

## Diary 11 – 9 October 2010

Today I had a swim in Young Sund. I only did that to be able to start the news letter in this way ;-). Another point would be that it is possible to have a swim - there is no ice on the sound/fjord yet and it is 9 October. Last year at this time you could have a walk or skate on the fjord. However, the weather forecast says cold, clear and calm for the next week so it might have been the last swim this year (in fact I am absolutely sure about that!!). Lakes and ponds in the area are all ready covered by 20 cm of ice.

We had a little snow in early October which left a scattered snow cover of 0-5 cm in the valley. Not enough for skiing and not enough to cover the vegetation and certainly not enough to add positively to the water situation at the station. So we still rely on the water from the river. Not a problem so far. Even though, the river looks pretty solid, some water is still running below the ice.

When I say "we" I refer to the three people who are running the measurements and Zackenberg Research Station during this extended field season - Lars Holst Hansen (BioBasis monitoring programme), Jørgen Skafte (Logistics) and Charlotte Sigsgaard (GeoBasis monitoring programme). It is the fourth time that the field season last until November and it has been four very different "late seasons" when it comes to arrival and amounts of snow, temperatures and timing of soil freeze. Since these parameters play a major role on all the different things we measure up here (gas fluxes, soil dynamics, phenology of plants, birds and mammals etc.) it is valuable to be able to study and get some data from this period as well.

Before, I went down to check the ice situation on the fiord I was out in the fen area where methane and carbon dioxide are being logged continuously. Right now, it seems like there is an increase in the methane fluxes. We have observed a sudden rise in fluxes during soil freeze before but there are lots of open questions when it comes to the process of this phenomenon and to "catch" another burst would be very welcome. Time will show...

Last Sunday we celebrated Lars birthday – and we even had a visitor (it happens not very often at this time of year!!). After breakfast I was preparing some equipment to bring outside when I heard this message on the VHF radio: "There is a POLAR BEAR on the station area - next to the new building". It was Jørgen Skafte calling from House no. 5. Both Lars and I were in House no. 9 but a few seconds later we were on the porch outside the building looking at a real polar bear through the snow – armed with cameras and flare guns (we were -not the polar bear). What a view; king of the arctic – or maybe a prince. After all it was quite a small polar bear that was checking out a rubber boat lying outside the building. Shortly after, the bear decided to leave the station and headed out to the runway and moved on in a southerly direction towards Young Sund. We met with Jørgen and got the story of how he was on his way from the new building (The Polar Bear House) to House no. 5 when he turned around and saw the bear 20 m behind him. Luckily, he was only 10 m from his destination and when he was inside he called on the radio. We were not able to reconstruct where the bear came from as the tracks were being covered by snow - but it was here and it disappeared again and we all had a very fine experience and Lars had an extra birthday present ;-).

The next "visitors" are scheduled to arrive 20 October. Then Kirsten Christoffersen and Mikkel Tamstorf will join us for the last period.

Now it is time to check for northern lights... Goodnight!

Charlotte Sigsgaard