



NOAA Teacher at Sea
Allison Schaffer
Onboard NOAA Ship GORDON GUNTER
September 14 – 25, 2007

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Allison Schaffer
NOAA Ship GORDON GUNTER
Mission: Ichthyoplankton Survey
Day 4: Tuesday, September 18, 2007

Weather Data from Bridge

Visibility: 12 nautical miles
Wind direction: NE
Wind speed: 18 kts.
Sea wave height: 3 – 4 feet
Swell wave height: 3 – 4 feet
Seawater temperature: 27.5 degrees
Present Weather: Mostly Cloudy



Our sample from one of the bongo collections

Science and Technology Log

I woke up this morning excited and ready to go! My morning doesn't exactly start bright and early at 6am but tends to start much later around 10am. The way life on board the boat works for the team of scientists is that there are two teams: the night watch which is from midnight to noon and the day watch runs from noon to midnight. The field party (that's what the team of scientists on board is called) consists of six scientists and the FPC (Field Party Chief). I work as part of the day watch along with two of the other scientists. The remaining three work the night shift. Each of the pre-selected stations is about 30 miles apart, so it takes us close to three hours to commute between stations. Once we arrive at the station, all the sample



Teacher at Sea, Allison Schaffer, rinsing one of the bongo samples into a glass container to be preserved

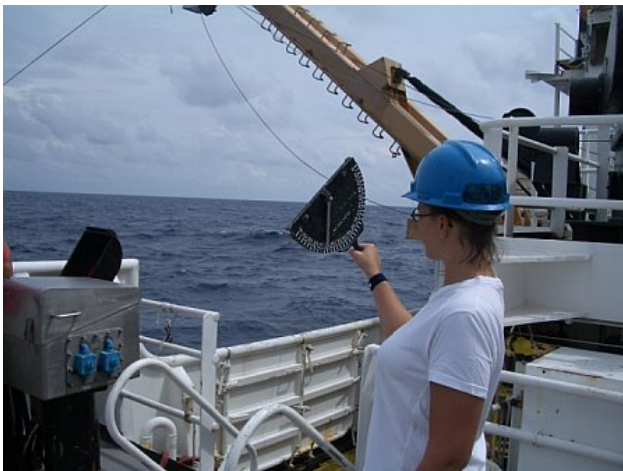
collections and last about 45 minutes to an hour. After we have completed a station we head back into the lab where we have three hours to wait until our next station. During this time we usually watch a movie, read a book, email friends, family or work, do work, play cards, etc. Or in my case, I like to sit out on the deck and look at the ocean since living in Chicago it's not something I get to see everyday.

So this particular morning, I wake up and get dressed just in time for an early lunch before our shift. Today it happens that we reach our station around 11 and

since each station takes about an hour, myself and the other scientists from my shift decided we would head up and relieve the night shift early so they can head down for lunch since lunch is only out until noon. Since they had already done the bongo net sampling and preserving, we finished up the station with a Neuston collection. Once we labeled all the samples, I sat down at one of the computers to do some more emailing and started staring out the window in the lab. It was another beautiful day on the Gulf! At least from my perspective it was. What I didn't see yet on our horizon was a fairly large storm system was headed our way from the Atlantic across Florida in our direction. We arrived at our second station, did our two sample collections and headed back in for dinner. When we got back in, the FPC said that the Commanding Officer (or CO), Lieutenant Commander Brian Parker, said we were going to be heading south to get away from the storm. He said that was our best bet to avoid any bad weather and that the safety of everyone on board is most important to him. We would definitely not be able to hit anymore stations on my shift but we now had the rest of the night off to relax!



Bongo nets coming out of the water getting rinsed down by one of the GUNTER scientists



Teacher at Sea, Allison Schaffer, taking wire angle measurements for the bongo nets using the inclinometer.

Personal Log

I have been finding some very cool animals in the samples we have collected! The other deck scientist and I spend more time looking through our sieves to see what caught than we do doing anything else. At our first station we got more jellies—and the stinging ones this time! But at our second station, we caught a bunch of juvenile flat fish and eels. And we are getting tons of crabs and shrimp! Little tiny ones! It is still amazing to me the variety of what we are finding and the different colors of everything! Bright blue copepods, orange or purple

crabs, purple amphipods, silvery blue and yellow jacks, silvery blue half beaks, yellow and gray triggers, pink shrimp, and more!



Teacher at Sea, Allison Schaffer holding a cannon ball jelly caught in the Neuston net