

Enhanced Mussel Watch Phase 1: Eastern Great Lakes



Thursday, September 24, 2009

-Kristina Lauenstein

Kristina and Gunnar got an early start in order to meet Helen and Sarah from the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve. At the Poughkeepsie site, Helen donned her scuba gear and dove for the mussel samples, they being particularly scarce due to predation by crabs.

While Sarah kept an eye on Helen, Gunnar and Kristina collected sediment for chemistry analyses. The first five tries were unsuccessful; the jaws wouldn't close. We moved the boat several times, and after another five trawls had enough sediment. After an hour, Helen returned with enough mussels for the most important part of the analysis. With Helen back on board, we moved to our next and last site on this trip; after half an hour we are at the Tivoli site. By the time the anchor was out, we had drifted into water so shallow that Helen decided not to roll backwards into the water. We watched her move away in, what we thought was, waist deep water until she tells us over her shoulder that she is actually moving on her knees. We see for ourselves how shallow the water is when the grab sampler is not completely submerged when we drop it over the side for our sediment collection.

After we were done collecting our sediment we were in such shallow water that Gunnar had to get out of the boat and push us into deeper water. An hour and a half after leaving the boat, Helen returned with a large sample, the last to be collected for this cruise. We thanked Helen and Sarah, met Ed and mailed the Hudson River samples, then continued on to the hotel to rest for tomorrow's long drive home.