



The world's northernmost alternative newspaper

Vol. 7, Issue 26

July 14, 2015

www.icepeople.net



MITCH WALK



COURTESY OF LONGYEARBYEN CAMPING



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen Camping visitors, right, try in vain to get a glimpse of Svalbard Airport, a couple hundred meters away, through a thick cloud of fog blanketing the town most of Sunday and Monday. At top left, stranded passengers wait for Scandinavian Airlines to sort out who is booked on one of the first outgoing flights after the fog lifted Monday evening. At bottom left, cruise ships housing travelers anchor offshore due to lack of dock space.

# Foggy memories

*Hundreds of tourists stranded as low clouds caused by hot weather shuts airport for nearly two days*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

All commercial and charter flights at Svalbard Airport were cancelled most of Sunday and Monday due to dense fog, stranding about 300 people until the clouds lifted late Monday.

"This is a weather phenomenon that can occur in Svalbard in the summer, this is not abnormal," Airport Manager Morten Ulsnes told NRK. "But we have not had it this bad since 2008. Then there was two or three days where all aircraft were tuned around."

The fog – caused by unseasonably warm temperatures that were higher in the mountains than the airport (which reached a high of 13 degrees Celsius on Sunday), thus drawing sea fog inland – reduced visibility to near zero

**See STRANDED, page 3**

# Paying a fatal price

*Tour group fined 10K kroner for negligence that led to attack by polar bear that had to be killed*

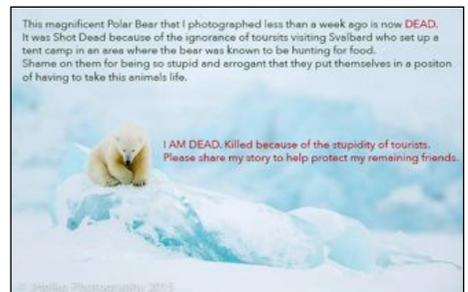
By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

The leader of Czech tour group whose campsite was attacked by a polar bear in March, resulting in the animal's death, has been fined 10,000 kroner for neglecting proper safe-

ty precautions.

The six-person group set up a trip wire alarm incorrectly and didn't have anyone keeping watch when the bear attacked the campsite at Fredheim at about 5:30 a.m. March 19, according to a statement issued Friday by The Governor of Svalbard. One person suffered face and arm injuries before a woman in the group drove the bear off by shooting it three times with a revolver, forcing officials to track

**See PUNISHMENT, page 4**



JOSHUA HOLKO

A Facebook post denounces a group of campers shortly after they were attacked by a polar bear. Numerous photos of the bear and its family were taken during the weeks before the attack.

## What the heck is this?!



A monster mystery from Svalbard  
**Page 2**

## Getting the big 'Mo'



Store Norske adds new subsidiary  
**Page 3**

## Dark memories



Mine 3 reopening for tours this fall  
**Page 4**

## Near beer



First brewery in Longyearbyen days away  
[icepeople.net](http://icepeople.net)

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

### Editor

Mark Sabbatini

### Principal of principles

Kristan Hutchison

### Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

### Accomplice

Jeff Newsom

### Mailing address

*Icepeople*  
Vei 210 -2- 13  
Longyearbyen, Svalbard  
9170  
Norway

### Telephone

Norway: +47 41 51 46 38  
U.S. +1 (970) 673-4472

### E-mail

marksabbatini@yahoo.com

### Web site

www.icepeople.net

*Icepeople* is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

## Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

## 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.

## Whetting the appetite for tourists and scientists



CHRIS KING / QUARK EXPEDITIONS

A polar bear eats a narwhale on the sea ice north of Spitsbergen in this photo taken by an observer on a cruise ship this summer. Numerous photos and sightings of bears and marine mammals are being provided by members of the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO) to scientists as part of a collaborative effort with the Norwegian Polar Institute. Among other notable recent sightings was a polar bear eating a dolphin, the first time researchers said they are aware of such an occurrence, perhaps as part of a pattern that has seen the bears seek new areas and new types of prey as the sea ice vanishes due to climate change.

## Icesheet

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

One of Svalbard's famous creatures is coming out of the closet and exhibiting its vibrant hues after six years in the latest release of the horror/drama/comedy series "Sea Monsters of the North." **An ichthyosaur known as "Gamla," who starred in the 2009 flick "Death of a Sea Monster," has been hauled out of the basement and is on display for the first time** at the Zoological Museum at the Natural History Museum in Oslo. The specimen dug up by paleontologist Jørn Hurum and a team of assistants is believed to be the most complete ichthyosaur skeleton found in the Arctic, with only the end of its tail missing, according to a blog entry at National Geographic's Explorers Journal website ([tinyurl.com/q5oy27w](http://tinyurl.com/q5oy27w)). Moving the 5.5-meter specimen a lengthy process, with preparation of the display occurring "under the gaze of a T-rex," according to the blog by Aubrey Roberts, one of Hurum's assistants. The eye-catching colors are because "the support for the specimen consisted of paraloid pellets, which stick together after adding ethanol. Colored glass sand was added for aesthetic purposes," Roberts wrote. "With all that preparatory work, a total of close to 300 hours over the course of four months was used to get the speci-



JØRN HURUM / NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

**They're just trolling us now:** There's no way these colors are used if they weren't using the "Sea Monsters" moniker to sell science.

men ready for display" ... Since Earth is being captivated by our first good look at Pluto this week, we're throwing in this clickbait from an article titled "The Codes of Life" that starts with exploring the outer solar system, and then somehow moves to DNA and creating non-genetic forms for things like digital data using glass beads. The article ([tinyurl.com/nrvo8d3](http://tinyurl.com/nrvo8d3)) is totally over our heads, but the fun graph: "If kept in the clement European air ...they estimate a (lifespan) of around 2,000 years. But **place these glass beads in the dark at -0.4° F, the conditions of the Svalbard Global Seed Bank...and you could save your photos, music, and eBooks for two million.**"

## Be part of Longyearbyen's growing future!

Polar Permaculture has a vision to develop a resilient and healthy community while reducing our impact on the environment. Our team of experts are creating solutions for organic food growing, transformation of waste streams and engaging our community. Work is commencing on our greenhouse project now. Could you be part of the solution? We would love to hear from you.



## Polar Permaculture

[www.polarpermaculture.com](http://www.polarpermaculture.com) 🌱 4695 4875 🌱 [info@polarpermaculture.com](mailto:info@polarpermaculture.com)



MITCH WALK

Tourists stranded by the closure of Svalbard Airport wait for a replacement bus Sunday after being stranded again outside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault when the bus they were on got stuck in a ditch.

# Fog clouds travelers' plans

## STRANDED, from page 1

soon after a flight departed early Sunday morning. The low clouds lingered through most of Monday despite slightly cooler temperatures.

"We don't know when we're leaving because we keep getting conflicting information," said Barbara Weist, a resident of the Phoenix, Ariz., metropolitan area. "The problem is nobody knows what the weather will be, including SAS."

Two outgoing Scandinavian Airlines flights and two charter flights were cancelled Sunday afternoon and early Monday. An Air Berlin flight scheduled to arrive at 1:30 p.m. Monday afternoon was rescheduled to arrive at 1:20 a.m. Tuesday. Three Norwegian Air and Scandinavian Airlines flights, scheduled to arrive between 6:55 p.m. and 11:50 p.m. and depart between 7:55 p.m. Monday and 4:40 a.m. Tuesday, eventually managed to reach Longyearbyen and depart after some delays.

Weist and her husband, Dennis, said they were spending part of their extra day in Longyearbyen shopping, but had only until 4 p.m. before the last zodiac shuttle to their ship where they were staying an extra night departed.

Many visitors struggled to contact the airport for updates due to swamped phone lines

and to reschedule bookings online via the few free public wi-fi networks that were also swamped. Those who did get through said the backlog of travelers means their problems won't end after they leave Svalbard.

"We can't go back until Thursday," said Mitch Walk, an Orlando resident originally scheduled to arrive home Monday, but unable to rebook a flight until later in the week.

Some travelers planning to return to their home countries from Oslo also found themselves facing fees of thousands of dollars to reschedule flights or transfer to another airline with available seats.

"You can't just jump from flight to flight these days," said Ross Greenberg, a New York resident who said he booked through a travel agency who was able to waive most of his rebooking fees.

Walk said passengers from his cruise disembarked Sunday and were scheduled to depart early that afternoon, but the fog meant the buses scheduled to take them to the airport became four vehicles instead – until yet another mishap occurred when one of the buses went off the road and into a ditch near the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### New Store Norske subsidiary to focus on tourism, research

Store Norske is hoping a new subsidiary, Store Norske Momentum (SNM), will create 30 jobs in Longyearbyen by the end of next year in industries branching out beyond coal mining and real estate. Among SNM's planned projects are a museum in the abandoned Mine 3 scheduled to open later this summer and an Arctic infrastructure/industrial research center at Svea. A subsidiary with a similar concept was part of an emergency financial assistance package Store Norske requested from the Norwegian government due to a crash in coal prices that resulted in large-scale layoffs had the company teetering on the edge of bankruptcy earlier this year. The government rejected the subsidiary, instead providing a 500-million-kroner package intended to keep mining operations alive until the end of next year. But Minister of Trade and Industry Monica Mæland said funding for the new subsidiary will be evaluated separately.

### Paint company opening test center in Longyearbyen

Jotun, a major Norwegian paint company, is planning to open a research facility in Longyearbyen in late August to test its products in Arctic conditions. "Steel is exposed and broken down by the sun, wind and weather conditions," said Svein Erik Andresen, Jotun's global sales director, noting the company's clients include oil giants with oil rigs in the Arctic. "Our task is to make sure that does not happen because we are protecting assets worth enormous sums." LNS Spitsbergen is offering the company a site to build the center, likely at Sjøskrenten or Hotellneset because they're highly exposed to weather. A subsequent agreement with UNIS, with Jotun possibly sponsoring a PhD program, will determine who will operate the research station.

### Yet another odd sign of life

Add owls to the list of odd animal and plant species showing up in Svalbard, as researcher at The Arctic University of Norway at the University of Tromsø said he photographed a ground owl for the first time at Passhytta, during the annual reindeer census earlier this year.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. S winds to 32 km/h. High 10C (6C wind chill), low 5C (1C wind chill).	Cloudy. SW winds to 39 km/h. High 8C (5C wind chill), low 4C (-2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 29 km/h. High 8C (5C wind chill), low 5C (1C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 25 km/h. High 7C (3C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, p. cloudy, 7C (4C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 8C (4C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 8C (5C), 6C (2C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 9C (6C), 5C (2C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no

## Mining for cash (and credit cards)



MERVE ÖZTOPRAK / THE UNIVERISTY CENTRE IN SVALBARD

An Arctic management class at The University Centre in Svalbard gets a guided tour of Store Norske's abandoned Mine 3 in April. The company announced last week it is planning to reopen the mine as a museum this fall, with tours initially led by Basecamp Spitsbergen. Initial tours will include the surface facilities and first portions of the mining area, but the company said long-term plans include extending tours to a stope 600 meters inside the mine. The mine was in operation from 1969 until 1996, and in recent years has been reopened for concerts and other special events. A video of the UNIS tour is available at [tinyurl.com/o2hm4fd](http://tinyurl.com/o2hm4fd).

## Group fined for bear negligence

### PUNISHMENT, from page 1

down and kill the wounded animal.

"All of the tour members were inside the tents and the only protection that was taken against polar bear attacks was one tripwire connected to a line placed so high that polar bears could pass under without triggering the flare," the statement notes.

The fine is the first imposed under an addition to the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act in 2012 that states "anyone who travels outside the settlements, except for visitors and residents who are involved in an organized tour arrangement, are obliged to have knowledge of protection against polar bear attacks

and take appropriate measures to avoid the risk of attack by polar bears, and to be able to avert such an attack without injuring or killing the animal."

The leader of the group is being held responsible because he was the most experienced, according to the governor's statement. The penalty is for failure to take precautions, not for shooting the bear after the attack.

The attack provoked outrage among local residents and many outside observers, since the bear had been spotted and photographed repeatedly during the weeks before the attack.

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

### SHORTLISTED FOR THE BAILEYS WOMEN'S PRIZE FOR FICTION

'AMBITIOUS,  
PROPULSIVE,  
ADDICTIVE,  
ASTONISHING'  
*New York Times*



'CHANGES THE  
WAY WE SEE  
OUR WORLD'  
*Sunday Times*



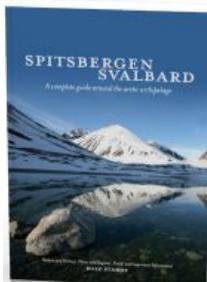
"This book does not only cover **comprehensive** information concerning all fields of possible interest, but is at the same time a photo book containing many color images to illustrate many wildlife and flower species and to document landscapes and places from all over the archipelago."

- Reader review

## THE complete guidebook by the complete guide



SPITSBERGEN-SVALBARD.COM



Sailing Voyages • Books • Photography • DVDs • Polar News And Information

## What's up

### July 14

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

### July 19

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Ted 2," U.S. comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### July 21

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

### July 26

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Ant-Man," U.S. action/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### July 28

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

### Aug. 2

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Mission: Impossible – Rouge Nation," U.S. action/thriller, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 4

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

### Aug. 9

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Pixels" (3D), U.S. comedy/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 11

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

## 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:

- Study: 'Mini ice age' coming in 2030
- Bees join those threatened by warming
- Climate change linked to fatal 2012 flood
- Can birth control save polar bears?

**HELP!** (we need it too much to use a more clever headline)

What you spend on coffee in a week can provide a jolt from *Icepeople* for a year.

Visit [icepeople.net](http://icepeople.net) and, while checking out the extra content, click the "subscribe" box to help with a one-time donation of any amount.