



# RCC PILOTAGE FOUNDATION

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## Route p1

# ROUTES TO THE PACIFIC NORTH WEST FROM HAWAII

## Kitty van Hagen

Edited by Jane Russell

The Pacific Ocean Map also provides links to her notes on entering USA as well as to 'The Pacific Crossing Guide' and the other RCC Pilotage Foundation publications and web guides available to help plan a voyage in the Pacific Ocean.

For text version, see below

For interactive Google Map version, click on pin.



To return to text version, press 'back' button on your browser.

### CONTRIBUTORS

The Pilotage Foundation is extremely grateful to Kitty van Hagen who has provided the information which is now available for the benefit of others;

### Weather:

Best time May – September

Hurricane season: No

<http://weather.noaa.gov/fax/alaska.shtml#SCHED>

Kodiak Alaska

CALL SIGN	NOJ	FREQUENCIES	TIMES
		2054 kHz	1000-1159, 1600-1748
		4298 kHz	
		8459 kHz	
		12412.5 kHz	

<http://weather.noaa.gov/fax/marine.shtml>

Honolulu Hi, Station KVM

### Frequencies

KVM70	9982.5 kHz
	11090 kHz
	16135 kHz

The North Pacific High is the dominating feature of this area. During the summer months (June to September) the Pacific high tends to move north to around 38N although some years it never seems to get established. The route towards Kodiak or Dutch Harbour takes you due north. From Hawaii north the current is favourable for those heading towards Juneau or Vancouver as the route will take you north and east, skirting the top of the Pacific High. Crossing the Gulf of Alaska is straightforward. If the depressions are to the south you can expect headwinds. In this area the Alaska current is against you. Heading due North from Hawaii to Kodiak gives you the opportunity to visit Seward and the Kennai peninsula before cruising Prince William Sound, an utterly magical area brimming with wild life and glaciers, before heading across the Gulf of Alaska to Juneau.

### **Getting there from Japan**

The route across the North Pacific to Alaska from Japan is one that is very possible and can give you the opportunity to stop at some of the remote and beautiful Aleutian Islands. The typhoons become more frequent in Japan in June/July, so you need to time your crossing so you are out of the way of the typhoons in southern Japan, but not too early in the northern Pacific to encounter bad gales and cold. The currents circulate against you on this route and the weather dependent on the passage of low pressure systems. These track predominately either up the coast of Japan or across from Siberia, and on through the Aleutian chain to Alaska. The choice is whether to miss the western end of Aleutian Islands and try to skirt around the south side of the low pressures and so keep following winds, or head for Attu and risk headwinds en route. In our experience it would be a shame to miss these remote islands on your way past and, if carefully watching the weather faxes, this can be a feasible option.

VHF Wx 1, 2, 3 and also VHF 21 in Canada gives marine continuous forecasts. Usually excellent and give a general synopsis as well as the weather expected in your area, coastal waters as well as up to 100 miles off shore. . In May the temperature is still very cold in Alaska, and the northern latitudes especially so at night. From the beginning of June it does begin to warm up, slightly, the nights are still getting shorter and the depressions that sweep in from Japan are less severe than in May although you may expect to get a nasty one. Fog or poor visibility can also be expected on the approaches to Kodiak or Dutch Harbour. Fog can be expected almost any time but it seems to be worse in August.

For the first part of the trip from Hawaii you can expect light to moderate N E'ly winds until you pick up the W'lys around 35 N. The depressions during the summer are of less intensity and head into the Gulf of Alaska where they dissipate as they move inland. Leaving Kodiak and heading North towards Anchorage, Seward and the Kennai peninsula, the wind may well have quite a lot of north east in it. When crossing the Gulf of Alaska from Prince William Sound to Cape Spencer, if the depressions are running south of you there will be a lot of east in the wind.

### **Cruising itinerary and timing**

Plan to leave Hawaii so as to time your arrival in Kodiak or Dutch Harbour not before the beginning of June. The same would hold true if heading towards Juneau, Sitka or Vancouver.

Kennai Peninsula Anchorage. It may be possible to leave yacht in Anchorage. There are marinas there.

Prince William Sound. May – August

Gulf of Alaska – Seattle May - September

Inside Passage to Vancouver – Seattle. May – September.

## **Unalaska/Dutch Harbour, Alaska**

Customs and immigration

### **Dutch Harbor, AK**

Dutch Harbor small boat harbor

(907) 581-4114 (0800-1700 M-F)

(907) 581-1254 (After business hours)

The Robert Storrs International Small Boat Harbour 71 slips. Long-term slips and transient moorage spaces are available for vessels up to 60 feet. Freshwater, shore-power, waste oil disposal, and refuse removal are available.

Not sure if this could be called a port of refuge but it is certainly an interesting destination.

### **History**

Early settlers were Unangan people, now known as Aleuts, who lived in two dozen settlements on the islands. Many were enslaved and moved by the Russians to the Pribilofs to harvest fur seals. Current archaeology projects are finding remnants of that old civilization.

In 1825, the first Russian Orthodox Church was built. The founding priest, Ivan Veniaminov, translated the scripture into Aleut about this time as well. The cathedral was rebuilt in the mid-1850s as the new Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Holy Ascension, which stands today and incorporates remnants of the original church. At one time on the American Heritage list of most endangered landmarks, it was renovated in the 1990s.

The Japanese bombed Unalaska in June 1942, two months after the city was incorporated, in the same campaign in which they seized Kiska and Attu islands. Almost all of the remaining Aleuts were interned by the United States in Southeast Alaska during the war, and the church was nearly destroyed by U.S. troops. It held together, however, and is the oldest Russian Orthodox cruciform-style church in North America.

### **Kodiak, Alaska**

A bustling fishing port with a fascinating history as well as the prettiest of Russian churches complete with bright blue onion dome.

Transient yachts go to the downtown St Paul's Marina. There is electricity and water on most of the slips.

Services and repairs for almost everything can be found. It is a large fishing port used to commercial vessels. Expect a warm welcome as yachts are an exception.

Transport. Car Hire. Scenic flights as well as daily flights to and from Anchorage.

Ferry service.

Harbour master email: [mowen@city.kodiak.ak.us](mailto:mowen@city.kodiak.ak.us)

General enquiries: Email. [harbormaster@city.kodiak.ak.us](mailto:harbormaster@city.kodiak.ak.us)

Tel: + 907-486-8080

Harbour is manned 24hr on VHF channel 12 or 16. Office hours 8 – 5 Monday to Friday during the winter months but in the summer the office is open 7 days a week.

Us Customs and Immigration:

Kodiak office: 305 Center Street, Suite 1 Telephone: (907)481-2900 Fax: 481-2905

Call up the harbour master on arrival who will arrange for customs to visit.

### **Seward**

Harbourmaster. Scott Ransom, [harbormaster@cityofseward.net](mailto:harbormaster@cityofseward.net)

Good place to store up if planning to visit Prince William Sound. Either here or Valdez

### **Valdez Harbourmaster**

The Valdez Small Boat Harbour is a 511 slip harbour with 65', 50', 42', 40', 32', 30', 24' and 20' slips and approximately 900' of transient dock space. The Harbour is open 7 days a week all year. Office hours are 0800 to 2230 from May 15 to September 1 and 0830 to 1700 the rest of the year or call (907) 835-4981 (fax 835-2958) for more information.

### **Valdez Small Boat Harbour**

Post Office Box 275

Valdez, Alaska 99686

Harbour master Email: [vdzsbh@alaska.net](mailto:vdzsbh@alaska.net)

Valdez is an interesting port to visit as well as being as good as Seward as a destination from which to explore Prince William sound and from which to leave to cross the Gulf of Alaska.

Gulf of Alaska to Jeneau.

Straight forward enough if the lows are passing south of you can expect a lot of headwinds. Once in past Cape Spencer head for Jeneau and Auk harbour.

### **Auke Bay Harbour:**

**VHF ch 16**

**Phone (907) 789-0819**

This moorage facility is located 12 miles to the north of Juneau. The harbor is connected to town by road. The *Don D. Statter Harbor* facility provides 6,000' of transient moorage for boats up to 200' in length. Moorage is on a first-come, first-served basis. Register at the Harbor Master's office (located at the head of the floats) to get current rules and regulations for transient moorage. The Length of stay varies, and you could be cited for over-staying. Water, showers, and pump-out are available. Showers and carts are found at the Harbor Master's office (hours are 8:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. in May but are usually extended later in the summer.) There is a public grid.

You used to be able to anchor off the marina.

Transport:

Bus and ferry from the harbour and air from Juneau. Good connections for crew changing.

Juneau is a thriving tourist destination and down town is usually packed with cruise ships.

Meadenhall Glacier is certainly worth a visit.

### **Canada.**

#### **The passage from Hawaii to Vancouver Island or Seattle.**

Best time: May – August

It is certainly possible to leave earlier than May but the weather further north will be colder. The position of the North Pacific high dictates the route. The great circle route to the strait of Juan de Fuca would almost certainly take you through the centre of the high with it's large area of light winds. Some yachts may choose to use their engines and power through. The older recommended route was to skirt around the western edge of the high until you reach the northern fringe. More recently yachts head directly north and use their engines when they run out of wind until they pick up the westerlies.

Fog is the weather feature of late summer from end of July through August and September. Radar is an essential safety device.

**Formalities:**

Visa: not required for most foreign nationals.

On arrival at a port of entry, customs should be contacted on 1-888-CANPASS (the service is also available as a 1-800 number). CANPASS is a new program to streamline customs and immigration clearance. Customs will want to know the boat's name, registration number and last port of call.

Customs may also request a list of ports where one intends to visit. For each person on board, provide full name, date of birth, citizenship, purpose of trip and length of stay in Canada or, in the case of returning residents, length of absence. All personal goods being imported, including firearms and weapons as well as alcohol and tobacco, must be declared. The customs officer will advise you whether you are free to leave the area and enter Canada, or if you have to wait for a customs or immigration officer to complete documents or conduct an examination. At the conclusion of the customs process, you will receive a report number for your records, as proof of reporting. This number should be displayed in a suitable place where it can be seen.

A cruising permit will be issued for six months.

Fishing permit is required and cost around \$35.00 for a year.

The following docks are designated Reporting Stations:-

White Rock Government Dock,

Crescent Beach Marina,

Coal Harbour/Burrard Inlet,

False Creek Government Dock (Fisherman's Pier), and

Steveston Government Dock

Customs

Tel:1-800-461-9999 or 666-0545

For customs information for the Vancouver area.

**Vancouver.**

[www.coalharbourmarina.retrix.com](http://www.coalharbourmarina.retrix.com)

**Address**

1525 Coal Harbour Quay

Vancouver, BC

V6G 3E7

**VHF** 66A

**Tel:** 604-681-2628

**Fax:** 604-681-4666

**Victoria:**

The entrance is straight forward and the tidal stream not strong. Watch out for the float plane lanes marked in yellow.

The Customs Station is at the James Bay Dock.

Causeway Floats

James Bay Dock

Tel:001 250 883 0094, VHF Channel 73

Water and electricity at each berth. Stays limited to 72 hours during the summer. Customs clearance can be arranged. Showers and laundry in the summer.

Royal Victoria Yacht Club

3475 Ripon Rd., Victoria, BC, V8R 6H1

Tel:001 250 592 2441, Fax:001 250 370-2286

[info@rvyc.bc.ca](mailto:info@rvyc.bc.ca)

The club is on the western shore of Cadboro Bay. Situated at the southeastern tip of Vancouver Island, at the convergence of Haro Strait and Juan de Fuca Strait. Visitors mooring is available on a Reciprocal Privileges basis at the Cadboro Bay Facility, from April to October, on the northernmost outer slips. Prior arrangements must be made. A smaller facility is located in Tsehum Harbour on the Saanich Peninsula just north of Sidney, B.C.

## **MEXICO**

### **Passage from North America or Canada.**

Best time:

The winter months through to early spring are the best times for Mexico, there is plenty of wild life to see. From May on through the summer months is hot to extremely hot in June, July, August and September the humidity rises and it becomes really unpleasant. The winds get lighter and lighter so sailing is hardly an option.

The heat low over the land produces a squash zone between that and the North Pacific High that results in strong to gale force Nth'ly winds. The recommended advice is to stay 100 miles off shore. One reason for this is that the big winds create big seas which can be much more rough on the edge of the continental shelf, deeper water is recommended.

The hurricane season is from June to November with August and September being the most active months. The Pacific high that dominates the weather slips further south and west during the winter months. The prevailing winds along the outside of the Baja Peninsula are NW'ly except during the summer months when there can be expected to be some S'lys. During the winter in the Sea of Cortes you can expect a high percentage of strong N winds. See Mexwex book for details. These 'northers' can blow strongly for 3-4 days. The strongest NW'ly winds along the outside are usually during the spring, April, May and June, the lightest October – November. The Baja-haha a cruisers rally from San Diego to Cabo St Lucas depart the end of October. This is rather like the ARC and is intended to bring the cruisers down to Mexico for the winter

### **Cabo st Lucas**

The port captain's office is on Matamoros Street, immigration near the Pemex fuel station.

## **Docking**

It is possible to anchor off the beach north of the inner harbor, though the anchorage is not very protected and in order to land the dinghy you must travel through the busy narrow entrance into the inner harbor. Panga water taxis are available from the anchorage into the inner harbor. There is a small anchorage fee.

### ***Marina Cabo San Lucas***

Lote A-18 De La Darsena De C.S.L., Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico

Tel:+52 114 31251, Fax:+52 114 31253

[marina@cabomarina.co.mx](mailto:marina@cabomarina.co.mx)

A full service marina situated in the harbour of Cabo San Lucas with fuel dock and pump-out facilities. A boatyard with all services, 70 ton travelift and chandlery. All retail services within walking distance.

Customs and immigration offices are in the Federal building behind the municipal quay. Port captain's office in Calle Francesco Madero north of the quay.

## **La Paz**

Situated on the eastern coast of Baja California and tucked into the Bay de La Paz at the southern end of this peninsula, La Paz offers a very welcome sheltered stop over. The local cruising ground has many islands and attractive anchorages. It is the cruising centre of the Sea of Cortez, and almost all repair work can be done here. Parts can be obtained from the US and the postal service is more reliable than in other parts of Mexico. There is an anchorage off the town.

There are several marinas, the two largest are Marina Palmira and Marina La Paz. All marinas monitor VHF Channel 16.

La Paz Cruisers' Net takes place Monday - Saturday at 8:00 a.m. on VHF Channel 22. Weather and general information.

## **Puerto Vallarta : Profile**

The Puerto Vallarta Harbour Master VHF ch. 16. Telephone: 011-52-322-10275.

Puerto Vallarta is the most convenient port on the West coast of Mexico as a jumping off place to cross the Pacific or to head south from towards Panama. Not only does it have all the facilities for yachts it also the safest place to leave a yacht during the hurricane season. There have however been reports of lightning strikes.

There is an anchorage out side the harbour which is popular with the local crusing fraternity. The Cruisers net VHF 22 at 0800 daily is a valuable source of information.

Marina Vallarta

P.O. Box 350 B, Marina Vallarta, Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico

Tel:+52 322 221 0275, Fax:+52 322 221 0722

[info@marinanuevovallarta.com](mailto:info@marinanuevovallarta.com)

Opening Hours: Office 9-2,4-6 Mon-Fri; 9-2 Sat

This is the largest marina in the area and lies at the north end of the harbour. It has all facilities, laundry, and pump-out facility. There is a store and fuel available near by. The marina office can arrange clearance. It is advisable to book in advance.

### **Paradise Village Marina**

Paseo de los Cocoteros #001, Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit

Tel:+52-322-22-66728, Fax:+52-322-22-66728

[marina@paradisevillage.com](mailto:marina@paradisevillage.com)

All facilities, including pumpout, picnic area, snack bar, sail wash, club house, tennis courts, mail/message. Automatic gate keys, 24-hr. security, cable TV, potable water, use of hotel facilities. On-site shopping centre. This is by far the nicest marina and consequently heavily booked.

Facilities

Opequimar

Puerto Vallarto, Jaliso

Tel:011 52 (322) 221 1800, Fax:011 52 (322) 221 1978

[info@opequimar.com](mailto:info@opequimar.com)

Shore storage, and all repair services. This yard has a 80 ton travel lift.

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