

TRAPPERS' STATIONS



Borganes [421-1], 6th August 2004. © NCN

Borganes. They spent the autumn exploring their surroundings, hunted and became acquainted with the wildlife. Wolves were observed close by, and without knowing it they had landed in one of the best polar bear habitats in Greenland.

The trappers killed 28 polar bears during the winter, and in fact had more success with bear hunting than with fox trapping, which was the main object of their wintering. One reason was simply their lack of experience. To start with they had taken far too few traps with them; at the start they had only three, and two of these were swept away during a November storm so they then had to construct new traps. There was also a problem with the closing device on their box traps, which didn't function very well, so the foxes walked out of the traps as fast as they walked in. But the three pioneers refused to give up, and invented new closing mechanisms, each one shrewder than the other. However, all this took time and when the closing device eventually worked perfectly, the foxes gnawed their way through the wood of the box. Finally the hunters covered the box traps with thin sheets of metal, but at this point the trapping season was almost over. The expedition's catch was just 32 foxes, including three live animals.

After the polar night they were running low on firewood and then it became cold in Borganes. On the 15th March 1909 Brandal wrote: *"When we measure a temperature of 30 degrees at the roof we get the same result on the floor, with the difference that it is minus 30 degrees down there"*.¹⁰⁷ Without sufficient firewood and with a leaking roof, life in their dug-out was no longer a pleasure. Some time during the spring the three trappers therefore moved out of their dug out and went up to join their friends in Koppneshuset at Kap Wynn.

Borganes was only used for wintering in 1908-09, but up to 25 years later it still served as an occasional shelter for trappers, mostly in emergency situations. It was still almost impossible to heat up this dug-out hut, and as a matter of fact, Hermann Andresen claimed that on a winter's day it was so cold inside that the grease on his steak would stiffen as he flipped the steak on the frying pan!

Brandal 1930; Giæver 1939, 1955; Description ... 1932; N032; N087

Recent status

Borganes today is a ruin. However, it is in surprisingly good condition and a unique example of the most primitive trappers' station in North-East Greenland.

BORGANES



Borganes [421-1], 6th August 2004. Borganes is a former Norwegian trappers' station built in 1908 by the Floren Expedition at Kap Borlase Warren. It was only used as a wintering station in 1908-09. Borganes station is still in surprisingly good condition, with all its walls still standing. Together with Germania-hamn [447-2], these are the only trappers' stations in North-East Greenland with a partly subterranean construction. © NCN

