



HLY0802: March 29-May 6, 2008

Chief Scientist's Log

April 1: Storms and Stations at Sea

Post by Carin Ashjian

Healy rolled and crashed through the night in 30-knot winds, making sleep difficult for many and deploying science gear perilous at times. From my cabin, I could hear the spray on the house as the bow pitched in the waves. I could tell the cadence of the station work below, continuing relentlessly through the dark night. The ship rolls when the CTD is being deployed from the starboard side and is relatively peaceful running with the wind. I had an early morning station with my VPR, and, between the weather and the anticipated early morning page, I heard all the transitions between events.

The morning dawned no better with a wild VPR recovery as the stern heaved and the instrument swung. We did get it under control and safely onto the deck. However, at the next station, the Calvet net (a small pair of nets used by Alexei Pinchuk) jumped on board by itself (the nets and the samples were fine!). That was enough for me and the VPR remained safely in the hangar until conditions improved.

At approximately 1130, we entered the ice for the first time. The edge of the ice zone was mesmerizing, a matrix of snow covered ice "pancakes" rolling and tumbling with the swell. Most of the time, although ice moves quickly horizontally, there is little vertical motion unless two floes collide. Here, the ice field would be perilous for a lesser boat than an icebreaker. We were all relieved to finally leave the open water for the calm of the ice. I unleashed my desk chair from its anchor point on the floor and can sit without bracing myself to keep from rolling. As we continue into the ice, the swell dissipated and the ice floes become more beautiful. The wind continues, however, and it is brisk outside. Later this afternoon, the sun came out bathing the ice in a golden glow.

We have done a number of stations today, despite the dicey conditions early on. The krill gang completed their first krill feeding experiment. My zooplankton gang completed our first egg production experiment. The instruments in the lab are humming and beeping.

Tomorrow we will do a large, multi-measurement "process" station at one of our important sites. We are excited; this is our first process station in ice and we will re-sample here later in the season when the ice is gone, providing a comparison of the ecosystem with and without ice. We hope to find an ice floe suitable for a party to sample on the ice itself and have been planning the logistics of the station. Right: Tracy Shaw, Tom Kruger, and Eric Rocklage deploy the Bongo nets in the evening sun. The nets are black so that they will be less easily seen by krill. Krill are zooplankton that resemble a shrimp.



The North Pacific Research Board and the National Science Foundation are partners in a six-year, \$50 million study of the Bering Sea marine ecosystem and the effects of climate change on this vital area. Learn more about the BEST-BSIERP Bering Sea research program at <http://bsierp.nprb.org>

