

MSM146

BAFFINGAS



1. Weekly report

19.08. – 23.08.2026

Our research cruise, cruise number MSM146, which is dedicated to investigate gas and oil sources and sinks in Baffin Bay, began in Reykjavik, Iceland, on Wednesday, August 19, 2026. A small advance team from our group was already on site when RV MARIA S. MERIAN arrived at the end of its previous research cruise. Thanks to the excellent organization of the crew, RV MARIA S. MERIAN was ready to unload our equipment that very same day. The last scientific crew members arrived on Tuesday, August 18, completing the team of scientists from Germany, Canada, Sweden, France, and Spain. On August 19, RV MARIA S. MERIAN set sail at 10 a.m. local time, heading for the west coast of Greenland.



Arrival of the scientists on board in Reykjavik. Photo: E. Burwicz-Galerie

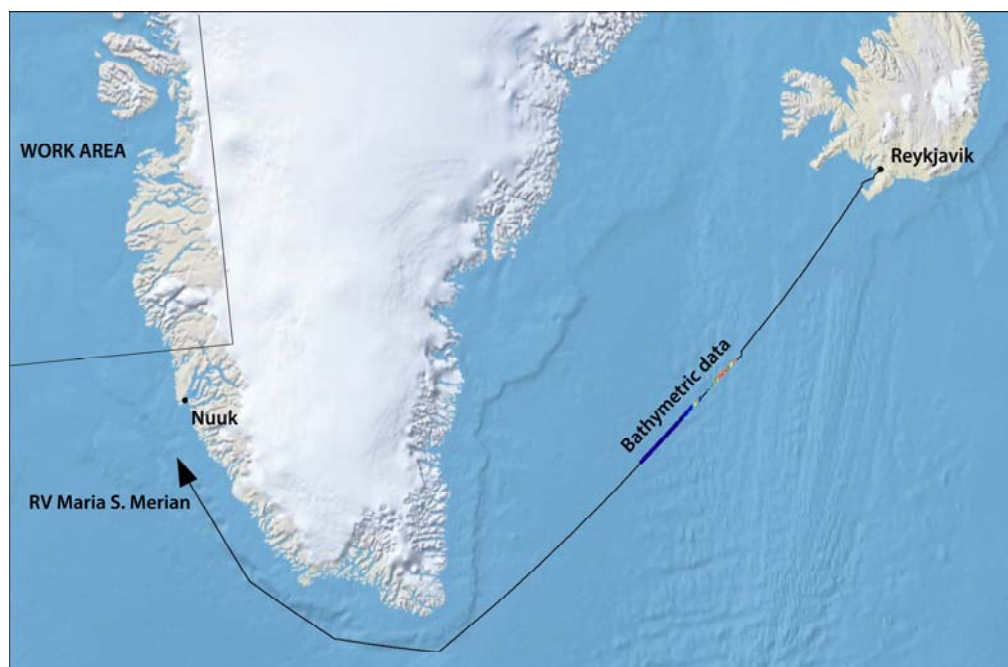


The working deck is prepared for station works. Photo: E. Burwicz-Galerie

Today, Sunday, August 23, we have nearly completed the transit to our first research area in Baffin Bay. We spent the first few days on board setting up the laboratories, testing all the equipment, and going over the sampling procedures in detail. During our daily meetings, we engage in in-depth discussions about our scientific goals to make the most of our interdisciplinary offshore as well as onshore team's potential. We also practiced the safety procedures on board. The safety officer gave us an introduction to these procedures while we were still in port, and shortly after we set sail, a drill was conducted with everyone on board. Part of the drill involved boarding the free-fall lifeboat above the aft deck. On Saturday, August 22, the scientists also had the opportunity to take part in a tour of the ship's machinery, which was met with great interest. The weather during the voyage was mostly good, so we made good progress. Only on Friday, August 21, did heavy swells with heights

exceeding 3 meters set us back a bit, and also forced some of the participants to get used to the ship's movements.

We have already collected first data: Since we were in international waters for about 15 hours during the transit, we have already recorded hydroacoustic data using the systems installed on board. We used the multibeam echo sounder to map the seafloor beneath the ship, while we used a sediment echo sounder to map shallow sediment structures and also recorded current data. Even though this data does not originate from one of our working areas and we do not plan to use it for this research cruise's objectives, it constitutes valuable research data for the "Marine Data – Research Vessels" project coordinated by the German Alliance for Marine Research (<https://www.allianz-meeresforschung.de/en/activities/data-management-and-digitalisation/underway-research-data>). All of RV MARIA S. MERIAN's hydroacoustic systems operated without any problems, and the data is of excellent quality. We will continue to make extensive use of them during our research cruise to detect and analyze hydrocarbon sources on the seafloor.



Research expedition MSM146 set sail from Reykjavik, Iceland, on August 19, 2026. We will reach the first of our research areas on Monday, August 24. We already deployed the hydroacoustic systems in international waters between Iceland and Greenland. Map: QGreenland & Natural Earth.

We are now fully prepared to begin the scientific program in the study areas. In just a few hours, on Monday, August 24, we will reach the first study area and begin our work. In the next weekly report, we will therefore certainly be able to share the first interesting results.

We are looking forward to starting our station work soon and send our warmest regards from aboard RV MARIA S. MERIAN!

On behalf of all participants,
Miriam Römer

We regularly write a logbook during this expedition:
<https://www.marum.de/en/Ship-s-log-MSM136.html>