

RV MARIA S. MERIAN - MSM112 "RioM ROFI"

The Rio Magdalena Delta Region of Freshwater Influence

07.10. - 14.11.2022, St. John's (Canada) - Cartagena (Colombia)



2nd Weekly Report (10. - 16.10.2022)

Expedition MSM112 off the Caribbean coast of Colombia begins with a transit from St. John's (Canada) to Cartagena (Colombia). We are now ten days underway at 10 knots and are making good progress. We passed through the Sargasso Sea, whose namesakes (brown algae *Sargassum Muticum*) arrange themselves impressively in small free-floating patches and group in outstretched Langmuir cells. Very large dense abundances, as reported recently for many areas of the Atlantic, were not observed.

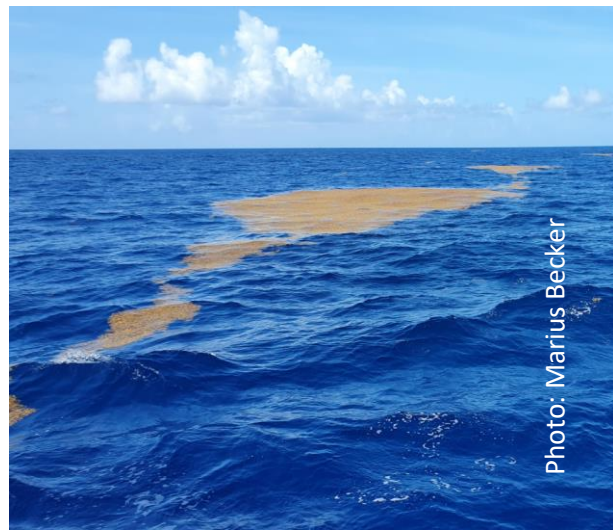
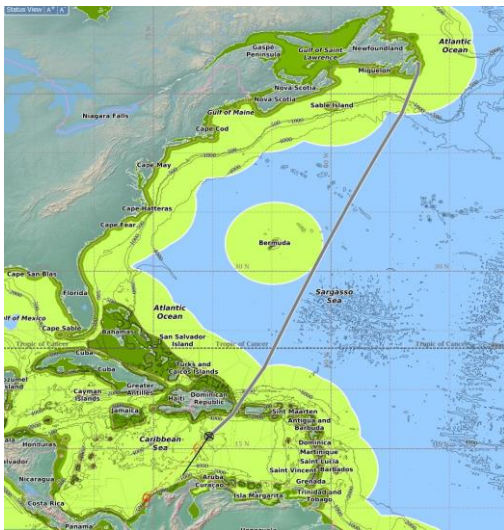


Photo: Marius Becker

Figures: Left: 2120 Nautical miles heading for Colombia, right: Sargassum Muticum in the Sargasso Sea

Since the passage between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico, we are now in the Caribbean Sea, heading straight for Cartagena. The sea is calm, with occasional flying fish and frigate birds, boobies, and others to be seen around the ship.

The quarantine period is over and we can now work without masks and daily COVID-tests. We use the time to set up the equipment, fine-tune the measurement programme and hold scientific talks and seminars on board. Workstations and laboratories have been set-up, the instruments have been tested once again and are now being installed on an autonomous seafloor observatory (lander) and on a small catamaran. Also the research permits for Colombian waters have arrived.

In Cartagena, scientists from the participating institutions (Universidad del Norte, Barranquilla, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Medellín, Universidad de Antioquia, Turbo, and Centro de Innovación y Tecnología de Ecopetrol S.A.) will board. We are also expecting an observer for marine mammals and an inspector from the competent authority DIMAR. After a diplomatic reception and a VIP visit on October 20 the actual research expedition is to begin.

The temperatures are rising, the weather remains fantastic, and so is the mood.

Greetings on behalf of all participants,

Christian Winter

(Kiel University)