



# Virus limits cruise

*Ship quarantined in Svalbard after norovirus outbreak infects at least 100 passengers, crew*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

A cruise ship carrying 580 passengers and crew was quarantined Saturday in Longyearbyen due to a norovirus outbreak that infected a significant percentage of those on board, according to health and cruise line officials.

The first symptoms of the illness on the *Funchal*, owned by the Portuguese company Portuscale Cruises and carrying mostly Swedish passengers, were observed when the ship departed July 5 from Gothenburg, according to Catarina Campos, the company's web and booking manager, in an e-mail interview. She stated preventative measures were enacted, although no on-board activities were affected other than quarantining sick passengers in their cabin.

But the highly contagious gastro virus spread quickly, infecting at least 100 to 150 passengers before the ship arrived in Longyearbyen, according to various estimates.

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OCEANWIDE EXPEDITIONS

A group of tourists in a sightseeing boat approach a glacier in Isfjorden on July 9, where a guide delivered a lecture about polar bear conservation and management. The glacier is expected to be increasingly visited after a ban on heavy oil takes effect next year in many parts of Svalbard.

## Western showdown

*'Don't mess with me' groups say regarding revised access rules. But rassling others may be OK*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Here's a big surprise: Nobody seems particularly eager to have more restrictions imposed on their activities in protected areas of western Spitsbergen.

Tourism, scientific research and local resident groups are all stating they generally don't believe more restrictions are necessary on their particular sect in a new management plan for the area being drafted by Svalbard's governor.

But there are instances where they believe limits should be imposed on others, such as researchers stating increased limits on tourism and commercial fishing may be worth considering in some areas.

The reports from each group were made public last week by the governor's office, which began initial work on the revised plan for national parks and bird sanctuaries last fall. Despite some differences about specific protections and areas, the groups generally agreed current protection measures are sufficient and further limits could in some ways have negative effects.

"Many people move to Svalbard due to the  
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## Angry voices unite in polar bear case

*Tensions go beyond who's to blame as newspaper mocks death of teen 'troublemaker'*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Given all the anger and controversy about an error-filled Svalbard expedition that resulted in the mauling death of a teen by a polar bear, it would take something pretty drastic to unify most of those affected. But a Socialist newspaper covering an official inquest into the matter has achieved that by mocking the youth

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PROVIDED BY FAMILY OF HORATIO CHAPPLE

Horatio Chapple, 17, a British student killed by a polar bear during a 2011 Svalbard expedition, is seen here at the Von Postbreen campsite where the attack that injured four others occurred.

## 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.

## Yeah, his customers got their money's worth

A polar bear cub, above right, appears to wave to a group of tourists from an iceberg in Spitsbergen after the group spotted the cub's mother in the distance. Wimbledon resident

Paul Goldstein, a guide for London-based Exodus Travels who took the photo, told the *London Daily Mirror* another cub was nearby and they continued playing together while the mother remained at a distance. At

bottom right, a Svalbard reindeer appears to take a selfie photo as Goldstein watches. Goldstein told the *Daily Mail* of London his tour group spotted the animals while scouting for polar bears and they came ashore from their icebreaker for a closer look. The reindeer approached as

Goldstein was setting up for a shot, prompting him to freeze in place until they moved away from his camera. He said he had a similar selfie experience with a lion in Kenya's Masai Mara.



PAUL GOLDSTEIN / EXODUS TRAVELS



PAUL GOLDSTEIN / EXODUS TRAVELS

## Icesheet

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

The hordes of cruise ship visitors wearing jackets might not believe it, but we're definitely in the midst of a prolonged heat wave right now, complete with warning exclamation points next to upcoming temperatures in the weather service forecast. The most obvious sign this week is **the stem of the snow "champagne glass" on Operafjellet was officially severed July 15, the second straight year it's occurred a couple weeks earlier than average**, according to The Local Paper of Muck. The paper hosts an annual guessing contest where the two residents submitting the closest guess win an engraved shotglass, but they'll have to wait the names are announced Friday to sedate their heat-induced misery. And for the benefit of all you climate change skeptics, we're duly noting the melt date a mere two years ago was Aug. 31 – and snowfall before that date had some questioning if the glass would remain unbroken all year ... We haven't heard much about that Chinese tycoon's effort to buy that massive tract of land in Austre Adventfjord lately, maybe because it was a load of bollocks to begin with since he was startled there's a lot of ice there. But if **he's a decoy for the Chinese government, as suggested by some who suspect hostile intentions, a column in this week's *Business Insider* offers a reason the land sale might happen anyway: "Perhaps Norway is in need of some pandas."** WTF? Yeah, that was pretty much our reaction, so here's what passes for the magazine's rationale: China made a rare loan of two of its pandas to a Copenhagen zoo this spring, raising some eyebrows among Scandinavian observers who suspected it had something to do with China's interest in expanding its Arctic



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

**Getting smashed early this year:** But a few people giddily claiming Operafjellet's snow champagne glass broke last weekend got the sobering news that the official date on Tuesday from the contest judges giving away the shotglasses is the only one that matters.

presence. Norway's frosty relations with China have thawed somewhat recently due to actions such as top government officials refusing to meet the Dali Lama during a recent visit (seriously pissing off most Norwegians) and supporting China's admission to the Arctic Council. And while Norway's government seems inclined to ancient legal declarations to block foreigners from purchasing Austre Adventfjord, the magazine notes China has been investing tons of money in northern nations which has often been much appreciated and, hey, those cute bears might be just the thing to break the ice. The reader comments, BTW, are a racist wasteland. The most intelligent, clearing possibly the lowest bar ever, is a guy with a Kermit The Frog moniker who rants "Let the Russian men and the China men fight it out over the north on their side! Then the might Canadian military will swoop in and mop up the leftovers! Nobody gave a rat's ass that the Canucks owned the arctic until the thing started to melt."



BJØRN FOSSLI JOHANSEN / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

The volcanic hot springs at Bockfjorden are vulnerable to frequent visits from tourists during both summer and winter, according to scientists assessing possible changes in access rules for the area.

## Groups shun changes to access rules

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nature and natural experiences," stated the report from the local users' group, whose members included municipal government officials, recreation and hunting groups, and Ny-Ålesund's social welfare organization. "One possible and real consequence of restrictions is that fewer people will choose a move here. A traffic ban will be perceived as a strict limitation of opportunities to experience nature."

"The working group wants to preserve the situation as it is today and not to restrict activities in national parks, especially the activities that are categorized as 'local use.'"

Similarly, the report from the researchers' working group states closing off certain parts of the area "will not add value to the natural environment nor serve to enhance the scientific value of the currently protected areas."

"It is vital that scientific research and research-based education is recognized within the plan as being a necessity, and is in turn welcomed and facilitated," the report adds. "This is of particular importance in this time of rapid environmental change."

But while the local users' group is adamantly opposed to any additional hunting and fishing restrictions, the researchers' report asserts "commercial fishing activities near the parks could have impacts on marine life within

the park areas. The extent of the effects are not well understood and the report on current knowledge...is highly deficient."

Researchers also emphasize flexible management is essentially to cope with changing circumstances. But uncertainties about how restrictions are imposed and possible changes to them is a main focus of the tourism industry's report.

"The management plan must provide predictability, this is seen as an opportunity and a response to the challenge of constant changes in regulations," the tourism report states, adding lack of certainty will dampen companies' interest in the area and their ability to coordinate activities to minimize impacts.

Increased ship sailings to Isfjorden, for example, are likely due to a ban on heavy oil that takes effect in much of Svalbard next year, the report states. As of now tour operators are assuming "current rules will also apply in the future."

As with the other groups, tourism officials argue current restrictions are sufficient to ensure the parks and sanctuaries remain pristine.

The reports (in Norwegian with the exception of the researchers' assessment in English) are available at [tinyurl.com/nexe44f](http://tinyurl.com/nexe44f).

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Cruise owner files complaint against gov't in wage dispute

The owner of a cruise sightseeing company accused of replacing Norwegian crew members with Filipinos working for illegally low wages has filed a complaint against Norway's government alleging unfair treatment. Stig Henningsen is accused by two labor unions of "social dumping" by replacing the crews of the *Langøysund* and *Billefjord*, the latter of which was forced to remain docked in Longyearbyen for about a week after a June 26 inspection because it lacked a master who is an EEA (European Economic Area) national. The complaint against the Norwegian Maritime Authority claims the ships received permission to sail to Svalbard under the authority of the Norwegian International Ship Register, which places no restrictions on crew nationality, but subsequently required them to conform to more restrictive domestic ship registrar requirements.

### Store Norske leader stepping down at the end of the year

Store Norske Administrative Director Per Andersson is resigning for personal reasons, with his departure to take place at the end of the year, three years after he was appointed to the job. "We regret that Per Andersson is leaving Store Norske, but understand his decision," said Anette Malm Justad, chairwoman of the company's board of directors. She said a search for a successor is underway, with the priority being on finding a leader who can continue the company's "major restructuring process."

### Dog travel rules cause chaos

Changes to the rules for bringing dogs to the mainland are causing chaos for many summer travelers. Before the change took effect last year a dog owner could provide a declaration stating the animal had been wormed within the past five days, but now an exam by a veterinarian is required, which is proving problematic if the only one in Svalbard is on vacation. Some locals said a 28-day exam period before travel was granted in such circumstances, which is disputed by mainland officials who say it only applies to guide dogs, and animals traveling between Norway and EU countries. Svalbard is considered a non-listed third country.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. SE winds to 22 km/h. High 9C (7C wind chill), low 7C (4C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 25 km/h. High 9C (8C wind chill), low 6C (2C wind chill).	Cloudy. SW winds to 25 km/h. High 10C (7C wind chill), low 7C (4C wind chill).	Light rain. SW winds to 32 km/h. High 8C (4C wind chill), low 7C (3C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 7C (4C), 6C (2C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, 7C (4C), 6C (2C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, 8C (6C), 6C (3C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 9C (6C), 8C (5C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no



DENNIS MORTIMER / CRUISETRAFFIC.COM

> Did you know that Svalbard is categorized as "arctic desert" due to the low air humidity? More than 40 different nationalities live in Longyearbyen? There are more polar bears than humans in Svalbard? Yes, today is the Svalbard, a remote protected area, the M/v Funchal is docked in Longyearbyen. — at Longyearbyen, Svalbard. (4 photos)  
See Translation



PORTUSCALE CRUISES

The *Funchal*, at left, a Portuguese cruise ship originally built in 1961, was refurbished last year, but its return to service in Sweden was delayed due to "serious errors" involving life-saving equipment and the crew's safety culture, according to inspectors there. At right, an entry on the Facebook page for Portuscale Cruises, which operates the *Funchal*, omits any mention of a norovirus outbreak on the ship and subsequent quarantine when the ship arrived in Longyearbyen on Saturday. A company spokesperson stated such outbreaks on ships "are a common issue. The ship has always informed all the competent authorities with updated information."

## Cruise marred by norovirus outbreak

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"Not everyone was sick at the same time, of course," stated Erik Jenssen, a doctor at Longyearbyen Hospital, in an e-mail interview.

Less than five percent of the crew and 25 percent of all people aboard were infected, according to Campos.

A sick female passenger was brought by helicopter to Longyearbyen Hospital while the ship was at Belsund on Saturday morning, a few hours before the vessel docked in Longyearbyen.

Local health and port officials reviewed the medical records of those aboard before allowing those showing no symptoms during the previous 48 hours to go ashore, albeit with strict limitations on their activities. Among the restrictions were prohibiting passengers from visiting restaurants, bars and shops with fresh food on shelves, and from having close contact with local residents and other tourists.

"We had no opportunity to ensure that passengers who did go ashore complied with the restrictions, but our impression was that the passengers did understand that they were

obliged to follow the imposed restrictions," Jenssen stated.

In addition, the ship was not allowed to berth when it sailed to Ny-Ålesund on Saturday night, and passengers and crew were not allowed to go ashore, Campos wrote in her message Tuesday afternoon, adding there have been no reports of additional infections among passengers and crew during the past 72 hours.

Outbreaks of Norovirus, often transmitted by food or water contaminated by feces, commonly occur in closed and semi-closed communities such as cruise ships, hospitals and prisons. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain, although severe cases are rare and death usually occurs only when other complications exist.

Jenssen, who has worked at the hospital for the past three or four years, stated he is not aware of a local outbreak of similar scale, but there have been isolated gastro virus cases among cruise passengers and most likely some were norovirus infections.

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

## Ridicule of teen's death stirs outrage

### INQUEST, from page 1

and refusing to acknowledge outraged calls for an apology.

A verdict from the inquest at Salisbury Coroner's Court into the 2011 death of Horatio Chapple, 17, during the expedition by a British youth group camped at Von Postbreen is not expected until Friday. A week of testimony ending last Friday suggested the trip's leaders failed to bring all the necessary equipment for a tripwire alarm system, tried to rig an improvised alarm using equipment such as paper clips to hold wire in place, failed to post a guard to watch for bears overnight, and lacked familiarity with the rifle they brought and tried unsuccessfully to fire several times before finally killing the bear.

**Eton by bear? The inquest begins**

An inquest into Horatio's death began this week. Troublemaker has long supported campaigning for the environment. Now we have another reason to save the polar bears.

But *The Socialist Worker* newspaper delivered its judgement in an article titled "Eton by bear? The inquest begins," a derisive reference to Chapple's hometown.

"Troublemaker has long supported campaigning for the environment," the article stated. "Now we have another reason to save the polar bears."

The article went viral as Twitter messages and other social media denounced the headline and characterization, even as many of the contributors continued a debate ignited after the attack about the appropriateness of such expeditions in remote areas populated with polar bears.

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

## What's up

### July 15

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

### July 20-22

Theater workshop for youths ages 14-18 featuring instructors from the Nordic Light. Course is free. For details contact [birgitte.dahl.knutsen@lokalstyre.no](mailto:birgitte.dahl.knutsen@lokalstyre.no).

### Aug. 9-10

Basic sea kayaking course. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. both days. Contact Svalbard Sailing Club at [svalbardseil@gmail.com](mailto:svalbardseil@gmail.com) for details.

### Aug. 10

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

### Aug. 16-17

Basic sea kayaking course. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. both days. Contact Svalbard Sailing Club at [svalbardseil@gmail.com](mailto:svalbardseil@gmail.com) for details.

### Aug. 17

7 p.m.: Movie: "Guardians of the Galaxy" (3D), U.S. action/sci-fi, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 20

6 p.m.: Movie: "How to Train Your Dragon 2" (3D), U.S. animated family film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 24

5 p.m.: Movie: "How to Train Your Dragon 2," U.S. animated family film, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7 p.m.: Movie: "Hercules" (3D), U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 26

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

### Aug. 27

6 p.m.: Movie: "Hercules," U.S. action/adventure, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 29

7 p.m.: Premier of movie "Beatles," Norwegian action/comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

## What's online

[icepeople.net](http://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:

- *Norway's penguins at risk of overheating*
- *Winners, losers in China-Russia gas deal*
- *Climate skeptic: Mars, Earth same temp?*
- *John Oliver: Don't go to Antarctica, ever*