



# Blaming the bear's victims

*Many scorn 'arrogance' of youth group; fatal attack by bear may have been due to toothache*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

They were initially described as heroes for fighting and first-aid efforts that prevented more deaths. But the group of youths is now hearing many observers call them arrogant and stupid – along with the idea of even allowing field research trips in Svalbard.

"Exercise in Arrogance Ends Predictably," reads one newspaper headline analyzing the Aug. 5 polar bear attack that killed one youth and wounded four others. "Should We Return to Spitsbergen?" asks another wondering if land-based expeditions should be allowed.

Second-guessing is also occurring about the cause of the attack. Officials and scientists initially speculated the bear was forced from its traditional feeding areas due to climate change, but an exam reveals the animal was

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NORWEGIAN VETERINARY INSTITUTE

One of several bad teeth in a Svalbard polar bear that killed a teenager is shown by an examiner.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JØRN HURUM

Jørn Hurum, third from left, and other members of his expedition at Janusfjellet make a plaster jacket for a large fossil so it can be "flipped out of the Earth and transported intact" to Oslo, according to the trip's journal. The dolphin-like ichthyosaur, believed to be a new species, is nicknamed "Nillefanten."

# New dino types are old news

*Another ichthyosaurs species likely found while facing snow, bears during annual fossil dig*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Another year, another new dinosaur species.

It's so common for Jørn Hurum during his annual summer fossil excavation expeditions at Janusfjellet he relishes digging up bones he's already familiar with.

"We hope that some of those are the same as species found before," he said of this

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# Tourists ♥ north, but not Svalbard

*Northern Norway sees boom in part due to Hurtigruten, but drop locally hits ferry's finances hard*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

More than half of Norway's population watched a 134-hour reality TV show of a ferry voyage. but they aren't showing the willingness to go the distance in real life.

Tourism in Norway's three northernmost mainland counties is up 19 percent this year compared to 2010, far above the five percent

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NRK NETT

The *Nordnorge* ferry cruises along the Norwegian coast during a voyage watched live on television by 2.5 million people in the 134-hour reality show "Hurtigruten – Minute by Minute." The program can be streamed at <http://nrk.no/hurtigruten>.

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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## Corrections policy

When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

## Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

## The burly bird caches the sperm



UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

A Svalbard rock ptarmigan is observed by scientists who say they found large differences in the running capabilities between the sexes of the species. Larger males are able to run more efficiently and up to 50 percent faster than females, said Jonathan Codd, a University of Manchester professor leading the study. The faster and more efficient males are also more successful at breeding because they are able to defend larger territories against rivals. Details about the study are available at [www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/news/display/?id=7321](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/news/display/?id=7321).

# Svalbard woes hit ferry hard

## CONTRAST, from page 1

nationally, with the TV show getting partial credit. But passenger traffic to Svalbard has been abysmal, with the ferry system stating 36 million kroner of a 64 million kroner loss in revenue is due to reduced sailings here.

"There have been many cancellations due to various events, technical failures and weather conditions," the company's report for the first six months of 2011 states. "The activity in Svalbard was hit hard when all sailings of the chartered ship *MS Polar Star* had to be canceled when the ship was not available due to bankruptcy of the company owning it."

Hurtigruten is also facing increased competition from other cruise ship and tour firms.

Svalbard's tourism industry has struggled the past two years due to economic and nature-

related setbacks, and the downturn appears to be continuing after a brief upturn at the beginning of this year.

But the Troms district is reporting a 24 percent increase in tourism through May compared to a year ago, including 22 percent in the city of Tromsø. The Nordland district was up 18 percent and Finnmark up nine percent.

John-Steve Linløkken, head of Norwegian Arctic Tourism, told NRK industry efforts and the *Hurtigruten* reality show are responsible.

"We spent more money on marketing than we have in the past and we are more targeted," he said.

The show, "*Hurtigruten – Minute by Minute*," attracted 2.5 million viewers.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## Icesheet

### Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Prince Harry's Excellent Arctic Adventure this spring is back in the news as a two-part BBC documentary about the trip is scheduled to be aired beginning Aug. 23. The prince says he kept the trip a secret from the queen and his father was "very nervous" about the idea. It seems impossible to believe anything stays secret long in the royal family – especially when you invite the press hordes to watch you – and he acknowledges "my grandparents and the rest of my family probably just found out about it and they may think I'm completely mad." ... We've taken a lot of sarcastic potshots at video games featuring Svalbard since they tend to

feature penguins 12,000 kilometers from their natural habitat or genetic science mutations run amok. But this fall release may soak up a huge part of the upcoming dark season: Naval War Arctic Circle is a real-time strategy game set in the year 2030 where you "take on the enemy as commander of the awesome contemporary navy of either NATO, the Nordic Alliance, Russia or the United States." Frankly, we're torn between being the "good guy" Norwegians defending this little piece of home turf or the "evil" Russians who have so much more power (and, some might accuse, fewer scruples). If the latter, it definitely won't be with any user name we can be associated with.



PHOTO COURTESY OF JØRN HURUM

Jørn Hurum and members of his team excavate and plaster a fossil despite snow in the Konus Valley. "This is hard and dirty work, and the snowstorm didn't make it more pleasant," Hurum noted.

## Snow, bear liven up 'normal' dig

### EXCAVATE, from page 1

year's findings. "The more specimens we have the more accurate our research about them can be."

The apparent new discovery this year is "Nillefanten," an ichthyosaurs from roughly 150 million years ago similar to others preserved from the area – yet different.

"This is probably a new species to science and is much older than the rest of the ichthyosaurs we have found in this area," Hurum wrote in the expedition's online journal (<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/author/jornhurum>). "We know that because it is found in a lower layer than the others. However, it is particularly fragile as it has been exposed to repeated frosts."

Hurum, a paleontologist and associate professor at the University of Oslo, has been credited with numerous discoveries since beginning the Svalbard trips in 2004. The most notable is the record-size pliosaurs known as "Predator X." Last year's dig revealed yet another species of the dolphin-like ichthyosaur.

"It happens every year," he said, when asked how often he discovers a new species.

Specimens of numerous other fossils were preserved in plaster and are being sent to Oslo for further study. But, like other years, there wasn't time to unearth all the discoveries. Also,

there were the inevitable weather slowdowns, and the expedition team was ravenous by the end of the two-week trip since the decent food supplies were gone.

"It was a quite usual year in many ways," he said. "The only thing unusual was there was a snowstorm for half a day. That, of course, makes it harder."

Expedition members were plastering fossils when the snow fell on the tenth day of the trip, so the moisture wasn't a threat to preserving them, Hurum said.

The team was warned about a heightened risk of polar bears due to an unusual blockage of drift ice along the coast that allowed the animals to reach land easier. There was an encounter, but with a rewarding rather than tragic ending.

"When running from a polar bear yesterday, Nille (Ragnhild Staubo Munthe-Kaas) stumbled over some fossils that turned out to be a very nice ichthyosaur with a complete flipper," Hurum wrote in the journal. "After uncovering more bones the whole morning it was time for lunch, and on the way back to the camp she picked up a beautiful stone, that Jørn realized was a tooth of a pliosaurus. First we have found so far."

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Court: LNSS must leave Svea on Sept. 1; appeal possible

Store Norske legally terminated a contract for LNS Spitsbergen to provide support services at Svea, meaning the company must depart Sept. 1 when a new firm will take over, according to a Friday ruling in Nord-Troms District Court. LNSS was explicitly told in May and June they needed to depart, removing machines and equipment as part of the process, according to the ruling. "Store Norske is on this basis taking the necessary steps to ensure that the operation of the mine can be maintained even after Sept. 1," the ruling states. "A moratorium on mining at Svea will have significant consequences in human, social and economic terms, and will create ripple effects for the entire Svalbard society." LNSS is considering an appeal of the termination which resulted from a scandal involving improper contracts leading to corruption charges against former Store Norske Administrative Director Robert Hermansen.

### Elevation of skate ramp a risk to children, parent tells city

Bård Gundersen isn't allowing his three children to play on Longyearbyen's recently renovated skateboard ramp and is asking the city for a risk analysis, stating "sooner or later there must be an accident." He said he noticed concrete blocks to level the ramp in the center of town have raised it about 80 centimeters in height, and it now reaches two-and-a-half meters above the ground. He said he also noticed children riding on it without helmets and "all the kids climb on it." City Administrator Ivar Undheim said the matter will be looked into as officials return from summer holidays, but he noted there is also playground equipment at Kullungen kindergarten used frequently by children during evenings and weekends.

### Man found in Barentsburg likely died of natural causes

A 51-year-old Russian man found Aug. 7 in Barentsburg likely died of natural causes, according to the Svalbard governor's office. A preliminary autopsy shows no evidence of foul play, but a specific cause of death is not being revealed until the final report is done.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. SE winds to 18 km/h. High 10C (7C wind chill), low 4C (0C wind chill).	Mostly sunny. SE winds to 22 km/h. High 8C (5C wind chill), low 4C (0C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. E winds at 15 km/h. High 2C (-2C wind chill), low 0C (-4C wind chill).	Cloudy. SE winds to 11 km/h. High 3C (1C wind chill), low 0C (-3C wind chill).
Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light	Sunrise/sunset: 24-hour light
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 3C (1C), 0C (-2C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, 3C (1C), 2C (0C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 3C (1C), 1C (-1C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, rain possible, 2C (0C), 2C (0C), light 24:00h.			

Data provided by yr.no



ARLID LYSSAN / SYSSELMANNEN



BSES

Part of a tripwire system deployed around a Tempelfjorden campsite attacked by a polar bear, left, is photographed by a Svalbard police officer as investigators try to determine why it didn't work properly. Killed in the attack was Horatio Chapple, 17, right, seen two days before the incident.

## Group faces scrutiny after attack

### CRITICISM, from page 1

suffering severe toothache pain.

A 13-member group from the British Schools Exploring Society was camping at Tempelfjorden about 40 kilometers from Longyearbyen when the early morning attack occurred. A tripwire system designed to set off flares to scare the bear away apparently failed to activate, and a rifle carried by the group reportedly failed to fire four times before a leader was able to shoot and kill the animal.

Horatio Chapple, 17, was fatally mauled in his tent. Two other youths in the tent, Scott Bennell-Smith, 17, and Patrick Flinders, 16, were seriously injured and subsequently hospitalized. Also severely hurt were expeditions leaders Andrew Ruck, 29, and Michael Reid, 29, who shot the bear and this week is undergoing his third operation for a broken jaw, fractured skull and eye socket damage.

Investigations into the incident are being conducted by the Svalbard governor's office and BSES, and the latter may itself be investigated by UK child protection officials.

BSES has brought student research expeditions to Svalbard for 40 years – and said they will continue to do so – but numerous criticisms about their preparedness during the fatal trip are being voiced by professional and casual observers.

John Ingen Karlsen, head of security at The University Centre in Svalbard, told *Aftenposten* the expedition team correctly pitched their tents on a hill and away from the water's edge, but they failed to have team members on continuous watch for bears and the tripwire system may not have been set up properly.

Laypersons with less familiarity about the area are questioning, sometimes in the harshest

of words, why such trips are even occurring.

"The notion of campers marching in and staying overnight is a revealing insight into mankind's total disregard for the animals' habitat and his arrogance in believing it right and proper for him to be there," wrote Peter Bills, a columnist for the *New Zealand Herald*.

"Perhaps we ought to pass on our sympathies too, to the family of the subsequently shot male bear now left behind to forage for themselves."

Lest one dismiss this as a fringe opinion, 26 of 27 reader comments as of today support the writer, often with insulting words for the expedition. The remaining comment urges readers to wait for the results of investigations before passing judgement.

The cause of the attack is still being officially determined, but a routine rabies exam revealed the bear's teeth were heavily worn, with exposed nerves on two canines and several smaller front teeth, according to a statement by the Norwegian Veterinary Institute. The "great pain" likely affected the bear's behavior.

"Even though healthy, normal polar bears may attack, we believe a bear with such great pain and probably also great difficulty ingesting food may behave abnormally rough and aggressively to people," said Bjørnar Ytrehus, the veterinarian examining the bear's head.

"On the basis of tooth wear, we believe that this is an older bear. Alternatively, one can imagine that the animal has had any illness or injury that has resulted from grazing on the vegetation of the place to hunt their normal prey, and thus has worn down teeth. This we can not reveal without a full autopsy."

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## Local Utøya memorials preserved

Flowers, messages and other tributes left at the Gruvebusen memorial in the center of Longyearbyen for two local victims of the July 22 shooting at the Utøya youth camp are being sent to Oslo to be part of a permanent memorial maintained by the National Archives.

Johannes Buø, 14, was one of the youngest

victims of the attack that, combined with a bombing in Oslo by the same assailant, killed 77 people. Viljar Hanssen, 18, is undergoing a lengthy rehabilitation from life-threatening injuries.

Three other local teens were at the camp, but not injured.

## What's up

### Aug. 15-21

Swimming pool and sports hall at Svalbardhallen closed for maintenance. Gym access and spinning classes are continuing during normal hours.

### Aug. 21

8 p.m.: Movie "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2," U.S./British adventure/family. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 24

8 p.m.: Movie: "Super 8," U.S. horror/sci-fi, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 28

6 p.m.: Movie: "Cars 2" (3D), U.S. animated dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hodejegerne," Norwegian action/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 31

8 p.m.: Movie: "Captain America: The First Avenger," U.S. action/adventure, age limit not determined. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 4

8 p.m.: Movie: "Oslo, 31," Norwegian drama, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 7

6 p.m.: Movie: "Få Meg På For Faen," Norwegian drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 18

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Smurfs" (3D), U.S. animated/family, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 22-24

Beer festival. Radisson SAS Polar Hotel.

### Sept. 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "Knerten i Knipe," Norwegian children's, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 29-Oct. 2

Svalbard CinemArctic 2011. Russian/Norwegian film festival in Longyearbyen and Barentsburg. For more information contact [christin.kristoffersen@unis.no](mailto:christin.kristoffersen@unis.no).

## What's online

**Icepeople.net** provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *Minister: New Svalbard mine important*
- *A tough summer job at Svalbard hospital*
- *Russia to U.N.: North Pole belongs to us*
- *Best way to Mars – Svalbard or S. Pole?*