



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Probability Statistics Norway is about to be mocked: 100 percent. Two new reports released by the agency paint vastly different portraits of Svalbard, as one claims to present a precise numerical profile while the other says trying to collect some similar data left its number crunchers in the dark.

CLEARLY CONFUSING

Worldly wards: Updated 'This Is Svalbard' shows we're more diverse, expensive and wasteful

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Mining is down, but pollution isn't. We're more wasteful, yet less. Diversity is rising, but we remain a stubbornly sexist society.

In short, Svalbard is still weird, statistically speaking.

An updated "This Is Svalbard" profile released this month by Statistics Norway shows the archipelago has changed significantly recently, yet retains many of its traditional quirks despite efforts to eliminate some of them.

Longyearbyen remains a male-dominated society, for instance, representing about 60 percent of the population – a number that has

See **STATISTICS**, page 4



LONGYEARBYEN LOKALSTYRE

What?! He's hungry for more survey data?

This creature, at the forefront of Longyearbyen's last citizen survey in 2009, apparently needs to be fed again with a new survey mailed to all households due by Nov. 23. Officials say 13 percent of the surveys have been returned as of Monday. The survey can also be filled out electronically at svar.bedrekommune.no.

Eccentric enigmas: Lengthy study of locals not only useless, but reveals flaws in past data

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

In a way, it's everyone's fault for having the gall to celebrate the sun's return after a four-month-long night. And for coming and going so quickly, treating Svalbard as something other than a normal place to live.

For those and many other deviant behaviors, residents of 132 local households who spent two weeks documenting every kroner they spent and were then interrogated about it wasted their time. Worse, they also retroactively made the efforts of those before them futile.

A newly published report about the in-depth "consumer survey" conducted in 2012

See **MEANINGLESS**, page 3

Inside

Ever see a polar bear explode?

Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- First apartment w/ solar panels a big success
- Trash plant problem causes backlog of full bins
- Longyearbyen crushes Barentsburg in sports

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 8

...and this study may mean chaos

Strategic analysis says Svalbard still part of Norway's most vital area for future foreign policy

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Wondering why the government is collecting so much data about us. It might have something to do with being part of "Norway's most important foreign policy interest."

That characterization by Prime Minister Erna Solberg is part of a new strategic analysis released this month focusing on the north. The

See **POLICY**, page 3



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Military personnel are increasingly present in Norway's Arctic for exercises, reconnaissance and confrontations with Russian forces who are encroaching on the area with planes and ships.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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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.

Nice evidence...er, we mean photos



PETER COX



KEVIN RABER

Svalbard's walrus get a close-up look at Irish photographer Peter Cox and a group of "photography tourists" visiting this summer. A photo gallery of the trip (available at tinyurl.com/p7z6tne) is getting lots of media attention, which may make it hard to explain how images such as the one to the left aren't violating laws prohibiting the disruption of wildlife.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

The first snowmobiles engines of the coming season are being heard around town, but there's still lots of places lacking sufficient snowfall to ride safely. Such as **the theater at Huset, where someone tried to take a snowmobile on the stage for a joyride and ended up running aground in the orchestra section**, according to The Local Paper of Recklessness. Longyearbyen's two big snowmobile dealers turned the old performing arts center into a sales showroom last Saturday, but it seems an employee at one of them snuck in the night before the show and, as the local put it, "the temptation was too great when the man discovered the snowmobile on stage. It did not end so well." Damage to the stage and orchestra pit was apparently minimal, but details about that and whether police are getting involved aren't being revealed by the culprit's boss, who also happens to co-own the building ... We're not sure if this more applicable to the joyrider or his boss, but both seem like good test subjects if someone wants to inject them with DNA from **polar bears who, according to a new study, are immune from heart attacks despite their high-fat diet that gives them a 50 percent body fat content**. A team of researchers from the U.S., China, Denmark and Greenland studied tissue samples of 79 polar bears and 10 brown bears and, while the polar bears' cholesterol level would kill humans, apparently some kind of mutant gene thing happened when the polar bears became a separate species 500,000 years ago. Yes, the beakers say



SLATE

This is not having a heart attack? And how is this helping all those fat people not have one?

that might somehow benefit our ever-fattening population someday. A one-minute animated version of all of that lengthy and complex research is at tinyurl.com/lhoeryz ... Finally, **a moment of dead sobriety as we mention an NRK article profiling survivors of the Utøya massacre, including one from Svalbard, who turned to alcohol to cope with the tragedy and are now seeking help to recover**. "I think everyone who experiences a trauma seeks a calming effect in something," said Astrid Sylte, 20, one of five Svalbard youths on the island during the July 22, 2011, shooting that killed 69 people. "For many of us the alcohol was the typical place to hide away." She is one of about 30 youths now participating in a Tromsø. "For my part, this has been crucial," she told NRK. "It is like a kind of group therapy. Here we have used everything from gallows humor to serious conversations about problems you have. Just hearing that it is allowed to suffer, that it's okay to not have a good day, has been important."



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE



NRK

Longyearbyen residents, left, don't dress or follow a lot of other everyday habits during Solfestuka, making a consumer spending survey conducted during the festival in 2012 useless. But the sun is a blessing for a different set of data gatherers who say less sea ice will aid development in the Arctic, which Prime Minister Erna Solberg calls "Norway's most important foreign policy interest."

Surveys, fun in the sun don't mix

MEANINGLESS, from page 1

isn't a statistical analysis so much as it is an effort to say "bureaucratic screw-up" in as many ways as possible in 25 pages. Timing, methodology, sample size, confusion due to language barriers and "random events" are just some of the flaws cited by Statistics Norway, which conducted the survey and subsequently decided not to publish the results as official data.

"Uncertainty in the calculations made show the consumer survey in Svalbard has large statistical variance in its estimates," states the report. "It is also revealed poor quality traits in the foundation of 2006 figures, which also contributes to greater uncertainty in the estimates."

A small number of participants and a short monitoring period – especially during the Solfestuka festival in March when many residents' spending habits are different than usual – were among the primary flaws cited in the report.

Melting ice opening Arctic to shipping

POLICY, from page 1

major findings are similar to previous studies, but show the pace of some activities is growing rapidly or has the potential to do so soon.

Among the most notable developments is shipping in the Northern Sea Route due to the shrinking ice sheet, Solberg wrote. A total of 71

vessels navigated the passage in 2013, 46 of them Russian.

"Several analysts believe that the sea route will soon be a real alternative to the Suez Canal," the report asserts.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

First apartment with solar panels a shinning success

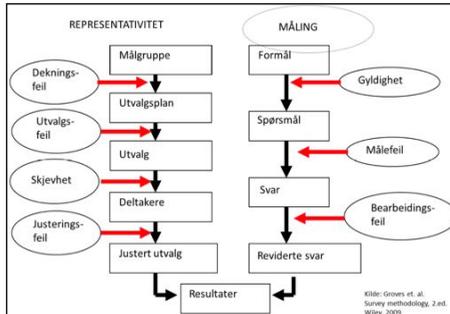
The first solar panels installed on an apartment complex in Longyearbyen produced more than twice as much electricity as expected, according to officials. Solbes, a supplier of photovoltaic systems for Nordic conditions, has evaluated the production of the panels for 2014 and concluded 8,496 kilowatt hours were produced from March to September, 115 percent more than the 3,954 kilowatt hours expected. March production was below expectations because the sun is low on the horizon until late that month, but in May was nearly four times as high, possibly in part due to combination of cold and sunlight reflected from snow. LNS, which built the apartment and is nearly finished with a second that will have the panels, said this year's success means they will sider using solar energy from a more commercial perspective since it would reduce customers' electricity bills and pollution from the town's coal-fired power plant.

Malfunction at trash plant leaves bins full around town

Operational problems at Longyearbyen's solid waste facility resulted in a lot of full garbage containers around town during the past few days. Hans Petter Lauritsen, manager of the facility, said a malfunctioning trash grinder forced workers to bundle trash in bales. "That takes a lot of space," he said Tuesday. "And our storage capacity is beginning to be used up now." Normal operations were expected to resume Wednesday after replacement parts arrived Tuesday.

Longyearbyen dominates sports events in Barentsburg

Longyearbyen dominated Barentsburg on the Russians' home turf during the annual sports exchange, winning five of seven events and losing only at ping pong. The 33 participants from Longyearbyen prevailed at football 10-6, badminton 5-3, basketball 71-50, volleyball 3-2 and indoor field hockey 5-3. The Norwegians tied the Russians at chess 3-3 and lost at ping pong 0-3. Barentsburg gets to seek revenge when they visit Longyearbyen Nov. 22.



Those red arrows are not a good sign: A flow chart analyzing a consumer survey in Svalbard shows the objective ("Formål") was the only aspect of the project that wasn't flawed.

In addition, language problems with foreign residents meant some recorded data incompletely and incorrectly.

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

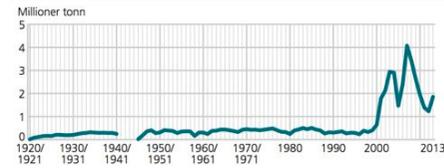
Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. Variable winds to 22 km/h. High -4C (-7C wind chill), low -13C (-18C wind chill).	Snow. SE winds to 49 km/h. High -7C (-14C wind chill), low -13C (-18C wind chill).	Snow. SE winds to 38 km/h. High -4C (-9C wind chill), low -9C (-16C wind chill).	Rain/snow. S winds to 35 km/h. High 2C (-3C wind chill), low -4C (-9C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, 1C (-3C), 1C (-4C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow, 1C (-7C), -9C (-13C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -4C (-10C), -8C (-13C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -1C (-5C), -6C (-11C), light 0:00h			

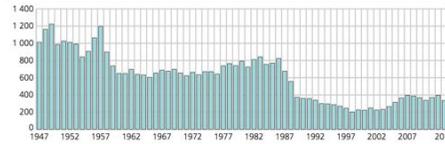
Data provided by storm.no

Coal is declining...

Produksjon av kull

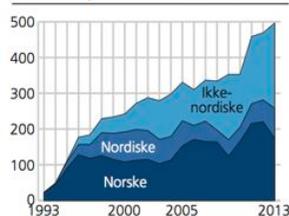


Ansatte i den norske kulldriften

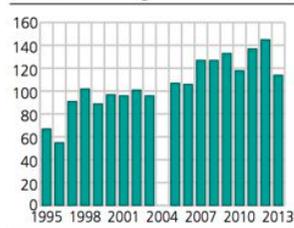


Students and prices are rising...

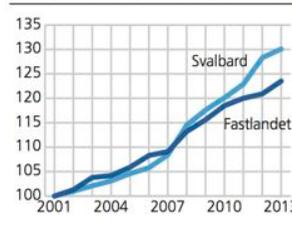
Studenter ved Universitets-senteret på Svalbard (UNIS)



Barn i barnehager

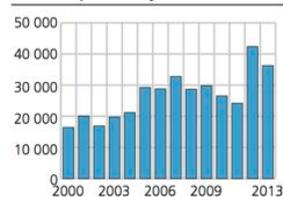


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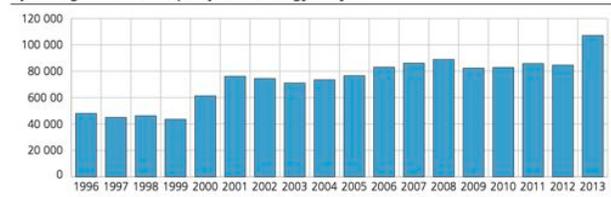


Tourism is a mix bag...

Turister på oversjøiske cruise



Gjestedøgn ved hoteller/pensjonater i Longyearbyen



STATISTICS NORWAY

Graphs showing the trend of Svalbard's coal production and employment (top row); university and kindergarten enrollment (first two in center row); consumer price index compared to mainland Norway (at right in center row); and visitors arriving on cruise ships and staying in hotels are part of "This Is Svalbard," a comprehensive profile of the archipelago available at tinyurl.com/pb3a2qd.

More men, more pay, more trash

STATISTICS, from page 1

remained consistent in recent years, even though mining jobs have declined sharply, and students and foreign residents are rising. The uneven ratio plays a major role in shaping some of the area's other well-known qualities.

"In 2012, the average gross income in Svalbard was 571,900 kroner, compared with 391,700 on the mainland – in other words, almost 50 percent higher in Svalbard," the report notes. But "since the proportion of men among the employed is higher than the mainland it contributes to a higher average income. If we compare men's and women's income in Svalbard to the mainland, the difference is reduced to about 37 percent."

But the high wages are being increasingly offset by higher prices compared to the mainland. While Svalbard's consumer price index was about the same as the mainland's from 2001 to 2010, a steadily increasing gap with Svalbard on the costlier end has since appeared.

Furthermore, the trend of Svalbard's housing costs being lower than the mainland's "is about to change," the report notes.

"Spending on 'housing, fuel and power' is what has increased the most in recent years – 75 per cent since 2001," the report states. "This should be seen in the context of the housing market in Longyearbyen being, to some extent, privatized."

One housing tradition that remains largely intact is 52 percent of Svalbard's households are single-person, compared to 39.7 percent on the mainland, while larger households are

roughly one-third smaller in Svalbard than the rest of the country. Also, while the central government is enacting policies designed to further its goal of making Longyearbyen a more family-oriented community, 70 percent of the employees at the Svea mine commute to the mainland when not at work for their 14-day-on/14-day-off shifts.

Mining remains Svalbard's biggest employer, but major financial and other hardships for both Norwegian and Russian operators means the industry now accounts for 18 percent of the total man-hours worked, a decline of nearly 40 percent since 2008. The 1.9 million tons of coal produced in 2013 is less than half of the peak of 4.1 million tons reached in 2007.

Greenhouse gas emissions have remained relatively level in recent years, aside from a slight upward spike in 2011, despite the decline in mining, which scientists have previously attributed to pollutants drifting in from other regions.

There's also more trash in Svalbard, with the study noting more than 4,000 tons was produced in 2010, compared to about 2,750 tons in 2008. About 85 percent of the waste was from business activities. But the news wasn't all bad.

"On average, each person in Longyearbyen produces nearly 200 kilograms of waste," the study notes. "That is far less than on the mainland, where the average for every inhabitant is 441 kilograms."

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

What's up

Nov. 18

3 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting, Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

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

7:30 p.m.: Auction of about 80 books from the polar collections at Longyearbyen Library and Svalbard Museum. Opens with presentation about books on Svalbard by Per Kyrre Reymert. Svalbard Museum.

Nov. 19

6 p.m.: Movie: *Dumb And Dumber 2*, U.S. comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 20

Noon: Supervisory Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Galileo Room.

Nov. 22

1 p.m.: Puppet show "Hurra for Grunnloven" by Dårækisten Teater, suitable for children ages 2-6. Free admission. Kulturhuset cafe.

Nov. 23

5 p.m.: Movie: "Turist," Norwegian/Swedish drama/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

7:30 p.m.: Movie: "1001 Gram," Norwegian drama, all ages. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 24

8 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Barentz Pub.

Nov. 25

7 p.m.: Musical meditation and lighting of candles. Svalbard Church.

Nov. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Interstellar," U.S./British action/sci-fi, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 27

7:30 p.m.: Christmas concert featuring soloists Reidun Sæther and Espen Grjøtheim. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 29

10 a.m.-5 p.m.: Christmas market w/ 20 artists in Nybyen. Galleri Svalbard.

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:

- *U.S., China agree to major climate deal*
- *History in WWII wrecks in Arctic Norway*
- *Climate tools seek to bend nature's path*
- *Robot 'dolphins' study Antarctic ice melt*