

The last part of the Galapagos trip was spent out in the Pacific watching sperm whales. The boat's naturalist was staying up all night, running a hydrophone in the water, listening for the singsong sounds whales make.

After daylight he'd be high up on the mast, scanning the horizon for sight of the telltale water spouts that give the whales away. The rest of us had the choice of hovering underneath a canvas shade on deck, or hanging on in the rough sea to the only table in the dining salon.

However, at that time we were in peak condition to be at sea. We'd been training on a straight diet of rice and fish and cabbage. Like the old time Oriental sailors who ride out the storms on the China Sea, our stomachs were so seaworthy that we'd have made an albatross think he was coming down with altitude sickness.

For those who couldn't handle the food, an English couple had brought along elastic wrist bands that the British Navy had used to prevent sea sickness in the Falkland Island campaign. Ailing shipmates who were able to stand having a wrist band on their arms were brought steady and about in short order.

When the whiskered naturalist did begin to find whales, he found a lot of them. We'd pour up on deck, stumbling on the stairs and rushing wildly to take photographs. The crew and the more intrepid of the group would dive overboard to swim out closer to a whale.

Mainly, I hung onto a cable in the bow and shot pictures that took in the troughs of the waves and wide angle shots of the horizon. Everybody along was connected to an environmental group except myself. I overheard quite a bit of muttering by the deck bound people about the others spooking the gentle whales.

In no way was I going to blow my cover. They'd already asked me what I did back in Texas and I'd told them that I grew coyotes for a living.