

Day 14, Voyage 2, June 21, 2011

Summer solstice - the first day of summer. Indeed it was hot; we are discovering Gulf heat again. No need to tell anyone to come in out of the heat today. After slow roasting on watch the team was aggregated in the salon or their cabins. Lots of work and looking, but no Bryde's whales. We were visited by dolphins, a hammerhead shark and again not much else. The Bryde's whales are just hard to find. We are in that grit and determination phase.

The Bryde's whales are typically seen between Tampa Bay and Pensacola Florida along the 600 foot shelf. The plan is to traverse this area three times. We entered from the Tampa side having come up from Key West. Thus, we travel from off Tampa to off Pensacola and then back and then back again ending this leg in Pensacola. Today, we finished the first scan. With the heat and lack of whales, it was sorely tempting to just continue on in to Pensacola today and call it a leg.

This leg officially started on June 8, which would be about 2 weeks as was our plan. Functionally, the leg started on June 14 so it's only been a week at sea so far. Plus, its key we learn something about these whales, even if the sad conclusion is that we could only see one. One is 6% of the estimated population. Let's hope for the whale's sake and ours that we find more. Let's hope our grit and determination hold out.

For me, the day was particularly frustrating as I have some much to do in a compressed period of time. It is one on the inherent challenges of leading a group that produces a great deal of very diverse work. But, I was provided with my voyage entry moment. That point in this process where you remember that there is more to life than the frustrations and hassles that happen on a regular basis.

It was after dinner, there was a cool breeze blowing across the deck. Rick, Ian, Bob, Johnny and I were simply sitting around the aft table swapping jokes and stories and remembering old sitcoms. There was a lull in the conversation and quiet on deck. I looked out over the ocean and study the setting sun. It was quiet, peaceful and beautiful. I relished the cool breeze, the picturesque setting and the company of close family and good friends. In that moment, I let go of my frustrations and found some peace. The conversation and laughter with the sunset gang resumed. I knew I was at sea and all would be well.

I hope wherever you are and whatever you are doing, life brings you a similar moment.

I want to give a shout out and thank Chris Gianios, Hong Xie and Jane McKay for holding our land lab together so well. You guys are doing a great job and I really appreciate it! Could not be out here without you. Thanks.

Pictures of the sunset and a baby dolphin are below.

p.s. Our current location is somewhere off of southern Florida in the Gulf. 28 degrees 25.8 minutes North and 86 degrees 15.7 minutes West, for those who want to track us as we go.



