

Friday-Saturday, April 21-22 – Days 11/12 by Dr. Wise

Dear All,

So, day 11 found us in port in San Felipe awaiting James and Sean's arrival on day 12, and I don't usually write much while in port as I am away from my computer. Our day was spent quietly as Carlos and Andrea found an internet café to work in, Mark and Rachel went walking around some rocks on the beach, and Rick and Johnny and I just kind of hung out, while the Sea Shepherd crew went to a Sea Shepherd gathering.

Ultimately, the most action of the day might have been watching Mark and Rachel each get henna tattoos on their wrists from a street vendor, that, or watching Rick rent a skiff for a ride to a Sea Shepherd boat tour, only to discover that boat simultaneously was towing an inflatable boat full of tourists all the way there and back! Later, we had dinner with scientists studying the vaquita and beaked whales and had a very nice evening meal.

Morning came, and we met the scientists again for breakfast aboard the Narval, a boat owned by the Museo de Ballenas, and further discussed projects together. About noon, James and Sean arrived, and it was time to say goodbye to Johnny and Rachel, and to welcome Sean on board. Two o'clock came and we were underway again.

Easing into sampling with new crew is always preferable. Sean is an incoming Ph.D. student in my laboratory, having done his Master's with me at my previous institution, and while he has worked on lobster boats, he has not really need to see like this trip. Further crew came from Sea Shepherd, as they added Nathan, a deckhand from France, but new to Biopsying. Of course, it's not really easing into it – when a Bryde's whale appears suddenly on the port side!

Racing about, to and fro, and we do our best to follow. Eventually, a Bryde's whale allows one good sampling opportunity, and you get it or you don't. Very quickly we had the target, but both arrows hit water, and usually that means no sample, as the water slows the arrows speed sufficiently to dull the impact. Exactly, one good sampling opportunity with Bryde's, that's all we get and, today, was no different as we did not get close to that whale again. Rick was frustrated to no end, for he really wanted us to get that sample.

As it turns out... we did! One of the arrows sampled our 45th whale of this leg. Rick called Johnny to let him know. It would be the only whale we saw today.

All is well with us in the Sea of Cortez. We are at anchor in Bahia Willard. We are at 29.49.680 N and 114.23.230 W if you want to follow along on Google Earth or similar-type program.

You can see all the emails from Day 0 through today (Day 12) on

www.WiseLaboratory.org.

Good night from here until tomorrow.

John









