

2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 6



**A Delayed Arrival** Our last guests of the summer, Bill Faia of Maui & Montana and Carol Booth of Maui & Dallas were to fly into Kodiak for our return trip to Cordova.

The short flight between Anchorage and Kodiak only takes about a half hour, but landing took three flights and two days as a result of adverse wind and fog conditions.

As they walked down the dock to our moorage, Carl had the exterior

audio speakers on playing *Anchors Away* loudly to greet them.

**A Changed Itinerary** With the new crew expressing no great interest in seeing the bears up close and having lost two days to the storm, we began the journey back towards Cordova once again traveling through Kuprenof Strait to avoid the remnants of the storm. This rich channel that separates Kodiak Island from Afognak Island is often filled with wildlife. We passed a few whales feeding plus hundreds of puffins, sea lions and sea otters (**photo**).

We spent our first night in a bay in Afognak Island where we kayaked with Bill and Carol (**photo**).

**Mighty Fin Whales**

After reviewing the five day weather forecast, it was evident that we had a small window of time to cross both the Stevenson and Kennedy Entrances to Cook Inlet before the arrival of the next summer storm.

The strong currents through the entrance to Cook Inlet usually make for an interesting and often challenging day. It



2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 6



also offers numerous chances to see the pods of fin and humpback whales that feed on the nutrients kept in constant motion by the swirling currents. Fin whales (**photo**), at almost 80' in length, are the second largest creatures on the planet. Only the rare blue whale is larger.

**An Imperfect Storm** Port Chatham at the end of the Kenai Peninsula has been known to us as a secure anchorage either before crossing or returning from the Kodiak Island chain ( 60 12.960 N, 151 43.970 W ).



With another storm approaching, we made the decision that instead of anchoring just inside the entrance, we would motor to the far end of the inlet. We anchored just out of the way of purse seiners setting their salmon nets even as the winds reached gale force.

The storm soon moved in with a vengeance. Not only did the torrential rains rival anything we have ever experienced but the hurricane force winds continued for a duration of 36 hours.

**Dragging Anchor** About midway through the next day, Carl noticed that the boat anchor had broken free from the bottom and the boat had drifted 300 yards before catching again. This was the first time this has happened in more than 1,000 anchorages of the *Inside Passage*. The howling winds which gusted to

over 90 MPH certainly contributed to this occurrence.

2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 6



Carl and Bill wrestled with the anchor and finally raised it and we moved upwind to reset it for the night ahead (**photo on previous page**). Plugging in a system of external speakers, we set the vessel's computer to put out a loud alarm if the boat's location moved beyond boundaries that we had set on our electronic charts. With confidence we were able to sleep safely, although not quietly, the second night as the boat swung back and forth behind its anchor. All total, the boat's speed log indicated that we had traveled 30 miles during the storm. The view from the *Inside Passage* was one of periodic water spouts intermixed with wind whipping the bay's surface into a frothy maelstrom (**photo**).

Not all the activity was in the sea. As part of their efforts to keep fit, Carol and Joann passed some time during the storm by doing yoga in the salon following instructions on Carol's iPad (**photo**).



**Some Relief** The next couple of days, we cruised northeastward cautiously along the Kenai Peninsula to escape the depleting storm front.

With the arrival of the next storm and its 10' waves, we surfed into Seward to allow the passage of the weather front. It was our first opportunity to put our feet on land since departing Kodiak six days earlier.

2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 6



**Exit Glacier** Our wait for the seas to calm allowed us time to explore the area. We rented a car and drove to the Exit Glacier about 10 miles out of Seward ( 60 10.00 N, 149 40.00 W ).

This glacier is highly accessible with a trail that reaches almost to the face. It is one of the descending arms of the enormous Harding Ice Field comprising the majority of the Kenai Fjords National Park.

The glacier has receded a couple of miles in the last two

hundred years. After hiking to the end of the trail near the glacier, we left the crowded tourist scene and went to a pleasant nearby trail head with a view (**photo**). While enjoying our picnic lunch, Carl suggested we hike the nearby forest trail along a glacial fed river. Although there had been frequent rains, the trail was quite passable as long as we avoided the periodic waterfalls.

We had dinner that evening at a funky rustic restaurant that we spotted along the road behind a large sign advertising *Salmon Bake*. Their souvenir t-shirts state that they serve “Cheap Beer & Lousy Food”, but that turned out not to be true as the food was both delicious and memorable.

**Off the Ocean** Upon re-entering Prince William Sound, we were once again back in one of the world’s largest intact coastal ecosystems and, in the opinion of some, perhaps the most beautiful. This scenic region is protected from the often stormy seas of the Gulf of Alaska and is enclosed by high mountains and glaciers.

Iktua Bay ( 60 06.220 N, 148 00.270 W ), our next anchorage, is fed by several salmon streams. That evening we were able to kayak and see black bears on the beach (**photo**).

Although the pink salmon run appeared to be only starting, our guests saw a total of seven black bears wandering the beach at one time. More skittish than grizzlies, black bears sometimes wait until dusk to start wandering the beaches looking for food.



2013 Alaska Cruise Journal # 6



**Three In View At Once**

The next day we visited the Chenega, Tiger Tail and Princeton Glaciers in Western Prince William Sound's Nassau Fjord.

Our timing was perfect as it was a calm and sunny day. We turned off the engines and just listened for the cracking thunder blasts from glacier movements and watched shards of ice cascade down into the seawater.

**A Beautiful Setting For a Nap**

Later, after anchoring in nearby Tiger Bight, we took advantage of the setting to kayak among the icebergs. Very much at home in his

kayak and under ideal and calm conditions, Carl took a 20 minute nap in front of the Tiger Glacier (photo).

Recognizing that he was sound asleep, and afraid he might roll over and fall in, Joann waited patiently nearby hoping a cold water rescue would not be necessary.

With our return to Cordova, we prepared the *Inside Passage* for the arrival of the delivery crew who will return her to Seattle.

Once again, we have ended another wonderful and adventurous summer. We hope through our journals we have shared with you our appreciation of these glorious wilderness areas.

