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Press Release

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DEC Collects Chukchi Sea Water Quality Data

(ANCHORAGE, AK) – A team of researchers led by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has finished sampling 30 Chukchi Sea coastal sites from Point Lay to Barrow. The survey will provide water quality data for pH, chemicals, temperature, salinity, and dissolved oxygen and other indicators such as fish abundance.

Other researchers on the team included members of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Status and Trends Program.

"With the good weather we were able to collect data at three sites most days," said Doug Dasher, DEC's lead scientist for the survey. "This research will help establish baseline conditions and assist environmental managers in evaluating potential changes in the future. In the near-term, it will help environmental managers protect coastal marine environments, mitigate damage to the marine ecosystem and establish wastewater discharge requirements in state and federal permits."

The 12-day survey used the 115-foot *Norseman II* as a work platform and benefited from good team work between the 13-member science team and the nine crewmen. Sampling was completed Sept. 17.

Samples from the survey will mainly be analyzed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks with some going to Texas A&M Geological Environmental Research Group laboratory. Typically it takes about a year for all the samples to be analyzed and to go through the quality assurance process.

The Chukchi Sea survey is part of the larger Environmental Protection Agency National Coastal Assessment that is surveying the environmental conditions of the nation's entire coastal water resources. Since 2001, DEC has conducted coastal surveys in Southeast Alaska, Southcentral Alaska, the Aleutians, coastal northern Chukchi Sea, and Kachemak Bay.

For more information on DEC's water quality surveys visit its Web site at:
<http://www.dec.state.ak.us/water/wqsar/monitoring/AKMAP.htm>.

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