

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 33: Only 5 shopping days left!

Steve Lambert, WHOI
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This morning Hugh MacLean and I were getting ready to deploy another buoy - this is just one of several small drifting buoys that are released over the side. We were set to go after breakfast when the LSSL made contact with another ship. We have seen a couple of other ships so this is not uncommon, but what made this one different was that it was from Malta. We are a long way from Malta! As part of the Coast Guard mission it is the LSSL's duty to ensure that all shipping and transport guidelines are being followed so Pilot Chris Swannell made a flight to go have a look. Sometimes ships will dump garbage or oil from the bilge, poach whales, or any number of other activities. In this case, however, the ship was in compliance and Chris returned to the LSSL. It turned out the ship - Scorpio - was just a small sailing vessel with 2 passengers aboard making a trip through the area.

Afterward the Air eXpendable Ice Beacon (AXIB) deployment began on the helo deck. With some help from the crew we were able to lower the unit down with a small crane and safely release it at 77 degrees north latitude / 157 degrees west longitude. Later our chief scientist Dr. Bill Williams received an e-mail stating that the unit was working properly.

Elsewhere on the ship the science group have begun making plans for their final sampling and buoy stations; some equipment is being organized for shipping home. Our lab is preparing for the final instrument deployments for tomorrow.

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