

## Day 11, Voyage 2, June 18, 2011

Today was a special day.

It started out fairly ordinary. Sunny and hot, mild seas and crew working their various watches and jobs. I worked on some grants and some papers. Sent a few emails and reviewed the voyage path with Ian. Then we heard some whales clicking about noon. Excitement grew, but we never found them. I looked at the path and we were beyond "sperm whale country" and I wondered if we would see anymore whales the rest of the day. Rick noticed where we were and promised today the arrows would fly.

I went to catch a catnap and the boat slowed down. In the pilothouse there were lots of whale clicks and there was Ian grinning like the Cheshire cat. I told him he earned a gold star for the day for finding whales again. Even gave him one. I decided with the whales clicking it was the perfect opportunity to tune the array with Josh Jones from Scripps. I called Josh at home.

Three hours behind us and three thousand miles away in beautiful San Diego, Josh took my call. Josh is an Ocean Alliance legend having spent a lot of time on the global voyage and universally acknowledged as the best array person around. We began the process of troubleshooting the array though I warned him, with a whale clicking, I might be called away. The whale clicked. We worked the array. Then the whale stopped. That meant a whale at the surface and, sure enough, a few minutes later, Nora called out a whale ahead. A little while later, with Ian at the helm, we had sperm whale biopsy 999. Our first biopsy of the season! Picture attached of Cathy holding a tube with a biopsy.

The day dragged on. Four O'clock approached. We wondered whether we might get biopsy 1000. Ian spotted a whale from the pilothouse, but alas he got away. I noticed Rick and Cathy on watch on the midlevel platform. I called up to them and announced we needed one more whale or no dinner for them. Rick said "ok" and I resumed my work with Josh. Fifteen minutes later Rick spotted a whale dead ahead. Then he asked for dinner.

Ian turned the helm over to Bob as he felt that since this whale could be biopsy 1,000 and since Bob was captain for most of those 1,000, Ian felt that Bob should have the honor of running the helm. Ian went to spot whales on the top of the pilothouse.

When Bob learned we were after number 1,000 I could see a gleam in his eye. The boat sped up. Johnny was on the whale boom and Rick in the bowsprit ready with the crossbows. Sandy was ready for the photo ID and Cathy had the data board ready. Cyndi was atop the pilot house spotting and Nora stood ready with the net. We were near the whale in no time so quickly that Shanelle had to take pictures from halfway up the mast.

We approached the whale. Both Rick and Johnny released their arrows. Johnny's glanced off and did not take a sample, but Ricks hit straight on and a few minutes later Nora had our 1,000 whale in the net! Cyndi processed the sample having been trained by Cathy on sample 999. It was a great moment! I have attached Sandy's pictures of the arrow taking the 1,000 biopsy showing the arrow approach (a bit blurry), take the sample and fall away.

Indeed, the Odyssey took her 1000th sperm whale biopsy today! In fact, we went a bit beyond and now the Ocean Alliance/University of Southern Maine sperm whale biopsy collection is at 1,002 and for all whales is 1,010 and counting. Pretty impressive and exciting collection.

It was a nice moment and a moment hard earned. The team is tired, but has a bounce in their step having collected the first 4 biopsies of the voyage. We all ended the day with dinner at 8 pm and this sunset to watch (picture attached). Tonight, I imagine I will sleep my first good night of sleep on the boat knowing we have made a good step forward in our summer voyage. My head is already heavy.

John

p.s. Our current location is somewhere off of southern Florida in the Gulf. 26 degrees 18.6 minutes North and 84 degrees 46.6 minutes West, for those who want to track us as we go.







