

Drifter Newsletter #3 November 2009

Satellite Account Setup

Our satellite service-provider has recently instituted a new policy. Those of you who get billed directly (or plan to get billed directly in the future) now need to fill out a one-time “business agreement form”. If you haven’t already done so and you plan to deploy drifters in 2010, please let me know. I will email a copy of this form partially filled out for you to fax or email to ComTech Inc.

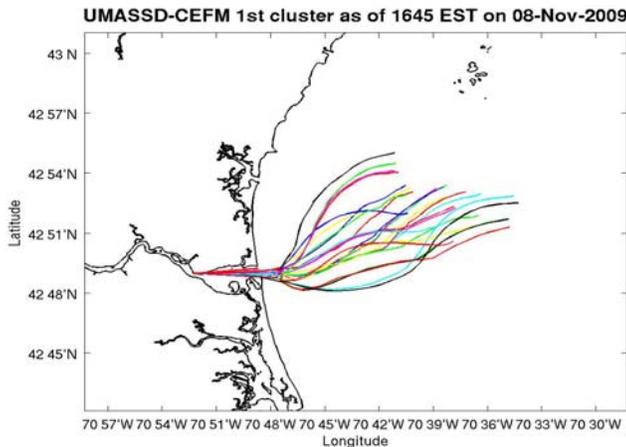
Note: Those of you funded by the MATE project do not have to worry about this until your “message count” exceeds a few thousand. You can see your message count on the 8th column of the sensservice.com spreadsheet.

New Drifter Designs

Two new designs were tested in November 2009:

- **“Kathleen” Bucket**

Dan McDonald and his crew from UMASS Dartmouth successfully deployed 26 bucket drifters off the mouth of the Merrimack River (Newburyport, MA) on Nov 7th



after a large runoff event. All units, many of them fitted with additional sensors (temp, salinity, GPS, high-powered strobes), worked well and were successfully recovered after being quickly expelled into the open ocean. See figure below.

- **“Ruben” Radio-tracked**

I spent an afternoon on Buzzards Bay with Ruben Davis of Datissystems Inc of Catamnet, MA a few weeks ago. Ruben, a retired electronic engineer, has devised a radio-tracked GPS drifter that can be monitored from a laptop on board or at a base station ashore. He demonstrated the successful operation of his prototype and plans to work on expanding the range capabilities of these units this winter. So, those of you interested in near-shore applications that are free of satellite costs, let me know.

Viewing Tracks in GoogleEarth

Some of you had trouble accessing and viewing the kml files. They are linked from the www.nefsc.noaa.gov/drifter site under the “drogue depth” column of the 2nd table. Please note that the best way to do this is to click on the link and then “view→page source” on

the upper toolbar of your browser. This is the file you input to GoogleEarth. If your track does not have a kml file linked, or you have trouble viewing it, call my cell at 508-566-4080 or email james.manning@noaa.gov.

Buoy sticks and toggle supplies

Some of you have had trouble obtaining more drifter parts that are NOT sold in most hardware/marinas. The buoy sticks and toggles (ie flotation component attached to the end of the fiberglass spars), for example, are sold specifically in Maine for the lobster and herring fishermen, respectively. For help in obtaining these parts, you may contact erin@gomlf.org.

Proposals in the works

We have two proposals in the works that include drifter deployments. One is a small part of the Northeast Regional Associations of Coastal Ocean Observing Systems (NERACOOS) request to the 2010 NOAA IOOS. While we do not have much hope that it will be funded, we have nevertheless suggested routine deployments by fishermen at selected sites around the Gulf of Maine throughout the HAB season (Apr-Sep). Another proposal, in the early stages of development, is a follow-up to the eMOLT project in 2004 where, similar to the NERACOOS objective, lobstermen deploy student-made instrumentation around the Northeast region to obtain data for the purposes of validating numerical simulations. If any of you are interested in similar proposals in your region, let me know. I'll send you a copy. If you have other ideas for drifter proposals, let's hear them!

Drifter-related books

For an entertaining read about things that float in the ocean look up "*Flotsametrics and the floating world*". For more technical discussions on the science of things floating in the ocean see "*Lagrangian Analysis and Prediction of Coastal and Ocean Dynamics*".