

Polar Bear at the Storholmen island, Kongsfjorden, Svalbard

The Storholmen Island, a bird sanctuary in the Kongsfjorden is a protected area accessible to ornithologists. On 6th July, 2013, Prof.Arun Kumar and Mr.Rupesh Kumar Sinha, members of the Summer expedition to Arctic (2013-2014) were on their way back to the town on a small boat after placing a GPS near the Kongsbreen glacier. At Stroholmen, they happened to see a polar bear resting on the top of the island. The bear could have visited the island to feed on the birds' eggs since summer season is a difficult hunting time to get its preferred food-the seals.

It is important for all Ny-Ålesunder's to gather as much information on the bear during any chance encounter. When they tried to approach the island to have a closer look, the polar bear got alert of the noise and started inspecting the surrounding area. It didn't make much movement but it must have realized their presence with its sharp sense of smelling. They kept a safe distance on the boat and observed the grandness of this world's largest terrestrial carnivore. Its body was heavily furred with yellow shade and elongated neck with large head suggesting that it was an adult female polar bear. It had long stocky legs to rest its heavy body. The surrounding birds of the island were chirping and trying to chase the bear away but it didn't appear to affect the bear much. Since it was a bird protected site they couldn't get much closer and returned after sometime. The same polar bear was spotted next day in the Ny-Ålesund town which was chased away in the sea by Kings Bay watchman.



Polar bear resting on the Storholmen Island



Polar Bear got alert due to the boat's noise



Polar bear inspecting the surrounding area



Polar bear growling