

ANT XXIII/8 Weekly Report No. 4 17 December 2006

Since the beginning of last week, the course has been set for the Antarctic Peninsula. First, we had to bypass a large area of sea ice north of Atka Bay by heading northeast. On Wednesday, ice conditions allowed for a direct course west along the 64th latitude. With favourable weather conditions, we are making good progress. As this part of the expedition is passing by without particular events, Karl-Herman Kock from Hamburg is using the opportunity to introduce our second scientific program.

Germany has been member of the 'Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources' (CCAMLR) since 1982. This organization is responsible for the conservation and rational use of all Antarctic marine resources with the exception of cetaceans. Germany focuses its CCAMLR-related research on the state of fish and krill stocks in the Atlantic sector of the Southern Ocean. This research is conducted by the Seafisheries Institute of the Federal Research Centre for Fisheries in Hamburg on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture and Consumer's Protection in cooperation with foreign institutions, such as the Southwest Fisheries Science Centre of the National Marine Fisheries Service in La Jolla, USA. The bottom fish survey conducted during ANT XXIII/8 is the seventh survey in a row in the southern Scotia Arc region. Polarstern will carry out 75-80 thirty-minute trawls based on a stratified random survey design. The work on board will focus on length measurements, weight and sex determination, stomach content analyses and the removal of tiny ear bones for age structure analyses. The sum of the scientific data will provide a comprehensive indication of the fish population dynamics since the end of Antarctic commercial fishing in 1990. Results of the survey will be presented at the next annual meeting of CCAMLR in Hobart, Australia, in October 2007.

All participants are in good health and spirits, particularly since all novices had the pleasure to participate in the Southern Polar Circle Baptism. Christmas is still far away in our minds, as much work will take place between now and then. Since I'm not going to report of the life aboard Polarstern over the Christmas period before the next year, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all of you that follow this expedition from home a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. I would like to express my deepest respect to those at home and onboard who will spend the Christmas holidays apart from their families.

On behalf of all scientists, I send greetings from the northwestern Weddell Sea.

Yours  
Julian Gutt

P.S. For all of you interested in recent events on R/V Polarstern, a few links for the Internet:

[www.international-polar-year.de](http://www.international-polar-year.de)

[www.polarfoundation.org](http://www.polarfoundation.org)

[www.cousteau.org](http://www.cousteau.org)

[www.caml.aq](http://www.caml.aq)

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Christmas Greetings 2006