

Greetings again from the Ronald H. Brown, after week three of A16N (Leg 1)!

It's been a calm week here in the Atlantic Ocean, as we steam ever closer to Spain. Since our last update we've completed 24 deep and 7 bio (1000 m) stations, for a total of 61 deep and 18 bio stations thus far for this leg. We also deployed 3 drifters, at 11°N (3/21), 15°N (3/24), and 18°N (3/25) along 29°W, and a core Argo float, at 11°N (3/21).

CTDs have continued to proceed on the aft winch. This has generally worked well. Early in the week we had a few spooling issues with the cable, but these were efficiently resolved by our deck crew and we haven't had any significant issues since. We are still working on getting the forward winch back into working order to have a back-up going forward, and especially for Leg 2. Along those lines, our "care package" of spare equipment was shipped earlier this week from AOML and should be set to meet the ship in Spain. Thanks so much for the hard work of everyone who made that happen!



Ellen Park (WHOI) and Harrison Bruce (Crew) prepping a drifter for deployment. Photo credit: Tyler Christian (AOML)

In other science news, on Wednesday (3/22) we made our final Sargassum grab as we exited the Great Atlantic Sargassum Belt. In total we were able to collect 68 Sargassum samples over 11 stations from three different species (*S. fluitans*, *S. natans I*, and *S. natans VIII*). We look forward to the exciting science to come from these samples!



Kieran Claassen (UCSD) and Tyler Christian (AOML) preparing Sargassum samples. Photo credit: Alex Fine (AOML)

We've started a number of friendly competitions for our time off shift, involving both scientists and crew. We are midway through the 2023 March Mammal Madness competition (@MMMLetsgo), with the Striped Hyena and Golden Eagle highly predicted to win it all (4 votes each; "mammal" is very broadly defined). After the ping pong table was set up in the main lab it was only a matter of time before the double-elimination knockout tournament started, and we are down to the final 11, equally split between scientists and crew, as everyone plays their games as schedules allow. And to help keep everyone in shape, there is a triathlon competition going on in the gym – if you want to do it with us, we're rowing 500 m, biking 3 miles, and running 1 mile!

Looking forward to the last week of sampling,
Zach Erickson and Katelyn Schockman, Chief Scientists