

Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Sunday, June 1, 2008



Our Alaska Cruise resumed today at 8:15AM as Seagate and Wild Blue departed Ketchikan for Misty Fiords and beyond. It was sunny yesterday in Ketchikan but cloudy today and the seas were flat as the boats passed two huge cruise ships moored in the harbor and made their way southeast towards the Fiords.

(← *Nice views along the way.*)

Our destination is Shoalwater

Pass an overnite anchorage with US Forest Service cabin and mooring buoy. The 40-mile passage took us around various points of land, and at each one we kept bearing left, so that we ended up going due north in the Behm Canal. Each of the points hosted a small fleet of salmon fishing boats, both sport and commercial, showing downriggers and poles. Of course both Seagate and Wild Blue always reduce speed near small fishing boats so as to not cause a wake, and because we know from first hand experience if we do wake a fisherman, word will immediately get back to Jay Field in Anacortes. (Fisherman Jay will be running for Anacortes Port Commissioner or Councilman, and we want to be on his good side.)

Our last left turn brought us through Short Pass just 6 miles from Shoalwater. We enjoyed a 1.5-knot current push through the pass and arrived at 1:30PM in the anchorage.

(*Short Pass, almost there.* →)



Seagate anchored while Wild Blue experimented with tying to the US Forest Service mooring. Unlike Catalina moorings, these Alaskan buoys just have a ring on top that you just loop a line through. Sounds easy, after all we've done this in the dark before with a boathook! This time Alex positioned the boat with the buoy just next to the stern swimstep. Crew Pat carefully slipped a long dock line through the loop then back. As the boat motored backwards, Pat walked the line forward to the bow.



Then she tied one end to the starboard bow cleat, then the other end to the port bow cleat. That was easy. It was so much fun, Wild Blue decided to stay on the mooring until the USFS kicked them off and forced them to anchor.

(← *Wild Blue on the US Forest Service “Alaskan” mooring buoy.*)

As soon as Seagate was anchored, Dick received a crab order from Harriett and immediately set his trap in about 70 feet of water just in front of the boats. Just after that a couple kayakers came by and pulled a nearby crab trap which was filled with multiple crustaceans. He then went back to the boat and fired up the crab cooker. Now that’s what I call confidence! Unfortunately the Wild Blue crew forgot to purchase a fishing license, so they will have to suffer through another round of BBQ Willie Bird duck breast. Damn!

Speaking of crew, the Seagate crew this week is Dave Ross and Barbara Schlueter. Dave is a long-tie friend of the Squires and crewed for Dick on his various race boats through the years. In fact he brought along all his old crew shirts from that era. He’s already been seen wearing a *Shoofly* and *Easy Street* shirt! Barbara is a close friend of Dave’s who is quite familiar with Baywood Park, having stayed at the Baywood Inn several times over the years. This looks like a fun crew.

(*Dick and Harriett with Seagate crew Barbara and Dave. Note Harriett’s new lemon-lime squeezer for all that fresh caught seafood and Dave’s Easy Street crewshirt. →*)



The Wild Blue crew this week is Sid and Virginia Findley, the Benson’s friends from SLO town. Sid is a recently retired SLO County judge and Virginia, a talented chef, is an administrator at Cuesta College.

We hope these two can dazzle our taste buds while keeping us out of jail. This is the third cruise for the Findleys on Wild Blue.



(← Virginia Findley, Pat, and Sid Findley with Shoalwater Pass anchorage in the background.)

While Wild Blue chose the mooring buoy, Seagate set their anchor nearby. Both boats had a great view of Shoalwater Pass and it's interesting shoreline. We regularly scan the grassy meadows for bears and their cubs, but no joy as yet.



The USFS has constructed a cabin for use by boaters and kayakers. This time kayakers had the use and started their crab cooker on the beach, just so we could get a whiff.

(← Seagate at anchor, Shoalwater Pass)

After its evening "soak" Seagate's crab trap yielded nada. So it was difficult to watch those young, fit and thrifty kayakers consuming their bounty. Ci la vi.



Finally, the next morning the Seagate trap yielded one good sized crab. Fortunately, for the crab, it was a she, and requiring Dick to reluctantly return her to the sea. Why do the rules always favor women?



(← “It’s a girl,” exclaimed Dick upon retrieving his trap containing one lonely crab.)



(Wild Blue on the mooring. →)

Tomorrow is a 80-mile day of cruising through Misty Fiords. We will need an early 7AM start. Exiting Shoalwater Pass Anchorage means crossing shallow Shoalwater Bar. Now this Bar doesn't serve drinks and you can't take a written test to pass it, but it does test your navigation skills at low tide. The charts say 1 to 1.5 fathoms (6 to 9 feet) minimum. Seagate needs 4.5 feet and Wild Blue needs 5.5 feet. We'll need to open our boat's bar tonight for a drink to keep our minds off tomorrow's crossing of the Shoalwater Bar. We're crossing anyway, Bar nothing.....