



Hot in Nanaimo

I woke up at 5:10am to get the boat ready to leave and of course make coffee for our cruise to Nanaimo. 5:45am we departed Thetis Island Marina to catch the slack water at Dodd Narrows. Julie and the kids still slept in their beds as I shoved off the dock with the navigation lights on and before the sun came over the horizon. The early morning departure was dead calm with an eerie warmth in the air. The forecast was for 85 degrees today! I love leaving early while everyone still sleeps and I am alone in the pilothouse, the feeling is so quiet and peaceful. Julie loves it too, lying in bed knowing we are on our way to the next destination.

Dodd narrows is a narrow stretch of water between Mudge Island and Vancouver Island. Unless you want to go out into the straight of Georgia this is your only option to get to Nanaimo. A lot of water passes through here. Currents can reach 9 knots and opposing wind and current can create massive standing waves. It's best to transit the narrows at slack water. The previous day I used my Raymarine chart plotter to find out when slack water was at Dodd Narrows. It said 7:04am was slack. Just to be sure I also used Navionics on my iPad to confirm the time. It gave me a different answer, 7:35am. Why would they be different? So I got out the old paper tide tables and that said 6:21am. Now I was really

confused. I asked the fuel dock attendant and he confirmed the 7:35 time. I also went online and confirmed 7:35 with other sources but also found some other times as well. There must be something I am missing but I'm still not sure why I got different times. My Raymarine chart plotter is all messed up because its wrong on all tide tables not just Dodd Narrows. Must need to be updated or something so that's now on the long list of "to do's".

As we approached the narrows it was just about 7:20am. I was still not feeling all that confident in the 7:35 slack water time. To make matters worse no one was around us ready to go north, and quite a few boats were coming south through the narrows. I held off for a while hoping someone would lead the way north and confirm my timing. I knew I could run past slack some because the water would be flooding at that point pushing me through instead of running against me. Finally at about 8:00 a sailboat and a powerboat passed me by going north. I pulled in behind and followed them through. It was no problem at all as we flowed right through in about 2 knots of current. It does get pretty narrow but only for a short period of time then you're out of it.

At 9:17am and 18.01nm we pulled into the Nanaimo Port Authority docks right downtown. We've never been here so we were excited to get out and explore a new town. What a nice town, with lots of great shops and restaurants. Located 50 feet from where our boat was docked sat Penny's Palapa, a small Mexican restaurant literally floating on the docks. Halibut tacos at Penny's that night were awesome!

With the town explored, we decided to stay a second night so we could explore the water around the town. Just east of Nanaimo two islands shelter the town from the Strait of Georgia, Protection Island and Newcastle Island. All of Newcastle Island is a provincial park with a dock, beaches and lots of hiking trails. We were excited to get out there and see the island. First though we took a Dinghy tour down the

shoreline of Nanaimo harbor. From where our boat sat the protected harbor runs north up to Departure Bay. We ran the dinghy up the harbor and looked at all the boats to Departure Bay. The wind was blowing about 20 knots and there was a fair amount of chop in the bay. Our dinghy handled it well, something we never could have done in our old dinghy.

After lunch it was off to Newcastle Island. We hiked along the beach for a while until we came to a place the kids wanted to swim. They jumped in and swam for a while until it was time to go. Back at the dinghy we cruised over to Protection Island for a beer at the famous Dinghy Dock Pub. I've read a lot about this floating restaurant and always wanted to go there. What a great environment with the only way to get there being by boat! Not sure about the food but the beer sure was good.

The next day was another 85 degree day! We contemplated taking off but in the end decided to stay for a 3rd night so we could enjoy the hot day at the beach again. First though we had to take care of some necessary chores. Nothing like sitting in a hot non-air conditioned laundry room when its 85 outside! 5 loads later and a trip to the grocery store, we were done, ready for our departure tomorrow. At least the kids got to play at a huge playground while Julie went to the grocery store. What a trooper, she even brought all the groceries back by herself!

Then we were off back in the dinghy to Newcastle Island. It was so hot I even swam in the freezing water and I'm a wimp. The kids found a log and used it as a half submerged canoe and paddled around the bay. They would paddle around then purposefully tip it over falling in the water. They loved it!

What a hot day! We all felt a little heat exhaustion as we ate dinner on the boat and went to bed ready for the turn back south tomorrow.

Trip Log – 205.86 nautical miles



Dodd Narrows. Its actually much narrower than it looks in this picture



Chicken Man! aka Skylar



Ava's gummy skewer





View of Nanaimo from
Newcastle Island



