

The musk oxen

The musk oxen originally immigrated from Canada to North Greenland. The big animal is well adapted for living in the Arctic, and it scattered throughout the land free of ice in North-eastern Greenland.

Natural barriers such as deep fiords, steep mountains and violent rivers prevented the musk ox from scattering further to the south. However, at the beginning of the 1960s, 27 musk ox calves were moved via the zoological garden in Copenhagen to Kangerlussuaq in West Greenland.

The new West Coast population of musk oxen managed excellently and developed into a population of thousands of animals. In the 1980s, some animals were moved to the Qaanaaq area in northern Greenland, and later in 1991 some calves were moved to Ivittuut in South Greenland.

The range of the big animals continues, and

in this decade nineteen musk oxen were moved to the southernmost Greenland. Today, in the Kujalleq Municipality there is a smaller population, and still the hunting of the animals is not started. Therefore, the hunters from the largest town in South Greenland, Qaqortoq, take the long trip in their small dinghies to hunt the musk oxen at Ivittuut, just north of the current boundary of the municipality. It is more than 150 kilometres through one of the world's largest archipelago coasts.

The musk oxen can attain a full weight of three hundred kilogram. The meat and the fur from the musk ox are easy to sell, and it can provide a good return for a hunter, who usually hunts seals or fishes for cod.

This sunny day in September, the hunter has just arrived with his musk ox. On the landing stage he makes the meat from the big animal ready for sale on the local market.



*Qaqortoq, South Greenland,
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