

Watching Whales

We took our usual whale tour with Island Packers today. The captain always recognizes us, and we chat a lot with him. It is



interesting that out of a few years of doing this, we have always managed to get Captain Dave out of 5 other captains.

Dolphins raced to join us; they are such a happy greeting committee. They will look up out of the water to make eye contact. It wasn't long before we started seeing plumes of exhaled air, evidence of whales. We

were out for nearly 4 hours and saw maybe close to 20 whales, all humpbacks.



The captain and the wildlife biologist told us later what we experienced today was about as good as it gets. It was very thrilling, especially when the whales got within about 200 feet of the boat. That is when you start to get an idea of just how

huge they are. I thought it was an interesting perspective; Captain Dave said the catamaran we were on is 65 feet long. He later said humpback whale adults are about 55 feet long, 10 feet shorter than our boat.

A baby humpback was along with one pod, what a treat!

The only thing the whales didn't do was jump clear out of the water. The dolphins and whales were cooperatively hunting. The wildlife biologist said the dolphins and whales hunt together cooperatively. She said the dolphins drive the fish and the whales sometimes bubble net them and they all dine, including the birds. She said whenever she sees the humpbacks feeding, so are the dolphins. They are very often together.

They each make it easier for the other. The wildlife biologist said she thought the dolphins were driving the fish, but the whales were bubble netting and occasionally several all at the same time would "lunge feed",

lunging upward to engulf a mouthful of fish. When that happened, almost everybody on the boat let out some kind of astonished utterance. It's a wonder we didn't scare the whales with so much noise.