

Icy giants

Our small boat skims across the surface of the sea. We draw only a small deal of water under the fast sailing. Yet I often get worried when we get too close to the icy giants. We all know the physiology of the icebergs: One-tenth visible above sea level. Below sea level nine tenths of the iceberg is hid.

Precisely such a sunny summer the icebergs are belaboured violently by the sun. The sun is shining directly on the ice, and the rays of the sun are also reflected in the surface of the sea and send yet more radiation up to the icebergs.

The rays of the sun increase the melting of the ice. Suddenly the dramatic situation arises: A large piece of the ice breaks off and you are sitting in a small 'bath tub' right beside the iceberg. It is even more dangerous if the melting causes the equilibrium of the iceberg to change to the point where the icy giant capsizes and sends huge waves into the surroundings.

These kinds of incidents are killing people in Greenland almost every year.



An iceberg, South Greenland,
September 2015