

Creep into the DEEPEND

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FROM: DEEPEND Science Team
TO: DEEPEND Virtual Team Leaders
SUBJECT: Team Ceph

Dear Virtual Science Team,

Hello! I am part of "Team Ceph." Ceph is short for *Cephalopod*. That group includes squid, octopus, or nautilus. What do you know about squid and octopus? Why do you think squid and octopus are important?

Cephalopods eat many of the smaller ocean animals. In turn, fishes and marine mammals eat squid and octopus. As you can imagine, that makes cephalopods an important part of the deep-sea food webs. Because cephalopods interact with deep-sea fishes and crustaceans, as both predators and prey, we hope the DEEPEND research will shed some light on how food possibly moves from the surface waters to the deep seafloor.

Half of the fun of being part of Team Ceph is waiting for the nets to come up. We never know what we will find. While at sea, I help sort animals that come up in the nets, identify the cephalopods, and take tissue samples for DNA work back in the lab. Any idea what the DNA can tell us? Different species of squid and octopus often look alike. DNA helps us identify the specific species.

I have learned so much about the diverse kinds of animals that live out here. Some of the squid are tiny with adults only 1 inch (2.54 cm) long and they only live about 6 months. Others (that we haven't gotten in these nets) get to be over 20 ft. (6 m) long! I've attached a couple photos for you. Isn't the glass squid pretty?

We are still learning many things about these amazing invertebrates. We hope to make many discoveries and answer many questions through our DEEPEND research. If you were part of Team Ceph, what would you want to know? How would you find the answer?

Speaking of questions, remember, to send us any of your questions.

Have to run, just got word the nets are coming up! Stay curious!

Heather

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Creep into the DEEPEND Mission

