

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Monday, June 16, 2008

The marine forecaster for the Juneau-Glacier Bay area has been batting .333. Over the last 3 days the forecast has called for overcast/rain, 3 to 4 foot seas and 15 to 20 knot winds. We've had the overcast/rain but with flat seas and no wind. Today he struck out as the sun shined on



us all day. The glassy, windless seas, and bright sun made for a great cruise to Swanson Harbor, about 25 miles outside Glacier Bay National Park.

(← Seagate enjoys the sun and flat seas off Auke Bay. The remnants of yesterday's clouds fade in the distance.)

Seagate's crew of Denny and Lori Haythorn arrived yesterday and met the boat in Juneau. The Haythorns are regular crew on Seagate having cruised many miles with Dick and Harriett. Denny is a Law Professor at Whittier Law School and Lori works in the medical administration.

(← Dick, Denny, Lori and Harrett enjoy the sun in Swanson Harbor.)



The Squires, Haythorns and Bensons are members and met through the California Yacht Club. Dick, Alex, and Denny are Past Commodores of the Club over consecutive years starting 1998.



Wild Blue's crew this week is Arch and Janet Young, Bill Bicksler and Richard Grotke who met the boat in Auke Bay. Arch, Janet and Bill, from El Segundo, are long-time Benson family friends.

(← Richard, Bill, Pat, Janet and Arch.)

All are retired and this is their first cruise on Wild Blue. Richard, from Ft.

Lauterdale, FL, is Bill's cousin and a past yacht salesman. He is quite familiar with the larger cruising boats. Richard and Bill are in the middle of a two-month driving tour from Los Angeles to upper Alaska, and back and can't wait to get fishing.



(Point Retreat lighthouse on northern tip of Admiralty Island.)



(Floatplane ascends over boats in Swanson Harbor.)

Seagate left from Juneau and Wild Blue from Auke Bay as the boats met and proceeded to Swanson Harbor, about 35 miles around the northern tip of Admiralty Island. Swanson has two floats for transient boats to tie up. As soon as we had docked, the tenders were launched and the fishing commenced.



The Seagate crew set a crab trap while the Wild Blue crew set two crab and one prawn trap. Then Richard, Bill and Arch loaded the fishing gear and headed for three Sisters Islands, about 5 miles out in Icy Strait.

(← Richard, Bill and Arch get serious about fishing.)

The rest of the crews visited and sun-bathed in the pleasant 75 F degree temperatures. The boys stayed out all afternoon fishing for halibut. Then a

call over the VHF radio to fire up the BBQ as fresh fish was on the way. My goodness! The last crew fished their butts off all last week and only caught a few flounders, crabs, and prawns before *farming* a major halibut. These guys have a good sized halibut *in the box* on their first day!



(← Richard shows off the “catch of the week”, a good-sized halibut, on day one.)

(The boats are docked at the float in Swanson Harbor.
→)



(Seagate is also raking in the fish with these two crabs on day one. However one of these crabs was a lucky girl. Funny how the Wild Blue crab traps were empty, even though they were set close to the Seagate traps. →)



All crews met aboard the Wild Blue for drinks and snacks and to plot an early morning departure. Tomorrow we leave for Glacier Bay, about 25 miles to the entrance, and then another 30 miles to the anchorage. Upon arrival we need to contact the Park Ranger to get specific entry instructions. Dick and Alex applied 60 days ago for a permit to enter the park. Only 10 advance boat permits are allowed in the park on any one day. All boats must report to the ranger station for crew orientation before continuing into the Park. We'll see how it goes.