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Thursday, February 24. 2011

A ship!

Day 19, Thursday, 23.02.2011, 12:00 UTC (09:00 local), 18:51.7N 57:04.8W, 26Ã‚Â°C, 1014 mBar Yesterday was very nice sailing. The sea was pretty calm in the morning and at first it went very well and comfortably with the Parasailor up. But by noon (local time) the wind had gone gradually down to about Bft 1-2 and I wasn't happy with the speed I was making, only 4kn. Since the wind was coming from about 160Ã‚Â° I took the Parasailor down and put the main-sail and genoa up. Which gave me upwards of 6kn of speed, much better. I kept the standard sails up for the rest of the day and night. See note below for a verdict on the Parasailor, if interested. One thing I always wanted to do is take a video of the boat while sailing. From outside. The idea was to string a camera to a kite and let that fly. For that reason I had brought two kites, one with 1m2 and another with 1.3m2. Yesterday was going to be the big day. But it turned out the wind was too light and the kites wouldn't fly. Later there was more wind, but they always kamikazed into the main-sail. Turbulence I guess. So ... no footage of the boat sailing yet. But I'll tr again today. I am getting close to the Caribbean and am expecting more traffic again. I haven't seen another ship in 15 days. And just as the sun went down I saw one. A freighter, the "Crystal Gate", bound east. Both the AIS and Radar Detector saw it too, but I saw it first. Suckers . We have this little competition going. Who is the last to see the first ship of the day has to do the night watch. Haha. After sunset the wind increased and I reefed down for the night, but the wind dropped again later and at three in the morning I changed from 2nd to 1st reef, and at five from 1st reef to full sail. At this point the first self-inflicted damage of the trip occured. I tore the rope of the starboard lazy-jack. I had noticed that it was going a little hard on the winch, and looked out for the lazy-jack because it's the usual suspect. But in the dark I couldn't see anything wrong despite the flashlight and then ... snap, it was suddently very easy on the winch. Uuups. Next time I'll use dark lines for the lazy-jack so they contrast better against the sail in the night. To fix it I would have to climb the mast up to the second spreaders. Since I have no mast-steps and nobody to haul me up on a winch I would need to go up with my climbing ascensors while the boat is rolling around. Sounds like fun. Or I'll just throw a rope over the first spreader and pull the lazy-jack over that for the time being until I'm in port. 345nm to go. Really close now! Verdict on the Parasailor I've sailed now for 18 days in 0 to 40kn of wind, using alternatively the Parasailor and the Main and Genoa. Though I didn't sail the Parasailor in more than 25kn of wind. After that trial it has become clear that my boat does always go faster with the standard sails than with the Parasailor. Depending on the angle to the wind the difference is between 10% (160Ã‚Â°) and 30% (90Ã‚Â°). I don't think that this is true for every boat, and that the difference in speed is that big on my boat for two reasons: 1st I have a 7/8th rigg and my Spinnaker halyards don't come out at the top of the mast but just a little over the forestay. Therefor my Parasailor is a lot smaller than it would be if I had a top-rigg and it flies lower and creates less pull. 2nd my standard sails are very well cut (and very new) DC66/77 triradial sails and with the 7/8th rigg I can trimm them just right. However I'm still happy with the Parasailor and downwind of 160Ã‚Â° I prefer it to the regular sails for a number of reasons. 1st the difference in speed is downwind not so big. 2nd the boat rolls a lot less because of the lift of the wing. The added comfort is huge, especially in light winds and old swell. 3rd I don't have to be afraid of a accidental gybe. 4th it looks really cool. So my final verdict on the Parasailor: Great downwind sail. Needs no pole and is therefor a lot easier to use than a Spinnaker. Needs a little practice with the ropes (2 downhauls, 2 sheets). Can sail up to 60Ã‚Â° to the wind, but in practice you would not go closer than 100Ã‚Â° unless it's only for a few miles. Good investment.

Posted by Axel Busch in Vespina at 06:08

it's the final countdown ..
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viel glÃ¼ck fÃ¼r die letzten meilen.. jetzt nur nicht unvorsichtig werden...
Anonymous on Feb 24 2011, 07:04

Thank you for this valuable post. It changed my way
Anonymous on Feb 25 2011, 02:33