

Day 7: July 23, 2010

Finally, a calm night and relatively calm seas all day. Still not a sleep through the night type of night as the ac went off and no one realized until I showed up to sleep in the pilot house as my cabin was 90 degrees. Johnny had preceded me up and was sleeping in the salon and Kellie was right behind me for space in the pilot house. Bob quickly had the ac restored and we all headed back to our cabins which cooled to 75. We are happy with 75. But we had a reasonable night sleep anyway.

No whales today. Could not see any blows anywhere. But there were dolphins, lots and lots of dolphins. Okay so technically there were whales since scientifically dolphins are actually whales, but none of the kind we are seeking. You could hear them whistle on the acoustic array and then they would make a beeline for the bow and bow ride. The entire crew would race to the bow and watch over the side as the dolphins would roll and tumble and porpoise with the boat. I have never seen Matt move so fast and be as animatedly excited as he was each time a new group of dolphins would arrive. Peals of delight and really, truly it was cool to watch them. We are unsure of the species, but certainly there were some bottlenose dolphins and some Atlantic spotted dolphins though the taxonomy books indicated that there is a lot of confusion when it comes to identifying spotted dolphins.

Kellie and Matt were feeling better so they resumed watches on the midlevel mast station. Rick also took a turn up there and it was so nice most did not want to come down after their hour was up. Plus the view of the dolphins was remarkable. Rick managed to fix the top step so tomorrow Cathy can go up and we will resume our normal rotations. Hopefully, we will also start helm rotations which will begin with Cathy and me.

So there was opportunity for writing and I worked on Amie and Sandy's papers and on the Center proposal. Bob and I discussed the Gulf route and decided on Mobile, Alabama as our home port and not New Orleans as it is quicker in and quicker out. Once we have the Deep Horizon coordinates we will pick a second home port to explore the area of the Gulf near Texas as Mobile is too far east to use when it's time to explore the western Gulf.

It was a peaceful day which was good to have and the dolphins sprinkled in a bunch of fun.

Kyle made his first lasagna which the crew loved. Thanks to his mom for the advice.

Tonight we are off Cape Hatteras with a strong headwind and current slowing our progress to a crawl. There are reports of thunderstorms so we are anticipating a rough one.

No cell growth yet. But we are hoping. The microscope is a particular challenge as there is no known area of cell attachment so it's hard to find the plane of focus plus the boat

rock causing the focus to drift and the stage to move so it takes too up us to get a rough look at one area. We may not know anything until we are at dock in Florida and can look at the cells better. Some maybe areas but really hard to say as it would look like something and then the focus would drift and Cathy and I would be tossed a bit and let our hold on the stage and the flask slip just a smidge which of course on a microscope changes everything.

It's the one thing about a boat. You do gain sea legs and you do stop being seasick and you may even get better at sea typing. But there is always a jolt coming that tosses you some.

Hope all is well there.

John