

Sunday, September 30. 2012

One of those rare perfect sailing days

Monday, 2012-10-01, 11:40 UTC+13, 18:28.955S 178:31.896E , COG 255, SOG 6.5kn, Wind 15kn SE, sunny

Great sailing today! All sails up, and Gudrun is zooming along just nicely now, fast and steady at 120degrees apparent wind. Suva is just up north, and there should be no problem with being at the Navula passage on the south-eastern corner of Viti Levu tomorrow early morning. From there I have to go 22nm north-east to Lautoka to clear in before going back south a 6nm to Vuda Point, where the marina is. Hope clearing in doesn't take too long and I can get there before evening.

Plan for the rest of the day is mostly just sailing and a little cleaning, getting ready for the inspection by the authorities. And cooking, hmm, I wonder what to have for lunch today. Yesterday I made Burritos, very tasty. Now I have one onion, one carrot, a little bit of cabbage, some potatoes and some apples left. Sounds like stew, but I don't feel like it. What I would really like right now is a plate of kebab with rice, salad, and sauce!

125nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:31

Calliope / date line

Monday, 2012-10-01, 18:27.182S 179:39.601E, COG 280, SOG 5.5kn, Wind 20kn SE

hey - did you notice? The longitude is E now, not W anymore. I passed the date line today (180 longitude)! So, after passing the greenwich Meridian (0 longitude) in February 2010 on the way from Ibiza to Almeria, I've sailed now officially more than half around the world. Almost exactly half of that distance (89 degrees, from St Martin to Tahiti) together with Liz. Sweet!

But that is actually not the most exciting thing that happened today. That was when at 7pm after another no-wind day suddenly a heavy rain-front passed with 25kn and at the same time the radar detector and AIS alarm went off. Another boat! And I can't see it for all the rain . So no photo. But thanks to the AIS I know it was the 42m Motoryacht Calliope, doing 12.7kn on the way to Denarau, Fiji. I verified it's position by Radar, and seeing that we'll pass each other with a mile to spare I went back to playing a roleplaying game on the iPad ("Aralon" - Nothing special, but you've got to do something when there's nothing to do all day because of no wind).

Now the rain's gone, but the wind is still 20kn. The sea is also pretty agitated at the moment, and the boat's rolling again. Ah, maybe going super slowly wasn't so bad after all

183nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:26

Saturday, September 29. 2012

Electronic ramblings

Sunday, 2012-09-30, 12:00 UTC+13, 18:33.284S 179:30.833W, COG 245, SOG 2.1kn, Wind 4kn E, overcast + rainy

Zzzzzzzzz ... so glad I have my little electronic distraction devices, otherwise I couldn't help but sleep all day on a day like this - overcast, rainy, 2-3kn of speed.

The investment into eBook reader and tablet are so worth it when you go cruising. I've read hundreds of books in the last three years on the boat. A lot of them reference books which I keep turning back to. No way I could carry them all in paper. Nowadays I only buy paper books if I can't get them as ebooks. And even then I photograph the important pages (of reference books) and convert them into text-ebooks with Adobe Acrobat and Calibre. Not that I could get the book I wanted on the route - download is the only way. And the tablet (Android or iPad, doesn't matter) are not only great for watching movies, playing games, or reading color ebooks (e.g. about photography, video), but also for navigation. They all have GPS, and some even GPS + GLONAS. And charts are cheap.

On this trip I've tested "SEAiq Open" for the iPad, which takes the standard CM93 charts that "everybody has", and it works great. Much more features than the Navionics software, and a lot cheaper too (only \$15). I'm only wondering why they didn't include a feature to measure distance between two points. Kind of essential.

My brother Ralf, the ingenious engineer, send me an email saying it can't be Diesel in my oil, otherwise I would definitely smell it. I ran the engine for another 1.5h yesterday, and the oil level didn't change. I also checked the transmission oil and it's at max, so didn't lose any of that either. Looks like I just did have too much oil in there to start with. Hm

235nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 20:01

gummi bears

Sunday, 2012-09-30, 0:00 UTC+13, 18:21.694S 178:49.078W, COG 270, SOG 1.5kn, Wind 5kn SE, raining

So glad the wind has finally established itself back South-east. Now there's a chance of getting some decent, steady wind soon. But it might take another day. Doesn't matter. Infinite patience here on the boat. If maybe the rain could stop.

Only the supplies are running out. No more Nutella! Absolute disaster. Gummi bears also strictly rationed, only 8 left. Lots of gelatine, sugar, juice, and jam though ... maybe I can make my own?

Still very excited about the whales. Totally made my day

270nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:35

Whaaaaales!

Saturday, 2012-09-29, 17:38, 18:29.560S 178:29.780W, COG 270, SOG 4kn (motor), Wind 4kn S

What a stressfull sailing day. All the time sails up, sails down, engine on, engine off, tack, reef in, reef out, tack, then all that rain and then on top of it engine trouble Btw, I had a look at that in between sailing stuff, and it actually seems I had too much oil. I removed 3/4 liter, and that solved the problem. Question is: how come? It's not water. So either I put too much oil in last time (but why didn't the alarm go of earlier?) or diesel got into the oil. Or oil from the transmission. Or am I missing something? Have to look some more.

But first there's reason to celebrate: I saw humpback whales! From my boat! While sailing! Isn't that awesome? Almost three years I've been waiting for that . I had just tacked, and looked toward Oneata Island to see if I could see the reef in front of it. And instead I saw a plume of water! Fortunately - tataa! - the camera is always ready in the cockpit in a PELI case, and I just managed to get some shots of a "hump" and a fluke before the whales went out of sight. Then I sat there for one hour with the camera in hand, waiting for the two whales to come up again. But no luck. Anyway, still very happy. But wow, that went so fast, I can see how you have to do a lot of watching to have a chance to see a whale out in the Ocean. And to be honest, I'm not doing that much watching *blush*.

But what I saw instead was: S/V Promise, a little catamaran. So funny. Promise left Niue with me, and five days later (is it only 5 days?) we get to this passage at the same time. I took some shots of them, maybe I'm lucky and they took some of Gudrun too. Although I doubt it, it's a boat delivery, and they didn't look like photography was a priority.

Have to complain a little here: This is propably the least miles for effort I've managed on any sailing day ever - 35nm in 17 hours! And just in the time it took me to write that email I had to work in the cockpit 6 times: 3x adjust sails, 1x reefing, 1x unreefing, and finally to take the sails down and start the engine.

Anyway, I'm pretty much through the passage now, after that I'm happy to drift again or whatever. And I saw whales today! Isn't that absolutely amazing? Whaaaaales

295nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 01:53

Friday, September 28. 2012

almost Fiji

Saturday, 2012-09-29, 12:11 UTC+13, 18:28.883S 178:15.409W, COG 240, SOG 4.1kn, Wind 6kn NW, overcast

So far the day was pretty crappy, lots of rain and little to no wind. The little wind that is keeps shifting from NW to NE and back, and because I have to go straight W it's a little bit of a pain. I didn't feel like playing catch-the-wind games and turned on the engine while I made pancakes, eggs, and coffee for breakfast. Then the wind felt slighted and went away completely, so I kept on motoring. I want to pass those first islands during daylight.

Ten minutes to twelve the oil alarm went off - beeeeeeeep! I turned off the engine in a hurry and looked over the engine - oil looks good, temperature looks good, no idea. I've only changed the oil and filters in Tahiti, that's like 19 engine hours ago. So I'm surprised there is a problem. Well, that takes care of my afternoon activities

But first I have to get through that oneata passage. Not that I expect any problems, it's 4nm wide, more than enough space to tack if necessary. Fortunately the wind just went up to 7kn, which allows for decent sailing. heyyyyyy!

sh....

So, wind just turned to W and because I was down here writing the boat tacked by itself and I had to clear the sails. Yep, busy. So, wind from west is really not very nice now, hopefully it keeps on turning S! Be a little more cooperative, come on.

Anyway, all clear, just a little busy. But that's sailing ... nothing to do for days and then everything is happening at the same time.

307nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:37

rain

Saturday, 2012-09-29, 00:00 UTC+13, 18:28.381S 177:51.528W, COG 240, SOG 1kn, Wind nada

Friday afternoon continued to be very nice, slow sailing. 8kn of Wind, main + gennaker. Then three hours ago little fronts started passing through. Rain and wind for 10 minutes, then no wind for half an hour. Then again some rain, followed by wind. Then nothing. Hope that doesn't go on all day today, it's a little annoying.

Sometime today I should reach the first Fiji islands - Oneata, Karoni, Thakau. Not islands really, more just reefs. Lots of reefs around here. But there's the "Oneata Passage" marked in the charts, so that part can't be too bad. After that pretty much nothing for 100nm until Moala, then nothing for another 80nm, and then 100nm more of going around Viti Levu to my destination Lautoka. That last leg is where it's going to be really busy, but that's at least two days away.

330nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:07

Thursday, September 27, 2012

slow and steady

Friday, 2012-09-28, 11:50 UTC+13, 18:25.530S 177:07.432W, COG 265, SOG 2.5kn, Wind 5kn NE

The wind was pretty good the rest of the night, sometimes up to 12kn. Calm sea, no rolling, perfect for sleeping. Except for the GPS alarm which went off every few minutes after 2am. "GPS Fix lost". Then it ackquired it again, then another alarm - "GPS Fix lost". Rebooted the whole navionics stuff but the error persistet. After five minutes I shut the GPS alarm off. No worries, GPS isn't that important out here anyway. I'm sure it wasn't my devices, probably a temporary bad coverage. South pacific isn't a priority I guess. Anyway, after an hour I didn't see the GPS signal get lost anymore.

This morning the wind dropped to 5kn, and that's where it still is. Very slow goig with 2-3kn. Nothing I can do about it, patience is the key. Maybe I get lucky again and it picks up 1h after this blog entry?

Lunch today is a very simple stew: potatoes, carrots, onions, garlic, cabbage, chicken-stock and spices. Classic boat food

370nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:18

Pizza rampage

Friday, 2012-09-28, 0:00 UTC+13, 18:24.898S 167:13.335W, COG 280, SO 5.5kn, Wind 12kn NE

Wonderful sailing all afternoon and night so far. Steady wind, calm sea. At first main + gennaker up, come night main + genoa.

Problem with making Pizza on the boat is that there's nobody to share them with. Made dough for five, and, well, eat for of them so far. Sweet sin.

423nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:02

Wednesday, September 26, 2012

So funny

Unbelievable. 1:00pm on the spot wind came up. 8kn from North-East. Since then mai-sail and gennaker up and sailing along in clear sky and calm sea with 5kn.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 22:42

Becalmed - Pizza time!

Thursday, 2012-09-27, 12:00 UTC+13, 18:23.275S 175:21.030W, COG 270, SOG 1.0 kn, Wind: nada!

One of the mysteries of this voyage is that about one hour after every new blog entry the wind changes. Honestly. Like last night: At 1am it changed from NE to NW. I pulled the main-sail up, and sailed quite nicely for a few hours with full genoa, full main, and almost full moon. A few miles SE of me was a big cloud with continuous vicious lightning inside, and true to form it moved perpendicular to the wind so no danger for me. Then I saw the lights of two cargo vessels - the first cargo vessels I saw out on the ocean since Panama (Not counting Inter-island traffic in French Polynesia)!

So I'm definitely getting closer to civilization again. Makes me all motivated to cook some real civilization food today: Pizza! Prepared the dough earlier, fortunately the yeast was still alive. Once the dough's done rising I'm going to heat this little boat of for real with the oven. Not that it isn't hot already, especially with no clouds and absolutely no wind out there. I'm just drifting with the current, again, fortunately pretty much in the right direction. Unfortunately there's still some swell coming in, from the side, so the boat's rolling a lot again. Nothing new there.

But according to the correlation of blog entry and wind changes, there should be some wind in about an hour .

470nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:14

passed Vava'u

Thursday, 2012-09-27, 00:00 UTC+13, 18:28.887S 174:51.509W, COG 270, SOG 6kn, Wind 18kn NE,

The rest of the day was rather nice. The sea calmed down and it rolled less. For about an hour in the afternoon there was a flock of birds always just in front of the boat, diving in the water and fishing. But I never saw them with a fish in their beaks. Then a spectacular sunset - orange, red, and pink fluffy clouds. An hour ago the wind picked up some.

500nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:27

Tuesday, September 25. 2012

International Date Line

Wednesday, 2012-09-26, 11:40 UTC+13, 18:26.019S, 173:49.519W, COG 270, SOG 5.0kn, Wind 15kn NE, sunny

Whoaaaa - Wednesday already! Where did Tuesday go? Tuesday was a victim of the international date line. Well, almost. The actual, geographical, date line is 180W, and I'm not quite there. But Tonga and Fiji (and other islands) have decided to ignore that little detail for political and economical reasons (Asia, Australia and NZ being closer then the US) and put themselves on the other side.

And because I'm now just north of Tonga, which has the same time then Niue but a different date, Tuesday got overtaken by Wednesday in no time at all. Normally I don't change ship's time until arrival, because it makes keeping a log so complicated. But I figure a whole day is worth the effort. And since I have to start communicating with Fiji soon (advance arrival notice) anyway, it's better to be on the same date.

Another thing that has changed is the wind - to North East. Now that is not such a great thing, because it means there's a little trough or depression in the south (again), which means the wind will turn further North then West as that thingy moves east and I'll be left with pretty much no wind (and rain) for a day or more, depending on the speed of that thingybob in the south. Can't be helped. It's all part of that south pacific sailing experience, right. I signed up for it, now I got it. No complains

But that's a day away. Today the weather is very nice and sunny, and that's something to be very happy about.

560nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:04

audio books no good for watches

Tuesday, 2012-09-25, 0:00 UTC-11, 18:46.340S 172.59.100W, COG 320, SOG 4.5, Wind 15kn ESE

60nm south-east of the Vava'u group which belongs to Tonga. Apparently lots of yachties there, watching whales and getting ready for a fun regatta this friday and a full-moon party on the beach. Sounds like good fun, but I have to pass this time.

Everything ok on the boat. I'm pretty bored though. The boat's rolling too much to do any concentrated work like editing photos or movies or writing without getting seasick. Have a few interesting books left to read. But I've read so much over the last three years ...

Tried listening to an audio book instead but fell asleep after a few minutes, hehe.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:15

Monday, September 24. 2012

Choices

Monday, 2012-09-24, 11:44 UTC-11, 19:02.742S 172:06.745W, COG 280, SOG 5kn, Wind 15kn ESE

Not much happening here. Lots of clouds and rain during the night. Now less clouds and nice sun. Not quite sure what to do with the sails. I can't make it until Friday to Fiji, especially because Fiji is across the international date line and therefor a whole day ahead of me. If I pull the main half-way up I'll get there Saturday night or Sunday, and if I just go with the Genoa I'll arrive Monday. Arriving Monday seems a little smarter then to arrive Sunday and pay fines. On the other hand the boat rolls significantly less with the main up - but then I have to be more concerned about reefing and accidental gybes and all. Always those compromises

Even more important than the question of what sails to fly, is the question what to cook for lunch today. And more urgend, because I'm pretty hungry! I gave most of my supplies to other cruisers on Bora Bora and Niue, because I'll leave the boat in Fiji for a while and they'll just go off. I've still got more than enough for this week, but the choices are now a little more limited then before. Hmm, Wraps? Dal? Pasta? Had Dal and Wraps last week, but didn't have pasta in two weeks, maybe I'll make that. Yep, good idea. Now let's chop up some veges while they're still fresh.

663nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 18:48

Monday

Monday, 2012-09-24, 0:00 UTC-11, 19:12.336S 171:04.326W, COG 250, SOG 5.5kn, Wind 15kn SE, overcast

Very light wind most of the day, mostly around 5kn, sometimes 8kn. At first I had the full main and gennaker up which gave me ok speed despite having barely a breeze. But as it often is with light winds, it shifted a lot around between S and NE, and I got tired of gybing all the time and also of the flapping main due to the old swell and at 2pm I dropped the main and just sailed with the gennaker. Which worked better then I had expected. I could go down to 150 apparent instead of 130, and it didn't roll much more then before. And no banging.

10pm the wind increased to 15kn, at which point it gets a little hairy with the gennaker because the boat's doing hull-speed already. At night with an overcast sky I can't see what's coming my way wind-wise, and more then 15kn and I'm in trouble with the gennaker up. I didn't want to risk loosing my last light wind sail, so I took it down and am now sailing with the genoa. Slower then before, and it's rolling a lot more. I really do miss the parasailor. Well, not much point in getting all sentimental, you've got to work with what you've got. But I notice that the longer I sail, the more I prefer light winds. 10kn really is about ideal, nice and comfy and sufficiently fast. I guess I'm getting old & soft

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:20

Sunday, September 23. 2012

On the way to Fiji

Sunday, 2012-09-23, 10:02 UTC-11, 19:03.194S 169:58.639W, COG 240, SOG 4kn, Wind 12kn SE, sunny

Just left Niue for Fiji in light winds from the SE and old swell from SW. Originally I wanted to leave on Friday, but couldn't get hold of customs to check out. Friday the plane from Auckland (the only plane all week) arrives, and customs is busy at the airport all morning. They should be back for the yachties by three, but apparently they decided for an early weekend. I waited until five, then the immigration lady told me to come back Saturday. Island time

Saturday checking out worked all right, but no wind. A little depression passed through south of the island and the wind turned 360 degrees, causing some uncomfortable swell in the bay from the west. Against this swell I'm sailing today, but it should be down by evening. But at the moment there's a lot of rolling and banging going on, my favorite sailing days. At least the sun is out again. It was all rainy and overcast since Wednesday last week. The batteries are low and everything's a little damp, so the sun is definitely very welcome.

Weather forecast for the week looks quite nice, at least until Thursday. Light to moderate winds from the SE. Perfect if I still had my parasailor. With the gennaker I can not sail reasonably further downwind than 140 degrees apparent wind angle, so I'm going to do a lot of extra miles to Fiji. I had hoped to get there Friday, but as it is it's more likely to be Sunday.

I've read that they fine you 100\$ in Fiji for checking in on Sunday. I've also read that I have to anchor and pick the officials up at the dock. Which won't work with my kayak, so I guess I'm going to be immensely popular right from the start. Hehe. But we "cross that bridge when we get there". Next waypoint: Vava'u (Tonga), 232nm

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:41

Friday, September 21. 2012

Dolphiins!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 10:26

Niue Diving video

Check out the crazy clear water!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 09:24

Thursday, September 20, 2012

Beautiful Niue

The peculiar thing about Niue, from a mariner's point of view, is the lack of a dock as well as any local boats in the water. All boats are launched into the sea by crane, and craned out again upon return to shore. And the same applies to the dinghies of us cruisers:

Alex craning his dinghy onto the wharf. Local kids helping.

The only problem with this is during strong westerlies, when the waves are rolling right into Alofi bay and breaking against the wharf and it's impossible to launch, or retrieve, a boat.

The wharf from shore.

Together with me five Canadians from S/V Ruby Soho, a 47ft Catamaran, checked in. Next day Pierre and Lili from S/V Jotys joined us, and we spent pretty much all the time together.

Jeni, Ady, Dan, Alex, Shannon from Ruby Soho with obligatory arrival beers.

Pierre mixing drinks.

We rented a van and drove around the island together, because there are many "Sea treks" to explore. On one we were a little lazy and drove further than recommended and got stuck with the car on a holey gravel slope.

Don't take you're van down steep gravel tracks.

But with reduced tire pressure and a lot of pushing and jumping down on the rear bumper we got it back up again after an hour, phew!

The sea treks are a few hundred meters to a few kilometers long, and at the end there's always a pleasant surprise: caves, arches, ravines, pools, or spectacular breaking waves.

Beautiful, right? And the underwater geology is as spectacular! Well worth a diving holiday, especially with water as clear as I've never seen anywhere before. The reason: No rivers or other run-offs, and no sandy beaches. Only hard coral.

Another phenomenon is an abundance of sea snakes. You can see them all the time in the water, and especially in the caves with access from sea & land, where they nest.

More photos on my photo archive: <http://xlvisuals.smugmug.com/Diving/Niue/>

Another highlight are dolphins and whales. Only I didn't see any whales. But I got real close to dolphins:

Between exploring the island above and under water during the day, and meet-ups in the evenings, it was again a very "stressful" week (like in all the anchorages). I need a few lonely days at sea soon to relax from all the socializing!

Pizza time!

But yesterday Jotys, and just now Ruby Soho left, and at the moment I'm the only boat in the bay. I've got another two dives lined up for tomorrow, with the hope of seeing the whales after all. Then I'll also leave, either in the afternoon or on Saturday morning.

Bye bye Ruby Soho!

But I'll come back for sure, Niue is a great place for a relaxed vacation far off the beaten tourist track, not only for diving.

Local fishermen going out at sunset in their wakas (outrigger canoes)

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 22:54

Sunday, September 16. 2012

Arrived in Niue (Saturday)

Saturday, 2012-09-15, 10:26 UTC-11, 19:03.374S 169:55.570W, at mooring in Alofi

To arrive safe and sound in a quiet bay after two rough days and nights at sea is the best thing in the world. Right now at least. Coming in to the bay of Alofi I was wondering whether there will be a free buoy for me and how I'm going to tie to it alone. But all fine, at least three free big orange buoys, and the place is so protected from South-Easterly winds that it was no problem to grab the buoy with the boat hook and thread a line through the eye. Then I called Liz, and after that Niue Radio for clearance.

After a friendly welcome and basic questions (name of vessel, call-sign, number of crew, animals, last port, next port) Niue radio asked me to stand by on Channel 16 because there are two more boats in line ahead of me.

All together there are twelve boats here of which I know three.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:05

Saturday, September 15. 2012

in niue

all fine, arrived at 10 this morning. busy organizing stuff, more later

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 20:55

Almost there

Saturday, 2012-09-15, 0:00 UTC-10, 19:41.850S 169:31.510W, COG 280, SOG 5.6,
Wind 25-30kn SE

Waves are between 2 and 2.5m now, sometimes a little more, sometimes they break over the boat - very wet. The boat rolls a lot, bounces on the wave tops like a rubber duck. Not really comfortable. The autopilot thought so too and started acting up an hour ago - "No Data" on the display. Means connection problems, a wire must have come loose with all the rolling. So I took the panels down and fiddled with the wires to the compass. My favorite thing!

Looks like it was the ground wire. Seems to work now. I guess I can't complain, that's what you get when you change the unit in the middle of the ocean. Have to spend some more time on it at the mooring, but first I have to find the right cable connectors, mine are too big and don't sit well.

I'm taking a roundabout way to Niue to "waste time" at sea, and the genoa is almost completely furled in. Don't want to get close to the island while it's still dark. But I should be ok now. Should have a little nap, too.

Only 45nm to go. Yay!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:31

Friday, September 14. 2012

111nm to go

Friday, 2012-09-14, 11:50 UTC-10, 19:40.177S, 168:08.658W, COG 280, SOG 6.5kn, Wind 20-25kn SE

3:30am the trough finally passed through and I could turn the boat west again and toward Niue. No need to unfurl the genoa or pull up the main, there's plenty of wind. The sea is a little rough, but ok. It's drizzling, and sometimes spray is kicked over the sides.

I'm glad I decided to take an extra day. As the conditions were I wouldn't have made it yesterday anyway, I would only have gotten frustrated. Memories of the begging of my trip in the Mediterranean pop up. Feels like a very long time ago, hehe.

The weather isn't really nice outside. I went out to have a look, got drenched by spray, went down again. So I stay below mostly and just pop my head up every half hour. The one thing I'm concerned about a little is coming around Niue in the night. I better give it a berth of a few miles, there's going to be fishery stuff in the water for sure, and I won't see it in the moonless night. Maybe also whales "logging" (sleeping). Don't want to bump into one. Richard recommended to go all the way around then follow the leading line on the chart (leading lights are broken of course). Sounds like a good idea.

Plan for today: not much. I'm feeling slightly uncomfortable from the boat movements. So basically: into the bunk, read, out of the bunk, look around, into the bunk, read, out of the bunk, look around, ... Started reading "Google SketchUp for Game Design".

111nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:04

waiting for the trough to pass

Thursday, 2012-09-14, 00:00 UTC-10, 20:09.450S 167:25.517W, COG 015, SOG 4kn, Wind 20-25kn WNW,

All during the day the wind slowly changed further via North to West, and I changed my course from NE to SW in a nice arc. At nine pm a rainfront passed through and afterwards the wind came from almost due West and the pressure down to 1012mBar. I tacked, not wanting to sail away further to the south of my destination and thinking that the trough has almost passed now and the wind will come from the south.

Hmmm, three hours later and I'm still waiting, sailing north now. Pressure is at 1014mBar, wind North-West. I am confused. Looks like I tacked too soon. Maybe I should have kept on sailing south? Well, can't be more than another few hours now until this is over and the wind's back to normal. But I thought it would go faster. The sea is naturally very confused now with waves coming from all directions, banging against the hull. The wind was up over 20kn all day and the batteries are pretty full again. I even ran the watermaker, charged my laptop, and made a backup. Now nothing to do but sit and wait

158nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:05

Thursday, September 13, 2012

slowing down

Thursday, 2012-09-13, 11:30 UTC-10, 19:54.740S 166:39.575W, COG 260, SOG 5.0kn, Wind 20kn N

During the rest of the night the wind direction moved ever further north, and the strength increased slightly to 20kn. The rain passed and the stars came out again, but with no moon it stayed pretty dark. In the morning I was left with bumpy sea and 220nm to go to Niue. Decision time: hurry and get there tomorrow, or slow down and aim for arrival on Saturday morning.

In nicer conditions I'll probably have hurried up, 200nm is doable with a beam reach. But bumpy as it is at the moment, and with unclear conditions up ahead, I decided to take it slowly. I really don't want to have to do more boat work in Niue, just get the boat to NZ without too much trouble. So I took down the main and furled the genoa a little, and now I'm bouncing along with 5-6kn.

Not sure what to do today. Originally I wanted to do the laundry while it was raining, but that happened during the night. Maybe more rain later today. Otherwise I'll clean inside a bit. Or sleep. I'm done with all my books for the trip, and I never feel like watching anything or doing computer work while at sea, especially when it's bumpy.

195nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 16:55

pitch black

Thursday, 2012-09-13, 0:00 UTC-10, 19:52.781S 165:18.890W, COG 280, SOG 7, Wind 15-20kn ENE, dark

Afternoon was pretty nice weather-wise, light winds and sun. I spent most of the day in the cockpit, reading, watching, organizing the boat. The sea was strangely uncomfortable. No big waves, just lots of little ones with no pattern. And some old swell. Only 1m high, but very insistent. Every time one of them rolled underneath the boat it lurched sideways funny and I had to stop whatever I was doing for 5sec and hold on. Even while reading lying down! Very strange.

The gennaker did it's trick again and wrapped it around itself so that I had to take it down and patiently untwist it on the deck. It looks like the design doesn't work very well in roly seas. Put the genoa up the rest of the day.

Before nightfall I saw clouds moving in and getting thicker. Decided to reef the main-sail and finished just as the first rain-drops started to fall. Now making good speed in absolute pitch black darkness. Clouds and no moon. It's absolutely dark like you can't imagine. Visibility stops right in front of my eyes, I can't see the length of the cockpit. It's a little disquieting to blast along through the night without seeing anything. Fortunately there's isn't much around out here on the ocean. No beep from the AIS or Radar detector all week. To sail like this in a coastal environment would be absolute madness.

270nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:07

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

corrected position from 12:00

Wednesday, 2012-09-12, 12:01 UTC-10, 20:04.930S 164:04.061W

Markus noticed that I had a typo in my position info. It is 20S, not 10S. Sorry guys. And thanks for watching out, I almost sailed to Hawaii!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 20:26

sailing along

Wednesday, 2012-09-12, 12:01 UTC-10, 10:04.930S 164:04.061W, COG 275, SOG 7.0, Wind 10-15kn ENE

just finished unwrapping the gennaker. I went down to drink something and when I came back up it was wrapped around itself like a towel you want to wring out. Nothing to do but take it down, lay it along the side of the deck, and patiently unfold it. An hour later ... back up again.

Weather is great. Sun, calm sea. The wind shifted a little north-east this morning. I waited until it was settled and then gybed. Everything went fine. Now on direct course to Niue, ETA 48h at current speed. Well, tomorrow I'll be in the trough. Rain and no wind, so it's going to be Saturday for sure.

340nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:07

So many stars!

Wednesday, 2012-09-12, 0:00, 19:34.866S, 163:07.098W, COG 255, SOG 6kn, Wind 13kn E

The night sky far out at sea is always special, but tonight it's extra extra special. Exceptional visibility, no clouds above, and no moon. Absolutely amazing view of the milky way. Took about fifty photos (5D mk III + 24mm.1/10s, f/1.4, iso 25.600) and I'm surprised how well a few of them turned out. Motion blur being obviously the biggest problem on a sailboat.

Had full main and gennaker up all afternoon, trying to catch up some of the miles I've lost due to my autopilot experiments. I debated briefly keeping the gennaker up at night, but then brains won over balls (this time at least) - safety first! It's my last down-wind sail after all, and it can't take as much wind as the parasailor. But I like the gennaker a lot. Can't sail as far downwind as with the parasailor, but it's a lot quicker to get up and down, and faster in light winds or on the beam - same area but no hole.

On the menu today was burritos for lunch and chili on rice for dinner. Complete with fresh coleslaw salad, sour creme, and cheese. Yummy! But I almost decorated the galley with sauce after the gimbal thingy of the stove seized and the thing stopped swinging. Next wave and the pan started sliding. I was looking away, cutting leech, heard it sliding and just caught the handle of the pan before it slipped from the stove. Lucky. Looks like I have to take the whole stove out to fix the gimbal. Not sure if I want to try that at sea, might dump it on my foot accidentally. Have to use the

small pan now, the big one's too wide for the "rough-sea-brackets".

390nm to go!

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:41

Tuesday, September 11. 2012

back on track

Tuesday, 2012-09-11, 14:00, 19:16.980S, 162:02.540W, COG 255, SOG 7kn, Wind 15kn SE

Yes Uwe ... "never change a running system". Oh, how I can see my friends chuckling at my foolishness. 3 years on the boat and I start playing with the autopilot half-way through a one week trip. Doh! Well, just shows how bored you really can get at sea.

So, I tried to calibrate the new autopilot for an hour, driving in circles, but it didn't work. I guess my and Raymarine's definition of calm don't match. So I installed the old autopilot again, and now everything is "sweet as". Now that is a New Zealand expression and means ... fine. Have to practice my NZ dialact ey, not far now

Liked the old autopilot (ST4000) better anyway. Raymarine ST6002 is for the can. First of all you turn it on have to wait one minute until it's ready. ST4000: immediately. Want to change rudder gain at the ST6002 because the sea got rougher: turn it off first. ST4000: no problem. And the remote control is crap too. The battery lasts for only about 8h, then it starts beeping. But you can't turn it off, you have to plug it in first, because the alarm that goes off every 2sec interrupts the shut-down procedure. You can also not turn it off while in auto pilot mode. So there's no way to conserve battery power. And no, the cradle doesn't come with a plug. Great user research guys. I know it doesn't sound like a big deal, but after a day it annoyed me so much I turned it off and not on again. Next upgrade (or boat) I'll rip all the Raymarine stuff out.

Time for lunch, I'm starving. 448nm to go.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 19:57

autopilot woes

Tuesday, 2012-09-11, 12:00, 19:13.816S, 161:57.834W,

Nice day today, like yesterday. I thought it would be a good day to complete the autopilot calibration. So far i've only done compass calibration, because the manual says it needs lots of space and calm calm conditions to do the autopilot calibration. And after my trial & error setup it was working ok, but doing more than necessary and using more power.

Anyway ... bad idea. Now it can't keep course anymore at all. Tried to fix it for the last three hours but no success. Now I have to take the sails down ,start the engine, and begin with the compass calibration all over. If that doesn't work i can always install the old system, or the wind-vane. Well, well.

Other than that all green. 450nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:22

Half way

Tuesday, 2012-09-11, 00:00 UTC-10, 18:53.363S, 160:50.845W, COG 255, SOG

6.5kn, Wind 20kn SE

The afternoon continued to be a great for sailing. Calm sea, blue sky, light wind, steady progress. This is how I imagined the Pacific. So there definitely are nice sailing days here.

At 2pm I passed 10nm north of Aitutaki and heard some yacht traffic on the radio, but didn't see anybody. So far nothing but sea, clouds, and very few birds.

After nightfall the wind picked up a little and I changed the gennaker for the genoa. I almost forgot, I'm so used to just let the parasailor up because it can handle pretty much anything. Now we have 20kn of wind from the SE and I have the genoa out and the main in the 2nd reef. Should have been ok for the gennaker, but better safe than sorry. Also, on a short downwind trip like this I like to keep the main-sail always reefed. Makes the whole trip so much more relaxed than having to turn into the wind "all the time" to reef and unreef, and I'm still fast enough.

Got an email from S/Y Jotys, Pierre and Lili, who Liz and I met diving in Fakarava. I met them again in Bora Bora and they left for Niue one day ahead of me. They've decided to stop over in Palmerston to let the trough pass. I read up on Palmerston and it doesn't say nice things about the anchorage with anything but an easterly swell, and it's going to be southerly. So thank you, but I'll try my luck at sea. I've tied my anchor so tightly to the bow it'll take me two days to untie it anyway. But maybe my info on Palmerston (from the south pacific crossing guide) is outdated and they have now moorings somewhere nice?

Anyway, for now the plan is to sail on. Let's see what the weather forecast says later today. Btw, passed the half-way point today, yay! 517nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:33

Monday, September 10. 2012

All sails up

Monday, 2012-09-10, 11:30 UTC-10, 18:37.170S, 159:34.390W, COG 255, SOG 5.5kn, Wind 12kn E

I'm always surprised how much of a difference the weather makes. I mean, of course it makes a difference, sailing is all about the weather. But still ... only 5kn of wind more or less and the whole experience changes completely. During the night it calmed down and when the sun came up this morning I felt so rested and energetic that I changed sails before even thinking about breakfast.

I set the main-sail and the new doyle gennaker (first time up!), then fiddled with the lines a bit. Happy with the setup I ran around the deck with the GoPRO, recording everything, and then I made pancakes with eggs and bacon for breakfast. Yay! What a difference compared to the last days, when I didn't feel like doing anything because it was so rolly that everything was so much effort.

Forecast says it's going to stay like this for two days, and then the effects of that trough coming from Fiji should show. Well, I don't mind two nice & slow days at all. Looks like I'll get to test that Doyle Gennaker thoroughly. Nice colors btw - green, grey and orange.

Had a little electrical problem earlier. The raymarine stuff was complaining about low battery voltage. But the battieres are 90% full, so it could only be ... always the same ... a connection problem. I tracked it to an old electric mains switch. I have three switches - one near the battery which I installed, and two near the switch panel which came with the boat (I wonder why the dude installed two in the first place). One of the old ones was causing the trouble. I should have replaced it a long time ago, but I couldn't find one that fitted and I was tired of drilling holes into my boat. Anyway, all I could do now was bridge it with a short cable, which I reckon is ok for now because there are two more switches left to turn off mains in case I get hit by a Klingon photon torpedo and the switch panel starts exploding or whatever. Again I'm surprised that the problem came up during nice weather - very unusual. Looks like this is my lucky trip! I keep my fingers crossed that my luck holds until Niue

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:13

troughs and friends

Monday, 2012-09-10, 0:00 UTC-10, 18:19.450S, 158.34:601W, COG 260, SOG 6kn, Wind 20kn E

The afternoon was nice and quiet. Wind only about 17kn, and the sun came out, and the sea got calmer. Around nightfall it rained again and now the wind is gusty and the sea is a little rougher, so I'm waiting for stronger wind.

I'm sailing only with the genoa. The main would give me another knot, maybe knot and a half of speed. But 6kn isn't exactly slow, and with the main-sail up come all the worries and work and also higher load on the autopilot. Not to forget shade on the solar panels, which means I'd probably have to turn off the fridge. Which is full of cheese, and wouldn't that be sad? So ... no

main at the moment. Might change tomorrow when the wind is supposed to drop a little and I slow down.

Venus (Gisela) forwarded me Bob McDavitt's Weathergram, which I had subscribed to but with the wrong email (ehem). Bob's talking about a convergence zone over Fiji and Tonga turning into a trough on Thursday and then move southeast. That is NZ time, so everything is happening one day earlier for me. Which means I might just make it to Niue before wind and waves pick up, or I might just not. ETA is Friday morning. Maybe I should re-consider about the main-sail? :-p. Well, not tonight.

Then I got an email from E Capoe (Andre), saying that they arrived in Suwarow two days ago after a fast passage, and that it's very nice and the park wardens are super friendly. There were more than 30 boats when they arrived, but after seeing E Capoe half of them took to the oars yesterday and ran away. Or sth like that

That reminds me that I won't see many of my friends again. A very few (e.g. Venus/Gisela+Uwe) decided to stay another season in French Polynesia. Understandable, fantastic place. Some take the southern route west (via Cook Islands), some the northern route (via Suwarow/Samoa), and only a few the middle (Niue). Then most seem to go to Australia without stopping in New Zealand, and others (e.g. Moyomo/Matt and Miepke/Andreas+Nana) decided that neither Kiwi nor Kangaroo is of any interest to them and they'd rather get back to the Atlantic/Caribbean quickly.

You'd think that sailing is a very lonely activity - especially when sailing alone. But in fact it's a rather large and very open and friendly community of people with a common interest and often similar values, so naturally friendships form quickly. Add some bonding by having lived through the same ordeals and you get pretty strong friendships. I'll miss my friends, and all the socialising at the anchorages. Dinghying from boat to boat, sharing meals and beers and stories, and helping with repairs and planning. It's a nice life. Not very comfortable or useful, but it definitely resonates with some old instinct deep inside.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:02

Sunday, September 9, 2012

Half a parasailor

Sunday, 2012-09-09, 11:52 UTC-10, 17:60.000S, 157:18.747W, COG 255, SOG 6.5, Wind 20kn E

I wake up from a brief light nap. Something is wrong with the parasailor. I hear a swish-swish sound that shouldn't be there. A quick look at the watch: 1am. I stick my head out of the companionway, turn around and have a look. It's dark and I can't see anything. Flashlight!. Ah ... interesting, so that is what half a parasailor looks like. At first I see only the wing and the top part, but then I notice the rest of the sail dragging in the water. Well, so much for a boring night.

The wind isn't too strong, but the waves are funny and the boat rolls a lot. Thinking of Liz in Auckland I don the life vest, click myself in and walk forward. Up close I see that the fabric is torn all the way down along both sides, right next to the belt. I wonder how you fix sth like that. Probably sewing? Well, not on the boat. I'm glad that I ordered that gennaker in Panama, I had a suspicion that the Parasailor wouldn't last me all the way to NZ. Not because it's a bad sail, but because it's pretty much the only sail I'm flying, and we had some rough nights between Europe and here.

I take down the Parasailor and put it into the bag. I'm surprised that it isn't blowing like crazy or raining. Usually stuff brakes always in the worst possible weather. I decide that's a good sign and start humming. Shouldn't I be worried? I guess not, I've plenty of sails with me, and it can probably be fixed. I unfurl the Genoa and we're going again. Sailing with the genoa will be a little slower, but a lot more rolly. Well, can't be helped now.

The rain comes in the morning. Heavy. But too late, hehe, nothing I have to do outside. So I sit inside and read and smile. The waves feel funny again. I take a look, and see them coming from the east as well as from the south. Some are 3m tall. They roll over and under each other and it looks quite spectacular, but not threatening. The boat bounces along like a rubber duck. I wonder what I'll have for lunch. Cooking could be a challenge. Feels like stew-in-the-pressure-cooker weather.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:26

Boring is good

Sunday, 2012-09-09, 0:00 UTC-10, 17:42.593S 156:02.800W, COG 250, SOG 7.0, Wind 25kn E

A brown booby circled around the boat for hours in the afternoon, and the wind dropped down to 15kn for a little while. Now the booby's gone and the wind's back up to 25kn, and that's about all there is to report at the moment. On a passage like this, the boring the better.

I'm slowly getting back into the routine: reading, sleeping, eating, watching out, pulling on some lines. But with the wind that steady there really aren't many lines to pull.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 05:27

Saturday, September 8, 2012

day two

Saturday, 2012-09-08, 12:00 (UTC-10), 17:25.291S, 154:41.784W, COG 250, SOG 6.5kn, 1019mBar, 33C, sunny

Still good going in 20-25 kn of wind from the east. 158nm in the last 24 hours, good for the parasailor. The sea is a little calmer than yesterday, waves still big but developed and regular. The sky is blue with some cumulus. I'm staying below decks out of the sun most of the time, just pop my head up to have a look now and then. Not much to see, some pelagic birds, mostly boobies. Radar-detector and AIS are helping me to watch out.

I made greek salad for lunch which I'll have with Christine's fantastic bread. It's too hot to cook a big meal for lunch. But I'm thinking what I could make for dinner. Maybe a curry? Food really is the only exciting thing happening on a lengthy offshore trip like this. Apart from big mammals in the water or bad weather, but I can do very well without the bad weather thank you very much. It was all so very exciting three years ago when I started. Now that I've seen it all a few times I'm happiest if the winds are light and the sea calm.

Richard said that I should definitely stop in Niue because the underwater visibility is fantastic, there are plenty of sea snakes, the people are friendly, and there's a chance to see whales although most are somehow in Tonga this year. Friendly people and great diving sounds like my kind of place. Only 875nm to go

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:13

a hole in the parasailor

Saturday, 2012-09-08, 0:00 UTC-10, 17:00.707S, 153:29.678W, Wind 20kn E,

At 1pm I started to feel a little sick with all the crazy rolling and set the parasailor. It's a lot better now, and since about 6pm, the ocean is getting a little calmer too, nice. Gisela was worried that I can't cook when the sea is rough, but that is actually not a problem. I do still cook, it just takes a little longer and I hit my head more often against the closet with the dishes.

Had some trouble with the autopilot at first. The idea is to do first a compass calibration, then a "seatrial calibration". The seatrial calibration needs lots of empty sea room, and calm seas. Aaaaah, right. Not enough sea room in the lagoon, and no calm seas outside. So instead of the seatrial calibration I did a good old trial&error calibration.

With the old model that was relatively easy because there were only two settings: rudder gain and response level. And you could change both while in autopilot mode, so you could see the effect immediately. Now there are a four more relevant settings, and you can only change "response level" in autopilot mode, and for the other you have to go to manual steering, fiddle with the buttons while holding the boat on course, then turn the autopilot back on and see what changed. A little tricky. Liz will be proud to hear that there was no swearing throughout the whole process. Now it seems to be fine, and I love the remote control. Don't even have to lift my head up from the bunk anymore to check or change course. yay!

Just received an email from Vulcan Spirit, who arrived in Tonga today. Says there are lots of whales there, and almost none in Niue. So I'm thinking that maybe I should not bother stopping in Niue and sail the extra 300nm? Would also be nice to meet up with Richard & Ali again. But it's too early to say now, will have to see what the weather does.

Oh, and there's a hole in the parasailor. Not that big hole, which is supposed to be there, but a new little hole where the fabric is torn. A triangle about 20cm sides, where the starboard control line of the wing is attached. The ripstop nylon seems to do it's work though and it's not getting any bigger, so I decided to leave the sail up while it's roly and take it down for repairs when the sea is a little calmer.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 06:03

Friday, September 7, 2012

On the way to Niue

Friday, 2012-09-07 12:00 UTC-10, 16:35.281S, 152:09.716W, COG 250, SOG 6.0, Wind 25kn E, Waves 2m 120D, 29C, 1018mBar

I dropped the mooring line at 7:30 this morning and turned away from the island. Moyo said good-bye from the, Miepke blew it's horn, and Schuessel was also on Deck waving and snapping photos. Then they all looked a little confused while I turned a few circles just south of the mooring field, but I had to calibrate the autopilot and the manual says to do this in calm conditions.

No calm conditions outside the pass. Wind is quite gusty around 25kn, waves are only 2m but short and with no rythm. The boat is rolling a lot. Wind is from the east, and my destination is pretty much straight to the west. Which means I have to tack downwind to make life on a monohull bearable. After looking at the wave forecast I decided to tack south first for a few days, because it looks like the wave direction will turn further south the closer I get to Niue. Approaching Niue from the south rather than the north will allow me to have the waves more from the back than the front.

At the moment only the Genoa is up because the wind is not very steady. It should settle a little over the next few days and then I'll pull up the parasailor, which is much more comfortable.

Looks like lunch today will be mostly fruit, and dinner bread, cheese, ham and eggs.

Matt from Mojomo (www.mailasail.com/mojomo) send a photo of a fish he caught but can't identify. Judging by size, fins, tail, and stripes it very much looks like a Barracuda to me. But Matt says the teeth are wrong. Says it might be a spanish mackerel, but the sp m has dots and no stripes. A King Mackerell has stripes but is only found in the Atlantic. Mysterious! Any idea anybody?

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 17:39

Bye bye Bora Bora

Friday, 2012-09-12 06:30, 16:29.435S, 151:45.654W,

Bye bye roosters, you won't wake me again at four in the morning. Today I'm leaving for Niue, 1060nm WSW. Smack in the middle between here and Niue lies Palmerston, which is handy should the weather turn bad. Otherwise I'm not planning to stop there.

Only thing left doing is set up the cameras, drop the mooring line, and then calibrate the new autopilot by driving some circles or so. I better have a look at the manual again. So I should be out of here in an hour or two. And then it's 7 or 8 days at sea. Lots of veges, fruit, bread and cheese on board. And Andreas from Miepke baked a chocolate-cake for me and Christine from Schuessel a german bread. Fanstastic, thanks so much friends. The plus of being a single-hander is that everybody feels like helping you.

Below some more photos from Bora Bora. Yep, it's a nice little island.

Blog Export: S/V Gudrun V, <http://www.gudrunv.com/>

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 11:48

Thursday, September 6, 2012

last days on Bora Bora

Last week was a blur of working and socializing - regular life at the anchorage at a staging point like Bora Bora. During the day people get their boats ready for the next big trip, and in the evenings everybody meets up for drinks and dinner.

Only for me socializing started with breakfast already, usually on E Capoe. That's one of the nice things about being a single-hander: people invite you over all the time. As Andre said: if there's food for two, there's food for three. After breakfast some working on some boat, then coffee on Contina, then lunch on Gudrun, E Capoe, Miepke, or Moyo, then more working, then dinner again somewhere else, for example S/V Schuessel (Herbert & Christine). Very busy!

getting ready to go out for dinner

The menu at Bloody Mary's, Bora Bora

Good news: all the work is done! The new shrouds are in, the hull is cleaned, even the new autopilot with remote control (haha!) is installed, and a whole bunch of other small things. Only the depth-sounder couldn't be revived although I rewired the whole thing. It always shows 2.1m - the offset from the bottom of my hull to the bottom of the keel. Which means no signal, which means (probably) the sounder is broken. Can't change the sounder while in the water, so the hand-lead will have to do from now on. Just like in the old days. Only in the new days we have pretty good charts and GPS (and GLONASS too). So not at all like in the old days. Phew, lucky break.

picking up the shrouds from the supply ship

I had some reservations about upgrading the autopilot. I bought a new unit, because I needed a new drive unit anyway (looks like they only last one ocean crossing. 1 for the Atlantic, 1 for the Pacific), and the new X5 has three big advantages over my old ST-4000:

1. it has a gyro "course computer", which should help a lot with the waves from the back.
2. it has wind-vane mode, which means steering by the wind angle. Helps a lot with small changes in light wind
3. it has a remote control! Fantastic for making small adjustments while working at the mast. No need to walk back.

All three 'new features' are very useful when sailing alone, which is why I did the upgrade after all. But chances are something's going to go wrong on the first passage, so I'm expecting to spend at least half a day somewhere on the ocean with no sails up fixing the autopilot. Or reverting to the old one. I'm keeping it close at hand, just in case.

No more whales, but I went on a hike with E Capoe and that was very nice.

Canon overlooking the bay

Monday they left for Suwarow though, and later today I'm leaving as well. Destination: Niue. Have to run some errands in the city and check the stuff on the mast one last time, then it's bye bye and off to another week at sea.

Andreas from Miepke helping with the anti-fouling

Not happy with my bio-tin antifouling btw. it's only half a year old, but not much use. Andreas asked me whether I'm sure I didn't paint the hull with fertilizer instead. I cleaned the hull only two weeks ago, and had already 10cm long grassy beard all over.

Posted by Axel Busch in Gudrun V at 08:47