

## Baja Voyage (cont'd) Day 23 & 24

After a morning swim, we threaded our way through the islets in Coyote Bay and headed north 12 miles to Mulegé. The sail was strictly a run with a light southerly wind right up the bay, so we poled out the Genoa. In a couple of hours we crossed the sand bar (the other bar we would do later) and tied up at the same slip I had last time I was there with my brother. The capitana took our lines and welcomed me back and I introduced my wife Alice to him. There was a large beautifully restored 42' Peterson, *Inclination*, next to us. It had been there when Brad and I had been in Mulegé before, but this time it appeared someone was aboard. We both were curious about the boat.



**I think Alice was ready for this kind of civilization**

A short walk along the sandy beach led us to Bar El Patron where we had some cold drinks and nice lunch. It was so nice just sitting there looking out the windows (sans glass) at the turquoise sea with the cooling wind blowing over us.

We met several very interesting people including two marine biology students from La Paz. The two boys were heading north to work at the resort where my pickup was left and promised to take it for a joy ride. "Just kidding" they said.

One of the kids had spent the last couple of summers studying the whale sharks that congregate in the Bay of Angles during late summer and fall. He said it was easy to spot them and even easier to jump into the water with the 10-meter long sharks and go swimming with them. Man, I want to try that! We also saw Tim, the Minnesota expat, had placed Brad's bar geocache in a place of honor.

When we finished lunch it was still siesta time, so we went back to the boat to wait for a ride into town. The capitana's wife gave us a ride in so we wouldn't have to walk the 3 miles. More importantly, we could return with some fuel and ice. All went well and Alice got the 10-cent tour of the town of Mulegé.

While we were unloading our purchases, we ran into Garth, the owner of the large sailboat next to us. He had lived in Mexico for the last 30 years, working a few months

a year as a yacht carpenter and Jack-Of-All-Trades for yachts across the gulf in San Carlos. For a short time each year, he also migrates north to Friday Harbor in the San Juan Islands in Washington State to do some custom sail and canvas work. Garth is an absolute fountain of knowledge about the Sea of Cortez and how to harvest its abundance. If one were to go on line to the Sea of Cortez sailing page in the Q & A's, he is always there with sage advice. He invited us to go on a tour of the town and especially the mission located up river in a huge grove of palms. Unfortunately, Alice was not feeling well and we decided not to go. After a simple meal on board our boat, we tried to go to bed early. It was a bit noisy with all the comings and goings at the river mouth. Also Garth did have a weakness. His boat had onboard air-conditioning powered by a small, but not silent, generator. It ran most of the evening. Eventually we fell into a less than restful sleep.

Up early the next morning, we headed north under sail past Punta Chivato with its expensive Norte-Americano villas. Our next destination was the island of San Marcos and "Squid Bay" -- more properly know as Bahia de Punta Piedra Blanca. Half the 25 nm was done under sail and the rest under the iron jenny. We arrived in the afternoon and I got the chance to hike up to the top of an overlooking ridge for a view of the anchorage, something I just love to do.



Unfortunately, I had to land the dinghy on a small beach with the remains of a wretched fishing camp. The camp was now abandoned and was a distressing sight.

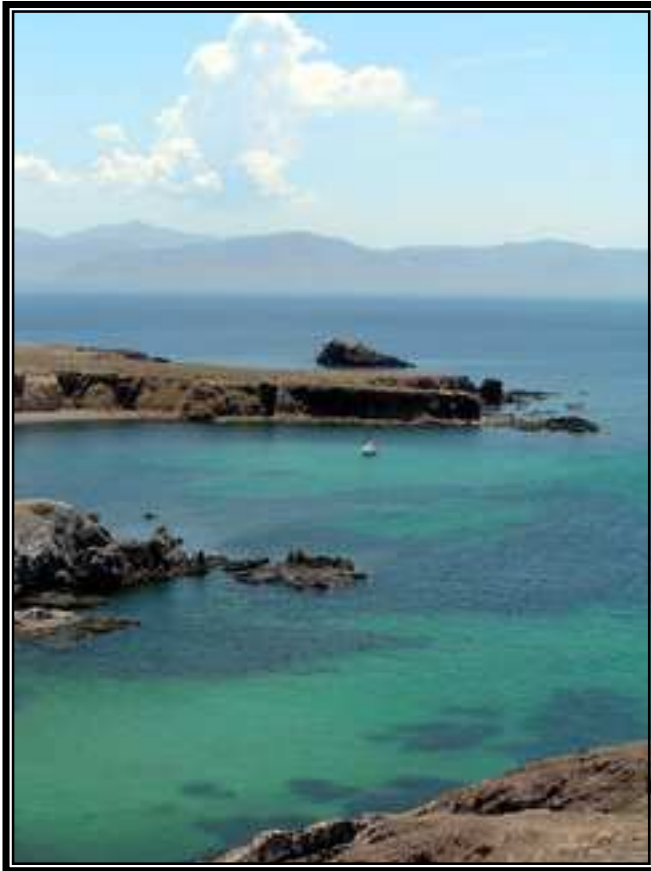
Strewn over the sand were piles of garbage and junk. There was even an old refrigerator half covered with sand. Was it used to store the salted fish or perhaps shark? Could they have had a really long extension cord?

**The beautiful bay on the north western part of Isla San Marcos**

These islands are supposed to be national parks and eventually have the potential to generate a lot of revenue for the locals, but for now they are not being treated as an asset. Perhaps I am being too harsh in my judgment. This is how the locals have fished for generations. Previously the sea, with the help of an occasional hurricane, would sweep away all the wounds on the shore. Now the fishing isn't being done on a subsistence level with biodegradable materials, but is almost being done on a large scale with "durable goods" of metal and plastic. Hopefully, the national parks rangers

will increase their education efforts and convince the local people that it is truly in their best interests to maintain the parks.

We spent the rest of the day after I climbed back down from the top of the hill, snorkeling all over the bay. The water would range from tepid to almost cold as we swam through various eddies in the bay. There were lots of fish, especially along the base of the cliffs. On the cliffs themselves, there was a collection of different crabs. One kind was called a “Sally Forth” crab as I recall. It looked like it was made of the most garish combinations of enameled red, yellow, orange and black with perhaps some blue thrown in too; a most unusual crustacean.



**Another view of Bay of Point White Rock  
(Bahia de La Punta Piedra Blanco)**

It was strange to be swimming in the same bay as the “giant killer squid” that my brother and I encountered a few weeks before. However, these interesting beasts live down deep during the day (oh please, oh please be true) so there shouldn’t have been anything to worry about.

As I sit here writing this, I just saw a National Geographic TV special about the Humboldt Squid that was filmed a short distance from where we were swimming. If you can find it on the net it would be worth seeing.

We had a very quiet and peaceful evening watching the sun set, and the stars and waxing moon come out. We listened to some classical music and went to sleep early. I did wake up occasionally and shined a flashlight in the water just on the off chance I might see something interesting, or scary – or tentacled, or not.