



TOP_{to}TOP

GLOBAL CLIMATE EXPEDITION



Annual Report 2020



Aurora Borealis



School Presentations



DNA Sampling



Less Pack Ice



TOP Ambassadors



Dead Sperm Whale



Pachamama's Office



Melting Glaciers



Schools Joining In



Sledding to Schools



Arctic Sailing



Orca



Microplastics Sampling



TOP of Svalbard



Clean up the Arctic



Arctic Light



Walrus



Survival Family



Iceberg



Research

EXPLORE — INSPIRE — ACT: OUR MISSION IS TO SAVE OUR PLANET!

TOPtoTOP is the first expedition to traverse the seven seas and reach the highest peaks on each of the seven continents, connecting with all climates and relying only on the power of nature and the human spirit. *“Along the way we have discovered good solutions for our climate and inspired more than 145,000 students in more than 100 countries through presentations and actions. Our message is one of hope, designed to inspire students and communities to act for a better future by sharing experiences of nature's beauty and resiliency, and presenting innovations for a healthy planet”.* Dario Schwörer

For more than 20 years, Dario & Sabine Schwörer, their family and volunteers have circumnavigated our blue planet to every climate zone, witnessing examples of climate change and its effect on communities, conducting field-based research, and sharing examples of innovative solutions they have learned along the way to protect, preserve and conserve our planet.

At the core of their expedition, they meet with students at schools and community groups, organize clean-up campaigns, and present examples from around the world of counteracting global climate change by living in an environmentally sustainable manner.

At the moment the focus of their activism and engagement with communities is in the far North, introducing guiding skills and outdoor sports to natives in the Arctic. This enables them to create an alternative source of income to survive in their fast-changing environment caused by climate change.

In this report, we elaborate about their expedition, its goals, annual highlights for 2020, as well as their strategy, route, the outlook for 2021 and how you can support them in their amazing challenge to save the planet.

OUR PROGRESS — HOW WE MEET OUR GOALS

In line with our belief that “inspiring the youth to act” is the most efficient way to facilitate long-lasting change, we again visited schools and universities with our program. This was a more complicated task when COVID-19 restrictions were put in place mid-March 2020.

From January until mid-March we were busy visiting schools and taking the first microplastics samples for the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and the Norwegian Research Center in the biggest Fjord in Europe, Sognefjord. Odd Tufte and Christian Zurbuchen in Kaupanger, as well as Marianne Nilsen and Tarald Seldal from the University in Sogndal, were key for the success of the TOPtoTOP expedition in this wonderful fjordland.

Because of Corona, we had to cancel the “Fjord to TOP Expedition” from one of the deepest fjords in the world to the highest peak in Norway, Scandinavia and Northern Europe, Galdhøppigen (2469m). We had booked 40 participants and now intend to do the climb as soon as conditions allow. Our idea is this: “Norway is a unique place where the *ocean* meets the *mountains* and the *glaciers* feed the sea. We want to show this interconnection via an outdoor activity and celebrate the wonders of Norwegian natural wilderness. Our goal is that everybody – and especially kids – gets a unique outdoor experience. Outdoor people are grounded in nature and therefore care more.”

During the COVID-19 lockdown, we were stationed in Vatnahalsen. Teacher Simon Unternährer was a great addition to the expedition. Together with him, we worked out the exploration-based

learning tool [“ADVENTURE”](#), where students globally are able to remotely be part of the expedition and participate in certain campaigns to save the planet. Simon is also a gifted writer and started to write the second book about the TOPtoTOP Expedition.

Supported by Vanessa Rueber, our partner at Patagonia, we started the project “Surf 2 Clean the Arctic”. The idea is to get people to surf and – through a closer connection with the ocean – stand up for clean water! Our aim is, inter alia, to enthuse other families with children, and to connect local surf communities to a powerful collaboration for the environment!

In May we continued sampling all along the Norwegian coast and were able to visit some remote schools with our environmental program. A major stop was in Ballstad Lofoten, where Yngvar Aagaard and Torgunn Rist’s family gave us a warm welcome at Kremmervika on the Norwegian National Day. Together, we organized some clean-ups in the Lofoten and combined it with outdoor sports: Lofoten is a paradise for surfers, kayakers, skiers and climbers and the best place to get in touch with nature. Even in May, we were able to ski and surf on the same day! - Check out [“TOPtoTOP Lofoten”](#) on YouTube.

After sampling and visiting schools in the Vesterålen Islands and Tromsø region, we finally made it to Lyngen. Check out [“Arctic School Visits”](#) on Vimeo.

In June our task was to sail, cycle and ski to the highest TOP in Finland, Halti. Soon after our “DNA team”, Meret Jucker from the ETH Zurich and assistant Salina Schwoerer, joined the crew. Since then we have been sampling simultaneously for microplastics and DNA, to get a better understanding of what kind of species we see at the microplastics hotspots.

From Lyngen we sailed to Alta and Hammerfest before we crossed to Bjørnøya Island and Spitzbergen. - Check out [“TOPtoTOP sails stormy arctic waters to sample microplastic in Svalbard”](#) on YouTube.

In Longyearbyen, we met Professor Andrew Hodson who showed us firsthand the impact of climate change on permafrost. Our major mission was to increase the height of Perriertoppen (1712 m) to equal the highest peak in Svalbard by shoveling and adding snow and antlers – the highest before was Newtoppen at 1713 m. We reached the TOP of Svalbard on the 26th of July when a record temperature of over 20 degrees Celsius was measured in Longyearbyen. With this achievement, we stress the impact of global warming, especially to the Arctic regions. We have never experienced so much melting in the last 20 years on the expedition and so many landslides and rock falls out of the permafrost on a single day!

At the most northerly point of Spitzbergen, we had three polar bears approaching us while we were cleaning a beach from plastic. It showed that having an emergency plan and execute some training drills before, is the key to managing such a situation. The dinghy was launched in no time and we were able to stop them by using a flare gun to scare them off.

After Spitzbergen, we created history to become the first boat under sail to circumnavigate Svalbard. Check out [“Clean the North Pole”](#) on YouTube.

In this event, we reached the most northerly Island of Røssoya. Stopped by heavy pack ice close to 82 degrees North, we were only three sailing days South of the North Pole. There we encountered the most microplastics. On the northern coast of Nordaustlandet, we found the biggest amounts of

macroplastics in the Arctic. It seems that the golf stream sweeps all the plastics from lower latitudes up to the edge of the pack ice.

We were warmly welcomed with a huge cake and hot showers by the Norwegian weather station crew on the island of Hopen. They are on duty six months of the year. The head meteorologist has been working there for 15 years! He told us that we are the first visitors to arrive by sailboat. He has experienced the warming firsthand: In the past, the sea was freezing over by the end of October; - this year it was delayed and freezing in February!

Between Nordaustlandet and Kirkenes we reported a dead sperm whale to the Norwegian coastguard to avoid the whale becoming a marine hazard. There was a sad record number of whales beaching in the Arctic this summer.

From the Russian border in Kirkenes, we continued sampling to the Nordkap and back to Lyngen where we had a warm welcome by our friends at our base Soerheim Brygge, the Magic Mountain Lodge and Solhov. There at the TOPtoTOP annual general assembly, Simon Unternährer was elected as a board member of the TOPtoTOP Foundation. He left soon after to study in Switzerland. Melanie Abegg was the perfect replacement for Simon on the expedition.

In Tromsø, we had meetings with Akvaplan Niva, the University of Tromsø and the Norwegian Polar Institute. Further, we were able to extend the fleet of interested sailing boats for forthcoming research – and environmental activities and campaigns.

We continued sampling with major stops in Ringsvassøy, Sommarøy, Senja, Andøya, Vesterålen where we had a warm welcome by our friends Rikard and Inger-Lise in Alsvåg. It was September the 23rd where we had 90+ knots (167 km/h +) of wind in the harbour! Many thanks again to Rikard who helped us out with huge fenders.

Our next mission was to climb the biggest peak in Lofoten, Møysalen with 1262 m, before we visited schools and organized cleanups mainly in Kabelvåg, Henningsvær, Ballstad and Ramberg. Our old friend Hanne Lykkje from Eggum was once again a great coordinator. She was studying Geography as an exchange student with Dario in Switzerland and was once Dario's best friend Aischan's girlfriend. Sadly, on 10. February 1997, Aischan Rupp fell to his death on the descent of the Matterhorn, after climbing the north face.

In October Marius Løken invited us to the great Skarvik boatyard in Svolvær. It was the best yard-time ever! We worked for two weeks from early morning till late at night to solve issues caused by previous poorly executed repairs.

In November we sampled between Tromø and Hammerfest and got rewarded by humpback whales and orcas. One orca had a plastic bag around its dorsal fin. Another reminder that we have to stop littering the oceans! Check out our blog ["Save the Arctic Seas"](#)!

At the moment we are overwintering in the Arctic at 70 degrees North. The sun is replaced by Northern Lights till the end of January. We recently visited schools more inland thanks to "Offtrack Experience" where we had the opportunity to learn dogsledding.

We invented the [“TOP Talks”](#) where you can join live on Facebook or Zoom. Our kids are busy learning Norwegian at the small local school. They do well and will be soon able to talk to peers during our TOPtoTOP conferences.

Accomplishments 2020

- distance sailed: 5,000 nautical miles (of a total of 116,000 nm)
- distance climbed: 100,000 altimeters (of a total of 600,000 m)
- distance cycled: 100 kilometres (of a total of 23,400 km)
- number of attendees at presentations: 5,000 (of a total of 145,000)
- number of DNA – and microplastics samples collected: 100
- plastic collected in clean-ups: 3,000 kg (of a total of 63,000 kg)
- Start campaign **“Save the Arctic”**
- Start campaign **LPS**, **“Leave the Plastic in the Shop”**
- Start campaign **OHO**, **“One Hour Outdoors”**

HIGHLIGHTS 2020

- 1st circumnavigation of Svalbard under sail
- sailing as close as 82 degrees North towards the North Pole
- climbing the highest TOPs of Finland, Svalbard, Lofoten from sea level, CO2 neutral, “by human power and nature’s force”
- Community actions to fight plastic waste and Clean-Ups at many beaches
- [Great media coverage!](#) Everywhere we travelled the media were interested in an interview. In all destinations, TV, radio and print media reported very positively about the TOPtoTOP actions.
- The TOPtoTOP Global Climate Expedition teamed up with the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences, the Norwegian Research Center, the University of Akureyri in Iceland and the ETH Zürich in Switzerland to get a better understanding about the Arctic Seas, especially the Norwegian Sea, the Barents Sea and the Greenland Sea.
- With our concept to get everybody on board, we have been received with open arms in Norway and Svalbard, establishing many partnerships with local individuals, organizations and initiatives.

OUR STRATEGIES — HOW WE ACT

Our belief *‘to go together is to go far’* is a success: The family members and volunteers have gone far again this year and managed to repair the damaged expedition boat and still continue their mission.

Our strategy to reach out more to get the media involved worked very well. This approach also helped us to get in contact with the school authorities to organize events and actions.

We learned that our message is so much more powerful when our children and younger volunteers started to talk to their peers of the same age.

We received less activity feedback from TOPtoTOP members in other countries than last years because of the COVID-19 situation. Our ongoing story and challenge is the backbone that creates

the unique global family of activists. Our global network is based on understanding and solidarity;
- this to solve the global challenge we face with climate change.

OUTLOOK 2021 – OUR CAMPAIGN “SAVE THE ARCTIC”

In 2021, Pachamama will operate in the Arctic towards the North Pole. We will collect data for climate and plastic pollution research in Svalbard, Jan Mayen, Greenland, Iceland and Norway. We will combine our environmental education program and cleanups with our research activities.

- We will sail and ski on “Arctic TOPtoTOP” around the “Heart of the Arctic” to show its beauty and its importance for the whole planet. On this journey we invite families with their kids to join us. We will connect as many people as possible with nature through outdoor activities. This, with the ultimate goal to preserve this paradise for the next generation.
- Transfer of sustainable tourism -, mountaineering - and guiding skills, to give new perspectives and hope to young people living in the Arctic to protect their environment, and enable them, to get an alternative source of income to survive in their fast-changing arctic environment caused by climate change. Check out [“Inspiring Inuit kids to climb”](#) on Vimeo.
- We aim to give remote places a voice and connect schools from different parts of the planet.

LONG-TERM OUTLOOK

We aim to inspire another 100,000 students over the coming years on our route circumnavigating the Arctic and the Americas from POLE to POLE in a figure of 8, making optimal use of the winds and currents. On this endeavor we sail the Northeast Passage to finish the circumnavigation of the Arctic and have a second try at climbing the last TOP, Mount Vinson in Antarctica.

- Our ultimate goal is to save the planet through our inspiring examples and our actions. We aim to build a global network of activists to solve global challenges, based on understanding, friendship and solidarity.

Support us

It is time to save our planet! Our goal is to establish a lasting movement that inspires youth to act. Please consider an annual donation, see <https://toptotop.org/donate/> and join us on Instagram ([TOPtoTOPExpedition](#)), Facebook ([TOPtoTOPGlobalClimateExpedition](#)), website ([TOPtoTOP.org](#)) and subscribe on our YouTube Channel ([TOPtoTOPExpedition](#)).

The annual TOPtoTOP-membership is 50 USD/Euro/CHF per household/institution. A lifelong membership is 250 USD, please register at <https://toptotop.org/donate/toptotop-membership/> .

Thank you for your support!

THANK YOU

Without the generosity and hospitality of the people we meet on our journey, and without your support, our efforts would have been unthinkable. A big THANK YOU also to our partners **UNEP, NORCE, HVL, ETHZ** and **myclimate**, and to our main sponsor **VICTORINOX**. Our thanks also go to all the benefactors and all those who support our project with their TOP products and services, especially **Skarvik, Nogva, PredictWind, Patagonia, WEYTEC, Hostpoint, Sunware, Optrel** and **Munters** and **Soerheim Brygge**.

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