

Exercise I – Material I2**Storyline two: Fishing from the sea ice**

One by one, Aqaluk buckles the dogs to the sledge. The sky is blue, there is almost no wind and the temperature is minus 35. The sun has regained some power and the days and nights will increase by 40 minutes every day. Within a month, there will be midnight sun.

Down upon the sea ice the dogs run very fast and Aqaluk jumps on to the sledge, and during the next couple of hours, the ride towards the fishing spots 25 km inside the fjord goes at full speed. This is where the halibut lives. In the water full of oxygen there is life feeding the halibut. Halibut live at huge depths, from several hundred meters down to one kilometer.

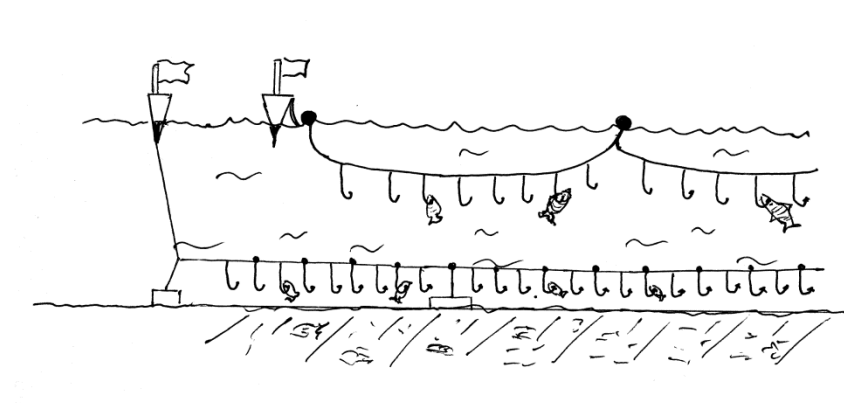


Illustration: © Sebastian Schmitz

The longlines of the fisher are spread all over the fiord, and today Aqaluk is the first one to come to tend his lines. He has two long lines each of a kilometers length, each containing 200 hooks. During the night, the hole where the longline passes into the water has frozen, so the first half hour goes by knocking off the ice without damaging the line. The first hooks are empty, but then the halibuts start to come. Aqaluk carefully draws the line with the help of a line winder, while with the other hand he loosens the hook from the fish with a very large fishing hook attached to a wooden stick.

While stepping on the line, preventing it from running out again, Aqaluk grasps the fish with his hands and carefully takes out the hook and cuts up the stomach of the fish and removes the guts. Then he throws the fish on the ice making it freeze immediately. He goes on drawing the line and removing the fish. After 150 fish, he has finished the tending of the first line; it is time for some coffee, so he sits down on the sledge and relaxes by putting bait on the many hooks. For baits, he uses small pieces of ammassat (a fish in the salmon family).

Part 2

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When he sets the line, he is very careful not to touch the other lines, or else it will be a mess to get them apart again. The second line is released, just like the first one. It starts to get windy. He turns his back to the wind pulling his hood over his head. In his “kamikker” (boots) made from sealskin and his ice bear trousers and sealskin anorak he is warm, but the fingers get very cold, because he can only wear rubber gloves, when he works with the fish. He now and then has to take them off and put his hands inside the anorak warming them on the bare skin of his stomach.



Picture: © Greenland Institute of Natural Resources

Today the catch is good. Almost 600 kg. Late in the afternoon, it is time to return, but now a heavy wind is blowing from the sea. Aqaluk has to help the dogs to pull the heavy loaded sledge. Then he jumps on to the load, and turns his back to the riding direction, so that he will not get too cold. Now it starts to snow, visibility gets difficult, but the dogs will find their way home.

It has been dark for a while before they get to see the light from the houses. The little factory is already closed, so he has to wait to sell the fish until the next morning, but the fish will stay frozen in the cold weather. He puts the sledge on a safe place where the dogs cannot get to the fish. Then he feeds the dogs rewarding them for their efforts with a meal of seal meat and blubber.

After a long day, it is great to return to the family in the small warm house. He was expected, but no one was worried, because everyone knows that he returns when the fish is gathered.

The next morning he gets up early to sell the fish before going out to tend to the longlines again. It is his daughter's birthday in two days, and they are going to celebrate with a “coffee mik” where everyone is coming for coffee and cake. So further fishing has to wait a couple of days.