ONC hosts international ocean acidification workshop

Submitted by Katie Shoemaker Wed, 2018-02-28 15:59

ONC hosted an international workshop 7-8 February during which scientists and sensor developers discussed the importance of obtaining accurate and reliable data from ocean-observing systems for ocean acidification.

?We hold workshops like this to bring together the research and technology communities to accelerate the development of sensors needed for making critical measurements in the ocean,? says ONC chief scientist Kim Juniper. ?We need ocean sensors to be more accurate and more robust so that researchers can make more progress in addressing problems like ocean acidification.?

The workshop featured ONC science theme leader Jim Christian, research scientist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the Canadian Centre for Climate Modelling and Analysis, and an adjunct faculty member at UVic.

Workshop participants included researchers from Canada (DFO, Dalhousie University, University of Calgary, Hakai Institute, Pro-Oceanus Systems Inc.); the U.S. (Scripps Institution

of Oceanography, Sea-Bird Scientific); Japan (National Research Institute for Far Seas Fisheries/Japan Fisheries Research and Education Agency, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Sasakawa Peace Foundation); the UK (British Oceanographic Data Centre) and Germany (GEOMAR/Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research Kiel).

Ocean acidification occurs when atmospheric carbon dioxide dissolves in the ocean, forming carbonic acid and making seawater more acidic. A more acidic ocean has a detrimental impact on marine organisms that form calcium carbonate shells, like juvenile oysters, clams and mussels?and even some types of photosynthetic plankton that are at the base of the marine food chains. In a more acidic ocean, shell growth can be stunted and survival rates decreased.

It is important that data collected from autonomous sensors be reliable as it increases the affordability of comprehensive ocean observing systems, allowing scientists to measure ocean acidification over time in diverse areas and to capture episodic or unexpected events.

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