

# Denmark/Norway Bike-Packing Exploration Board Report August 2025

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# 1 Expedition Overview and Objectives

This document contains details of our bike packing trip through Denmark and Norway. The trip took place over 13 days during August 2025. During this expedition, cycled roughly 800km up the North Sea Cycle route, from Southern Denmark to Bergen in Norway.

## 1.1 Overview

## 1.2 Expedition Outcomes

This journey was guided by several key objectives:

- **Pushing Our Physical Limits, Safely** – We aim to challenge ourselves, while ensuring that safety remains a priority throughout the trip. Careful planning, proper pacing, and awareness of our physical limits will be essential.
- **Sustainable Travel** – As we navigate the coastal landscapes, we aim to reduce our environmental impact by adopting responsible travel practices. Carrying our own supplies, camping in designated areas, and minimising waste will allow us to move through these regions with respect for nature.
- **Cultural Exploration** – Cycling through Denmark and Norway presents a unique opportunity to learn about the history, traditions, and way of life in these two Scandinavian countries. From small fishing villages to vibrant rural communities, we will take time to engage with locals, sample regional cuisine, and appreciate the cultural nuances of each place.

## 2 Expedition Team

### 2.1 Anna Tippett

- *Age: 24*



#### Academic Background:

- MPhys in Physics, University of Oxford
- Third Year PhD, Department of Physics, Imperial College London, investigating cloud-aerosol interactions and timescales for precipitation development using high-resolution climate models.

#### Experience:

- Arctic Finland Trekking Expedition Board 2023
- Wilderness First Aid Certification
- Salkantay Trek (5 days) in Peru at 4580m a.s.l.
- Various day cycling trip around the UK.
- Completed a 2 day hike of Volcan Acatenango in Guatemala, involving a summit of 4000m a.s.l, as well as participating in several other shorter 1 day hikes
- Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award, acting as team navigator
- Completed several hikes across the USA, Brazil, New Zealand and Australia
- Competent sport climber, kayaker and canoeist

## 2.2 Tatiana Dickins

- *Age: 24*



### Academic Background:

- BSc (Hons) Biological Sciences at the University of St Andrews.
- Recently completed an MRes in Ecosystems and Environmental Change at Imperial College London (graduated 2024)

### Experience:

- Japan bike packing Exploration Board 2024
- First Aid for Cyclists course 2024
- Mongolia solo trip 2023
- Serra de Tramuntana, Mallorca GR221 hiking trail 119km 2023
- Frequent 1-2 day hikes across the UK and Scotland

## 2.3 Carolina Pestana

- Age: 23



### Academic Background:

- BSc Biotechnology at Imperial College London.
- Recently completed an MRes in Systems and Synthetic Biology at Imperial College London (graduated 2024)
- Currently completing a PhD in Synthetic Biology at UCL

### Experience:

- First Aid trained
- 7 day walking El camino from Sarria to Santiago de Compostela 2022
- 2 day hike across Ilha Bela, Brazil 2023
- 2x 7 day surf trips in Coast de Caprica, Portugal 2023, 2024
- Several hikes in the UK across East Sussex and the Cornish Coast

### 3 Trip Diary and Route

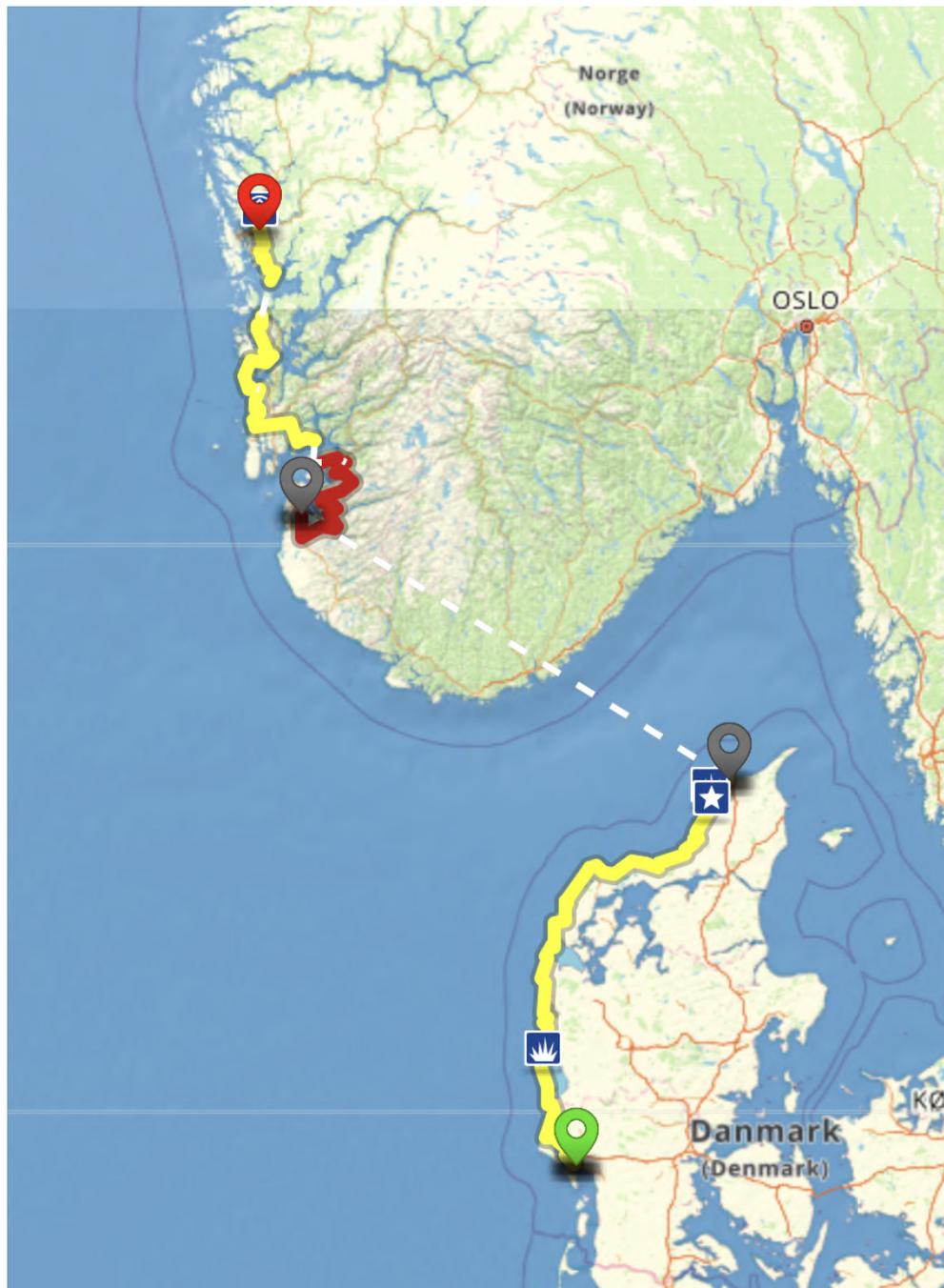


Figure 1: Our route

### 3.1 Denmark

#### Day 1 – 15 August: Esbjerg to Henne Strand (56.96 km, 141m elevation)

We arrived in Esbjerg having got the train from Copenhagen and having stocked up on food in a local supermarket we were on our way. Unfortunately, about 20km in Tatiana's chain mysteriously locked and she was unable to pedal. We pulled over to see what the problem was and an inquisitive group of horses came over to see what all the fuss was about. Luckily the issue was a simple fix, caused by the hurried re-assembly of the bike in Copenhagen airport. We were using the Danish shelter website to find designated wild camping spots, which required a certain level of interpretation as we pushed our bikes through thick sand to find a poorly marked clearing in a coastal forest. However, once we had made it, we cooked some dinner on the camping stove, excited to spend our first night in the tent.



#### Day 2 – 16 August: Henne Strand to Thorsminde (80.23 km, 139m elevation)

Today we really got to explore Denmark's coastal landscape, cycling on gravel tracks through heather-covered dunes. We hadn't anticipated how slow our progress would be cycling on the gravel and ultimately had to head back to the main road. Unfortunately we were faced with a 34mph head wind which made straight line to our lunch spot pretty gruelling. We also found the lack of elevation really impacted our feet and the palms of our hands as there was no relief on the descents. After a hearty fish and chips lunch, we got onto a B road surrounded by grazing cattle and swaying grass, yet more failed attempts to tackle the gravel followed. We ended our journey in a forest of fairy houses people had made from moss and sticks- one of which had a whole clutch of baby robins in.



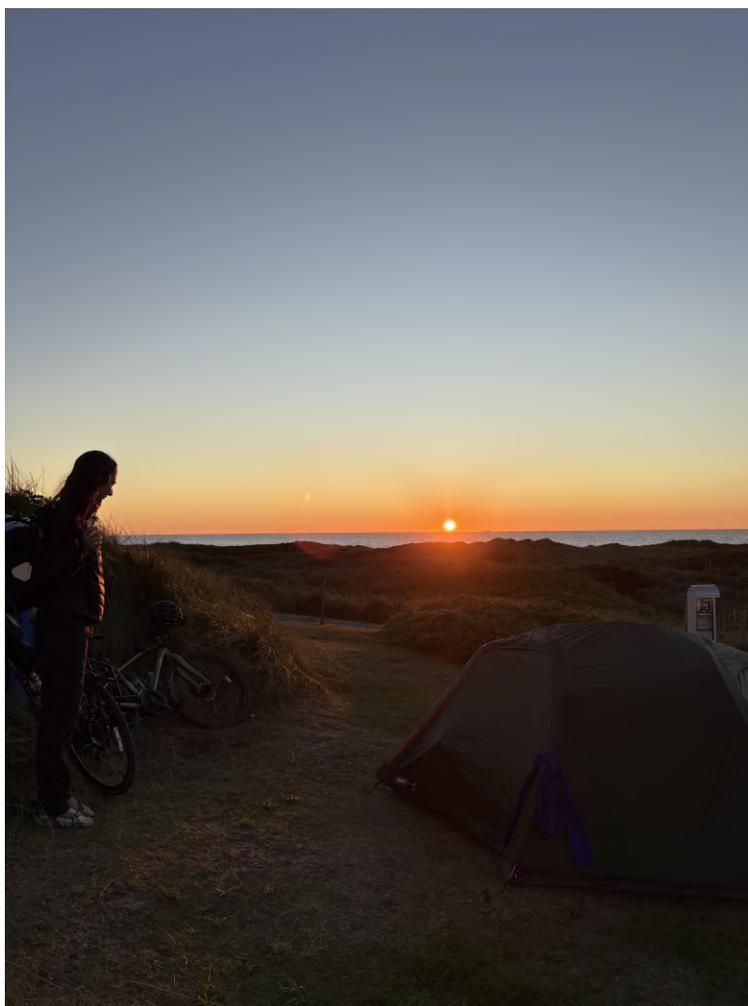
**Day 3 – 17 August: Thorsminde to Nørre Vorupør (91.38 km, 190m elevation)**

Thankfully the wind had died down this morning and we powered along a straight strip of road in the bright sunshine, with towering dunes on one side and fields of horses on the other. We got our first ferry, to Agger, and cycled along the wetlands where horses were wading in the water alongside the birds. Our route took us right next to the coast, but we eventually had to turn in because of the gravel conditions. We stayed in a paid campsite so that we could have a shower and tried to go for a sea swim but the waves were too big.



**Day 4 – 18 August: Vorupør to Thorup Strand (78.06 km, 216 m elevation)**

We woke to the sound of waves at a coastal campsite and started the day with porridge before setting off. Our route took us through a small industrial fishing town where we stopped for fish on toast, a simple but great local treat. To avoid rough gravel paths, we took the highway, passing enormous wind turbines along the sea. That evening, we stayed in a refuge with a central communal area lit by fairy lights and warmed by a fire. A curious little German boy was fascinated by our campfire, and we were grateful to be able to charge our devices in the shared space. We grilled hotdogs and brewed sleepy tea before turning in.



**Day 5 – 19 August: Thorup Strand to Lønstrup (73.22 km, 248 m elevation)**

The wind was strong today, making the ride more demanding. Some highway sections felt too exposed, so we adjusted our route to take some smaller roads. We reached the beach just in time for a beautiful sunset and camped in a forest refuge surrounded by tall grass. The site was peaceful and scenic, though shared with a lively German scout group celebrating a birthday. We ended the day with some simple pesto pasta.





**Day 6 – 20 August: Lønstrup to Hirtshals (30 km, 115 m elevation)**

With the ferry scheduled for the afternoon, we had a more relaxed cycling day. We spent time in the sun, fixed our bikes, and learned to adjust gears and cable tension using YouTube tutorials. None of us had to change tyres during the trip, but gear issues were frequent due to the varied terrain. We visited the sand dunes near Hjørring and had lunch at an organic café, Anna claimed it was the best toastie she'd ever had. We boarded our overnight ferry from Hirtshals to Stavanger, which we had booked well in advance. Though we were exhausted and fell asleep quickly, the rocking of the boat made for a night that wasn't entirely restful, far less peaceful than our usual three-person tent out in nature.



## 3.2 Norway

**Day 7 – 21 August: Stavanger to Jørpeland (69.93 km, 832 m elevation)**

We arrived early in Stavanger, unexpectedly disembarking in an industrial area rather than the town centre. Navigating through the city was a bit stressful, but a stop at a Turkish bakery and a new sleeping mat for Tatiana lifted our spirits. Soon, the fjords of Norway came into view—stunning and serene. We had lunch by the water and took our first short ferry. Norway’s landscape is dotted with islands, and ferries, often free for foot passengers, a regular part of travel in the region. Elevation increased significantly from this point, and we noticed many “no camping” signs. With no refuge system in place, we wild camped in a less-than-ideal spot that night.







**Day 8 – 22 August: Jørpeland to Hjelmeland (55.7 km, 739 m elevation)**

Eventually, we got back on the road and cycled through one of the most scenic stretches of the trip, a quiet cycling path that led us deep into the fjords, with hardly any cars in sight. It was a peaceful and stunning ride. We found a campsite by the edge of the fjords, where hot showers were a welcome relief after the chilly start. Carolina swam in the fjords, embracing the cold water. We ended the day with burgers by the port, grateful for the calm and beauty of the surroundings.

## Day 9 – 23 August: Hjelmeland to Haugesund (63.18 km, 1000 m elevation)

We woke early to catch the ferry to Ombo, which turned out to be one of the most scenic sections of the trip and as the only people in the ferry we got to visit the control room. The island was quiet and peaceful, with long climbs followed by sweeping descents, lakes, and views across the fjords. It was also one of the more demanding days, as the next ferry wasn't until after lunch, leaving the bulk of the distance to be covered in the afternoon. We stopped to cook noodles with prawns before continuing along a less scenic highway route. Despite the effort required, the day ended on a positive note with a sauna by the canals and dinner in a small restaurant space at the campsite.



**Day 10 – 24 August: Haugesund to Heiane (67.52 km, 868m elevation)**

Despite the previous day's demanding ride, Anna and Tatiana got back on their bikes and continued the journey, crossing a long bridge before reaching Heiane. Carolina's knees were too inflamed to cycle, so she took a coach to the next town and located a campsite for us, a small nature reserve near a lake, conveniently close to a McDonald's where we had dinner. Tatiana also picked up a kebab. We swam in the lake, which turned out to be the best swim of the trip, and camped in a biodiverse forest under a lovely sunset. The setting was peaceful, and the swim provided a welcome break after several physically demanding days.





### Day 11 – 25 August: Heiane to Nesttun (67.38km, 1010m elevation)

The day began well, with a good pace and spirits high. We enjoyed ferry hotdogs and supermarket treats, Anna had mac and cheese, Carolina a burger, and Tatiana accidentally picked a sweet bacon crêpe she didn't enjoy. The route included steep climbs through forested areas. Despite Carolina's knee pain, we pushed through to reach Tatiana's cousin's home, where we were warmly welcomed by Titus, Ima, Kasper, and their dog. A comforting bolognese dinner marked the end of our cycling journey. It was lovely to finish the trip in a home, and to learn more about life in Norway from people who had previously lived in London and now made their lives there. Ima was Norwegian, and their stories gave us a richer sense of the place beyond the landscapes we had cycled through. This intense day of climbing, the largest on our trip, is sure to reward us with expansive views and quick descents.



## Day 12 – 26 August: Bergen

We spent the day exploring Bergen, visiting the fish market and browsing local shops. The city was busy with cruise ship tourists. In the evening, Tatiana cooked a rice and filo pastry pie, and we packed our bikes, now more confident in our mechanical skills than when we began. We were slightly stressed about finding bike boxes, but it all worked out in the end, especially thanks to Ima, who kindly drove the boxes to the house after work. It was a quiet and reflective end to the journey, with a sense of accomplishment, tiredness and calm.



### **Day 13 - August 27th: Bergen to London**

We flew back to London very early in the morning, each of us heading our separate ways once we landed. Rebuilding our bikes happened at different points across the city, and although we were tired, it felt good to be back with all we had experienced throughout the trip.

## 4 Training

### 4.1 Personal Fitness

All team members already had a good base level of fitness through their own expedition experience and sports such as cycling, running and surfing. This was be supplemented by a cycling-tailored gym routine focusing on strength and endurance to reduce the risk of injury during the expedition.

### 4.2 Cycling

In preparation, the group also completed a test ride in Kent to practice longer days with greater elevation. Individual training also occurred, with members regularly doing 70km days in preparation.

### 4.3 First Aid Training

All of the team will had up-to-date wilderness first aid training from the Red Cross prior to the expedition. For more information see [here](#).

## 5 Equipment

### Cycling gear

- Bicycle
- Panniers
- Frame bag
- Bar bag
- Front and rear lights
- Helmet
- High-vis bib
- Small pump
- Puncture repair kit
- Spare inner tubes
- Spare chain
- Bike multi-tool
- Electrical tape
- Needle and thread
- Chain lube
- Bike grease

### Clothing

- Bib shorts
- Sturdy cycling shoes
- Sandals
- T shirts
- Waterproof over-trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Lightweight trousers
- Lightweight shorts
- Sports socks
- Underwear

- Fleece
- Thermal base layer
- Lightweight puffa
- Cycling gloves

### **Personal camping gear**

- Three-season sleeping bag (appropriate for lows of 6°C)
- Sleeping bag liner
- Camping pillow
- Thermally insulated roll mat
- Water bottles (2l per person)
- Cutlery, bowl, mug

### **Group kit**

- Camping stove
- Fuel

### **Medical kit and toiletries**

- Sun protection
- After sun lotion
- Insect repellent
- Anti-histamine sting relief
- Personal Medical items and wash kits
- Anti-septic cream and wipes
- Plasters, bandages, cotton wool & micropore tape
- Blister relief
- Medical scissors

### **Miscellaneous**

- Buff
- Cap
- UV protection sunglasses

- Lighter
- Washing up equipment
- Travel towel
- Personal money
- Watch
- Head torches (100-350 lumen)
- Battery pack

- Pan
- Bags for collecting group rubbish

- Painkillers (ibuprofen, aspirin, paracetamol)
- Re-hydration sachets
- Imodium relief
- Tweezers
- Safety pins
- UV protection lip balm
- Foil emergency blanket
- Tick remover

- Passport
- Camera
- Portable power bank
- Whistle
- Insurance documents

## 6 Finances

### 6.1 Income

We were lucky to secure sponsorship from “Universal Colours” cycling apparel, who provided jerseys, bib shorts, socks and outerwear to all team members, which helped alleviate costs.

Furthermore, we are extremely grateful to:

- The Lord Mayor’s 800th Anniversary Awards Trust - This charity supports people aged up to 24 who are going on character-developing projects, usually abroad. We received a grant of £600, and will be attending a report back evening in December 2025. More information here.
- The Royal College of Science Association (RCSA) - As three students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences, we were extremely fortunate to be granted an additional £350pp towards the trip costs. This was incredibly appreciated.
- The Exploration Board - This trip would not have been possible without the generosity and support of the Exploration Board. We are extremely grateful not only for the financial support, but for all advice and connections given prior to the trip. Thank you very much!

Our overall budget per person was estimated to be £1,379.67 (see proposal), and we received £950pp towards our trip costs. We managed to stick mainly to our budget, which was fortunate and slightly surprising!

## 7 Concluding remarks

The cycle tour from Esbjerg to Bergen covered over 800 kilometres across Denmark and Norway, offering a varied mix of terrain, and logistical challenges. Denmark’s flat coastal routes were often slower than expected due to gravel paths and strong winds, while Norway introduced significant elevation and more dramatic scenery, with fjords, islands, and regular ferry crossings shaping the route.

Bikepacking proved to be a rewarding way to travel, allowing us to cover far more ground than walking, and to see places that would be missed entirely if flying directly to Bergen. The changing landscapes, from coastal forests to island climbs, gave us a broader sense of the region than a more conventional itinerary would have allowed.

Mechanical issues were frequent, particularly with gears, but manageable. We became more confident in our bike maintenance, and more grateful for the simple pleasures, hot showers, warm meals, and quiet campsites. Accommodation ranged from forest refuges and wild camping spots to paid campsites and, eventually, a warm family home in Bergen. Norway’s lack of a formal refuge system made camping more difficult, though the natural surroundings often compensated.

Travelling as a group added value to the experience. The shared effort, especially on more difficult days, made the trip more enjoyable. Evenings were spent unwinding and reflecting on the day's challenges. Passing fellow bikepackers, exchanging waves, and interacting with other campers and occasional locals also shaped the journey, adding a sense of community to an otherwise self-sufficient mode of travel.

Overall, the trip was a test of endurance and adaptability. It offered a deeper connection to the places we passed through and a sense of achievement that came from completing the journey under our own steam.

## **A Risk Assessment and Safety**

P = Probability; S = Severity; R = Risk Factor

Please see the following pages for our risk assessment.

Hazard	Symptoms	Consequence	Prevention	Response	P S R F
Road Traffic Accidents	NA	Injury, Equipment Damage	Exercise caution at all times, wear helmet and reflective clothing, avoid busy roads, do not overtake vehicles from the inside.	Assess injury, carry out first aid. If necessary, call emergency services on 113.	1 4 4
Equipment Failure	Loss of brakes, flat tire, cracked fork, loose spokes, kickstand down, wheel wobble	Accident, Injury	Check bike function regularly	Carry out repairs as soon as problems arise. If necessary, locate bike shop.	3 1 3
Bike Theft	NA	Stranded, unable to continue trip, left alone whilst partner seeks assistance	Lock bikes with strong D-lock, don't leave them unattended for long periods	Report to the police straight away. Use public transport to reach bike shop and attempt to rent new bicycle.	1 3 3
Breakdown	NA	Stranded, unable to continue trip, left alone whilst partner seeks assistance	Monitor bike function regularly, practice bike maintenance prior to trip	Carry out repairs where possible. If necessary, locate bike shop.	1 3 3
Muscle strain	Pain and/or swelling	Inability to carry on cycling	Exercise caution at all times, don't over exceed physical limits. Carry out regular gentle stretching	Stop as a group, carry out first aid and rest. If necessary, seek further medical treatment.	3 2 6
Getting lost	NA	Running out of food/water, risk of exposure at night.	Have emergency camping equipment so if huts cannot be reached before dark, we can set up camp. At all times, carry a physical map and a GPS. Ensure all team members are familiar with map-reading and the route before the start. Agree regular check-ins with emergency contacts.	Stay as a group. Call 112 and await response. Use a satellite phone if there is no signal. Set up shelter if night is approaching and ration food/water supplies.	1 3 3

Hazard	Symptoms	Consequence	Prevention	Response	P S R F
<b>Weather Related Hazards</b>					
Caught in storm	N/A	Wet and increased risk of getting cold, slipping on wet terrain and hit by lightning. Risk of getting lost with difficult navigation.	Check the weather forecast each morning. Do not hike if there is risk of lightning, stay in one of the shelters available along the trail. All carry waterproof clothing and sturdy waterproof boots. Refer to compass and GPS units frequently and carry spare batteries.	Take extra care whilst walking and use poles to improve stability. If lightning begins, estimate distance, and if closer than 10km, take necessary precautions. If necessary, set up camp and change out of wet clothing.	1 3 3
Caught in flood	N/A	Wet and/or stranded on higher land	Flood season is in May so we specifically planned the trip to avoid this. Check weather forecast and trail conditions leading up to departure and if severe flooding is still occurring we will postpone.	Get to higher land and get shelter and change any wet clothing.	1 4 4
Sunburn/ sun stroke and hyperthermia	Headache, thirst, dizziness, perature	Burnt skin, fusion, loss of consciousness	Wear suitable protection i.e. hats, long-sleeve clothing and sunscreen). Remain well-hydrated. Keep observant of team members.	Rest in a shaded area. Cool down the unwell team member, using water soaked clothing and fans. Supply fluids and electrolytes. If no improvement or unconsciousness, seek medical attention.	1 4 4
Dehydration	Thirst, headache, fatigue, dizziness, dry mouth and dark urine	Confusion and/or loss of consciousness.	Remain hydrated and consume electrolytes. Remain aware of water supply and have a list of drinking sources.	Rest in a shaded area. Rehydrate with water and electrolytes. If symptoms do not improve, seek medical attention. Several team members will have water filters or tablets to allow us to consume freshwater in an emergency.	2 3 6

<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>P S R F</b>
Hypothermia and Exposure	Erratic behavior, uncontrolled shivering, pale and blue extremities and low body temperature.	Cold and risk of encountering dangerous wildlife. Hypothermia and death	Staying at huts along the trail. Extensive research done along the trail to ensure that the huts used are a realistic days hike away from each other. Everyone pack sufficient spare layers that are waterproof and windproof.	If huts cannot be reached before dark, emergency tents will be set up and food supplies secured away from camp.	1 4 4
<b>Equipment Related Hazards</b>					
Stove breakage or loss of fuel	NA	Inability to cook or boil water. If fuel leaked there could be risk of fire or explosion causing regular injury.	Frequent checks of stoves and fuel bottles. Huts provide cooking equipment so stoves are only for emergencies or if hot lunches are required. Stoves to be checked before departure. Repair kit to also be packed	If injured, treat with first aid kit and if necessary seek medical attention.	1 3 3
Tent loss, leakage or breakage	NA	If tent not available for emergency use then exposure may occur.	Several team members to assist with tents when being set up in emergency situations/bad weather. Carry repair kits. Tents to be checked before departure.	Repair tents. If lost, try to buy a new one. Ensure that adequate huts are available for the rest of the journey.	1 3 3

**Location Related Hazards**

Brown bears, Moose and Wolves	NA	If attacked, serious injury or death	Bears: stay away from dead animals, stay as a group cook, and store food in bear-proof containers away from campsite or in suspended bags downwind. After camp is set up, blow the whistle. We will position our tents in an open area, away from denser trees and bushes which the bears may use at night. Moose: if spotted, do not approach. Wolves: do not travel in low visibility or dark conditions. If spotted, do not approach.	If injured, seek medical attention. Whilst waiting for attention, treat injuries. Set up emergency camp to shelter injured person. Move supplies away from site. Remain as a group, making noise and keeping an eye on your surroundings.	1 5 5
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Insect/tick bites	Irritation of skin, redness.	Risk of infection or spread of disease	Loose-fitting, long-sleeve clothing will be worn at all times and insect repellent will be applied to any exposed skin. The team will also all wear hat nets when necessary. We will also avoid areas of long grass and stagnant water to reduce the likelihood of ticks, mosquitoes and blackflies, respectively.	Within our first aid kit we will carry proper tick removal equipment and tipped tweezers in case proper removal does go wrong. We will monitor any mosquito bites for infection, and regularly disinfect bites. If any of the team get bitten and get a high fever or other worrying symptoms, we shall seek medical assistance. Tents will remain zipped when we are not in them to try and keep out as many insects as possible. Due to the time of year of the trip, bites are likely and therefore we will also carry bite and sting relief cream to help with any milder symptoms.	3 2 6
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Hazard	Symptoms	Consequence	Prevention	Response	P S R F
<b>General Travel Hazards</b>					
Theft and Mugging	NA	Loss of property and/or personal injury	Remain vigilant whilst in public areas, use common sense, do not keep valuables in public site and keep a card/cash separate to other money in a secure place e.g bottom of shoe. Buy required insurance.	Report to the police and treat injuries with group first aid kits. If necessary, seek further medical attention.	1 3 3
Physical/Verbal Abuse	NA	Personal injury	Be aware of local customs. Learn basic Danish and Norwegian to improve communication with locals.	Report to the police and treat injuries with group first aid kits. If necessary, seek further medical attention.	1 3 3
Food poisoning	Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhoea	Unable to cycle and dehydration	Drink clean water and ensure all water sourced from non-portable sources is purified or filtered. Exercise common sense with food.	Rest and rehydrate with water and electrolytes	2 2 4
Infectious disease, inc Covid-19	NA	Short or long-lasting health impacts	Remain up-to-date with Covid-19 recommendations. No vaccines required for Norway and Malaria not currently seen as a risk. Avoid contact with needles, blood or body fluids.	Thoroughly clean all wounds and monitor for infection. If necessary, seek further medical attention.	2 2 4

## A.1 Emergency Procedure/Emergency incident plan

In case of any emergency use the satellite phone to call the emergency number which is 112 for police, or 113 for medical. The emergency services also suggest using the Hjelp 113 phone app which automatically sends your coordinates to rescue services, hence we shall each install this app too. If there's a signal problem, one person will stay with the injured individual, one should go to the closest service point. Those staying should refer to their first aid training (which we shall all undertake) to help at the scene.

Procedure in an accident:

1. Assess the situation: Rapidly evaluate the situation to determine the severity of the accident. If someone is unconscious or having trouble breathing, contact the emergency services immediately.
2. Call for help: If feasible, use a mobile phone or another communication device to contact emergency medical services or local authorities. Clearly provide your location and details about the emergency.
3. Administer first aid: Offer appropriate first aid until professional medical help arrives. Concentrate on stabilising the injured individual and preventing further harm.
4. Secure the surroundings: If necessary, take measures to secure the area and prevent additional accidents or injuries. This might include blocking traffic, setting up warning signs or relocating the injured person to a safe space.
5. Await medical assistance: Remain on-site and wait for the arrival of medical help. If possible, provide responding medical personnel with information about the emergency and the actions taken so far.
6. Document the incident: After resolving the emergency, thoroughly document the incident, including the steps taken, important information about the injured individual, and any other details crucial for future reference.