NERACOOS News

NORTHEASTERN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION of COASTAL OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEMS

Delivering ocean information in the Northeast

IOOS INTEGRATED OCEAN OBSERVING SYSTEM

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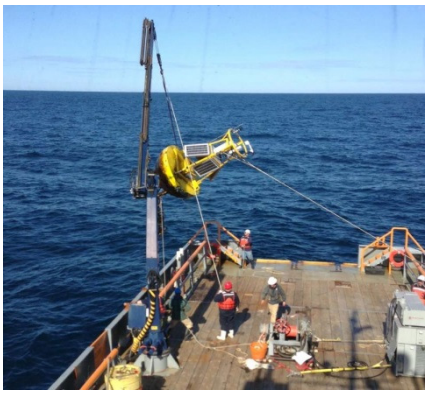
Buoy M Recovered!

After traveling 186 miles over 48 days, buoy M has been recovered. The rescue mission took place aboard the OSV Scarlett Isabella, thanks to the University of Maine, and Boston Harbor Cruises, Offshore Logistics.



NERACOOS buoy M is owned and operated by the University of Maine's Physical Oceanography Group (PhOG) and is routinely moored in Jordan Basin, approximately 60 miles southeast of Mount Desert Island, ME. During winter storm Nemo in early February 2013 it broke loose from its mooring. During the storm buoys in the Gulf of Maine measured wave heights over 30 feet and wind gusts exceeding 55 mph.

Scientists at the University of Maine monitored the buoy daily as it drifted in the Gulf of Maine and worked diligently to coordinate the recovery, which required adequate weather and ship time. The recovery took place March 30th on the southern edge of George's Bank where a crew gathered and recovered buoy M along with many of its' instruments aboard the OSV Scarlett Isabella. The buoy and instruments have been returned to the University of Maine for inspection and repairs and a refurbished buoy will be deployed in Jordan Basin later this spring.

Pilots rely on NERACOOS Information

"The coast of Maine supports multi-million dollar fishing and tourism industries so when making decisions about bringing a 700 foot tanker full of fuel into port we need the best ocean and weather information possible, which is why we depend on NERACOOS buoy observations and forecasts to ensure safety and efficiency of these critical operations." - Captain David Gelinas, Penobscot River and Bay Pilots Association

Penobscot River and Bay Pilot, Captain David Gelinas gave us a glimpse of what he faces in his job and reminds us how NERACOOS contributes to safe, efficient port operations in Penobscot Bay, ME. In February, Captain Gelinas needed to board a tanker at Monhegan Island coming up from Boston. While the seas at the pilot boarding area were only 4' when the ship left Boston, the NERACOOS wave prediction page showed them to be 8-11' by the time the ship would have been at the boarding area. Captain Gelinas confirmed that the seas would be too rough and cancelled the job for that day well in advance of the vessel's arrival. The seas eventually reached nearly 20' later that night. Captain Gelinas set up boarding for 1500 the next day, when the prediction showed a more modest 8' sea with a much longer period between waves. He reported that it was still a challenging boarding, but the ability to so accurately predict the seas and establish a schedule greatly contributed to the safety of the job, as well as provided the shipper with a firm idea of when his ship would come into port.

NERACOOS Sponsors Drifter for Global Learning Charter School Students

Students from the Global Learning Charter Public School (GLCPS) in New Bedford, Massachusetts, deployed an ocean drifter this month thanks to NERACOOS. The GLCPS class spent their first semester studying sea surface currents, tides, and waves.

This semester they are learning about marine biology and ecosystems. The drifter data will be used to make connections between the physical and biological components of the ocean. Assembling, deploying, and tracking the drifter will prove how the GLCPS capitalizes on the exceptional resources of our region and tie these resources to their curriculum and instruction.

Jessica Harris, a teacher from GLCPS, built the drifter for her 50 students at a workshop on March 9 where educators from Massachusetts and Connecticut built a total of five drifters. The workshop was hosted by NERACOOS, the Massachusetts Marine Educators, and the Northeast Fisheries Science Center. The GLCPS students will be following their drifters onwww.neracoos.org/drifters/globalcharter every day in their classrooms. To learn more about the drifter program, and to see the other schools who built and deployed drifters this year, visit http://neracoos.org/drifters and http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/drifter/. NERACOOS will be co-sponsoring another workshop in September with the Gulf of Maine Marine Educators.

Sustaining the Congressional Support IOOS Association Hill Visits

The cherry blossom trees were in bloom in Washington, DC on April 9th and 10th as Ru Morrison, the NERACOOS Executive Director and vice-chair of the IOOS Association, joined Julie Thomas, Director of the Southern California Ocean Observing System and chair of the IOOS Association, in making the rounds on Capitol Hill. Meeting with congressional delegations and key committee staff is an important part of the effort to sustain IOOS support at a national level. Ru and Julie were grateful to be joined for many of the visits by Staci Lewis from the Consortium of Ocean Leadership. Great discussions about the everyday benefit to people of the program demonstrated the continued commitment to IOOS by those on the Hill. Meetings included staff from both the House and Senate Appropriations committees, the Senate Commerce Committee, House Committee on Natural Resources, the House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, and the Northeast's own Representative Chellie Pingree from Maine. Congresswoman Pingree was thanked for her continued support and helping to lead a Dear Colleague letter for House members to sign onto urging the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee to sustain funding for IOOS that circulated the same week.

Buoys Support Red Tide Forecast for 2013

The spring and summer red tide of 2013 in New England is expected to be "moderate" according to the forecast released by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI).

Ocean and weather data from the Gulf of Maine buoys play an important role in this forecasting effort. When developing this new red tide forecast system, scientists depended on historical data from the buoys to develop and verify the model. Buoy data is also used on an ongoing basis to review forecast accuracy. This collaboration provides a working example of how observations from buoys and model forecasts go hand in hand in understanding the dynamic ocean ecosystem.

This collaboration is also demonstrated in the development and testing of new instruments. Scientists from WHOI have helped to develop and are testing buoy-mounted instruments to detect the cells of red tide-causing algae. In the future NERACOOS buoys could carry these instruments and detect a red tide in real-time, which could significantly improve forecasting and management of red tide events. To learn more about red tides and associated research, monitoring and forecasting efforts in the Northeast, please visit the Northeast PSP website.

Mobile Access to NERACOOS.org

According to Google, in 2013 more people will access the web on a mobile device than from a computer. This forecast has been echoed by many NERACOOS users, many of whom
work on or near the water with no access to a computer. The current products on the NERACOOS website were designed to effectively deliver information on a computer screen, not on the small screen of a mobile device. We want to make sure that access to www.neracoos.org on a mobile device is easy and effective. To achieve this goal the NERACOOS web development partners at the Gulf of Maine Research Institute are currently developing mobile versions of many of our web-based products. In the first phase of this effort we will roll out mobile access to our real-time data products that are used by thousands every week. Stay tuned and get ready for mobile NERACOOS.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

April 19, 2013, Long Island Sound Research Conference, Port Jefferson, Long Island, New York

April 30, 2013, NERACOOS Strategic Planning and Implementation Team Annual Meeting, Narraganset, RI

May 8, 2013, NERACOOS, Board of Directors Meeting, Seacoast Science Center, Rye, NH

May 18, 2013, National Maritime Day Celebration, Belfast, Maine

June 8, 2013, World Ocean Day Celebration

June 10 - 12, 2013, Energy Ocean International, Providence/ Warwick, Rhode Island