



The Long Haul

Sunday August 19th – We Left Manson's Landing and started heading south in the Georgia Strait under the cover of some serious wildfire smoke. No specific destination in mind we just need to start heading south. After some weather forecast research, it looked like the weather was changing. It called for mostly calm winds today then rising in the evening to windy conditions for the next few days.

So, we decided to bust it south! Normally you try and limit your exposure in the Strait of Georgia but today we cruised 70 miles straight down. We didn't want to get stuck waiting for a weather window in the coming days. Building following seas pushed us right into Gabriola Pass where we caught somewhat decent slack water. But why stop here. We pushed on but now I transferred the helm to Skylar where he navigated us all the way to Sidney Spit in the southern Gulf Islands.

In all we cruised 120nm in one day, an all-time record for us. We anchored off the spit and spent the next 2 nights just relaxing on the beach, watching the Orca whales pass by and taking the dinghy to dinner in Sidney.



Long run down the Georgia Strait

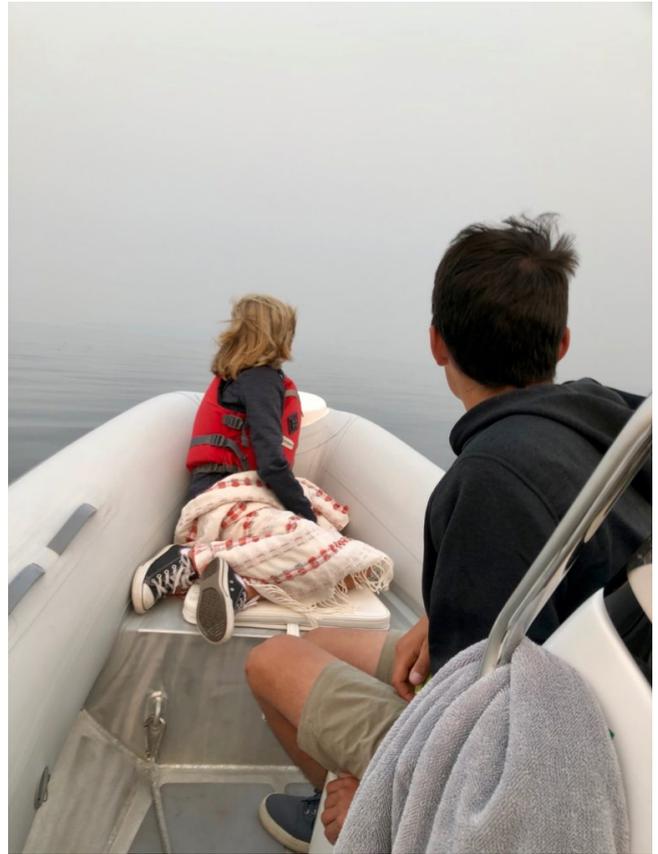


Sidney Spit in the smoke





On our way to dinner in Sidney



We had to navigate the short distance in the dinghy using GPS because of the thick smoke



Sidney Harbor







Hillbilly Heyer

Saturday August 18th – Today we left Prideaux Haven and made our way west to Manson's Landing, tucked in a little area we always anchor. It's a fun spot, complete with a saltwater lagoon, a nice beach, and short hike leads to a beautiful lake but the weather must be calm. The anchorage opens up to the south end of the Georgia Strait. If the wind was blowing out of the south, it would not be comfortable. Lucky for us things were calm, and the forecast was for more of the same the next day.

It's kind of a tricky anchorage in 80' of water but we managed to secure a spot right where we always anchor. A few others were not so lucky as they came in after us trying repeatedly to set the hook within acceptable range of other boats. After feeling like the boat wasn't going to drift off anywhere, we set out for some beach time and exploring the area.

Just as we were getting in the dinghy to leave Skylar said quietly but clearly "oh no, that's not good". What, I said. "My tooth just fell out" he said. He turned to Julie and I and the hillbilly was suddenly turned on. Years ago, when Skylar

was about 8 years old, he was sliding on his stomach down our long, slippery, hardwood floors. He wouldn't quit sliding even though it was time to leave the house. Finally, he put on his sweatshirt to leave but just had to slide one more time. Except this time the grippy logo on the front of his sweatshirt took hold on the hardwood and planted his face smack on the hardwood. When he came up, blood was everywhere, his tooth almost went through his lip and his front tooth had a big chip out of it. The dentist was able to fill it but warned that it would not last forever.

Today, miles from a dentist, in a different county, on a boat, it decided to fall out. He played it off like no big deal, but he was embarrassed. We decided to wait until we got home to get it fixed but Skylar is resourceful. He found the chunk and was able to put it back in until he had to eat then took it back out. That lasted for quite a few days until he lost the chunk!

After some exploring time, Skylar "Hillbilly" Heyer and I took a run in the dingy to Gorge Harbor to fuel up and get some much-needed groceries. It was a fun run, then we all took a sunset cruise and fishing expedition. Skylar of course hooked into a nice Lingcod. Must have been the tooth.





Anchors up. Leaving
Prideaux Haven











Sunset from our anchorage



Nice Lingcod Skylar!



The ling puked this zombie fish up after we caught it.



Fish! Fish! Fish!

Wednesday August 15th – We left Walsh Cove and headed back to Prideaux Haven for a few nights in the warm water. After getting all 3 boats anchored, rafted and shore tied, we all ran to Refuge Cove for some lunch, groceries and dinghy fuel.

On our return we witnessed a guy on a sailboat who admittedly said he didn't really know what he was doing, catch about a 25lb salmon. Landing a big fish from the back of a sailboat is a serious challenge so the Steels helped them out from their dinghy. We all cheered as the fish rested securely in the net and onboard the sailboat. It was fun to see the proud fishermen so surprised and excited.

With that, we all had a renewed ambition to get out there ourselves and catch some fish! It was a race! Get back to the boat, gear up the dinghy and catch ourselves a fish. Back on the fishing grounds, wham, Bruce catches a fish right away. Then Skylar and I get one on but loose it. Then another one and loose it too! We kept on it then Skylar landed a nice fish! After all 3 boats brought in fish we headed back with our prize.

That evening was warm and calm as we cruised the bay in the dinghy while the sun set. The next day we were back out on the fishing grounds and luckily the fish were still there. Wham! More fish that day and the next! It was super fun except we had to organize both of our freezers just perfect to get all the fish to fit.

Todd and Tami had to leave the group and head south for some obligations at home, so we motored just a few hundred yards away and anchored in a tight little cove. The anchor didn't seem to set good, so I pulled it up and tried again. The 2nd time was better, but I still didn't feel 100% comfortable. Against my better judgement I let it be, justifying my

inaction by calm weather but that uneasy feeling didn't go away. High tide, about 10pm, just as it was getting really dark, we felt and heard a loud boom. It was really startling! It seemed like something ran into the boat or we hit rocks. After a quick assessment of the situation with a flashlight and checking for intrusion of water, it looked like all was good.

All I can think of was the anchor abruptly slipped off a rock during the high tide. Definitely scared us but we seemed to be holding position. I evaluated our options and decided it was safer to stay put rather than try and re-anchor in the dark. Not a restful night's sleep.

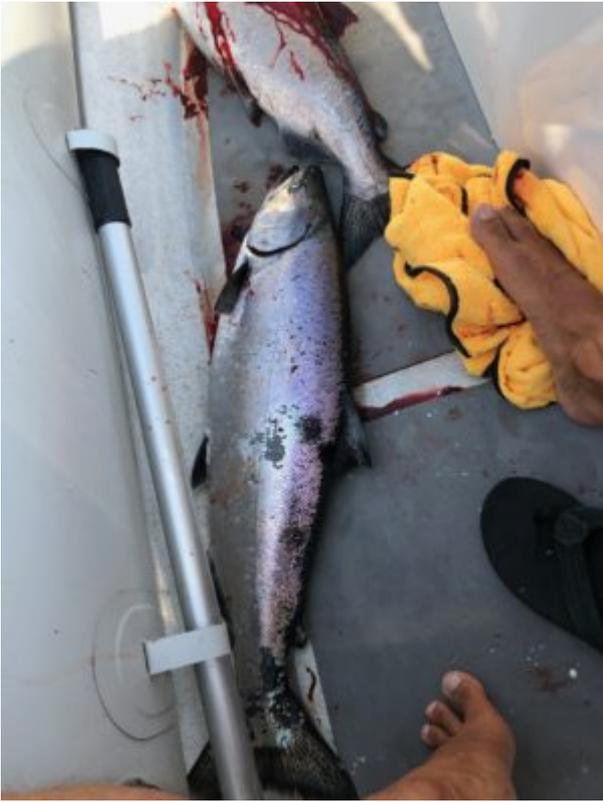


On our way to Refuge



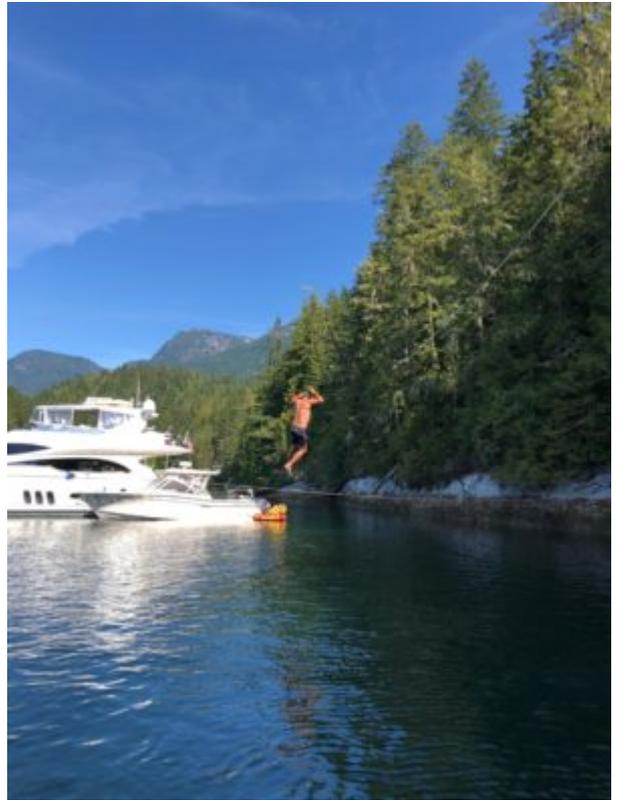


The first fish

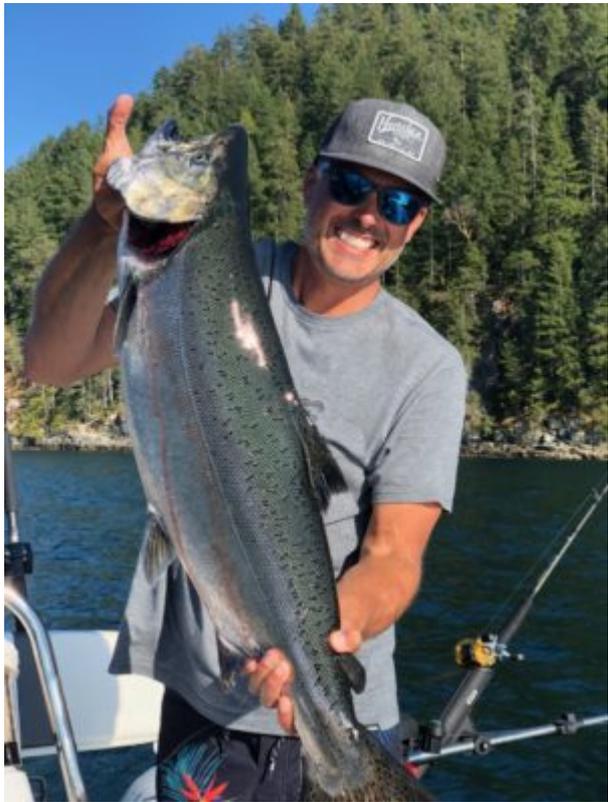




Rope swing time







And more Fish!



