



**NOAA Teacher at Sea  
Christopher Harvey  
Onboard NOAA Ship OSCAR ELTON SETTE  
June 5 – July 4, 2006**

**Date:** June 7, 2006

**Time:** 6:00 PM Hawaii

**Speed:** 0.0 knots

**Depth:** 16 fathoms (96 feet, ~32 m)

**Entry**

We have “made a bed” for ourselves a short distance away from Necker Island. For all of the huff and puff of reaching the island, I am a little disappointed. It is definitely nothing more than a rather small island, or a rather large piece of rock, sticking out of the water just enough to attract several dozen birds. Apparently there are some monuments engraved into the island, left over from primitive Pacific cultures. Scientists’ best guess is that they were used for navigation, or small religious ceremonies, since the island is definitely not habitable.

It has been a long day today and I am grateful for the change in pace. At 12:45 we were called into the wet lab, a laboratory set up on the inside of the ship where most of the science of the project will take place. We, the novice researchers, were given instructions on how to set up and bait the traps, as we would be setting them in our first sites almost immediately. Joe, one of the scientists and leading authorities on the North West Hawaiian Island (NWHI) lobsters, gave us the run through in Trap 101. I can teach any of you Trap 101 upon my return to the mainland if you so desire. He didn’t have certificates to print out, so my knowledge of lobster traps will be filed away under the “Important Once Upon A Time” folder inside my head that contains information such as: how to remove a tick from a dog’s rear end, how to speak Pig Latin, and how to cook microwave popcorn in a microwave.

By 1 PM we were all out on the fantail of the ship assembling, baiting, and locking 160 lobster traps. This again was a wonderful portrait of the unity that we have formed among us, with no instruction to cooperate as such. To give you an idea of our working conditions, whenever fish blood was spilled on the hot, black deck, a filthy steam would rise into the air. I went through a gallon of water in the course of an hour or so. And at times the sweat was pouring into my eyes so much that by the time I wiped my eyes with my shirt, more sweat was pouring in. (Remember, no pity parties...yet!) Now take into consideration that there was many of us working together in a rather tight spot (after we have assembled 160 lobster traps, the deck is rather full) all requiring the same basic materials to complete our task, in such heat as I’ve just described. I can count the number of times one of us complained by using a Goglesplotcha (That’s right, whatever that “word” is, it does not exist. NO ONE complained once.).

By 2:30 we were setting traps in the water with the help of the more experienced ship crew. Although no specific jobs were assigned, we seemed to rotate the workload between us, ensuring that the job was done effectively and efficiently. Again, coming from a business mind, I am thoroughly impressed with the way things went today. Our boss was so confident in our working together that he stood on the next deck above us and drank a diet coke while we sweated away (I guess that is the reason we should all strive to become a boss one day!). Nobody had to thank me for the work I had done. Nor did I have to thank anyone else. We all knew that we had successfully completed the task. Had I a PhD behind my name, I might study our methods a little closer and try to coin a phrase to describe our cooperation and put it in a book! I think, if somehow our faculty could cooperate the way we did today, there is no question in my mind we would become the best school in the district. There were probably flaws along the way, and at times some of us may have been thinking that we were carrying more or less of the workload. But when it was all said and done, the job was done wonderfully and we will be rewarded by the data we begin collecting tomorrow.

That's it for now. Life aboard the ship is peachy keen (or something cheesy like that).

PS- The "sea legs" have arrived, complete with a nice sunburn! The only trouble I have now is closing my eyes in the shower to keep the shampoo out of my eyes. When I do this, it seems my inner ear loses its balance and I bang my head against the showerhead. Believe it or not, the methodical scientist that I am, it is not enough to have this happen once. I must try several times, testing variables such as water temperature, width of stance, and pace of head scrubbing. In the end I get the same bruised noggin. O' the price I have to pay in the name of science! (It may just be that I am clumsy. I haven't taken that variable into consideration yet!)