

Dispatch from Tuesday, 8 May 2007

Greetings:

Today we found out how lucky we were to have made the crossing of the Drake when we did. Apparently a low pressure cell has moved in behind us and the Drake is now a washing machine. We got an e-mail this morning from Palmer Station saying that they had winds gusting up to 60 Knots. So not only did we miss this, but we had an incredibly calm ride all the way into port. This morning we awoke near the entrance to the Straits of Magellan. A few of the early morning raisers got to see hourglass or Commersons dolphins. They are beautiful little speedsters. Shortly after the dolphins were spotted we came upon a couple of southern right whales. One of them was with a calf. Around 12:00 we passed through Argentine waters to Chilean waters and a 2:00 PM we picked up a Chilean Pilot who will guide the ship into Punta Arenas for a 10:30 PM arrival. This whole coastal region is rich in oil, so there are many oil platforms scattered along the coast and into the straits (see picture). We were careful to make sure we came through the straits on an incoming tide as the current was almost 3 knots. As we approached one of two narrow regions (see picture) we came upon a number of Commersons dolphins. These little guys are incredibly fast and hard to photograph, but we managed to get a few pictures. We are on the final leg of our voyage and will be spending our final night about the *L.M. Gould*. Tomorrow we turn in our field gear and move to hotels. At the same time our replacement seal team arrives from the US and we trade places.

All the best from Seal Team



