

Pacific Puddle Jump 2024

Fleet Letter #4

Ahoy Pacific Puddle Jumpers,

Please read the following information carefully.

Mandatory Pre-Departure Immigration Form

Yes, this is a brand new requirement, and we warn you that it is quite detailed, so don't wait until you are about to throw off your dock lines before filling it out. We're told it takes a half hour or more to complete it. Throughout your stay in French Polynesia, you will be expected to update your online file, noting crew changes, etc.

Create an account and input your info at this link: www.demarches-simplifiees.fr/commencer/declaration-unique-plaisance-polynesie-francaise

Contact Info Sharing, Opt-In or Opt-Out

The PPJ has a long-standing policy that we never share your contact info with marketers or the general public.

But we will share your boat's primary contact email with other fleet members unless you advise us

not to. If you do choose to "opt-out" of fleet contact sharing, please let us know ASAP: Email: pacific.puddle.jump@gmail.com.

Early-Departers Nearing Landfall

Every year the majority of Pacific Puddle Jumpers head west in March or April. But we invariably have some early birds also. This year, the first birds out of the nest were Sarayha Ferris and Jordon Whyte, who jumped off from Banderas Bay February 1 aboard their vintage Tayana 52 cutter, Current Toy (a Bob Perry design). As I write this, February 19, they are smoking along toward the SW, roughly 200 nm from making landfall at Hiva Oa.

Based at Victoria, BC, Sarayha, 35, and Jordan, 41, say they learned to sail only five years ago! Their intention is to spend three months island-hopping through French Polynesia before circling back to the Northwest. We look forward to meeting them both here in Tahiti.

Online access to PredictWind's Recent Webinar

If you are eager to learn more about Predict Wind's cutting-edge weather forecasting capabilities but you were unable to attend the company's recent Zoom webinar, you're in luck, because presenter Nick

Surveying the ancient cliffs of Hiva Oa's south coast while ghosting along, soon to make landfall.



Olson recorded the entire program, and has now made it available at this link:

<https://youtu.be/JB-iEExCis8>

Even if you're well-versed in the program, we suggest you take a look, as the company's software functionality seems to be continually growing and improving.

Check Out the Chart Locker

While we are on the topic of navigation, allow us to give you another worthwhile recommendation. Bruce and Alene Balan of the Cross 48 Migration are longtime cruisers who strongly believe in sharing their knowledge and insights with the wider cruising community.

One way they do that is by administering The Chart Locker, an online resource meant to enhance the navigational safety of all who use its materials.

Bruce writes: "All charting sources — whether on a chartplotter, your laptop, your tablet, or your chart table — have errors. That's why a prudent mariner uses multiple sources for charts. You can download free charts for French Polynesia at TheChartLocker.com, where you'll find mbTile satellite and nautical charts for use with OpenCPN. The resolution of many of the charts is so good that you can see the individual coral heads in the Tuamotus — a true game-changer for navigating the atolls. You can also download charts for all the other island groups of the South Pacific, plus New Zealand and Australia. There's also a video tutorial on how to use the charts in the free OpenCPN charting software."

Making Landfall — What to Expect

French Polynesia's Department of Maritime Affairs, DPAM, lists more than a dozen places where visiting sailors could clear in. But in reality, almost all arriving cruisers clear in at either Nuku Hiva or Hiva Oa in the Marquesas. A small number clear in at Rikitea, in the Gambier Archipelago, and some — generally megayachts — travel directly to Tahiti and clear in there.

If you've heard veteran Puddle Jumpers talk about making landfall in the Marquesas, you know that it's usually a joyful, uplifting experience. The dramatic volcanic peaks of the larger islands are often seen from offshore a day or more before arrival. And during the final hours of approach, it's not unusual to smell the sweet fragrance of tropical flowers wafting on the breeze.

Hiva Oa or Nuku Hiva?

The main argument for clearing in at Hiva Oa is that it lies farther to the east than most of its sister isles, which means your travels from there to other islands within the archipelago will usually be off the wind. Conversely, Nuku Hiva has a much larger main anchorage, Taiohae Bay, and more services, but if you choose to go there first, you'll eventually have to do a stint of upwind sailing in order to visit the other islands in this group.

What about Fatu Hiva? Despite what you may have heard from veteran cruisers or read in old cruising guides, it is now illegal to make your initial landfall at famously beautiful Fatu Hiva — the most

When you sight the ancient volcanic spires of Ua Poa you know you have arrived in a very special corner of the world that most sailors will never experience.





After several weeks at sea it's great to get your feet on dry land and have a look around. The view from the swank Nuku Hiva Keikahanui Pearl Lodge is spectacular.

easterly isle in the archipelago. You can incur substantial fines if you do.

About Nuku Hiva

Taiohae Bay is well protected from almost all sides, as it was formed from an ancient volcano's caldera. With plenty of room for 100 boats or more, its broad anchorage offers good holding on a mud bottom, roughly 35-50 feet deep.

While most prudent skippers lay offshore until daylight to enter, nighttime entry into the outer bay is possible, especially with substantial moonlight. Most sailors find Taiohae to be a fine refuge in which to rest, recuperate and resupply, despite the common complaint (particularly from monohullers) that it's often a bit roly.



Almost every morning fishermen clean and sell their catch on the Taiohae quay. Fish doesn't get any fresher than that.

The administrative center (including the Gendarmerie) is located near the NE corner of the bay, a three-minute walk from the town quay, where local fishing boats Med-moor behind a concrete sea wall. Adjacent is a small boat launch ramp, beyond

which is a busy dinghy docking area along the quay, equipped with two steel ladders. When the harbor is churned up, it can be a bit dicey to scramble ashore here, but normally it's relatively easy — especially if you plan your arrival with a high tide in settled weather. Note: Always tie up with a long dinghy painter to accommodate the swell, and allow room for other dinghies.

For most new arrivals, your first stop ashore will probably be at Yacht Services Nuku Hiva, less than 50 yards from the dinghy dock. YSNH is run by American ex-pat Kevin Ellis, who arrived here on a sailboat, fell in love with a lovely Polynesian girl named Anabella, and eventually decided to fill a much-needed niche, offering a wide range of services for cruisers. Phone: 689 40 92 07 50

YSNH is an independently operated company, but Kevin and his crew also function as sub-agents of TahitiCrew yacht agency. As such, Kevin can assist you with clearing in, obtaining a duty-free fuel certificate (25-40% savings), organizing and turning in paperwork to the High Commissioner's office to complete your Long Stay Visa (Carte de Sejour) process, and a range of other local services.

Even if you're operating without an agent, you'll probably want to check in with Kevin to learn about local regulations and procedures. He is basically the go-to guy for a wide range of services, for which he charges on an 'à la carte' basis. (And no, as we reiterate every year, you cannot get the duty-free fuel certificate here without the help of an agent. In Tahiti, yes, but here, no.)

Be sure to ask Kevin for your official PPJ burgee if you didn't get one from us already at our Nuevo Vallarta or Panama events. YSNH used to operate the local VHF net, but with so many boats now using satellite email/internet (Starlink), we are told that the VHF net has been abandoned.

At the quayside snack stand, try the local favorite, poisson cru. It is fresh tuna marinated in coconut milk — a sort of a Marquesan ceviche. It's awesome. And if you're thirsty, try a glass of fresh-squeezed pampelmousse juice.

Within a few minutes' walk from the quay, you'll find a bank with ATMs, an Air Tahiti ticket office, an excellent tattoo parlor, a pharmacy, a public trash bin, a recycling center, a post office, a (reservations-only) pizza restaurant, at least two pensions, two small hardware stores, a marine store and a fuel station (behind the commercial wharf, east side of the entry channel).

After first coming ashore, kissing the ground, and clearing in, you'll probably be most interested in reprovisioning. There are five food stores (magasins), three along the waterfront, and two a short walk uphill. If the word uphill sounds like a deal-breaker, know that most food shops will give you a ride back to the dock if you make substantial purchases. And, as we discovered during the initial Covid lockdown here in 2020, some will actually allow you to email in an order, then they'll deliver it to the dinghy dock the same afternoon. (Generally, cash only.) See contact details at the end of this Fleet Letter.

Please note also, that new arrivals are requested to stop at the City Hall and pay a fee of 1500 XPF (about \$US 15) for garbage collection and water access.

About Hiva Oa

Hiva Oa's main anchorage, Tahauku Bay, is well protected, but it can get pretty full during the peak 'arrival' season — May through July — requiring most boats to anchor bow and stern. If the anchorage is too crowded, you can anchor outside the seawall



Striking a pose at the equator. You can pick up your official Pacific Puddle Jump burgee at our Nuevo Vallarta event March 11, or from Kevin at YSNH or from Tahiti Crew in Tahiti.

when the weather is mild or moderate.

A lovely Marquesan woman named Sandra Wullaert is a great resource here. Like Kevin, she operates independently and, when called on, work as a sub-agent for TahitiCrew. She will also do your laundry, provide you with Wi-Fi, deliver fresh produce to you, and give you a ride to Atuona, the island's administrative center, where you can clear in at the Gendarmerie.

In this small town, you'll also find a bank with an outdoor ATM, a post office, several grocery stores, a couple of restaurants and other services.

Because of the Marquesas location so close to the equator, it is virtually impossible for them to experience hurricane-force storms, which is why some cruisers choose to leave their boats on the hook and unattended in Taiohae Bay or on the hard at Hiva Oa's boatyard, Maintenance Marqueses Service,

located adjacent to Tahauku anchorage. Phone 689 87 20 99 49.

Please see Part B of this mailing, attached. More to come soon.

— Andy Turpin,
PPJ

SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS BON VOYAGE

March 11th, 2024

MONDAY, 1:00 PM TO 4:00 PM
Vallarta Yacht Club

Latitude 38 and the South Pacific Sailing Network join the Vallarta YC in hosting the Pacific Puddle Jump Sendoff Party & South Pacific Bon Voyage seminar.

Who? All sailors who are making or are planning to make the crossing are welcome.

Free! Seminar and drinks offered to the participants by Tahiti Tourism

Please RSVP: contact@southpacificsailing.org