

Diary 13 – 22 July 2014

I have been at Zackenberg for the past 3 weeks – 3 weeks that have gone so fast I feel like I've only just arrived, but I will be leaving tomorrow.

This is my second visit to Zackenberg, collecting data for my PhD. It is a stream hydroecology project, studying the cascading influences of different water sources on stream physico-chemical habitat, and how this in turn affects stream biodiversity. I am also looking at stream foodwebs and to see if there are any terrestrial links in these, so I am taking home with me many aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates to identify.

This year everything looks completely different to the last time I was here. In 2013, the stream water levels were very low, whereas this year, after a large amount of snow fall over winter, the streams have a much higher water level, giving us much more to work with! This year I am working with Simon Leth from the University of Aarhus, Denmark, on the fieldwork, who is here collecting data for his Masters project.

The house is quite full at the moment, with people here working on different projects, from studies on the local vegetation to methane fluxes to bird migration. As well as there being people working in the valley, there are 2 groups that are going further afield. Kathryn and Tim have just returned from a 4-day camping trip to Slettedalen, and in the next few days a larger group of 7 people studying vegetation will be heading out on the boat towards the coast and past Daneborg, to spend over a week camping out there. However, the house was even fuller this time last week when we had a special 2-day visit from 4 people – known as the VIPs- here to evaluate the station. They left last Wednesday, and that was good news for the new people who arrived last Tuesday, as many of them were not able to bring their luggage up from Constable Point! They were told it would be sent up later that day, however it finally came on the plane that arrived to take the VIPs back the next day!

One of the VIPs had spent a lot of time at Zackenberg throughout the last couple of decades. He showed us some old photos of the station, and of when they were constructing house 9- where we sleep. It makes you realise how much it has changed over the years!

I have had a very enjoyable/busy/tiring/exhausting/exciting/productive 3 weeks here at Zackenberg. Now I am looking forward to getting in the lab to start identifying all my samples!

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