



SEBASTIAN GERLAND / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

A researcher participating in a Norwegian-Chinese study of the Arctic ice sheet drills a hole to measure surface light and heat radiation. Fresh snow can reflect up to 90 percent of the sun's energy.

# Norway ices China

*Countries, despite tensions, join up for first time to study sea ice and snow cover in the Arctic*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Despite their many bitter political conflicts, Norwegians and Chinese are definitely seeing a thaw in the ice.

Researchers from both countries collaborated

See **ALBEDO**, page 4

# A gigantic comeback

*Svalbard whale sightings rising after threat of extinction; record number of blues in Barents Sea*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

After nearly a century of absence and fears they might become extinct, the world's largest animals are making a return to Svalbard.

A record number of blue whale sightings in  
See **COMEBACK**, page 4



FRANK BAKKEN / UNIS

A blue whale dives in Isfjorden in August. Sightings of the species in Svalbard have risen recently.

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# Liv tossing caution to the 'Vind'

*Longyearbyen singer/pianist making Saturday concert the foundation of her fourth album*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Liv Mari Schei definitely wants her listeners to be a part of her new album. It'd definitely be preferable if their cell phones and screaming babies aren't.

The Longyearbyen singer and vocalist is planning to use a concert at 7 p.m. Saturday at  
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MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

**Hold your applause:** Liv Mari Schei says the audience should wait until the last note plays out during songs at her concert Saturday night.

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

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## Copyright stuff

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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.

## Are any of these silly scientists from Svalbard?



SKEPTICAL SCIENCE

Quips by "97 of the world's top climate scientists" are being revealed at a rate of one per hour this week at a "97 Hours of Consensus" interactive website hosted by Skeptical Science. Each of the scientists was invited to write a short paragraph explaining why human-caused climate change is accepted by 97 percent of the scientific community (99 percent if the field is limited to scientists who frequently publish in the field and have a direct background in atmospheric physics). The site is at <http://skepticalscience.com/nsh>.

## Icesheet

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

We're starting to see a few articles about tourists trying to get off the beaten path by seeking Arctic destinations other than Svalbard and we're guessing that attitude won't be helped by the latest bit of blatant commercialization contained in a photo making the rounds on the internet this week. It turns out **the hungry polar bear that raided the Arctic Nature Guide camp at Nordenskiöldbreen last week took the time to pose and prominently display a bag bearing the logo of Longyearbyen's lone supermarket** (attn. management: send us 2,500 kroner and we'll include the name in our online edition). We're guessing store employees would have been happier if photographer Elida Langstein had managed to get a closer-up shot of the bag's logo (a polar bear, of course), but it's still plenty recognizable enough to prompt numerous viewer comments along the lines of "All (as in ALL!) in Svalbard shop at the store," according to The Local Paper of Recouping Losses ... Speaking of selling out, *The Guardian* hosted a travel writing competition and for its winner in the wildlife category selected Chris Lowery, who wrote about a kayak trip to Svalbard that was "hosted" by Basecamp Explorer. Considering how **he opens his essay with "Curtains!" and then bitches repeatedly about the lack of them in his cabin during the polar summer** we definitely can see why the judges were enthralled. The essay, which in



ELIDA LANGSTEIN / ARCTIC NATURE GUIDE

**Product placement to die for:** Of course, if the lead actor shows up and demands union scale, the sponsors damn well better pay up.

our overly harsh judgement is basically your average travelogue, is at [tinyurl.com/om4p9h5](http://tinyurl.com/om4p9h5) ... Something that's anything but your usual travelogue is an article published this week by Lost Coast Outpost titled "Letter from Istanbul: The Camel, the Polar Bear and the Delivery Boy." The opening, sure to offend some, notes **"according to Turkish lore, a camel's idea of heaven is to die and wake up in the North Pole. Conversely, a camel's idea of hell is to wake up in the desert getting raped by a polar bear."** We don't recall any of this being mentioned by polar bear experts recently, although we suppose climate change might get to the point where both species occupy the same territory. Anyhow, find out how all this ties into watching *Seinfeld* and ordering delivery food at [tinyurl.com/msw4vyk](http://tinyurl.com/msw4vyk).

## Svalbard's fiercest creature? Whatever



A polar bear attempting to sneak up on a group of dozing walrus seals on a beach in Spitsbergen is thwarted as most of the pups rush into the water while the adults circle to protect a cub still on land, seen at top right. The bear eventually retreats from the group and ponders his failure alone on the beach. The sequence was shot by Roy Mangersnes of WildPhoto, whose other photos from the trip are at [tinyurl.com/oyhh735](http://tinyurl.com/oyhh735).

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Ill-prepared and uninformed campers a growing problem

Longyearbyen's campground is increasingly seeing guests arrive without tents, sleeping bags and awareness of the polar bear danger, according to the employees working there this summer. Others are bringing equipment unsuitable for the Arctic elements, expecting employee assistance when they arrive in the middle of the night and trying to avoid paying for a final day if they depart on flights that leave in the middle of the night. The lack of awareness about polar bears ranges from wondering if a vegetarian diet will thwart attacks by them to not knowing the animals exist in Svalbard. The common denominator, according to the employees, is such visitors are arriving on flights from discount carrier Norwegian Air. "Many people have no idea what they are coming to," said Michelle van Dijk, the campsite's owner. "They just fly here because it is cheap."

### Subsea cable to Ny-Ålesund is a job for a special ship

A fiber-optic cable from Longyearbyen to Ny-Ålesund is being installed in the seabed during a multiday voyage by the *Cable Innovator*, one of only two ships in the world with such capabilities. Installation of the cable, which involved more than a year of preparations and is expected to cost about 90 million kroner, began Aug. 29 and was expected to be completed late last week. The 140-meter-long *Cable Innovator*, built in Finland in 1995, is the same vessel that installed the subsea cable linking Svalbard to the mainland. Among the extensive equipment on the ship is the underwater vessel *Excalibur*, which can provide information about difficult terrain or other problems thousands of meters under the ocean's surface.

### Governor's new ship arriving next week after delays

The Governor of Svalbard's new service vessel, scheduled to arrive next week after months of delays, will be christened by Norwegian Minister of Justice and Public Security Anders Anundsen. Gov. Odd Olsen Ingerø said rescue and refueling tests are scheduled Sunday, and the vessel will be brought to Longyearbyen during the week.

## Schei looks for new life with live album

**VIND, from page 1**

Kulturhuset as the foundation for her fourth album. It is her first live recording project as a leader and she said she hopes it will be notably different in energy and structure than her previous works.

"I really want to connect with the audience," she said. "I think it makes me sing better."

"I'm not going to have a concert just for them," she said. "I want them to be a part of it."

The album, "Vind," is described in a promotional announcement as "an attempt to find out how."

"When you live close to the great nature, it is easy to fall in love," the announcement declares. "But it can cloud over – and blow up a storm. 'Vind' is about passion, both between people, and between nature and humans."

The music was composed by Schei – who will sing while performing on piano, Hammond organ and Rhodes – while the lyrics were written by Sigri Sandberg, an author who also collaborated with Schei on the music/video project "Polar Eufori."

"Sigrid and I have worked with some of the

songs for years, but most of the songs are new," Schei said.

Performing with Schei will be Staffan Johansson on traditional and lap steel guitars, and drummer Finn Sletten.

In addition the live setting, Schei said many of the compositions themselves are different than the soothing tones of her previous studio albums in that they are "louder" – meaning more intense – and in her native midland Norwegian dialect.

The plan is for "Vind" to feature 14 songs, including 11 from the concert. Schei said the live songs will be featured individually instead of as a continuous track, with some string quartet backings added to the post-performance mix.

Schei said she is planning rehearsals of the concert on Thursday, Friday and before Saturday's show, but "I don't want to have too much now."

"I really want my album to sound live, not studio perfect," she said.

That said, a retake of a song is possible if disaster – or a Bieber ringtone – strikes.

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

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High 2C (-3C wind chill), low 0C (-5C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High 0C (-5C wind chill), low -2C (-7C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 29 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 0C (-5C wind chill).	Rain. SE winds to 39 km/h. High 7C (3C wind chill), low 4C (0C wind chill).
Sunrise 5:03a; sunset 8:45p	Sunrise 5:11a; sunset 8:36p	Sunrise 5:18a; sunset 8:28p	Sunrise 5:26a; sunset 8:19p

**Extended forecast:** Sunday, rain/snow, 4C (-3C), -1C (-9C), light 14:37h; Monday, rain/snow, 3C (-2C), -1C (-8C), light 14:21h; Tuesday, cloudy, 4C (1C), 3C (0C), light 14:06h; Wednesday, rain/snow, 3C (-1C), 2C (-3C), light 13:50h

Data provided by storm.no

## Good video, bad music – and vice versa



TOM ARNBORN / WWF-CANON



END OF THE ALPHABET RECORDS

A group of walrus, above, are observed from a swimmer's viewpoint as part of a short film of Svalbard available free online. Filmmaker Peter Cox describes the project, available at <http://vimeo.com/102132581>, as a first-person look at some of the archipelago's most scenic features. Some viewers are describing the music with phrases such as a "computer-generated endless I-IV-V-I cadence." An arguably more musically adept effort is the new song "Longyearbyen" by Noel Meek from the experimental album "NoFi Rainbow Vol. 1," although the cover at left is the only visual, available at [tinyurl.com/n5ttuh5](http://tinyurl.com/n5ttuh5).

## Norway, China treading on thin ice

### ALBEDO, from page 1

for the first time on a study of the Arctic ice sheet, with a primary intent of improving the accuracy of measurements, according to the Norwegian Polar Institute. Previous studies have shown a drastic reduction in the ice sheet in recent decades, especially during summers, reaching a record minimum amount of cover in 2012.

"But there is much we still do not know about the ice cover around the North Pole," a statement by the institute notes. "Not least, we up until now knew little about the thickness of the sea ice."

A substantial amount of data was collected by the Chinese and Norwegian researchers, which will provide a solid foundation for future studies, according to the statement.

A key part of the project was the development of a buoy with instruments known as the

Spectral Radiation Buoy. The buoy is an unmanned research platform that allows continuous measurement of sunlight, plus other key snow and ice properties.

Also important is being able to calculate the Earth's albedo, which indicates the amount of light and heat radiation being reflected, which researchers said has been lacking until now.

The study comes at a time when both countries are entangled in numerous Arctic and environmental disputes. Among the most recent examples are Norway's concerns about China expanding its Arctic presence by purchasing a large private land tract in Svalbard and China banning imports of Norwegian salmon because of allegations it's contaminated with a virus that can result in ebola infections.

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

## Whales following food sources north

### COMEBACK, from page 1

the Barents Sea were reported this summer and sightings of several whale species elsewhere in Svalbard also are increasing, according to researchers and media reports. The primary reason appears to be the mammals are following the plankton they feed on, populations of which are decreasing in the Norwegian Sea and increasing further north.

"Currents are pushing nutrient-rich water up into several locations around Svalbard," said Jørgen Berge, a professor at The Arctic University of Norway, in an interview with *Aftenposten*. "Until recently this was covered by ice, now it's open waters."

The Institute of Marine Research reported 25 blue whale sightings, 17 of them in the same place, as of last week in the Barents Sea, the newspaper reported. Kit Kovacs, a Norwegian Polar Institute researcher studying whales in the area for the past 20 years, said she saw no blue whales during the first 15 years, but more are gradually appearing.

An increasing number of humpback, fin and beluga whales are also being observed in Svalbard, according to David Braun, who participated in a weeklong voyage aboard the *National Geographic Explorer* this summer.

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## What's up

### Sept. 9

7 p.m.: Longyearbyen Community Council meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### Sept. 10

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Expendables 3," U.S. action/thriller, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 11

6 p.m.: Registration for Confirmation for Sept. 18 (first meeting) to Sept. 28 (graduation). Birth certificate required, attendance of one or both parents suggested. Svalbard Church.

### Sept. 13

4 p.m.: Photographic contrasts walking tour w/ Longyearbyen Fotoklubb and Japan Photo. Meet at Næringsbygget.

7 p.m.: Recording of live concert album "Vind" by Liv Mari Schei. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 14

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (3D), U.S. action/animated, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 15

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

### Sept. 16

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and fireplace social. Svalbard Church.

### Sept. 17

7:30 p.m.: Concert: "Schubert & Haydn at 78 Degrees North," by musicians from the Northern Norwegian Opera and Symphony Orchestra. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 21

11 a.m.: Family Mass w/ music by Polargospel. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Planes 2: Fire & Rescue," U.S. animated children's film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Let's Be Cops," U.S. action/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

## 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:

- *Canada finds fabled Franklin Arctic ship*
- *Russia building military bases in Arctic*
- *Greenhouse gas hits new high in 2013*
- *'Queers for the Climate': We know peril*