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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 19: The final Ice-Based Observatory (76 N, 138 W)

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Dense fog this morning prevented a helicopter flight to search for a suitable ice floe for our final IBO site. As we waited for it to lift, Rick Krishfield (WHOI) spotted a decent floe through the fog from the ship, and an afternoon of ice work followed.

Today's deployments were an ITP (ITP number 55, a standard temperature/salinity ITP), an UpTempO buoy and a Seasonal Ice Mass Balance buoy (SIMB) developed at the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (New Hampshire). The SIMB makes similar ice temperature, thickness and snow depth measurements as the IMB, deployed at the previous two IBO sites. However, the SIMB is a modified system that is designed to survive in thin ice. Its development was motivated by the decrease in older, thicker ice in the Arctic in recent years, and the corresponding increase in thin, seasonal ice cover. The SIMB is a tall thin buoy that is deployed through an 11" hole in the ice and can float vertically in open water (a spar buoy). So far, all instruments on the floe are transmitting data via satellite and appear to be working properly.

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During the buoy deployments, Kazu Tateyama and Kunio Shirasawa performed an electromagnetic ice-thickness survey around the floe, and Alice Orlich (UAF) and her team took ice core samples and carried out a drill-site thickness survey.

Today concluded our work on the ice for this season. As the Arctic winter sets in, we'll be analyzing the data streaming in to our computers back home.

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