

## Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 27: Last Ice Camp

Gerty Ward  
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Today is our last trip out on to the ice. WHOI is deploying their last ITP, Dave Meldrum is putting in his third SAMS-IMBS and Alice & Kristina are team. The day starts out "warm and sunny" (OK, the air temperature is 2°C. This is the Arctic after all).

After the ITP hole is drilled, Sarah Zimmermann puts a CTD down the hole to profile the water under the ice. They are interested in the freshwater, freshwater does not mean "drinking water" but instead water of lower salinity that comes from ice melting.

A "warm and sunny" day in the Arctic!

Sarah Zimmermann drops a CTD sensor into the ITP hole before the ITP is deployed to measure the salinity of the water near the surface under the ice. Photo by Gary Morgan.

It is difficult to sample this surface layer from the ship because the ship is moving around and mixing this water up. One of the results to come out of the project is that the freshwater layer is increasing in the Beaufort Sea. The cause of this increase is not well-understood. For more information on the Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project background [here](#).

I have been on the LSSL for 3 weeks. The ship has been moving, breaking ice, rolling with waves and all the while the engines have been running quiet. We are moving -- this floe has drifted over 4 miles since yesterday afternoon -- but the motion is not perceptible. Ice feels firm underfoot, a mix of ice and snow. We look ahead of where we walk: low spots, darker ice (where the dark water below is showing through) and melt pond edges are [safety guide](#) that can give you an idea of how thick ice should be for various activities. As part of the deployment process, holes are drilled in the ice (see [Dispatch #17 Deploying an ITP?](#) and [Dispatch #14 Ice Recon from Helo](#)) for more information on these processes.

The ice has small details in its landscape that are missed from the ship, as we steam by or are on station working.

The first thing noticed when stepping on the ice is Q U I E T. Then, we see the shapes.

Do you see a heart in this ice? Being out on the ice gives us an opportunity to notice fine details in the ice structure that often cannot be appreciated from the ship.

Though here, there are no "Noi

The isolation is dramatic. When I look back at the ship, I think of astronauts looking back at Earth. Our helicopter is their LEM.

My Arctic Friends in front of the  
helicopter. Much like the LEM was  
the way off the moon for the  
astronauts, the helicopter is the way  
back to the ship for us.

The last helicopter ride off the ice. The buoys stay behind to  
collect the data.

As our work ended, the clouds rolled in and the ice camp looked quite desolate from on board. The next time we will be off the ship is in Kugluktuk

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