

## Weekly Report, Leg 1 (01.04. to 05.04.2015)

Research Vessel *Maria S. Merian* left Pennos Wharf in St. George's, Bermuda as scheduled on 01.04.2015 at 9:00 o'clock after four hours of fuel bunkering in the dockyards. With a strong breeze she steamed from Bermuda towards the first sampling station on our westernmost transect at 70°W, 30°N.

The first trial run of all sampling gear was successful except for the CTD probe (Figure 1), which due to some defect showed strong deviations from the expected temperature and salinity data. After intensive efforts and various steps to repair the probe, the problem could be solved and all data were successfully recalibrated. The deployment of the multinet, the two Isaaks-Kidd midwater trawls (0.5 and 5 mm mesh size) (Figure 2), the 1 m<sup>2</sup> MOCNESS (Figure 3) and Manta trawls worked fine, although it was decided to run the IKMTs from the stern instead of the starboard side.

The cooperation with the ship's crew is excellent. Station planning follows the programme suggested in the ship's research proposal and is carried out in close communication with the captain and scientists.

Each station of the first transect includes the deployment of a CTD and an IKMT. In addition, MOCNESS and multinet, respectively, as well as the 5-mm IKMT are used alternatively at two neighbouring stations.

The Manta trawl may be deployed parallel to other trawled gear, captain permitting. The tedious sorting of the plankton samples of all gears is carried out directly after each catch.

On April 4 we started sampling pelagic macroalgae of the genus *Sargassum* as well as drifting plastic litter. The deployment of the Zodiac required for this action benefitted from fine weather conditions and was performed smoothly. Additional samplings of drifting litter from the Zodiac are planned for the next days.

One major aim of the expedition is the sampling of *Leptocephalus* larvae of the Atlantic eels. So far, this objective was carried out successfully. Until Sunday at noon a total of 251 *Leptocephalus* larvae was collected and identified, 24 of them larvae of the American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*).

Overall, the sampling programme is according to time schedule and will continue as planned.

All people on board of RV *Maria S. Merian* are fine and wish everybody at home Happy Easter Holidays!

Reinhold Hanel & Willy Hagen

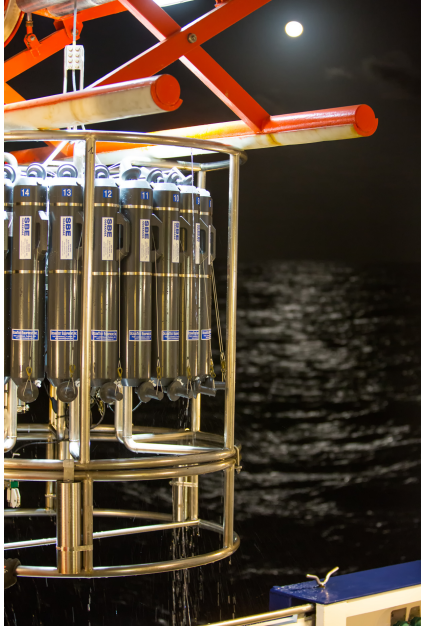


Figure 1: Conductivity Temperature Depth (CTD) Probe



Figure 2: Deployment of the 0.5 mm mesh size Isaaks-Kidd Midwater Trawl (IKMT)



Figure 3: Deployment of the 1 m<sup>2</sup> MOCNESS