

NIRB Review Requests – May 27, 2022

File #: 125683

Please indicate all activities that will take place during underwater excursions and ROV operations.

Submarine excursions include passenger underwater scenic viewing only. This would be similar to a flightseeing excursion, where passengers board the aircraft for aerial views of the surroundings. An excursion will range in duration from 20-60 minutes long and typically 4 excursions will be planned for a 5-hour time period.

There are no planned ROV operations. The ROV is on board to assist in the event of a submarine incident or emergency.

Indicate what areas and under what conditions submarine and ROV activities will take place.

As mentioned above, ROV activities will only take place to assist the submarine if needed.

Submarine excursions have been planned for the following locations:

- Croker Bay, Devon Island
- Radstock Bay, Devon Island
- Johansen Bay, Edinburgh Island

Alternate submarine excursion locations, should the above not be available, are planned for:

- Cuming Inlet, Devon Island
- Maxwell Bay, Devon Island
- Jenny Lind Island

PLEASE NOTE: No submarine excursions are planned near King William Island, including Wrecks of HMS Erebus and HMS Terror National Historic Site.

On the day of a scheduled submarine excursion, the Submarine Operating Team will come together for a pre-dive briefing and decide on proceeding with the pre-dive preparations or cancelling the operation. Canceling the activity would be due to an assessment of current or expected weather, sea state, wind speed, ice conditions or mechanical issues at the dive site. The same analysis will be done for the Zodiac operation. For the duration of the dive operation, the Submersible Pilot will be able to communicate with the Chase Boat (designated Zodiac) and the M/V Scenic Eclipse via a voice VHF on the surface, and with the Chase Boat via an (acoustic) underwater communications system while submerged. A tracking system allows the Chase Boat to track the submersible underwater, and the submersible will have information about its location relative to the Chase Boat. Throughout the dive operation weather and environmental conditions, ice movement, as well as surface traffic will be monitored by bridge officers, all crew involved in operation and all expedition staff in the field. A dive may be aborted if conditions so dictate. At any time, the Surface Officer can request the Submersible Pilot to surface if it shows that there is dramatic change in the weather.

Please provide guidelines and restrictions that will be implemented for underwater viewing activities (i.e., proximity to wildlife, disturbance of seafloor and marine habitat, etc.).

A with all operations in the vicinity of marine mammals, the submarine will follow AECO's Arctic Guidelines:

Cetaceans: <https://www.aeco.no/guidelines/cetaceans/>

Seals: <https://www.aeco.no/guidelines/seals/>

Walrus: <https://www.aeco.no/guidelines/walrus-2-2/>

In addition the following guidelines will be followed:

- No matter the distance, negative reactions to the submersible, such as rapidly swimming away, will be avoided at all times.
- The submarine will never set down on the sea floor.
- The submarine will remain 2m from the sea bed so as not to stir up the bottom and disturb sea life.