

# The Arctic Sunrise

The Greenpeace icebreaker Arctic Sunrise has a colorful history; before Greenpeace chartered the Arctic Sunrise it was used as a sealing vessel, and Greenpeace also once confronted the ship while it was delivering equipment for the French government to build an airstrip through a penguin habitat in the Antarctic.

The Arctic Sunrise began its Greenpeace life during the 1995 North Sea Brent Spar campaign, where it was used to prevent dumping oil installations at sea. Since then it has worked everywhere from within 450 miles of the North Pole, to Antarctica's Ross Sea, and has navigated both the Congo and the Amazon.

Designed as an icebreaker, its rounded, keelless hull allows it to navigate through sea ice—but also makes life rather interesting in rolling seas. In 1997, The Arctic Sunrise became the first ship to circumnavigate James Ross Island in the Antarctic, a previously impossible journey until a 200m (660ft) thick ice shelf connecting the island to the Antarctic continent collapsed. This was just one of the many signs of climate change which the Arctic Sunrise has helped document.

The Arctic Sunrise has returned repeatedly to the Arctic to work on a variety of issues, including several visits to Alaska to study climate change and to oppose Northstar, British Petroleum's project to open up a new offshore oil frontier. The project threatened a vulnerable region with oil spills in this vulnerable region, as well as further contributing to global warming.

In 2009, the ship spent many months working around the coast of Greenland and in the Arctic sea ice, documenting the effects of climate change on the region.

In the Southern Oceans, the Arctic Sunrise, along with its sister ship the Esperanza, thwarted Japanese attempts to pursue its so-called "scientific" whaling programme; it also chased pirate vessels fishing illegally for Patagonian Toothfish to the pirate port of Mauritius.

Manoeuvring the ship directly into the missile's path did not prevent the US from proceeding in 2000 to test its "Star Wars" missile defence system, which threatens to ignite a new nuclear arms race.

Fortunately the Arctic Sunrise survived to tell the tale and continued on to Argentina for the start of the Latin America toxics tour in 1998.

## Personal Accounts

Captain of the Arctic Sunrise Arne Sorensen during the Southern Ocean expedition in December 1999

"We are peacefully protesting against illegal Japanese whaling in the waters around Antarctica when we hear a mighty crash and the ship rolls heavily. The chief engineer David de Jong rushes to the bridge shouting 'That didn't sound like ice!' He's right—it's neither sea ice nor an iceberg, but the Japanese whaling factory ship Nisshin Maru, 10 times the Arctic Sunrise's weight, ramming us. Despite risking the lives of both crews, fortunately no one is hurt.

Professor Peter Wadhams of Cambridge University following the Arctic Meltdown expedition in 2009

"The offer by Greenpeace to use the ship and her helicopter, and the assistance offered towards the cost of the ice mass balance buoys, demonstrate Greenpeace's commitment to supporting critical climate research in the vital area relating to changes in Arctic ice volumes and thickness - the theme that underlay all of the ship's work this summer. The support offered by the whole crew on board was amazing—unstinted, professional, and far better than I normally find on government-owned research ships."

## Specifications

<b>Port of registry:</b>	Amsterdam, Netherlands
<b>Former name:</b>	Polarbjorn
<b>Date of charter:</b>	1995
<b>Number of berths:</b>	28
<b>Inflatable boats:</b>	2 Ribs and 2 inflatables
<b>Helicopter capable:</b>	Yes
<b>Type of ship:</b>	Sea-going motor yacht
<b>Call sign:</b>	PCTK
<b>Built:</b>	1975 by AS Vaagen Verft
<b>Gross tonnage:</b>	949 tonnes
<b>Length O.A.:</b>	49.62 m (162.79 ft)
<b>Breadth:</b>	11.50 m (37.73 ft)
<b>Maximum Draught:</b>	5.30 m (17.38 ft)
<b>Maximum Speed:</b>	13 Knots
<b>Main engine:</b>	MAK 9M452AK 2495 IHP 1619kW
<b>Aux engines:</b>	2 x Deutz BF6M716 208hp (175 kva)
<b>Bow &amp; stern thrusters:</b>	400 hp each