

Smithsonian Tropical Research Institution Repowers Boat with Volvo Penta Diesel Sterndrives

(CHESAPEAKE, Va.) – August 22, 2017 – When the Panama-based Smithsonian Tropical Research Institution (STRI) decided to repower their 11-year-old launch *Morpho*, as good scientists they researched the alternatives thoroughly before selecting a triple [Volvo Penta](#) diesel sterndrive rig for the boat.

Constructed in 2005, the 48-ft. *Morpho* makes daily runs for scientists and visitors between the STRI laboratory facility in Gamboa and the Barro Colorado Island nature sanctuary in the Panama Canal waterway. The boat was recently repowered with three Volvo Penta D6 330-horsepower diesel Aquamatic engines with DPH Duoprop drives. The installations were performed by Volvo Penta's application engineering together with Volvo Penta dealer Comercial de Motores – CDM.

Luis Zambrano, STRI maintenance supervisor, spearheaded the project. "The engines were chosen based on the reported reliability, fuel economy, performance and the support we received from CDM," he explained.

The Volvo Penta D6 engines feature common-rail fuel injection, double overhead camshafts, four valves per cylinder, a turbocharger and an aftercooler. They are rated to EPA Tier 3 emission standards.

Zambrano said they were pleasantly surprised when they discovered the Volvo Penta D6s were a good deal smaller than the engines they replaced, giving more room around the engine compartment for easier access and maintenance.

Another surprise was the dramatic boost in performance and fuel economy. "During the sea trials, we discovered the boat was cruising at 38 to 39 knots. We could not reach more than 23 knots with the old package. Now operators of the boat are fighting to be the one at the helm due to its performance," said Zambrano, who also observed that the boat is consuming 50 percent less fuel. Less fuel means lower emissions as well. "The D6s are much quieter too," he added.

"We have been receiving good customer support from CDM, who has a reasonable amount of spare parts in stock and trained technicians available," Zambrano said.

"Special thanks to our outstanding team at CDM, who played a key role in this repowering project and provides ongoing support to the customer," said Dave

Brown, director of marine commercial sales for Volvo Penta of the Americas. "This triple installation validates the unique combination of power, performance, fuel economy and durability offered by Volvo Penta's diesel sterndrive packages."