Greenpeace Ship Calls on Kodiak

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The Greenpeace ship Esperanza pulled into Kodiak on Tuesday. The 236-foot vessel is headed to Dutch Harbor and then the Arctic Ocean in response to Shell Oil's drilling plans in the Chukchi and Beaufort seas this summer. Maggie Wall/KMXT photo

Alexandra Gutierrez/KUCB

Greenpeace is making its way north as part of its campaign against Arctic drilling.

The Esperanza pulled into Kodiak Tuesday and is expected to set sail today. It's scheduled to stop in Unalaska next week. The vessel had previously been in Seward for repairs.

According to Greenpeace Campaign Director Dan Howells, the 237-foot rainbow-emblazoned ship will then travel on to the Chukchi and Beaufort seas to study marine life in the region.

Greenpeace

had initially timed the trip so that the Esperanza would shadow Shell Oil's drill ships as they did exploratory work in the Arctic. But because of persistent sea ice, Shell has had to change its drilling schedule. Howells says that the Esperanza will continue on to the Arctic without them.

There are two-dozen people aboard the Esperanza right now, a mix of scientists and crew. They plan to take photographs of the Chukchi lease site using drones and record video footage with submarines, and then post that material online. Howells says Greenpeace views the research as a form of activism.

As part of their Kodiak port call, the crew of the Esperanza received a safety briefing from the Coast Guard officials yesterday. According to Petty Officer Sara Francis, the Coast Guard will also have assets in Unalaska when the Esperanza makes its stop there, thoughHowells says the group currently does not have any large-scale protests planned. Francis says two Jayhawk helicopters, a long-endurance cutter and an ocean-going buoy tender are also scheduled to spend the summer in the arctic.

Shell had no comment on the Esperanza's progress, but spokesperson Curtis Smith says the company wishes Greenpeace "a safe journey."