

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Monday, July 28, 2008

“Queen Charlotte Sound, storm warning in effect!” says the 4AM VHF Canadian marine weather radio update. Oh what a wonderful way to start the day. A Small Craft Warning means winds 20 to 33 knots; a Gale Warning means winds 34 to 47 knots and OUR Storm Warning means 48 to 63 knotswhich is not a good thing! On the bright side, a consistent aspect of Canadian weather forecasts: conservatism. In general, the forecast is the extreme peak winds expected, not the average. Likewise the forecast wind warnings are issued early, well before the actual weather is expected. We’ve heard weather warnings days before the winds actually

strike. This makes sense as fronts move into an area at varying speeds.



(← The 100+ foot Trigador is moving north up Fitz Hugh Sound away from the Storm Warning, while we move south.)



(← The Storm Warning doesn't seem to bother this humpback whale.)

So for today we'll watch our barometer closely, looking for a sharp downward trend, which indicates the low pressure and winds are near. Most important, it's best not to blab about all this weather stuff to the crew, especially the admiral, as she and they may over react a bit, and make reactionary statements such as “Well my half of the boat is staying right here!”



We get underway at 9AM ready for a 4-hour cruise down Fitz Hugh Sound to Duncanby Landing on the southeast side of Rivers Inlet.

(← Addenbroke Island light station.)

Everything is swell, that is, flat seas and moderate winds. Lady Anne leaves a bit after 7AM and with her 15-knot speed aims for Port Hardy, a bit over 80 miles south. She



hopes to beat the storm by crossing Queen Charlotte Sound early. We won't know her status until we make Port Hardy, scheduled for tomorrow.

(← Southerly seas whipped up by current and wind break onto Wild Blue.)

At about 11AM we pass Addenbroke Light Station and the barometer shows a steep decline over the past 3 hours. We're seeing 1012 millibars, down from 1019, when the low of 990 millibars is up off northern BC. The wind builds and the southerly seas are whipped up by the south flowing ebb tide causing big waves to wash over the bow and deck.



(← Rain and seas keep the wipers at high speed.)

We're still 2 hours out from Duncanby and Dick on Seagate begins looking for alternative anchorages. After 30 minutes of pounding seas, he suggests we move east behind the Penrose Island group to protect us from the weather.

(← Duncanby at last.)



As soon as we turn the boats, we see flat water ahead. It's a master navigator's decision and proves that Dick's year at



the Merchant Marine Academy in the 1950's was worth it. We locate Finn Cove as a calm alternative anchorage but continue through Klawuak Channel exiting just west of Bilton Island, then cross Rivers Inlet to Duncanby. We side-tie to the float just after 1PM and begin to unwind.

(← Sid, Alex, Penny, Harriett, Pat, David and Dick are happy to be onshore.)



(← The crews enjoy some Don Braulio to settle their nerves.)



(← High-priced Duncanby Lodge and Marina caters to fisherman from all over the planet. Moorage was the highest paid on the cruise at \$1.75 per foot per day, plus \$35 power charge. Internet was \$35 per day. Wow!)





Convinced we were witnessing a seaplane crash land into the bay at Duncanby, we held our breaths.

(← *Pacific Coastal Air seaplane folds starboard wind float.*)



(← *With right wing dipped, the left wing is elevated.*)

The right wing float had collapsed, so we thought. The plane looked to be careening to the right. Instead the pilot was preparing to land at a dock.



(← *Seaplane can now offload passengers and cargo next to dock.*)



(← *We later found out that Lady Anne had beat the storm and made it all the way to Port Hardy. Here her crew celebrates at the fishing boat dock. As they say, any port in a storm!*)

The storm is supposed to continue through the night. We hope to be able to leave early tomorrow. We'll check the 4AM weather update first. Goodnight moon!