

Day 10-15: July 26-31, 2010

These days have been filled with the tedium of wrestling with government bureaucracy and software complications and of course driving from Beaufort, North Carolina to West Palm Beach Florida.

The boat has arrived in West Palm Beach Florida (dockage is 3X cheaper than Fort Lauderdale and towns are 30 minute drive apart). Johnny called each day reporting the status of the boat. In sum, each day was calm water with lots of sightings of dolphins and sea turtles. No whales. The students trained hard learning how to work the helm of the boat. Captain Bob agreed fully and said the students did well and were helpful. There was one humorous moment when I asked them to measure the array. Well, it's over 300 feet and the boat is less than that so they had to wind the array around the deck a few times and then take the measurements I needed. Cathy said it was like "round and round the deck they go, where they stop nobody knows".

Kellie's time has come to an end and she flew home just in time for her ultimate Frisbee game. Greer has arrived to occupy her spot. Greer just finished her freshman year at Bates College and has worked the past 2 summers in my lab. She is also a graduate of Portland High school, the best high school and my alma mater.

This stop was always planned as a break and upgrade stop. Chris has the array software working in the office and now the challenge is to get it working on the boat. He will arrive tomorrow. Tomorrow will also bring the air conditioning guy to improve that system. Iain will arrive Tuesday to install the satcom that will be our outreach system. Still no funds for airtime, but we will have the hardware so we will be part way there.

The permit snafu has resolved itself like this- NMFS does not want to authorize me to supervise biopsying until I demonstrate I can biopsy well myself. It's like telling a basketball coach that he cannot coach unless he can hit his free throws. But, we have to dance to their tune. Thus, Roger Payne, himself, will join the next leg of the voyage and train me to shoot the biopsy darts myself. Then I will be the primary biopsier on the next leg. Then NMFS will certify me to supervise the following legs. So now I will start practicing by biopsying frisbees in the water.

Johnny turned 21 today. My how the years have flown by. West Palm Beach had a block party - nice coincidence to help celebrate.

John