

## **Life in the Atacama Field Journal**

August 20-21 2005

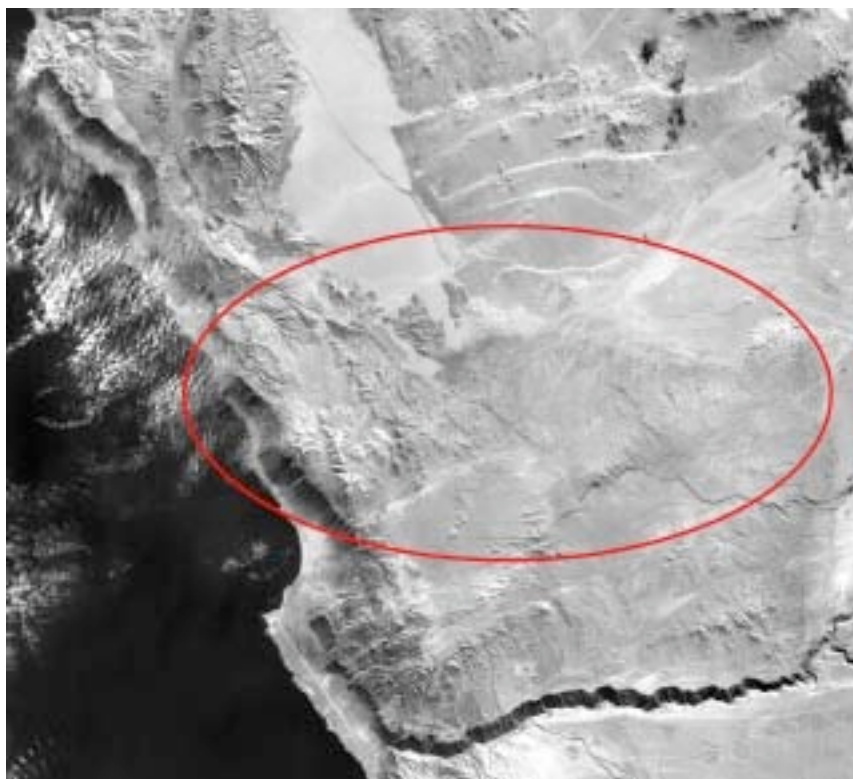
Iquique and Salar Grande, Chile

### **Agenda**

- Drive to Iquique
- Select Site D camp and cargo drop

### **Status and Progress**

- Drove vehicles to Iquique. Accomplished an uneventful drive 400km from Antofagasta north to Iquique airport to collect inbound team members. To make the most of the afternoon we immediately headed for the desert and drove to the region south of Salar Grande and found a track along the western side of the salar and connected that to a road running east to Ruta 5. Evidence of mule and wagon tracks were visible along the route now taken by a graded dirt road.



- Scouted south Salar Grande area. We have not previously visited the area south of the Salar, more than 40km from Mina Punta de Lobos. So we pushed south on roads we have seen in previous years or glimpsed from satellite images. At the southern end of the Salar we found several open valleys traversable from the last range on the coast (which drops 600m to the ocean) inland almost 40km.

We also investigated several potential camps that would position us between Mina Punta de Lobos (our source of food and fuel) and the investigation areas. This is the earliest in the Spring we have been in Salar Grande and most of the region west of the salar is blanketed in fog except at mid-day making it a cold, damp area to camp. We are likely to move north and set our camp outside this foggy region.

We encountered some evidence of seismic activity in several areas and rejected one camp due to an open fissure that was deep (several seconds of rock drop), sulfurous smelling, and 8-10C warmer than the ambient air temperature. From the mine we learned of an earthquake last year that has blocked the steep road that accesses the salar from the south. Apparently an immense rock now sits in the road we climbed at the beginning of our field season last year.



### **Upcoming**

- Receive cargo at camp
- Assemble Zoë
- Set up satellite connection

### **Weather**

Mornings: Clear, 14C, 60% RH (Iquique)

Afternoons: Clear with low-lying fog, breeze, 10-40 KPH, 10-20C, 30% RH (South Salar Grande)

Evenings: Clear with low-lying fog, breeze 40 KPH, 20C, 60% RH

**Quote of the Day**

“If you fall in you’ll get stuck after about 20 feet. Yeah, and we have a 15 foot rope.”