



Over The Hump There are only a few locations along the route to Alaska where vessels are exposed to ocean swells and the periodic severe effects that may occur during major storms. Queen Charlotte Sound is one of those locations. The crossing is only about 30 miles. Once we completed the passage and were back within the Inside Passage cruise route, we could with confidence determine an arrival date in Prince Rupert. We would be dropping off the Pruzans early so they could fly back to attend a wedding in Seattle and on the same day celebrate their 56th anniversary.

Segregation Bella Bella ([52 09.940 N, 128 08.760 W](#)) is one of very few pockets of civilization in this region and is primarily populated by what are now called First Nations people. A short distance away across the channel and around the corner is Shearwater ([52 08.840 N, 128 05.380 W](#)) which historically was mostly occupied by the non-native population. Over the years we have made several stops at Bella Bella, but had not been to Shearwater in 23 years. On that earlier visit, the primary attraction was a rough looking bar that had a sign posted "No Knives Allowed Inside".

Progress After that experience we never had much interest in returning, but this year we decided it was time to update our impressions. We found that much has improved over the years and presently there is a large fishing resort, marina, restaurant, marine supply store, post office, and grocery market. The handsome mural above the main building depicts various significant residents of the area which has become more integrated with the passage of time (**photo**) . We only stopped for an hour which was sufficient to check out the stores, read the community bulletin board (always fascinating) and witness a few colorful characters. One fellow mariner appeared to be have come directly from central casting (**photo**).





accordance the BC Ferry standards.

A New Ferry Terminal

Continuing north up Finlayson Channel we past Klemtu ([52 35.640 N, 128 31.370 W](#)), another small First Nation village with a population of a few hundred.

There is a new ferry dock just a short distance from town, complete with provisions for waiting lines and a sign detailing the two kilometer distance to downtown Klemtu (**photo**).

Given that the single road on the entire island starts at the ferry dock and ends at the small community, the signage may be excessive but was probably prepared in

Green Inlet Rapids We cruised north along Princess Royal Channel where we exited into Green Inlet for the night. Instead of anchoring in a familiar spot that already had an occupant, we proceeded to the far end of this four mile inlet. At the head was Baffle Point ([52 56.577 N, 128 24.773 W](#)) where we had a view of the rapids that poured from the mostly fresh water lagoon.

We tucked the *Inside Passage* in close to the shoreline and away from the rapids that created turbulent foamy white water on the falling tide.

Persistent off and on rain for the last few days kept most of the crew indoors, but Carl decided to kayak anyway. It was not a great decision because as soon as he launched, a heavy downpour began (**photo**).

Whale Show and Coast

Guard Request On our departure the following morning, we again passed the inlet entrance and the





mariners had come in contact with the vessel *Konig*, or if it was seen, to advise them they had “traffic on hand” and that they should contact the Coast Guard on channel 16 for a message. Often, this type of relayed communication is used for family emergencies.

Since we had just passed them we knew we could circle back and see if the occupants were all right and possibly just didn’t have their radio on. The whale show continued but after grabbing a few more photos, we headed back to alert the boat.

We called out to the *Konig* and a man came out and we gave him the

boat that we had seen anchored. This time the crew noticed that her name was *Konig*.

As we entered the main channel, we spotted a mother humpback with her calf. It must have been the youngster’s day to practice jumping out of the water and falling on its back.

We grabbed our cameras and stopped so we could watch the almost continuous display of a whale breaching (**photo**).

As the show continued, an announcement came over our VHF radio from the Prince Rupert Coast Guard asking if any





had not subsided, we put on our full raingear and went over in our kayaks to visit (**photos**). As we paddled, the sing-song cry of a lone common loon could be heard across the water for a considerable distance.

Later as Lucy paddled to the far end of the cove to the mouth of a river, she was surprised as she suddenly came up on seven unusually large birds sitting together under the trees apparently frozen to avoid detection.

She attempted to signal us of their presence but as we approached they took flight. We had no idea at first what they were and weren't able to attempt to identify and photograph them until we reached their next resting spot.

With the aid of Carl's long lens, we shot some

message. Later we heard him communicate to the Coast Guard a thanks to the unknown vessel that in his rush to his radio, he had not identified.

A Wildlife Bonanza After we circled around the north end of Princess Royal Island, we settled into an anchorage for the evening in Cameron Cove (53 03.875 N, 129 06.980 W) which is just off the larger Barnard Harbour which contained a large floating fishing resort up for the season.

Immediately upon anchoring we sighted a black bear grazing peacefully on shore grasses. Although the rain





More Playtime So far, this year has been an excellent one for wildlife viewing. Herb easily earned the award for the most sightings.

In a remote area off of the cruise ship route, he spotted a solo humpback in a playful mood, if that term can be used to describe a wild animal.

It was a mature adult that was breaching (**photo**) as well as slapping its large pectoral (side) fins which can be twelve to thirteen feet in length.

This aquatic mammal periodically laid on its back, occasionally with both fins in the air (**photo**), and repeatedly slapped one fin or the other on the surface with a loud C-R-A-C-K.

photos. Back onboard, Joann could compare his photos with our bird books and confirm that we had experienced our first ever encounter with sandhill cranes (**photos**). They are among the tallest in the bird kingdom with a height up to four feet.

Spirit Bear We spent an additional half day on the west side of Princess Royal Island cruising various inlets in an unsuccessful search for a view of the Kermode or “Spirit Bear” whose sole home is this island.

This rare ‘white’ bear is actually the result of a mutation that causes approximately 10% of the island’s black bears to have white fur. Even siblings can be different in color.

