

## Ice is also a sign of spring!

Now, we seriously approach the spring and the hectic polar summer here in South Greenland. The snow is melting rapidly away, and we already smell the delightful scent of soil, crowberry and heather. The Snow bunting has started to build the nest with his partner, and also the Lapland bunting has returned from his winter headquarters.

And then the ice arrives! Imagine the ice as a sign of spring! This year the Storisen (meter-thick sea ice formed in the Polar Sea) entered into the fiord near Qaqortoq May 12 in the evening: Ice floes and icebergs as far as the eye can see.

An amazing natural phenomenon! The Storisen is Polar ice having gone through the long journey from the Arctic Ocean along the east coast of Greenland to Cape Farewell and now following the currents north up the west coast of Greenland.

The Storisen creates a lot of problems for the small settlements in South Greenland. The small harbours risk within a short time to be encapsulated inside the vast amounts of ice that even large vessels have difficulty to manoeuvre through.

When the sea is densely covered by ice

floes and icebergs the ships have to zigzag through the ice to come forward along the coast and into the fiords.

The small boats can be crushed, when the ice floes are fretting the boats from all sides. Often the small boats must call for help to get free of the ice when the currents and the tide suddenly and unexpectedly stow the ice together around the boats.

But the Storisen also has its advantages. The ice is a resting place for seals that are migrating along the coast of South Greenland. Suddenly the ice floes along the southern Greenland are alive with the hooded seals and the harp seals. The local people get their freezers filled with traditional Greenlandic food – all for free.

The ice is also a phenomenon that both the locals and the tourists can admire for hours. This nature phenomenon cannot be seen in many places in the world, and if we are lucky, we again this year will get visit of some exotic guests from the Arctic Ocean: The polar bears can be transported in the pack ice from the Arctic Ocean. The Storis is indeed a perfect hunting ground for the elegant but dangerous predators.



Qaqortoq, May 2015

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