



FISH ON!

Just Northwest of Sucia Islands Shallow Bay, is an island called Patos. Every year we pull into its small anchorage trying to find a spot to anchor, with no luck. We have never stayed the night on this island so exposed to the Strait of Georgia its wind beaten sandstone cliffs and trees are extremely ragged.

The weather was nice and calm. We decided our best shot of exploring Patos Island would be to make the 3 mile run across fairly exposed open water from our anchorage on Sucia to Patos, using our dinghy. Our dinghy will run at about 20mph (with the 4 of us) and is actually more stable and seaworthy than you might think but even though, its still only 10.5 feet long.

We all hopped in the dinghy for the early morning run. A smooth crossing all the way landed us on a sandstone beach off the beaten path. Exploring where not many go is our favorite, and this was just that. After about 30 minutes or so I started to see the wind kick up and tide rips forming in the distance. Not a good sign. We didnt want to be stuck on Patos so I told Julie its time to go! What already? We just got here, she said. Pack it up, Im not risking the crossing in anything but perfect conditions, I said.

We piled back on the dinghy. Weaving around some of the larger tide rips that were creating some white cap waves we rode through some building lumpy seas. Probably nothing that would have gotten much worse but Im not taking that chance!

It was time to get the boat down to the American Tug factory in La Conner. Our rudder shaft seal has been leaking a little bit for the last year, so it was time to get it replaced. To replace it though, they need to pull the boat out of the water. Our haul out appointment was for 11am the next day, so the plan was to stay the night in La Conner tonight to be ready for our appointment tomorrow. As we were getting ready to leave Sucia, about 10:30am I got a text from the factory asking if we were close. Close? We were 35 miles north; and our appointment is not until tomorrow, I thought. I figured they must have the date mixed up, so I went to my email to confirm what I told them. Sure enough, that's exactly what I told them, today at 11am. How could I have got that so screwed up! After lots of apologies I got a new appointment for 1:30pm the next day.

Nothing we can do now, lets go fishing! We pulled out of Shallow bay and got the downrigger in the water. After an hour or so of fishing, Skylar asked, "how will we know if there is a fish on"? I explained how the downrigger worked then just said, "you'll know". Within a few minutes Julie and Skylar start screaming "FISH ON, FISH ON". I was in the pilothouse and came running back to a zinging line. All right, finally a salmon, I thought. It fought pretty hard for a minute or so, then not so much. As I got it close to the boat I could tell it wasn't a salmon, then the huge mouth of a lingcod lurked up out from below. It was a beautiful fish, but this time of year you can't keep them. It was extremely difficult to let him free!

We realed up, then southbound for a nice cruise to LaConner. We tied up for the night at the American Tug docks for an early to bed.



