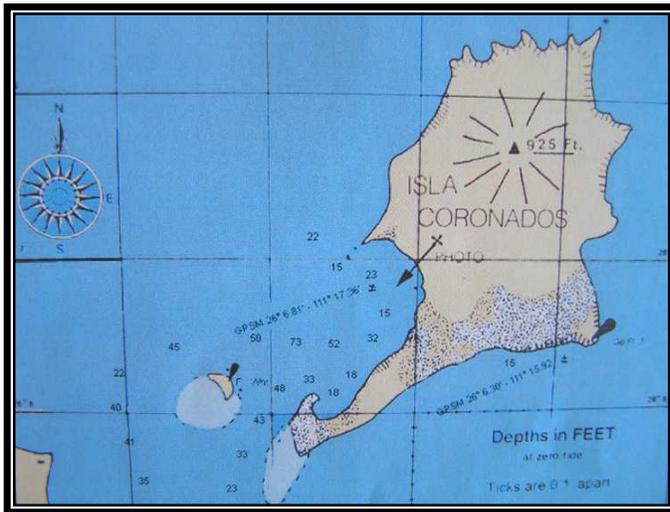


Baja Voyage (cont'd) Day 14 & 15

It was a Sunday morning and for a nominal fee, Brad had arranged for the Captain of the Port to drive him to the bus station at 7 am. Loaded down with most of his gear (we're still looking for some of it), he left for his bus and eventual flight out of Loreto. I got busy stowing things and set out for Loreto myself (55nm) away. The wind was moderate (10 –12 kn) from the east and since I was headed south-southeast it was a fine wind. I rounded Punta Concepcion and headed south along a high and rocky coast. The entire coast from where we began to the farthest south we would sail is a fascinating open book of geology. There are fault-block mountains mixed in with up-thrusts, and seabed deposits, caves and natural bridges and fantastic shapes created by the uneven weathering. All of these were shot through with fractures and faults, and overlaid with dramatic volcanic formations.



Isla Coronados (from Cunningham's Guide)

The coastline along which I sailed was pretty deserted with only an occasional road or shack visible. I enjoyed the solitude. I saw more pilot whales and several pods of dolphins; one pod must have had 200 dolphins in it. The sea was that deep indigo blue of great depths, and the large swells were spaced well apart. The boat rode smoothly on the sea sailing itself with only a bungee and well balanced sails. This was truly a delightful day of sailing. When alone at times like this I never feel lonely. I was however, looking forward to meeting my wife in a few days at Puerto Escondido.

It was 3:00 pm when I arrived at my intended overnight cove called La Ramada (not the motel). It was so early in the day so I decided to push on to the island of Coronado 12 nm further south. I arrived to find a small ½ mile long island composed of an old cinder cone volcano and a long narrow lava flow extending southwestward to form a natural breakwater from the prevailing SE. swells. Even though some swell worked its way around from the north, the anchorage was comfortable and deserted. I could see the lights of Loreto only a few miles in the distance. That evening, after a nice meal of canned ham and green beans, I watched the stars compete with the phosphorescence created by many small schools of fish fleeing larger ones and listened to strange clicks, grunts and snaps from the water.

Loreto at last! After a short sail of perhaps 5nm, I approached the breakwater of this delightful town. The guide book states: "There is no real harbor at Loreto, but the breakwater carries 4 feet at its entrance and serves as a sheltered dingy landing. The open roadstead is completely exposed so I stay on board...." Not a real option for me by myself. I decided to go in anyway and found that there was 12 feet at low tide at the entrance and there were a lot of 20 –30 foot powerboats and even a floating dock for

visiting boats! I docked and wandered over to the harbormaster in a building he shares with the national parks administration. We sat in the shade and talked about boats, fishing and family. He was very well spoken and articulate in English. He even could make a great joke. When I asked him if he was from the area he said "Yes, my brothers and I grew up here in Loreto, not much, but some." When I asked about the cost of the dock he said no charge as long as I don't stay too long. Neat guy! Actually he was typical of everyone we met during the entire trip. Without exception, everyone was helpful and proud to share his or her beautiful country. At no time did I ever feel we were in any kind of danger from an individual or social situation, not like I've felt in many cities here in the U.S.



Such a contrast between these beautiful green trees and the harsh desert that surrounds Loreto



Searching for my lost jigger of gas

I found a phone under a real shade tree and called home to confirm the rendezvous point with my wife Alice; it was to be Puerto Escondido about 13 nm south. I headed into town carrying a couple of 6 gal fuel tanks. The Pemex gas station was about a mile away, but I hadn't gone 100 yards before another boater offered me a ride in his truck to get the gas. Along the way he pointed out the best places to get fresh fruit, veggies and bread, the bank and the best café. The town was an old mission town and had many old buildings and lots of trees. I was looking forward to exploring the town with my wife.

That afternoon, loaded down with goodies, I left Loreto to spend the night on the island of Carmen about 7 miles away. The island is a national park (as are almost all the islands in the Sea of Cortez). There was lots of bird life and on the way over I saw several large sea turtles that dove back into the water before I could get close

enough to identify them. I anchored at a cove called Puerto Balandra with all around protection except from due west. There were several sailboats in the cove and it was very quiet until a large 100' powerboat came in, anchored a short distance away and started up their huge diesel generator. I knew it would go on for the whole night, so I moved to the other side of the cove near the mangroves just as dusk was fading to

night. Gee, I could still hear the diesel generator, in fact there were several, in fact they were flying around my head! Too late to move; I had at last found the birthplace for the world's mosquitoes. (No doubt that statement will be disputed). I doused myself in Deet and wrapped myself in mosquito netting, dozed off to sleep with the buzzing of vampires in my ears. With a couple of exceptions (this being a big one), we had very few problems with no-see-ums or mosquitoes for the entire trip. Two weeks later in the Bay of Angels we handed over the boat to my son and his 3 guests. When he returned home, he said those bloodsuckers were a real problem. I don't know why, perhaps there was a thunderstorm that deposited some freshwater that the mosquitoes and no-see-ums like.

To Be Continued....