

## The Greenlandic dinghy

This afternoon in the early June did not go quietly in the northern settlement Uummannaq in North Greenland.

The ice had long ago broken up around the town, and the transport on the fiord ice by dogsleds or by car had been replaced by boat sailing. It was a sunny Sunday. In the town a wedding party took place, and during the afternoon more and more families came to the quay in Uummannaq. Most should participate in the wedding party, but others use the opportunity to visit relatives and friends in the town.

All around the island, on which Uummannaq is located, there are several small settlements. The distance is short, and you can visit Uummanaq and get back to your home on the same day.

It takes a couple of hours each way. If the weather is permitting, it is a stunningly beautiful sailing between icebergs and lots of ice floes on the shiny, light blue fiord. But it is a cold trip, and you have to be well

prepared. If you are unlucky, you may also be suffering from a freak wave, which makes the clothes even more wet and cold.

The sailing to Uummannaq is accompanied by the fulmar birds. The entire inlet area around the small town is filled with fulmars that elegantly glide close over the surface of the sea. The fulmar is also the landmark of Uummannaq. The bird was part of the shield of the municipality, as the town and the surrounding seven small settlements together constituted its own small community.

The dinghies play a central role in Greenland. A lot of hunting and fishing takes place from the dinghies, and the dinghies also act as important means of transport between the settlements. But it is not without risk to sail the dinghy in these waters.

This photo of the week is from June 2007. This year ten accidents with dinghies were recorded and thirteen people died along the coast of

Greenland: Four of the boats disappeared. On board were seven people who never were found. A dinghy was found with fractured outboard motor and the two on board died. A dinghy was found damaged and the person on board was found drowned four days later. One person died in an accidental shot accident because it took too long before he reached the hospital. A dinghy was found without the person on board. Two people were thrown into the water when the boat turned sharply. One person could not swim and drowned. A dinghy sank as it sailed at full speed over a rock and got the bottom ripped up. The family of two adults and two children rescued themselves into a rubber dinghy and were found unharmed a few hours later.

Every year tragedies and serious incidents of this kind occur. But the dinghy is still used as the most important means of transport along the coast of Greenland.



*A family arrives to the town Uummannaq, June 2007*