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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 13: Recovery of ITP-1

Luc Rainville
August 8, 2007

We found "Camp Smiley" again! On the way back for the Northwind Ridge to the mooring site, First officer Ross Boone and Chief Officer Stéphane Legault steered the ship towards the position the had estimated from the last few known locations of ITP-1 (see dispatch 10). The visibility this morning was much better, and just before breakfast Stéphane had located Camp Smiley less than 2 miles ahead off the ship. We pulled in right next to the floe and the buoy, and the helicopter carried Jim Dunn, Rick Krishfield, and Kris Newhall (WHOI), and deckhands Bill May (to help recovery) and Glen Watton (gunman, on bear patrol) to the ice, as well as all the equipment they needed.

ITP-1 was trapped in an ice floe about 2.3 m thick; freeing it was not an easy task. The whole process is easier to understand by looking at the pictures below, but in short it involves melting a hole around the float and through the entire thickness of the floe, then a lot of lifting and de-icing. Everything went really well, and about five hours after starting ITP-1 was on board and Rick "decided" to celebrate the successful recovery by falling on his back in a melt pond. No harm, but it was quite a classic moment!

The day was not nearly over. After a 2-hour transit to the mooring site, crew members from the deck department helped the WHOI guys to deploy mooring A. We started just after dinner (5:30pm) and were done about 5 hours later. The deployment went really well: two moored profilers, three sediment traps, and an upward-looking sonar are now monitoring the water properties at Site A. Three more to go!

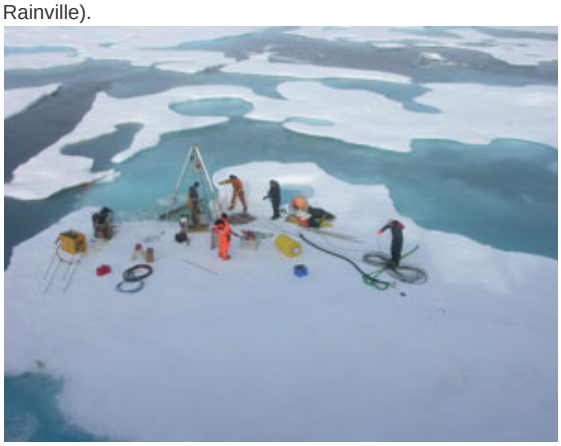
Jim Dunn, Kris Newhall, and Rick Krishfield are setting up the gear, brought to the ice by helicopter. (Photo by Luc Rainville).

Every time someone goes on the ice, they have to be accompanied by a gunman - for protection against polar bears. Here Glen Watton is patrolling around Camp Smiley. (Photo by Luc Rainville).

First a hole had to be melted around the float. Hot water is circulated through a ring placed around the yellow float by Bill May, Rick, and Kris. (Photo by Jim Dunn).

The melting operation results into a big 'ice core' with a diameter of about 2 ft. The float can be lifted... (Photo by Luc Rainville).

... but the cable is still trapped in ice. Little by little, Kris is



Then 800 m of cable have to be pulled out and coiled. (Photo

trying to free the cable from the ice with a chain saw. (Photo by Luc Rainville).

Finally come out the crawler itself and the bottom weight. (Photo by Rick Krishfield).

by Luc Rainville).

Rick is climbing out of the melt pond after his "celebratory swim". (Photo by Toshio Nagashima).

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