

From: Jake the SeaDog [mailto:seamail@whaletimes.org]  
 Sent: Friday, January 22, 2010 10:21 AM  
 To: 'creepintothedeep@whaletimes.org'  
 Subject: Creep into the Deep: Last day of our research cruise, already!

Aloha Friends,

Wow, it's our last day of the cruise. Can you believe it?

The wind is up a little bit today but nothing to keep us from diving with the sub. Good weather makes working at sea so much more productive. Not only are we able to use the sub, ROV or other gear over the side, but we sleep much better. Then we're not as tired during our long days at sea. Each room has an upper and lower bunk bed. When the sea is rough, you tend to roll around in bed. On those days, you have to wedge your mattress so you don't roll around. On really rough days, the upper bunks often have a board they put up that keeps you from rolling out of bed in your sleep.

After we get the sub back aboard, the ship will travel through the night back to Oahu. On the way, we will cross some channels between the islands where the water tends to be rougher. We should make port first thing in the morning that will be the end of the cruise.

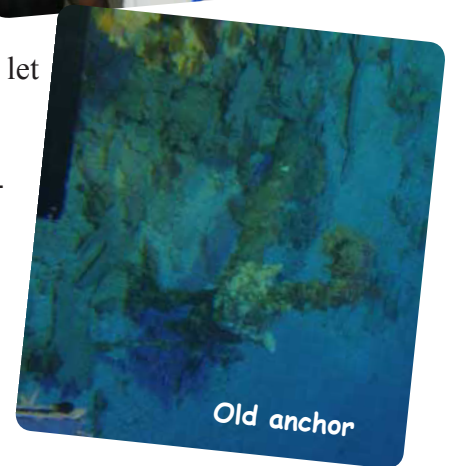
I've attached a couple more photos. The first is the sub waiting to be brought back aboard the KoK, one showing how we document the animals collected during a cruise (you can probably see the ruler, so it's easy to tell how big it is), and an old anchor we found while exploring.

CJ (aka Christina) has been busy throughout the cruise but she has volunteered to finish today's log with some of her observations from her sub dive. Before I hand over this Seamail to Christina, though, I wanted to let you know your signatures have joined us for every dive! You were with us when we explored places no one has ever been; saw a manta ray; searched for coral; were encircled by schools of silvery fish; and floated along deep-sea cliffs. Your signatures made the following Pisces IV dives:

DIVE #	DATE	DEPTH
Dive P4-231	1-17-10	160m
Dive P4-232	1-18-10	151m
Dive P4-233	1-19-10	105m
Dive P4-234	1-20-10	134m
Dive P4-235	1-21-10	130m

That's a lot of dive time! Thank you for joining us. It was fun having you along.

Mahalo,  
 ~Frank (and the science team)



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Aloha Virtual Team Members,

So this was my third sub dive -- my second on this particular research trip. Each time I find that the habitat we visit is just a little bit different, holding some new mystery for me to discover. I am a biologist whose primary interest has always been in fishes and other biotic aspects of ecosystems. But each time I dive in this \*mesophotic zone I become additionally interested in some other specialty of science.

On this dive, the water was so clear we could see the bottom from 40 meters above it! Unfortunately, it didn't stay that way for long and fairly soon the visibility wasn't more than 15 meters. Cruising along looking for good coral cover and habitats with high biological diversity, I couldn't help but feel like I was in some Hollywood movie about the abyssal regions of the ocean. Because of the lowered visibility, everything was a little darker than usual, and as we came upon rock formations they would first appear as dark masses up ahead. Then slowly, they would come into view and the pilot would adjust our course so we could move around them.

The multitude of caverns in the cliff faces, the jagged cuts into the cliff walls, and the precipitous nature of the bluffs we were traveling around made me wonder what geologic event created such interesting bathymetric features. Is this evidence of prehistoric sea levels? What will our cliffs and beaches look like millions of years from now? At that moment, I wished I had a better understanding of geology. So now, once we arrive back in port, I intend to search out a good geological oceanography book and curl up for a good read.

~CJ

\*Here's a nice article about the mesophotic zone with a photo of the Pisces:  
Mesophotic Coral Ecosystems Found to Host Species from Shallower Reefs  
<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/news/weeklynews/may09/mesophotic.html>