

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 31: JAMSTEC mooring recovery

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The Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) deployed a mooring at about 76 degrees north that was due for recovery and so today set to work with Jonaotaro Onadera and Hirokatsu Uno. Unlike the moorings we have been working with so far this cruise the JAMSTEC configuration does not include the large 6-foot sphere at the top or the profilers that climb up and down the wire. This mooring had two small 37-inch spheres at the top, a host of micrCAT and ADCP sensors, and a dozen glass floatation balls at the bottom. The wire was not wire but a kevlar reinforced synthetic line that made the mooring very light and easy to recover. With help from the deck crew the JAMSTEC scientists began removing equipment from the hold and setting up the deck just after breakfast. As the work began we could see a ship in the distance and for a brief part of the recovery we had a bit of snow. With Ed Bridgeman at the winch Seaman Vince Mullett was lowered over the side with a recovery hook to snag the mooring float. The float was tough to catch, however, as the seas threw the small sphere around a bit and there wasn't much to hook onto but Vince pulled it off and soon the recovery began.

The upper portion of the mooring was the most complicated with each sensor being taken off and the many, many terminations that had to be handled as the line came out of the water. At the end of each section the termination is shackled together and then the shackle is cotter-pinned. To prevent cutting the line on the spool the cotter pins are removed and the shackles covered in a canvas wrap to protect both it and the winch. This slows the operation down quite a bit. But after a few hours out on deck we got the mooring in and safely on board. This puts us one job closer to port, and to home.

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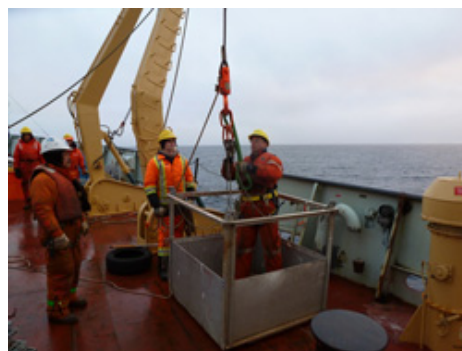
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