

Preface

The objectives of the Plancius Foundation are to give support to scientific research in the fields of biology, geology, archaeology, oceanography and nature protection, next to organizing voyages to nature-reserves and other wild places in the polar regions.

Since 1980, projects were carried out on Spitsbergen on behalf of many European universities and institutes. Until 1991, this was done with our own ship, *MV Plancius*, but from December 1991 onward, when an expedition was undertaken to the Antarctic Peninsula, we sail with the chartered Russian research vessel *Professor Molchanov*. This is an ice-strengthened ship, so the geographic scope of the voyages could be enlarged to Northeast-Greenland and Franz Josef Land and to the Antarctic.

By sailing with this research vessel, the Plancius Foundation hopes to help realize the Russian research programmes on oceanographic and polar research, and at the same time advertise the conservation of polar areas. With a relatively small ship we offer an excellent way to visit and experience the polar regions. As a rule, every day the passengers have the opportunity for extensive land excursions with an experienced guide. With our ship it is also possible to sail to remote and quite inaccessible places, where few scientists have been before.

From 1985 to 1990, Kees Camphuysen led in each season several of our voyages to and in Spitsbergen during which he shared his knowledge and enthusiasm for marine life with the passengers who liked his guidance very much. At the same time he found the opportunity to collect a valuable set of data on the occurrence of birds and sea mammals. We are glad that we are able to fund the publication of the extensive results of his work in *SULA*, which means a substantial contribution to the knowledge of the fauna in this area. The future probably will bring a boom of ship-based nature tourism in the polar regions, because the people of the wealthy industrialized countries still want to see untouched and wild nature. Our foundation will continue to organise this type of nature tourism, because we advocate that not only scientists or other people with a professional link with these regions should be allowed to go there. Without harming the wildlife of the visited areas, we can show our passengers a kind of beauty which they hardly can experience in our densely populated and cultivated countries.

J. de Korte
President of the Plancius Foundation,
Amsterdam

*The great Sea has set me adrift
has carried me away
Earth and the great weather move me
They move me like a weed in a river
and fill my inward parts with joy*

Netsilik Eskimo

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