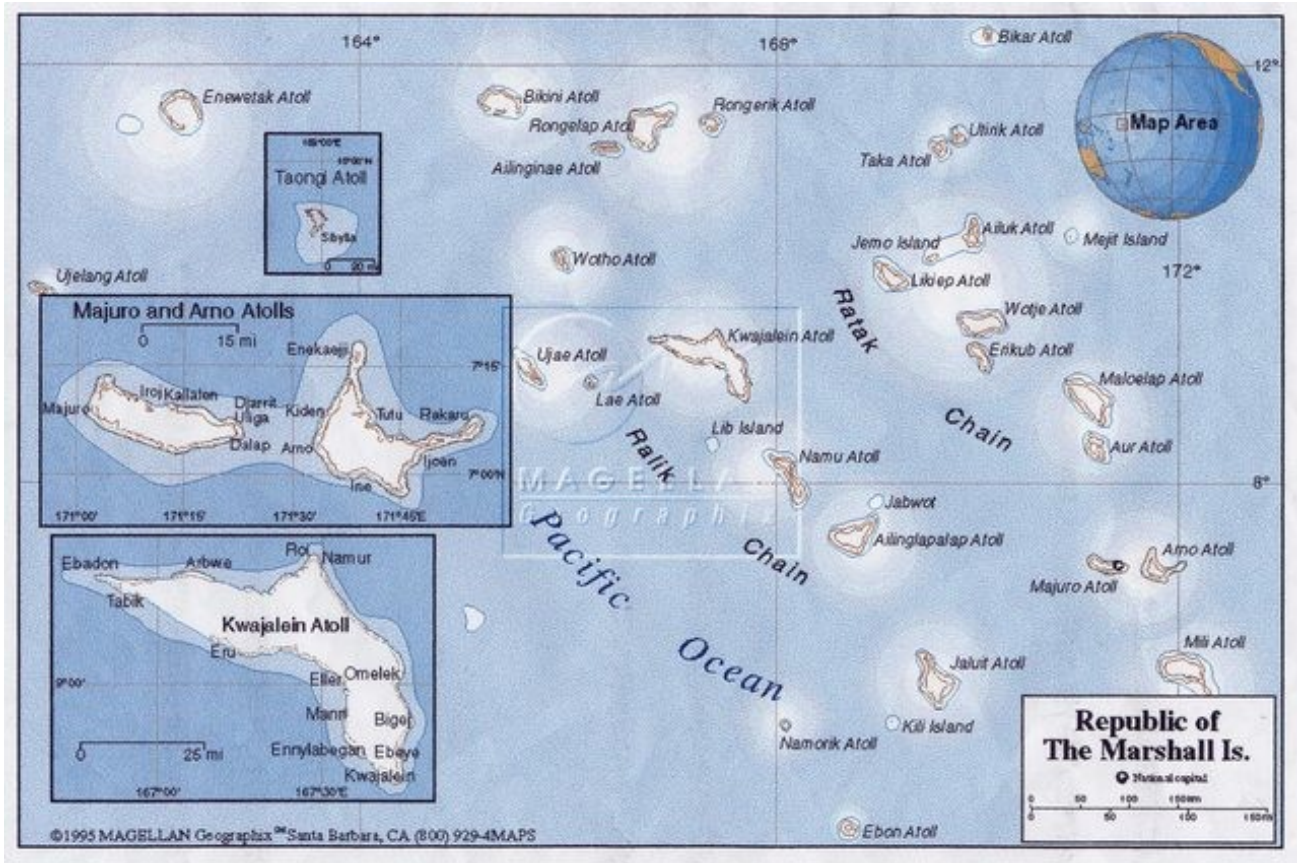


# The Marshall Islands Compendium

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports



**IMPORTANT: USE ALL INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT AT YOUR OWN RISK!!**

Rev 2023.2 – Nov 7 2023

We welcome updates to this guide!  
(especially for places we have no cruiser information on)

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# 1 Introduction

The original Compendium for the Tuamotus in French Polynesia started out as a way for s/v Soggy Paws and a few friends to organize notes and various internet sources on the Tuamotus, prior to our cruise there in Spring of 2010. Later, it became a way for us to pass on what we've learned while cruising the Tuamotus in 2010 and 2011. Now the idea has migrated with Soggy Paws, from the Tuamotus, to the Marquesas, to the Societies, Hawaii, the Cooks and Samoas, Tonga, Fiji, the islands between Fiji and the Marshall Islands, and now the Marshall Islands. There are now Compendiums all the way to South Africa and the Red Sea.

If you haven't yet found our other 'Compendiums', they're available online at <http://svsoggyaws.com/files/>

This is not intended to replace the guidebooks or charts, but to supplement out-of-date guides with recent cruiser first-hand reports, and fill in places that the guides don't cover.

To compile this 'compendium', we have used all sources at our disposal, including websites, blogs, emails, and our own experience. We always try to indicate the source of our information, and the approximate time frame.

If your information is included in this guide, and you object to its inclusion, please just email us, and we'll remove it. But this is a non-commercial venture mainly to help cruisers from all of our collective experiences.

## 1.1 Organization of the Guide

This guide is loosely organized from the perspective of a cruiser arriving in Majuro first, and then exploring the atolls South and East of Majuro, and the atolls North and West of Majuro.

## 1.2 Overview of the Area

## 1.3 Time Zone

The Marshall Islands are on the same general time zone as Fiji (+12). There is no daylight savings time in the Marshall Islands.

## 1.4 Weather In This Area

### 1.4.1 General Weather Conditions

Note that the weather varies quite a lot between the southern end of the Marshall Islands (near the ITCZ) and the northern end of the Marshalls.

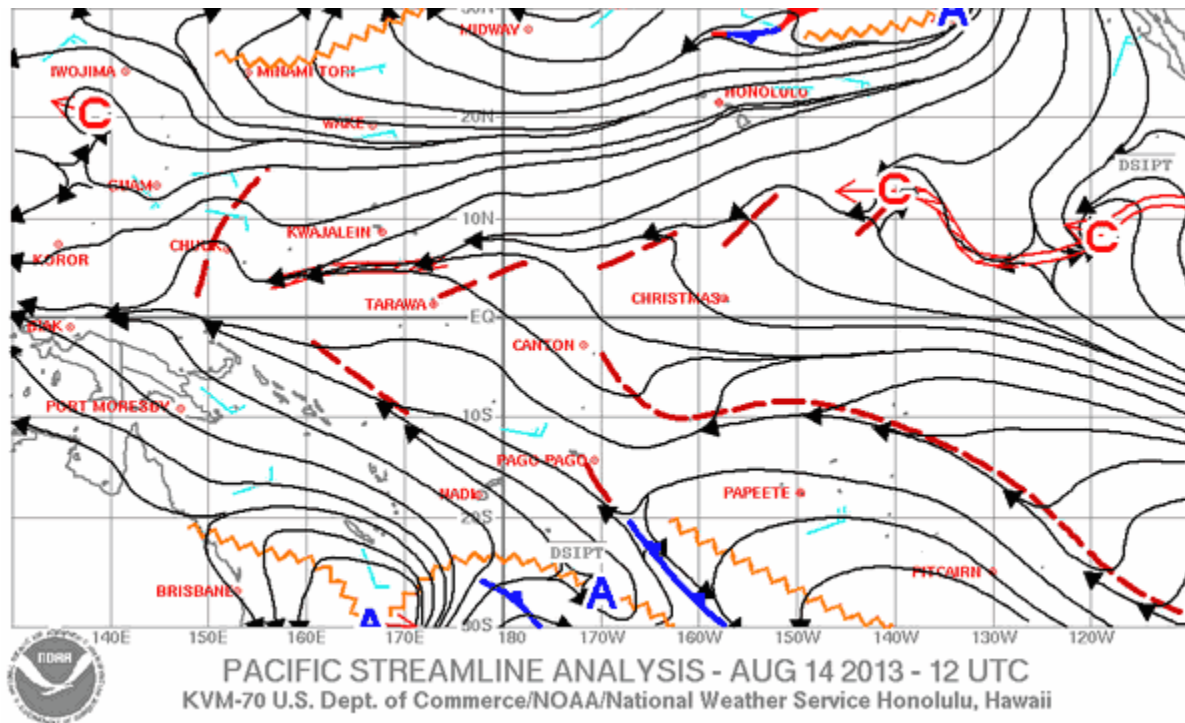
It also varies a lot between summer (May - October) and winter.(Nov-April).

**Summer weather:** In the summer, the trade winds lighten up--the prevailing wind mid summer is 10-12 knots.

Like the Caribbean, the main weather in the summer comes from the EAST. About every 3-5 days, a "tropical wave" drifts through from east to west. Most of the time these "waves" are shown on the surface charts (esp the Streamline Analysis). They are also quite visible on satellite pictures, and discernable on GRIB files if you know what you are looking for.

Tropical waves are denoted by a distinct weather progression... as the wave approaches, the wind goes more north of east (sometimes to as high as 45 T, but usually at least to 60 T. After a day or so of this weather, the weather turns cloudy and squally, and at some point, the wind switches to ESE. How violent the squalls are depends a lot on other weather factors (watch for terms like "upper level trough"). Most are brief with winds to about 25 knots, followed by light winds. It can be quite frustrating to sail during the squally periods. However, in one "wave" accompanied by an "upper level trough" (TUTT), we had sustained winds to 40 knots for about 6 hours.

See the picture below for a typical summer Streamline Analysis, with the tropical waves shown in red. (the NE/SW short red lines just north of the equator are the waves, and the hashed bar approx just S of Majuro is the ITCZ)

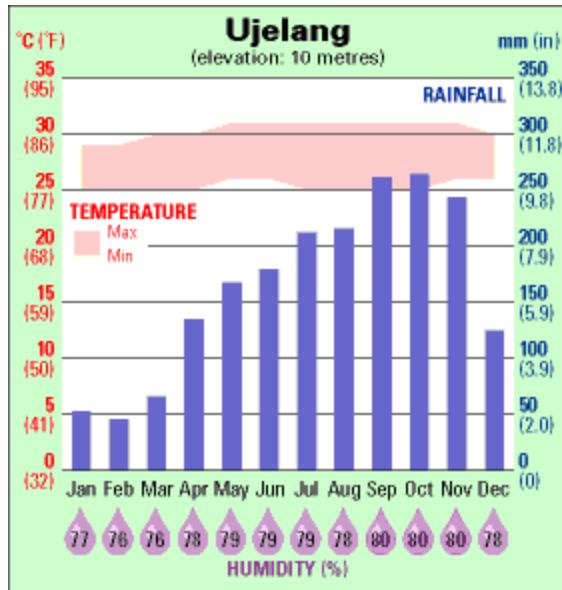


Majuro gets a lot more squally weather and overcast than the atolls to the north, as the ITCZ "acts up" occasionally.

**Tropical Storm Threats:** Traditionally, the area between 8N and 8S is considered "tropical storm free". Majuro, at about 8N, is therefore not likely to have problems with tropical storms. Though there have been an occasional typhoon go through the Marshall Islands, they are usually weak and disorganized.

Our (Soggy Paws') insurance company considers the Marshall Islands a tropical storm zone, but we felt that the probability of a big organized storm is so low, that we opted not to purchase an extra "tropical storm" rider on our policy this year.





This summary was taken off some website that I didn't keep track of. Ujelang is near the northern end, just north of Kwajalein and a good way west of most of the Marshalls. I would expect rainfall in Majuro to be higher than this summary shows.

Emails from friends in Majuro during the (Northern Winter 2011/2012 were filled with complaints about how wet and windy it was. **Note that this was an unusually wet/windy winter.** To quote them:

*"The weather here absolutely, positively, undeniably, without question, sucks!!! The wind blows relentlessly. There is a big wind generator up near the resort. We have only seen one day since we've been here where it wasn't spinning. And it rains a lot. It's backed off a little recently but it was reported on the local cruisers net that we have more rain coming in and it should last for a couple of weeks. When we first arrived, it was torrential rains that were good for filling water tanks.*

*We had actually really intended to spend a year here, but we can't wait to leave. They tell us the best time to visit the outer islands is April-June. I sure wouldn't want to be anchored out there now with the winds that blow here."*

**Mr John IV - Feb 2011:** Looking back on our time in the Marshalls, I wonder why we spent so much time firmly attached to our mooring in what would seem to be a far from perfect location.....Then I remember the weather, the seemingly constant squalls, the horizontal rain showers and the uncertainty of the forecasts. Majuro is right in the ITCZ (most of the time!) and no one (NO ONE) knows where the ITCZ is going or what its doing next; they can tell you where it is, or where it was BUT NOT where it's going next.

Therefore, this is a place where most of the forecasts are mostly wrong most of the time! Whilst on our mooring off Majuro (December-January), we experienced winds over forty knots on three occasions and winds over thirty knots on more than a dozen occasions. There were very few calm periods, except from those short intermissions caused by a substantial frontal cloud immediately up wind.....working on my hull from the dinghy was a near impossibility (too rough) but we never lacked power, on many occasions when I was not quick enough to secure it

in advance, our wind-generator would be pumping in over twenty-five amps and close to going ballistic!

The good news is that water on board is not a problem and you'll always have a well washed boat....In this respect, Majuro is well placed as the Urban Capitol of the Marshall Islands; there is usually enough water falling from the sky to satisfy the local population.

We were there in a drought year (La Nina) and during the 'dry season' (Jan & Feb); to me it seemed Humid and Wet, so what the wet season is like I don't know but one of the locals suggested that the wet and dry seasons are basically the same only during the dry season the rain is more horizontal than vertical and was thus more difficult to catch! (You can work that out....!).

**Soggy Paws - June 2013:** We (Soggy Paws) took the information from our cruiser friends ahead of us to heart, and decided to wait until May to arrive in the Marshalls. When we did arrive on May 10, 2013, we found that even in May, the ITCZ occasionally engulfs Majuro and the southern Marshall Island atolls, bringing squally weather. But at this time (May/June 2013), the northern atolls are experiencing a severe drought. In our time at Majuro, Kwajalein, and Bikini, the wind has been fairly steady at 14-17 knots, from 090 degrees to 065 degrees, with a mean direction of 080-085.

Other than when the ITCZ "acts up", we have found the GRIB files to be reasonably accurate. It is frustrating trying to understand what's influencing the weather here, because the Surface Charts basically show "no significant features".

In general, when the boats in Majuro report getting drenched, we were getting scattered showers in Kwajalein. So, if you want better weather **GET OUT OF MAJURO**.

It is possible to get your mail, internet, cell phone coverage, and decent groceries at Ebeye Island in Kwajalein Atoll, and the weather is a lot better in Kwaj than Majuro. You do not need any special permission to enter Kwaj atoll at Bigej Channel and proceed to Ebeye. But you should check on the range schedule (see Kwaj section) for any periodic closures.

### Useful Info From the [Kwajalein Weather Station](#) (240 miles WNW of Majuro)

#### Kwajalein **Precipitation** Normals 1981-2010 (inches)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Amount	4.01	3.30	3.56	6.21	6.61	7.86	9.85	10.40	10.89	11.83	11.07	8.13	93.72
Change	-1.11	-0.43	-0.26	-1.42	-2.01	-1.00	-0.39	-0.02	-0.93	+0.37	+0.33	+0.19	-6.68

#### Kwajalein **Temperature** Normals 1981-2010 (Fahrenheit)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Maximum	85.4	85.8	86.4	86.5	86.8	86.5	86.5	86.8	87.0	86.8	86.4	85.7
Average	81.7	81.9	82.3	82.5	82.8	82.5	82.3	82.5	82.6	82.5	82.3	82.0
Minimum	78.0	78.0	78.2	78.5	78.7	78.4	78.1	78.1	78.1	78.3	78.2	78.3

**October** is normally Kwajalein's heavy weather month. October has our maximum normal monthly precipitation with 11.83", and it has a high occurrence of lightning warnings, west wind warnings, and warnings for winds stronger than 35 kts.

The reason for this is the sun has been nearly overhead in our region since April, and the ocean has had time to warm, so a great amount of potential energy is available for creating thunderstorms. However, this year we are returning to a weak La Nina and our ocean temperature is a little cooler than normal. In October 2010 we had 20 weather warnings across the atoll. At Kwaj, beware the ides of October!

**Waterspouts:** There have been eight official waterspout sightings at the Kwajalein Weather Station since 2000:

Aug 28, 2000  
Sept 21, 2001  
Sept 28, 2001  
Oct 29, 2001  
June 24, 2004  
Sept 9, 2006  
Oct 13, 2007  
Mar 25, 2008

There have been at least three other, unofficial, sightings of waterspouts on Kwajalein since March 2008.

Unlike tornadoes, waterspouts typically form in weak wind situations under moderately developed cumulus clouds, and dissipate quickly over land. There are two types of waterspouts: Kwajalein waterspouts are like "dust devils", usually weak and ephermal, though they can become strong enough to damage small storage buildings; outside of the tropics there are tornadic waterspouts, these are tornadoes over water and are as dangerous as any other tornado, however Kwajalein never experiences them.

Well developed waterspouts may contain a small area of dangerous wind shear and should be avoided.

**Tsunamis:** Kwajalein Tsunami Records

21.6 inches: Mar 11, 2011; Sendai, Japan; Mag 8.9 - Rank #5  
15.0 inches: May 22, 1960; Valdivia, Chile; Mag 9.5 - Rank #1  
11.8 inches: Mar 9, 1957; Andreanof Is, AK; Mag 8.6 - Rank #13  
9.8 inches: Nov 4, 1952; Kamchatka, USSR; Mag 9.0 - Rank #4  
9.4 inches: Jul 14, 1971; Solomon Is; Mag 7.9 - Doublet  
9.4 inches: Jul 26, 1971; Solomon Is; Mag 7.9 /  
7.9 inches: Oct 13, 1963; Kurile Is, USSR; Mag 8.5 - Rank #16  
5.9 inches: Mar 28, 1964; Prince William Sound, AK; Mag 9.2 - Rank #2

No Tsunami was detected at Kwajalein for the #3 and #6 ranked earthquakes - Indonesia 2004 and Chile 2010.

## 1.4.2 Weather Sources – With Onboard Email/SSB

**Soggy Paws - 2013:** In our transit through this area, what we used most of the time for watching the weather were 6 files (via the free service Saildocs):

Text forecasts (NW Pacific, Majuro, Kwalein, Guam discussion):

```
send FZPN40.PHFO
send pmz181
send http://www.rts-wx.com/data/forecasts/FCST2.htm
send http://www.prh.noaa.gov/data/GUM/AFDPQ
```

A spot forecast for the location we were in—every 6 hours for 10 days

```
send spot:07.1N,171.3E|10,6|PRMSL,WIND,WAVES,RAIN,LFTX
```

A 'local' GRIB file that gave a fairly detailed forecast for a reasonably small area for about 5 days, and included sea state information

```
send GFS:6N,10N,173E,165E|.5,.5|0,6..144|PRMSL,WIND,HTSGW,WVDIR,RAIN
```

A 'wide range' GRIB that watched conditions approaching us. The area we request while in transit was a pretty wide area on a 3x3 grid, for the next 10 days. This is about a 25K GRIB file. This provided a good long range forecast.

```
send GFS:0N,30N,160E,175W|3,3|0,12..240|PRMSL,WIND,RAIN
```

During times of tropical activity, we also found these sources useful for additional perspective

[http://weather.gmdss.org/navimail/GMDSS METAREA14-TROPICS INMARSAT](http://weather.gmdss.org/navimail/GMDSS_METAREA14-TROPICS_INMARSAT) (this is Met14.trop on Saildocs)

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/data/raw/fz/fzpn40.phfo.hsf.np.txt> (this is FZPN40.PHFO (N Pacific 0-30N, 140W-160E) on Saildocs)

Nearing Majuro, this might be helpful:

<http://weather.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/fmtbltn.pl?file=forecasts/marine/coastal/pm/pmz181.txt>

In the northern part of the Marshalls, this is useful:

<http://www.rts-wx.com/data/forecasts/FCST2.htm>

## Hawaii Weather Faxes - North Western Pacific

UTC	Local	Product	Coverage Area
1724	0524	SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
1755	0555	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1815	0615	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
1835	0635	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
1901	0701	24HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
1914	0714	48HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
1927	0724	72HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E

1940	0740	WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1953	0753	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2130	0930	SURFACE ANALYSIS (NW PACIFIC)	20N - 70N, 175W - 135E
2302	1102	48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2315	1115	72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2341	1141	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2354	1154	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0014	1214	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
0034	1235	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
0524	1724	SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
0555	1755	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0615	1815	SURFACE ANALYSIS	EQ - 50N, 110W - 130E
0635	1835	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E
0701	1901	24HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0714	1914	48HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0727	1924	72HR SURFACE FORECAST	30S - 50N, 110W - 130E
0740	1940	WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0753	1953	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0930	2130	SURFACE ANALYSIS (NW PACIFIC)	20N - 70N, 175W - 135E
1102	2302	48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1115	2315	72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1141	2341	24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1154	2354	STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1234	0034	EAST PAC GOES IR SATELLITE	05S - 55N, 110W - 155E

### On the Web

The full Hawaii schedule is available as a text email via Saildocs or online at

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/hfhi.txt>

The Streamline is available at this URL:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/stream.gif>

And the Significant Cloud Features here:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/neph.gif>

The Sat Photo is here: [http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir\\_ICAO-F\\_bw.jpg](http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAO-F_bw.jpg)

### Getting the Hawaii Faxes via Email from Winlink or Iridium email

From s/v Whoosh: Here are the files I've been sampling using NOAA's FTP file server because I don't find these in the Winlink catalog and Sailmail won't offer graphics files/attachments.

This just boils down to sending an email to winlink with some special commands in the body of the email. They require opening up your file size limit (to 40K in some cases) but one or two are practical with a good connection, without using up all one's time. These are the same products available via wxfax IF propagation supports getting them in a viewable, usable form, and IF the timing fits the crews' other plans. So the FTP option is just another arrow to have in the quiver.

PJFB10.TIF - Pacific Wind/Wave Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PWFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PJFI10.TIF - 48HR Pacific Wind/Wave Forecast 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

PWFA11.TIF - Pacific Streamline Analysis 30S-30N, 110W-130E (Most Current)

QYFA99.TIF - Tropical Surface Analysis 40S-40N, 100W-120E (Most Current)

PBFA11.TIF - Significant Cloud Features 30S-50N, 110W-160E (Most Current)

PYFE11.TIF - 24HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)

PYFI11.TIF - 48HR Pacific Surface Forecast 30S-50N 110W-130E (Most Current)

To get any of these, you address an email to:

[ftpmail@ftpmail.nws.noaa.gov](mailto:ftpmail@ftpmail.nws.noaa.gov)

No subject; use the following format with one or more files listed:

```
open
cd fax
get PJFI10.TIF
quit
```

I'm finding that connecting to the Winlink Hawaii station must be done the evening before I do a morning weather report (in order to connect) - do either of you pull down winlink files in the early a.m.? For me, this means using some stale f'cast products (e.g. that streamline analysis) but doing so seems better than not having it altogether.

Note: To get any of these via internet directly, prefix the product above with

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/>

If you have trouble viewing or downloading as TIF file, try changing the .TIF to .GIF

For an printable listing of current Pacific "Fax" products

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/fax/rfaxpac.txt>

### **1.4.3 Weather Sources – Voice**

The **Yokwe Net** operates out of Majuro, and covers cruisers in the Marshall Islands. It operates at 0745 Local time (+12 GMT), on 6224 USB. There is no daily weather forecast done, but if

you need it periodically, I'm sure someone will help out. Also it is very helpful hearing the various stations report their current conditions.

There is also the "Shellback Net" on 8161.0 khz USB at 2100 Zulu. This net covers cruisers heading west across Micronesia.

#### **1.4.4 Weather Sources – Internet**

##### **Marshall Islands (Majuro) Weather Service**

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/majuro/>

##### **NOAA Charts in Color from Hawaii**

Though these are highlighted in color (much easier reading), they are small files, only about 30K each.

Current Streamline and Streamline Loop:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/stream.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/streamloop.gif>

24, 48, 72 Hr SFC Prog for Entire Pacific

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/24hrsfcp prog.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/48hrsfcp prog.gif>

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/graphics/72hrsfcp prog.gif>

Full List of Hawaii Marine Weather Products:

<http://www.prh.noaa.gov/hnl/pages/marine.php>

##### **Satellite Pictures**

A really nice color-coded loop of the West Central North Pacific is this one:

<http://www.ssd.noaa.gov/mts/wcpac/flash-rb.html>

For slow connections here's the link I use for a small B/W Pacific Satellite:

[http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir\\_ICAO-F\\_bw.jpg](http://aviationweather.gov/data/obs/sat/intl/ir_ICAO-F_bw.jpg)

This picture is updated about every 15 minutes, and if you download and save successive files, you can get a fairly nice moving satellite picture.

##### **Passage Weather**

Note this is mostly 'repackaged GRIB' files

<http://www.passageweather.com>

#### **1.4.5 Tropical Weather (May - October)**

Check this link for more info on the current state of the MJO:

<http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/precip/CWlink/MJO/mjo.shtml>

The US Joint Typhoon Warning Center has a graphic and text forecast out for 120 hours.

<http://www.usno.navy.mil/JTWC/>

Finally, if you don't have all this internet stuff, a long range, wide-area GRIB file is much better than nothing. We request this one to be sent daily:

GFS:<td> |3,3|0,12..240|PRMSL,WIND,RAIN

It is about 40KB, so you might have to request something smaller if you don't have Winlink (to get around Sailmail's size limitations).

#### **1.4.6 Understanding the NW Pacific Weather Patterns**

We're still trying to figure this out...

#### **1.4.7 Professional Weather Routing**

Soggy Paws used a USA-based weather router named **Ken McKinley** at [Locus Weather](#) for the Easter Island to Pitcairn and Gambiers legs of their trip. Ken did a good job for them. Email Ken at locuswx – at - midcoast.com.

A friend has used **Rick Shema** in Hawaii (at [Weatherguy.com](#)) for routing between French Polynesia and Hawaii. Rick's long experience in the Pacific would also likely make him a good choice for NW Pacific passages.

**Bob McDavitt** is a familiar name to those who have crossed the South Pacific. Though his specialty is the South Pacific, he might agree to do routing in the NW Pacific. See contact information on his website at <http://www.metbob.com/>. However, my recommendation would be to use a weather router familiar with the North Pacific.

### **1.5 Customs & Immigration**

The information on this section was taken originally from the Visit Marshall Islands website, which appears to now be defunct.

**Alice - May 2023** There are still two ports to clear in to Marshall Islands, Majuro and Ebeye. To clear in or out on Ebeye you need a cruising permit from the consuil of Ebeye.

We tried to get one to be able to clear out of Ebeye, you go through "department of internal affairs" in Majuro, but we didn't get any cruising permit so we went to Ebeye and cleared out there anyway without any problems.

Custom, Immigration and Quarantine wanted to board the ship, but everybody was very nice and fast and it's no charges.

It says on Noonsite that there is no custom officer on Ebeye but that information is old. There are some dive boats that operate from Ebeye.



### **1.5.1 Pre-Arrival Notice**

This came from some Marshall Islands website, probably VisitMarshallIslands.com:

When arriving to the Marshall Islands on a private yacht please contact the port captain at least 72 hours before arrival. Send a copy to the Customs office as well.

Please provide the following information: length of your boat, your home port, number of people on board, and other relevant information.

**Iris – October 2023:** We sent a bunch of emails to addresses listed in this compendium and on Noonsite. We got replies back from the following:

[rmiports@gmail.com](mailto:rmiports@gmail.com) (port authority)

[mof.rmcustoms@gmail.com](mailto:mof.rmcustoms@gmail.com) (customs)

those two officials forwarded our pre-arrival notice to the relevant authorities.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We completely forgot to do this. No one mentioned this to us at all on our check-in.

### **1.5.2 Arrival**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** There are a number of yachties which are living onboard their boats in Majuro. They are extremely helpful, and organize the cruisers net at 7:30 Monday to Saturday on VHF 71. They also welcome you, and help you moor to one of the mooring bouys.

We tried to contact customs after arrival, but no one answered so we decided to go ashore for customs and immigration. Immigration has a little office right on Uliga Dock. If they are not there, then you will have to go downtown to their main office. We ended up visiting customs in their main office downtown near the Marshall Island Hotel

**Alice - May 2023** Clearing in at Majuro was painless and fast. You still need to give them a pre-arrival notice. When arriving in Majuro you have to contact customs by e-mail or phone and arrange a time to meet them on your boat. You can always ask another boat to help you. There is a net every morning at 07:30 on channel 71. You can ask anything you need to know there. On Tuesday there is a cruisers-dinner at some local restaurant. Ask any sailor to show you where the restaurant is and with one. The dinner is popular both for expats working in Majuro and yachties. It's a good way of getting to know everyone and get new friends.

**Visit Marshall Islands ~2013:** It is recommended to arrive in Majuro between 8am and 5pm, Monday to Friday; otherwise an overtime fee of \$150 will be charged.

Arriving yachties are automatically given a 30-day visa with the possibility of extending for 60 days. If you would like to stay in the Marshalls longer, it's possible to get a residency for a year.

Immigration Website: <https://rmiimmigration.org/>

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We had previously emailed the SSCA Cruising Station, Karin and Cary on s/v Seal, and let them know we were headed up from Fiji. We started checking in on the Yokwe Net (6224 at 0745 local) as soon as we could hear it and they could hear us VHF (about Tarawa). So they knew we were headed in. We also checked in on the VHF net the morning we arrived (VHF 68 at 0730 local).

We were told by Seal to give them a call on the VHF as we arrived in the mooring area, and they'd call Customs and Immigration for us. We arranged a time to meet them at Shoreline (after we'd had lunch and got the dinghy launched).

Seal told us that it was quite possible that one or both of the Customs/Immigration people wouldn't meet us. In that case, we should wait about 20 minutes and then make our own way by taxi to Customs (in the Government Building) and Immigration (in a different Government Building).

The Customs guy showed. We showed him our clearance out of Tarawa, and he took those papers. We didn't fill out anything, pay any money, or have to do anything else for Customs. The Customs guy called the Immigration guy and was informed he wasn't coming. So we taxied down to the Immigration building. Though we told the taxi driver "Immigration", he dumped us at the main Government Building (the wrong place). So we had to get another taxi out further to the proper building. Immigration is up on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> floor. We filled out some paperwork for each crew member, got our passports stamped, and that was it.

U.S. Citizens are given unlimited time in the country. Other nationalities at given 6 months. Extensions are possible.

### **1.5.3 Departure**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** It is possible to clear out in Ebeye. Be sure to check with customs in Majuro to ensure it is still possible. According to the Ministry of internal affairs you need a permit to visit Ebeye. They took a long time getting our permit signed, but they were kind enough to send the signed permit to us on email, so we did not have to wait in Majuro for long.

However we could not find anyone in Ebeye who knew where to pay the permit fee, and no one asked us for it, so we ended up having the permit, but never paying.

The charges for clearing out in Ebeye was \$150 US for customs and \$100 US for immigration. We probably ended up paying the fee because we left Ebeye on a Sunday, but the officials came aboard on Friday at 1 p.m. Better check with customs and immigration when the fees apply – we forgot to be precise, and ended up paying.

## **1.6 Local Information and Customs**

The below information was written by some cruiser, and specifically regarding Aur. Sorry I don't know the original source. The words apply to all the Marshall Island Atolls.

### **1.6.1 Courtesies**

YOU ARE IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS. YOU ARE NOT IN THE UNITED STATES OR EUROPE. YOU SHOULD LEARN TO OPERATE WITH THEIR CULTURE RATHER THAN TEACHING THEM TO OPERATE WITH YOURS.

When you arrive at an atoll, try to meet the **iroij**, and the mayor, and spend a few minutes talking to each. It is important to do this and will help you tremendously into gaining friends in the villages. Everyone will know the moment you paid this courtesy.

Stop and greet people. Spend a few minutes talking to them. Ask their name "Etam?" Give your name "Eta in ---". The Marshallese are not reserved or shy but they don't wish to disturb

your space. A simple greeting from you will open many doors and change the manner of your experience. If you don't sing out a greeting you could walk the entire village without meeting a single person, the Marshallese secure in their knowledge that they properly did not disturb you. They want to meet you!!! You must indicate to them that you wish to meet them.

If you stop at a home you will be offered a chair. Often an elderly person will have to sit on the ground to provide the seat for you. PLEASE----Take the offered chair! Your visit brings instant status to the home and it is important they provide this courtesy to you.

Be very careful when admiring an article of wear like necklaces, hats, hair bands, and fabric, also items inside a home, and most other things. If your praise is high the article will be given and you may have to accept it as a gift.

You may walk anywhere, including between houses, during the day or night. If someone is present it is polite to ask permission to walk between homes. When visiting a home you should call out a greeting, "lokwe", before reaching the door.

Remove your shoes at homes, schools and all other indoor places except church.

Handshaking when meeting men is important. It is not the western handshake, rather more a holding of hands. This may continue through an entire conversation. It is common for 2 men to hold hands when walking as with 2 women. Men do not display affections to women in public.

Do not shine your torch out of the pathway at night. If you meet someone please turn your torch off when talking to them.

Women will be quite subdued when in the presence of men. The same for girls while in the company of boys. Often they will be the farthest away from the center, unable to talk to you, help you launch your dinghy, share in the experience. If you wish to see the real robust nature of the women or girls then you must get them apart. Hosting a trip to your boat, with a group of women and girls, will be an enlightening experience at what is beneath the surface.

Apologies close the book entirely on any misfortune you may cause. After an apology there are no recriminations, no further thoughts on the matter. A simple apology will result in the reply of "ejjollok inepata", literally "no problem".

There are a lot of culture differences which you may not like. The role of women, the role of the church, class structure, the status of the iroij, requirements placed on families, very many things will be foreign to you in how the community operates. Please....we are visitors and experiencing the Marshalls. It's how they operate and the system works to their satisfaction. Enjoy the experience rather than working to change it. All is well, leave no footprints.

### **1.6.2 Alcohol**

By law, alcohol is not permitted in the outer islands, except at Likiep. You may imbibe on your yacht but DO NOT GIVE ANY ALCOHOL to a Marshallese visitor on board your yacht. Do not take alcohol ashore when picnicking on uninhabited islands.

### **1.6.3 Buying and Trading**

Marshallese don't bargain. The price they quote for animono (handicrafts) will be more than fair. Most animono is \$1 per inch, wooden canoes \$2 per inch. Hats can be ordered to style and size, takes 3 days to make, and cost \$20.

Trading is a western value, not part of the traditional culture of the Marshallese or most people in the Pacific! If you give a gift you give it from your heart, not from your wallet. You will often receive a gift of fruit, fish or animono, with or without your own generosity. **Accepting a gift places an obligation on the recipient, a hunger to balance the books.**

Please accept gifts, though you may limit the quantity of the gift. For instance a stalk of banana can be reduced to half or a third, just what you require. However, IT IS NOT ALWAYS A GIFT IF THEY ASK "DO YOU WANT ---?" Sometimes it is for sale. I don't know how to tell the difference without asking "Is this for sale or a gift?" Selling has to take place as the Marshallese are seduced into this system with rice and other western goods. Both giving and selling seem to co-exist in a very strange fashion.

If you are asked to give items you are at liberty to say no. There is no stigma attached to denying a request. Do not offer to trade for an item that has been asked for as a gift. If the person asks to buy an item then it is the category of business. You are also free to ask for items.

If you are purchasing you may ask if they wish to be paid in the same value of rice, flour or other staple food stuffs. This is often an important trade, especially to old women, as it allows them an opportunity to feed their families rather than being fed by them. It is quite an honor for the older women to provide food through their efforts. Don't bargain on trades. Give equivalent value of what you paid for an item. If you wish to sell an item you may offer to trade. Again...it is not a bargaining society. You are expected to give and get good value.

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013 - Suggested Trade and Gift Items:** The closer in atolls are provisioned pretty well, but the further out you go, **food items** become good trade, including basics like rice, instant coffee, sugar, chocolate, and canned meat (esp Spam and Corned Beef). This is especially important when the resupply ship is delayed.

We have frequently been asked for **DVD's**--though I would watch what you give these fairly religious "sheltered" people.

**Fishing gear** is always asked for--fishing line, lures, good hooks.

Someone told us shoes (flip-flops) make good trade items.

**Balloons** make good "hand out" items for the kids (vs candy).

**Cigarettes** would also be good trade/gift item for the smokers.

Hats, **sunglasses**, and T-shirts are always good.

We have also been asked for **reading glasses**... get a few pairs from 1.0 to 2.0 in power (you can buy a 3-pack at Walmart for about \$10).

Most of the outer atolls rely on solar and batteries... so LED lights, battery testers, wire, connectors, and your own trouble-shooting expertise are good trade/gift items.

**Gasoline** is always expensive and in short supply. The gallon of gas you buy in Majuro for \$5 costs the people in the atolls anywhere from \$7 to \$10 per gallon. If you are asking someone to take you somewhere in their boat, make sure you throw in the gasoline from your stock.

**Photographs** are also a good trade item... take your camera ashore, take some pictures, and bring back prints. One cruiser we know set up their camera in the shade of the tree, and offered

to take pictures of anyone who wanted them. Though not everyone in the village showed up that day, she was inundated with requests as she walked around the island in the days following. She ended up making a DVD of all the village pictures and leaving it with the custodian of the village computer.

#### **1.6.4 Privacy**

You may think that you are on a deserted beach, miles away from anyone, a chance for that refreshing nude swim. Everyone in the villages across the atoll will know just about the time you splash into the water. If you don't want to be the talk of the villages, for the next several months, keep your clothes on. Your privacy aboard your yacht is ensured.

On shore, anywhere in the atoll, except inside a home, you have no privacy. If you are doing something you shouldn't be, everyone will know the moment you perform. Don't be the yacht that provides the proof of this.

### **1.7 Yachtsmen's Services - Overview**

The best source of information about what's available in Majuro and where it is is the Yachtie Yellow Pages document, originated by Amulet in 2007, and occasionally updated by someone from Meico Beach Yacht Club. Arriving yachts are usually given a "welcome packet" by the Yacht Club, and it contains this list.

There is almost nothing available outside of Majuro, except at Ebeye in Kwajalein Atoll.

#### **1.7.1 Money**

The currency is the U.S. dollar. There are ATMs in Majuro (see that section for details). In Kwajalein, there is NO ATM AT EBEYE. The only ATM is at the Kwaj Army Base.

The only way a visiting yacht without base access can get cash in Kwaj is to take the ferry to the Kwaj base and access the ATM at the ferry terminal.

Most boats landfall in Majuro, so this is not a big issue, but if you are arriving from the west and plan to check in at Ebeye in Kwaj, it would be easier if you already have USD.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The only ATM in Majuro which works (most of the time) is the one at Bank of Guam right next to the K&K supermarket.

It is incorrect that you cannot get USD in Ebeye, the way to do it is as follows: You take the ferry to Kwajalein (free of charge). In Kwajalein you are allowed ashore and are allowed to enter the ferry terminal building. In the left side of the terminal – opposite the American Eatery fast food joint, there is an ATM. It accepts both Visa and Mastercard, however when we were there it only worked with our Mastercards.

#### **1.7.2 Diesel and Gasoline**

Diesel and gasoline is available for purchase in Majuro and Kwajalein. In other atolls, if you are in dire straits, you can likely purchase a small amount locally, but expect to pay \$10 per gallon.

The going rate in Majuro in 2013 was \$5.60/gallon. See Majuro and Kwaj sections for details.

### **1.7.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)**

Propane refills are available in Majuro. Getting propane anywhere else in the Marshall Islands will be a problem. See the Majuro section for details.

### **1.7.4 Groceries**

There are good grocery stores in Majuro. See the Majuro section for details.

There are also a couple of pretty good grocery stores in Ebeye, at Kwajalein Atoll. The ship comes to Ebeye every 2 weeks and there is fresh veggies, including tomatoes, lettuce, celery, and brocolli. Good supply of frozen meats and a variety of everything you'll be looking for. You do NOT need any permission (other than the normal Marshall Islands outer atoll permission and check-in) to stop and stay at Ebeye.

There is a decent (for out-island) grocery store at Roi, at Kwajalein Island. Though this is on the "base" there, yachts can stop and use the grocery store without any formalities, sponsorship, or permission. The store itself is gated off from the rest of the base, and used heavily by the Marshalese.

We also found small stores in the out-islands. Likiep had a very nice (but sparse) store or two. No fresh veggies available, but staples and canned goods.

Every atoll has some kind of store, but don't expect much and expect prices to be 50% higher than Majuro. Most are not marked and are not open at regular hours. You will have to ask.

The best plan is to use Majuro and Ebeye as your provisioning bases.

**Alice - May 2023** There are big grocery stores in Majuro but I wouldn't say they are good. The best one by far is K&K. Look for expiree dates and bugs on everything you buy. When we were there the flight stopped coming to Majuro so every store were totally out of vegetables but after a few days there was a containership coming with some vegetables.

### **1.7.5 Water**

Roi at Kwaj has potable water for the taking by dinghy. Majuro is difficult--see the Majuro section.

The southern part of the RMI rains a lot more than in the northern part. Even in the "rainy season" (summer) in the northern atolls, it would be difficult to survive on just the water you catch (2013).

**Alice - May 2023** We filled with water on Ebeye, there is a water tower in the middle of town with good treated drinkining water. Most people in Ebeye came there and get there water and its free to take for us too. You have to walk around 100-200 meters with your jerry cans from the ramp.

### **1.7.6 Boat Parts & Repairs**

Majuro and Ebeye are the only places with stores that carry hardware and marine supplies.

### **1.7.7 Medical**

Adequate medical care is available on Majuro and Ebeye, but not elsewhere. The main facility is Majuro Hospital (tel. 625-3355), which provides good basic medical care as well as limited specialty services.

There is also a private clinic on Majuro (Majuro Clinic, tel. 625-6455), and a small new hospital on Ebeye.

Most outer islands have medical dispensaries.

Most doctors and hospitals will expect payment in cash, regardless of whether you have travel health insurance. Serious medical problems will require air evacuation to a country with state-of-the-art medical facilities.

**Alice - May 2023** There is a Filipino private doctor in Majuro. It's really hard to find him, ask any other yachtie or ask at the store "Island eco" and they have to show you. The doctor is very good in English and he is very helpful. A visit costs 20 dollars.

### **1.7.8 Laundry**

Laundry facilities are available in Majuro and Kwajalein. See the respective sections for information.

## **1.8 U.S. Embassy**

Americans living in or visiting the Marshall Islands are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Majuro. The U.S. Embassy does not have a street address in Majuro.

The Embassy is located on the ocean-side of the island's road approximately 1 mile east of the airport.

Contact info: The U.S. Embassy's mailing address is P.O. Box 1379, Majuro, MH 96960-1379. The telephone number is (692) 247-4011. The fax number is (692) 247-4012.

The US Embassy Page for Majuro is <https://mh.usembassy.gov/embassy/majuro/>

**Alice - May 2023:** Some friends of ours succeeded to get their B1,B2 visas for USA at the embassy here. They got an interview after only one week of waiting. This has been more or less impossible anywhere else. In Panama you had to wait for over one year to get it, so if you are planning to stop in USA on your travel get your Visas here.

## **1.9 Getting Visitors In and Out**

**Reflections - February 2012:** There is regular air service to Hawaii and Guam here. But it's not cheap!! Just under \$1400 round trip to Hawaii.

We weren't planning on traveling home this year, but it was a shock to some of the other cruisers who arrived this year. When Chuck took us around the atoll we went past the airport. It is the most well constructed thing on the island. It's actually a thing a beauty. Perfectly level, lighted, as high a quality as any airport in the states.

## **1.10 Communications**

### **1.10.1 VHF**

The Majuro Cruiser's Net is on CH 71 at 0730 local time, Monday-Saturday.

**General VHF Advice that applies to all areas:** Be aware that on high power, a good VHF will transmit 25 miles line of sight. So if you are only doing within-anchorage communications, switch to low power. On the flip side, if you are trying to call across island, or to the next island, use high power, and turn your squelch down. Make sure you are aware which channels are automatic low power (ie 17, 67 on some radios), and stay away from the low-power channels for long distance conversations.

Though widely spaced in channel number, channels 16, 68, and 18 are very close to each other in frequency. Most VHF antennas are 'tuned' for channel 16, so long distance communications will work best on 16, 18 or 68. Conversely, in a crowded anchorage, transmission on high power on channel 18 or 68 may 'bleed' over to channel 16 (and almost any other channel, if you're close enough). You don't need high power to talk to the boat next to you, so turn your radio to Low Power!!

Also be aware that some channels that Americans use frequently are 'duplex' channels in International mode. So, for example, you may have trouble communicating with a European boat, or an American boat whose radio is in International mode, on Channel 18. (see any VHF guide for the full list of international and US channels and frequencies, but any US channel designated 'a', like 18a, 22a, etc will cause trouble with VHF's in international mode).

Make sure you ask in each port what the local channels are--both so you know how to reach someone ashore and so you know not to use those channels for your off-channel conversations.

### **1.10.2 SSB Radio Frequencies and Nets**

The **Yokwe Net** operates out of Majuro, and covers cruisers in the Marshall Islands. It operates at 0745 Local time (+12 GMT), on 6224 USB

There is also the "**Shellback Net**" on 8161.0 khz USB at 2100 Zulu. This net covers cruisers heading west across Micronesia. *(Note, as of Feb 17, 2014, this net was moving to 2200Z, as the bulk of the net participants moved west toward Palau, which is 3 hours earlier than Majuro time).*

If you're a ham, for longer passages, we always checked in with the **Pacific Seafarer's Net**. This is also a good frequency to have saved in case of emergency—the Hams on the PacSea net will move heaven and earth to help any boat with a true emergency—ham operator or not. Even when there is no net going on this frequency, there are often hams monitoring the frequency for emergency traffic.

The Pacsea net operates on 14,300 Khz USB at 0300 UTC. They start with a 'warmup session' at 0300, where you can call in and chat, and maybe hook up with someone who will make a phone call to the US for you. They start calling boats on the roll call at 0330, and when they finish (30-60 minutes later), they call for boats getting ready to go on passage to get on the list for tomorrow's net.



The net control is usually in Hawaii, but there are always relay stations on both sides of the Pacific to help with weaker signals.

**Local SSB Frequencies:** Many of the residents on the out-islands in the Marshalls have SSB radios. The nearer islands (Mili) stand by on a 5Mhz freq, but I don't know what it is. The rest of the atolls leave their radios on **8113.5** nearly all day. So in an emergency where local help would be useful, a call on 8113.5 might be useful. The Majuro hospital frequency was were given is 8291.0.

### **1.10.3 Telephones, Cell Phones and Internet Access**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** NTA simcards worked on our phone. The packages are 25\$ for 25 Gb, 50\$ for 50 Gb, and 70\$ for unlimited – all packages have a length of 1 month. Internet is good in Majuro and also on Ebeye – it works fine in the anchorages, but nonexistent in the outer atolls we visited.

Some of the Atolls either have, or are getting Starlink, so sometimes it is possible to get access that way. We got access in Wotje through one of their Starlinks.

**Alice - May 2023** You can buy sim-card at NTA which is the state telephone company. Internet is very good in Majuro but in Ebeye the signal was very weak. There is no coverage in Rongelap, Ronelip or Bikini. Bikini and Rongelap have telephone masts but they haven't been working for years.

Most phones (at least our iphones) are NOT compatible with the sim-cards from NTA. Don't ask me why! We had to buy a small wifi-unit and use that as a router. The unit costs 75 dollars, and that works. They have some different offers for data, if I don't remember this wrong its 15 gb for 25 dollars, 50 gb for 50 dollars and one month unlimited data for 70 dollars. Something like that.

**Soggy Paws – May 2013:** We took our unlocked quad-band cell phone to NTA, the Marshall Islands Telecommunications company, and bought a sim card for \$15. This doesn't come with any "minutes", but cell phone recharge cards can be bought for \$5 and \$10. I think cell-to-cell calls are 10 cents a minute. Off-island calls are higher.

### **1.10.4 Mail**

The Marshall Islands, as a former U.S. Trust Territory, is still operating with a U.S. Postal Code. That means that mail sent from the U.S. arrives fairly quickly (2-3 weeks) by U.S. Priority Mail. There are post offices in Majuro and Ebeye (Kwajalein). See those sections for the mailing addresses and appropriate information.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The problem with packages being stuck in Guam was due to a problem with one of the Marshallese pilot's license. That problem has been solved and packages are now coming to Majuro again.

**Alice - May 2023** At the time when we were there was no cargo flights coming or going at all. Almost all packages going to Majuro were stuck in Guam and nothing worked. This had been the situation for several months. Before ordering anything into Majuro, talk to the expat community, they know if it's worth the effort.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** Best way to get packages sent in or out is with the US Post Office. It generally takes from 6 days to 2-3 weeks to get stuff in from anywhere. We only had

one problem with First Choice Marine when they sent us hatches by Surface mail - aka by boat!) It took 3 months to arrive here despite the USPS website giving an ETA of 2 weeks! With FCM not very responsive, it was quite frustrating! But as luck happens, we got these hatches the exact day we were leaving for our 3-4 month cruise in the Ratak chain of outer atolls!

**Avoid FEDEX if at all possible.** The few times a supplier sent things Fedex, they got stuck in Guam. Only by a lot of bugging and requesting the office here to email Guam, and then following up again and again, were we able to finally get the packages. Totally defeats the purpose of Fedex as an express courier. UPS is a little better, but the UPS office is a taxi ride or long dinghy trip away (in Majuro).

### **1.10.5 News**

#### **News via SSB Radio (This is all likely obsolete)**

**Westward II - June 2013:** Here are a list of AM radio frequencies we have been listening to:

**Voice of America** - 6110, 17735

**Radio Australia** for PNG, Solomon Islands, Micronesia, Guam, and Japan - 5995, 6020, 6080, 7240, 9580, 9660, 9710, 9815, 11650, 15240, 17580, 17715, 21725

**Radio NZ** - 6095, 9885, 11675, 11725, 11820, 15160, 17675

**BBC** - 9740, 11765, 11955, 12080, 15070, 15360

#### **News via Email**

I don't know of any news service that formulates a customizable daily news email for yachts at sea (if you do, please email me, see email address at front of this guide).

But we had success, using Sailmail, in subscribing to a 'daily news email' from Reuters. We set it up so it went to a shore email address, and then we used Sailmail's Shadowmail feature to retrieve the daily emails when we felt we needed/wanted news, and had good enough propagation, to retrieve the email, stripped of all the graphics and stuff.

The daily 'US News', coming in through Sailmail, was only 7Kb. It contains the 'top 10' headlines, with a one sentence summary of each. Check out what Reuters offers at <http://links.reuters.com>

I am sure there are many other similar sources of a daily news email, but try them out on your internet email before you subscribe via your Winlink/Sailmail account!! And if you have Sailmail access, I strongly recommend you check out Shadowmail (it is not offered/supported under Winlink)

### **1.11 Diving**

Diving in the Marshall Islands is superb. There is not much soil, so not much runoff. Even inside the atolls the water is fairly clear. To dive with tanks in the Marshalls, you must apply for a diving permit with the Historical Preservation Office in Majuro. This is a one-time fee of \$50 per person and covers you for all atolls. We were told that some people at some atolls may ask for a diving fee (specifically, Wotje), but that we should not pay it. Politely show them the receipt from Historical Preservation Office and tell them you were told that no further fees for diving were required.

The only exception, of course, is at Bikini Atoll. You can dive at Bikini on the coral, but you CANNOT dive on the wrecks without major expense and hassle. See the Bikini section for more info.

### **1.12 Haulout, Storage, and Repair Facilities**

There is a yard of sorts in Majuro that normally services fishing boats. It may be possible to get hauled out by crane in an emergency in Majuro, and maybe at Kwajalein at the Kwaj Yacht Club (lots of paperwork and requires a sponsor, US citizenship or a proper visa).

### **1.13 Tsunami Information**

The entire Pacific Basin is subject to tsunamis. Since we have been in the Pacific (3 years), there have been 3 significant tsunamis which have affected cruising locations (American Samoa and Tonga in 2009, So America, Galapagos & Panama in 2010, Hawaii & Mexico in 2011). The tsunamis originate in various locations, but the worst origination locations were Japan and Chile, however, many 'tremors' happen in these locations that do not cause widespread tsunamis.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center website is located here:

<http://ptwc.weather.gov/>

If you have onboard email, it is a good idea to subscribe to tsunami warning emails while you are in the Pacific, which you can do on this website. It might be useful to first subscribe from your internet email for a little while, to understand what messages might be coming your way, and how often, before you chance clogging up your onboard email.

### **1.14 Cruising Information Sources**

We are indebted to the people and organizations below for documenting their experiences and sharing them with us. We hope they don't mind that we've gathered their comments into this document to share with other cruisers who don't have internet

A few details about the boats are included, where we know them, so you can assess what 'a foot under the keel' means, for example.

Where it's important, we've annotated the contributions. But every section is a mix of several sources.

#### **1.14.1 Local Websites**

Here are some websites you should visit when you are looking for information on this area:

<http://www.sailingmarshallislands.com> - Mico Beach Yacht Club site

<http://www.visitmarshallislands.com/yacht.html>

<http://www.visitmarshallislands.com/maritime.html>

<http://www.yokwe.net>

<http://www.marshallislandsjournal.com/>

<http://www.rmiembassyus.org>

### **1.14.2 Cruiser Reports**

For most of the earlier sources, we have gleaned the information off the internet (cruiser's websites, blogs, and online forum postings) or out of an SSCA bulletin. For the sources reported below as 2011-2013, much of the info has come directly from our cruising friends, helping to round out the information in our various Compendiums.

**Interlude (2006)** - Interlude made the trip in 2006 and documented their trip well in several SSCA newsletters. Interlude is a 74' Deerfoot with 7' draft.

**Billabong (2006-2007)** - Billabong made the Fiji to Majuro trip, and back, in 2006/2007.

<http://www.sailbillabong.com>

**Mr John IV (2010-2011)** - These comments came from a PDF file floating around on the web called **Mr John in the Marshall Islands** or Mr John's blog. It seems to be a compendium of his own experience, and shared experiences from other yachts. Useful guide and it includes some sketch charts which are not included here. John has graciously given Soggy Paws permission to publish his guides on our Files page. You can download this guide from here:

[http://svsoggypaws.com/files/MrJohn-Marshall Islands.pdf](http://svsoggypaws.com/files/MrJohn-Marshall%20Islands.pdf)

Mr. John IV is a Bristol 35.5 with a fairly shallow draft (for a monohull). He has a tendency to want to anchor in shallow water, so if you have boat with a draft over about 5 feet, take care!

Mr. John also has a blog, where they elaborate more on their experiences at each place.

<http://yachtmrjohn.blogspot.com>

**Sloepmouche (2010-2012)** - Sloepmouche is a trimaran. They stopped in the Marshall Islands for about a year from December 2010 to early 2012.

**Carina** - Carina spent a year primarily in Majuro in 2011. <http://sv-carina.org>

**Savannah (2011/2012)** - We are indebted to Monica from s/v Savannah for collecting and collating information as they passed through the Marshalls. Her guides are posted on their blog, plus additional information available in their various blog posts:

<http://savannahsails.blogspot.com/>

Savannah is a 40 ft Owen Easton Catamaran.

**Downtime (2012)** - <http://downtimecat.blogspot.com>

**Breakfree (2012-2013)** - Ants and Jane's blog is here:

<http://breakfreeblog.blogspot.com>

**Soggy Paws (2013)** - Soggy Paws arrived in Majuro May 2013 and hung out in the Marshall Islands through December 2013.

Soggy Paws is a CSY 44, a 44 foot monohull with a 5.5' draft. Soggy Paws' blog is here:

<http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com/search/label/Marshall%20Islands>

**Alice (2023)** – Alice is a Swedish boat on a second circumnavigation. They spent several months in the Marshall Islands in 2023.

**Iris (2023)** - SY IRIS is a Hallberg Rassy 42F MkII (sloop, monohull). Length: 13.22m, Beam: 3.95, Draft: 2.0m, sailed by Kaare and Kirstine Dahl from Denmark, and we have visited the Marshall Islands in October 2023. Website: [www.sy-iris.dk](http://www.sy-iris.dk)

#### **1.14.3 Pacific Puddle Jump Yahoo Group**

This is a 'group' on Yahoo where the people gathering in South and Central America meet to share information about crossing the big puddle. Fortunately, many previous years' jumpers come back and share their information with the newbies. A good source of information, but not very organized, and full of bloat from people who ask the same questions over and over again, without doing any research of their own.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pacificpuddlejump/>

You must be a member to read or post anything on this site, but if you are getting ready for a Pacific crossing, it is well worth a few minutes to sign up for Yahoo and then sign up for this group. Be sure to explore the Files and Links pages, there is lots more information there.

#### **1.14.4 Circumnavigator's Yahoo Group**

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Circumnavigation/>

Once out of the Puddle Jump region, the only other similar group bulletin board.

#### **1.14.5 Noonsite**

Originally started by Jimmy Cornell, this site is a great repository of information for all those out-of-the-way places. Made possible by YOUR contributions.

<http://www.noonsite.com>

#### **1.14.6 Seven Seas Cruising Association**

The SSCA is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a monthly publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. They also have a good website and a well-attended bulletin board. Membership is reasonable, and the monthly publication is available electronically every month. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://www.ssc.org>

#### **1.14.7 Ocean Cruising Club**

The OCC is a world-wide organization for cruisers whose primary function is to exchange information about cruising destinations. They have a website and bi-annual publication that is mostly letters from cruisers about the areas they are cruising. Membership is reasonable, and the publication is available electronically. Indexed back issues are also available electronically.

<http://oceancruisingclub.org>

## **1.15 Printed Sources**

An interesting read from a World Teach volunteer who spent a year on a Marshall Islands atoll... Surviving Paradise: One Year On a Disappearing Island.

### **1.15.1 Cruising Guides**

We are consciously NOT duplicating any printed, copyrighted information here. It takes a lot of effort AND money to publish a cruising guide, and we firmly believe that if it is still in print, you should BUY it, not steal it (in electronic form).

There are no cruising guides that cover the Marshall Islands.

### **1.15.2 Recommended Reading**

For background, we recommend the following books:

Marshall Islands Culture - Surviving Paradise: One Year on a Disappearing Island by Peter Rdiak-Gould.

Bikini Atoll - Nuclear Testing - Ghost Fleet, The Sunken Ships of Bikini Atoll by James P. Delgado

## 2 Passage Reports

### 2.1 *Passages Between the Marshall Islands and Other Places*

#### 2.1.1 *Hawaii to Marshall Islands*

#### 2.1.2 *Fiji to the Marshall Islands*

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We left Viti Levu in the end of September for the long passage up to Majuro. Doing this passage we had to cross the ITCZ, which makes it a bit cumbersome. We had light winds most of the way, and ended up spending 16 days for the 1600nm passage, motoring for 40 hours in total. There were a number of thunderstorms around us, but luckily we avoided them all.

Around Tarawa we encountered the Equatorial Counter Current, which slowed us down quite a bit, and took us a couple of days to cross. We had up to 2 knots current against us. The current sweeps around the islands in different ways, and is a bit unpredictable.

We entered Majuro through the Calalin Pass, which is very well marked and easy to navigate. Beware of the tuna boats coming in (or going out) as well as bigger shipping intended for Majuro. We ended up giving precedence to a large freighter in the channel.

### 2.2 *Passages Up and Down the Ratak (Eastern) Chain*

#### 2.2.1 *Majuro to Mili*

**Learnativity - May 2011:** We left Majuro mid-afternoon so as to time our arrival in Mili to be about 10am when there is good light. Our departure from Majuro couldn't have been better as it was mostly blue skies, sunny and about 15 knots of wind.

As we cleared the NW pass out of Majuro and got into open ocean a pod of over 30 bottlenose dolphins came to wish us well and guided us out to the far NW corner of the atoll.

We continued down the west coast of the atoll as the sun set and we started our first night sail together. Once clear of the SW corner of Majuro atoll we were out of the lee of Majuro and into open sea and more wind and set a course SE for Mili and had a great night sail all the way there.

The wind kept creeping southward and so we had it mostly on the nose for the majority of the sail and had to keep bearing off a bit to the south as we were sailing right on the edge of what we can sail upwind which is about 35-40 degrees off the wind. As we got closer to Mili we were too far west to make it under sail and so for the last few hours we had to use the motor to help get us the last bit East into the pass on the NW corner of Mili.

The pass is small but plenty big enough and we made it through about 10am just as planned to give us good light for the visual navigation you need to do inside the atolls as you watch for coral heads (bommies).

Once inside the atoll we sailed down to the NW corner to the small village of Mili where the Mayor lives to show him our inter Marshall Island sailing papers and to ask permission to stay.

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013:** We wanted to go to Mili during the near windless period in August to go dive on wrecks on the leeward side of the lagoon. We ended up having to motorsail the whole way due to light winds. It was a very easy short overnight passage.

### **2.2.2 Majuro to Aur**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We left Majuro at 4 in the afternoon for an overnight sail to Aur. The wind died as we came out of the pass at Majuro so we ended up motoring most of the way.

We entered Aur lagoon through the West pass using the following waypoints

08 19.175'N 171 02.164'E

08 19.171'N 171 02.420'E

08 19.051'N 171 02.702'E

08 18.454'N 171 03.298'E

We anchored off Tabal Island at 08 18.579'N 171 09.270'E in 10m in sand among a small number of coral bommies. Used floats on our anchor chain, and did not have any problems with the bommies.

**Downtime - December 2012:** We set sail at 9:00 pm for the 80 mile trip to Aur Atoll. The winds were fresh and blowing 20 to 25 knots and we just set only the jib sail for the overnight passage.

We thought the seas would calm down when we were a few miles from land but they never did. If anything they got bumpier! It felt like we were back in the North Atlantic with waves smacking us from all directions? There must be some strange currents around here causing all this wave action!

At daybreak I set the fishing lines as we approached the atoll hoping to catch a fish to give the village when we arrived. The wind had lightened but the waves were still crashing on the reef we would have to cross. Our charts showed several passes to the north and we hoped the skies would clear so we could clearly see the pass as we went through. Daria went forward to watch for bommies (coral heads) as we slowly went through the reef going through a pass just over 100 feet wide and 35 feet deep with jagged coral reef on either side with waves crashing.

**Breakfree - December 2012:** We left Majuro on the 23rd, at around six in the evening, for an overnigher. Unluckily it was blowing from the direction we wanted to go so unlike most gentlemen we had a bit of a bouncy upwind sail. We arrived in the mid morning of the 24th (nicely timed for bommie spotting) at the south entrance to Aur Atoll and spent the day sailing across the lagoon to the island of Tabal in the North West corner, where we had been told most of the population (about 300) of Aur had decamped for the Christmas festivities.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** Aur is an easy 77-nm overnight passage going North from Majuro. We heard that seas can be quite confused in the vicinity of each atoll but we lucked out, we had a very nice passage with East winds 10-13 and no sudden squalls!

We entered Aur via the very easy South Pass (WP outside: 08-10'444N / 171-06'376E / WP inside 08-10'625N / 171-06'538E).



We made one easy tack towards Aur island in the South corner and anchored in 25ft of good sand at 08-09'166N / 171-09'844E. This is the first village you should visit to present your permit and pay the \$25 fee.

**Holokai** - Winter - Many times the waters between Majuro and Aur become "lumpy". Expect 20 to 25 knots of wind regardless of the forecast, though it is usually accurate for sea height. A good sail will be with forecast seas below 8 feet. A small current is sometimes present midway to Aur but it is less than 5 miles in breadth and less than 1 knot in strength. It has been experienced as flowing east or west, most predominantly easterly.

Mahi-mahi are abundant in the last 10 nm approaching AUR Atoll from the south and tuna and wahoo along the NW side. Marlin are also on the northwest side and a large lure will nearly always result in large trouble for you. They are quite capable of pulling your yacht to a stop. Expect a massive pod of dolphins at the south pass. Large turtles are often seen in the lagoon and trolling with a small bright blue/silver lure is often rewarded with rainbow runner as you cross the atoll. There is excellent snorkeling inside the lagoon and also at the encircling reef.

There are four wide and safe passes on the north-west side of the atoll and a single pass in the south.

The north most pass has a large reef after the pass but it is about 1 mile into the lagoon and easily steered around.

The south pass is about 150' wide, see the Aur pass information for details.

### **2.2.3 Majuro to Wotje**

**Downtime - December 2012:** With just a few days remaining in 2012 we set sail for our next adventure sailing with our friend Bob on Braveheart to Likiep atoll some 200 miles to the NW.

The winds were forecast to blow out of the east at 10-15 knots, but we found ourselves motor sailing in little or no wind the first few hours. We set sail at 10 am and calculated our arrival sometime the following afternoon using 7 knots as an average speed.

When making a good Plan A we find that we must also include a good "Plan B" just in case things go, well....Not like "Plan A" This trip started just that way... We were going much slower than 7 knots average speed and calculated that at this speed we would arrive way after dark thirty the next day and there is no way either of us were going to attempt entering a poorly charted atoll at night.

Plan B was to stop at Wotje Atoll some 60 miles closer but was also 20 miles further east (closer to the wind). We changed course with plan B in full force when things started getting interesting. After motor sailing for 5 hours the winds started picking up and a series of squalls could be seen in the eastern skies.

Bob had pulled ahead about a mile and had a lot of sail up when the first squall hit. He thought he would be in front of the system but was caught by 30 knot winds and torrential rains. Conditions like these cause monohulls to lean way over and Bob found himself standing knee deep in the cockpit trying to get the boat back on course while cushions and whatever else was not tied down washed out to sea.

While Bob was battling the squall, I took the hint and rolled up our jib and turned down wind to ease the pressure of the wind on my mainsail because I also had way to much sail up!

The squalls had caught us off guard but the weather forecast had not shown any storms heading our way. Forecasts like these are what sailors hate because they tend to allow you to let your guard down.

After the squall we both reduced sail and Bob spent the next hours getting thing back in order on Braveheart.

With the sails reefed and the sun setting the winds filled in to the forecasted 20 knots and Downtime was in her element, chewing up miles while charging across the ocean swells at just under 10 knots. At these speeds it is very noisy and rough aboard when the boat crashes through the waves.

We were ready for the next squalls and saw them clearly on the radar as they approached. Like before, the winds would pick up to over 30 knots when they passed but only lasted 30 to 40 minutes.

We sailed on with the last of the squalls behind us in 20 knot winds and calculated our arrival at the pass somewhere around 6 am. Bob left his sails reefed and got some sleep as we put some distance between each other during the last hours of the night. We would be passing close to Erikub Atoll which we found out is the slash down zone for long range missile testing for the USA. We hoped there would be no testing tonight as we sailed by!

Plan B was working out well and we cleared the pass by 7 am but found ourselves motoring the last 12 miles across the atoll straight into the 20 knot winds towards the anchorage on Wotje Atoll. Luckily the bommies (coral heads) inside the atoll had been wire drug (knocked down)by the navy years ago because our new charts seem to be off by a few hundred feet!. We figured this one out when our track line went right through the middle of an island on our way through the pass!

By noon we had the anchor set and spent the rest of the day napping and taking it easy after a rough sail. Bob arrived a few hours and did the same.

#### **2.2.4 Aur to Majuro**

##### **Downtime - December 2012:**

After spending a few action packed weeks in Aur Atoll, we set sail back to Majuro with what looked like to be a good weather forecast. The winds had been blowing out of the NE for days and the weather report showed one more day of this wind direction as we raised the anchor sailed towards the south pass of Aur.

Approaching the pass I could see this was not to be the case the wind had already clocked way south and had somehow already generated a nasty swell to go along with it! To make matters worse we could see a series of squalls stacked up on the horizon! We cleared the pass trailing a few lines and landed nice yellow fin before the first squall hit and that was the end of the fishing for the trip.

The pass into Majuro lay 65 agonizing miles to the south and I found myself furling and unfurling the jib for the next 5 hours as squalls would pass by blowing at over 30 knots and dumping tons of rain as they went by.

For Daria, the rougher the seas get the sleepier she gets and in these seas it was not long before she was sound asleep leaving me to drive the boat alone.

After 5 or six squalls passed I have had enough of it all myself and left the jib most the way rolled up and started the engine. I set the auto pilot and radar alarm and then took a nap. By dawn the skies had cleared and we found our way through the pass into Majuro and motored our way towards the anchorage while beating into a 20 knot SE wind the last 12 miles.

Anchored safely we wondered how we could have had such crappy weather in both directions!?

### **2.2.5 Aur to Maloelap**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We had a nice short sail from Aur, exiting through the west pass the same way we came in and entering the South pass using Sloepmouche's GPS coordinates. The pass is very easy and does not present any problems navigating in good visibility. Aim for the clearly visible sand bank, which marks the entrance.

At Taroa we anchored north of the wreck and west of the pier in 14m in sand with coral bommies at 08 42.290'N 171 13.326'E. Lots of room to swing, and if you use floats on your chain you will not get stuck when the wind changes.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** Our passage from Aur was easy in 15kt of East wind and regular seas. After one tack we entered via the Southern pass (outside N08-31'98 / E171-06'31 then inside N08-32'33 / E171-06'47) and sailed all the way to Airik Island in the SE corner.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** Tabal to Airik in Maloelap is about 23 miles so if you leave at 1000hrs to arrive about 1400Hrs you'll have the sun over your shoulder on both passes.

Katie Lee - October 2010: We left Tobal, Aur about 8:00 AM this morning (Oct 10th here). I had thought it was about 25 miles pass-to-pass, but turns out it is 25 miles total from Tobal to Airik, Maloelap. We got here about 3:30. Not too bad considering the 1.5 knot adverse current and the 15-20 knot wind nearly on the nose! We sailed down the lagoon in Aur, then motor-sail the rest of the way. Lots of the time under 3 knots. But we made it OK.

### **2.2.6 Maloelap to Majuro**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** We had very light winds for this whole passage. We chose to go west of Aur but could have easily gone east, because we were motorsailing. We did sail some once clear of Aur, but had to point up a little to keep enough wind in the sails. Finally about 15 miles out we motored in.

**Soggy Paws - September 2013:** We had much better winds for our second passage down from Maloelap. We left the SW pass at about 4pm, and with an easterly wind at 10 knots, had a nice sail at 5.5-6kts all the way to the pass at Majuro. This was the only all-sail passage we have had in about 2 months!

**Amulet - August 2007:** Thought we had a good weather "window" for the 119nm passage back to Majuro, plus it was full moon time. We like a full moon on night passages. The winlink GRIB system went down so we couldn't get a updated wind forecast the morning we left, but the one we got the day before seemed good. Well things change here and the forecasting is quite poor.

We had mostly light wind on the nose, and ended up motorsailing about 60% of the way. The skies were mostly clear though and you could almost read by the moonlight. We came back as we are out of fresh veggies and the like having been away for 38 days. It turns out Majuro is also out of fresh veggies as the last two flights from Hawaii got cancelled!

### **2.2.7 Maloelap to Wotje**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The biggest problem for this passage is that the logical way is to leave Maloelap at the northern passes entering Wotje at the southern passes, however there is only 50nm between those passages, which is too long for a day sail, and too short for a night sail. We decided to leave through the south pass in Maloelap and entering through the Schischimarev pass, and had a nice 10-15 knot wind all the way for a smooth sail. The current between the Atolls can be quite strong, so you need to steer quite a bit easterly to compensate.

We used the following waypoints to get safely through the pass at Wotje:

09 23.100'N 170 06.300'E

09 23.700'N 170 06.300'E

09 23.850'N 171 06.600'E

09 24.000'N 170 07.800'E

09 24.000'N 170 09.000'E

09 23.700'N 170 12.000'E

We anchored in the northern part of the anchorage of Wotje island at 09 27.430'N 170 13.830'N in 13m in sand with two floats on the chain due to the coral bommies. The visibility is excellent and it is easy to pick the sand between the bommies to put down your anchor – the holding is good, and there is a lot of swing room.

### **2.2.8 Wotje to Ailuk**

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We had to tack several times to get here from Wotje because a strong Westerly flowing current pushed us out at least 30 deg to port. You do not experience it when sailing close to the western side of atolls but as soon as you are in the open, there it is frustrating your progress if you try to head North! Since we arrived at the atoll at night, we decided to hang around the west side in the lee until daylight (even then seas were rough with the strong winds we were experiencing). You want to stay at least 1 nm off the atoll's edge since your radar won't pick up the low fringing reefs. When the sun was high enough, we entered the lagoon by the deep and straightforward Marok channel (N10deg21'812 / E169-54'461). (Note: There is a pass on the South end of the atoll that we thought about using, but our friends on *La Gitana* reported it quite shallow looking and they used one of the Northern passes, all deep enough for inter-islands boats.) Once inside Ailuk lagoon, we had a very nice sail straight for Ailuk island, in the SE corner.

### **2.2.9 Wotje to Kwajalein**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The passage to Kwajalein is a nice 160nm trip, which took us a day and a half. In the pass between Wotje and Loj island we encountered and 1½ knot west going current, but apart from that we had 12-15 knots wind from southeast and only 1-2 meter following waves – smooth sailing.

We entered Kwajalein through the Bigey channel (ocean side) 08 52.186'N 167 45.960'E (lagoon side) 08 52.500'N 167 45.370'E. The pass is noted as being buoyed, but the bouys are missing for the most part. It is an easy sail down to Ebeye, where we anchored south of the dock in 10m in sand. Beware there are some bommies which are within 3-4m of the surface at low tide. Put your anchor in the sand and the holding is good.

### **2.2.10 Likiep to Ailuk**

Note that there is a small island/reef area (Jemo Island) between Likiep and Ailuk. As always, the charts are off a bit. Here are some waypoints I plotted off a GoogleEarth chart:

NE reef: 10-06.4N 169-34.3E

SE reef 10-04.3N 169-31.5E

W reef 10-04.95N 169-31.2E

Make sure you stay well clear of this area at night--currents are reported strong in this area.

**Soggy Paws - July 2013:** We made this passage as a "short overnight". We left Likiep right after lunch, on a day with the wind about 085T at about 12-14 knots. The forecast was for the wind to go south of east overnight.

As usual, the forecast wasn't perfect. It did go south of east somewhat, but also went back much faster than forecast to the prevailing ENE.

We struggled with our big heavy cruising boat with a shoal draft (5.5 ft) to make headway to the east on either tack. With the effect of the west-bound current, we were able to only make about 160T on the SE tack and about 015T on the NE tack.

We started out motor-sailing almost due east, hugging the south coast of Likiep, until we were sure we could clear the SE point, which sticks out a long way. Then we tacked over (still motorsailing) and made sure we WERE clear of the SE point, before turning off the engine.

We were able to sail most of the night, but ended up about 15 miles downwind of Ailuk. That far out, we were getting a little "lee" from the big waves, but there was still a 2-3' "chop" which prevented us from just motoring straight in. The waves were very confused, so no matter which way we motorsailed, it seemed we had waves on the nose. Finally, at about 5 miles out, we were getting enough lee that just motoring would be feasible. But by this time, we had a nice angle on the Erappu Channel, and sailed on in.

This channel looks complex on the Google Earth chart, but it was easy in reasonable light. As we have found in other Marshall Islands atolls, the direct course from the channel to the village had a few scattered bommies, but nothing terrible. It was easy sailing/motorsailing with a lookout for the easily-spotted coral heads.

## **2.3 Passages Up and Down the Ralik (Western) Chain**

Note that the Kwajalein Missile Range area actually extends well east and west of Kwajalein Atoll. Passing vessels are advised to ascertain whether there is any missile activity. Usually the "range closures" are for very specific time windows, so even if there is range activity, you can find a window to transit the area safely. (See Kwaj section for details).

### **2.3.1 Majuro to Kwajalein**

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We had an easy passage from Majuro to Kwaj. We sailed off our mooring in Majuro about 10am on Monday, and arrived at Kwajalein about 5am on Wednesday. The only struggle on this passage was the wind was far enough aft of the beam to cause our windvane trouble steering. We ended up on autopilot (who wasn't happy either). With a little current pushing us along, we averaged almost 6.5 knots (about .75 higher than normal), and arrived earlier than expected.

We went in through Bigej Channel in the dark, using GoogleEarth charts and the CM93 Cmap chart (which is pretty accurate), and sailed south toward Kwaj base. The lights are as charted in our 2010 version of the Cmap charts. See notes in the Kwaj section on contacting Kwajalein Control before entering the Atoll.

**Savannah - December 2011:** We saw 12 foot seas, squalls with 40 knot winds, and at one point we had a hull speed of 12 knots. Some catamaran crews dig 12 knots. I do not! The 12 foot seas I'm talking about were "confused" and coming mainly on our beam.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We had a quick and relatively comfortable sail from Majuro. We left one afternoon and arrived early morning after a 2-night passage. The Bigej pass (SE lagoon) is straightforward and we entered before light and proceeded all the way to the anchorage in Ebeye using exact GPS points taken on Google Earth and the radar, following the islands.

### **2.3.2 Majuro to Rongelap/Rongerik**

**Brick House - December 2011:** It was a quiet sail direct from Majuro for about 24 hours, and then the wind died all together. We had diverted temporarily east of our rumb line because a small open power boat was lost at sea, but it was recovered before we even knew the precise area to look. The boat and 6 occupants had drifted to another atoll. When the wind died we drifted for days, sometimes motoring for a few hours looking for a helpful current. The currents in the atolls are not always predictable and can run contrary to what would seem obvious.

When the wind came up, it came on strong and was of course on our nose. We beat to the most accessible atoll which was Rongerik.

### **2.3.3 Majuro to Jaluit**

**Soggy Paws - September 2013:** The wind died in the Marshall Islands (and across Micronesia) about 1 August, so we have been motoring everywhere. We had one 2-day puff of wind that let us sail down from Maloelap to Majuro. We waited in Majuro for another such puff, and thought we had a forecast for ESE winds at 9-10 knots, which would have been acceptable.

However, the wind was really 7-8 kts ENE-NE, and it ended up being behind us on the trip to Jaluit. We logged only about an hour and a half pure sailing on this 24 hour trip. However, most of the trip we had a following current.

We left the main pass at Majuro about 3pm, and arrived at the Southeast Pass at Jaluit at around 2pm.

#### **2.3.4 Kwajalein to Bikini**

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We left the Kwaj Small Boat Marina at oh-dark-thirty, with the wind at 080 degrees at 10-15kts (in the protected harbor). We went out the South Pass at Kwajalein Atoll, and then sailed with light winds aft of the beam close in up the west side of the atoll. The course was about 305 degrees.

We rounded the NW tip of Kwaj about sunset, and hardened up to 330 degrees direct for Bikini. This is one of the of the fastest passages we've ever had. Partially because of the nearly perfect sailing conditions--not too strong, not too light, and just aft of the beam, but also because we must have had close to a knot of current behind us at times.

We noticed a couple of times on passage that the waves got really rough and confused. Later in our travels through the Marshall Islands, we came to recognize these "washing machine" conditions. Usually they are caused by the current over the bottom landforms--upslopes, and islands. Usually they are short-lived. One minute, it's very rough and the boat is all over the place, and the next minute, it's back to smooth sailing. It's worse of course, going upwind!!

The **South Pass** at Bikini is very wide. None of the markers shown on the chart are still there. Nor is the light on Enyu Island.

In settled conditions, a waypoint of 11-30.90N / 165-33.40 clears the SW tip of Enyu. If the swell is up, it's better to go a bit wider, 11-30.50N / 165-33.15E, to go west of a 40' spot.

You can either swing in and anchor off the pier at Enyu or sail on up to Bikini Island (see Bikini section).

#### **2.3.5 Bikini to Kwajalein**

#### **2.3.6 Kwajalein to Wotho**

#### **2.3.7 Wotho to Bikini**

#### **2.3.8 Kwajalein to Rongelap**

#### **2.3.9 Jaluit to Kwajalein**

**Soggy Paws – September 2013:** We made the final leap of our summer's cruising from Jaluit back to Kwajalein Atoll, where we'll leave Soggy Paws for a few months to go see friends and family in the U.S. This trip was 251 nm, anchor to anchor. And we could have water-skied the entire way, the wind was so calm.

With 5 knots of wind the ENTIRE trip, the passage was exceedingly easy. Most of the time the wind was out of a northern quadrant, so it was essentially "on the nose". We were able to turn off the engine and sail for about 5 hours one night--oh blessed peace. But in flukey winds, on a

schedule, it's a lot easier to just pull the sails in tight, crank the engine, and make some miles in the calm conditions. So that's what we did. We may set a record this month for the most engine hours since we left Florida. But, boy, have we seen a lot more of the Marshall Islands than almost everyone--cruisers and locals alike.

The only really memorable part of the trip was that Kwajalein was having "range activity" during the last night, and I happened to look up from my book at just the right time, and saw the missile (?) streaking in to Kwaj. It was kinda cool (but short-lived). The main activity at Kwaj is testing missile defense systems, and they shoot something into the area every couple of months. This is the first one we've seen ourselves.

Because we've been sending in Position Reports via Winlink, we get an advance email from some ham on Kwaj advising us of pending launch activity--the exact coordinates of the closure area, and the times the area is closed. The same notices are posted on shipping channels (Navtex, etc) so the shipping in the area knows about it. Most of the launches are scheduled for late night/early morning, so it's not usually a factor in moving around during daylight hours.

We arrived at the South Pass at Kwajalein Atoll about 7am, and motor-sailed an additional 35 miles up to anchor at the north end of the atoll for a couple of days. The weather is so great for diving, we thought we'd get a couple more dives on the airplane wrecks here, before we head in to put Soggy Paws to bed for awhile. We have a friend from Kwaj Base flying up on the afternoon plane to meet us here and dive with us.

## ***2.4 Passages Going East and West in the Marshall Islands***

### ***2.4.1 Bikini to Rongelap/Rongerik***

**Soggy Paws – June 2013:** We finally saw a decent weather window coming up for the ~90 mile (as the crow flies) trip to Rongelap. We were anxious to get going at the first opportunity. We were hoping to be able to catch an extended window, make it to Rongelap, get checked in and get permission to go to Rongerik, see a bit of Rongelap, and make it all the way to Rongerik (another 30 miles into the wind), in the same light wind period.

At dawn I got up and collected another weather forecast, and it still looked good. So we finished breakfast and our final preps, and set off from Bikini about 0915. The wind was about 065-070T at 12 knots.

The direct route from Bikini to Rongelap passes just north of Alinginae Atoll. If the wind was down and the seas flat calm, we would have motored straight to Rongelap, passing north of Alinginae. But once we got going, the wind and waves were such that we opted to use Alinginae as a wind/wave break for the NE winds and waves. So instead of motoring almost straight upwind on the most direct course, we motorsailed SE to the SW corner of Alinginae, then hugging the Alinginae coast as much as we dared at night, motored upwind in the lee provided by the atoll. It was a great plan, and mostly worked, but we found that the "lee" petered out about halfway up the south coast. Then it was slow-going... motoring into light winds, seas, and a light current. We only made 3.5 knots for a few hours.

We had wanted to stop briefly at Alinginae just to see it, but we had been delayed so long at Bikini that we felt we were running out of time. And the timing to leave Bikini and stop at



Alinginae was not good for going on to Rongelap, if we found Alinginae untenable. And we are supposed to have permission from Rongelap to stop there anyway.

We had nearly a full moon and great conditions while motoring along Alinginae. There was enough moon to see the breakers off to port when we got in close. With the CM93 (CMap) chart off by nearly a half a mile, we were relying on the Google Earth charts that we had made, to keep us out of trouble. (The Navionics iPad chart was off too, and the Garmin didn't have much detail).

Finally about midnight we cleared the SE corner of Alinginae, and were able to tack (still motorsailing) up into the gap between Rongelap and Alinginae, where we got some relief from the wave action from Rongelap Atoll.

We had all along toyed with the idea of just skipping Rongelap altogether, and continuing on to Rongerik, which it looked like we could reach without too much trouble by late afternoon. For this reason, we had had our friends on Challenger, who were in Rongelap ahead of us, pay our \$50 fee to the "acting mayor" at Rongelap, and get permission for us to go straight to Rongerik.

Our friends on Westward II, on the other hand, are on a different schedule than we are, and they opted to go to Rongelap no matter what.

So, while we were underway, we got another forecast, and it just didn't look like there'd be another window soon that would let us keep going eastward. The timing and conditions being right, Soggy Paws tacked off (still motorsailing) to head around the SE tip of Rongelap. While Westward II slowed down and headed for the SE pass at Rongelap, planning to go in at first light.

Long story short, the predicted shift from ENE to ESE winds, which would make our tack from the SE corner of Rongelap to the NW corner of Rongerik a pleasant sail, didn't happen. Instead of 12-13 ESE, we had 15-18 ENE... right in our face. So it was a wet and windy day. We actually t-t-t-acked 3-4 times! But we arrived in the anchorage at Rongerik before sunset, exhausted and salty.

We again used our Google Earth charts to choose where we would enter through the wide western pass area at Rongerik, and to watch for isolated coral heads on the way across the atoll to the anchorage on the east side. With the sun behind us, it was easy.

Of course, almost minutes after we got our anchor set, the wind eased back to 12-13 knots and shifted SE, only a few hours late.

For a crow-flies distance of 116 NM, we covered roughly 145 NM in 32 hours, unfortunately having to motor at (mostly) low RPM's the whole time. Had we tried to just sail it, we'd have spent probably another 24 hours tacking around.

#### ***2.4.2 Rongelap to Rongerik***

**Soggy Paws - July 2013:** We essentially did this trip--from the SE Pass of Rongelap to the NW (Bock) Pass at Rongerik, on our overnight from Bikini to Rongerik. We were directly off the SE pass of Rongelap in the early morning, and motorsailed ESE, and short-tacked NE to the NW Pass at Rongerik.

Rongerik is a small atoll and doesn't provide much lee, and the seas get confused toward the southern end and the northern end of your tracks. But we made it in 15-18 kts ENE, in a long day.

Our friends sailed up the inside the east side of the Rongelap Atoll, overnighted behind one of the islands near the pass, and left Rongelap in the early morning through the NE Pass. From there it's only 25 miles pretty much due East, to the NW (Bock) Pass at Rongerik. It's not fun going upwind, but it is a daytrip, and somewhat sheltered from the big swell, once you get about half way across.

We crossed through Bock Pass at 11-20.74N / 167-22.86E. It was a typical Marshall Islands pass experience, where the bottom went from "bottomless" to 60 feet in the space of a boatlength.

There are widely scattered coral patches, easily seen in almost any light, inside the Rongerik lagoon.

## 3 Majuro

### 3.1 Approach, Arrival and Formalities

Contact the Yogwe Net on SSB 6224 at 19:45 Zulu a few days out. This is a net of primarily people hanging out in the Marshalls. It is very informal and someone will be able to hear you and relay your ETA.

Also, you can contact the cruisers in Majuro on VHF as you get closer to the lagoon. The net is at 19:30 Z, channel 68, and the cruisers hang out on 68 most of the time, as channel 16 is taken up by chatter from fishing boats.

If you contact someone ahead, most likely someone will help you moor and inform officials of your arrival.

#### 3.1.1 Passes and Markers, Etc

**Alice - May 2023 – Majuro main pass:** We had a big swell coming with us when we went through the pass. It looked really scary with breaking waves all over the place but, going through was actually not bad at all. Our charts were very accurate. All green beacons were in place, but two red beacons were missing.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013 - Charting:** Our CM93 chart, version 2010, is very accurate. But (properly created) Google Earth charts are even more accurate.

**Soggy Paws - September 2013 - Majuro's Main Pass:** The main pass at Majuro is used by big ships at all hours of the day. They all looked like they were in place (not exactly as charted, but close) when we were leaving Majuro. They will show up on radar, and may be lit (we went out in the daytime).

**Before - June 2011:** Red Right Reaving #2 channel marker, is missing red beacon and #2 sign. Pole remains and the rest of beacons are there at this time.

Amulet - 2007 - Calalin Pass: **(This pass is a small pass just east of the main pass. If coming from the east, it cuts a couple of miles off the trip into the lagoon).** Took new waypoints coming in the Calalin Island pass at Majuro Atoll. These put us just a little more than

1/4nm (by radar) off the edge of Calalin Island. The least depth was 40' at the outside and inside waypoints with about 100' deep at the middle waypoint.

Outside: 07 09.364 N / 171 12.059 E

Middle: 07 09.149 N / 171 12.151 E

Inside: 07 08.980 N / 171 12.230 E

### **3.1.2 Anchoring and Mooring - Majuro Town**

**Alice - May 2023:** The two mooring fields still exist but I don't know if the moorings are maintained, and nobody else seems to know either. When you arrive, ask around the other boats which mooring to take and they will show you. Always try them out and dive on them.

**Soggy Paws – May 2013:** The two main mooring fields of Majuro are in front of the Robert Reimers Enterprises (RRE) compound in Uliga and, to the south, in front of the Mobil tanks. Yachts are charged \$3 a day in both mooring fields. Yachts in front of RR can pay at the Western Union desk in Ferosa Supermarket; while yachts in front of Mobil pay Matt Holly (his is located behind EZ Price).

**Before - June 2011:** Some thoughts on North or South mooring zones. We are in the South field where most of the permanent yachties seem to be moored. This is where many of the "problems" occurred, but seem to have been stopped at this time. We have not had any problems and our mooring has held in 40 knots of wind. We were also guided to this one by Cary, who stopped us from picking up another mooring and then handed us our mooring line. How sweet was that! I believe he checks and maintains most of the moorings, north and south. NORTH: Closer to main dingy dock, nicer view(?), more expensive, wakes from crew and pilot boats and seems nosier from ships anchored astern. SOUTH: Half the price, we have yet to run down the man to give the money to. Less wake activity, quieter when concerts are going on at the Shoreline. In either case probably best to choose a mooring farthest from shore, less flies, shore noise, and pollution. The lagoon has a high content of E coli, so our mantra is "The Solution to Pollution is Dilution"

DINGY DOCKING: At RRE/Shoreline most used, busy, convenient, and security. New dingy dock and future slips building underway, but who knows when it will be finished. If we are going east in town we dock inside the Uliga - fishing port, and tie up at the stairs on the back wall. Way less crowded and no problems. Caution, they may close access at night. Other sites are available along the shore, but we have as yet had no need for them.

### **3.1.3 Checking In**

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** Karin on Seal helpfully arranged for an appointment at Shoreline on Friday afternoon, for Customs and Immigration. When we showed up promptly at 2pm, the Customs guy was already there. He took our Tarawa clearance papers, we did not have to fill out any forms and he did not give us anything. Then he called the Immigration guy on his cell phone and was informed that he wasn't coming down. So we took a taxi to Immigration. The

taxi dropped us at the Government building instead of where Immigration is, so we had to take another taxi further out to the M-A-K-O building.

Taxi's cost 75 cents when going outside the downtown area.

Immigration was relatively quick--fill out a form, get the passports stamped. And we were done.

**Before - June 2011:** If you can contact someone (Yacht Seal) on the VHF net (Channel 68), you can set up a convenient time for you to meet the officials on shore (at "Shoreline" - the dinghy dock).

Much of the time, the officials so arranged do not show up. If not, you will then have to take a taxi down to their offices.

Walk to the road, (do not cross street), hold the number of fingers of passengers, and indicate you are going to the right, and a taxi headed in that direction will stop. These are the most dilapidated, rusted out, Japanese junkers you have ever seen. You will wonder if you will arrive at your destination, but so far we have a 100% successful arrival rate.

Ask for the Government Building and go to Customs on the first floor.

Once finished with Customs, cross the main road and hail another taxi and go to the M-A-K-O building, a really ugly green building. Go to the 5th floor, beware of the elevator killer door, and proceed with Immigration. Taxis will be 50 to 75 cents each ride.

When finished with Immigration, catch a taxi back in the other direction, to R-R-E/Shoreline. Stop at the Tidetable for a drink. Welcome to RMI. You are home.

#### **3.1.4 Theft Issues**

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013:** Since we've been in the Marshall Islands (May-Sep 2013), there have been no theft issues in Majuro. One dinghy left overnight in the Shoreline dinghy area disappeared for a few hours in the early morning but was back soon after.

Since there is a local VHF net, the best thing is to ask about security issues on your arrival in Majuro.

**Visit Marshall Islands - 2013:** It is possible to anchor to the north of RRE in front of Kirt Pinho's area (which can usually be identified by a large crane) and between the capital building and the Marshall Islands Resort. However security may be an issue.

Security in the main anchorages tends to be very good, given the close proximity to houses in a developing country. Remember that it is advisable to lock your boat when ashore and avoid leaving anything of importance on the decks.

Theft happens everywhere. One must always be aware no matter where they are in the world.

In Majuro you should take the precaution of running plastic-coated lifeline or flexible stainless steel cable that in one run locks your dinghy outboard, fuel tank, and dinghy, and padlock the end to your boat at night.

If you plan to be out well after dark, do the same at the dinghy dock, mostly to prevent drunken purse seiner crews from "borrowing" a ride out to their vessels.

**Seal (SSCA Cruising Station in Majuro) - April 2011 SSCA Bulletin:** Following a number of boardings of yachts in Majuro, capital of the Marshall Islands, the Mico Beach Yacht Club has put a number of safety measures in place that will hopefully put a halt to any further problems of this nature. The club's committee has obviously been extremely disturbed by this recent trend, which is a completely different picture to that experienced by hundreds of cruisers over the past decade. The club's safety measures are being backed up by regular nighttime patrols of the lagoon area where yachts are moored by a small rapid response vessel belonging to the National Police through its maritime division, Sea Patrol.

Adding to its support of the yachts, on Friday (February 11), the National Police Commissioner, George Lanwi, had a letter published in the Marshall Islands Journal, which stated in part: "Since the last incident of January, 2011, the police have been carrying out a vigorous, 24-hour patrol of Majuro lagoon. This all-pervading police presence in the lagoon can be attested to by all yacht owners presently staying in and enjoying the Marshall Islands. There has never been a single case of yacht burglary since the commencement of these patrols. Police patrol is now a permanent feature of the lagoon."

The club's committee believes that it is one small group of people who have committed the great majority of the recent break-ins, or attempted break-ins, and there are many people in the community, as well as the police and the cruisers themselves, who are working towards their apprehension. This is a relatively small place and things tend not to stay secret for too long.

That said, Majuro may be a small atoll (a rectangle of about 28 miles by four miles), but it is still an urban center with all of the inherent pressures that come with a low employment rate and high levels of poverty. Just as they would in any other part of the world, cruisers intending on leaving their yachts in Majuro should have such items as motion detectors on board.

My husband, Cary, and I have worked hard to promote the Marshall Islands around the world's yachting community. As well as being co-founders of the Mico Beach Yacht Club, our yacht Seal is an SSCA Cruising Station. As well, I have served on the Marshall Islands Tourism Association and I have created and sell a travel guide CD called On the Move in the Marshall Islands.

We do all the above because we believe this a place that is truly remarkable for cruisers who can sail to our many outer islands and enjoy great people, great diving and great fishing.

We don't want a couple of bad apples to stop more yachties coming to enjoy this unique country, which has so many wonderful features. On this topic, Police Commissioner Lanwi stated in his letter: "Marshallese remain the friendliest and most hospitable people in Micronesia. Please be assured that our warm hearts and welcome await you as you sail here."

**Brickhouse - 2011:** If we had any idea that theft against cruising yachts was so prevalent in Majuro Harbor we would have chosen a safer destination to leave our floating home while we flew to the U.S. for an intended two month trip.

In the six months prior to our arrival, 8 unoccupied yachts had been vandalised. Shortly after our arrival one yacht was boarded in daylight. Just after we flew out of Majuro, the mooring line of the unoccupied yacht behind Brick House was cut late at night and thousands of dollars worth of equipment stolen. Two groups of thieves have been caught yet other thieves continued the intrusions.

After 35 days away from Majuro, we received the dreaded email from friends, John and Paula on SV Mr John, who were looking after Brick House. At 1:30 in the morning thieves pulled the trip wire tied to our dinghy stowed on the fore deck sounding our loud alarms which blared across the harbor. Despite much effort and looking with strong flash lights by thoughtful cruisers searching in dinghies, the three men who jumped into the water disappeared with the aid of SCUBA gear they had tied to the mooring line. Incredibly, two nights later the thieves were back, being spotted on the deck of Brick House at 12:30 in the morning. Again the thieves disappeared like submarines, without being apprehended. The police? If the police cannot stop small shops from selling alcohol to minors, it is likely beyond their capacity to catch thieves operating beyond the shoreline. "If you catch them, bring them into the station." was the police officers response when a cruiser called for help during one burglary.

We were fortunate that our alarms and the vigilance of neighbours did not give the thieves time to damage our boat with crowbars or to take anything.

For cruisers, street crime has not been a problem, at least during the day.

For every one bad person or groups in any country, there are 99 more wonderful honest and concerned ones. It is too bad that one or two bad people are ruining it for the others. Everyone else that we have met on shore in Majuro and beyond have been very honest and fair people....like everywhere in the world.

## **3.2 Cruisers Services**

### **3.2.1 Money**

The currency used in the Marshall Islands is the U.S. dollar. There are several banks in Majuro, with ATM's. The closest one to the RRE/Shoreline dinghy dock is under the RRE Shoreline Hotel, right next to the Ace Hardware.

The Island Pride grocery and Ace Hardware stores accept credit cards.

### **3.2.2 Diesel and Gasoline**

There is a new fuel dock at Shoreline. It is possible to take your boat alongside at high tide and fill up. However, it's a little tight, and most people just use their dinghy and jug the fuel. Fuel price in August 2013 was \$5.55 per U.S. gallon for diesel and \$5.60 per U.S. gallon for gasoline.

If you need lots of fuel, you can arrange to come alongside at Ulinga dock like the big fishing boats do.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The pump at Shoreline was broken while we were there, and reportedly had been broken for some time. The nearby gasoline station did not have diesel (they had sold out) and, as it turned out, they were also 20% more expensive.

Our solution was to take the dinghy across the lagoon to the dock next to the only bridge in the Marshall Islands at 07 04.996'N 171 21.201'E. Tie your dinghy to the ramp and walk 30m to the road and there is a large gas station which sells both diesel and gasoline. You have to bring your own jerrycans.

### **3.2.3 Propane (Cooking Gas)**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** Taxi to M-E-C to pay and then taxi to tank farm and fill. The price was about \$1.90 per pound--\$38 for our 20-lb tank. They fill both kinds of American tanks. You specify how much you want when you pay, and then take the receipt to the fill place. The fill place is out beyond Marshall Islands Resort (MIR), on the opposite site of the road. The taxi drivers know where it is.

### **3.2.4 Groceries/Provisioning**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** Coming from Fiji, which has a great fresh fruit/veggie market but somewhat limited selections of meats and staples, we were delighted at the offerings at the grocery stores. I got broccoli for the first time in 2 years!! And for an American, all those American brands are nice. However, the availability of fresh-looking stuff depends on when the last shipment was received. After a week or so, the veggies in the grocery store can look pretty sorry.

Within walking distance are two grocery stores, plus a couple of small shops...The Island Grocery right next to Ace Hardware, seemed like it was closing down the last time we were in there--almost nothing on the shelves.

Across the street from the RRE parking lot is the Formosa. We bought beer there (\$32/case for Japanese Asahi beer) and a few things. This store isn't as clean-looking as some of the others, and I found one box of instant rice just teeming with small black bugs. But it is conveniently located and a good place to buy cases of beer and wine.

A few doors down to the right (S) from Formosa on the same side of the street is a small shop that seemed to specialize in over-expiration-date canned goods. I got Spagetti Sauce there, expired, but the cans look OK, for a pretty good price.

Further to the right, a 5-10 minute walk, is EZ Price Mart, and the brand new Payless store.

The former Payless store, now called Island Pride, is a loooong walk, down just past the Government Building (better to take a taxi for 75 cents). It is the most upscale in size, variety, and also price, though the new Payless store is giving it some competition. The Island Pride also has a pretty good veggie selection, and most of the American goods I've been looking for since American Samoa--chunky peanut butter, Triscuits, Cheerios, canned black beans, and those name-brand specialty sauces that make your food taste like home.

Prices are, in general, near Hawaii/American Samoa prices, which are at least 15% higher than U.S.

Several of the stores carry U.S.-brand 5L boxed wines at about \$25-\$30 per box.

We found really nice cuts of pork--chops and roasts--to be really inexpensive (compared to the crap they sell in Fiji). Chicken and Turkey in a variety of cuts are also available, and some nice looking steaks and ground beef too.

**Before - June 2011:** Surprising availability, depending on when the ship was in. Since we came from Hawaii, prices do not shock. Payless (taxi ride, lots of EasyYo) EZ Price some health foods and fair product line along with hardware store. Close to boat; Island Grocery (go left at street), and Formosa. Check dates and examine packages for critters everywhere.

Wine: \$10.00 a bottle, 25.00 for box So far best price and quality for Chardonnay, Ace One Stop Beer: Flametree or Home Garden. Lots of stores to explore and check what they have.

**Mr John IV 2010/2011:** Always check expiry dates and roaches!

1) Payless Supermarket – See MIVA map. Open 0800-2000 hrs, 7 days. Biggest grocery store with widest selection of foods and fresh vegetables. Watch prices rung up at register as not always accurate. Liquor section. Separate section for discounted, out-of-date foods but they can also be found almost anywhere!. Items marked with red dot sticker; again, watch price at register. 8% discount with Senior Citizen card (60 yrs & over) but not if you're staying less than 6 months. (Watch the roaches getting into your bag... especially at the cash register!).

*Ed note: In 2013, the Payless group split up. The original Payless location is now called Island Pride. A new Payless store has been opened near Easy Price Mart (walking distance of Shoreline).*

2) Formosa (Uluga store) - See MIVA map. Open 0800-2100 hrs, 7 days. Watch for cucarachas in fresh foods area. Watch for bugs in rice in boxes. Liquor department. Good prices on Japanese beer by the case (\$32 for a case). Section for discounted, out-of-date foods. 6% discount with VIP card (50 yrs & older); also not for short-timers.

3) Division 7-12 – Across from G&L Enterprises, set back from road. Hit or miss selection of foods. Most times cheaper than Payless. Clean store.

4) Cost Price – Next door to Division 7-12. A lot of Oriental products. Best prices on case lots of soft drinks. Beware! - discounted, out-dated foods can be really old.

5) EZ Price Mart– See MIVA map. Small selection, some institution-sized. 5% discount with MBYC card.

6) Crazy Price – Located across from Flame Tree. Some Fijian products.

7) Majuro Market Place – Located at foot of RRE parking lot. Sometimes they have locally grown veggies & bananas. Cheap pre-made lunches.

8) Payless Warehouse (near Payless Grocery) offers case lots. Cash and carry, open to public.

9) Pacific Basin Wholesale (located next door to Flame Tree) offers case lots. Cash and carry. Open to public.

### **3.2.5 Water**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** Several stores now sell the 3-5 gallon drinking water bottles (empty) and you can get fills in several places.

**Before - June 2011:** WATER: Town water is NON POTABLE and hoses do not exist. Buy it, Make it or Collect it. Cost about 40 cents for non potable to 1.00\$ for bottled.

### **3.2.6 Boat Parts & Repairs**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013 - Computer and Electronics Repairs:** A friend had an inverter repaired by Brian Velde. Brian works for \$60/hr and fixes radios and similar electronics for the Tuna boats. He can be reached at 625-3811. Where there are lots of boats in the harbor, he is often swamped.



Someone recommended Ralph at Office Mart for computer repair. His number is 456-3012

Someone else recommended Stan at Majuro Computers for computer repairs 625-2667.

**Before - June 2011:** There are a number of well-stocked hardware stores, which also have marine parts. ACE, DO IT Best and EZPrice, have marine (?) supplies.

### **3.2.7 Laundry**

**Soggy Paws - Aug 2013:** The convenient laundry machines at Shoreline have gone away. The next closest laundry was a block away, but that burned down recently. There are several laundry facilities further afield.

Two are visible along the road between Shoreline and the Island Pride grocery store... one in a yellow building on the lagoon side, with prominent "Laundramat" out front.

But the two that were recommended to me were these:

- About 100 yards up the side street (away from the lagoon) from The Party Store, on the right. The Party Store is just beyond NTA (the phone company with the huge satellite dishes).
- On the back road (ocean side) behind the new Payless Grocery store.

I went to the first one. It had about 10 washing machines and 8 dryers. Did not have a change machine, but it is attended and they easily changed my \$10 bill. Wash \$1.50, Dry \$2.00. Nice clean facility, with good area for folding clothes.

### **3.2.8 Medical**

a) Doctor

1) At Majuro Hospital, see MIVA map. Expect to wait.

2) Majuro Clinic, opposite MIVA. Recommended only for getting something prescribed.

b) Dentist

1) At Majuro Hospital.

2) Dr. Hazel – 625-8935, see ad in MI Journal.

### **3.2.9 Getting Around**

There is only one bus on Majuro, and that's the "Laura Bus" that goes way out to the SW end of the island. The Laura Bus is on a schedule. Check with others to find out the schedule and details.

For the main downtown areas of Majuro, the norm is "shared taxis". Wave down any car with a "taxi" sign on it, going your way. If you have more than one person traveling together, show how many seats you need by holding up your fingers (ie 2 fingers - 2 people). Many taxis are air conditioned. If you want an A/C taxi, look for one with the windows rolled up.

There is a graduated fare system -- 50 cents close in, 75 cents to "most of Majuro" and \$2 to areas further out. For even further out, take the Laura Bus.

The Tourist Information Center has a nice map with the names of all the places.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The taxi fare is now 1.5 USD for all of Majuro and 2.5 USD if you cross the bridge

### **3.3 Communications**

#### **3.3.1 Telephones & Cell Phones**

I took my unlocked quad-band cell phone down to the NTA office and for \$15, bought a 'pre-pay' sim card. Unlike most places, it doesn't come with any 'minutes' on it, and doesn't have any pre-configured helpful numbers to check your balance, etc. You can buy \$5 or \$10 cell minutes cards from most stores in Majuro.

The cell phone signal covers most of the Majuro atoll, and maybe some others (tbd).

There is at least one "hack your cell phone" operation in Majuro, where locked cell phones can be unlocked. It WAS located at Shoreline, but was moving 1 June 2013.

#### **3.3.2 Internet Access**

**Soggy Paws - May 2013 - Majuro:** We were in the South Mooring field, and had NO problems getting NTA wifi from the boat, using just an Alfa USB-wifi "booster" in the cockpit, with no extra antennas. Once connected to a good signal, the wifi was pretty good. Once signed on to an NTA hotspot, you have 3 options... buy wifi time by the minute, by the MB, or sign up for a monthly fee (the latter is a new option as of May 1, 2013). The both by the minute and by the MB is fairly expensive (10 cents per minute or \$1 per MB), but convenient and easy if you're just going to be there for a day or two, or are just a casual user of internet.

If you plan to be around Majuro for some time, go down to the NTA office with your laptop or external wifi device, and sign up for their monthly wifi plan. A \$5 sign-up fee and \$35/month gives you unlimited wifi (pay the first month in advance and then your payment is due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of each month).

I found that at least one of the NTA wifi signals available in the harbor seemed to be a bad connection--it would not give out a proper connection. If you are having this trouble, try connecting to a different

**Downtime - December 2012 - Majuro:** The way we have been getting connected is to go to the Tide Table Resurant and for \$15 you get 24 hours of reasonably fast internet. Option 2 is to Chinese place across the road and buy by the hour \$6/hr but it is faster. You can get an air card but it is \$10/MB! so the best is the Tide table 24 hour plan...unless you link an Iphone and buy sim-card \$15 plus setup of \$15 plus \$15/mo and then you can Skype all you like!

**Savannah - November 2011:** Internet here is even more expensive than in French Polynesia and we can't get it from the boat. So when we need it, we pack up our laptop and keyboard and trek up to the internet café and try to hurry through everything in the 50 minutes that our \$5 bought us. Yesterday we decided to bite the bullet and buy a cell phone with wifi. Since we're going to be here a while, we figured it was pretty cost effective. The wifi package on the cell

phone is only \$15, but we still have to be in a hotspot to use it. So it doesn't eliminate the need to pack everything up and go to the café, but it does cut our costs down considerably.

**Before - June 2011:** There are at least 15 places for Hotspots where you can buy cards; \$5.00/50 minutes \$10.00/100 minutes. Our favorites: Tidetable, drink beer and eat sashimi while e-mailing. Dar Coffee Corner Go down street(?) between Formosa and tan store, ahead you will see DAR services. To the east is a stand alone building with same paint job, the Coffee Corner. Like many of the businesses, it may look closed but it is open. Marshallese owned, AC and everyone agrees faster WIFI. No beer. Many use an external USB antenna, with 80% success. Everyone is generally at the hotspots. We find our Sat phone is cheaper and more convenient than long distance or the cell phone dance.

### **3.3.3 Mail**

The Post Office is just across the street from RRE/Shoreline (primary dinghy dock).

Here is the mailing address for transient cruisers in Majuro.

If sending from the U.S.

<Your Name>  
SY <Boat Name>, Yacht in Transit  
General Delivery  
Majuro, MH 96960

If sending from somewhere other than the U.S.:

<Your Name>  
SY <Boat Name>, Yacht in Transit  
General Delivery  
Majuro 96960  
Republic of Marshall Islands

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We had heard that the Post Office will send mail back if you don't pick it up within a certain time. However, someone else on the net told us that if it is obviously yacht mail, they will ask Seal before they send it back. So if you have having mail sent ahead, it is a good idea to contact Seal (email or SSB net) and let them know you are coming.

**Before - June 2011:** It took 6 days for parts ordered online to arrive and 3 weeks for mail.

## **3.4 Things to See and Do Around Majuro Atoll**

### **3.4.1 Dive Sites Around Majuro**

**Soggy Paws - October 2013:** We got tanks filled at a place just behind the Shoreline dinghy docks, by a guy named Leigh 455-1240. He wasn't around all the time, but we'd call him and find out when he'd be there filling tanks, then drop the tanks off ahead of time. Tank fills were \$4/tank.

A guy named Brian (affiliated with the Indies Trader boats) was also doing fills, but his compressor was broken when we were there in October. Brian also rents gear. His place is accessed easiest by dinghy on the left side (as you approach) the little cove inshore from the South mooring field. (ask Seal to point it out to you).

If you are looking for dive tanks, Matt Holly had some near-new tanks for sale for \$150 each in good condition.

The below information came from s/v French Kiss, this doesn't look like his original work, but copied from the Yokwe Divers website:

You can spend years on Majuro and still find dive sites that you haven't had a chance to visit. The lagoon is loaded with variety from coral pinnacles to deep walls to wrecks -- there is something for everyone.

Coral pinnacles rising from depths ranging from 10 to 120 feet are typical of many lagoon sites in the Marshall Islands and Majuro is no exception. Home to a diverse range of Pacific sea life, the pinnacles are like a busy city center. Schools of tiny, brightly colored fish peek through and around clusters of coral. The pinnacles offer an exciting dive for novice and advanced divers alike.

A few minutes from the Yokwe Divers dock lies **The Bridge**, a favorite for many divers in Majuro. Plate coral splattered with clusters of Black Coral and Tridacna clams embedded in the coral base, drops down a steep wall that exceeds 130 feet. Whitetip and Silvertip sharks cruise the area and Napoleon wrasse hover in the shallow areas. Expect to see schools of Red Snapper and brightly colored Angel Fish as well as Helfrecht's Dartfish at this popular dive site.

**Aneko Island** has both shallow and deep water coral heads that are incredibly large. From 12-90 feet, you will find anemone, cleaner shrimp, resting turtles and a deep water coral garden.

**Kalalen Pass** is a favorite location for drift dives. Diving depths run from 30-130 feet at the Pass and steep coral walls drop into the crystal clear water. Pelagic species cruise the currents in search of food and you can expect to see sea turtles, rays, several species of sharks and sea turtles on a typical day. Silvertip sharks over 8 feet in length have been seen at this location.

**Kalalen Island**, located adjacent to the Pass, has a lagoon side reef that boasts both hard and soft corals and divers exploring the coral will be thrilled as they discover butterfly fish, triggerfish and the elusive octopus hiding in the coral gardens. Further east, in areas called

**Second Island**, a gradual slope down the coral head drops to a sandy bottom at around 120 feet. Whitetip sharks share this area with shrimp gobys and Grass eels are commonly sighted.

The **North Shore outer reef** on the ocean side of Kalalen Island is a pristine gradual slope populated by thousands of table corals, anemone, and tens of thousands of tropical reef fish. Schools of fusiliers rain down from the surface as you glide toward the transition from slope to near vertical wall. Sharks, rays, dogtooth tuna, and turtles are also seen here regularly.

Even further east, **Fourth Island** offers a popular site for easy second dives as well as for beginning divers because of the extremely calm conditions usually found in this area. Bring your camera because in addition to schools of Kiribati Red Snapper and thousands of tropical

reef fish, you can see 3 different species of anemone and anemone fish including the Marshallese Three Striped Clownfish.

Incoming tides at **The Aquarium** may offer one of the most exciting dives of your trip. Ranging from 60-130+ feet on the outer reef wall of Kalalen Channel, this natural "horse shoe" shaped feature creates an area where tidal flow is compressed, concentrating the flow of rich, open ocean sea water as it enters Majuro Lagoon. This is the place to see Horse Eye Jacks, Black & White and Red snapper, Barracuda, and all manner of reef fish numbering in the MANY tens of thousands. On the sandy ocean floor, you will see sleeping reef sharks and Sting-rays, Gray reef, White-tip, and Black-tip sharks. Schools of Rainbow Runner, Napoleon Wrasse, and huge schools of fusiliers are also common here.

**Bokolap Island** offers an exciting experience on a dive site ranging from 12-120 feet in depth. Beautiful coral heads, 4 species of anemone, clownfish, Harlequin shrimp, 3 species of lionfish, colorful nudibranchs and more fish than you can imagine are here for the viewing. A WWII U.S. torpedo plane sits at 115 feet at this location. A **Grumman Avenger** is also located in this area at 120 ft. depth. Downed by anti aircraft fire, this Avenger crash-landed on the ocean-side of Bokolap Island, washed over the reef, and sunk inside the lagoon where it rests today. The tail section lies up the rubble slope and is home to a family of three striped Marshallese clown-fish.

If you are looking for extreme visibility, in excess of 140 feet, you will hope for the mild weather conditions that will allow you to dive **The Riviera**. This northern reef location runs across nearly two miles of untouched coral reef. A drift along the reef will reveal sharks sleeping on the bottom - within your visibility but over the recreational diving limits. This area drops to over 130 feet and is populated by schools of huge red snapper, Mantas and Spotted Eagle Rays and coral reef in every color imaginable.

Just northwest of the **Uluga Wall** is another dive that is accessible only in the best weather conditions. Known as **Shark Street**, this is a deep reef on the northeast outer reef of Majuro Lagoon. Divers have reported sightings of 25 or more sharks on a single dive. Thick forests of black coral and schools of Napoleon Wrasse make this a thrill for anyone. Shore Dives are popular with local divers and good shore diving sites can be found on the southern reef wall a few miles west of the Yokwe Divers shop. Weather conditions and local knowledge are important when attempting shore diving which may require entry through breaking waves and a possibility of strong currents. The south shore wall ranges from 20 to over 130 feet in depth and you will be rewarded with schools of Dogtooth Tuna and Grey Reef Sharks. Gorgonian Sea Fans ride the current on the vertical walls and drop-offs of these area - commonly referred to as Mile 14, Mile 15 and Mile 17.

**Wreck Diving** gives you the best of everything. Explorers enjoy the mystery of the wrecks and the incredible variety of marine life that can be found in every nook and cranny of a sunken structure. Photographers are thrilled by the shafts of light that penetrate through holes and open decks into the dark interiors. In a nation with so much WWII history and a heritage of water transportation as a way of life, you can expect to find a multitude of underwater structures including ships and airplanes - some intentionally sunk and functioning as artificial reefs, others sometimes referred to as "natural wrecks". A sunken freighter, The **Kabilok**, once sailed between the outer islands and Majuro, hauling copra and supplies. She lies on her side on an 80' sandy bottom in Majuro Lagoon. A favorite for night dives and underwater photographers,

the Kabilok offers safe, interesting penetration into the open cargo hold and is home to colorful sponges, whip coral, and tropical fish of many species.

On night dives, beautiful batfish and puffers take refuge in and around the wreck.

**Ejit Island (The Parking Lot)** at 10-120 feet is the location of a U.S. military dumpsite. A small coral pinnacle marks the spot where Jeeps, Trucks, a Navy Tug boat, and a landing craft were sunk at the end of WWII. The relics, now artificial reefs, are home to colorful sponges, corals, and tropical fish of many species. This area is a favorite for photography and exploration.

The **Grumman "Duck"**, just a few miles from the Yokwe Divers dock sits inverted on the bottom. It seems to have crashed on approach to Majuro's WWII carrier re-supply airfield, which was adjacent to this site. Used primarily for search & rescue and reconnaissance, there are said to be fewer than 10 surviving Ducks left in the world. This aircraft is also home to hundreds of fish, sponges, and corals. The "Duck" is in excellent condition and steeped in the history of this area of operation during WWII.

Just 500 meters from our dock at the Marshall Islands Resort, an **F6F Hellcat** sits in 115 of water. It was pushed overboard from one of the five aircraft carriers that were in Majuro Lagoon in late 1944. The Grumman F6F Hellcat was the U.S. Navy's primary fighter brought into service to battle against the Japanese Zero. The control stick, rudder pedals, and throttles are still intact and the wings are folded back in pre-flight storage position. Hundreds of tropical fish, sponges, oysters, and corals have made their homes there.

In the same general area there are other wrecks to be explored. A short 5 minutes from our dock lies the **Ratak-Ralik**. A dive of 60 - 92 feet will place you on this 120' freighter that sank in the late 1980's. The engine room is accessible and very open penetrations are made through the wheelhouse and the hold. Expect to see thousands of fish on this dive. Within 200 yards the Evangeline offers an upright 85' wreck with a wheelhouse and exposed hatch into the engine room.

Majuro's latest find, the **Cenpac**, was discovered in January 2003. The Cenpac is a 150' refrigerator ship that was used to haul copra and also passengers and supplies between Majuro and the outer islands. It sank in 135 feet of water about ten years ago. Schools of Spade Fish and Giant Sweetlips call the wreck home.

Midway on the western atoll between Laura & Rong-Rong is a **B-24 Liberator**, resting in 12 feet of water. A popular site for snorkeling, this classic American bomber was damaged during a bombing run from Kiribati prior to the U.S. occupation of the Marshall Islands. The pilots brought her down on the reef top at low tide. The pilots were captured but the plane remained and was scuttled by the Japanese soldiers who were stationed here at the time. Although the fuselage has broken apart and been buried in the surrounding sand, more than 2/3 of the wing structure is still intact with all four engines and props. The belly machinegun turret is now the host of corals and fish.

A **DC-3** has become a very interesting artificial reef, covered in corals and fish and located near shore at Anemonit Island. Penetrations are easily and safely made through the open aft section where the plane was dismantled. The area is dotted with other natural coral heads teeming with life and is a favorite of novice wreck and reef divers.

The below dive sites are all inside the atoll, except the FAD and the Bridge. Most of the World War 2 sites are discussed extensively in Matt Holly's writeup Submerged Cultural Resources in the Majuro Lagoon, which is available as a PDF file (check the RMI-HPO.com website).

Some waypoints are listed twice as I have received waypoints from various sources, and where they don't agree, I've left them both. The ones we (Soggy Paws) have personally dived on are starred.

Aquarium 1	N07-09.84190'	E171-10.75740'	Blue water spot for income tide dive
Aquarium 2	N07-09.431'	E171-12.126'	Blue water spot for income tide dive, will take you into the "aquarium"
Avangeline Wreck	N07-05.698'	E171-22.564'	Small cargo ship lying upright in 60' near downtown Majuro
Avenger Plane	N07-08.250'	E171-17.840'	Avenger Torpedo dive bomber 110' with good coral and critters shallower
B24 airplane	N07-11.931'	E171-03.284'	WWII Wreck
Laura B24 airplane	N07-11.9550'	E171-03.185'	A very shallow snorkeling site with the wings and some of fuselage of a B24 Liberator
Cenpac refer shipwreck	N07-08.571'	E171-15.279'	140' ft to sand, 90' to deck. Good sized cargo ship lying upright
Coca Cola Heaven	N07-07.294'	E171-21.603'	The end of the old pier, lots of debris here. 20-25'
*DC3			Just inshore of the east-most mooring at Enemonit, in 10-15' of water. Wings missing.
Grumman Duck	N07-04.866'	E171-19.552'	Unusual biwing flying boat lying upside down in 90' deep off Long Is Hotel
Jenrock Shipwreck	N07-06.625'	E171-21.983'	Jenrock longliner shipwreck. A small longliner lying upright in 140' near downtown
*Martin Mariner	N07-05.549'	E171-22.595'	Large Seaplane Debris Field
Ocean Glory Shipwreck	N07-05.236'	E171-22.410'	Small longliner wreck lying on its side in 90'. May have a mooring attached to it. Directly N of small boat passage into MIR.
*Old Jap Pier	N07-06.98530'	E171-21.94060'	WWII stuff
Pinacle #9	N07-06.10600'	E171-15.825'	Large coral reef in lagoon off airport. Bombs, depth charges @60' on east side
Ralik Ratak Shipwreck	N07-05.70800'	E171-22.46800'	Small cargo ship lying on its side in 100' in downtown area.
*The Parking Lot	N07-07.254'	E171-21.051'	Tie to the prominent pole in the shallow water, swim east around the coral point until you see a line going off into deeper water, follow the line.
*Hellcat	N07-05.468'	E171-22.287'	Hellcat lying nose down in 95' off MIR. Tail in about 60ft
*Matt Holly's Folly	N07-06.166'	E171-22.440'	4 Wrecks in S Mooring Field. Start at first one and follow ropes from wreck to wreck
*Beech Airplane	N07-06.304'	E171-22.429'	Beech light twin in 20' near S Mooring Field
Uliga Longliner	N07-06.433'	E171-22.061'	140' by Shoreline
The Bridge	N07-04.919'	E171-21.320'	Fish and coral on a steep wall
FAD off Bridge	N07-02.744'	E171-21.147'	Outside atoll. Anchored floating debris for fishing. Likely to have big pelagics around.

### **3.4.2 Mieceo Beach Yacht Club Activities**

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013:** We were pleased to be greeted when we arrived in Majuro by a representative of the MBYC, and handed an information package for Majuro. That was a nice touch, and full of useful information.

Majuro is a little sleepy in the summer, from a cruiser perspective. Many of the transient cruisers are only here during South Pacific cyclone season, so the boats dwindle to the "regular crowd" after about April (except for the diving contingent like us, who arrived in April).

We are sorry to have missed the winter race series held by the yacht club, and the generally higher level of social interaction when more boats are here. But we still participated in a number of organized and impromptu yacht club activities:

- Saturday yoga
- Sunday bike rides
- Tuesday night "cruisers eat out" nights, and a once-a-month quiz night
- Weekend cruises to Majuro atoll sites

You don't HAVE to be a member of MBYC to join in these activities, but MBYC membership is really cheap, and with an MBYC card, you get a discount of 10% from several frequented establishments in Majuro, so the membership pays for itself. Our information packet included an MBYC membership application.

The daily VHF net keeps everyone connected and informed. Whenever there is anything water-based going on in Majuro, the yachties are usually solicited to help out. One example--during the Pacific Islands Forum (political heads from the Pacific Basin getting together to discuss issues), the visiting dignitaries were treated to a traditional Marshallese canoe ride. The yachties were asked to supply dinghies to ferry the dignitaries out to the canoes and then tend the canoes as they passaged across the lagoon.

During the local fishing tournaments, there is always the opportunities to volunteer to help out.

**Amulet - April 2007:** After 34 days Majuro grows on you and many find it hard to break away. After a while you don't see the crap lying about, derelict cars and boats used as breakwaters and land fill, etc., you get used to it.

On the plus side you get used to the American style groceries and restaurant food. The Ace Hardware becomes your home away from the boat. The social scene with the yacht club and other cruisers is nice. You make sure to wake up for the 07:30 VHF cruisers net and never miss the weekly newspaper that comes out on Thursdays.

We took 2nd place (actual and PHRF corrected) in the annual Coconut Cup Race! The old fat girl can still pick up her skirts when urged to. This was after re-provisioning with about \$1000 worth of goods and with full water and fuel tanks. To be fair it was a brisk day and we made lucky tactical decisions which worked!

The local resorts and businesses really support this event which included 10 yachts, 8 local canoes and 2 windsurfers. Everyone we've met in Majuro conveys a welcome attitude toward the cruisers. It seems we are a significant contributor to the tourist trade as they have little other



tourism. They are trying to promote the diving business as they have so many WWII artifacts among the outer islands virtually untouched.

### **3.4.3 Alele Museum**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The Alele Museum is a small but very nice little museum, which is worth a visit. It is located on the main road right next to Uliga Dock. The staff is very friendly, and will tell you a lot if you ask them.

### **3.4.4 Topolar Copra Processing Plant**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** Copra is very important to the economy in the Marshall Islands and especially for the people living on the outer islands. From all the islands the copra is collected and brought to Majuro for processing. The price of copra is fixed by the government and is currently at 53 cents for one pound of dried copra. A bag is 180-200 pounds, and a full year's production for one person in the outer islands is typically 20 to 30 bags.

If you go to the Topolar plant they will happily show you around, and show you how coconut oil is extracted from the copra. It is well worth a visit, and sets the visits to the outer islands in perspective when you encounter people making copra.

## **3.5 Cruising Majuro Atoll**

**Breakfree - July 2013:** Besides the lovely and easy moorings at Enemanit and Eneko, we have found a few additional out-of-the-way places to anchor in the Majuro Lagoon... Roguren Island and \_\_\_ Island. (details forthcoming we hope). We have also anchored off the western end of Calalin Island, on the east side of the pass, as a day-snorkel stop. There is a nice sand patch in about 30 feet.

**Visit Marshall Islands - Mar 2013:** There are two islands on the Northern side of Majuro atoll that are open to all Yachts that would like to anchor there or come to land without the need for prior permission.

**Enemanit Island** is open to all yachts. It is about four and a half miles to the west of Uliga. As you come alongside Enemanit, you will see a low wall jutting out perpendicular to the beach. You should anchor either off the wall or to the west of it. Please be aware that the local dive operators use the area to the east of the wall and they request no yachts use this area so that the coral is safe from anchor erodes. Anchoring at Enemanit is between 35 and 60 feet and is good holding, as long as you drop in a big sandy spot and avoid the coral heads. It is permitted to go ashore at Enemanit.

**Eneko Island** is RRE owned and is the second place where you can anchor and land at in Majuro without prior permission. Snorkeling is highly recommended as this island boasts some of the best snorkeling in Majuro.

Also, one mooring exists off the Marshall Island Resort (MIR). This mooring is maintained by the Yacht Club, and there is a small charge to use this mooring. As always, you should inspect the mooring yourself before trusting your boat on it.

You are strongly advised to dive on any mooring you use. If you feel the mooring is not safe, either contact the owners or reinforce the mooring with your own chain.

It is not advisable to anchor in front of the downtown Uliga area as the ground has a shallow amount of sand on rock. It is possible to anchor to the north of RRE in front of Kirt Pinho's area (which can usually be identified by a large crane) and between the capital building and the Marshall Islands Resort. However security may be an issue.

Security in the main anchorages tends to be very good, given the close proximity to houses in a developing country. Remember that it is advisable to lock your boat when ashore and avoid leaving anything of importance on the decks.

To anchor off any other islands in Majuro lagoon (including Kalalin at the main pass); please contact the Marshall Islands Visitors Bureau (MIVA) to organize permission from the landowners.

**Savannah - November 2011:** After ordering our new computers and a few other things, we thought it might be nice to head out to one of the other islands in the atoll to swim, snorkel, dive, whatever...basically, stay away from places where we can spend money and go ahead and get our minds off all of our latest setbacks.

There are two islands here that have free moorings. I would love to tell you what they're called but everyone calls them something different (and nothing near what they are on the charts) and they're impossible to spell, so I'll tell you that they're only about 6-8 miles away from Majuro and they're very pretty.

Our friends on Renova went with us and the first few days it did nothing but rain. We managed to explore the beach for 30 minutes or so in between down-pours, but other than that, we didn't get much done. But once the clouds parted (briefly and intermittently), we got in a few dives, some good snorkels and even managed to throw in some school every now and then.

Seriously though, the snorkeling was really great. There aren't many big animals around (well, none actually), but there are hundreds of fish and some of the best coral I've seen since we went diving in the Bahamas 5 years ago.

The downside is that the beaches here are littered with trash. Presumably, it washes out from the city with the tide and then ends up on the beaches on the outer islands. As we sit on a mooring tonight, we actually saw a guy just throw a big bag of trash in to the water. The winds are light right now so you can see everything just floating around.

### **3.6 Cruising the Outer Islands**

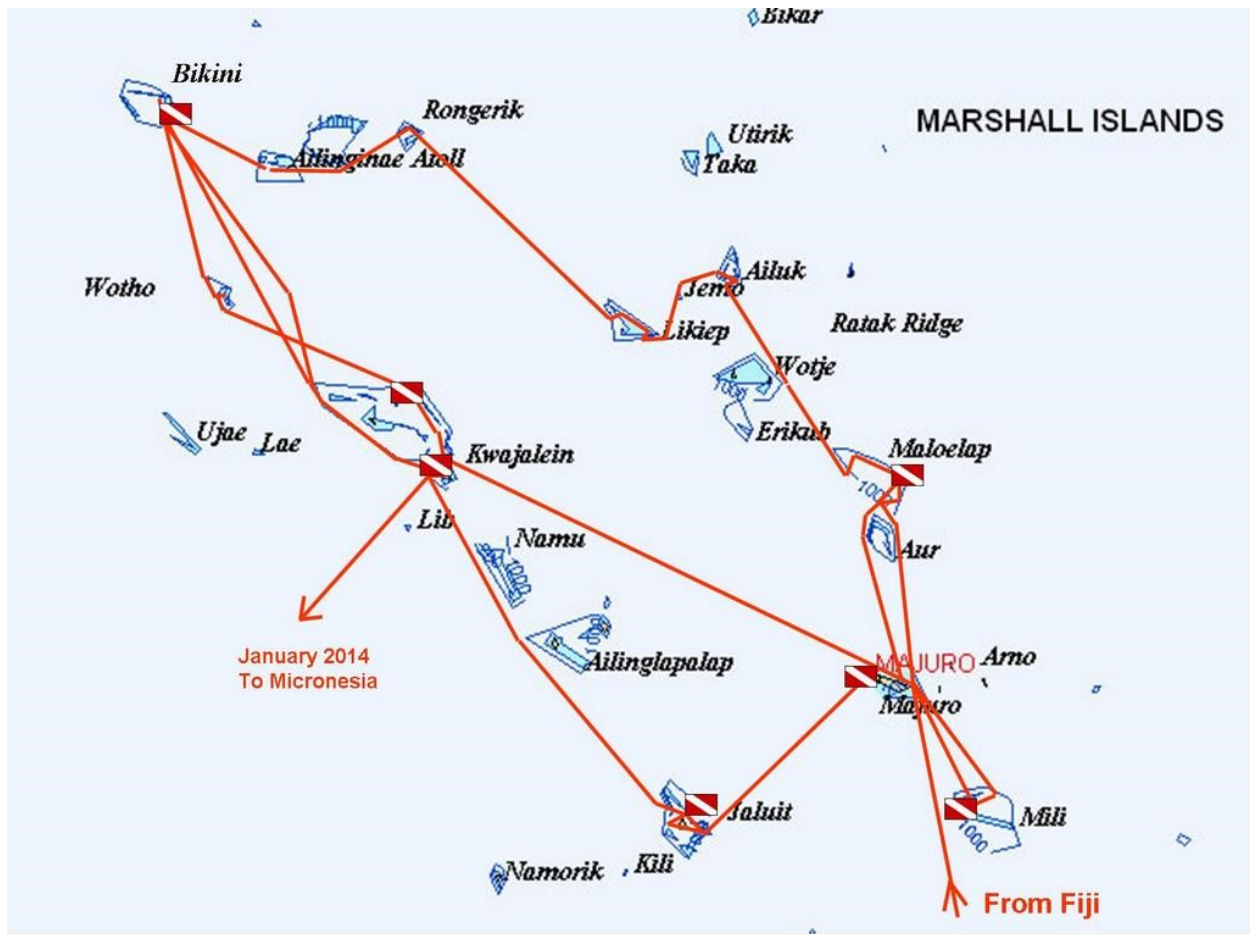
**Iris – Oct 2023:** We arrived in Majuro Friday morning, and went to the Ministry for Cultural and Internal Affairs and asked for the outer island permits late in the afternoon. Tuesday morning we were back asking for a status on the permits. We had applied for Aur, Maloelap, Wotje and Kwajalein. Nothing had happened, but the nice office lady in charge of the permits decided that she could sign the first three, because as she said: "They just love to see you". The one for Kwajalein turned out to be a little more tricky. They ended up sending it to us on our email, but it took 10 days to get the signature from Kwajalein.

**Alice - May 2023** I totally agree with previous writers, everyone should visit the outer islands even if the paperwork is a headache. You need to have a lot of time and start the process way ahead of time for your cruising permits. You also need to remind them many times to actually get them. The moment you stop remind them they stop doing anything.

The cruising permit for Rongelap/Rongelip is the easiest to get, because you can take the permit yourself to the Rongelap town hall and have it signed. To get cruising permit for Bikini you have to email the counsel yourself and ask. Make sure you explain that you are a private yacht with no passenger. The normal fee to visit Bikini is 10 000 dollars (a little too much for our budget) but when I asked and explained that we are just a normal family and have no passengers, they reduced the fee to 50 dollars in exchange that I wrote a short article with some pictures of our visit that he could use for marketing.

We never succeeded to get a cruising permit for Ebeye and Kwajalein atoll. They just didn't answer. I heard about other sailors going there without a permit and had a lot of troubles. We went there anyway and had no problem clearing out from there at no costs. We only stopped in Ebeye for a couple of days for provisioning and clearing out. If we wanted to cruise around in the atoll it might have been harder.

**Soggy Paws – May-Oct 2013:** We agree whole-heartedly with Sloepmouche, that visiting cruisers should make an effort to get out of Majuro. Go into Majuro, enjoy the social life for a week or two, do your provisioning, order your stuff from Amazon, but don't wait for it to arrive, and then pick an easy weather window to explore another atoll.



On our arrival in Majuro, we went straight to Internal Affairs, and got permits for almost all the atolls. It doesn't cost anything to get the permit--just a few minutes of your time filling out paperwork (and that can be minimize with judicious use of the computer and/or a copy machine).

Remember that you can reprovision, and get cell phone and decent internet, in Kwajalein at Ebeye Island. You can also receive parcels there--get a friend currently in Majuro to ask the Post Office in Majuro to forward your waiting parcels to you at Ebeye--they usually show up in a day or two (chat with the Ebeye Post Office manager first, so he knows they are coming). You can also get gas and diesel fuel, water, and some provisions at good prices from the "3<sup>rd</sup> Island Store" on Roi Island at the north end of Kwajalein (but no cell or internet here). See the Kwaj section for more details.

So, plan a 2 month cruise from Majuro with 3 weeks out, a stop in Ebeye for provisions and internet, and another 3 weeks out. Then go back to Majuro, reprovision again, and you can head out for another easy destination.

If you have OpenCPN with CM93 charts, and Google Earth charts, navigation within the atolls is easy. Crossing lagoons is easy in most conditions--the water is usually 100-200 feet deep, with widely scattered coral heads, easily avoided.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** The outer atolls are the best part of island countries and visiting them is the only way to really meet the true natives of the Marshalls, and appreciate your visit.

We were surprised to see a majority of cruisers never leave Majuro during their time in the country. Most boats this past season seem to have come here to avoid the cyclone season in the South Pacific and kept comparing Majuro with Fiji! Some were quite disappointed in the little of the Marshalls they explored. Expect little and enjoy all the positive aspects, is our way of thinking. Try not to compare using a very selective memory ... enjoy all the great things that any place you visit has to offer!

We heard reports of natives being aloof and not so friendly ... we were very pleased to discover that not to be the case. If you go around greeting everyone you see, even from afar, with "Yokwe" and a big smile on your face, people will usually return the greeting. Stop and let people approach you or even go slowly towards them, they might be a little shy because they see very few visitors and their English might be rudimentary ... but that does not make them any less friendly!

Some cruisers reported islanders not growing their own food and having nothing to barter with ... we found, on the contrary, a willingness to trade their fruits, vegetables, seafood, coconut crabs as well as handicrafts! (We cruised Apr-Aug which seemed to be breadfruit, pandanus, and lemon season, which may have made a difference)

In four months of cruising the Ratak chain, we never saw any other cruisers ... so if you are looking for rarely traveled cruising grounds, cruise the Marshall islands ... during the best season – April to October.

*Sloepmouche's reports on their stops in the outer islands are below in the appropriate sections.*

## **4 Atolls South and East of Majuro**

### **4.1 Mili**

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** We wanted to go to Mili during the near windless period in August to dive on wrecks on the leeward side of the lagoon. We ended up having to motorsail the whole way from Majuro due to light winds. It was a very easy short overnight passage.

We came in the Tokawa Passage (NW-most passage) at first light. It was easy, especially with tracks from Westward II and Google Earth charts. There was some current in the pass, but not bad in the light conditions.

We first stopped at the anchorage right near the pass, labeled Port Rhin on the chart, behind Tokawa Island. Westward II had told us that the policeman who spoke good English was here (Kazzi). But fishermen on the island said that neither the mayor nor the policeman were there. They directed us to **Alu/Nanru Island** in the NW corner of the lagoon. We motored there and anchored in very calm conditions (this wouldn't be a comfortable anchorage in normal easterlies) at 06-12.196N / 171-43.629. We found the acting mayor there. Kazzi was also reportedly there, but we didn't take the time to try to locate him. The mayor spoke barely any English. It was dead low tide when we were there, so a little difficult getting the dinghy in. We ended up dropping the guys on the reef and they walked in, and then waded back out to be picked up when finished.

Trying to take advantage of the no-wind period, we then hurried down to **Mili Island**, where we anchored at 06-05.14N / 171-05.04E, near where we had heard there was a Japanese shipwreck and an American B-25 bomber. We spent 3 light air days anchored here exploring the wrecks and also spent a day hiking ashore looking at old Japanese installations and airplane debris. A piece of the shipwreck is visible at low tide, sticking out of the water a couple of feet. This is a decent snorkel.

We found water clarity around Mili to be best when the tide was DROPPING. As soon as the tide started up (using WXTide32 for Mili), the water all of a sudden had lots of particulate. The bomber is in 25' in the sand, just ESE of where we anchored. When the water is clear, you can snorkel to find it. We never found the A24 wreckage that Matt Holly describes, north of the shipwreck.

We only spent one afternoon ashore on Mili, walking around trying to find old Japanese gun emplacements. We pulled our dinghy high up on the beach in front of a randomly-selected house, and were greeted with smiles and "Yokwe". We left our dinghy there under Selena's coconut tree, and it was unmolested when we got back.

The people ashore at Mili Island were very friendly. It is a very nice clean island, with all the trash picked up and the yards nicely kept. Mili is very lush, compared to the northern atolls--lots of banana, papaya, breadfruit, coconut. I am sure you could trade for whatever locally-grown things you need.

There are WW2 bomb craters everywhere on Mili Island--the US forces bombed the crap out of Mili before finally coming ashore. We found some very awesome gun emplacements, a few with the huge guns still mounted, along the western shore near the end of the runway. We also found a Japanese Betty bomber and 2 Japanese Zero wrecks. Basically we walked out the runway to the western shore, then beat the jungle along the shore (a little bit) til we found stuff, then circled back left toward the village along the shore most of the way. See our waypoint list below. The last waypoint was from a second trip. It is on the northern end of the atoll, and there are several items there.

<b>Description</b>	<b>Lat</b>	<b>Long</b>
Betty (Plane) Wreckage	N6 05.191	E171 44.119
Bunker	N6 05.242	E171 43.607
Ammo Bunker	N6 05.147	E171 43.575
Large Gun	N6 05.116	E171 43.573
Large Gun	N6 05.086	E171 43.564
Observation Post Bunker	N6 05.053	E171 43.564
Water Tank	N6 04.992	E171 43.546
Clearing	N6 04.938	E171 43.535
West End of Runway	N6 04.882	E171 43.601
Zero (Plane)	N6 04.806	E171 43.597
Zero (Plane)	N6 04.798	E171 43.553
Building	N6 04.710	E171 43.684
127mm Guns	N6 04.661	E171 43.686
127mm Guns	N6 04.679	E171 43.701
Big Generators	N6 04.691	E171 43.751
Bunker	N6 04.668	E171 43.800
Pillbox	N6 04.668	E171 43.849
Gun in Water	N6 04.657	E171 43.888

Guns in Water	N6 04.653	E171 43.939
Bunker	N6 04.923	E171 44.155
Command Bunker	N6 04.968	E171 44.196
Machine	N6 05.031	E171 44.310
Bunker now House	N6 05.077	E171 44.278
Bunker	N6 05.138	E171 44.280
Bunkers & 127 Double-Guns	N6 06.32x	E171 43.93x

If you're interested in this stuff, get a copy of the 1994 Henrik Christiansen WW2 Archaeological report on Mili Atoll (can be obtained as a PDF file from the Historical Preservation Office in Majuro). There is lots of other stuff on the island, laid out in maps in that report.

Our second stop in Mili was **Ennanlik Island** (what Westward II called **Enejena**), where we dropped our anchor at 06-12.472N / 171-58.625E, in mixed coral and sand, in 45-50 feet. Shallower, and it was all coral, deeper and it got deep very quickly. There wasn't much protection from the SE winds we had, but they were very light.

**Westward II - May 2013:** Here are the anchorages we stopped in Mili. The conditions were 15-20 knots NE - E the whole time.

Tokowa Island	06°13.142'N	171°47.983'E	anchor 25m, boat 10m, swell invades,
Jobenor Island	06°14.130'N	171°53.348'E	11m, little rolly, esp high tide, watch for bommies
Enejena Island	06°12.464'N	171°58.592'E	Anchor 17m, boat 27m, calm anchorage, coral/sand
Near Wau Island	06°05.726'N	172°06.227'E	10m protected by reef, very calm
Enedoul Island	06°02.033'N	172°06.123'E	anchor 18m, boat 26m
Enejena Island	06°12.444'N	171°58.598'E	19m
Jobenor Island	06°14.141'N	171°53.349'E	11m

We checked in with our Internal Affairs permit and paid our fee, at Tokawa Island. We met Kazzi ashore there, he speaks English. He helped us locate the Mayor, and do our paperwork without going to Mili Island. (The Mayor does not live on Mili Island in the SE corner of the atoll).

**Learnativity - May 2011:** We stopped in Mili on our way from Majuro to Fiji.

We left Majuro mid-afternoon so as to time our arrival in Mili to be about 10am when there is good light. Our departure from Majuro couldn't have been better as it was mostly blue skies, sunny and about 15 knots of wind.

As we cleared the NW pass out of Majuro and got into open ocean a pod of over 30 bottlenose dolphins came to wish us well and guided us out to the far NW corner of the atoll.

We continued down the west coast of the atoll as the sun set and we started our first night sail together. Once clear of the SW corner of Majuro atoll we were out of the lee of Majuro and into

open sea and more wind and set a course SE for Mili and had a great night sail all the way there.

The wind kept creeping southward and so we had it mostly on the nose for the majority of the sail and had to keep bearing off a bit to the south as we were sailing right on the edge of what we can sail upwind which is about 35-40 degrees off the wind. As we got closer to Mili we were too far west to make it under sail and so for the last few hours we had to use the motor to help get us the last bit East into the pass on the NW corner of Mili.

The pass is small but plenty big enough and we made it through about 10am just as planned to give us good light for the visual navigation you need to do inside the atolls as you watch for coral heads (bommies).

Once inside the atoll we sailed down to the SW corner to the small village of Mili where the Mayor lives, to show him our inter Marshall Island sailing papers and to ask permission to stay.

However just as we were about to set the anchor I smelled something not right coming out of the engine room and had to shut down the engine. Fortunately we had just arrived at a good anchoring depth and were able to get the anchor down and set so we were secure in the growing wind and waves. As we were setting the anchor however the electric windlass that pulls our very large (75kg) anchor and chain up suddenly stopped working. Not a problem for setting the anchor but this meant we weren't going anywhere until we fixed the windlass as taking it up by hand is rather difficult.

Fortunately it didn't take long to find that as I suspected the problem was that the rubber impellor pump on the sea water pump for our wet exhaust system on the main engine had disintegrated and needed to be replaced. This is something I've done many times in the past and can almost do in my sleep now and it only took about an hour to have the engine back up and running.

Turning to the windlass problem it was blowing the high amperage circuit breaker each time we turned it on and after some testing it turned out to be a rather nasty problem as the main ground cable on the windlass motor was shorting out and arcing so much it was melting some of the outer motor case.

However in the several hours it took to repair the problem with the windlass, the weather had deteriorated with winds up over 35 knots and the wind waves and swell were now approaching 2 meters. We were in the SW corner of the atoll and the swell and wind was coming from the NE, so we were in the worst spot for the build-up of both and it wasn't too safe to be launching the dinghy and going ashore. So we tried to raise the mayor on the VHF radio and let them know we were not going to be able to look after our clearance here and were going to head up to the north side to find a better anchorage.

It was about 4pm by the time we got the anchor up and were underway and we initially tried to sail diagonally across to the NE corner but with the opposing wind and waves our speed, even motoring was such that it would have been after sundown that we got there. So we headed for a more protected spot just inside the NW pass where we entered, and were able to find a perfect spot to anchor that had a good size coral reef that we could put between us and the swell and made for a very comfortable anchorage.

Anchored off **Port Rhin** on NW corner of Mili Atoll 06-13.181 N / 171-48.003 E



Some of the local men rowed out to welcome us and we were able to show them our papers and get their permission to stay. The wind and waves were still too much for us to go ashore in the dinghy to trade with them but were able to give them some of the goods we have been collecting to distribute to the people in these outer islands such as clothes, blankets and reading materials and we had a short but good visit with them.

After a few quick squalls passed over, the sun was back out in perfect time for us to enjoy an evening meal in the cockpit as the sun went down.

After a very restful sleep we awoke to a beautiful sunny day and spent a leisurely morning enjoying this idyllic spot while we made the big decision of the day; head off to sea or stay another day in Mili? It was perfect sailing weather so we decided to sail straight East across the lagoon inside the atoll and headed toward the NE corner where we could either anchor for the night in what looked like a lovely little spot amidst lots of coral and small islands or keep going out the small NE Passage and out to sea.

The winds are predominantly from the East this time of year and Fiji lies mostly south but a bit to the east of us so gaining the approximately 15nm of easting while inside the protection of the atoll helps us so be exiting out the east side we are in a better position when we leave here and head for Fiji.

The wind was pretty much due East, so directly opposing us or “on the nose” as it is called and so we used the opportunity to practice some tacking as we zig zagged our way across the lagoon. Tacking of course takes much longer to get where you are going and we enjoyed the leisurely pace and sunny weather punctuated by a few brief squalls during the afternoon.

Mid-afternoon we decided to anchor for the night and so we slowly motored our way through some coral reefs and found a great little spot to anchor just off two postcard perfect little palm islands with a long sandy beach connecting them and lots of coral reefs to break up some of the swell. It took two tries to find a nice sandy bottom in about 30 feet (9m) of water to drop the anchor into and avoid damaging any coral and by the time we let out about 200 feet (61m) of anchor chain we were already in 120 feet (37m) of water as the coral drops off quickly.

We soon lost most of our sun as the squalls became more frequent and strong and were now getting winds up over 30 knots when they came through. Each squall only lasts for 3 to 10 minutes but they were not getting more frequent and lasting longer without the usual clearing to clear skies between, so looks like we will be in for a windy night and a bit more boat motion.

Anchored off **Ennanlik Island** and pass in NE corner of Mili Atoll

Position: 06-12.217 N / 172-00.004 E

**Day 2:** As we expected last night was a series of frequent and more powerful squalls with winds up to 50 knots at times. Learnativity handles it well and just gets a bit noisy and roly. The wind shifted to the north and that puts us more in line with the swell so we roll much more and makes moving around a bit of a challenge but is fine when you are sitting and reading.

**Day 3:** More squalls through the night but less rain and the wind were keeping us more perpendicular to the sea swell so not as roly overnight. It was more gray skies when we awoke though it looked quite thin and the sun seemed to be doing its best to burn through. We get very spoiled and accustomed to clear blue skies and sun all the time! With the boat all good to go

and nothing compelling us to spend more time in Mili we decided to head out to sea and start the longer passages down to Fiji.

We pulled up the anchor just before 11am and headed east, winding our way through some last bits of coral outcroppings and over to the **NE Passage** out of Mili. Our charts said there was just enough depth (about 20 feet) for this pass to be safe for us to go through. We had talked to the captain of a large local boat who said this pass would be fine. This would put us a bit further east which was good and then we'd turn south and be off towards Funafuti.

As we approached the NE Passage, we could see that there was lots of distance, about 500m, between the two islands that marked this pass but our charts showed that there was significant coral outcroppings from each side. It was a bit daunting to see the large rollers breaking as the west-moving swell from the open ocean outside suddenly rose up from several thousand feet to only 20 feet above the coral in the pass. However we had the wind and the current opposing us so if anything did happen or we decided we didn't like the looks of this pass, we could easily turn back with the help of the wind and current and go to the main pass on the NW corner of Mili where we had entered the other day.

So we kept a close eye on the waves, watched for any colour change in the water that would indicate sudden depth changes and watched the depth meter as we steadily headed into the pass. Fortunately Learnativity has a large powerful engine which helps us stay in good control and push us through such passages and with all things seeming to match our charts and other information, we made the decision to go for it, gave it some more throttle and headed into the waves which were now rising up to about 5 meters/15 feet. Learnativity's length and weight helps us as well to cut through and ride such waves, and ones much larger and while it was an exciting ride for a few minutes, the depth meter never dipped much below 20 feet and was soon reading hundreds as we cleared the pass and headed out for open ocean.

We stayed heading east to gain good clearance from the island and to get out into slightly calmer water though the storms we had been seeing the past two days had clearly built up some significant swells and wind waves and the seas were running about 3m/10ft out of the east. Once well clear of Mili and the pass we put up our sails, pointed the bow SSE and we were on our way to Funafuti.

**One Boat's Problems at Mili - May 2012:** The catamaran Super Mario had problems when they made an unplanned stop at Mili enroute to Fiji from Majuro. They did not have an Internal Affairs permit, though they did reportedly offer to pay the \$50 Mili fee. Things started to unravel when the person who was there to take the \$50 fee said he couldn't give a receipt.

Reports differ on exactly what evolved over the next couple of days, but at one point the captain was told he was going to have to pay a \$10,000 fine for illegally stopping at Mili.

We have been told that it is permissible to stop at a Marshall Islands atoll when you are outward bound, but you should get the proper Internal Affairs permit and do the mayoral visit as appropriate to stopping at any atoll. Mili is difficult because the main villages are on the leeward side of the atoll where there's no protection in normal easterlies.

As for a receipt, several easy solutions are available, suggested to us by various people:

- Make 2 copies of your permit, give one up, and have the person taking the money sign and date the other copy, which you keep to prove that you paid the fee.

- Take a picture of you, your permit, the money, and the guy you're giving the money to. This is not just a nice pictorial remembrance of your visit, but also the best way to prove/show to any other person on the atoll that you paid the money, and whom you paid it to.

## 4.2 Jaluit

### 4.2.1 Passes

**Soggy Paws - September 2013:** We arrived at the **SE Pass** in good light at mid-day, with almost no wind and an incoming tide, so this pass was pretty easy. The current was behind us and we clocked 7.5 knots on the way in (about a 2 knot current). You will see a prominent marker ahead as you line up on the pass. You will be turning to the south to head for the harbor at Jabor BEFORE this marker. This is the SW-most of the two markers shown on our CM93 chart--the other one is missing.

Here are a couple of waypoints for coming in this pass:

Outside	05 55.65 N / 169 38.58 E
Mid Pass	05 55.60 N / 169 38.36 E
Just inside	05 55.51 N / 169 38.30 E
Well inside	05 55.30 N / 169 38.27 E

From here you can see the big pier off Jabor. Anchor in 45-60 feet of water SW-S of the pier.

We left Jaluit a week later via the easternmost of 3 openings at the **NE Pass**. Again it was very calm and we had pretty good visibility. Here are a few waypoints we used:

Well inside	06 03.21 N / 169 38.55 E
Inside	06 03.38 N / 169 38.18 E
Just inside	06 03.57 N / 169 37.81 E
Mid Pass	06 03.84 N / 169 37.76 E
Outside	06 04.27 N / 169 37.77 E

**Mr John IV - Spring 2011:** The entrance at **South East Pass** is easier than it looks and seems to get some protection from seas and swells by the land which 'hooks' out eastwards to the north of it.

Arriving off the Pass at 05-55.7N 169-38.7E stay off the clearly visible reef to your port, and proceed to 05-55.65N / 169-38.5E and then to 05-55.55N / 169-38.3E. From here head south until you see the dock, then curve around and anchor to the SW of the dock leaving room for local traffic.

If you are departing to the west, you can leave by the **SW Pass**..... it looks a little tricky but once you get close its all very apparent and leaving in the morning you'll have the sun behind you on your way across the lagoon.

## 4.2.2 Arrival and Formalities

### Soggy Paws - September 2013:

The mayoress's name is Billa. She is a very nice lady, and speaks very good english. She can be contacted by email at [billajacklick@gmail.com](mailto:billajacklick@gmail.com). If you go into the Fisheries dock (a small concrete dock south of the big concrete dock), her house is to the right, the southmost of the two houses directly across from the generator/fuel tanks.

**Mr John IV - Spring 2011:** Again, one should remember how big these atolls are. It would take a couple of months to cruise around Jaluit's many islands and most of them are deserted.

The charting here is fairly good although not all the lagoon is covered, There are many coral heads that are not shown on any of the charts and all sailing within the lagoon requires a good lookout at all times.

On arrival you will have to go and check in with the Mayor or appointed official and almost certainly you will pay your visitor fee in Jabor, the old centre of government and a small town rather than a village.

As usual you need to discuss and get permission to visit the outlying islands within the lagoon; normally this is not a problem.

## 4.2.3 Anchorages & Things to See

### Soggy Paws - September 2013 - Jabor Area

We spent several night anchored in Jabor. We were looking for something less than 50 feet to anchor in, and ended up in more coral that we liked. We dropped at 05 55.15 N / 169 38.48 E. Don't go any further south than this point as it gets quite shallow in spots (coral heads on the shallower sand area ~5 feet deep). Also, don't anchor too much further north, as there is a wrecked tug on the bottom at 05 55.182 N / 169 38.453 E

While in this spot, we got good internet via wifi using our by-the-month NTA account. We also had cell phone coverage here. In the mornings the internet seemed slow. It seemed to speed up a lot after school got out.

We did a couple of dives from our dinghy here. Below is the list of dive sites we have to the Jabor area. The ones we did are starred. The German ship was the best.

*Japanese Pier	N05°54.69'	E169°38.21'	Interesting snorkel on the remains of the old pier
*German Ship	N05°54.77'	E169°38.19'	Anchor here in 60 feet for German ship in 80-90 feet. Ship is late 1800's "composite" construction (iron frame with wooden planks). Planks are gone, but the frame is intact. Nice dive.
Tanaka	N05°55.03'	E169°38.19'	70's era Japanese fishing vessel in 120 feet
*Tugboat	N05°55.18'	E169°38.43'	Drop anchor here for Tug dive. Tug is in 45-50 feet just east of this spot.
Drift Dive 1	N05°56.06'	E169°38.48'	On incoming tide, enter where small pass meets the main pass. Drift in 40-50 feet of water to the west and around to S side of Kabbenock I

Drift Dive 2	N05°55.68'	E169°38.39'	PA. On slight outgoing tide in calm conditions. Enter at reef edge at halfway point of Island, descent to 60 feet. Look for hundreds of wine bottles from German ship. Keep close to reef and turn corner at east point to enter an area sheltered from current and with millions of fish.
Bottle Wreck	N05°55.78'	E169°38.55'	German Bottle Wreck. Pre-WW2 German trading vessel. Lots of current and big swell. Mast, davit, and engine remain, plus lots of wine bottles. 10-30 feet
Shipwreck on chart	N05°53.95'	E169°37.38'	We didn't investigate this

There is a small store right across from the Fisheries dock. The town itself is nice and neat, and worth a stroll around. The people were friendly and smiling. There is a large school area near the pass. We met two American teachers (one World Teach and one Dartmouth) who had just started their year's commitment, teaching at the high school.

**Soggy Paws - September 2013 - Imeij Area:** We spent two nights here--one night anchored near the big **Japanese ship on the beach** (and looking at a Japanese building ashore) and one night off Imeij (Emeij) (pronounced "Im-ish" or "Him-ish").

The ship anchorage (05 59.15 N / 169 42.99 E) was nice and peaceful--no one living ashore nearby. We enjoyed the solitude. There is pretty good protection from about SW around to NW (through east) in this whole bay (including off the village at Imeij). If you expected a big blow from the north or south, moving north or south in this bay would give you good protection.

There is a building ashore about 400 yards north of the ship. It was a generator building and a radio facility. We found a huge 3-story building, plus several auxiliary structures. It was fun to poke around. There is no clear path from the shore to the building, but it's not hard to weave inbetween the foliage. The building complex is located at N05°59.20' / E169°43.14'

The village at Imeij is sleepy. There seems to be no generator or solar power, no cell phone coverage, and the whole town is dark by about 9pm. The people are friendly. Here we did dives on the two "Emily" Kawanishi seaplanes sunk by American bombing during WWII, and then we spent about 2 hours tromping around in the bush looking at old Jap buildings.

The seaplane hangers are pretty much scrap now. All that is left is the concrete pad and some iron beams on the ground. One of the villagers took us to where the Emily was supposed to be in the hanger. It is just pieces--barely recognizable (similar to those in the airplane graveyard at Taroa, Maloelap. We then struck out from there along a path heading east, and found several more large concrete buildings in the jungle, and a few gun emplacements or pillboxes on the windward beach.

The two airplanes under the water are much better preserved--and the nearly intact one in 90 feet is quite impressive--probably the best airplane dive we've done in the Marshall Islands.

Here are some waypoints and points of interest in this area:

Kawanishi Intact	N06°00.66'	E169°42.98'	Kawanishi Flying Boat. Large 4 engine flying boat, largely intact (upside down) in 90 ft of water
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Kawanishi Anchor Spot	N06°00.68'	E169°42.98'	Drop anchor here to be clear of Kawanishi and hang back over site
Kawanishi Remains	N06°00.79'	E169°43.01'	Kawanishi bombed to pieces in 60 feet. 250 feet north of intact Kawanishi

**Mr John IV - Spring 2011 - Jabor:** From the approach from the southeast pass, head south until you see the dock at Jabor, then curve around and anchor to the SW of the dock leaving room for local traffic.

The Dock at Jabor has much traffic coming and going at all hours, leave plenty of room and be well lighted at night.

There are so many places to go within this lagoon it will depend on what you want and how much time you have. There are plenty of people in Jabor that will give you recommendations.

### **Mr John IV - Spring 2011 - Imej Area**

I took "Mr John IV" up to **Aineman Island** and anchored just south of the wreck which lies beached there; it provided a nice breakwater to the north of us. Whilst there were a few coral heads, they were easily seen and we were able to fly the 'kite' and enjoy the flatter waters of sailing inside the lagoon.....

#### **4.3 Arno**

#### **4.4 Ebon**

#### **4.5 Namorik**

## **5 Atolls North and West of Majuro - Ratak Chain**

### **5.1 Suggested Cruising Routes**

**Alice - May 2023:** Our Plan was to sail north from Majuro to Maleolap, Rongerik, Rongelap, Bikini and then down to Kwajalein and Ebeye to clear out. In this way we didn't have to beat against the wind all the way back to Majuro. We ended up skipping Maleolap and sailed straight to Rongerik.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We had originally planned to visit Kwajalein atoll after Likiep and then sail back to Majuro from Kwajalein. Looking at our tracks going north, a result of predominant winds and westward current, we came to 2 conclusions. First, if we cruise the Ratak chain again, we would sail from Maloelap directly to Ailuk and visit Wotje after Likiep on the leg back to Majuro, Second, sailing from Kwajalein to Majuro would be a very difficult sail with lots of tacking ... thus our decision to keep Kwajalein atoll cruising for a separate cruise departing from Majuro, exploring some of the Ralik chain on our way West towards FSM.

## 5.2 *Aur*

### 5.2.1 *Passes*

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** The **North Pass** in *Aur* is clearly defined and presents no difficulty... fishing in the pass can be rewarding as it is in most of the Marshall Islands Passes.

1: 08-18.45N / 171-03.30E

2: 08-19.05N / 171-02.70E

3: 08-18.20N / 171-02.40E

4: 08-18.20N / 171-02.25E

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** *Aur* is an easy 77-nm overnight passage going North from *Majuro*. We heard that seas can be quite confused in the vicinity of each atoll but we lucked out, we had a very nice passage with East winds 10-13 and no sudden squalls!

We entered *Aur* via the very easy **South Pass** (WP outside: 08-10'444N / 171-06'376E / WP inside 08-10'625N / 171-06'538E).

**Holokai: Pre-2010:** There are four wide and safe passes on the north-west side of the atoll and a single pass in the south.

The north most pass has a large reef after the pass but it is about 1 mile into the lagoon and easily steered around.

The **South Pass** is about 150' wide. Waypoints:

- South Pass Oceanside 08-10.444N / 171-06.376E
- South Pass Lagoon side 08-10.625N / 171-06.538E.

\*\*\*\*When sailing direct from **South Pass** to **Tobal** stay east of bommie at 08-12.885N / 171-06.615E This will give a nice clear passage across the lagoon. \*\*\*\*

Waypoints for smaller (width @ 160') **North Pass** were:

- Shallow spot between *Tabal* and **North Pass** (not marked on chart) to port of course 08.18.316N/ 171.03.926E (south of this waypoint by 150')
- Approaching Pass from Lagoon-side 08.18.250N/171.02.538W, 125'
- Start of Pass 08.18.233N/ 171.02.423E, 75'
- In Pass 08.18.227N/171.02.366E, 35'
- Out of Pass Ocean-side 08.18.276N/171.02.166E, 60'
- Line up if approaching from outside 08.18.306N/171.02.09E

For the wider **North Pass**, line up from outside 08-18.885N / 171-01.733E

## **5.2.2 Tobal / Tabal**

**Breakfree - December 2012 & January 2013:** On the downwind sail from Maloelap back to Tabal, saw the fish larder replenished with 6 fish landed between our 2 yachts.

Tabal's New Years Eve was a bit unusual....we're still not sure if they celebrate the New Year arriving or not...The guys ventured ashore but other than after midnight local Policemen, and other small groups singing songs at people's front doors for presents (like thanksgiving) not much was happening.

The outer Atolls are dry....a no alcohol policy so maybe that has something to do with it??

**Downtime - December 2012:** Having safely cleared the pass and made our way across the lagoon and anchored in front of **Tobal Island**. We were greeted on the radio by James Bond 007! James is the local medical practitioner and as it turns out would become our good friend and connection to the village for the week. The village only had 150 people so every one naturally knew everyone. James greeted us when we came ashore with a big bunch of bananas, giant cooking bananas, and drinking coconuts.

We had been hearing that the islanders could be a little standoffish and rude to visitors but our experience has been totally the opposite and we were warmly welcomed by everyone we met.

Meeting James and his family was the link to making the whole week an amazing adventure. As we sat down and shared stories with a fresh coconut in our hands James began telling us a little about the island and what was going on that week. First of all it was Gospel Week and the 7th of December was Liberation day from Japan and the day they celebrated the arrival of the first Missionary. Sunday would be a huge celebration, one of which where a sister island Aur would come over and they would all celebrate together a the arrival of the first missionary bringing the gospel.

We spent a few days with James over a Mummet Island (see Other Aur Anchorages)

Over the next several days we would bring fish ashore for the family that we had stored in our fridge on Downtime since they do not have any way to keep it cool on shore. Just try to imagine living without a refrigerator or ice!

On Thursday James asked if would like them to catch us some lobsters? Well, after my last lobster experience in Kiribati I was a little leery about going lobster fishing but I said sure lets go. I would just need to bring masks, snorkel's and flashlight batteries. The two boys that caught the crabs on the island would be doing the catching and we would hold the bag for what they caught. I said I was not going in over my waist this time since I almost drowned last time! They promised this would be much safer than my last experience and rarely did they go in water over 4 feet deep to catch lobster. We would have to wait for low tide which was at 2 am.

I met them on the beach in SD and we drove 3 miles down the lagoon on a calm moonlit night to a deserted island known to have what we were looking for, lobsters! The moon was in its last quarter providing plenty of light to see on this clear starry night and we anchored SD of the lee shore and walked to the island with high hopes.

I flip flopped my way out to the shallow reef where the boys were wading in the water with their dive lights searching for lobster. They had caught two by the time I arrived and within an hour we had 10 in the bag!



The boys had made their way to the next island walking across the reef and catching a few more "bugs" along the way. It was not a great lobster night according to James but we had enough for a few nice meals! Thanks James and the boys!

There was a big celebration this weekend to celebrate Gospel Day, the day the missionary brought the Gospel to the islands back in the 1800's. The whole village had been practicing their dancing and singing and we had been hearing it aboard Downtime all week. We were told church started at 10 and finally somewhere around 11 the bell rang (a old oxygen cylinder with the bottom cut out being struck with a claw hammer). The celebration started with the pastor giving praise and then different age groups doing a crazy dance to a beat played on a electric keyboard being led by a guy blowing a athletic starter whistle. After this was a donation in which I put one of two bills I had in my pocket. The guy holding the basket asked if I wanted change? I said that's alright, the church can keep it. Then there was another dance with younger kids and another offering.....and so it went...I should have got change and a few smaller bills to put in all of the 8 different dance offerings.

Four hours later the service was finally stopped for a break and we were welcomed to stay for lunch as honored guests, which you guessed it would require another offering (people usually give 50 cents) . We were invited to sit at the Mayors table and enjoyed a lunch of steamed coconut crab, whole lobsters, pork, baked bananas, rice, and breadfruit. Our beverage choice was Mountain Dew, Pepsi or green coconuts, we drank coconuts! Naturally sitting next to the Mayor we had all you can eat lobster and left the table unable to eat another bite.

The kids on the island would swarm around us and were so friendly, asking questions like where you from? And what's your name? Can we come see the boat? The bags full of candy would disappear and smiles were shared.

We met the World Teach volunteer, Julia from New York, earlier in the week. And today another volunteer, Chuck also from NY was up from the southern village of Aur for the celebration. They were part of a team of almost 30 teachers who volunteer to teach English on the islands for a year to gain experience after graduation. They are paid a whopping \$100 a month but have host families that give them food and lodging while they are here. We invited them both aboard Downtime later that afternoon for an "American style" meal and cranked up the Air Cond for them and grilled a few steaks which they both enjoyed. It had been 4 months since they started teaching here and we were the first Americans they had seen since. We loaned Julia the sat phone to call her family as our Christmas present and she was able to talk to her family for the first time in months back in the states.

Monday was another holiday and school was out and I met the kids on the beach with SD and a surfboard. The kids had no idea what I had in mind and it took a little coaxing to get the first kid on the board but soon they were all lined up want to try and surf behind SD. Thirty something kids tried and 6 were able to stand up which was amazing since this was everyone's first time! We all had so much fun watching the crashes and the success of those that were able to hang ten! Monday was another holiday and school was out and I met the kids on the beach with SD and a surfboard. The kids had no idea what I had in mind and it took a little coaxing to get the first kid on the board but soon they were all lined up want to try and surf behind SD. Thirty something kids tried and 6 were able to stand up which was amazing since this was everyone's first time! We all had so much fun watching the crashes and the success of those that were able to hang ten!

The kids here are so courteous and respectful to their elders and if one achieves something the whole group celebrates! We had the first kid riding the board and the whole group was clapping and giving him praise on shore. It is like they all want everyone to enjoy success and share the glory and are so unselfish. We spent two days dink surfing and then had a big party with 20 kids drinking pop and eating Oreos on Downtime! This is one Island I will never forget!

**Breakfree - December 2012:** We arrived in Aur from Majuro the mid morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> of December (nicely timed for bommie spotting) at the south entrance to Aur Atoll and spent the day sailing across the lagoon to the island of Tabal in the North West corner, where we had been told most of the population (about 300) of Aur had decamped for the Christmas festivities.

After rowing ashore, we were taken to meet the Mayor in his little grass hut. He was asleep on a pandanus grass mat platform in the open plan hut with his wife in the small outer "kitchen bit" of the hut. We showed him our visitors permit, paid our \$25 and were told we were welcome.

The local Iroj (the chief of Tabal island) told us the "beat" celebrations would be in the church Christmas day morning and again we were welcome. Back in Majuro, around the churches, over the few weeks leading up to Christmas we had seen (and heard!) lots of people practising dancing and singing. This "beat" is done in rows sort of like line dancing with a leader with a whistle at the front. Each Church "chapter" puts on a performance on Christmas day and a collection is taken for each group. It actually seems to be fairly competitive with each group having distinctive dress or uniforms and trying to out dance the previous mob.

On Christmas Day, we attended the local Tabal "beat". Quite a different Christmas experience....a mixture of modern US, traditional Marshallese with a almost tribal feel. Every section of the local community was represented from young to old. We were invited to the community feast...and seated at the big table with all the local dignitaries!!! the food was served on amazing woven pandanus plates and was very traditional Marshallese fare....Pork, beef, preserved breadfruit, coconut milk, pandanus meat, tapioca starch and green drinking coconuts....I can't say yum but there was enough to feed an army for a week! We only stayed from 11am until 7pm so missed a few hours of the celebrations!

**Sloepmouche - April 2011:** We anchored in front of Tabal village and had great contact with many people including James (acting doctor) and Terry.

The atoll recently received complete solar systems (post with 2 panels, 2 batteries, 6 lights, gauges, small inverters from the Taiwanese govt. For a \$5 monthly fee to the local electric company in Majuro they get any future maintenance. So plenty of lights in the villages here with DVD players and more! Gone soon will be the era of coconut oil lanterns and the whole village in front of one TV screen! There are some very shallow reefs right in front of the village with very vibrant coral and pretty fish. Great snorkeling. Beach access is tricky at low tide, but there are a couple areas with a clear channel to the sandy beach. Easy navigation with very few, well visible, shallow areas on the way to one of the NW passes out of the lagoon.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** At Tabal, there is plenty of room to anchor inside the isolated coral patch and somewhere south of the Landing Craft that can be seen on the beach in front of the village.

Tabal is a fairly wealthy as far as villages go, it is quite 'up-market' when compared with some of the villages you'll visit in other islands. There are some WWII leftover's and you may get some of the kids in the village to point them out; however, what I saw was hardly worth the effort.

**Holokai:** A good land mark for the anchorage at Tobal is the white copra shed that can be seen from the lagoon even in poor light. This is nearly the farthest northwest point of the village as the last NW 1/3 of the island is uninhabited. CAUTION!!! There is a reef that dries at low tide directly in front of the shed, offshore from the beach about .5 miles.

The island forms a shallow bay which protects the anchorage from winds and waves, though on the peak of extreme high tides a small amount of swell will affect yachts who anchor well off the beach. The atoll is relatively bommie free though a few must be steered away from. A large coral reef is centered off the anchorage about 1/2 mile from shore, approximately off the beach where a prominent pig fence marks the center of the village. You can anchor in front of this coral patch or left or right of this along the entire island. CAUTIONS: there is also a large coral formation that extends out from the beach in this area. Don't sail the length of the island without first sailing out a safe distance, unless visibility is good. Watch for locals snorkeling in the bay, their presence often (but not always) marked by a floating kitchen basin. Sail only during good visibility. In an emergency you may safely make passage along the entire east side of the lagoon, sailing 1/2 mile off the shore.

Meet the iroij, Bollong, and mayor, Risen, and spend a few minutes talking to each. It is important to do this and will help you tremendously into gaining friends in the villages. Everyone will know the moment you paid this courtesy. Both men are quite charming and do excellent work for Aur Atoll. Batlynn, wife of the iroij Bollong, is one of the most charismatic and elegant women you will ever meet, a Marshallese Princess Diana. The iroij lives on Tobal but will be present in Aur during the celebration. The mayor lives in Aur and collects the permit fee. You may ask for any of these people by "Ewi Bollong" or to find their house, "Ewi mon Bollong". Phil, a World teacher, is also a good source of information and language help. "Ewi Phil?". Everyone seems to know exactly where everyone else, is at every moment. I don't know how.

**Amulet - Summer 2007:** We enjoyed meeting the people of Tabal Island. The medical technician James at the clinic speaks enough English to have a conversation with. We met many of the 30 or so families that live there by walking around and those that had solar panels I would offer to check them and their batteries. None were in good shape. The batteries especially were abused mostly by undercharging as most of the solar panels are old and putting out only 20-25% of their rated AMPS. They have no way of monitoring this or their batteries except when the lights dim or go out at night. I showed them how to use a hydrometer and urged them to buy one.

We enjoyed socializing and trading with the locals for breadfruit, coconuts and bananas. We offered fish hooks, 12 V. fluorescent lights and banana bread.

We made a day trip west to **Bigen Island**, about 8 nm each way. We were planning to stay overnight as we heard there was good snorkeling there. C-Map was very inaccurate. Anchoring

is difficult as the many scattered coral heads seem to be only about 10' apart in every direction. The worst problem though were the flies which immediately inundated the boat. We walked around the un-named island just to the east of Bigen (we named it fly island), got back to the boat, upped anchor and went back to Tabal. Our cockpit looked like an old battlefield when we got back as our two fly swatters did their job.

Last night our Out Island Paradise Experience was ruined when we were **boarded** by one and possibly two locals around midnight. A green plastic "Ocean Kayak" was used to paddle out to AMULET. We heard some noise, woke up, and when I emerged from down below and started yelling he (they?) jumped in the water and started swimming to shore, leaving the kayak adrift. We quickly assessed that our two pairs of swim fins were missing from the rear deck. We lowered our dinghy and I gave chase with a spot light.

I caught one of them but kept my distance as he was a healthy full grown man and I didn't want any physical violence (I'm not young and as stupid anymore). He obviously did not have our fins and when I asked about them (not politely I'm afraid) he pointed to the kayak now well downwind heading out to the middle of the atoll. I left him and went after the kayak, one fin of each pair was there and after searching for a while I found Nancy's other fin but not the match to mine. We chained the kayak to the stern of AMULET for the night and didn't get much sleep.

This morning we went in to see the police, a joke - got no satisfaction, returned the kayak to Hundy (its owner) who I believe was not involved, upped anchor and left. We generally keep everything left on deck locked up with chains or cables. The fins were in daily use and were kept 4 feet from the stern against the cabin.

Beware when visiting this little village, at least one thief lives there. Better yet skip Tabal entirely. This was our first ever uninvited boarding with obvious criminal intent, a bit nerve wracking.

*Note: In summer of 2013, and from all the cruisers above in more recent years, there have been no similar reports of theft or attempted theft.*

### **5.2.3 Aur Aur**

**Breakfree - December 2012 & January 2013:** We called into the southern village of Aur Aur but with the wind and sea conditions, ended up anchoring off a nearby island with the anchor at 11m and the boat in 20m...not ideal. Winds a brisk 25 plus.

**Downtime - December 2012:** After spending about a week at Tobal, we headed south to **Aur Island** in hopes of doing some kite surfing along the reef there. Again we were greeted with coconuts and bananas and were able to give three rainbow runners in trade that we caught along our way. This is the Island the Chuck, the World Teach volunteer we had met at Tobal, taught at and we went to the school to say hello to he and his kids. The village was a little bigger than the one on Tabal and was very clean and well kept. Without James it was just not quite the same though and we did not feel as welcome here.

On Saturday we had Chuck out for another dinner, one he had been craving since he been on the island..., Pizza and beer! Just after dinner I got a call from James which was strange because I knew his radio did not reach all the way from Tubal? It turned out he was Aur and that

his uncle had passed away that day and they needed some tools to cut wood for the coffin! I said I had a tape measure and saw and soon we were ripping 2x4's on the back of Downtime! The funeral was to be Sunday at 10 am and when we arrived just before he told us they had to burry him that morning because of the terrible smell. So we missed the ceremony.....

One more day of kite surfing on Monday and the weather started changing for the worse....We were trying to return to Majuro for Christmas and it looked like the winds would be blowing our way for just a few more days so the next morning we set sail at 4 pm with dark skies and squalls on the horizon.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** The anchorage here is one of the nicest in the whole group, there are however, some strong currents, so caution is needed when swimming / snorkelling.

ENTER THE ANCHORAGE GOING EAST ON 08 09.250N AND SWING NORTH TO ANCHOR WHEN YOU HAVE YOUR DEPTH

You could just stay in Aur and you'd have a good idea of what happens in all the other outer islands without the hassle of actually going there. However, Aur is still well south and does suffer the same ITCZ crud that Majuro gets (though a little less)

When the wind goes NNE (and further) you may have to quit this anchorage and take shelter up the north end of the Lagoon.

**Sloepmouche - April 2011:** We made one easy tack towards Aur island in the South corner and anchored in 25ft of good sand at 08-09'166N / 171-09'844E. This is the first village you should visit to present your permit and pay the \$25 fee.

We arrived on April 13<sup>th</sup> as next day was the annual Liberation Celebrations day. We, and the Finnish parents of one of the volunteer teachers were the only visitors on the island! After the flag raising and a few speeches in Marshallese, baseball matches went all day. Communal lunch was chicken (imported!) and white rice. We had local bananas and coconuts and were well catered to!

The festivities actually went on all week with spelling B and other sports. It ended up with the Palm Sunday mass and celebration at the Protestant church. People from both Tabal and Aur village put on an all-day show of dances and singing and small shows that they had practiced for several weeks. Lunch was a copious basket-plate woven from fresh coconut leaves that were stuffed with local dishes as well as rice, chicken, and spam! Each year, each village alternatively hosts all feasts. The anchorage is a way from shore so we had a very nice breeze and had privacy on deck. You still have a short and easy beach access by dinghy to the shore. There is, however, a relatively large tidal difference (about 6-7 ft) to be aware of.

**Amulet - July 2007:** Inside we motored from the South Pass over to **Ennopus Island**, reportedly the better anchorage, it didn't seem so to us, narrow shelf then sudden drop off to 90. We came down to Aur I. and it seems better here, large areas of 35-50' sand with scattered coral heads. We have to check in here with the acting mayor anyway and pay the \$25 visiting fee.

Anchored at 08 09.166 N / 171 09.844 E

Enjoyed our week at Aur I. Even though only 60nm or so from Majuro, it's like another country. The locals are very welcoming.

We befriended a family with a 17 yr old daughter and a 5 yr old son. We originally bought a handicraft wall hanging from the mother (\$1/inch) and later the daughter saw us walking along the one central street and presented us with a pumpkin. We asked if we could trade some sugar and said we would visit the next day. That began several visits where I helped trouble shoot their failing solar panels and we traded with them while hanging out watching them do their handicrafts. They were very forthcoming on sharing what they had as we got to know each other better and neither took advantage of the other. They spoke little English, the 17 yr old girl spoke a little more and she would try to translate. Overall a nice experience.

Anyone coming behind us, good items to bring to sell or trade would be hydrometers, 12v fluorescent drop lights, rechargeable LED flashlights (especially wind or shake to recharge) and gasoline (\$7/gal on Aur). In the village we traded among other things "shake-a-light" flashlights for lobster and a fluorescent drop light for a wall hanging handicraft. Balloons were always a big hit with the little kids, who paid us back with big smiles.

#### **5.2.4 Other Aur Anchorages**

**Breakfree - Decmeber 2012:** After a fond farewell from Tabal we sailed to **Bigen**...a beautiful anchorage and deserted island. The underwater visibility was at least fifty metres.

From Bigen, we left for Maloelap.

**Downtime - Decmber 2012:** In one of our conversations with James, he told us that his wife owned **Mummet Island** the small island we could see 9 miles across the lagoon. Unfortunately they have not been able to get out to the island for almost two years since his father in law had passed away. Daria asked if they had coconut crabs on the island and when he explained there were probably more crabs than we could catch in a week the decision was made to take he and his family to the island the next day.

I went ashore early the following morning to give the family a ride out to Downtime with all their gear that they would need to spend the night camping on the island. We had James, his wife, two daughters, two sons and nephew aboard Downtime as we set sail for the island.

While sailing I changed to some baits James recommended and soon after we landed a few nice Rainbow Runners while crossing the lagoon!

James's wife is an expert weaver and she gave us small woven hearts, dolphins ,and fish to put on our small Christmas tree. She also made a beautiful basket and other woven decorations for us while we were there. Special gifts that we will treasure, a small token for us taking her and the family to her island. Thank you so much for all the gifts!

I went ashore early the following morning to give the family a ride out to Downtime in SD with all their gear that they would need to spend the night camping on the island. We had James, his wife, two daughters, two sons and nephew aboard Downtime as we set sail for the island. While sailing I changed to some baits James recommended and soon after we landed a few nice Rainbow Runners while crossing the lagoon!

James's wife is an expert weaver and she gave us small woven hearts, dolphins, and fish to put on our small Christmas tree. She also made a beautiful basket and other woven decorations for us while we were there. Special gifts that we will treasure, a small token for us taking her and the family to her island. Thank you so much for all the gifts!

With the winds blowing out of the NE we found we would have to anchor in the lee on the SW outer side of the island outside the reef with the open ocean behind us. We found a place along the outer reef with a small shelf and 40 feet of water to drop the hook on and luckily it wrapped around a big rock and held fast. We let out another 150 feet of chain and backed down over the outer edge of the reef and were now sitting in 200 feet of water! Wow what a drop off along this reef! This definitely would be one of those nights I would be sleeping with one eye open and have the anchor alarm on hoping the winds did not shift from the west!

We left Downtime anchored on the reef and lowered the dink to bring the Family ashore in a bumpy sea. Safely across the reef and onshore James assessed the remains of the shelter that had been last used 2 years ago. The shelter had the tattered remains of a blue tarp and a few pieces of rusted tin for a roof another small structure nearby covered the copra (coconut) drying oven. In the past they came out for a month or two at a time and harvested copra while living primitively on the island that covers roughly 25 acres.

The older boys went out to set traps for the coconut crabs which involves splitting a copra (when coconuts are dry they call them copra) and wedging them between a few low branches just above the ground outside the holes where the crabs live, wedging them tightly so the crab does not carry away the bait. Later they go back with bright light and sneak up and blind them with the light and grab them being careful not to lose a finger in the process.

Back at the shelter the women were cooking fresh fish (rainbow runner and travelly) and rice for dinner, along with the fish and rice they served baked breadfruit and cooked bananas. The fire was made from coconut husks and when they cook fish over a fire they use the coconut shell for fuel which burns hotter and cleaner. They cleverly serve the meal in a woven palm leaf which takes them all of 20 seconds each to make. (The first true "GREEN" paper plate)

By morning they had caught two sacks full of two different types of crab, one a small land crab about the size of your hand and the other the famous coconut crab we had been hearing about that grows to over a foot round and can pinch your fingers off with their huge claws that they use to open coconuts.

In the morning, when Daria and I arrived back on the island, there was a fresh batch of steamed crab laid out on palm leaves and we sat down for a crab breakfast. James showed us how to crack open the crab by cleverly cracking them between two coconuts, using a full one as a hammer. To me eating crab is a little like slowly starving to death since it requires much more work to open and eat them than the energy you are consuming, but Daria loves the little critters and can eat them for hours.

Later we walked around the island which was a sanctuary and nesting ground for many seabirds and green sea turtles. Daria and I were walking back to the shelter and we saw James and the older boys digging in the sand under some trees near the shore line. To our dismay we saw that they were digging up a turtle nest! This kicked Daria's "save the turtles" action in gear and she began giving them the save the turtles speech. The sea turtle is in danger of being over harvested in all these atolls and is endangered to the point of soon becoming extinct if things do

not change. All the islanders know this but nobody is following the ban on eating them! Daria told them she refused to let turtle eggs on Downtime and I agreed with her. It was just a awkward moment being on another persons island in their country trying to enforce what is right. Reluctantly the men put the eggs back in the nest and re-buried them, hopefully several of the 80 plus eggs that were buried would hatch and a few turtles will survive to live and return and lay eggs of their own on these shores one day.

Later that morning with everyone back aboard Downtime we set sail for the return trip to Tobal Island. We re-set the fishing lines and were sailing along the reef towards the pass and found ourselves sailing directly into a flock of feeding birds and landed a nice 35 pound yellow fin tuna. This one fish would surely make up for the protein loss of the turtle eggs and we gladly gave the fish to the family. Later while gong through the pass we landed another fish, a nice barracuda to add to the bounty we had been given by the sea.

During the passage Daria cooked banana bread and fish for all crowd, girls really liked it and was asking new recipes, but simple sweets and chips disappearing fast too!

Back at the village the work of processing the crabs began and Daria spent hours picking meat out of the steamed crab legs. She worked her hands raw in the process but did use a ball peen hammer instead of coconuts to break open the tough shells. In the process of getting one of the larger crabs into the pot one grabbed onto her finger but she luckily was able to shake it loose before it took off her finger! One night she cooked delicious pasta for me with crabs, cream and fennel from her sister recipe.

**Sloepmouche - April 2011:** After a few days celebrating with the villagers at Aur Aur, we decided to sail and anchor off some of the uninhabited motus on the way North towards Tabal island (the second inhabited island) so we could enjoy beachcombing with our Schipperkes as well as swim and snorkel around the lively reefs. Normally etiquette requires one to obtain permission to visit any islet from it's owner. The only catch is we don't know which island we will anchor at until we see one we like...then, try to describe which island it is to anyone..."you know, the one with the white beach and lots of coconuts". We did our best by asking the mayor AND the iroche (custom chief) We choose **Pikiet islet** about half-way to Tabal. Later that day, one of the motor launches stopped by and the driver, Boston, told us we were welcome to enjoy his island .. which we did for 3 days! Later in Tabal, we added into his cruisers visitor book.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** I found a fair anchorage just north of the spit off **Paufen**....and the second island south of there looked to have a nice sandy spot but I never got to try it out.

From Aur to Tabal Islands, stay fairly close in and you will be rewarded with some good fishing.

### **5.3 Maloelap**

Maloelap is just 90 miles north of Majuro, and is an easy reach-reach there and back again from Majuro. So it is frequently visited by yachties from Majuro.

**Background info:** Sources: *Matt Holly Report on Maloelap WW2 Artifacts - Nov 2006, Dirk Spenneman "A Virtual Tour of Taroa Airbase" (online)*



Maloelap Atoll possesses over 100 separate islets located on a distinct fringing coral reef, with channels in the west, southwest and south-southwest providing a navigable connection between the lagoon and the open ocean.

The lagoon averages 150 feet in depth, but generally drops rapidly to thousands of feet on the oceanside. It has one of the larger lagoon areas within the Republic.

The wind typically comes from the east to northeast, the average daily temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit, and with a very humid climate and frequent rains. Housing is typically island style, with few concrete buildings other than those built by the Japanese military 60 years ago. The current population is estimated at nearly 1,200, the majority of which live on the five islands of Kaven, Tjan, Ollet, Taroa and Airik.

Maloelap Atoll today is a lush green jungle of islands along the east side of the atoll overlooking a deep blue lagoon. Two airstrips are on the atoll; with one cut from the jungle on Kaven, and the airstrip on Taroa re-cut from the original World War II Japanese Runway "A".

Kaven has the largest population center today, but Taroa was the center of the Japanese military on Maloelap, and the focus of this paper.

Maloelap was probably first used by the Japanese military in 1935 after her withdrawal from the League of Nations and with the establishment of weather and lookout station throughout the Marshall's.

Secretly the Maloelap base was being well developed by the Japanese, with a full service Naval Air Base being constructed. Two 5000 foot runways, hangars, service shops, barracks, bunkers and lots of guns of every description. Taroa was completed with a large pier with a crane, two smaller work docks, and channel and anchorage pillars constructed to aid shipping. A large power station and pier was built at nearby Pigete Island which supplied Taroa with power via an underwater submarine cable over three miles long. The Americans were very surprised on their first visit to Maloelap.

War came to Maloelap suddenly on the morning of February 1, 1942, with two raids by U.S. Naval aircraft from carrier USS Enterprise (CV-6). The first air raid totaled five Grumman F4F "Wildcat" aircraft with two 100-pound bombs each. The first plane of the Marshalls attack flew off the deck and into the water, and under the path of the carrier. They next arrived over Maloelap and started to bomb Tjan or Ollet by mistake.

Between Feb. 1942 and Aug. 1945, US aircraft dropped 3543 tons of bombs and US ships shot 453 tons of shells onto Taroa.

While the first attacks were carrier-based and irregular, daily attacks were started after Majuro and Kwajalein had fallen to the U.S. At the same time, all supply lines to Taroa were cut off, and the Japanese garrison was left to starve.

Of the originally 3097 strong Japanese garrison (1772 Navy, 368 Army, 957 civilians) only 1041 (34%) survived. Several Marshallese were also killed. The survivor rate for Maloelap is the worst of all bases in the Marshalls. Death occurred from air raids, diseases, accidents, and suicides, but mainly from starvation.

### 5.3.1 Passes

**Soggy Paws - July/August 2013:** On our first visit to Maloelap, we made an unplanned stop at Maloelap while on passage from Ailuk to Majuro. We had salt water leaking from our exhaust line, and with no wind and the prospect of motoring another 24 hours, we stopped in Maloelap to make temporary repairs.

Because it was late in the day when we made the decision to stop, we went into the atoll via the nearest pass, which ended up to be the **Bebi Island Pass**. It was late in the day with the sun behind us, and we went in using "Mark I Eyeballs" and a Google Earth chart.

The center of the pass is located at approx 08-45.96 N / 170-53.01 E. It was an easy entry. Then we raced to the nearest anchorage location--**Tjen**, making it just before dark.

We existed the atoll on that visit, and used on a subsequent visit, the **South Pass**. We used Mr. John's waypoints below, and they are fine.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We decided to exit at one of the **NW passes** we found on Google Earth, one that is easy to confirm even during overcast wx as it passes between 2 islands. The waypoints were spot on and we had a wide and deep pass to sail thru (lagoon side N08-49'798 / E170-52'035 / ocean side N08-49'777 / E170-51'641)

**Mr John IV - Feb 2011:** As you line up to enter through the **South Pass** the clearly defined Sand Island will be visible ahead and slightly to port. This Sand Island is most visible at LW but is still a good marker at HW. and in reduced visibility.

Waypoints for the south pass entry:

001: N8 31.729 E171 06.096

002: N8 32.154 E171 06.380

003: N8 32.344 E171 06.539

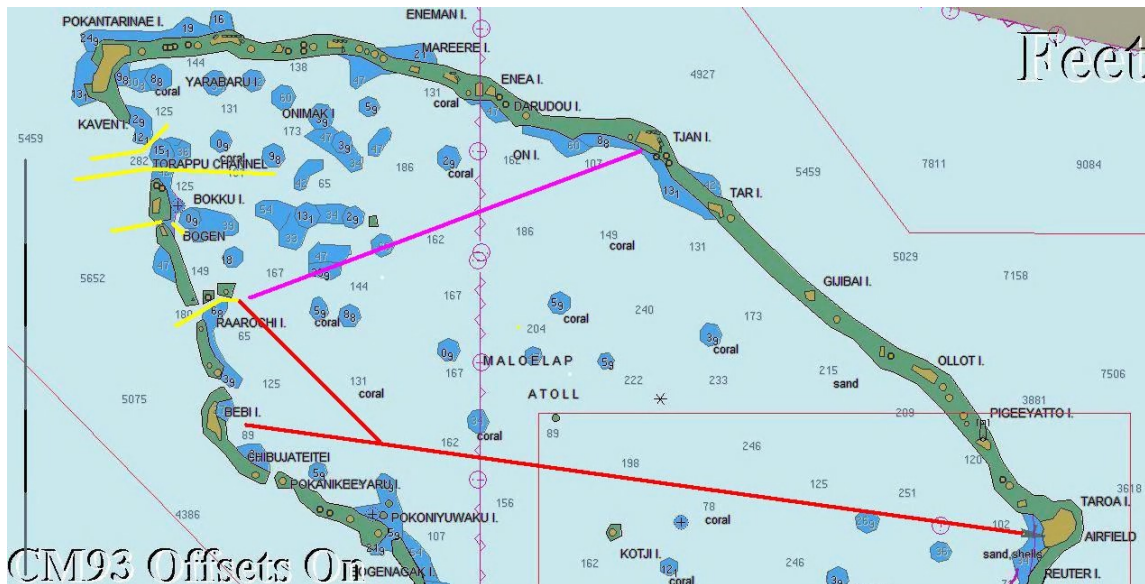
004: N8 32.394 E171 06.718

005: N8 31.703 E171 08.089

Once inside you should head directly to **Airik** in the South, or **Taroa** to the NE, and pay both your respects and your 'entry fee' to the Police Officer, who collects it on behalf of the Mayor. This, at least, was our procedure but you should just check this info is still valid when obtaining your permits.

There wasn't much to hit on the way down to the anchorage however, once there you may have to skirt a few coral heads to find a clear spot to drop your anchor.

Exiting by one of the **Northern Passes** on the western side, will get you to Wotje, the next island to the north in the group.....There are a couple of passes to choose from and most are fairly easy to use.



The main pass is **Torappu** and it is apparent on the chart that you would have to try quite hard to hit something going this way. The Torappu Channel is quite wide and is over ten feet deep almost right up to the Reef that extends north from Bokku Island.... This reef is very easy to spot and is almost always breaking, there are a couple of large lumps of coral close up to the drop-off and these are quite visible.

I only used the **Raarochi Channel** ....this was back in 1988, before GPS and due to overcast conditions I felt safer, on leaving Tabal, headed across the lagoon for Bebi I. which was quite easy to identify some distance off. Then, when I had established my position I headed NW and picked up the channel without difficulty; all the reefs were very clear to see, even in the poor light. Raarochi Island is quite substantial and sparking white and the three detached reefs could be spotted at almost two miles off

To the south of Bokku Island is another channel which separates it from Bogen Island, this also a good departure channel as it lays between two easily recognized islands and you can run east-west along the 08 49.8N latitude right between them. However watch for the isolated white sand and coral patch about a mile east of the pass and a little north of the line

There are plenty more channels further south and most of them will accommodate a yacht without too much trouble.

**Creola's - 2009:**

Enijun Channel South:	Ocean	N 08 35.392	E 171 02.467
	Mid	N 08 35.435	E 171 02.612
	Lagoon	N 08 35.484	E 171 02.776
			47' deep. Hugged north edge of reef to avoid shallow in center of pass.
Torappu Channel:	Ocean	N 08 50.697	E 170 51.701

Mid	N 08 50. 697	E 170 51.948
Lagoon	N 08 50.757	E 170 52.173

43' deep. Hugged north shore of Bokku Island

### 5.3.2 *Airik*

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013:** We anchored twice in Airik, but never spent an overnight here. The first time, we had motored through Taroa, thinking Airik was the place to present our paperwork. When we got to Airik, we asked for the Policeman that Mr. John mentioned, and found that he, and all the other men, were off-island (fishing, copra cutting, or in Majuro). Rather than leave our money and paperwork with just "someone", we left our boat card and promised to come back and pay on our next visit. We hauled anchor and left the atoll by the South Pass immediately after.

On our second visit to Maloelap, we went directly to Taroa and did the paperwork there. We planned to spend a night in Airik on our way out, but on the trip down from Taroa to Airik, the wind was so fair that we decided to leave for Maloelap. So we had lunch again in Airik, and left. Our anchorage there was nearly on top of Mr. John's (mentioned below), and we can recommend that as the best we saw.

Our friends on Westward II and Challenger stayed, however, and they enjoyed meeting the people in Airik, including the doctor. They were employed for a couple of days "fixing things"--everything from hooking new batteries up to an existing solar system for the doctor, to trying to repair the chainsaw for the policeman. The villagers in turn offered them heaps of limes and coconuts.

**Breakfree - December 2012:** Our next stop after Taroa was at **Airik Island**. This was a strange place for us at first, because except for cats, dogs, pigs and 2 women, the entire population was at Taroa. As we walked around a boat load of Airikians returned from Christmas celebrations and it all came to life again.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** Our passage from Aur was easy in 15kt of East wind and regular seas. After one tack we entered via the Southern pass (outside N08-31'98 / E171-06'31 then inside N08-32'33 / E171-06'47) and sailed all the way to **Airik Island** in the SE corner.

This was a calm anchorage in 30ft of good sand with isolated coral patches. The mayor lives on this island (when not in Majuro) so you can pay your \$25 fee to him.

When we arrived, we were told the acting mayor was in Ollot ("whoolit"). The mayor, Benjamin, I had met in Majuro, happened to arrive the next day to stay a few weeks on his island so we checked-in officially with him here.

This island hosts also the Queen of the lower Maloelap atoll. Nice community. A very small-uninhabited motu just north, only a dinghy ride away, was a nice little beach for us to relax on.

We were able to help several people fix several things like replacing a fuse in SSB radio, epoxy glue a guitar, move the battery bank of the clinic to the new shed outside and other repairs. Not all repairs undertaken are successful as electronics are often hard to troubleshoot and parts needed are often not available ... but people are happy to get any help they can! We also checked many solar /battery systems and gave advice on upkeep. We received gifts/traded and left with plenty of limes & coconuts, a breadfruit & a beautiful handicraft.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** Our visit started in **Airik Island** at the south, where we paid the local Policeman our \$25 and then, after a few days, moved up the Atoll to Taroa.

Our route to Airik from the south pass is below.

This route does take you through some coral heads to the inner anchorage, where 14 feet in sand was found between coral heads.

001 N8 30.572 E171 10.168

002 N8 30.112 E171 10.860

003 N8 29.875 E171 11.026

004 N8 29.745 E171 11.074

005 N8 29.694 E171 11.131 (anchorage)

Airik seems to be one of the poorer islands and was quite shabby ashore; I can't say that I was that impressed. I got involved with fixing a generator (and looking at several others), this seems to be the accepted thing in the Marshall's; first you pay, then you get to fix their broken equipment with your spare parts! They have no tools so you have to take your own ashore and I have to say, I never quite had the same amount when I returned on board.

We were impressed that there were fish and even a large Tiger Ray swimming around the coral heads of the anchorage; I was getting some nice underwater pictures until a rather large shark showed up!

Some people like Airik.....we couldn't find much to keep us there and soon moved on to the north.

**Amulet - April 2007:** **Airik Island**, Maloelap Atoll, RMI Lat/Lon:08 29.989N/171 11.140E

Our first stop was Airik Island. The Airik anchorage is nice and peaceful. Well sheltered and no swell. We went ashore and walked the one dirt road/path, takes about 10 minutes from end to end. People are very friendly. The housing is mostly modern materials, cement block and metal roofs. Some secondary structures are built from the free natural materials. The school is located at the left end with about 30-40 students, island population was said to be about 90.

There's a clinic with a "Doctor" just before the school. We met the doctor who was having his morning coffee break behind the clinic with about 6 other guys. One older guy was a patient who had his big toes amputated, flies were swarming over the filthy bandages, not a good advertisement for the clinic.

They gave us some limes, we gave out balloons to the kids who had gathered to gawk at the white couple, we had a nice visit.

Amulet's second visit in August 2007: Good and mostly calm anchorage. Decent snorkeling nearby. Friendly people who have a bit more than the folks at Aur I. We delivered a basketball hoop to the very nice and thankful acting mayor that sv NAVIGATOR had given us. Basketball (and baseball) are popular with the Marshallese, American influence I guess. We loaned out DVD's to a few of the villagers that had players and fixed a few things for them. They gave us limes and lobster. We also bought some nice handicrafts including a custom made mat from Lois (\$25). We went to the church service (Sundays 10:30 am) and it was only ok. All in Marshallese and the singing by the women's group afterward must be an acquired taste.

### **5.3.3 *Anchorage Between Airik and Taroa***

**Soggy Paws - Summer 2013:** We motor-sailed all the way from Tjen in the NE, trying to reach Airik in the SE, but were running out of daylight. So we stopped at Egeriben Island, about 5 miles north of Airiki. We dropped anchor on the edge of the sand, just before the drop-off, at

08-36.93 N / 171-10.65 E in 16-20 ft sand, scattered coral

In trade-wind conditions, you wouldn't have to worry about swinging room, but in the summer with passing squalls and variable winds, the swinging room was a little tight. Fortunately we were fine for the night. It was a nice protected spot. We did not go ashore.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** The queen of southern Maloelap that we met in Airik gave us permission to stop at a small uninhabited atoll just 4 nm away, **Kumar Island**. We anchored in 50-60ft of good sand (N8-34'1 / E171-10'3).

Beachcombing was fun as well as going at nite to look for coconut crabs & lobsters. Despite the 20-25kt of NE wind, we were well protected with only a small sideways swell.

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** There is a nice little anchorage at **Kumar Island** at approx

08-34.187N / 171-10.213E

Moving north up the lagoon we tried to stay in less than twenty feet of water, hugging the reef, to windward of us. It was nice sailing in smooth water and we were rewarded with catching a nice fish.

Along the way we passed a few nice little islands which would be well worth stopping at in settled weather. Beautiful clear water over a relatively shallow sand bottom and a tropical island to yourself.

### **5.3.4 *Taroa Area including Piggiatu and Ollot***

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We spend two days at anchor of Ollot at 08 46.000'N 171 10.247'E the anchorage is a little west of the two sunken ships, but had a nice swing room. While we were there, the wind turned to the south and we were quite happy with the swing room, however the

waves started to pick up so we decided to leave for an new anchorage in the south part of the atoll near Kemar Island.

While we were at Ollot we dinghied to the second islet NW of Ollot. Here, close to shore and out of the current, we found a fantastic snorkeling area – lots of live coral, lots of fish, and great visibility.

**Soggy Paws - August 2013:** We spent a week in this area, looking at the World War II artifacts and searching for a downed WW2 Corsair fighter plane in the waters off Taroa.

Anyone with interest in seeing the World War II sites of interest in this area should go to the Historical Preservation Office in Majuro and request PDF files of the various reports on Maloelap. There are at least 5 (Matt Holly, Christiansen, Adams et al, University of Hawaii, and Spenneman's Virtual Tour). (Or ask around the anchorage...)

The winds were very variable when we were here--we mostly had zero wind, but also had winds from NE, E, S, SW. Highest winds were S-SW at 20 knots, and there's very little protection from this quadrant anywhere in the normal anchorages in Maloelap. Airik would have been good in these winds, but it was 13 miles away and we didn't think they'd persist long enough to warrant a move (we were right).

We anchored in 3 spots in **Taroa**. First, right off the pier in about 15' of water, sand with scattered heads. Then in 12' between the Terushima Maru and the pier. We were trying to get protection from the S-SW winds, otherwise we wouldn't have been in so close. There is an old ship's chain that comes off from the T.Maru toward the pier. Watch for a straight line of small coral heads and don't drop your anchor on the chain! Later, because of mozzies from shore, and a lack of wind close in, we moved out to 40' deep. Again, sand bottom with good holding, but scattered large coral heads. We didn't try the "best" spot mentioned by Mr. John below.

We spent a couple of days towing snorkelers back and forth in 60-90' water offshore of Taroa, north of the pier, searching for the Corsair remains. We never found it (contact Matt Holly for details/status). For a few days we had amazing visibility--60-70' vis. This happened when the wind was low and the tidal range was abnormally small (new moon, I think)--only about a 1' tidal range. A couple days later, the lagoon even though the wind was still near calm, the water was too murky to search and never cleared up so we could continue the search.

We did locate the "B-24" remains on the reef just south of the small island to the north of Taroa (described in Matt Holly's Maloelap report). This has turned out to be a PBY, not a B-24, according to Matt Holly. Look for prominent "rocks" at low tide. These are the engines. In the slot between these two engines, to the west, there's a nice snorkel in shallow water, with lots of fish and live coral, and pretty clear water.

We spent one afternoon tromping around in the bush in the northern half of the island, visiting the Japanese Control Center (in the village), out to the airplane graveyard, and to the guns on the northern tip of the island. We had a guide for this visit (Zacharias). He knew where the interesting sites were, but knew virtually nothing about them. It would be a good idea to print out the map from the Spenneman Virtual Tour and take it along with you.

The next day, Zacharias was worn out and told us to do the southern half of Taroa on our own. We tried to find the "Beheading Place" (which wasn't, according to Matt Holly), and didn't, but did find more gun emplacements on the S and SE shore, remains of the small railway car used

to move ordnance around the island, and some remains of buildings. There were lots of buildings in this area, but it's very overgrown and difficult to find anything (take a machete).

Next we moved up to **Piggiatu** and anchored there for the night. There were a couple of unoccupied huts/houses on this island, but no one there. On Piggiatu is the remains of a major Japanese Generator site. Another huge building with old rusting generators. We also found a small (28-30') sailboat wrecked on the windward shore. No name, but from San Francisco. Looked like it had been there for years.

The next day we moved to **Ollot**. Here we located the two shipwrecks, two small (100') freighters. The first one is in about 15'--shallow enough to see from the surface, and to snorkel. The second one is just off its stern in about 45'. We anchored just north of the two shipwrecks. The deeper wreck makes an interesting dive. We spent an hour in the dinghy investigating the two engines on the reef you can see at low tide. One is off the south end of the island and the other is on the west side of the north end of the island. They are easy to spot.

See Matt Holly's report and the UH report for info on these ships and the Japanese Zero remains.

**Breakfree - December 2012:** On the way from Aur, we caught Tuna and Wahoo, and in the lagoon we nabbed a Rainbow Runner (our first).

We first anchored at **Taroa**, a village full of Japanese World War II relics....this is where all people from the five populated islands of Maloelap had all decamped for Christmas.

We had an amazing snorkel over a Japanese munitions shipwreck in the anchorage. About 100 metres long in 15 metres of water and almost intact except for a bombed bow.

Ashore were the remains of fuel tanks, admin buildings, plane wrecks, air raid shelters, and numerous craters from bombs dropped on the WW2 airfield and even a 6 inch cannon on the beach!

On island the Christmas sports festival of baseball and volleyball was in full swing. The 5 groups of Maleolap were on the closed airstrip involved in a serious competition. It was closed because the lawn mower could not keep up with the grass despite a valiant attempt.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** After great sailing inside the lagoon, on one tack, we arrived at **Taroa**, the main Japanese base during WWII. Perfect calm anchorage in 25ft of good sand and a galore of WWII artifacts to look at, from the wreck in the harbor you can snorkel on, to the numerous pillboxes, guns, plane fuselage, concrete underground bunkers, a 3-story HQ building, huge fuel depots ... and more ashore. Small WWII concrete jetty makes dinghy landing convenient. We saw Zacharias, the council secretary, who introduced us around and showed us many WWII remnants. Most of these remnants just sit there and deteriorate slowly exactly where they were left at the end of the conflict ... some buildings are used by people but most are just abandoned!

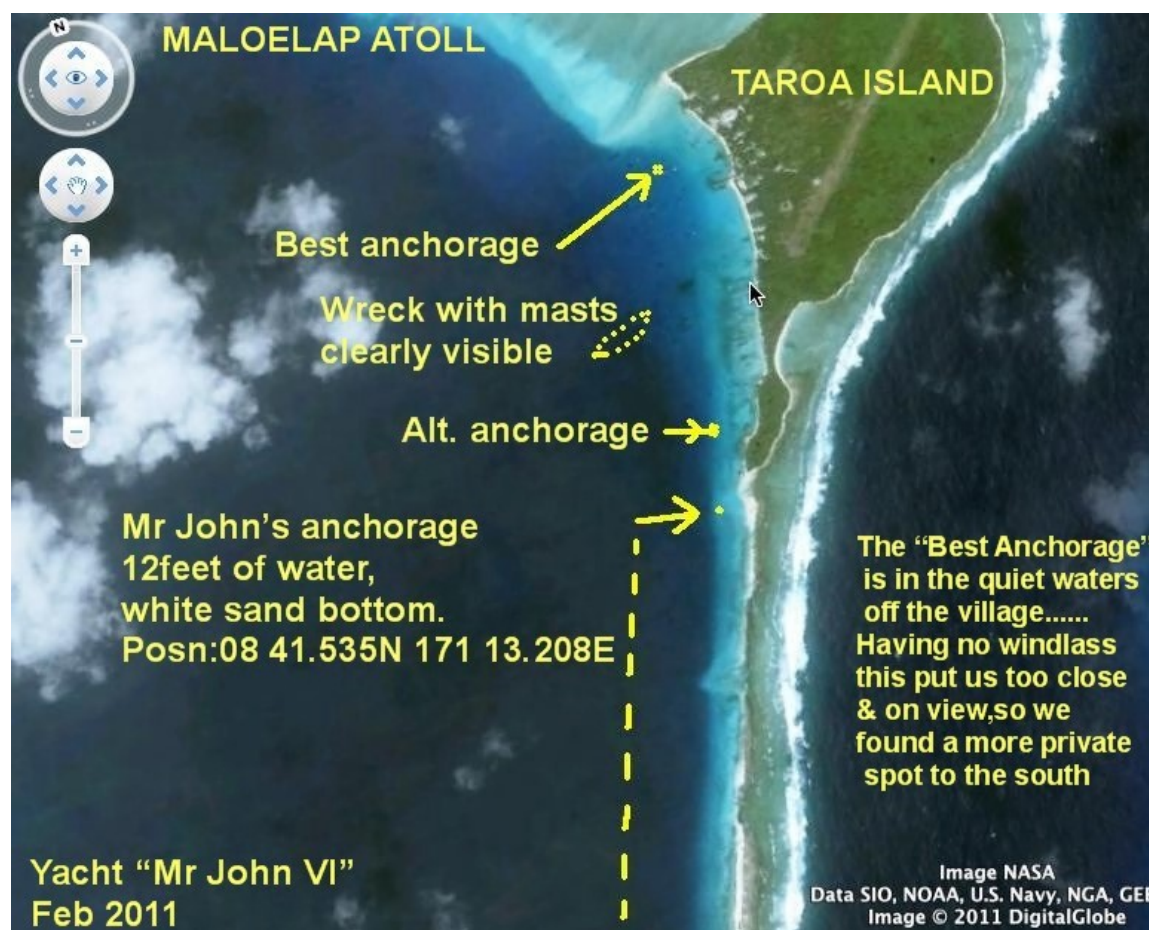
We snorkeled scuba & filmed on the sunken wreckage of a Japanese freighter "Terushima Maru" easily spotted as two prominent masts of the large vessel still extend above the water at even high tides. The water is generally very clear and calm at low tides, and has a nice collection of marine life in and around the vessel.



Warning: this vessel has live depth charges Many Japanese warships, when sunk, carried their live depth charges with them. If pre-set to 33 feet, as was a custom, and the safety forks fell off, they detonated. Many men were killed in the water in this manner. The depth of the hold is about 35 ft deep. The depth charges sit on a mid-deck, at about 20 feet down. If they were to roll off, or the deck deteriorates and fails, they could detonate. You can see a few of them remaining as well as the rails used to roll those to the transom to dump them.

A short 4nm sail brought us to **Ollot** (pronounced 'whoolit'). Anchorages can be a little roly now as Easterly swell brought over the reefs at high tide tends to roll along the coast. Had plenty of contact with the local population.

**Mr. John IV - February 2011:** The next stop was **Taroa**, the main island of the lagoon, this was a major, fortified base for the Japanese during WWII with a large airstrip, many guns, and bunkers.....There is still a lot of it around to be seen; plenty of live ammunition laying around also...watch the kids!!!



The normal anchorage and probably the 'best' anchorage, is off the village where indicated; however 'Mr John' found what we considered to be a better spot and whilst the protection not as good, we had privacy and could land on the beach without being swamped by the local children. It was an arrangement we could live with and we did like the clean, clear water for our early morning dip! 08-41.535N / 171-13.308E 12-foot sand.

On Google Earth, you can see several yachts anchored off the main village on Taroa, there is plenty of sand between coral heads and the holding ground is good. In strong Trade Wind conditions you can get more shelter here when the swell starts to get over the reef.

**Creola - 2009 - Ollot:** Anchorage (watch for bommies):

N 08 45.892 E 171 10.352 in 30', sand

Beautiful Island with very friendly people. 2 sunken Japanese cargo ships 50' apart in 30' to 60' depths, 2 Japanese Zeros

**Amulet - April 2007:** In **Taroa** we met with the acting mayor who looked at our permission and receipt papers, the actual mayor spends most of his time in Majuro representing Maloelap. No problem, we were welcomed.

We asked if someone could give us a tour of the island and he arranged for his grown son to do so the next morning. Taroa was a major Japanese base during WW II. It had two runways and many planes, many wrecked zeroes are in evidence. Several large reinforced concrete buildings have survived well, one is remarkably in excellent condition but is not used for anything. The three story headquarters building was heavily bombed but much is still standing. The generator building is interesting if you like old big machinery (I do).

In touring the island and what and how the Japanese had built there it was very obvious they intended to stay for many decades. They built concrete sea walls on the ocean side and a significant concrete pier on the lagoon side which still stands today.

On shore the people are pretty friendly and they live mostly in shacks made of plywood with metal roofs, very few traditional buildings are seen. No traditional boats were seen, only 3-4 fiberglass boats with 25 - 40 hp OB's. About 150 people live on Taroa.

It's natural for us to compare their lifestyle to that of the out islanders in Kiribati. While Majuro is more advanced than Tarawa (capital of Kiribati) the people on the Marshall Island out islands seem to live poorer lifestyles than in Kiribati. They are not as welcoming and you get a sense that they view you more as a meal ticket than a friend. Their shacks appear more modern (construction materials) but they have little to nothing inside them. They seem to want cash but will trade when you insist. Whereas in Kiribati we could not keep up with all that the locals willingly just gave us without asking (sometimes sneaking store bought food into our knapsack) here it seems more like "I'll give you this if you give me that" sort of deal.

**Pigeeyatto Island** has two households and 14 people we were told. Their main income comes from copra and stripping the large electric power plant the Japanese had there during WW II. It provided most of the power for the big airbase at Taroa 3 nm away. The Allied forces were surprised that they could not extinguish the lights at Taroa no matter how much they bombed it and destroyed the relatively small power plant there. From walking around the island there appears to be no defenses so I guess they kept the power plant a low key operation. Pretty good planning on the Japanese part.

We received a nice but cool welcome on the island, many of the people were away though including the three woman who live there, maybe they are the welcoming committee.

We spent a week anchored there, mostly spent finishing a new awning.

The weather has been rainy and squally. There's pretty good snorkeling on nice coral just south of the pier. We also spotted a live artillery shell among the coral, it was about 5' diameter by 12-14" long, we didn't risk moving it. While beachcombing, Nancy found several 50 caliber (American) and smaller caliber (Japanese) brass machine gun shells and lead bullets.

**Ollot Island** (Lat/Lon:08 45.853N/171 10.417E ) was the best out island experience in the Marshall Islands thus far. The 70 or so locals are friendly and do not ask for much if anything. Sandy is the one to start with. She speaks passable English and with her husband Maston and their three young kids run the yellow store near the beach at the center of the island. It's probably the best store in the Atoll as even people from Taroa come there to get stuff. It's still strictly the basics though, rice, flour, sugar, some can stuff and gasoline (\$7.50/gal!). Sandy wove us two nice picture frames (\$10 ea.).

James is an interesting elderly man who speaks very good English. He lives towards the North end of the island with his wife who doesn't speak English but makes nice woven handicrafts. I think he used to have something to do with the Peace Corps before they pulled out of the Marshall Islands.

We attended the Protestant Church service on Sunday (10:15 am) and were made most welcome with special guest seats of honor up front. Both the minister and Deacon speak passable English.

They have a primary school on the island though we kept missing the teachers. For higher grades the children must go to Taroa or Wotje. They also have a government sponsored clinic with a "doctor". Doctor is a very loose description in the out islands, a medical technician with two years of training is what usually constitutes a doctor.

Snorkeling is the best we've experienced so far. The highlight is the two Japanese patrol boats that are sunk in 20-60' of water right in front of Sandy's store. The deeper one was worth a scuba dive though snorkeling on it at low tide is good also. There's nice coral nearby as well. The wreckage of a Japanese "Zero" at the south end of the island is interesting, it's exposed at low tide.

### ***5.3.5 Anchorages Between Ollot and the North End***

**Mr. John IV - February 2011:** There are many small islands to the north of here situated on the surrounding reef, if you wish to visit any on your way out of the lagoon, its best to have permission from the Mayor or the local police officer..... Normally it is not a problem.

In moderate conditions most of the barrier islands will provide a passable anchorage. There are plenty of places to have all to yourself and the beachcombing is rewarding.

The trades are fairly consistent and you face into any swell that comes across the reef.

### ***5.3.6 Northern Maloelap Islands/Anchorages***

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** A few more miles up the lagoon brought us to **Tjan** island. This was a good anchorage in good sand between coral boomies. Here we were greeted by Ken, a very energetic native who lived in the US for his education as he is part of the Ratak chain family of traditional chiefs (Irojche) After having lived in the US system for all these years

and had a boy there with a Marshallese girl, they moved back to an uninhabited island here. What a contrast! We traded for more fruits like papayas, coconuts, pandanus, ...with him and others.

As he went back to his own isolated island a few miles North, we decided to anchor up there and share with them some food recipes and more. We anchored at **Enea Island** at N08-52'73 / E170-59'66 in 17ft of good sand. We anchored Bahamas style (anchors fore and aft) to avoid going over shallow reefs if winds were turning as it did once in Tjan during a rainsquall. We had no rain for about 2 months so that rainsquall was welcome ☺ The lagoon has very few coral patches that present any danger and these are very easily seen so you can sail easily within the lagoon.

**Katie Lee - October 2010 - Anchoring at Kaven:** They always say it is bad to anchor on a lee shore, and Kaven is a lee shore. We are the only sailboat that has stopped in Kaven in the past 5 years. I guess I'll explain why! Arg!

It was a beautiful calm day as we motored up from Taroa toward Kaven. It is about 25 miles, so it took most of the day. We were tired from the flu still, so we decided to anchor in a little better protected spot about 2.5 miles from Kaven, at Yarubaru Island. We rested and had a peaceful night. About 10 AM we motored on to Kaven and anchored in front of the school.

Trinda still was not feeling well from the flu so I took the candies for the kids and went ashore alone. I found the World Teach volunteer, Angelina. We walked around passing out the lollies and took photos in her classroom. It began to rain. We stepped inside a house we had just given candy too, to wait out the heavy part of the rain. After about 10 minutes I walked in the rain over to the beach where I could see the boat. All looked OK. I went back. About 10 more minutes it let up some and I said I needed to get back to check on Trinda.

As we got back to the center of the village where I could see the boat, IT WAS IN THE WRONG PLACE!! We rushed to the dinghy and tried to launch it. The wind had gotten up to 30 knots straight from the other side of the lagoon, 30 miles away. With that much fetch, it only took 20 minutes to build 10 to 12 foot breakers on the beach and under the boat. Angelina, some students and I could not launch the dinghy! The breakers just filled it with water. A couple of the local men ran out to help. They first tipped the dinghy over sideways to empty the water then helped launch it without filling it up again. I waved goodbye and got to the boat.

Trinda was in a panic! The anchor had slipped some. The chain had jumped off the windlass and run out the whole 300 feet. That put the boat back almost on the beach in 11 feet of water. We need 7 feet to float and the 10 foot waves made it less. Trinda was sure she heard the boat hit the bottom a time or two.

When the wind first got strong, she had tried to get my attention. We have a "canned air airhorn". She honked it all out. Also another one you blow on. She then rang the ships bell a while. Not a soul looked out in the rain to see her. She was VERY frustrated, to say the least! When I got to the boat I started apologizing before I got out of the dinghy.

The waves were so big that I just pulled up beside the boat and on a high one just rolled out of the dinghy onto the deck!. I tied off the dinghy on the side of the boat, with the outboard and wheels still down in the water. I started the boat engine and ran up to get the anchor started up. Trinda drove the boat toward the anchor chain while I got it on the gypsy of the windless and started pulling it up. Finally almost safe, we headed for the pass about 2 miles away. The wind

was still about 30 and veered around straight from the pass. We thought that we could get in the lee of the island next to the pass and maybe find a sand patch not too deep to anchor for the night. The wind was so hard that it took 4 hours to get to the pass. By then it was too dark to see to find a safe place to anchor. We followed our previous track through the pass out to the ocean side, looking for a break from the wind. Not found! We were tired! We had noticed a 60 foot depth in the center of the pass, so we turned around and went back looking for it. Just as we passed it the windless acted up and threw the breaker again so it wouldn't go down by power. I released the clutch and let it run out fast. We managed to get anchored in about 85 feet of water. Then it was time to do something about the dinghy. We had stopped in order to get it squared away. You can't expect to tow a dinghy with motor any distance in the ocean without lots of damage, like a line chaffing into and loosing it or the rings tearing out.

There was still about 6 foot waves from the wind in the lagoon and about 8 foot swell coming in the pass from the ocean side, but only about 15 seconds a part. I tried to pull the dinghy up to get in so we could take the motor off. I couldn't pull it up, something was caught. I had left the dinghy anchor in the dinghy with its 75 foot rope and thought it must have bounced out and caught on the reef. I went back and crawled out through the lifelines and fell into the dinghy between waves. I found the tight line and cut it. I still couldn't pull the dinghy forward! I looked again and saw the anchor still there but a tight line from the other side. The dinghy anchor line had washed out of the dinghy and fouled the main boat prop! Well I cut that side too then we pulled it around to the other side where we hoisted the outboard off and got it on the rail mount safely. Then I noticed the dinghy wheels that I left down, were now only one! One vibrated loose and lost. Someone in Kaven will now have a new wheel barrow wheel.

It was dark now. Another thing you never do, is leave the boat with a severe problem when things are bad! I was too tired, so I said I'd deal with the anchor rope in the prop in the morning. This time I got away with it. We woke up at first light, as if we actually slept any with the anchor chain jerking on the coral every wave and the boat bobbing all around. I jumped over and started untying the rope from the prop. There were still big waves. Now and then a wave so big the boat prop came out of the water with me snorkeling, trying to hold on and untie the mess. I finally got it, then noticed I could see more of the shaft than I should.

I got back aboard, I had to have Trinda help as I was so tired and jerked around that I couldn't climb the ladder with my fins and mask on. I looked in the engine room and sure enough, the 'drive saver', a rubber coupling between the transmission and the propeller shaft, had "protected" the transmission and broken completely away.

After worrying a while, I removed the bolts and pieces and found that there was just enough slack in the shaft to bolt it direct to the transmission without the drive saver. We were in business again. Then I got a big glass of water. Oh! It's salty!! I had left the deck fill ports open with a towel around them to catch any possible rain. Trinda has been washing clothes every day and using lots of water. When the wind came up, it made the boat bounce, salt water came over the bow and ran right into the drinking water tanks.

I had noticed it open earlier and closed the deck fills but hoped that not much water came in. We drank the cold water that Trinda keeps in the fridge until that was gone. We used the tank water to wash dishes and such. Because the fresh water floats on top of salt water, we accidentally used most of the salt water out of the tank before we need to drink much. By then it was diluted enough, it only tasted a little off. When we got back to Majuro and settled down a

little, I tested the tank water with the watermaker tester and it was not bad, 400 ppm, where the watermaker makes 250 ppm water. You can taste salt at about 750 ppm.

We got the engine going, weighed the anchor and voted to return direct to Majuro and skip Likiep. We were sad to have to miss visiting Likiep again, but we need to get back to order parts and rest.

**Creola - 2009 - Tjan:** We anchored in 20' loose sand (big area) w/drop off to 90' at 08-51.327 N / 171-03.784 E

We sailed most of the way north to Tjan Island, weather was clear and fine until about 3 nm from the destination when it turned squally with limited visibility to see into the water, summertime seems to mean daily minor squalls.

We anchored just at the south tip of Tjan in a pass between Tjan and another small island, the sand is somewhat loose as the current flows between the islands into the lagoon. The first time we backed down a bit fast and dragged the anchor nearly off the shelf. The shelf is pretty wide here so there's room to swing if need be. In front of the village are many coral patches with some decent size sand patches in between, anchoring there would also be possible if care were taken. The water clarity was good and it looks like a good place to snorkel. Did not go ashore at Tjan, it was hot with very little wind and we got lazy. The snorkeling was very good right in front of Tjan. Another cruiser said that Tjan was their favorite place in Maloelap.

**Amulet - April 2007 - Tar Island:** Lat/Lon:08 49.768N/171 05.516E . **Tar island** is uninhabited but they come from nearby Tjan to process the Copra. Snorkeling was good and we saw a family (pod?,school?) of 7 manta rays about 3-4' wing spread. Saturday a local boat arrived and we went ashore to meet the friendly people. We traded some fish hooks for coconuts. I think Tjan would make a good friendly out island experience, hopefully next time.

**Amulet - August 2007 - Tjan Island:** Lat/Lon 08 51.327 N / 171 03.784 E.

We're anchored just at the south tip of Tjan in a pass between Tjan and another small island, the sand is somewhat loose here as the current flows between the islands into the lagoon. The first time we backed down a bit fast and dragged the anchor nearly off the shelf. The shelf is pretty wide here so there's room to swing if need be. In front of the village there's many coral patches with some decent size sand patches in between, anchoring there would also be possible if care were taken. The water clarity was good and it looks like a good place to snorkel.

Did not go ashore at Tjan. It was hot with very little wind and we got lazy. The snorkeling was very good right in front of Tjan.

#### **5.4 Wotje**

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We used the following waypoints to get safely through the pass at Wotje:

09 23.100'N 170 06.300'E

09 23.700'N 170 06.300'E

09 23.850'N 171 06.600'E

09 24.000'N 170 07.800'E

09 24.000'N 170 09.000'E

09 23.700'N 170 12.000'E

We anchored in the northern part of the anchorage of Wotje island at 09 27.430'N 170 13.830'N in 13m in sand with two floats on the chain due to the coral bommies. The visibility is excellent and it is easy to pick the sand between the bommies to put down your anchor – the holding is good, and there is a lot of swing room.

At Wotje we anchored next to the seaplane ramp and dinghied ashore. At the power plant we asked for the Mayor, and they lead us to the central store where we met the Deputy Mayor. The Mayor does not reside on the island, but lives in Majuro full time. We have encountered this on all the islands we have visited – the Mayors and the Senators are never on the island they represent, but are “living the good life” in Majuro.

The Deputy Mayor was very nice, and gave us a tour of the island the next day. In order to move around on the island he arranged for the police officer to drive all three of us in the new Police Pick-up truck !!

Wotje today is not a small island. It has a population of around 800, and has numerous cars and pick-up trucks. It is also the site of both a High School and a small College where students come from the outer islands to study. Just recently they opened up the Wotje Distance Education Center using Zoom to reach out to students in the outer islands. The new center is located inside an old Japanese bunker, and is quite worth a visit.

Starlink has also arrived to Wotje, and they even have an internet café in the center of the town at the biggest store. The deputy mayor was nice enough to let us access their Starlink internet for free while we were there.

After spending a couple of days exploring the main town of Wotje, we left for the small uninhabited island of Anebing 4nm to the NW. Here we anchored at 09 30.583'N 170 11.416'E off the island. It was difficult to get ashore, because even though the shore looked like sand it was more like coral and we did not want to rip our dinghy. However, the snorkeling was fantastic right off the island. There was a layer of 2-3 feet of very warm water, but below that there was extremely clear cooler waters which made the snorkeling experience great.

Finally we sailed south and anchored at Egmedoi island right next to the wreck of Toyotsu Maru at 09 23.990'N 170 12.835'E. As others have described, the animal life around the wreck is fantastic. The wreck itself is deteriorating, and the mast has fallen down. All in all the wreck is a nice to snorkel and quite accessible from the surface.

**Downtime - December 2012:** We cleared the pass by 7 am but found ourselves motoring the last 12 miles across the atoll strait into the 20 knot winds towards the anchorage on Wotje Atoll. Luckily the bommies inside the atoll had been wire drug (knocked down) by the navy years ago because our new charts seem to be off by a few hundred feet! We figured this one out when our track line went right through the middle of an island on our way through the pass!

By noon we had the anchor set and spent the rest of the day napping and taking it easy after a rough sail.

We woke refreshed the next morning and put the dink down to go find the Mayor (they don't call them chief any longer) and give him a white out and island name changed copy of our permit paper since Wotje was not on Plan A which had official documents.....

Wotje Atoll was occupied by the Japanese since the early 1920's. Wotje is one of 74 islands that make up the atoll and the largest island. By the 40's the Japanese had sugarcane plantations and had heavily fortified the island with many large concrete bunkers and even built a air strip down the middle of the island. Thousands of square yards of concrete were poured and now serve as the town center and are used as roads. Roads? Yes we actually counted 3 pickup trucks on this 3 mile long island!

The concrete along with the bunkers is riddled with pock marks left from bombs dropped during the war. The bunker that protected the generators took a direct hit on the roof and the blast had the force to buckle 3 foot square heavily reinforced concrete columns but the 3 foot thick roof is still intact although resting on an angle over the buckled columns. The bunker next to it has a tank battery inside and you can still smell the fuel oil inside after 70 years! One of the generators was in the middle of a rebuild with pistons the size of 30 gallon drums lined up in a row next to the cylinder head when the bomb was dropped and is now one of the longest engine rebuilds in history! And you thought your mechanic was slow!

We had one of the locals show us the other war remains and saw several 5 inch guns slowly rusting away. One gun was amazing in the fact that it actually had bullet holes through the barrel! You have to wonder what kind of gun has the power to shoot through another guns 2 inch thick steel barrel.

Toward the south end of the island is the General's Quarters which we also found heavily bombed but still standing. The heavy steel doors were full of bullet holes but the thick walls stopped anything that struck them.

A few hundred feet through the coconut trees is a cemetery with two markers covered in Japanese writing. Walking down the path we arrived in a the village of Londo--home to about 40 people--and had a coconut to drink.

Continuing down the path we came to the end of the island and a small bunker. I went to look inside the 4 foot high door and to my surprise came face to face with a fully grown pig who came charging out towards me! Apparently this is his place to get away from it all and take a nap.

Way on the south end of the island is another battery that the big guns were placed at. The guns are long gone but the bunker remains in an amazing condition considering it was built over 80 years ago! The people from London keep the weeds down and the floors swept. There is an unspoken respect for what happened here on these islands. Many people's lives and futures were changed during this war and we would be living much different times if the war had the opposite outcome.....

While we were on this island we had intermittent but slow **internet** to our amazement.

I posted where our location was on Facebook and one of my best friend Phil's dad, James Odem sent a message that said " I was there on Wotje in 1944." James was born in 1927 and was only 17 when he was stationed here all those years ago! I can only imagine what it would had been like to be 17 and thousands of miles from home serving in the war.



New Year's Eve was spent on Downtime eating a roasted duck with Bob from s/v Braveheart. We had planned to go ashore and celebrate with the locals but the weather had other ideas as it continued to be stormy.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** After a very calm overnight passage from Maloelap, we entered thru the very easy Schishmarev channel and made 2 tacks inside the lagoon to arrive at Wotje island proper to present our permit and pay the \$50 fee.

This lagoon has also very few coral patches that present any danger and these are very easily seen so you can sail easily within the lagoon. The Cmap charts have these patches pretty well located too ... when you compensate for chart offset.

We anchored in the most calm **anchorage** so far at N09-27'484 / E170-13'855 in 25ft of good sand with few isolated deep reefs. Dinghy landing is easy at the 2 docks. There is a **wifi antenna** next to the power station (the Northern dock) so we could get internet access with our NTA card obtained in Majuro. (Have to take your laptop and sit next to the antenna at the power station building).

We met plenty of nice people on this island including Wesley (our informal guide), Glen and his daughter at the power plant, Dancy (high school agricultural teacher). We traded for plenty of fruits (breadfruits, coconuts, papayas, coconuts, pandanus, vegetables).

There are plenty of WWII artifacts on shore to look at and an interesting wreck to dive on. The Japanese vessel Borudou Maru was sunk at anchor in 123 feet of water (you can contact HPO or email us for exact GPS position). The top of the upward hull is about 70 ft.

We then sailed to the SE corner of the lagoon and anchored at **Egmedio Island**, next to the Toyotsu Maru wreck that you can see breaking the surface. Beautiful snorkeling. Plenty of fish around that wreck as you may see in our YouTube video.

We also sailed to the NE corner of the lagoon and anchored next to **Toleef**, an inhabited island. Just south of this island is a series of small islets that are very photogenic and nice to visit by dinghy. We had a nice visit of Ormed island where the locals were eager to trade so we got nice size lobsters, coconut crabs and fruits.

## **5.5 Erikub**

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We decided to check this uninhabited atoll (after getting permission from Wotje mayor) as a detour on our way to Ailuk.

We experienced some excitement entering thru the Eastern pass (N9-10'849 / E170-02'886) as the pass had blind breakers in some areas and you have to dodge your way once you have determined where the deep water was. Amazing blue colors in that pass that would make this an excellent pass to snorkel or scuba with milder wind conditions.

But what a disappointment to not find any suitable overnight anchorage anywhere we checked! We checked the islets north of the pass as well as the one in the NE corner of the lagoon. We even checked the outside of the atoll just South of the Western pass (N9-09'686 / E169-56'438 oceanside) that we used to exit the lagoon.

## 5.6 Likiep

**Background & History** - Likiep is unique in the Republic of the Marshall Islands in that it is the only series of islands and communities that were owned by Europeans. With the intent of developing a Copra (coconut) plantation, A. Capelle, a German, and J. deBrum, a Portuguese, acquired rights to the Atoll in 1876. From then through several generations, the Capelles and deBrums dominated the culture and community of the island of Likiep and its affiliated atoll islands, running them as a company community. The islands seem to have prospered during the peak years of copra production.

Gathering and processing of the coconuts took off starting in 1891 with 40,000 kilos and peaking in 1910 at 283,000 kilos. Subsequently, the demand for copra has been on a steady decline. Unfortunately for most of the Marshallese and the residents of Likiep, today copra is in such poor demand the industry is only in existence because of heavy governmental subsidies artificially inflating the value of the product.

Likiep was a relatively popular stop for passing sea captains as early as the 1500s with Spanish explorers. As well, the Russian explorer Otto von Kotzebue made several stops during his journeys in the 1800s. Capelle and deBrum took extra efforts to make travelers, merchants, and explores feel at home on Likiep and thereby helped give a comparatively cosmopolitan feel to the remote area. The deBrum house still holds fine wood furniture imported from exotic Southeast Asia as well as books covering broad topics of science and literature. The names deBrum and Capelle are still dominant in the small Likiep communities as well as spread throughout the country of the Marshall Islands. This distinctive community and area is well worth the visit not only for the unique culture but the natural beauty of the island and lagoon.

**Soggy Paws - July 2013:** People we met: Junior DeBrum & wife Titi. Junior is in charge of the Fisheries operation (clam farm and fishing co-op). Very friendly, good english. Joseph - Catholic Priest and Anna, nun. James Capelle and wife Samantha, storekeeper. [Capelle.james@hotmail.com](mailto:Capelle.james@hotmail.com) Acting Mayor: Anthony John. Joe DeBrum's grandson in law (Joe in Majuro with sick wife).

Hotel still there but not open and "historic" DeBrum house falling down (but still antiques can be seen in the "basement").

2 Stores, Cappelle's and another one near the school. Stocked with basic stuff, but expensive. Nothing fresh. Didn't ask about frozen.

Diesel for sale in limited quantities at \$9 per gallon (they buy it from the supply ship at \$8.50 per gallon). Probably gasoline is likewise available.

Protestant and Catholic Church on island. Very very clean island, very friendly people.

Internet and telephone available in the "library" building in the school complex, open from 9am to 5pm, closed 12-1. Walk along the waterfront "road" until about the middle of the bay and turn left on another "road". Wander around until you see the school or the big satellite dish (or ask someone). Internet free, but very slow. Their computer wouldn't allow "cookies", and had trouble getting our computer to work properly. But Gmail worked OK.

Air Marshalls plane weekly on Saturday late morning. Ship every 3 months or so. Neither very reliable.

Anchorage partly down the atoll at **Enej Island**: 09-55.47N / 169-12.05. We marked this spot on our way by, but didn't stop. It ended up being the best anchorage we saw outside the village of Likiep in the SE corner. Later Westward II and Challenger visited, and WW II's position at anchor was 09-55.53/159-11.88 anchored in 15m. They said that a big coral head in the middle of the anchor spot I gave them. But managed to wedge in both boats nearby.

**Wrecked ship** on the reef west of the village 09-49.75N 169-17.56E in about 9-20 meters in sand. Scattered wreckage somewhat recognizable. Some tanks, propeller and shaft, Apparently the ship broke in two and the bow section floated away. Junior deBrum took them out there. There is also a downed American plane in the sand in front of the village (ask Junior where). But we couldn't find any traces of it in a short snorkel.

**Downtime - January 2013:** We did a daysail from Wotje to Likiep.

We had been hearing that Likiep was one of the most beautiful atolls in the Marshalls and what we were seeing as we entered was just that. Once inside the pass we motored east 4 miles along beautiful white sand beach islands and along the shallow inner reef with clear waters glimmering every shade of turquoise imaginable. The small island in the far SE end of the atoll is where the anchorage is located which is next to the main village.

We set the anchor and the children of the village began coming out to see who the new kid in town was and stood waving on the beach. We lowered the dinghy and brought the two fish we had caught in Wotje, and some candy, ashore and spent the rest of the afternoon relaxing.

The first thing I noticed as we got closer to the village was the beautiful white sand beaches that lined the shores. Then I saw that just to the north there was a mile wide lagoon protected by a reef that at low tide transformed itself into a kite surfing paradise! The trade winds blew from the east and across the north/south lying reef which knocked down the surf and left smooth water behind to kite on. The water behind the reef was anywhere from 6 inches to 2 feet deep and a few hundred feet wide and went across the entire lagoon. The only downside was that if you crashed you would land on the hard coral bottom! I did my best to not let that happen and only clipped a few coral heads with the fins on the board in the shallow spots.

The small village only has around 150 people living in it most of which are kids. There are two churches a Protestant and a Catholic. The only market in town is located in a old converted refrigerated container. Not that that refrigeration works any longer but the container itself is in pretty good shape. They cut a big opening in the side and you just walk up and point to what you need. Most the items are canned or dry goods and once in a while the supply boat might bring a surprise.

We found bringing candy to these kids was like bringing sand to the beach, they were all chewing gum or something sweet already. But when they found out we had tons of it the whole gang followed us around until our supply was exhausted.

The smaller kids did not speak English well and seemed starved for attention. The bag full of toys came out and everyone got a gift and we had 40 new friends following us everywhere we went. Simple things like a bottle of bubbles, a matchbox car or a small ball can bring out the happiest kids you ever seen. Daria had two new friends a little girl about 4 with the cutest smile and the biggest brownest eyes you ever saw and another little boy who would not let go of her hands as we walked around the village. We visited the school and met the teacher Paul who also spoke perfect English and gave him supplies for the kids to color and draw with.

The village reminded me of New Plymouth in the Bahamas with clapboard houses and tin roofs. This island was one of the few settled by Germans back in the day and most the wooden homes are still standing...some just barely but these were the first all wood structures we had seen in the Marshals.

When we first went ashore we were greeted by Joe the owner of a small 8 room hotel located on the lagoon side of the island. This is one of very few hotels in all of the Marshalls and like many other business was suffering from the loss of one of the Air Marshallese planes that has been down for service. There is no longer reliable transportation to and from the islands since the airline is down to it's last plane and that one plane has to service the whole country! Customers would come out and get stranded with no cell phone or internet service to even check on flights, it is a very remote place to be left high and dry! The only other transportation is hopping on the 40 foot supply boat that comes once a month (weather permitting) and taking a 350 mile 2 day trip back to Majuro!

Joe looks like he might be 70 or so but it turns out he is 82 and is one of the few people that speaks perfect English on the island. We enjoyed getting to know him and listening to hours of stories about his life. Joe had been born on this small island back before the war and moved to Majuro to find work. He spent 20 years working for the airlines and has traveled all over the world with his employee miles. He has seen many changes in this big world in his 82 years and has been a great honor to have met him and his wife and be able share his island paradise for the week we were there..

One day Joe and I did a bit of trading, he traded me a basket full of 20 green coconuts and I traded a basket full of 48 beers, both items that we found ourselves to have more than enough of.....Joe didn't feel the trade was fair so he sweetened the deal by throwing in a few cowrie shells and two rare glass Japanese fishing floats that are really hard to find... Then I felt bad and evened up the trade with a Downtime tee shirt! Trade done....

As the week came to a close we took a **dive trip** to the pass in the dinghy with Bob from s/v Braveheart, and Daria watched the dink while Bob and I went for a dive. The first thing we saw when we went down was a spotted eagle ray and a turtle! Then the local law came out to see who was in their turf and several varieties of shark came to check us out. The white tips, black tip, and nurse sharks don't bother me much but the grey's and reef sharks get my attention! Especially when they are 6 or 7 feet long and acting a little territorial and get in your face. One grey did not like us there and let us know by getting closer and closer....we took the hint and swam on..... Then we came up to a sleeping leopard shark that was about 7 feet long! More fish and another turtle and the dive was over and it was Daria's turn to do some snorkeling since she was not up for a dive. It turns out the grey shark did not like her either.....She hopped back in the dink and on our way saw a group of dolphins that let her swim with them . We finished just in time and found ourselves driving back in a squall.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** After an easy overnight passage from Toke, we entered Likiep via the easy and straightforward southern pass [N09-49'621 / E169-13'367 ocean side] and had to make one tack to sail to Likiep Island.

A number of isolated bommies can easily been seen on the way anywhere in the lagoon with reasonable light. We were pleasantly surprised to hear someone calling us on VHF as we approached. It was Joe de Brum, manager of the **Plantation Haus** welcoming us and offering

the use of a very sturdy **mooring** right in front of the hotel [N09-49'588 / E169-18'317]. This mooring was installed a few months ago by some Majuro cruisers.

There are numerous buoys in the harbor used for aquaculture, but the mooring is the one in front of the Hotel (building with several flag poles in front) at a comfortable distance from shore. Despite 25kt+ of wind, there was hardly a ripple on the water in this small natural harbour protected from all but Westerlies! This harbour also offers a very picturesque view of the beautiful Catholic church as well as hotel, school and other buildings meshed into the landscape. We went to see Joe to find out to whom to present our visitor's permit and \$50 fee.

Joe is celebrating his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year and is spry, animated, and very friendly. He loves to talk to visitors and has been the yachties' friend for many years. The hotel is really not operating since the time that Marshall Islands Airlines suspended service to the islands for an extended period. Now there is a flight at least once a week, weather-permitting, but still no guests arrive. The place is slowly "going native", as abandoned things accumulate, and upkeep loses priority. ... but Joe is happy to help cruisers when needed.

Joe took us on a tour of the island on his ATV Quad. He helped to build the grass runway which amazingly is over a mile long. It's hard to believe that the highest elevation in the Marshalls is in Likiep (according to visitor guides). All it is are some small mounts in the coconut plantation mid-island! We went down the ocean side road to the end of the island where Joe's brother, Orlando, is building a fancy villa for his daughter and American son-in-law who come from the states to visit occasionally. What a contrast to the native way of life. We got caught in a rain shower, so didn't get to see Joe's house and garden on the other side of the village.

You can tie your dinghy at that dock or you can beach your dinghy at the resort. We met Bill, originally from Majuro, because of his beautiful vegetable garden on the road between the main dock and the Hotel. It's rare to see an organized garden with green veggies, so we had to meet the gardener. Nice guy who's Mother is a gardener in the Laura region of Majuro. He just loves to plant and putter and try new things in his garden. Unfortunately we had just missed his harvest a week ago, when he gave away a lot of veggies to the neighbors.

Also met Junior de Brum, Joe's nephew, who is manager of the Fish co-op, and Giant clam breeding program. They have freezers (all solar) where the villagers can keep fish or keep frozen food stocks for a small fee. No one has refrigeration in the atolls, so this is a real boon. The clam farm is on the neighboring island, Lodo.

For a complete change of scenery, we sailed just 2 nm away to **Lodo Island** where only one small family lives permanently. On the SE side of the island, you can visit the giant clam farm where they breed them for the aquarium market, and on the NW side you can snorkel in the pools in the channel between Lodo and the next island, on both sides of a small islet.

You can also find suitable anchorages along the eastern islands and you can exit the lagoon via a west passage if you are going towards the Ralik chain.

**Compendium of input pre-2010:** Likiep means "bottom of the basket". Cruising permit \$50. Total land area is only 3.96 miles<sup>2</sup>, but that encloses a large lagoon, 65 islands.

A sandhill on Likiep is said to be the highest point in the Marshall Islands. The population is 527 living in 82 households. It was never occupied by the Japanese because its shallow lagoon (163.71 miles<sup>2</sup>) made it impractical to serve as a harbor for large ships. However, due to its

close proximity to Wotje Atoll, VMB-613 maintained surveillance on to ensure it remained free of Japanese activity.

s/v 'Creola' information: Likiep atoll's south pass is a joy to go through, because it is bordered by large islands, and, if needed you can anchor off the north shore of the small island (Entrance Island)

South pass waypoint: Ocean      09-49.500N 169-13.380E

Anchorage waypoint:              09-49.590N, 169-18.356E

Once In: Hug the reef as you make your way to the village. Normally, you will be close hulled and will likely need to motor-sail the 5 miles to the main village. Assuming you arrived during good light conditions, you won't have any trouble missing the bommies.

The anchorage is in a small bay; beautiful, calm and well protected. The anchorage's sandy bottom shelves quickly offshore, dropping off to 40 or more feet, so we were anchored quite close to the beach, all the better to admire the beautiful village scene.

Lado Island is next to Likiep, there is a big sandy spot to anchor in 15' on the west edge of the reef. Spectacular snorkeling, an exceptional number of reef fish - the variety is seemingly endless. We even saw a hawksbill turtle; she had a lovely shell pattern & swam with surprising speed.

'Ursa Minor's' 2008 report: Likiep lies about 40 nm NW of Wotje, convenient to leave Wotje from Rurick Strait at the W end for passage to Likiep, a nice fast reach on a NE to SE wind, free of offshore dangers.

South Pass Entrance at approx. 09.50 N, 169.14 E, accurate on C-Map, lies between Agony and Etoile islands. Tree-covered Entrance Island is set back in the pass and won't uncover until you are about ½ mile from the pass. When it uncovers, the entire pass will become apparent. C-Map doesn't show the four smallish islets E of Agony and Entrance Island itself. However, both islands are almost a mile in width, and will appear larger than the islets extending along the reef from the SW end of Likiep itself.

The pass is easy decent light. Follow the dark blue due north for ¼ nm and then turn due east in front of Entrance Island. The anchorage is approx 4.6 nm at 95° True. The reef to the south and coral patches to the north are easily seen. However, when approaching the anchorage avoid the cove to the SE as this is all foul ground. Head instead directly towards the low rambling building to the left of the little yellow Catholic church, this is the 'hotel'. You can anchor in front in 15 to 20 meters, all hard sand, calm and well-protected from all but westerly winds. You can tie up the dinghy at the Fishing Coop wharf, or pull it right up on the beach in front of the hotel and secure to a tree.

## **5.7 Mejit**

## **5.8 Utirik**

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** We had a easy passage, (without tacking), to the outside of the atoll as we did not experience that strong westerly current we did coming from Wotje to Ailuk ... the wind was more to the East so that helped too.

We arrived outside the Utirik passage at 4am so we had to hove-to until the daylight would let us see the reefs. Unfortunately the charts are vague and you cannot see the outside barrier reef on radar (very low) so keeping 1 nm away for safety, we actually were about 2nm. Alas for us, at dawn, we got a big squally area moving on us giving us 30-40kts for a few hours, making us drift away even more! Then the wind progressively died down while we motorsailed toward the passage and into the lagoon.

We had looked on Google Earth to get the exact location on that passage over the barrier reef. We found a minimum of 15ft of depth but friends found at least 25ft when they passed at low tide. The entrance channel is not so much a "pass" as just an area of deeper water across the barrier reef. Keep a good bow watch and use these waypoints only as a guide: outside WP is N11-14'553 / E169-44'587 and inside WP is N11-14'721 / E169-45'402.

Crossing the lagoon, there are few bommies, but some are hard to spot, on the way to the anchorage off Utirik. But watch out in the anchorage as we did not find any sandy bottom, all brittle corals and some very shallow areas (5ft!) difficult to spot with bad light.

When checking our anchor, we were thrilled to see a manta ray swim by. A group of 5-6 manta rays hang around the area so you might be able to see them too if you ever visit this atoll.

We met the acting mayor to present our permit and the \$25 fee. We met several friendly people ashore (as like on every atoll) and did trade for fruit and fish. In this atoll you don't have many different islands you can anchor off so we end up staying 10 days right here.

We dinghied to the uninhabited island just North and watched many local people harvesting sea cucumbers for the Asian market. At \$30-\$50kg for dried sea cucumber it is a better work than copra, and Utrick is the most fortunate atoll of the Marshalls with all 6 kinds of cucumber present in the lagoon.

### **5.9 Toke/Taka {Uninhabited}**

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** Natives call it Taka.

We asked the permission in Utirik to visit this uninhabited atoll as we heard it was a beautiful natural reserve with turtles, birds and plenty of fish (and sharks).

We had an easy day passage from Utirick. The entrance channel is straightforward: outside WP is N11-06'802 / E169-35'419 and inside WP is N11-07'190 / E169-35'637. We tacked inside the lagoon to get to the anchorage. Keep a good watch for coral patches, some need a good eye to spot them.

Anchored in 50ft of good sand with a few deep coral formations at N11-06'808 / E169-39'579. This anchorage is well protected from winds NE to SE.

If you enjoy seclusion from time to time as well as little disturbed nature, this is one of these places you will really enjoy! This island is only seldom visited for a few days at a time by some families of Utrick to get copra, coconut crabs and more. Good beachcombing on the ocean side as usual. Plenty of birds of different types are nesting here both in tree branches and under scrub brushes on the ocean side. We saw fresh traces of turtles so we decided to come back at night but were not lucky to see a turtle laying her eggs! But we saw some coconut crabs, nesting birds, and mice.

Great snorkeling and good spearfishing between the islets on the barrier reef as well as isolated boomies. You might even see conchs like in the Bahamas! It was so beautiful to just sit on the beach and watch the sea birds soaring all around us, some even coming very close to check us out. It was fun to watch the young ones joyously try out their wings and practice maneuvers. Were really lucky to see a rare event of a group of eagle rays in very shallow water. As we drifted by in the current with our masks on we saw there was one large female being pursued by at least 5 smaller males, and even saw one male actually mount the female! Where was the UW video when we needed it!?

### **5.10 Ailuk**

**Mr John IV - February 2011:** Arriving in Ailuk, the recommended entrance is through the **Eneneman Channel**, it is certainly the least complicated and once through, there are the least amount of coral heads between you and the first available anchorage. Just watch that lump of coral inside the pass, it seems to be a little further north than charted.

The **Marok Channel** is also easy but more coral to dodge once you get inside.

**Erappu Channel** is not easy and still more coral to dodge getting across the lagoon

(C-map is out here again...and the clouds don't help either!)

Unfortunately, as your first stop, you should go and see the Mayor or the appointed official and he will generally be located on Ailuk Island in the SE corner of the lagoon.

This lagoon is well loaded with Coral Heads and there seem to be many more than are shown on the chart. As you will most likely be arriving in the morning, you may have to pick your time to move south, threading your way between the heads.

AILUK ISLAND is in the SE corner and has a dock, it is the centre of administration and where most of the visiting yachts seem to hang out..... Apparently you anchor between the coral heads and there is not much room.

On Google Earth, you can see a yacht anchored off Ailuk Island. The yacht is facing N of E and this would be as expected for the normal winds here; this makes the anchorage a little exposed, thus I would be inclined to do my check-in then, with permission, depart for the N end of the lagoon where there are better anchorages with more protection.

**Sloepmouche - Summer 2011:** This was the favorite atoll of the cruisers this season, several yachts that visited only one atoll in the outer islands visited here and skipped those in the south. This was one of our favorites too.

Ailuk is known for still using and building traditional sailing outriggers, and it was great to see the natives using these instead of motor boats for their daily excursions to the copra islands or to go fishing on the isolated coral heads in the lagoon. They are very adept at handling them...they can zoom at 10-12 kts! They make a beautiful sight as they skim by so effortlessly.

We also loved the views of the beautiful blue colors of the water contrasted with the white sand beaches and greens of the coconut palms as we sailed in the protected waters of the lagoon!

We had to tack several times to get here from Wotje because a strong Westerly flowing current pushed us out at least 30 deg to port. You do not experience it when sailing close to the western



side of atolls but as soon as you are in the open, there it is frustrating your progress if you try to head North!

Since we arrived at the atoll at night, we decided to hang around the west side in the lee until daylight (even then seas were rough with the strong winds we were experiencing). You want to stay at least 1 nm off the atoll's edge since your radar won't pick up the low fringing reefs.

When the sun was high enough, we entered the lagoon by the deep and straightforward Marok channel (N10deg21'812 / E169-54'461). (Note: There is a pass on the South end of the atoll that we thought about using, but our friends on *La Gitana* reported it quite shallow looking and they used one of the Northern passes, all deep enough for inter-islands boats.)

Once inside Ailuk lagoon, we had a very nice sail straight for Ailuk island, in the SE corner. We even crossed 2 local sailing outriggers carrying people and goods!

Not long after we anchored (N10-13'6 / E169-58'7) in 45ft of good sand with bommies around, we were visited by Emae, the mayor. He came to welcome us and check our paper as well as collecting the \$50 fee.

The anchorage is breezy but is quite well protected in Easterly winds. Can get roly at high tide especially if the wind goes more NE. The island has a nice convenient modern dock where you can land your dinghy easily. It made it very convenient for us to go ashore without getting my infected leg wet. Make sure you treat any small cuts or scratches right away or you might, like me, get a big infection requiring strong oral anti-biotics! (the dispensaries on the islands are limited in supplies ).

Except for a few families living in Enejelar, everyone lives on Ailuk island. The island is fairly small with one village, very neat and tidy. Like all other main islands on every atoll it has some churches, a dispensary, a new school as well as an airstrip for weekly flights.

The cargo boat from Majuro only comes here about every 3 months so the island is quite isolated. As usual we traded for local food like lemons, coconuts, breadfruits & bananas (eating and cooking varieties). Ailuk is a drier atoll than the ones south of it. Though they still had many food crops, papaya was rare.

We checked the numerous batteries and solar panels and gave advice as well as troubleshoot some systems. We saw more sailing traditional canoes in this atoll than any other visited so far ... some cruisers made sails for them a few years ago and the impetus has been going strong since then ... nice to rely on wind instead of gasoline at \$8/gal! One of the past-times of the children (and men) is building miniature outrigger models and sailing them in the shallow waters at low tide. We think it's great to promote the tradition of sailing this way, so we organized a race with the kids and gave prizes to every participant. What a great time!

After 10 days of enjoying the main island, we decided to sail along the East side of the lagoon and anchor in front of any attractive uninhabited island with a good anchorage. Tempo, a retired school teacher living behind the visitor information booth (!) encouraged us to visit any of his several islands.

You have several possible anchorages along the chain of small islands. We anchored at **Uriga island** N10-15'25 / E169-58'79 in 25ft of good sand in front of scenic islets with sea channels between them at high tide. Easy way to go beachcombing! Great snorkeling on the reef just

south of anchorage, that comes out of the shallows ashore, as well as some small nearby seamounts.

We had more glorious sailing to our next stop, off **Achactakku Island** at N10-23'53 / E169-57'87 in 30ft of good sand, just in front of a bigger seamount.

We then sailed to **Enejelar Island**, where about 6 families are living. Calm anchorage in less than 40ft and good sand N10deg26'70 / E169-57'30. We traded for pandanus, coconuts & breadfruits and had a great potluck lunch before our departure. Very welcoming people, a favorite spot from our friends on La Gitana too.

Easy passage thru **Eneman channel** on our way to Utirik with only a rare isolated reef to watch for!

### **5.11 Bikar**

## **6 Atolls North and West of Majuro - Ralik Chain**

### **6.1 Ailinglapalap**

The Ailinglapalap council has imposed a \$250 fee for visiting boats. So very very few cruisers ever go there.

### **6.2 Namu**

### **6.3 Lib**

Lib is a tiny atoll a bit west of the line between Namu and Kwajalein. There is no break in the reef here, so very few cruisers visit.

I noted that my Google Earth chart of Lib shows it to be nearly 2 miles WEST of where it shows on the CM93 2010 chart. So if you're passing by there, beware!!

### **6.4 Kwajalein**

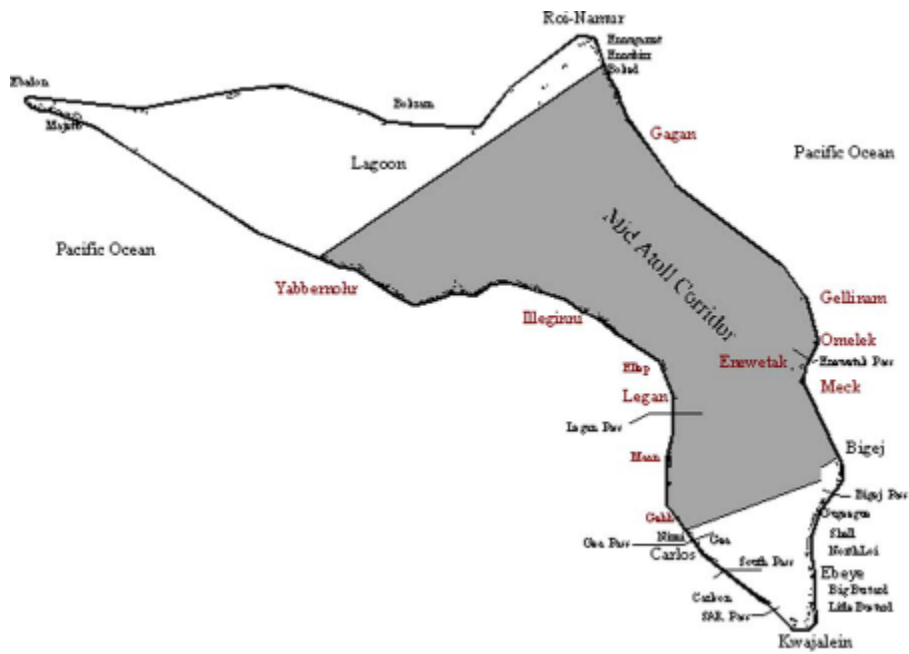
We found no internet or cell coverage in Kwajalein, beyond what is on Ebeye. There is internet available in the Food Court at Kwaj Base, but you need to be sponsored into the base to access it.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** When contemplating a stop in Kwaj, you should check the status of Missile Test Operations by listening on 2716 USB at the top of any hour. Have a pencil ready as the coordinates of any closed area are given in a long group of lat/long positions. In May 2013, we were told there was some test activity going on. Basically the middle of the Kwaj Atoll was off limits, plus areas east and west of the middle of Kwaj, in the open ocean.

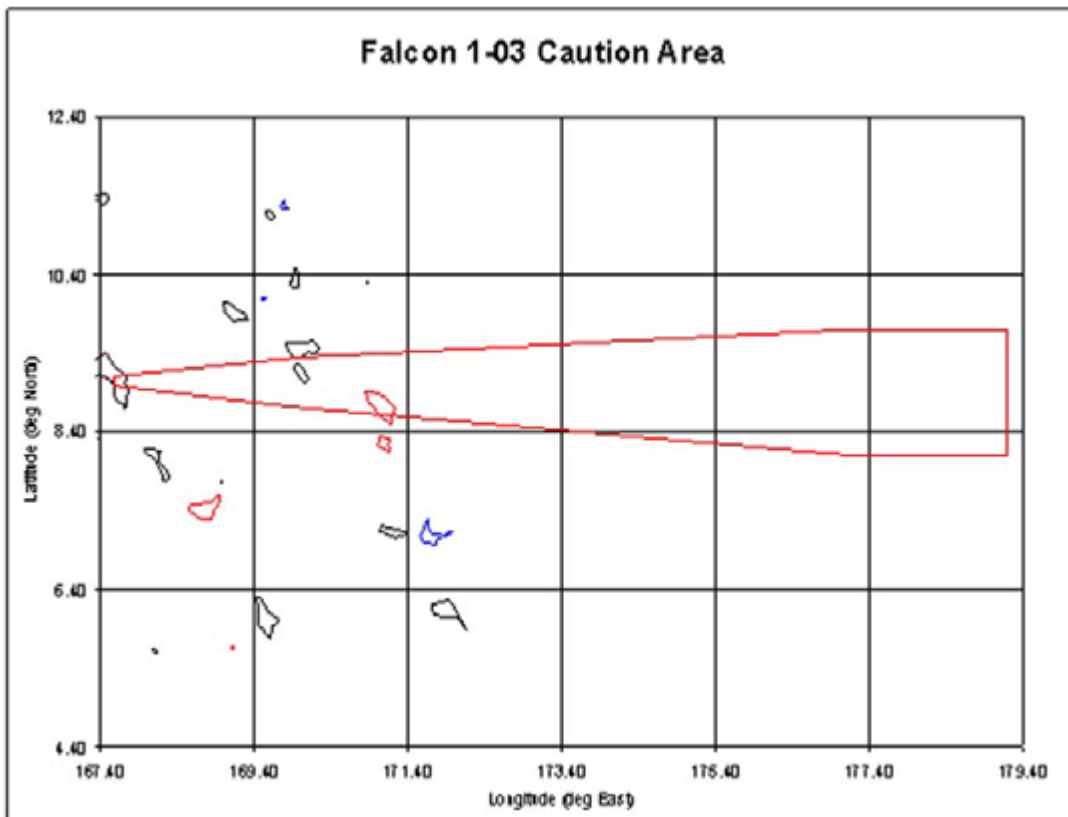
We could come and go via the Bigej Pass, anchor off Bigej Island (but go no further north), and travel between Bigej Pass and Ebeye and the Kwaj Base.

They call the closed area the "Mid Atoll Closure", so you could also come in through passes in the south (Gea Pass) and north (several passes near Roi) ends of the atoll. See sketch below.

### Sketch of Kwaj showing the Mid Atoll Corridor & Passes



Caution Area Goes WELL East of Kwaj on this Particular Missile Test



**Savannah - January 2012:** Kwajalein is the biggest atoll in the world at 40 miles across the lagoon. We left Majuro for Kwajalein in mid December as we were able to get sponsorship on the Army base. Winds were 20-25 knots out of the E/NE with 12 foot seas. It was by far the most miserable trip yet. The pass in Majuro was big, but the pass in Kwajalein was even bigger. Not the best time of the year to move between atolls... We departed out the north pass with little to no wind in mid January with no problems at all.

**Sloepmouche - 2011:** Many cruisers are still confused about visiting this atoll that is partially occupied by US military. First you should treat Kwajalein like any other atoll in the Marshall meaning you have to obtain an entry permit in Majuro (Internal affairs) and first check in at Ebeye island by paying the \$25 fee at the town council office. You can now visit islands in the atolls (remember to try to get landowners permission as usual) EXCEPT all islands that are controlled by USAKA (US Army forces). These restricted islands are Kwajalein, Carlos, Legan, Illeginni, Meck, Omelek, Gagan and Roi-Namur.

The US is conducting secret missile testing here so you won't be welcome in these islands UNLESS somebody working on the base is willing to sponsor you. You might be issued day passes or even a 2-week pass that allows you access to some facilities. Several cruisers do work as private contractors so some visiting cruisers (mostly US citizens) were able to get sponsorships from them. (Sponsors accept full responsibility for your conduct for the period, and their jobs and accommodations are at stake if you do something inappropriate). That allows you to come into a marina, enjoy shopping at great prices (compared to Majuro & Ebeye), and on Kwajalein Island, the "Country Club"-like atmosphere. During missions, movements around the lagoon might be restricted, as the mid-atoll corridor is closed from East reefs to near Nell island, so keep your ears open to avoid trouble. Military stand by on VHF CH12. Ch 16-72 are also used. Kwajalein is the second international port of entry/exit so it is a good last atoll to visit if going westward before checking out of the Marshalls. US cruisers seeking work might also be lucky (or unlucky depending one point of view 😊 ).

#### **6.4.1 Ebeye**

Ebeye is pronounced "e-buy". It is an island a few miles south of the primary (south eastern) channel into Kwajalein lagoon, and a few miles north of the Kwaj Army Base.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** We never found a place where we could pay the 30 US for the permit to visit Kwajalein. The police office had never seen that paper before and we could not find the Town Council. They are not very used to Yachts visiting. According to Immigration we were the second boat since COVID (SV Alice was the first).

Customs and Immigration are both located on the second floor in the Finance Ministry building. The building is at the extreme southern end of the island right next to the power plant. You should go there a couple of days in advance of you clearing out, in order to set an appointment for the officials to visit your boat.

The officials will come to the dock and you have to ferry them out to your boat in the dinghy.

Ebeye is very crowded, and there are a lot of children. According to the latest survey there are 15.000 people living in Ebeye on only 0.35 km<sup>2</sup> land, and more than 50% of the population is less than 18 years old. We did not find Ebeye a nice space. The people were friendly, but the island was quite dirty with a lot of flies all over.

## Provisioning

Payless, as the only place in Ebeye, now accepts credit cards (most of the time). We were able to pay once with our card, but the next day it did not work. Towards the south there is a DIY store with some hardware items, and a bit to the north there is a very nice store called the Ralik Store, which is run by an Irishman named Bill. It is not big, but it is the nicest cleanest store I Ebeye (no food).

**Alice - May 2023** We went in and out of the atoll through the Gea pass on the west side of the atoll. The pass is very deep and well buoyed. We were told that is also the pass the military use but we didn't see any other ships. We stopped in Ebeye only to clear out. We didn't have a permit, but nobody said anything about it. After arriving we went to the police station but he just told us to go to the port authority instead.

The Port Authority has their office behind the big green building by the ferry docks. They share house with the post office, port authority is on the second floor and the post office on the first floor. It is hard to find so you might have to ask around. The port captain had us fill in some paper and helped us contacting custom, immigration and quarantine for clearing out. He was very nice but a bit surprised to see us. According to him we were the first boat here after Covid.

NTA have an office here, by the antenna and you can top up your phone credit. When we were there they didn't have any sim-cards but we already had that.

**Provisioning** – everything is kind of the same as they written before here, there is a payless store and a store called Lucky star. They didn't have much and you have to check the expiring dates on everything. I bought flour but I had to trough everything overboard because the bag was full of bugs. You can get water from the water tower in the middle of town. The water is **treated drinking water** and it's free, but you have to have your own jerry cans. More or less the whole town is getting their drinking water there and it's an experience to fill water along with everyone else. We didn't get any diesel and I'm not sure if you can. There is a petrol station that sell **diesel** by the big ramp, but the custom guy said there was a lot of water in that diesel. I don't know if he was serious or not.

**Westward II - May 2013:** We got stuck in Kwajalein for a couple of weeks because our propeller "threw a blade", and it took us awhile to get a new one shipped in.

We found good NTA wifi from several signals on Ebeye. We ended up moving our boat to the SW end of Ebeye to get the best signal. It's a nice anchorage except for the wakes from the ferry boats ferrying workers to and from the Kwaj Base.

Since we expected to be doing a lot of internet, we went into the NTA office in Ebeye and got signed up for the new "by the month" internet plan. It costs \$35/mo and basically gives unlimited internet for the one computer that you sign up. The internet in Ebeye is actually pretty good--it seemed faster than what we were used to from Majuro. If you are using a wifi range extender, be sure to take that in with you to get signed up (give them the Mac address from that device rather than your computer).

We wanted to receive a package that had been shipped to us in Majuro, in Ebeye, so we had a cruiser in Majuro go into the post office and tell them to forward the package for us to Ebeye. It was done at no expense and arrived in Ebeye the next day. We found the postmaster in Ebeye to be very nice and accommodating. When the post office in Majuro continued forwarding

packages (unbeknownst to us), the Ebeye postmaster flagged us down in the street and told us he had received another package for us.

When our propeller came in through the Kwaj Base via DHL (6 days from Canada, routed via Hong Kong, and Seoul South Korea), the postmaster retrieved it for us and met us on the quay at Ebeye and handed it to us.

If you can't get Kwaj Base privileges to shop at the base (where fresh groceries come in by air once a week from Hawaii), the Payless store in Ebeye is pretty well stocked and receives fresh veggies every two weeks on a ship from Guam. You can also buy good frozen foods, some staples, and beer and wine from the Payless.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** We haven't done this yet, but theoretically you can receive mail at the Post Office in Ebeye (see Savannah's note about the Post Office below).

If sending from the U.S.

<Your Name>  
SY <Boat Name>, Yacht in Transit  
General Delivery  
Ebeye, MH 96970

If sending from somewhere other than the U.S.:

<Your Name>  
SY <Boat Name>, Yacht in Transit  
General Delivery  
Ebeye 96970  
Republic of Marshall Islands

**Savannah - January 2012:** Ebeye is the main town in Kwajalein. There are ferry boats that take people to and from Kwajalein Island several times a day. This is mostly for workers but you can get a day pass as well, although these require sponsorship as well.

**Check in/out** - Some boats checked in at the police station but were met mostly with confusion. One boat was told it cost \$50 to visit Kwajalein, so they checked in and paid their money. The officials were happy to take it, but the rest of us were told (in Majuro) it didn't cost anything so we didn't check in or out and had no issues. Ebeye is a point of official entry and exit for the Marshall Islands so if you want to bypass Majuro, this is the place to do it.

**Provisioning** - There is a Payless very close to the wharf. You tie your dinghy to the wall perpendicular to where the ferry's come in and walk straight down the road. The Payless is on the right. Prices are similar to Majuro, though the selection is slightly less. Watch expiration dates. We found everything in the refrigerators and freezers to be way past their expiration date. Veggies were pretty good the day we went with lettuce, red/yellow peppers, bok choy, potatoes, onions, celery, cabbage. Fruit was limited to sliced cantaloupe, apples, and oranges. Non refrigerated items were plentiful with a wide variety.

If you turn right after the Payless, there is another store down the road on the left, Lucky Star. It carries much less and isn't quite as clean, but had quite a bit of Asian condiments we didn't see

in Payless. They also had a fair amount of hardware items (we found some battery clamps here we couldn't find anywhere else).

There is another store across from Payless that has a bakery and carries department store type items – tvs, furniture, clothes, etc.

**Restaurant** - There is one restaurant on the island, inside the hotel. If you go past the Lucky Star a block or so and look on the right, you'll see the hotel. Go in the hotel straight down the hall, then turn right. You'll find the The Mermaid Restaurant. It serves basic Chinese food as well as beer.

**Internet** - There are several Hotspots and you can use the same NTA cards that were sold in Majuro. We didn't buy any here, but suspect you can get them all around town.

**Post Office** - It's still a US Post Office here so you can get shipments here as well. They're not as familiar with yachts here as they are in Majuro, so it would do you well to go in ahead of time and tell them the package(s) are coming.

**Sloepmouche - 2011** - Ebeye is not as dirty as we heard and were quite surprised to see people cleaning up all around their houses, making the island much cleaner than Majuro. Perhaps it was a Xmas/New Year resolution that won't last ... or perhaps there is a new effort to really clean up the place?! Time will tell!

Other than a smaller version of Payless Supermarket (but with surprisingly better prices for veggies and some shelf items), a snack bar, and a Chinese restaurant at Hotel Ebeye, the island offers no attractions and is packed wall to wall with residences.

**Wifi** coverage is good in the anchorage, using the same NTA cards as in Majuro.

**Before - June 2011:** Ebeye is an island that was built up to house RMI workers for Kwaj. About 16,000 people live on a few square miles. USPS is there, and because we can't use the Kwaj PO, we take a ferry over for mail. There is a small grocery store, no ATM, one hotel with Chinese food, a good Phillipino restaurant, and a bank (BOMI). We got fuel and propane on base--it's not easy to get at Ebeye. You can check in and out of the Marshall Islands at Ebeye. It is not a good anchorage, all three boats, including us have dragged, so we stay close to the boat or leave one of us on board.

Nobody had anything good to say about Ebeye, but we found it cleaner, with friendlier people, and lotsa fancy cars and trucks. Visualize Mexico. That said we wouldn't want to spend a heap of time here, due to limitations. No dive fills available that we know of.

#### **6.4.2 Bigej**

**Soggy Paws - June 2013:** We haven't had a chance to stop and anchor at **Bigej** (properly pronounced something like Bik-esh, though I've heard the cruisers at Kwaj base call it Bee-Gee, like the band), but we made a close pass, and thought it looked lovely.

We dropped a waypoint at 08-54.152N / 167-46.127E to use as an "easy in, even at night" anchor spot. Even though the wind was blowing 18-20 ENE, it was well sheltered, in nice sand, about 25 feet deep. As of October, we still haven't stopped overnight at this anchorage, but our friends who have say it's a great anchorage.



**Savannah - 2011:** Bigej is just about 10 miles or less north of Ebeye and is a beautiful anchorage. On the south side is some good diving and surfing but may be a little rocky. The middle of the island is where the houses are if you want to get to know some locals. The north side is quiet and has some pretty good snorkeling. In high winds you may get some wrap around from the small pass north of there. If you go ashore you'll find a beautiful beach covered with flies. On the ocean side, it is considerably better but with coral instead of sand. It's a nice seashell finding beachwalk. We didn't see any trash ashore at all.

### **6.4.3 Roi-Namur Area**

Roi Namur is located at the NE end of the Kwajalein atoll. It was a Japanese base early in WW2, but was taken over by US forces in 1944 or 45.

Now it is a major missile tracking installation, with a HUGE radar.

The land area is off limits to all but authorized personnel. Like Kwajalein, you must be sponsored by a Roi Base resident to go ashore EXCEPT at the concrete pier where the ferry goes back and forth to 3<sup>rd</sup> Island, transporting Marshallese workers.

However, you can go in and anchor off the beach in Roi, and you can go ashore at the pier, shop at the store, get water and ice, buy diesel/gas, and use the laundry facilities, within the gated compound set up for the Marshallese workers.

**Savannah - 2011:** Roi-Namur sits directly north of Bigej at the top of the atoll. This is also run by the army base, therefore going ashore is not an option without sponsorship. There are a number of wrecks here though that we hear are worth diving, although we did not dive any of them.

**Soggy Paws - June 2013:** We had a screaming reach up the atoll behind the reef from Bigej to 6<sup>th</sup> Island, and stopped at 6<sup>th</sup> Island overnight, based on Sloepmouche's info. We didn't like the sound of anchoring in 40-50 ft, and with strong tradewinds, weren't worried about West winds, so we snuck in closer and anchored on the 20' sand shelf, between scattered coral heads, at 09-20.186N / 167-30.376E. This was a nice quiet anchorage, even in 18-20 ENE and even at high tide. The island is uninhabited, and there's a decent beach ashore, and a decent dive bommie just offshore. When we got tired of the less-than-perfect anchorage at Roi, we moved back to 6<sup>th</sup> Island.

The next day, we went up to **Roi Namur**, and anchored in the west basin of the base area at 09-23.626 N / 167.28.217E, in about 20' sand. The best spot, a little further in and to our starboard, was taken up by another boat. Where we were was blocking the concrete ramp ashore on the port side, which is used once a week by the large landing craft that shuttles cargo between Roi and Kwaj base (we would definitely have to move if he wanted access to the ramp). Further out you get more wind/chop and more roll.

This is a beautiful anchorage (except it's not as protected as it looks if the wind goes south of east), but we couldn't go ashore. Despite the efforts of our contacts in Kwaj, we couldn't get permission for a day pass to have a look around. Like Kwaj, most of the island is off limits, except the ferry dock to the east. There we landed our dinghy and talked to the small boat marina people. There is a small store there we could buy from, and the ferry to 3<sup>rd</sup> island (free with no security checkpoint to get on or off). We also saw washing machines in the gated area, which we were told we could use.

On approaching Roi Namur (about 4 miles out), you should call Roi Harbor Control on Channel 12 and ask permission to come in and anchor. We didn't get any response after several calls, but we were told this was unusual.

With the wind blowing at 18-20, we only ventured out to dive on the Japanese Zero, which is just east of the marked channel into the Roi fuel dock (see the Kwaj Dive Club website for waypoints). It was challenging diving out of the dinghy in those conditions, but worth the effort, as the plane is still mostly intact. We anchored one dinghy in 60' (sand/coral) just upwind of the waypoint, and easily found the wreck by snorkeling at the surface (or just below). The other dinghy anchored in 20' on the shallow/sand coral about 50 yards due east of the wreck waypoint.

On traveling close to the reef between 6<sup>th</sup> Island and Roi, it looked possible to find a decent anchorage behind each of the other islands. There is a Marshalese community on 3<sup>rd</sup> Island. We hear there is a small store there (but most of the Marshalese seemed to be coming on the ferry to Roi to shop in the store there).

**Sloepmouche - 2011:** After our stop at Nell, we next anchored off **6<sup>th</sup> island** (called so because it is the 6<sup>th</sup> island down from Roi Namur (NE corner of atoll and USAKA main radar base). We anchored in 40-50ft good sand, between coral formations at **N09-19'95 / E167-30'41**). Nice deserted island to walk around and snorkel in the anchorage.

#### **6.4.4 Nell**

**Savannah - 2011:** We heard **Nell** was a nice place to anchor as well, but did not try it. It is on the western side of the atoll where it starts to curve (i.e. if you think of Kwaj as Florida, it's at the beginning of the panhandle).

We found Kwajalein to be a refreshing change after spending two months in Majuro. It's quiet, beautiful and we saw much less trash. Ebeye is more populated but we found it to be much cleaner.

**Sloepmouche - 2011:** We met our longtime friends Jack & Kathy on their trimaran at **Nell island's** scenic and protected anchorage ( 09-06'580N / 167-18'860E). This anchorage is not well charted at all, on electronic maps, it shows the whole area as shallow reef ... Despite being on the west side of the lagoon with 20kts Easterlies, the anchorage was only slightly roly. We made ourselves a temporary mooring to avoid laying too much chain as the bottom is 60—80ft deep! Plenty of scenic islets to walk on and snorkeling spots both inside and outside the lagoon. We came from the outside of the lagoon and entered thru the wide and clear pass East of Nell island but we could have entered thru the smaller pass on the west side of Nell island. Once inside, navigate carefully to avoid isolated reefs.

#### **6.4.5 Other Kwajalein Anchorages**

**Sloepmouche - 2011:** From 6<sup>th</sup> Island, we then sailed South past **Submarine Pass** (about 14nm from Roi Namur) where you see a wrecked sub hull on the reef. Our friends told us of a 15-20ft sandy shelf where you could anchor with 360deg swing if you want to walk on the reef to check on the sub. But since it was so rainy & windy the day we sailed here, we decided not to stop neither for a day anchorage neither for the night.

We decided to sail all the way (about 35nm from 6<sup>th</sup> island) to **Bigej Island**. This is the island North of Bigej pass. We anchored in 20ft of good sand with few isolated coral formations at **N08-53'89 / E167-46'12**. The next day with blue sky and sunny wx we discovered how scenic this anchorage is. We put our dinghy at the old dilapidated dock and met the 2 friendly locals who live here. They offered us coconut water and papayas and welcomed us on their island. This island is visited on the weekends by many people working in Kwajalein base and Ebeye but is all calm during the week. We walked around, snorkeled in the anchorage and in the pass and were glad we stopped here!

#### **6.4.6 Diving in Kwajalein**

**SloepMouche - 2011:** USAKA does not control the numerous WWII wrecks so avid divers have the possibility to check these out. We read Matt Holly's WWII wrecks survey report and decided to dive on the following wrecks:

**North Loi Wreck** – N08-48'00 / E167-43'80 in 70-75ft ... looked all around the "GPS position but could only find smaller remains (old rusted engine/machinery and wood remains) in only 50ft closer to land? But nice coral reefs there.

**Akibasen Maru** - N08-44'667 / E167-43'477 bottom 150-160ft. Took us some work to find it. Luc jumped from the dinghy and dove in the blue with a line at the exact GPS location. Saw the wreck when about 60ft down and then saw a line with a buoy coming from one of the masts. Tied to that buoy about 20ft deep and we dove the wreck. Several turtles, not shy, were seen on this upright wreck as well as some small white tip sharks and a eagle ray.

**Prinze Eugen** - N08-45'00 / E167-40'80 above water till 150ft. This one is easy to find since you tie your dinghy to the giant propeller sticking above the surface of this interesting and historic wreck, sunk quasi-upside down. This German vessel survived the Bikini atomic testing, then was towed all radioactive to Kwajalein for further study when it mysteriously capsized and sank at anchor! A must dive.

**Iris – Oct 2023:** The story of Prinz Eugen is as follows:

Prinz Eugen is a German heavy cruiser from WWII. The ship was surrendered intact to the British at the end of the war when the US claimed it as a war prize. The US used her in testing damage from nuclear explosions from one of the atomic bomb detonations on Bikini Island. All the other ships sank except Prinz Eugen. She was sailed to Kwajalein so they could study her more to find out exactly why she, of all the others, was the only one afloat.

At anchor off Kwajalein, it was noticed that she was leaking, and as the tests were important it was decided to ground her by running at full speed up on to the beach, but that night there was an unusually heavy storm that washed the ship back into the water where it overturned, and all you can see now are the two propellers and the rudder (there used to be three).

Germany asked if it would be possible to take one of the propellers, and the US agreed. Matson Shipping offered to ship it to Germany for free, and that propeller is now on display at the Laboe Naval Memorial in Germany as a dedication to the ship and its crew. She was deemed the "Lucky Ship", as all through the war she went in harm's way many times, but suffered very little damage, in fact only very few of her crew lost their lives during the war.

#### **6.4.7 Kwajalein - Military Base - Visiting**

To find out about any testing that may be going on in Kwajalein Atoll, listen on SSB freq 2716. At the top of each hour, a broadcast should be heard with range test information. You can contact Kwaj Range Control on this frequency at any time.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013 - Approach and Arrival:** On approach to the Kwaj Base area, call Harbor Control in VHF Channel 12 (give them your permit number?). The Small Boat Harbor stands by on VHF 68.

**Savannah - December 2011:** The main military base on Kwajalein is located in the southern part of the atoll. It is only possible to visit if you get sponsorship from someone on the base, which is easier said than done. They are only given 90 days to sponsor someone a year (kids under 12 don't count towards that limit). If you're looking for sponsorship, the end of the year seems to be easier as people have days left over and they know whether or not they're going to use them by the end of the year. Whereas, at the beginning of the year, most people don't yet know how many days they'll need for family and friends and they're reluctant to give them up.

Foreign Nationals are next to impossible, if not impossible, to get sponsorship. It's also a big responsibility for the folks doing the sponsoring. Everything you do reflects on them. They're responsible for your entire well-being, including medical. It's always a plus to point out that you have DAN insurance and any other type that would assure them you're covered financially.

If you're retired military – the only place to shop with your Military ID is the AFES stores. One is a convenience type store with beer and wine and the other is more like a mini department store. Everything else is contractor run and you need your sponsor to accompany you (i.e. no commissary). There is no military medical facility – it is also contractor run.

After three weeks here, we finally discovered that we can get the 8 Armed Forces Network (AFN) channels here on our boat.

This is a funny little place. We're thoroughly enjoying ourselves but there are some things worth mentioning to help you get a picture for it here. There are very few cars/trucks. They're all government vehicles. The people here travel on bikes and the occasional golf cart. There are all sorts of bikes too – "Island bikes" – meaning the handlebars might wiggle, the chain might slip, but no worries, because it gets you from point A to point B. There are all kinds of trailers for these bikes too.

The grocery store here even gets in on the action....since trailers can only carry so much, they deliver!

It's nice because you can just sort of let your kids do what they want without worrying about someone snatching them up or them getting hit by a car. It's kind of refreshing knowing there's still a place around that's safe.

Everyone is really friendly and it's such a small community that everyone knows everyone. That could be good or bad, I suppose, but so far for us, it's nice.

They have pretty much everything you need here – swimming pools, movie theaters, sports, water sports, beaches, even a food court complete with Burger King and Subway (Something I bet Andy they had...I've never been to a military base that didn't have at least one Subway).

Some of our favorite things have been the turtle pond and a little beach spot that our sponsors showed us with a rope swing. Jake spent a few hours there the other day swinging and jumping off into the water.

### **Useful Info from Kwaj Sites:**

**Banking:** "Community Bank" provides banking services for the Kwajalein community. The bank is a member of the Federal Reserve System and provides full service banking to all residents, including three ATM machines that are strategically located on the island. Community Bank will also cash checks for non-account holders for a small fee.

**Post Office:** While living on Kwajalein, your address will be: Your Name, Kwajalein Atoll, P.O. Box XXXX, APO, AP 96555.

Kwajalein receives and dispatches stateside mail via AMC military planes which currently come twice a week. It takes an average transit time of about two weeks for letters and pack-ages from the States to reach us, but could take as long as 11 weeks. Services offered are Parcel Post and Priority (United Parcel Service and Federal Express services are not available).

All packages coming to and leaving Kwajalein must contain a U.S. Customs slip, filled out properly, with the contents clearly stated.

**Soggy Paws - May 2013:** If you are shipping something care of a friend at Kwaj base, only put THEIR name on the package--your name should not show anywhere on the package.

### **6.4.8 Kwajalein Military Base - Working**

*Though this is a bit old, the experience is still similar. It is possible to find work at Kwaj Base*

**Vellela - 2004:** In Kwajalein, we felt like we'd found a comfortable way to enjoy America while still retaining the joys of cruising. Since we'd broken so much equipment recently and needed a bit of time and the resources to address these problems properly and faced an already strained budget, we toyed with the idea of staying to work if we could. We felt like we needed a short break from the challenges of cruising the third world and needed a bit more financial cushion so we could enjoy the places we visited a little more and worry about the budget a little less.

While people here work 5 days a week, they are serious about enjoying the outdoors and lead a much more balanced life than on the mainland. "If you have to work, it's a good place to do it" is what our friends Bob and Robin, fellow cruisers, told us.

On Kwajalein, there are numerous uninhabited islands to explore within a 2 hour sail and many more islands just a little further. Here lies some of the best scuba diving in the world along with a very active scuba club with low priced courses and free tanks. We fully intend to get certified and do lots of diving while we are here. We can also get our ham licenses through a very active Ham club here. We'd have great opportunities to race with the yacht club yet also enjoy the facilities that allow us to participate in activities that boating precludes. Everybody bikes to work and wears shorts in the office. If you need to work, it does sound pretty good.

When we first arrived, we mentioned that we were thinking about trying to get jobs. When we showed our resumes to people who we had gotten to know, they were very excited about our skills sets. While it is typically very difficult to get jobs here and we thought maybe all we could get would be menial jobs, we were extremely lucky that we had experience for professional positions that were just opening up. Despite that, it took a long time for all the approvals, health

and background checks to come together, and we worried constantly about whether we'd be hired before our 60 day visitors pass expired. Garth had the opportunity to work on a short term project: updating some Autocad drawings for a rush job so was able to earn a little money quickly and delay his visitor's pass from expiring as soon.

The fact that we had an opportunity to work in professional positions made working more appealing, and the attractive perks was what swayed us ultimately to stay. While the base salaries are lower than in the U.S., since they are not subject to federal tax, the actual take home pay is higher, along with other perks and balanced lifestyle to bring us out ahead. Benefits include free furnished housing, meal card covering all meals, health and dental care, a free ticket home after a 1 year contract is completed with \$1500 spending money (if we sign on for another 90 days), plus a 401K with 50% matching.

We can ship out a total of 1500 lbs of "household" goods from Washington as part of our contract (and return at the end of the contract period, provided we don't leave before the contract period is complete). Because there's next to nothing to spend money on here, we are able to bank money at a faster rate than at home since we've eliminated the housing, commuting, and food costs, plus costs for boat storage. And, of course there are all the great activities and facilities that we mentioned in the last update which make staying much more fun: free movies, crafts and woodworking center, and the myriad of clubs and events. It feels a little like we've returned to college with all the activities and the small campus feel, except that there are children on this campus.

Moving off of the boat into housing allows us to address a few problems that are difficult to tackle while living aboard and constantly using the boat, such as overhauling the head, addressing a drip in the fresh water pump under the sink, delamination of the Formica around the galley sink, and varnishing the interior.

What kinds of jobs we will be doing? Garth has gotten a job as a mechanical engineer working on troubleshooting facilities maintenance, not quite his line of work but at least he's not doing construction or managing the hobby shop. I scored a little better, getting a job as a web developer for the company intranet. I basically am part of a newly formed team with 3 full time people and 2 others that will work with us as their schedule allows to develop a new Intranet site. It's a great project and an excellent opportunity to learn and develop my skills. I honestly couldn't have dreamed of something I'd be more interested in doing right now.

A few things peculiar to Kwaj:

A peculiarity of being on US territory and particularly a military owned base is that we are again reminded of the US strive to protect everyone from the risk of poor judgment. In the interest of safety, we all have to take a boating safety course and get tested before we can take out a boat, even the boat we sailed 17,000 miles to get here!!!! The buddy system is strong, so neither of us is allowed to move the boat alone or go for a sail on our own. Drats. But, not something we do often anyway. When we go racing we have to fill out a float plan.

Some of the down sides of being government contractors, things sometimes move very slowly around here and there are lots of rules and paperwork. There are lots of people who have been working here too long and have become dead weight, yet seem to be tolerated. We wasted several of our first days working with orientation, safety briefings and filling out paperwork. But,

hey, if they want to pay us for that, I guess that's their choice. Yet there are lots of fun, adventurous people that have come here to enjoy a different kind of lifestyle.

Acronyms are rampant here and we continually have to ask what people mean. A garage sale is called a PCS sale after the term Permanent Change of Status, which in common English means: leaving.

On TV and radio, which is satellite fed by the military, the commercials are all public safety messages. We kid that as far as TV programming we can get "ALL IRAQ WAR NEWS ALL THE TIME!" or sports, but the rest of the selection is limited. That's fine by us since we've never been used to having a TV anyway and haven't gotten one. We can see movies 4 times a week for free, so that keeps us pretty content. We still hear people talk about some sitcoms, so some must be coming through, although we understand the hours are odd because of the time difference.

We've enjoyed biking all over the island even though a full tour of the island can take less than an hour. The salt air is pervasive and a brand new bike will rust within 6 months. Ads for bikes in the paper describe "Kwaj condition", which means that in the States one might think the bike was rusted out. But, in Kwaj, one needs to ignore the surface rust on the handlebars and pay careful attention to the chain and brakes. Derailers and other mildly fancy features are liability in this corrosive environment. We bought an aluminum bike that was nearly new for only \$25 from someone that was breaking their contract early (and reluctant to ship anything home at their own expense). Not even the handlebars were rusty yet, but it hasn't taken long. Garth revamped an abandoned bike: It works fine and cost nothing. With a visit to "Bicycle Heaven", one can easily find all the parts for getting a bike back in condition. We joke that a Kwaj station wagon is a bike with front and back baskets, a child seat and a trailer. Everyone gets pretty innovative and we've seen some odd looking trailers. But, necessity is a mother of invention: how else does one transport scuba gear by bike? When we moved house by bike, it was pretty comical, but we borrowed a couple of funky trailers and it only took a couple of trips.

Recycling is big here since everything must be shipped in from Hawaii or the continental US otherwise. Visits to the dump are common for those household projects or hobbies. While we have several stores with decent selection (compared to the 3rd world it is phenomenal), it's not up to Walmart standards. Online purchasing is huge and the post office here does a whopping volume of package handling as a result. We can tell when the cargo plane has arrived by the number of boxes leaving the post office from the pick up window and the selection of fresh vegetables available in the stores.

We chuckle that we live feet from the ocean yet buy frozen seafood at the supermarket flown in from Hawaii. (Ciguatera poisoning from reef fish is a concern here, although the Marshallese have no qualms about eating it and all the sports fishermen have a ready market for their catch.)

Here for a dressy occasion people will pull out new flip flops and a clean Aloha shirt. Like us, here on Kwajalein, we have finally run into others who have encountered that blank stare when they've shared with people from home where they've been spending their time. We run into everyone from work at the grocery store, at the post office, at the dining hall, on the waterfront, at the pool, so we get used to seeing our professional colleagues in bathing suits and all kinds of attire.

Sometimes while watching a movie under the stars, we have a few occasional brief showers so it helps to bring an umbrella so we don't have to move under the production booth overhang during the movie. We watch movies at the Richardson Theatre where Bob Hope performed for the troops over 50 years ago.

We have friends that bought a stripped out Ericson 39 that came with a boat house and lots of parts and tools from someone who is leaving the island as Boeing's portion of the contract ends. To get away from the dorm room, they spend all their time down at this boat house where they can play loud music and party late into the night and BBQ without bothering anyone and have a nice storage and work space to work on boat projects. While they could just enjoy the boat house and resell it in a few years for what they paid for it, they intended to put their outfitting and woodworking skills to work to rebuild it and make the Ericson sailable again so they can sell it for a profit. But alas, the Ericson wasn't salvageable and now they're selling parts and planning to sink the hull. They'll still come out ahead.

Vegetables, fruit and mail are flown in once a week. Every once in a while when the plane is down, the produce and frozen food section in the market gets a little bare. While some people complain, we still think we are in heaven because it sure beats the selection we've seen over the last year!

Usually the dining hall fare is pretty decent with good variety and we have special events where we have fine cheeses, seafood and desserts that we don't usually see. We see lots of very large people enjoying all the dining hall has to offer and we have to remind ourselves that we don't need to sample some of everything or to have ice cream after every meal.

## **6.5 Ujae**

## **6.6 Wotho**

## **6.7 Alinginae**

Downtime - January 2013: We've just arrived to Ailinginae Atoll, which is 30 miles west of Rongelap. It was the most pleasant passage since sailing to Tonga, 2011... And we caught the biggest fish A 80 pound Yellow Fin Tuna! The biggest fish since our 300 pound Blue Marlin, Fiji, 2011...

While Pete was cleaning the huge fish on the back of the boat 20 medium size sharks (3-6 foot) came to say Hello! I did some pics and cool video footage! (I will publish them when we will have Internet).

Pete told me: " I can feed the sharks and you should take our new underwater camera and put your hand underwater and take video and pics!" I answered him... " I've got better idea, I will feed sharks and you take a video!" :)

## **6.8 Rongelap**

**Alice - May 2023** We did a daysail from Rongerik to Rongelap arriving through the south pass. We went through the pass just in the middle of one of the worse squalls we ever experience. The rain was pouring down and we had no visibility. We anchored on sand just off the pier at **Rongelap Island**. There are three men working and living on Rongelap. They are there for 6 months and then another three men will take their place. They have everything they need and a



lot of food in big freezers. They were really nice and take us on a tour around the island in their pickup. They really wanted some new films and we copied as many as we could fit on their small flashdrive. They got so happy. We heard from several sources that it's okay to eat coconuts, breadfruits and pandanus from Rongelap. The guys on the island gave us more than we could eat. There is also a tree with a small red fruit that looks like a bell and have a good juice taste. Our girls just love them and the guys thought it was very fun to see them climb the tree and pick them. There is a big airstrip and at least 50 houses on Rongelap but everything is just empty, it's a real ghost village. There is no internet on Rongelap. There is an antenna but it hasn't worked for ages.

Before going to Rongelap and Rongerik you have to get your cruising permit from internal affairs in Majuro. You also have to pay the fee (50 dollar) at the Rongelap town hall in Majuro. The workers on Rongelap have nothing to do with the permits.

**Downtime - January 2013:** We set sail at noon on Monday with a great wind angle and quartering seas following us doing 7-8 knots. Then around 9 pm the first squall showed it's stuff.

The squalls continued through the early hours of the morning and by 11 am we had covered 160 miles and had the North Pass of Rongelap in sight although it did not line up on our charts worth the darn! I was correcting the offset which by my guess we was off 3-4 hundred feet! About that time a serious squall hit with 30-35 knot winds and a driving rain along with it taking visibility down to a few hundred feet! I punched the menu button to set the offset and the screen went blank and the plotter powered off and would not restart! Then at the same time one of the poles gets hit and had a big reef shark on the line!

So here we are with a fish on, no navigation, being blown at 6 knots through a poorly charted pass by a 35 knot winds soaking wet in the rain! Daria grabbed the Motorola Zoom with our spare charts and drove the boat while I dealt with getting rid of the shark. We some how missed all the bombas as we motored a few miles up the atoll to a small island and set the anchor. And wouldn't you know it as soon as the hook was down and set the skies cleared and the sun popped out just like any other day.

These islands still show the effects of the bomb and have very few coconut trees and are mostly are covered in radioactive mangroves! No two headed birds or fish seen yet, but we are looking....

**Savannah - December 2011:** Rongelap is one of the atolls in the Marshall Islands that got most of the fall out of the hydrogen bomb testing the US did in the 50's on Bikini atoll. As a result, the residents have all been moved to other atolls while they clean up and of seeing it before everyone moves back. Right now there are about 50 people on the main island working mostly in construction, with a few looking after the facilities. We have found the people here to be the friendliest we've met so far in the Marshalls...maybe that's because they never see anyone new?

### **Checking in/out**

Every yacht is supposed to get a permit and pay \$50 before leaving Majuro. When you arrive in Rongelap, the main island is in the south eastern part of the atoll. There is a brand new dock where you can tie your dinghy. Walk straight from the dinghy dock and eventually you'll see the "Field Station" on your left (there's a big sign in front). There, you will find Fred. Show your

permit to Fred and that's your official entry. We've found the people here to be the friendliest in the Marshalls so far.

### **Exploring**

Fred will probably offer you a tour if he has a working truck, but if you want to explore on your own...If you keep going straight, you will find a trail to the ocean side of the beach. There is a ton of trash that floats up onto the beach, but it makes for excellent beach combing. There's rumor of glass Japanese fishing balls, but we only found pieces. If you stay on the road, you'll come to the new airport. It's tiny, but the airstrip is over 4000 feet, large enough for a small jet liner.

If you continue on the road, you'll come to the backside of the new homes. Eventually, on your right, you'll see the "Garden Project." They're experimenting with different ways to grow vegetables and what type of soil is best, etc. It's quite impressive, as are the pigs in the stalls beside the gardens.

Further down the road is the church. It was built in the 1970's but there are plans for renovation eventually.

On the other side of the main road/cross road, you'll find more houses and a long stretch of road. If you follow this road a mile or two, you'll find the "resort." There are four bungalows and a soon to be restaurant. We're told it's not officially open but if someone comes to visit, that's where they put them up. The bungalows are really nice and appear to be maintained fairly well.

### **Internet/Cell phone**

There is internet and cell phone coverage on Rongelap, however it's not always reliable. We weren't able to pick up a signal from our boat (using an antenna), but they offered for us to come and use their computer any time we wanted. At the time we were there, there was no cell phone coverage, but they were waiting for a technician from Majuro to come repair it (the planes were down in Majuro...).

### **Exploring outer islands**

We asked permission from Fred to move north to explore a little more. We moved about 7 islands up to **Eneatok**. There is a small pearl farm here, but the buoys are easy to see and there's no chance of running over them. There is good holding in the sand with just a few bommies to watch out for. The snorkeling is really nice with lots of giant clams and various different kinds of coral we haven't seen yet in the Marshalls. We did see a few grey sharks and small black tips here, the first we've seen in the Marshall Islands.

Anchor Waypoint: 11.17.25N, 166.53.22E (16 ft at low tide)

The ocean side of the beach provides hours of exploration, but again, we failed to find the Japanese buoys. However, we found every other kind of buoy you might want along with lots of pretty shells, if you're into that sort of thing.

On our way back into "town" we stopped at a few more islands, **Rigonman** and **Busch**. We used the dinghy to explore the islands on either side as well. On **Enialo**, just north of Rigonman, we found pieces of an old Rocket on the Oceanside of the island. It was kind of neat to try to piece it all together and figure out where it came from. We haven't gotten to the internet yet, but Andy is guessing a Pegasus Booster Rocket.

The snorkeling at both places was pretty good, but better at Rignonman. We did a few dives on the bommies behind the boat at Busch and enjoyed that. Lots of giant clams and different kinds of parrot fish.

Waypoint for Busch: 11.12.55N, 166.53.36E

## Provisioning

There's a small store on the main island but it appears that the locals need it way more than we do....stock up in Ebeye, Majuro or Kwajalein before coming up. If asked for beer/liquor, it's requested that we all say no...drinking isn't allowed on the islands – evidently, they get a little crazy 😊.

## 6.9 Rongerik

**Alice - May 2023** We arrived through the **Eniwetak pass** during day in good light. There were no problems at all. After going through the pass we went around the corner and anchored outside **Eniwetak Island** on sand. The island is beautiful with nice sandy beaches but it can be a bit uncomfortable if the wind picks up. On shore we saw a lot of signs of turtles nesting. We only stayed one night because it was a bit rolly.

The next island we stopped on was **Tarrowatt Island**. This is also a bit rolly and didn't really have any good protection. We only day anchored here. But the island is very nice. There were hundreds of Boobies nesting with lots of baby birds. On the outside of the island there is a whale skeleton from some kind of big whale. I don't know the kind. It was fun look at.

The best and most protected anchorage is at **Rongerik Island** in the northeast corner. We spent over a week here just exploring, snorkelling and hanging on the beach. On the middle of the beach some sailors have made a little area with a table and some old buoys hanging from the trees and call it Rongerik Yacht Club. From here we explored the close by islands and found more nesting birds and turtles tracks.

We left Rongerik through the **Bock pass** early in the morning heading for Rongelap. We motored through the lagoon just hoping not to hit any bommies in the bad morning light. But my feeling is that most bommies are shown on the charts or are very deep, we went straight over most of them. We were the only boat there and didn't see any other human being.

**Soggy Paws - July 2013:** We had arranged to dive with the M/V Windward in Bikini in early July. Then we waited almost 2 weeks for a good enough weather window to head east for Rongelap. In the end, the weather window was long enough that we opted to go all the way to Rongerik, skipping Rongelap. We had friends already anchored in Rongelap pay our \$50 fee and get permission for us to go direct to Rongerik.

We arrived about 4pm at Bock Channel (NW channel), and proceeded east motor-sailing to the anchorage waypoint we'd been given by another boat, at 11-22.59N / 167-30.54E. This is behind the south end of **Rongerik Island**.

The entry at **Bock Channel** was easy--it is fairly wide open without much coral. On the trip east, we saw several widely scattered coral patches that were easily visible, even in the late afternoon.

The CM93 charts, though detailed, are off quite a bit. (See the offsets we used in the Appendix).

The anchorage was OK in moderate conditions, but when the wind got up, it got pretty choppy at certain points of the tide. We didn't notice it so much, but another boat anchored with us complained a lot about it (they are lighter than we are).

We spent several days here beachcombing and enjoying the solitude (with 2 other boats to keep us company). We went out on the reef "lobster walking" one night at low tide, beaching the dinghy on the southern tip of the island, and walking across to the SE shallows. We only got 2 lobster in an hour. A rain cloud came up, just about the right time for the lobster to start showing, and we quit prematurely.

There is a very nice bommie for snorkeling just north of the anchor spot (within swimming distance). There are at least 3 HUGE giant clams in this bommie. And lots of smaller clams around on the bottom and scattered small coral heads.

There were a couple of turtle tracks on the island ahead of us, but the island to the NW of the anchorage, Latoback Island, had a LOT of turtle tracks, one fresh one. We also saw signs of an old camp (old Coke bottles scattered around) on this island.

We found numerous nice shells and a few small glass balls on the windward beaches in the NE corner.

When getting ready to leave for another upwind beat to Likiep Atoll, we motorsailed south to **Enewetak Island**. Again, nice beachcombing on this island. We anchored at 11-18.14N / 167-28.64E. This was an OK anchorage in light ENE. Wouldn't be good if the wind was north of east in stronger winds.

Our friends on Westward II made a dive on a coral bommie somewhere near the anchorage, inside the atoll, and said it was a great dive. Nice clear water, and some more huge giant clams. Lots of fish and one fairly persistent shark.

We left for Likiep via the **Enewetak Pass**, at first light. Easy out. Conditions were very calm at the time, and the wind quite north of east, so no issues with wind/wave. Though we did see quite a bit of current over the shallow areas as we exited.

**Brick House - December 2011:** It was a quiet sail direct from Majuro for about 24 hours, and then the wind died all together. We had diverted temporarily east of our rumb line because a small open power boat was lost at sea, but it was recovered before we even knew the precise area to look. The boat and 6 occupants had drifted to another atoll. When the wind died we drifted for days, sometimes motoring for a few hours looking for a helpful current. The currents in the atolls are not always predictable and can run contrary to what would seem obvious.

When the wind came up, it came on strong and was of course on our nose. We beat to the most accessible atoll which was Rongerik.

We were cautioned by those giving us permission to stop at this uninhabited atoll that it was haunted and you could go crazy if you stop there.

When we stood on the small island at the southern entrance to the lagoon, Rebecca could hear a murmur of voices, but later heard nothing when we explored the northeastern islands. Patrick is too hard of hearing to notice such things.

It would be good to encourage the hauntedness of this atoll. There are conservation laws in the Marshall Islands to protect nesting turtles and other wild life but there is no enforcement. Even

in downtown Majuro, the capital, huge turtles were landed and slaughtered as the centerpiece for functions or just for ones own consumption. If we meet any Marshallese who think we are a bit odd, we will certainly tell them we had visited Rongerick and no one should go there. Rongerick should remain a haunted nature preserve.

Rongerick was one of the best atolls we had ever been to. Unpopulated and unspoiled. In 1946, this is where the Bikinians were brought to live in preparation for the nuclear testing. There were 23 tests at Bikini and 43 tests at Enewetak atoll, 180 miles to the west of Bikini. Because of the taboo against Rongerick, people rarely come here so the animals above and below water have flourished. But on the north east island, the one which was once populated, the rats have flourished. They all have the normal number of legs, eyes ears etc and their fur looks normal. The rats eat into fallen coconuts. Coconuts absorb radiation from the ground. If the rats are healthy, maybe it is a verification of the finding of government agencies that the radiation problem has mitigated.

We snorkeled on the coral heads inside of the lagoon. The coral was plentiful but in some areas it was dusted with sand from the nearby barrier reef. The fish populations were not as abundant as we had hoped but the number of groupers were greater than anywhere else we have visited in the Marshalls. The water is so warm and clear there is not much plankton to support life inside the lagoon. On the outside of the windward side of the atolls, where the plankton nourishment is greater, the reefs are more vibrant. There is enough plankton to feed the giant clams. The largest of the giant clams in more than 3 feet across; nearly as big as the largest on the Great Barrier Reef of Australia.

It was nice seeing some black tip sharks and several turtles, signs of a healthy reef. The sharks were small and would circle around to see who we were and if there was any free food floating about. I stayed close to the dinghy but never felt threatened. We saw at least one turtle each day who was curious to see who the newcomers were and silently glided by giving us the eye. Beautiful. One day we saw a large school of jacks that just couldn't get close enough to us. The school of thousands would swim directly at us. The swarm would open within arms reach and pass by to the sides, over and below us, eyeing us over but never quite bumping us. Just like the sharks, they were looking for some handouts from the biggest fish in the pond.

Another day we walked on an island over which, lots of birds circled. For some reason the island was noticeably lacking in coconut palms but thick with short trees and scrub. It was nesting season and there were lots of baby boobies and some small frigate birds squawking at us when we got too close. We got lots of nice pictures of them without making any of the adults fly away.

Other days we hiked long white beaches and found 9 glass fishing floats. We put them higher up on the beach out of reach of the high tide. Glass floats have not been used for decades, being replaced by plastic. It is extremely rare to find them and these are the first we had found in 4 years of remote cruising. We emailed Patrick's sister to see if they were worth enough to haul on to Brick House and send home. We thought maybe we had won the lottery. But low and behold they weren't worth much more than \$50 or \$60 each and that wasn't enough to justify lots of glass balls rolling around Brick House especially since sending one in the mail from Eyeeye , the nearest post office, would cost \$30. We left them where we found them for the next soul to discover and fantasize about the good life.

We found the overgrown site of the old village. The fresh water well was extended higher than the ground with a rectangular concrete wall. That was probably done by the Japanese who had a coast watching station on the island, or it could have been completed by the Americans when they set up a meteorological station, before the Bikinians were moved here.

At Rongerick, we ate well from our freezer on Brick House. We did not try to catch fish since we heard ciguatera poison can be found in the fish. It appeared the maladies attributed to the spirits on Rongerick were very similar to the effects of ciguatera poisoning; headaches, vomiting sore muscles. The effects can linger for many weeks.

But we did eat the lobsters. At night, at low tide, we walked along the edge of the outer reef in 12 inches of water and picked up 22 lobsters. But the species of lobsters living in these atolls are small so it takes several to make a dinner for two. Some times we simply stepped on the lobster and then picked them up with a gloved hand and others we speared with our 4" long trident fastened to a broom handle. Since there was no wind, it made the walk very easy as there were no huge waves to flood onto us.

After 10 days of paradise, we sailed westward to Rongelap.

### **6.10 Bikini**

Bikini is an easy 1 ½ - 2day sail NW of Kwajalein, or a 1 day sail downwind of Rongelap.

**Alice - May 2023** We did a night sail from Rongelap to Bikini atoll. Again we arrived in the **Enyu pass** in the middle of a squall and we took cover at **Enyu Island**. The pass is big and there are no problems. Enyu Island is the island with the airstrip but no airplanes are going there today. Everything looks much abounded. We walked around the island and found quite a lot of abounded houses; some of them weren't even finished. Some of them had salt and pepper on the tables, it looks like the people just stood up and left one day. There is a good concrete pier were you can tie your dingy.

Next Island we visited was **Bikini Island**. We anchored just off the village on the middle of the island in sand. There is three men working here aswell. They also got very happy for some new films on their flashdrive, James Bond-movies was popular. The village here contains a workshop, some houses and an abounded dive resort with an outside bar but its all closed.

For the entire time we were on Bikini there was 1 dive boat anchored out by the sunken ships, but the never went ashore. The dive boat operates from Ebeye. We don't scuba dive and our permit stated that we wasn't allowed even if we were. The sunken ships from the nuclear testing are fairly deep. After only one night outside the village we moved to the north end of Bikini Island and anchored just of the concrete pier. The coral was nicer and our girls love playing on the piers.

Our last anchorage in Bikini atoll was **Romurikku Island**. It's the very north island in the atoll and if I understand everything correctly it's the same island that is called "**Center Island**" in this compendia. I think this is the island were they detonated the Bravo Bomb. There is some old bunkers left on the island and I must recommend you to bring a flashlight and walk inside them. The inner copper coating have the most amazing blue colour, it looks really poisonous. There were some birds nesting in the entrance. We loved this island, there are lots of birds nesting and we saw turtle tracks. On the middle of the east part of the island there is a small sandy beach with no swell were you can land your dingy with no problem. The beach is just amazing

to hang and swim in the afternoon. We walked to the north west part where we think they detonated the bravo bomb, you couldn't really see anything, but in the middle of the supposed crater was a big Japanese fishing ball in glass.

We got our permit from the council of Bikini before leaving Majuro. Nobody asked us about our permit when we were there. We were supposed to pay 50 dollars but we had nobody to give the money to so we ended up not paying.

There is no internet on Bikini, the mast haven't worked for ages. We were the only sailing boat there. You shouldn't eat any coconuts, pandanus or breadfruits from Bikini Island; the radiation is still too high. You can eat lobster and fish.

**Savannah - Early 2012:** We made an overnigher and took 16 hours to get from Rongelap to Bikini. It could have been less with the winds we were given, but we had to slow down to keep from arriving in the dark. We came in the southeast pass, which is super wide, with no issue.

We stopped first in Enyu where the airstrip is, as we weren't quite sure where the people were living (see notes below on what's in Enyu). We moved to Bikini Island and anchored in a sandy bottom to the east of the buildings.

### **Check in/out**

We took our permit in to show the head guy and ended up meeting all six people on the island. They rotate out on various different schedules so the people change periodically. When we arrived, Edward was the dive master and guy in charge of the island. We showed him our permit and he gave us free range of the island. There is no charge for Bikini.

NOTE: We emailed Jack in Majuro before heading here as he requested and he gave Edward advanced notice as well, so they were expecting us.

### **Bikini Island**

Ben, the mechanic, took us on a driving tour of the island. There aren't very many things to look at, but it makes for a very scenic tour. The beaches here are a bit sandier than in Rongelap on the ocean side and not quite as trashy (but still pretty littered). It's at least a three mile walk all the way around the island. There is a "hotel" for when the tourists come to dive as well as a kitchen for them to use. It's \$50/night and available for cruisers as well, but the rooms are bare minimum with just a bed, toilet, and shower. There is an outdoor "bar" but is only open when the tourists are here (no booze otherwise). The room where they do their dive briefing also has a book exchange with a fairly large number of books. The rest of the buildings are occupied by the guys who live here.

### **Enyu**

This is the first island you see when coming in the south pass. The airstrip is here along with some old barracks and the start of a dive resort never completed. It's uninhabited but kind of fun to explore. It's here that we found the large Japanese fishing balls we had looked so hard for. We also had great success with lobster hunting at night, finding some of the best lobster we've ever eaten.

### **Center Island (real name?)**

This island is also uninhabited but you can find the old bunkers and camera structures from the Atomic bomb testing. This island is also covered in birds, more birds than I've ever seen in one place (Terns, Boobie birds, Frigate birds).

At the time of year we were in Bikini, the winds were blowing from the East/North East averaging 20 knots. There was very little protection on the center island and we ended up only staying one night there.

The crater caused by the bomb "Bravo" is in the northwest corner of the island...

### **DIVING:**

If you want to dive, you must make arrangements with Jack before leaving Majuro. Jack was pretty adamant that we not dive on the wrecks here so he wrote "no diving" on our permit. Edward, the dive master, called and asked him if he could take us on the Saratoga and he said no. If the Windward (diving boat) is here, they have a chamber on board and you might have more luck, but it's best to work it out before you leave Majuro. We were told that we would have to have someone live on our boat, we feed them, etc. but according to Edward, you just have to take him diving with you. Funny enough, they don't care if you dive the coral heads, just not the wrecks.

**Sloepmouche - December 2011:** Luc had an opportunity to join the crew of M/V Windward as first mate for a private charter booked at the last minute.

One of the Japanese TV networks wanted some filming done in Bikini and Rongelap atolls with the most urgency. They sent 2 reporters to Majuro with no real idea how to get to these 2 remote atolls where nuclear testing had been done in the 50's. Unfortunately for them, the local airline Air Marshalls had no plane in flying condition! For months now, their 2 planes (?) are grounded for lack of parts. The only boat that could bring them to Bikini was the private charter boat Windward that does surfing and tech diving trips! At US\$3,500/day to charter the boat, that is not a cheap information gathering trip! Luc was approached by the local agent for the TV team, as they needed an underwater videographer, and at about the same time by the Charter boat captain who did not want to sail with a short crew (since most of his crew was away for vacation time!). I had a few hours to decide if I was going or not but since I had wanted to join that ship a few weeks earlier when they had a regular diving trip to Bikini, it was not a difficult decision to take!

I did not relish the long sea trip involved as Bikini atoll is about 450 nm away, thus a 48-hour passage on that rolly boat that does about 8 knots. And rolly it was! We had 20-25 knots winds most of that charter! The boat was rolling and jumping up and down in the rough seas ...

When we arrived in Bikini, the passengers rushed onto the tender to step on Bikini and regardless of any possibilities of radiation, kissed the ground!

During our 3 days in Bikini, I dove 3 times with Brian on some of the ships that were sunk during the US atomic nuclear tests in the 50's. Dove on the Japanese Imperial Navy flagship Nagato, on the USS air carrier Saratoga, and on USS Lamson. These were 140-165 ft deep dives. We dove using air and made our last decompression stops with pure Oxygen to add safety. I also used the small underwater video from the Japanese reporter to film for her the Bravo Crater rim, where the first hydrogen bomb was detonated.



She had a small Geiger counter with her and took lots of readings ... radiation was quite low everywhere.

At the time we visited Bikini, there were only 4 people there, Edward, the Marshallese who dove the wrecks more than anyone else since he is involved with Bikini since over 30 years. For living on Bikini for so long, he looks quite healthy!

In 1989 (?) Bikini was opened to dive tourism and the Bikini Council built some accommodations, dive center, dive boats ... The operation was doing very well until a few years ago when Air Marshall got so mismanaged that the flights could not be relied upon anymore! For year now, the whole infrastructure is just sitting there and slowly rotting away. The Marshallese government does not want to admit they are incapable of running an airline and they forbid any private company to start a new airline! So inter-island traveling is by infrequent boats only!

Any sailors wanting to visit Bikini atoll on their own boat should first contact the Bikini Council in Majuro for a permit and this should be granted.

No scuba diving is permitted at this time for safety and other reasons. If you wanted to dive, the best would be to contact the Windward and make prior-arrangements with them. They have a recompression chamber onboard, all mixed gases and tech diving equipment. If you were anchored in Bikini when they visit, it is conceivable that you could join their passengers on their dives.

The 9 shipwrecks are fairly deep (140-250ft) and are 3-4 nm away from the anchorage.

Several cruisers went to Bikini to snorkel on the untouched reefs

## **6.11 Enewetak**

## 7 Useful Marshalese Words and Phrases

The below was gratefully lifted from a document circulating among the cruisers labeled "Holokai's Marshalese Primer".

Meaning	Spelling	Very Phonetic Pronunciation
Hello	lokwe	Yok-way
Goodbye	Bar lo eok	Bar low yoke
What is your name?	Etam?	Eh-dam
My name is	Eta in.....	
Thank you (very much)	Kommol tata	Ko-mohl ta-ta
How's it going?	Emman mour	Emmahn more
How's is your life?	Emman ke am mour?	Emmahn-kay-am-more
Yes	Aet	aye-et (also after negative question)
No/don't	Jab	jop
I/me	Na	gnah
You	Kwe	kway
Come inside	delon	ray-lung
Sit down	jijet	jee-jet
You're welcome	kun jouj	gun-joojh (literally 'with pleasure')
A little	Jiddik	jittick
None/nothing	ejjelok	eh-jol-lock (and means 'throw out')
Come	itok	ee-tuck
Come again	kap bar ito	kap barr ee-tok
Wait	kottar	cut-tar (both t's are said)
Okay with you?	Emman ke ippam?	Em-mahn kay-ee-pem?
Understand?	Melele	muh-lay-lay
Do you understand?	Kwo melele ke?	Quo muh-lay-lay kay?
I'm sorry	ejjollok bod	eh-jol-lok bur ('throw out my mistake')
You're welcome	Kinjouij	Kin joo-jh
Beautiful (of things only)	aiboujouj	eye-boo-joojh
<b>People</b>		
Foreigner	ri-belle	ri-bellay
Marshalese people	ri-majol	ri-mah-jull
Friend	Motta	Mutt-tuh
Children	ajiri	ah-ji-ree
Woman	kora	kuh-rye
Man	Emman	(watch for difference between 'good' and 'man')
Good	Em man	Eh-m-Man
Good Looking man/woman	Lakatu/Likatu	Lack-ah-too / Lick-ah-too

Hard	bin	bin
Easy	pidodo	bi-ro-ro
Know	jela	jel-l
Happy	monono	muh-nuh-nuh
Relax/rest	kakkije	ka-key-jay
Sleep	kiki	key-key
I will	inaaj	ee-nohj
I'm not	ijab	ee-jop
Ride	uwe	ooh-way
Maybe	emaron	eh-ma-rohng (long'o')
Don't worry	jan inepata	jop in-eh-pot-uh
Good fortune/cheers	jeradman	jair-ahh-mun
No problem	ejjollok inepata	eh-joll-lock in-eh-pot-uh
<b>Food and Eating</b>		
Eat	mona	muh-nga
Hungry	kuli	
Delicious	enno	en-no (both n's distinct)
Chicken	bau	bow
Fish	ek	ick
Drinking coconut	ni	knee
<b>Questions</b>		
Where?	Ewi?	Eh-wee?
Who?	Won	one
What?	ta	tah
How many?	Jete	jet-tay
<b>Time</b>		
Return	rool tok	rawl-tuck
Next week	week in lal	week in lall
Day	raah	raahn
Night	bon	bohng
Afternoon	raelep	rye-lep
Today	rainin	rye-neen
Tomorrow	iliju	ill-ih-jew
Yesterday	inne	in-nay
Now	kiio	key-uh
Soon	mottan jiddick	mott-ahn jid-dick
<b>Outside Activities</b>		
Lagoon	iar	yar
Swimming	tutu iar	too-too-yar

Fishing	eonod	eh-young-or
Coral	coral	(real word is too similar to 'lobster', just say 'coral')
Wind	koto	cut-toe
Ocean side	lik	lick
Sky	mejatoto	mehj-uh-toto
Ocean	lojet	low-jet
Waves	no	no
Big	kilep	key-lep
Small	dik	rick
<b>Sailing</b>		
When/if	ne	nay
Pull	kanke	kun-uh-kay
Push	iuni	you-knee
Hold	dapji	rep-ih-jee
Let go	kotoloke	cut-oh-lock-ee
Left (port)	anmiin	on-uh-ming
Right (starboard)	anmoon	on-uh-moon
Tie	lukoje	loo-ku-jay
There (place)	ijo	ee-joe
Ready	pojack	poh-jack
More/again	bar	bar
Do it/make it/fix it	kommane	kum-mun-nay
Enough	ebwe	eh-bwe
Done/finished	emoj	eh-mush
Open/unfurl	belok	pell-lock
Inside	ilaan	lonn
Like this	ainwot e	ein what eh
<b>Numbers</b>		
One	juon	jew-un
Two	ruo	roo-oh
Three	jilu	jee-loo
Four	emmen	em-men
Five	lalem	la-lem
Six	jiljino	jee-jee-no* (* Easier to pronounce
Seven	jiljilimjuon	jim-jew-un* than spelling suggests)
Eight	ralitok	rall-ee-tick
Nine	ratimjuon	rat-im-jew-un
Ten	jonoul	jung-ohl
<b>Repairs</b>		

Impossible	eban	eh-bahn
Off	kune	coo-nay
On/open (v)	kebbellok	This is word for 'open'
Dirty	ettoon	et-tone
Clean (verb)	karreo	ka-ray-oh
Help	jippan	jeep-peng
Need/must	aikuj	eye-khudge (both noun and verb)
Bad	nana	nahh-nahh

Other language resources:

<http://www.rmiembassyus.org/Marshallese Phrasebook.htm>

[Practical Marshallese](#), by Peter Rudiak-Gould

## 8 Cmap Chart Offsets for OpenCPN

My copy (Updated 2010) of the CM93 Edition 2 charts are quite off in the Marshall Islands. However, some of the charts are very detailed. So it is useful if using OpenCPN to apply offsets to make the Cmap charts somewhat line up with the Google Earth charts we are using.

The below is pretty techie stuff.

**I make no warranty that these offsets won't put you on a reef.**

**Use this info with extreme caution. No guarantees!!**

### 8.1 How to Apply Offsets in OpenCPN

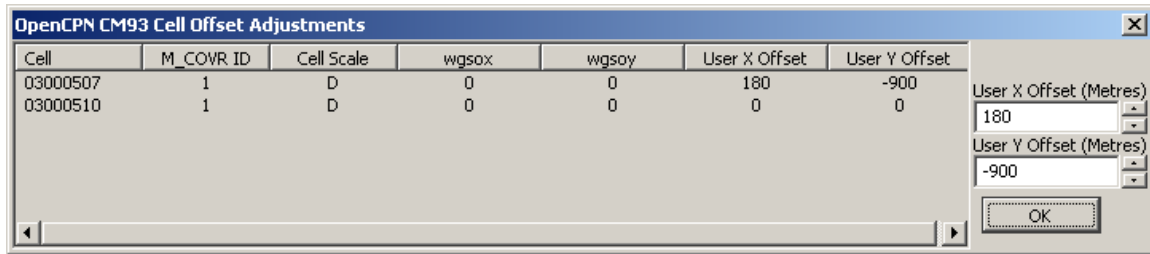
Unlike Maxsea, when you apply offsets to "correct" CM93 charts in OpenCPN, it shifts the chart, not the GPS position. (this is the right way to do it).

Here's a quick rundown on calculating the offset and applying it:

1. Drop a mark in OpenCPN on a prominent feature on a GoogleEarth chart for an atoll. (end of an island, or center of a pass, for example)
2. Turn off Chart Quilting (F9 key, or use the Settings Dialog). There are two easy ways to tell whether Chart Quilting is on or off.
  - a. If the colored ovals at the bottom of the screen have square corners instead of oval corners, quilting is off.
  - b. If you right-click on the CM93 chart (anywhere), the pop-up window will have an additional menu item "CM93 Offset Dialog"

Pressing F9 again will turn quilting back on.

3. Right-click on the CM93 chart and select "CM93 Offset Dialog". This pops up the OpenCPN CM93 Cell Offset Adjustments window:



Normally, if you are zoomed in, you will only see one line (the most detailed chart). Regardless, click on the line to highlight that line. Then enter the offsets in the box to the right. X offsets move the chart left and right. Y offsets move the chart up and down. As soon as you TAB out of the entry field, the offset will be applied. (Clicking OK also applies the offset, but also closes the window).

Keep fiddling with the offsets until the mark you dropped on the prominent feature on the GoogleEarth view, lines up correctly on the CM93 view.

4. Now check the offset in several other places on the chart. Often you will get it perfect in one spot, and it will be off in another spot. This is the nature of imperfect charts. Fiddle until you are happy with it... either the pass you intended to go in is dead-on, or you have an average view.

#### Notes:

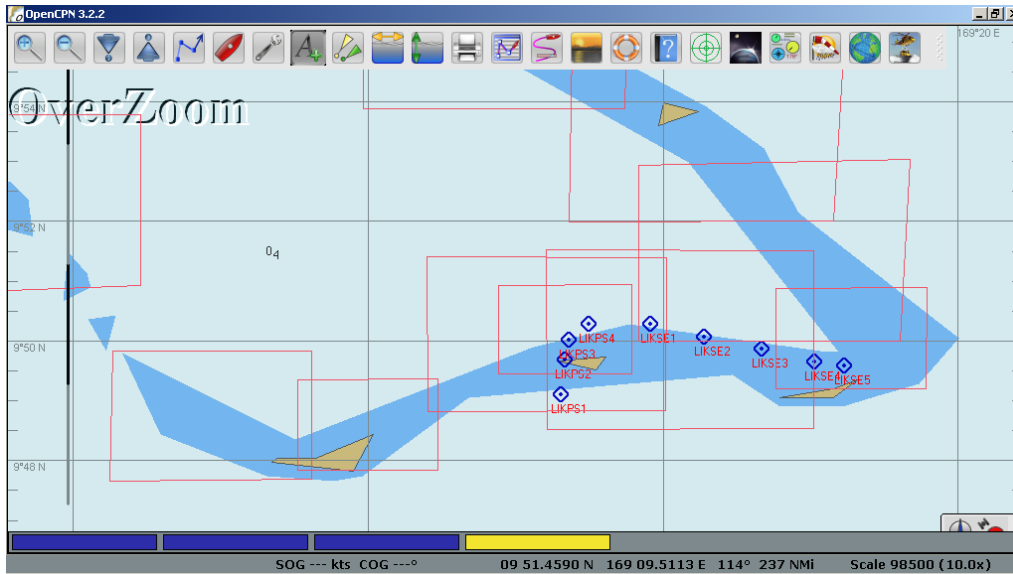
See the OpenCPN help file for more info (there's not a lot in v3.2.2, but may be in the future).

In OpenCPN, these offsets are, I think, saved in the CM93 folder in the OpenCPN folder in the Program Data folder (see the Help/About tab for where the log file is... that's where you'll also find a CM93 folder.) (ie where the layers folder is).

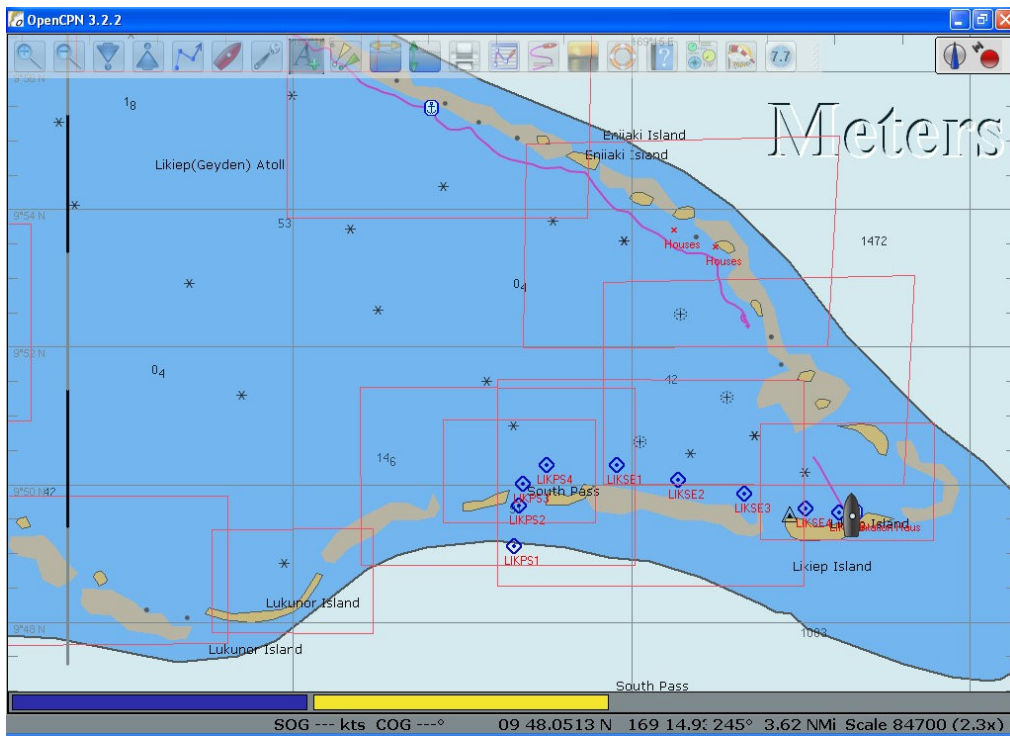
They appear to be saved in a file that is named the same as your CM93 chart folder name. Backing up this folder, AND keeping the same naming convention on another computer MIGHT allow you to transport these offsets to another computer. I haven't found any other way in OpenCPN to do so.

**Warning:** There are a LOT of different CM93 chart sets floating around. Offsets for a 2010 version of charts (what mine are) may not be appropriate for a 2011 (or 2005) version of charts.

Also, if your set of charts have been made from combined directories (ie copying an "update" into an existing CM93 directory, some charts may be there that are not in someone else's "2010" list. Example: Below is a screen shot from the most detailed chart I have for Likiep Atoll on one computer.



And here is about the same view with the "same" chart set on another computer:



Note considerably more detail. This chart, 2940504, dated 2010-03-01, does not exist apparently in the "latest" 2010 chart set. (it also won't be displayed by Maxsea, even if it is present in the CM93 folder).

## 8.2 Offset List

**I make no warranty that these offsets won't put you on a reef. Use this info with extreme caution. No guarantees!! USE YOUR OWN EYEBALLS and only navigate in reefy areas with good light!!**

Place	Chart Cell	M COVR ID	Cell Scale	X Offset	Y Offset	My Chart Date	Comments
NE Marshalls	2940504	1	C				E of Rongerick
N Marshalls NW Marshalls?	3000480	1	B	-200	-750		Check
	3000480	2	B				West of Bikini
Rongelap	3030498	1	D	550	-1400		Covers Rongelap & E Alinginae
Rongelap	3030501	1	D	550	-1400		Between Rongelap & Rongerick
Rongerick	3030501	1	E	200	-400		West Rongerick (Check)
Rongerik	03030502	1	E	200	-400		
Rongerick	03040501	1	E	???	??		Between Rongelap & Rongerick
Rongerik	03040502	1	E	200	-400		Rongerick Detail
Bikini	03030495	1	D	-50	-800		
Bikini	03040495	1	E	-220	-785		
Bikini	03040496	1	E	-220	-740		
Likiep	02940504	1	C	650	-210	2010-03-01	This chart missing in another copy of the CM93 (later 2010?)
Ailuk	03000501	1	D	180	-900	2010-05-03	Not perfect, but close enough
Wotje	02980510	1	E				Not off?
Wotje	02970510	1	D				Off, but not calculated
Maloelap	02940510	1	D	0	0	2010-05-03	Looks OK without Offset
Maloelap	02940513	1	D	-20	-165	2010-05-03	
Maloelap	02940504	2	C	500	500	2005-06-30	
Mili	02880515	1	E	0	0		Pretty much dead-on
Mili	02820504	1	C	-250	-150		Note diff offset at Jaluit!
Jaluit	02820504	1	C	400	0		Note diff offset at Mili!
Jaluit	02870508	1	F	775	-340	2009-05-12	Does not exist in the 2010 chart set
Jaluit	02850507	1	D	200	200		Near Jabor?
Jaluit	02850507	1	D	-100	-100		Near Imej and west to Devastators
Jaluit	02880507	1	D	-100	-100		Northern half of Jaluit
Namu	02820504	2	C	-400	-500		
Namu	02940504	3	C	-750	-400		





# Republic of the Marshall Islands



## MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Post Office Box 18 · MAJURO · MH 96960  
Telephone: (692) 625- 8240 / 8718 Fax: (692) 625-5353

### Outer Islands Entry Permit

Permission is hereby given to \_\_\_\_\_ to enter the jurisdiction of \_\_\_\_\_ . This said vessel is registered at \_\_\_\_\_ and the registration number is \_\_\_\_\_. This permit is for visiting, touring, and sightseeing purposes only.

#### Restrictions:

1. Going ashore on any uninhabited island without the consent of the traditional landowners shall be considered trespassing: In order to have access to any uninhabited islands, one must first get the authorization from the proper owner or owners of island before going ashore. (See people in the community for more information).
2. Fishing: All types of fishing is prohibited anywhere within the atoll's five economic zone without first obtaining the authorization of the Atoll's Local Government.
3. On land or under water tour of historic of cultural sites: Please consult with HPO Office.

On Board Are:	Names(s)	Occupation
	_____	_____
	_____	_____
	_____	_____

This permit authorizes the named vessel or yacht to enter the designated atoll and not other atolls in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and it is valid for a period of \_\_\_\_\_ week(s) effective on the arrival date \_\_\_\_\_ and ending on \_\_\_\_\_. This document must be disclosed to the appropriate Local Government authorities immediately upon arrival.

Fee of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ dollars is assessed upon arrival.

This granting of permission is based on the mutual agreement between the Ministry of Internal Affairs and \_\_\_\_\_ with respect to the Atoll Marine Zone Regulation Ordinance.

Captain: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

IA Official: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_