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Teenage Explorers Rescued From Arctic Blizzard

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The team of teenage Arctic explorers covered dozens of kilometers of ice fields during the 10-day trip to the North Pole.

A rescue craft has airlifted a team of teenage Arctic explorers, accompanied by adult trailblazers and children's rights ombudsman Pavel Astakhov, from a North Pole camp where they had been stranded by a blizzard.

The blizzard trapped seven 16-year-old Russian boys and girls — including two deaf teenagers and students from special-education schools and orphanages — along with their adult guides in a tent camp on the North Pole, where they had skied from the Barneo ice station, RIA Novosti reported.

The departure for the final leg of the trip — from the floating Barneo camp to the Arctic city of Murmansk — had been scheduled for Sunday night, but was delayed by the weather hazard and was expected to proceed Monday, the local FlashNord news agency reported.

The Barneo camp is set up every spring on an ice floe for about a month and a half, after

the polar night has already rescinded but before the sun melts the ice.

"Barneo will be wrapped up in a few days," Astakhov said Sunday in a Twitter message. "We are probably the last expedition this year."

The expedition covered dozens of kilometers of ice fields during a 10-day trip from Barneo to the North Pole that began on April 10, with participants traveling on skis throughout the day and spending the nights in tent camps.

"The weather is still keeping us captive," Astakhov said in a Twitter message before the rescue operation Sunday. "The only food remaining is half of an Easter cake, and there is even less fuel."

"The team's spirit is strong, the boys and girls are not despairing," he said in another message. "Waiting for the evening. Been told on the radio that a helicopter may be sent from Barneo."

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