SBC LTER: Oceans Moored pH data: Instruments and data processing

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Overview/Background: Starting in 2011, continuously recording pH meters were deployed with near-shore oceanographic moorings at some SBC LTER sites along the mainland coast of the Santa Barbara Channel and near of Pt. Conception. Sensors are mounted near the CTD at approx. 4 meters depth.

This document describes deployment and processing of pH sensor data using the SeaFET pH sensor (based on Honeywell Durafet sensor). Other moored instruments not discussed here include: ADCP (Currents/waves), CTD (Hydrography) and Optics data (Fluorescence, Beam Attenuation, and Volume Scattering Function), and thermistors located near bottom, near surface and mid water column. VSF, fluorometers, and nitrate analyzers were deployed occasionally for specific research investigations. For information about these, see documented protocols for datasets in the mooring series (knb-lter-sbc.200x).

All sensor data from a single site are organized into annual files by interpolating onto a common 20-minute time base. Text versions of these annual files are concatenated. The 20-min mooring format is referred to as a 'monster file' due to large complement of measured and derived variables. Most processing is performed using Matlab but some sensors require manufacturer's proprietary software to generate machine readable raw data. A suite of derived seawater-carbon variables generated by USGS CO2calc.exe is included for each record in the concatenated text files.

Methods:

Field Collection.

Sites with pH sensors maintained by SBC LTER:

- Alegria (ALE)
- Arroyo Quemado (ARQ)
- Mohawk (MKO)
- Stearns Wharf/Santa Barbara Harbor (SBH)

A typical near-shore mooring is diagramed in Figure 1. Deployment details are maintained internally, contact sbclter@msi.ucsb.edu for more information. Not all instruments are deployed at all sites.

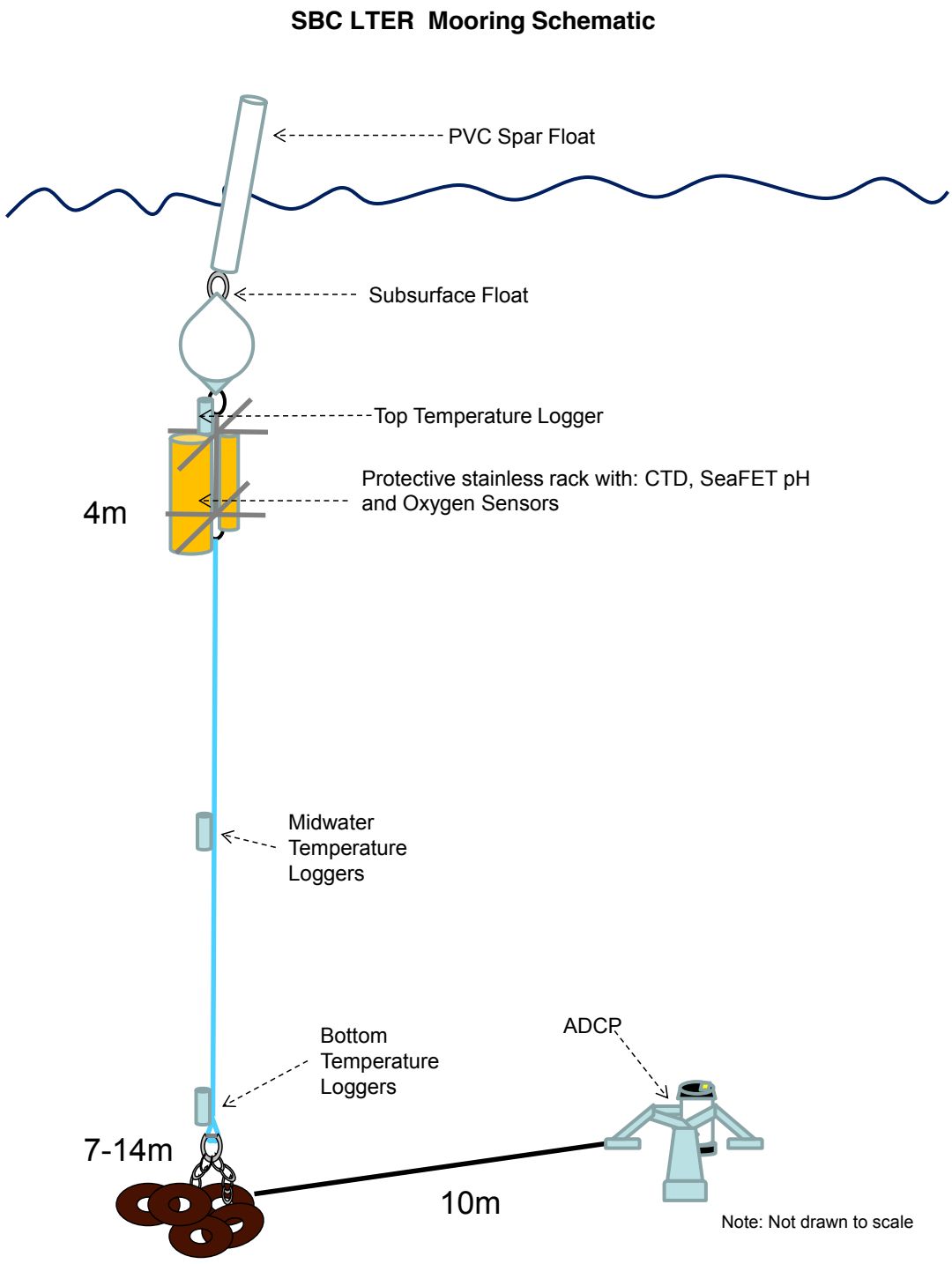

Figure 1. Schematic shows the general layout of an SBC LTER instrument mooring. The ADCP is mounted on the seafloor, approximately 10 meters away and not physically attached to the mooring anchor. pH and oxygen sensors are not deployed at all sites.

List of Moored Instruments (all)

pH: SeaFET, Satlantic Corp.

Instruments with methods and data available elsewhere:

Temperature thermistors: Onset Computer Corp. (TBIC32+4+27) (Hobo UTBI-001),

Acoustic Doppler Current Profiler (ADCP): RDI Instruments (Work Horse, 300, 600, 1200 kHz).

CTD: SeaBird (SBE37).

Fluorometer: WETLabs Inc. (intermittently deployed)

Volume scattering function (VSF): ECO-VSF, WETLabs Inc. (intermittently deployed)

In-situ nitrate auto-analyzer (NAS): W.S. Oceans (intermittently deployed)

Oxygen: D-Optologger, TBD, planned for 2015

Laboratory Processing (SeaFET sensors only).

Moored instruments were and continue to be recovered, downloaded, serviced, and exchanged on a roughly bi-monthly schedule. Typically, the raw sensor data are downloaded from the instruments using the manufacturer software. The raw data files are uploaded to a data entry directory on the file server and archived within subdirectories named with the upload date to allow easy identification of new data files.

Data Processing

Data processing is shown graphically in Figure 2. The process is initiated when the field crew deposits both new SeaFET deployment and benchmark water samples on the file server. Processing is in Matlab, or the USGS-supplied program "CO2Calc". The result is files in two formats: 1) an archive of a processed, calibrated single deployment and a concatenated, resampled time-series file ("ph_monster_concat.csv"), suitable for matching to other SBC LTER moored data products in the data catalog.

Data Preprocessing – SeaFET

Time series of pH data from the SeaFET sensors requires an adjustment based on in-situ conditions and hand-collected discrete bottle samples (benchmark samples). We use only the earliest water sample collected after the pH sensor has become conditioned to adjust an entire deployment, although multiple bottle samples may have been collected during a deployment. For the SeaFETs this conditioning period is determined by the difference between the pH values from the internal and external electrodes. If the difference is less than 0.05, the sensor is considered "conditioned".

Benchmark water samples are collected (for more details, http://sbc.lternet.edu/cgi-bin/showDataset.cgi?docid=knb-lter-sbc.75, and protocols therein). pH values from laboratory conditions are adjusted to in-situ values using USGS CO2calc and using either the in-situ temperature recorded by the SeaFET or from the co-located SBE37 CTD. In-situ temperature from the precise time the water sample was collected is used as input to the CO2calc program and the adjusted bottle sample pH output is used to calibrate the SeaFET pH time series. Any out-of-water data is clipped from the beginning and end of each deployment and a Matlab .mat file is saved out containing the raw voltages, calibrated temperature, and adjusted pH time series.

Data Processing, 20-min "Monster file".

Individual "Monster" files are annual files generated from preprocessed moored sensor data collected at one site. Single deployment data that may have been collected at differing sample intervals is 1 hour low-pass filtered (Butterworth filter) to remove noise and then interpolated onto a common 20-minute time base. All monster files for a particular year have the same number of rows and columns. Annual files for a leap year will have time records (rows) for Feb 29 as well. The first data record is always yyyy0101 00:00:00. The last is always yyyy1231 23:40:00. Time records yet to be filled (e.g., in the future) are removed from the concatenated text files but remain in the annual .mat versions.

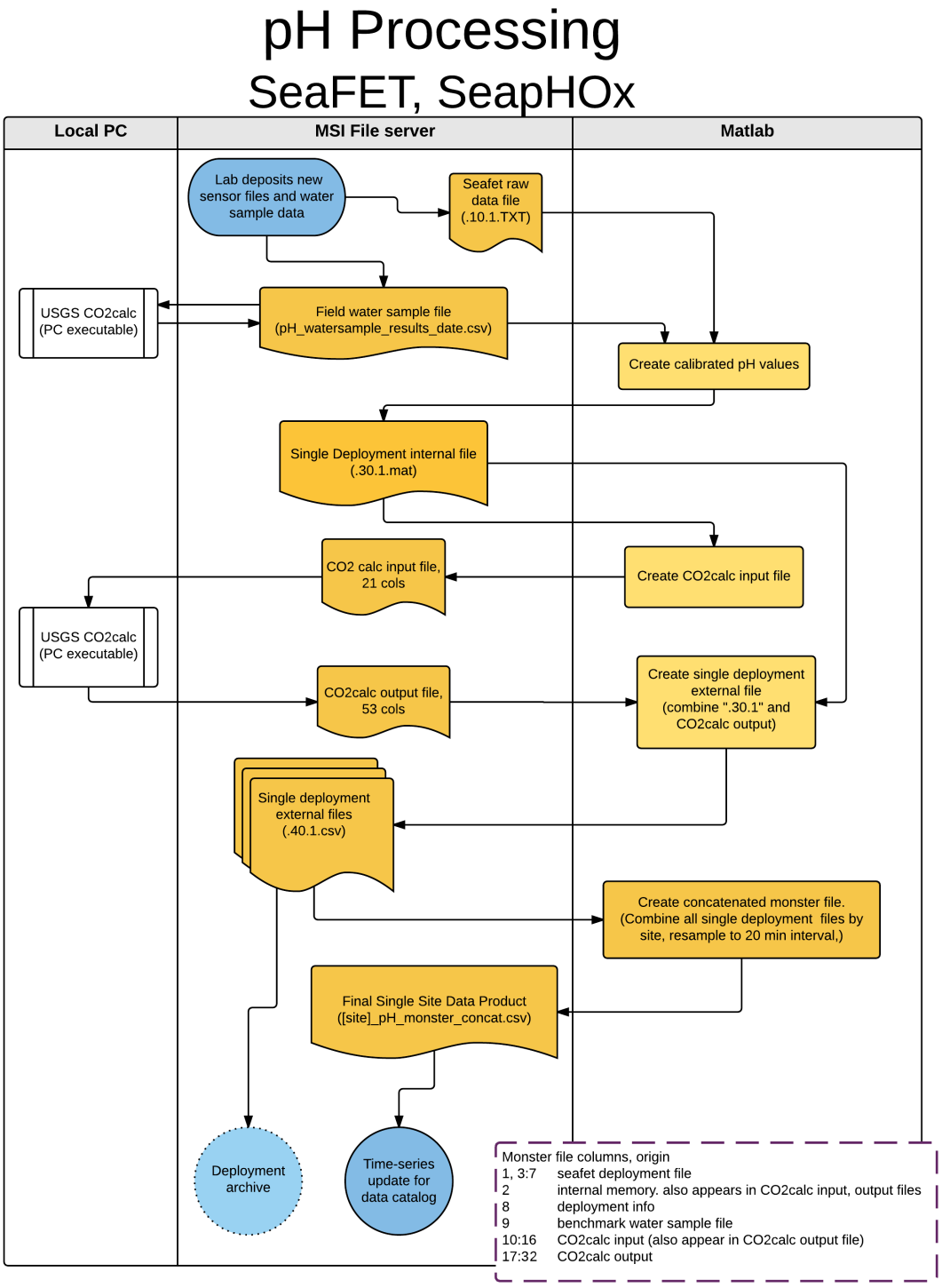

Figure 2. Schematic showing process workflow..

Column descriptions:

COLUMN	DATA DESCRIPTION	SOURCE
1)	Timestamp (UTC)	n/a
2)	pH in situ (Total scale)	SeaFET
3)	Temperature (C)	SeaFET
4-7)	Instrument voltages	SeaFET
8)	Sensor Depth	deployment configuration
9)	Salinity (PSU)	benchmark sample
10	Temperature (C)	SBE37
11)	Pressure (db)	SBE37
12)	Total P	n/a
13)	Total Si	n/a
14)	Total Alkalinity	??
15)	Total CO2	??
16)	pH in situ (Total scale)	SeaFET
17-29)	CO2calc algorithms output	CO2calc
30)	Partial pressure of CO2 in air	
31)	Windspeed	
32)	CO2 flux	

References:

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