

Join **Mark Carwardine** and expert friends on a one-off expedition to Baffin Island and the High Arctic 12 - 27 August 2014

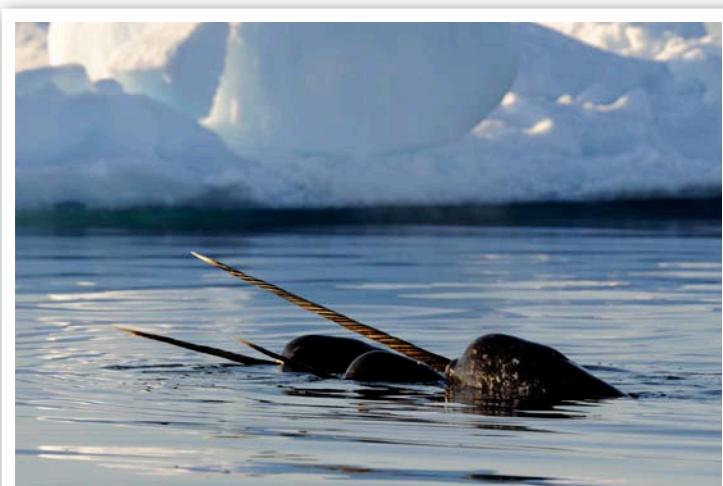
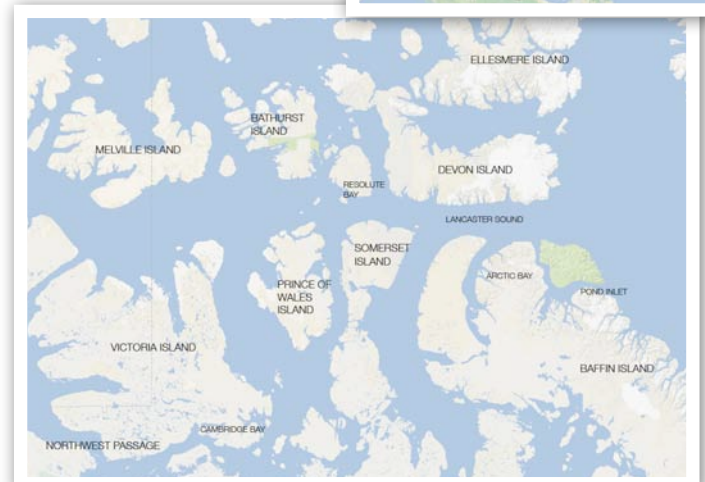


“Our first Baffin Island trip sold out in less than a week, so we’ve chartered the same ship again – this time to explore the northern end of this spectacular corner of the Arctic and to push as far north and west into the seldom visited, wildlife-rich icy wilderness as we possibly can.” Mark Carwardine

The Canadian territory of **NUNAVUT**, is chock full of mountain scenery, ice-choked waterways, deep fjords, deserted beaches, icebergs - and wildlife. Surprisingly few trips explore this wonderful corner of the High Arctic and no expedition cruises combine visits to such enigmatic islands as Baffin, Devon, Prince Leopold and Ellesmere. For this unique adventure - which will be a one-off - we have put together a special itinerary to see as much of the region as we possibly can - northern Baffin and beyond, local Inuit culture and, most of all, the fabulous wildlife. We'll sail along the floe edge in search of polar bears, spend calm days and nights drifting quietly in our Zodiacs looking for the tell-tale signs of narwhal tusks raised above the sea surface, hike along rugged coastlines looking at birds, visit hotspots for bowhead whales, belugas, walrus and musk ox, and explore places such as Pond Inlet, Lancaster Sound, Croker Bay, Dundas Harbor, Prince Leopold Island, Zenith Point, Cunningham Bay, Beechey Island and Grise Fjord. We will join our specially-chartered, comfortable expedition cruise ship in Resolute Bay (they say 'Resolute is not the end of the world, but you can see it from here') then cruise between the islands and the ice off the northern end of Baffin Island and across into the notorious Northwest Passage, before disembarking at Cambridge Bay.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Travel on Mark's exclusively chartered, comfortable and safe, ice-strengthened polar expedition ship - the Akademik Ioffe.



- Wonderfully varied Arctic journey with superb wildlife watching in a spectacularly wild and remote setting with long hours of daylight.
- We hope to see: the three Arctic whale species (bowhead, beluga and narwhal - there is nowhere better for narwhal than northern Baffin) as well as orca; lots of different pinnipeds, including walrus and ringed, bearded and hooded seals; polar bear, Arctic fox, Arctic hare, musk ox and caribou; snow goose, king eider and gyrfalcon, as well as Thayer's, ivory and glaucous gulls, and a wide variety of other Arctic birds; teeming seabird colonies (including the most important site for seabirds in the Canadian Arctic); and lots more.
- We will be joined by natural history filmmakers Peter Bassett and John Ruthven; award-winning landscape photographer Joe Cornish;



ornithologist extraordinaire Dick Filby; manager and trip administrator Rachel Ashton; and a resident team of Arctic experts.

- Exciting cruises in inflatable Zodiacs among breathtaking ice floes for up-close encounters with wildlife.
- Learn first-hand about the remarkable history of the region and about the art and culture of the local Inuit.
- Visit the graves of British explorer Sir John Franklin's expedition team and other polar explorers, on Beechey Island, after their failed attempts to find the Northwest Passage.
- Fabulous photographic and video opportunities, with special tuition and workshops by well-known experts.
- Outstanding schedule of lectures, talks, workshops and seminars by a range of polar and wildlife experts.
- We lend you all the appropriate Arctic outer clothing and boots.

ITINERARY

During this trip, we focus on the northern end of Baffin Island, as well as smaller, largely uninhabited islands further north and west. The cruise itinerary is outlined below, but please bear in mind that it is likely to change as we take advantage of weather and ice conditions and wildlife (if we find a large number of bowhead whales, for example, we won't want to leave in a hurry). More details on the pre- and post-tour package (including flights and hotels) will be available soon.

Tue 12: Pre-tour package or independent travel arrangements from London to Edmonton – overnight in Edmonton.

Wed 13: Pre-tour package or independent travel arrangements from Edmonton to Resolute Bay (one of the most northerly inhabited places on Earth) – board the Akademik Ioffe in the morning - sail out into Resolute Passage to begin our journey.

Thu 14 - Sun 24: We have no fewer than 12 nights on board to explore this wild and little-visited corner of the Arctic. Our exact itinerary and timings will depend on ice

conditions and wildlife-watching opportunities, but we hope to explore Pond Inlet (famous for narwhal and bowhead), Lancaster Sound (outstanding for bowhead and other Arctic whales), Maxwell Bay on Devon Island (excellent for walrus), Croker Bay and Dundas Harbor on Devon Island (good for beluga, polar bear, musk ox, walrus and Arctic fox), Prince Regent Inlet (great for beluga), Prince Leopold Island (with up to 200,000 pairs of seabirds), Zenith Point (the northernmost point of mainland Canada and great for polar bear), Point Ross on Melville Island (another good place for bowhead), Bellot Strait (for polar bear and musk ox), Cunningham Bay (one of the best places in the world for beluga), Beechey Island (to see the graves of early explorers and to look for white gyrfalcon), Grise Fiord on Ellesmere Island (great for polar bears), and other enigmatic and wildlife-rich places.



Mon 25: Bid farewell to the staff and crew of the Akademik Ioffe and, after breakfast, disembark in Cambridge Bay (in the famed North-west Passage) - post-tour package or independent travel arrangements from Cambridge Bay to Edmonton - overnight in Edmonton.

Tue 26: Fly Edmonton to London.

Wed 27: Arrive home in London.

SHIP DETAILS

The Akademik Ioffe - a modern, safe, comfortable, ice-strengthened vessel - is like a floating wilderness lodge and ideally suited for polar exploration. Mark has travelled on many polar vessels over the years, and rates her as one of the best.

Built in Finland in 1989, and recently refitted and refurbished, she is designed to be exceptionally stable, with sophisticated stabilizers and a built-in ballast trimming system to reduce motion significantly. She is also remarkably quiet, with little ambient noise (from either the engines or machinery) in the cabins and public areas.

There is ample deck space, with viewing areas on each passenger level of the ship. The top deck enjoys 360° views for watching the Arctic glide by. Meanwhile, the ship's bridge, and the chart and navigation room, are open to everyone.

The public areas are expansive and filled with natural light. They include: a lounge and bar (with a fireplace and tea and coffee always available), a well-appointed library (with large windows overlooking the bow deck and the inevitably breathtaking scene beyond), a gift shop, a multi-media centre (with Apple Mac computers freely available and loaded with the latest software for photo management and manipulation, a DVD/CD burner and a photo printer), a well-equipped gym and a tiny sauna. Briefings and lectures are held in a large presentation room, with theatre-style seating and the latest in digital technology.

There is a full complement of Zodiacs (rigid-hulled inflatable boats) aboard, for breathtaking ice and wildlife cruises, and to take everyone ashore.

The 117-metre vessel is maintained to the highest standards and kept immaculately clean. She has a crew and staff of 63 - the passenger-to-staff ratio is one of the highest in the industry - and there is an extremely high level of personal service. Attention to detail is second-to-none, yet the atmosphere on board is relaxed. The Akademik Ioffe is the perfect size for this trip. She is large enough to provide very comfortable accommodation - and a stable platform - and yet small enough to ensure maximum time ashore and to venture into more remote areas.

Safety is a priority, of course. With an extremely experienced captain and crew, and regularly tested safety and emergency equipment, the Ioffe is exceptionally safe for polar expedition cruising. There is also a small infirmary and crew doctor, who is available to give a basic and emergency medical service.

And, finally, the Ioffe is built and operated to be as environmentally friendly as possible, from using Marine Grade Fuel (the highest grade marine fuel with the lowest emissions) to the ecologically sensitive cleaning supplies used by the cabin stewards.

ACCOMMODATION

There is a choice of comfortable, fresh and clean cabins (triple, twin or superior) as well as suites, on four different decks (please see the ship's deck plan overleaf for more details). All are tastefully and pleasantly decorated and furnished, with a writing desk and chair and ample storage. All of them have opening windows (except triple cabins, which have portholes) with some of the most spectacular views in the world! Some have sofa-beds, which are the size of normal beds, and just as comfortable, but double-up as sofas during the day (they are converted every evening by the cabin stewards).

Triple cabin (2 available): 2 bunk beds and 1 sofa-bed, with sink. Shared facilities.

Twin/single cabin (5 available): 2 bunk beds and 1 sofa-bed, with sink. Shared facilities.

Twin semi-private cabin (12 available): 1 single bed and 1 sofa-bed. Facilities shared with 1 other cabin (the bathroom is in-between the 2 cabins, so you don't have to walk through a public area).



Twin cabin with semi-private facilities

Twin private cabin (14 available): 2 single beds. Private facilities.

Superior cabin (9 available): 2 single beds and a sofa. Private facilities.

Shackleton Suite (5 available): very spacious with separate sleeping quarters (1 double-bed and 1 sofa-bed), TV/DVD player, iPod dock alarm clock, mini bar. Private facilities.

One Ocean Suite (1 available): very spacious with separate sleeping quarters (1 double-bed and 1 sofa-bed), TV/DVD player, iPod dock alarm clock and iPod speaker system for main room. Private facilities with a bathtub. This cabin has windows overlooking the bow, which can be opened.

MEALS

All meals aboard ship are included. The window-lined dining room, which can seat everyone in one sitting, is catered by international chefs, offering a daily choice of cuisine. The food is excellent, varied and tasty, with plenty of healthy options made with fresh ingredients.

LEADERS

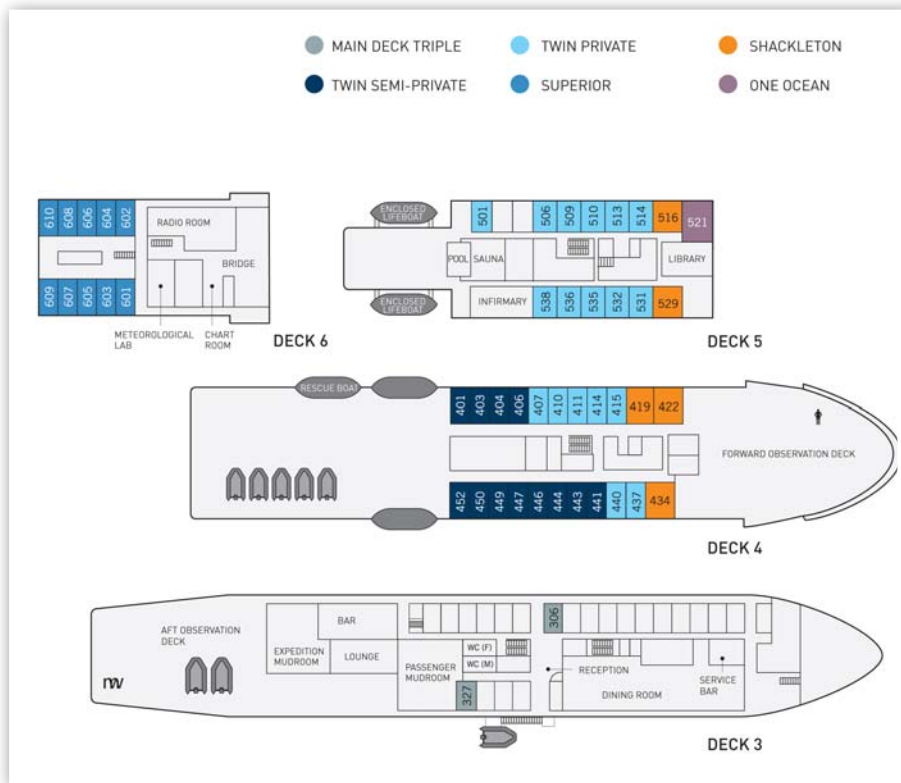
Mark Carwardine will be hosting the trip and will also give lectures and run workshops. He will be accompanied by film-maker John Ruthven (producer/director of the BBC Natural History Unit's Blue Planet and many other classic wildlife films); film-maker Peter Bassett (producer of the BBC Natural History Unit's Life of Birds, Life in the Undergrowth and Life in the Freezer, and many others) - John and Peter will be making a video of our trip for everyone to take home afterwards; Britain's best-known landscape photographer Joe Cornish (owner of his own photographic gallery and author of many books); Dick Fllby (founder of the Rare Bird Alert news service and a veteran of wildlife trips to the polar regions); Tamsin Constable (wildlife writer and editor) who will provide a diary of the holiday; and Rachel Ashton (manager and trip administrator). There will be a highly experienced resident polar expedition team on board, too, who will be responsible for day-to-day activities and will provide detailed briefings on each landing.

Between them all, they will provide a huge variety of entertaining and informative lectures (on everything from history and geology to Arctic whales and seabirds) and workshops (on wildlife identification, wildlife and landscape photography, film-making, etc) throughout the trip.

WHY AUGUST?

August is the best month for several reasons. There are long hours of daylight (it never really gets dark - the short night consists of twilight rather than darkness); the ice has melted sufficiently to give us access to many of the best wildlife-rich areas; and it offers the best





Price does not include: return flights from the UK to Resolute Bay and from Cambridge Bay back to the UK (via Edmonton); airport arrival and departure taxes; any other pre-voyage airport transfers; any additional pre- or post-voyage accommodation and land arrangements (if required); passport and visa expenses; government arrival and departure taxes; excess baggage charges; cancellation, baggage and travel insurance (compulsory); meals on shore; alcoholic and soft drinks; items of a personal nature such as laundry and telecommunications charges; medical expenses; crew and resident expedition staff gratuities (we suggest about US\$10 per day, usually collected towards the cruise end).

OPTIONAL PRE-CRUISE EXTENSION & FLIGHT PACKAGE

We are delighted to offer an optional pre-trip package, including flights from London (with charter flights from Edmonton to Resolute Bay, and Cambridge Bay to Edmonton – cheaper than scheduled flights), hotel accommodation, transfers, etc. Full details now available (see website).

PAYMENT SCHEDULE (per person)

- Non-refundable deposit due on booking: £1,500
- First-stage payment due on 15 January 2014: £2,000
- Optional pre-trip package (including flights) due on 15 April 2014
- Balance due on 15 April 2014: varies according to cabin

This trip's bonding and liability insurance is provided by Wildlife Worldwide - so the money you pay is safe even in the highly unlikely event of cancellation or insolvency. ABTOT registered member 5199 ATOL: registered member 10544



chance of decent weather. It is also a really good time to see narwhal and bowhead.

GROUP SIZE

There will be approximately 94 passengers on the ship altogether, plus Mark and his team. The ship is capable of holding 110 passengers, but we limit numbers.

WEATHER & SEA CONDITIONS

Temperatures in the second half of August vary considerably, but they are likely to range from about zero to 11°C, with an average of around 4°C. With appropriate clothing (which we provide) this can be exhilarating, especially when the sun is out and the air is still. There is likely to be some rain (it typically rains, at least once, on roughly 10 days during the entire month). While snow is possible at any time of year, it is least likely in August. It is very warm on the ship - many people wander around in T-shirts.

The other consideration is sea conditions and seasickness. The good news is that we don't have any long open sea crossings (unlike trips to the Antarctic) and most of the trip is spent in relatively calm, sheltered waters close to islands and sea ice. Most importantly, we have a good-sized ship with sophisticated stabilizers and a built-in ballast trimming system to reduce motion and ease the way (the loffe is built to be exceptionally stable).

PRICES (excluding flights):

- £4,895 (sharing triple cabin with shared facilities)

- £5,845 (sharing twin cabin with shared facilities)
- £6,395 (sharing twin cabin with semi-private facilities)
- £6,850 (sharing twin cabin with private facilities)
- £7,275 (sharing superior cabin with private facilities)
- £7,650 (sharing Shackleton Suite with private facilities)
- £8,495 (sharing One Ocean Suite with private facilities)

Single supplements: 1.7x price for twin cabins and 2x price for suites (cruise only). Unfortunately, single supplements are not available for triple cabins.

Price includes: airport-to-ship transfer pre-voyage and ship-to-airport transfer post-voyage; 12 nights' accommodation in comfortable cabin on the Akademik loffe, with daily housekeeping; all meals throughout the voyage; guide services of Mark Carwardine and expert friends from arrival in Resolute Bay; leadership throughout the voyage by the resident Expedition Team; all shore landings and excursions during the cruise; pre-departure advice and information; all miscellaneous service taxes and port charges; loan of Wellington boots, polar jacket and waterproof trousers (perfect for Arctic conditions – and saves considerable space in your suitcase).

