

Ahoy, Pacific Puddle Jumpers,

Poised to Pounce

We are told that many westbound passage-makers are now 'poised to pounce', and should be heading out in the next couple of weeks. We're happy to see that at least 40 PPJ fleet members will be participating in PredictWind's special tracking program (free to PPJ members). We think it'll make your trip a bit more fun for your entire crew, as well as friends and family — and potentially safer too. So if you intended to take advantage of the free tracking offer but just haven't had time to check it out, it may not be too late, even if you are already offshore. (Although there is one step that must be done via shoreside Wi-Fi before you go. (Contact techsupport@predictwind.com.)

Remember What Kevin Says

Well actually, most of you probably haven't even met Kevin yet, but there's a good chance you will in the coming days. He's a California ex-pat who sailed here years ago, fell in love with an island girl, and now runs Yacht Services Nuku Hiva, on the wharf at Taiohae Bay. You will probably poke your head in there at some point, if for no other reason than to pick up your official Pacific Puddle Jump burgee!

So what does he say that's worth remembering? (We paraphrase, but...) having watched fleets of cruisers arrive in Nuku Hiva for at least a decade, Kevin likes to point out that no matter how much fun it can be to push your boat to her full potential on the open ocean, it's smarter to throttle back your afterburners, sail comfortably, and arrive with little or no broken gear. Imagine the cost and complexity, for example, of shipping in a complete mast, sails, and rigging to Tahiti, let alone to the Marquesas.

About Marinas

Several fleet members have asked about the possibility of finding a slip in Tahiti where they can leave their boat for a few weeks, while they fly home. The short answer is that it's difficult, but not impossible. Contact info for everything I'm about to discuss is best found in the free downloadable PDF, [Yellow Flag Guide to French Polynesia](#).

There are two large marinas in Tahiti, Marina Papeete, which is right downtown in the harbor, and Marina Taina, about 5 miles south of downtown in an area called Puna'auia. The former does not take reservations, the latter does. And Marina Taina also administers an enormous mooring field where balls are occasionally available.

Although the downtown marina does not take reservations, once you're in you could be allowed to spend considerable time there, especially during the wet season, November to April. Believe it or not, the common approach to finding a slip in the downtown marina is to send somebody over to walk the docks in the morning and do so some

reconnaissance to find out who might be leaving that day, and at what time. You then come back with your boat and hover around until the departing boat makes its exit. Yeah, it's a crazy system, but it works better than you think most of the time.

Marina Taina does take reservations, but few slips become available during the peak sailing season (May to September) unless you happen to have a megayacht, in which case they will be happy to place it in a prime position, Med-moored along millionaire's row. Or Should that be billionaires?

Most cruisers visiting Tahiti end up spending time at the default (free) cruiser anchorage, aptly named the Airport Anchorage, which lies adjacent to the international airport's runway, and a dinghy ride away from the swank Intercontinental Hotel, and the giant grocery and houseware store, Carefour. There's generally good holding in the sand bottom there, which inspires some boat owners to leave their boats there unattended for weeks at a time. But I wouldn't recommend doing so.

A better idea, if you can't find the slip and need to fly home, is to park the boat in extremely well-protected Port Phaetan, a huge free anchorage adjacent to Taravau, at the south end of Tahiti. There's also a small boatyard and Marina adjacent, but it cannot handle larger cruising boats.

Tahiti's sister island, Moorea, which lies just 12 miles from Papeete, is where most cruisers spend their time while visiting the Windward portion of the Society Islands. There's been a lot of chatter on social media about new regulations there, but they haven't actually been fully implemented yet, so for the time being there are still plenty of places to drop the hook in beautiful Moorea.

In the Leeward Islands of the Societies, there are also a few marinas, but they tend to be pretty full of local boats and bareboat charter boats. Cruisers with smaller monohulls can sometimes snag a berth, though, if only temporarily.

Another idea, if you have to leave your boat for a while, is to leave it on the hard in the boatyard. There is a small yard in Hiva Oa, Marquesas; a yard at Apataki in the Tuamotus; two small yards in Raiatea; plus the yard previously mentioned at Taravau. Unfortunately, there is no dry storage near Papeete.

So that's our overview; not terribly encouraging, but not terribly bleak either. We should close by mentioning that in a typical year, many boats are left for months in Nuku Hiva's Taiohae Bay. The anchorage is free, but the island-hopper flights to get there are pretty pricey when you're on a cruising budget.

Got Time to Chat?

Sadly, the number of boats carrying fully functional Ham or SSB radios seems to shrink a bit each year, which is a shame. Texting, emailing, and satphone calling just aren't the

same.

That's why Scott and Kathy of Sea Bella are "happy to invite any and all" to participate in their informal SSB group:

"We do daily check-ins at 0200 Zulu on channel 6A 6224 USB. With alternative frequencies of 8B 8297 USB and 12A 12353 USB."

If you have a Ham radio and have a license to operate it, Jane Goldsmith, NH7TZ, would love to say hello. She is the usual Net Control Station for the Pacific Seafarers Net. "We come up on frequency 14300 every day at 0300 UTC to take position reports and weather info from the boats that check in with us." Unlicensed folks are always welcome to listen in, and in an emergency, we always speak with them and try to help."

Safe Travels

If you are jumping off this week, please be careful out there. And don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions, concerns, or breakdowns.

— Andy Turpin, PPJ