

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 1: From Sea to Sea

Chris Linder
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"No, really -- we're going to meet an icebreaker in the Canadian Arctic." Our waitress in Edmonton, Canada thought we were pulling her leg, but Rick Krishfield was telling the truth. At that moment we were already six hours of flying time from home in Massachusetts, with roughly five more to go before we would reach our destination. While we were flying from the Atlantic, our colleagues from the Institute of Ocean Sciences in British Columbia were making their way northeastward from the Pacific. Our paths converged in Cambridge Bay, a small town on the south end of Victoria Island in the Canadian Arctic archipelago.

Our final flight was the most exciting--a helicopter ride from the Cambridge Bay airport to the icebreaker *Louis S. St-Laurent* waiting just offshore. In only a few moments (we all wished our flight had been longer!) we were greeting the ship's crew on the deck of the icebreaker. It's amazing to think that only 24 hours ago we had left warm, sunny weather--here we are now surrounded by sea ice...

Once we arrived on the ship we hauled our bags through the maze of corridors to our staterooms. Not to make you too jealous back home, but I have quite the view from my room. From two large portholes, I can see out right over the bow of the ship--which today is surging through broken, melting bits of ice called "brash ice" as we cruise westward through the Northwest Passage. The sun, shining brightly in the clear arctic air, sits high on the horizon as I type this dispatch at 11PM.

For this month, join me on a virtual expedition aboard the icebreaker *Louis S. St-Laurent* as we head north, well above the Arctic Circle. Through dispatches and photos from the field, I will show you what it's like to deploy oceanographic instruments, watch polar bears lumbering across the pack ice, or even what we're having for breakfast. Welcome aboard!

Last updated: September 23, 2014



A patchwork of fields flying into Edmonton.



Rick Krishfield calls the ship from the Cambridge Bay airport (under the watchful eye of a stuffed musk oxen).



Rick Krishfield (background) and Kris Newhall

board the ship's helicopter.



The CCGS *Louis St. Laurent* in Cambridge Bay.

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