

Day 27: August 12, 2010

Today started with an interview with the local NBC news affiliate. While remarkably I have not had the time to view it myself, I am told it is pretty good and here it is if you want to view it:

<http://www2.tbo.com/video/2010/aug/12/studying-oil-and-whales--21282/video-news/>

It takes a little bit to load and it is preceded by a commercial I am told. During the interview the reporter brought up the bit about the government smelling the fish. I am still stunned by this approach.

Later in the day, I had arranged a tour for the students of Dr. David Mann's laboratory at the University of South Florida. Dr. Mann is a bioacoustics expert and has a post-doc working on domoic acid toxicity in sea lions. We found him to be personable and helpful. His focus is on fish acoustics, there are a number of noisy fish in the ocean and he has loaned us a hydrophone and recording system to listen to them. His school is graduate only so we hope to try and build a collaboration around marine acoustics engaging our undergrads and high school students in the work. Something I have been trying to do around marine acoustics for a while. So that was encouraging.

Adjacent to his labs was the engineering department and my the possibilities that could grow out of this work and into technology and engineering, not to mention photojournalism and all of the arts that the wildlife inspires. I kept thinking that John Wright and Andy Anderson (our former Dean and now Provost and our new Dean) should be there to see all the stuff and possibilities there are. One cool aspect was these gliders they use that look like torpedoes. Basically, they define a loop in the water and these gliders simply go under water and take measurements in the ocean and then transmit them back. They even work in hurricanes! So to answer a question posed of me early in the process, can this research direction lead to many new discoveries and technologies - yes the sky (or perhaps the ocean) is the limit!

One point that came up was that USF had discovered a plume of dispersant deeper in the ocean 6 miles wide and when they told NOAA, they were told to shut up. Sandy found a story about it in the paper. It's at:

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/environment/article1114225.ece>

Read it - it is stunning and true.

The repairs on the boat are moving forward. Autopilot is fixed. Generator will have to be replaced but that will be done tomorrow. We should be back on the water soon.

John