

20 Aug 2015

Hi OCN 201 students:

Greetings from 76°N in the Arctic Ocean.

We sailed from Dutch Harbor on August 9th and are now well into our sampling program which I will tell you a bit about each week.

Our email is very limited as we are near the limit of regular satellite coverage so we can only send small files.

Today I am sending a map of our cruise track and a couple of low resolution pictures showing us setting up the ship in Dutch Harbor.

There are 51 scientists on this Coastguard ship (USCGC Healy) and a crew of 95, which is unusually large for a research project. Everybody has to get their equipment unpacked and set up before the ship sails, so it takes a long time to do this and makes quite a chaotic mess as picture 1 shows.

Picture 2 shows some of my fellow scientists making a "clean room" out of plastic inside the main lab. When finished air blowers with HEPA filters on them will circulate air inside this "bubble" as we call it, making sure there are no dust particles inside. This means that we can handle samples for trace element determinations without all the dirt from the ship getting in and contaminating the samples.

Our UH project is lucky because we have a 20ft long container van that already has a filtered air supply and contains all of our laboratory equipment already inside it and set up. Nevertheless, when we first get on the ship we have to set up things inside our van and connect up electricity, water, and other things we need to allow us to do our work. Picture 3 shows me on the roof of our van feeding the internet cables from the ship into the inside of my van.

Finally, today as we were sampling we saw 2 polar bears about a mile from the ship, one of them was quite curious about the ship, but fortunately did not come very close to us. I will tell you more about this and other things we see later in our cruise.

Bye for now,  
Chris Measures