



**HLY0802: March 29-May 6, 2008**

**Chief Scientist's Log**

## **April 15: My Pager ... and Huge Waves**

*Post and Photos by Carin Ashjian*

I start today with a description (and photo) of my pager. There are 137 people on this ship. The ship is so huge that it is very easy to lose people. So each person on board has a pager (a.k.a. an electronic leash!). This means that we can be found easily at any time of the day. Today I thought I would take a short nap. My beeper went off 3x during the nap! The pager system is a very effective way to keep in touch with people. There was one day that I forgot my pager and left it on my desk for an hour ... I have to admit that it was liberating! I have heard also of pagers accidentally going through the laundry ... they don't work so well after they have been washed!

Lately we have been trying to work our way along a line in the mid-shelf along which the ice is very jumbled and tough. The ship has been having more difficulty in breaking through. To make the going easier, the ship drivers have been following anything except a straight line between points as they seek leads, or openings in the ice with open water or very thin ice, through which to drive rather than trying to beat through the jumbled ice. Occasionally there is no choice and then we break through with a great rumbling and clattering. It makes for longer transits between stations. To pass time between stations, we read, work on data, or play card or computer games.

We continue to collect water and plankton samples along our track. We have been measuring how many females produce eggs per day, how many eggs are produced per female, and how many of those eggs actually hatch. Since the cruise started, we have seen an increase in the numbers of females that are producing eggs, a sure sign that spring, and increased levels of food, are coming to the Bering Sea. We are also measuring the feeding rates of these females on the ambient, or naturally occurring, phytoplankton (plant plankton) and microzooplankton (smaller animal plankton).

The ice and sky continue to be incredibly beautiful. Every day brings new vistas of ice and leads and new ice and frost flowers. Today at sunrise we saw two impressive "sun dogs" to each side of the rising sun that persisted for quite some time. I am constantly mesmerized and enchanted by the changing light and vistas of the ice. We have also seen in the distance seals and their pups – another sign that spring is coming!

We have sampled so far at 56 stations or locations. This may not seem like a lot for some cruises but it is quite a few considering that a good number of these last for 6–18 hours if we have people who go out onto the ice to sample. Today we also used the helicopter for scientists to fly away from the ship and sample the ice remotely.

We are heading to the shelf break after this to try to sample some deep stations. We are not sure if the weather is going to look favorably on our plans! There are some high winds and waves forecast for the area during the next few days that may make it difficult or unsafe to work. We may stay in the ice, where the waves are dampened despite the high winds.