

Diary 15 – 21 September 2011

Change in Weather

It's been three weeks since I returned to Zackenberg, after a month of vacation in Denmark. As always in Zackenberg, time is the commodity for which demand is greatest. We've had the most amazing clear weather, with blue skies, below zero temperatures and often no wind at all. So we've all been busy preparing for worse weather and getting the most out of the decreasing sunlit hours. But yesterday it changed completely, just after noon the wind intensified and stopped shifting directions, we've had more than 24 hours of storm from North, positive temperatures and rain, which has given time to get things done indoor, this newsletter for example. Lars has used the excess time to sow an insect net, even though I claim it looks more like the kind of nets you'd use in an aquarium. I'm sure Claus Rasmussen and Jesper Mosbacher would look at it condescendingly and laugh about its size.

A couple of days after arrival we started a bet, who can guess (or get closest to) the date when the river has frozen enough for a person to cross dry-footed. Jørgen guessed the 21st, stating 'on that date it will definitely be frozen!', so today we should be able to cross the river, without waders. Unfortunately the river wasn't close to frozen before the storm and this morning the wind and higher water temperatures (0.3 instead of the 0.2 degrees Celsius it's been for more than a week) had removed almost all of the, otherwise accumulating, ice. My guess is the 30th (which was originally looked down on as a rookie mistake), so my fingers are crossed, hoping the river will keep running until the 26th, at least. Lars was never really close to winning, his guess was the 17th, which goes to show how 'in pact with nature' he is. Maybe the reason for his overshooting, is that the lakes (that we were suppose to take samples from on the 11th), froze from ~1 % ice to fully ice covered in less than three days. We won an extra trip to the lakes and took the samples without inflating the boat. I say we, because there should be two persons present when taking a water sample, however I don't know how useful my skating around and taking photos were... To round the bet-thing of, Jørgen has just seen the opportunity to suggest that if the river is not frozen on the 1st of October, we should all get to place new bets; Pfft!

For the past week, we've had a lonely goose walking around the station area. It seemed pretty content in the company of the musk oxen. Even though we worried a little that it was too late for it to fly south, it was kind of nice watching it from the living room, as it walked around calmly outside of house 10. Today the faith of the lonely goose was determined; a raven has started a feast just south of house 9, desperately trying to hide the partly digested Christmas dinner from its seven conspecifics. They together with two falcons have been spotted on the slope towards the river for the past couple of days. Once again Lars showed his true face, with the remark; 'ah, then we should have cooked the bird ourselves'. I don't know why he regretted it so much, since we are definitely not starving. We have more than plenty of 'koldskål' and mayo, that should be demolished, otherwise Jørgen threatens to throw it out, which would almost be a greater disaster than the faith of our poor, former station bird.

Otherwise we are looking forward to better weather and maybe a plane? At least, both Jørgen and I are expecting spare parts, so we're hoping that the flight for 'Danmarkshavn' don't skip our runway.

Kirstine Skov, GeoBasis