



**NOAA Teacher at Sea
Elizabeth Eubanks
Onboard NOAA Ship DAVID STARR JORDAN
July 22 – August 3, 2007**

NOAA Teacher at Sea: Elizabeth Eubanks

NOAA ship DAVID STARR JORDAN

Mission: Catch rates of pelagic sharks comparing J hooks to Circular hooks in support of The Relative Abundance of Sharks Survey

Date: Day 6, July 27, 2007, Friday

Pacific Ocean - Tanner Bank – East of San Clemente

Weather Data from the Bridge taken at 1500 (3pm) - Deep Sea Temp at (2000) 8pm

Visibility: 8-10 miles

Air temperature: 17.0 degrees C

Sea Temperature at 350m: 7 degrees C

Sea Temperature at surface: 19.0 degrees C

Wind Direction: 290 W

Wind Speed: 18 kts

Cloud cover: clear –some cumulus, cirrus

Sea Level Pressure: 1013.2 mb

Sea Wave Height: 2-3 ft

Swell Wave Height: 2-3 ft



Dr. Suzy Kohin surrounded by a big Blue Shark – notice the eye, the nictitating membrane covers the eye.

Science and Technology Log

“First do no harm” Michael J. Zoghby RPT

Today was so exciting. We caught a *Mola mola*, Ocean Sunfish, and 22 sharks. Many of them were baby Blue sharks and although this team tries very hard to keep all of the sharks alive, some of them are so badly thrashed by the hook and/or line that they don't make it. Yesterday was the first day that we had our first mortality (dead shark). It was a baby Blue and the gills were just ripped out by the hook. Sad, no one likes to see a dead shark. Everyone is out here to preserve them and keep them safe.

We caught many average size sharks and a few really large ones. Watching the scientist work on the large animals has got to be one of the most thrilling things to see, especially when they have the extra challenge of wave swells coming across the platform, soaking them and giving the shark a chance to do what it does best... swim. As one of the grad students put it, the pictures and videos we have taken during these events are not ones



Scientists Suzy Kohin and Russ Vetter tag the *Mola mola*, Ocean Sunfish

you would want your mom to see, the mix of slippery platform, scalpel in hand, swell water pouring in and of course a HUGE SHARK, could be a deadly mixture. But safety comes first. They probably had the shark on the platform for a good 3-5 minutes. The Blue was using every bit of what it had to get off of the platform. It was so exciting that I had to video and take still shots. This shark would've been a great choice for the satellite tag because of its size, but they didn't get a chance to that. They removed what they

could of the hook, identified him as a male and struggled to hold him down. The Blue shark was estimated at 220cm. We never did get an actual measurement, because for one thing it appeared to be longer than the platform measuring tape and for another Dr. Kohin made a decision to “just let it go” and that is a direct quote. Safety comes first for shark and for people.

More safety notes: Late night we found out that there was a problem with one of the engine fans. So tomorrow morning our set is canceled. We will have to wait to see if they can fix it and if they can't we go back to San Diego and the trip is over. Why? Because they follow the rule, the only rule you really ever need– First Do No Harm.

Extra note: The Ocean Sunfish is an amazing fish. You will see them in the Pacific and at first think that they are sharks, because of their dorsal fin that sticks out of the water. They have been described as one of the most evolved fish and look like a super sized Frisbee.- A great fish to do a little personal research on, if you are into fish. (Sean Maloney – check it out!)

Personal Log

“Bet ya goin’ fishn’ all the time, I’mma goin’ fishin’ too. I bet your life, your lovin’ wife is gonna catch more fish than you, so many fish bite if ya got good bait, here’s a little tip that I would like to relate, I’mma goin’ fish, yes I’m goin’ fishn’ and my babies goin’ fishin too!”

- Not sure who sang or wrote this little diddy first, so I can’t give credit right now – but I didn’t write this “catchy” tune.

I am working/ living on a fishing boat. Dah! It’s a goofy realization that just hit me today. Since I got accepted for this project, I have been in a narrow mindset that I am on a shark research vessel, which I am. I broaden my mindset and hit me that I am also on a fishing vessel. Fishing is what we do when we set and haul the long line. Fishing is what we can do in our spare time. We have bait, we have hooks and we have line. We catch fish. Oh and we cook and eat fish too. We are fishing. Funny, but now it makes my experience even cooler. I have always wanted to work on a fishing vessel.

Right out of high school my girl friend and I had done a heap of research and were planning on moving to Ocean City, MD for the summer. We had spent hours investigating different job possibilities. We had heard that sometimes you spend all your summer working to pay your bills and don’t really get to enjoy the beach, but we didn’t care. She was interested in a job as a waitress and I had sent in a ½ dozen applications to fishing vessels. That is what I really wanted to do. That was my glamour job! I dreamed that I could be the one who baits the hooks and cleans the deck. I figured if I had to spend most of my time working, it should be on the water with fish and people who liked to fish.

Anyway, that dream ended with a car crash – no one was killed, just minor injuries but it sure shook up my folks enough to keep me in PA for the summer.

So after all these years - I am working and living on a fishing ship. Super cool, huh!

Oh happy day,
Elizabeth Eubanks

Please direct your emails (questions for me and answers to my questions) to the email address listed below. I will **NOT** be checking my yahoo email account until I return to land!

elizabeth.eubanks.atsea@jonems.jordan.oma.noaa.gov

Question of the Day

If you had to pick a research science career, what would you study? What would your problem be?

Question of the trip

Which hook, the J or Circle will catch more sharks?

Please make a hypothesis. Utilize resources to justify your hypothesis.

-----Yes, you get extra credit for this.