



HYDROFOIL REVIVAL IN SWEDEN

IT HAS BEEN 41 years since a hydrofoil last operated a scheduled service in the archipelago of Stockholm, Sweden.

Back then it was the biggest commercial hydrofoil in the world, at least outside of the USSR, a 250-seat Supramar PT.150, delivered by Westermoen Hydrofoil, Norway in 1971, operating between Stockholm and Mariehamn in the Åland Islands for a few months in 1972.

This time it is one of the smaller commercial hydrofoils around, a Polesye carrying 53 passengers, built in Belarus in 1991 and refurbished in 2011.

The vessel, *Gryf*, was last operated by Wodolot, based in Stettin, Poland, and had been on the market for some time.

Renamed *SandhamnXpress*, the Polesye was introduced between central Stockholm and Sandhamn by Gåshaga Rederi AB, marketing the service also as SandhamnXpress, on September 20.

Initially the service operates on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, reflecting the status of Sandhamn as primarily a weekend destination for Stockholmers. One roundtrip is operated on each of these days, leaving Stockholm at 16:00 and Sandhamn at 18:00 on Friday and 10:00 and 14:00, respectively, on Saturday and Sunday. Scheduled trip time is 90 minutes.

However, effective from November 29, operation will be increased to include also Wednesday and Thursday and more departures will be offered on Thursday–Saturday. The rota will also be partly altered in so that *SandhamnXpress* will stay overnight in Sandhamn rather than Stockholm on certain days. At other times the hydrofoil is available for charter.

Several Polesye hydrofoils can be found in Europe and elsewhere, including Poland, Hungary, Austria, the former

Above : Rather unexpectedly a hydrofoil has entered service in the Stockholm area. The Polesye, *Gryf* / Sandhamn Xpress, was introduced on September 20
/ SANDHAMN XPRESS photo

Right : The first Polesye built, by the Gomel Shipyard, appeared in 1983





Above : Gryf / SandhamnXpress alongside at Sandhamn in the outer Stockholm archipelago in September

Below : The passenger cabin looking aft. A bar or kiosk, probably at the rear, will be fitted over the winter

Bottom : The hydrofoil carrying a good passenger load outbound for Sandhamn / PATRIK NYLIN photo, all

USSR territories and China. More than 100 vessels of this type were built between 1983 and 1996.

The Polesye has a length overall of 21.2 m, beam of 5.0 m and hull width of 3.6 m. Designed for operation in shallow waters, the draught is 0.95 m in hullborne and only 0.40 m in foillborne modes, fully loaded. It is powered by a single 12-cylinder V diesel engine. Normal service speed is 35 knots, however, speed restrictions apply at certain stretches within Stockholm harbour.

Passengers are accommodated in a single saloon between the wheelhouse and engine room. On the Swedish craft the majority of the 53 seats are arranged facing forward, 3 + 3 either side of the aisle. There is an excellent view from the wide windows – and it is needed. The Stockholm archipelago is considered one of the most beautiful in the world, as is the entrance to Stockholm itself and the section from/to the landing point.

During *Gryf's* winter lay up, starting December 15, SandhamnXpress intends to fit a bar or kiosk from which to serve hot and cold drinks and various snacks, probably at the expense of a few seats. **cff**

