

Adaption to extreme cold

I have just got back home after a short walk. Outside the temperature again has fallen to below minus ten degrees Celsius. The hum of the oil burner and the heat in the house makes me feel good.

My first act after have taken off my outdoor things, is to throw a few handfuls of grain out to the small birds. Now I first hand have experienced how cold it is out there, and then I have to show solidarity with my little friends outside the window.

The snow bunting or qupaloraarsuk, which gave the name to this website, is a true arctic bird. It can choose to fly to warmer parts of the American continent in the winter. But here in South Greenland the buntings overwinter. In the countryside and around in the town, we often see large flocks of the little bunting.

The deep snow is a big obstacle for the snow

buntings, while they are foraging. Therefore, they are very dependent on the food they can find in the human settlements, but also on the rocks where the wind has blown the snow away.

There is no doubt that the worst enemy of the snow buntings is the elements. They spend the night in the open only protected against the cold wind of small rocks on the ground, or partially burrowed into snow-drifts.

Studies have shown that the snow buntings can withstand temperatures down to minus 40 degrees Celsius, but then the bird must hide in the snow most of the day and only forage in a short periods during the day.

The birds that visit my feed place look healthy, but you see the temperature out there right now is *only* ten degrees below zero.



Tuia, Qaqortoq, January 2015

Adaption to extreme cold

[Quit](#)

[Go to the Text](#)