

JEWELS OF THE ARCTIC

9th – 22nd of AUGUST 2014

JEWELS OF THE ARCTIC EXPEDITION – Lead by Joshua Holko and Antony Watson

Join Moab Master and X-Rite Coloratti Photographer Joshua Holko with Pro Photographer Antony Watson on the ultimate photographic expedition to the Arctic – The 'Jewels of the Arctic'.

WHEN

August 9th – August 22nd 2014 : **Strictly Limited to 50 Places + Leaders and Expedition Guides**

ABOUT

This dedicated photographic expedition departs on the 9th of August 2014 and docks on the 22nd of August 2014. The trip will set sail from Longyearbyen in Svalbard and will be taking in the very best of Spitsbergen and Greenland before docking in Isafjordur in Iceland. A connecting flight will then take you to Reykjavik Domestic Airport.

This expedition will combine the very best of Spitsbergen and Greenland with a taste of Iceland and has been structured to provide the best possible photographic opportunities. Spitsbergen's rugged northwest coast comprises mountains, tundra and fjords. Greenland's remote east coast shows off the immensity of the icecap, fantastic icebergs and massive granite spires rising over 1000 meters above the fjords.

This expedition offers a complete Arctic experience for photography: tundra walks amidst reindeer and exquisite dwarf vegetation, zodiac cruises near carving glaciers, hikes to breathtaking mountain vistas and warm welcomes into indigenous communities. We will likely see and photograph Polar Bears, Reindeer, Arctic Foxes, Walrus, Glaciers, Icebergs and more. It is going to be a truly spectacular photographic trip for a very limited number of photographers aboard an ice hardened expedition class ship – The Polar Pioneer.

The expedition is for a **strictly limited number of 50 participants** plus leaders and expedition guides. Whilst many trips to the Arctic take 100+ tourists this expedition is capped at a maximum of 50 dedicated photographers in order to ensure the best possible experience and photographic opportunities. We will be using an ice hardened expedition ship with a highly experienced crew in order to ensure we get as close as possible to big ice and place you in the best locations for making photographs. Our expedition ship is equipped with sufficient zodiacs and crew for all photographers to be shooting simultaneously with plenty of room to spare for camera equipment.

There will be informal talks and image reviews and plenty of opportunity for one-on-one instruction for those who wish it throughout the length of the trip. As well as informal side by side shooting from the deck of the ship, on zodiac and during shore landings there will be lots of opportunity to discuss all aspects of photography and image making with like-minded individuals.

These expedition notes will give you a brief summary of what you will discover on your voyage to the European Arctic. Our emphasis is on photography, personal contact with the environment, wildlife encounters, and visiting sites of historical and cultural significance. Your safety is our priority, closely followed by showing you the best Arctic experience possible.

Please remember that the enclosed itinerary is merely a guide. This voyage is expedition-style, and our adventure will be influenced by the cold sea current from Siberia along the east coast, which can result in lower temperatures and means, that even in summer, frequent pack ice can make access difficult. Weather and sea conditions will dictate our daily explorations. We'll delight in taking advantage of spontaneous opportunities and there is always an element of the unexpected. Our expedition staff will keep you updated and provide you with daily programs during the voyage.

REGION HIGHLIGHTS

Spitsbergen

This wondrous archipelago of Svalbard is the world's most readily accessible bit of the polar north and one of the most spectacular places imaginable. Meaning 'Island of the Cold Shores', Svalbard is located between 74° - 81° N and 10° - 35° E and has a total land mass of 63,000 square kilometers.

Spitsbergen is the largest island in the Svalbard island archipelago. It was named by Dutchman, Willem Barents in 1596, when he was on his way to Novaya Zemlya, searching for a northern route to Asia. The island was first used as a whaling base in the 17th and 18th centuries, after which it was abandoned. Coal mining started at the beginning of the 20th century, and several permanent communities were established. The Svalbard Treaty of 1920 recognizes Norwegian sovereignty and established Svalbard as a free economic and demilitarized zone. With a population of approximately 3000, Spitsbergen is still virtually an unspoiled wilderness.

Greenland

Greenland is the world's largest island, almost totally covered by the second largest icecap on Earth, and boasts the planet's largest national park. Its east coast is sparsely settled by small communities of Inuit hunters who eke out a living in one of the harshest environments on the planet. We will marvel at the complex geology of the oldest island in the world where we will see acres of gravel beaches, dumped by Ice-Age glaciers and intriguing flat-topped mesas striated with layers of ancient deposits rising dramatically between massive glaciers.

Iceland

Iceland, where we disembark, is one of the world's youngest islands. Forged by fire and honed by ice, it is a geological treasure trove. Reykjavik, the capital, is a clean, sophisticated and progressive city. It is worth venturing further into Iceland after the voyage to get a glimpse of life in times gone by - quaint fishing villages, turf houses and spectacular geothermal landscapes.



ITINERARY

Please note: The itinerary is subject to changes depending on weather, ice conditions and the movements of other vessels.

Day 1: Embark Longyearbyen

Today you will be met at the airport in Longyearbyen and taken on an introductory tour to explore the remote outskirts and village of Longyearbyen, 'capital' of Spitsbergen. Your luggage will be taken directly from the airport to our ship, *Polar Pioneer*. After your tour you will be transferred to the port in the later afternoon to board *Polar Pioneer*. The Jewels of the Arctic voyage begins with our cruising down the magnificent Isfjorden, flanked by bird cliffs, vast glaciers and jagged mountains. A favorite pastime on board is to stand on deck or on the bridge, watching for seabirds and photograph the dramatic scenery.

Days 2 & 3: West coast of Spitsbergen

Depending on conditions, we will cruise either north or south along the west coast of Spitsbergen, stopping at intriguing places in search of the mighty polar bear. Along Spitsbergen's north coast we will explore places such as Woodfjorden and Leifdefjorden, where from our Zodiacs we enjoy magnificent views of glaciers sweeping and tumbling into the sea. We will walk on smooth raised beach terraces to magnificent viewpoints, hike on flowering tundra where reindeer graze, & may visit trappers' huts of yesteryear – all the while remaining alert for wandering polar bears.

Should we head south we plan to enter the spectacular Hornsund Fjord where we will take an early morning Zodiac cruise to admire the beautiful ice walls of the Samarin Glacier or take a stroll beneath the towering seabird cliffs at Sofiebogen. In Bellsund Fjord we are always on the lookout for Beluga whales. We plan to visit the remnants of a Norwegian Beluga whaling station from the 1930's. Across the fjord at Våraolbukta is a lush and stunning landscape where reindeer roam, Arctic flowers bloom in abundance and Arctic fox may be seen patrolling the little auk colony, where several thousand birds nest here amongst the boulders, coming and going in huge swarms. This is a beautiful place where we can stretch our legs before heading on a south-westerly course towards the East Greenland pack ice belt and the world's largest Island.

Day 4: At Sea

As we cruise southwest across the Greenland Sea – the main outlet of the Arctic Ocean – we will likely encounter pack ice. The strong icy currents have isolated East Greenland from the rest of the world for millennia. These currents carry nutrients from the Polar Basin, attracting large numbers of fish, seals and whales. Climatic conditions and the concentration of ice in the vicinity often create thick morning fog that vanishes with the onset of the midday sun.

Day 5: Approaching East Greenland

As we approach East Greenland we will encounter more pack ice where we will likely see seals and a variety of seabirds, including northern fulmar and migratory Brunnichs guillemots. Conditions permitting we plan to land on the Greenland coast. This stretch of coastline is ripe for exploration, with its many secrets locked in place by drift ice for up to eight months each year. Home to polar bear, walrus, snowy owl and musk ox, it's the world's largest national park.

Days 6 – 10: Kaiser Franz Josef, Kong Oskar Fjords & Scoresby Sund

We will attempt to enter Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord, a remote and rarely visited fjord system with countless opportunities for exploration that lies within the Northeast Greenland National Park. Cruising through Kong Oskar Fjord we will marvel at the geological beauty of the mountains. We will then head south along the coast of Liverpool Land, with our passage dependent on ice conditions. We aim to reach Scoresby Sund, the world's biggest fjord and a favorite hunting ground of the local Inuit. Massive glaciers dump into this fjord, the birthplace of the famous big Greenland icebergs.

We plan to visit the remote Inuit community of Ittoqqortoormiit (Scoresby Town) and to hike across the tundra in search of ancient graveyards and summer villages occupied 3000 years ago by Eskimos. If we are lucky we will see musk oxen, Arctic hare and seals, and maybe if we are extremely lucky even a polar bear or narwhal, although due to the relentless pursuit of the local hunters, these sightings are now very rare.

Places we may visit in Kaiser Franz Josef Fjord and Scoresby Sund include:

Cape Humboldt – Ymer Island: One of the many possibilities on Ymer Island is Cape Humboldt, where a lone trappers' hut built on an ancient beach looks out across a magnificent bay dotted with huge icebergs. Water-worn birch logs washed up on pebbly beaches and a steep hillside behind the hut offer walking opportunities and the possibility of seeing musk oxen grazing on the hardy foliage. Keep a lookout for Arctic fox and ptarmigan.

Sefstrom Glacier – Alpefjord: A narrow waterway between peaks of up to 2200 meters – serrated brown eroded mountains with hanging glaciers clinging like limpets to stony gullies. The snout of the Sefstrom Glacier juts out almost blocking Alpefjord, allowing zodiac access. Clumps of Arctic flora in autumn glory are visible as we cruise through the still water.

Ittoqqortoormiit – Scorseby Sund: A colorful Inuit community of about 500 residents, some of them still hunt local game for a living. Explore the village, visit the fascinating museum and meet parents pushing latest model prams with cute round faced babies peeping out from Arctic fox fur jackets. Avoid speedy 4-wheel motorcycles that hurtle along rough dirt roads, listen to the crescendo of howling emerging from lines of huskies secured to chains. Visit the supermarket or sit spellbound in the beautiful Lutheran Church serenaded by the local organist.

Sydkap – Scorseby Sund: A small promontory jutting out from Scoresby Land, which offers good walking and delightful views across the sound. There are great opportunities for kayaking past lonely beaches where ancient gravesites can be visited on shore. Nests of grounded giant bergs the size of 10 story buildings with green tunnels and aquamarine lakes offer hours of endless enjoyment for kayakers and “zodiacers” alike. Some other possible landing places are: Rypefjord, O Fjord, Fonfjord, Bjorn Oya, Milne Land, Hekla Havn, Danmark Island.

Days 11 & 12: Volquart Boon Coast

We explore the east Greenland coast, along the flanks of Knud Rasmussen Land. We will sail south along the Volquart Boon Coast where our explorations will depend on the weather and timing. There are virtually no charts for these bays and fjords along this stretch of coast. So who knows where our adventures will take us and what we will discover? In the afternoon of Day 12 we head into the Denmark Strait.

Day 13: At Sea

We will be at sea all day, cruising across Denmark Strait towards Iceland, constantly on the lookout for whale blows and the many seabirds that trail our ship on the up lifting thermals.

Day 14: Isafjordur – Reykjavik During the early morning we will arrive at Isafjordur, in the north west of Iceland. You and your luggage will be transferred to the airport to board your flight back to Reykjavik Domestic Airport. Please note no meals are served on this flight. You will have the opportunity to farewell your fellow passengers as you continue on with your own travel arrangements.



Zodiac Cruising – Photograph: Joshua Holko

YOUR INVESTMENT

Prices quoted are in Australian Dollars, per person, twin share. Single Occupancy is 1.7 times the twin share price. No single supplement applies if you are willing to share your cabin (triple and twin cabins only). Deposit to secure your place is \$1,250 AUD with balance not due until 90 days before date of departure.

Please note that due to initial expressions of interest and registrations there are only **limited places remaining**.

CABINS

- o Triple Share Cabin \$7,700 per person
- o Twin Share Cabin \$8,950 per person
- o Twin Private \$10,900 per person
- o Mini-Suite \$12,175 per person
- o Captains Suite \$13,150 per person

PAYMENT TERMS

A deposit of \$1250 must be paid at time of registration to secure your place with the balance due 90 DAYS prior to the expedition commencement. All payments are made directly to the expedition charter company.

EXPEDITION INCLUSIONS

- Transfers to and from the airport to Polar Pioneer.
- Group sightseeing tour in Longyearbyen.
- Flight from Isafjordur to Reykjavik.
- Ship's accommodation. All public areas are open to all passengers.
- All meals on board ship.
- All shore excursions from the ship including Zodiacs.
- Lectures, videos, slide and film shows and guide services.
- Medical services. There is a resident medical officer and a clinic on board.
- Port taxes and port charges imposed by government authorities.
- Pre-departure information.

EXPEDITION EXCLUSIONS

- Air transport, not mentioned above.
- Excess baggage on any air flights.
- Visa, passport and vaccination charges and airport departure taxes.
- Hotels and meals not included in ship cruise itinerary.
- Tips on board for crew and service personnel.
- Optional excursions not included in ship cruise itinerary (such as sea kayaking).
- Laundry, postage, personal clothing, medical expenses, personal travel insurance and items of a personal nature such as bar charges, email and telephone calls.
- Travel insurance and any emergency evacuation charges. Please note that travel insurance is mandatory.

REQUEST A BOOKING

Please contact me via email at info@jholko.com if you would like a booking and reservation form.



TOUR LEADER – JOSHUA HOLKO

Born in Melbourne, Australia, I am a full-time professional landscape, nature and wilderness photographer. A passionate photographer, teacher and adventurer I run workshops and expeditions for other photographers and travellers to some of the world's wildest and remotest regions.

Specializing in the Polar and sub-Polar regions of the globe, my work celebrates the extreme latitudes of the Polar environment. An ambassador for the Polar Regions I gave up the corporate world to pursue my true passion for photography. You are welcome to join me on a photographic trip of a lifetime to some of the most magical destinations on this planet.

Living in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, I studied with distinction at the Australian Photography Studies College and the Australian College of Journalism. I am a fully accredited associate member of the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP) and was selected to appear in their 'Look for the Logo' television campaign highlighting some of Australia's best photographers. In 2011, I was appointed as Australia's first and only Moab Master Photographer and Printer by Moab and Legion Paper in the USA.



TOUR LEADER – ANTONY WATSON

Born in Melbourne, Australia, I am a full-time professional photographer with a passion for photography and the environment. My work documents my interpretation of the dwindling vestiges of pristine wilderness and cultural diversity.

Leading Expeditions into the Polar Regions as well as Asia provides amazing opportunities to share these rare and amazing experiences with fellow photographers and travelers.

Residing in Melbourne Australia with my wife and two daughters, I graduated from Photography Studies College majoring in Commercial Photography. I am a full accredited member of the Australian Institute of Professional Photographers (AIPP) having won awards at both the state and national level.

When not running photography expeditions, I work selectively for a number of commercial clients.

