

LOG OF MV POLAR STAR

From Steam to Ice



2ND TO 11TH SEPTEMBER 2008

Written by Joel Turner
Edited: John Harrison
Species List: Chris Furse

MV Polar Star
From Steam to Ice
September 2nd – 11th 2008

Captain	Adam Boczek
Chief Engineer	Zenon Berger
Chief Officer	Dariusz (Darek) Zarwalski
Second Officer	Roberto (Bobby) Sainz
Third Officer	Joseph Banate
Hotel Manager	Florin Blaj
Head Chef	Brian Hanson
Doctor	Cambell Odlin
Pilot	Peter Giersing
Expedition Leader	Hannah Lawson
Staff	Chris Bateman
	Chris Furse
	Vikky Furse
	Lori Gross
	John Harrison
	Ursula Tschertter
	Joel Turner

Tuesday, 2 September - Leaving Reykjavik

Time: Midday
Latitude: 64° 09' N
Longitude: 21° 56' W
Wind: Calm
Pressure: 1015mb
Temperature: 19°C



Standing beside the M/V Polar Star as she sat peacefully in dock, the clear blue skies, warming sun and temperatures upward of 20 degrees centigrade made even the most seasoned traveller question our location. We were indeed in Reykjavik, Iceland, enjoying a small snapshot of what has proved to be their hottest summer on record. The decks were soon awash with new faces as we explored the ship and enjoyed the fantastic views around the harbour. As soon as everyone was confirmed aboard, we lifted anchor and were guided out to open water by the port authority. Our expedition had begun.

In the Observation Lounge we met the team of expedition staff who gave brief indications of their specialist interests and experience. Captain Adam was introduced and First Officer Darek's mandatory safety briefing followed, after which we donned the bright orange life-jackets and

mustered under the lifeboats for the drill. It was then time to find the dining room and enjoy our first meal onboard.

Clear skies and good visibility assisted our team of spotters throughout the afternoon and evening. At one point John Harrison alerted us to the presence of a small pod of white-beaked dolphin and soon after, much to Ursula's delight, a minke whale was seen off the stern of the ship. By early evening we had amassed a staunch following of northern fulmars and kittiwakes who seem to like nothing more than to cruise above and around the ship with no apparent care for the course that would eventually take us far across the Denmark Strait to the East Coast of Greenland. Chris Furse explained that these pelagic birds can fly for many hours at a time, scouring the sea for food, and are attracted to the ship by the free ride on our draft and in the hope of finding some nourishment in our wake.

As darkness settled in, the stars came out in force and many of us chose to spend time on deck familiarising ourselves with the night sky. Seemingly this very sky was gazing back at us and saw fit to formally welcome us to its northern realm with a breathtaking show of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights). Hannah was quick to rouse the ship back into life, although it was now 23:30 and many of us had retired to our cabins, so that everyone had the opportunity to witness this rare and unique phenomenon. The Aurora Borealis presented itself to us as a wide ribbon of green across the night sky, a result of particles from the sun (collectively known as the *solar wind*) colliding with oxygen and nitrogen atoms in the upper atmosphere. This interaction takes place between 70km and 200km above the Earth's surface and occurs in the Polar Regions as a result of the Earth's magnetic field drawing the particles of the solar wind towards the magnetic poles. It is of course not only science that has specific interest in this occurrence; the Inuit attach spiritual significance to the Aurora which plays its role in their rich culture. Whether seen as a gift from the ancestors; to light the dark polar nights or an earthly manifestation of past and future events, there is no doubt that the Aurora Borealis is extremely important to the Inuit way of life and we were privileged to have experienced it on our trip. And so, the day ended with contentment. We returned to our cabins and were gently led to sleep by the calm movements of the ship.

Wednesday, 3 September - At Sea, Denmark Strait

Time: Midday

Latitude: 67° 01' N

Longitude: 24° 02' W

Wind: ExS Force 4

Pressure: 1015mb

Temperature: 8°C

The ship woke to a fresh, sunny morning: perfect conditions to observe our entourage of sea birds. Early risers were lucky enough to witness northern gannets flying amid the fulmars and kittiwakes. Today would be spent entirely at sea, sailing north across the Denmark Strait and thus cutting through the Arctic Circle at 66° 30' N on our way. The East Greenland Current originates in the Arctic Ocean and flows southward through the Denmark Strait at a rate of 0.5 knots (nautical miles per hour) carrying many icebergs into the Atlantic. After rounding Cape Farewell at the southern tip of Greenland, a branch of the current flows northward into Baffin Bay.

During the morning, John Harrison presented the first of his lectures, 'Early Whaling' which included all aspects of the exploration and exploitation of the Arctic into the mid-nineteenth century. After a short break for refreshments, we reconvened in the observation lounge to listen to

Vikky's talk 'Ittoqqoortoormiit' which gave a fascinating insight into the village and its surrounding area at the mouth of Scoresby Sund.

After our first lunch together the afternoon's entertainment began with a sighting of two humpback whales in the distance. We were lucky enough to observe many strong blows and finally a fluke as they began to dive. Minutes later, Bobby, our Second Officer on the bridge, spotted a sperm whale in front of the ship and slowed to a stop in good time to allow us to watch it replenish its oxygen levels on the surface in a process known as *logging*. These incredible creatures have been recorded diving to depths of 2km in order to feed on deep ocean giant squid for durations exceeding two hours. Only minutes after witnessing the sperm whale flaunt its gigantic fluke and dive back to the depths of the ocean, we were joined by several humpback whales, intermingled with numerous white-beaked dolphins.



Hannah quickly opted to postpone the Expedition Briefing to give us time to watch these huge mammals in a surprisingly active display of flipper and head slapping. Ursula offered some interpretations of this behaviour from her own experience and research on whales, suggesting that what we were seeing was the whales communicating various emotions to one another. Quite what they were saying will forever remain a mystery to us. After an amazing two hours out on deck, the tough decision was made to return to our set course and continue on our way to Greenland. At 16:00 we finally made it to the observation lounge to attend the Expedition Briefing which set out guidance for our behaviour in the Arctic environment which in some ways is as fragile as it is beautiful. We also learned about the Zodiacs which would be our water taxis for the cruise. After dinner Lori Gross prepared us for the hard days ahead of snapping photographs with 'Photography Tips and Tricks'; sharing the secrets of improving the memories we take home and challenging our preconceptions of what makes the 'perfect shot'.

Thursday, 4 September - Kap Brewster & Ittoqqoortoormiit

Time: Midday

Latitude: 70° 18' N

Longitude: 22° 13' W

Wind: SW Force 3

Pressure: 1012mb

Temperature: 6°C

The bridge was a hive of activity at 06.30 as Captain Adam navigated around Kap Brewster to enter the largest fjord in the world: Scoresbysund. We made our way between numerous large icebergs, some of which were unstable and close to rolling over, to our morning anchor point off Volquart Boons Kyst, in view of the Milano, Romano and Sfinx glaciers. Resident bird enthusiasts enjoyed a brief encounter with a regal gyrfalcon that soared past the bridge. Over the next hour, the mist which had once shrouded the fjord began to dissipate and by the time we had eaten breakfast and lowered eight Zodiacs, the sun was lighting the ice to stunning effect. The Zodiacs cruised around the icebergs, during which time we learned about some of their unique features, stumbling upon wildlife along the way. Some groups watched a lone little auk paddling around the boats. Many of us had a unique experience watching a very relaxed young ringed seal at close range. All boats were treated to the sight of a huge flock of barnacle geese flying, in classic V formation, on their long journey south to warmer climes. Once all Zodiacs were placed safely back

on the upper deck, the ship lifted anchor and began its short navigation to the settlement of Ittoqqoortoormiit, the ship's crew working on as we enjoyed a spot of lunch.



On our arrival, the ship anchored next to a large supply vessel that was in the process of unloading huge steel containers full of supplies for the community of Ittoqqoortoormiit. Only one such ship arrives each year, before fast ice renders entrance to the village by sea impossible, and thus its cargo is of huge importance to the inhabitants. The Zodiacs took us into a small rocky beach by the pier side, variously aided or hindered by keen local children who had been allowed out of school for the afternoon to practice their English. They invaded two of our Zodiacs that had been anchored at the beach and spent the whole

afternoon playing together in the boats, getting increasingly wet as time went on. The brightly painted wooden houses were founded on bedrock round a small promontory and we could only imagine their effect against the white of the Greenland winter. The museum contained materials from a traditional house, as well as photos of the work done by the man whose bust adorned a monument on the hill overlooking the town: Ejnar Mikkelsen. In 1925, he was responsible for populating the modern settlements of Scoresbysund with surplus population from the Ammassalik (now Tasiilaq) area. We had plenty of opportunity to explore, using maps supplied by the local shop, stumbling across various skins and sledges which alluded to the hunting way of life along the way. Many working dogs, howling like wolves from time to time, were chained up round the town, a reminder of the harsh conditions that necessitate the use of such unique animals.

We returned to the ship for Happy Hour and an interesting recap and briefing in which unanswered questions from the day's activities were addressed. We ate dinner together and then made our way out on deck to witness a truly breathtaking sunset which spread warm oranges, reds and purples across the iceberg laden fjord; the perfect end to a memorable day.

Friday, 5 September - Martin Karlsen Bugt and Sydkap

Time: Midday
Latitude: 71° 31' N
Longitude: 27° 09' W
Wind: Calm
Pressure: 1010mb
Temperature: 6°C

We awoke to bright skies, a light, cool breeze and most impressive of all, a plethora of huge glacial bergs decorating the fjord. The ship sailed past a colossal iceberg, measuring 1500 metres long, which had most likely carved off the snout of the Dagaard-Jensen Glacier, one of the fastest flowing in the world and thus a big producer of bergs. We sailed on through Nordvestfjord, a branch of Scoresby Sund, and reached Martin Karlsen Bugt (named after the sealing grandfather of the owner of the Polar Star shipping company) just before breakfast. On full stomachs, we watched our Zodiacs being lowered in the sunshine and we were soon on the water, exploring the monster bergs. All manner of shapes, sizes, colours and textures of ice greeted us this morning; some bergs even sported arches and caves that demanded photos from all angles. The browns, reds, yellows,

oranges and greys of the autumnal fjord sides contrasted with the whites, blues and greens of the water and ice to create a scene that will long remain with us.

The weather was so fantastic that Hannah decided that we should make a landing and hike to a superb vantage point for views over the fjord. Expedition staff loaded their rifles and remained vigilant, scanning the area for dangers such as Polar Bears; although the threat of encounters here on land is small, it is quite possible that one may have made its way this far into the fjord system. The steep walk took us past well established dwarf willows, alpine birches and bearberries with their vibrant autumnal colours. We found various signs of musk oxen activity in the form of well worn tracks, fur snagged on vegetation and numerous piles of more solid remnants. The majority of us stopped at the crest of the hill and paused there for photos and relaxation, while Chris led a team of ultra fit hikers further up the mountainside. On our return down slope, a huge cracking sound drew our attention to an iceberg very close to the ship's port far below us. As we watched from various vantage points, the resultant change in buoyancy and internal pressure caused the berg to break in half and roll over. This action released an army of small *growlers* and *bergy bits* and produced unexpected waves that licked the side of the ship.

Lunch was served on our arrival back at the ship and the early part of the afternoon was spent navigating further up the fjord until the depth soundings expired, forcing Captain Adam to turn the vessel around. Along the way Hannah spotted a large male hooded seal on the ice, an unusual occurrence this far into the fjord system. He allowed those of us with good lenses to take photos and those with binoculars to gain a better view before slipping into the water out of sight. In celebration of reaching our northern most latitude (71° 43' N) we gathered on deck, with the Captain, and enjoyed a nip of whisky together to toast our progress.

The rest of the afternoon was to be spent on ship, motoring to the east, until finally arriving at



Sydkap soon after dinner. As the ship pulled into its anchor point, Hannah was on the bridge undertaking her mandatory visual scouring of the area for potential risks and points of interest. She could see that Inuit hunters were busying themselves around four fresh musk oxen carcasses on the slopes close to shore and decided to postpone the landing out of courtesy to these people. The ship sent out a scout boat and our Pilot, Peter Giersing and Joel went ashore to make contact with the hunters to ask if they were happy for

us to come and witness the event. The five men were pleased to invite us onshore and within 30 minutes, all those who wished to watch the butchery of the beasts in the tundra were gathered around the Inuit men sharing a truly special experience. The hunters, using a mixture of English and Danish, explained that all families have a quota to shoot one musk ox per year (this is higher for professional hunters who are allowed three). The season finishes on the 10th of September, after which time it would be illegal to shoot, and so the men seemed very pleased to have finally secured their quota.

It was rather unusual to see Brian, the ship's Head Chef, walking with us in the tundra but soon it became clear that he was not just there as a bystander. After a short conversation with the Inuit men he had arranged to trade a hamper of supplies from the ship for two huge joints of oxen meat. He had obviously seen this opportunity as a means to spice up our already exceptional menu. The

Polar Star also made its own 'thank you' by donating extra fruit, vegetables, biscuits, drinks and chocolate to the hunters. This evening's landing has given each of us such a memorable and incredibly rare insight into the lives of these remote people.

Saturday, 6 September - Danmark Ø

Time: Midday

Latitude: 70° 26' N

Longitude: 26° 12' W

Wind: Calm

Pressure: 1012mb

Temperature: 8°C

We woke to yet another fine morning; it appears that flat water and bright skies have followed our progress closely since arriving in Greenland. The ship anchored 2 miles from our chosen landing spot on Danmark Island and once breakfast had been enjoyed, we began to fill empty Zodiacs with keen explorers. The boat drivers were pleased to have a slightly longer drive from ship to shore but speedy relays meant that the hikes got underway in good time. All groups explored the tundra's hardy vegetation and wildlife; of special note was a brief encounter with a Siberian wolf spider. Fearful preconceptions based on this creature's name alone were quickly shattered as we peered down to get a closer look at the tiny 5mm long arachnid. Many of us observed ringed plovers scurrying around rocks at the shoreline while occasionally hearing the distant calls of geese. For those with an interest in rocks and the mechanics of weathering, we encountered fantastic examples of *freeze/thaw* action; huge boulders cracked perfectly apart due to expansion of ice in their joints. Certainly, one of the highlights of the landing lay with the abundant plant life that shows such determination and resourcefulness in surviving the harsh conditions here in Greenland. Dotted across the tundra we found clumps of fireweed (the national flower of Greenland), purple saxifrage and polar cotton grass alongside edible varieties such as bearberries and bilberries. Some amongst our number decided to take on the taste challenge to decide which of these wild berries were most palatable, a clear winner was found with the bilberries.

While the hikers were onshore and oblivious to the goings on aboard ship, the crew of the Polar Star fine-tuned their emergency operations with a series of drills and equipment checks. We returned to the Polar Star and everyone was checked back aboard by 12 noon.

As we sat down for lunch, the ship lifted anchor and we began our navigation back out of Scoresby Sund. At 15.00 Peter Giersing, our guest Pilot for the trip, was finally given the opportunity to present his twice postponed lecture about ice and its effects on navigation around the Greenland coast. Learning a little more about his extensive work mapping ice from planes high above the coastline was incredible and his talk ended with a fascinating animation of ice movements over the period of a year. Vikky Furse continued the educational programme with her lecture '*Hunting Down the Blossville Coast*': a discussion of her unique experiences travelling with the Inuit. Vikky used both photography and her own sketches and paintings to bring her adventures to life.

Happy Hour ushered us nicely into Recap and Briefing where Chris Furse spoke about some of the birds we had seen during the day. His description of the curiosity of ravens led John Harrison to take us on a journey of '*How The Raven Stole The Light*' an enchanting tale from Inuit legend. Dinner was served, giving the opportunity to share experiences and enjoy more of the ship's delicious food. Those who wished to relax and watch the Planet Earth film '*Ice Worlds*' headed to the Observation Lounge at 20:30, while others chose to spend the evening watching the world go by from the bridge.

Sunday, 7 September - Blosseville Coast & Nansen Fjord

Time: Midday

Latitude: 68° 12' N

Longitude: 28° 43' W

Wind: ENE Force 5

Pressure: 1011mb

Temperature: 5°C

Considering the incredible weather we had so far enjoyed since leaving Iceland, it was a surprise to wake up this morning to the sound of rain. Heavy mist cloaked the ship as we slipped further southward, following the Blosseville Coast. Once breakfast was over, we were all prepared to learn. John Harrison began a morning of lectures with *'Nansen Crossing Greenland'*, an astonishing insight into the vision and determination of Fridtjof Nansen, the first man to successfully cross the ice cap in 1888. At 11:00 we returned to the Observation Lounge only this time with a few subtle changes. For Ursula's lecture *'Incredible Hunters'* we were joined by a huge orca with its calf in tow and a juvenile humpback whale commanding a fine view from the back of the room. These were of course just some of the visual aids that Ursula used to help us understand the feeding techniques and strategies of her favourite creatures: minke whales.



After feasting all morning on victuals for the brain it was time to allow our stomachs to catch up and we descended on the dining room for a spot of lunch. As people returned to their cabins, loud crashes could be heard on all sides, (they were particularly thunderous on deck three). The reason for this

was simple; we had turned into Nansen Fjord and entered a minefield of brash ice, bergy bits and large icebergs. The huge Christian IV's Glacier was producing its share of the floating ice but there was another mechanism at work. Small pieces of sea ice were also gathering together and re-freezing to create small jagged floes which spread out over the fjord. The Captain took to the bridge and we spent the next two hours barging lumps of ice out of the way, cutting through ice floes and navigating around hefty bergs. Some of us were lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a stunning ivory gull as it glided past the ship and flew off across the water. As we neared the glacier, Hannah ordered six zodiacs to be lowered for cruising. Although it was raining, everyone who took part in the 'mini-icebreaking' zodiac session had a fantastic time, a couple of groups even brought back pieces of glacier ice to break up for use in drinks at tonight's happy hour.

We returned to the ship in time to get changed and warm up ahead of the ship's BBQ at 19:00. Brian and his team laid on a fine spread and Bart and Reuben made sure there were plenty of drinks available to assist in washing it down. The evening gave great opportunity to share stories with each other and reminisce about highlights of our voyage so far. Meanwhile the ship was making her way back out of Nansen Fjord, through the ice, to the coast. Those of us who were still awake when she arrived there would have felt a notable change in sea conditions which caused the ship to roll with renewed vigour.

Monday, 8 September - Kangerlussuaq Fjord

Time: Midday

Latitude: 68° 10' N

Longitude: 31° 46' W

Wind: Calm

Pressure: 1013mb

Temperature: 5°C

Many of us with cabins located on the higher decks woke after a restless night thanks to the nocturnal movements of the ship. However, as light opened a new day, tiredness was forgotten in place of excitement for the next adventure. The ship was surrounded by brash ice and bergy bits as the Captain repositioned her in view of the magnificent Kangerlussuaq Glacier and was gently pitching due to a long languid swell. Hannah led a team out to shore during breakfast which scouted the area to establish suitable hiking routes and soon the first Zodiacs were full of passengers heading for the abandoned hunting camp in Uttental Sund. We explored the old huts and then headed towards the spot where John Harrison was examining a series of Thule Eskimo tent rings and offering interpretation of their history. The large group was then split into those who wished to return to the boats, others who were keen to see more of the area on a medium length hike and the experienced hikers who wanted the challenge of a longer, more strenuous outing. We all went our separate ways, close to a guide with a rifle at all times, and explored the highly glaciated, igneous environment. We walked over rounded granite which had, in places, been



intruded by softer basalt. This basalt had weathered at a faster rate to create pronounced linear depressions running across the landscape, known as dykes. High above the ground we could see that the mountain tops were sharp and pointed in direct contrast to the smooth rock below which gave us good indications of the heights of past glaciers. Glaucous gulls were seen flying around the peninsula of land we had landed on; we also saw black guillemots (or tysties as the Scottish call them) paddling around in the water. Every now and then a ringed seal would pop its head out of the water before diving back below the surface. Rather than returning directly to the ship, each Zodiac driver took a short detour to view the snout of the Forbindelses Glacier which has retreated significantly in recent years. Huge piles of moraine are testament to the past extent of the ice and show the erosive power that this glacier once commanded.

Everyone was ready for a hearty lunch on our return; meanwhile the ship was starting up its engines to leave on a course southwards towards Ammasalik. At 15:00 Ursula presented her lecture '*Ein Einblick in die Welt der Meeressäuger*' ('*A Glimpse into the World of Marine Mammals*') which was conveyed in German; although many English speakers went along to view here unique slides. This was closely followed by Chris Furse and his lecture '*Message from the Great Auk*' which explained various things we have learned from this extinct northern 'penguin'.

Tonight's dinner was something of a special occasion as the Musk Ox we had traded in Sydkap was on the menu. Head Chef Brian had done a fine job and everyone who ate the meat agreed that it was superb. This was followed by the film '*This is Greenland*' which gave insight into the social welfare, education, housing, infrastructure and natural resources in Greenland today.

Tuesday, 9 September - Ammassalik & At Sea

Time: Midday

Latitude: 65° 37' N

Longitude: 37° 37' W

Wind: Calm

Pressure: 1010mb

Temperature: 9°C

As breakfast was announced, those of us on the bridge caught our first glimpse of the picturesque town of Tasiilaq. A huge iceberg lay grounded at the entrance to the harbour, towering over the ships that lay in dock. We had our first dry landing of the trip, albeit slightly earlier than planned due to an unidentified time difference, and many of us chose to leave our boots aboard and wear shoes. The morning was spent exploring the shops, the Post Office, craft workshops and museum, or taking a long walk along the stream up Flower Valley. The beautiful new church on top of the hill was built in 1985 by the Lutheran congregation, replacing the older church near the harbour, which now houses the museum.



Around Tasiilaq the inland ice has retreated gracefully from the sea, leaving a wide and well vegetated coastal area which has attracted habitation for several thousand years through the Palaeo-Eskimo, Thule and Colonial periods. The impressive peaks and pinnacles that surround the town are formed of rock in the vicinity of 2 billion years old.

Tasiilaq, on Ammassalik Island, is the largest community in East Greenland (called Tunu in Greenlandic, meaning “the other side”), and the administrative centre for Ammassalik District with a population of 3000. Its official name is Tasiilaq (‘like a still lake’), but the more commonly used name is Ammassalik, meaning ‘capelins’, which are small, delicious fish that inhabit these waters. The name change to Tasiilaq is said to have occurred after the death of a man whose name was Ammassalik, as it is considered disrespectful to speak the names of the dead. Most of the inhabitants are dedicated to fishing for Greenlandic halibut, Atlantic salmon and other fish that make up the economy of this remote place. We saw some of these fishermen using the floating jetty to fill their tanks with fuel as we waited for Zodiacs to ferry us back to the ship. This historic district was the site of East Greenland’s first trading post in 1894. Nowadays, the town with its brightly coloured wooden houses is the “capital” of the East Coast and the main base for tourist services in this region. Just across the fjord is Kulusuk airport, offering flights to Iceland and other domestic links.

We returned to the ship with bags of gifts and souvenirs and went straight into the dining room for a lunch. During our meal, the Captain announced that we would be heading into Force 8 winds originating in the north. He made us aware that the outside of Decks 3 and 4 would be closed during for this part of the crossing and that heavy swells would demand extra caution when moving around the ship. John Harrison continued his journey through the history of whaling with his lecture ‘*Classic Whaling*’, which targeted the period from the 1840s to the modern day. Soon

after Ursula led us in an interactive session ‘*The Photo Identification of Minke Whales*’ which highlighted the importance of using various techniques to recognise whales for research purposes. Happy Hour followed but rougher seas forced Hannah to cancel Recap and Briefing and reiterate the Captain’s cautions about moving around the ship. The dining hall was sparsely populated during our evening meal tonight as many of us opted to stay in our cabins. Those who did brave the conditions to make it to the observation lounge at 20:30 were treated to the exceptional film ‘*Around Cape Horn*’. Filmed in 1929, it captures the perils of sailing the stormy waters of Cape Horn, 50 years later the filmmaker added a hilarious narrative which really is a joy to hear.

Wednesday, 10 September - At Sea

Time: Midday

Latitude: 64° 52' N

Longitude: 30° 10' W

Wind: ExS Force 2

Pressure: 1012mb

Temperature: 12°C

Our final full day was spent cruising over the Denmark Strait, a stretch of water which can be as capricious as the notorious Drake Passage, back to the safe harbour of Reykjavik. At 09:00, Lori began our lectures with ‘*Marine Mammals: Adaptation for Life at Sea*’ revealing all the ways in which physical variations allow warm-blooded animals to survive the coldest oceans. As we waited for Brent Houston’s presentation about the life found in pack ice and the effect of climate change on this unique environment in ‘*Ice as Habitat*’, a pod of pilot whales passed the ship giving us fine views, we had also seen blows from other whales throughout the morning. There were accounts to be settled before lunch, and afterwards a documentary film *Deep Blue* made from the best footage of the BBC *Blue Planet* series was shown in the observation room. All too soon it was time for the Captain’s Farewell Party, followed by a slide show put together by Lori with images from all the staff team. Dinner followed as our course took us ever closer to the Icelandic coast, back to the very place our journey began. We will leave the Polar Star tomorrow morning with new friends and lasting memories; all of which were born in the most unlikely setting, a voyage to the remoteness of South East Greenland.