

Day 58: September 12, 2010

Today was an very quiet day. Not much to see anywhere. The whole team got excited when the boat suddenly and dramatically slowed down. Everyone bolted for the deck where we found... Captain Bob scooping up some water to see what the small brown flecks were in it. In the end, he decided it wasn't interesting. The next moment of excitement came when the boat suddenly and dramatically turned around. The team got excited and ran up on deck where we... scooped up and empty bag of chips Johnny had dropped from the mid-level platform. Other than that it was quiet both visually and on the array. A few fish, a baby turtle, nothing else.

One bit of interest came when Captain Bob hung the awning that covers the aft deck. Now, we have plenty of outdoor shade. In fact, as I write this I am sitting on said aft deck with Rick. He has found a local radio station on his boom box. The sky is clear and glittering with stars, bright planets and a mysterious half moon slightly shrouded by a few clouds. A gentle breeze is blowing as Rick and I enjoy a warm Gulf evening under the Odyssey 'tent' listening to soft music. The others? Captain Bob is sorting items on the bridge. Everyone else is playing Quelf. When I left, First Mate Ian had to tell and embarrassing childhood story while tap dancing. It is on film and coming to a Facebook page near you soon.

We are not about as far west as we can go in the Gulf and still be near 3,000 feet deep where the sperm whales like to feed, about 100 miles from Corpus Christi, Texas. I am also in an email chat with Josh Jones of Scripps and also of the first voyage on tweaking the array. He is at sea up in the arctic. Technology is truly amazing (and thanks Josh!). The array works well, but there are whale clicks it is missing so we are adjusting it.

With the realization that we were well west of the Deepwater Horizon accident where no oil reached and that we were as west as we are going to go, I had Bob stop the boat at 6:30 pm our time and we all went swimming! The water was warm and clear blue and quite salty, but the entire team enjoyed a respite from a rather dull day. After our swim, we all gathered with bananas in the bowsprit and watched the sunset, everyone was there looking for that green flash. Alas, the entire horizon only had two clouds and they had to be right by the sun! So no green flash. We then gathered at the aft table for our daily dinner and conversation routine. It has become a part of the day that I think we all look forward to and treasure (Thanks Iain Kerr for the suggestion!). After dinner we usually relax a bit until 10 pm our time - and my helm watch time when we resume our travels. Tonight, we will turn and start our way back east and see what we can find.

Carolynne has done a great job moving all of the pictures off the lab camera and onto a hard drive we have. I thought I would send you a shot of everyone (except me) as you may enjoy some faces with the names. They are attached as PDFs.

I wish you all a great evening and peace in your week as it starts up again. We will of course be here, in the Gulf, pursuing our quest for answers and taking on the challenges the day may bring.

John













