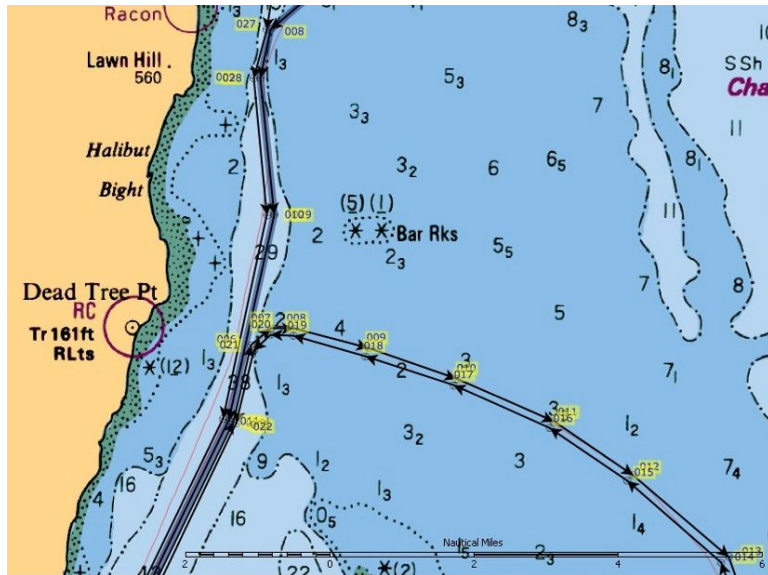


Seagate and Wild Blue Alaska Cruise – Saturday, July 12, 2008

Today we have a 50-mile cruise to Thurston Harbour on Tallunkwan Island. It's actually much closer for smaller boats with shallow drafts but our boats need to follow the "less shallow" route adding about 15 extra miles. We leave QC City at 6AM to get the rising tide. Although the adverse flood current slows us a bit, if we do get "soft-grounded" we can use the rising sea level to float off later. After an hour we arrive at the naturally deep entry-exit channel to Skedigate Inlet. Although it looks like open water, it's really a narrow, 250-foot deep channel, with just a



few feet of depth on the sides. Even though we want to go south, we are forced to travel many miles north until the channel side is deep enough to turn east. We decide 12 feet is enough, and carefully turn right at the ominously named Dead Tree Point, hoping the charts are accurate and that no small object has sunk in our path.

(← *Just turn right at Dead Tree Point, Note: Soundings in fathoms.*)

Wild Blue blazes the trail with all pilothouse eyes glued to the forward-looking sonar display. These are the best times: all unnecessary pilothouse chatter ceases, and the crew is focused on the instruments and shallow water ahead. After 40 minutes we complete our "crossing of the bar" and settle back into casual cruise mode, meaning everybody goes for a snooze, except usually not the driver.

We motor south, down the each side of Moresby and Louise Islands and eventually arrive at Thurston where Wild Blue sets two crab, and a prawn trap on the way into the harbour. The boats are anchored and the crews immediately are clamoring to go ashore – they're like little



kids who just can't wait. The tenders are launched, crews loaded, and the Wild Blue tender makes way for shore.

(← *Dick and Norman test out bear deterrent whistles.*)

Now anyone who cruises a bit knows that your shoes get wet when going ashore. So the options are to wear shoes that can get wet, such as top siders, flip-flops, reef-runners, Dick's favorite Crocs, or Alex's favorite rubber cement boots. If you plan a hike, wear your water shoes ashore, with your hiking shoes and socks around your



neck, then change. It seems like the guys easily figure this out, but the girls don't. So now we're looking for a place to land the tender that's deep enough and next to a rock, so the girls can step out with dry shoes.

(← There's supposed to be three mooring buoys here in Thurston. We find only one and it's on the beach.)

The desire to get on land is high, but we can't find a rock! As we motor to the head of Thurston Harbour, we see some rocks in the distance. We



move in closer. Oh it looks like one of these will do.

(← Seagate in Thurston Harbour with tender launched.)

Suddenly one the rock starts to move! It's a Black Bear chowing down on grass. "I don't want to go ashore anymore. Let's go back to the boat." Later on the guys get their feet wet while beach landing about a mile down the shoreline from the "bear rocks".



(← A thin beach of rocks, pebbles and sand, and then dense forest. Note the mountain scars from past logging operations.)

On the beach we found only remnants of a prior logging operation and the washed-up mooring float. There were no trash, flotsam or jetsam; a pristine beach. We found a piece of bark fungus most



likely scraped away by the bears, and left our mark.

After careful research and sampling, it has been determined that there are no crabs and no prawns in and around Thurston. However, each trap returned an 18-legged starfish. Yum!

Tomorrow we enter Gwaii Haanas National Park, visit the Haida village site at Tanu Island and then move on to Crescent Inlet for the night.

(← Standing on Thurston's beach and peering into the forest. It's so thick that very little light penetrates.)



(← We left our mark on a detached piece of bark fungus. Like us, it will float away at high tide.)