

Monday, April 24 – Day 14 by Dr. Wise

Dear All,

Alas, it had to happen sooner or later – a day with no whales. Usually, one has many days without whales because of weather, and, of course, because the whales migrate in and out of the area. Really, we've been quite lucky during the first leg because the sea was so calm, and the whales so abundant. Only today, and perhaps for several more, the weather has turned a bit for the worse.

Raging winds continue to batter at us, as they move from the Southwest to the North. As they come across the mountains, they really whip across the water. Driving winds create white caps that complicate sighting the whales, as one has to ascertain whether or not it's a whale surfacing or a whitecap. Of course, the winds also rapidly disperse the whale blow, making it difficult to see the blow. Yes, we do our best to work when we have periods of wind die down, but we lose large gaps of time while waiting, and it's harder to maintain a fluid process, and individual concentration.

On the other hand, the wind does bring cool air, which is a much needed relief on the boat. We are in the sun and heat much of the day, and the air conditioning on the boat has been broken since before we started. Ultimately, that was the silver lining of today, no whale, but cooler air to allow for a goodnight sleep, especially for those of us in the forward bunks.

Added to the driving wind, we also had extensive rolling of the boat with the swells. Nothing too big as waves go, but enough to require items be secured not to move and cups and glasses held onto to prevent their sliding around. Now and again, someone wobbles around (often me) and you think they are going to fall, but then they catch their balance and keep going.

Arrows also pose an issue in winds like these, for if they were released the wind would blow them well off course. Perhaps, even more complicated would be recovering the arrows, as the wind and the waves would push them around, obscure our view of them, and make leaning over to net them quite hazardous. Lately, we have been using the dinghy to retrieve the arrows, and that clearly is not a viable option in this ocean swell, so we wait for calmer seas.

All in all, we consider ourselves blessed by what has been good weather and great sampling. Yes, whales would have been nice too, but at least everyone is safe and sound and we have cool air to sleep under.

All is well with us in the Sea of Cortez. We are at anchor in Punta el Alacran. The Las Animas Wilderness Lodge is here, but looks deserted so we will not disturb it. We are at 28.53.940 N and 113.22.673 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's (Day 14) on

www.WiseLaboratory.org

Good night from here until tomorrow.

John













SEA OF CORTEZ

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