

GOMECC-4 weekly update- Week 2

Greetings from the Gulf of Mexico.

Week 2 seems to have flown by us. We have now completed the Panama City and Louisiana Lines, and even had time to add an intermediate line between them, which after some back and forth we have decided to call the Pensacola Line. Our station count so far is 48 stations and as of the reading of this update you will likely find us transiting from the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary on to the Galveston Line.

This week also marked the deployment of two of our 4 AOML BGC-Argo floats. The first float was successfully deployed on September 22nd at the tail end of the Panama City Line, the second one was deployed off the Louisiana Line and just sent its first profile data.



Figure 1: Scientists Emily Osborne and Andy Stefanick prepare the BGC-Argo float for deploying in the early hours of September 22nd. Photo credit: Grace Owen (University of Miami)

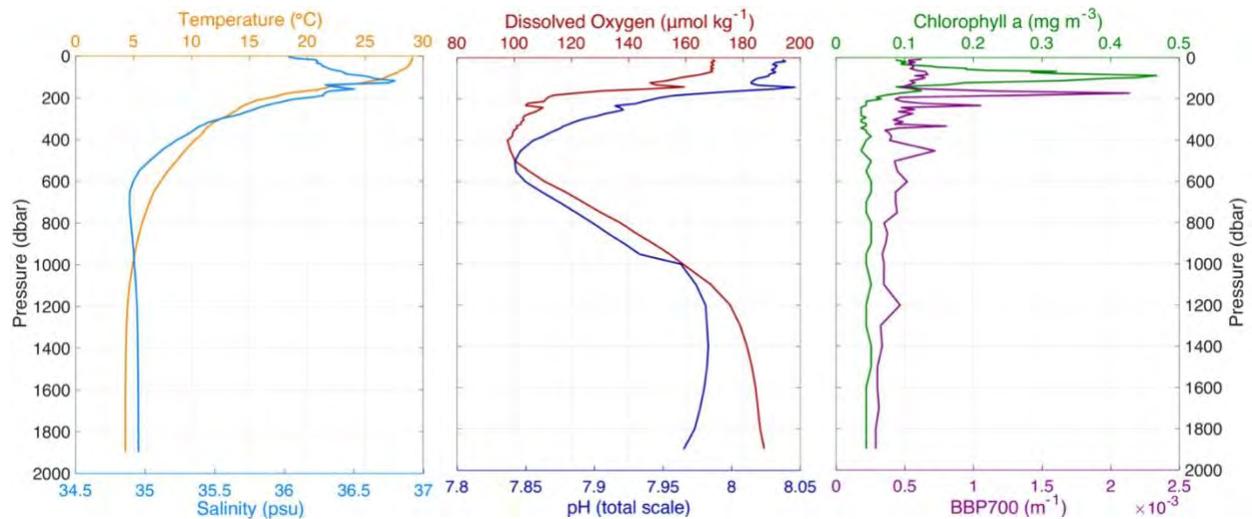


Figure 2.- First profile sent by the BGC-Argo float deployed on September 22nd.

On Sunday, a week after two of our colleagues joined us in Clearwater, FL, we were able to remove our masks for the first time since the cruise started. We celebrated with a BBQ on the deck which was perfectly timed quite by chance with a transit between lines, which gave both science and crew a little bit of time to enjoy the good weather off the Louisiana coast.

Saving the biggest piece of news for last, this week we received Mexico's approval of our request to conduct Marine Scientific Research (MSR) in their territorial waters. This would not have happened were it not for intense advocating on behalf of our project from our collaborators, Dr. Sharon Herzka (CICESE) and Dr. Martin Hernández Ayón (Universidad Autónoma de Baja California). Thank you so much!! Big thanks as well to our colleague back at AOML, Ms. Emy Rodriguez, who made sure the consul in Brownsville, TX is ready to accommodate 17 scientists with no previous appointments. We have been working with the ship's command to come up with a plan that will allow us to safely extend our COVID bubble for a quick visit to the consulate, and we are eagerly awaiting final approval from NOAA Health.

Our systems continue to behave well, and we are making good time to our scheduled rendezvous in Brownsville, TX. Now fingers crossed that we can continue with our mission as initially planned, into Mexican waters for a complete survey of ocean acidification conditions in the Gulf of Mexico.

Onwards,

Leticia Barbero and Andy Stefanick, chief scientists GOMECC-4