

Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 11: Recovery of Mooring A

Luc Rainville
August 6, 2007

After locating ITP-1 last evening, we reached the location of the Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project Mooring A early in the night and started doing CTD casts and taking all sorts of biogeochemical samples. The sampling went through the night, and at 6 am the WHOI guys sprung into action. Jim Dunn, Kris Newhall, and Rick Krishfield first did a survey to accurately locate the sub-surface mooring (interrogating the acoustic release near the ocean floor to see how far it is, and triangulating the position), then the captain broke the ice above the mooring, and finally Kris sent the release command shortly after 9am. The big orange float appeared right in front of the Louis, and from there the whole recovery went really well. By lunch time the whole mooring was on deck, with all the instruments in great shape. It was a very swift and smooth operation.

Then the plan was to go back to "Camp Smiley" and recover ITP-1. Unfortunately, the fog rolled in just after the end of the mooring recovery and the visibility rapidly went down. We sent the helicopter to look for the buoy, but they were not able to find it again. Since it reports its position only once a day near 6:30 pm (local time), we didn't know where the drifting ice took it. By then the fog was so thick that it was impossible to fly, and the search pattern we did with the ship didn't lead anywhere. After a few hours we decided to give up (for now), and head to the Northwind Ridge (west) to do a series of CTD casts.

Later that day, ITP-1 called home and we figured that at some point the ship had been within 2.5 miles of Camp Smiley. Too bad the visibility was so horrible that we couldn't see it!



The sub-surface float (big orange ball) is on the surface! The Captain is looking out of the bridge to align it with the side of the ship.



After hooking up the sphere, you have to lift it out of the water and connect the mooring wire to the winch.



Keeping an eye on the foredeck from the bridge, where all the action is happening.



Then there is a lot of winching... Here Jim (blue jacket) and Kris (brown work suit) are working on a termination, while deckhands Bill May, Alfie Sears, and Glen Watton (left to right) operate the winch.



After a few hours, the acoustic releases, which held the whole mooring attached to the anchor for the past year are finally coming on board.



The whole mooring is on deck! The cluster of yellow balls is a bunch of glass spheres that add buoyancy to the mooring, here near the acoustic releases.

Photos by Luc Rainville.



Looking for ITP-1. When the fog rolls in, visibility gets very bad. Rick took this picture of the *Louis* as they were returning from the ITP search mission on the helicopter. (Photo by Rick Krishfield)

Last updated: September 23, 2014

Copyright ©2007 Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, All Rights Reserved.

Mail: Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, 266 Woods Hole Road, Woods Hole, MA 02543, USA.

E-Contact: info@whoi.edu; press relations: media@whoi.edu, tel. (508) 457-2000

Problems or questions about the site, please contact webdev@whoi.edu