

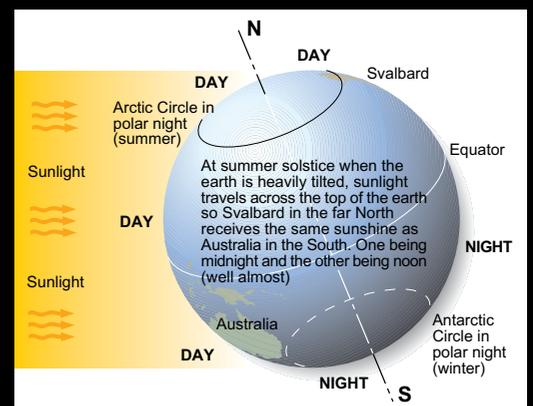


Walking with polar bear protection.



Glad to have missed the Polar Bears.

continued to the nearby fjord of Ymerbukta where we found good shelter and anchored in broad daylight ready for a hot meal and a night's rest, but the fantastic sunshine was too tempting. I wanted a photograph of the midnight sun in line with the north cardinal of the yacht's compass when Isobelle said "That sun is shining on Australia right now" which really made me think.



I have drawn a simple diagram (above) for those like me who marvel at such things. We were now beyond 78° North and looking at the ice distribution chart possibly the most northerly active sailing yacht in the world.

On Wednesday we set off trekking in deep snow, which made for slow progress and Olivier became concerned as our party spread out. He had encountered polar bears in the past and they look out for stragglers so he insisted we keep closer together. We found more of their tracks and even clumps of fur where one had rolled in the snow but alas, no actual polar bear.

From a navigational point of view I learned another important lesson about the polar region. When we entered the fjord it was stunningly attractive with snow clad mountains and the glacier running into the sea, but it was clear of ice and easy to navigate. Within hours we were completely surrounded by a sea of ice giving Robert and Franc a tough job threading our RIB to the shore. Being early summer there was no danger but I realised how easy it would be later in the season to overstay and have the yacht become totally icebound. We spent the evening watching an Arctic Fox hunt