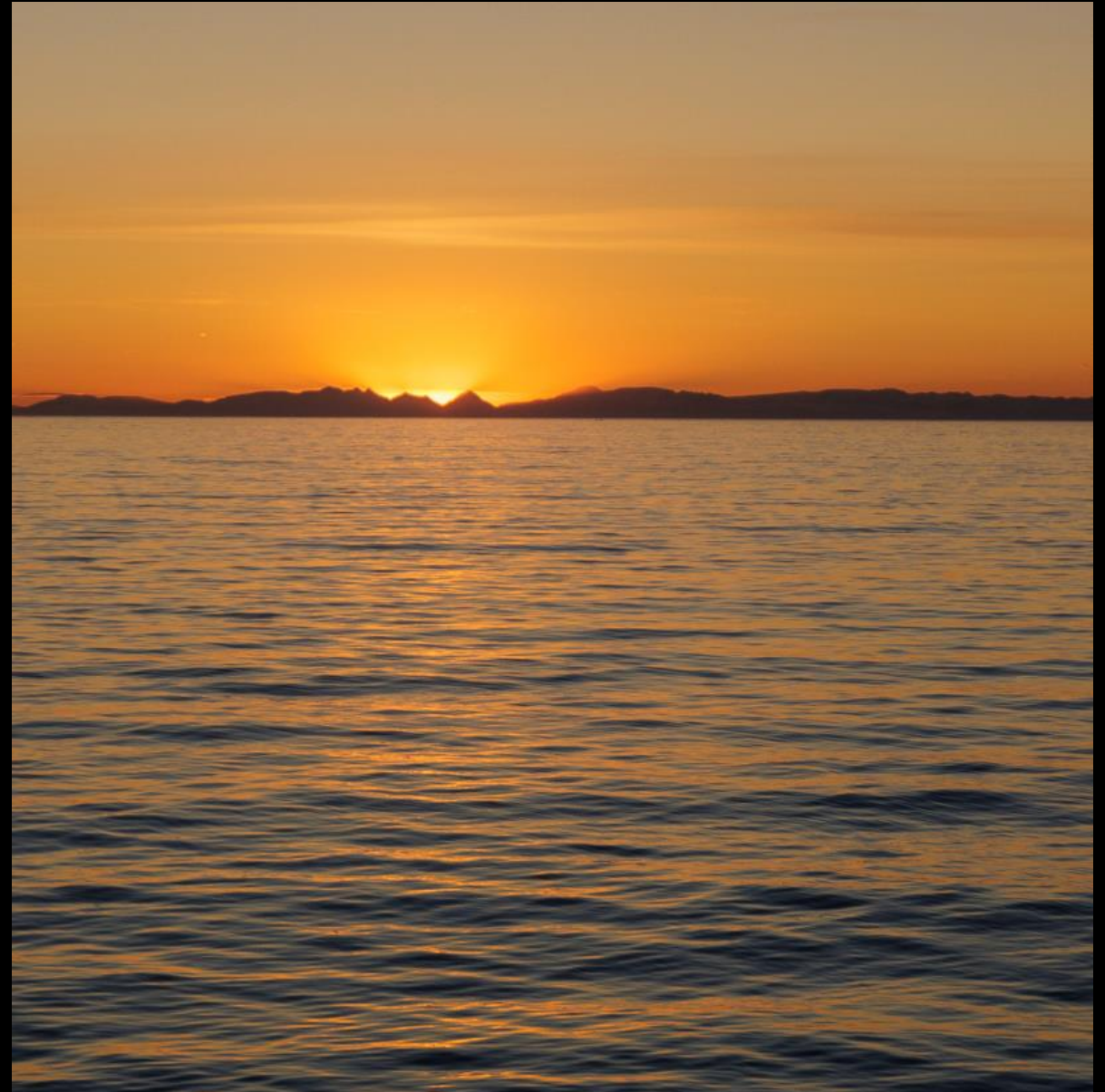
Sunset on reaching Greenland



More sunset photos



© PhilJC



First view of the Northern Lights



Day 1 Sunrise Photos



East Greenland & Scoresbysund

Date: Monday 11th September

Day 3: Vikingebugt & Danmark Ø

Sunrise 06:21 - Sunset 20:25

0630 Wake - up call.

0700-0800 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant.

This morning we hope to offer a zodiac cruise & kayaking at Vikingebugt.

0800 All kayakers please be ready for boarding the zodiacs at deck 3, forward shell door.

+/-0810 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on deck 3 for a zodiac cruise at Vikingebugt. **Please listen for announcements.**

+/-0820 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on deck 3 for a zodiac cruise at Vikingebugt. **Please listen for announcements.**

1130 Please join photography guide Koen in the lecture room for his workshop regarding photographing the Northern Lights

1230-1330 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant.

This afternoon we hope to offer a landing & kayaking at Danmark Ø

1400 Please can all kayakers be ready at the deck 3, forward shell door

1400 Please can all long hikers be ready at the deck 3, rear shell door

+/-1410 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on deck 3 for a landing at Danmark Ø. **Please listen for announcements.**

+/-1420 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on deck 3 for a landing at Danmark Ø. **Please listen for announcements.**

1830 Please join the expedition team in the lounge for daily recap.

1900 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant.

2100 Please join Simone in the **Lecture Room** for a sound workshop *(only for those who have participated in recording during today)*

Morning - Vikingebukt zodiac cruise



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

A **sun dog** or **mock sun**, also called a **parhelion** in meteorology, is an atmospheric optical phenomenon that consists of a bright spot to one or both sides of the Sun. Two sun dogs often flank the Sun within a 22° halo.

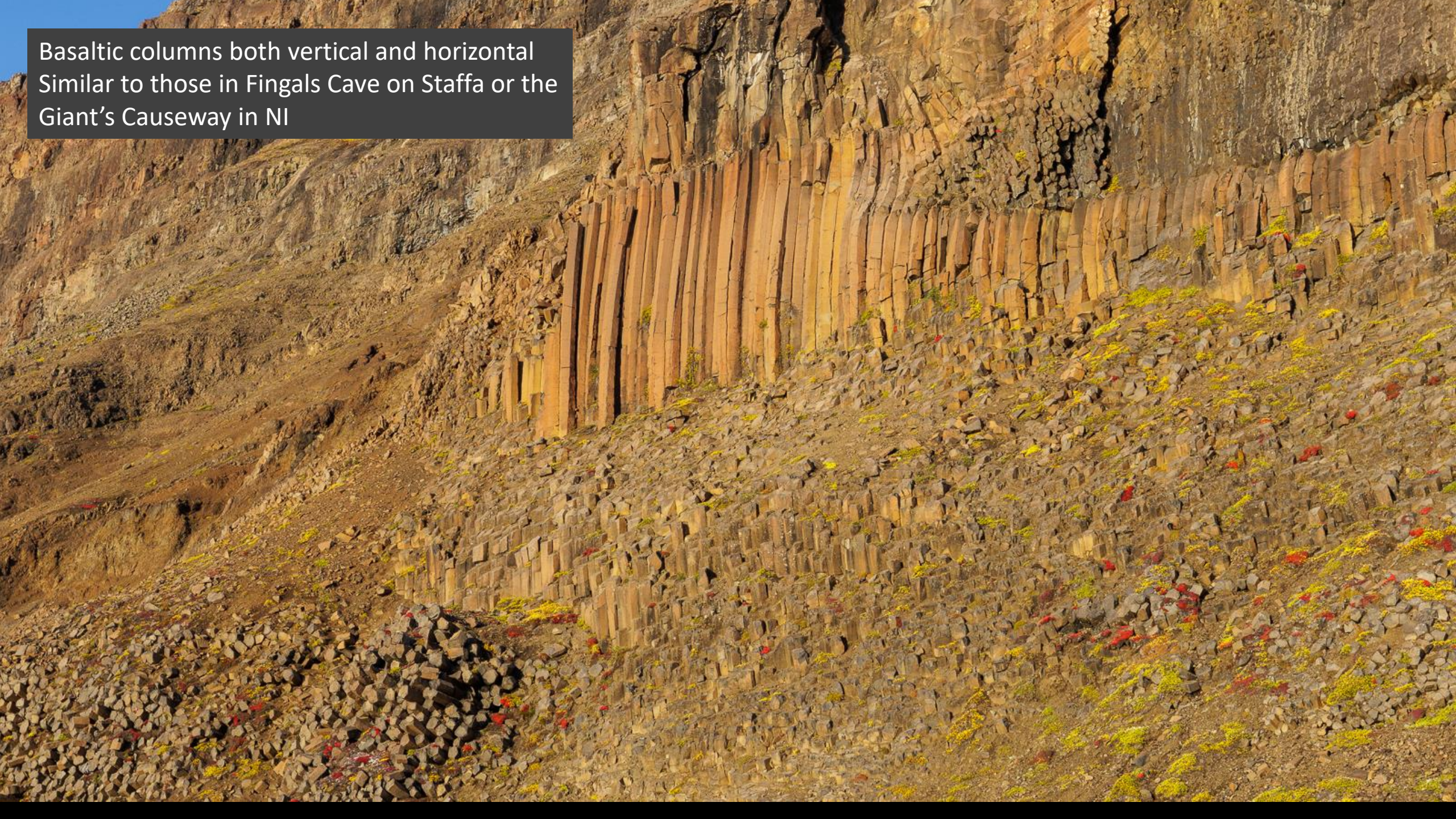


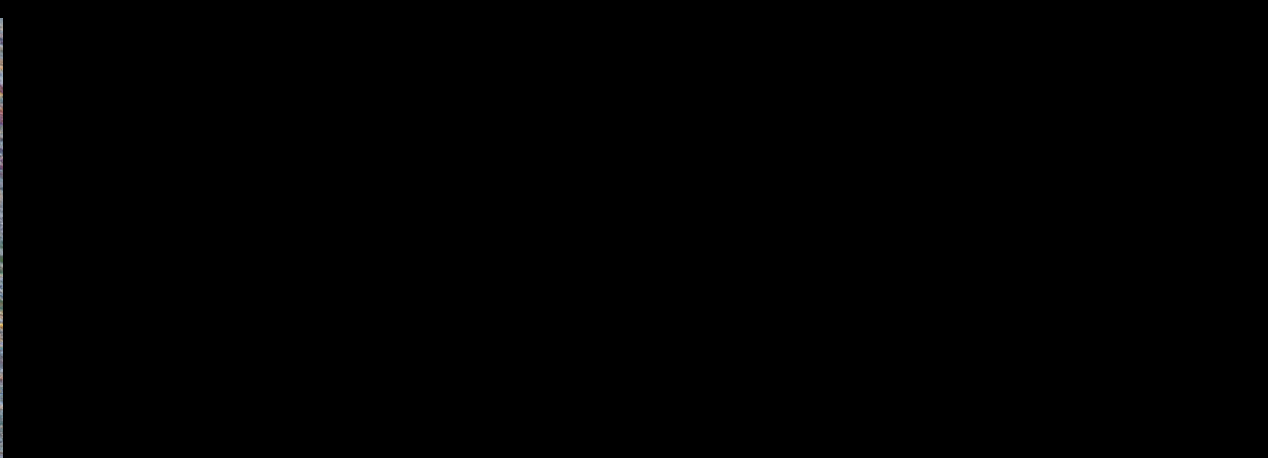
Danmark Island

Vikingebukta



Basaltic columns both vertical and horizontal
Similar to those in Fingals Cave on Staffa or the
Giant's Causeway in NI





First sighting of a Polar Bear – uncropped and cropped

Close ups of a second Polar Bear





A glacier showing calving splashes

© PhilJGPhoto



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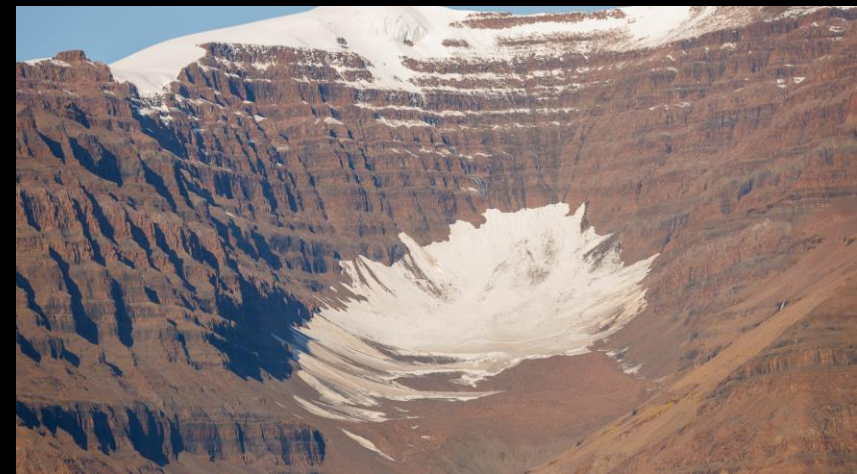
© PhilJ



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Afternoon landing on Danmark Island



© PhilJGPhoto



© PhilJGPhoto



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Mound caused by frost heave



Willow – Greenland forest and Greenland's most abundant tree



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Fungus



A small Polar Bear print



Rocks cracked by ice



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Beautiful Autumn colours



More flora



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



Cotton Grass



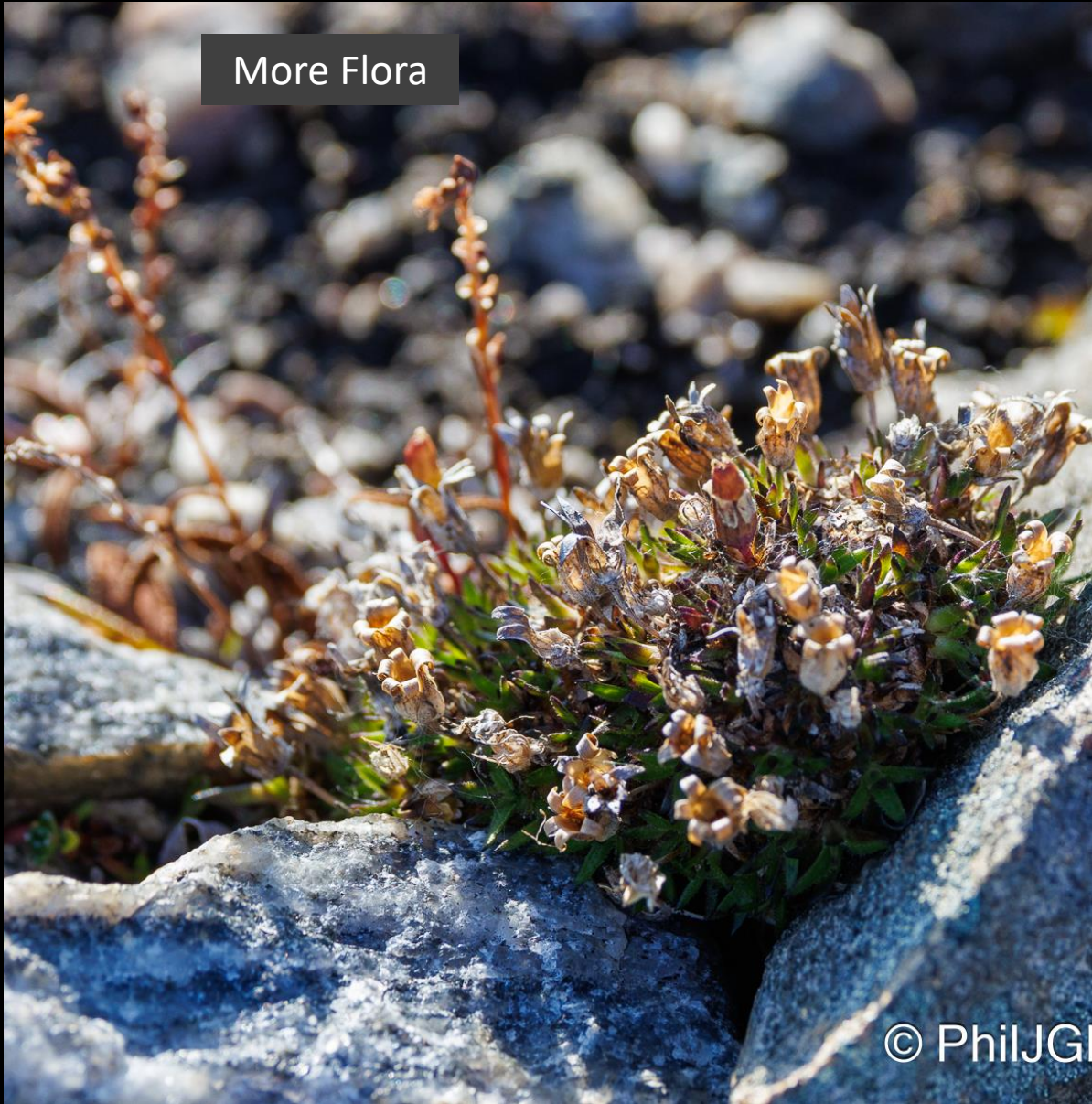
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Ice cap showing
in the mountains



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

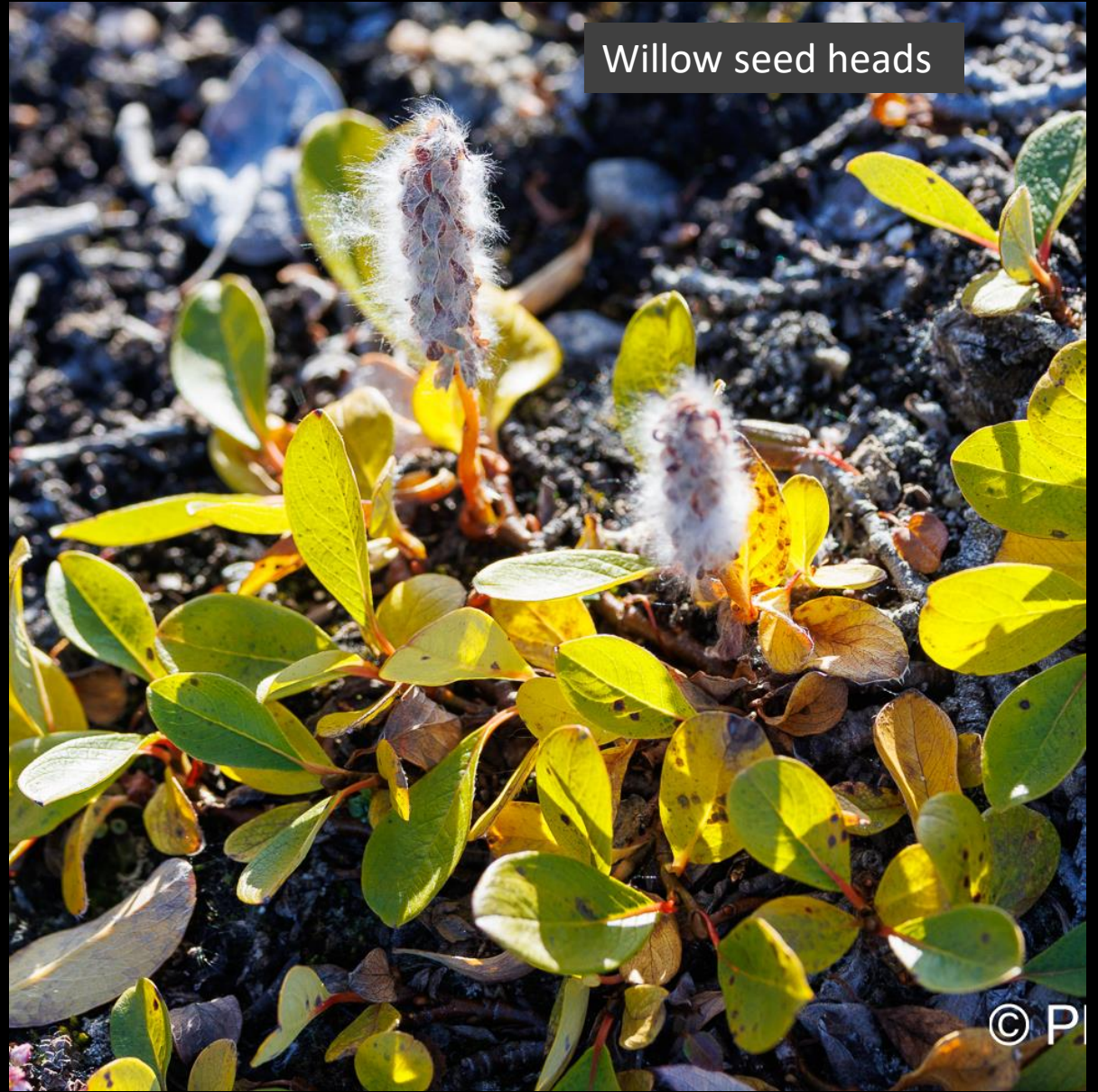
More Flora



© PhilJG



© Phi









© PhilJGPhoto.uk



Cotton Grass

© PhilJGPhoto.uk

The evening's Northern
Lights show.

The best time is when the
sky is at its darkest
between midnight and
3:00am





DAILY PROGRAM

East Greenland & Scoresbysund

Date: Monday 12th September

Day 4: Røde Ø & Rødefjord Expedition Afternoon Sunrise 06:30 - Sunset 20:20

- 0630 Wake-up call.
0700-0800 Breakfast buffet in the Restaurant.

This morning we hope to offer a Zodiac cruise, landing, & kayaking at Røde Ø.

- 0800 Please can the **Red** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a landing at Røde Ø. Please listen for announcements.
0820 Please can the **Blue** Group be ready at the shell doors on Deck 3 for a Zodiac cruise at Røde Ø. Please listen for announcements.
0845 All kayakers please be ready for boarding the Zodiacs at Deck 3, forward shell door.

The **Red** and **Blue** groups will swap halfway through the morning.

- 1230-1330 Buffet lunch will be served in the Restaurant.

This afternoon we hope to offer a landing & kayaking at Langenaes in Rødefjord.

We will assess ice conditions in the morning and update you in the early afternoon.

- 13:30 Join Hans in the Observation Lounge for an update on the afternoon's activities.
1900 Please join the expedition team in the Lounge for daily recap.
1930 Dinner will be served in the Restaurant.

Dawn and the daily schedule



Morning: Zodiac cruise amongst the grounded icebergs (iceberg graveyard) followed by a landing on Rode (Red) Island

Afternoon: walk up hill from Langanaes in Rødefjord



Rolige Brae Glacier



Rode Island



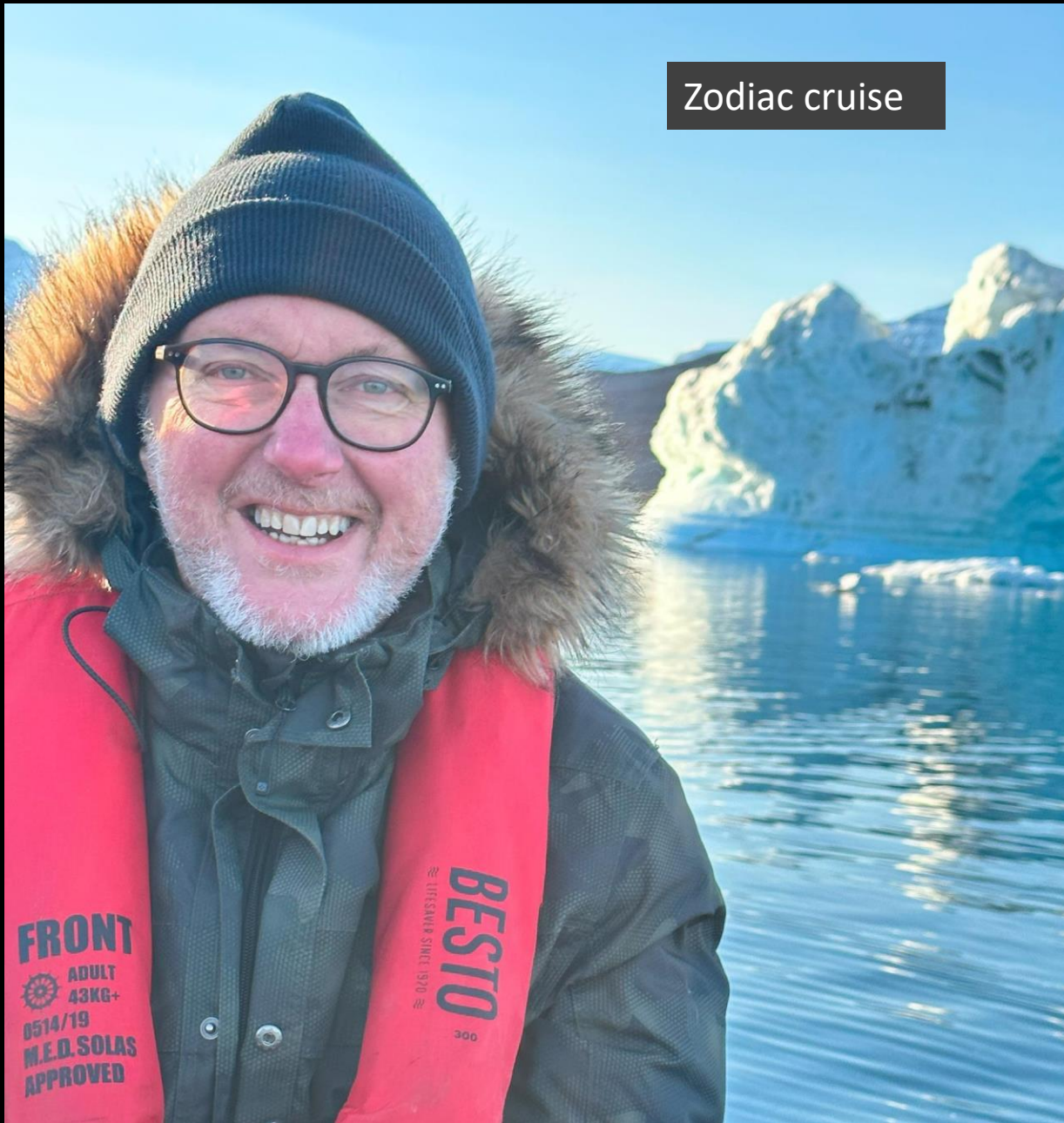
Danmark Island



Vikingebukt



Zodiac cruise



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

This small iceberg turned over as we went by it



Blue ice



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



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After landing on
Rode Island

Demonstrates the
size of the icebergs



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

More Flora









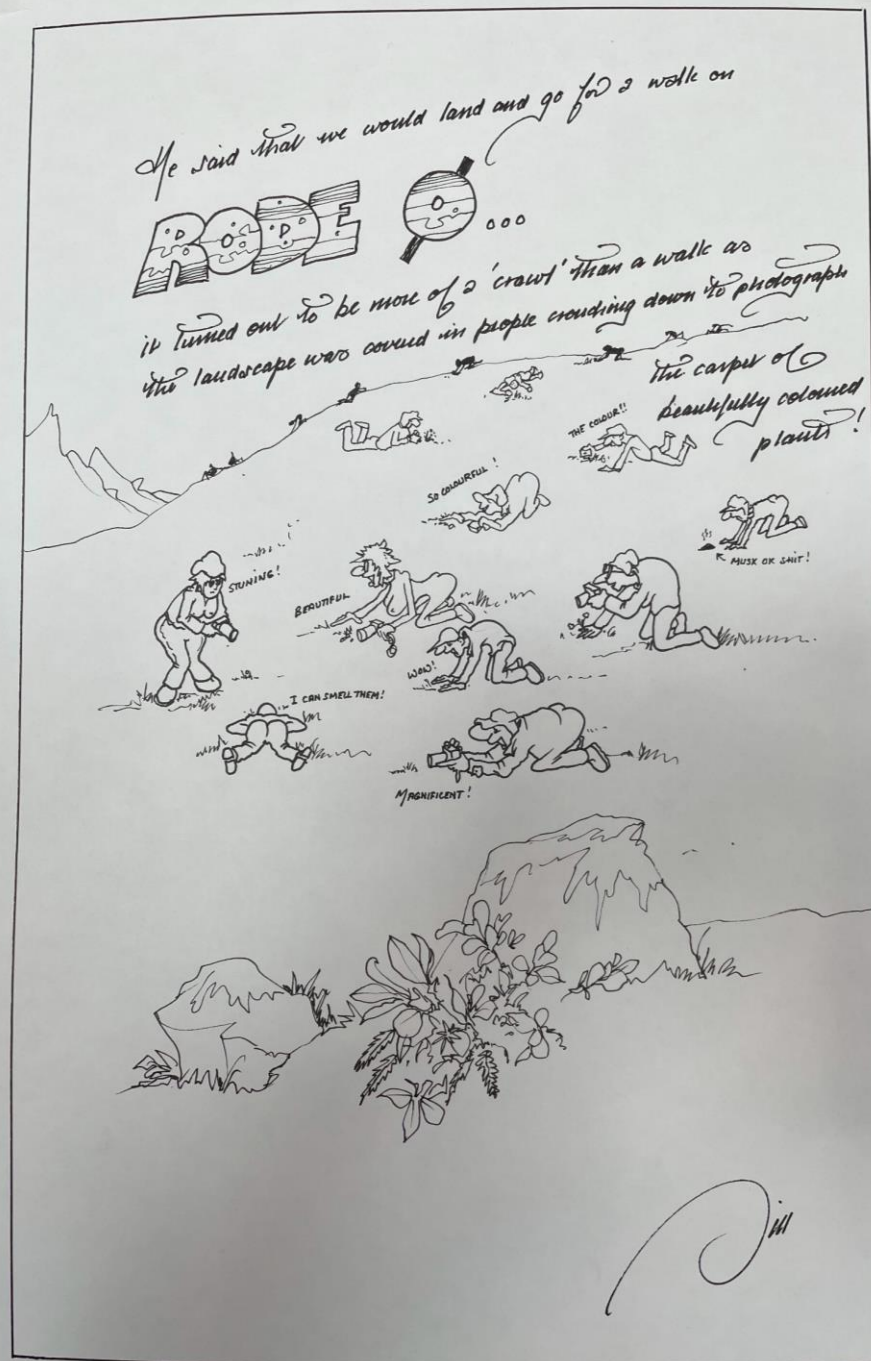


Returning to the ship for lunch



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Cartoon drawn by
the ship's artist,
Bill a native of
Scotland



He said that we would go for a walk on Rode Island. It turned out to be more of a crawl than a walk as the landscape was covered in people crouching down to photograph the carpet of beautifully coloured plants!

The afternoon landing at Langanaes was followed by a hard slog up a hill to see

Rodefjord panorama



The Rolige Brae Glacier



Some calving took place while we were there



This photo gives you some idea of the scale



© PhilJGPhoto.uk

Interesting rock strata
I can see a lion



Bone from a musk ox



© PhilJGPhoto.uk



Northern Wheatear taken on the way back down to the landing site

© PhilJGPhoto



© PhilJGPhoto



Taken on the way back down to the zodiac landing site



A tour round a few icebergs on the way back to the ship

A very distant ringed seal – photo taken at dusk



Ringed seal



The **ringed seal** (*Pusa hispida*) is an earless seal inhabiting the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. The ringed seal is a relatively small seal, rarely greater than 1.5 m in length, with a distinctive patterning of dark spots surrounded by light gray rings, hence its common name.



This is an example
of a receding
glacier

End of Part 1