

Day 9: July 25, 2010

We have decided to stop for a couple of days to allow the winds to die down. The winds are expected to be high for the next day or so making whale searching impossible and really grinding us down. We are near Beaufort, North Carolina so we will pull in there.

Beaufort is a sleepy little rural town. Duke has a marine center there. It's far too hot easily over 100 degrees. It appears my emails have now become logs and a number of you are reading them. I hope you find them interesting informative and I welcome you on our journey. A few people have asked about whether we are permitted to biopsy calves. We are. I had it explicitly put into the permit as knowing what levels contaminants are is extremely important and valuable toxicologically. Each time this question has been posed I have reread the permit to see if any nuance has escaped me. There is not. It is clear and we are permitted to do so. I have read it so much that I have that section practically memorized. However, the last pass caused me to discover a nuance that I had missed. It seems NMFS forgot to authorize me to supervise biopsy activity. It is unclear if this problem is a clerical error or deliberate decision that we need to fix. Either way, it is Sunday and there is no way to know. However, Iain and Roger and I all agree that we should not jeopardize the permit and seek clarification before we continue with biopsying activity.

In addition the Gulf looms and the weather has limited the training the students have had on running the boat itself. Reports also indicate that the oil is now not likely to reach the Atlantic. Thus, rather than hold the boat in Beaufort until we get the permit fixed. We will have the student spend the next four days focusing on learning to sail the boat with no biopsy work. I will get off here and work with Iain to solve the permit question and with Chris to solve the array software question.

Coincidentally and fortunately, Dr. Richard Winn a colleague who specializes in Aquatic Toxicology at the University of Georgia is vacationing in Beaufort and is available to meet with us on a number of technical issues. Thus, I will start there working with Richard the next 2 days. Johnny will call me each day with a report of the days' activities on the boat.

John