

Walrus & Bowhead Whales Itinerary

[Link: Walrus & Bowhead Whales](#)

Tour Overview

Our search for these remarkable arctic residents takes us to Sanirajak (formerly called Hall Beach) and the shores of the Foxe Basin in Nunavut, Canada.

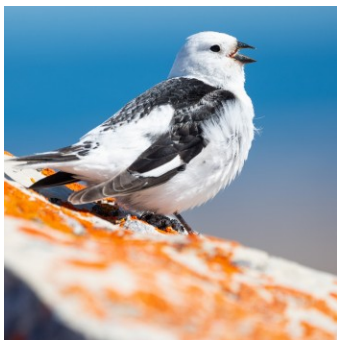
The Foxe Basin is rich in wildlife and the Inuit have lived here for centuries. At this time of year, bowhead whales, weighing up to 90 tonnes, feed along the edge of the sea ice as they wait to move further north, and groups of walrus can be found basking in the sun on pieces of sea ice.

We travel by boat with Inuit guides in search of these massive creatures plus ringed and bearded seals. We will also find a variety of northern birds, including Red Phalarope, Common Eider, Sabine's Gulls, and Arctic Tern. Photography should be superb with 24-hour warm arctic light, calm waters and a backdrop of gleaming ice.

Join us for a remarkable arctic wildlife experience on our Walrus & Bowhead Whales tour!

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Sanirajak



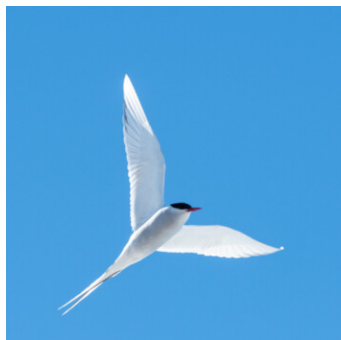
Our Walrus & Bowhead whales tour begins today in Sanirajak, Nunavut. Participants will arrive on flights from Ottawa (via Iqaluit) or from Iqaluit if they are connecting this tour to our Narwhals & Polar Bears tours in Pond Inlet or Nauyasat. We meet for an evening meal and to discuss the upcoming adventure. We should have a chance to meet our local guides and walk around the community of Sanirajak after dinner as we have 24 hours of daylight! Night at our hotel in Sanirajak.

Days 2 to 6: Foxe Basin



We plan our 5 full-days of the tour around weather and ocean conditions. The community of Sanirajak was known as Hall Beach until early 2020 and is the site of a DEW line station built in 1957. It sits on the western edge of the Foxe Basin. At this time of year there is open water very close to the beach or right at the beach. We set off from the edge of the ice by boat in search of walrus and bowhead whales. Walrus are typically found resting on small pans of sea ice over relatively shallow water where they forage for clams on the ocean floor. We will use the knowledge of our local guides to travel to the areas where we are most likely to find walrus. Weighing up to 900 kg (2000 lbs), these are enormous animals and seeing them packed together on a piece of ice is impressive! At the edge of the open water we find the 'floe edge', which is the border between the solid 'fast' sea ice and the water. We travel along the floe edge in search of bowhead whales. There is a whole ecosystem of phytoplankton and zooplankton underneath the ice and these whales feed along and under the ice. We may even see them surfacing in small holes in the ice with just the 'bow' of their blowhole visible. Bowhead whales are enormous! These arctic specialists can grow to 90,000 kg and are typically 15 m (50 ft) long, which means they are not one of the long slender whales - they have some girth to them. Being present when they surface close by is a truly magical experience! Beyond our two large target mammals, there is plenty of other wildlife to enjoy. Ringed and bearded seals are relatively common and there is an abundance of birds migrating and nesting in the area. Over the water we are likely to see King and Common Eiders, Black Guillemots, Long-tailed Ducks, and Snow Geese. Polar bears are very uncommon in this area, but there is a small chance we could find one. On small islands in Foxe Basin there are nesting Brant, Snow Geese, Red Phalarope, Arctic Tern, Sabine's Gulls, and more. These are sites where local Inuit hunt geese and eiders and collect their eggs. We anticipate being on the water looking for walrus, bowhead whales and other arctic wildlife four of the five full days. If weather prevents us getting out on the water, we will spend some time exploring the community and the areas around it. Sanirajak is a small community (population 848 in 2016) and we will have a chance to visit the local store and will probably meet some of the friendly local residents in our travels. Near the community there are numerous ponds and some sod house archaeological sites worth exploring. Fans of the film 'Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner' will be interested to know that our travels on the water may take us near the islands where Atanarjuat was exiled in the legend. Nights at our Sanirajak hotel.

Day 7: Departure



Our Walrus & Bowhead Whales tour ends today. We catch our flight south from Sanirajak to Iqaluit in the morning and connect to a flight to Ottawa, arriving in the evening. We recommend you spend this night in Ottawa before connecting to flights home. We part ways here with memories from an incredible Arctic experience.

What to Expect

Daily Schedule

Travel in the Arctic requires flexibility to adjust to weather conditions and the daily schedule on our Walrus & Bowhead Whales tour is likely to be variable. On days with good weather we plan to be on the ocean in two small boats with our local Inuit guides. These are open aluminum boats with an outboard motor with capacity for 8. We will depart after breakfast and will have lunch out in the field and plan to return to the community for our evening meal. Note that we have included a maximum of 4 days on the water in the price of the tour.

Worldwide, we feel this is one of the best places to watch bowhead whales on a tour and the opportunities to find walrus should also be excellent.

Our daily activities will be focused on looking for walrus and bowhead and watching birds, but we won't hesitate to enjoy other aspects of the natural and cultural history of this area on this incredible Arctic tour.

While we have outlined the detailed itinerary, this schedule and our daily activities will be very dependent on the daily weather and ice conditions as well as possible schedule changes from the airline.

Climate

This time of year can still be cool. Temperatures are above freezing, but it will be cool on the water and warm layered clothing along with the waterproof boots should keep you warm. We have 24 hours of daylight, so sunscreen is essential!

Accommodations

Our hotel in Sanirajak is basic, but adequate with private bathrooms in each room. We can request single rooms, but as is typical in the north, if space in the hotel is tight, single travelers may be forced to share with other singles on our tour of the same gender.

Travel

Please understand that due to the weather in the Arctic, flight delays are more common than elsewhere. If our flights are delayed we will do our best to adjust and get on our way as soon as possible. Additional costs due to flight delays (e.g. extra hotel nights or meals) are the responsibility of the participant, but should be covered by your trip interruption policy (see below).

Insurance

Please note that the deposit for this tour is \$1000 CAD/USD. Due to the remote nature of this tour and the high cost of evacuation, emergency medical insurance is **required** on this tour. Due to the potential for flight delays and cancellations due to weather, trip interruption insurance is also **mandatory**. Trip cancellation coverage is highly recommended.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- 6 nights in hotel accommodation
- Ground transportation
- Travel by boat on the ocean in search of walrus and bowhead whales for a maximum of 4 days
- Includes all meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 7
- Eagle-Eye Tours guide plus local Inuit guides with 6 - 11 participants

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Round-trip airfare from Ottawa to Sanirajak (~\$2,495 CAD | ~\$1,950 USD + 13% tax) or airfare to connect from our Narwhals & Polar Bears tours (~\$1,295 CAD | ~\$995 USD + 5% tax from our Pond Inlet tour)
 - Mandatory emergency medical and trip interruption insurance
 - Additional hotel nights if connecting from one of our Narwhals & Polar Bears tours
 - Accommodation in Ottawa prior to the start of the tour and after the tour
 - Additional expenses as a result of flight changes or delays
 - Items of a personal nature
 - Taxes (5% GST)
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