

# THE HAWK EYE

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Wednesday, March 25th, 2015

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## Going before they are gone

### Cruises offer glimpses of the ice pack and a land of polar bears.

By ANNE Z. COOKE  
Tribune News Service

LONGYEARBYEN, Svalbard - If it weren't for the red flags marking the tundra trail to the glacier, some of us - passengers on the Hurtigruten cruise ship MS Fram, sailing out of Spitsbergen - might have been tempted to leave the slowpokes behind and bushwhack across country.



Photo

But as newcomers are relentlessly reminded here in Svalbard Archipelago, where white is the new black, that polar bears are the Big Dogs. More numerous than humans (3,500 to 2,750) and a protected species, the bears have the run of the islands, 24,209 square miles of wilderness, just 800 miles from the North Pole. Curious, stealthy and fast on their feet, they're not fussy about their food.

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