

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY

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COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

AT SEA in Gulf of
MEXICO - Approaching Galveston
Monday, Feb. 7th

2:30 P.M.

Dear Viktor:

I wanted to let you know how very much Evelyn and I appreciated the fact that you took time to have dinner with us at Philadelphia. We both appreciated your outward acceptance of her in spite of all the complications of the life we have tried to live together. She was very ill on Thursday and I finally had to call a doctor. So she missed the Thursday night concert of the Symphony, but had heard them Monday night and at several rehearsals.

We rescheduled our trip home from Philadelphia via Baltimore so we could visit the Willers party Dec. 31st New Year's Eve and part of New Year's Day. I hadn't known about his glaucoma and CATARACTS - so was surprised at the restricted use of his eyes. But he and I had some enthusiastic exchanges and we were very glad we stopped by. In the afternoon Mary Rawles and her husband stopped by to pick us up and take us to their apartment briefly and then to the air limousine. Mary showed me what she says is to be her last manuscript. The subject was "Tract Specificity in Structure of Down Plumage" (or something close to that). The one reference cited was my published doctoral dissertation, which she said she had confirmed in every detail and used as the BASIS of EXAMINATION of tracts other than those of flight feathers. I was very pleased about this. No longer need one wait for juveniles or adult plumage to emerge in studies concerned with tract specificity. The differences in the different tracts are there and clear-cut in the down feathers of newly hatched chicks.

My writing is especially bad because we are moving quite rapidly through heavy seas trying to dock in Galveston by 8:00 P.M. tonight. At the Philadelphia meeting I was invited by Dr. Rez Darnell,

- 2 -

New program officer of ASZ and a Professor of Oceanography at Texas A & M, Chief Scientist on this cruise, to come along - mostly at their expense - and see how Oceanographers worked and what animal life was like in the Gulf. We left from Galveston at 12:30 on Tues. Feb. 1st & were due back at noon tomorrow, Feb. 8th, but because of some very bad weather and also because of some damage to critical equipment that put an end to our collections of core samples, plankton and trawl hauls, we are trying to come in a bit early. This has been my first experience "at sea," and, while disappointing because of the weather, has been a thoroughly interesting and restful change of pace - mostly during our break between semesters. I have seen a lot of animals new to me - and one particularly colorful sample we took (of plankton) near a coral reef. We have seen a dozen or so porpoises performing, lots of offshore oil platforms, etc. We went straight southeast to YUCATAN Peninsula until we reached 100 fathoms, then ran directly North towards the mouth of the Mississippi, then worked in and out of the shore line along Louisiana and Texas back to Galveston, taking various samples from many stations 24 hours a day when possible.

Your friendship has been greatly valued by me and, when she is well, by Evelyn. We wish you the best of health and progress and satisfaction in your work in the years to come.

Most warmly,

Ray Watterson