

Tuesday, April 12 – Rogue - Mark Martin

One of the last days, sadness wanted to come over me, but I was having too much fun. We were all in a zone. We were ready, if we had more time and no stops we probably would have had 50 samples. We all knew we needed sperm whales and I still wanted Orcas. The nights we sailed through the night I had to sleep on my bunk. I had gotten yelled at by the captain for sleeping in too many places of the boat. I knew Dr. Wise was happy about the trip, we weren't. Not until there were sperm whale and they didn't seem to be coming. We had done all the dances and voodooos to bring them but they stayed deep.

I actually enjoyed the fact that the boat was moving with the waves, I loved it whenever the sail went up and the movement of the waves made me feel at home. We woke up and worried when we saw the angry seas, maybe no whales, I didn't like to give up. Everyone else seemed to resign themselves to another whale day. The last one had provided a friendly whale shark and a visit to an island that was a cool change but we were more into finishing strong. I spend over four hours that day in the mast. I looked, saw things, waves everywhere, choppy. Even trying our best we had low chances.

I was at the roof of the bridge, dancing to keep moving and swiveling in all directions. I stopped, don't know why. I saw a fast, small whale come up behind the ship and go down, faster than everything so far. Whale! Dr. Wise turned screamed whale and gave me a thumbs up. The sighting of the whale was a sudden transition that triggered adrenaline, movement, activated processes and changed time. Into the zone.

I did not wait for the other biopsers, I grabbed the bow. The arrows were labeled with assigned numbers for data processing and nicknames from the crew for luck, if you look at the log, Fast Eddie customer, LaLa and Magic were the most used. I grabbed Lala because Magic was broken for now.

What is it? I don't know, juvenile fin whale

NO Johnny and John said. Only one whale here that can move like that Bryde's whale. All the Spanish speakers on the boat believed it was pronounced as it read. But it is actually sounded like brudus whale, brutus whale when I said it. we all saw it again, it was in port then it accelerated went under the boat and came out on port didn't break the

surface and turn onto the bow accelerated to a very fast speed, dove, came back up. We smiled, its messing with us. Instructions from Johnny. In this weather, we can't afford to use too many arrows, make shots count. It won't come up for long

Lots of considerations, all mattered. Watch the waves, use your body as a swivel from the waste, help the bow stay on target, compensate for wind, a lot. Direction and gusts, aim high if the wind was coming at us, direct if it was with us, unless the waves were choppy. It will only give us a small window, don't release if it is turning, if it's erratic don't take the chance of hitting it in a bad place. We still don't know if it's alone keep both eyes open, but take it if it's there, it won't stay long. Not a dolphin it will be gone in a flash. Don't release unless you're sure in this situation.

The whale was having fun, how it must look from the mast, it turned and showed its side, tricky in the sense it played with the surface but rarely came up when you thought it would. Hard to time with all of its speed burst and hesitations.

There is a certain difficulty explaining how all of it blends into one in your mind and although you think about everything you don't think about anything but the moment. Johnny had taught me, Ric had showed me, John had calmed me.

I was ready. The sun and the wind were trying not to cooperate; the boat was actually doing great. We moved a lot but everything seemed synchronized to me. Your body thinks, your mind focuses. All of you sees it. I saw it. It came up fast. It seemed not slow motion but somehow enhanced. I saw it, squeezed. Saw it hit. Sample. I was proud and thankful to everyone and the whale. It was definitely my best shot. More importantly now I understood what I needed to see. I was glad to bring the team a species of high value in terms of research and management concern. In the most recent Mexico biopsy trips Carlos said it and the Pygmy sperm whale were the hardest to biopsy. There were three shots that stick out in my mind, Ric's blue, Johnny's impossible long shot and this. They all had that zone, or should I say Zen. The whale left, I would like to believe we helped each other.

Mark