

The Ice Centre

This Saturday in the middle of May the sun is shining and the sky is clear. I have a plan for my hike into the mountains. I want to reach a point from which there is a good view to the Davis Strait. Out there, I may see the polar ice, in Danish called Storisen.

I know that there is much ice out at sea. I can see the ice on the ice charts, which is published by the Danish Meteorological Institute a few times a week. The meteorologists gather their information in many ways. For the ice reconnaissance, a small helicopter is flying routes criss-cross along the coast and in the fiords from Cape Farewell and to the north.

This polar ice (Storisen) is ice that has broken loose as far north as the Arctic Ocean east of Greenland. The sea currents transport the ice to the south along the east coast of Greenland. The researchers have estimated that every second, an average of 150,000 m³ of sea ice is transported through the Fram Strait between Greenland and Svalbard. At Cape Farewell the sea currents transport the

ice back to the north, but now along the west coast. In May, the field ice has expanded right up to the coast off my hometown Qaqortoq.

But the glaciers of the Greenlandic Ice Sheet also provide lots of ice and ice-bergs, and ice is formed on the fiords in the long, cold winter. This photo of the week shows the ice in the fiord outside the South Greenlandic town Narsaq.

The mapping of ice around Greenland has been implemented since 1872. But one morning in January 1959 the people of Greenland and Denmark woke up to the reports on a terrible, fatal accident. The ship M/S Hans Hedtoft had collided with an iceberg and wrecked and all 95 people on board perished.

The incident formed the basis of the establishing of a permanent Ice Centre based at the former military airport in Narsarsuaq. Since then, the centre has made ice reconnaissance one to three times a week both offshore and inshore in South Greenland.



The fiord outside Narsaq, April 2014