Drifter Newsletter #5
February 2010

Drifter Website Update

We have made some progress in designing a new website to plot all the drifter tracks and to serve the data but we have not yet released it. It will take the place of the rather cluttered site: http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/drifter/ before the 2010 drifter season gets underway in a few months. Tanya Stoyanova, a computer science student from Bulgaria, is working on it one day per week.

COSEE podcast

Ari Daniel Shapiro's interview with us including a trip to Casco Bay to deploy drifters was released last week and posted on the COSEE NOW website where it will be heard by many educators and their students around the country. It can be found at http://coseenow.net/2010/02/drifter/ .

New Drifter Deployers

We are happy to add Long Beach Community College from California, Clatsop Community College from Washington State, and the Atlantic Salmon Federation from New Brunswick, Canada to the list of drifter users. LBCC students are actively designing new rigs to radio track bucket drifters in Los Angeles river runoff events. CCC students are following their surface drifters (rachels) rapidly moving north and east of their deployment location off Astoria. ASF will be deploying several drifters in the St Lawrence River in May to track the potential transport of your smolts.

New Transmitters on the Market

We are watching the development of various transmitters such as the new "Spot2" come on the market. There are a variety of options available "off-the-shelf" for doing our sort of tracking but we are sticking to the TrackPack II in 2010. Given its increased battery power this year and improve circuitry, we are hoping it will serve our needs. We will see.

Collaboration with Coast Guard

Working with SMCC and UMASS-D, we provided the USCG with one of our drifters which they deployed off of Cape Elizabeth Maine in mid-January 2010 (see Fig 1). This was part of the USCG Search and Rescue Training Operations where they practice some of their routines following drifting objects over the coarse of several days. Since we have similar interests for scientific reason (such as following patches of toxic algae), we are trying to combine our efforts in this endeavor. Animation of these forecasts vs observed tracks are linked from the drifter website but may be found directly is at, for example: http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/drifter/fvcom_sarops.html . If you are interested in implementing this sort of forecast operation in your waters, let us know. All you need is to find local circulation modelers who serve "CF-compliant" output and a MATLAB programmer.

Drifter plans for 2010

More than 100 drifter deployments will be made this year (Fig 2) to document flow patterns around the Gulf of Maine.

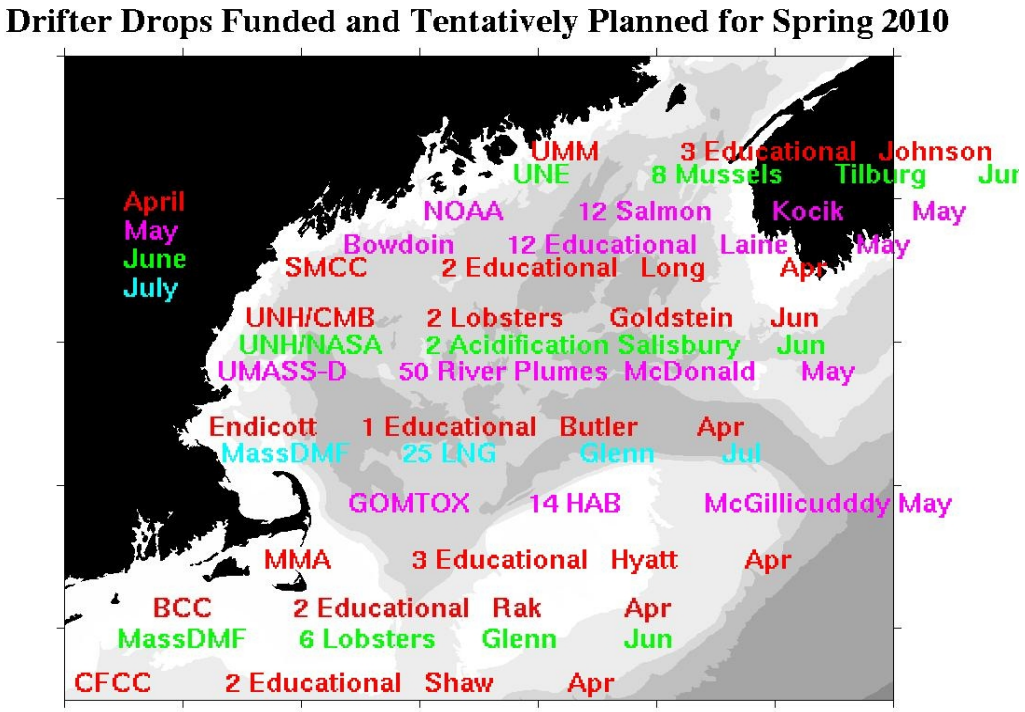

Figure 2 Approximate location, institution, #, purpose, principal investigator, and month of SMCC/eMOLT drifter deployments planned for 2010.