

79°56,8'N 016°44,2'E

# Eolusneset

After the Norwegian sealing schooner "Æolus".

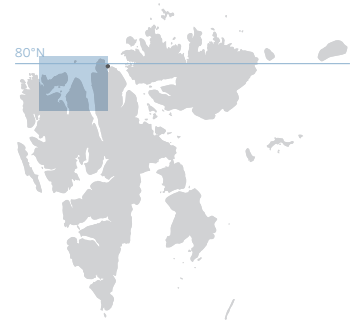


Photo: Lisa Ström

## Silent monuments

The graves at Eolusneset lie as silent monuments to the international whaling that took place in Svalbard 300-400 years ago. They tell a story of a risky workplace from a time when the whalers mastered the arctic sea and coast. Prepared for death they stocked their ships with materials for coffins on their northbound journeys.

### VEGETATION

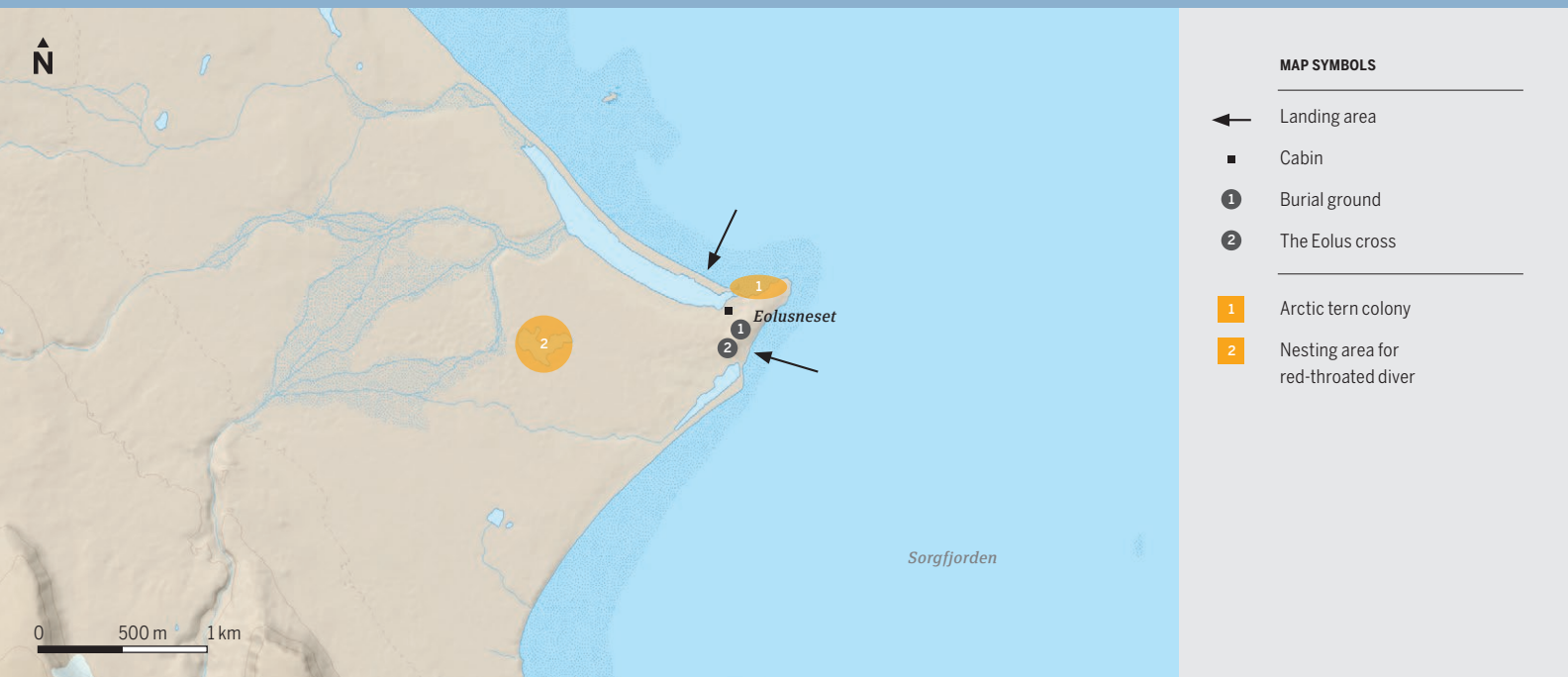
Eolusneset has scarce vegetation dominated by lichens and mosses and some species of vascular plants. The grayish color in the hill up to the cross is mainly from the heath greymoss, and with small white poppies and chickweeds in between. Lichens are slow-growing organisms, and the lichen-cover on the graves indicates the long cultural history of this site.

### FAUNA

This area holds relatively few species and low numbers of birds and mammals, but at least one pair of Arctic skua, and a few pairs of Arctic tern breed here. Ptarmigan can be observed in the vicinity. Red-throated divers breed at a small lake one kilometer west of the burial ground and reindeer are common. Sorgfjorden is an important area for common eider, and ivory gull may be seen, especially when there is drift-ice in the fjord.

### CULTURAL REMAINS

The burial ground at Eolusneset has 30 graves dating from the western European whaling activities in the 1600s and 1700s. The number of graves grew over the years as it was the same few selected places that were in use as burial grounds during the whaling era. The Eolus cross on top of the hill was erected by Skipper C. Holmgren from the schooner Eolus of Bergen, which was trapped by ice in Sorgfjorden in 1855. He intended to commemorate the diseased from the battle in Sorgfjorden in 1693 as the casualties were believed to have been buried at Eolusneset. This turned out to be a myth.



## Guidelines

Stay on the established path up to the cross to avoid new tracks.

If the Arctic skuas and Arctic terns attack, walk away while watching where you step to avoid trampling on eggs and chicks.

## Tip

Walk south along the beach and cross to the foot of the mountain and return along the river to experience different landscapes and the chance of seeing Svalbard rock ptarmigan, common eider ducks, red throated divers and reindeer.



Photo: Lisa Haglund

From Pole to Pole. The Arctic tern overwinter in Antarctica.

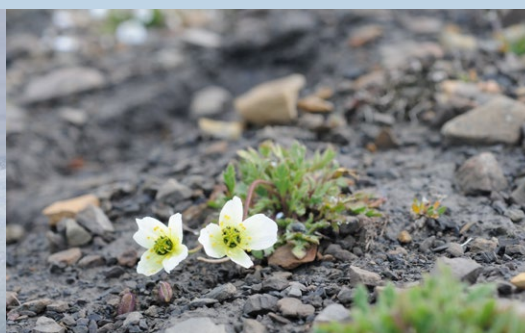


Photo: Tommy Presta

The Svalbard poppy can be white or yellow, and is one of the most robust Arctic plants. The white petals absorb sunlight and create sheltered conditions for ripening seeds.

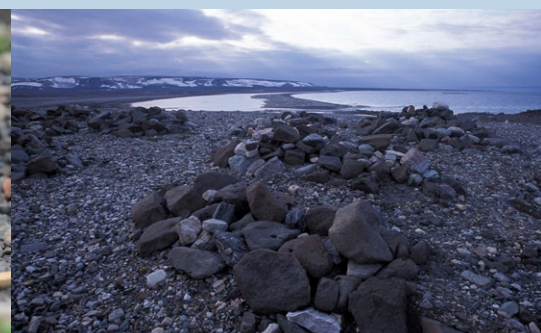


Photo: Kristin Prestvold

Whalers' graves on Eolusneset. On account of the difficulty of digging the ground, the wooden coffins were covered by large stones.