

Days 2-6, Voyage 2, June 9-14, 2011

At sea at last! At sea at last! Thank God Almighty we are at sea at last!

We sailed out of Key West today and are motoring out to 3000 feet deep where the whales are. We expect to be there some time tomorrow. The past few days in port were filled with hard work and moments that simply tried our patience. We had 4 issues to resolve before we could go: 1) USM needed to finalize the contract with Ocean Alliance to release us to go. 2) The weather had to clear. 3) There were some small boat repairs to finish and 4) There were some science details to finalize. At times it felt like our job was to confirm Murphy's law while others seemed simply to define absurdity. But at 4:17 pm yesterday, USM finalized the contract and with that the final piece in place, we knew today would be the day we could finally go to sea.

The team was as excited as can be. The final hours leading up to departure seemed like years. But, finally at 3 pm, we were on our way. The weather was beautiful and the seas calm. We are hopeful for a productive leg.

I guess my first email missed some people as I had some email glitches so I will again set the team: Captain Bob is at the helm. Ian Glass is first mate. Johnny is our primary biopsier and student team leader. Cathy is running the cell culture lab and Sandy is the cook/whale photo identification person. Rick is our second biopsier. Shanelle Dugan will be taking video and photos, Cynthia Browning will be processing whale samples. Nora Daley will be preparing arrows and working the recovery net. Alyssa Catalano is our new deckhand. We are set up to collect whale samples, prey, water, air, sediment and sounds. Lots of samples and lots of work. We enjoyed a nice dinner on the aft deck with a sunset on our starboard side and a moon rise on our port side. Pictures of each are attached. For the dinner picture, Captain Bob is sitting on the rail so he looks to be standing. Deckhand Alyssa is in the sunglasses, then there is left to right- Nora, Cathy and Johnny. Rick is in the hat. I look forward to telling you all about the adventure.

John



