

Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee Report October 2009

USCGC Healy completed her 2009 science season and returned to Seattle WA on October 1. Healy conducted four science missions this year, supporting two NSF funded Bering Sea Ecosystem Study/Bering Sea Integrated Research Program cruises to the Bering Sea (22 days, Chief Scientist Cooper; 40 days, Chief Scientist Ashjian) in March-May. She returned to Seattle in June until leaving again in early July to support two cruises in the Beaufort Sea, one in support of the NOPP program conducting mooring recoveries/turn arounds and hydrography on the Beaufort Shelf funded by the ONR (13 days; Chief Scientist Pickart) and a cruise to conduct Extended Continental Shelf Mapping, working together with the CCGS Louis St. Laurent, supported by NOAA (41 days, Chief Scientist Mayer). Healy shortly will enter dry dock at Todd Pacific Shipyard in Seattle WA for maintenance and upgrades, including the installation of a new Multibeam system. Because of the length of the shipyard period, she is unable to support the final field year of the BEST/BSIERP program (that program will have to use a non-ice strengthened UNOLS vessel). She has a full science schedule for 2009 starting mid-year.

USCGC POLAR SEA was on standby to support ODEN during the McMurdo breakout but her services were not required. She supported a cruise on the Beaufort Shelf primarily to map methane hydrates but with additional science also, in mid-September funded by the NRL, DOE, and USGS (11 days, Chief Scientist Coffin) and is presently working in the Beaufort Sea on an NSF funded cruise to re-capture tagged polar bears (34 days, Chief Scientist Ben-David). She has science cruises planned for 2010. USCGC POLAR STAR is in caretaker status at the dock in Seattle WA. The CG is waiting for the results of an engineering assessment study and for a second increment of funding before proceeding to repair the POLAR STAR.

Efforts to foster good communication between science and northern communities continue. The AICC Chair attended the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission meeting in July to present science results from the BEST/BSIERP program. The Healy continues to enjoy good relations with the northern communities and will maintain efforts in this regard. Much of the communication regarding POLAR SEA science activities has been conducted by USCG District 17 and Dr. Phil McGillivray (USCG), the POLAR SEA science liaison. The POLAR SEA science schedule had potential to conflict with local subsistence hunting and considerable effort was required to resolve these conflicts. The AICC will hear a report from Dr. McGillivray regarding these efforts at the next Committee meeting.

The AICC completed debriefs of the first two 2009 Healy cruises in June and will be debriefing the last two cruises in the next few weeks. Debriefs of the Polar Sea cruises will occur after the ship returns to Seattle in early December 2009.

The AICC has solicited nominations for new members to replace members whose terms have expired or who have had to step down from the Committee because of professional conflicts. The Committee expects to identify five new members who will take their seats at several time periods between now and January 2010.

The AICC met June 24-25, 2009 in Arlington VA and will next meet December 8-9, 2009 in Seattle WA. Draft minutes of the June 2009 meeting will be posted on the UNOLS web site shortly.

The AICC can be reached by writing to the Chair (carin@whoi.edu) or to the UNOLS Office (office@unols.org).

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