

## Puttaaruunnaq - Play on ice floes

During the months of March and April, the ice is breaking in Southern Greenland. The fiords are filled with ice floes and large icebergs. Sometimes the wind stove the ice along the shores. Other times you can see the ice spread as an infinite mosaic of the windless, smooth fiord.

The ice along the coast is called winter ice. This type of ice melts in the spring sunshine. The ice is breaking up and large and small pieces are moved by wind and currents around in the fiords. The small as well as larger boats have to keep a strict watch to this ice. A boat can quickly become trapped along the rocky coast, if the wind and current suddenly pack the ice in the place where the boat is anchored overnight.

Also, larger ships have to be careful with this ice because the small pieces can be almost invisible. So-called black ice can appear in the surface of the sea and cause damage to the hull of the high-speed ships.

The presence of large blankets of ice floes

has always been a popular but dangerous playground for children in Greenland. Puttaaruunnaq is the name of a game children play, when the ice breaks up in the spring, and where they can jump from ice floe to ice floe. It's a good way to train agility and balance, but just a moment of inattention can bring out the child in danger. Often the ice floes are pitching, and the child has to jump further on to a new ice floe. It is easy to slip on the ice and the ice floes can be fragile and break when a child lands too heavy.

If a child falls into in the water, it is fatal. At the coastline we often find deep water and the ice can close over the place, the child fell through. The coldness of the water and the air is dangerous if a child is dripping wet and has a long way home. Many an exhausted child has reached back to his home with chattering teeth. Unfortunately, many children never get back home.



Puttaaruunnaq, Nanortalik, April 2014

Puttaaruunnaq - Play on ice floes

Quit

Go to the Text