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Beaufort Gyre Exploration Project: Dispatch 11: Rain Day

Chris Linder
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It appears that my petition to Poseidon didn't go well last night, because the weather is miserable. Peering out through my porthole, I can't tell where the ice ends and the sky begins. I am reminded of a typical blustery March day in New England--the snow is in dirty piles at the gutters, the temperature is just above freezing, and a hard rain sucks the heat right out of you. It was with some relief that I discovered this morning that Sarah and John decided to postpone the mooring deployment for a day. John wanted to take the opportunity to retest the acoustic releases, plus it gives Sarah and the CTD team a chance to finish the west-east CTD line they started yesterday.

Sarah Zimmermann decorates the main lab bulletin board with the champion cup, created by ice officer Lucie Theriault.

The change of pace allowed the chemists some time to catch up on analyzing samples and also to exercise a little creativity. Both crew members and science party put their artistic talents to work decorating styrofoam cups for the traditional "shrinking of the cups." It's a time-honored oceanography tradition to send a few bags of cups down with a deep CTD cast. After being subjected to the compressive power of the weight of 4000 meters of water, the cups come back miniature versions of their former selves.

Rainwater drips from the *Louis*.

This afternoon a pair of curious visitors paid us a visit. Two small birds appeared out of nowhere, chirping excitedly and wheeling around the ship in mad little circles. Having seen only a few very shy seals, it was quite a sight to see (and hear) another living creature in this otherwise eerily quiet place. Doug informed me that they were an arctic species called "pipits." It looks like they might be catching a ride with us or resting for a bit before continuing their travels to a hopefully more hospitable climate.

Just before dinner Linda White joined me at the rail watching the rain come drip dripping down. "In all my Arctic cruises I can't remember this much rain" she tells me. "At 75 degrees north, it should be snowing!" The ice, too, has been thinner than usual at this location. We are still encountering thin, melting annual ice instead of the thicker multi-year ice. This could be a problem in the next week, as the mooring team needs to find some thick floes to support the two ice buoys.

Rick Krishfield tapes up the sediment samples from the sediment flux trap on mooring A.

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Dissolved oxygen sample bottles wait to be filled in the wet lab.

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