

On board Research Vessel *Meteor* in the Caribbean, Monday 22 October 2012

Dear all,

It is very hard to recall leaving Las Palmas, now almost three weeks ago; so many things have happened the last few weeks! In the previous weekly bulletin I reported on the successful deployments of stations M1 to M3, the following M4 and M5 were also very successful. Especially at station M4 we had some troubles finding a good spot for the multicore, but the good old “Bremer Recht” applied once more: the third attempt resulted in a nice catch of about 30cm sediments and a beautifully preserved sediment-water interface.

The last sediment sample taken with the multicore at station M5, located just inside the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 miles) of Barbados, was put on deck on Thursday 18 October at 5:00 UTC. With the help of Akio and Matthias –who discovered on board that they really appreciate “digging in the dirt”!– we sliced and sub-sampled the 35-cm cores while already setting sail towards Cristobal. Since last Friday we are hence in the Caribbean, sailing our transit towards Panama.

All in all we are very happy with the great success of this cruise: all five deployments went very smooth, we found good locations to drop the moorings and managed to position them really well. The collaboration between Yvo, Barry, and Bob and boatswain Peter and his team went smoother and smoother throughout the cruise leading to shorter and shorter deployment times.

Now that most of the scientific tasks have been fulfilled, there is a bit more room for other duties on board, such as practicing emergency situations. Last Tuesday we had an “abandon ship” exercise, meaning that everybody collects on deck carrying a life vest and wearing sun-protective clothing. The scientific crew was directed towards one of the life boats for a short instruction on how to act and behave in an emergency situation. The ship’s crew practiced a fire drill. We sure hope the *Meteor* will never have to put these rehearsals into practice but it is very good to see how well prepared everybody is.



The scientific crew prepared to enter the life boats. From left to right: Akio Hansen, Matthias Brück, Bob Koster, Jan-Berend Stuu, Yvo Witte, Michèlle van der Does, Barry Boersen.

Although all around us tropical depressions develop into real tropical storms, we have been very lucky to sail right in between them. The two DWD meteorologists keep us well informed about the potential of these depressions and how they influence our weather. In the weblog about our cruise you’ll find a small animation of 3-hourly satellite images showing nicely the developments of tropical storms during our cruise.

Our cruise track took us very close to the Dutch Antilles; we saw the light house of Curaçao in the dark and now and then we get a glimpse of Colombia. During the last few weeks the horizon was mostly empty of life in all directions. Now it is clear that we are approaching the civilized world again by the amount of passing ships. Other signs of getting close to land again are the large amount of gannets that plummet into the water to catch (flying) fish.

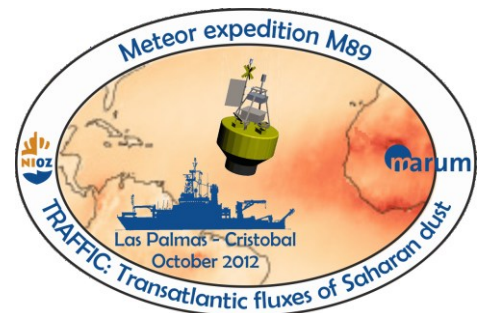


On the horizon one can just see the northern shores of Colombia

As we are approaching Panama we have already started packing our instruments, cleaning the labs, and writing the reports. These are the last words I write to you as Fahrtleiter, please keep an eye on the weblog for further updates.

Last but not at all least I would like to thank Captain Michael Schneider and his excellent crew for a marvellous trip. We hope to be back soon!

All the best to all of you from the Meteor in the Caribbean!
On behalf of the ship's- and scientific crew,
Jan-Berend Stuut



For daily updates about our cruise, please have a look at www.stuut.tv/html/jbatsea.html The blog can be read both in Dutch and English. A German version is made available on the MARUM website at: www.marum.de/Expeditions-Logbuecher.html