



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
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CRUISE REPORT¹

VESSEL: *Oscar Elton Sette*, Cruise 06-08 (OES-44)

CRUISE PERIOD: July 17–August 3, 2006

AREA OF OPERATION: Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) (Fig. 1)

TYPE OF OPERATION: Protected Species Division Monk Seal Field Camp Recovery and Cetacean Survey

ITINERARY:

- 17 July Embarked C. Yoshinaga, M. MacDonald, A. Hall, and C. Young. Departed Snug Harbor, Honolulu at 1000 en route to Laysan Island (3 days, 10 hours).
- 21 July Arrived Laysan Island at 0800. Loaded equipment, supplies, and debris. Disembarked MacDonald. Embarked G. Johnson and M. Fowler. Departed Laysan 1600 en route to Pearl and Hermes.
- 23 July Arrived Pearl and Hermes Reef at 0800. Loaded equipment and supplies including one 18-ft Rigid Hull Inflatable Boat (RHIB), one 15-ft EdgeWater boat and six empty 55-gal drums. Embarked H. Finn, J. Lopez, and K. Reuland. Departed Pearl and Hermes Reef at 1400 en route to Midway Atoll.
- 23 July Arrived Midway Atoll at 2000.
- 24 July Loaded equipment and supplies, including one 25-hp outboard engine. Embarked C. McGuire and L. Karczmarski.
- 25 July Departed Midway Atoll at 0600 en route to Kure Atoll. Conducted cetacean surveys in transit.



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- 25 July Arrived Kure Atoll at 1300. Disembarked McGuire and Karczmarski. Loaded equipment and supplies including one 13-ft Boston Whaler boat and engine. Embarked T. Wurth, A. Gutierrez, H. Eijzenga, and J. Eijzenga. Departed Kure Atoll at 1600 en route to Pearl and Hermes Reef.
- 26 July Arrived Pearl and Hermes Reef at 0800. Launched the National Marine Fisheries Service RHIB and SAFE boat with scientific personnel to conduct day survey and tagging of Hawaiian monk seals. Recovered all boats at 1600. Departed Pearl and Hermes Reef at 1700 en route to Lisianski Island.
- 27 July Arrived Lisianski Island. Disembarked marine debris team to collect land debris. Loaded equipment, supplies, and debris. Embarked J. Higgins, V. DeCamp, and debris team. Departed Lisianski at 1600 en route to Laysan Island.
- 28 July Arrived Laysan Island at 0800. Launched inflatable boat with scientist to collect land debris. Recovered all scientists and boat at 1600. Departed Laysan Island at 1700 en route to French Frigate Shoals (FFS).
- 29 July Conducted cetacean surveys during transit.
- 30 July Arrived FFS at 0800. Off-loaded equipment and supplies including three 55-gal drums of gasoline and one drum of diesel. Loaded equipment and supplies. Embarked S. Canja, E. Leung and M. Mckinzie. Departed FFS 1600 en route to Necker Island. (8 hours)
- 31 July Arrived Necker Island at 0800. Disembarked Yoshinaga, Lopez, and Finn to conduct day census on the Hawaiian monk seal population. Recovered scientific shore party at 1600. Departed Necker en route to Nihoa Island.
- 1 Aug Arrived Nihoa Island at 0800. Deployed Watercraft (operator Yoshinaga) and inflatable boat. Disembarked Canja, Higgins, Johnson, and Wurth to conduct day census on the Hawaiian monk seal population. Deployed marine debris team (Hall and Young) to conduct snorkel survey for marine debris. Recovered all scientific parties at 1600.
- 2 Aug Arrived Kaula Rock at 0800 to conduct marine mammal survey (Hawaiian monk seals and cetaceans) of island and surrounding waters. Continued cetacean survey transect along the west coast of Niihau. Finished cetacean survey at 1800. Began transit to Honolulu.
- 3 Aug Arrived Honolulu at 0800. Off-loaded all supplies, equipment, trash, and recyclables. Disembarked all scientific personnel. End of cruise.

MISSIONS AND RESULTS:

- A. Recover field camps at Laysan Island, Lisianski Island, Pearl and Hermes Atoll, Midway Atoll, and Kure Atoll.

All field camps were recovered successfully.

- B. Resupply existing NMFS field camp at FFS.

All supplies were transported to FFS.

- C. Resupply existing U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field camps at FFS, Midway, and Laysan Island. Transport equipment, supplies, and personnel.

All supplies and equipment were transported successfully.

- D. Support Department of Forestry and Wildlife field camp at Kure Atoll.

All supplies and personnel were transported successfully.

- E. Collect marine debris on Laysan and Lisianski Islands.

A total of 1,917 kg of debris were collected from Laysan and Lisianski Islands (1,549 kg = Laysan, 368 kg = Lisianski).

- F. Conduct day census on the monk seal population at Necker and Nihoa Island and Kaula Rock:

1. Necker Island seal count

Mom/pup pairs = 3

Adults = 2

Subadults = 2

2. Nihoa Island seal count

Mom/pup pair = 5

Adults = 14

Subadults = 4

Juveniles = 3

Weaned pups = 2

3. Kaula Rock seal count

Adults = 9

Subadults = 5

Juveniles = 1

G. Conduct cetacean surveys opportunistically.

Cetacean surveys were conducted on transit days from 0600 to approximately 1800 (see itinerary). Additional surveys were conducted when departing islands.

The following cetaceans were observed during the surveys:

- a. *Mesoplodon densirostris* ($n = 3$)
- b. Probable beaked whale unknown species ($n = 1$)
- c. *Physeter macrocephalus* ($n = 3$)
- d. *Tursiops truncatus* (five sightings; $n = \sim 5-15$ per sighting)
- e. *Stenella longirostris* (three sightings; $n = \sim 20$ per sighting)
- f. *Pseudorca crassidens* ($n = \sim 8$)

H. Conduct conductivity-temperature-depth (CTD) casts and expendable bathythermograph (XBT) deployments opportunistically.

CTD casts were not conducted because of a problem with the CTD unit. XBT deployments were conducted three times per day on transit days.

**SCIENTIFIC
PERSONNEL:**

Chad Yoshinaga, Chief Scientist, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC),
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Gretchen Johnson, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Melinda Fowler, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Jean Higgins, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Veronica DeCamp, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Suzanne Canja, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Megan McKinzie, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Elaine Leung, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Hugh Finn, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Jessica Lopez, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Kenady Reuland, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Tracy Wurth, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
Antonette Gutierrez, Cooperating Scientist, Aquatic Farms
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Christina McGuire, Cooperating Scientist, DOFAW
Leszek Karczmarski, Cooperating Scientist, DOFAW
Mark MacDonald, Cooperating Scientist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Submitted by: (/s/Chad Yoshinaga)
Chad Yoshinaga
Chief Scientist

Approved by: (/s/Michael Seki) for
Samuel G. Pooley
Science Director
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Attachment

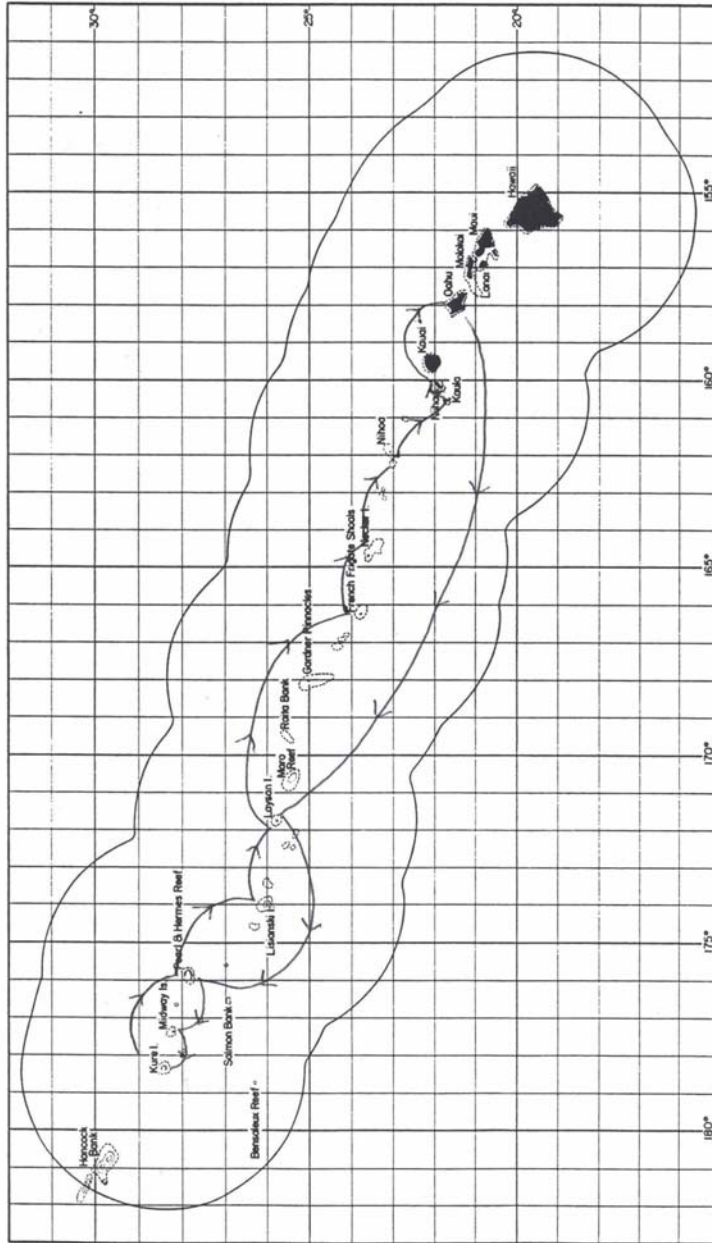


Figure 1.--Track of the NOAA Ship Oscar Elton Sette Cruise OES-06-08 (OES-44), July 17 to August 3, 2006.