Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 16: Grin and Bear It

Rick Krishfield
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This Sunday is a bit more peaceful than usual on the *Louis*, as we are currently stopped in the ice while repairs are made to electronic circuitry in the engine control room. When the ship is not moving, there is less work for the scientists as the regular program is put on hold. A few days of a relaxed schedule seems like a short vacation now, but may become difficult to bear if this reprieve lasts too long.

Speaking of bears, while we were stopped last evening we were visited by our first polar bear of the cruise (not counting one bear that was spotted far away early on). Animal researcher Joe Illasiak estimates that the bear was rather small, only about 400 lb. The bear circled around the ship at a distance of about a hundred yards or so, swimming occasionally between icefloes, and quietly departed. It's always fun to see the animals in their native habitats, and most of the scientists suddenly became tourists, running out to the railing to snap pictures of the curious creature. The next day, Joe and Ian Green also reported seeing seals in the area.

But down time does not necessarily imply dawdling. Borden Chapman (NRCan), Ryan Pike (NRCan), and Joe Manning (DFO/Maritime) see this as an excellent opportunity to tune the ship's depth sounder, with assistance from Electronics Technician Heather Kinrade. Chief Scientist Sarah Zimmermann continues to acquire seawater profile data with a smaller self contained CTD and wire bottle sampling for chemistry (harkening back to earlier days in the history of oceanography). And of course, the watch schedule remains unchanged for the ship's officers and crew. Furthermore, the annual Cribbage tournament has begun, and cards are flying!

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A polar bear took a stroll around the *Louis* on Saturday night. *Photo by Will Ostrom, WHOI.*

Joe Manning, Borden Chapman, and Heather Kinrade examine the ship's depth sounder deck unit. *Photo by Sarah Zimmermann, IOS.*

Kris Newhall is laughing now, but Flo Carter will have the last laugh in their round of cribbage. *Photo by Rick Krishfield, WHOI.*

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