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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 11: The mooring deployment

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After the long day of recovering the mooring deployed in the summer of 2011, the crew is now ready to replace it for the following year. The first step is to set up the deck equipment and to make sure everything is ready to go because once the deployment starts it is difficult to stop for any length of time. To do this job the ship must remain in one place for hours on end. In heavy winds or currents this can be a difficult task, but today the seas were as calm as possible. It was cold and foggy during the night and we started with a wet deck and ice on the equipment. As the morning wore on the sun did come through the fog and clouds for a bit but after lunch, however, it began to drizzle.

The mooring consists of an anchor which is a pair of old train wheels weighing in at about 4500 lbs., several lengths of wire, 52 glass floatation spheres, a large foam sphere at the top, and lots of instruments. The entire contraption is more than two miles long and takes hours to put in. The instruments are both delicate and heavy which makes handling them on a ship sometimes tough, and all of this must be done with the utmost safety. We started right after breakfast and finished just in time for a nice Sunday dinner. I went for the lobster tails, scallops, and merlot. Afterward we gathered in the lounge to watch the closing ceremony of the Olympics and to enjoy some music by Ben Powell on the guitar and Captain McNeill on the bass.

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