



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Volunteers use debris collected from the north shore of Spitsbergen to built a "garbage hut" on a beach in Longyearbyen. A ceremony celebrating the final project is scheduled Wednesday.

## Trashing the house

*New waterfront cabin is a real dump – and its builders are proud (yet rather sad) about that*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Inviting kids to play in a giant pile of trash isn't something parents are usually likely to approve of. But as garbage goes, this might truly qualify as the top of the heap.

A hut built from the 90 cubic meters of debris collected during the Svalbard governor's annual coastal cleanup cruise is

scheduled to officially open at 7 p.m. Wednesday on the beach next to the Svalbard Sailing Club. The structure, meant to raise awareness about the problem of litter in the world's oceans, is being built by a group of volunteers led by artist Solveig Egeland as part of her Ocean Hope project.

"It's not really about art," she said while working on the hut Monday. "It's really for the nature. Art is just a different way doing it than writing about these terrible things."

Seven volunteers from several countries are building the cabin, Egeland's fourth in  
**See HUT, page 4**

# Yum! Lot o' whale

*Whaling season in Far North shaping up to be the best since 1993 – if you're a hunter, that is*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Whether this is the best or worst whaling season since modern-day hunting resumed in 1993 depends on which end of the harpoon you're on.

Those on the hurling end are elated, as the Norwegian Fishermen's Sales Organization (NFSO) is reporting 686 minke whales have been harvested in northern Norway as of July 30, 162 more than last year at the same time. A record catch is projected by the time the whaling season ends Aug. 31, although it's likely to fall far short of the quota of 1,286 animals.

"This season has been fantastic," said Remi Unstad, the skipper and gunner aboard the *Unstad Junior* fishing vessel, in an interview with NRK.

He said the ship has been on three hunts since the season began April 1, including one to Bjørnøya and Spitsbergen, capturing 56 whales that produced 75 tons of meat. Last

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## Welcome, headbangers, to Triassic Park

*'Sea Monster' headlines return and heavy metal videos debut for Jørn Hurum's newest project*

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

If it takes horror movie headlines and heavy metal videos to get people interested in prehistoric animals these days, Jørn Hurum is all for it.

"I get more attention to what I'm doing with research this way," said Hurum, an Oslo paleontologist starting a new multi-year hunt  
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KJELL OVE STORVIK / SPITSBERGEN TRAVEL

Members of Jørn Hurum's fossil exploration team inspect a species during a previous summer expedition to Spitsbergen. This year's trip is focusing on mapping a new area.

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

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*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.

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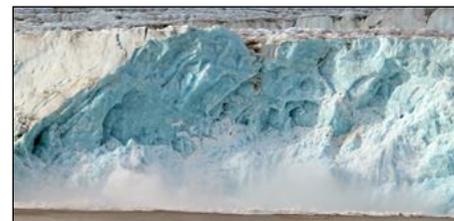
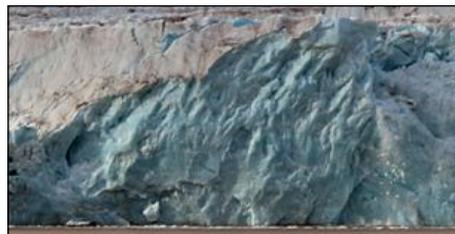
## Corrections policy

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.

## Making a molehill out of a mountain



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

The glacier in Templefjorden undergoes yet more downsizing as several large chunks of ice break off Saturday afternoon. The calving, which looks far less impressive in stamp-sized pictures than in person, was observed by passengers participating in a free touring cruise offered by the Norwegian Polar Institute aboard its *Lance* research vessel. The glacier has retreated several kilometers during the past century.

## Icesheet

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

She's delivering anything but the best lines of her career, but since she's also helping clean trash from Svalbard's remote beaches **we won't hold the script against actress Emma Thompson who's on a voyage this week with her daughter, Gaia Wise, 14**, aboard Greenpeace's *Esperanza*. As with many celebrity and VIP trips, it's all about about climate change awareness, complete with comments that seem to vary little. "The Arctic is warming faster than anywhere else and it's not just a polar bear problem," she told NRK. "It affects the weather as far away as India, while rising sea levels destroying for people all over the world." Maybe some of her fans are hearing that part for the first time, so OK, but she trips a bit on the next part. "My daughter and her generation is about to inherit the world we are responsible for, and I want to make sure that we leave the Arctic in peace for oil companies and that the Arctic remains protected forever." Of course, it's possible there was a slight hitch in the translation, since in Norway she's credited with winning an Oscar for "Tilbake til Howard's End" ("Going Back to Howard's End"), a remarkable achievement since we're pretty sure even she doesn't



JOHN COBB / GREENPEACE

**She used to keep her Oscars in the bathroom:** Since the sign tells you why Emma Thompson is here, we thought we'd offer useless trivia instead.

remember doing a sequel to that long-ago Victorian film ... Taking the purity from pollutants campaign from the macro to the micro level, we're guessing **the occupant of an apartment in the center of Longyearbyen is seriously thinking about giving up smoking after a neighbor, seeing smoke coming from under the door, "rushed in with fire extinguisher and sprayed powder all over the apartment,"** according to *The Local Paper of Flamers*. That triggered the fire alarm and brought out the fire department, meaning that in addition to a costly cleanup of there's going to be a heavy fine to pay as well. "This is one of the reasons that you cannot smoke in here," said Thomas Ulvestad, a police chief inspector for the governor's office, noting the apartments are leased out by the city ... If Cigarette Smoking Man (no, not that one) needs a place to stay in the meantime, **he can always strive for more notoriety by staying in one of the "Hotels That Hold Guinness World Records,"** as described by *Meetings and Conventions* magazine. The local contribution, of course, is the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel and its claim to being the world's northernmost full-service hotel. But we think it'd be cooler to do a getaway to the Nisiyama Onsen Keiunkan in Japan, the world's oldest hotel which has been open continuously since since 705 A.D.



MAGNAR SILSETH / SYSSELMANNEN

**Forget those big-print labels about reduced sperm.** Something like "Warning: Smoking may cause your neighbor to go batshit crazy, break into your apartment and spray everything with enough extinguisher to cost you a month's salary" seems like a truly scary deterrent.



A fossil was described  
Named *Darwinius massilae*.

OHM RESISTANCE

Try singing these lyrics. We dare you. Five years of scholarly debate about the controversial Ida fossil are squeezed into seven minutes of heavy metal in a new Science Slam Sonic Explorer video.

## 'Sea Monsters' man back on new hunt

### PREHISTORIC, from page 1

for fossils in Spitsbergen this week. "Of course it's not for everyone, but it's not supposed to be for everyone."

Hurum has gained worldwide notoriety for numerous discoveries, including several new species during nine years of excavations in Svalbard from 2004 to 2012 that focused on the Late Jurassic era about 150 million years ago. The most famous species from the Svalbard expeditions, a 15-meter-long pliosaur nicknamed "Predator X" and described as a marine reptile that "makes T-Rex look feeble," fueled a media frenzy that resulted in *National Geographic* establishing a "Sea Monsters of the North" portal for his research.

His most famous – and controversial – global project came in 2009 when he and other scientists claimed 47-million-year-old primate fossil nicknamed Ida was the "missing link" in the evolutionary process between humans and monkey-like species such as lemurs. While the debate about the validity of that claim is still raging, Hurum is promoting his theory with a different kind of clamor: a heavy metal video using a verse he wrote for lyrics as part of an exhibit of similar works titled Science Slam Sonic Explorer (the video is at [tinyurl.com/ppgmzfh](http://tinyurl.com/ppgmzfh)).

"My lyrics are recited by Life of Agony singer Mina Caputo, backed by the band Gator Bait Ten, including ex-Swans drummer Ted Parsons," Hurum writes in a description of the video that he says tries to condense five years

of academic discussions into about seven minutes of metal.

"We're going to do the same thing for the Svalbard project," he said shortly before departing Longyearbyen for this year's work.

Hurum's new project, which he hopes will last five years, is going back in time another 100 million years as he and a team of assistants search for sea mammals from the Triassic era.

"At this time the region that was to become Svalbard was a shallow, temperate sea and full of life," wrote expedition members Aubrey Roberts and Victoria Engelschön Nash, in a post at Hurum's official *National Geographic* blog ([tinyurl.com/ohgykt5](http://tinyurl.com/ohgykt5)). They note this year's expedition is during the 150-year anniversary of the first discovery of fossils from that era in Svalbard by Finnish explorer Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld.

This year the expedition team will focus strictly on mapping an area of about 20 square kilometers, with no excavations planned, Hurum said.

"If we find something big we'll GPS it and apply to the Sysselmannen for a permit to dig," he said. "We didn't even bring a jackhammer. That's rare."

The team is scheduled to conclude two weeks of work on Aug. 15. As in previous years, day trips to the site by are being offered by Spitsbergen Travel. The site itself is about a two-hour hike from where the boat docks.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Record number of arctic fox births surprises scientists

A record-high number of arctic fox litters have been observed this summer, surprising researchers who expected many dens to be empty due to a lack of reindeer and ptarmigan carcasses to feed on during the winter. Record populations of the latter species suggested a low mortality rate of the foxes' prey, but Norwegian Polar Institute scientists conducting their annual population survey say adult foxes apparently feasted well on geese and reindeer calves. In addition, a lack of ice due to a warm winter meant there were few concealed places for seals to give birth, allowing foxes to prey on the pups. Researcher Eva Fugleid said a critical time for young foxes is in October when they must leave dens and hunt on their own, so "it will be very interesting to see how it goes this winter"

### Local wildlife advocates seek halt to invasive bird photos

Longyearbyen wildlife advocates are expressing increasing displeasure with how aggressively tourists are attempting to get close-up pictures of birds. "It is absolutely ridiculous how stupid people can be," said Tom Ramberg, who, along with other residents, have reported seeing visitors walk off the road near the dog kennels toward the sea area, disrupting the animals' habitat. He and other residents are proposing signs be placed warning against such behavior, and having the Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators ensure its operators emphasize responsible behavior during cruises to Svalbard. Bjørn Frantzen of Longyearbyen Field Biological Association said he is also working with the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund on a brochure explaining proper behavior in nesting areas.

### Dutch man hospitalized after helicopter rescue from ship

A Dutch man in his 60s who was injured after being crushed in an accident aboard the boat Virgohamna had to be rescued by helicopter Saturday night, according to the Svalbard governor's office. The man was brought to Longyearbyen Hospital, said Police Chief Inspector Sidsel Svarstad.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 22 km/h. High 8C (5C wind chill), low 5C (1C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 18 km/h. High 7C (5C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. N winds to 15 km/h. High 7C (5C wind chill), low 5C (3C wind chill).	Cloudy. NW winds to 18 km/h. High 6C (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, cloudy, 5C (2C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, 5C (2C), 4C (1C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, clear, 6C (3C), 4C (2C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 6C (2C), 4C (0C), light 24:00h			

Data provided by storm.no



PICASA

A winch brings a captured minke whale aboard the *Unstad Junior* during a hunt this summer in Svalbard. A total of 23 vessels are participating in what's expected to be a record year for hunters.

## Whalers hyped about quantity, quality

### FISHING, from page 1

year the vessel caught a total of 30 whales, producing 45 tons of meat.

"The reason is that there has been steady supply of whales this year," Unstad told the network. "Also, the wonderful weather this summer, which has remained stable over time, has meant success in the hunting going more effectively. It is alpha-omega for us, that the weather is a team player."

Whaling industry officials are also talking up the culinary quality of this year's catch.

"We are hoping that the meat will now bring up the popularity," said Brita Rasmussen, regional director for the NFSO in Svolvær, in an interview with NRK. "Whale meat is a good product that we want people to open their eyes for. The meat produced is of very good quality and has a great taste; it is important that people know that."

Of course the whales – and a multitude of

people claiming to speak on the animals' behalf – don't necessarily share that enthusiasm.

"Norway, you WILL be stopped," wrote John Tribolet, a volunteer and graphics artist for the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, in response to a *Norway Today* article. "Eventually, educating the Norwegian people, coupled with world pressure and the economic losses you'll incur from the massive loss of tourism, the boycott all Norwegian companies and products, and your barbaric, obsolete whaling (the murder of sentient beings who's meat is toxic anyhow) being made known to the world, will force you to end whaling forever."

Norway is one of one three countries, along with Japan and Iceland, defying an International Whaling Commission ban on commercial hunting that has been in effect since 1986.

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

## It's still trash on the beach – but now it's art

### HUT, from page 1

Norway, with two filmmakers capturing the work for a documentary.

"This is bigger than we've done before, but we have more people," she said.

Svalbard's pristine location also makes the cabin more symbolic than her previous works, with the tragic aspect of it depicted in a cairn of debris on the roof.

"On the top it is a grave of the sea," she said. "Instead of stone we are using plastic."

The cairn, as with other features, aren't the result of a preplanned blueprint. Instead the group started sketching designs in the sand and, after constructing a pyramid-like frame of logs, started adding on features and decor according to their individual and collective whims.

"I make it up as I go along," said Annelie Grimwade, 23, a Hamburgsund, Sweden, resident who's been the primary architect of the interior room.

The group was supposed to start construction last Monday, but the "building materials" weren't delivered until Thursday, so they're



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Annelie Grimwade uses rusty nails collected from a beach to attach a discarded fishing net to a wall inside a hut made of coastal trash.

rushing through 12-hour work days to get the hut completed in time.

"I think maybe because I'm in my own little bubble I don't feel rushed," Grimwade said.

The cabin is scheduled to remain on the beach until October, after which it will be moved if someone wants it or dismantled and discarded, Egeland said.

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

## What's up

### 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

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

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

### Aug. 11

7 p.m.: Ceremonial opening of the Project Ocean Hope "trash hut." On the beach next to the Svalbard Sailing Club.

### Aug. 12

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

### 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

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

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

### Aug. 19

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

### 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

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "How to Train Your Dragon 2." 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." 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:

- *Chess Olympiad converges in Tromsø*
- *Russian sanctions hurt Arctic oil drilling*
- *Polar bears now tracked from space*
- *Siberian crater means we're all screwed*