

M/V Tiglax 2008 Field Season Report

Interesting Oceanic Observations

We had our second documented observation of a blue whale in the ships history, and it took place in the Rat Islands. Two whales were together not many miles from where the first one was seen 11 years prior. This could lead to a lot of speculation as to whether they are related which I will leave to the scientific mind.



Transiting up the east side of Kodiak in the first week of July on our annual National Marine Fisheries charter, we encountered dozens of grey whales from Cape Barnabas to Ugak Is and during these observations we saw approaching from the east 100's of Pacific White-sided Dolphins and intermixed in their aerial display were Northern Fur seals. The seals mimicked the dolphins with their leaps out of the sea which was a real treat for the fur seal biologists on board.

Marine mammal sightings were 62 for the year. Humpbacks (19) Orca's (13) sperm's (9) Minke's (7) Fin's (5) Fur seals (4) Grey's (2) and Sei's (1). In the non mammal world there was (9) sightings of Short tailed Albatrosses that is note worthy.

Tiglax Facts for 2008

- **Days at sea** 152
- **Total miles** traveled 16862 NM
- **Passengers:** 151
- **Ports of call** (5) Adak, Homer, Kodiak, Seward, Unalaska, Dutch Harbor
- **Dockings** 53
- **Field camps supported** 11
- **Countries Represented** : Belgium, Canada, England, Germany, Russia, and the USA
- **Federal User Groups:** Alaska Volcano Observatory, Dept Of Energy, National Marine Fisheries, NOAA, US Fish & Wildlife And the U.S Geological Survey
- **Non Governmental Agencies:** Aleutian Pribilof Island Ass., Island Conservation The Nature Conservancy and The Sanak Corporation
- **Universities:** Memorial University , University Of Alaska Anchorage and Fairbanks, University of British Columbia
- **Refuge Projects Supported:**
 - Annual seabird monitoring sites (3)
 - Akutan land exchange
 - Bering Sea Integrated Ecosystems Research Project
 - Common eider survey and telemetry project
 - Fox eradication at Sanak Island
 - Hydro acoustic and pelagic seabird transects at Buildir
 - Kittlitz murrelet telemetry project
 - Level 1 contaminants survey Great Sitkin
 - Logistical support Adak
 - Rat Island eradication
 - Seabird colony mapping at Kanaga Is
 - U.S.F.W botanical and archeological surveys
 - Centennial photo show

Rat Island Seabird Restoration Project



Our field season was extended because of the Rat Island eradication project. The Tiglav supported the project in several ways. During our transiting of the Aleutians during the field season we cashed fuel for the helicopters to be used as support of their flights from Homer to Rat Island and back. Secondly we transited to Rat Is at the end of regular field season to lend more personnel support for observations of the sea lion rookeries before during and after bait application to Ayugadak Island and assist in hand bait application around the fresh water lakes on Rat island. Lastly, we were the support vessel for the demobilization of the 10 tons of field camp gear. That was the first time the vessel was used as a support vessel for helicopter operations and the operation went off without a hitch.

Captain Bell's Last Voyage to Agattu

It is fitting to end the field season report with mention of our special passenger this year. Captain Kevin Bell made his last trip aboard the Tiglax. He has been on since its inception and has sailed in every field season. On May 13th we had family and friends aboard to place some of Kevin's ashes in Kachamak Bay one of the two places he had chosen as his final resting place.

In August we picked up his wife, Mary Bell in Adak and transited to Island Cove on Agattu the other place he chose as a place to rest, a place that he insisted was the "nicest spot on the Refuge." The day was spectacular, Kevin always said the Near Islands have their own "micro-climate" and this day he was right, sunny and warm and after a season of rain and fog throughout it seemed fitting that the skies cleared and the sun warmed the earth on this day to accept its latest resident. It was very special for Mary to finally see a place that Kevin held so close to his heart. So whenever we transit Agattu we can hear Kevin say "anytime you're on the south side stop in say hi and see the nicest place in the Maritime."

