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# This is Svalbard 2014

What the figures say

215<sup>5</sup>



## What do the figures tell us?

Through the publication of *This is Svalbard*, Statistics Norway aims to present a wide-ranging and readily comprehensible picture of life and society on Svalbard, based on available statistics. Statistics Norway has previously published four editions of Svalbard Statistics in the Official Statistics of Norway series. Statistics from many different sources have been used in order to present a full picture of life in the archipelago. As of 1/1 /2007, the Norwegian Statistics Act applies to Svalbard, and Statistics Norway will accordingly be publishing more statistics relating to Svalbard. These will be available on [www.ssb.no/en/svalbard/](http://www.ssb.no/en/svalbard/)

Oslo/Kongvinger, October 2014



Hans Henrik Scheel  
Director General

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Sources: Unless otherwise stated, Statistics Norway is the source.

Cover: Photograph by John M. Longyear has been lent by Store Norske Spitsbergen Grubekompani AS

Illustration: Colorbox/Crestock.

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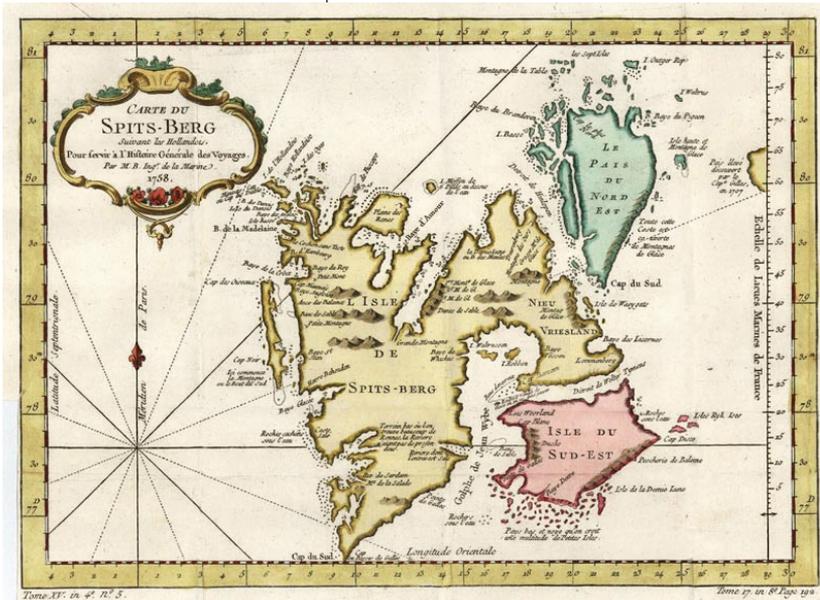
# Hunting, research and mining

## A Dutchman and jagged mountains

In 1596, the Dutch explorer Willem Barents discovered the largest of the Svalbard islands while searching for the North-East Passage. He named his discovery Spitsbergen, after its jagged mountains. The name Svalbard is mentioned in Icelandic sources dating back to 1194, but it is not certain that this refers to what we know as Svalbard. The name means 'chill' (sval) 'edge or rim' (bard).

## Early hunting activity

In 1607, the English explorer Henry Hudson saw the potential in the rich natural resources of Svalbard. Although Denmark-Norway asserted its claim to Svalbard, little happened in the way of actual activities. Over time, whalers and hunters from many European countries began to turn up. Russian trappers wintered on Svalbard in the period 1715-1850. The first Norwegian hunting expedition to Svalbard took place in 1790, but annual hunts did not begin until 1840. Over time, the animal populations were severely reduced and commercial hunting ceased.



Map of Svalbard from 1738

## Exploration and research

In 1827, the archipelago was explored by an expedition led by the geologist B.M. Keilhau, and subsequently there were several Swedish and other expeditions to the islands. In the 1920s, the polar explorers Roald Amundsen and Umberto Nobile used Ny-Ålesund as their base for a number of their North Pole expeditions. More recently, Svalbard has been the arena for a number of international research projects. In 2008, the Svalbard Global Seed Vault was established, as a measure in safeguarding the earth's plant life.

## Norwegian sovereignty

Svalbard was long considered a so-called terra nullius by many nations – literally a 'no man's land' over which no single state held sovereignty. The Spitsbergen Treaty was signed in Paris in 1920 as a result of the peace conference after the First World War. This confirms that Norway holds sovereignty over Svalbard, and in 1925 the islands were officially brought under the Kingdom of Norway.

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This is why Norway lays down and enforces laws and regulations on Svalbard. However, the Spitsbergen Treaty requires Norway to grant persons and companies from the 40 signatory states equal rights to engage in hunting, fishing and certain forms of commercial activity in the archipelago and its territorial waters.

### **Coal mining starts up**

One of the reasons that all the signatories to the Spitsbergen Treaty were so keen to secure equal right of access to various types of commercial activity for their citizens and companies was that the islands had once again become economically attractive with the post-1900 boom in commercial coal mining in the archipelago. The polar seafarer Søren Zachariassen sold the first cargo of coal in Tromsø in 1899, but it was American interests that first started mining on a large scale. In 1916, some private Norwegian companies bought into the mining operation and created Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani and Kings Bay Kull Company.

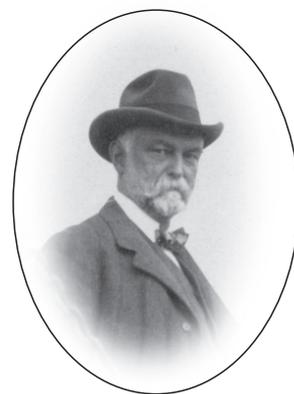
### **Evacuated during the Second World War**

After Germany attacked the Soviet Union in 1941, everyone on Svalbard was evacuated, either to the USSR or the UK. In 1942, a Norwegian force was dispatched to prevent the establishment of German bases. The Germans raided Svalbard in 1943 and all settlements on the islands were destroyed during the war. Reconstruction of the local communities on Svalbard began in 1948.

### **No longer so isolated**

Svalbard was for a long time an extremely isolated society. In 1911, the Norwegian authorities had established Spitsbergen Radio and for many years all regular contact between Svalbard and the rest of the world was by radio wave or ship. The civil airport, Svalbard Airport, Longyear, only became operational in 1975, after Soviet protests had blocked plans for an airport in the 1950s. Today, Longyearbyen is the northernmost place in the world to have regular scheduled air services.

In 1978, Svalbard was connected to the phone network via three channels on a satellite connection, and in 1984, the archipelago received direct TV broadcasts from the Norwegian state broadcaster (NRK) for the first time. Prior to this, inhabitants of Longyearbyen were only able to view two-week old programmes supplied on video tape. In 2003, Svalbard was connected to the Norwegian mainland via two fibre-optic submarine cables which provide broadband and other telecommunications services. Almost all households (97 per cent) now have a broadband internet connection, compared with just 80 per cent in mainland Norway.

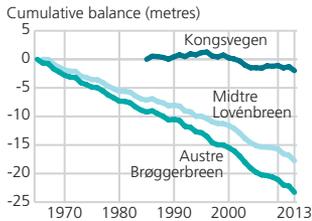


*John Munroe Longyear (1850-1922) came to Svalbard on a cruise in 1901 and became interested in the coal-mining prospects. In 1906, through The Arctic Coal Company, he acquired mining rights from a Norwegian company and Longyear City was founded. In 1915, the mining operation was wound up, and in 1916 it was sold on to the newly founded Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani AS.*

*Section of a photo loaned by SNSK.*

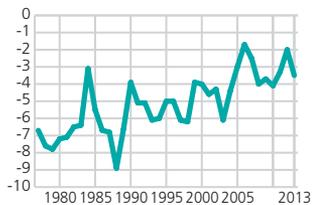
# Protected wilderness

## Annual increase/melt of snow and ice on three glaciers



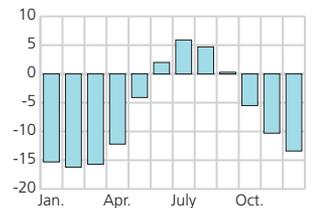
Source: Norwegian Polar Institute.

## Annual average temperature, Svalbard Airport. Centigrade



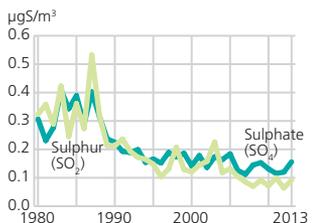
Source: Norwegian Meteorological Institute.

## Monthly normal temperatures in Longyearbyen (1961-1990). Centigrade



Source: Norwegian Meteorological Institute.

## Annual mean concentration values of atmospheric sulphur compounds



<sup>1</sup> Until 1990 the measurements were done in Ny-Ålesund, and subsequently on Zeppelin Mountain. Source: Norwegian Institute for Air Research and Norwegian Pollution Control Authority.

## Plenty of space

Svalbard is an archipelago in the Arctic Ocean which is part of the Kingdom of Norway, but without the status of county or municipality. The largest of the islands is Spitsbergen (37 814 km<sup>2</sup>) which is also where most human activity takes place. The total land area is 61 022 km<sup>2</sup>, corresponding to some 16 per cent of the entire Kingdom of Norway.

Whereas there are 16 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> in mainland Norway, Svalbard's 2 400 inhabitants live in one of the most sparsely populated areas on earth, with 0.04 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. However, population density on Svalbard is slightly higher than in some other Arctic regions, such as Greenland (0.03 per km<sup>2</sup>) and Nunavut in Canada (0.01 per km<sup>2</sup>).

## Dark winters – light summers

The polar night in Longyearbyen lasts from 14 November to 29 January, while there is midnight sun from 20 April to 22 August.

## Low-lying wilderness

The highest mountain on Svalbard is Newtontoppen (Newton Peak) at 1 713 metres above sea-level, but 43 per cent of the land area lies below 300 metres above sea-level. On the Norwegian mainland, the corresponding figure is 32 per cent.

98 per cent of the land area of Svalbard is natural wilderness. This compares with just 12 per cent on the Norwegian mainland.

## 65 per cent is protected

There are seven national parks on Svalbard (out of 44 in Norway as a whole), six nature reserves, 15 bird sanctuaries and one geotope (geological protection area). The first three national parks were created in 1973, the next three in 2003 and the last in 2005. In all, they comprise close to 14 500 km<sup>2</sup> (24 per cent) of Svalbard's land area. In addition, in excess of 20 000 km<sup>2</sup> of marine areas are included in the national parks.

In total, 65 per cent of the land area of Svalbard is protected in one way or another in order to conserve its unique nature, landscape and cultural heritage. In comparison, areas with various types of protection constitute just 17 per cent of mainland Norway, of which 10 per cent are national parks.

## The glaciers are melting

Around 60 per cent of Svalbard's land area is covered by innumerable small and large glaciers. The two largest glaciers on Svalbard, the Austfonna and Vegafonna ice cap (8 492 km<sup>2</sup>) and Olav V Land (4 150 km<sup>2</sup>), are also the two largest glaciers in the Kingdom of Norway. However, the Svalbard glaciers are shrinking and new land is appearing. Annual measurements of three glaciers close to Ny-Ålesund show evident melting and reduction in size.

### Less cold ...

The melting of the glaciers is linked to increased summer temperatures and less precipitation in winter. The annual average temperature in Longyearbyen has risen in recent decades. The norm (1961-1990) goes from  $-16^{\circ}\text{C}$  in winter to  $+6^{\circ}\text{C}$  in summer.

The annual average temperature in Longyearbyen over the last century has been between  $-8$  and  $-2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , while in Oslo it has been between  $+4$  and  $+8^{\circ}\text{C}$  and in Tromsø between  $+1$  and  $+4^{\circ}\text{C}$ . However, due to the Gulf Stream Svalbard has a relatively mild climate compared with other places at the same latitude.

Weather stations on Svalbard typically record 200 to 400 mm of precipitation annually. Areas around Longyearbyen are some of the driest zones, with annual precipitation usually ranging between 150 and 230 mm. This is less than the driest areas of the Norwegian mainland.

### ... and less acid rain

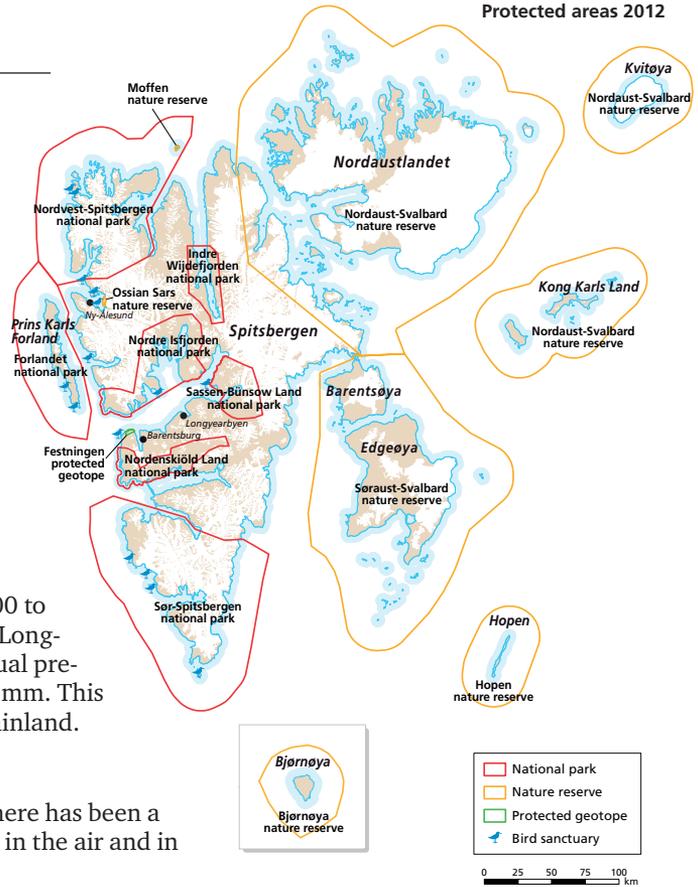
Measurements taken in Ny-Ålesund show that there has been a considerable reduction in acidifying compounds in the air and in rainfall on Svalbard in recent decades.

Climate gas emissions on Svalbard, measured in  $\text{CO}_2$  equivalents, have in recent years been about 200 000 tonnes (emissions from vessels, air traffic and light vehicles are not included). On Svalbard, more than 75 tonnes of  $\text{CO}_2$  equivalents are produced per capita due to the local energy consumption being based on coal and mining, while on the mainland the figure was 7 tonnes per capita.

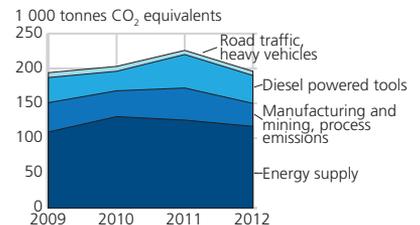
### More waste

The volume of waste on Svalbard has increased in recent years. Four thousand tonnes of waste were produced in 2010, of which nearly 85 per cent was from commercial activities. Previously, much of it was disposed of in landfills, but it is now shipped to the mainland.

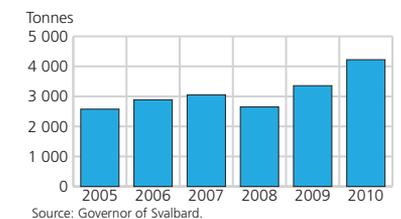
On average, each inhabitant of Longyearbyen produces 200 kg of waste. This is far less than on the Norwegian mainland, where annual per capita household waste production is 441 kg; this may be because consumption on Svalbard is more oriented towards services.



### Air emissions, climate gases ( $\text{CO}_2$ , $\text{CH}_4$ and $\text{N}_2\text{O}$ )

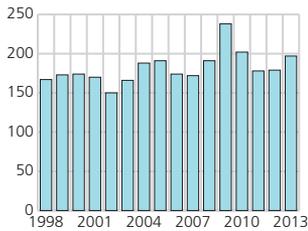


### Waste



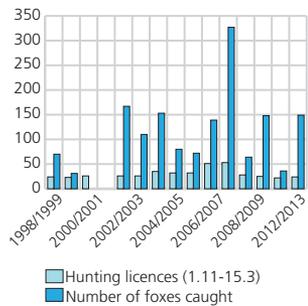
# Protected, but also hunted

## Hunting of Svalbard reindeer



Source: Governor of Svalbard.

## Catches of arctic fox



Source: Governor of Svalbard.

## Hardy creatures

Svalbard is covered in permafrost and only the top metre of soil thaws in the summer. Only 6-7 per cent of the land area of Svalbard is covered by vegetation, and plant life is marked by a short growing season. There are no trees or shrubs. Animal and bird life on Svalbard is especially adapted to the harsh Arctic living conditions and is generally under a protection order, although hunting and fishing of individual species is allowed.

## Rugged Rudolph

The Svalbard reindeer is found only on Svalbard and is the largest of the three land mammals in the archipelago. Studies indicate that the population is subject to major fluctuations and that spells of mild rainy weather in winter affect living conditions due to ice formation. The animal was protected from 1925 to 1983, since when there have been regular hunts in some areas. Each year, 150-200 Svalbard reindeer are culled in ordinary hunts and 20-60 for research purposes.

## Opportunistic scavenger

One animal that profits from the Svalbard reindeer is the Arctic fox, whose diet includes seal and reindeer carrion, as well as baby seals, seabirds, eggs and more. It is estimated that there is a sizeable population of Arctic foxes on Svalbard, whereas they are threatened with extinction in mainland Norway. On average, 140 of these small foxes have been trapped annually in recent years.

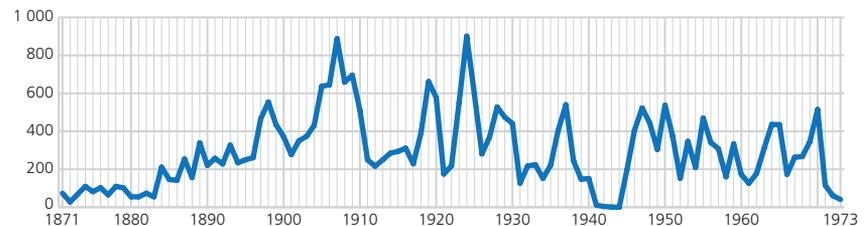
There are also small numbers of sibling voles on Svalbard. This rodent is not native to Svalbard, and is assumed to have arrived on ships from Russia.

## Threatened polar bear

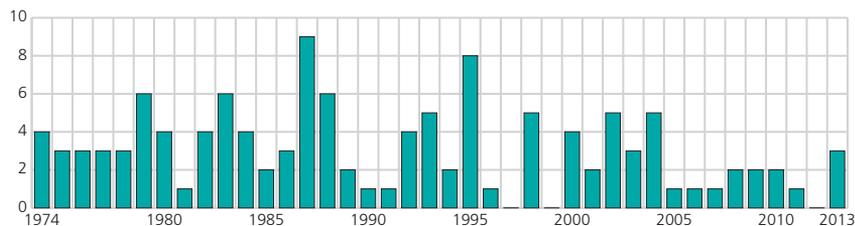
Svalbard is also home to marine mammals. The polar bear was hunted intensively until it came under total protection in 1973. Since then, the population is likely to have increased slowly, and estimates indicate that there are now around 3 000 polar bears in the Barents Sea region.

Since the conservation order came into force, 3-4 polar bears per year on average have been killed on Svalbard during alleged self-defence or because the animal was sick or injured.

## Hunting of polar bears



### Polar bears killed during alleged self-defence or for humane reasons



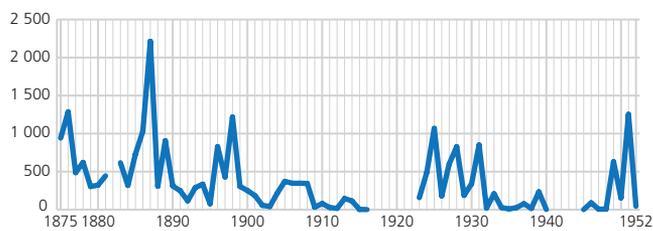
Source: Governor of Svalbard.

The polar bear is at the top of the food chain and is sensitive to elevated levels of organic environmental toxins such as PCBs. Climate change is also a threat since changes in ice cover around Svalbard will reduce the polar bear's natural habitat.

### Hard-hit walrus

There are four species of pinniped native to Svalbard. The walrus was nearly wiped out through intensive hunting over several centuries and the population has grown slowly since their protection in 1952. Counts made in 2006 show that there are somewhere over 2 500 walrus on Svalbard.

### Walrus catches



The world's northernmost population of harbour seal is on Svalbard and consists of some 1 000 individuals. There are also a couple of thousand bearded seal in the Svalbard region, while the ringed seal is the most common species of seal on Svalbard. Annually, between 30 and 70 of this species are culled. The endemic Svalbard whale species are the beluga, narwhal and Greenland right whale.

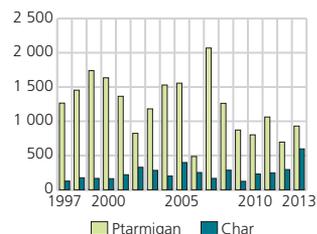
### Ptarmigan and char

In all, around 36 species of bird nest on Svalbard. The Svalbard ptarmigan is the only species not to migrate from the archipelago in winter. While the ptarmigan is the only bird to pass the winter on Svalbard, the Svalbard char is the only freshwater fish on Svalbard.

### Many dogs

Man's best friend is also found in large numbers on Svalbard. In 2013, there were more than 600 dogs, of which almost half were owned by tourist enterprises.

### Ptarmigan hunting and catches of char



Source: Governor of Svalbard.

# The heart of Svalbard society

## An isolated mining community

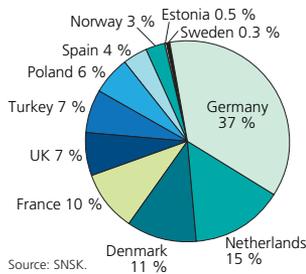
In 1906, the American John M. Longyear founded the Arctic Coal Company. At the same time, he founded Longyearbyen in Adventdalen on the island of Spitsbergen. The American company was purchased ten years later by Store Norske Spitsbergen Kullkompani (Store Norske). Mining in Adventdalen was the life-blood of Longyearbyen until the coal reserves became almost depleted in the late 1980s. Today, Store Norske's commercial coal production takes place mainly in Svea, 60 km south of Longyearbyen, and in Mine 7 in Adventdalen.

Before Svalbard Airport became operational in 1975, the only means of transport to Spitsbergen was by ship. Because the harbours iced up, the local community was completely isolated for the long winter. Companies operating businesses from Svalbard had to plan carefully.

## A company which dominates the Longyearbyen community

Until the late 1980s, Longyearbyen was a 'company town', a community in which Store Norske was behind most of the everyday amenities. The company ran the town's only shop, was the largest landowner and organised the miners' living quarters. Before 1980, there was no money in circulation in Svalbard society. Instead, Store Norske produced payment tokens; this 'Svalbard money' was exchanged by the Svalbard inhabitants for groceries and other goods. Store Norske, in its turn, depended on considerable state aid.

## Store Norske coal sales. 2013



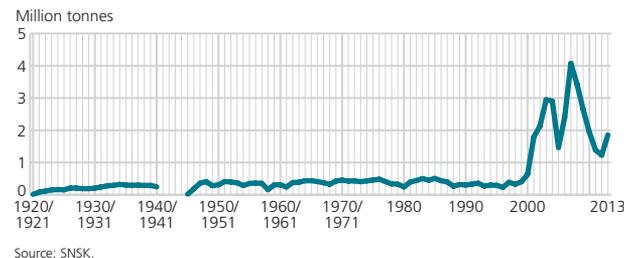
## Coal production increased many times over in 100 years

From the modest beginning in 1907 of 1 500 tonnes, coal production reached a record level of 4.1 million tonnes in 2007. Subsequently it has more than halved, declining to some 1.9 million tonnes in 2010. Practically all coal is now exported, and Germany alone purchases more than half of Svalbard's coal production.

## An economically dominant industry

In 2013, the turnover in coal operations (mining and working) was NOK 1.3 billion. Again, this is more than a halving, from 3.4 billion in 2008. The turnover of Svalbard society as a whole, including state subsidies, was almost NOK 3.8 billion.

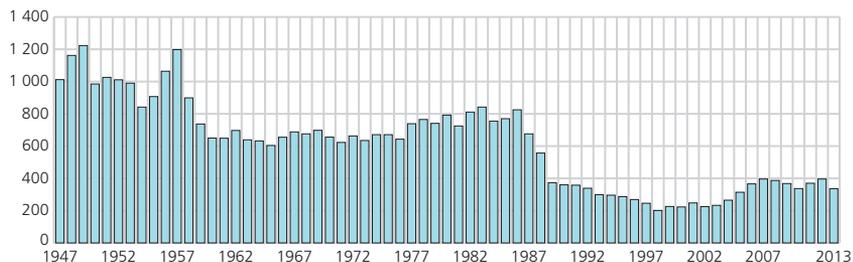
## Production of coal



## Fewer people employed in the mines

The mining industry accounts for 18 per cent of the 1 500 or so FTEs (full-time of equivalents) of labour currently performed on Svalbard, making it definitively the largest industry in the archipelago. Despite a decline in the number of FTEs of nearly 40 per cent since 2008, mining remains the largest industry in the archipelago.

## Employees in Norwegian coal-mining



In the 1950s, around 1 000 people were employed in the Norwegian mines. Today, about 300 FTEs are tied to Norwegian mining operations. Many jobs are more indirectly dependent on activity in the mines, above all in the transport sector. And some of the capacity in Longyearbyen's hotel and restaurant trade also goes to cater to guests visiting Svalbard as a result of Store Norske's activities.

### Many nations take a stake

The Norwegians were the first to exploit the coal reserves on Svalbard. However, in the early 20th century, companies from many nations expressed an interest in the coal fields. As the name implies, the mines at Svea were originally Swedish. The Dutch mined coal at Barentsburg, but they sold their mining rights to a Soviet company in 1932.

The Russian mines on Svalbard are now owned by the company Trust Artikugol which mines in Barentsburg. In recent years, some 500 people have been living in Barentsburg, whereas there were several thousand miners in the Soviet mines in the 1950s.

### Hard-working commuters

Statistics Norway's living conditions survey for Svalbard shows that people settle in the archipelago in part because they want to earn well. Those employed in the coal mines certainly do a lot of work; each Store Norske employee performs on average more than one FTE of work.

Nowadays, production at Adventdalen has been much reduced, and some of the coal from this site is used to cover Longyearbyen's own consumption. Commercial mining now takes place primarily at Svea, where a new mine, Lunekefjell, opened in 2014. From Longyearbyen, these mines can only be reached by plane. Due to the great distances involved, the workers there have various shift work and commuting arrangements.

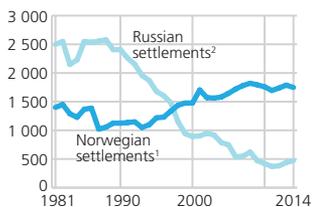
70 per cent of shift workers at Svea head for mainland Norway on the weeks they are not in the mine. Other miners are content to commute to and from Longyearbyen.

### Coal tourism

Until 1998, Russians also extracted coal from the mines in Pyramiden, 50 km north of Longyearbyen. Today, just three people remain in this once lively community. They work at maintaining the mines and as tourist guides.

# Commuters or permanent residents?

## Persons in settlements on Svalbard. 1 January



<sup>1</sup> Includes the two settlements Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund.

<sup>2</sup> The settlement in Barentsburg. Soviet prior to 1993.

Source: Svalbard tax administration, population statistics, Statistics Norway, Governor of Svalbard and Trust Arktikugol.

## Like a small Norwegian municipality

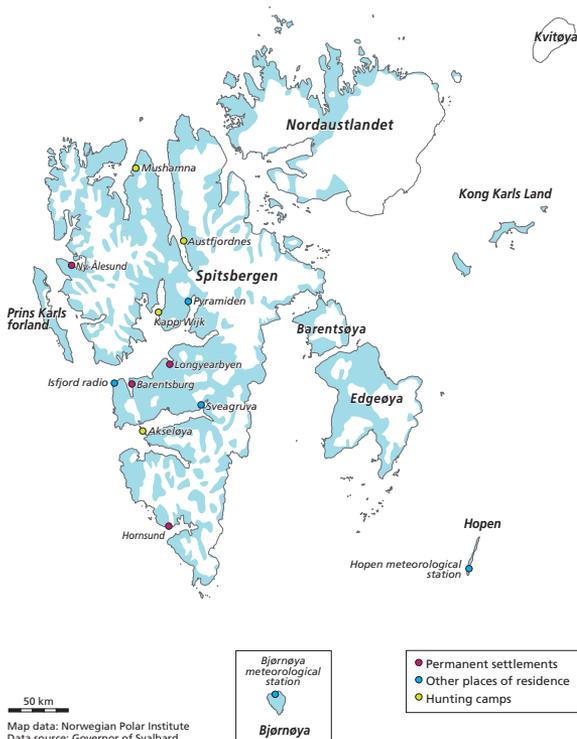
There are currently approximately 2 600 people settled on Svalbard. This approximation is due to some uncertainty in the figures. For instance, there are more people resident on Svalbard in the summer months than in the winter ones. ('Resident' here means all those living in the archipelago and who intend to stay for more than 6 months).

In the early 1980s, when the number of residents was at its highest, the majority consisted of some 4 000 resident Russians. From the early 1990s, the numbers of both Russians and Norwegians fell. Since then, the number of Russians has continued to fall, while the number of Norwegians has increased. Today just over 1 700 Norwegians, around 300 Ukrainians and only some 100 Russians live on Svalbard.

## From near and far

The Norwegian population is largely recruited from the counties of Troms and Nordland, which contribute nearly 30 per cent. There is in addition a large and increasing number of foreign residents: nearly 500 people from some 40 countries, the majority from Thailand, Sweden and Russia. The share of foreigners in the Norwegian settlement has increased to 22 per cent.

## Settlements, other places of residence and hunting camps



## Concentrated settlement

Svalbard's population is mainly concentrated in two settlements: Norwegians in Longyearbyen and Ukrainians and Russians in Barentsburg. Most of the other foreign citizens also live in Longyearbyen. There are also around 25 permanent residents at Ny-Ålesund.

## Still a male-dominated society

There has always been a preponderance of men among Svalbard residents, largely due to the dominant position of coal-mining in the industrial structure. As a result, Longyearbyen remains a male-dominated society. Nearly six out of ten resident adults are men, a proportion that has remained relatively stable in recent years.

Svalbard's population is a young one. Compared with mainland Norway, there is a clear preponderance of people in the 25-44-year age group and an almost total absence of anyone over 70 years of age. The proportion of children and young people is only slightly lower than on the mainland, but there is a major difference here between infants and teenagers.

The age group of 15-19 year-olds is notably small; perhaps Svalbard is not a place to attract teenagers?

### Small households

About five out of ten Svalbard households are single-person households, compared with just four out of ten in mainland Norway. Consequently, the average household size is also slightly lower than on the mainland. However, many of the single-person households on Svalbard have a family on the mainland and their solitary status is temporary and applies only to the situation on Svalbard.

Households on Svalbard and in mainland Norway. 2013. Per cent

	Svalbard	Mainland Norway
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
1 person	52.0	39.7
2 persons	23.7	28.2
3 persons	9.6	12.6
4 persons	9.3	12.7
5 persons or more	5.4	6.8

A much large proportion of men than women live alone on Svalbard; a difference not found in mainland Norway.

### Large turnover

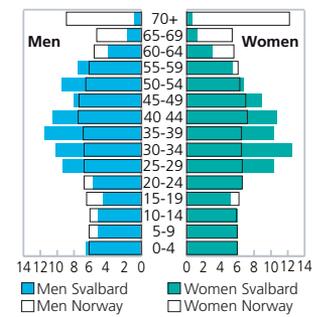
Svalbard has been characterised as a ‘churn society’, and Longyearbyen has a much greater turnover than a Norwegian municipality of similar size. There are large numbers of both arrivals and departures: in 2013, just over 450 departures were recorded, corresponding to around 20 per cent of the population. The average length of residence in Longyearbyen is seven years – slightly longer for Norwegian residents and somewhat shorter for the foreign ones.

However, there is of course huge variation in how long people stay here. While some just stay for a year or two, others are more permanent residents. At the start of 2014, for example, a good quarter had moved to Svalbard before the year 2005. It is mining employees in particular who reside on Svalbard for a long time. Employees in local administration also stay for relatively long periods. Students, employees in higher education and the tourism industry and government employees have far shorter periods of residence.

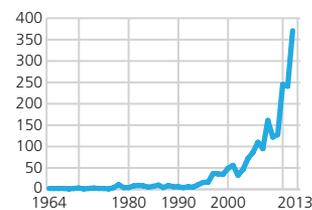
### Highly educated population

The level of education is higher on Svalbard than in mainland Norway. There is a notable preponderance of people with upper secondary education: 52 per cent in Longyearbyen against 43 per cent for the rest of the country. 33 per cent of residents have higher education, while the proportion in the rest of the country is 28 per cent. The proportion of women with higher education is especially high on Svalbard, at 45 per cent.

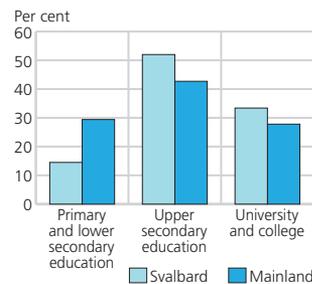
Age distribution in the Norwegian settlement on Svalbard and on the mainland. 2014. Per cent



Residents in the Norwegian settlement by year of relocation. 1.1. 2014

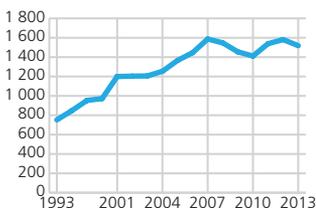


Educational level of people aged 16 years and over, on the mainland and on Svalbard. 2010



# Work hard, earn well

**Man-years of labour in Longyearbyen and Svea**



## A society of working people

Svalbard is, to a large degree, a place where people come to work. Nearly everyone who lives in Longyearbyen is working or is part of a household in which one or more people are in employment. While around 70 per cent of the adult population in mainland Norway is in employment, the corresponding figure for Svalbard is 85 per cent. Many of those who work also perform more than one FTE of labour per annum.

## New industries gain footing

Longyearbyen is built around coal mining, and traditionally most workers on Svalbard have been men employed in the mining industry. However, since the 1990s, there have been major changes in working life on Svalbard. From 1993 to 2007, there was a doubling of the number of FTEs in the Norwegian communities, from about 750 to about 1 600. Since then, the number of FTEs has fallen slightly, to about 1 500. The Svalbard community has focused on two new main industries: tourism, and higher education and research. The accommodation and catering sector accounts for more than 200 FTEs. Turnover in this sector was almost NOK 250 million in 2013, with sales to visitors from mainland Norway or other countries accounting for the largest proportion of turnover.

## Still mostly men

Even though growth in industries other than coal-mining has changed the gender balance among employees on Svalbard, the majority of those working in Longyearbyen are still men. 64 per cent of permanent employees are men (2013). Men also work full-time to a greater degree than women. Just over a quarter of employees on Svalbard work seasonally.

## The population structure impacts living conditions

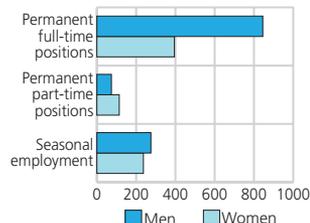
In earlier times, people living on Svalbard lived more frugally than Norwegians on the mainland. Today, the situation is in many ways reversed, a consequence closely related to the composition of the population. The population is young, highly educated and has a high rate of employment. At the same time, both prices and taxes are lower than on the mainland.

## Higher incomes

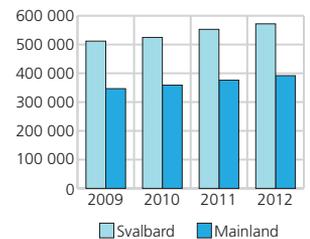
In 2012, the average net income on Svalbard was NOK 571 900, compared to NOK 391 700 on the mainland; in other words, incomes on Svalbard were nearly 50 per cent higher. However, some of this difference is caused by the composition of the Svalbard population. As the proportion of men in the employed segment of the population is higher than on the mainland, this contributes to a higher average salary. If we compare men and women's incomes on Svalbard and the mainland, the difference is reduced to about 37 per cent.

Additionally, tax rates on Svalbard are lower than on the mainland. While households on the mainland on average pay about 25 per cent tax, the tax rate on Svalbard is just 8 per cent.

**Number of people in employment over the year, by gender and type of position. 2013**



**Average gross income. NOK**



### Can count themselves lucky

Svalbard is nearly tax-free, which leads to lower price levels. In 2013, for an average household on Svalbard, prices were generally 14 per cent lower than for a mainland household. However, there are large variations between different sorts of goods. The cheapest goods are those which are most highly taxed in Norwegian shops. For example, tobacco products on Svalbard cost only about a third of their price elsewhere in Norway. Transport is also cheaper in the archipelago.

However, price levels for food and non-alcoholic beverages for Svalbard households were slightly higher than on the mainland in 2013. The largest price differences were for key food groups such as fruit, dairy products, vegetables and bread.

Up until 2006, the prices on Svalbard increased less than on the mainland. However, in recent years prices on Svalbard have increased slightly more than on the mainland. From 2001 to 2013, the consumer price index for Svalbard rose by 30 per cent, compared to 24 per cent on the mainland.

### Higher alcohol consumption than in mainland Norway

Since alcohol is cheaper on Svalbard, it is perhaps not surprising that people drink a bit more. Permanent residents of Svalbard are allowed to buy unlimited duty-free wine, while sales of duty-free beer (and spirits) are subject to quota-based restrictions. Almost three in ten Svalbardians responded in 2009 that they drank alcohol at least twice a week, with men drinking more frequently than women. On the mainland, 18 per cent of respondents reported drinking at least twice a week.

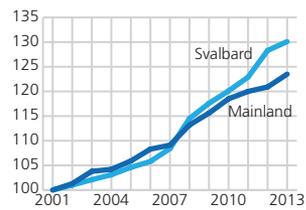
### Cramped, but cheaper housing

Housing in Longyearbyen and in mainland Norway are worlds apart: while 80 per cent of households on the mainland are owner-occupiers, the same is true of just 10 per cent in Longyearbyen, where the vast majority rent their housing. The remaining households have housing provided by their employer.

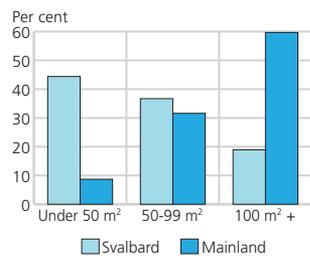
Rental accommodation is largely in housing blocks, terraced housing and other small dwellings, while just 6 per cent are detached homes. One effect of this is that homes in Longyearbyen are smaller, and that a larger proportion of the population (14 per cent) live in cramped conditions compared with the mainland, where the figure is just 6 per cent. ('Cramped conditions' in this context means more individuals than living rooms in a household).

Against that, rent is lower on Svalbard than in the rest of the country. However, this is now in the process of changing. Expenses for 'accommodation, light and heating' have increased the most in recent years, having grown by 75 per cent since 2001. This must be seen in the context of the housing market in Longyearbyen having been privatised to some extent.

Consumer price index. 2001=100

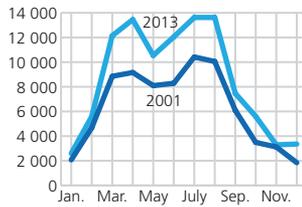


Size of housing. 2013



# The Arctic – increasingly popular with tourists

**Monthly guest nights at hotels/boarding houses in Longyearbyen**



Source: Svalbard Tourism.

## An important industry

After the commercial focus on tourism in Longyearbyen started up in the early 1990s, this industry has exhibited strong growth.

Tourist enterprises on Svalbard had a turnover of NOK 250 million in 2013 and accounted for 200-plus of the 1 500 FTEs performed on Svalbard.

## 107,000 guest nights

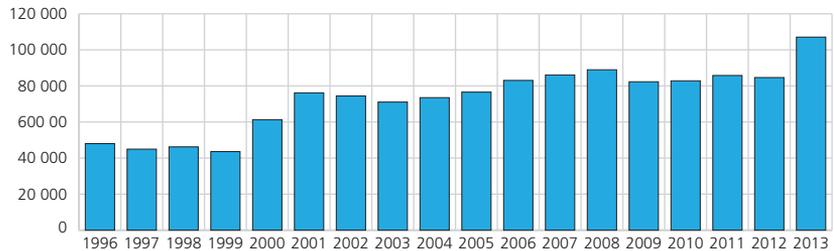
From 1999 to 2008, the number of guest nights in Longyearbyen rose from just over 43 000 to just under 89 000. It subsequently fell to around 85 000, before rising again to 107 000 in 2013.

The average guest spent 2.3 nights in hotels. Tourists account for 60 per cent of guest nights, while business travellers and course and conference attendees represent 12 and 30 per cent, respectively. Tourism on Svalbard is seasonal, with the fewest visitors in the autumn and winter months and the most in spring and summer.

## Norwegian tourists in the majority

Most tourists visiting Svalbard are Norwegians. The number of foreigners has increased but remains a small proportion. Of all guest nights at hotels and boarding houses in Longyearbyen in 2013, more than 80 per cent were Norwegian. Visitors from Europe beyond Scandinavia have shown the most growth among foreign tourists.

**Guest nights at hotels/boarding houses in Longyearbyen**



Source: Svalbard Tourism.

## More cruise tourists

Tourists arrive in Svalbard by air or sea. No estimates are available of how many airline passengers are tourists, but there has been a large increase in air passenger traffic. In 2013, the airline Norwegian established a direct route to Svalbard, and the same year about 75 000 passengers arrived at Svalbard airport.

Tourists who arrive by sea come either by cruise liner or in private yachts. In recent years, around 50 private yachts have visited Svalbard each year. The number of cruise liners visiting Svalbard for a day or two as part of a longer cruise has been stable at just under 30 in recent years, but the number of passengers on these vessels rose from around 20 000 in 2000 to more than 42 000 in 2012. This figure has since fallen slightly.

Many of the tourists who arrive in Svalbard by plane also join 4-7 day expedition cruises around the archipelago. The number of tourists participating in this type of cruise increased from around 5,000 in 2001 to around 10,000 in 2013. The cruise tourists came ashore at around 100 different locations in 2000, while in 2103 they came ashore at 220 different locations.

## Organised tours are popular

Most tourists visit Svalbard to experience its natural wonders. There is a wide choice of organised tours such as glacier crossing, boat trips, snowmobile safaris, kayak tours or dog sledding. Hiking, skiing and glacier crossing are the most popular activities, but snowmobile safaris are also in great demand. However, many people prefer their own company when seeking out Svalbard's natural environment. In recent decades, between 300 and 500 tourists annually have travelled independently out into the wilds of Svalbard for recreational purposes.

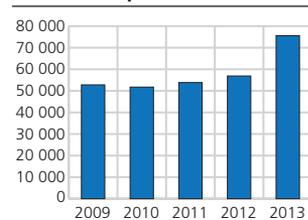
## Museums of archaeology and mining

Svalbard Museum is the most popular attraction in Longyearbyen, with nearly 40 000 visitors in 2013. In addition to this museum, there is a museum at Barentsburg, the Ny-Ålesund town and mining museum and the collections on Bjørnøya (Bear Island). The majority of the collections consist of archaeological and cultural artefacts.

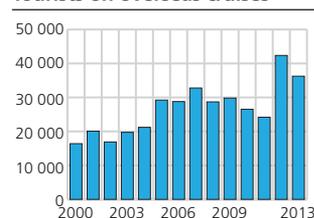
There is also a collection of art, maps and literature, the Svalbard Collection, and a collection of photographs belonging to Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani.

Svalbard has nearly 1 600 protected cultural heritage sites. There are also nearly 600 protected buildings and industrial heritage sites.

Number of passenger arrivals.  
Svalbard Airport

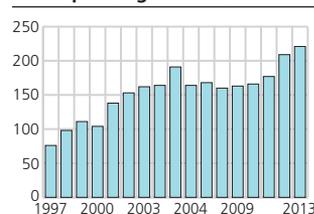


Tourists on overseas cruises



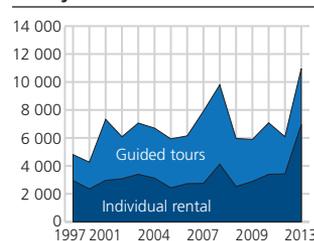
Source: Governor of Svalbard.

Number of locations where  
cruise passengers came ashore



Source: Governor of Svalbard.

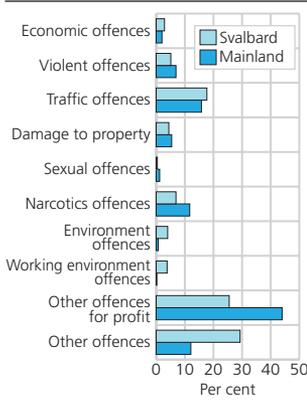
Snow scooters. Guided tours  
and individual rentals. Number  
of days



Source: Svalbard Reiseliv AS.

# The cold arm of the law

**Number of reported offences by classification of offence. 5-year average (2009-2013)**



Life on the archipelago is governed by Norwegian laws and regulations. The Svalbard Act lays down the principles for Norwegian legislation for the archipelago and prescribes that Svalbard is part of the Kingdom of Norway.

Svalbard is largely subject to the same laws and regulations as the rest of Norway. However, certain elements of public law are not applicable, and special provisions have also been laid down for Svalbard in both legal statutes and regulations. For instance, Svalbard is governed by a special environmental protection act and appurtenant regulations.

**Administrative regulations applicable to Svalbard. 2011**

Environmental regulations	13
Conservation regulations	14
Other regulations	10

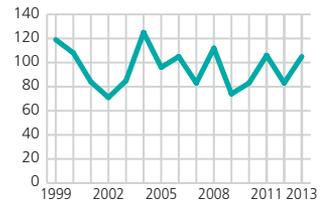
## Different crimes

Crime on Svalbard differs from that found in mainland Norway. There are few serious profit-motivated offences such as burglary, and the proportion of crime for profit is lower on Svalbard than on the mainland. The proportion of narcotics cases is extremely low on Svalbard, but the archipelago has a higher proportion of reported industrial health and safety cases and breaches of environmental law. The latter are probably attributable to the stricter environmental legislation in the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act.

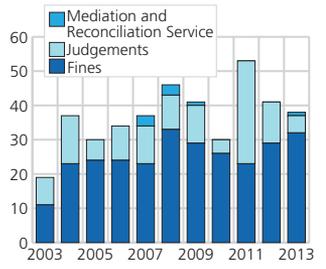
## Great variation in the number of reported offences

In the last decade, the number of reported offences with Svalbard as the scene of crime has been between 70 and 130. In addition to this, some 10-15 cases a year are investigated by the Governor of Svalbard, but are not treated as criminal offences. Most reported crimes are profit-motivated or traffic offences, as on the mainland. Even though the annual variations may be large, the level of crime on Svalbard has been relatively stable in the last 10-15 years. The figures are too low to be able to determine reported crimes per 1 000 inhabitants on Svalbard, but they are lower than on the mainland. In the majority of cases in which a penalty was imposed, the sentence was a fine.

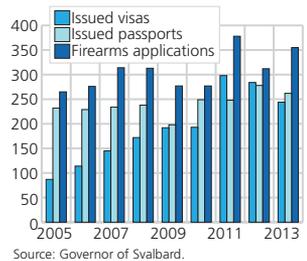
**Reported offences**



**Sanctions (excluding on-the-spot ticket fines)**



## Weapons, visas and passports



## Weddings, weapons and visas

The Governor of Svalbard is the Norwegian Government's senior representative in the archipelago, and is also the Chief of Police. Beyond crime-related police work, the Governor's office processes 800-900 police administration matters annually, such as issuing certificates, visas, passports and processing firearms applications. The Governor's office is

also the local rescue station, with rescue and emergency preparedness being one of its main remits.

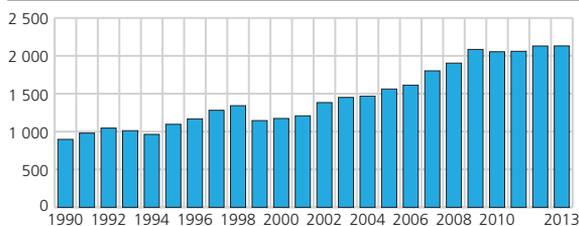
The Governor of Svalbard is vested with the same authority as a county governor on the mainland, and environmental protection and a range of administrative duties sort within the Governor's jurisdiction. For example, it is the Governor who marries people on Svalbard, and grants separations and divorces. Thirty-two marriages were performed in the archipelago in 2013. Many of the couples who marry on the islands are visitors.

### A snow scooter life

It is also the Governor who registers vehicles and regulates snow scooter traffic on Svalbard. Although there are only some 50 km of roads in and around Longyearbyen, there are nonetheless 1 000 registered cars and vans (i.e. vehicles bearing the Svalbard ZN licence plate) on Svalbard.

However, the snow scooter is by far the preferred means of motorised transportation among Svalbard inhabitants. There are as many snow scooters in Longyearbyen as there are residents (some 2 100 registered snow scooters in 2013), and about 70 per cent of households on Svalbard have one or more snow scooters. In comparison, only half of the households have a car.

**Number of registered snow scooters (belt-drive type)**

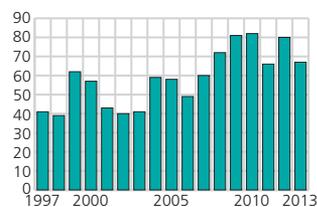


The use of snow scooters in the national parks and other protected areas is regulated by the Governor. In recent years, between 10 and 30 exemptions have been granted annually to allow snow scooters to be driven in national parks. These exemptions cover up to 100 snow scooters. In addition, annual exemptions are granted for travelling by snow scooter outside of Management Area 10, an area of central Spitsbergen where visitors can travel of their own accord without notifying the Governor.

### Always prepared

Not all trips into Svalbard's wilderness are incident-free. The Office of the Governor of Svalbard, in its capacity as the local rescue centre, undertakes 50-80 rescue missions on Svalbard each year, more or less evenly divided between helicopter ambulance sorties and other rescue missions.

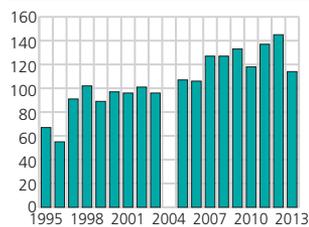
**Rescue missions**



Source: Governor of Svalbard.

# From the cradle, but not to the grave

## Children in nursery schools



## From Store Norske to Longyearbyen Local Municipal Council

In 1988, Store Norske Spitsbergen Kulkompani AS created Svalbard samfunnsdrift AS, a company 'with the aim of organising and developing Norwegian local society on Svalbard'. On 1 January 2002, Longyearbyen Local Municipal Council was created, and all the shares in Svalbard samfunnsdrift AS were transferred from the State. The Local Municipal Council's responsibilities include social and area planning, commercial development and social services for children, young people and adults.

## Full nursery school provision

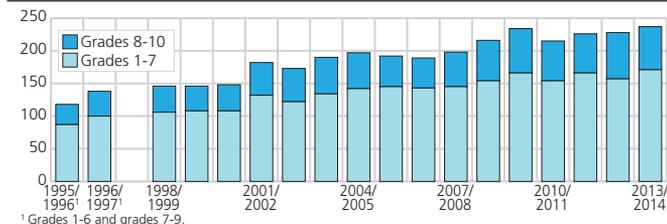
There are approximately 120 children on Svalbard, attending three different nursery schools with about 40 employees (2013). The nursery schools are financed by parental contributions, state aid and local authority subsidies. The Norwegian Day Care Institution Act does not apply on Svalbard, but the parental contribution nonetheless adheres to the Government's maximum rate. In the autumn of 2010, Svalbard had full nursery school provision.

## Multi-purpose school

There is only one school on Svalbard, Longyearbyen School. This fulfils the roles of primary and secondary schools, after-school centre, culture school and Norwegian-language training for adults who do not speak Norwegian.

Previously, the school was run by the Norwegian State, but as of 1 January 2007, Longyearbyen Local Municipal Council took over operational responsibility. In 2013, the school had about 50 employees working 46 FTEs.

## Pupils in primary and lower secondary education



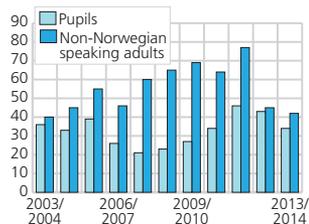
<sup>1</sup> Grades 1-6 and grades 7-9.

## Arctic syllabus

The number of primary and lower secondary pupils at Longyearbyen School increased

from 114 pupils in 1993 to 243 by autumn 2013. The school has devoted a lot of time to developing local curricula, which give greater emphasis to the Arctic and Svalbard's geographical location

## Pupils in upper secondary education



Source: Longyearbyen Municipal Council.

The number of pupils at upper secondary level at Longyearbyen School has varied between 20 and 40. Each year, the school offers specialised study courses, but the programmes offered depend on the number of pupils. Each year, 50-80 adults attend the school's courses in Norwegian language and social studies.

## Culture in the Arctic

The Culture School, run by Longyearbyen School, offers courses in music, dance, drama and art. The school has between 70 and 130 pupils per year.

Each inhabitant of Longyearbyen visits the Svalbardhallen sports complex nearly 20 times a year, and the public library about 8 times a year. They each went to the cinema nearly three times in 2013.

## International students are attracted to Arctic subjects

The University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS) was created by the four oldest Norwegian universities in 1993. The University offers various courses at the master's and doctoral levels. The courses focus on Arctic biology, Arctic geology, Arctic geophysics and Arctic technology.

The number of students has increased significantly in the past three years, and nearly 500 students from about 30 countries are affiliated with the University Centre. In the first years most students were from Norway, but today the international students are in the majority. Many of the international students come from the other Nordic countries, but the share of non-Nordic students is on the increase. There are about the same number of female and male students.

The students tend to stay on Svalbard between two weeks and six months at a time, and many return several times. The courses last from two weeks to two years. It is the University's goal that the students spend longer periods on Svalbard, and the share of students spending entire semesters or degrees on Svalbard is growing.

## No nursing and care services

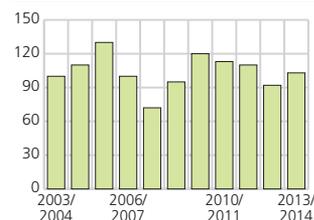
The hospital in Longyearbyen provides emergency services only to the population in the Norwegian settlements and to visitors. It is a small hospital with six beds and about 20 employees. There is no provision of nursing and care services on Svalbard, and Norwegian health and social legislation does not apply to the archipelago. Norwegian residents retain health care coverage with their home municipality on the mainland, and it is these municipalities that are responsible for services within the social and health sectors and in the event that nursing and care services are required. In other words, Longyearbyen is not organised as a place where people can live their entire lives, but rather a place one comes to work.

## From deficit to surplus

An overview of the Norwegian State's revenues and expenses related to the administration of Svalbard (called the Svalbard accounts) showed a deficit for the State each year until 2008. As of 2009, this has changed to large surpluses. Tax revenues were especially high in 2011. In 2012, tax revenues were just two-thirds of the 2011 level, a reduction of NOK 800 million to about NOK 550 million in 2012. Despite the reduced revenues, the Svalbard accounts nevertheless showed a surplus of NOK 250 million in 2012.

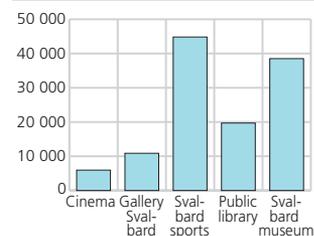
The State's expenses for the administration of Svalbard amounted to NOK 300 million that year. 42 per cent of the expenses for the administration of Svalbard went to Longyearbyen Local Municipal Council. The Governor of Svalbard's expenses were nearly as large, but here two out of three kroner went to the purchase of helicopter services.

## Students at Culture School

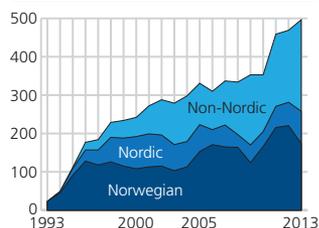


Source: Longyearbyen Municipal Council.

## Number of visits, cultural institutions. 2013

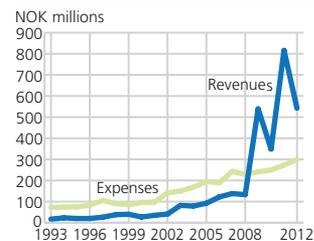


## Students at the University Centre in Svalbard (UNIS)



Source: UNIS.

## State administration on Svalbard, revenues and expenses



# More statistics?

*This is Svalbard* provides a sample of Statistics Norway's Svalbard-related statistics.

Svalbard is now a separate topic on our website, under the 'STATISTICS' tab. Current and up-to-date statistics on and analyses of topics discussed in this pamphlet can be found there. The website also provides detailed background data on the various statistics. New statistics are published at 10 a.m., and all information published at [ssb.no](http://ssb.no) is free of charge.

The screenshot shows the Statistics Norway website interface. At the top, there is a logo for 'Statistisk sentralbyrå Statistics Norway' and a search bar. Below the logo, there are navigation tabs: 'STATISTICS', 'RESEARCH', 'DATA COLLECTION', 'ABOUT STATISTICS NORWAY', and 'MY PAGE'. The 'STATISTICS' tab is selected, and a dropdown menu is open, showing a list of categories. The 'Svalbard' category is highlighted with a red box. Below the navigation, there is a section titled 'Statistics Norway - official statistics about Norwegian society since 1876'. This section contains five data points: Population (5 156 451), GDP per capita (604 075 NOK), Unemployment (3.7%), Consumer price index (2.0%), and Net migration (40 073). Below this section, there is a search bar for statistics. At the bottom, there are three boxes: 'PRICE CALCULATOR', 'NAME STATISTICS', and 'STATBANK'.

As of 1/1 /2007, the Norwegian Statistics Act applies to Svalbard, and in the years ahead, Statistics Norway will accordingly be publishing more statistics relating to Svalbard. These will be available at [www.ssb.no/en/svalbard/](http://www.ssb.no/en/svalbard/)

## **Questions about statistics?**

Statistics Norway's information service answers questions about statistics and assists you in finding your way on [ssb.no](http://ssb.no). If required, we can assist you in finding the right expert and we also answer questions regarding European statistics.

E-mail: [informasjon@ssb.no](mailto:informasjon@ssb.no)

Telephone: +47 21 09 46 42

*This is Svalbard* is a free publication and can be ordered by e-mail at: [salg-abonnement@ssb.no](mailto:salg-abonnement@ssb.no)

A PDF version of the publication can be found here:  
<http://www.ssb.no/en/svalbard>

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