The last week of R/V SONNE cruise SO234/1 was characterized by the c. 1,600 nm long transit from the Walvis Ridge to our final destination, Durban, located at the eastern coast of South Africa. Thanks to the prudent scheduling of captain Oliver Meyer, we passed the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Agulhas in calm weather conditions despite the stormy season. Apart from the extensive cleaning and packing, we were thus able to use the transit for a series of talks and seminars on geology, biology, cartography, and project management. Two highlights were the lecture of Jörg Geldmacher entitled "Introduction to igneous rocks to absolute beginners" which even got some biologists enthusiastic about magmatic rocks, and the seminar "Dissection of sensory systems in fish" by Hans-Joachim Wagner, Fanny de Busserolles, Ulrich Mattheus, and Adrian Flynn. Here the students had the opportunity to study and dissect fishes and squids, which had been caught and fixed earlier during this cruise. The biologists offered the topics systematics ("How do I identify a fish?")", structure of the fish eye ("isolation of a retina with Tapetum Lucidum") and structure of the fish brain. After only a short introduction the students dissected the structures on their own with great enthusiasm and patience and took numerous photos of their specimens.

On Saturday R/V SONNE entered the port of Durban. Now we look forward to our homes and look back on a short but successful training and capacity building cruise, which gave the students not only insights into marine science but was also great experience for them. They describe their impressions at www.oceanblogs.org/walvis2.

The SO234/1 Scientific Party (photo: Ulrich Mattheus).

The scientists would especially like to thank Captain Meyer and the crew of R/V SONNE. Their hard work, high level of experience, and willingness to help, as well as the pleasant working atmosphere on board, contributed not only directly to the success of the SO234/1 expedition but also made sure that we felt quite comfortable onboard. We are also grateful to the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for continuing support of marine research. Lastly I would like to thank the SO234/1 scientific party, not only for their excellent work on board but also that they crucially contributed to the good atmosphere on board throughout this expedition.

Reinhard Werner