

Alaska Summer 2020 part 1 :



After the Covid-19 pandemic and the cancellation of all our visitors, even the Americans, we thought that we would be able to chill and sail in the Prince William Sound, around Kenai Peninsula. And also, near Kodiak and Alaska peninsula to visit Geographic Harbour and its bears fond of salmons. All of this before going South (Southeast SE) of Alaska and wait for the Canadian borders to re open... And go out of the USA before the end of our visa mid-September.

But life never comes without challenges, changing weather and bad reception of the forecast's files. Fredoya getting older doesn't help either, we have to make the maintenance for the sounder, the gear box reverser, the windlass... all these compulsory "extras" on board.

1. The quick and unpredictable weather forecast changes should not be a problem, thanks to the files we receive through the iridium, even though the telephone network is so weak when we move away from Seward or Kodiak.

While leaving Cordova we start the prepaid card with an annual subscription for our mailbox. But the card could not be activated, so we had to wait until I could call the provider 15 days later...

Our mailbox was working with an inland network but there was no way to connect one of the three computers to the satellite phone. Fredo spent days searching how to connect the computer to the iridium network. In the end thanks to her best English accent she managed to receive a link given by the nice "helper" she had on the phone in order to install the program to recognize the iridium...

Took ages but after several attempts with Océane, it works!

Now we'll have to be patient while asking for weather forecasts, it seems that there are only few satellites above our head and the prepaid card is slower than the subscription.



2. The depth sounders: 2 at least to never have problems with both

- 1st one : the screen doesn't work anymore, it can't find the transducer which has been checked by David at RadarAlaska. He will try to book us a brand new « display » since our model doesn't exist anymore (550 \$ for a super small screen)
- 2nd one didn't give the depth under 25m then it was 10m and now only sometimes, not for a long time. The probe was verified several times, its echo must be weak. We can hear its ticktock.

3. The gearbox:

We had already a problem in March after a leak on the inverter oil cooler... the sea water mixed with the oil formed mayonese. (Newsletter April 18 – “Retour au port pour bricoler”) Now it's the seal which is leaking.

Besides getting the spotless motor leak pan dirty, the gearbox also shows weaknesses and lack oil regularly (of course).

We order the lip seal by internet with the time interval and distance: patience is necessary.



Without sounder it's hard to stop fishing and anchor but since the American maps are very precise we can do our best thanks to the point given by Robin.

Without being sure that the reverser will switch on again after a small fishing stop we can't really appreciate fully...

When we start it in the morning (when it's cold), after checking the oil gauge there were no problems at least we can sail a couple of hours.

4. The windlass: Regularly the ball-bearing and the seal are due to be changed.

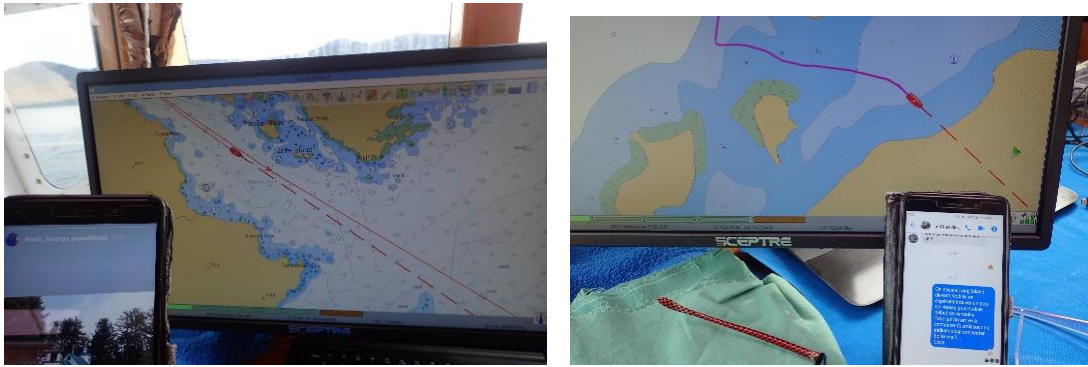
More and more often since we bought the remote control for the chain counter in 2016. It's a super-efficient tool but the buttons are not reactive enough to control the chain. So the windlass come under strain at the end when the chain tend itself. The ball-bearing are wearing out and letting the water infiltrate and rust, blocking the axis we had to push really hard with the 2t hydraulic cylinder to dismantle it.



5. Without any windlass we are obligated to go to the harbor...

To calculate a day at the harbor in Alaska once count from midnight to midnight... Hostellerie friends you should think about this!

A good way to make more money. The 1st night in Seward with an additional mensual tax: \$112 without electricity nor showers (\$5 for 10mn) ... abate on 3 days we paid only \$80 and we had time to sleep 2 nights... it's a scam! At Kodiak it's only 75\$ for the night... Next time we will moor, even if we must do all the trips with the dinghy. It's a pity because we meet people more easily at the harbor!!



We take our time because we want to stay close to Kodiak City in order to have mobile network to get back the seal for the output-shaft and the sounder screen as soon as they arrive... We were arrived at the South of Kodiak: at Old Harbour hoping to turn around the island by the South and see the petroglyphs in Akhiok: next time!

We already saw many birds, whales, deers, bears and foxes. Now we search thoroughly the first mushrooms since the first boletes arrived in Cordova.

Fishes are rare, must be the heat! But we fish enough for our subsistence. Even though Robin points are made for winter and fishes are swimming deeper during summer to find freshness. We also released our first Black Cod because we didn't know that it was the excellent local fish and it was really tiny.

Moorings and meeting new people:

Good moorings require to have good maps and an efficient informatic system. Indeed, maps readers are no longer an issue with OpenCpn and the very precise free American maps, along with a perfectly calibrate GPS.

Well, who knows why, the rocks don't appear on the computer we us for sailing. We had to connect the old screen, too dark to use. The problem doesn't come from the Windows version, nor OpenCpn... Fred had plugged the PC correctly and arrange the wires... Fredo add some more all over the place!

After Greenland, we find really nice moorings and even civilization in the middle of nowhere.

We could meet again with the sailing yacht Morgane, and Robin took nice shots with the drone while Fred and Amanda were talking about cooking ... (video and photos very soon)

They tried to loose us in the bush to go fishing in the lake but the arctic char weren't on the top of the mountain rather in the plains river...

Two days were too short but we will meet again.



Looking for mobile network near Kodiak we found only one spot shelter from the wind and not too deep but right in front of an isolated house. It's never our first choice but since it was the only good spot, we impose Fredoya in the landscape. Due to Covid we hesitate to go on land to introduce ourselves but the next day in the nice village of Ouzinkie we met Matthew who saw us in front of his house and checked our website. He offered us to come and meet his wife Vickie who nicely harvested some vegetables before leaving to fish.

We invited them onboard for the night, also with Sonja's mother and they brought us a superb salmon: a Red Salmon that you can only catch with a net so we had no chance to fish it yet.

They fought hard against the rising wind to fish 5... we even had to change the mooring but hopefully they come with their own boat so it's easier than directly from the beach.

Lovely evening, telling about our life like always would say our daughters...



After a really quick stop in Kodiak City to do some groceries at the Safeway, thanks to Joël & Martine and their car (Newsletter of July 1st : 2 jours à Kodiak city) we are continuing South.

We moored in front of the Old Harbor-town; 225 inhabitants, and since it's Sunday there are no one in the streets... We took a stroll and visited the Russian orthodox church open for the tourists, always with a reminder of the security precautions against Covid.

Our walk mates howl and bark when we leave with the dingy for the next bay.



Some bears (this time it must be grizzlies of Kodiak with their characteristic bump) on the different beaches and a female with her 3 cubs but she's at some 800m so it's too far away for our super zoom. in the morning this time it's deer, foxes and jumping salmon...

We tried dragnet fishing and cast fishing but we learned that the Red Salmon doesn't bite you have to fish him at « roumagnole » like they say in the South... fishing with a grapple hook!)

Another nice mooring in front of a lagoon where we can enjoy the first mosquitoes... Fred will wake up in the middle of the night in order to burn a mosquito repellent on which Fredo will walk in the early morning since she didn't hear him, sleeping on her bad ear.



Some sailing boats are navigating in the uncertainty of the next months, all of our travels depending on the end of our visas and the (non)opening of the borders. For the moment we should be able to enter Canada thanks to family reunification... for everyone who comes from the US and having a relative in Canada... We hope that Mid-September this will still be possible and that then we'll have the possibility to come back to Alaska for next Summer... with a small stay in Mexico or not.

We came back to **Anton Larsen** and met Hamish & Kate from Seal. We sum up the sailing boats we met... no more than 5!

Mooring in Morgan Bay, during the first days we renovate the wood in the cockpit (sanding, oil treatment) and discovered the surroundings to fish so we didn't meet many people.



On Sunday at 7am since the tide is good and the sky is grey, fishing should be good. We turn around thanks to our maps... and then we found our first halibuts. 35kg of fishes.

We spend the rest of the morning cleaning, filleting and salting the cod, vacuuming the halibut fillets. In the afternoon we clean and wait the woods to dry so we could oil them again.



When it's sunny there are less fishes but we found the first berries: salmon-berries, ripe just enough but with splendid colours from salmon eggs colour to black purple.

The taste... between blackberries and artichokes!

The tart even with the excess of juice didn't need wiped cream nor cream.

The first jam is too cooked, too bad but the season is only beginning.



We also found some tiny dandelions for our salad tomorrow. Tonight we have an exquisite aioli with artichokes!!

1m for 8kgs. We still don't know how she arrived inside the fishing box maybe she was a contortionist...

Bruce brought us some peas... very good, grown in the sun. He apologized for not coming earlier but with all the house renovation and the garden we can understand.

Because of the pandemic we did not dare to step a foot on the beach without being invited and since she works with aliens she doesn't dare to come onboard.

Even though she came to bring us the car keys so we can go to the city.

They also fish a halibut but no cod since they normally swim deeper than 200 fathoms... except for ours!



Frédo lost a nice cod but fished 19 kg of halibut (4*5kg +4kgs: quota of 2/pers. And 4 per boats: it's perfect) calibrated in our black box, then put in salt and in cans... it keeps us busy

The oil pot is empty, we get the sheets ready to protect the sails from the mast yards in a sunny day without any wind to climb the mast.

We search also the leak flooding the TV table each time it rains: It seems that we'll have to dismantle the pilot house again to make the screw impermeability. How not to get bored while on a boat!



You can see we went from a winter to summer outfit in only several hours... sunglasses and boots are obligatory...



