



ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Canada and Greenland

Best of the Western Arctic

13th September to 2nd October 2022 (20 days)



Snowy Owl by Dave Kutilek

Venture far above the Arctic Circle, in a land where the sun never sets and Polar Bears roam, with the Best of the Western Arctic: Canada and Greenland itinerary. You'll be exploring the northerly shores of Canada's Baffin Island and the western coast of Greenland, searching for the wildlife and visiting the communities that call this mysterious realm home. Zodiac cruising gives you an awe-inspiring perspective of impressive icebergs, glaciers and fjords, while visits to communities immerse you in their traditional and modern way of life. The rugged beauty of these pristine places will have you marvelling at the soaring cliffs of Sam Ford Fjord and the dazzling icebergs dotting the Ilulissat Icefjord. In this remote, wildlife-rich region, you may spot whales in their natural surroundings or get a glimpse of one of the Arctic's most iconic animals; the Polar Bear.

The Arctic has been inspiring explorers for centuries, and our expeditions offer the chance for you to discover why. We're excited to host you on your unforgettable adventure!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland
Day 2	Embarkation Day in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland
Day 3	At sea
Days 4 to 6	Exploring Baffin Island, Canada
Day 7	At sea
Days 8 to 11	Lancaster Sound
Day 12	Smith Sound
Days 13 & 14	Exploring Northwest Greenland
Day 15	At sea
Days 16 to 18	Exploring West Greenland
Day 19	Disembark in Kangerlussuaq, fly to Reykjavik
Day 20	Depart Reykjavik

ROUTE MAP



THE TOUR IN DETAIL...



Arctic Fox by Alasdair Hunter

expedition.

Day 3. At sea. As we cruise across the Davis Strait, your Expedition Team will prepare you for the adventures that await. Learn about the storied history and politics of the Arctic, its fascinating wildlife, geology, ecology and climate, and the incredible sights you will soon explore. Staff will also keep a lookout for seabirds soaring above your ship, as well as whales that frequent the waters here.

Days 4 to 6. Exploring Baffin Island, Canada. Baffin Island is the fifth-largest island in the world, it was named for English navigator William Baffin, who ventured to the area in the early 17th century in search of the fabled Northwest Passage. Your days sailing along the island's eastern coast will be guided by weather and ice conditions, with each day and each landing presenting new adventures. Some of our favourite destinations include Qikiqtarjuaq, Isabella Bay and Sam Ford Fjord. Towering mountains, deep fjords, colourful tundra, and Inuit settlements await!

The Inuit community of Qikiqtarjuaq (which means "the big island" in Inuktitut) is located just north of the Arctic Circle, on Broughton Island. Fondly called Qik by locals, the welcoming hamlet offers a superb vantage point of the Davis Strait. You'll also have a chance to support local Inuit artisans here by purchasing unique artwork, crafts and jewellery. The rarely explored Sam Ford Fjord is one of the most isolated places on the planet. It is a spectacular big-wall playground, attracting adventurous climbers eager to scale the dozens of towering vertical granite cliffs that erupt from the sea. Have your camera handy

Day 1. Arrive in Reykjavik, Iceland. Your arctic expedition begins in Reykjavik. Explore Iceland's capital city on your own before spending the night at your included hotel.

Day 2. Embarkation Day in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland. In the morning, the group will transfer to the airport and board our private charter flight to Kangerlussuaq, a small town at the eastern head of Sondre Stromfjord, one of the longest fjords in the world. After embarking your ship in the afternoon, enjoy time out on deck, taking in your new surroundings as you set sail on your arctic



Black Guillemot by Jonathan Rossouw





Walrus by James Wakelin

as you cruise along this impressive coastline carved by ancient glaciers - the towering formations, stacked side by side, are simply majestic.

Baffin Bay itself is home to about 20,000 Belugas, of which around 15,000 are concentrated in the North Waters alone. Occurring in pods often numbering up to 30 individuals, these iconic animals are easily identified by their striking white colouration, very rounded shape and lack of a dorsal fin. They have been labelled the 'canaries of the sea' due to the beautiful sounds they make when communicating with one another.

Other abundant animals of the region include Harp, Bearded and Ringed Seals, the latter of which form the staple meal of the Polar Bear. Interestingly, these Ringed Seals are also occasionally preyed upon by Walruses, a surprising deviation from their typical diet of clams! The bay's shores are also a habitat for a wide variety of plant and tree species, which in turn harbours wildlife such as Caribou, Arctic Wolf, Arctic Fox, Arctic Hare and lemmings. On the bird front, Little Auk is common; while Snowy Owl, Willow and Rock Ptarmigans, Gyrfalcon and Arctic Redpoll all occur in the surrounding countryside.

Day 7. At sea. As our ship sails farther north, take in a presentation by our on-board experts, sip an icy cocktail in the bar, watch a movie or join your Expedition Team on the bridge as they scan for wildlife - there is no shortage of activities while at sea.

Days 8 to 11. Lancaster Sound. The gateway to the Northwest Passage, Lancaster Sound is one of the richest marine habitats in the Arctic. With open water areas staying ice-free all year, it is an important summer feeding area for whales and other marine wildlife. Our days here will be spent exploring several of the sound's beautiful bays and inlets, discovering historical sites, enjoying Zodiac cruises and searching for such iconic wildlife as Walrus, as well as various seals and whales. Polar Bear sightings are possible too.

If conditions are right, we could find Beluga to be plentiful, whilst we also have chances for extraordinary Narwhal, unique denizens of the Arctic seas with incredible spiral tusks that can reach an astonishing 10 feet (three metres) in length!

Another cetacean that occurs in smaller numbers is the Bowhead



Willow Ptarmigan by Forrest Rowland





Ringed Seal by Forrest Rowland

Whale. These huge creatures sport the longest baleen of all the world's whales in their seemingly oversized heads, which account for about a third of the animal's total length! Amazingly, Bowhead Whales consume around 2 tonnes (1800 kg) of food in the form of tiny planktonic creatures every day! This they sieve out of the water with baleens that measure up to 14 feet (4.3m) in length. These incredible structures are comprised of a series of overlapping plates consisting of a fingernail-like material called keratin, which they then use to trap their prey while swimming with their mouths wide open in the region's plankton-rich waters.

Walrus numbers here are now recovering after they were heavily hunted in the past. Herds of these huge and sociable animals, growing up to 10 feet long and weighing up to a tonne, are usually spotted basking on suitable rocks and ice-

flows and we can also expect some interesting encounters with these bizarre-looking arctic animals. However, it is the mighty Polar Bear that is our primary target here, and we will keep our eyes peeled for any of these super predators prowling on the edge of the sea ice, around the small islands or on the area's ice floes. Please note that our stops along the shore of Lancaster Sound will depend very much on ice conditions and weather.

There may be a possibility for a shore visit at Radstock Bay, the location of one of the most impressive ancient Thule sites in the Arctic. Exploring the well-preserved remains of the subterranean houses, including the whale bones used as supports for the dwellings, will give you an understanding of how these pre-Inuit people thrived in the Far North.

We will attempt to land at Beechey Island, a Canadian National Historic Site. Named after explorer Frederick William Beechey, the island is the final resting place of members of Sir John Franklin's 1845–46 expedition to find the Northwest Passage. The graves, on a desolate rocky beach, were discovered in 1850 by a team searching for signs of the ill-fated expedition.

Predominantly covered in glaciers and ice fields, Coburg Island and its surrounding waters comprise the Nirjutiqavvik National Wildlife Area. The island's steep coastal cliffs are an ideal habitat for hundreds of thousands of nesting seabirds like Brunnich's Guillemots (Thick-billed Murres), Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars and Black Guillemots.



Polar Bear by Julie Wilkerson





Icebergs by Julie Wilkerson

Day 12. Smith Sound. Before saying goodbye to Canada, we'll push as far north as possible, exploring both sides of Smith Sound, the uninhabited passage between Ellesmere Island and Greenland. Experience a true expedition as weather and ice determine how far north we explore.

Days 13 & 14. Exploring Northwest Greenland. Your return to Greenland will have you sailing along the remote northwest coast, a land of

impressive icebergs and massive glaciers. Qaanaaq, formerly known as Thule, is one of the northernmost towns in the world. Here, local Inuit share their culture and traditions, while the museum sheds more light on life near the top of the world.

We hope to explore Melville Bay, a significant whaling site until the early 1900s. Opening up to Baffin Bay, the area is a major egress for the Greenland ice cap and is home to spectacular icebergs in all shapes and sizes, making it an ideal spot for Zodiac cruising. If you're feeling adventurous, perhaps you'll treat yourself to a unique arctic experience by partaking in an optional paddling excursion (additional cost).

Day 15. At sea. As we continue sailing south along the west coast of Greenland, presentations by our on-board experts will prepare you for the adventures that lie ahead.

Days 16 to 18. Exploring West Greenland. Boasting spectacular glaciers, mountainous landscapes, dramatic fjords and vibrant communities, the west coast of Greenland will leave you breathless. Some areas we hope to explore here are Uummannaq, Itilleq and the impressive Ilulissat Icefjord. Quite possibly the most picturesque place in Greenland, the traditional Inuit town of Uummannaq (which means "heart-like") takes its name from the red heart-shaped mountain that rises up a staggering 3,840 feet (1,170 meters) behind it. You'll want to be positioned on deck as your ship approaches the shore, with your camera ready to capture the inspiring vistas of the twin

peaks soaring high above the colourful houses dotting the rugged coastline. Another beautiful locale is the Ilulissat Icefjord, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Home to Jakobshavn, one of the most active glaciers in the world, this is a great spot to enjoy a Zodiac excursion past towering icebergs. Venturing ashore in the town of



Brunnich's Guillemots by Alasdair Hunter





Caribou by Forrest Rowland

Ilulissat (which means “iceberg”) will allow you to visit the icefjord on foot and gaze at this unforgettable river of ice from the rocky shore.

Surrounded by sea and mountains, Itilleq (meaning “crossing place”) is situated about a mile (2 km) above the Arctic Circle, in a scenic hollow on a small island. It is the southern limit of the Greenlandic sled dog. To keep the breed pure, the dogs are not permitted south of this community and all other dog breeds are prohibited this far north. Explore the town’s traditional wooden houses painted in a rainbow of colours, chat with the locals, whose main trade is fishing, and maybe challenge them to a game of

football (soccer) - it won’t be long before you’re experiencing Itilleq’s famous friendly vibe.

Day 19. Disembark in Kangerlussuaq, fly to Reykjavik. Enjoy one more Zodiac ride to shore, where you’ll board your charter flight back to Reykjavik, Iceland. Upon arrival in Reykjavik, we will transfer you to your included hotel.

Day 20. Depart Reykjavik. Today, you can make your way home at your leisure or spend time exploring this vibrant city.

POSSIBLE LANDINGS...

Embracing the unexpected is part of the Legacy - and excitement - of expedition travel. When traveling in extremely remote regions, your Expedition Team must allow the sea, the ice and the weather to guide route and itinerary details. The following landing sites are a sample of what you may experience on your expedition.

Canada

BEECHEY ISLAND

Named after Frederick William Beechey, an explorer with the Royal Navy, this is one of Canada’s most important Arctic sites and has been deemed a Canadian National Historic Site. During the Franklin expedition of 1845–46, two of Franklin’s ships, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror, anchored

here with perilous results. Three of Franklin’s crew died here and are buried at a marked gravesite.



Musk Ox by Forrest Rowland



COBURG ISLAND

A well-known nesting ground, Cobourg Island is a wildlife reserve with a diverse avian community. Brünnich's Guillemots, Black-legged Kittiwakes, Northern Fulmars and Black Guillemots dominate the cliffs here, while it's also possible to spot Snow Goose, Snowy Owl, Peregrine Falcon and Gyrfalcon.

CROKER BAY

A nearby glacier actively calves off chunks of ice, creating a birthing place for icebergs at Croker Bay. The bay was a popular stop during the 1800s, when a path to the Pacific (the Northwest Passage) was at the forefront of arctic exploration.

DUNDAS HARBOUR

Located on Devon Island, there are remains of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police post here, dating back to 1924. Historically, this area has been settled for more than 3,000 years by Inuit and pre-Inuit cultures. The Inuit name for Devon Island (Talluruti) refers to the various north-south oriented fjords on Devon's south coast that resemble the tradition women's straight line chin tattoos. Be alert for wildlife, as Walrus, Polar Bears and Musk Ox have been seen here.

ISABELLA BAY

A Bowhead Whale sanctuary, the Ninginganiq National Wildlife Area is comprised of the islands of Isabella Bay and the surrounding shoreline and waters. As many as a hundred Bowhead Whales have been recorded at one time in the bay, which is the single-largest known concentration of the species in Canada.

QIKIQTARJUAQ

Known until 1998 as Broughton Island, Qikiqtarjuaq boasts the highest mountains in North America east of the Rocky Mountains. A friendly and welcoming community will share their techniques for living off the natural resources here.

RADSTOCK BAY

This bay has been a popular research location for observing polar bears. Denning mothers favour the area, and polar bears are frequently seen here during summer months. A Thule site here provides insight into how the pre-Inuit people thrived in the Arctic.

SAM FORD FJORD

This fjord is a rock climber's dream. Tempting some of the most famous mountaineers and adventurers, its sheer rock faces form a severe barrier against the sea. The dramatic landscape makes for stunning photographs.

West Greenland

ILLULISSAT

North of the Arctic Circle, this ice fjord is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Recognized as one of the fastest-moving glaciers in the world, the Jakobshavn glacier located here moves at 62 feet (19 meters) per day. More glacial ice is calved into the ocean here than anywhere else outside of Antarctica.



ITILLEQ

Itilleq in Greenlandic means “a hollow,” which is where this village is situated, on an island without any freshwater. The village has approximately 130 inhabitants and offers picturesque views of colourful Greenlandic houses dotted along the rocky landscape.

KANGERLUSSUAQ

Kangerlussuaq and the Kangerlussuaq Fjord in West Greenland present the potential for glimpses of such arctic wildlife as Musk Ox and Caribou. Mountainous landscapes provide a great backdrop at this port of embarkation and disembarkation.

MELVILLE BAY

This large bay was named by explorer Sir John Ross after Lord Melville, the first lord of the British Admiralty. The Greenland ice sheet comes down to the coast, making it a major egress for some of the most spectacular icebergs in the world.

QAANAAQ

Qaanaaq is one of the world’s most northern settlements. Traditional means of living are strong here, and the local museum helps shed some light on what it takes to live this close to the top of the world.

UUMMANNAQ

Uummannaq was founded as a Danish colony in 1758 on the Nuussuaq mainland, but in 1763 it was moved to the nearby island, as seal hunting was more plentiful there. Within sight of the Greenland ice sheet, this town and the island of the same name are a study in contrasts.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, cabin prices, single supplement rates, relevant flight costs and spaces available for this cruise are displayed on our website. Please note that cabins have variable prices depending on type and size. Please see under IMPORTANT INFORMATION below.

You are welcome to contact the Rockjumper office for further information and specifics on the cabins variations and booking conditions for this tour.

Please note: The cruise costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs (especially the price of fuel) and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges or other price adjustments need to be implemented. Furthermore, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary due to unforeseen circumstances, but please be aware that we will attempt to stick as close to the original program as possible.

Please note: these prices do NOT include the Mandatory Transfer Package, Optional Adventure Package – Sea Kayaking or Optional Adventure Package – Paddling.

This includes:

- Shipboard accommodation with daily housekeeping;
- All meals, snacks, soft drinks and juices on board;
- Beer and house wine during dinner;
- All shore landings per the daily program;
- Leadership throughout the voyage by our experienced Expedition Leader;
- All Zodiac transfers and cruising per the daily program;



- Formal and informal presentations by our Expedition Team and special guests as scheduled;
- Photographic journal documenting the expedition;
- Waterproof expedition boots on loan for shore landings;
- Official Quark Expeditions® parka to keep;
- Coffee, tea and cocoa available around the clock;
- Complimentary reusable water bottle;
- Hair dryer and bathrobe in every cabin;
- Comprehensive onboard materials, including a map and an informative Arctic Reader;
- All miscellaneous service taxes and port charges throughout the program;
- All luggage handling aboard the ship;
- Emergency evacuation insurance to a maximum benefit of US\$500,000 per person;
- Greenland voyages cruise passenger tax.

The tour fee does not include:

- **International airfares;**
- Mandatory Transfer Package*;
- Arrival and departure transfers except where listed in the Mandatory Transfer Package;
- Passport and visa expenses;
- Government arrival and departure taxes not mentioned above;
- Meals ashore unless otherwise specified;
- Baggage, cancellation, interruption and medical travel insurance - **strongly recommended;**
- Excess-baggage fees on international flights;
- Mandatory waterproof pants for Zodiac cruising, or any other gear not mentioned;
- Laundry, bar, beverage and other personal charges unless specified;
- Phone and Internet charges;
- Voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for shipboard staff and crew;
- Additional overnight accommodation;
- Any Adventure Options;

***MANDATORY TRANSFER PACKAGE INCLUDES:**

- One night's pre-expedition hotel accommodation in Reykjavik
- Group transfer from the Reykjavik hotel to the ship on Day 2
- Charter flight from Reykjavik to Kangerlussuaq
- Group transfer from the ship to the Kangerlussuaq airport on disembarkation day
- Charter flight from Kangerlussuaq to Reykjavik
- Group transfer from Reykjavik airport to hotel on disembarkation day
- One night's post-expedition hotel accommodation in Reykjavik
- Shuttle transfer to Keflavik airport on last day of itinerary;

INCLUDED ACTIVITIES:

ZODIAC CRUISING - Zodiacs are the workhorses of polar expeditions, safely transporting guests to remote shorelines and shallow inlets - places the ships can't reach. Expedition staff make stepping in and out of them safe and comfortable.

HIKING - Led by experienced staff, exploring in foot is the best way to appreciate the polar landscapes. Our guides are able to accommodate a range of skill levels to suit every passenger.



PRESENTATIONS - Daily chats with on-board experts - our guides, scientists and other special guests—let guests rub shoulders with historians, ornithologists, biologists, geologists and more.

POLAR PLUNGE

This rite of passage, experienced just once per expedition, sees you safely jumping into icy ocean waters under the watchful eye of our staff—and just about every single camera lens on board!

PHOTOGRAPHY - Documenting your voyage so you can take the memories home is a rewarding experience. Our photography guides will help you learn skills to capture the beauty of the Polar Regions.

OTHER EQUIPMENT ON BOARD - Walking poles are provided at each landing for your convenience. As there are limited number of poles available, please bring your own if you require them on every landing.

ADVENTURE OPTIONS:

SEA KAYAKING - Imagine gliding across the surface of a bay in the presence of icebergs and glaciers. Our Sea Kayaking adventures are a great way to feel at one with the sea. A small group of kayakers will plan to go out multiple times per voyage instead of shore landings. The number of kayaking opportunities are weather dependent and will only be conducted during calm conditions.

Prior kayaking experience is recommended for you to feel comfortable on the water, and the capability to do a wet exit is strongly encouraged. Beginners interested in kayaking should consider participating in the Paddling Excursion adventure option.

PADDLING EXCURSION - If you're interested in kayaking and would like to try something less in depth than Sea Kayaking, you can still enjoy the benefits of adding an on-water experience to your expedition with a Paddling Excursion. Sign up for a onetime paddle on our sit-on-top kayaks, which are stable and unencumbered - perfect for anyone with little to no kayak experience. Expert guides take rotating groups of passengers on calm days to connect with the sea.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we now quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour).

b) Please also note that a Rockjumper leader may not accompany the expedition unless a minimum of 12 participants are signed up through Rockjumper. In the case that a Rockjumper leader is not on board, the professional expedition staff will take care of all participants signed up through Rockjumper.

c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs (especially fuel) and may have to be adjusted as a result. You will be notified by email if fuel surcharges or other price adjustments need to be implemented.

d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.



Important Reminder

Embracing the unexpected is part of the legacy—and excitement—of expedition travel. When traveling in extremely remote regions, your Expedition Team must allow the sea, the ice and the weather to guide route and itinerary details. This itinerary is a tentative outline of what you'll experience on this voyage; please be aware that no specific itinerary can be guaranteed. By the same token, wildlife encounters as described are expected but not guaranteed. Your Expedition Team will use their considerable experience to seek out wildlife in known habitats, but the presence of any particular species of bird or marine wildlife is not a guarantee.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE DETAILS:**Arriving in Reykjavik**

You may arrive in Reykjavik at any time during Day 1 of the itinerary and make your way to the included hotel. On arrival at the hotel, you will receive a welcome letter outlining the departure information for the following day's flight. An agent representing Quark Expeditions® will be available in the lobby of the hotel this evening to answer any questions about the charter flight scheduled for the following morning.

Kangerlussuaq and embarkation

Your flight to the Arctic is expected to depart from Reykjavik to Kangerlussuaq on Day 2 of the itinerary in the afternoon. The scheduled flight time will be communicated in your welcome letter, and you will be transferred from your hotel to check in at the airport. Upon arrival in Kangerlussuaq, you will be transferred to the ship by Zodiac.

Disembarkation in Kangerlussuaq

Your ship is scheduled to arrive in Kangerlussuaq between 7am and 8am local time. After breakfast, and once the ship has anchored, you will have time to bid farewell to your Expedition Team and shipmates before completing your disembarkation. The process takes about an hour. After disembarkation, you will be transferred to the airport for the return charter flight to Reykjavik.

Departing from Reykjavik

Upon arrival in Reykjavik, there will be a group transfer to your included post-expedition hotel. After breakfast the following morning, you may make your way to the airport to connect with your onward flight, or stay longer if you have booked additional accommodation.

Hotel Accommodations

Your included accommodation begins on Day 1 of your itinerary, and the specific hotel(s) will be indicated in your final voyage confirmation. If you are arriving prior to Day 1 of your expedition or are staying after the disembarkation day and would like help booking a pre- or post-stay, please contact your Polar Travel Adviser or travel professional for hotel options. As accommodation space is limited, you are encouraged to request any extra nights as early as possible.

Arrival and Departure Transfers

An arrival transfer in Reykjavik is not included in the expedition; however, your Polar Travel Adviser or travel professional can arrange one for you. Your final night's included accommodation will be provided at a hotel close to Keflavik International Airport, and a transfer to the airport will be available on the final day of the itinerary. A transfer to the city is not included if you are extending your time in Iceland after the expedition but one can be arranged for you.



FLIGHTS:

Keflavík International Airport, Iceland (IATA: KEF), is the main port of entry for international flights for this tour and is well serviced by most international airlines. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**

