

Ocean Wildlife



By Rich Wilson
aboard *Great American II*

Date: May 1, 2003
Position:
17° 15' S / 004° 23' W
Boat Speed: 5.2 knots
Boat Course: 323°

Mother Nature's variety and imagination at sea is simply amazing.

Flying fish, squid, and jellyfish have come aboard, either self-propelled or washed on by the sea. Porpoises have played at high speed with *GAI*'s three hulls; a pilot whale eased by one night to investigate. Two large whales cruised the Agulhas Bank, and two sperm whales strolled while their baby frolicked in the Benguela Current. Baitfish swarms off Namibia attracted frenzied birds diving for dinner.

Several barnacle-like crustaceans have attached to our stern, and a single one of a different species to our stern platform. This latter extends

a fan of tentacles to gather food from the sloshing water. Its growth since the South China Sea is remarkable.

In the sky, we have seen thousands of birds of various species. One bird worked for an hour to successfully land on our waving masthead! The majestic and mesmerizing albatross, gliding and soaring effortlessly and imperceptibly in any weather, barely moving their wings, have forgotten more about aerodynamics than any aircraft designer ever knew.

Unseen below the sea surface swim millions of fish. Fishing grounds worldwide are under great pressure from the expanding human population's need for protein.

Enormous trawlers take huge scoops of fish in each bite.

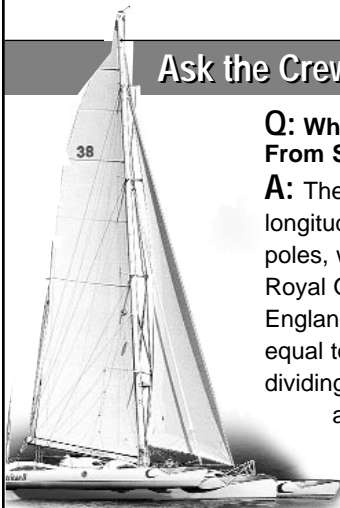
In the open ocean there are few governing laws, much to the detriment of sea life. International agreements govern certain fisheries, but not most. Mother Nature is beautiful. She is also prolific, but not infinitely so.



ANSWERS AT
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1. Look it up: What type of animal is a pilot whale?
2. What is growing on the boat's stern platform?
3. What human activity is endangering sea life?

Ask the Crew of *Great American II*



**Q: What is the Greenwich Meridian?
From Stacy, Massachusetts, USA**

A: The Greenwich Meridian is a line of longitude, stretching between the Earth's poles, which runs through the British Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England. The Greenwich Meridian is equal to 0° longitude, and provides the dividing line between the Earth's Eastern and Western Hemispheres.

—answered by Rich du Moulin



The environment is frequently in the news.

Look in the newspaper for articles that identify problems relating to the environment. Choose one problem to research further, then brainstorm possible solutions.

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