

**SVALBARD ODYSSEY**  
**ABOARD GREG MORTIMER**  
**JUNE 18-30, 2024**

© 2023



A polar bear on the hunt in Svalbard © Tyson Mayr

*In the north of Norway, only 600 miles from the North Pole, lies the Svalbard Archipelago, a polar wonderland of dramatic landscapes and seascapes, immense icebergs, calving glaciers, sheets of pack ice, snow-blanketed mountains, sheer fjords, and flower-spangled tundra.*

*Since Svalbard is almost entirely protected, perhaps no other destination offers such a breathtaking pageant of Arctic wildlife. Using Zodiac landing craft, we will visit unspoiled beaches, towering sea cliffs, and protected nearshore waters in search of the islands' most charismatic wildlife. This is the best place to see Polar Bears, and the list of marine life we will encounter includes some of the Far North's most range-restricted animals. Beluga Whales, Ringed and Bearded seals, and the mighty Walrus are all possible.*

*VENT is returning to Svalbard to experience the superlative wildlife and outstanding natural beauty found here at the onset of the northern summer. For this expedition, we have reserved an allotment aboard Greg Mortimer for an exploration of the main island and others in the archipelago.*

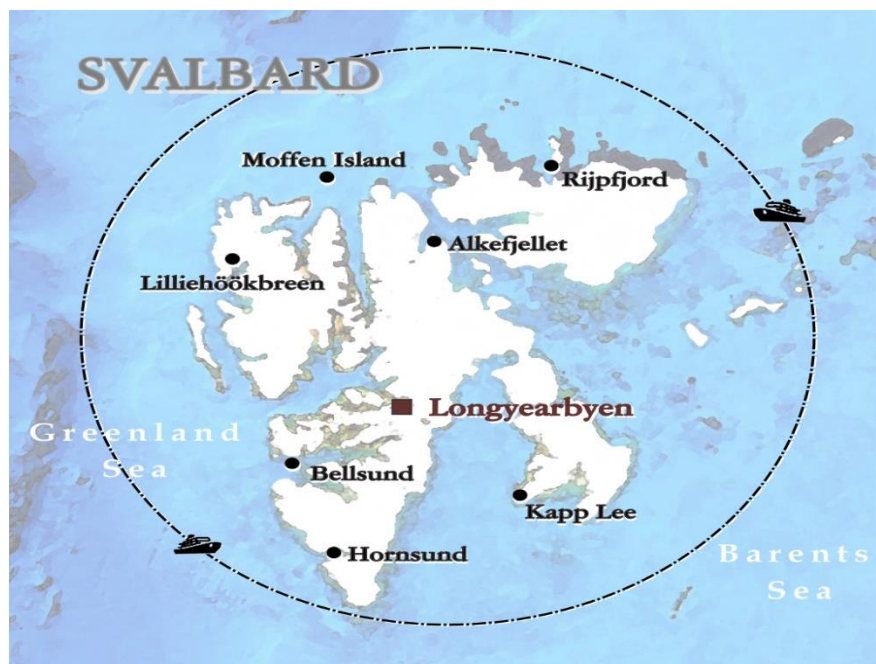
*The birds are represented by a dazzling array of waterfowl, shorebirds, and cliff-nesting alcids. Arctic Loons, Common and King eiders, Pink-footed and Barnacle geese, Dovekies and Thick-billed Murres, and even Ivory Gulls are among the highlights, alongside the spectacle of thousands of nesting birds.*



A drake King Eider on a sunny Arctic day © Brian Gibbons

*The emphasis of this trip is on quality rather than quantity. While the species diversity may be limited, a visit to Svalbard is really about experiencing a spectacular part of the high Arctic and its natural history—and what an experience it is!*

**June 18-19, Days 1-2: Departure from home to Longyearbyen.** Most flights to Longyearbyen (airport code LYR) from the United States and Canada will depart on June 18, arriving the following day. On request, the VENT office will be happy to help make hotel arrangements for participants who wish to arrive early and spend some time on their own exploring Longyearbyen.



On your arrival in Longyearbyen, a representative of Aurora Expeditions will meet you for the transfer to our hotel. At the hotel, please ask the staff at the reception desk for Aurora Expeditions cabin tags, which you should mark with your name and cabin number and affix to your luggage so that it can be delivered to your cabin tomorrow.

In the evening, we will meet your fellow expeditioners over light refreshments at a welcoming reception and short pre-embarkation briefing. Afterwards, dine at your leisure (dinner not included).

NIGHTS: June 18, en route  
June 19, Radisson Blue Polar Hotel

**June 20, Day 3: Embarkation on Greg Mortimer.** Please be sure that your bags are clearly labeled with your name and cabin number; your luggage will be collected at the hotel this morning and transferred directly to your cabin on board *Greg Mortimer*. Remember to keep valuables and personal items, including your passport, with you during the day today.



After a mandatory final health screening and Covid test, we will enjoy a sightseeing excursion through Longyearbyen, the gubernatorial capital of Svalbard and the northernmost city of more than 1,000 inhabitants in the world. Founded early in the twentieth century by an American coal magnate, Longyearbyen is now a center of education, tourism, and research. Some 2,400 people live here, above the 80th parallel; each year, more than 40,000 visitors arrive at the airport to begin their exploration of Svalbard.



**Thick-billed Murres on their perilous nesting ledges © Shutterstock**

We will arrive at the pier late this afternoon for embarkation. There will be time to settle into our cabins before taking part in the mandatory safety briefings as we set sail. The captain's welcoming dinner this evening, our first on board, will be a chance to get to know our fellow expeditioners and expedition team better and to celebrate the start of a rich series of high-latitude adventures.

NIGHT: On board *Greg Mortimer*

**June 21-29, Days 4-12: Svalbard.** This is the Arctic at its wildest, with spectacular fjords, magnificent mountains, and even a fossil-rich polar desert. Each day, our expedition team will rely on experience gathered over countless journeys to plan our excursions, selecting our localities based on weather, sea ice, and the daily and seasonal movements of the wildlife.



**Svalbard by Zodiac © Scott Portelli**

Whatever the exact details of our daily itineraries, we can anticipate seeing walrus hauled out on beaches and sea ice, and we will visit towering cliffs topped with brightly colored tundra wildflowers and noisy with nesting murres and puffins. Scree slopes hold enormous numbers of Dovekies, those tiny bull-necked auks that can be so hard to see south of their productive breeding grounds here in Norway's Arctic.

Most memorable of all, the dream of every Arctic expeditioner, will

be our encounters with the majestic polar bear. Our expedition team will be on constant watch for these imposing creatures, and a sighting will have us all rushing to enjoy a moment with the king of the polar ice.

There are many ways to experience this boreal wilderness, and if you choose an optional activity such as kayaking, you will gain a unique perspective on the waters of the Arctic whenever conditions allow. For those of us brave enough to make the "polar plunge," that exhilarating dip will be a chilly memory to savor for years to come.

NIGHTS: On board *Greg Mortimer*

**June 30, Day 13: Disembarkation in Longyearbyen.** We will cruise back into Longyearbyen early this morning. Bid farewell to your expedition leaders and enjoy some free time before your transfer to the airport. Please do not book your departing flight for earlier than noon today in case of any delay in our reaching Longyearbyen.



Walrus in Svalbard © Michael Baynes

**TOUR SIZE:** This tour is limited to 16 VENT participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Rafael Galvez



**Rafael Galvez** has been birding and illustrating birds since childhood, a dual passion that developed when his family moved from Peru to South Florida. Always with a sketchpad in hand, he has traveled throughout the U.S., Latin America, and Eurasia in pursuit of birds. He served several years as a board member of the BirdLife International affiliate in the Republic of Georgia, developing educational and conservation programs. He gained knowledge of the Caucasus region while directing a series of records and documentary shorts on the ancient chants of the Georgian nation. During that period he also produced retrospective books and catalogs on the works of Russian realist painters. He has combined his love of art, education, and birds while collaborating in several publications, including a field guide to *Raptors and Owls of*

*Georgia (Caucasus)*, which he illustrated and coauthored. After working with raptor research along the Black Sea, he returned to South Florida to spearhead a new phase for the Florida Keys Hawkwatch migration monitoring project, where he has participated as director. As chair of citizen science and IBA monitoring at Tropical Audubon Society in Miami, he has reached out to underserved communities by providing opportunities for the greater appreciation of birds and Florida habitats. Currently, he lives in Homestead, spends much time in the Everglades, serves on the Florida Ornithological Society's Records Committee, and is on the Leica Sport Optics Pro Staff. He loves sharing his passion for birds with audiences of all ages, and has been a guide and teacher for over 15 years. You can find some of his latest sketches and articles about painting in the field at his blog, [GalvezBirds.com](http://GalvezBirds.com).

## CRUISE INFORMATION

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** Prices quoted are per person based on double occupancy. All staterooms are outside cabins with two lower beds and en-suite bathroom. Cabins will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Limited single accommodations are available at 1.5x the double occupancy rate listed above.

BALCONY STATEROOM C:	\$14,895
BALCONY STATEROOM B:	\$15,695
BALCONY STATEROOM A:	\$16,895

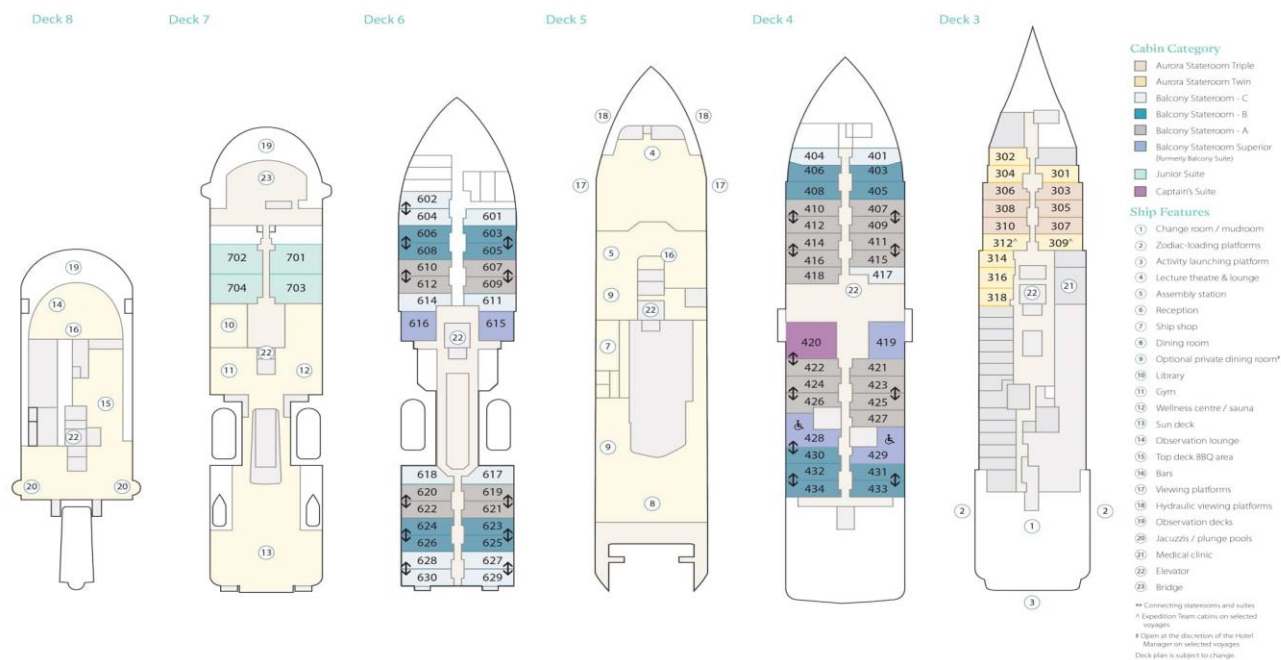
### Included in your cruise package

- Land transfers as stated in the itinerary, including transfer from airport to our group hotel on Day 2; group transfers to ship on Day 3; group transfer from ship to airport on day 13
- Accommodations: shipboard 10 nights (Days 3-12), hotel in Longyearbyen (Day 2)
- Tour of Longyearbyen prior to embarkation
- All shipboard meals, including soft drinks, beer, and wine with dinners
- Zodiac excursions
- Services of ship staff (expedition leader and lecturers), crew (including Zodiac drivers), and VENT leaders
- On-board medical officer
- All visitation fees, landing fees, and port charges
- A 3-in-1 waterproof polar expeditions jacket
- Complimentary use of muck boots during the voyage
- Gratuities for ship crew

### Not included in your cruise package

- International airfare from your home to Longyearbyen and return
- Hotel accommodations other than those stated in the itinerary
- Meals before breakfast on day 3 or after breakfast on day 13
- Optional excursions not mentioned in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature, including but not limited to laundry, postage, telephone calls, emails and internet usage, bar charges, and alcoholic beverages and soft drinks outside of dinner service
- Insurance coverage such as emergency evacuation, accident, baggage, or cancellation insurance
- Medical services
- Passport or visa fees
- Excess baggage charges
- Airport arrival and departure taxes
- Optional gratuities to ship staff, expedition leader, lecturers

### *The Greg Mortimer Deck Plan*



**MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE REQUIREMENT:** This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may **NOT** be available. **For this reason, travel insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour.** This coverage is included in the **Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™** program. Through Ripcord, “emergency evacuation” can be purchased as a stand-alone benefit or as part of a comprehensive travel insurance policy. If you choose not to purchase insurance through Ripcord, you are required to obtain it through another provider.

**REGISTRATION:** A deposit of **\$2,500** is required to reserve a space on this cruise. A second deposit of **\$3,000** is due 210 days prior to departure (November 20, 2023). The balance of the fee is due 150 days prior to departure (February 19, 2024).

If you prefer to pay the initial deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. If you would like to pay your initial deposit by check, money order, or bank transfer, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. The VENT registration form (available from the VENT office or by download at <https://ventbird.com>) should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office.

This cruise is designed for persons in reasonably good health. By forwarding the expedition deposit, you certify that you do not have a physical condition or disability which would create a hazard to you or other passengers. VENT reserves the right to decline to accept or retain you or other passengers should your health, actions, or general deportment impede the operations of the expedition or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other passengers.

**PAYMENTS:** All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits, second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 150 days prior to the tour departure date.

### **CANCELLATION POLICY:**

#### **Cancellation by Participant:**

Refunds, if any, for any cancellation by a participant are made according to the following schedule: the initial deposit of \$2500 is fully nonrefundable. For cancellations that occur between 209 and 151 days, both deposits are non-refundable; cancellations within 150 days of the departure date are 100% non-refundable whether previously paid or not. Any refunds will be reduced by applicable airline cancellation penalties. No refunds will be made in the event of “no shows” or cancellations made on the day of sailing.

#### **Cancellation by VENT:**

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A “**Force Majeure**” event means any act beyond VENT’s control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances; (h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES:** In the erratic global financial markets of today, it is difficult to predict foreign currency exchange rates over the long term or at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Tour prices are based upon the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If exchange rates change drastically, it may be necessary to implement a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges are passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

**FUEL AND FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of this departure. Our prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, if the fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

**TRAVEL INSURANCE:** To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend their **Ripcord** plan. Designed for all types of travelers, Ripcord is among the most comprehensive travel protection programs available.

Critical benefits of Ripcord include a completely integrated program with a single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims; **medical evacuation and rescue services** from your point of injury or illness to your **hospital of choice**; comprehensive travel insurance for **trip cancellation/interruption**, primary medical expense coverage, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as security evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or other security events, **waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion**, and a “**Cancel for Any Reason**” benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.\*

For a price quote, or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: <https://ripcordtravelprotection.com/ventbird>; or click the **Ripcord** logo on our website (click Help and Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

\*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 14 days of making your tour deposit. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, mid-payment, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The “pay as you go” approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to “pay as you go,” you must cover each deposit or payment within 14 days in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. The primary medical expense benefit is available to U.S. residents only. For this reason, non-U.S. residents will pay an adjusted premium when purchasing a comprehensive policy, which includes all of the other benefits available to U.S. residents. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.



**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.\* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. **Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.**

\*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

**BAGGAGE:** We ask that you limit your baggage to one large duffel (or soft-sided suitcase) and one carry-on bag. **Please consult your pre-departure materials and airline to find out specific weight restrictions.** The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, essential toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) for the most up-to-date information: <http://www.tsa.gov/>

When traveling, it is suggested that you wear clothing and a pair of shoes suitable for birding in case your baggage is delayed. It is wise to carry several copies of a list of your expensive equipment—cameras, binoculars, tape recorders, spotting scopes, etc.—for customs inspectors. This list should include a description of the object (including the serial number if possible), place of purchase, and price. Visitors are rarely challenged about such equipment, but U.S. customs may be more difficult. If you are taking a large amount of equipment with you, it is advisable to declare this to a customs officer before you leave the United States.

Your bags will be automatically transferred the morning of Day 3 from our hotel to the port for delivery to your cabin. Please be certain to ask for cabin tags on your arrival in our hotel and ensure that your bags have those cabin tags clearly labeled with your name and cabin number. Keep all valuables and personal items, including your passport, with you throughout that day.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

**GOVERNMENT FEES, TAXES, AND VISITOR'S FEES:** *Greg Mortimer* is responsible for port costs at embarkation and disembarkation. Visitor fees for the various landings presently scheduled for this itinerary are not being assessed. In the event, however, that Visitor Fees are assessed by any governmental or governing bodies before embarkation of the cruise, Victor Emanuel Nature Tours reserves the right to pass such fees to the Client and must be paid before the commencement of the voyage.





*Greg Mortimer* © Scott Protelli

**The Ship** – The *Greg Mortimer* can accommodate 132 guests per voyage in 76 cozy, comfortable cabins. All cabins have a view of the ocean, and 85% of the cabins have their own balcony. The ship also features a modern lecture lounge, multiple observation areas, zodiac launching platforms, a restaurant serving excellent meals, a gym and wellness center, Jacuzzis, a mudroom, and many other amenities. A fleet of Zodiac landing craft permits landings anywhere nature or curiosity dictates.

#### **Technical Information**

Passengers: 132  
Crew: 90 (includes Staff)  
Built in: 2019  
Class: Ice Class 1A and Polar Code 6 compliant

**Zodiac Landing Craft** – Expedition cruise ships carry fleets of Zodiac landing craft. Developed as a means for gaining access to places larger vessels cannot go, Zodiacs bring greater intimacy to your travel experience. Designed to withstand challenging conditions and harsh environments, these craft are constructed of high-performance plastimer fabrics and outfitted with a powerful motor. Each craft holds as many as 10 passengers. During your cruise, you'll make numerous excursions to shallow bays and landings on isolated beaches, coming face-to-face with an assortment of wildlife. Although the flat-bottom design allows for direct on-shore landings, passengers will need to walk through shallow surf on some occasions.

**Dining** – The restaurant can comfortably seat all passengers at a leisurely single seating for all meals, with tables unassigned. A choice of a buffet or table service is available for breakfast or lunch. Dinner is served at the table. The chefs can prepare food according to special dietary needs, provided the ship receives sufficient notification. Please advise of any special needs at the time of registration. Kosher meals are not available.

**CLOTHING:** The following items are recommended:

- **Pants:** A couple of pairs of warm, waterproof pants are essential.
- **Field Clothing:** Outdoor stores such as Cabela's and REI carry field clothing that many birders find appealing. Pants and shirts made of warm, durable materials with multiple pockets and ventilated seams are popular.
- **Shirts:** Several comfortable long-sleeved shirts in styles suitable for cool to cold weather or for layering under a sweater or jacket.
- **Hat:** A hat for protection from the sun is essential.
- **Sweaters and Coats:** A warm sweater, fleece, or jacket, and waterproof gloves. Your expedition fare includes a 3-in-1 waterproof polar expedition jacket.
- **Dinners and Events:** Dress on board the *Greg Mortimer* tends to be casual, but many find "dressy informal" attire—jackets (with or without a tie) for men and dresses or neat slacks for women—comfortable for dinners and receptions.

**FOOTWEAR:** We recommend a sturdy, ideally waterproof trail-walking shoe or hiking boot when in the field. Your expedition fare includes use of muck boots during the voyage.

**LAUNDRY SERVICE:** Laundry service is provided by the ship staff at an extra charge. Check with the staff on embarkation for procedures and turnaround time.

**EQUIPMENT:** One of the most important aspects of an enjoyable travel experience is being prepared with the proper equipment. Be sure to bring

- Backpack or wet bag for carrying extra clothing, books, supplies, and optics on landings and excursions.
- Ziploc bags in several sizes for keeping small items dry.
- Notebooks and pencils.
- Alarm clock.
- Polarized sunglasses with good UV protection.
- High-SPF sunscreen.
- Lip balm and lotions.
- Insect repellent, if desired.
- Personal toiletries.
- Cameras, lenses, extra batteries, and film or memory cards.
- Telescoping walking stick—highly recommended for those who have trouble walking.
- Pocket packages of tissues.
- Folding umbrella.

### **BINOCULARS & SPOTTING SCOPES**

**Binoculars** – We strongly recommend good 7x35, 8x42, 10x40, or 10x42 binoculars. Do NOT bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like “minis” because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. Trying to find a bird in your binoculars using minis is like trying to read a book through a keyhole. You will be very frustrated, and even if you do manage to get the bird in your binoculars before it flies, you will have a poor view. You will find that 7x35 or 8x42 binoculars are compact and light enough.

**Spotting Scopes** – Your tour leader will have a scope available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

**OTHER ITEMS:** The ship’s library holds copies of the most useful field guides for the areas visited on our cruise, but you may want to bring your own for convenient consultation. We recommend the third edition of *Birds of Europe* by Lars Svensson, Killian Mullarney, and Dan Zetterström.

**CLIMATE AND WEATHER:** Expect nighttime temperatures to fall into the high 20s F, with daytime highs in the 30s. Daylight at this time of year lasts nearly 24 hours. Blue skies are always a possibility, but on average cloud cover is more likely, and chilly showers or snow can fall at any time.

### **TRAVEL DOCUMENTS**

**PASSPORTS** – A passport valid for at least six months after your return from the tour is required. If your passport expires earlier than that, you must get it renewed. Also make certain that you have at least two blank pages in your passport for stamps.

If you need to obtain or renew a passport or request extra pages, you should apply well in advance of your trip departure. Passports can be expedited for an additional fee. In the United States, you can apply for a passport or renewal at passport offices, most post offices, and county clerk’s offices. You can also visit [www.state.gov/travel](http://www.state.gov/travel) for information about obtaining and renewing passports.

As a safety measure, photocopy the first two pages of your passport and keep the copies in a safe place so that you have proof of identification if your passport is lost. Your passport should be signed and easily accessible at all times. You will need it to check in at airports and to clear immigration controls in Norway, so **do not pack your passport in your checked luggage.**

On board ship, it is customary for the purser to hold all passports for clearance with customs and immigration authorities. Your passport will be collected before or on embarkation and returned to you on disembarkation.

**VISAS** – Citizens of the United States and Canada do not need a visa to enter Norway for a stay of less than 180 days. Citizens of other countries should check with their local Norwegian consulate or embassy. Immigration requirements may change at any time, so please confirm your needs well in advance of traveling.

**CURRENCY AND MONEY MATTERS:** Your tour payment includes most necessary expenses, including all meals while on board. You will need cash to cover such personal expenses as taxi rides, gifts, laundry, gratuities, and snacks and meals on your own before or after the cruise. It is best to carry small bills, as some of the places we visit may not be able to change larger denominations. Please check with your bank and credit card issuer for more information regarding banking and the use of ATM and credit cards overseas.

The US dollar is the official currency on board the *Greg Mortimer*.

The official currency of Norway is the Norwegian krone (NOK); US dollars are not accepted in stores or restaurants. You can see the current exchange rate at [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). You can order pounds through your bank before leaving home, or withdraw them from ATMs at the airport or in towns. Please ask your bank or credit card issuer about the use of your ATM and credit cards abroad.

**ELECTRICITY:** Electrical current in Norway is 230V/50Hz; outlets accept two round pins. Most newer electronic devices can be run without conversion, but if you have items that cannot, you will need a step-down transformer in addition to a plug adapter. The *Greg Mortimer* has both American-style outlets (accepting two flat prongs) at 110V and European-type outlets (accepting two round prongs).

**TIME:** Norway in May observes Central European Summer Time, which is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time and 9 hours ahead of Pacific Daylight Time.

**HEALTH:** VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations.

Although we make every effort to provide the most recent information on travellers' health recommendations, it is advisable to check with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

**COVID-19:** We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance regarding recommendations for avoiding COVID-19. Please visit the **Coronavirus Travel Update** page of our website <https://ventbird.com/covid-19> for our official statement regarding COVID-19 and the operation of our tours. Please visit the CDC website for the most up to date information about COVID-19 and associated guidance for proper health and hygiene: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>.

Those who are not fit for light to moderate physical activity, including those with physical disabilities that affect mobility and balance, heart or immune deficiencies, or other conditions associated with poor health, are advised not to join the trip. **Comprehensive optional travel insurance is available and recommended. This coverage is available through your trip cancellation policy. Please consult your insurance agent or policy for the terms and limitations of your existing coverage. See the section above on Trip Cancellation Insurance.**

**Sun exposure** – Prolonged exposure to the sun’s ultraviolet rays damages eyes and skin. Protect your skin, lips, eyes, nose, and ears whenever you are outdoors. We strongly recommend the use of high-SPF sunscreen and lip balm, along with ultraviolet-blocking, polarized sunglasses. Severe sunburn is very painful and will affect your enjoyment of the trip.

In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, which operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers’ Information Line (800) CDC-INFO (800-232-4636). You can check the CDC website at <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>. Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health.html> (click on Travel Health).

**SUGGESTED READING AND VIEWING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers, including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and, for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com) or [www.buteobooks.com](http://www.buteobooks.com), which specializes in ornithology books.

### ***Birds***

Mullarney, Killian, Lars Svensson, and Dan Zetterstrom. *Birds of Europe*. 3rd ed. Princeton UP, 2023.

### ***Mammals***

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**TIPPING:** All tipping (restaurants, porters, drivers, local guides, and ship’s crew) is included. If you feel one or all of your VENT leaders, or any local guide has provided exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.



**RESPONSIBILITY STATEMENT:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “**VENT**”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on November 28, 2022 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant’s Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant’s risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the “**Airline**”) is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline’s aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

SVAL:20240618

Rev: 12/02/22 – RW

P: 03/28/23 – GL