

Saturday, May 5, 2012

Under motor

Day 21, Saturday, 2012-05-05, 12:00 boat (18:00 UTC), 9:32S, 132:03W, COG 280, SOG 5.5kn, Wind 7kn E, overcast

Sunset is our special time. During the day both of us are busy with boaty things or our interests, or sleep alternatively and don't get to talk a lot. But before sunset we cook dinner and, weather permitting, have it together in the cockpit. Then we watch the sun set, and the stars come up, and talk about our thoughts. Very special. When Liz asks me, what we get out of this trip, I often think that this time together is one of the most important things, and that I will remember those evenings in the cockpit as the best part of the trip. Sure, exotic islands and a little taste of adventure is nice, too. But having time for each other is real special.

Last night, a few hours after dinner, Liz went back to her writing, and I took my laptop into the cockpit and coded underneath the 90% full moon. Then the wind started to drop below 10kn and shift, and I was busy with the lines trying to keep the boat speed at around 5kn. In the morning we heard a call on the VHF radio: "Sailing Yacht that just crossed my port side.", repeated a number of times, but no answer. Apparently the captain of a commercial vessel wanted to have a chat with a sailor, but the sailor wasn't listening. I know a few cruisers who, when night falls, close the hatch and sleep until the morning, trusting in god, good luck, and the vigilance of others to see them through. Maybe this was one of them. Well, the sea is big, traffic is scarce, and a sailboat is small and slow, so chance is on their side. But still ...

Out on the ocean and away from shipping lines we also sleep for up to an hour without looking around. But at least we have all our electronic eyes and ears turned on, and we get warned half an hour before a possible collision above the water. The aluminum hull is also a very good resonator, and a number of times I've heard the noise of another vessel below decks before I've seen it on the horizon. But now that we're approaching the islands and there is more traffic to be expected, we look around at least every half hour. And no sleeping within 50nm to 100nm of land, depending on the approach.

This morning the wind dropped below to 6kn, and we were barely making 2kn through the water. No surprise, given the thick forest of growth on our hull. I took the sail down and started the engine, we've only run it for 10h so far on the trip. Then I tied a big scraper to an aluminium pole and started working on the side of the boat from the deck down, to get at least the waterline clean. You have to wait until the side comes out of the water as the boat rolls, but it works quite well. Now we're moving with 5 to 6kn, and the desalinator is running. Unless the wind comes up to over 10kn we're going to go like this all day, filling up the water tanks. We used about 30l a day, but only made 60l every third day, so we have some catching up to do. Better do it out on the ocean than close to land.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 13:53