



# Not a sound plan

*Oil agency halts seismic tests in Svalbard, claims political uproar had nothing to do with decision*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

It's entirely possible the oil folks are telling the truth when they say they abruptly abandoned their mapping project in Svalbard for innocent reasons. But a lot of people aren't buying it.

Maybe that's because the "successful seismic season" ended halfway through its two-month itinerary with a lot of territory still uncharted, supposedly because the project ran out of money. It also occurred only two days after publicity about the project triggered an uproar that has supposedly allied national politicians battling each other.

"Because of the good weather and few technical problems, the data assembly has been more effective than we had expected," said Sissel Eriksen, exploration director for the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate, which commissioned the project without the apparent knowledge of a lot of those politicians.

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ANDERS RINGHEIM



ANDERS RINGHEIM



MAGNAR LØVBØTTE / STORE NORSKE

A polar bear inspects a cabin at Revneset, top, while spending three days last week wandering along a coastal area of Hiorthhamn. The bear broke into the cabin owned by Anders Ringheim twice in three days, seen at lower left, causing heavy damage and eating what food it could find. At lower right, a female bear and her two cubs are spotted Aug. 15 near Svea, where they lingered for several days.

# Feeding the beast

*Locals get visual feast as bears seek munchies at cabins and Svea*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

For just about everyone in Longyearbyen except Anders Ringheim, it was a rare and ideal opportunity watch a polar bear for a few days.

Ringheim, on the other hand, saw his cabin at Revneset get thoroughly trashed as it was

raided by the bear twice in three days. The bear entered and exited by breaking windows, destroyed much of the furniture and ate pretty much everything intended to be consumable.

"He had himself a really good meal with bacon, sausage, mayonnaise, eggs and

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## Store Norske's big day at the Opera

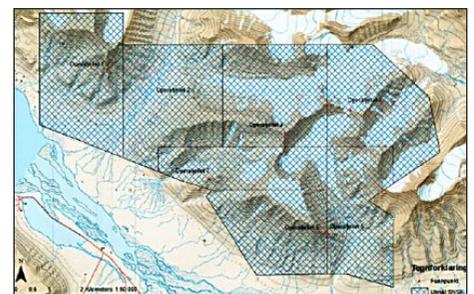
*Mining company wins rights to coal-rich area of Operafjellet; Austre Adventfjord may appeal*

**By MARK SABBATINI**  
**Editor**

Store Norske won a huge battle in its efforts to find life after Svea as the company prevailed Tuesday in a lengthy legal dispute over the coal mining rights to a large section of Operafjellet.

The 61-square-kilometer area is projected to contain up to 10 million tons of recoverable

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DIRMIN / STORE NORSKE

A 61-square-kilometer area on the north side of Adventdalen is projected to contain about 10 million tons of recoverable coal.

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

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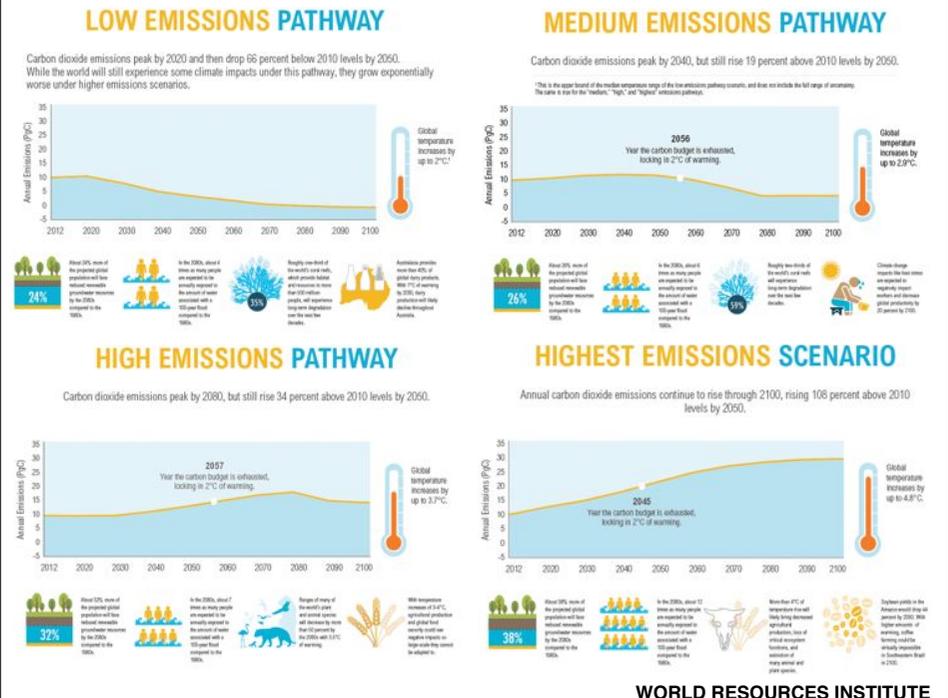
## Corrections policy

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.

## Pick a path to the future (hint: they all suck)



A series of charts depicts the likely consequences of various levels of global emissions by the year 2100, according to the newest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. A final draft of the IPCC's synthesis report, which combines three documents released earlier this year, sent to governments Monday declares current warming levels "might already be considered dangerous" and severe future climate change may be "irreversible." The charts, detailing scenarios ranging from "low" impacts such as 100-year floods affecting four times as many people as now to "highest" impacts of mass extinction, can be seen in detail at [tinyurl.com/m6j5u7h](http://tinyurl.com/m6j5u7h).

## Icesheet

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

Hunting season is here, when our collective appreciation for Svalbard's wildlife shifts from picturesque to palatable. But this year **those bloody carcasses are both artery-clogging and artful as Sayo Senoo, a Japanese artist living in France, is back in the archipelago looking to add to a hunting trophy collection that truly captures the heart. Along with various other internal organs.** This is her third trip since last summer doing her version of portraying the beauty in the savage side of Svalbard's wildlife, which she said is proving provocative in Paris, but somewhat sedate in Svalbard. She's planning to stay until Sept. 19, so hunters interested in being accompanied by an attractive young woman with a true appreciation for their marksmanship can contact her at +33 6 4673 7217 or [senosayo@gmail.com](mailto:senosayo@gmail.com). Those with a stomach for her kind of art can



**SAYO SENOO**

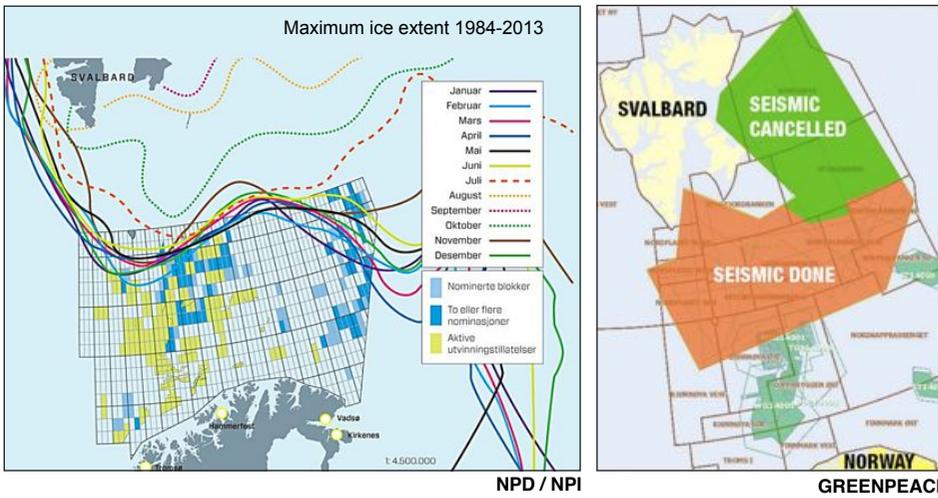
**My bloody valentine:** This heartfelt memoir from Svalbard, available as a large-size JPEG suitable for framing, is the perfect gift for that special bleeding-heart vegan in your life.

see her images and the other usual profile stuff at [sayosenoo.strikingly.com](http://sayosenoo.strikingly.com) ... Staying with the provocative sightings of life theme, a certain faction of this planet is ablaze about a supposed revelation on another planet as **the Curiosity rover, which did its test drives in Svalbard, is celebrating its two-year anniversary on Mars by sending back pictures identified by experts as a thigh bone.** By "experts," of course, we mean UFO conspiracy blogs. NASA, being the killjoy government agency it is, explains the Aug. 21 photo is merely a rock "likely sculpted by erosion, either wind or water." The UFO fanatics might feel a brief moment of ecstasy as the space agency adds Mars once was a habitable planet, but it's going to be hard to spot Martian spacecrafts since they'd be piloted by microbes.



**NASA**

**A hard-on for Martians:** This large-size memoir from Mars, available as a large-size JPEG suitable for framing, is the perfect gift for arousing that special galactic hitchhiker in your life.



A chart tracking the monthly maximum extent of the Arctic ice sheet since 1984, left, reveals new areas in the Barents Sea being opened to oil exploration are overlapping the ice edge, a concern for environmentalists and safety experts. At right, a map of the region shows where a ship conducted seismic mapping this summer and an area left unexplored due to controversy surrounding the project.

## 'Successful' seismic project goes silent

MAPPING, from page 1

Whatever the reason, chalk this one up as a PR win for Greenpeace, which has had a few losing and sometimes embarrassing battles with oil interests in the area recently. The environmental organization issued an alert about the project Aug. 17, resulting in widespread media coverage and a halt to the mapping two days later.

"We are pleased that the NPD has stopped this ugly creeping opening up of the Svalbard zone, but disappointed that they began at all," said Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace Norway, in a prepared statement. "There must be an end to the NPD trying on their own to define Norwegian petroleum policy."

Greenpeace, other environmental organizations and commercial fishermen claim seismic mapping can cause significant damage to marine life, including scaring animals from the area, and killing fish eggs and larvae.

The Dolphin Geophysics ship *Artemis Atlantic* began its work July 18 and collected 2D seismic data in about 5,600 kilometers of the Barents Sea, according to the NPD's statement. The original plan was to cover 7,100 kilometers, but an area off east Svalbard extending all the way to the northeast tip of the archipelago remains unmapped.

Oil exploration in the region is controversial for environmental and political reasons at both the national and international level. The Arctic is thought to contain up to 25 percent of the world's remaining oil reserves and countries are fiercely engaged in disputes

about territorial rights and drilling policies.

Norway claims it has sovereignty over the shelf around the Svalbard archipelago, but Russia in particular is challenging that assertion. Commercial activity in much of the area is also subject to restrictions under the Svalbard Treaty and Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

The platform of Norway's Conservative-led coalition government states it is opposed to initiating petroleum-related activities in the Svalbard zone. The coalition's Conservative and Progress parties are backing the NPD's claim the seismic work is "a clean mapping" unrelated to petroleum activity, but the coalition's Christian Democratic and Liberal parties disagree.

"This is not in keeping with the nature of the cooperative agreement, in which we clearly write that we should not have petroleum work inside what is defined as the ice edge," said Ola Elvestuen, a Liberal Party member who is chairs Parliament's Energy and Environment Committee, in an interview with TV2.

The NPD states it has been collecting seismic data in the southeastern and northern Barents Sea since 2011. Nikolai Astrup, a Conservative Party member who is on Elvestuen's committee, told TV2 there are no plans to open the Svalbard zone to drilling but "it is in the public interest that we collect as much information as possible about Norwegian territory."

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

## HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

### Youths to star in, help film Camp Svalbard documentary

About 40 local youths will star on the big screen as part of a documentary about this year's Camp Svalbard, which started last week at Ymerbukta. The camp, now in its sixth year, features a variety of activities including glacier walks, deep-sea fishing, rifle shooting, kayaking and outdoor living skills. The filmmakers, who received a grant from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund for the project, will work in collaboration with students who participated in a photography course this spring, said Ingeborg Runde, the camp's coordinator.

### Book about history of Hopen gets new edition with updates

A new edition of a book about life at Hopen since 1596 has been released, adding details about what has happened on the island since the book was first published in 2002, according to Svalbard Museum Director Tora Hultgreen. "It is a good reference book about everything that happened on Hopen through the times," she said. "The previous edition was quickly sold out." The island, possibly discovered in 1613 by whale and walrus hunter Thomas Marmaduke, is now a meteorological station and designated international Important Bird Area. The book, "Hopen 2014: Ishavsøy og meteorologisk stasjon" is written by Oddmund Søreide og Tor Børsting, with an ending contributed by station leader Kåre Holter Solhjell.

### Deadline for Longyearbyen School book delayed again

The completion date of a book about Longyearbyen School, originally funded by a grant from the city in 2007, is being pushed back yet again, with the author saying extra time is needed to revise and add material to the manuscript. Kjersti Strømmen was hired to write the book in 2009, but work remained largely at a standstill until the city's Youth Activities Authority provided additional funds last year for author fees, printing and other costs. The book was supposed to be completed in April and published this fall under the revised deadline, but Unn Martinsen, head of the youth activities committee, said the deadline is now Sept. 1 and the publication date is unknown.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Cloudy. E winds to 18 km/h. High 8C (6C wind chill), low 5C (2C wind chill).	Rain. S winds to 52 km/h. High 9C (4C wind chill), low 6C (1C wind chill).	Rain. W winds to 49 km/h. High 7C (1C wind chill), low 3C (-2C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. W winds to 42 km/h. High 5C (1C wind chill), low 2C (-3C wind chill).
Sunrise 2:40a; sunset 11:17p	Sunrise 2:55a; sunset 11:01p	Sunrise 3:08a; sunset 10:47p	Sunrise 3:20a; sunset 10:35p
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, cloudy, 7C (3C), 3C (0C), light 18:50h; Monday, rain/snow, 3C (-2C), 2C (-3C), light 18:28h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, 2C (-1C), 0C (-5C), light 18:07h; Wednesday, p. cloudy, 2C (0C), -1C (-4C), light 17:47h			

Data provided by storm.no



MAGNAR SILSETH / SYSSELMANNEN

A polar bear that ransacked a cabin at Revneset twice last week wanders along a hillside across the channel from Longyearbyen. The bear was visible from town for three days until officials with the Svalbard governor's office used a helicopter to chase the animal into the mountains.

## Polar bears pay visits to cabins, Svea

### ENCOUNTERS, from page 1

Brelett," Ringheim told *Svalbardposten*. "I also think it ate two brown cheeses."

The bear, first spotted Wednesday in the Hiorthhamn area and easily visible to the naked eye across the channel from Longyearbyen, inspected numerous cabins as it wandered several kilometers along the coast. But Ringheim's cabin was apparently the only one invaded.

"It probably visited six or seven cabins that we saw," said Dag Arne Husdal, who was on a fishing trip with a friend, in an interview with *Nordlys*. "It seemed curious and scratched on the doors and windows of the cabins where there have probably been people recently. At one of the cabins it was the overzealous and there ended up being a window broken, but it did not seem like he was interested in going in."

The Governor of Svalbard issued an alert about the bear Thursday, reminding the public that approaching or otherwise disturbing the

protected species is prohibited. After the second raid of Ringheim's cabin a day later officials used a helicopter to chase it several kilometers into Haneskogdalen.

Workers at Svea also got an unexpectedly prolonged encounter as a female bear and her two cubs spent several days near the coal mine starting Aug. 15.

Odd Georg Østbyhaug, Store Norske's electrical operations manager, told *Nordlys* bear sightings aren't uncommon at Svea, but the trio of animals returned repeatedly despite efforts to chase them away.

"The female bear had kids who were born last winter and at this time of year they can be a little hungry," he said. "Summer is the worst time, because there is not much food."

A heightened alert was maintained while the bears were nearby since "it's amazing how fast bears move in this terrain," Østbyhaug said.

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

## A win, but hurdles remain for Store Norske

### OPERAFJELLET, from page 1

coal, compared to the 8.4 million tons at the newly-opened Lunckefjell mine that is expected to sustain the company's mining operations for about four years.

Also seeking the rights was Austre Adventfjord, owned by a Bergen family that is trying to sell a 217-square-kilometer tract in the area. The company was awarded 10 of 17 claims at Hiorthfjellet, but a company attorney told *Svalbardposten* all of the parcels are needed to proceed with their mining plan.

Both companies have six months to appeal the ruling by the Norwegian Directorate of Mining with the Commissioner of Mines at Svalbard.

The company has conducted geological mapping of the area during the past several years with promising results, according to according to *Anlegg & Transport*. But even if Store Norske ultimately prevails, it still faces numerous hurdles before it can begin

extracting coal from the section of Operafjellet known as Bassen. In addition to meeting environmental and other government requirements, the economic feasibility of the project is uncertain.

"There is a need for considerable further research to determine whether the operation of the field can be profitable," said Morten Often, Store Norske's exploration manager, in a prepared statement. "The presence of Bassen is located relatively easily accessible from Longyearbyen and will be a natural main production site after the Store Norske deposits around Svea are recovered."

Store Norske plans to extract the remaining coal from Svea when the supply at Lunckefjell is exhausted. Mining in the Bassen section of Operafjellet is not projected to begin until 2028, but the company is exploring other potential interim mining sites.

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

## What's up

### Aug. 27

6 p.m.: Movie: "Hercules." Kulturhuset.

### Aug. 28-Sept. 1

Grumant festival, featuring music from northern Russia. Performances in Barentsburg, Pyramiden and Longyearbyen. Details and tickets at [tinyurl.com/mlb43lo](http://tinyurl.com/mlb43lo).

### Aug. 29

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

### Aug. 31

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "Børning," Norwegian action/comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

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

### Sept. 1

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

### Sept. 2

7 p.m.: Interview of Spitsbergen Travel Director Svend-Erik Svendsen by Priest Leif Magne Helgesen. Svalbard Church.

### Sept. 3

5 p.m.: Polargospel practice begins for youths in grades 3-6. Svalbard Church.

6 p.m.: Movie: "Børning," Norwegian action/comedy, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Sept. 6

Noon: Quadrathlon, consisting of 5.8K run, 5K kayaking, 13.1 bicycling and rifle shooting, either individually or in teams of up to three people. Start and registration at the Svalbard Sailing Club.

### Sept. 7

11 a.m.: Mass. Svalbard Church.

5 p.m.: Movie: "The Fault in Our Stars," U.S. drama, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

7:30 p.m.: Movie: "The Expendables 3," U.S. action/thriller, ages 15 and up. 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:

- *Atlantic seabed leaking lots of methane*
- *Canada bets big on Arctic development*
- *China going massive on coal, CO2*
- *Climate scientists' fright in photo book*