

Day 28: August 13, 2010

Today started with another interview with the local FOX news affiliate. I don't have that link yet, but we were live on the news in the morning!

By mid-day it was good news and bad news. The good news was that the generator would be installed by the end of the day. The bad news was that the arrays would not arrive in time. The one group Iain found made a mistake and that array would not work for sperm whales. The person I found cannot get it to us before we leave. Luckily, we are studying two species of whales in the Gulf, sperm whales and Bryde's whales (pronounced Broodah and not Brides). The Bryde's whales are only found visually- no one is sure what sounds they make. As good luck would have it, they pretty much are found along the 200 meter depth line between St. Petersburg and Mobile!

Thus, we will spend the next 4-5 days zigzagging along that depth line focused on the Bryde's whales and so it's the right time for our array to be in the repair shop. So we will focus on these whales and now add a third watch platform - the crow's nest. Thus, the students will be in the crow's nest, on the midlevel platform and on the pilot house scanning for blow. Weather and seas should be calm during this time- so wish us luck. NOAA only found 1 of these whales on their cruise- maybe we can do better. Dr. Mann showed Johnny how to use the hydrophone and record and maybe he will get the first Bryde's whale recording. Maybe Cathy will develop the first Bryde's whale cell line!

By the way, the fin whale and humpback whale cells are back in our Maine lab and all growing well!

Matt is back with us and ready to work. Roger and Peter have departed. In Mobile, Greer, Cathy and Ryan will depart while Juli, Rob and Chris will arrive.

Today, Captain Bob also installed the whale boom. Johnny and Rick will walk out this 30 foot pole and sit in the chair on the end and sample whales. Pictures of the boom will be up soon!

On a final note, I should mention that our boat challenges have been typical of boat research I am told by many. The NOAA boat which costs \$38,000 a day compared to our \$2,000 was in many times for repairs and adjustments. This last stop in St. Pete would have been necessary anyway as weather-wise, we were riding the back of a tropical depression. So it was a lucky time to have to do repairs as we would have had to stop anyway.

All is well. Spirits are high and let's hope we find whales! We pushed off at just before midnight and are now underway again!

John

