

Diary 9 – 9 August 2013

Unbelievable how fast time goes! I have been here seven weeks now and still have two weeks to go. A lot of things have happened during my stay here. The first day out in the field, we saw a polar bear! It was exactly at the same spot we were going. I am not sure my reaction was the right one when my thoughts were "Crap why are we going back so quickly? I cannot get any good pictures!" We of course had to go back and wait a couple of hours before trying to go out in the field again. It was a bit frustrating since the weather had been anything than good and Julie who was going to instruct me of the work I was going to carry on, was only going to be here a week. Everything went well in the end, except the plane that comes and leaves on Wednesdays could not take off until Friday. After some weeks, the weather finally stabilized and I got a glimpse of how the weather is supposed to be in July, sunny! Not extremely wind from all directions and rain that I have got to discover in the beginning. This however turned out to be one of the driest summers ever. I am working with methane and carbon dioxide fluxes, and thereby in the wetter areas, but it did not take many days until I could change the rubber boots to normal comfortable walking boots. Not exactly complaining about it and another pro is that there are hardly any mosquitoes left! The temperature has also varied a lot during my stay. I have started my days with 0°C and there have been days where you could walk in t-shirt and shorts! I really prefer working when it is warm, not just, because it is nicer but the machine I am using is taking a very long time to reach the certain temperature necessary for measurements. So during cold days, it can take over an hour to get ready and I need to cover it, not only with wind sheets but also with my own clothes to make it go quicker. So my machine is warm and cosy while I have to freeze. I also have a fox around who seems to disagree with the way I back my stuff, since he comes and leaves a little "present" now and then on the box and around.

So during Sundays it is free time to do whatever you like. I have visited a fox den and seen a lot of small, very curious and cute fox puppies! I have experienced myself up to the Kuhn-pass, twice, to look after some fossils. The first time the weather did not allow the full walk because of clouds coming in and the visibility became 1 m. So with only 500m left to the right spot we (I, Catherine, Katja, Hans and Michael) had to return. The second time, I guess I did not look close enough on the stony ground because I could not find any fossils. I found a lot of perfectly round stones on the way and a really good view while on the top, so I cannot complain on the trip. It was however very frustrating when Loic went up there and found a lot of fossils. A third time maybe?

I, Jakob, Jakob, Henrik, Laura and Lærke climbed the Zackenberg Mountain as well. It was a very nice trip and a fantastic view on the top. It took its time because of all the loose stones on the way, but we got both up and down and succeeded to cross the river twice in way to big survival suits. I was "promised" hares on that trip but did unfortunately not see any. So the big wishes for my last stay here is hares, a real wolf (not only tracks), a closer polar bear and a lemming that sit still long enough for a photo :). Too much to ask for? I got though very lucky when I followed Jannik out for the fourth or fifth time to see some bird eggs that was supposed to hatch. The first nest got taken and the last one was also a bit dramatic in the beginning. We thought that one also had been taken but Jannik found them moving around. So finally some chicks up close and ringing in action!

We are supposed to write what has happened during the week, and except my work with five minutes chamber measurements, two minutes holding the chamber and so on, the most exciting thing that has happened this week is that it has been my birthday! I had a really nice day started with everyone singing a Danish birthday song about "chokolade". The day I spent together with Lars and Jakob who were taking measurements in some lakes in a beautiful moraine area across the river. When going back we experienced a bit of action in a boat, trying to cross the river in a low tide and a bit of waves that were smashing over us. We were late for dinner but everyone had waited for us! So served for dinner was smoked fish from the fjord that were caught by Lars and Jakob, and then a delicious Danish cake with 23 Swedish flags

on. Two more songs were sung and then the party carried on for a bit longer with varying cocktails and party-tricks like "who can put your fist in your mouth" and "who can turn a biscuit in your mouth, not using hands". So summarized a really good day and many thanks to everyone at Zackenberg who did my day a fantastic and memorable one! :)

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