

## Day 52: September 6, 2010

Today was a full day. It started early for me as I had the 12 am - 2 am helm watch. The watch went without incident and Captain Bob and I discussed a variety of topics. I landed in my bunk about 2:15 am and quickly fell asleep. But after just a couple of hours I awoke to the strangest sound again - the lab had gone quiet. I thought for a moment and realized that what was happening was that Johnny was recording the ocean and the boat was off to allow that recording. I quickly realized that this was going to be a problem as he was going to do this every morning, which meant I would not be sleeping a whole lot. At 6 am I was extremely thirsty and so I got up to get a drink.

It occurred to me as I headed for some water that we would be near Deepwater Horizon as the location for returning the Scripps HARP buoy was about 10 miles away. No oil was evident in the water. The boat was stopped for the recording and so the stillness of the boat and the proximity to the accident seemed like a good chance to grab a water sample. Both Matt and Johnny were up so we quickly went to work. Cameraman Ian must have a sixth sense for this sort of thing because shortly after we started, there he was camera in hand. I had looked for him as Alexandra and her team's work is focused on water so it seemed the sort of thing they might want on film, but I didn't see him and figured we was asleep given the early hour. Not sure where he had been, but there he was. It was 6 am and we were on camera after just rolling out of bed. I still hadn't had my drink of water yet.

A flying fish had landed in the boat and died, thus providing us with an excellent opportunity to take a sample once we completed the water. But before we could do that, Ethan informed me we were back at the buoy site and it was time to put the HARP buoy in the water. Johnny went up to the crow's nest to look for whales, while the rest of us successfully returned the buoy to the sea.

Next up was the flying fish. Matt removed its scales and filleted it in the pilot house lab. Ian caught every moment.

After this period of time I had a short break. The students were on their watches and I still had not had that water nor had I had breakfast and it was pushing 9 am. So I went down in the galley and found myself eating cereal with Ethan, Bob and cameraman Ian and discussing the future of mankind. One can't help but find oneself in these types of discussion on a boat. Something about being away from civilization makes you wonder about its fate. Ian and I were on the optimistic side while Bob and Ethan simply felt we were doomed. Fortunately, none of this discussion was on film.

The next major event was to put our array in the water. Our original array has arrived back from its repairs at Scripps and it was time to deploy it. Johnny and Ethan put it in the water and Ethan began training Johnny on the software to run it. Ian was there again catching those moments on film.

About 1:30 the lack of sleep was really catching up with me. I went to my bunk for a short nap, but there was simply too much rolling to settle in. Plus, too much activity already in the day to really relax. So I laid quietly simply resting when a light tap arrived on my door and Matt walked in. Johnny spotted a whale he said and just like that we were at our whale stations.

We saw one whale, but just as we started to get close it fluked and made a deep dive. But then there was another one spotted and we made a beeline to catch up with it. The water was still rocking and rolling, but we were determined. Johnny was on the whale boom. Rick was on the bowsprit. Sandy was on the pilot house. First Mate Ian was on the midlevel platform halfway up the mast. Bob was at the helm. Matt was on the arrows and net. Carlyne was in the bow of the boat and I was in the pilothouse doorway relaying directions from the team to Bob. Cameraman Ian? Well, he was everywhere and yet never once in the way, truly remarkable.

Rick made the first attempt and it fell short. Watching Johnny for a moment made it clear that this day was going to be difficult and it was so wavy. The whale boom was rising well into the air and then crashing into the water. Johnny was getting dunked up to about his waist! He was having to hold on while simultaneously trying to aim a crossbow. In addition, the waves were washing over the whale making the potential target area very small. Sandy would comment later that this activity took the "look mom no hands!" statement to a whole new level. We were unsuccessful in our attempt to obtain a sample and we did not see another whale this day.

Our new tradition is to stop the boat when dinner is ready and we all eat dinner together. The past two days dinner has been spent at the aft table. Although, we did not get a biopsy, we all felt it had been a very busy and successful day. There was not a lot of conversation tonight as everyone was tired. But Venus was bright in the oncoming night sky and we all leaned back and enjoyed the stars as they emerged. I am still tired but pleased that our guests have accomplished what they came for and that our array is working and the whales are clicking away loudly. Hopefully, the water will be flatter tomorrow or perhaps our biopsiers will be more experienced with the waves and luckier with their efforts.

I have noticed that the crew is tired and have taken on a second watch. My new watches will be 10 pm- midnight and 6 am - 8 am, which will allow everyone to get 6 consecutive hours of sleep. I am still quite tired, but we need to keep the crew fresh and I am sure I will catch up on my sleep eventually.

John