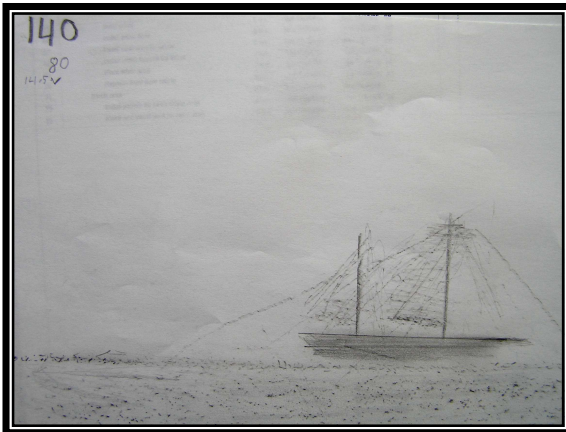


## Baja Voyage Day 27 & 28



Sketch of depth sounder screen

tiller and steered us out of the narrow entrance of our anchorage. The water was plenty deep, 140 feet, at that point so I was surprised when Alice shouted that there was a weird shape jutting up from the bottom. I jumped back into the cockpit just in time to see what she was talking about disappear off the screen of the bottom profiling depth sounder. It was most intriguing and after talking with Alice I was able to make sense of what I saw. We sketched it a short time later. It appeared to be a sunken ketch.

We woke before the sun rose and had a long and leisurely breakfast watching the sun come up through the clouds that seem to congregate over the mainland 40 miles away. I took a quick row around the anchorage to check things out, retrieve one of the anchors and then we were ready to head northwest to our next destination, Isla Estanque 23 nm away. As I was coiling the anchor line Alice had the



Wing and wing headed north to Isla Partida



Seal Rocks off Raza Island

sun and others leaping off rocks and chasing each other around in the water.

With a light southeast wind, we sailed on a broad reach or run, sometimes even wing and wing with my \$30 whisker pole. We sailed just west of Raza Island, and like Isla Partida, there is an off-lying rock to the north with lots of sea lions. Raza means race and the race of people on this rock, of both genders, were loud, fat, be-whiskered, and noisy with fish breath. (Hmm, could it be a bunch of my Greek relatives?). As on previous "seal rocks", there were the extremes of comatose sea lions laying in the

As we sailed on northward past Partida Island to the west, we could by early afternoon clearly make out Angel Island and the small island of Estanque at its tip. It was in this area just north of Partida Rock that my brother and I saw the huge pod of dolphins. As I was describing the incident to Alice, she interrupted me with an exclamation that there were lots and lots of dolphins headed our way. How neat, and it would seem not a coincidence, that here was another large group of dolphins in the same place about the same time of day, only a month later. The big pod was subdivided into smaller pods of what we assumed were mothers and small baby dolphins, pods of medium size dolphins, somewhat on the small size, and a few pods with just big dolphins. It was exciting to see and hear them as they swam over to check out the boat. We were both too excited to get many pictures. It was more important to us to share the wonder of the experience with each other.



**Hard to see but look for the dolphins splashing**



**The “pond” on Isla Estanque**

We rounded the eastern tip of Estanque with the beginnings of a contrary current causing the seas to begin to become steep and choppy. We motored sailed around and once in the lee of the island things became smoother. Having entered the “pond” before, it was an easy route into the calm and protected lagoon of Estanque Island. I went ashore for the obligatory picture of our anchorage and boat, riding sail up and all calm and serene. That evening after

dinner, the rising moon silhouetted the cactus on the rocky crest of the island.

We went to bed early listening to the tidal falls cascading over the rocky reef just outside the entrance to our anchorage. Around eleven at night, I could see a tremendous display of constant lightning over the mainland and island of Tibrion 30 miles to the east. Within an hour, it was apparent this storm was headed our

way. Shortly after midnight I had a second anchor out with 150 of line and chain. There was no significant wind, but I was nervous that this might be the feared Chubasco. This is a miniature cyclone that can produce winds of 100 kn in a matter of minutes and last up to an hour or so. The actual area affected by these mini-cyclones is usually less than 60 miles. By 12:30 am we began to get gust around 30 kn and these increased to perhaps 40 kn for a short time. Though spray was being kicked up, because of the protected and small nature of the "pond," there was never any wave action. By 1:30 am it was calm again. We found out later that just to the south and east of us at Puerto Don Juan, a sailboat had recorded winds in the 65-knot range.

Understandably, we were slow to get going the next morning and by the time we were trying to motor-sail around the eastern point of the island we were bucking a strong 3-4 knot current. To complicate matters the sea was so steep that just motoring around the point was impossible. Also, we could only use the motor on the starboard tack. When we had to make a port tack, we had to kill the engine and struggle to hold our own or to gain just a bit. When we gained sufficient distance around the point, it was back to motor sailing on a starboard tack. After four hours of this, we had cleared the area of concentrated current, having gone only 6nm over ground, finally reaching calmer water. This did not last long. A few miles later we approached the southern tip of Angle Island. Pushed by strong tides the water for the whole sea must decide to go inside to the west of the island or outside along the east of the island. The shapes, motions, and colors of each patch of distinct waves were fascinating. Some areas of only a few hundred yards had no waves at all, yet surrounding them were standing waves and other areas with big rollers. What a ride we had for the next hour!

We finally broke free, and under sail, headed east-southeast with quartering seas and winds. The seas were in the four to six foot range and quite steep. The wind was around 15-20 knots and we had a reefed main and jib. Even so,



we would go climbing up the back of one wave and then go surfing down it to the trough. Fun, you bet, tiring for sure, since the boat wanted to head up when a cross wave would hit the stern. After an hour or two of this I was ready for a nap and handed the tiller to Alice. After a few minutes she had the rhythm and I had my hour nap only occasionally woken if a really big wave slammed the transom and slew the boat around. In that case, Alice would calmly spill the wind and then resume course with no water being shipped.

**The lighthouse at Punta Arena with weather**

It was mid-afternoon and I asked Alice if she wanted to go into Puerto Don Juan or press on to the town of Bahia de Los Angeles. She opted for the latter and we sailed on until late in the afternoon when we anchored off the ramp at Gulliermos' restaurant. We jumped into the inflatable and rowed ashore to the restaurant for some cold drinks and a hot meal. As we relaxed, we struck up a conversation with another cruising couple (real cruisers, not like us) and had a very enjoyable afternoon and evening. Alice and I suddenly realized that it was almost dusk and we could not stay in the exposed place where we anchored. We returned to the boat and motored over to a curving bight of sand called Punta Arena, behind which the water was mirror-smooth. Fortunately it was only a mile away in the falling light; with a red and white-striped lighthouse like the one at San Francisquito marking it. Anchored, we relaxed in the big cockpit bed and watched the moon rise over the mountain. Listening to the surf pound against the intervening sand spit, we fell into a deep sleep. Occasionally I woke to check the progress of another huge lightning storm across the sea. It had the good grace to remain over the main land to our east and never got closer than 20 miles away.