

Saturday, April 15 – Day 5 by Dr. Wise

Dear All,

Don't think I have fully introduced the team to you so I thought, today I would focus on letting you meet everyone so it is clear as I write going forward. Actually, this work involves three different groups – the Wise Laboratory team, the Sea Shepherd crew and the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California Sur (UABCS) team.

Now, the UABCS team I introduced you to, yesterday. Carlos and Andrea make up that team and they are students of Jorge, who is our local host and collaborator and holds the necessary Mexican sampling permits. Each works hard and has a warm smile.

With us from Sea Shepherd is Captain Fanch, who is new for us to work with, but is a fantastic captain and pleasant fellow, with a great sense of humor, providing music, an appreciation of birds and good conversation. I think you may remember Mike, our first mate from Sea Shepherd last year and this year who is also our boat engineer. Tireless worker, great conversationalist and really welcoming demeanor is the best way to describe Mike. He is a very easy going nice guy, which is not to say other people here are not, they are nice too, but it is for sure a defining quality of Mike- you cannot help but say, wow, he is really a nice guy.

Media on the expedition is key of course, and Sea Shepherd's has sent Carolina (pronounced Care oh leena) as our media expert. Every time we see something interesting on the boat, Carolina is there filming. Besides which, she also has a passion for science, which shines through in our many conversations about work and the sea. All of our food stores, lunch, dinner and our afternoon snack are prepared by our cook Sheila, also from Sea Shepherd. Boat policy is all food on the boat is vegan and Sheila makes sure we are well cared for and well fed. Each day we enjoy trying a new vegan dish, which is different for us, but tasty nonetheless.

The Sea Shepherd team is responsible for the boat, our safety and our progress to San Felipe. Really they do a fantastic job and I thank our Captain from last year, Oona, for leaving us in such capable hands. Oona we miss your company, but you are right – you have provided us with a fantastic team!

That leaves the Wise Laboratory team. Mark, our Captain on our Gulf of Maine work is here from last year and is providing his signature good humor and insightful suggestions. Rick from our Gulf of Mexico and Gulf of Maine voyages is also here keeping us all grounded with his kind and calm demeanor. New to the trip is Rachel. She is my Ph.D. student at the University of Louisville in her second year(ish). Rachel is a careful and hardworking scientist, with a good sense of humor and patience when it comes to fieldwork. She runs our sea turtle program in Vieques and has been part of our Gulf of Maine whale trips.

Then, of course, there is Johnny, whale biopsier extraordinaire and my right hand man on these expeditions. He is the backbone of the team providing music, humor and occasionally the needed intensity for everyone to focus around. He makes sure it all runs from moment to moment. He has

been at sea with me for many, many days and months now over the 7 years we have been doing this work and has really become an exceptional field toxicologist. He is now finishing his Ph.D. at Purdue University.

Lastly, there is me. I guess we have reached a point now in this email distribution list where some of you do not know who I am. I am the head of this adventure and the leader of the Wise Laboratory. My main role here at sea is to keep it all running smoothly. When its simple dynamics, for example when sampling one lone whale, like a patient father, I mostly watch from the sidelines, and complement my team on a job well done. When it is more complex, like when there are many whales in multiple groups, then my job is more like the conductor of a symphony to make sure all of the instruments come in on time and make beautiful music together. With 11 voices, from 3 teams with 3 different working cultures, it's not trivial work, but it is fun and it is flowing and we are really working together very well. It's a great group of people, all dedicated and hardworking.

All is well with us in the Sea of Cortez. We are at anchor and I am tired, but well. The stars here in Bahia San Francisquito are simply fantastic tonight. We are at 28.26.226 N and 112.52.768 W if you want to follow along on Google Earth or similar-type program.

No pictures today as we are trying the email pictureless to see if it goes through the satellite uplink better

Good night from here until tomorrow.

John