

Diary 10 – 20 June 2012

Zackenbergl

We arrived to Zackenberg on the 14th of June. Jan and Jeroen from the Netherlands, Kirstine and Tonni from Denmark, Mikhail from Sweden, and Tomas and Riikka from Finland. Flight was smooth and on time in good weather. At Zackenberg airstrip, we were welcomed by Dina, Spanggård, Maria, Lars and Jannik who were already staying at the station.

Ever since our arrival, the weather has been wonderful: mostly calm, sunny and warm. Snow is melting quickly, but it will take some weeks before the landscape is free of snow. At the moment, snow still covers most of the area and the snow layer is tens of centimetres deep, which is exceptional at this time of the year.

Despite abundant snow, plants on bare land are flowering and insects are flying around. The warm weather has been rewarding especially for an entomologist looking for insects. And the insect life has been abundant indeed: in four days, Tomas and I have caught some 500 specimens by pitfall traps, yellow pan traps and sweep netting. Malaise traps and funnels for soil fauna are still to be emptied and sorted out later. But I never imagine I would need a pair of skis or snowshoes to take pitfall traps to a suitable place! I also started to collect plant samples for DNA bar-coding, but this work is only in the beginning since most plants are flowering later in season.

Life at the station has been good, a friendly atmosphere and delicious food! On Thursday just after our arrival we had a Sirius patrol visiting the station, otherwise visitors have been scarce, if lemmings are not accounted for. This year is apparently a peak year for lemmings, so I'm hoping to see many pairs of long-tailed skuas breeding and maybe even a snowy owl. I keep my fingers crossed!

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PS. terveisiä äidille!