

Dispatch from Tuesday, 24 April 2007

Greetings:

After some frustrating attempts to get tags out we managed to get a tag out on a female seal at the end of the day. She was sleeping on a floe with three other seals. We now have deployed 6 CTD tags on seals so far. Tomorrow we are going to try and find an area with ice that is easier to work in and or has more seals. The idea is to move down the Tickle Passage, which is between Adelaide Island and the Continent.

I've included a picture of a crabeater seal in the water taken by Dave Weimer, who is one of the staff members at Palmer Station who joined us for this cruise.

The picture of pancake ice shows what we now have to deal with as it gets colder. When we first arrived fresh ice was hard to find and now as the temperature drops we are seeing more new ice each day. While this is beautiful it also makes operating a zodiac difficult. Today to get to the floe where the seals were we had to go through a large section of newly frozen sea ice that had a lot of large chunks of ice in it. It made for interesting small boat operations!! As usually the Raytheon crew and Captain Marty of the LMG did an excellent job of first using the LMG to flush a path into the ice and then getting the zodiac up to the floe so we could work with seals.

The final picture shows the mountains of Lellamand fjord and 4 seals on a small floe in the middle of newly frozen pack ice, giving you an idea of how conditions are changing as the winter starts to come.

Best from the seal team.



