



# Easing up east access

*Strict limits remain in revised environmental protection act, but researchers get some breaks*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Strict new limits on access to East Svalbard remain in proposed revisions to the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act, but changes expected this week by Parliament address some concerns raised by researchers.

The update to the plan originally enacted in 2002 imposes a ban on heavy oil in East Svalbard, limits tourist activity areas, adds "cultural heritage" to the list of factors meriting protection and requires increased precautions to prevent polar bear attacks.

Criticism about a draft of the updated plan released earlier this year has come from tourist and other industry officials, scientific and historical researchers, and local politicians. All claim the limits will have excessively adverse occupational and/or economic impacts, although there are obvious difference about specific areas and activities.

A committee receiving those concerns, which met for the final time earlier this month,

See **PROTECTION**, page 2



VS

DEC. 25, 2011

# CHILLA IN MANILLA

*Two Svalbard heavyweights. One tree. Who's the worthy mail?*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Let's get ready to ... CRUUUUUMPLE!

The gift wrap, that is, as the competition is on in earnest for a champion to bowl over that special (or not so) someone on the titan of all shopping holidays. The multimedia division is usually packed with new contenders and this year two in particular emerged with noteworthy pedigree and hype.

Appearing first was the CD/book package "Arctic Mood" from the Northern Norwegian Jazz Center, featuring music by Molde resident Brynjar Rasmussen and

**Undercard:** A trio of other new gifted local contenders to entice talent scouts

Page 4

photography by Oslo's Werner Anderson. It debuted with an extended live performance during Polarjazz in early February.

The late contender is "Polar Eufori," which debuted as a theater music/video presentation late last year and has been performed several times with varying ensembles since. The DVD/CD version was

See **SHOWDOWN**, page 4

Inside	
Seeing a forest of trees in Svalbard	Page 2
<b>Headlines from Svalbardposten</b>	
- A big win and a big warning from Store Norske	
- Company again tries to sell faulty food grinders	
- Lønnum rejects UNIS offer, new person asked	Page 3
<b>Weather forecast</b>	Page 3
<b>Events calendar</b>	Page 4

Yes, you can get **BUTTER!** P. 2

# Bear broadcast is BBC buffoonery

*Documentary about Svalbard uses misleading zoo footage in yet another fake 'reality' scandal*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

What is it about big-city folks with TV cameras that makes them believe Svalbard isn't dramatic enough in real life?

Forget the James Bond supervillains in the seed vault and Blair Witch wannabes stalking research stations that are so popular among conspiracy and fiction types. This time another high-profile "reality show" has been caught substituting misleading polar

See **SCANDAL**, page 3



BBC

Newborn polar bear cubs are cared for by their mother in the BBC program "Frozen Planet." The show's narration suggests the bears are in Svalbard, but the scene was actually filmed in a Dutch zoo using artificial snow.

## 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.

## Flames near a short-lived forest



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Longyearbyen youths, above left, light candles during a St. Lucy's Day Mass today at Svalbard Church. At right, residents inspect imported Christmas trees Saturday outside Svalbardbutikken. The trees, which went on sale Friday evening, were mostly gone the following day.

## Plan gives E. Svalbard access zones

### PROTECTION, from page 1

made some modifications allowing researchers into certain protected wildlife areas during non-breeding warm-weather months. But a statement from the Svalbard governor's office notes the plan still follows the Norwegian Ministry of Environment's mandate to make protection the highest priority.

"The project group has designed a proposal for a division that maintains users' interests, as far as possible within this framework," the statement notes.

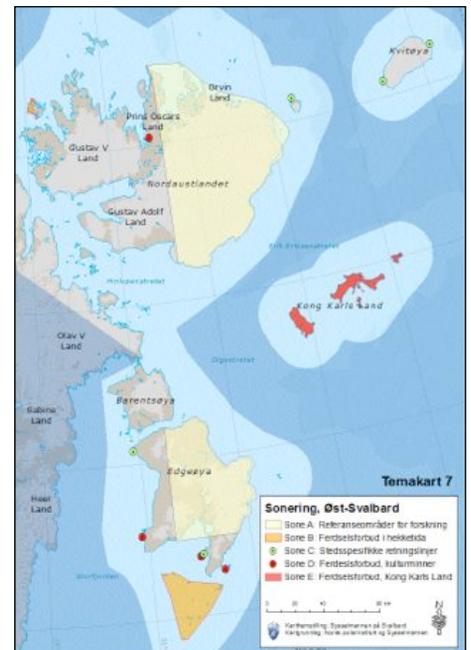
The plan establishes five zones for East Svalbard:

- Zone A: Reference areas for research, especially about climate outlook and the environment, with notification and reporting requirements for all traffic.
- Zone B: Wildlife breeding areas with access limited from May 15 to Aug. 15.
- Zone C: Active tourist areas.
- Zone D - Existing cultural sites with a ban on traffic.

Zone E - Existing traffic ban area to protect polar bears.

Further review and public comment to the revisions are planned early next year.

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



SYSSELMANNEN

East Svalbard is divided into five access zones in an proposed update to the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

## Icesheet

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

We're suffering the Great Butter Crisis of 2011 thanks to a high-fat diet plan that's consuming Norwegians who don't realize even the "one-third are obese" residents of the U.S. realized years ago was absurd (even before its founder died of heart disease). It's possible Svalbardbutikken will be getting more late this week. If not, those feeling no goodwill toward their fellow hoarding man these holidays can still find plenty of butter there – premium quality, no less – if they're willing to pay a very high price or put in a little effort. The deli sandwich shelves have several hundred individual pats of sweet-cream French butter for

two-and-a-half kroner apiece. That's roughly five times the price of the regular Tine stuff, not to mention the hassle of having to unwrap each tiny pat (lousy for recipes, but probably a blessing in terms of portion control). If that's too rich for your blood, so to speak, **make your own butter by churning the heaviest cream available in a blender or food processor for five minutes.** You need to "wash" the butter in cold water afterward to remove left-over milk particles that will cause it to spoil, but otherwise you're set – and with your choice of sweet or salted butter no less. More precise details are everywhere on the internet if you need them.



BBC

A polar bear roams Svalbard during the polar night in a video posted online by the BBC where, in an interview, David Attenborough explains why his "Frozen Planet" program used footage of a polar bear birth from a zoo rather than the archipelago. He said bringing cameras into a mother's den would be dangerous, but was evasive when asked why that was not disclosed during the program.

## BBC busted for bear birth bluff

### SCANDAL, from page 1

bear footage, resulting in a national scandal in Britain that is making Prince Harry's visit this spring look like the least sensational media event this year.

The fifth episode of the eight-part BBC series "Frozen Planet," which aired Nov. 23 and attracted more than eight million viewers, featured Svalbard's polar bears and the plight they are facing due to climate change. But scenes of a mother giving birth to cubs in her den was filmed at a Dutch zoo (or "wildlife park," as the BBC later put it) using fake snow,

David Attenborough's narration suggested the footage was from Svalbard, but during subsequent grilling from journalists he said the wording was carefully chosen to declare that outright. He the decision to film at the zoo was made for "the safety of the animal."

"If you had tried to put a camera in the wild in a polar bear den, she would either have killed the cub or she would have killed the cameraman, one or the other," he said in an interview with Britain's ITV.

He said explaining the zoo during the show would have ruined the atmosphere.

Accusations of motives in the resulting brouhaha have been even more absurd.

Mark Thompson, BBC's director-general has suggested the outcry over faked wildlife documentaries is the press seeking "revenge" for the broadcaster's coverage of the country's

tabloid hacking scandal. Meanwhile, while many are guffawing about a show the BBC hoped would draw attention to a serious issue, climate change skeptics are calling it yet more junk science from the liberal media.

"When it comes to tugging the heartstrings and purse strings in the name of agw (anthropogenic global warming), there is no trickery too debased to resort to," wrote one online commenter in response to a newspaper report about the revelation.

Still, an online poll in the *Guardian*, which has led in exposing the hijinks of Britain's tabloids, shows 86 percent of respondents don't think the fake footage is a big deal.

It's not the first time Svalbard's polar bears have been misrepresented, either intentionally or due to ignorance. Attenborough caught heat in 1997 for using mother/cub footage in an Arctic documentary that was actually filmed at a German zoo. This year, a *National Geographic* documentary, among numerous embellishments, suggested a fossil excavation site was being threatened by a polar bear by using footage shot elsewhere on Spitsbergen.

Also, Attenborough is coming under scrutiny with his other projects, including headlines mocking his use of penguin "body doubles" in an upcoming film that portrays one animal while using images of many.

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### A court victory for – and a warning from – Store Norske

Store Norske won a big court victory regarding past mining operations, but is saying another legal matter may put future work on hold. The mining company will not have to pay 400 million kroner sought by U.S.-based Oxford Coal for terminating a coal sale contract Store Norske claims was overpriced. The contract is among numerous questionable agreements reached by former Store Norske Director Robert Hermansen, who is serving a prison term after confessing to charges of gross corruption. Store Norske was also awarded six million kroner in legal costs in the case heard in Oslo District Court. But another legal dispute with the Norwegian government, which is delaying a decision on whether to approve a new coal mine at Lunckefjell, could lead to a year of inactivity between work at Svea and new mine, said Director Bjørn Arnestad. He said the drastic measures may occur if the company does not have an answer around the start of 2012. Concerns about the environmental impact of the new mine are being cited for the delay.

### Company again trying to sell faulty food grinders to locals

A company is bypassing official channels and attempting direct internet sales of food grinders that caused clogging, fire and other hazards when they were installed in Longyearbyen homes earlier this year. Activum Consulting, which also raised the price to 1,250 kroner from 1,000 kroner, argues it won a fair bidding process with the city and disputes the reports of defects. City officials said they are consulting with attorneys before responding to the internet marketing effort.

### Lønnum rejects offer to lead UNIS again; 2nd pick made

The University Centre in Svalbard is again searching for a new director after Lasse Lønnum turned down an offer to serve for a third time. UNIS offered the job two weeks ago to Lønnum, who was director from 1998 to 2002 and again from 2002 to 2004. The university is now offering Research Director Ole Arve Misund the position.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Clear. E winds to 36 km/h. High -11C (-20C wind chill), low -13C (-21C wind chill).	Snow late. E winds to 50 km/h. High -12C (-23C wind chill), low -14C (-27C wind chill).	Snow. NE winds to 25 km/h. High -7C (-14C wind chill), low -10C (-19C wind chill).	Snow ending. NE winds to 18 km/h. High -7C (-13C wind chill), low -9C (-14C wind chill).
Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, -8C (-12C), -10C (-13C), light 0:00h; Monday, cloudy, -10C (-13C), -11C (-15C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -11C (-15C), -13C (-18C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -13C (-18C), -14C (-20C), light 0:00h			

Data provided by yr.no



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Pianist/vocalist Liv Mari Schei, left, and Longyearbyen students perform a song from "Polar Eufori" during a CD/DVD release concert for the Svalbard multimedia project Thursday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel. A free four-minute excerpt of the DVD is at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PST0gQJPiw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PST0gQJPiw).

## Battling for the best show of Svalbard

### SHOWDOWN, from page 1

released during a concert Thursday at the Radisson Blu Polar Hotel.

Each has differing styles – "Mood" the imposing brawler, "Eufori" the favorite-son tactician – but pass the qualifying test for an all-audiences evaluation. Also, unlike many wimpy "critiques" in small-town newspapers, there is a winner and a loser – none of this "buy each, they're both winners" nonsense.

First, a reality check: You can't capture Svalbard's extremeness or the impact of a live performance on a small flat disc played on a TV/stereo/laptop. "Arctic Mood's" riveting 75-minute live performance, for instance, is a watered-down 34 minutes on CD.

On to the round-by-round commentary:

**Compositions:** "Arctic Mood" features complex, ambient and some experimental orchestral passages that earned raved reviews from John Kelman, a former colleague of mine at *All About Jazz* who's one of the most knowledgeable critics on the planet. "Polar Eufori" is a more soothing and even soundtrack with Liv Mari Schei's upper-range vocals giving vibrancy to Sigri Sandberg Meløy's lyrics and Mari Tefre's visuals (all three live in Longyearbyen). The latter is the safer all-audiences pick, but the opening round still goes to the visitors.

**Visuals:** Both are well above average in their genres, but "Eufori" ties things up due to

its more direct interaction with the music.

**Capturing Svalbard:** "Arctic Mood" features striking pictures whose patterns and hues offer an unorthodox perspective of their subjects. Alas, they lose the tension buildup of the live show's "Ken Burns" panning-and-scanning. "Polar Eufori's" video and lyrics capture more depth, vibrancy and familiarity with all aspects of human and natural life. First knockdown goes to Polar Eufori.

**Local artistic presence:** Three Svalbard icons verses a couple of talented visitors. "Arctic Mood" is beginning to stagger as Eufori scores another knockdown.

**Pricing/availability:** Leaving aside shaky audience cams and other illegal ways of obtaining these free via YouTube, etc., neither is cheap at 300 kroner through their designated websites. But the album-only "Arctic Mood" is at e-music sites everywhere for about 30 kroner, while any such plans for "Eufori" won't happen until after the holidays. A literal stunner as "Arctic Mood" comes off the ropes to score a knockdown of its own.

**Verdict:** This isn't "Rocky," where the contender who's lost most of the rounds magically makes up for it with a last-second punch. "Polar Eufori" wins by unanimous decision – and as a bonus it's far cheaper to mail to those envious relatives to the south.

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

## A trio of strong undercard contenders

Several new CD and/or DVD projects with local ties were released during the past year which, for varying reasons, didn't qualify for our title bout. But the following turned in strong undercard performances:

- "Sydpolsferd" by the Norwegian Polar Institute. One of two new DVDs about the famed explorer, this features never-before seen footage of his South Pole conquest years ago (the other is a Svalbard quest in the 1920s).

- "Snostjerna" by Simen Henriksen and

Inger-Johanne Mørk. This CD was actually released late last year, is a bit raw in terms of performance and is getting a bit scarce. But it makes the list because it's worth saying you heard both teens if/when they become famous.

- "Splendid Svalbard" by Marcela Cardenas. We can't review this due to a massive conflict of interest involving a botched work project. But the relative newcomer's photo/music DVD brings remarkable life to a huge collection of images.

## What's up

### Dec. 14

6 p.m.: Movie: "Friends With Benefits," U.S. comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 16

10 a.m.: Kindergarten worship service. Svalbard Church.

### Dec. 18

5 p.m.: Christmas concert featuring various local performers. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Arthur Christmas" (3D), U.S. animated/family dubbed in Norwegian, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1," U.S. drama/fantasy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 20

8:30 a.m.: School liturgy. Svalbard Church.

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

### Dec. 21

6 p.m.: Movie: "Tower Heist," U.S. action/comedy, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 24

2 and 4 p.m.: Christmas Eve Mass services. Svalbard Church.

### Dec. 25

Noon: Christmas Mass. Svalbard Church.

### Dec. 26

6 p.m.: Movie: "Alvin and the Chipmunks 3," U.S. animation/comedy, all ages. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Sherlock Holmes; A Game of Shadows," U.S. action/adventure, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Dec. 27

6 p.m.: Family Christmas party. Svalbard Church.

### Dec. 28

6 p.m.: Movie: "Happy Feet 2," U.S. animation/family, all ages. 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:

- *Skepticism greets new climate treaty*
- *Underwater Svalbard helo wreck found*
- *The great S. Pole race, 100 yrs. later*
- *Surviving Arctic mishap w/ frozen beer*