

PRESS RELEASE: DUTCH KAYAKER STILL GOING STRONG IN THE CANADIAN ARCTIC

Amsterdam, 25 August 2015. Adventurer Yuri Klaver has returned to the Netherlands, after a succesful third stage of the Venture Arctic expedition. In five months, he has traveled two thousand kilometers along the Arctic coast of Alaska and Canada, from Prudhoe Bay to Paulatuk. Drifting ice, persistent easterly winds and frozen toes were this year's largest obstacles.

The Arctic Venture expedition is an attempt to become the first man ever, to cross the entire polar region of Northern - America using only man power. With a kayak, skis, warm clothing and camping equipment, he travels from Nome, Alaska to Greenland, all alone. A grueling journey of 7000 kilometers through one of the largest wildernesses on earth, but also a journey through human and spiritual nature.

The ruthlessness of the Arctic was already clear from the first day, on his departure from Prudhoe Bay. The first two weeks six storms screamed over his tent. Yuri: "I had to shovel snow every day. I think I've shoveled the contents of an entire garage, to prevent my kayak and tent to become completely buried under meters of snow. During one of these storms the wind blew 150 kilometers per hour. In a temperature of – 25 Celcius, the wind chill reached to about - 70. After that storm, I arrived at an oil drilling station for some technical assistance. It turned out that I had suffered frostbite in my toes, the doctor sent me straight to Anchorage the next day. There I stayed in the hospital for three days, followed by a recovery of three weeks."

In early April, Yuri was able to continue his journey. His plan was to go over the sea ice, the shortest route along all the bays, but that proved impossible because of the drifting ice, which was piled ten meters high by the wind. Yuri: "I had no choice but to follow the long route along the coast. Moreover, the wind blew constantly from the east. In two months, there were only three days when I was able to use the kite. On one of these days I traveled nearly a hundred kilometers across the lagoons along the coast. But a few days later the thaw came in. I often had to paddle along the estuaries, and deep puddles appeared on the sea ice. I had to wait three weeks for the sea – ice to disappear. One night, well, night, it was not at all dark anymore, the wind started to blow from the west. Soon I heard the hissing sound of open water. When I looked outside, there was a strip of hundred meters of water from the shore. An ice plate of kilometers wide was moving towards the sea. Fortunately I found myself safely ashore. But it took another week before I could paddle continuously, on my way to the Mackenzie Delta and Tuktoyaktuk."

You've been so long underway, you've probably ended up in some dangerous situations. Can you tell me something about it? Yuri: "Having passed Tuktoyaktuk, I was on my way to Paulatuk. After 80 km of paddling I moored on a beach of an inland sea. The water was as smooth as a mirror, there was no wind. I was terribly tired and just wanted to eat and sleep.

But the beach consisted of sharp stones so I had to walk hundreds of meters to find a place for the tent. When I looked back I saw that the kayak was detached from the shore. I pulled a sprint of three hundred meters, took off my boots and pants and stepped into the water. It was clear and cold. The pebbles vanished quickly into the depths, I had to swim. The distance to the kayak was about eight meters but the cold began to penetrate deeply into my body. What if I was to drown here just before my boat! I wouldn't be the first one. I had no confidence and turned around. On the side I tied a knot in both legs. I filled the air with pants and tried again, but my improvisation quickly lost buoyancy so I had to give up my second attempt. No! I shouted on the beach. No!! I found myself two hundred kilometers from Tuktoyak. My possessions were reduced to rain pants, a thin sweater, a mosquito net and a device to send a emergency signal. " And then? Yuri: "I do not want to reveal everything. The whole story is described in the book I'm writing. The first part is available next year."

I have a question you probably have heard before, but I guess we just can't do without it being asked: why are you doing this? Yuri: "This question actually consists of several questions. What is the attraction of the wilderness? Why am I doing this alone? Are there things that drift me away from people? The answer to the first question is that we are all made to wonder through the wilderness. So it's better to turn the question around: what happened that we don't do that anymore? It has partly to do with fear. There is a Dutch proverb that says: man suffers most of the fear he suffers. We are more afraid of the fear, than for the real dangers. That's a part of the answer. For the whole answer, unfortunately, I have to refer to my book. "

What are the plans for next year? Yuri: "next year I want to start in Paulatuk late March, the Canadian town I reached this year. Hence I will go as far to the east of Canada, pass Cambridge Bay and beyond. Statistics show that I have a good chance of westerly winds, so I should be able to use the snow – kite to come a long way. Most importantly however is finance, the next few months I've got to get together \$ 10,000 to be able to start next year."

Note to the editors: For further information please contact Yuri Klaver, via yuriklaver@gmail.com, or call: +31629057879.