

## Nora Daly's Reflection for Leg 1

Hello my name is Nora Daly and I am a junior conservation biology (biology and environmental studies) major at Middlebury College. Although I go to a school in the middle of Vermont, and therefore nowhere near any large body of water let alone whales, the ocean has always been my passion. The voyage of the Odyssey has given me the opportunity to combine all my academia thus far with my passion for the oceans. I didn't know what exactly to expect going into the voyage. I had talked at length with one of the members of the Wise Lab, but my mind was in a flurry of getting ready, along with the constant thought of the opportunity to see sperm and bryde's whales up close. After a week in port, we were all eager to get out into the Gulf. And after almost two weeks out here, I can say that I have had an experience better than I ever could have expected. Looking back on the voyage, I thought I would say the best part was seeing whales, and that was amazing. I remember the first call 'WHALE!! WHALE!! EVERYBODY WHALE!!' the adrenalin pumping through all of our veins. I was practically stunned, the beautiful giant animal right next to me, swimming peacefully, the dark body dipping below the surface and then back up for air. A surreal experience, almost as if time slowed down. I was mesmerized. O shoot, there goes the arrow...luckily this is a very patient crew. But now, as we head into port I think the best part of the voyage has been the wealth of knowledge I have gained in two short weeks. Although to anyone from the Wise Lab my newly attained knowledge may seem brief and simple, to me it is only the beginning of understanding how we as an individual can make change in the world. I can truly say I have learned something from everyone and every experience on the boat. I have had the opportunity to find a place where my academic passions have collided with the things I have loved my whole life. I have loved being a part of this leg, would do it again in an instant! I would like to thank the Wise Lab and Ocean Alliance for giving me the opportunity to participate!