

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project

2009 Dispatches



[1: It Begins](#)

Earlier today, leading oceanographers from America, Canada, China, Korea, and Japan boarded the CCGS Louis S.-St. Laurent to embark on a month of mooring deployments, collecting samples, and other scientific projects in the Beaufort Sea.



[2: The Louis Moves](#)

At around 8:30 this morning, the engines surged, the water churned, and the CCGS Louis S.-St. Laurent moved through the sea for the first time of this expedition.



[3: Stormy Weather, Stormy Seas](#)

Inclement weather and 6-foot swells foiled this morning's plan to deploy a Conductivity, Temperature, and Depth monitor (CTD) and plankton nets.



[4: The Ice Floe Cometh](#)

Amid the thunderous echoes of sea ice crashing against the hull, scientists and crew members of the Louis S.-St. Laurent awoke to a frozen seascape. Today marks the ship's first encounter with ice floes.



[5: Plankton, Bongos, and Tigers of the Sea](#)

Kelly Young explains the importance of gathering biological samples from the Beaufort Sea and how zooplankton help explain the movement of Arctic waters.



[6: Copter Recon](#)

The Louis uses a sophisticated arsenal of tools to navigate ice-covered waters and facilitate scientific research in inhospitable environments. Chief among these tools is its primary source of transportation off the ship, the helicopter.



[7: You Down With ITPs? Yeah You Know Me](#)

Today WHOI scientists aboard the Louis, aptly named "The Buoy Boys", recovered the first profiler of the expedition, with assistance from the ship's crew.



[8: The Ice Floe Soundeth](#)

Sea ice comes in a brilliant spectrum of blue and white hues. Its many forms--sometimes jagged, sometimes smooth--could easily replace Rorschach tests in a psychiatrist's office. Though different in size and character, one feature of all floes remains consistent. The ice, when colliding with the hull of the Louis, vibrates the ship and resounds.



[9: Refueling in Numbers](#)



Today's refueling evidenced that the Louis is an extremely thirsty ship. She's already sucked up over one-million liters of fuel, and she'll continue slurping until tomorrow afternoon.



[10: The Calm Before The Figurative Storm](#)

After the ship slurped up its last desired drop of diesel, the Louis continued north en route to the 150 west line, along which scientists and crewmembers will perform 7 CTD casts and two mooring deployments.



[11: There She Floats](#)

In a turn of events worthy of Melville's pen, last afternoon the crew of the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent had a surprising encounter with a whale, or rather part of a whale carcass.



[12: Toilet Bowl Buoys](#)

Yesterday, atop a deck dusted in snow, Mike Dempsey of the Canadian Institute of Ocean Sciences performed a favor for one of his colleagues, Mike Steele from the University of Washington, by deploying Steele's Autonomous Drifting Ocean Station (ADOS).



[13: Arctic Profiles](#)

This is the first in a three-part profile series that will explore the diversity of crewmembers and scientists aboard the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent.



[14: Tree Rings Of The Sea](#)

Unlike drifting buoys and Ice-Tethered Profilers, the most recently recovered mooring, Beaufort Gyre Observing System-A (BGOS-A), latches to an anchor on the ocean floor and remains stationary throughout the year.



[15: More Moorings](#)

Though conceptually simple, subzero temperatures, winds, and heavy ice cover present mooring recoveries with numerous challenges. All moorings, however, follow a similar course to get from the bottom of the Beaufort Sea to the deck of the Louis.



[16: Ziggy Stardust's House of Power](#)

Though their responsibilities and experiences vary, the many scientists, technicians, deckhands, navigators, cooks, and journalists aboard the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent have something in common. All depend on the engineers that keep the ship and its operations running.



[17: Briefs](#)

A team of WHOI scientists and technicians helicoptered to a floe to recover Ice-Tethered Profiler-8 (ITP-8) and deploy ITP-32.



[18: In Praise of Labor](#)

Work on an oceanographic research vessel, on the other hand, demands physical activity. Sailors and scientists rarely sit still on the job. Among other tasks, they operate cranes, transfer seawater samples from Niskin bottles to storage flasks, prepare the ship's food, and maintain the enormous engines that propel the ship through the ice and water.



[19: Arctic Night Owls](#)

When the sun sets beneath the polar horizon, most people aboard the CCGS Louis S. St.-Laurent head to their rooms, insert earplugs, snuggle into bed, and fall asleep. But for a handful of scientists, the setting sun marks only the day's beginning.



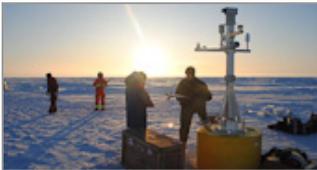
[20: Almost an IBO](#)

Up North, even the most thorough plans can dissolve in the face of the Arctic's true arbiter: the weather.



[21: The Beaufort Gyre Circus Spectacular Presents: The Obuoy](#)

The conditions provided an ideal day for a buoy extravaganza. In total, 19 individuals flew from the CCGS Louis S. St-Laurent for a day of sea ice sampling and the installation of an Ice-Based Observatory, a group of buoys that will give scientists a longitudinal picture of ice, weather, and ocean dynamics.



[22: Arctic Profiles #2](#)

The following profiles compose the second of a three-part series that aims to explore diversity among the participants involved with the 2009 Joint Ocean Ice Study.



[23: The Many Faces of Sea Ice](#)

In the Arctic, ice appears in manifold shapes, colors, and sizes.



[24: Homey Comforts While At Sea](#)

After the novelty of being at sea wears off and thoughts of Fiji start replacing those of frostbite, crewmembers and scientists aboard the CCGS Louis S St-Laurent look to familiar comforts to remind them of warmer days and loved ones back home, or just to provide an escape for a little while.



[25: Deep Blue Beaufort Sea](#)

Although surface water studies dominate oceanographic discourse, the layers closer to the seafloor than the surface hold their own mysteries. Below 2,500 meters (8,200 feet) of depth, the deepest regions of the Arctic Ocean contain a separate world of ocean dynamics, most of which is just





beginning to be investigated and understood.



[26: Snowy Owls Aboard The Louis?](#)

Attention all crewmembers, attention all crewmembers. Two Snowy Owls have been spotted on the port side of the ship.



[27: Arctic Profiles #3](#)

The following profiles compose the third of a three-part series that aims to explore diversity among the participants involved with the 2009 Joint Ocean Ice Study.



[28: Expedition in Numbers](#)

The Louis traveled a total of 4,312 nautical miles (7,986 km or 4,962 mi) over a 29-day expedition period, averaging 149 nautical miles (276 km, 171 mi) per day. The ship reached its northernmost point at 79° 19.6' N, 151° 42.0' W, roughly 650 nautical miles (1,207 km or 750 mi) from the North Pole.



[29: A Dispatch Writer Reflects](#)

It's a critical time to be in the Arctic and we are the privileged few who get to know and explore it.

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