
Latitude 38

PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP RECAP

— FAST, ROWDY & FUN

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FAST, ROWDY & FUN —

It takes most cruisers years of planning and preparation before they're ready to tackle a patch of ocean like the South Pacific. But when they finally do become psyched up and fully supplied, it's mighty tough to deter them from their long-anticipated travel plans. Per-

nets. Many never actually meet face to face until they arrive in the islands.

This year, after we worked out a sweet deal for fleet members with Papeete-based Tahiti Yacht Agents, new boats started signing up for the rally in droves. For a small fee, all fleet members got exemptions from having to post the normally required security "bonds" upon arrival. Plus, they got cleared in and out, and were allowed to buy fuel duty-free.

Shortly before the optimum springtime weather window opened up, we helped foster camaraderie within the fleet by hosting PPJ Kick-off Parties at the Vallarta YC (February 6) in Nuevo Vallarta's Paradise Village Resort, and at the Balboa YC in Panama City (March 6). Then in mid-June we joined forces with Tahiti Tourism and the Papeete Port Authority to welcome the fleet to Polynesia at the three-day Tahiti-Moorea Sailing Rendezvous (featured in our July issue).

So how did this year's crossing compare to previous years? Well, whether you blame it on El Niño, global warming, global cooling, the alignment of the stars and planets, or the Obama administration, the fact is that this year's crossing seemed to be a bit windier than usual with lumpier seas. And, of course, there were practically as many reactions to those conditions as there were boats in the fleet.

Some, who'd done a number of previous ocean crossings, thought this trip was relatively easy: "The passage was quicker than planned and easier than our prior passages," reported Bill and Sue Grun of the Colorado-based J/160 *Avante*. They set out from the Galapagos in mid-April. Others thought the confused seas whacking them from several directions — especially north of the equator — were going to drive them bonkers. "There were some rough days when just getting out of the berth was a chore," remembers Alex Viterbi of the California-based Hylas 49 *Terrapin Flyer*. He left from Cabo San Lucas in late April.

Of course, making generalizations about conditions in such a vast pool of water is about as useful as an empty can of Hinano beer. But generally, boats crossing via the Galapagos seemed to have a smoother time of it

this year.

Behan Gifford of the Washington-based Stevens 47 *Totem*, who stepped up early on to act as one of several de facto group leaders, summarized her family's crossing this way: "Overall, much of this passage was right out of the textbook.

"We bobbed around in the doldrums, and screamed along in the trades."

We left (out of Puerto Vallarta) with the evening land breeze and sailed our way offshore. Things broke, but nothing serious. We bobbed around in the doldrums, and screamed along in the trades. We reefed and unreefed countless times. In fact, my husband Jamie and our crewman Ty were downright slaphappy when they wrestled with the reefing lines for

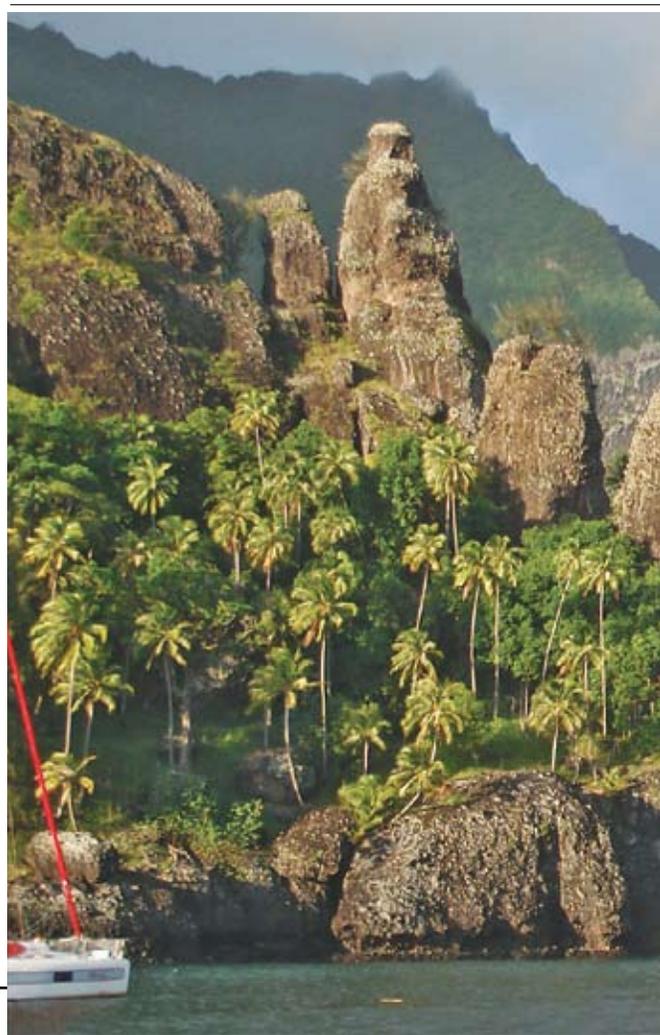


Michael and Gloria of 'Paikea Mist' celebrate crossing the equator — at 8 knots in 12-ft seas — with a cup of Mexican grog.

haps that's why — despite a struggling world economy and threats of a strong El Niño influence on South Pacific weather — more boats registered for our 2010 Pacific Puddle Jump Rally than any time in its 15-year history. The final tally: 217 boats from 19 countries!

As regular readers know, ever since *Latitude* editors coined the phrase Pacific Puddle Jump years ago, we've dedicated a lot of time, effort and ink to celebrating the annual springtime migration from the West Coast of the Americas to French Polynesia. Why? Because we think making that passage is a major accomplishment within the realm of sailing. If you were to circumnavigate via the tropics, this 3,000-mile crossing would be the longest stretch of open water you'd face where you had no chance of a stopover en route.

We should clarify that we use the word "rally" very loosely when referring to this international collection of boats and crews. Although the majority of them typically jump off for Polynesia from either Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, or Panama City, Panama, others leave from a variety of points along the West Coast — and it's pretty rare for even two boats to set sail on the same day. So, in contrast to more highly structured cruising rallies with specific schedules, where entrants pay a fee to be shepherded by a committee boat, the Puddle Jump Rally is merely a loose association of westbound crews who trade weather info and get to know each other along the way via HF radio



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the 12th time one afternoon."

One aspect of this year's crossing that was shockingly unique compared to previous years, was the number of emergencies. A severe crew injury led to a mid-ocean medevac, and two other fleet boats had to be abandoned at sea — all were 'firsts' in the Rally's history.

On April 1, while sailing in strong winds and big seas close to the exact middle of the passage, an accidental jibe aboard Rudy Heessels' Washington-based Beneteau First 36s7 *Wind Child* resulted in life-threatening injuries to crewman Michael Kalahar, 57. The colossal effort (detailed in our May issue) to save his life would inspire any red-blooded American to stand up and salute the stars and stripes. Like a scene out of *The Perfect Storm*, four specially trained Air National Guardsmen parachuted

End of the rainbow indeed. We've run a lot of images of Fatu Hiva's Bay of Virgins before, but this one says it all.

onto the scene in the dark of night from a long-range Coast Guard C-130. The pararescue-men were able to stabilize Kalahar, then later transferred him to a Liberian-flagged container ship and stayed with him until they and their patient could be airlifted to a U.S. medical facility by a flock of four Marine Corps aircraft. We're happy to report that Kalahar is now A-okay.

On May 12, British skipper Robert William Marshall, 42, and his Taiwanese fiancée Yung-Ching Cheng, 29, were taken aboard a Belgian tanker after their Westsail 32 *Stray Dog* began sinking from unknown causes while en route to the Marquesas.

Six weeks later, long after successfully completing the Jump, newlyweds Louie van Praag, 36, an Australian, and his American wife Alicia, 27, had to abandon *Tar Baby II* after dismasting near Niue. Ironically, she too was a sturdy Westsail



32. The young couple was picked up safely by a Taiwanese longliner.

As you'll see by the table on the following page, most of the fleet suffered breakage that's fairly typical: blown sails, uncooperative autopilots, broken gooseneck fittings, etc.

But at least two boats had to abort their crossings, and turn back to Mexico to make repairs. Jeff and Judy Wahl's Polynesian dreams were put on hold when their South Dakota-based Wellington 47 *Island Mistress* took on water that ruined essential gear. They returned safely to PV. Don and Marie Irvin had to turn back *twice*: "Both times we were close enough that it made sense," explains Don. Once they finally got going again in late April, though, their luck improved dramatically: They saw better weather than most boats that had departed before them, and made the crossing aboard their Hallberg-Rassy 46 *Freezing Rain* in 22 days.

As we've been told by hundreds of offshore sailors, a long ocean passage tends to be a blend of highs and lows. For most of this year's Puddle Jumpers, the lows were days in the doldrums with little or no wind, frightening squalls, and/or the simple monotony of day after day alone on the ocean. But the low point for Doug Schuch of the USVI-based Morgan 46 *Fellow Traveler* was when he was forced to make an unplanned pit stop at the Galapagos after his crew became anxious and wanted to get off. Undeterred, however, Doug completed the 3,000-mile leg from



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there to Polynesia's Gambier archipelago singlehanded.

For Bill and Kathi Cuffel of the Seattle-based J/42 *Jarana*, one of the lows was "having to fight off the booby birds that tried to land on the boat. The cheeky devils were very persistent and fought back!" says Kathi.

For Frank and Karen Taylor aboard the North Carolina-based St. Francis 50 cat *Tahina*, a definite low was noting how little marine life they saw offshore, then coming across "15 large Japanese fishing vessels line-fishing the heck out of the waters in grid patterns."

As Alex on *Terrapin Flyer* notes though, once a long passage has been completed, "the high points are much more easily recalled: Each sunset was



As Lori of 'Trim' can confirm, one chore that every passage-maker has to attend to before setting out is buying and storing provisions.

a time for celebration; the serene, sublime days of sunshine that blended into one another; and, of course, fresh sashimi."

The highs also make much better reading. Vince Wawrzynski of the San Diego-based Catalina 45 *Fidelis* recalls, "The high point came 300 miles west of the Galapagos when the tuna were biting everything I offered."

Gene Dennis and Gloria Watson of the San Carlos, Mexico-based Island Packet 44 *Pincoya* say, "The highest point for us was in the northern trades using our gennaker for six days and nights — a controversial undertaking. During that time the winds were 12 to 21 knots with

2010 PACIFIC PUDDLE JUMP PASSAGE DATA

Although many more sailors did the Puddle Jump this year, those who responded to our questionnaire give a representative sampling of passage data.

Boat Name	Boat Make & Length	Captain & Crew	Boat's Homeport	Departed From / Date	Landfall & Date	Days Xing	Miles Xing	Eqtr X Long.	Engine Hours	Best 24 Hr	Worst 24 Hr	# Fish Cght	Breakage & Breakdowns
<i>A Cappella</i>	Valiant 42	Ed & Cornelia Gould	Half Moon Bay, CA	Galapagos 4/15	Hiva Oa 5/5	19	3,000	N/A	24 hrs	200	113	0	mainsail tear
<i>Alobar</i>	Island Packet 350	Joel Ungar	Santa Barbara	N/A	N/A	27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	genoa tear
<i>Aphrodite</i>	Amel Maramu 46	Tom Deasy & Mary Ellen Mullane	Santa Cruz, CA	Puerto Vallarta 5/10	Hiva Oa, 5/31	21	2,974	130°	70 hrs	195	80	5	Ham/SSB problems; mainsail tear
<i>Avante</i>	J/160	Bill & Sue Grun	Telluride, CO	Galapagos 4/17	Hiva Oa 5/3	16	3,070	91°	6 hrs	240	150	6	generator impeller failed
<i>Bint al Khamseen</i>	Caliber 40	Ken & Susan FitzGerald	Seattle, WA	La Paz, MX 3/17	Hiva Oa 4/10	24	N/A	131°	141 hrs	155	N/A	0	blocks on wind vane system
<i>Delos</i>	Amel 53	Brian Trautman & Erin Russ	Seattle, WA	Mexico 3/26	Hiva Oa 4/21	18	2,900	130°	30 hrs	199	120	4	generator; propane hose broke
<i>Dignity</i>	Lagoon 41 cat	Helen & Steve Southwood	New York, NY	Galapagos 4/12	Fatu Hiva 5/3	21	2,984	N/A	N/A	195	80	4	blown light air sail
<i>Dream Caper</i>	F/P 42 cat	Portia Igarashi & Steven Stecher	Corte Madera, CA	Galapagos 4/17	Fatu Hiva 5/6	19	2,889	N/A	43 hrs	192	123	3	turnbuckle toggle; blown spinnny; etc
<i>Elixir</i>	F/P 42 cat	Dr Simon & Jane Elix	Darwin Australia	Puerto Vallarta 3/30	Nuku Hiva 4/19	20	2,800	129°	80 hrs	180	100	10	lost topping lift; freezer defrosted
<i>Fellow Traveler</i>	Morgan 46	Douglas Schuch	St John, USVI	Panama 3/16	Gambiers 4/18	33	3,816	88°	80 hrs	165	81	2	eng freeze plug & wtr pump failed
<i>Fidelis</i>	Catalina 45	Vince Wawrzynski	San Diego	Panama City 3/15	Nuku Hiva 4/12	26	4,000	105°	8 hrs	211	130	10	lost a lure to a monster fish
<i>Fly Aweigh</i>	Catalina 45	Allan & Alison Gabel	Channel Islands, CA	Puerto Vallarta 3/23	Hiva Oa 4/14	22	N/A	129°	70 hrs	165	80	0	halyard shackle; AIS failure
<i>Freezing Rain</i>	Hallberg-Rassy 46	Don & Marie Irvin	Astoria, OR	Puerto Vallarta 4/25	Hiva Oa 5/18	22	2,989	126°	59 hrs	168	112	0	watermaker; reefer; generator; etc
<i>Ghost</i>	Hanse 47	Brad & Kat McMaster	Southampton, UK	Galapagos 5/4	Nuku Hiva 5/25	21	3,000	87°	72 hrs	150	115	3	diagonal stay failure
<i>Hokimai</i>	Farr 46	Neil Burson	New Zealand	Cabo San Lucas	N/A	20	N/A	N/A	36 hrs	205	110	5	none
<i>Ile de Grace</i>	F/P cat 44	Jon & Jennifer Glaudemans	Annapolis, MD	Galapagos 3/20	Hiva Oa 4/15	21	3,000	91°	100 hrs	210	60	0	none
<i>Island Mistress</i>	Wellington 47	Jeff & Judy Wahl	Yankton, SD	Puerto Vallarta 12/1	Huatulco 1/1	...	note: boat took on water, thus major vessel mechanics were ruined; returned to PV						
<i>Jarana</i>	J/42	Bill & Kathi Cuffel	Seattle, WA	Puerto Vallarta 4/9	Hiva Oa 4/29	19	2,700	129°	24 hrs	197	98	0	autopilot drowned; spinnny tear
<i>Kamaya</i>	Stevens 50	Rayle-Berkowitz family	Hood River, OR	Galapagos 4/15	Fatu Hiva, 5/2	16	2,900	N/A	9 hrs	204	140	2	gen wtr pump; old batteries failed
<i>Kijiro</i>	Lavranos 31	John & Jean Ranahan	Lorain, OH	Galapagos 5/1	Hiva Oa 5/22	22	3,000	N/A	24 hrs	170	60	5	engine problems
<i>Mary Powell</i>	Discovery 37	Stephen Dolman	Vancouver, BC	LaCruz 3/11	Hiva Oa 3/31	20	2,817	132°	5 hrs	170	93	10	broken shroud wires
<i>Nakia</i>	Hans Christian 33	John Gratton	San Francisco, CA	Hilo, HI 4/3	Nuku Hiva, 4/22	20	2,240	140°	70 hrs	135	60	0	windvane; steering cable
<i>Nikita</i>	Hallberg-Rassy 40	David & Rae Ann Duer	Seattle, WA	Galapagos 4/29	Fatu Hiva 5/16	17	2,900	N/A	12 hrs	178	158	0	bolt broke on furling head
<i>Northfork</i>	Amel 53	Mark Hayden	Incline Village, NV	Panama 7/5	Fatu Hiva 7/21	17	N/A	N/A	25 hrs	N/A	N/A	N/A	blown sails; generator impeller
<i>Oso Blanco</i>	Nordhavn 64	Ann & Eric Bloomquist	Ashland, WI	Puerto Vallarta 4/1	Nuku Hiva 4/17	16	2,714	128°	all	212	180	2	none
<i>Paikaea Mist</i>	Beneteau Custom 50	Michael & Gloria Hanssmann	Vancouver, BC	La Cruz 3/20	Hiva Oa 4/8	18	2,730	128°	44 hrs	210	40	0	baby stay; masthead halyard block
<i>Pincoya</i>	Island Packet 44	Gene Dennis & Gloria Watson	San Carlos, MX	Puerto Vallarta 3/21	Hiva Oa 4/11	22	2,850	130°	112 hrs	180	45	4	boom separated from gooseneck
<i>Proximity</i>	Swan 41	Rod Lambert & Liz Lehmsberg	San Francisco, CA	La Cruz 3/23	Marquesas 4/16	24	N/A	126°	105 hrs	186	82	0	mileage log; wind generator
<i>Puerto Seguro</i>	Morgan 38	Esteban & Maria Font	Florida	Galapagos 4/6	Fatu Hiva 4/30	24	3,200	85°	72 hrs	150	90	6	none
<i>Pylades</i>	Van de Stadt 39	Fergus Quinlan & Kay Cronin	Galway, Ireland	Galapagos	N/A	20	N/A	83°	few	166	121	0	none
<i>Reflections No. 1</i>	Alexander 30	Alex Kao & Leah Prentice	Vancouver, BC	Galapagos 4/20	Fatu Hiva 5/15	24	3,000	88°	144 hrs	151	90	3	autopilot; snapped fishing rod
<i>Renova</i>	Cape Dory 36	John Fremont & Naomi Tabata	Campbell River, BC	Galapagos 4/9	Hiva Oa 5/1	23	3,032	N/A	30 hrs	154	106	3	furling drum; steering bearings
<i>Soggy Paws</i>	CSY 44	Dave & Sherry McCampbell	Marathon, FL	Galapagos 3/10	Gambiers 4/6	27	3,520	N/A	N/A	145	90	0	none
<i>Sula</i>	Brandlemayer 41	Betty & Herb Weston	Tacoma, WA	Puerto Vallarta 4/26	Hiva Oa 5/17	22	3,003	126°	100 hrs	180	47	0	Autopilot; heat exchanger; tranny
<i>Tagish</i>	Brent Swain 36	Brian Vezin	Vancouver	La Cruz Mexico 3/26	Fatu Hiva 4/22	26	2,850	129°	82 hrs	132	70	0	main sheet tear; shroud unraveled
<i>Tahina</i>	St Francis 50 cat	Karen & Frank Taylor	Wilmington, NC	Galapagos 4/24	Hiva Oa 5/1	15	3,103	88°	55 hrs	152	151	2	nothing significant
<i>Tar Baby II</i>	Westail 32	Louie & Alicia van Praag	Australia	Puerto Vallarta 3/14	Hiva Oa 4/12	29	N/A	130°	96 hrs	130	30	2	tiller/pilot failed; improvised repair
<i>Tenaya</i>	Hallberg-Rassy 40	Jim & Katie Thomsen	San Diego	Galapagos	N/A	19	3,965	89°	98 hrs	189	92	3	jib head shackle broke
<i>Terrapin Flyer</i>	Hylas 49	Alex Viterbi	Mammoth Lakes, CA	Cabo San Lucas 4/25	Nuku Hiva 5/14	19	2,900	135°	12 hrs	175	120	5	a few leaks
<i>Totem</i>	Stevens 47	Gifford family	Eagle Harbor, WA	Puerto Vallarta 4/1	Hiva Oa, 4/21	21	2,950	129°	30 hrs	193	103	0	SSB failed; masthead tricolor failed
<i>Trim</i>	Del Rey 50'	Ken & Lori Newell	Long Beach, CA	La Cruz 3/26	Hiva Oa 5/15	22	2,820	130°	68 hrs	178	95	0	gooseneck fitting
<i>Verite</i>	Catana 50 cat	Piersons Overseas Ltd	BVI	Galapagos 3/14	Hiva Oa 3/27	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	270	N/A	N/A	sail halyard eye & stitching
<i>Whoosh</i>	Pearson 42	Jack & Patricia Tyler	St. Pete, FL	Galapagos 4/15	Hiva Oa 5/6	21	3,113	N/A	20 hrs	193	78	0	none

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6- to 10-foot seas. That really smoothed out our sailing and was very exciting."

The biggest thrill for Brian Trautman and Erin Russ of the Seattle-based Amel 53 *Delos* was "diving at Isla San

"Three red-footed boobies spent the night on the bow about 350 miles shy of the Galapagos."

Benedicto (350 miles off the Mexican mainland). It added miles to our course, but we got to ride giant manta rays for a week!"

Rod Lambert of the San Francisco-based Swan 41 *Proximity* recalls, "The high was being alone on the ocean with the love of my life. Elisabeth and I were both very happy — the desolation of it was amazing and awe-inspiring."

For Mark Hayden of the Nevada-based Amel 53 *Northfork*, "The high point was when a pod of dolphins swam with us as we headed into the Galapagos."

Aboard the Ireland-based Van de

Stadt 39 *Pylades*, Fergus Quinlan and Kay Cronin recall, "High points were the stars at night without light pollution, and jumping rays."

Jim and Katie Thomsen enjoyed the "beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and the solitude," aboard their San Diego-based Hallberg-Rassy 40 *Tenaya*, plus "visits from bottlenose dolphins, Risso's dolphins, pilot whales and a sperm whale that swam right next to the boat. Also, three red-footed boobies spent the night on the bow about 350 miles shy of the Galapagos."

Aboard *Totem*, the Gifford family loved the "sunsets in the ITCZ, with spectacular clouds and colors, sharing dinner in the cockpit, and the great sailing days, when we thought, 'Now *this* is what people talk about!'"

The high point for Ed and Cornelia Gould of the Half Moon Bay-based A *Cappella* was clocking a 200-mile day. "Pretty good for a Valiant 42."

For Louis and Alicia on *Tar Baby II* the best part of the trip was "a couple of really calm days with no

wind and no swell. It is amazing how calm the ocean can be way out there," says Alicia. "The rare days when we had about 15 knots of wind and light seas were also cherished!"

Aboard the New York-based Lagoon 41 cat *Dignity*, "The high point was sailing with a pod of 30 to 40 short-finned pilot whales for two hours," recalls Steve Southwood.

"Making landfall at Easter Island after so many years of research, anticipation, and fear" was the high point for Dave and Sherry McCampbell of the Florida-based CSY 44 *Soggy Paws*.

But for Allan and Alison Gabel of the Channel Islands-based Catalina 45 *Fly Aweigh* "The best part was swimming across the equator! The wind was dead and the seas were flat, so three of us jumped overboard and swam across the equator, while the fourth kept the boat beside the swimmers. Then, as they were drying off, we drifted north again, giving our fourth crewmember a chance to swim across as well. That felt fabulous! We offered a few treats to Neptune, of course: some wine and a popsicle."

Equator-crossing celebrations

have always been an uplifting part of this transit — often involving wearing wacky costumes, sharing a toast with King Neptune and forcing new 'shellbacks' to eat or drink some noxious concoction.



FLY AWEIGH

After their swim, the entire crew of 'Fly Aweigh' — Allan (behind), Alison, Tiffany and Greg — dressed up to toast King Neptune.

Aboard the San Francisco-based Hans Christian 33 *Nakia*, John Gratton recalls, "We drank some rum and poured a hefty amount over the side for Neptune. This was our fifth equator crossing, and it seems like every time we send more and more booze to the King while asking for good weather."

In the same vein, John Ranahan of the Ohio-based Lavranos 31 *Kijiro* set an unusually high bar by sharing some of his precious 1919 Angostura Trinidadian rum with the lord of the oceans.

Jack and Patricia Tyler's equator-crossing anecdote about what took place aboard their St. Petersburg, FL-based Pearson 42 *Whoosh* made us cringe: "We suited up in appropriate King Neptune and Fair Maiden costumes, positioned our camera and snapped a photo. But just then an unexpected swell tossed the boat, and the \$1,000 camera took a header from the companionway to the cabin sole." The photo reportedly turned out great, but the camera was toast.

For many sailors, one of the most impressive parts of a long crossing is making landfall. Some are overcome by emotion, while others simply feel a great sense of relief.



AQUILA

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Ken and Susan FitzGerald of the Seattle-based Caliber 40 *Bint al Khamseen* report: "We were ecstatic. Couldn't get enough of the scents of the island."

Behan of *Totem* agreed: "The smells were overwhelming — earthy, spicy, floral. . . It's amazing how your senses are sharpened by time spent on the big blue."

Ed and Cornelia of *A Cappella* note: "We were excited, but could hardly walk after almost three weeks at sea."

Brian of *Delos* says: "I felt exhilaration, excitement, and the most incredible craving for a cheeseburger and a beer."

"We were very tired, as we came in at midnight when it was pitch black," recall Dr. Simon and Jane Elix of the Australia-based Fountaine-Pajot 42 cat *Elixir*. "The next morning we awoke to the most surreal sight: the volcanic peaks of Nuku Hiva looming above us!"

No matter where you set out from, completing the Puddle Jump is no small feat, and the lessons learned along the way are well worth heeding. Fleet mem-



TENAYA

Jim Thomsen of San Diego-based Hallberg-Rassy 40 'Tenaya' strikes a pose with his catch of the day — a nice Mahi.

bers offered the following advice to future Puddle Jumpers:

"The destination is well worth the effort! Get a long-stay visa before you leave your home country. Three months here is definitely not long enough!" say John Fremont and Naomi Tabata of the British

Columbia-based Cape Dory 36 *Renova*.

Vince of *Fidelis*: "Stay out of the mid-Pacific ITCZ. I crossed near the Galapagos with its attendant wind patterns, went to 5°S and made the bulk of my transit there. I had good winds while listening to the lamentations of others."

Ann and Eric Bloomquist of the Wisconsin-based Nordhavn 64 *Oso Blanco*: "French Polynesia is a mysterious, wonderful place with lots of adventure and things to learn."

Gene of *Pincoya*: "Bring dive gear. We would have lost our anchor gear in coral without the ability to go down and unravel it from the coral canyons. Also, get those new sails ahead of time instead of trying to make your old ones last. Bring beer and booze. We're still drinking Mexican beer here in the Societies where it costs more than \$2 per can, and vodka or rum is \$35 for a fifth."

David and Rae Ann of *Nakia*: "Relax and keep it reefed. Going slow is not a sin."

Don of *Freezing Rain*: "Make sure you

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have several methods of getting weather info and make sure your SSB email setup for SailMail or Winlink works before you depart. As long as you have good communications, you will have support for trouble-shooting breakdowns. Take lots of spare parts."

Brian of *Delos*: "There are really big fish out there. Buy twice as many lures as you think you'll need, because you'll

*"Just do it.
Leaving the mainland
is the hardest part."*

lose lots of them until you get it down. They don't need to be huge. We got large fish on small to medium lures. But only use steel leader and a minimum of 90-lb test for reels (400m) and 300-lb for handlines. If you use a reel, buy a good quality one, not a cheapo brand. It will

more than pay for itself. And bring a hatchet for splitting open coconuts!"

Jim and Katie of *Tenaya*: "Be prepared for the places you'll be visiting. Have guidebooks for land as well for as anchorages in order to get the most out of your visit. Attempting to speak the language, no matter how badly, is always well received. Smile, be humble and thankful."

Tim Rayle and Ruth Berkowitz of the Oregon-based Stevens 50 *Kamaya*: "Go to the Galapagos first and get an *autografo* (cruising permit) so you can stay a long time and really get a feel for the animals."

Alex Kao and Leah Prentice of the Vancouver, BC-based Alexander 30 *Reflections No. 1*: "Just do it. Leaving the mainland is the hardest part. Everyone stalls as much as they can, but once you're off, it's good."

Brad and Kat McMaster of the UK-



PUPPY

If we had to guess, we'd say this shot of Natasha and Anatoli of the LA-based Westsail 32 'Puppy' was taken in Tahaa's Coral Gardens.

based Hanse 47 *Ghost*: "Keep the key boat systems simple, redundant and non-integrated, and don't set unrealistic expectations. It isn't about the miles per day, it's about arriving at the other end while caring thoughtfully for your crew and their experiences."

Rod of *Proximity*: "Don't fall into 'chasing your tail' during preparation. We watched many people work themselves into a near-panic trying to gather and

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assimilate each and every document on the Puddle Jump website, as well as attend each and every seminar. Just prepare well, then give yourself some time to relax. Also, don't be afraid to get away from the herd. Although our fellow cruisers are wonderful people, and we love 'em, there are many wonderful local people along the way you'll want to meet too."

Steve of *Dignity*: "If sailing from the Galapagos, make 2°S as soon as possible but don't cross 4°S until you reach 130°W. This keeps you in the favorable current for much longer and gives a much better sail to Fatu Hiva — which is a much more stunning landfall than Hiva Oa."

Simon of *Elixir*: "If starting from Mexico, cross the equator early and get into the southern trades and current. Once you start hooking the big fish, we found it best to heave to! Stick to the pelagic fish, as ciguatera (found in some reef fish) is *nasty*."

Doug of *Fellow Traveler*: "Don't follow the crowd. Go to the Gambiers."

Joel Ungar of the Santa Barbara-



PAIKEA MIST

About 300 miles off Mexico, Michael couldn't resist checking the view from the top of *'Paikaea Mist's* mast as the breeze began to fill in.

based Island Packet 350 *Aloha*: "Listen and learn as much as you can. Keep lots of spares, and from time to time check the screws that hold the roller-furling foils together."

Jon and Jennifer Glaudemans of the Annapolis, MD-based *Fontaine-Pajot*

44 cat *Ile de Grace*: "Relax, watch for chafe, and bring a lot of books."

Dave and Sherry of *Soggy Paws*: "For those doing the same route we did — via the Galapagos, Easter Island and Pitcairn — leave a little earlier in the year, and build in some time for 'delay points'. Get the Galapagos *autografo* (cruising permit) and allow enough time in the Galapagos to enjoy it. Getting there early means you can enjoy the anchorages without having to share them with 200 other cruisers."

Michael Rafferty of the San Diego-based Islander Freeport 36 *Aquila*: "Have a watermaker, plenty of cedar plugs for fishing, and bring lots of paper towels!"

Herb and Betty Watson of the Tacoma, WA-based *Brandlemayer* 41 *Sula*: "If you take crew, check them out by sailing around before you make the passage. Ideally, do several overnights."

Kathi of *Jarana*: "The best advice I was given was to get audio books for my MP3 player. It saved my sanity. Also good crew really helps in every way. Ours was

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a total hero."

Michael and Gloria Hanssmann of the Vancouver, BC-based Beneteau 50 *Paikea Mist*: "Be open-minded and flexible in your approach; be willing to change routes, watches, and, of course, sails in order to make the most of your crossing. Prepare yourselves and your boats well, and above all else, trust your boat. She truly is at home in the blue water!"

"Above all else, trust your boat. She truly is at home in the blue water!"

This year's Pacific Puddle Jump is one that won't soon be forgotten, as it featured a record number of entries, several dramatic rescues, and conditions so challenging that a group of first mates

has banded together — seriously — to form the Flying Wives Club, in anticipation of their boats' future ocean crossings.

For many sailors, doing the Jump is not only a *passage* — or an entry on their 'bucket list' — that they anticipate for years, if not decades. As we write this, in fact, a new batch of dreamers is already solidifying their plans for the 2011 crossing.

If you'd like to learn more about the voyage and our associated Tahiti events, consider attending one of our free Puddle Jump seminars: October 23 in San Diego at West Marine (5 p.m.; 1250 Rosecrans); in late January (date TBA) at the Seattle Boat Show; or in mid-April at the Strictly Sail Pacific show (date TBA).

And if you're ready to register, our new online sign-up process should be up and running by the end of this month at



MARIA FONT

Catching and boating this shark in mid-ocean brought out the animal in Estaban Font of the Argentina-based Morgan 38 'Puerto Seguro'.

www.pacificpuddlejumps.com.

There's no doubt about it. The Pacific is one big patch of water. Perhaps that's why so many sailors seem to hear its call so clearly.

— **latitude/andy**