



RA BOE / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The German trawler *Kiel*, seen here docked in Berlin, was detained by the Norwegian Coast Guard near Hopen last September for catching more haddock than permitted. The company that owns the vessel is now in a Tromsø court challenging Norway's authority of Svalbard's protected fishing zone.

Fishing for a fight

Germans, Icelanders in court challenging arrest in Svalbard; may have major effect on treaty

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Russia just sent a military ship to patrol the area due to what it calls unfair fishing rules. Now trawlers representing two other countries are in court fighting for a more permanent and binding change in what they see as an abuse by Norway of its authority.

The Icelandic owners of the German fishing company Deutsche Fischfang-Union are battling the Norwegian government after the company trawler *Kiel* was detained last September for illegal fishing in the protection zone around Svalbard. The lawsuit, now in the Hålogaland Court of Appeal in Tromsø, is likely to be challenged all the way to Norway's Supreme Court and could have a major impact on the interpretation of the Svalbard Treaty

The plaintiffs "argue that the Svalbard
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Another mining fatality

Barentsburg mine closed after avalanche kills Ukrainian man in second fatal accident since April

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

The coal mine in Barentsburg is closed for what may be an extended period after a 27-year-old Ukrainian man was killed in an accident Thursday, the second such death in two months.

The accident occurred at about 6 p.m., with the Svalbard governor's office notified at 9 p.m., Lt. Gov Lars Erik Alfheim said in a prepared statement.

"The miner was caught in an avalanche that went into a ventilation shaft 300 meters below ground," Alfheim said.

The deceased miner was brought to the surface before officials arrived. An inspection by members of the governor's office, the Norwegian Labor Inspectorate and the Directorate of Mining's Commissioner for Svalbard is underway, which Alfheim said may be lengthy.

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Feeling crabby about invasion

Snow crabs' arrival in Svalbard another potential 'disaster' to native species due to warming

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Like any potentially disastrous approaching snow storm, there may be nothing to do but wait for it to hit. And in this case there may be no digging out afterward.

An invasion of snow crabs from the Barents Sea into Svalbard appears to be happening and officials say they may be powerless to stop the major threat it poses to the area's ecosystem. The crabs are just one of many new life

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INSTITUTE OF MARINE RESEARCH

This snow crab, caught in 2011 about 75 kilometers from Edgeøya in east Svalbard, has scientists and government officials concerned about a large-scale invasion of the species.

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.

This is a hot midsummer's eve in Svalbard



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen residents and visitors bask in the unseasonably warm temperature of 11 degrees Celsius at the annual summer solstice beach party Saturday at the Svalbard Sailing Club. Overcast skies and moderate winds meant coats outnumbered swimsuits by a ratio of about 200 to one (figure does not represent a scientific survey), with large crowds gathering near the traditional bonfire, pictured at top. The chill kept those at the grill, lower left, busy serving burgers (both pink slime and fish paste), hot dogs (species mercifully unknown) and corn-on-the-cob (claims of local sourcing being scandalously false, had any been made). At lower left, youths opt to dig in the mud for rocks instead of braving the waters during what's usually one of two noteworthy swimming days during the year (the other being a well-supervised winter polar dip through a hole in the ice).

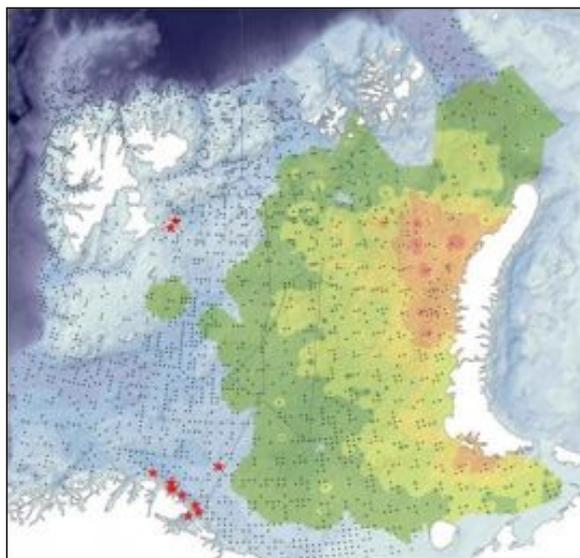
Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

Here's how utterly insane things are getting with Svalbard's total solar eclipse in March of 2015: **43,580 kroner. That's the per-person starting price (based on double occupancy, of course) for a four-night trip to Longyearbyen to see the sky go dark for a few minutes.** It includes airfare from Oslo, meals, lodging at the Radisson ("or similar") and not much else. Best we can tell, it's roughly quadruple the rate you'd pay during peak tourist season (by comparison, a three-night photography workshop with expert-led field excursions this October is about 9,000 kroner). The eclipse trip is being offered by a travel agency, pretty much the only obvious option for travelers since accommodations for the event sold out long ago. But persistent types will discover another option as **some Longyearbyen residents (with encouragement from tourism officials) are planning to offer their homes and/or rooms for what we're presuming will be rather lucrative rates.** What we'll really be curious to see is how resourceful the camping crowd gets in finding spots and how many rules are bent/broken in the process ... You'd think a cruise ship fire resulting in lots of canceled trips wouldn't

be cause for celebration – if you were born before the era of internet commenters. But **great satisfaction is being expressed after the 184-passenger German vessel *Hanseatic* is having to cancel summer sailings here and elsewhere in the Norwegian Arctic due to an engine-room fire earlier this month.** To quote one *USA Today* reader, "See Carnival haters? It can happen to anybody" ... Finally, a local misfire we hope doesn't become important enough to make our front page is happening at **Longyearbyen's main power plant, which was shut down Monday due to problems with both boilers,** according to Bydrift. Electricity is now being supplied by the backup facility – which performed admirably without an interruption after a fire closed the main plant for three days last December – and "we hope this does not lead to consequences for our customers." Bydrift's statement notes "we are now working on arrangements for repairs to the boilers" – without mentioning a timeframe – and "during operation of the reserve, we are especially vulnerable following an error." Eek, but hopefully that wouldn't mean evacuating the town – a possibility last winter – since we're lucky enough to be sweating in relatively tropical temperatures of around 10C.

A map depicting the snow crab population in the Norwegian and Russian Arctic shows most are still clustered several hundred kilometers southeast of Svalbard, but they are migrating north and there has been at least one sighting of the species in the archipelago. Scientists say snow crabs are notorious for devouring lifeforms essential to Svalbard's marine ecosystem, but there is a critical lack of information about how quickly an invasion might occur and what the specific impacts might be. The Svalbard governor's office, working with scientific and other organizations, is hoping to complete an action plan – which will also address other invasive species – before the end of the year.



COURTESY OF PINRO

Fearing a blizzard of snow crabs

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forms invading the archipelago due to climate change, but the situation is serious enough the Svalbard governor's office is delaying the release of an invasive species plan so a detailed analysis of the crabs can be made.

"I was hoping to get it done before the (summer) holiday, but because we got this new information about snow crabs we need to consider those impacts," said Espen Stokke, the governor's senior adviser for nature management.

He said the plan should be released by the end of the year.

The growth of the snow crab population in the Barents Sea has alarmed scientists, who recently discovered the total biomass of the species is ten times higher than king crabs, according to the *Barents Observer*. But king crabs were deliberately introduced into the area

during the 1960s, while the snow crab population has increased at a much faster rate during the past 20 years.

Unlike king crabs, snow crabs are making a seemingly easy migration without human assistance, Stokke said. He also said there may be nothing humans can do to stop it.

The densest part of the snow crab population is still several hundred kilometers southeast of Svalbard, but at least one has been sighted in the eastern part of the archipelago.

Researchers are concerned snow crabs will devour species essential for recycling nutrients into the upper layers of the marine ecosystem. Similar concerns about disruptions of the delicate cycle are being expressed about other lifeforms such as brown algae destroying traditional seabed species.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

'Very concerned' about mining deaths

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"The accident happened in a difficult to reach part of the mine," he said in an interview with NRK. "We must ensure there are safeguards before we go in and it will take time."

Also "we are very concerned in that there has been two fatal accidents with short intervals, even if they occurred in different parts of the mine. Now the mine is closed and we have to make the reviews with regulators and experts in mining."

Another Ukrainian man, in his 30s, was

killed April 9 when he was hit by a boulder. Furthermore, a miner lost his arm in May of 2012 when his arm got caught between a pull wire and a transport truck.

The accidents have marred the reopening of the mine after it was shut down in 2008 for more than two years due to a fire that killed two miners, plus a third man who died three weeks later while trying to help get the fire under control.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

City rejects terms of power plant upgrade, losing 73M

A mandatory new treatment facility to reduce emissions at Longyearbyen's power plant is becoming further immersed in controversy as the municipal council unanimously voted not to sign a contract for its construction, citing state demands the city pay a substantial portion of the cost. "It is unreasonable to demand Longyearbyen with a population of 2,100 inhabitants will be responsible for nearly 40 percent of the bill," said City Manager Lars Ole Saugnes at the council's June 18 meeting. A 2010 estimate placed the facility's cost at 2010 73 million kroner, which the state provided, but a new estimate places the cost at up to 115 million. The council's vote means they will have to return the 73 million – with no guarantee of getting it back – as a new approach to the upgrade is considered.

Pubs getting tough with bans as troublemakers increase

Tough rules dealing with an increasing number of troublemakers are being imposed by pubs and similar businesses after meetings with government officials about the problem. Cheaper tickets to Svalbard are bringing a new type of tourist and "we have noticed an increased frequency of adverse events," said Steve Daldorff Torgersen, owner of Karlsberger Pub. A common agreement among the businesses is a person banned from one establishment will be banned from others. A first ban lasts three months, with a six-month ban imposed for causing subsequent trouble. Businesses are also consulting with government officials about changing Svalbard's alcohol laws, which are somewhat more liberal for 18- and 19-year-olds compared to the mainland.

Two skiers shot polar bear in self defense, governor rules

Two skiers who shot and killed a polar bear April 18 at Isbukta acted in self defense and won't face charges, according to the Svalbard governor's office. It is the second such ruling for a polar bear encounter this spring, with another couple being exonerated after killing a bear trying to enter their cabin at Hyttevika in March.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Occasional rain. S winds to 29 km/h. High 7C (4C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Cloudy. SW winds to 32 km/h. High 8C (5C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Occasional rain. SE winds to 32 km/h. High 7C (4C wind chill), low 6C (2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. SE winds to 49 km/h. High 8C (3C wind chill), low 6C (2C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, 6C (3C), 5C (2C), light 24:00h; Monday, rain, 6C (1C), 5C (0C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, 8C (6C), 5C (1C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, 7C (3C), 5C (0C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no



MARY-LISS FUNKE / NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Paleontologist Jørn Hurum, left, studies prehistoric fossil specimens from Svalbard with the assistance of Aubrey Roberts and Victoria Engelschion Nash at the Natural History Museum of Oslo.

'Sea Monsters' are b-a-a-ck!

Nearly a decade of dino digs are over, but researchers find life anew in basement laboratory

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Just when you thought it was safe, it's "Sea Monsters of the North, Chapter X – Back From the Dead."

Paleontologist Jørn Hurum, who led excavations of prehistoric fossils in Svalbard that made headlines worldwide for nearly a decade, is now analyzing 37 "more or less complete specimens" with the help of two assistants at the Natural History Museum of Oslo.

"In writing throughout this summer, we hope to give you insight into the process of not

only finding and excavating a fossil, but what follows as well," Hurum wrote in a journey entry for *National Geographic*, which featured one of his excavations in a melodramatic – and somewhat factually challenged – 2011 documentary. "The year-long drying, followed by opening of jackets and the painstaking hours of careful preparation and love before they are eventually described (that is, placed into the right species, or possibly named as a new one)."

Among his Svalbard discoveries was the so-called "Predator X" plesiosaur, believed to be the largest carnivore ever, and apparently new species of ichthyosaurs. His journal is available at tinyurl.com/ohgykt5.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Svalbard fish fight goes to court

TRAWLER, from page 1

Treaty is an illusion, Norwegian sovereignty is an illusion, and that Norway should refrain from the right to decide over fishery resources in the fisheries protection zone around Svalbard," said Lars Fause, a Norwegian state attorney in Tromsø, in an interview with *The Foreigner*. "Norway does not intend to surrender sovereign rights up in the Barents Sea."

The Norwegian Coast Guard detained the *Kiel* near Hopen on Sept. 5, with inspectors finding a larger catch of haddock than permitted. The company was ordered to pay a fine of 40,000 kroner and the captain a fine of 15,000 kroner, but neither has done so.

Deutsche Fischfang-Union, echoing a claim made by Russia and other countries, claims Norwegian authorities are discriminatory in interpreting and enforcing fishing zone regulations. Russia deployed one of its Coast Guard vessels to Svalbard earlier this month, with officials saying they hoped its presence would discourage detentions of trawlers that

have been a major point of friction during the past few years.

The 1920 Svalbard Treaty, signed by Germany in 1925 and Iceland in 1994, recognizes Norway's sovereignty over archipelago, but allows other countries equal fishing and hunting rights, banning any monopoly.

Deutsche Fischfang-Union is arguing those terms should apply to the 200-nautical-mile protected fishing zone in Svalbard.

Hallvard Østgård an attorney for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told NRK Deutsche Fischfang-Union has a strong case.

"The international community was ensured the economic exploitation opportunities up there on equal footing when the Svalbard Treaty came into force," he said. "It is believed it also applies to areas within the protection zone, not just the islands. The party who loses here will probably not be happy with the result and appeal (to the Supreme Court)."

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

June 30

11 a.m.: Mass by visiting priest Ragnar Aase. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "I De Beste Hjem," French drama/comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

July 2

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

July 7

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Lone Ranger," U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

July 9

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

July 14

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Internship," U.S. comedy, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

July 16

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

July 21

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "World War Z," U.S. action/drama, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

July 28

6 p.m.: Evening Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Wolverine," U.S. action/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

July 30

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

Aug. 4

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Pornopung," Norwegian drama/comedy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

Aug. 6

7 p.m.: Evening Mass and social gathering. 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:

- *Arctic farmers ponder growth potential*
- *Obama's climate plan: Less coal, finally*
- *Norway now gives Europe the most gas*
- *20 stranded tourists rescued from ice floe*