

When the Ice Floe Broke Up

The first joint high-latitude expedition of rheologists, meteorologists and airmen in the Arctic has been completed.

The new take-off and landing strip was in service for a little longer than a week. Before the departure of the last heavy transport, a sixty ton An-12 airplane, the ice started to move and a "piece" of ice, the size of a football field, broke off from the airstrip.

"For two months the geophysicists were able to study a 50 kilometre long section along the meridional traverse between the Lomonosov rise and the Mendeleev uplift", the deputy head of the high latitude expedition, Mikhail Yur'evich Sorokin, told me.

During its drift the ice floe shifted 120 kilometres from the place where the investigators were first set down in March. During this time the ice camp was broken up five times.

Five times they re-located the tents, together with all of the stores, equipment, instruments, platforms, fuel tanks and radio station, and they ferried the technical machinery. The aerodrome was moved three times and the take-off and landing strip had to be constructed anew three times.

All of the planned studies in the "Trans-Arktika" program were carried out. At the beginning of the week the last workers from the expedition returned to Leningrad.

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Page 4 (Abridged)