

Day 60, Voyage 2, August 7, 2011

Another day of filming and we are still adjusting to it. It's a challenge to blend the needs of the film scenes against the needs of the search for whales with the constant factor of Gulf heat. The normal whale search routine is 2 hours shifts on the watch platforms followed by 4 hours down. The first of those 4 hours is usually spent cooling off and rehydrating and the second is usually a nap. The newbies often nap longer as is physically taxing to stand a watch for 2 hours.

This leg, however, we are short two science crew so already the rotations shorten so its 2 hours up and then 2 hours down. That increases the need for the 2 hours down to be for cooling off and resting. But, we are filming. That means off-watch time is spent on deck in various situations being filmed. Thus, there is little time for rest and rehydration, though trust me I do make sure the team gets it.

For Johnny and Cathy, the shift in routine is a bit disorienting as they have been in it all summer. For Franklin and James, I am not sure there is a routine yet. The good news today was that James found our first whale early and by 10 am we had both a biopsy and another nice set of videos of the process from a different angle. That gave us three angles - one from above on the midlevel platform, one from sea looking at the boat and one from above and behind on the boat.

Midday we were attempting to video water-sampling. I have attached a picture of the shoot in progress. Jonah is holding the camera, Iain Kerr is in the hat readying the water collector. Andy is to his left and Johnny is to his right. We did successfully collect water and, tomorrow, I hope to collect right at the epicenter of Deepwater Horizon.

The day ended with a bunch of whales around. Iain Kerr had the team put a platform off the starboard side giving us another angle to video the process from. We collected another 2 biopsies and felt a sense of relief and accomplishment as three a day has been our average. It is clear we are scientists and not actors. Probably a good thing.

We continue to collect footage and samples and look forward to seeing the videos ourselves.

Sunset picture attached.

John

P.S. We are in the Gulf. Our current location is 28 degrees 51.4 minutes North and 88 degrees 21.8 minutes West, for those who want to track us as we go. For Google maps (not Google Earth - but maps) or Bing maps use (include letters and comma): 28.514 N, 88.218 W

For those of you who are new to this email diary - the previous days can be found at: <https://cms.usm.maine.edu/toxicology/dr-wises-voyage-leg-summaries-2011>



