

Day 17, Voyage 2, June 24, 2011

Every once in a while in the Gulf, you get such calm water it is like a mirror. It is absolutely amazing. It is then that the men of the sea, like Captain Bob and First Mate Ian get intrigued by dolphins on the bow. They call it "mirror water". While the science team is dolphin-jaded, save perhaps for Cathy who can never seem to get enough of the dolphins, this morning was the time to look. Poor Cathy had to look from above as she was on watch when the spotted dolphins arrived.

Johnny would, of course, insist that much of the science team was missing because they were processing fish as he and Ian caught 6 bar jack fish in the morning, and indeed some were doing that. It had been a busy morning as what appears to have been a 12 foot great white shark swam by. So Ian and Johnny were catching fish to attract the shark. They swear they had no intention of actually trying to catch the shark and only wanted it near the boat for pictures. But with those two, you never know. Anyway, I digress; back to the dolphins on the bow (the shark was long gone then).

I headed to the bow and found Sandy, camera in hand, Ian and Bob. The water was like glass. You could see every nuance of the dolphin's movements. There were initially two then four spotted dolphins bow riding with the boat. There were even these small fish bow riding above them. It was stunning.

They say a picture says 1,000 words. I think the attached picture taken by Ian is one of those. I have called it "dolphin reflection". It is remarkable. You can see how clearly we could see the spotted dolphins under the water. You can see the surface of the water looking like glass. You can even see a reflection of Ian, Bob and me as we look down on the dolphin. Ian is on the left with the camera, Bob is in the middle and I am on the right. Truly an amazing illustration of the incredible water.

I have also attached a picture Ian took of the bow riding fish. They, too, are remarkable in their own way.

At lunchtime it was bottlenose dolphins bow riding in the glassy water. One was remarkably large and this time, much of the science team, including Cathy, enjoyed their antics. This time I tried a photo with my iPhone. A bit nerve wracking to hold it out over the water in large hands like mine (you may remember I lost my iPhone over the side last year), but it worked and yielded a really nice photo. I called it dolphins under glass, because again you can see the amazing water.

The rest of the day passed quietly. A thunderstorm was nearby so watches were stopped in the late afternoon. The team took advantage of the break to play cards and games, catch up on some reading and relax. I, of course, continued to write and work.

Sunset attached.

John

p.s. Our current location is somewhere off of southern Florida in the Gulf. 28 degrees 37.8 minutes North and 85 degrees 35.2 minutes West, for those who want to track us as we go. For Google maps use (include letters and comma): 28.378 N, 85.352 W







