



## NOAA Teacher at Sea Kimberly Pratt Onboard NOAA Ship MCARTHUR II July 5 – 24, 2005

### Interview 12

Another successful scientist is Peter Pyle. Peter became interested in Ornithology while helping his dad, a meteorologist, band birds in their backyard in Oahu, Hawaii. Peter attended Swarthmore College and received his BA in Biology. Peter who loves field work lived on the Farallon Islands for 24 years as a field biologist. When Peter is not doing field work, he is busily writing scientific papers and manuals to compliment field guides for Ornithologists. His manuals help age/sex determination, species ID, and are written for “bird in hand” observations. Peter’s favorite bird is a Bristle-thighed Curlew, which is a rare bird that breeds in Alaska and winters in Hawaii and the tropical Pacific. Peter likes it because it acts like a goofball. Peter, who is married, has an understanding and independent wife. Peter’s advice to someone who would like to be an Ornithologist is to be a field person. In the field you get dirty, have to be patient; you may spend hours in cold blinds waiting. You have to have a passion for biology really be successful. Lastly, Peter advises that if your heart is in the right place, you’ll be a successful biologist.



Another Ornithologist on this mission is Rich Pagen. Rich, who did his undergrad work in Environmental Studies, received his MA in Wildlife Biology. Currently he lives in Minnesota, but in the past he lived on Catalina Island. He also taught an outdoor science class in Pasadena. During a Sea Bird meeting, he met Lisa Ballance who got him interested in the CSCAPE project. Previously, Rich has done shark satellite tagging, and has gone to Antarctica as a naturalist on a passenger ship.

Rich will be completing this cruise as a Bird Observer.

If this group of scientists could have an action figure, it would be Juan Carlos Salinas. Juan is in charge of tissue biopsy of the whales and dolphins. He is able to obtain these biopsies in very difficult circumstances. Juan who lives in Mexico City was hand picked for these missions because of his talent for obtaining biopsy’s and his knowledge of marine mammals. Juan learned biopsy sampling while in Baja in 1991 when studying

humpback whales. Juan has had extensive field work experience and will be going to Hawaii with the MCARTHUR II until November 30th. He's excited about his mission to Hawaii because you always see something different. The Hawaiian waters are just being studied and what's out there is relatively unknown. During the mission in Hawaii, he will do species ID, population studies, determine the health of the animals and finally learn about their genetics. Juan states that the field of biology is much more specialized than before with genetics being the big thing today. Another marine mammal observer that is talented in tissue biopsy is Ernesto Vasquez. Ernesto, who is married with a family, does field work cruises about once per year. He currently works at the National Resource Ministry as a Marine Biologist in LaPaz, Mexico. He's been with the government for 3 years. He graduated school in 1998 with his degrees in Marine Biology. While away, he e-mails his wife and family and he likes getting close to the animals, and getting tissue samples to.



Currently being trained in biopsy operations is marine biologist Tim O'Toole. Tim graduated from San Diego State University and did his post graduate work in Australia. An avid surfer, Tim enjoys the ocean and having the opportunity to gain further field experience working with marine mammals. While on this research cruise, he's gaining experience from other scientists as well as reading, and learning Spanish. He does, however miss friends and family and likes to stay in touch.

Photos:

1. Peter Pyle
2. Rich Pagen (back), Tim O'Toole foreground
3. Juan Carlos Salinas
4. Ernesto Vasquez