

## EDUCATION

# Naturalist captures Baja trip in words and images

First I wish to thank the Audubon Miami Valley Chapter for your support for my Master's Field Methods course through Earth Expeditions this late May and early June to Baja, Mexico, with the Rosie Bloom Scholarship.

We did not go to Baja with the sole intent of seeing and naming as many plants and animals as possible and returning with grand lists. We went to observe, ask questions, look for answers, experience a sense of wonder and see how another community is exhibiting leadership in conserving their natural resources.

We did see amazing creatures and habitat. There is a world of Ciero trees, the Cardon cacti forest fed by fog, and dry rough landscapes, all extending between the blue waters of the Gulf of California and the peaceful Pacific. The Gulf is filled with sea lions and whale sharks, the ocean with swells and migrating gray whales. All should be treasured.

I saw morning sunrises in the desert with quail calling from cactus, I swam with sea lions and had them search me out with their own curiosity and I watched the largest fish in the world, a whale shark, spit a plankton cloud from its mouth.

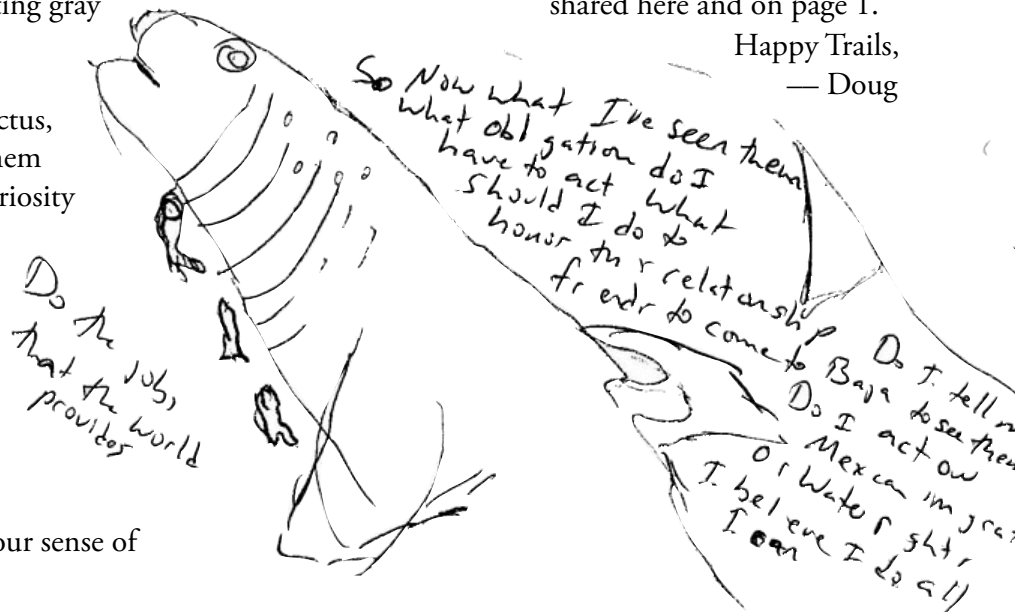
I traveled with a group from my graduate field methods class, many of whom I had just met. We became friends as we challenged "tourism" and our sense of

entitlement. We had "rich experiences" but simpler living conditions as we tried on the role of traveler.

This trip introduced me to those who want to see our education system rejuvenated with learners who are respected as they learn to explore this world, not just be told what they are seeing. I also met folks working to conserve natural areas that continue to sustain the human communities around them.

Travel sometimes makes it clearer to see these human and natural riches. One final "assignment" that helped me sharpen my eyes to see was the daily recording of thoughts in our field journals. This wasn't to be a simple list of what we saw, although we could note the wonderful birds etc. in it as well, but we were to use it to reflect upon our experiences. Journals can capture some things in a way a camera cannot, and so two excerpts are shared here and on page 1.

Happy Trails,  
— Doug



Doug Horvath, a naturalist with Five Rivers MetroParks, is one of four educators awarded AMV Rosie Bloom scholarships for 2010 summer travel, and one of three able to make his trip as planned.

Unfortunately, Lakota science teacher Rachel Howard's journey to Thailand was cancelled due to the

dangerous political situation there.

Watch for reports in future newsletters from health educator Joshua Gardner and naturalist Joshua York. Their trips are made possible thanks to Earth Expeditions, in partnership with Miami University and Project Dragonfly.

See Doug's Horvath's Baja photo album at <http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=6856&id=100001036285770&l=c502bd32a3>

