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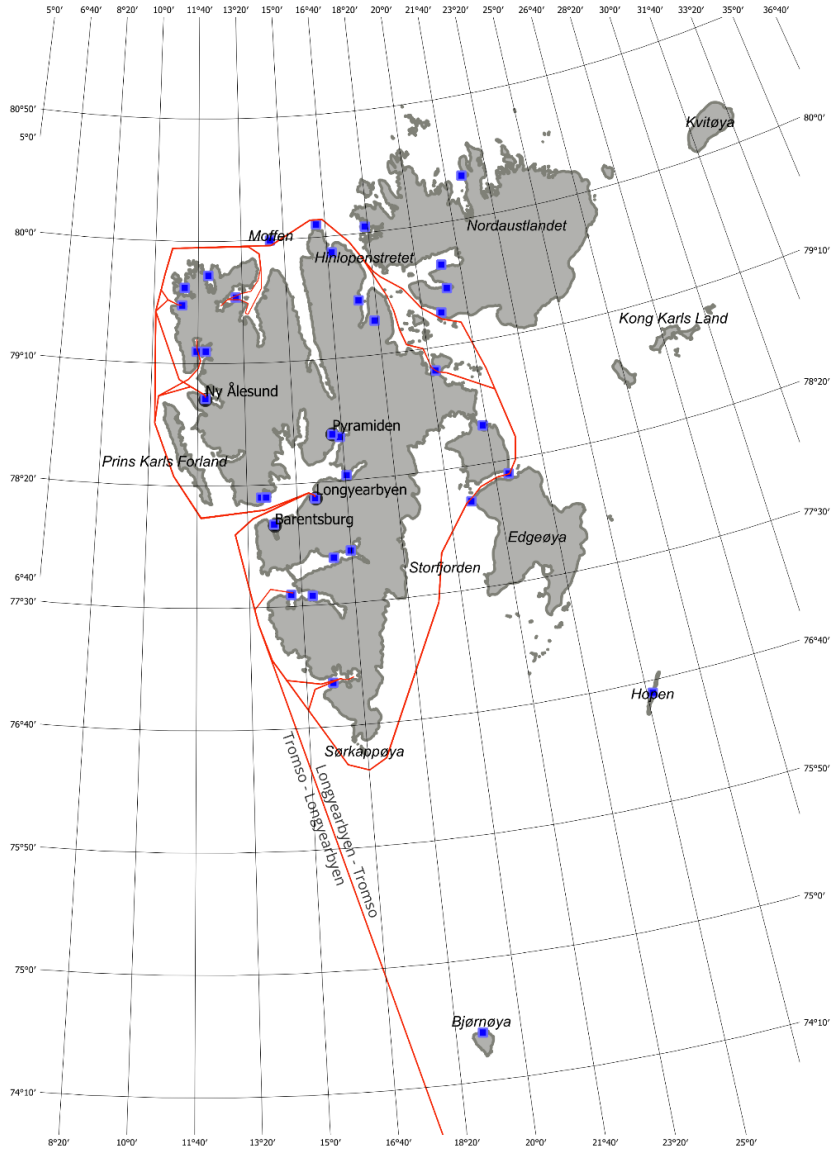
KYSTVERKET
NORWEGIAN COASTAL ADMINISTRATION

Route information Approaching Svalbard
Regulations and Information Services



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1 Introduction

1.1 This document provides key regulations and reference to Information Services for professional vessels navigating towards Svalbard. While the English translations of the regulations are incorporated in this document, they are not official versions. In instances of inconsistencies or errors, the Norwegian versions will take precedence[1].

Quality assurance for the service Routeinfo has been provided by a combined effort of Norwegian pilots, the pilot exemption certificate unit, and the Norwegian Hydrographic Service (NHS, Kartverkets Sjødivisjon). Assessments of the reference routes are based on a vessel model with lengths and drafts extending to 150 meters and 9 meters respectively. In alliance with other nautical regulations, such as The Polar Code (part I-A, Chapter 11 Voyage planning), the Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA, Kystverket) advises navigators to plan their journey in the Svalbard waters using these reference routes.

When venturing towards Svalbard, caution must be paid to the Arctic climate, ice conditions, limited communication, and the fragile Arctic Wildlife. Several regulations are in effect to protect marine vessels and Arctic nature alike. Regulations pertaining to Svalbard visits are not confined to those mentioned in this document. Consistently stay informed with updates from The Governor of Svalbard, (Sysselmesteren)[2], the Norwegian Coastal Administration[3], the Norwegian Hydrographic Service[4], and the Norwegian Maritime Authority (NMA, Sjøfartsdirektoratet)[5], as well as through nautical charts, and other nautical publications. The Sailing Directions for Svalbard and Jan Mayen, published by NHS in May 2018, is a valuable source of information. Although it is not subject to further updates[6].

2 Weather, ice and current conditions

2.1 The sea areas around Svalbard and the Barents Sea are characterised by seasonal sea ice which begins to melt during the Spring and continues through the summer, so-called first year ice. Wind plays a critical role in this area, affecting the movement and transport of sea ice, as well as influencing icing on ships. In certain wind situations, the topography of Spitsbergen can create extreme local variations in wind speed. This effect is most notable near the South Cape with easterly winds, and Hinlopen with southeasterly winds, but also other places can be affected depending on wind directions.

In the fjords landlocked ice forms during the autumn period and through the winter. Sea ice from the Arctic Basin can be advected into the waters around Svalbard and maintain an ice presence throughout the year. This can include more hazardous second- and multi-year ice.

[1] https://lovdata.no
[2] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/
[3] www.kystverket.no
[4] https://www.kartverket.no/en/at-sea
[5] https://sdir.no
[6] https://kartverket.no/til-sjos/nautiske-publikasjoner/den-norske-los

Early in the summer, drifting sea ice can be encountered or an ice blink observed after passing Bjørnøya, and this is an indication to navigate westward, in order to avoid ice-encumbered areas. As the ice often forms long ice tongues between wide and deep bays, navigators should not be too quick to steer eastwards again.

Typically ice drifting around Sørkapp will not extend in high concentrations or rarely travels north of Sentinelleflaket. Vessels heading towards Kongsfjorden can typically avoid the ice along the west coast, near Prins Karls Forland. In exceptional situations of prolonged northerly winds, it is important for vessels bound for Kongsfjorden to monitor the position of the ice edge at the location of the main ice pack in the Fram Strait, as this can impact the northwest coastline of the archipelago.

Along the west coast of Spitsbergen, a north-flowing current of 1-2 knots can be expected, also known as the West Spitsbergen Current. This current is responsible for maintaining a consistent open water area north of Svalbard. Additionally, it drives ice into the fjords, particularly on the south side, and pushes it out on the north side (due to the Coriolis Effect), where in calm wind the ice disperses more widely. During such weather conditions, anticipate areas of broken ice with large open channels on both the northern and southern sides of the fjords. The current originating from Isfjorden typically slows down the northward flow of ice near Sentinelleflaket when ice masses are not too extensive. However, before entering an ice-encumbered area, it is crucial to thoroughly assess the conditions as both the current, and especially the wind, can quickly alter the situation, potentially leading to closer ice proximity and channel compression.

Icing

Sea-spray icing on ships may occur in open sea water in all months throughout the year, but is most notable from October to May. The most severe conditions seem to occur from December to March on the west side of Spitsbergen with moderate or severe icing occurring above 20 % of the time in the period 1980 to 2012 (Naseri and Samuelsen, 2019).

2.2 **Forecast services**:

A) Yr[7] includes weather warnings, statistics, and live cameras from the Norwegian Meteorological Institute (MET).

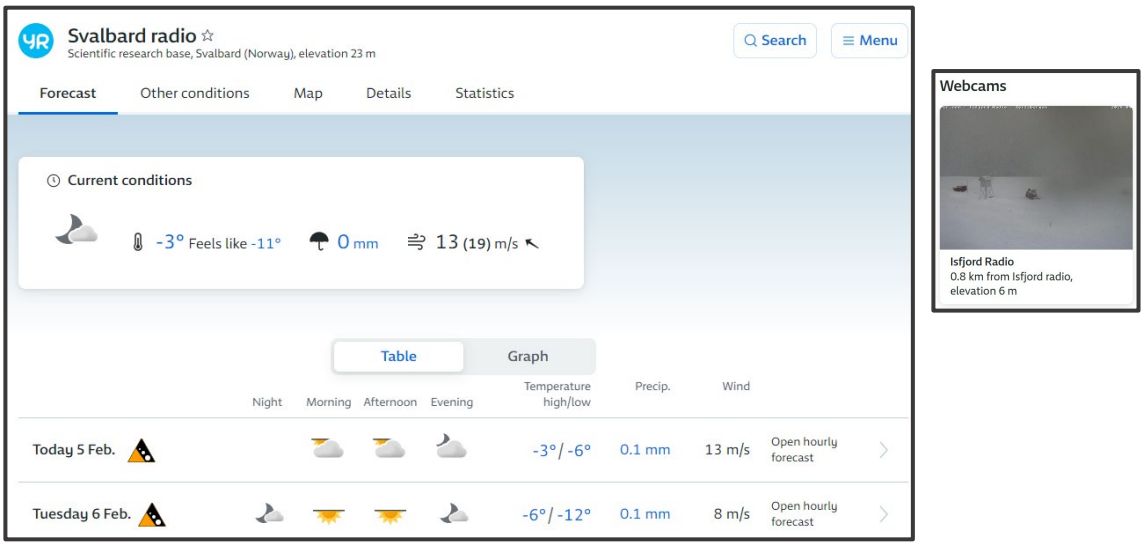


Figure 1 Image of weather forecast from website yr.no on the location of Svalbard radio

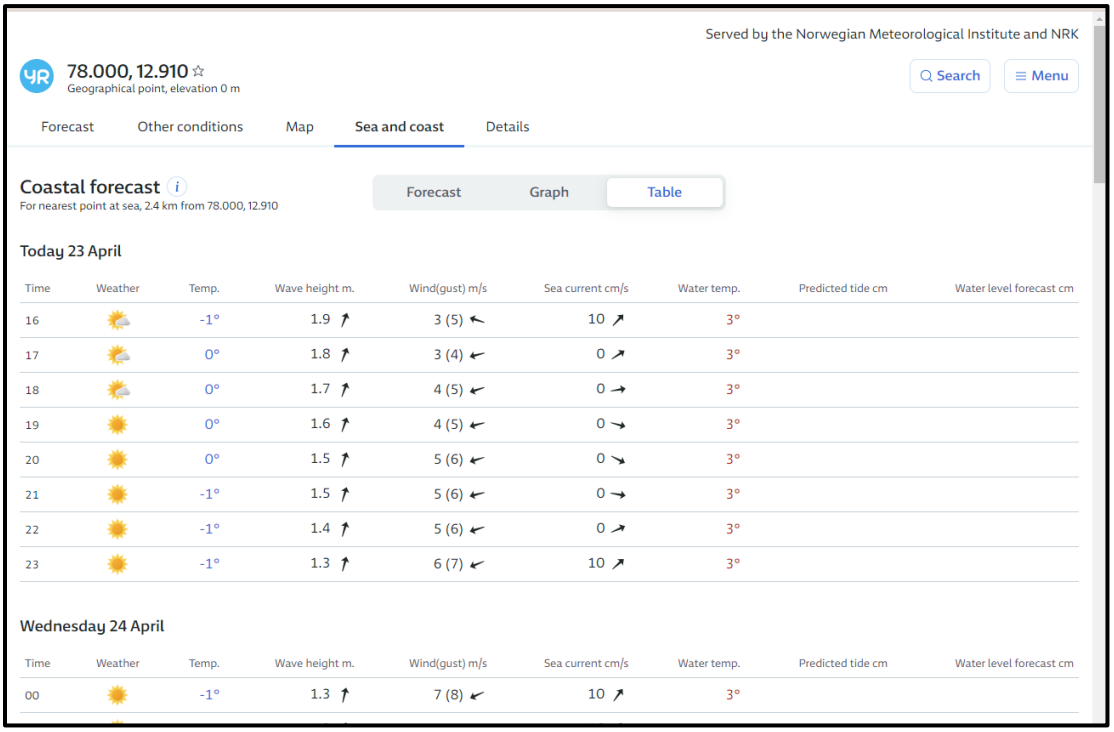


Figure 2 Image of ocean forecast from yr.no including waves and current.

[7] https://yr.no/en
(figure: https://yr.no/en/forecast/daily-table/9-14164/Norway/Svalbard/Svalbard%20radio)

B) Cryo[8] is a portal with the latest products and information about sea ice, snow and permafrost from MET, including guidance on reading ice-charts[9].

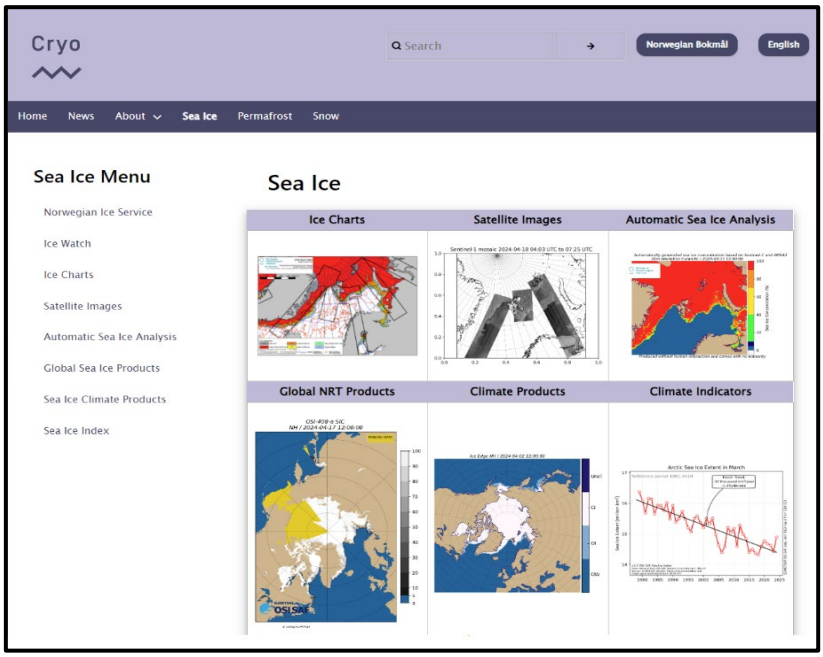


Figure 3 Image of information on ice conditions from the Cryo information service

C) Arcticinfo[10] from BarentsWatch includes information on ice and weather-conditions around Svalbard, Iceland and Greenland to support navigation, together with reports to the Greenlandic authorities and live ship traffic in the area.

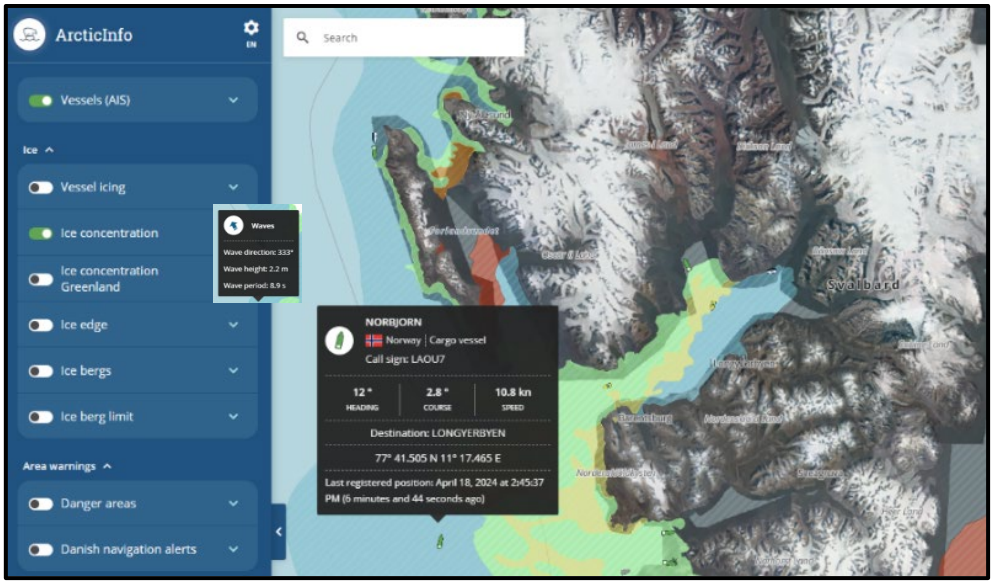


Figure 4 Image of information found in Arctic Info

[8] https://cryo.met.no
[9] https://cryo.met.no/understanding-ice-charts /
[10] https://www.barentswatch.no/arcticinfo/

D) Polar Lows[11] from BarentsWatch is a weather forecast including free subscription of Polar Low Alerts, produced by The Norwegian Meteorological Institute. Polar lows are small, intense low pressure systems formed in the winter over the Arctic Ocean.

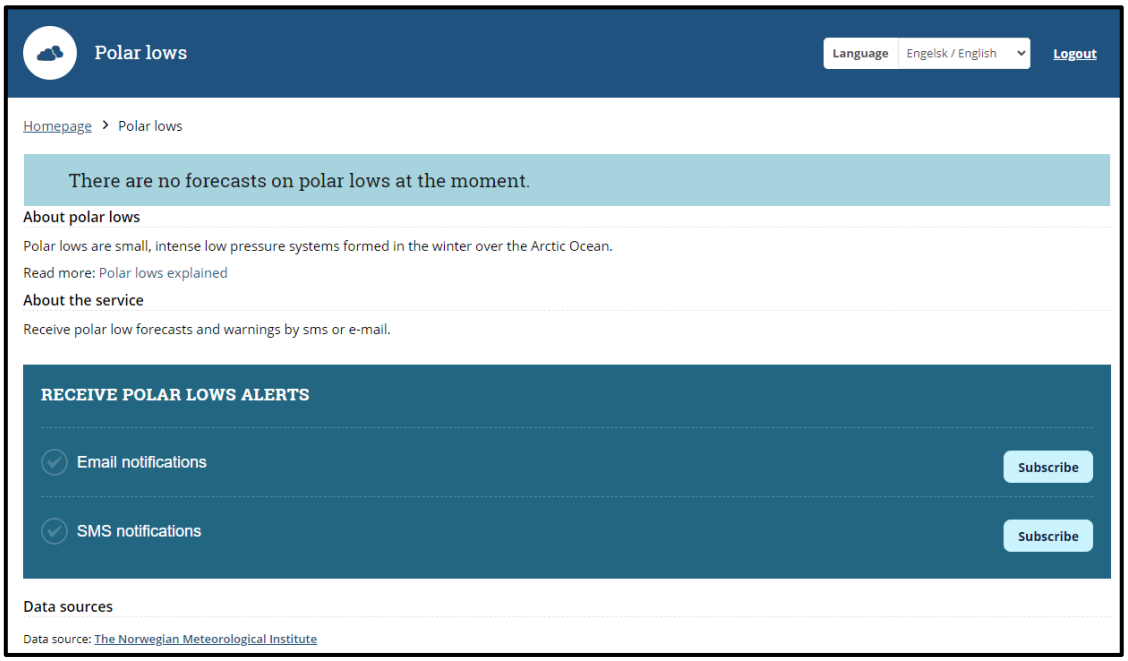


Figure 5 Image of the service Polar Lows

3 Charts and Hydrography

3.1 While bathymetric surveys have been conducted in Svalbard's main shipping lanes, the quality of nautical charts across the archipelago can vary[12]. To ensure safe passage, always plan and navigate according to the specific bathymetry data provided on your navigational charts[13].

For reliable routes, consider using those available on Routeinfo.no. These routes have been quality-assured by the Norwegian Coastal Administration, by Norwegian Pilots and the Pilot Exemption Certificate Unit, taken into account all bathymetric data collected by the Norwegian Hydrographic Service surveys (NHS).

The NHS offers a variety of information services for mariners, including Notices to Mariners, Nautical Publications, water level and tidal information, and up-to-date nautical charts. Further information on NHS information services can be found on their website[14].

Updated List of Lights for Svalbard can be found on NCAs website[15]

[11] https://barentswatch.no/polarelavtrykk/
[12] https://kartverket.no/en/at-sea/more-about-nautical-charts/seacharts-on-svalbard
[13] https://kartverket.no/en/at-sea/more-about-nautical-charts/data-quality-in-norwegian-nautical-charts-catzoc
[14] https://www.kartverket.no/en/at-sea
[15] https://www.kystverket.no/sjovegen/fyr-lykter-og-sjomerker/norsk-fyrliste/

4 Navigational warnings and emergency contact

4.1 The Norwegian Coastal Administration issues navigational warnings for the maritime area NAVAREA XIX, including the Norwegian Sea, the Greenland Sea and the western part of the Barents Sea. NCA is also the national coordinator for coastal warnings for the Norwegian coast and the coast of Svalbard.

Official navigation warnings are sent over NAVTEX, SafetyCast and SafetyNET – in accordance with national regulations and SOLAS provisions.

Navigational warnings can also be found online:

- Navarea XIX[16],
- Coastal warnings[17]

The online versions are not intended to be a substitute for, or an alternative to, the ordinary navigational warning service. Thus, the publication of navigation warnings online does not exempt seafarers from the responsibility of following official navigation warnings sent over NAVTEX, SafetyCast and SafetyNET – in accordance with national regulations and SOLAS provisions.

NAVAREA XIX: Notify incidents in the Norwegian Sea, the Greenland Sea and the western part of the Barents Sea to:

- Telephone: +47 78 94 30 00
- Email: navarea19@kystverket.no

The National Coordinator for Navigational Warnings. Notify casualties to aids to navigation and other incidents to:

- Telephone: +47 22 42 23 31
- Email: navco@kystverket.no

4.2 Emergency contact points:

NOR VTS – For vessels in need of assistance

- VHF channel 16 (emergency), VHF call sign: NOR VTS
- Telephone: +47 78 98 98 98,
- Email: nor.vts@kystverket.no,
- secondary contact point: +47 90 24 53 39,
- Iridium: 00 88 16 21 41 90 09

[16] https://www.navarea-xix.no
[17] https://kyvreports.kystverket.no/NavcoReport/navigasjonsvarsler.aspx

The Governor of Svalbard – When something goes wrong

Contact point when something goes wrong. The Governor of Svalbard leads all rescue operations in the archipelago.

- Satellite phone: 0047 79 02 12 22
- Emergency number, only available from a mobile phone: 112

Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) Bodø – Resource in Search and rescue operations, north of 65° North.

- Contact via maritime radio
- Telephone (emergency): +47 75 55 90 00
- Email: operations@jrcc-bodoe.no

4.3 Preparedness against acute pollution

At Svalbard, The Governor of Svalbard together with the Norwegian Coastal Administration are responcible authorities in situations causing risk of acute polluiton. Contact points for situations with risk of acute pollution is the Governor of Svalbard and NOR VTS.

Port of refuge can be an important resource in situations with risk of acute pollution. The Norwegian Coastal Administration has pre assessed a number of locations as port of refuge at Svalbard, however distance and situation overall must be considered in choice of location when in need for port of refuge. The list of pre assessed ports of refuge can be found on online in '*Kystverket Beredskap*'[18]. The information service also include other important information, as the dataset PRIMOS, addressing level of vulnerability for oil pollution for the Svalbard nature (prioritized environments at Svalbard).

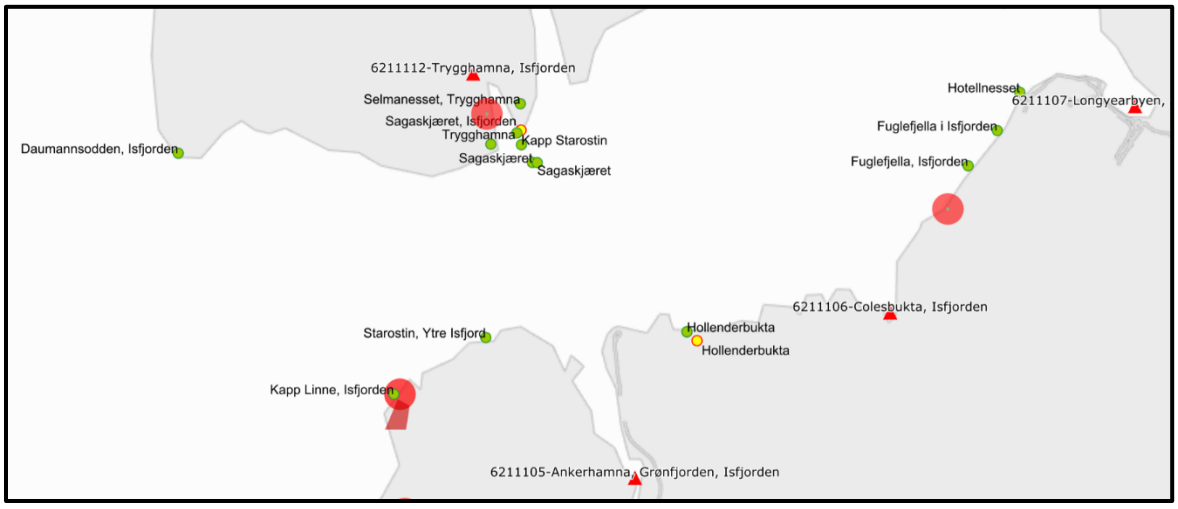


Figure 6 Map section from 'Kystverket Beredskap' with information on ports of refuge (red triangels) and environments at Svalbard given priority in PRIMOS (red / yellow / green)

[18] https://beredskap.kystverket.no/

5 Communication

5.1

Telenor Coastal radio - main goal is ensuring safety at sea for both recreational and commercial vessels. Details on radio communication including VHF, MF, HF is found on the Telenor Coastal radio channel plans[19]. VHF radio has limited coverage in Svalbard, but may come in handy as a means for internal communication and communication with rescue helicopters, planes or vessels.

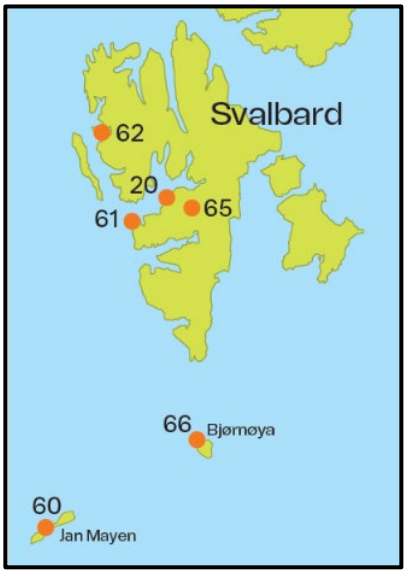


Figure 7 Map shows VHF channels, from Telenor Coastal Radio Channel plan 2023

Telephone

There is limited cover for mobile phone communication, mainly giving coverage in Isfjorden. At Ny Ålesund cover were established by Telenor in 2023. The mobile coverage include limited contact also in other parts of Svalbard.

Satellite communication

The development of Low Earth Orbit systems (LEO) has brought new solutions as Starlink and OneWeb together with the traditional Iridium service the last years. Satellite communication has become much more available because of a close to global cover, and is important for communication at Svalbard as land based communication is very limited.

AIS

The Norwegian Coastal Administration has a network of AIS base stations on the west coast of Svalbard, in Hinlopenstretet/Olgastretet, at Hopen and Bjørnøya. The base stations together with satellite-based AIS give access to real time traffic for search and rescue operations at Svalbard. Shore based stations picks up AIS signals from ships up to 40 nautical miles from the coast, and records ships identity, position, speed and course.

The live traffic can be viewed online in the service NAIS [20].

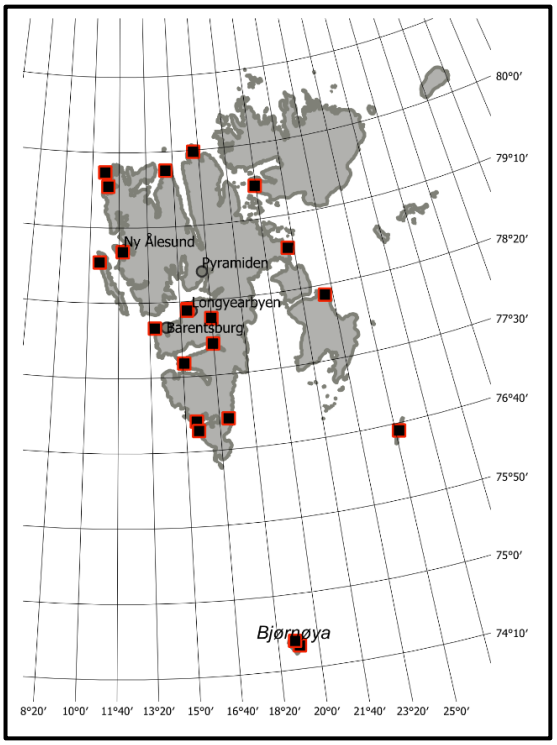


Figure 8 Map of AIS base stations on Svalbard (NCA, april 2024)

[19] https://www.kystradio.no/
[20] https://nais.kystverket.no/

6 Pilotage

6.1

Compulsory pilotage (Regulation 17 des 2014 no 1808 §3 (1))[21]

(1) The following vessels are subject to compulsory pilotage when operating in waters that are defined as subject to compulsory pilotage in § 4:

a) Vessels with a length of 70 metres or more or a width of 20 metres or more
b) Vessels that push or tow one or more objects, and the object or objects have a total length of 50 metres or more
c) Vessels with a double hull with a length of 50 metres or more that are carrying hazardous or pollutive cargo in bulk as mentioned in MARPOL Annex I, or cargo in pollution categories X, Y or Z, which is regulated in MARPOL Annex II, cf. IBC Code, Chapters 17 and 18. Except offshore support vessels transporting limited amounts of hazardous and noxious liquid substances in bulk, as defined in Regulations of 1 July 2014 no 944 relating to dangerous cargo on board Norwegian ships, § 6
d) Vessels with a single hull with a length of 35 metres or more that are carrying hazardous or pollutive cargo in bulk as mentioned in MARPOL Annex I, or cargo in pollution categories X, Y or Z, which is regulated in MARPOL Annex II, cf. IBC Code, Chapters 17 and 18
e) Vessels with a length of 50 metres or more that carry gas condensate in bulk, cf. IGC Code, Chapter 19
f) Vessels with a length of 50 metres or more that are carrying 10 metric tonnes or more of hazardous or pollutive cargo in packaged form under hazard class 1, as regulated in MARPOL Annex III, cf. IMDG Code
g) Vessels that are carrying substances regulated by the INF Code
h) Nuclear-powered vessels
i) Passenger vessels with a length of 50 metres or more when carrying passengers

Compulsory pilotage does not apply to waters around Bjørnøya[22].

Vessels subject to compulsory pilotage as described above must, in accordance with the compulsory pilotage regulations § 4 either use a pilot or hold a PEC (Pilot Exemption Certificate) when navigating in Svalbard internal waters. A PEC may only be used by vessels with an all over length less than 150 meters[23].

[21] https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2014-12-17-1808/§3
[22] https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2021-03-12-721/§3
[23] https://www.kystverket.no/en/pilotage-service-and-pilotage-exemption-certificate/

6.2 Pilotage order[24]

Vessels shall order a pilot no later than 72 hours in the case of Svalbard, prior to the estimated starting time of pilotage. Alterations of 2 hours or more to the estimated starting time of pilotage shall be done as soon as possible and continuously. Final confirmation of the starting time of pilotage shall be given no later than 48 hours prior to the estimated starting time of pilotage, in the case of Svalbard. If circumstances occur that the vessel could not have foreseen, the deadlines prescribed can be waivered. Proof of such circumstances must be substantiated in writing. Pilotage which requires substantial planning, pilotage order must be done well in advance to give needed time for planning and preparation.

Pilot order is a part of the reporting in SafeSeaNet Norway (see chapter 7.1). Pilotage order contact points:

- Safe Sea Net Norway: https://www.shiprep.no
- Safe Sea Net Support: support.ssnn@kystverket.no. Phone: +47 35 57 26 25
- Lødingen Pilot Dispatch Centre: Phone: +47 76 98 68 10

6.3 Pilot boarding:

Pilot boarding areas:

1. Isfjorden off Barentsburg: N 78° 08’ E 014° 00’
2. Isfjorden off Longyearbyen: N 78° 16’ E 015° 14’

Corridor. Water in Isfjorden exempt from compulsory pilotage for voyages to and from the pilot boarding areas[25]:

1. N 78° 06′ Ø 013° 22′
2. N 78° 08′ Ø 014° 00′
3. N 78° 16′ Ø 015° 14′
4. N 78° 18′ Ø 015° 10′
5. N 78° 12′ Ø 014° 10′
6. N 78° 08′ Ø 013° 14′
7. Back to position no. 1

[24] https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2014-12-17-1808/§4b
[25] https://lovdata.no/forskrift/2021-03-12-721/

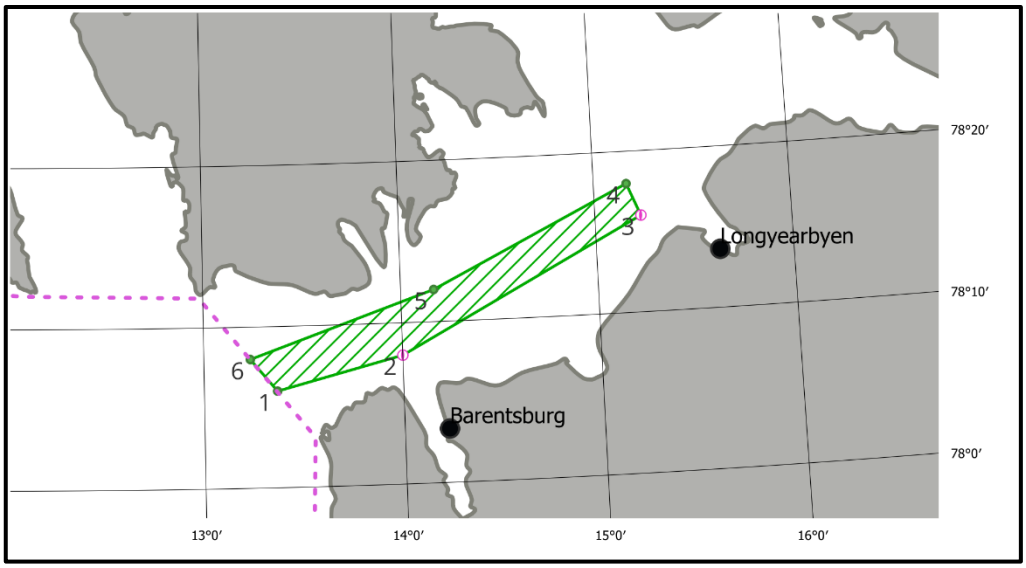


Figure 9 Map showing water (green) in Isfjorden exempt from compulsory pilotage for voyages to and from the pilot boarding areas (pilotage symbol).

6.4 Pilotage fee

The pilotage fees consist of the pilotage readiness fee, pilotage service fee and Pilotage Exemption Certificate (PEC) fee. Vessels sailing in Norwegian waters within the baseline must pay a pilotage readiness fee, and vessels using the pilotage service also have to pay a pilotage service fee. The fees are adjusted annually. Se more details on NCAs website[26].

[26] https://www.kystverket.no/en/sea-transport-and-ports/fees/

7 Reporting

7.1 SafeSeaNet Norway

For all ships calling ports in Svalbard it is mandatory to report in SafeSeaNet Norway[27]. This reporting includes information to the Norwegian Coastal Administration, Norwegian Maritime Authority, pilotage order, ISPS-reporting, reporting to The Governor of Svalbard and ports in Svalbard.

Reporting includes:

- Reporting of voyage. Reporting includes arrival and departure reporting for any destinations and includes crew and passenger lists. Crew and passenger lists must be reported minimum 24 hours before arrival.

- Position reporting for vessels carrying passengers and vessels with a length of 24 metres or more. Exempted for position reporting are vessels that may be tracked through LRIT, AIS Class A, or VMS, and vessels that may be tracked through a functioning AIS Class B.

Safe Sea Net Norway: www.shiprep.no

Safe Sea Net Support: Email: support.ssnn@kystverket.no. Phone: +47 35 57 26 25

7.2 The Governor of Svalbard

All tour operators in Svalbard shall notify the Governor of their travel plans no later than eight weeks before the scheduled start date. Requirements on notifications, insurance, clean up and more can be found on their guidance for tour operators[28].

All sea vessels are required to hold passport or other valid identification document for all crew and passengers when entering Svalbard waters[29].

[27] www.shiprep.no
[28] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/en/tour-operators/
[29] https://lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2022-04-29-643 (Regulation on Control of travelers to and from Svalbard § 6)

8 Route relevant regulations

8.1 The Governor of Svalbard

A number of regulations are relevant for sailing in Svalbard. The Svalbard Treaty[30] was signed in Paris on 9 February 1920. The treaty provides for Norwegian sovereignty over Svalbard, while at the same time providing for certain rights for the other signatories.

The Governor of Svalbard is the Norwegian government's highest-ranking representative on the archipelago. The Governor acts as both the chief of police and county governor. The Governor of Svalbard leads all rescue operations in the archipelago. Contact point when something goes wrong.

Contact point (opening hours 10.00 – 15.00)

- Telephone +47 79 02 43 00
- Email: firmapost@sysselmesteren.no

Updated information on regulations can be found on The Governor of Svalbard's website, including details on local regulations for protected areas:

- Guidance for tour operators[31]
- Laws and regulations[32]
- Relevant publications[33]

The Svalbard Act and the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act

The Svalbard Act[34] and the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act[35] include regulations on maritime traffic. Amendments to the Acts include further regulations on maritime traffic, which entered into force 1 January 2025.

All traffic on Svalbard must take place in a way that does not damage, litter or otherwise degrade the natural environment or cultural heritage or lead to unnecessary disturbance of people or wildlife (The Svalbard Act section 73)[36]

Heavy oil is not allowed on board vessels at Svalbard. Ships calling at the territorial waters of Svalbard shall not use or have on board petroleum-based fuels with higher viscosity, density or solidification point than permitted for marine gas oil[37].

Protected areas

[30] https://lovdata.no/dokument/TRAKTATEN/traktat/1920-02-09-1
[31] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/en/tour-operators/
[32] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/en/laws-and-regulations/
[33] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/en/publications/booklets-and-publications/
[34] https://www.lovdata.no/lov/1925-07-17-11
[35] https://www.lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2001-06-15-79
[36] https://www.lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2001-06-15-79/§73
[37] The Svalbard Environmental Protection Act Section 82a (Heavy oil defined in MARPOL I/43A. …crude oils having a density at 15°C higher than 900 kg/m3; oils, other than crude oils, having a density at 15°C higher than 900 kg/m3 or a kinematic viscosity at 50°C higher than 180 mm2/s; or bitumen, tar and their emulsions).

A large part of Svalbard is protected as national parks, nature reserves, bird sanctuaries and cultural heritage sites. Local regulations are given for the areas including regulations on maritime traffic. This document includes only parts of the regulations.

Within all bird sanctuaries all traffic is prohibited from 15 May – 15. August. At Bjørnøya nature reserve all traffic near the large bird colonies are forbidden in the period from 1. April – 31 August[38].

Local regulations also include restrictions on disembarking at some of the cultural heritage sites, to protect these sensitive locations.

For all of Svalbard the use of ship whistle, fire shooting or any cause of loud noise is prohibited closer to a bird mountain than one nautical mile in the period from 1. April to 31. August [39].

Discharge of sewage and gray water from ships or other vessels within a distance of 500 meters from land, is forbidden within all protected areas. In Rijpfjorden discharge of sewage and gray water is forbidden from any vessels inside a border between Kapp Loven and Kapp Wrede[40].

National parks and nature reserves

- Bjørnøya nature reserve
- Eastern-Svalbard nature reserves
- Festingen geotop protected area
- Hopen nature reserve
- Inner Wijdefjorden national park
- Kong Karls Land nature reserve
- Moffen nature reserve
- Nordenskiöld Land national park
- North-East Svalbard nature reserve
- North-West Spitsbergen national park
- North Isfjorden national park
- Ossian Sars nature reserve
- Prins Karls Forland national park
- Sassen-Bünsow Land national park
- South-Spitsbergen national park
- South-East Svalbard nature reserve
- Van Mijenfjorden national park

Bird Sanctuaries:

- Blomstrandhamna bird sanctuary

[38] Regulation on conservation of Bjørnøya nature reserve on Svalbard
[39] Svalbard Environment Act Section 30 third paragraph (https://www.lovdata.no/dokument/NLE/lov/2001-06-15-79/KAPITTEL_4-4#KAPITTEL_4-4)
[40] Regulation concerning the national parks South-Spitsbergen, Forlandet and Northwest-Spitsbergen, about the nature reserves Northeast-Svalbard and Southeas-Svalbard, and about the nature reserves for birds in Svalbard. Se sections for each protected area and Attachment 7 (https://www.lovdata.no/dokument/SFE/forskrift/2014-04-04-377, https://www.lovdata.no/dokument/SF/forskrift/2014-04-04-377/KAPITTEL_12#KAPITTEL_12)

- Boheman bird sanctuary
- Dunøyane bird sanctuary
- Forlandsøyane bird sanctuary
- Guissezholmen bird sanctuary
- Gåsøyane bird sanctuary, including reef west of Gåsøyane
- Hermansenøya bird sanctuary
- Isøyane bird sanctuary
- Kapp Linné bird sanctuary
- Kongsfjorden bird sanctuary
- Liefdefjorden bird sanctuary
- Moseøya bird sanctuary
- Olsholmen bird sanctuary
- Plankeholmane bird sanctuary
- Skorpa bird sanctuary
- Sørkapp bird sanctuary

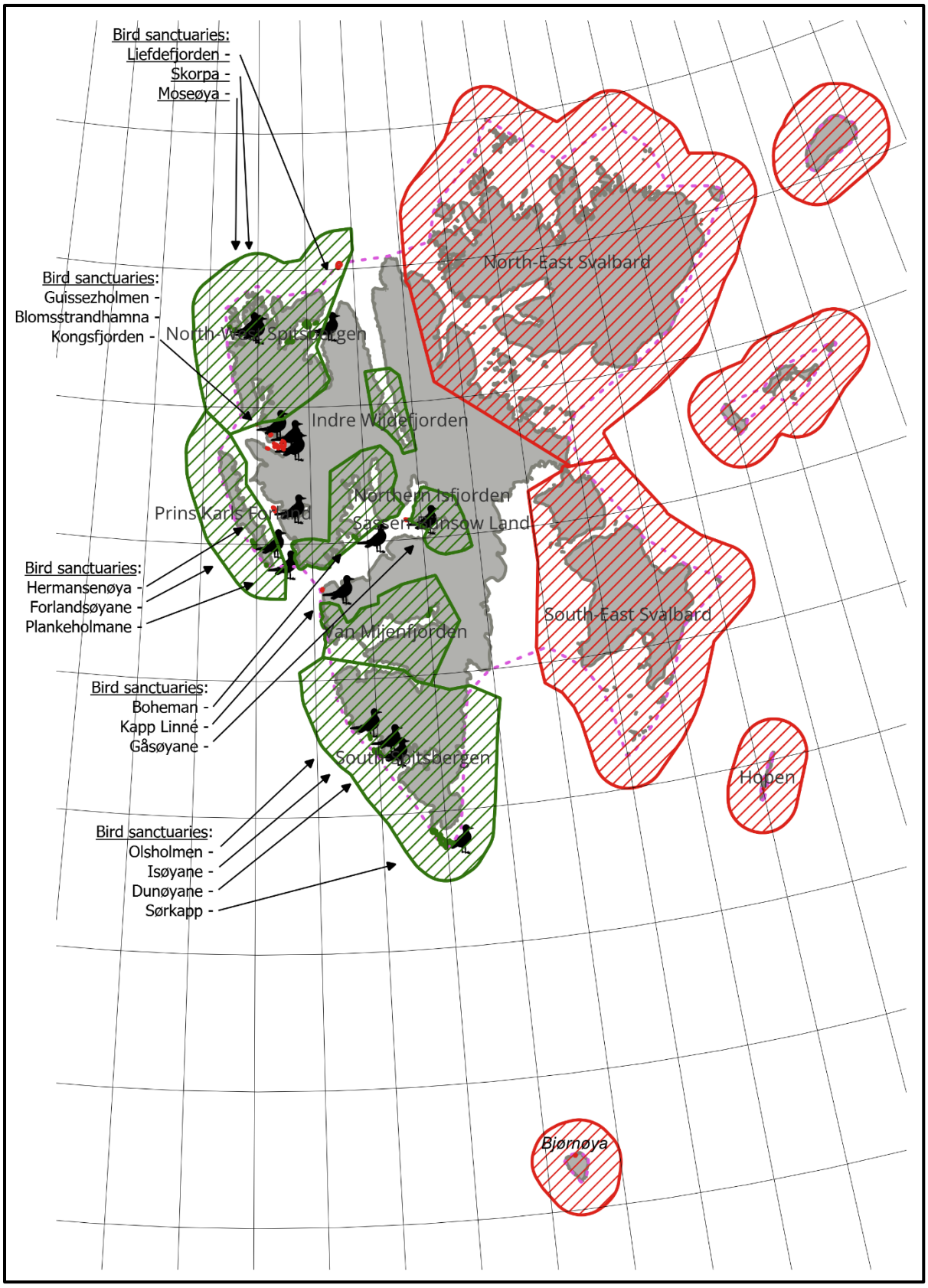


Figure 10 Map of protected areas at Svalbard. National parks (green), nature reserves (red) and bird sanctuaries (symbol)

Amendments to the local regulations which entered into force 1. January 2025[41]:

- Ships entering the sea areas in the national parks and nature reserves cannot have more than 200 passengers on board. The limitation will not apply to vessels in innocent transit in the maritime territory of protected areas, cf. Article 2 (1) of the Convention on the Law of the Sea.

- Disembarking is prohibited for a given number of cultural heritage sites[42]

- For tourist activities, disembarkation and stay on land in the national parks and nature reserves can only take place at specified places[43]. For a part of these places, marked blue in charts included in regulation, disembarkation can only take place together with a guide with knowledge of the natural and cultural environment, and there must be one guide per 12 people and a maximum of 39 people on land at the same time.

- A general ban on breaking fast ice has been introduced.

8.2 The Norwegian Coastal Administration (NCA)

Laws and regulations can be found on NCAs website[44].

The Norwegian Coastal Administration is responsible agency for the pilotage services, navigational warnings, maritime ship reporting through SafeSeaNet Norway, the national Coordinator for Navigational Warnings (NAVCO) and national preparedness against acute pollution.

8.3 The Norwegian Maritime Administration (NMA)

When operating in waters surrounding Svalbard some additional regulations apply, see NMAs website[45] for Regulations and Circulars regarding Svalbard and polar waters.

The main additional regulations for operation in waters surrounding Svalbard:

- Regulations of 23 November 2016 No. 1363 on safety measures for ships operating in polar waters[46], implements the safety part of the polar code,
- Regulations of 30 May 2012 No. 488 on environmental safety for ships and mobile offshore units[47], implements the environmental part of the polar code,
- Regulations of 7 June 2019 No. 710 on the Construction, equipment and operation of passenger ships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard[48], and

[41] https://www.sysselmesteren.no/en/news/2024/12/new-environmental-regulations-enters-into-force-on-1-january/
[42] https://lovdata.no/static/SF/sf-20140404-0377-v3-01-01.pdf (Attachment 3)
[43] https://lovdata.no/static/SF/sf-20140404-0377-v6-01-02.pdf (Attachment 6)
[44] https://www.kystverket.no/en/regulations/
[45] https://www.sdir.no/en/legislation/
[46] https://www.sdir.no/en/legislation/regulations/safety-measures-for-ships-operating-in-polar-waters/
[47] https://www.sdir.no/en/legislation/regulations/environmental-safety-for-ships-and-mobile-offshore-units/
[48] https://www.sdir.no/en/legislation/regulations/construction-equipment-and-operation-of-passenger-ships-in-the-territorial-waters-surrounding-svalbard/

- Regulations of 14 January 2020 No. 63 on vessels of less than 24 metres carrying 12 passengers or less[49] (12 Pax Regulations).

The following circulars are also relevant for operating at Svalbard:

- RSV 2 – 2024 How to apply for exemptions for vessels carrying 12 passengers or less operating from motherships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard (2024)[50] – UPDATED GUIDLEINE WILL BE PUBLISHED EARLY 2025.
- SM 4 – 2020 Recommendations for operation in polar waters for vessels not carrying a Polar Ship Certificate[51], and
- RSV 3 – 2020 Transitional arrangement for passenger ships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard[52].

The Polar Code

The Polar Code is a mandatory international code for operation in polar waters that takes into account the special risk factors that are not sufficiently covered by other IMO instruments.

The Polar Code has rules on the design and construction of ships, on equipment, operational conditions, training and protection of the environment. The actual Code is divided into two separate parts, one on safety and one on the environment. The safety part introduces, inter alia, a requirement to carry a Polar Ship Certificate for ships that shall be issued with SOLAS certificates and intend to operate in polar waters. A key point in this context is that the safety part is made as an additional requirement for ships that nonetheless are required to have SOLAS certificates, and therefore only applies to SOLAS ships, while the environmental part is based on the MARPOL Convention and therefore has rules that apply to all ships.

The requirements of the safety part are goal-based and functional requirements, and the requirements that apply to the ship are related to the risk factors in the areas in which the ship will be operating, such as ice conditions and temperature. It is important that the company assesses the area of operation for the ship. These conditions, along with any operational limitations, should be set out in the ship's operational manual.

Manning and Training

The polar code includes additional requirements for manning and training. Masters, chief mates, and officers in charge of a navigational watch shall be qualified in accordance with the amended chapter V of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification an Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and the STCW Code.

[49] https://www.sdir.no/en/regelverk/regulations/vessels-of-less-than-24-metres-carrying-12-passengers-or-less/
[50] https://www.sdir.no/en/shipping/legislation/regulations/regulations-on-the-construction-equipment-and-operation-of-passenger-ships-in-the-territorial-waters-surrounding-svalbard/
[51] https://www.sdir.no/en/regelverk/circulars/recommendations-for-operation-in-polar-waters-for-vessels-not-carrying-a-polar-ship-certificate/
[52] https://www.sdir.no/en/shipping/legislation/directives/rules-on-the-construction-equipment-and-operation-of-passenger-ships-in-the-territorial-waters-surrounding-svalbard/

Pollution prevention measures

Each of the chapters in the environmental part (part II-A) of the polar code includes additional requirements to the corresponding annex of the MARPOL Convention. Hence, the chapters of part II-A follow the scope of application of the various corresponding MARPOL Annexes. Meaning that some of the requirements apply to all ships, including fishing vessels, and not only ships certified in accordance with SOLAS chapter 1.

Most of the environmental requirements of the Polar Code are operational, applying to both new and existing ships. Nevertheless, operational requirements can result in the need for structural changes to ship design and arrangement. For example, a prohibition on discharge may result in a need to install tanks for oil or sewage, or install an approved sewage treatment plan.

MARPOL annex I/ regulation 43A

Special requirements for the use and carriage of oils as fuel in Arctic waters. From 1 July 2024 the use and carriage of Heavy Fuel Oil as fuel in the Arctic is prohibited.

For vessels complying with MARPOL Annex I, Regulation 12A on fuel oil tank protection or the Polar code part II-A regulation 1.2.1 this ban entry into force on 1 July 2029. There is also an option for states with an Arctic coastline to waive the requirement for ships flying its flag and operating in its water until 1 July 2029.

Guidelines on this Heavy Fuel Oil ban, as fuel, is under development by IMO.

Passenger ships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard

Regulation on the construction, equipment and operation of passenger ships in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard[53] makes the SOLAS convention, including the Polar Code and the Load Line Convention, the safety standard in Svalbard. The regulation entered into force on 1 January 2020 with transitional provisions until 1 January 2025 for those who are already operating passenger ships in Svalbard. Subject to limitations set out in international law, the regulation applies to all passenger ships, independent of flag.

The regulation gives three different schemes for passenger ships operating in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard to follow. These three schemes are:

- as a passenger high-speed craft pursuant to SOLAS Chapter X with an operation permit for Svalbard, or
- as passenger ship with Safety certificate according to SOLAS chapter I and polar code certificate according to polar code, or
- in accordance with chapter 4 of the regulation.

Further, the regulation also gives some additional requirements for all passenger ships, including those holding a polar certificate, such as:

- recommendations on voyage planning, given in the Polar Code (Part I-B, paragraphs 10.2 and 10.3), shall apply as regulation,
- regulations on operation at a safe distance from glacier fronts,

[53] https://www.sdir.no/en/regelverk/circulars/new-regulations-on-the-construction-equipment-and-operation-of-passenger-ships-in-the-territorial-waters-surrounding-svalbard/

- requirements for hospital accommodation and procedure for evacuation by helicopter,
- requirements for vessels used as tenders, and
- requirements for protection against polar bears.

12 Pax Regulations

Regulations on vessels of less than 24 meters carrying 12 passengers or less applies to both Norwegian and foreign flagged vessels in Norwegian territorial waters, including the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard. The regulation contains a section on operational limitations in the territorial waters surrounding Svalbard (Section 8). Companies operating in accordance with this regulation shall register information about the operation at the Norwegian Maritime Authority prior to any transport of passenger on NMA website.

8.4 The Norwegian Polar Institute (NPI) - Svalbardkartet

NPI holds a lot of competence on the Arctic and the Antarctica. Svalbardkartet[54] is an information service holding information, including marine protected areas, nature reserves, landing sites for cruise vessels, cultural heritage sites, RAMSAR areas, glacier fronts, geology, flora and fauna.

[54] https://geokart.npolar.no/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=Svalbardkartet (additional information: https://npolar.no/en/maps/ , https://npolar.no/en)

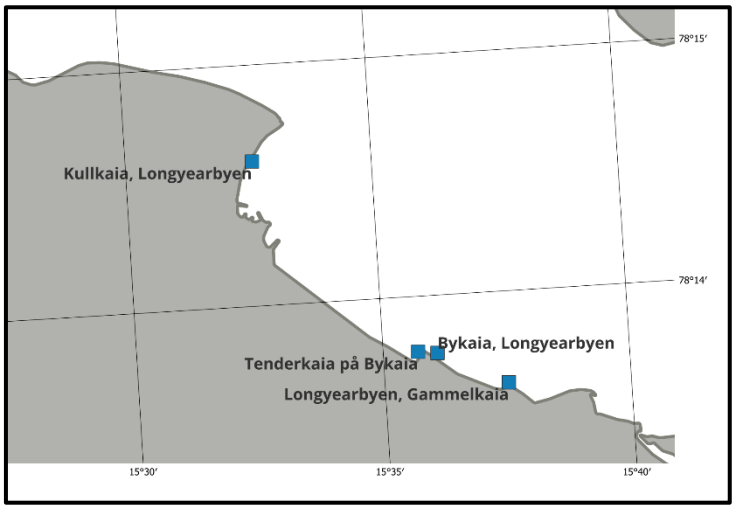
9 Port Information

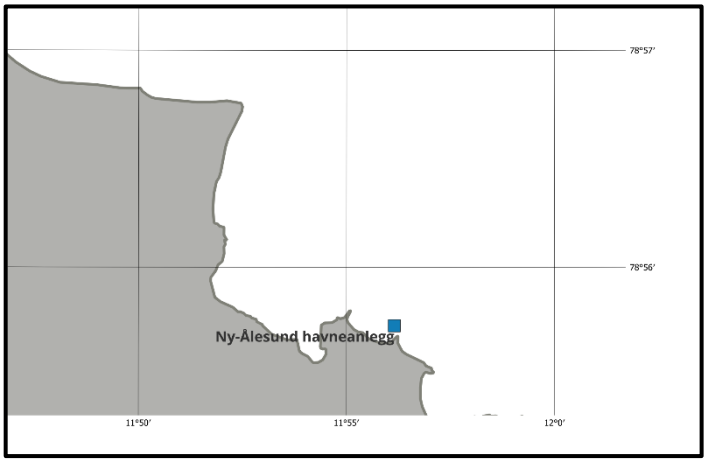
9.1 Port of Longyearbyen

ISPS-terminal: Bykaia

Contact information:

- Website: https://portlongyear.no/
- Details on port and port services: https://en.visitsvalbard.com/visitor-information/Svalbard-Cruise-Forum-en/port-longyear
- Email: bykaia@lokalstyre.no
- VHF CH12/16
- Medical emergency: Phone 113
- Phone: +47 79 02 21 50
- 24-hour phone: +47 91 12 23 00
-



9.2 Ny Ålesund Port - Harbour Master

- Website: https://port.kingsbay.no/
- Email: harbour@kingsbay.no
- Phone: +47 79 02 72 40
- VHF CH12/16