

The Tuamotus Compendium

(Including the Gambiers)

A Compilation of Guidebook References and Cruising Reports



Rev 2019.2 – February 21, 2019

Please send us updates to this guide!

Keeping this useful cruising guide up to date is impossible for me all by myself... we have cruised another 20,000 miles downwind, through many other islands and countries (dribbling more Compendia behind us). I'm still happy to edit in updates, but you're going to have to take a few minutes out of your busy cruising schedule and send me an email with a few updates to help keep the Tuamotus Compendium alive.

Email Soggy Paws at [sherry –at- svso](mailto:sherry-at-svsoggypaws-dot-com)ggypaws –dot- com.

You can also contact us on Sailmail at WDI5677

The current home of the official copy of this document is

<http://svsoggypaws.com/files/#pacific>

If you found it posted elsewhere, there might be an updated copy there.

Revision Log

Many thanks to all who have contributed over the years!!

Rev	Date	Notes
A	Feb 13, 2010	Initial 'compendium'
B	May 10, 2010	Updates from Soggy Paws, Visions, Pursuit IV
C	June 23, 2010	More Updates. Greatly expanded the overview information in Section 1
D	June 25, 2010	Updates on Apataki from s/v Nakia
E	June 28, 2010	Updates on Gambiers from Soggy Paws and Pape'ete from Whoosh and Visions. Update on Amanu and Tahanea from Fellow Traveler
F	July 14, 2010	Updates from Nakia on Pape'ete. Moved Pape'ete stuff from Section 1 to its own section.
G	July 16, 2010	Updates on Fakarava S Pass and Makemo
H	July 20, 2010	A few more diving tidbits gleaned from an old SSCA article from 2003 (Raroia, Tahanea, Makemo, Rangiroa)
I	August 15 2010	Inputs on Rangiroa from Salamander and Raroia from Soggy Paws. Also info on the Passage to Marquesas and passing Tepoto. More Amanu from Estrela (2004)
J	September 15 2010	Inputs on Raraka, Aratika, Toau, Kauehi, and Tikehau from White Princess. Update from Slipaway on Tahiti.
K	May 20, 2011	Updates from Slipaway on Fakarava, Manihi, and splitting out the Tahiti stuff to a separate Societies Compendium .
L	June 17, 2011	Minor updates and contributions from 2011 Puddle Jumpers. Quixotic report on Apataki Carenage, YOLO report on Kauehi and Fakarava, and SlipAway report on Rangiroa
L.1	July 15, 2011	Updates on Apataki from YOLO and Fakarava S Pass, West Anchorage, from New Morning. ddAed the French Wx Terms section, and visa discussion. Tahanea update from Narama
L.3	October 28, 2012	Propane Gravity Fill additions from s/v Irie
M.1	September 11, 2013	Updates on the Gambiers from s/v Irie, and on Anse Amyot from s/v Nakia
N.1	2014 Updates	Evenstar on availability of an ATM in Fakarava
O.1	April 2015	Massive updates from s/v Pitufa on the Gambiers
O.2	November 29, 2015	Jacaranda reports on a new weather service in French Poly. Major upgrade to the Gambiers information from Pitufa's excellent website and recent info on the Gambiers
O.3	January 25, 2016	Apataki Carenage update from Kalliope
2016.2	June 22, 2016	Motutunga Info from sy Hildegard Hansen. Kauehi and Fakarava info from Starry Horizons. Jacaranda updates on weather sources and cell phones.
2016.3	August 20, 2016	Major updates on Fakarava and some 2016 updates on general info for the Tuamotus, from Jacaranda and Naoma.
2016.4	September 16, 2016	Jacaranda on Raroia.
2016.5	October 9, 2016	Jacaranda updates on Fakarava, Toau, Apataki

2016.6	November 8, 2016	ATM on Makemo from s/v Skylark; Asolare on Tikehau and Rangiroa; Jacaranda on Ahe and Tikehau, plus some Intro updates.
2017.1	February 28, 2017	Updates from Asolare on Apataki and Fakarava
2017.2	March 13, 2017	Update from Jacaranda on Tahanea
2017.3	March 23, 2017	Referencing the new Tahiti Cruiser's Guide online.
2017.4	April 1, 2017	Important correction to Asolare's info on Apataki pass (referenced the wrong pass in their notes)
2017.5	June 16, 2017	Updates from Shindig with Makemo bommie list, and a few minor updates from Spunky in various places.
2017.6	June 30, 2017	Updates from Duplicat with info on Amanu, Hao, and Fakarava
2017.7	August 25, 2017	Ahe (Sea Dragon), and revised wpts in Apataki to get to Carenage from Tehere
2018.1	May 29, 2018	Updates on Cell Phones from Jacaranda. Pitufa on nesting birds in Tahahea. A report on stopping at Makatea from Fulvio, and some updates on Fakarava.
2018.2	August 14, 2018	Added a link to the document on Marine Protected Areas in French Polynesia.
2018.3	August 28, 2018	Update on Aratika by Chaos.
2018.4	September 20, 2018	Updates in several places by Jacaranda
2018.5	November 28, 2018	Update on Takaroa by Dr. No, Tikehau by Jacaranda, Mooring warnings by Jacaranda. Updates on Fakarava, Tahanea, Makemo, and Raroia by Kokopeli. Updates on Ahe and Rangiroa from Consensus.
2019.1	January 22, 2019	Added section on Ciguatera
2019.2	February 21, 2019	Makemo, Fakarava updates from Nehenehe. Fakarava updates from Lungta

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SE Tuamotus



1.3 Clearance and Visa Issues

Most boats clear in to French Polynesia PRIOR to arriving in the Tuamotus (in the Gambiers or in the Marquesas). However, if coming from Hawaii, you may clear into Rangiroa.

1.3.1 Visa Issues for non-EU Citizens

Americans and Canadians do not need a visa prior to arriving in French Polynesia. When you clear in, you are given an automatic 90-day visa. Many other non-EU countries also fall into this category, too. Some countries (ie Thailand) require a visa ahead of time.

Note that if you are American or Canadian, and your **90-day visa is running out**, whatever you do, get cleared out of Tahiti before your visa expires. It is possible (but IS illegal) to then cruise the Leewards on your way out of French Polynesia. You might get stopped and checked, but this seems to be rare.

NO VISA EXTENSION IS POSSIBLE IN PAPEETE. Except under exceptional circumstances... medical issues, severe boat issues, etc, **you cannot get a visa extension on the spot in Papeete.** Getting a little extra time for a legitimate reason is possible, but those situations take a lot of paperwork (not covered in the normal agent fees).

Your visa normally starts when you clear in to your first port (Marquesas, Gambiers, or Rangiroa), but sometimes that isn't the exact date, so check your passports.

Flying out and flying back in before the end of your allotted 90 days does NOT 'reset' the visa. It merely stops the clock. Re-entering French Polynesia 6 months from your first clearance, however, you should be given another 90 days.

The only other way to legally stay longer is to apply for a Long Stay Visa at a French Embassy/Consulate before you leave for French Poly. Panama is the quickest and easiest embassy to obtain your LS visa. You need to make 2 trips in person to the same French

Consulate with your passports, about 1-3 months apart (depending on the country you submit your application), and have a lot of other paperwork done.

There is a detailed write up on obtaining a long stay visa and what is needed after you arrive www.jacarandajourney.com - Other Good Stuff).

1.4 Maneuvering and Anchoring in the Tuamotus

1.4.1 Tides, Currents, and Passes

The majority of the atolls have at least one break in the reef. But only some passes are wide enough and deep enough to permit a cruising sailboat to enter through them.

The current runs strong in and out of these passes. How much current depends on a lot of factors including the moon cycle, wind and wave conditions outside, how big the atoll is, how narrow the pass is, which way the pass faces, and whether there is more than one pass

And if the wind opposes the current, there can be large standing waves. And if there are strong winds or large swell, there can be as much as 8 knots of current (see the Wind/Wave Factor discussion below). So it is always best to aim to enter the passes at slack or near-slack tide. Some passes are east-facing, and these passes will be dicey on the outgoing current. Some passes are west-facing, and these passes will most dicey on the incoming current.

The popular open source tide program, WXTide32, only shows 3 tide points in the Tuamotus, (Mangareva in the Gambiers, Hao in the middle, and Rangiroa in the NW) so the time of slack current at the passes of other atolls must be estimated. And, WXTide is confusing because it lists Tuamotus tide points in the Marquesan time standard (which is -9.5 hrs from UTC) instead of the Tuamotu time zone, which is -10 UTC). Hao is actually listed twice in WXTide, one on Marquesan time, and one supposedly on 'local time'. But as best we could tell from local observation, the Hao time is wrong by one hour (add one hour to the NOAA 'Local Time Zone' value).

After 2 months in the Tuamotus and hearing reports from other boats, when the wind is light and seas calm—under 10 knots and under 1.5 meters—you can probably safely enter any navigable pass at any time of the tide.

People typically have problems in these conditions.

1. A strong wind opposing a strong current. This is just classic wind-against-sea and can always produce uncomfortable and/or dangerous conditions. It is best to try to time your arrival at an unknown pass in mild conditions and in good light.
2. When the wind is blowing hard—over 15 knots—out of the SE thru West
3. When the wave heights are high—over 1.5 meters—from the SE thru West.

#2 and #3 cause 'unusual' currents, and is probably why there is so much conflicting information floating around about estimating slack current times.

The south and west sides of the atolls are usually low and reefy. Strong winds and/or waves from those sectors push a large volume of water over the reef into the lagoon, and the only way for this huge volume of water to get out is through the pass. In extreme conditions (eg. Wind over 20 knots for several days), there may be NO SLACK AT ALL. (See Visions of Johanna's report on Hao for an example). In less extreme conditions, high wind/sea conditions may delay the low slack by an hour or two, and advance the high slack by an hour or two.

Because the winds are typically from E - SE direction

- On a pass facing southeast (Fakarava S), you will be best to go in the pass on slack or an incoming tide.
- On a pass facing west (Kauehi, for example), you will be best to go in the pass on slack or an outgoing tide.

1.4.2 Estimating Slack Tide

We had several reputable references that gave the time of slack tide in reference to the moon. This seemed like a great idea, but we could never get them to correlate properly. And the British government source did not match at all with the U.S. government source.

What we finally ended up using was a spreadsheet developed by Gram Schweikert from Visions of Johanna. The latest version is posted on Soggy Paws' website at <http://www.svsoggypaws.com/files/index.htm> (**Important Note:** The version that is on the Soggy Paws site was last updated in 2014. The tides change every year! If you really think you need the "guestimator" you will need to update it for the Rangiroa Tide Data for the current year!!)

After a lot of experimenting, what Gram did was take NOAA tidal information from Rangiroa, and do a minor adjustment based on your relative longitude between Hao and Rangiroa, to come up with an approximate time of High and Low tide for the atoll you are interested in.

Basically, Rangiroa's tidal times are about 1 hour and 18 minutes after Hao's (this is not what the official tide tables say, but this is the correct figure to use).

So if you are at an atoll located $\frac{1}{4}$ of the way from Rangiroa to Hao (considering Longitude only), then you'd calculate the time of your local tide as $\frac{1}{4} \times 78$ minutes BEFORE Rangiroa's tidal time. This is APPROXIMATELY when you might expect a slack to occur in calm conditions. Adjusting for the wind/wave factor as described above, will give you a little better approximation.

Here are some of the locations that we had experience with, their normal current, and some ideas to adjust that for the 'wind/wave factor'.

	Longitude Degrees	Longitude Minutes	Normal Max Current
Ahe	146	22	?
Amanu	140	51	4
Apataki - N Pass	146	24.4	?
Apataki - S Pass	146	25	?
Arutua	146	37	?
Faaité	145	21.5	?
Fakarava - N Pass	145	42	6
Fakarava - S Pass	145	27.8	5
Hao	141	0	6

Katiu	144	21	6
Kauehi	145	11	4
Makemo - NW Pass	143	58	4.1
Makemo - SE Pass	143	34	4.5
Manihi	146	4	6
Raraka	144	57.5	?
Raroia	142	27.5	?
Tahanea – Middle Pass	144	42	4
Toau - Anse Amyot	146	9	1.5
Toau - SE Pass	145	53	?

Wind Wave Current Factor Suggestions

- Add 1 kt for every day the wind has been blowing over 20 kts from a S or W component
- Add .5 kt for every day the wind has been blowing over 15 kts from a S or W component
- Add .5 kt for every 1/2 meter increment of southerly-component swell over 1.5 meters (ie 3 meter swell = +1.5 kt)
- Cap the Wind Wave factor at 1.5 times the Normal Max Current
- Subtract .5 kt for wide/deep passes and for each extra pass that an atoll has

The wind/wave factor is always** outgoing current. So it adds to the outgoing current and subtracts from the incoming current. It delays (or eliminates) the low slack time by an hour or two, and advances the high slack by an hour or two.

Example: At Anse Amyot, where we stayed long enough to observe conditions over several weather cycles, the peak calm weather current is about 1 knot. However, when the southerly swell picked up to 2.5 meters, and the wind to 15 knots, the current never turned to become incoming—we had a fairly steady outflow, even on a ‘rising tide’ of 2-2.5 knots!

****Exception to the ‘always outgoing’ comment above:** After watching Tuamotus passes for a month and thinking we had them nailed, we spent one very windy period at Fakarava S Pass. The wind had been blowing about 25 kts from the ESE-ENE for over 24 hours, and a boat coming in the pass, expecting outgoing current based on the tidal information and corrections above, found ~4 kts INCOMING current. Our only guess at what was going on was that a strong E wind might blow all the water OUT of the lagoon over the low western reef, causing an incoming current when it normally would be outgoing. This is totally a guess on our part. This boat had a hairy ride into the atoll, but the current and the wind were going in the same direction, so no large standing waves.

Bottom Line: So the bottom line is OBSERVATION. Do the best to estimate the slack time, get there a little early, and wait patiently until you can see with the binoculars that the current is slack and there are no large standing waves in the pass. But remember that absolute slack is usually only necessary when you have a strong wind-against-current situation. A knot or three of current in light wind situations is usually no big deal, if your engine is working.

We went into Makemo at max outgoing tide once—we had the sails up (in light wind), the engine floored, and for awhile, on the edge of the pass, we were only making ½ kt. This was fine because we had a strong engine and very mild wind/wave conditions.

Another tactic that is useful is to not go directly in the middle of the pass. At N Fakarava, for example, the pass is wide enough that you can stay toward the east side of the pass in 25 feet of water, and avoid the strongest current. Use your charts and your eyes to see where this makes sense.

1.4.3 Official French Polynesia Tide Tables

There is a French site that has tidal information for the North Pass at Fakarava and a few other sites in the Tuamotus (in French) www.SHOM.fr (direct link to tidal page is below). However, they do not account for the 'wind/wave factor' in their tide tables either.

http://www.shom.fr/ann_marees/cgi-bin/predit_ext/choixp?opt=&zone=8&port=0&date=&heure=&portsel=map

From Slipaway: SHOM stands for "Service Hydrographique et Oceanographique de la Marine." We referenced it for tides at Makemo, Tahanea and both north and south passes of Fakarava. It did not have tide info for Manihi, but we got information on that atoll from Xavier (xavier.michel@mail.pf). The SHOM website is in French, but here are some directions for using it:

On the SHOM home page, click on "Predictions de Marees"

On the next page, click on "Listes alphabetiques" and then "Acces au predictions"

On the map page, click on "Zone 8"

On the next page, choose your location and then click on "Annuaire des marees (hauteur d'eau).

In the "Nombre de jours" space, fill in the number of days for which you want tide info, and then click on "Calculer"

When on the final page, if you want to choose another atoll, click on "Choisir un Autre Port"

1.4.4 Other Tide Information Sources

Jacaranda – 2016: Try to obtain a version of Total Tide program. Similar to WXTide32 but based on British tide tables. It has a number of atolls covered in the Tuamotus

1.4.5 Sample Cruiser Reports on Passes

Jacaranda – 2016 – Raroia: Just a note: A few days after we departed Raroia, the wind had been strong 20+ kts for a few days along with a big S swell. The large supply ship tried entering the pass and usually they power thru the passes with not much concern over slack water. They ended up backing out of the pass as they could not make it into the lagoon due to the outflowing current. The ship waited 2 hours and went in reporting 8 knots out flowing current.

Keep in mind that if you have a choice its best to NOT enter with tide against wind as that can create large standing waves. This means for Rarioa if it's windy from the E or SE its best to enter either at the start of an ebb or at the end of an ebb. In addition as has been pointed out elsewhere, if there is a large swell running this will also push a lot of water in the lagoon. In windy conditions slack water may only be a few minutes or not at all.

Mata'irea: Watch out for wind-against-current situation in the passes. We upped anchor, motored to the pass, raised the main sail, and started into the pass with the assistance of a 5 knot outgoing current. Halfway into the pass, we realized that the standing waves in the pass, created by the current rushing against waves generated by several days of high winds, were bigger and more dangerous than we had realized from inside the lagoon. Just as Sten spun us around to head back into the lagoon, the engine hiccuped. I eased the main to give us some downwind power and we surfed down 8 foot standing waves back to the safety of the lagoon. Other than the storm going to Bermuda, this was the scariest experience we have had on Mata'irea.

Iron Bark: Watch out for wind-against-tides. The passes are on the lee side of the lagoons and frequently have strong currents, caused by the ocean spilling over the windward reef and then pouring out of the leeward side. These currents can be countered by incoming tides causing frightening, standing waves. While these are manageable when you're being spat out, they can be extremely daunting when you're slugging in. Many anchorages are far from comfortable, being encumbered with coral heads, strategically spaced to snag your anchor cable, instantly reducing a comfortable 5:1 scope to up-and-down. Laying out the anchor with care can avoid this situation, but if the wind shifts or dies, you can find yourself back at square one.

Visions of Johanna: For a reason that I still don't fully understand (because we spent a lot of time studying tide tables ahead of time and trying to determine when slack tide was), we transited our first ever Tuamotu pass into Hao with a very strong ebbing current and significant standing waves at the exit of the pass. Our instrumentation showed that we had an average current of 7.4 knots against for almost 10 minutes. At that point it was hard to make much headway and we actually slid back into two standing waves, flooding the cockpit and sending some water down the companionway as we hadn't thought to put the dropboard in place. (this is a 62' boat that make 8 knots in flat water). Luckily we have a big boat with a very powerful motor.

The water in the lagoon is apparently quite high today because of the 3 days of 15-20 knot easterlies which are creating waves big enough to crash over the reef, filling up the lagoon. We still don't know when low tide was, but are pretty sure that if we had waited a few hours it would have been a much more reasonable time to go through the pass. (note, they were later told that there had been NO slack current for 3 days because of the winds/seas, but a boat entering the lagoon a day later reported a reasonable current on entry at the right time)

Soggy Paws / Makemo E Pass: We had been carefully timing our entry/exit through passes for both slack current and mild wind conditions, so have not had any problems. However, we arrived at Makemo after an overnight, about 2 hrs after slack. The current was ripping out, but it was going with the wind (against us). So we decided we had nothing to lose to try to go in, rather than waiting 3-4 hours outside for the next slack.

First, we entered well to the left of the main stream, and tried to stay out of the main stream all the way in. We had good light and kept a good watch on the bow, to make sure we didn't get into trouble.

It took us forever, and was hairy at times in the current 'boils'. At full throttle (way harder than we normally run the engine), we were sometimes only making half a knot against the current. If we had not stayed off to the side, we would have been going backwards. The current was running 6-7 knots.

Fortunately this pass has a 'shortcut' to the left (shown in Charlie's Charts, and accurate on the 2009 version of CMap charts), that enabled us to get out of the current quicker.

We certainly wouldn't have attempted the pass had the current been running against the wind.

1.4.6 Marine Protected Areas

Soggy Paws – August 2018: Since we transited through French Polynesia in 2010/2011, the government has made many changes to anchoring areas. The latest copy of the Marine Protected Areas, and the regulations surrounding them, are published in a guide downloadable from the internet.

As it has already changed location since 2017, here is the current location:

<http://www.ressources-marines.gov.pf/wp-content/uploads/sites/24/2018/07/Brochure-Zones-maritimes-r%C3%A9glement%C3%A9es-en-PF-web-31.07.2018.pdf>

In case it disappears again, I will upload a copy to my Files page also.

Sorry, I could not find an English version. Time to start practicing your French!

1.4.7 Anchoring in Coral

Nehenehe – Feb 2019: Very shallow anchoring recommendations from a trimaran:

We are starting to have very good luck with anchoring in shallow water. I swim out (mask and snorkel) and watch the anchor dig into the sand bottoms as Melanie backs down. We are finding this useful because it is very easy to judge the holding when watching the anchor slowly dig in. Twice now... I have watched the anchor hold very well at 2,700 rpm in reverse (this is a lot of reverse thrust because we have a three blade MaxProp); But.... The anchor does not dig completely in and it sets lying maybe a wee bit to one side. Both times the tip has probably dug into thin sand and just caught the edge of the hard coral bottom that was unseen under the sand.

We have a Manson Supreme anchor and both these times it was maybe dug in about ¼ to ½ way. From the deck of the trimaran it might have looked OK to me. Both times, Melanie just motored forward about 20 feet while I dove down to the anchor, and while underwater pulled some chain forward, then lifted the anchor out of the thin sand and using the anchors weight to hold me down in a walking position.... just walk the anchor to a new location while under water the whole time. Both times, the anchor reset perfectly by burying itself completely and this was only about four to five feet away from the old poorly set location. I am not a diver and can't hold my breath all that long.... but it's still very doable at age 60 in shallow water.

From Soggy Paws. In most of the anchorages in the Tuamotus, your anchoring conditions are

- (1) Solid coral bottom
- (2) Sand with a lot of coral heads
- (3) Sand with a few coral heads (rare)

The water depth is usually 35-50 feet, and the coral heads are 4-5' off the bottom, and scattered on the bottom at about every 6-10 feet or so, with sand in between. This is a perfect setup to badly wrap your chain, damaging the coral and endangering your boat.

If your chain gets wrapped close to the boat, you no longer have the 'catenary' of chain that provides a shock absorber when the wind blows or the waves get big. You can snap the chain, or break bow rollers and windlasses in this situation.

To minimize the problems and the risks, after experimenting some, we routinely buoyed our chain to make it hang in the water above the coral heads. This turned out to be a pretty neat arrangement.

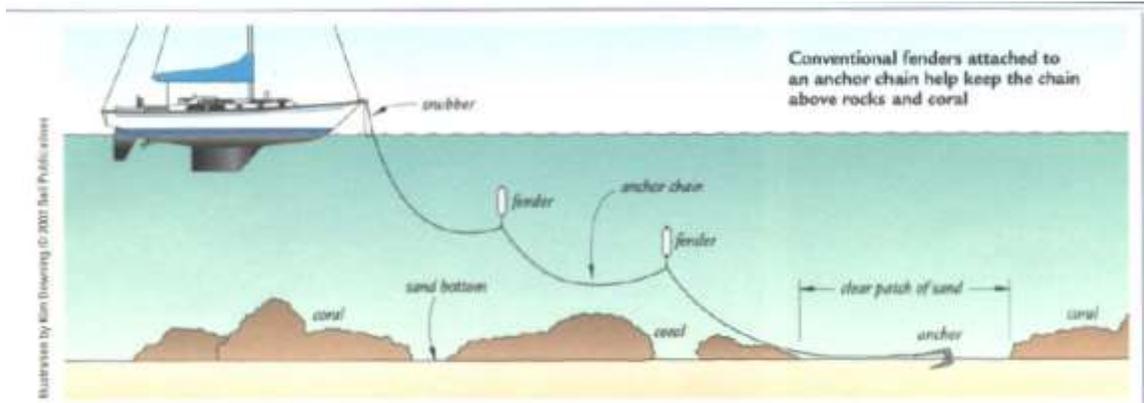


Illustration taken from a July 2002 Sail Magazine Article
"Fending off the Coral" by David Content

Using readily-available 'pearl farm' buoys, which can be found on any windward beach in the Tuamotus, we tied 2 together with a short line, and fastened a snap shackle in the middle of the short line. This was our float. A big fender would probably work pretty well too, as illustrated above.

We did our best to drop our anchor in a sand spot, set out a normal amount of chain (only 3x-4x the water depth, due to the deep water), and back on the anchor until we were sure it was set well. Then we gently pulled in enough chain to equal approximately 1.5x the water depth, snap on our 2-buoy contraption, and gently let the chain back out. The snap shackle makes it easy to attach and detach as you are anchoring.

In a typical 35-foot anchorage, the buoys would be snapped on our chain about 50 feet from the bow roller.

This leaves about 30-40' of chain laying on the bottom, where it might wrap, but also provides the correct angle of pull for the anchor. But the last 100' of chain is neatly suspended about 10' above the tops of the coral heads. (Depending on the weight of your chain and the size of your buoys, experiment with buoy-to-chain ratio to make it like this).

If the wind switched, we would probably wrap the first 30-50', but we always have more chain we can let out. We initially only deployed one float, but had a second set of buoys ready to deploy, in case we needed to let out more chain.

The snap shackle is not absolutely necessary, but it does make it easy to snap on and remove a pair of buoys in a few seconds, as the chain is coming in or going out. This is pretty important in case you need to up-anchor quickly. The shackle only has to hold a few hundred pounds of chain, in water, so it doesn't need to be super-hefty. Caribiners or something similar might be scrounged out of your spare hardware box to do the trick.

If your chain does get wrapped...

If you are in a storm situation, it is critical to maintain some free chain. Boats have successfully weathered bad storm situations by going to a really long really strong snubber and/or letting out more chain as their chain gets wrapped (having a spare buoy rigged for this would make a lot of sense).

In some deep anchorages inside the lagoon, it can be difficult to see the bottom snorkeling, and therefore difficult to see what's going on when your chain seems stuck. It is USUALLY possible to unstick your chain without diving on it—patience and calm weather are helpful. A snorkeler in the water can be helpful. But this is a time where having a dive tank can be a big help—even if you're not an active diver.

See the account in the Manihi section on one boater's experience with unwrapping 200 feet of chain from the coral.

The Tuamotus are diver's heaven, so a plea on Channel 16 might produce a neighbor with tanks who would dive your chain free for you.

Not anchoring in coral... After spending a season in the Tuamotus, we found that if you can make your way to the windward side of the atoll, there are usually spots where the sand has been pushed over the coral reef in big storms, and they make good sandy anchor spots in shallower water with only scattered heads. We found this to be true in Fakarava (SE corner), Tahanea (SE Corner), and Raroia (East side), and I'm sure this is why the SE corner in Kauehi is also popular.

1.4.8 Using Out-Island Moorings

Jacaranda – September 2018: The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage.

In 2017 a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauhi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette. This warning does **NOT** include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings.

Soggy Paws / Jacaranda – 2016: First, never ever assume that a mooring is good without inspecting it. Boats are wrecked every year while crossing the Pacific due to trusting a mooring.

A mooring that is not properly inspected and revamped every 6 months can be very dangerous for your boat. NONE of the moorings you will find in the South Pacific are inspected and revamped every 6 months. So inspect it yourself! Some things to look for:

- Inspect the loop for signs of chafe. Inspect the length of line to make sure that the line is of appropriate strength for your boat, and that the line, the chain, the shackles, and the mooring are of appropriate strength/size for your boat.
- Inspect the chain, especially if the chain hangs in the sand. As the mooring ball "dances", the chain rubs in the sand, resulting in very thin links.

- Inspect the connection to whatever is on the bottom... some are chain wrapped around a massive (dead) coral head. Some are concrete blocks with re-bar loops cast into the concrete (these can go bad).
- If you have a concrete block on the bottom, know the dimensions of that concrete block, and remember that concrete is half as heavy in water as it is in air (so a 500 lb block is only 250 lbs underwater). Do not assume that the islander who set up that mooring understands just how big a concrete block is required to properly moor a 45 ft cruising boat in a 35 knot squall.

Proper Connection to a Mooring: DO NOT run a single line from one bow cleat to another, through the mooring loop. This is a recipe for disaster! As your boat swings back and forth, this will saw on the loop, severely damaging it. In strong gusty wind, you can saw through a 1-inch 3-strand line in a couple of hours. We pulled one boat off the rocks, and heard of another boat who's boat was a total loss due to sawing through the loop. Even in light winds, you are damaging the loop (not being a good neighbor). Don't be lazy!

The proper way to connect to a single-loop mooring is to run two lines, one from each bow cleat. Each line should go from the cleat, through the loop, and back to the same cleat. This provides redundancy, and eliminates the "sawing" problem.

1.5 Weather

1.5.1 General Tuamotus Weather Conditions April-July

The prevailing wind in the Tuamotus when most cruisers are there is ESE and SE, with average wind speeds are 10-15 kts. However, averages don't tell the whole story.

The weather that controls conditions in the Tuamotus comes from New Zealand, and from the South Pacific Convergence Zone. Fronts and troughs and lows blast out of NZ and then stall out over French Polynesia. The SPCZ, surprisingly, often extends all the way into the Tuamotus (see the Fiji Nadi Fleet picture for this).

It's very difficult to predict what any given weather system will do, and the GRIB files almost always predict light and variable winds when a front passes. But at least once each season, it seems that cruising boats in the Tuamotus get surprised by a vicious frontal passage.

Soggy Paws: The one bad storm we experienced in the Tuamotus, the winds were forecast in the GRIB files to back from SE-E-NE-N-NW-W. Our Northern Hemisphere brains told us to protect ourselves from the north on the frontal passage, and we did that. So we tucked up in a place with protection from N and W. We figured that we would have plenty of time to move to a location the following day that had better protection from the south, if we needed to.

But the wind only stayed N and W for a few hours, and by the middle of the night, was blowing 25 knots from S—a direction that we were totally exposed across 15 miles of lagoon. In squalls we clocked 40 knots gusts.

As we were getting battered by 6' waves coming across the lagoon, on a lee shore, we finally dug into our 'Weather' folder, and read Jim Corenman's sage advice in Latitude 38 from 1998, which said "the northerly sector winds will usually be light and of short duration, so if you can't get 360-degree protection, make sure you are protected from the south, as that is where all the strong winds will come from."

Since then, we have cringed with every approaching NZ front (coming once or twice weekly in June), but have since experienced nothing but mild variable winds on the frontal passage.

Finally, sometimes deep lows and or highs way to the south will cause 'reinforced trade winds'. These can cause 15-25 kts winds for a week or two from an easterly quadrant.

In general, our experience was, when you are not sure which way the wind is going to blow, when at an atoll, protect yourself from the South more than anything else. Generally, the stronger winds will blow from the SE. When the wind goes N, it is usually pretty light and of short duration as it backs around an approaching front.

Added in Mid-July 2010: Looking back at broad weather trends....June in general had very light winds. Most cruisers were sitting around in anchorages waiting for more wind to sail somewhere. We did have one or two more of the 'SouthEasters' late in June. Then, in July, all the light winds went away, and several very strong high pressure areas passed well to the south of us, bring the reinforced trades. Then, all the cruisers were sitting around in anchorages waiting for LESS wind.

Tackless II: Weather, specifically bad weather, bracketed our stay in Fakarava like a set of parentheses. The two-day radio forecast we listen to every morning warned of strong winds from the northwest, so we and many other boats headed for the northern end of Fakarava atoll, the second largest of the Tuamotus. There the northern reef edge slants away to the southwest providing the best-looking protection from the northwest. When we actually arrived at the anchorage off the village of Rotoava (**16*03'S; 145*37'W**), there were only a couple of other boats, but by the end of the next day maybe fifteen had assembled, many of them fellow Puddlejumpers rushing northward from the atoll's southern pass.

Atolls are a mixed blessing in the protection department. While the motu-topped fringing reef encircling the lagoon keeps out the usual ocean waves, when the winds switch around you can find yourself with your back in a corner and plenty of fetch inside the atolls for waves to build.

And that's exactly what happened to all of us tucked so carefully up at the north end. That two-day forecast made no mention of the fact that the winds would proceed to back right round the compass, from N to NW to W to SW!

After one night of protection, the wind blew 20-30 knots from our exposed side for two to three days. Seas built up to four feet setting the boats rocking and bopping like hobby horses while our anchor chains wound up around coral heads 50' feet down. Several boats had their snubbers snap when the coral stole their catenaries (the sagging stretch of anchor chain that acts as a shock absorbers), and several others had their dinghies popped when they got yanked into their stern steering vanes.

One European boat actually took himself inside the brand-new rectangular concrete basin of the quay, only to find when the wind and waves switched that he was trapped in a washing machine! He did us all a service, because no matter how uncomfortable things got out at anchor, all we had to do was glance his way at his mast whipping back and forth like a metronome to feel better about our own situations.

Tackless II actually came through all the weather pretty well. She's a heavy old boat and therefore bucks the waves at a more tolerable rate. We got chafe gear in place and a back-up snubber on early in the game, and we lucked out that our coral head wind-ups never brought us up short. The worst thing that happened to us is that we actually got a splash of seawater through the aft cabin portholes!

About a week later when we were in the S end of Fakarava, we had a rerun of the nasty weather. This time, demonstrating that we do have a learning curve, we and the other boats in the anchorage did not run north, and this proved to be the right move.

The winds backed yet again from North through West to South, but this time the area's scattered reefs provided a sea break against any fetch that could build. Each time the wind shifted, we let out another length of chain, and although our rode on the bottom resembled some kind of macramé knot, we sat relatively steady for all three days that the system passed over us with the wind generator cranking out plenty of amps.

1.5.2 Weather Sources – With Onboard Email/SSB

We found 7 possible sources of weather useful while away from internet in the Tuamotus...

1. The French Polynesia text forecast is available via Saildocs for both 1 day and 3-4 day forecasts.

The one day French Polynesia text forecast available via Saildocs in either French or English:

To: query@saildocs.com

Body of email:

French 'send fr.poly' or

English 'send fr.poly.en' to request.

The 3-4 day French Polynesia text forecast available via Saildocs in either French or English:

To: query@saildocs.com

Body of email:

send <http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=me>

(Meteo France Med Range FP weather in French)

send <http://svsarana.com/translate/fr.poly.long.en.php>

(Med Range FP in English - Not perfect - new service still with some minor bugs)

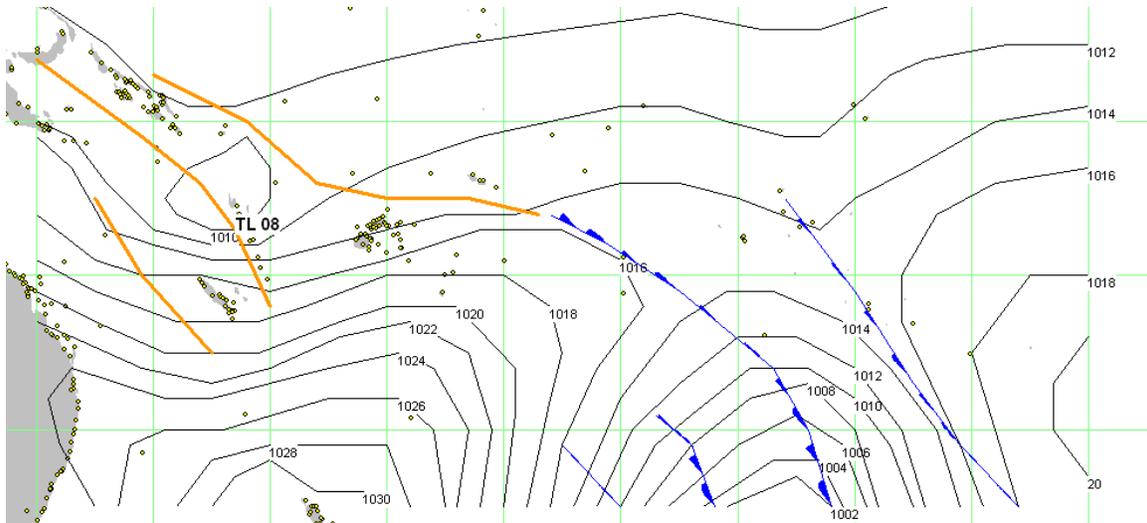
Eric from s/v Sarana has graciously made a translator from the French versions to English .

If Sarana's translation is not available, there are French weather terms provided in Appendix A.

Download a picture of the French Poly weather zones here:

http://www.meteo.pf/images/carte_zones_mar.jpg

2. **The Fiji Met office** produces 2 products that cover French Polynesia, one is the 'Fleet Code'—a coded text file that can be pasted into a software program that will decode the codes into a surface analysis chart that covers from New Zealand east to about 120W. Download the Fleet Code program on the Pangolin website www.pangolin.co.nz before you get out of internet range. The saildocs request is `send fleet.nadi`. The second product is a text version that is not coded. The saildocs request is `send nadi.sopac`.



The Nadi Fleet Forecast as Decoded by PhysPlot.

Jacaranda – 2016: We have used OpenCPN plug in for fleet code as a fleet code reader. This plugin is normally part of the newer versions of OpenCPN. You can download it from the OpenCPN Plugin Page <http://opencpn.org/ocpn/downloadplugins>

3. **NOAA Hawaii** also produces a text forecast that covers the Tuamotus. It is a 'High Seas' forecast and really only gives locations of fronts and such, and major areas of wind. The SailDocs request is `send FZPS40.PHFO`.
4. **GRIB files.** GRIB files seem to be generally accurate except when stalled cold fronts from NZ run into troughs or convergence zones which lurk sometimes over the Tuamotus. Then, no one, including the French, Fiji, or NOAA weather offices do a very good job of predicting what the wind will do in any given location.
5. New Zealand Weather Faxes

They only have one transmitter in NZ, so each product is broadcast on a different frequency every 15 minutes starting at xx00 (5Mhz), xx15 (9Mhz), xx30 (13Mhz), xx45 (16Mhz daytime, 3Mhz nighttime). All times are Local Fr. Poly (Tuamotus) times.

TRANSMISSION TIMES (Local) & Freqs

PRODUCT	3247.4	5807	9459	13550.5	16340.1

1200 SW PACIFIC MSL ANAL	0645	0600	0615	0630	
1800 SW PACIFIC MSL ANAL	1200	1215	1230		1245
TRANSMISSION SCHEDULE	1300	1315	1330		1345
0000 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 30	1400	1415	1430		1445
0000 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 48	1500	1515	1530		1545
0000 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 72	1600	1615	1630		1645
0000 SW PACIFIC MSL ANAL	1800	1815	1830		1845

0600 SW PACIFIC MSL ANAL 0045 0000 0015 0030
 TRANSMISSION SCHEDULE 0145 0100 0115 0130
 1200 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 30 0245 0200 0215 0230
 1200 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 48 0345 0300 0315 0330
 1200 SW PACIFIC MSL PROG H+ 72 0445 0400 0415 0430
 (subtract 1.9 to get dial frequency)

6. Hawaii Weather Faxes

UTC	Local Product	Coverage Area
1724	0724 SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
1755	0755 STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1849	0849 SW PACIFIC GOES IR SAT PIC	40S - 05N, 130W - 165E
1940	0940 WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1953	0953 24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2302	1302 48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2315	1315 72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2341	1341 24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
2354	1354 STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0524	1924 SIGNIFICANT CLOUD FEATURES	30S - 50N, 110W - 160E
0555	1955 STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0649	2049 SW PACIFIC GOES IR SAT PIC	40S - 05N, 130W - 165E
0740	2140 WIND/WAVE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
0753	2153 24HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1102	0102 48HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1115	0115 72HR WIND/WAVE FORECAST	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1141	0141 24HR WIND/WAVE FORECASTS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E
1154	0154 STREAMLINE ANALYSIS	30S - 30N, 110W - 130E

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

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

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.

7. Bob McDavitt's Weathergram

Bob McDavitts weekly TEXT version of his weather gram covering all the South Pacific. Best for Airmail. Best way to subscribe to the text-only version of weathergram is to send an email to bob@metbob.com .

1.5.3 Weather Sources – Voice

Jacaranda - 2016: Gulf Harbor Radio from New Zealand gives specific location weather on the SSB, and we have been able to hear them sometimes in the Tuamotus. This is a free service (donations accepted) but you need to register with them first. We have heard excellent comments about their weather reporting. Usually they do not cover FP but I assume that is because many people here do not know about them. They do give weather for the area between Bora Bora and Tonga and further west.

Freq: 8.752 19:15Z

Alt Freqs: 8.779 & 8.297

Contact them via email at weather@ghradio.co.nz

Register at Yachts in Transit New Zealand www.yit.co.nz

From the Yachtsmen's Guide issued by the Tahiti Tourism Board - In French only
Météo France : tél. : 36 70 08 (forecaster on live) www.meteo.pf

By BLU (Mahina Radio) on 8803 KHz at 8:45 / 11:00 / 12:00 a.m. and 2:30 / 4:30 / 8:00 p.m.; and on 2182 KHz and then 2620 KHz at 8:03 / 8:33 a.m. and 6:03 / 6:33 / 9:00 p.m. (times are all local Tahiti time, -10UTC)

RFO transmits weather reports on

- FM at 89 and 91,8 MHz, on
- AM at 738 MHz, at 5:55 / 6:57 / 7:57 / 10:30 a.m. and 5:55 p.m.

1.5.4 Weather Sources – Internet

Soggy Paws has compiled a bunch of specific South Pacific weather links on their website. These are mainly for French Polynesia, westward to NZ, and northward to Hawaii. These are all the government office forecast products that I have found to be useful. (and a few non-govt sites)

New Zealand Met

Current surface analysis:

<http://www.metservice.com/national/maps-rain-radar/maps/sw-pacific-recent-latest>

Surface Forecast Series (30, 48, 72H)

<http://www.metservice.com/national/maps-rain-radar/maps/sw-pacific-future-series>

These are great maps in small (PNG) format--about 16K per map. But not easily downloadable via email (appears to be no fixed product name for the graphics, unlike other offices' websites).

Australia Met

And here's for Australia. There may be a more user-friendly page, but I found this that seems to list all the products:

http://www.bom.gov.au/inside/itb/dm/idcodes/tables/current/difacs_products.shtml

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/24hrsfcprog.gif>

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

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

Full List of Hawaii Marine Weather Products:

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

Satellite Pictures

This is likely available on a marine weather site somewhere, but here's the link I use for Pacific Satellite:

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. There are better moving satellite pictures available elsewhere, if you have the bandwidth, but in low-bandwidth situations, this will almost always work.

FIJI Met Office

Fiji Met Office Maps and Satellite page

<http://www.met.gov.fj/sat-map.html>

They have some very good products, but some of them only start coverage west of 155 degrees West.

French Polynesia Met Office

Text forecast

http://www.meteo.pf/bulletin_marine.php

36 Hour Forecast Map

<http://www.meteo.pf/previsions.php?carte=preiso36>

Satellite photo - French Poly - Updated every half hour

<http://www.meteo.pf/observation.php?carte=pf>

Satellite photo - South Pacific - Updated every 3 hours

<http://www.meteo.pf/observation.php?carte=ps>

Bob McDavitt's Weekly Weathergram

Bob produces a weekly summary of the weather and is delivered on Sunday mornings. Its a excellent source of the big picture with more detailed information on various locations in the SP. Bob has two types of weekly "weathergram" emails... one WITH GRAPHICS and one as text only.

For text data that works best with Airmail (Sailmail & Winlink)

To subscribe to text-only version of the weathergram send Bob an email at bob@metbob.com

Works best with internet email program like Gmail or Yahoo, etc.

Weathergram with graphics is at <http://metbob.wordpress.com> , Click FOLLOW at bottom right to subscribe. To unsubscribe from WordPress: click the "unsubscribe" link on the bottom of the email. Or, if email wasn't from WordPress then send a reply email saying LEAVE.

The site without graphics is <http://weathergram.blogspot.com/> (but with translate button).

His new site (with graphics) is here <https://metbob.wordpress.com/>

Met VUW

Note this is mostly 'repackaged GRIB' files

<http://metvuw.com/forecast/forecast.php?type=rain®ion=specific>

Passage Weather

Note this is mostly 'repackaged GRIB' files

<http://www.passageweather.com>

1.5.5 Understanding the Weather Patterns

We (Soggy Paws) are pretty experienced cruisers and feel comfortable normally interpreting our own weather. However, our familiarity was with the Caribbean—Northern Hemisphere—weather. We were a little stumped when we first launched off from mainland South/Central America for French Polynesia. We still have trouble remembering that everything's backwards when weather systems pass.

Several really good sources of instructional material on South Pacific weather exist.

1. Bob McDavitt's "Mariner's Met Pack for the Southwest Pacific" ISBN 1-877197-08-04 published by Captain Teach Press, Auckland, NZ. Though Bob is located in NZ and his weather focus is mainly the western portion of the South Pacific, his instruction manual covers a lot of useful information for the South Pacific in general. Purchase online: [Waypoint Books](#) [Bluewater Books](#)
If you can't find it, email Bob at bob@metbob.com
2. Jim Corenmans "Letters from the South Pacific" originally published in the late 1990's in Latitude 38 Magazine. Copies of this series of articles are floating around among boaters, and might be found on Latitude 38's website. Jim had a great article on understanding South Pacific weather that is still really helpful to newbies entering French Polynesia.

Download from here: <http://svsoggypaws.com/files/index.htm>

3. David Sapiane's Weather for the Yachtsman. I downloaded this document from the Pangolin site:

http://www.pangolin.co.nz/jetsam/view_article.php?idx=19

It is an 11-page Word document dated June 2008, with a bunch of good information on terminology and understanding weather for the South Pacific.

4. Some practical tips on planning a passage can be found here: <http://www.pacificyachtdeliveries.co.nz/weather.htm>
5. The Hacking Family has a great circumnavigation website, and their South Pacific weather page is here: http://hackingfamily.com/Cruise_Info/Pacific/SPacific_Weather.htm

6. Check the Pacific Puddle Jump 'Files' section on Weather, there are usually some good, updated documents there. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pacificpuddlejump/>

1.5.6 Professional Weather Routing

Generally, the Marquesas – Tuamotus – Tahiti runs are not too difficult, but just to add some info for those of you who worry about weather for the Pacific crossing.

One of the most-mentioned names in the South Pacific when talking about the weather is **Bob McDavitt**. Professional forecasts can be obtained from Bob McDavitt. Email him for detail at bob@metbob.com

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.

Another source of Pay-For weather routing is **Bob Cook at Ocean Pro Weather**. (we have not used Bob, but he appears to be a professional world-wide router, check details on his website).

Robert Cook, Weather Router, Ocean-Pro Weather & Routing

Website: www.Ocean-Pro.com

oceanpro.weather@gmail.com

Naples, FL: 239-775-7435

Cell Phone: 239-877-4094 Skype: captcook52@gmail.com

1.6 Obtaining Supplies

1.6.1 Money

The normal currency in the Tuamotus is the French Polynesia Franc, usually abbreviated CFP. In June 2016, the exchange rate was 100 CFP per US dollar, so a 500-CFP coin is about \$5.00 USD.

Jacaranda 2016: There is now an ATM Machine at the Fakarava - Post office. Also, we have heard that there is an ATM being installed in Makemo in July 2016 (Reported by SV Eye Candy) .

Soggy Paws 2010: We have yet to encounter an ATM in the Tuamotus. You can exchange US dollars or Euros at some Post Offices, when there is a post office. Very few businesses are set up for credit cards.

In Makemo, the PO will NOT change either USD or Euros. But the big grocery store in will change dollars (and probably Euros) and will usually accept credit cards and will do a cash advance on some credit cards.

Rangiroa (where we have not been yet) may have a bank with an ATM and more establishments that accept credit cards. (See the French Polynesia Guide for Yachts)

So, if you are going to stay in the Tuamotus for very long, especially if you think you will need to buy fuel in any quantity, bring PLENTY of cash—USD, Euros, or CFP. Remember that diesel is about \$5.50/gallon and gasoline \$6.00. A beer in a store is around \$3 EACH. A typical meal ashore runs from \$11 to \$35.

If you run out of CFP, most businesses will accept USD or Euros, but maybe not at as good an exchange rate (ask first), though we sometimes got a better rate from individuals than from the Post Office. We also were turned down a few times by locals when we tried to pay with USD.

1.6.2 Diesel and Gasoline

Jacaranda – 2016: Diesel and gasoline were available in Fakarava (Fakarava Yacht Services, Pakakota Yacht Services), in Apataki from the Carenage Boatyard and in Tikehau from the baker.

Some of the supply ships sell diesel by the liter directly from the ship. Usually by placing a hose over the side on the dock and pumping diesel into your jugs. You would need to prepay with the ships dock master. Same guy you pre-pay for veggies and other supplies.

Gasoline - From the supply ships only is available by 200 liter drums.

Soggy Paws – 2011: In general, in the Gambiers and the Tuamotus, there are no 'gas stations', even in the larger towns (except maybe Rangiroa, we haven't been there yet).

So it is not a simple thing to arrive in a town and just go buy fuel. Basically the locals buy what they need directly from the weekly supply ship, in 200-liter (~55 gallon) drums. Everyone seems to keep a private stash in their backyard.

Sometimes the ship has extra fuel, and sometimes they only have what has been pre-ordered. Normally they will only sell full drums, but in one case there were enough cruisers around needing fuel that they agreed to sell in 5-gallon increments.

We did manage to purchase small quantities of fuel on occasion from a local business. In one case, it was a dive shop that we did several dives with. In another case it was a pearl farmer that we became friends with. In another case it was a guy who had been traded a drum of diesel by a passing fishing boat, and they didn't use diesel.

So your best option for getting fuel in the Tuamotus is to find out when the supply ship arrives, and be there on the dock when they arrive, or shortly thereafter, prepared to buy, with cash, and empty right then, a 50-gallon drum. Sometimes the ship only stays a few hours, so get in there as soon as the ship arrives. The price in 2010 was around \$5.50 USD per gallon for diesel and around \$6 USD per gallon for gasoline.

In the Gambiers, the ship accepted CFP, USD, and Euros. Also in the Gambiers, for boats wanting a lot of fuel, the boat rafted to the ship and they sent down a large-volume hose for them to fill. The ship metered the quantity using their meter (no arguments accepted).

You don't need a 'duty free fuel' paper when you buy from the supply ships. That's really only valid at the gas stations, and we heard that not all gas stations honor that paper (so ask before you pump!) We understand that if you can wait until you get to Tahiti, duty free fuel is available and is in the \$3-\$4 USD range.

1.6.3 Cooking Gas (Propane/Butane)

Jacaranda – July 2016: The cost of butane is a set price in FP. Deposit on the bottle is 3000F. Cost of the gas is 2800F.

Soggy Paws – 2010: For Americans: the normal cooking gas for the rest of the world is Butane or a Propane/Butane mix. Butane is almost identical in properties to the propane you are used

to, except it doesn't burn quite as hot, and it's a little dirtier. Note: There is a GREAT discussion on propane issues for Americans cruising with propane in foreign countries on s/v Whoosh's web page:

<http://www.svsarah.com/Whoosh/WhooshPrepLPG.htm>

Look for the section on "How to Fill your NA Tank".

Propane/butane fill fittings are non-standard around the world, and French Polynesia is no exception. In addition, throughout the islands, everyone just exchanges gas tanks. All the filling goes on back in Tahiti. So it is a bit difficult to get US propane tanks refilled.

The best option is to arrive in French Polynesia with a 'gravity fill' setup as described on Whoosh's site... basically the fitting end for YOUR tank and 5-6' length of hose. Then go to a local hardware store and buy the French propane fitting. Then you can 'rent' a local tank, and gravity fill from the local tank to your tank. This method works pretty well—hoist the local tank upside down in your rigging, or on your dinghy davit, and place your tank below it. Be patient and eventually your tank will be mostly full.

Here is the info I found on the internet about the 'gravity fill' technique:

1. Always wear gloves, as the propane that comes out of a tank it is very cold and can freeze your skin.
2. Connect the tank to be filled with the fuel source.
3. Open the bleed valve of the tank to be filled, the main tank valve and the fuel source valve.
4. As soon as liquid propane starts to spurt from the bleed valve, close the fuel source, the main tank valve and the bleed valve.
5. Disconnect the fueling line as described above.

The 'full' tank must be inverted and placed above the empty tank so liquid, not gaseous propane will flow. The connectors and hoses must be purged of air before connection to the tanks. Internal pressure should be released on the empty tank, then the full tank's pressure plus gravity will transfer liquid propane to the empty tank. It is not possible, without a special pump or a vapor relief valve on the tank being filled, to totally refill the empty tank. But ¾ full is possible, and should get you to Tahiti where you can get a refill.

It is dangerous to overfill a tank - they should be filled only 75% to allow for the liquid to expand if heated.

Supposedly it is possible to get fills in Tahiti, but we heard from boats in Papeete that unless your propane tank is less than 10 years old, they will not fill it, even if it has been recently 're-certified'. Note, later we heard that this was not a problem for other people—it may be WHERE you are trying to fill your tank. See the Tahiti section at the end of this document for some advice from people who were in Tahiti in 2010.

Oct 2012 - s/v Irie - Additional Notes on arranging a 'Gravity Fill' Setup: Nowadays you can only purchase POL valves that are "Excess Flow" (both the RV industry and Marine (ABYC) have requirements for use of Excess Flow POL valves). Which means there is a safety device that is built into the POL valve to reduce the flow of gas if a major leak occurs. In a gravity fill setup, this would be considered a major leak to the POL valve, and in turn, the gas would be restricted to a very slow rate.

So, when you want to build your own setup, you need to purchase a Full Flow POL valve.

I have confirmed with Trident Marine that the part # listed on “svsarah” is an Excess Flow valve, and will not work (or it will work, but extremely slowly).

The only manufacturer I have found that still makes Full Flow POL valves is at the link below:

<http://www.marshallexcelsior.com/product.php?id=844>

They make different lengths, this one I purchased is 48”.

1.6.4 Groceries

Staples...flour, milk, eggs, butter, rice, canned food, etc are available in almost every town. But veggies get very difficult to find. Stock up on vegetables and fruit in the Marquesas and the Gambiers before you leave. And if you see fresh veggies anywhere, buy them immediately--they may not be there next week when you're ready to re-provision.

The two best places we encountered for provisioning were N. Fakarava and Makemo. Though Rangiroa (which we haven't visited yet) probably has good supplies too.

Potatoes, onions, carrots, cabbage, and cucumbers are not too hard to find—though shortages do occur if the supply ship gets delayed. The locally-grown tomatoes are small and are scarce. If you see them, buy them—they won't be there in a few hours. Lettuce only comes on the supply ship, and is gone from the stores within a few hours. (We paid \$11 USD for a 3-pack of Romaine Hearts in Fakarava... split it with another boat and got 2 good salads each...and were happy with our purchase, in spite of the outrageous price).

We found frozen chicken—mostly leg quarters, but sometimes even boneless skinless breasts—to be pretty easy to find.

The beef we found was hard to identify and sometimes only suitable for stew meat. It is also often packaged in larger packages than a normal cruiser would want to deal with. We bought something expensive that said 'cube roll' from Uruguay in Fakarava that we ended up having to thaw and divide into thirds—but it ended up being pretty good steak-like meat. We sliced it 1” thick and treated it as steak with good results.

We did also find some nice lamb from NZ in one store in Fakarava, but often the lamb is packaged as a large leg, costing around \$30 USD.

None of the meat is displayed—look for the top-loading freezers and don't hesitate to rummage around. Also ask—many smaller stores have more stuff out back, or in their house. Much of the meat when frozen is hard to determine what it is, so don't be bashful--ask (it helps to know the French words for beef, pork, and lamb).

Again, the best time to shop is immediately after the supply boat comes in. Usually the stores will close for a few hours while they restock (and perhaps distribute orders to locals). As soon as they open, the good stuff is gone in a few hours.

Fruit like pamplemousse, lemons and limes, bananas, etc, are very scarce in the Tuamotus. Get all you can before you leave the Marquesas.

In N. Fakarava and also in Apataki, some of the locals have gardens and they will sell to cruisers, but you need to ask around (see the Fakarava section for specifics on finding the gardens in Fakarava).

Papeete has wonderful grocery stores at not too outrageous prices. See the [Societies Compendium](#) for what to expect in the Society Islands.

1.6.5 Water

Soggy Paws 2010: We had a watermaker, and so didn't pay as much attention to this question as we should have. However, here's what we know...

All the water in the Tuamotus comes from rainwater—all the houses have tin roofs with gutters leading to cisterns (usually large black plastic tubs). This supplies the water to each house. Many houses have more than one roof and more than one cistern.

A few towns also have water collection systems for the town, and some public faucet near the waterfront. But you should always ask someone for permission, and for information about whether the water is designed to be drinking water.

- In Tahanea, at the east pass, there are a couple of houses that are usually uninhabited that have cisterns. We were invited to use all the water we needed by the 'park ranger' from Faaité who came by while we were there. (we took our laundry ashore and did it right there next to the cisterns).
- In N Fakarava, the town has water near the concrete harbor
- In Makemo, the town has water near the concrete pier
- In Toau, at Anse Amyot, Valentine said they normally had plenty of water to share some with cruisers in need of water.

If you need a little water, most people I'm sure would share some water with you. However, in a really dry period, when you are desperate for water, the locals may also be desperate for water... So it would be best for you to collect rain water when you can, and fill up in small increments as you go along.

1.6.6 Boat Parts

Soggy Paws – 2017: Very little in the way of boat repair parts can be found in the Tuamotus. However, critical items can be shipped in from Tahiti.

Jacaranda – 2018: See the new online [Tahiti Cruiser's Guide](#) for what's available in Tahiti, and information about shipping in what you can't find in Tahiti. As of March 2018 over 115 pages. Download and save.

The vendors in Pape'ete are very familiar with shipping parts all over French Polynesia. You can order the part and have it on the next ship. Shipping parts to the islands is very cheap. We had a solar panel shipped from Papeete to Marquesas and it cost < 1000f.

Strongly suggest you download (when you have internet) and save, as you may need parts or supplies outside of Tahiti. There is a download pdf button on top of the guide. Any updates please use the email in the guide and I will make the changes for you.

1.7 Communications

1.7.1 Radio Nets

Jacaranda – 2016: As of 2016, there is a SSB net that has been going for the past 16 months in French Polynesia. Called the Polynesian Magellan Net 8.173USB. When all the boats were in the Marquesas, the net met at 17:30 Zulu. But as the boats have moved west, the net time changed to 18:00. (08:00 Tahiti time, 0830 Marquesas time, 0800 Tuamotus time).

Evening net for underway vessels is at 04:00Z on 8.173USB

Soggy Paws – 2010: With most English-speaking boats limited to 3 months in French Polynesia, the English SSB nets that are established in one year never seem to perpetuate into the following year. What seems to work well is to organize a net in the Marquesas on 8Mhz as boats get ready to leave the Marquesas.

Understand when organizing that the Marquesas is on a weird time zone (-9.5 UTC), ½ hour before the Tuamotus and Tahiti, which are on -10UTC.

Also be prepared for the fact that when boats go into Tahiti harbor, they pretty much go into 'radio silence'—the island of Tahiti effectively blocks the radio signals between the Tuamotus and the boats in the harbor at Tahiti. In 2010, propagation to Moorea was also almost non-existent from the Tuamotus.

Though we have no specific knowledge of them, there is probably a French net and probably a German net operating on other frequencies. If you speak French, the French net would probably be the best source of information, because the French boats are more 'plugged in' and can stay longer in French Polynesia than most English-speaking boats.

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 0325Z, 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.

Jacaranda – 2016 – Northland Radio: There is a new service recently started for underway NON HAM boats for tracking purposes. It is called Northland Radio and is located in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand. Peter has large antenna and has been able to work boats thru out most of the South and Central Pacific. This is a free service and a wonderful opportunity for boats to use his service to check in. He has direct links to various marine rescue services in the Pacific. USCG, French Polynesia Marine rescue etc.

Contact Peter Mott peter@northlandradio.nz with your location and he will confirm frequency and time for check in.

1.7.2 Telephones & Cell Phones

Jacaranda – 2018: Thanks to Mark on Starlet for letting me know that Vini is now able to run both data and voice thru the same sim card. This is a recent event (2018) so no need to buy two sim cards. BUT data is very expensive using this method. Best to sign up for a plan if possible.

I checked in the Vini office (3-20-18) in Papeete and was assured that sim cards purchased in Marquesas can now be used for both data and voice.

2010 / 2011 Info from Soggy Paws updated by Jacaranda in 2016: You must have a cell phone that can operate on the European frequencies (or a tri or quad band phone). Can be purchased locally but pricey.

We use a cheap BLU all band cell phone we bought for \$17 on Amazon when we were in the US figuring if we had it stolen while traveling in South America it would be no big loss. Still working 4 years later. It has a dual sim card setup that makes it easy to switch between countries or charge our USB dongle SIM card.

We did not find a town that did not have telephone access. Even tiny towns had at least one phone booth at the Post Office/Mairie (Town Hall).

Now days (2016) almost everyone uses cell phones and there are towers spread thru out the Marquesas and the Tuamotus. We have been able to get cell access in some very rural areas. Buy telephone minutes as prepaid cards in the post office or many of the small shops and you can call world-wide. Prepaid cards start at 500F and up. We have given our family our FP cell phone number and they call us on our cell via Skype. Incoming calls are free in FP.

The cellular operator in French Polynesia is called 'Vini'. Voice & Data SIM cards are often available in the post offices in Tuamotus.

Note: As of May 2016 the Vini system in the Tuamotus is not set up to handle voice and data on the same phone SIM card. You either need two phones or a phone with two SIM card slots. Or remove the data SIM card to make a phone call (yep crazy)

The Tuamotus area does not have 3G, only 2G, and hence the data transfer is "extremely slow". We use a USB dongle that we have used thru out Central and South America unlocking it years ago. Most people use a smart phone (Apple, Samsung, etc) as a hotspot

In 2010, there were no cell phone sim cards available in the Gambiers while we were there (we asked weekly at the Post Office). We were finally able to buy a cell phone sim card (from 'Vini') at the post office in N Fakarava. However, when our friends went to buy one the next day, they were out, and were not re-stocked when we checked back a month later. I'm sure Tahiti has Vini sims for sale.

1.7.3 Internet Access

Kokopeli – Aug 2018: Internet in French Poly is slow and limited. Particularly the cellular network is still 2g. Using our Fi Phones, we can just barely send and receive e-mails, no surfing the web, etc. But change is coming! We are told that a new undersea cable is being run from Papeete, and will bring these islands up to a much higher standard. The cable has already made it as far as the Tuamotus. We also saw a poster up on a bulletin board here announcing this. It showed a diagrammatic chart, showing both undersea cables between bigger islands, and microwave links to smaller ones. We cruisers seem to like our wifi, and the locals will also get addicted quite quickly, I expect. Another one of those mixed blessings, I expect.

Mary Ann II – March 2017 - Vini Wifi Network (Replaced the old Manaspot)

Buy a Vini Wi-Fi prepaid card at any post office Vini store or many small magazines. Cost are not by the megabyte but by the hour and bandwidth can be very narrow. Cost are \$5 per hour for one hour and drop to around a dollar an hour for 100 hours.

Nearly everyone who has used the hourly Wi-Fi system have seen glitches where chunks of time vanish from their account. In fact from about May 2016 to October 2016 a one hour Vini WIFI card never expired (those were the days!).

<http://www.vinispot.pf/index.php?lang=english>

Jacaranda – 2016: The internet in the Tuamotus is extremely slow (2G) and all handled via satellite.

Soggy Paws – 2011: In 2010/2011 when this guide was first written, internet, where it was available, was 100% via wifi (mostly paid service). Now things are migrating to cell data. See above section on the quirks of cell data access in French Poly.

If anyone has updates on where and how internet access is available in the Tuamotus, please drop me an email!!!

Reminder: Internet access in French Polynesia is via satellite and is REALLY SLOW. Do your fellow cruisers a favor and turn off ALL automatic downloads (Windows Updates, podcast downloads, etc). Limit your Skype calls and turn off the video. Then we can all get our email, and be able to access important website information!!

Internet access is possible at the larger atolls. The following are the ones we KNOW had internet access in 2010:

- Gambiers, Mangareva, Rikitea Harbor Only (Mana)
- Hao
- Makemo, village near the SE pass (Mana)
- Fakarava, village near the NW pass (Mana/Vini properly)
- Rangiroa (Mana, laoranet). Mana claims to have a location at both villages in Rangiroa.
- Manihi (Mana, WDG Hotspot)

1.7.4 News

Sitting in the Tuamotus for 3 months, we felt increasingly isolated from the rest of the world. Here are some sources of news that we used to keep abreast of what was happening in the world:

1.7.4.1 English Language Voice News

As the internet proliferates, English-language voice broadcasts seem to be dwindling. Many of the broadcasts you can find these days by dialing around are either religious-oriented, or anti-American oriented (so listen carefully!).

I did a lot of research on the internet before we left Central America, but I found that what worked best was to dial around on the 9Mhz band at the time of day I wanted to listen to news (morning and evening are the best times for propagation).

We found the BBC on 9695 am at 1600-1700 UTC (mornings) and 12095 usb at 0100UTC (afternoons).

Radio NZ

9.580 AM FP time

11.725 PM FP Time

15.720 PM FP time

30 minute BBC broadcast at 16:00-16:30 Tahiti local time on Radio NZ

Radio Australia

15.240 PM FP Time

17.840 PM FP Time

Voice of America does claim to broadcast to French Polynesia, but all the broadcasts are in the middle of the night in French Poly. 1230-1300 UTC on 9600 and 1400-1430 UTC on 9830.

1.7.4.2 News via Email

Jacaranda – 2016: Thanks to Naoma we use the following NPR summary. There is some text that you have to ignore but does give you a basic summary of US News.

query@saildocs.com

<http://npr.org/news>

Soggy Paws – 2010: 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 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>

1.8 Diving

Diving in the Tuamotus is some of the most superb diving we have encountered. But if you really want to dive the best of the Tuamotus, you will need to have all your own equipment, spares, and a compressor aboard.

If you do NOT have a compressor aboard, have your dive tanks inspected and pressure tested before you leave for French Polynesia. Getting fills at any commercial dive operation can be difficult if your inspections are not in date. Just about any dive shop can do the annual visual inspection, but the every-5-year hydrostatic test takes special equipment. Even in the U.S. the dive shops usually send the tanks out for the hydro. It is likely that the only hydro testing you will find in French Poly will be in Tahiti.

There are two guides to diving in French Polynesia (see Printed Sources, below), but even in these guides, coverage of the Tuamotus is limited to Rangiroa, Manihi, and Tikehau—where there are established dive operations.

Below is a summary of the diving we (Soggy Paws and Visions of Johanna) have done in 2010. We have not yet been to Rangiroa, Tikehau, and Manihi, all of which are supposed to have good diving, and some dive facilities.

Comments on specific dive spots can be found in each location's section.

Atoll	Type of Diving	Dive Operations / Tank Fills
Hao	Pass Dives	Yes
Makemo	Pass Dives	Yes

Tahanea	Pass Dives	No
Fakarava S	Pass Dives (Sharks)	2
Fakarava N	Pass Dives (Sharks)	3
Toau / Anse Amyot	Wall Dives, no current, few sharks	No (Faka N)**
Toau / Otuigi	Pass Dives	No (Faka N)**

*The Tetamanu dive operation at Fakarava South Pass does have a compressor, but they refused to fill our tanks due to 'liability issues'. If you dove with them a couple of times before you asked for fills, you might have better luck.

**All of the dive operators in and around the village at the north end of Fakarava also offer trips down to the South Pass, and across to Toau. But they are considerably more expensive than a local dive, and are only offered about once a week.

Basically, most of the diving in the Tuamotus are 'pass dives', where you are essentially doing drift dives in current. Diving inside the atoll is usually not as desirable, because the water inside the lagoon is not as clear as outside, and the coral not as spectacular.

Pass diving on your own

It's not too difficult doing pass dives on your own, from your dinghy, in settled weather.

Depending on the pass and the conditions, you can either arrange a 'surface support'—someone in a dinghy at the surface following your bubbles. Or tow your dinghy behind you. Towing is not too difficult in reasonable wind, but you will need a 'tether' on your dinghy about 75-100 feet long. This was definitely our preferred method of diving the passes.

The best pass diving is to plan to go into the water about an hour after the incoming current has started. The incoming current brings the clear ocean water into the pass before you start your dive, and also ensures that if you have a dinghy motor problem, you are inside the atoll and not drifting out to sea.

What we would do is get all of our gear ready in the dinghy before the dive, dinghy out to the approximate put-in location, and finish donning gear. Then when completely ready to jump in, reposition the dinghy one last time, and jump in and descend fairly quickly. It takes a little practice, but it's relatively simple.

Do not anchor when doing a pass dive with any current!! We made the mistake of dropping our tether over the side once, with the anchor attached, thinking we were in deep enough water so it would be suspended free of the bottom. But just as we got in the water and were ready to descend, the anchor hooked on the bottom, and the dinghy stopped dead in about 2-3 knots of current. Fortunately both of us had a firm hold on the dinghy when it happened, but we struggled to hang on in the current, and could not do anything useful but hang on. We finally

had to get back in the dinghy, start the engine, and motor forward against the current to get the anchor free. We now remove the anchor from our line when doing a pass dive.

Safety: It is always safest to dive the INCOMING current, so if you have a problem, the current is pushing you back into the lagoon. It is also safest to buddy dive with another dinghy, in case one has a problem. If no one else is going out with you, make sure another boat in the anchorage knows where you are going and how long you expect to be. Take a well-charged hand-held VHF, a hand-held GPS, and a waterproof flashlight. Tools for basic engine repair (starter cord, spark plugs, fuel issues), and an anchor on a long line should always be carried. It could be a long drift across the Pacific if you have engine problems while outside an atoll.

Jacaranda – 2016: There are now two dive shops in the S pass of Fakarava Top Dive & Tetamanu Diving at the village.

1.9 Haulout, Storage, and Repair Facilities

The only facility that we know about in the Tuamotus for hauling a yacht and either repairing or storing is the Apataki Carenage. This facility is new as of 2008 or 2009, and reports from boats who have hauled there are good. The family who owns the Carenage is a very nice family with a nice facility and they are very careful when handling the boats. Their new (as of 2009) lift is capable of hauling fairly large sailboats and catamarans, and the price is reported to be 'very reasonable' (see more information in the Apataki section)

Some cautions reported by other cruisers, however...

1. They cannot safely operate the lift in strong NE winds. So if the wind is blowing strong from the NE, you will have to wait for the wind to switch back to SE or lighten up.
2. They have virtually no repair capability (no mechanics on the island capable of diesel engine repair, for example). This is truly a 'do it yourself' yard.
3. They only have one lift. If that lift breaks down, you may be stranded.

1.10 Pearls and Pearl Farms

If you are coming through French Polynesia via the Gambiers, that's the place to buy the famous black pearls. They are reputed to be better quality and less cost than anywhere else in French Polynesia. We found lots of pearl farms there, but only one pearl 'shop' in Rikitea. There, we bought a good quality pearl necklace for about \$350—a similar necklace we priced later in the U.S. was selling in a reputable jewelry store for \$5,000+ USD.

The pearl farms in the Gambiers do not seem to want to sell directly to the public. (And in fact, later we found it is illegal for pearl farmers to sell directly to the public—the pearl industry is highly regulated and taxed). If you are buying legitimately from a registered pearl dealer, you should expect to get a receipt, with taxes added.

In the Tuamotus, most people found either Fakarava or Apataki to be the best places for a casual pearl farm visit, and buying pearls. See those sections for suggestions on arranging a visit to a pearl farm.

Avoiding Pearl Farm Entanglements: Unfortunately, not all pearl farms are buoyed. A pearl farm 'field' may be located a long way from any habitation, and typically in very deep water. If buoyed, the buoys are normally at opposite ends of a 'string' of buoys, so if you see 2 buoys, assume there is something suspended below the surface between them, and give them a wide berth.

If you are approaching an area that is either marked as a pearl farm area on the chart, or where you see buoys, you must proceed slowly and keep a really good watch. It is also conceivable that the buoys are not visible on the surface, but are 5' below the surface, so keep an eye out for submerged buoys.

If you see a small boat out in the area inside a lagoon, chances are they are tending pearl buoys. Again, proceed slowly, and keep an eye on the people in the boat—if they are agitated and waving at you, it is likely you are about to get entangled in their buoys.

1.11 Eating the Fish (Ciguatera!)

From Wikipedia – January 2019: Ciguatera fish poisoning, also known simply as ciguatera, is a foodborne illness caused by eating reef fish whose flesh is contaminated with certain toxins. Ciguatera Fish Poisoning commonly occurs in tropical and subtropical areas, particularly in the Pacific Ocean, the Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea.

Symptoms may include diarrhea, vomiting, numbness, itchiness, sensitivity to hot and cold, dizziness, and weakness. The onset of symptoms varies with the amount of toxin eaten from half an hour to up to two days. The diarrhea may last for up to four days.

Some symptoms typically remain for a few weeks to months. Heart difficulties such as slow heart rate and low blood pressure may also occur.

The specific toxins involved are ciguatoxin and maitotoxin. They are originally made by a small marine organism, *Gambierdiscus toxicus*, that grows on and around coral reefs in tropical and subtropical waters. These are eaten by herbivorous fish which in turn are eaten by larger carnivorous fish. The toxins become more concentrated as they move up the food chain.

Any reef fish can cause ciguatera poisoning, but species such as barracuda, grouper, red snapper, moray eel, amberjack, parrotfish, hogfish, sturgeonfish, kingfish, coral trout, and sea bass are the most commonly affected. Ciguatoxins are concentrated in the fish liver, intestines, heads, and roe. The toxins do not affect the taste, texture, or odour of the fish and cannot be destroyed by cooking, smoking, freezing, salting or any other method of food preparation. Outbreaks can occur seasonally or sporadically, particularly after storms. Not all fish of a given species or from a given area will be toxic.

Preventive efforts include not eating reef fish, not eating high-risk fish such as barracuda, and not eating fish liver, roe, or fish heads. Ciguatoxin has no taste or smell, and cannot be destroyed by conventional cooking. There is no specific treatment for ciguatera fish poisoning once it occurs. Mannitol may be considered, but the evidence supporting its use is not very strong. Gabapentin or amitriptyline may be used to treat some of the symptoms.

The US Centers for Disease Control estimates that around 50,000 cases occur a year. Other estimates vary up to 500,000 cases per year. It is the most frequent seafood poisoning. It occurs most commonly in the Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea between the latitudes of 35°N and 35°S. The risk of the condition appears to be increasing due to coral reef deterioration and increasing trade in seafood. The risk of death from poisoning is less than 1 in 1,000. Descriptions of the condition date back to at least 1511. The current name came into use in 1787.

Soggy Paws - I personally know someone who got a severe case in the Bahamas—3 boats shared the same large yellowtail snapper at a potluck. By morning, they were all very sick, and a couple of people from each boat were so sick that they were airlifted off for immediate hospitalization.

They spent at least a month recovering, and even a year later were reporting lingering symptoms. As the toxin is cumulative, they can never eat another fish.

In the Tuamotus, locals told us “bring us the fish and tell us exactly where you caught it, and we will tell you if you can eat it.” However, locals do get ciguatera too!

In the Gambiers, the problem is much much worse—even traditionally “safe” fish can be highly toxic. A friend caught a grouper on his way out of the W pass, and ate it for dinner. He was very sick for the next 3 days as he was sailing single-handed northwards to the Tuamotus.

Jacaranda: Linda from s/v Jacaranda has compiled a much more comprehensive look at ciguatera. You can download it from their website, here:

<http://www.jacarandajourney.com/other-good-stuff>

Look for "You Gonna Eat That Fish?" Info about Ciguatera

1.12 Cruising Information Sources

1.12.1 Cruiser Reports

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.

Heart of Gold (late 1990's) - We are indebted to Jim and Sue Corenman for their Letters from South Pacific, originally published in Latitude 38 in the late 1990's, reference in our Weather section, but also which contain a bunch of still-relevant information about cruising in the South Pacific.

Sloepmouche (2002-2003) - Sloepmouche is a 46' Cross Trimaran with a 5' draft, with Luc Callebaut & Jackie Lee aboard.

Sloepmouche's contributions are taken from a detailed [Noonsite](#) entry last modified on 2002-08-19. Sloepmouche is also a prolific [SSCA](#) contributor--search for their excellent information on all the places they have visited in the Pacific.

Twelfth Night (May 2004) - Twelfth Night is a 40' Passport sloop with 5'8" draft. Their report on the Gambiers appeared in the Oct 2004 edition of the [SSCA](#) bulletin.

Estrela (June-Aug 2004) - Estrela arrived mid June in the Gambiers, and then went to Amanu and Hao (July) and then to Kauehi and Toau (August), before moving on to Tahiti. They have a website somewhere, but I didn't save the link.

Ocelot (The Hacking Family) (2005) - This is a family traveling around the world on a catamaran. They have done a great job documenting where they've been and what they've learned. Here is their web page for the Tuamotus. There is a lot of other useful information about French Polynesia, and other Pacific destinations on other pages of their website.

http://hackingfamily.com/Landfalls/Newsletters/Tuamotus/tuamotus_letters.htm

Tackless II (2005-2006) - T2 is a 44' CSY center cockpit cruiser (5.5' draft). They first came into French Polynesia in 2005, wintered over in Raiatea, and continued west in 2006. They made a fairly quick passage through the Tuamotus, stopping only at Kauehi and Fakarava. They did some diving at Fakarava, which account we've included in the Fakarava section.

<http://www.thetwocaptains.com/logbook/frenchpolynesia.htm>

Baraka - Baraka went from Marquesas to Tuamotus to Tahiti, stopping in Kauehi, Fakarava, and Toau in the Tuamotus, in early to mid June.

<http://www.svbaraka.com/tuamotus.htm>

Thalassia (2006) - Thalassia is a 48' Suncoast cutter with 2.20 m draft. They arrived in the Gambiers from Chile via Easter Island in May, spent 10 days in the Gambiers, and then left directly for Tahiti. Their report on the Gambiers is extracted from the SSCA Bulletin of Sept 2006.

Mata'irea (2007) - Mata'irea transited the Northern Tuamotus from Marquesas to Tahiti, stopping at Ahe, Apataki, and Rangiroa.

<http://matairea.blogspot.com>

Iron Bark (2007) - They transited from Marquesas to Tahiti, stopping only in the Gambiers and Tahanea in the Tuamotus.

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

Hawk (2007) - Beth and Evans on Hawk stopped in the Gambiers for a few weeks enroute from Costa Rica to the coast of Chile.

<http://bethandevans.com>

Migration (2008-2009) - Migration is a trimaran with a beam of 25' and 4'9" draft. They entered French Polynesia from the southeast (see map below) in 2008, and traveled NW toward Tahiti. They then went back to the northern Tuamotus enroute to the Marquesas from Papeete in 2009.

Most of their comments (and most of the Google Earth shots) in this booklet come from Bruce's website. Bruce has also contributed a few comments via the PPJ Yahoo Group.

<http://brucebalan.com/migrations>

Migrations 10 and Migrations 11 cover their 2 trips through the Tuamotus in 2008 and 2009.

Mr John VI (2008) - These comments came from a PDF file floating around on the web called 'Mr John's guide to French Polynesia'. It seems to be a compendium of his own experience in 1987 and revisiting in 2008, and shared experiences from other yachts.

Kestrel (May 2009) - Kestrel must have posted a response to a query on the Pacific Puddle Jump Yahoo Group. I don't have any other information for them (except their comments about Hao)

Nine of Cups (2009) - Nine of Cups came in from Chile via the southern route, arriving in the Gambiers. They wrote a lot about the Gambiers, but not much about the Tuamotus. Nine of Cups is a deep draft 44' cruiser.

<http://www.nineofcups.com>

Visions of Johanna (2010) - Bill of Visions of Johanna pulled together the first version of this 'guide' as they approached the Tuamotus in early 2010.

Visions' blog is here: <http://vofj.blogspot.com> Their path through the Tuamotus was Gambiers – Hao – Makemo – Katiu – Tahanea – Fakarava S – Fakarava N – Toau (Anse Amyot) – Tahiti.

Visions is a 62' custom racer/cruiser with a 8 knot average cruising speed and a 6'8" draft.

Soggy Paws (2010 - 2011) - Soggy Paws was in the Gambiers for the month of April, 2010, and then sailed from there to Hao in early May. From there they went Tahanea – Fakarava S – Fakarava N – Toau – Fakarava N – Fakarava S – Tahanea – Makemo – Rarioia, and thence to the Marquesas. In 2011, they came back to the Tuamotus from Hawaii, making landfall at Manihi, and stopping in Toau before moving on to the Societies.

In 2010/2011, Soggy Paws was a CSY 44, a 44 foot monohull with a 5.5' draft.

Soggy Paws' blog is here: <http://svsoggyaws.blogspot.com>

Pursuit IV (2010) - Pursuit IV went from Gambiers to Hao late April 2010, where they found the pass 'impassable' due to high winds from the S, and then went to Rarioia, a convenient jumping off place for their destination of the Marquesas.

Pursuit IV is a Liberty 47, a 47 foot monohull with a 6 foot draft.

Pursuit's blog is here: <http://www.sailblogs.com/member/pursuit/>

Whoosh (2010) - Whoosh only stopped at Kauehi and Toau in the Tuamotus. Whoosh's major contribution is to the Pape'ete information in Section 1 (most of Whoosh's information was migrated to the [Societies Compendium](#))

You can find Whoosh's log at: <http://www.svsarah.com/Whoosh/WhooshUpdateLog.html>

Nakia (2010): Nakia is a Hans Christain 33, drawing about 6 feet. In the Tuamotus, they visited Tahanea, Fakarava, Kauehi, Toau, and Apataki.

Nakia's blog is here: <http://svnakia.blogspot.com>

Salamander (2010): Salamander emailed us an update on Rangiroa. Their blog is here:

<http://blog.mailasail.com/salamander>

White Princess (2010): White Princess came from Tahiti in 2010 direct to Fakarava, and then wandered up north through some of the lesser known Tuamotus, including Raraka, Katiu, Aratika, Toau (main pass), and Tikehau.

They have a steel boat with a 7' draft.

Fly Aweigh (2010) - We never met Fly Aweigh, but stumbled on their blog when searching for recent first hand accounts of Rangiroa and Tikehau.

<http://www.sailblogs.com/member/flyaweigh/>

Slipaway (2011): Jan and Rich on Slipaway spent the 2011 cruising season in the Tuamotus. Jan thoughtfully composed her inputs to me so they could be just 'cut and paste' into the Compendium. Thanks Jan!!

YOLO (2011): YOLO is a 42 foot PDQ catamaran and has a 4.5 draft.

YOLO traveled to Tahanea, Fakarava, Kauehi, Toau, and Apataki in the Tuamotus in 2011. See their blog at <http://yolotrautz.blogspot.com>

Narama (2011): "Narama" is 33ft sloop drawing 6.5 feet, with Stephen and Heidi aboard.

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

Irie (2013): Mark and Liesbet, lived, worked and cruised on their 35' catamaran Irie (draft 3.5 feet) for six years, before starting their Pacific crossing. They made their crossing from the Galapagos to the Gambiers in May, and were in the Gambiers for June and part of July, 2013.

Follow their adventures on www.itsirie.com

Irie is a Fountaine Pajot Tobago, a 35 foot catamaran with a beam of about 19 feet.

Pitufa (2103-2017): Birgit and Christian on sailing yacht "Pitufa" (Spanish for [Smurfette](#)) arrived in French Polynesia in spring of 2013, and are still there as of 2017. They spent a few months in the Gambiers in 2013 and 2015, and again in 2017.

<http://www.pitufa.at/gambier-islands/>

Kalliope (2016): Feedback on their experience at Apataki Carenage.

Hildegard Hansen (2016): Information on Motutungua.

Starry Horizons (2016): Starry Horizons with Amy & David aboard is a 44 ft Helia catamaran. They "Puddle Jumped" in 2016.

<http://outchasingstars.com>

Jacaranda (2016): Jacaranda with Chuck and Linda aboard spent a year in the Marquesas before moving on to do the Tuamotus slowly in 2016. They have been sending us reports to add to the Compendia, and also posting more information and details on their website:

<http://jacarandajourney.com>

Irene (2016-2017): The operators of Apataki Carenage.

Naoma (2016): Naoma with Ryan & Nicole aboard crossed through the Tuamotus in 2016.

Asolare (2016): Asolare is a Amel 54 (16.4m) yacht with a displacement of 19 tons, Peter and Cheron aboard. They cruised through the northern Tuamotus in October 2016. And they left their Amel on a mooring in Fakarava for a several month visit back to the UK.

Shindig (2017): Shindig is an Oyster 465, home port San Francisco, with Rob and wife aboard.

Spunky (2017): Robert and Aneke arrived in March in the Marquesas with our sailing yacht Spunky, a 43 foot Morgan. They are taking a short sabbatical from working life, and plan to island-hop to Australia and sell the boat and go back to work in the Netherlands in late 2017.

Duplicat (2017): Rick on Duplicat arrived in the Gambiers and made his way through the Tuamotus, stopping at Amanu, Hao, and Fakarava. Duplicat is a Privilege 435 catamaran.

Sea Dragon (2017): Sea Dragon is a Celestial 48 from Lahaina, Maui with Kerstin & Brian aboard.

Chaos (2018): Chaos is a Lagoon 500 catamaran with approximate 5 ft draft.

Dr. No (2018): Dr. No is a Belgian-flagged monohull with a draft of over 2 meters.

Nehenehe (2017-2019): Farrier F-39 Trimaran, LOA 47', Beam 26', Draft 20" min Max 7'

1.12.2 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.

1.12.3 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>

1.12.4 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.scca.org>

1.12.5 French Polynesia Birds

Nine of Cups (2009): We found an excellent website for identifying birds in French Polynesia and finding out their local names. http://www.manu.pf/E_Oiseaux.html

1.12.6 Sea Seek

This appears to be a French-maintained site that covers French Polynesia.

<http://sea-seek.com/index.php?geo=1480>

They have assembled a pretty good harbor by harbor group of information (using Google Earth and Maxsea Chartlets). But it is mostly in French. It is possible to use Google or Babelfish Translate functions.

1.13 Printed Sources

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).

What we have done here is cross reference which guide covers which atoll, since none of them cover all the atolls.

The best printed cruising guide for this area is Charlie's Charts, covering more of the atolls, with good sketch charts. However, no guide covers all the atolls that cruisers normally go. To get the best coverage, I would have South Pacific Anchorages and the Bonnette guide as well.

1.13.1 French for Cruisers

[French for Cruisers](#), Kathy Parsons, 2004

This is a fantastic French phrasebook, created by a cruiser for cruisers. Don't leave the U.S. without it, as it is not available once you get to French Polynesia.

For anyone going to a French-speaking cruising ground, French for Cruisers is invaluable. Slightly larger than a 'pocket guide', it is an invaluable reference for French terms for cruising things... like engine repair, dockage, etc.

1.13.2 Cruising Guides

Soggy Paws: When we were going through the Tuamotus in 2010/2011, Charlie's Charts was really out of date. I haven't seen the newer version, and so can't comment. We used the Guide to Navigation and Tourism quite a bit. Nadine Slavinsky's Pacific Crossing Notes are new, I haven't seen them. The rest (mainly older guides) were interesting, but in my opinion, not very useful (you'll get a lot more out of this compendium than the rest of the guidebooks listed here). But here's the full list:

1. [Charlie's Charts of Polynesia](#): Charles and Margo Wood (with updates by Jo Russell and Holly Scott), 7th ed 2011

Holly Scott has taken over the helm at Charlie's Charts and has been updating these age-old cruising guides.

2. [South Pacific Anchorages](#), Warwick Clay, 2nd Edition, 2001, pages 22-33

Covers mostly the islands in the NW section, but does cover briefly a few of the atolls in the SE section (Fangataufa, Mururoa, Tatakoto, Amanu, Hao, Nengonengo)

3. [Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia](#), Patrick Bonnette & Emmanuel Deschamps, 2001 This book provides the best coverage for some atolls, but is out of print and is becoming quite expensive to purchase if you can find it (in the \$200 range on Amazon). If you see it at a cruiser flea market, buy it.

4. [The Pacific Crossing Guide](#), published by the Royal Cruising Club Pilotage Foundation in association with the Ocean Cruising Club. Originally edited by Michael Pocock, and Revised by Ros Hogbin. We have the 2nd Edition published in 2003. Amazon has a version dated 2013.

Note: There is nothing specific about the Tuamotus in this guide, but it is a good reference for the Pacific.

5. [Landfalls of Paradise](#), Earl Hinz, 5th Edition, 2006, University of Hawaii Press.

Referring to the 1999 edition...Coverage of the Tuamotus is limited, see pgs 80-89.

Only specifically covers Gambiers and Rangiroa, but good coverage of background information about the Tuamotus.

6. [Pacific Crossing Notes](#), Nadine Slavinski, 2015, Rolling Hitch Press
7. Yachtsmen's Guide to French Polynesia 2011 (PDF)

This is a 40-page PDF file downloadable from the French Polynesia Tourism Bureau.

<http://www.portdepapeete.pf/informations/guideYachts.php>

It is available in both French and English.

(note, it can be hard to find, and may disappear off their website from time to time, so I have put the latest copy of the English version that I could find on my website at <http://svsogypaws.com/files/#pacific>)

It includes a lot of useful information about all of French Polynesia—clearance information, etc. It includes a nice 2-page map of FP, and shows where fuel is available. Also has advertisement from marine-related businesses that can be useful.

However, coverage in the Tuamotus is limited to Manihi, Fakarava, Rangiroa, and Tikehau (all in the NW).

1.13.3 Diving Guides

1. [The French Polynesia Diving Guide](#), Kurt Amsler, Abbeville Press (undated). This is a pretty coffee-table type book. It only covers 3 of the Tuamotus (Rangiroa, Tikehau, and Manihi), but has some stunning pictures, and has a pretty good color section on 'The Fish of French Polynesia'. It also covers the Marquesas (Nuku Hiva) and The Society Islands. Available from Amazon.com.
2. The [Diving in Tahiti, A Diver's Guide to French Polynesia](#), Thierry Ziesman covers diving in Rangiroa and Manihi, plus other sites in French Polynesia. This is less of a coffee-table book, and a more practical guide to how to find dive sites on your own. We had an electronic copy from another cruiser, and I have never been able to find this in print or online.

1.13.4 Books on Underwater Life

1. [Reef Fish Identification](#) by Gerald Allen, Roger Steene, Paul Humann, Ned DeLoach 2015

Or can purchase a download version from [New World Publications](#), Inc. Jacksonville, Florida

One of the best tropical fish books for the Pacific & SE Asia.

2. [Simon & Schuster's Guide to Shells](#) by Bruno Sabelli

Published by Simon & Schuster

Very comprehensive guide to shells with more than 1230 illustrations

2 Passage Reports

2.1 To/From the Marquesas

2.1.1 Tackless II – Nuku Hiva to Kauehi

Our four-day passage from Nuku Hiva to Kauehi will go down in the logbooks as one of the grandest, easiest, most pleasant ones we have ever made. From right out of the chute, the sailing conditions were great. Ten to fifteen knots on the beam with seas maybe one to two feet! Tackless II really excels in these conditions. With no seas to knock her back we could put up all that sail area and off we went, leading the pack! And quite a pack there was. In addition to the four boats that left Daniel's Bay together, the horizon was dotted with the sails of other boats that jumped on the same sailing window directly from Taiohae.

2.1.2 Baraka – Marquesas to Kauehi (Late May)

At about 9 am we pulled anchor and raised the main. We bid farewell to the lovely Marquesas, as they faded to light blue smudges off our stern.

Winds are forecast to be light, though steady. We are flying the spinnaker, on a beam reach, making 7 knots in 10-14 of wind, smooth sailing in flat seas. Dunno if this can keep up - but is is delightful, as good as it gets.

Day 2: On my off-watch this morning in my bunk, I had the impression we were tied to a dock. Under spinnaker in flat calm we were making great speed with almost no motion. But when I started my watch, Dave pointed out the squall line that was chasing us. We doused the spinnaker, then flew the jib in in the following hours of downpour. The rain pounded the seas flat, raising bubbles. We were stuck in the squall line for some time, and eventually started the engine to escape.

Now it is night, starry skies, the half moon not yet risen. We are again reaching at 6-7 knots under full jib and reefed main, nice! This may be a faster trip than we expected.

We are tired, a little sleep deprived, but this passage is going well. Warm Rain is 12 miles ahead. We check in with them by radio every 6 hours.

Day 3: Tomorrow we will past the Disappointment Isles and enter the Dangerous Archipelago. Sounds ominous. We recently watched Thor Heyerdahl's Kon Tiki film. He crash landed on a Tuamotu reef when the crew realized, late in the game, that they could not sail to windward (and land on the lee side) with a square rig. With good charts, radar and GPS we should fare a little better.

Day 4: Rolling along under reefed main, we are slowing the boat down to arrive at the pass entrance after daybreak tomorrow. Dave and Tom (Warm Rain) are strategizing on how to time slack water. Charlie's says go 1 1/2 hours after the low at Tahanea. Another book says slack is 5 hours after moonset. These don't quite agree, so we will stand off and eyeball it during the window set by these 2 references. Another case of the man with 2 watches not knowing the time.

Day 5 (arrival): We arrived with Warm Rain at daybreak, and watched a German ketch go through the passage just ahead. We followed, on the tail end of the outgoing tide. The pass boiled like Active Pass in the Gulf Islands, and the south edge featured a rolling bore, but it posed no problems for us. We popped inside, then motored across the 5-mile lagoon to the

village, where we are now anchored. It has been a very long time since we have been at anchor without the rolling swell of the ocean rocking us. Feels strange to be this still.

2.1.3 *Infini – Fakarava to Fatu Hiva (late June)*

We took the southern route into French Polynesia, arriving by way of the Gambiers. So we chose to work our way east to the Marquesas before leaving for Hawaii in late September.

We left Fakarava ahead of a cold front, with light SE winds, and for the first 2 days, were able to sail a course between 030 and 060 magnetic, steadily making our way toward Fatu Hiva.

The cold front slowed down and a big high caught up behind it, and brought near gale conditions in the Fakarava area of the Tuamotus. But we managed to stay ahead of the front.

However, the last 2-3 days of the trip, the wind swung to the ENE, and strengthened to 20-25 knots. This was not originally forecast. We ended up bashing hard to weather in heavy wind and seas for days. We had hoped to make landfall at Fatu Hiva, but ended up settling for Nuku Hiva, further to the north and west of Fatu Hiva.

2.1.4 *Soggy Paws – Fakarava to Fatu Hiva (early August)*

It took us several weeks of waiting for weather windows to work our way from South Fakarava, east 50 miles to Tahanea, then ENE 60 miles to Makemo, and then ENE 75 miles to Rarioa. Though it would have been nice to sail these legs—the wind in late July and early August rarely goes very far south of east. And when it goes, it doesn't stay for long. After witnessing what happened to s/v *Infini*, we wanted to make our 'long jump' as short as possible.

After very mild conditions in June, the wind seemed to howl almost all the time in July (and into August). Big high pressure areas kept coming from NZ and stalling well south of the Tuamotus, but they produce "reinforced trades" all over French Polynesia, even up to the Marquesas... winds blew 20-25 knots from the E-ENE for days. (This was at the end of a year of El Nino conditions, when conditions had changed to 'almost la Nina').

So we opted to wait for the 36-48 hour calms between systems, and motorsail like hell eastward in hops. Besides, we did want to see Tahanea again, and visit Makemo before we left the Tuamotus. As long as we weren't in a hurry, we enjoyed this trip, and we pretty much on schedule until we got to Rarioa, and got pinned down by another set of reinforced trades for 10 days.

But the forecast eventually showed a break in the high pressure areas coming our way, and when the boats in the Societies were finally reporting calm winds, we started getting ready to make the 400 mile sail to the Marquesas.

Once the wind slacked off, we gave it a day for the seas to subside, and also to allow the wind to make its way ESE as forecast.

We left Rarioa with a GRIB forecast that had winds about 090d at 10 knots, strengthening slowly over the next 3-4 days to 18-20 knots ESE on the final day.

The GRIB file ended up being uncannily accurate most of the time—except the switch to more SE-ly winds took about 8 hours longer than forecast. In the first day of light air, we motorsailed high of our straight-line course, trying to get some easting, and make miles while the conditions were light. We were VERY GLAD later that we had done this, as the last day, the wind went to

20-25 knots. As the wind strengthened to the 15 knot range, we turned off the motor and fell off to sail.

We ended up passing the twin islands of Tepoto and Napuka, which are directly on the route between Raroia and Fatu Hiva, by sailing (on visual, during the daytime) close up to the SW corner of Tepoto, and sailing close around the western end. Interestingly, our Garmin Mapsource charts looked like they were more accurate (they had more detail) than the CMap/Maxsea charts, but they ended up being a little off in position. According to the Garmin charts, we sailed right across the middle of Tepoto! Though our CMap chart only showed a 1000-meter depth curve for Tepoto, it seemed positionally accurate. We did not turn on the radar, but the land seemed higher than most Tuamotu atolls, and so should give a pretty good radar return from at least a few miles out (at least the west end).

The last day of our trip, the wind did strengthen up to 20-25 knots, with corresponding seas. Fortunately, the direction was about 120 degrees, so we could ease our sheets a little bit and still make Fatu Hiva. We sighted land about 35 miles from Fatu Hiva, but we didn't get much lee from the strong winds until we got right up to Omoa.

Once in the lee, we motored very close in along the shore, sightseeing. The CMap 2008/2009 charts are again very accurate.

We anchored in the Baie de Vierges (Hanavave) at 10-27.909S 138-40.042W, in 25', with (it seems) good holding. No matter how calm it is here when you arrive, you MUST make sure your anchor is well set, as accelerated gusts funnel through the valley and into the anchorage. Though the wind 'outside' was only 20-25 knots, we clocked gusts as high as 60 knots in the anchorage at Hanavave.

By this time, all the Puddle Jump boats were far west, and we had only one other boat anchored with us in Hanavave.

2.1.5 Starry Horizons – Marquesas to Nuku Hiva (late May)

We left Taioha'e Bay, Nuku Hiva, on May 19th, headed for Kauehi. We started with a strong beam reach, while we had hoped to catch the afternoon slack tide on day 3, the wind died and we extended our passage to arrive on the 4th day in the late morning slack tide.

Note that the Tuamotus are a half hour behind the Marquesas, the same time zone as Tahiti.

2.2 From the Gambiers

2.2.1 Migration – Gambiers to Tahiti via the Tuamotus – July - August 2008

Their route was Gambiers – Tatakoto – Hao – Amanu – Makemo – Tahanea – Faaite – Fakarava – Toau and then to Tahiti. It is covered below under the inter-island section, since it is mostly inter-island passages.

2.2.2 Visions - Gambiers to Tahiti via the Tuamotus – April – June 2010

Their route was Gambiers – Hao – Makemo – Katiu – Tahanea – Fakarava – Toau (Amyot) – Papeete

The Gambiers to Hao passage was 450 miles, undertaken in late April with winds from the E at 15-20. They caught a nice tuna by trolling the Gambiers western reef on their way out. The only

excitement was trying to enter the pass at Hao after days of strong winds (see that story in the Hao section). And the rest of their inter-Tuamotus passages in the next section.

2.2.3 Estrela – Gambiers to Tuamotus – July 2004

Now we are sailing northwest (308 degrees True, to be exact) up the long chain of widely distributed atolls that make up the Tuamotus archipelago in French Polynesia.

We don't know where we will stop; it'll depend on wind and weather. We plan at least to stop at Kauehi atoll, where I spent several weeks in 1989 when cruising through French Polynesia aboard Valkyr with Jim Hopkins, his wife Shelley and her son Isaiah. I have warm recollections of the friendships we made with the village chief and his wife and grandson and have brought scanned photos Jim sent me last fall. I hope to find someone in Kauehi who may remember our visit, a longshot, probably, but something I'm keen to try.

Kauehi is still 700 to 800 miles ahead, though, and we will likely stop at one or more atolls before then, maybe Amanu, about 450 miles from here. Amanu and its larger neighbor, Hao, were off limits to cruising boats until very recently, because Hao was a major military and supply center when France was using Mururoa and Fangataufa Atolls in the southern Tuamotus as nuclear bomb test sites. So we are hoping Amanu will view visits by sailboats as something unusual.

Right now the crew of Estrela are all looking forward to some warm water and settled sunny weather. So we are very happy to be headed north again, wherever we make landfall next. The Gambiers in winter -- this winter at least -- are downright wintery. We swam once in three weeks there and the girls lasted about four minutes in the water before their lips turned purple. It didn't help that we had high winds and rain or the threat of rain almost every day. This made our visit to the Gambiers more about the people than the snorkeling. It was tough to say goodbye and we all hope to return there someday.

We have motorsailed from the Gambiers smack into a big high pressure system with very little wind. There was not much we could have done to avoid the large area of little to no wind; it seems to be covering much of French Polynesia. Fortunately, the last few hours have brought some needed relief and we are making about 4 knots now with the engine off! We have already put a big "dent" in our diesel supply, running the engine for over thirty hours since leaving Rikitea. I am trying to find out whether diesel is available in Hao. Because there is a low tracking east right behind this high and the undesirable effects of these lows (especially the high winds from the NW, W and SW) seems much stronger south of about 20 degrees south latitude, I have figured it made the most sense to "invest" our diesel reserves in getting us as far north as possible as quickly as we could travel. So that's what we're doing right now -- heading due north. As the high moves east and the low approaches, the winds will back from the east to NE and then north, and we will alter course to head more west as the wind forces us to. The direction we are trying to travel to reach Kauehi is approximately northwest. We hope that when the wind inevitably goes to the NW it will not be strong and that we will not have much farther to go to reach an interim anchorage, probably at either Hao or Amanu Atoll.

This has truly been a passage like no other we've had before. Until about 11 this morning we'd enjoyed about 48 hours of glassy seas and no wind. For a couple hours each day we just stopped the engine and went swimming. We dived off the bowsprit and even snorkeled around Estrela to investigate the thriving goose barnacles.

Today the wind has come up a little, allowing us to sail intermittently, though not very fast. Right now Estrela is doing 2.2 knots; but hey, these knots are free and VERY fuel efficient. I figure we've burned 37 to 42 of the 95 gallons of diesel on board when we left Rikitea. The GPS says we have 125 NM to the pass into Hao Atoll. Our plan is to buy diesel in Hao, probably taking one 200 liter drum, if it's available and is sold in drums as it was in Rikitea.

Hao was the main French navy base during the nuclear testing period here in the Southern Tuamotus. Supposedly Hao is now keen to attract yacht traffic, now that the French military base has been closed and the nuclear testing is over. After refueling in Hao we hope to move to the neighboring atoll, Amanu, which also has a large and beautiful lagoon and a good-sized, though tricky pass allowing vessels to enter the lagoon. The critical thing with all these Tuamotu atolls that have navigable lagoon passes is to time one's transit of the pass carefully so as to catch a period of slack or nearly slack current. Friends on another boat who are now about two weeks ahead of us reported to us by email that they had missed slack water and the outgoing current during their exit from the Hao lagoon was running at close to 10 knots.

They ended up going into Amanu, see their comments on Amanu and Hao in those sections.

2.3 Between Atolls in the Tuamotus

2.3.1 Migration – Gambiers to Tahiti via the Tuamotus – July - August 2008

Their route was Gambiers – Tatakoto – Hao – Amanu – Makemo – Tahanea – Faaite – Fakarava – Toau and then to Tahiti.

Below are just the excerpts that talk about the passages. Their stops at the various atolls are covered in other sections.

Gambiers to Tatakoto: Pauline, a student we'd met in the Gambier, had invited us to her home on Tatakoto – a remote atoll with only 200 villagers. There's no pass into the lagoon so the anchorage is on the coral shelf on the outside edge of the atoll. Not the best anchoring. That, and the atoll's remote location 400 miles north of the Gambier on the eastern edge of the Central Tuamotus, is why the last sailboat visited Tatakoto four years before.

Tatakoto to Hao: An overnight sail brought us to Hao; once the site of a large military base. It has a long lagoon with a pass big enough for ships. Still, it was exciting sailing against the outgoing tide—our progress sometimes slowed to less than half a knot and three-foot standing waves just off the beam. It wasn't really all that dangerous, but, considering how slow we were going, it was surprisingly exciting.

(No report on Hao to Amanu passage or the passage to Makemo)

Makemo to Tahanea: A day and night brought us to Tahanea where we anchored just inside the lagoon to wait for the strong trade winds to abate.

Tahanea to Faaite: A Tuamotuan family needed to get back to the neighboring island of Faaite to catch the plane to Tahiti, but the winds were too strong for the small boats. We were heading that direction so the next morning at 7:00am, 11 people climbed aboard Migration for the 40-mile trip.

It was a beautiful sail. Unfortunately it was the first time on a sailboat for nearly all of our guests and there was a bit of mal de mer going around. Still, we arrived safe and sound and had a great dinner at their home on Faaite.

The wind direction didn't allow us to anchor inside the lagoon so we spent the night just outside the pass.

Faaite to Fakarava: A day's sail away was the large atoll of Fakarava.

Fakarava to Toau: Another day's sail brought us to Toau. This atoll does have a pass but we continued on to Anse Amyot—a false pass on the north side. Here, two families had installed some moorings (welcome relief from having to clear the anchor chain), and ran a small restaurant.

Toau to Tahiti: Two nights at sea and in the morning, there she was, Tahiti.

2.3.2 Visions of Johanna – Hao to Makemo, Katiu, Tahanea, Fakarava, Toau

Note that Visions is a 62' boat and typically make 8 knots on passage.

From Hao, it was an easy overnight to Makemo, the SE pass. They transited up inside Makemo with no problems, and exited Makemo from the NW pass.

From Makemo, they went on a daytrip to Katiu, anchored briefly, but decided they didn't like the anchorage (in the pass), and then overnighted to Tahanea.

From Tahanea, they motorsail fast enough to make the Tahanea to Fakarava S pass in a daytrip (most boats opt for an overnight). They transited from Fakarava S pass to the town by the north pass, and then out the N pass to Toau, Anse Amyot.

2.3.3 Mata'irea – Apataki to Rangiroa

The passage from Apataki to Rangiroa was short but uncomfortable. It started with an easy downwind sail in the flat water of the lagoon. Then we rode through the standing waves in the southern pass at Apataki, which is shaped like a dogleg. It was easily our hairiest pass run yet. The trip is only 90 Nm but you have to go through the passes and lagoons at both atolls in good light, so basically it is an overnight no matter how you look at it. We had to go slowly so as not to arrive too early at the Rangiroa pass. To slow us down, we had only the jib up, then kept furling in a bit more as the wind built through the night. Usually we use the main to keep us from rolling, but it would have been too much sail for this passage. With only a scrap of jib up, no main sail, and wind chop from the south east crossing swell from the south west we rolled all night long. Lets just say neither of us got much sleep last night.

2.4 To/From Tahiti

2.4.1 Migration – Tahiti to the Marquesas via the Tuamotus - Feb-Mar 2009

We left Tahiti in late February. It was still cyclone season so we carefully watched the weather for any signs of tropical storm formation to the west. It was good to be at sea again—the blue horizon in every direction. But the winds were contrary and we were making slow progress. Now that we had our long-stay visas, we had plenty of time and didn't need to rush (most non-EU cruisers get only 3 months). So why spend days sailing but not getting very far? I'd gotten a bad rope burn on my hand so we decided to take it easy and stop in the Tuamotus. We'd have

preferred to be farther east—away from potential cyclones—but we would just keep a close eye on the tropical storm forecast.

February is the transition time between summer and winter. That means unsettled weather. Rain showers and squalls rolled through daily. The showers are very confined—usually not more than a mile or so wide. The squalls can be much bigger. They pass quickly but dump an enormous amount of rain in a very short time. Sometimes they are accompanied by violent winds and thunder and lightning. One night we sailed through a terrific squall as we passed close between two atolls. Thunder and lightning were everywhere and, at times, the driving rain brought visibility to almost zero. We were grateful for GPS and radar.

We headed for beautiful Anse Amyot on Toau; home of our friends Gaston & Valentine, whom we met last year.

After 10 days at Toau, we decided to sail for the Marquesas again. We wanted to visit those islands before the crowds of boats arrived from Panama, the Galápagos, and Mexico in April, May and June. Unfortunately, Poseidon didn't think it was time for our voyage. After three days we still had 350 miles to go and the wind was blowing directly from the northeast... and strengthening. Our foredeck hatch was leaking (we would later discover a cracked weld in the frame). We had a ½ knot current against us and were making about 50 miles a day toward our goal. Another week of this didn't sound fun. We spun the wheel—well, the dial on the autopilot—and headed back to the Tuamotus.

(They went to Katiu and then to Makemo, where they finally got favorable winds to the Marquesas.)

Since the Marquesas were both north and east of our position, going either direction would help us when we again tried to sail there. Makemo is due east of Katiu and, having one of the larger villages in the Tuamotus and good provisioning, made a logical next stop.

At Makemo, we'd been watching the weather carefully and the forecast called for a week of light winds. The Marquesas would still be upwind, but we like sailing to weather in light air. We sealed the leaking forward hatch with duct tape and set off.

It was a quiet and calm six-day sail. Occasionally frustrating as the wind often blew directly from the direction we wanted to go, or it didn't blow at all. We made a brief detour to the remote atolls of ~~Takapoto~~ (Tepoto) and Nepuka, but without passes and with very steep coral shelves, the anchoring was too dicey for us. These are known as the Îles Disappointment—they were for us, as well as for some of the locals who gathered on the wharf waiting for us to come ashore. *(Note: the website says 'Takapoto' in one place and Tepoto in another. Looking at the island locations and their probable route, I think he meant Tepoto).*

2.4.2 Slapdash – 275 Miles Manihi to Tahiti – Aug 2008

Outside the passage we were met with a big swell and a stiff wind pushing waves in an opposing direction. We pitched and rolled while I set the sails but before long they were up and finally we were pointed towards Tahiti.

The sea was really rough after the bad weather over the past couple of days so we had a double reef in the main and same with the headsail. We had 275 miles to make Tahiti and wanted to keep things easy on ourselves and the boat.

Day one: So much for taking it slow. The wind has been between 20 and 28 knots. We are still double reefed and have covered 160 miles in our first 24 hours out.

Day two: We sighted Tahiti at 7:30 this morning. We were rolled around by big southeast trade wind swells mixed with local surface conditions that never dropped below 20 knots. It wasn't exactly a pleasure cruise and we certainly didn't have any chess board conditions but nothing broke and we covered the 275 miles in just over 40 hours.

2.5 To/From Hawaii

In 2010/2011 several boats made their way up to Hawaii for the winter for boat work and reprovisioning (and to get out of French Poly for the requisite 6 months)

Going up, a couple of boats worked their way from the Tuamotus to the Marquesas where it was an easy reach to Hilo, Hawaii. (See Soggy Paws' blog <http://svsoggypaws.blogspot.com> for September 2010 for the details of that trip)

A couple of other boats left from the Societies for Hawaii—they were a bit harder on the wind, but all made it to Honolulu OK. It was a fairly fast 15 day trip from the Marquesas. A slightly longer slower trip from the Societies. (see Nakia's blog <http://svnakia.blogspot.com> for Oct 2010 for the details of that trip).

In the spring, late April, 4 boats made their way back south from Hawaii to Manihi in the Tuamotus. One boat left from Hilo and tacked east for a day before heading south. One boat left from Maui, and 2 from Honolulu. The first week was a wet slog, hard on the wind on port tack. After that it got easier. The ITCZ was not a big deal at that time of the year, in fact it was in transit from it's winter location of just south of the Equator to it's summer location just north of the equator. The worst squall encountered by all 4 boats was one 50 knot squall with a little bit of lightning. Most squalls were only up to 25 knots, a bit of rain, and no lightning.

The boat that left from Hilo and tacked east for a day, made it as far east as 141-20W, before easing the sheets and heading south. This boat could have easily continued close-hauled and made the Marquesas (but they didn't have time to visit there).

Soggy Paws left from Honolulu, motorsailed in very light wind conditions, east to about 40 miles south of South Point on the Big Island, and then sailed the rest of the way. Soggy Paws' waypoint at the equator was more westerly than anyone else's, at 147-00W, and we still were able to make Manihi in the Tuamotus without too much trouble and without tacking.

The trip length from Honolulu to Manihi for all 4 boats was between 20 and 22 days.

Manihi is a good landfall—a west-facing nice (leeward) pass, a nice community with some English-speaking locals, a decent anchorage, and internet! Though it is not an official port of entry to French Polynesia, there is not even a gendarmerie, and no one seems stressed that we are here without being formally checked in. Two of the 4 boats eventually checked in with the Gendarmerie in Rangiroa a few days later. They were able to complete their initial paperwork (and start their 3 month 'clock'), but were told to just wait until they got to Tahiti for their formal check-in (similar to what happens in the Gambiers).

Two boats opted to stop in Manihi and then Toau without checking in (no gendarmes either in Toau) and delay their check in until Tahiti.

For Soggy Paws' notes on Hawaii, look for the Hawaii Compendium at <http://svsoggypaws.com/files/>

3 SE Tuamotus – South to North

The order here is in the order you would normally encounter them coming up from the Gambiers. Though some guidebooks include the Gambier group as part of the Tuamotus, Gambiers is covered in a different section.

Migration: From Gambier we went N to Tatakoto. We were very inexperienced in the Tuamotus and had no info on atolls further S or we might have stopped at others. From what I understand, the only atolls closed from nuclear testing are Mururoa and Fangataufu.

Charlie's Charts is very out of date when it says everything is closed in the Southern Tuamotus

3.1 *Fangataufu (Closed)*

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 22

3.2 *Mururoa (Closed)*

Guidebooks:

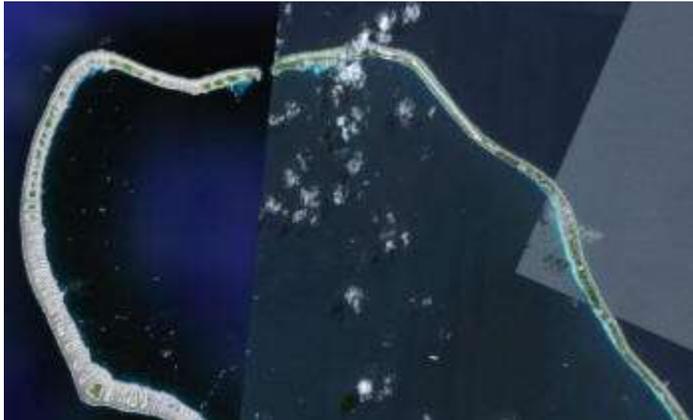
South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, 2001, pg 23

3.3 *Nengonengo (Pass)*

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 23

3.4 *Hao (Pass, Supplies, Internet, Flights to Tahiti)*



Hao was previously the site of a large French Navy base which supported the nuclear testing activities in the southern atolls. In 2002 or 2003, the large base was shut down, but the Navy still maintains a small presence on Hao.

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 23

(no coverage in Charlies Charts or Guide to Navigation and Tourism)

Services:

Internet: Mana net is available in Hao. Mana signals are usually emanating from the Post Office or Telephone company (usually co-located in one complex). You buy access cards at the Post Office. Visions reported being invited to use a private internet source at Hao, as well.

Airport: There are regular flights to/from Tahiti into Hao.

Cruising Reports:

(see more detailed reports about passes and anchorages in various locations, further below)

Duplicat – June 2017: The wharf is available to use without charge. Its better on the west side than the east, but the east is still usable. There is a liveboard catamaran there, so behind them is a good place. If not, a good **anchorage** is at 18S 06.151 140W 54.656 where there is more sand though still some coral to watch for.

The mayor shared the wifi password with us which was usable on the boat in the anchorage and at the wharf, albeit slow (especially when windy as the satellite dish moves, reducing throughput!).

Some boats used the main wharf by the village - I believe this is by arrangement and possible if a ship isn't due.

There's a lovely **anchorage** by an old pearl farm at 18S 13.196 140W 49.274 - we spent a blissful few days there. The owner of the farm invited us to join them for freshly caught and BBQed fish - we had a wonderful afternoon.

The pass is a good dive. I went with some locals - they have a pearl-farm buoy installed outside of the pass, a little to the west. You'll see two buoys there, we picked up the western-most one. The dive is fantastic - absolutely loads of fish, often manta rays, but we only saw Eagle rays.

Migration 2008: An overnight sail brought us to Hao; once the site of a large military base. It has a long lagoon with a pass big enough for ships.

Hao is not often visited by cruisers as it's still a bit far south for most of the boats on the normal route through French Polynesia (which runs across the Northern Tuamotus from the Marquesas to Tahiti). We stayed at Hao for a week and a half and were the only boat there. We made friends with some fun locals: Tonino, Maimiti and Parua. We shared dinners at their home and waffles aboard Migration. We rode bikes, snorkeled and just kinda hung out. There wasn't a great deal of danger here (except from eating too much *poisson cru*). However, the poor water visibility made it impossible to see where the coral heads were when we anchored. When we finally left, I had to scuba dive to untangle the chain which had ended up in a surprisingly complex tangle. (from <http://www.brucebalan.com/migrations/Migrations10.htm> November 2008)

Hao has a fairly large village (for the Tuamotus). There's a bakery and several small markets. You can anchor off the village (60 ft with coral heads). There is a small enclosed area -- I won't call it a marina but it is completely protected -- where you can tie to the wall. It's about a 5-10 minute walk from town. We know a boat that stayed there for 2 months.

The people at Hao are really nice. If you don't speak French, Tonino (Tony) White speaks excellent English. Parua and Maimiti who run one of the stores speak some English as well.

Migration 2009: We were in Hao in May 2009 for almost 3 weeks and loved it there. The pass was easy to navigate and there are plenty of anchoring possibilities near the village. There is

even an abandoned small u-shaped marina which we tied up to. It is easy to get into that marina and was free.

Yes there are many buildings falling apart, but I believe that the army is there to clean things up.

We loved it there, as people were friendly and interested in sailors. They have good flight connection to Papeete and good supplies.

There is a small store offering their private internet for sailors if you ask.

Estrela 2004: We went to Hao, 17 miles from Amanu, to refuel and were lucky enough to find someone late on Saturday who agreed to deliver 200 liters of diesel to us early Sunday. It couldn't have been more convenient; we spent the night tied to an empty concrete wharf in a protected inner harbor of the former French naval base. The Mobil truck drove right up to the boat and the fuel was clean and even a little less expensive than in Rikitea.

Until about 2000 this was the main supply center and military base for the French nuclear testing activities in the southern Tuamotus. Several thousand military personnel and dependents lived here. The old base feels like a ghost town and this atmosphere even pervades adjacent Otepa, the main village of Hao. Though the base closure has had predictable economic and social impacts on the community the residents with whom we spoke were happy to have the military gone and the nuclear testing ended.

Estrela was something of a novelty during our short visit. We had a small crowd of people, mostly kids, hanging around us and ambling around the boat most of the day. We learned we were the third cruising sailboat to visit Hao in the last few months. Eliza and Abigail gave gimp (aka boondoggle) lanyards to several children. Just before we left two of the boys returned with their dad and sister to give us a sack of freshly husked coconuts.

Pass on North Side & Anchorage

Sloepmouche: We entered the pass during ingoing tide with light wind. Coordinates entrance of pass: 18°03'90S 141°0 0'31W.

Migrations: It was exciting sailing against the outgoing tide—our progress sometimes slowed to less than half a knot with three-foot standing waves just off the beam. It wasn't really all that dangerous, but, considering how slow we were going, it was surprisingly exciting.

There is a protected anchorage just inside the lagoon E of the pass (18°04'31S-140°59'75W). Here you can wait for better light before proceeding inside the lagoon, or wait for the right time to go out of the pass. It's good sand with isolated coral heads and there is a very shallow dinghy-landing pier to go ashore and visit the point and old shooting range. There is also an anchorage on the W side of the pass.

Visions of Johanna (Late April 2010): For a reason that I still don't fully understand, we transited our first ever Tuamotu pass into Hao with a very strong ebbing current and significant standing waves at the exit of the pass. Our instrumentation,(after the fact) showed that we had an average current of 7.4 knots against for almost 10 minutes. At that point it was hard to make much headway and we actually backing into two standing waves, flooding the cockpit and sending some water down the companionway as we hadn't thought to put the dropboard in place. Luckily we have a big boat with a very powerful motor.

The water in the lagoon is apparently quite high today because of the 3 days of 15-20 knot easterlies which are creating waves big enough to crash over the reef, filling up the lagoon. We

still don't know when low tide was, but are pretty sure that if we had waited a few hours it would have been a much more reasonable time to go through the pass. (note, they were later told that there had been NO slack current for 3 days because of the winds/seas, but a boat entering the lagoon a day later reported a reasonable current on entry at the right time).

We headed into town and were immediately picked up by a very nice lady named Cammile who is a special ed teacher at the school here. She gave us a tour, had us over for cold drinks, and then invited us to join her for dinner and internet usage at her house tonight which we can't refuse. Everyone here has been amazingly nice and friendly. There are quite a lot of people here and a ton of kids playing around town.

We aren't too sure how long we will stay, but may break out the bikes tomorrow morning to take a tour of the island and head to the southern end. The island is only about 3 blocks wide and flat as a board. (Visions stayed only a couple of days at Hao—concluding that they had very friendly people, but not much else to offer).

3.4.1 Otepa

To go to Otepa, follow markers and sketches in cruising guides, with good light it is very easy, you could even sail, as isolated reefs are easily seen and far apart.

You can anchor N of Otepa town around 18°06'S-140°54'W. Good bakery, general supplies can be found.



3.4.2 Inside the Lagoon

Don't miss a deeper incursion in the lagoon by visiting some pearl farm motus along the E side all the way to Nake, the abandoned village.

3.4.3 Tony's Farm

Up to Tony's farm (18°15'58S-140°50'07W) it is very easy; further on you have to really pay attention for isolated coral patches and just submerged reefs and mostly underwater lines holding the pearl shells (sometimes marked by buoys, sometimes not!). If you are set up for scuba, you may help with some pearl farm jobs in exchange for some black pearls!

3.4.4 Nake

We stayed a few days off **Nake**, in a super smooth anchorage (18°24'S140°40'W) as it has little possible fetch except with a W wind. A few people live here from copra, fishing, and pearl

farming and on Sundays, you can make the fête (party) with them. They were glad to show us around and to share their meal! We were perhaps the 10th boat to ever have stopped here and we enjoyed the unspoiled contact!

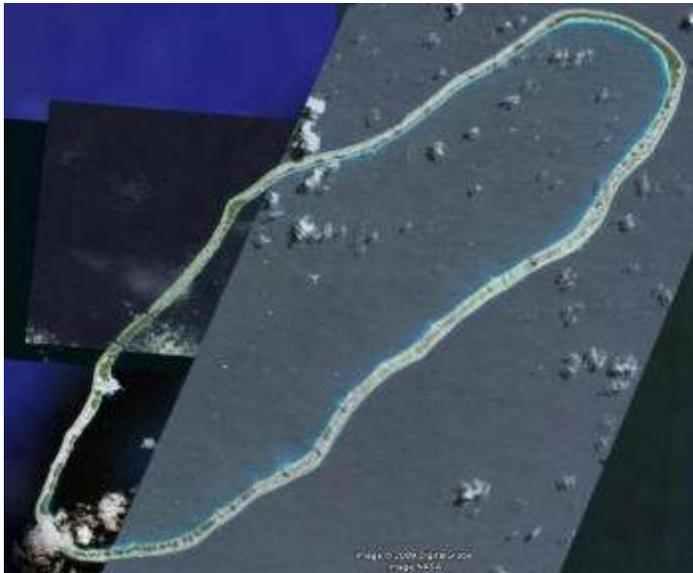
A new scuba center is being set up by Laurent, Padi and Cmas instructor, with great dives offered in the pass. You can anchor conveniently in front of it, as it is located just at the North edge of the village.

3.4.5 Passage from Marquesas

Mr. John: If you have gone down to Fatu Hiva for departure then this is not so difficult to reach so long as the wind stays east of southeast.

3.5 Amanu (Pass, No Supplies)

Pronounced Ahm-a-nu, with emphasis on the first syllable.



Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 23

(no coverage in Charlies Charts or Guide to Navigation and Tourism)

Duplicat – June 2017: For winds with any East in them, there is a very good **anchorage** at 17S 52.807 140W 47.198. Good holding in a sandy area with scattered, easily seen bommies. We spent a few nights there, very peaceful compared to the usual anchorage south of the village.

There's also some good holding in sand just inside the northern blind pass at 17S 42.697 140W 41.656. We spent the night there in light easterlies with no problems. Walked the reef on the outside of the pass going southwards for lobster but a bit too much tide to find any.

There are any number of nice secure anchorages in sand along the northern edge of the atoll. We stopped at 17S 42.819 140W 39.760, just off the abandoned village and would have been happy staying the night - good holding though there are lots of bommies its fairly easy to find an area clear of them.

We viewed the 'navel' as a day anchorage only - holding wasn't great.

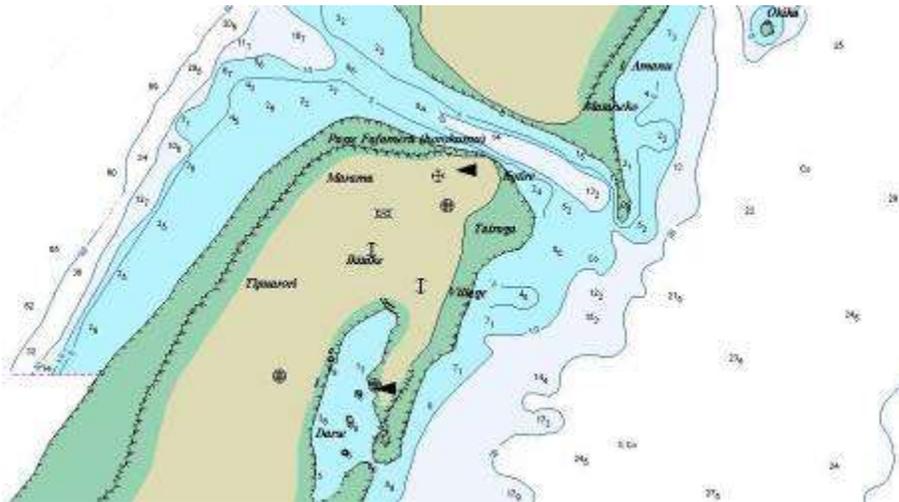
The south anchorage you list was reported to be very good, but lots of rats ashore if you go to BBQ.

The small harbour at the village has its entrance marked with a pair of stakes, and with strongish winds it can be "interesting" entering but we took our 7m wide catamaran in with 20knots on the beam - tight, but doable. We anchored in there for our last night so we could say our goodbyes to all our friends ashore without having to endure the long dinghy ride around from the anchorage in those winds - it would have been very wet.

The Mayor of Amanu is incredibly welcoming - invited all the cruisers to a lunch as due to weather a bunch of us arrived from Gambiers around the same time and they'd never seen so many yachts. We also had dinner with some locals who had taken us spear fishing and lobster hunting. A farewell dinner was arranged for when we left, and they presented us with wonderful necklaces. Truly, a wonderful place to visit with locals that really take you to their hearts.

If you're anywhere close, do not miss Amanu!

3.5.1 Pass and Anchorage



Fellow Traveler - May 2010:

The pass: I found this pretty easy to run, although it is quite narrow. The dog leg right at the end of it is extremely easy to see and navigate. I entered it with about 2 knots of outgoing current and had no problem going in.

I exited at approximately the maximum outward flow at the time, around 5 knots. I debated about attempting it or waiting several hours for slack, but saw a local runabout come in, then soon after go back out the pass, and figured if they could handle it, my sea-going boat should be up to the task. I did cruise above the entrance of it to look down and saw no big waves or anything scary.

The reef at the entrance was not visible as a reef; it was a waterfall as the water rushed over it and down into the pass. Other current came sliding in from the SE to merge with this one.

I hit the pass at near full-speed ahead as I wanted to be going faster than the current to maintain steerage. If you enter the current going too slowly, there is a risk that, as the current

grabs you, at some point your boat speed and the current are the same and your boat will not answer to the helm. I worried about problems where the two currents met, and tried to avoid being right on that line, but it not seem to be a problem.

Once out the pass I aimed to exit the current before the worst of the turbulence, exiting at a 45° angle. If you exit too directly, there is a risk of being spun as your bow bites into the eddy while your stern and rudder are still being pushed by the current. Anticipate this effect (called an "eddy-turn" in whitewater canoeing) and be ready with strong corrective rudder as you cross the eddy-line. These techniques should work in any pass with strong current with you so long as there are not overly large standing waves or extreme boils and overfalls at the end. If you can not see the full length of the pass, then obviously it would be better to wait for slack.

There is a 30 foot deep bank just inside the pass right off the village, but this is not a good place to anchor. I tried it as the light was not good for exploring the lagoon, but after only a couple of hours my chain seriously wrapped around the coral. Tama, a friendly local, came out and snorkeled it, telling me which way to steer to get it free, and diving down to unwrap it and still it was not easy.

The recommended anchorage further south is a ship anchorage: 60 feet deep or more, and still a risk for wrapping coral. I was told that boats with a maximum depth of 1.5 meters could enter the small boat harbor in the village (see Migration's report).

Groceries: There is a small shop in the village with very basic supplies. It is located by the small boat harbor, about the last building as you walk out of town going South.

Anchoring: I checked out two locations for anchoring in Amanu: The first is on the West side, just about a mile South of the pass. A large area of reef sticks out into the lagoon and behind it are two pocket bays protected from the North. The first one is deep, and does not look like it offers much for anchoring, but I saw a French boat anchored in here.

The second bay is about 25 feet deep with lots of coral heads, including some that near the surface, so good light and careful thought is required in anchoring here. There is barely room to maneuver inside this little anchorage, so examine it from the outside and have a plan. This bay offers moderate protection from the East and South, and excellent protection from the North and West. It is completely exposed to the 5-mile fetch to the South East.

An approximate position inside the bay is: 17-51.52' S / 140-51.21 W. (See red dot in picture below)



Entering the anchorage requires passing between the reef and several very shallow coral heads right along the edge of the shallow water. Just outside the bay it is 70+ feet deep. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ANCHOR HERE IN BAD LIGHT AS THERE ARE DANGERS ALL AROUND YOUR BOAT!

I anchored here 3 times, each time in a slightly different place due to the shifting winds. Twice I set two anchors to insure I did not swing onto the reef or a shallow coral head. If I had to do it again, I would consider just tying a line to the base of a coral head as my second "anchor". If it is a long enough line, one could bring both ends to the boat, then just drop one end and pull the other to retrieve it in a hurry...maybe...if it does not get jammed!

I thought the area to the NE of the red dot was too deep to anchor, but I did see a French boat anchor here, and the pic shows a possibility in N. winds, but with a definite risk of swinging into the reef with anything from the South. I snorkeled the SW side of this "bowl", and it drops off too fast to be useful for anchoring.

The second spot I anchored is on the Southern edge of the lagoon. A sand spit extends out North, then West from the edge of the motus. On top of the sand spit it is 18 feet deep. It is a bit deeper between the spit and the shore. There are two very shallow coral heads at the East end of this spit; one can circle them in deep water. The top of the spit has many coral heads, so you can expect your chain to get tangled, particularly if the wind veers direction. There is plenty of room to swing without encountering any coral heads that would risk most boats (Fellow Traveler draws 6.5 feet).

An approximate position for this location is 17-54.72' S / 140-50.5' W. (see red dot in the picture below)



There are possibly fewer coral heads in the deeper water between the spit and shore, but I did not investigate. I can free-dive 25 feet and clear my chain if need be, but not deeper.

I did not investigate anywhere else in Amanu other than these two general areas—the weather was not very good the whole time I was there. There are perhaps better anchorages in the Northern 2/3rds of the Atoll that I am unaware of.

I also show one I did not explore, on the SE side that looks slightly better than what I did find, and the reef in the center of the atoll.

Estrela (2004): They were enroute from Gambiers to further north in the Tuamotus when a passing front switched the wind to NW, and they took refuge in Amanu.

Anchorage Position: S 17-51.59' / W 140-51.35',

We navigated the pass into the Amanu atoll lagoon without incident at 1430 local time the day before yesterday (Sunday). Conditions were just about ideal, helped by an incoming tidal current of 2 or 3 knots. Had the tide been ebbing fast through this narrow cut it might have been a very different story, as a strong NW swell had kicked up the night before when a cold front passed through, shifting the wind from NE to NW and increasing it to 15 to 20 kts.

Turning immediately to starboard (toward the SW) we glided slowly by the small village as people waved and shouted, especially the numerous children. We anchored as close as we could SW of the town, but not without a little excitement. We found the lagoon to be deep right to the fringing coral reef along the interior perimeter, ranging in depth from over 100' to about 60' until it shoals sharply as one gets too close to the reef to be able to anchor and still have sufficient swinging room.

No sooner had we put the anchor down and turned off the engine, though, but a family in a small outboard motor boat came out from the village to warn us that this was a dangerous spot to anchor if a strong wind came out of the NE or E. The Amanu lagoon extends nearly 15 miles to the northeast from this spot and the long "fetch" would allow large wind-driven waves to build up, even though we were protected from the ocean swell. The villagers recommended

that we move around a nearby point where a bulge in the fringing reef would protect us from such winds.

By now our friends on Alii Nui had also entered the pass and anchored near us. So both boats now began to raise anchor and move as advised. Their move went without incident. We had a tough time raising our anchor. The chain had caught on something hard on the bottom. We hope it was just rock and not a living coral formation. By moving back and forth repeatedly with the engine, letting out and hauling back chain and putting some uncomfortable stresses on our bowsprit anchor roller system we were finally able, after an hour of work, to raise the anchor and get ourselves re-anchored around the point just at dark, and unfortunately again in over 60' of depth.

But what a spot we finally had -- a stone's throw from a little tidal inlet through to the outside reef, along a shore fringed by tall, laden coconut palm trees and a narrow sandy beach. An enormous manta ray flew by Estrela just below the surface, its great wings slowly pumping up and down and cavernous oval mouth open to inhale its minute prey. Lovely, rose and orangey hues in the sky, and a balmy breeze. Were we finally in paradise?? It sure felt so. We all gathered aboard Alii Nui for a potluck dinner celebration after our 7+ day passage from Rikitea, eager to get in the water and go exploring in the morning.

We enjoyed six nights anchored in Amanu lagoon before sailing to nearby Hao atoll for one night.

Sloepmouche (2002): Since we had little info about the pass, I heard traffic (in French) on VHF 06 and a local came out to pilot us in! It's not that difficult if you get to the **entry (17°50'S-140°51'W)** and stay in the center of the channel. With good light you see well the right turn you have to make at the end of the pass!

Anchorage 1: A huge mooring can be picked up in front of the village or with shallow draft you may get in the natural harbor. Unless you can get into the little harbor, the mooring can get VERY rolly as you're on a lee shore w/ miles of fetch.

Anchorage 2: From the village, follow the edge of the shallows, and behind two sand spits south of the village, you will find a very well protected and beautiful anchorage in front of a series of motus (little islands) (15-20 ft, good sand, with isolated coral heads). The outer edges of the sand spits and fringing reefs are staked: easy to see in good light. Tautu & Hinano (the postmistress) welcomed us.

Nice to visit an out-of-the-way atoll! (No stores, no bakery.) Good spearfishing in the passes and on the isolated coral heads in the lagoon with no ciguatera reported far away from the village! (We ate some delicious groupers).

Migration 2008: Only 200 people live on Amanu and, because it isn't listed in any cruising guides, very few boats visit. If your boat draws less than 2 meters (Migration draws 1.5), you can enter the tiny protected 'harbor' at the village. It wasn't the depth as much as the width that provided the excitement here. We had about a meter on each side to spare. But once in, we were well protected from the strong trade winds which blew hard across the lagoon for several days.



The red dot (above) marks Migration's anchoring spot.

Call Etienne on VHF 16 and he'll give you advice on the pass (in French). The pass is not too hard but the current really moves through it. Visit the different parts of the atoll... don't just stay by the village. And you can anchor at the star-shaped reef in the middle of the atoll

3.5.2 Etoile Reef (In the Middle of the Lagoon)

Locals says you have to go to the star shaped reef in the middle of the lagoon (17°48'S-140°46'W) before you can claim to have arrived in Amanu! We did go with Tautu and family for a day picnic and snorkeling and had a great time! Nice to have a local that knows the location of the isolated reefs even if they are pretty easy to spot!



Red dot shows the approximate anchorage for Etoile Reef.

Migration: After *Heiva*, we headed to Etoile Reef, known as the navel of Amanu; a star-shaped reef right in the middle of the lagoon. We anchored and snorkeled around the entire reef.

3.6 Tatakoto (No Pass, Marginal Anchorage)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages, 2nd Ed, pg 23: Anchorage is reported to be possible in favorable conditions on the coral shelf off the village at the west end of the atoll.

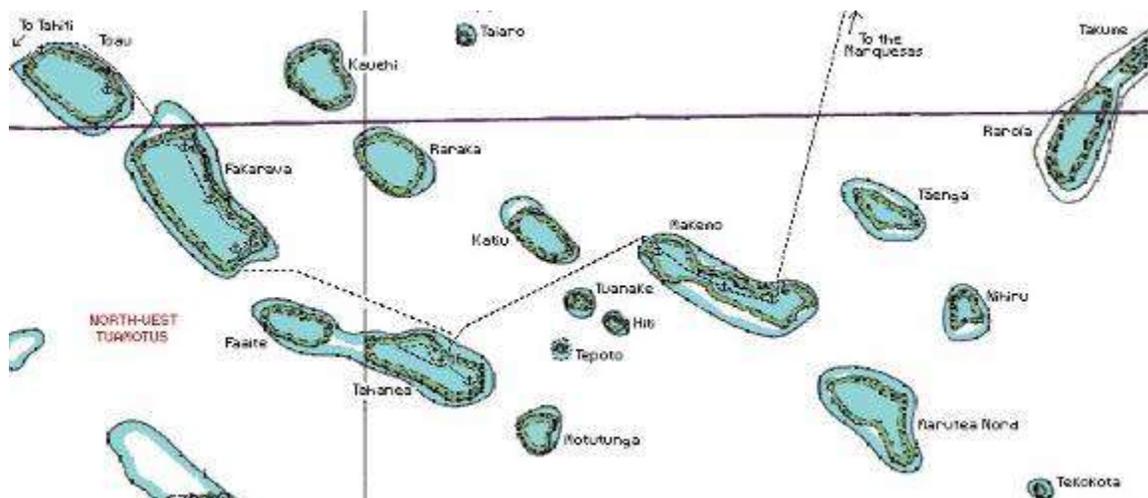
Charlie's Charts 5th ed, Pg 62, reports that anything south of 17-20S is part of the nuclear testing restricted area, so they do not cover Tatakoto. (other more recent reports say only Mururoa and Fangataufu are off limits).

Cruising Reports:

Migration: Pauline, a student we'd met in the Gambier, had invited us to her home on Tatakoto – a remote atoll with only 200 villagers. There's no pass into the lagoon so the anchorage is on the coral shelf on the outside edge of the atoll. Not the best anchoring. That, and the atoll's remote location 400 miles north of the Gambier on the eastern edge of the Central Tuamotus, is why the last sailboat visited Tatakoto four years before.

The anchoring did feel dangerous to us. So I stayed aboard while Alene swam ashore on a pool raft (to the great amusement of the locals). She spent the day meeting Pauline's family, touring the island, and being showered with gifts. She returned to the boat with a whole tuna, an octopus, wood carvings, shell necklaces, woven handbags and hats. The tales of generosity of the Polynesian people are definitely true

4 NW Tuamotus – SE to NW



A typical trip through the NW Tuamotus for cruisers going from the Marquesas to Tahiti.

4.1 Haraiki (Iffy Pass)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24: There is a narrow pass, 3m deep, at the south point of the atoll between two islets. The pass faces due south and is hazardous because of heavy rollers. (more in the guidebook)

4.2 Makemo (Pass, Some Supplies, Internet, ATM)



Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed; pages 98-99

(no coverage in Guide to Navigation and Tourism)

Boat Services:

Internet: Manaspot is available if you have a Mana card (prepaid cards available from the Post Office). You can also now sign up online with a credit card (connect to the spot, bring up a web page, and click the 'purchase online' button).

Banking: One boat reported being able to get a cash advance on a Visa card at a grocery store in Makemo. **Update from s/v Skylark, August 2016:** We are happy to report that Makemo, just in the last week, received an ATM and it has been plumbed in at the Post Office. It is quite amusing to watch the complete lack of users for it. I rather think that the Post Office ladies are preferable than the devil's box in the wall! Perhaps it is a gambit to attract more sailors. Certainly the people we learnt from, that the ATM was about to arrive on the next ferry, was a French boat who had heard about the big event all the way down at Hao. They stopped in here just to use it having run out of funds.

Cruising Reports:

Nehenehe – January 2019: We are now (January 17th- 22nd) at Makemo. We found good shallow water anchorages protected from the moderate NE winds on the east end (north side) at 16 29.4660 S; 143 49.5890 W, this was on a very wide sandy flat in 8.5 feet of water. It is a beautiful spot with a good dingy landing area.

We also anchored a bit more toward the village at 16 36.2427 S; 143 38.5376 W in 12 feet of water with good holding and protection from the North to East winds that evening. This spot had an unoccupied home very close by and we just spent an evening there before heading to town.

The village anchorage has a number of poor holding reports, but in the NE winds with squalls this evening we are very comfortably anchored at 16 37.599S; 143 34.259W in 13 feet of water in a good but small spot with deep sand. We needed to use a single pearl farm float on the chain. The boat hovers over a piece of steel wreckage that appears to be a small aft deck section of a trawler replete with its round steel deck hatch.

The Stores and Village Pouheva: Pouheva has three Marches; one “Super Market” and an “Egg Farm” (The ‘Super Market is called Opareke Market and is the best and largest Marche, it has way more stuff when the other three markets start to have bare shelves). The village is large by Tuamotus standards and is very clean and tidy with an ‘integrated paint scheme’ of purple, green, yellow, and white on many continuous cement balustrades that line some of the main streets. There were two schools and what were told was a college, all are very well loved and cared for.



Though completely different from Rotoava... it was still reminiscent of the somewhat European sense of orderliness that predominates the two towns. For a town this large, I found it vaguely odd that 2-1/2 weeks since the last supply ship..... all the shelves are well over half bare.

For a very large town like this; I would describe what we found to be the least well supplied group of magasins that we have seen in two months of cruising the Tuamotus.

The 'Egg Farm' has a 2'x 1.5' sign outside but it can only be read coming from the west and looking at its west face. I don't recall exactly other than it had the French "Oeufs" in the name and they have a chicken farm with lots of eggs. 500fpf per dozen and super nice proprietors.

The Magasin furthest to the west also appears to be the bakery since there were lots of empty shelving where the banquets and loaves appear to normally reside. The Supermarket is a bit harder to find than the other stores but is overwhelmingly better stocked and they insisted that we let them drive us back to the small boat harbor with all our bags.

The Post Office was all out of Wi-Fi cards but might possibly have some again in four days.... So it's not just the food stuffs that get low around town!

Kokopeli – October 2018: We motor sailed to Makemo, entering at the west pass at mid-day slack. Once inside, with the sun behind us, we elected to continue to the Punaruku anchorage, dropping the hook at 16°31' S, 143°41' W. The reef to the east here is much more extensive than Navionics indicates. It extends farther from shore, and is essentially awash. We snorkeled the west side, the east might have been better, but rougher with the east winds. There seemed to be a copra camp ashore, with two men working it. We chatted with them, very pleasant and friendly. They welcomed us to explore ashore.

We then continued on to the town at Makemo. We used Navionics charting on our MFD, and were following friends who had satellite photos. Navionics seemed to chart most of the bommies/reefs we passed, but they were usually more shallow than indicated, usually awash. So easy to see, in daylight. We also kept on person on the foredeck with a handheld VHF, polarized sunglasses, etc. What we saw enroute was easy to see, the bommies I've noticed that don't come near the surface seem to be mostly near the shore, in shallower water. We did pass one submerged pearl float string along the way to the village.

The village anchorage, west of the wharf, seemed good to us. We were there with two other boats, all on bow anchors only. There were many bommies on the bottom, and it was difficult to find any sizable patch of sand. But we (and they) held OK, under the light conditions we had. The difficulties we had were mostly from the light and variable winds, we drifted together in circles. We left with a forecast of stronger conditions to come. Snorkeling in the harbor is fun, there's a wreck on the bottom just south of the reef. Mostly flattened, but a 2 cylinder diesel with gearbox, a windlass and some anchor chain are readily identifiable.

The village was very nice. It was tidy, and the friendliest place I've ever been. Provisioning was good, I got some wifi off my Fi Phone. I had heard that one store had great wifi, but we must have asked the wrong one? We had dinner one night at ??, food was good, service excellent (Moana). Their eyecatching placemats were from a "Punaruku Plage/Punaruku Beach Pearls - Makemo" operation. This was not evident when we were in Punaruku, but maybe operates sometimes.

Shindig – June 2017 – Navigational Hazards: We spent two weeks at the Makemo Atoll and while navigating inside the motu we discovered many uncharted bommies. We traveled from the East Pass to the East corner and then to the West pass. (30 miles)

I am using the most current **Navionics** as of my purchase and download in February 2017. Most of the bommies are indicated spot on but I found several that were not.

I estimated the position of the bommies while passing by them so these coordinates are not perfect but should be within 200 ft. Keep an eye out.

16 27.768S 143 55.449W

16 28.018S 143 54.443W

16 28.897S 143 53.512W

16 29.014S 143 53.255W

16 33.123S 143 47.789W

16 35.069S 143 43.950W

16 35.630S 143 43.028W

16 35.968S 143 42.711W

16 37.318S 143 40.055W

16 37.386S 143 40.053W

16 37.530S 143 39.731W

16 38.006S 143 29.761W

16 37.984S 143 28.322W

16 38.608S 143 25.055W

In publishing this I do not want to deter people from visiting Makemo. It is an amazing atoll. One must take the precautions when navigating within the atoll. On Shindig my wife will be a spotter from the bow and we will communicate with a hand held VHF to point out any obstacles. The bommies are easy to see with the sun behind you. I navigate using the plotter and have binoculars in hand to spot what is charted and look out for bommies that are not.

Ed note: Anyone navigating inside atolls should be using Google Earth charts and "Mark I Eyeballs". NONE of the chart plotting offerings are spot on all the time.

Visions of Johanna (April 2010): The best anchorage in all of Makemo is at **16-31.1S / 143-49.3W**. This doesn't look very protected on the chart, but there is a small reef that comes out from the motu just south of this spot, which makes a nice protected cove from NE to SE. There is a nice beach along the shore.

We also anchored near the west pass at **16-27.21S / 143-57.91W**. You have to work your way into this area from the SE in good light, but once inside there is a reasonable anchorage protected from most directions by small patch reefs. It is convenient to the pass (for diving).

Soggy Paws (July 2010): We came in the East pass after an overnight from Tahanea. Because the wind died off, we missed the slack current by about an hour, and opted to go ahead in against the outgoing current, because the wind was light and was NOT opposing the current.

We entered the pass from the west side, as close as we could get into shore (we draw 5.5 feet). The current was running 4-6 knots. We stayed as far out of the main stream as possible (to the right) and had our boat at full throttle and at times were only making ½ a knot. It was a little tricky steering in the eddies, but we have a strong reliable engine, and we were never scared.

Anchorage off the town: The anchorage off the town at Makemo (just inside the E pass) is not very good in strong winds, especially winds from the SE. We anchored at **16-37.6S / 143-34.3W**. It is a coral bottom, with thin sand, and a lot of coral heads. There is protection from the N around to the E and just to the ESE, but in strong winds it gets very choppy. We ended up going into the dock—bow in—with 3 bow lines out to the nice stainless steel rings on the (new) concrete pier, and 2 stern lines out to coral heads behind us (an anchor would work too). At one point in the strong winds, there were 2 monohulls, 4 charter cats, and 1 supply boat on the leeward side of the pier.

Wifi (Manaspot) is pretty strong at the dock and in the anchorage.

SE Corner Anchorages: Some charter catamarans looking for protection from a howling east wind in July anchored at **16-39.3S / 143-23.5W**. This is at the end of the easternmost long motu. There is a little bit of a beach there and some trees to block some of the wind.

Visions of Johanna also anchored at **16-42.8S / 143-28.1 W** in milder conditions.

Services: We found one large-ish and 3 other 'Magazin' (grocery stores). We thought provisioning in N Fakarava was much better. Even with the supply ship here, there wasn't much.

Cash: We were shocked to find that the Post Office would not change either US Dollars or Euros for us—and there is no bank (Other places, like Fakarava and Gambiers, the Post Office readily changed US dollars in fairly large amounts). However, the big store accepted Dollars and changed some extra for us. s/v Infini also reported that the store did a cash advance on their Visa card for them.

Diesel is available in small quantities from the big store—most of the time. But we bought ours directly off the supply boat at a much better price. But they would only accept CFP.

Internet: Manaspot is available in the area of the Post Office, and there were 2 computers available inside the Post Office.

Sloepmouche 2002: Both passes are easy with good light. The pass at the village is marked for major traffic, and never seemed dangerous during the time we were there.

The West pass has a very nice protected anchorage in a little bay near a copra shed on the other side of the pass. We waited out some nasty weather there.

The anchorage in front of the village is uncomfortable to dangerous in heavy SE winds and the bottom is mostly hard with many coral heads, so you either don't hold or you wrap the anchor all around the coral.

Nice town with groceries and bread available, a hydroponics farm, infirmary, very comfortable internet access at the post office. See Gerard the black pearl sculptor (unique art) and shell and ivory (whale teeth) sculptor for unique souvenirs. Easy lagoon to navigate with few and well visible coral heads (in good light naturally) Always watch for pearl farm buoys even far from shore. Some farms west of the village may chase you away. Nice motus to anchor off about 8 nm SE of village: deserted, clear water, well protected from E-SE winds. Good drift diving and spearfishing (groupers) in passes. Ciguatera-free at this time.

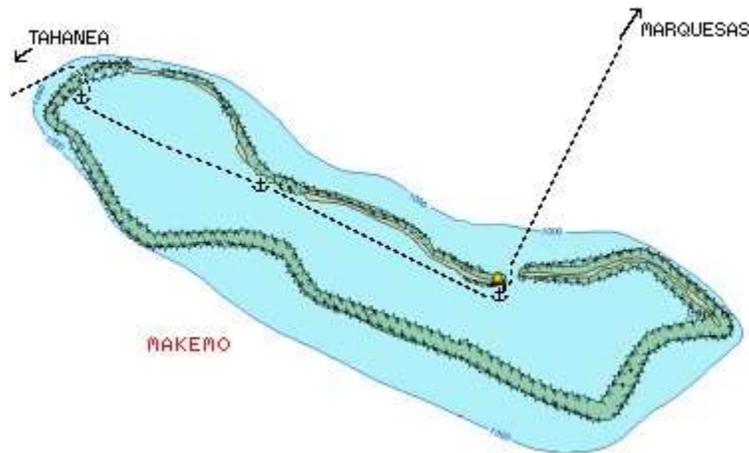
Migration 2008: We stopped briefly at Makemo to provision. However, it had been over two weeks since the supply ship had come and there wasn't much of anything fresh left. The wind was blowing hard from across the lagoon making for an uncomfortable, and slightly dangerous, anchorage. The next morning we sailed on.

Migration 2009: Makemo is due east of Katiu and, having one of the larger villages in the Tuamotus and good provisioning, made a logical next stop. We were surprised to find two boats in the anchorage—the first we'd seen in many weeks (it was early in the season). We bought fresh vegetables and bread and then headed to the east end of the atoll.

Though the Makemo village anchorage has little to recommend it, both the east and west ends of the atoll are beautiful. We found excellent snorkeling and improved our spear gun techniques. We ate a lot of parrot fish.

We'd intended to exit through the west pass and head southwest toward Motu Tunga; practically giving up on getting good winds for the Marquesas. But suddenly there was a forecasted change in the weather. We returned to the village to find new boats arriving from the Marquesas.

Ocelot: We really needed a rest after the last few days of the difficult passage down from the Marquesas. We were lucky that the current in the pass wasn't too bad, but the wind was howling from the SE, making the anchorage uncomfortable and unsafe, with a lee shore just behind us.



Then we noticed a little French catamaran tied to the concrete pier. We don't usually go to piers. They're often expensive, and they can have sharp protuberances that gouge our hull, or oily tires that mark our topsides, or rats, cockroaches, and other creepy-crawlies that try to climb on board. But in this case, we were desperate, so Sue got on the radio to ask what the story was. They told us there was no problem at the pier, no swell from the waves, and no charges either! So we tied off to a bollard (using long lines to avoid creepy-crawlies) and started catching up on lost sleep.

One of the amazing things about Makemo was the fishing. We'd heard about a nice anchorage about half way down the atoll, so we eventually left the village, unrolled some jib, and drifted down the lagoon. Since this was our first sail inside one of these lagoons, we kept a sharp lookout as we could see coral heads just under the surface. We passed some of these quite close by, and realized that they must come almost straight up from the bottom, as our depth sounder would give us no warning of an approaching coral head. Coral just under the surface is easy to see if the sun is shining brightly, but this day was full of clouds and even a few squalls, which cut visibility to almost nothing. Nevertheless, we put a couple fishing lines out, as we always do when day-sailing. Over the next hour, we pulled in 3 fat tuna-type fish, which yielded something like 20 lbs of boneless fillets. We hadn't had such good fishing before (or since).

Since Makemo has no ciguatera (a nasty reef poison), we dragged lines and caught three large fish along the way! We held a party on *Ocelot* the next night, serving some superb drum and other reef fish, then went down to the west pass for one more night before sailing to Tahanea.

The dancing was lovely, though not as lively as Marquesan.

We wanted to have supper ashore at one of the little food shacks, but were shocked to learn that no one sold fish. The only offerings were Steak Frite (steak and fries) for CFP1000 (about US\$10). We contented ourselves with boat food every night and then went ashore to see the dancing. They were dancing not only for their own island competition, but to choose a group to represent them later in July at the large festival on Fakarava.

From an SSCA Article 2003: There is a small dive operation here and two boys on *sv Kela* got certified here. We had standing waves at the time of Rangiroa high and for several hours afterwards on the day we arrived at the East pass. We never dove this pass. The West pass at Makemo is excellent and the walls outside are spectacular. Anchoring is difficult near the west pass with coral heads coming up 15 feet off the bottom to grab your anchor whichever way you swing. The walls were better than the pass and we found the south wall the best. Lots of large pelagic fish here- tuna weighing two hundred pounds, silky sharks and two 60 lb. Cubera snappers that followed us one entire dive like lost puppies.

4.3 Taenga (Iffy Pass)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24: There is a pass into the lagoon of this atoll but it is only 2m at the entrance. (more in guidebook)

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 96

4.4 Takume (No Pass)

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 100

4.5 Raroia (Pass, Small Village, no Supplies)

Guide Book: see Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: Charles and Margo Wood, 5th ed 2005; pages 100-101 for description and sketch map

Raroia is about 450 miles due south of Nuku Hiva in the Marquesas, and is often a first landfall for boats from the Marquesas. It is about 49 miles north of Makemo and 5 miles SW of Takume.

This is the atoll that the raft *Kon Tiki* finished its epic voyage from Easter Island in 1947.

There is a small village here, but it is on the leeward side of the atoll, with not much protection from prevailing east winds.

Kokopeli – November 2018: We elected to do an overnight motor to get over here, from Makemo, and make some more easting in light conditions. We arrived on the morning flood-before-slack, and got in without problems. We went down the channel along the motus to the village, and anchored a bit beyond it in shallow water, off the airport. Lots of bommies, and an out-of-service pearl farm horizontal line that was deep enough that we passed over it without problem.

We went ashore and found Regis and his new wife Tanea. Also her daughters and his mother, very great folks. He's growing vegetables, all is good. No usable cellular data here. But weather was threatening, so we left and went across the lagoon. It was flat calm and the light was not good (afternoon sun), which turned out to be difficult. The reflections of the clouds completely obscured seeing anything underwater. But we were following friends with satellite images, and made it OK. We anchored off the motu, south of the "Kon-Tiki Motu", in about 40' of water. Wind was up and down, rain, we went 350 degrees around our anchor. Visibility in the water was poor, so we had no interest in diving there. But when we were ready to leave, the chain came up without problem, and the anchor trailing a great plume of white sand. Guess we were OK. We followed our track back across the lagoon to the pass, amazing all the reefs/bommies we saw this time, that were completely missed a couple days before.

We turned north at the pass, and carefully explored to anchor there. From the chartplotter (Navionics) it seemed to have a better shelf on the east side, and that the west side was deep-to. Mostly the water was 60' plus, but we found two interesting spots. One was in the bight between the motu adjoining the pass on the north side and the next motu north. It's discernable as a lighter-colored patch of water, but not as light as the awash reefs in the lagoon. We motored right over it, it comes up to about 35' where the surrounding is all 60' plus. It's probably hard coral, but if you could stick the anchor you'd be OK with any wind shift. Approximate coordinates are 16°00.71 S, 142°26.84 W. Navionics has a rock charted approximately here. The other anchor spot is at the end of a sandbar/reef extending perpendicularly from the north end of the second motu north of the pass. It comes up to 35' pretty nicely, with deeper water all around. We anchored near it (16°00.45 S, 142°26.70 W) and held OK, in coral. Water clarity is much better here. Saw one 4' grey shark as we were checking out the anchor.

Looking at this spot later, the best patch of sand seems to be on the southwest side of the shallowest, most conspicuous, outcrop. These anchorages north of the pass are attractive if you're trying to drift dive in the pass, we weren't able to do this.

We went all the way around our anchor here, in 10 to 20 kt. winds. Actually this has happened a few times while we've been here in Rarioia, almost like a diurnal pattern. But we're also here while a shear zone between two systems has been passing. Plan for this. Our chain, although floated, was snagged on a few coral heads. Required a dive to 70', but conditions were then light, visibility good, and no sharks noticed. Exploring the Tuamotus without dive gear would be problematic.

Spunky – May 2017: Not all coral patches are on the maps/nor easily visible (we hit one on our crossing from the entrance pass to Kon Tiki motu). With cloudy weather it is really hard to see the patches.

Have a look at the pearl farm and bring them some fruit from the Marquesas, they appreciate it!

Jacaranda – August 2016: I had been in Rarioia 25 years ago and I was the only boat in the atoll at the time so was excited to return and show Linda her first atoll in the Tuamotus. We arrived off the pass at 06:00 and entered an hour before slack water with an outflow of 2-3 knots at 6:30am in heavy overcast and rain. Rarioia was on the cruiser track this year so many boats had stopped ahead of us and there were about 10-12 boats in the lagoon at the time we arrived.

Tracking across the lagoon requires keeping a careful look out as the bommies are numerous. There are two pearl farms with another one expected to startup in the next few months. Taking a straight line across the lagoon from the village will put you right in the middle of the pearl

farm administered from the village. We recommend going from the pass across the lagoon towards Kon Tiki island (see waypoints from Beach House below). If you are in the village already, then backtrack towards the pass before heading across the lagoon.

Pass: The pass is very straight forward, short and well charted. Staying to the north side will keep you out of most of the current and standing waves (if you don't time the pass right).

Just a note: A few days after we departed the wind had been strong 20+ kts for a few days along with a big S swell. The large supply ship tried entering the pass and usually they power thru the passes with not much concern over slack water. They ended up backing out of the pass as they could not make it into the lagoon due to the outflowing current. The ship waited 2 hours and went in reporting 8 knots out flowing current.

Keep in mind that if you have a choice its best to NOT enter with tide against wind as that can create large standing waves. This means for Rarioa if its windy from the E or SE its best to enter either at the start of an ebb or at the end of an ebb. In addition as has been pointed out earlier if there is a large swell running this will also push a lot of water in the lagoon. In windy conditions slack water may only be a few minutes or not at all.

Track across the Lagoon from Pass

From our friends on SV Beach House (with permission) with one comment from Jacaranda. The entrance to the lagoon on our charts says "Unsurveyed". Don't be alarmed, it's all deep except for the slightly submerged reeflets (I wouldn't call these bommies) that are clearly visible after 9 a.m. sunlight.

I will give you the waypoints that my track had including the "reeflets" that I recorded sort of in a direct line to my anchorage.

The reeflets I describe were in the direct line, there are lots more but quite easy to see.

After entering the pass, I moved over to the north side of the pass where the current was less.

I entered down the middle (purple line) on Navionics charts. Turned left (north) to:

16-00.7 S / 142-26.7 W

Then turned due east to:

16.00.7 S / 142-26.5 W

From there, I mostly took the straight line to where I am currently anchored at:

16-04.2 S / 142-22.0 W

The "reeflets of note" were at: (In order of West to East) Note the waypoints are where I WAS, not the reeflets - which were just near me. You'll see all of them plainly except the FIRST ONE... Quite small in diameter. All others are very obvious. There are lots of others, but not in what was my direct line.

There are pearl farms on the south part of the lagoon. Just an FYI to beware.

From entering the pass to the anchorage was about one hour (once inside) at 5.5 knots.

16-01.6 S / 142-25.2 W (This was the most difficult to see) (Jacaranda sez: we adjusted the WP to 16-01.590 S / 142 25.180 W to give us a bit more room from the bommie)

16-02.0 S / 142-24.5 W

16-02.7 S / 142-23.8 W

16-03.1 S / 142-23.4 W

16-03.4 S / 142-23.0 W

----- End Beach House -----

This year the weather was terrible while in Rarioa and after 3 weeks we counted 2-3 good days that did not include rain, very windy conditions, major wind changes or convergence zone crossing over us.

Village: The village is located about 1.5 miles from the pass in charted waters with a number of navigation aids. The village has a couple of magasins (small stores) that if stocked (recent supply ship) has a basic supply of items including frozen meats, milk, etc. No bakery here. Veggies are in short supply. We have heard from Silent Son (Chris & Jes that have spent 6+ months here) that you can buy fuel from the pearl farm closest to the village. Also you can buy diesel direct from the ship by the jug and gasoline in 200 liter drums (sharing amongst various cruising boats)

There is cell service at the village (Vini) and we were able to check email, etc using our internet stick (dongle) with a Vini data SIM card. You can get cell coverage in other parts of the lagoon but it all comes from the tower at the village. Further away the less the signal strength. Remember everything is uplifted via satellite meaning SLOW.

Village anchorage: We only anchored here one night in a NE breeze and found it reasonably protected. The bottom is littered with bommies and there were a number of boats anchored when we arrived forcing us into deeper water 45-50'. We did have trouble getting our anchor up when trying to leave early the next morning. The water is not clear so its best if you can anchor in shallower water where you can see and/or dive to clear your hook. Also this anchorage is on the leeward side of the lagoon in normal trade wind conditions and can get very lumpy. Not our favorite anchorage in Rarioa.

We first anchored in a spot that we felt was far far away from the onshore pearl farm near the village but a boat came out and politely asked us to move away. We moved 60 meters further S towards the Ohuhe reef in 45-50'. No further requests to move.

Eastern Side of the lagoon: The choice is yours where you want to anchor and can gain protection. The bottom is usually sand with some bommies. We usually floated our chain when anchoring. There are a number of hoa's (small inlets that let water flow into the lagoon) along this side of the reef. We have found that at times there would be some current when anchored close to the hoa's and in strong breeze could create some lumpy conditions.

Kon Tiki Motu (16-03.869 S / 142-21.568 W)

This is a small motu where the Kon Tiki crash landed on the reef. There is now a small monument on the motu and is a favorite spot for beach BBQ's. Excellent Kite Boarding spot just to the S of this motu with a tiny sand beach for launching. If you can obtain the original B&W documentary by Thor Hyerdahl there is some footage of the Kon Tiki Motu.

Pearl Farm (approximate 16-04.826 S / 142-22.282 W--not sure of exact motu coordinates but south about 1km from Kon Tiki motu.) We dinghied down from where we were anchored about 1 mile further N. Interesting way to spend a few hours. They have a nice dock that you can tie your dinghy to and are very welcoming to cruisers. The woman who is in charge is a delightful lady (Gigi) from New Caledonia. When we stopped there to visit there were 12 Chinese grafters

working inserting the starter graft. They do not sell the pearls as they have a shop in Papeete. We found it worthwhile.

Nice Snorkeling Bommies (nothing compares to snorkeling the pass but still contained a nice collection of fish)

16-03.745 S / 142-21.692 W Close to Kon Tiki Motu

16-04.498 S / 142-22.202 W About 1/4 mile S of the SP's anchorage waypoint

North East Rarioa: Due to the weather conditions we ended up spending a week or more on the north east part of the lagoon and really enjoyed it. The water was flat calm when we were there even though it was blowing NE 20+. Because the Motus are all tree covered the area was very protected. There were a few nice bommies to snorkel and the reef provided an interesting reef walk. Linda especially liked the inside of the motus in shallow water that contained lots of tropical reef fish, sharks, rays and octopus.

A couple places to anchor in the NE end.

15 56.975 S / 142 18.986 W Where we anchored in 14' in a sandy spot. We floated the chain

15 57.1175 / 142 18.963 W Larger sandy spot in about 15'. Anchor chain floated.

15 56.6976S 142 19.0261W Another boat anchored here.

Soggy Paws (July 2010): We stopped in Rarioa mainly as the eastern-most jumping off point for sailing to the Marquesas. We had a nice overnight motorsail from Makemo, between fronts in light east wind, and thought we had a good weather window within a day or so, to head for the Marquesas. However, the High below us strengthened up, and all of a sudden the forecast of 15 kts SE changed to 20-25kts ESE-E. So instead of spending a night or two in Rarioa, we ended up spending over a week there.

However, the good news is that it is a lovely atoll. We headed straight east from the pass without stopping in the town. In July, the sun is far enough north, even in the morning, that it wasn't hard to see and avoid the isolated coral reefs in the very deep surrounding water.

With some time on our hands, we started searching for the Kon-Tiki landing spot. Unfortunately, we hadn't done any research before we left the internet, and the location shown on Charlie's Charts was not specific enough to be useful. Finally we begged a computer-savvy friend back in the U.S. to do some internet research for us. He found (with great difficulty) a waypoint, and an article about a monument dedication held in 2007. Unfortunately, the waypoint was out in the middle of the reef—perhaps Kon-Tiki's first resting place. But a photo from the article finally led us to the correct motu that had the monument. Waypoints are listed below for our various anchorages and the Kon-Tiki sites.

We did all our navigating close in along the eastern side of the atoll. In July, the sun transits a course pretty far north, so the best time to go NORTH along the atoll rim is in the late afternoon. Going south is pretty easy at any time of the day. We laid a 'snail trail' with our GPS and chartplotter, and used that to navigate back in less-than-perfect light. The depth is normally about 45', with coral heads usually easily visible very close to the surface.

You can anchor pretty much anywhere along the back side of the reef. Though in heavier winds, anchoring behind the bigger atolls affords better wind protection.

Lat	Long	Comment
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16-03.49S	142-21.47W	First anchorage, near '3 Palm Island', ok for lighter wind conditions.
16-03.85S	142-21.68W	Anchored off the Kon-Tiki Monument island, 35' sand
16-03.87S	142-21.546	The Kon-Tiki Monument (inland on island)
16-03.87S	142-21.56W	Purported location of Kon-Tiki (on the reef)
16-04.78S	142-22.31W	Pretty spot, moderate protection from strong winds
16-05.65S	142-22.59W	Pearl Farm—watch for buoys, some with visible buoys and some submerged without any markers!
16-06.26S	142-22.67W	Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot
16-08.34S	142-23.56W	Nice anchorage, good protection, pretty spot.

We did not go ashore at the Pearl Farm. Another cruiser told us they had met them on approach in an outboard, and let them on a safe track through the pearl buoys. And they were not unfriendly, they were just not overly friendly.

We had already picked a safe passage through the buoys (close to the reef), they did not come out to guide us through. Though on a second time through the area, we spotted some submerged pearl buoy strings that we hadn't noticed before—no buoys marking them at all, and barely visible under the water (maybe at a depth that wouldn't have bothered us).

Unknown sailboat-June 2010: (by Soggy Paws): We had a nice conversation on VHF with a boat passing by who's name I don't remember. They spent a week or so in Rarioa. They anchored off the village (a little s of the pass), and then picked their way across the atoll to the east side--not hard they said. They spent a few days there and then came back and anchored near the pass ready to go out in the morning. There a local couple stopped by--they live on the island that is on the north side of the pass. This boat ended up staying there a few days and diving and snorkeling in and around the pass with the locals.

Australia 31 / Pincoya (June 2010): We spent 3 weeks in Rarioa. The people in the town very friendly, especially Regis and Tatiana, who live in a small bungalow near the airport. Many people in Rarioa speak English, so that was nice for us. The locals told us that we could eat the fish inside the lagoon on the east side of the atoll, so we fished from the boats and caught and ate grouper and 'sweet lips', a light colored snapper type with an orange throat. We used clams and fish for bait.

Pursuit IV (Late April 2010): Rarioa was very nice. The entrance was easy and we really enjoyed it there. The locals were very friendly.

We floated around Lat 16 01.009'S, Long 142 27.70'W, to enter the atoll when there was slack tide. There are very good markers that mark the course of 90.7 degrees, which set it up nicely. Good channel markers in and we anchored at 16 02.327'S, 142 28.184'W. Very beautiful anchorage and lots of black tipped sharks. The morning we left there was at least 5 swimming around our boat.

From an SSCA Article 2003: Slack tide seemed to be two hours after Rangiroa low and one and a half hours after Rangiroa High. This is one of the best pass dives in the Tuamotus and we dove it quite a few times. We saw from 50-150 sharks on every dive as well as 4-foot groupers, tuna, large parrotfish and many smaller species. We also had excellent diving on the walls outside the pass.

4.6 Motutunga (No Real Pass)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 94

This atoll is about 20 miles ESE of Tahanea.

Hildegard Hansen – May 2016: Light NW winds slowed down my passage from Hao to Tahanea. Willing not to spend the night on the lee of Tahanea I decided to try the entrance of Motutunga.

Having no guide I went on exploring.

There is a **pass** at approximately 17 02.84S 144 22.29W but it is really shallow and not suitable for a yacht.

The pass marked as "Passe Nord Ouest" on my Cmap Charts (a little off set) at approximately 17 03.68S 144 24.30W.... is not a real passe !!

It is a deep channel (5 meters at the entrance, around 15 inside) around 0.5 mile long and 45 meters large that become so shallow not to allow the entrance of a yacht in the lagoon.



The current can be fierce but on the East side of the passe, there is a little coral wharf (10 meter long) with good depth around (4-7 meter right near wharf) where it is possible to tie up (island style concrete bollards). Some tires are already attached as fenders!

Ashore plywood houses are probably used when copra is collected.

Near the wharf the current loses its intensity and gets almost slack, at times a slow counter current is created.

I came in late in the afternoon with a strong outside current ... going out at almost slack high tide was much easier!

Maybe it was not necessary (having somebody on board to help with the lines) but to keep my bow in the current I had to drop an anchor in the pass and I then tied some lines to the dock

To keep the boat away from the dock there is a coral head on the west reef that looks like is made exactly to put a long line on it.

Dinner can be easily caught on the pass (mind current and sharks) and grilled ashore.

There are plenty Caveo (coconut crabs?) for lunch on the nearby west motu (mind your fingers). To collect some nice coconuts is better to go on the motu all the way on the west of the atoll. There is some exploring to do, pretty snorkeling and edible shells.

It has been a nice stop!

4.7 Hiti and Tuanake

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; page 96

4.8 Katiu (Pass, Small Village)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 92-93

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25

Cruising Reports:

Migrations (2009): Friends on another boat had told us about the little-visited atoll of Katiu. The pass was a bit tricky but we were able to ask a local fisherman for directions and squeezed through with just a few meters on either side. (they have a beam of 25' on their trimaran).



We spent a week exploring and snorkeling near the village. I gave a presentation to 30 kids at the elementary school; Alene did a fantastic job translating into French. Getting lost one day (hard to do on an atoll that is only a few hundred meters wide), we met Calixte and Tania, and their cadre of 7 dogs. Calixte is Tahitian and Tania is Greek-Russian. They moved to Katiu many

years ago to start a pearl farm. We shared several meals together including a delicious lobster and champagne brunch.

Like most pearl farmers, Calixte is crazy about it and loves explaining the entire process. We had a fantastic time scuba diving in the middle of the atoll with Calixte, helping him with his oyster lines.

(I have edited a lot out of here from their log, called Migrations 11, it would be worth reading, but it's too long for this document)

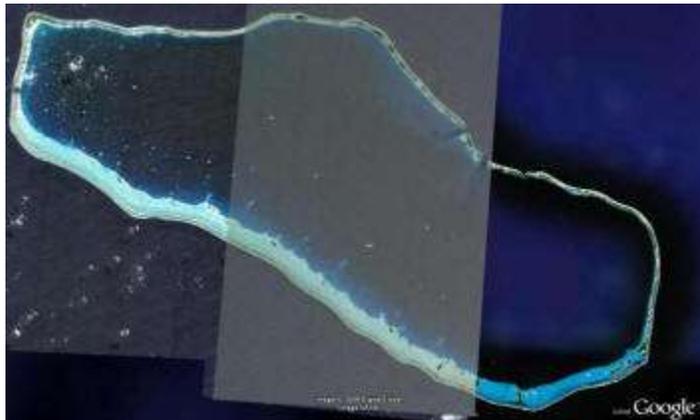
We walked the reef beachcombing, learned how to use our spear gun, barbequed shrimp and roasted marshmallows on a fire on the beach, gathered coconuts, swam every day, did yoga at sunset, lay on deck watching the Southern Cross and searching for satellites. Life was good. The east end of Katiu was, and remains, our favorite spot in the Tuamotus.

Other notes:

- The supply ship comes every 2 weeks
- There is a post office
- The village is about 250 people

4.9 Tahanea (Pass)

Tahanea is reportedly a national park, and it is mostly uninhabited. There are some buildings near the east pass, and a big plastic cistern, but they are seldom occupied.



Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 26

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 94-95

Cruising Reports:

Pitufa – 2017 – Be Kind to the Nesting Birds

We have spent the last 5 years in French Polynesia, a great part of that time in the Tuamotus. One of our favourite places is Tahanea, in particular the SW-side where a handful of natural motus (i.e. not just copra plantations) provide a refuge for birds. Sadly, there are not many of such places left in the Tuamotus, almost all atolls were cleared and turned into plantations at some point.

We visited Tahanea many times over the years and noticed a decline in the number of birds nesting there.

We witnessed several worrying things that endanger those nesting grounds, particularly the ground-breeding birds such as brown and masked boobies are shied away easily. Many locals are not environmentally aware and don't think about sustainability, but we can't do anything about that. Unfortunately many cruisers are also inconsiderate as we have seen too many times.

They drop their anchors in coral, go kitesurfing on beaches with nesting birds, have bonfires there, take their dogs ashore and hunt coconut crabs at night.

To be honest, each visitor to those motus disturbs the birds, even people who are careful and aware. The 'Number 7' reef mentioned in the compendium is one of these bird motus that has become very popular with cruisers in the last years, and now the birds are not safe there either.

Please ask everyone visiting to consider the birds in this very fragile ecosystem.

Kokopeli – October 2018: We left Fakarava by the south pass, using the guestimator. Current flow in the pass was a stronger ebb than the guestimator predicted, in accordance with some of the supplementary notes included with it. Even the dive operators seem to just have to watch it, to determine the day's slack. It seems to usually be an ebb. That said, it wasn't too difficult to wash on out, we saw probably 3 kts when we went through. Then a motor sail to Tahanea.

We entered Tahanea at the middle pass, against a 2 kt ebb. Not difficult, we turned to starboard and anchored SW of the motu between the middle and west passes. A good anchorage, secure in these conditions. There seemed to be one person living ashore in a semi-permanent setup, with a boat. We didn't contact him, but we were visited by another individual in a different boat. He had some English, and explained that he was a caretaker/watchman for the island. He asked us to sign into a guest log he had, and indicate when we had arrived and when we would be leaving. No fees were assessed. He was quite pleasant.

We snorkel drift-dived all three passes. The most fun was probably the NW pass. We timed it to be out there just before the morning high slack. As this occurred, we saw many manta rays converging on the pass, on or just below the surface. We jumped in, and were able to swim with them as they fed on the incoming plankton. Visibility dropped noticeably with the plankton, but was still good. Also good coral, particularly on the west side. The east pass was also fun, it's divided on the inside by a reef. The west channel was shallow and narrow, but easy for snorkel. Lots of interesting fish in all three, and good coral. After a few days we relocated to anchor in the lee of the motu between the middle and east passes. Also nice, and secure.

We saw, and were seen by, sharks every time we were in the water, in Fakarava and in Tahanea. Generally they were black-tips and black-tip reef, to a maximum size of 4 ft. They didn't seem aggressive, although one circled me. I wish I knew more about shark behavior as it relates to divers, what would be warning signs. I've been told that banking turns around you, and spinning, vertical passes are a very bad sign. Maybe DAN has more information on this.

Mary Anne II – October 2017 - Correction to GPS position for anchorage on sandy shelf

"Fellow Traveler" mentions "There are a number of narrow 10 foot deep sand banks further South and West, including: 16-54.04 S / 144-39.37 W." - that position should be corrected to 16-59.04' S (i.e. just a typo that 54 in the S position should be a 59)

We anchored here - in 3 meters and used a couple of anchor floats for the tiniest of bommies.

The camp on the island was occupied by a brother and sister - harvesting copra over a 3 month annual stay at Atoll.

We found a lovely active shallow coral shelf that is easily snorkeled (in waist deep water) running along the LEFT/North half of the Motu - facing into the Atoll - and lots of sea cucumbers in the (false) "pass" to the Left/North.

We also visited the NE corner of the atoll... Anchored (16°53.12'S , 144°34.93W)

A nice easy paddle/snorkel on overhanging coral shelf along the beach/shore line (1m depth)

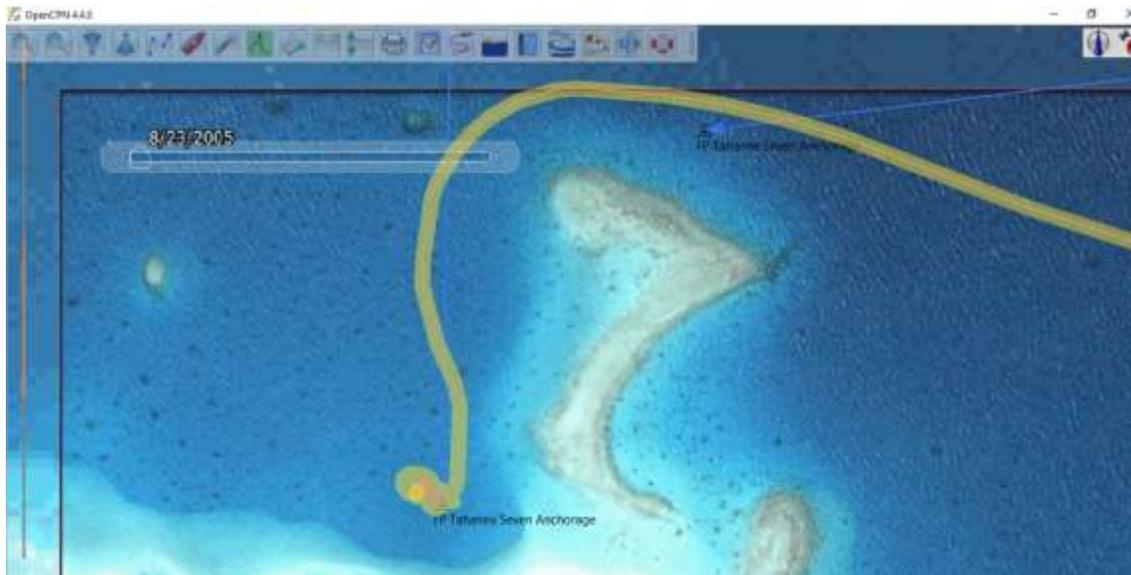
On a calm day we went ashore and hiked across the motu to the exposed coast. There are small ponds inland, and the easiest path from one side to the other is marked with cairns and propped up plastic flotsam. The land itself is mostly old/broken large bits of broken/jagged coral so you need good shoes (or very, very, very tough feet).

Jacaranda – 2016 – The “7” Anchorage

The anchorage that Soggy Paws mentions below that they didn't check out, we did. We call this the 7 anchorage because from GE it looks like a perfect number 7. We anchored at the 7 anchorage and spent a peaceful night. The trades were E and not very windy but have talked to a couple of friends who spent a few nights here on both sides with good success. Some of the reef dries out at low tide. Both sides provide good access to the closest motu which has good birding

Anchorage: 16 57.1146S / 144 44.5333W 30' sand with some bommies. We floated the chain.

Warning: Just be aware if anchoring here and planning on heading back to the pass you will most likely have poor light. Probably best to go here from the pass and then to the SE corner and then back to the pass.



Soggy Paws (early May 2010): A decent anchorage is possible near the eastern pass, Pass D'Otao, and navigation is easy between the other common anchorage just west of the middle pass. Anchor along a narrow shelf in 35-50' sand with low scattered coral heads at 16-51.715S 144-39.84W

From this anchorage, you can easily dinghy to the 'town' which has a cistern (big black plastic container next to a building). From here you can also see the incoming current stream on the eastern pass. Good spot to stage for a dive of the eastern pass.

There was a big yellow 'go-fast' Cigarette boat that arrived when we were there. It looked like they had tourists aboard (about 10 people total) for an overnight visit to the island. They said they had come from Fakarava. One person on board said he was a policemen or park ranger, and asked where we had come from. He checked the passports for each of the 3 boats there,

for a proper entry stamp. (note, this is the only check anyone did anywhere we've been in the Tuamotus).

When we talked to them ashore and asked about the water, they invited us to use some (for laundry). They also handed us each (boat) a fresh baguette!

A few days later...For the whole time we have been here, only our 3 cruising boats have been here. There was another boat (a large private yacht) who came in and anchored right by the pass for 2-3 nights during the stormy weather, but as soon as the weather cleared, they left. And they never went anywhere else but that one anchorage by the pass.

We have anchored in about 6 places and traversed twice the NE and E sectors of the atoll (see below for waypoints). The anchorage that we found as a refuge from the strong SE winds (Taha5, in the SE corner of the atoll) has been the best so far. It is 9 miles SE of the main pass. We have a nice anchorage in 15' of water in good sand, with protection from ENE to SSW. There is a nice palm-studded motu protecting us from the wind and chop. We have been shelling and opening coconuts on the beach. And we actually walked around the whole island, and explored the shallow windward lagoon between the motu and the reef (where we could go lobster-walking at night, if we wanted to).

We did drift dives in the passes, and had planned to do a couple of more before the bad weather set in. There are 3 passes side-by-side in Tahanea, so a lot of varied terrain to explore. On the outside of the pass, we saw sharks, dolphins, and big pelagic fish. In the pass... tons and tons of live coral of every variety and all the pretty reef fish you can imagine... We have yet to take a camera on a drift dive yet... still getting used to the procedure.

There is no one living here on this atoll. It has been turned into a park, so there are no permanent habitations and no pearl farms. We saw a 'park ranger' come by via speedboat from a neighboring atoll when we first got here. He welcomed us to use the water in the cistern next to the block building at the east pass, which is normally unoccupied. He said he visits Tahanea about once a month to check on things. He and a few friends stayed overnight and left the next morning. The only formalities, when he was here, was to look at our passports to make sure we had cleared in to French Polynesia somewhere else.

John on s/v Nakia has an intriguing Google Earth photo of the lagoon, and the 3/4 of the lagoon we have NOT explored looks very inviting. With a few days of settled weather, we could explore the whole atoll inside the rim, and try to find a location that has perfect protection from the occasional weather systems.

We were especially looking at a spot at 16-57N and 144-44.6W, where a spit of coral comes way off the surrounding rim into the lagoon. If an anchorage could be found on both sides of that spit, by moving once, you could get almost complete 360 degree protection. But we never checked this out.

Heading West to Fakarava: The distance is such that we can't easily make it daylight and in the 12 hours imposed by the requirement to enter and leave lagoons at slack current. So we made this in an easy overnight. In very calm weather, though, we learned, you don't need perfect slack to come and go, even from Fakarava S. Pass.

Here are our Tahanea waypoints, for our cruising friends following in our wake.

Going in the Pass

TAHAAPPR S16°50.1375' W144°39.2266'

TAHAPASS S16°50.9968' W144°41.0125'

TAHA IN S16°51.5110' W144°41.1084'

Anchorage:

TAHA1 S16°51.7245' W144°39.8052' Near E Pass, Moderate depth, some coral

TAHA2 S16°54.8479' W144°34.4900' E side of atoll, nice snorkeling

TAHA3 S16°50.6107' W144°41.8510' Lots coral, some NW protection

TAHA4 S16°51.0551' W144°41.5240' 25-30' Lots coral, good snorkeling, nr main pass

TAHA5 S16°57.2234' W144°34.8063' 14' sand, few heads, Good prot ENE to SSW

Day snorkel spots

TAHA6 S16°52.1230' W144°37.8250' Day anch., good snorkeling, 25' some heads

T16 S16°54.4110' W144°34.4916' NICE HEADS

T17 S16°52.5911' W144°36.0481' SNORKELING

Direct Route from Taha5 back to Middle Pass

TH RT#1 S16°56.6190' W144°35.5768' ARE isolated heads on this route, but easily

TH RT#2 S16°56.1030' W144°36.4693' spied with a good deck watch

TH RT#3 S16°54.4900' W144°38.0397' Depths 75-100 feet, with heads at 2'

TH RT#4 S16°53.5460' W144°38.7766'

TH RT#5 S16°51.8160' W144°41.0232'

The easiest navigation between anchorages listed above is to stay close around the rim. Stay in ~60. Only dicey spot is at Taha6. Easily seen and avoided from the deck on a reasonable day, but we recommend a stop to snorkel. This was the best snorkeling INSIDE the lagoon. There is a pinnacle that comes up from about 40' with tons of pretty fish and sea life at about 5' deep, easy dinghy (or moderate swim) distance from Taha6.

Fellow Traveler (late May 2010): I found no anchorages as nice as the Soggy Paws anchorage. I anchored at approximately 16-57.2' S / 144-44.8' W in 12 feet, sand, and no coral within wrapping range. There are a number of narrow 10 foot deep sand banks further South and West, including: 16-54.04 S / 144.39.37 W. One could anchor on the edge and have swinging room, although swinging out away from the reef into the deeper water risks wrapping a coral head. A Bahamian moor would work nicely here, with the two anchors running along the bank in the clear sand. This way one could not swing in too close to the reef/shallows, or out into the coral heads. The location given is on the SW corner of a group of three particularly attractive motus, so might be worth the effort.

Shallow draft boats such as catamarans would love some of these spots. The water is so clear when it is calm that it looks almost too shallow for any boat, but I crossed several right at 10 feet with my depth finder beeping steadily at me (12' alarm setting).

There are endless anchoring possibilities in this corner of the atoll at 35 feet with sand and coral heads should anyone want to anchor in them. That is a bit deep for me to free dive and unwrap

chain from coral so I will pass. My dinghy can take me to these motus from the Soggy Paws anchorage.

Nakia's spot: This spot mentioned by Soggy Paws at 16-57N and 144-44.6W indeed could be a good place to ride out a "sheer-line" or "trough" weather event. The reef is somewhat represented by the reef contours on C-maps. One can anchor on either side of the reef, which trends NNW, and has a definite East-going hook at the outer end, and a less-defined one to the West. The one to the East creates a nice, semi-circular anchorage in 20-30 feet with numerous bommies, although most are below the depth of my vessel. One would have some protection from the North here, but not much. Anything West of due North, all the way around to South would have excellent protection. South East it starts getting dicey again, and East to North is exposed. Obviously, the further into the little pocket one is willing to go, the better protection from the North. An approximate position for this spot is 16-57.05' S x 144-44.36.

Snorkeling here was not bad: nice around the coral heads, but the main reef was mostly dead. This is the first place I have ever snorkeled where the grouper come out of hiding to stare at me! They clearly have never seen a human before! I have read in other blogs that there is no ciguatera here and that cruisers have eaten the grouper. However, before I will risk it, I would want to speak to someone from the area and confirm this.

The West side of this reef has more options for anchoring, again in 20-30 foot depths, with perhaps slightly fewer coral heads. It offers excellent protection from the South to the East and North-East. Thus, one could move back and forth between the anchorages as the winds shifted, getting absolute protection from all directions except due North. There is a Motu just to the East of this reef, and it has another 10-foot anchoring sand shelf that is tight, but usable, and plenty of 25-35 foot with coral head spots between the motu and the reef. There is also a reef just to the North of this motu, so it might be possible to anchor between it and the Motu and get better protection from the North, but I did not investigate this area.

Australia 31 (mid June 2010): We saw the very rare Tuamotu Sandpiper (the reason the atoll is a park) on the east side of the atoll, while anchored at 16-57.91S / 144-35.6W. They are brown, with barred 'underpants' and dirty yellow legs. They have a shorter beak than most sandpipers and eat insects rather than sea life. They are usually located up on the beach near the vegetation, rather than in the surf zone.

We also went to the 3 motus in the middle of Tahanea, where we found nesting frigate birds. The frigate babies were just amazing. We did not find a good anchoring spot, but left someone aboard with the boat while 2 of us went ashore in the dinghy.

Narama (June 2011): We enjoyed a protected anchorage in ENE corner of atoll 016 53.725 S 144 34.596 W widely spread coral heads, 5-9 metres deep.

The snorkeling was good, there is a small landing beach nearby and the motu stretches for miles and is great for walking on both sides.

Re- the sandpiper, ditto 'Australia 31' comment, we only saw it on the 3 motus south of the anchorage they describe. There was also a PhD student from Canada camped on one of the motus on the far south side of the atoll studying these birds. We never met her in person but spoke on the radio and she was very friendly. As for other birds there are many nesting and inhabiting all the eastern motus we visited including the atoll fruit dove.

From an SSCA Article 2003: We did several dives on the walls outside Teavatapu pass as well as a drift dive in the pass. Our favorite was the wall to the east of the pass. On one pass dive we

started during the last 15 minutes of the incoming tide. Slack tide lasted 5 minutes and 10 minutes after the tide change the outgoing current was raging and there were 8-foot standing waves in the pass entrance. In this case surfacing IMMEDIATELY is essential to avoid being swept out the pass where the dinghy would have great difficulty finding you.

Sloepmouche 2002: Very easy middle pass (entrance at 16°51'S / 144°41'W), wide and deep. Of course, we timed our entrance. We saw 2 boats make a terrifying exit in the middle of the outgoing current. Good anchorage is found just behind the right side of pass (10-20 ft sand with isolated coral heads, protected from N to SE).

Good snorkeling and spearfishing in all 3 passes and vicinity. We went in the NE corner of the atoll to do some beachcombing, lobster hunting on the reefs at night (not as easy as some say!) and coconut crab (kave) hunting, also at night (see natives for the method!). Except for a few seasonal fishermen, the lagoon is uninhabited. We were told that all the fish were safe to eat except a certain type of grouper, which fits more the description of a red dog-toothed snapper.

Phantom (2000): The island is uninhabited all but 4 months of the year, when copra farmers move into the small village and harvest the coconuts. The highlight of our visit here was snorkeling in the pass. Timing our swim for the slack tide before the ebb, we would begin paddling about 300 yards inside the pass over a shallow coral reef. As we explored the reef, the ebbing current would begin to build and we would start to get carried by the increasing current over the reef and out the pass. We just floated on the surface as the current rushed us along.

4.10 Faaite (Pass)



Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 86-87

Cruising Reports:

Migration: The wind direction didn't allow us to anchor inside the lagoon so we spent the night just outside the pass

Sloepmouche: Easy, well marked pass. The described outside anchorage can be uncomfortable with S. swell or with occasional W. wind and you anchor on a hard coral shelf. Inside anchorage is not protected from East sector winds and is about ½ mile away from the village. The lagoon is reported difficult to navigate because of the numerous pearl farm stations!

Pass makes an interesting drift-snorkel on an ingoing current especially past the town pier and the fish traps they call *Parc à poissons*. There is a dinghy pass thru the reef that brings you close to the village in protected water. If you come from the anchorage inside, come back as if you are exiting the pass and just before you reach the town pier, you'll see the sticks marking the channel on your left.

4.11 Raraka (Pass)

The atoll of Raraka is located 10 miles SE of Kauehi.

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 71-72

White Princess 2010: Pass is narrow & shallow with permanent out flow of 3 knots or more at HW. We got to less than 1m under the keel (7' keel) in both arms of the pass before abandoning the attempt. There are leading lines & beacons in the lagoon but the village would not have much shelter except in NE to N winds.

We found the beacons here to be very confusing which was the main reason we abandoned the attempt to enter the lagoon, and the lagoon itself also appeared very shallow.

4.12 Kauehi (Easy Pass, Airport, Supplies)

Guide Books:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 26

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia, 2001, pg 69

Yacht Comments

Jacaranda – September 2018: USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauehi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette. This warning does **NOT** include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings.

Starry Horizons (May 2016): We arrived in the late morning slack tide. The tide was still a strong 4 knots, and the turbulence of the pass was visible, but the pass was wide and clear. We had no trouble coming through on one engine.

First we headed up the channel towards the village, but on VHF we chatted with some friends and decided to head south instead of anchoring near the village. We made our way down through the coral heads to: **15-56.270 S / 145-03.364 W**

We anchored in 30 feet of water. There were a few coral heads around, with some of their tops reaching up to 10 feet deep. We only had one small coral head in our swing zone for the chain. We snorkeled this area, exploring the coral heads between Starry Horizons and the beach. Visibility was good.

The next morning we moved to the "official" Southern Anchorage:

15-57.514 S / 145-04.754 W

Just to the west of our position were two large flat-top coral heads. Starry Horizons was anchored on a sand bank, 10 feet deep. We had no coral heads around us, and the water was crystal clear. To the east of us, our friends in a monohull anchored in 30 feet of water. There is clear color demarkation between the 10 foot bank and the 30 foot surrounding areas.

This is the idyllic anchorage. The water was beautifully clear. The beach was easy access and we walked the circumference of the motu and collected shells. The point of the motu has a small shack and concrete table. We had a bon fire one night on the point.

The snorkeling is fantastic. The two large coral heads are full of fish and black tipped reef sharks. We had up to four sharks at once. Very curious, but a good splash scares them away if needed.

YOLO (June 2011): We approached Kauehi after three days of no wind or very light winds in the Tuamotus. We could see a few standing waves when viewing the Arikitamiro pass from a distance. However, soon thereafter we entered the Arikitamiro Pass 80 minutes AFTER the slack tide was estimated by the "Current Guestimator" and the waters were dead flat and our motoring speed didn't vary at all. Perfect timing, a first for us.

The weather was quickly changing and the three day strong blow from the south, southeast, and east was starting to materialize, a mara'amu. We decided to seek shelter in the southeastern corner of the lagoon which was about 7 miles east of the pass. We set a waypoint at the inside of the pass at 15-56.926 S / 145-10.622 W and headed east to waypoint 15-56.18 S / 145-05.86 W. This route had water in the hundred foot range and we did not observe any reefs to avoid. Next, we traveled southeast to waypoint 15-57.47 S / 145-04.63 W which was highlighted in the Tuamotu Compendium. By this time the wind had really started to pick up and this potential anchorage location which is behind a reef and between two motus didn't offer ideal protection.

We decided to motor 1.5 miles northeast along the coast using eye-ball navigation and dropped our hook in a perfect location to sit out the high winds. We did not see any hazards along the way. Our anchor touched sand in 22 feet of water just north of **Mahuehue** at 15-56.206 S / 145-03.328 W, the extreme eastern part of the lagoon. This area has very few coral heads and offers great protection from wind and waves from the N, NE, E, SE, S and SW. There are no goods or services available at this location.

After a few days in the southeastern part of the lagoon we sailed north to Tearavero village. We traveled about 7 miles directly from the SE anchorage noted above to waypoint 15-50.10 S and 145-07.25 W with the sun high in the sky. Our C-Map NT+ navigation software did not chart this area so we had to use eye-ball navigation. Traveling between these two waypoints kept us at least a quarter of a mile away from six reefs, yet mid-way we had to make a slight jog around a

large reef. Almost all of the trip was in 70+ feet of water and the reefs are easy to see in good light. We also had to avoid the pearl farm buoys near the village.

You can anchor west of **Tearavero village** in three locations. The first location (western anchorage) is directly west of the village with a reef to the south and north of it. If you jog around the northern reef you have access to the second anchorage (middle anchorage) which we used. We anchored in 22 feet of water, sand bottom with a few coral heads, at 15-49.263 S and 145-07.041 W. The middle anchorage also has a reef to the south and north of it. If you jog around the northern reef of the middle anchorage you can move further east and anchor north of the village. All three locations provide you with good protection from the N, NE, E, SE, and S. The southern anchorage is closest to the village, yet when the supply ship visits the village the shuttle barge creates a lot of wake. You can easily motor your dingy from the middle anchorage through the reef to the village. If you are expecting a big blow from the NE, E, SE, or S, pick the northern anchorage if you are going to stay near the village.

The best Tearavero village landmark is the tall church. Just west of the church is a 200 meter long concrete wharf. You can tie your dingy up at the end of the wharf. On Fridays you will have to pull your dingy onto the sand beach north of the wharf because the supply ship shuttle uses the wharf for most of the day. When you walk down the wharf towards the church you will see a large steel trash barrel near the first building (a copra warehouse). Between the warehouse and the church you will see a large black fresh water container. According to the village "Policeman" cruisers can drop off their trash and use the fresh water at the warehouse location. The road in front of the church is concrete for several blocks in each direction. If you face the church and turn left (north) and go several hundred meters you will see the village government, police, and postal service offices on your right. If you face the church and turn right, go several hundred meters and turn left at the first gravel road, you will see the only village store on your right.

The posted hours on the store don't mean a thing, it's open when it is open. The store has a few basic items (at least half of the items are junk food), some frozen meats and canned or boxed goods; it never has fruits, and only onions, garlic, and sometimes potatoes are available for fresh veggies. Most items are very expensive, even by French Polynesian standards. The selection didn't appear to change after the arrival of the Friday supply ship. However, on Saturday and Monday the only planes that visit the island arrive. The planes bring fresh baguettes from Tahiti, 130 CFP each. The village does not have a bakery. Try to be at the store about an hour after the plane touches down...baguettes disappear quickly.

During our stay in Tearavero we spoke with numerous locals (in our broken French) and assisted them in planting coconut trees and building a garage. Everyone was warm and welcoming.

After a week of 20+ knot winds from the east, we sailed out of the lagoon and through the pass about three hours AFTER the estimated time for slack tide, according to the "Current Guestimator." The waters were ebbing at about 4-5 knots. We stayed to the east side of the pass in 50+ feet of water and the largest wave we experienced was under a foot tall. However, the western side of the pass had 1 meter high waves, spaced every 2 meters, screaming towards the ocean!

Australia 31 (2010): In late June, we found nesting boobies on a motu on the west side of the atoll. Our anchor spot there was: 15-51.776S / 145-15.317W

White Princess (2010): Pass is wide & deep with >12m. Inflow on flood tide can cause small overfalls inside the lagoon. Overfalls are slight on out going tide, but watch for whirlpools

forming. The lagoon is deep with a clear run from the pass to the village. supplies & airport. Village anchorage is exposed in se winds, but more shelter can be found to the north of the village, but it is a bit of a long walk in 0.5 mile. Watch out for pearl farms in the lagoon. most are quite deep.

People here are very welcoming & friendly. There is a small tourist charge of 40CPF per person per day.

Mr: John (2008): For many yachts arriving via the Marquesas, this was their first island in (2008) and it was very popular, the pass is very straightforward and then there is a clear reach across to the town where you can anchor off. You have to exit the same way as you came in. Said to be very friendly and nice ashore. Some yachts anchored close inside the pass and said the snorkelling was very good and the anchorage quite easy.

Phantom (2000): Here we visited the village of Tearavero, for almost 3 weeks. There are about 350 people on this island, and a few supplies.

We anchored about 200 yards from the concrete jetty in about 40 feet of water. No sooner had we tied the dinghy to the jetty than 25 village children mobbed us with smiles, chattering in French, and using hand signals to bridge the language abyss.

We found of the two stores in town and I got very excited about a bag of carrots in the cooler—we hadn't seen fresh veggies in at least 2 weeks. But they were not for sale. Out of beer they were too. At the only other store, really the living room of a family's home, we bought our staples of canned butter, canned cheese, and powdered milk.

Tearavero has a large diesel generator, so most houses have electricity. Many have TV's to watch programs from Tahiti.

We visited church on Sunday, and with the help of another cruiser who spoke fluent French, got to know many of the local people. They came out to our boat a number of times, and each time they brought small gifts.

Tackless II: Most of us picked Kauehi for our arrival point because it has a wide deep pass, on the leeward side of the atoll with no tricky reefs to complicate things. What makes passes - even easy passes - a challenge are the currents. Although the tides in Tuamotus are not big -- only a couple of feet -- all the ebb and flow must squeeze through the passes. Also, there is often more water in the lagoons than from the tides when big waves cross over the low reefs. This can result in really sizeable outgoing currents with standing waves. One therefore wants to go through a pass at or near slack water (in between tides) which happens only four times a day (and therefore only twice a day in daylight). The tide is also not easy to predict. The tide tables most of us are using have just one or two reference ports for the entire area. Often a boat will have to stand off and wait for as much as six hours or even overnight to be able to enter a pass.

We arrived at damn near the perfect time -- just at the end of the flood tide so we still had a little incoming current which helped us zip through. Once in we had planned to anchor and launch the dinghy to be able to standby for Aliikai (with rudder problems). To our amazement, we could find little water shallow enough to anchor in, and those few spots were filled with coral or the buoys of the pearl farmers (the lagoons' "big" industry)!

The charts and guidebooks for Kauehi show an anchorage only in the northeastern part of the lagoon in front of the atoll's one village. But friends ahead of us (the advantage of at least a

somewhat beaten path!) had radioed with GPS coordinates to an isolated spot at the southeastern end of the atoll. So we proceeded directly there.

Kauehi's Southeastern Anchorage (15-57'.47S; 145-04.63W)

Wow! This is what your mind conjures up at the words "South Pacific." The water is crystal clear and bright blue. The motus behind which we sit are bright white sand topped by waving palm trees while the ocean waves break on the outside just beyond. The wind is steady across the reef, enabling our wind generator to finally do its thing, yet the boat sits as steady as if tied to a dock!

Fortunately all four boats behind us made it safely in through the pass. The five of us, plus two boats already there, made a nice little social group the next few days.

And in this idyllic spot we finally did all those activities you imagine doing in a South Pacific anchorage. We snorkeled coral heads in white sand and water so clear it was like air. The coral heads were embedded with the rippled shells of six-inch tridacna clams whose fleshy mantles reflect jewel-like colors thanks to the algae that live there commensally. Familiar fish like parrotfish, surgeonfish, butterflyfish and tangs appeared in wildly unfamiliar color patterns, while unfamiliar characters like unicorn fish, bannerfish, and tiny humbug dascyllus sent us running to the fish books. Just to keep everyone's adrenaline pumping, small black tip sharks periodically swam nonchalantly through the group. Essentially harmless, they still look the part! They make a gentle introduction to the larger shark populations we are liable to encounter farther on.

After five days of projects in paradise, several of us moved up to Kauehi Village . The trip up was a real reality check on moving about inside the atolls. Getting into Kauehi had been so easy, we'd forgotten about the pitfalls - specifically, lurking coral heads. Although much of the lagoon is deep water, a coral topped rock can seemingly pop up any where. The rule of thumb is never move without good light overhead and without someone high up (on those ratlines we made in Mazatlán) keeping a looking out. Within ten minutes of our getting our anchors up, thick squall clouds rolled in cutting out the sunlight. This, and an early scare where a shoal spot materialized less than a boat length away in 80' of water (!!!), forced us to creep across the lagoon. The nine-mile trip took us three hours!

Kauehi Village – 15-19'.59S / 145-07'.12W (note this waypoint doesn't plot in Kauehi!, I think it should be 15-49'.59S)

At the small, but well-stocked store we made met the proprietor - Nicole, whose husband has a pearl farm out toward the airport and who would be happy to give us a tour. Nicole's husband Tiaiheu Tiaiheu (that's pronounced tee-ah-ee-ha-oo) is a prosperous entrepreneur who reminded me of Yul Brynner in the "King and I". "My farm, my store, my bungalows" and almost "my town, my island, my new airport" etc., but not remotely in an obnoxious way, rather proudly possessive. He picked up eight of us in an oversized pick-up truck and gave us a thorough orientation to pearl farming despite being in the midst of busy reparations for three simultaneous wedding the coming weekend. (He told me he was the "chief" of the weddings. For about five minutes I mistook that to mean he was the "chief" of the island, which wouldn't have remotely surprised me.)

Pearl farming has turned a haphazard resource into a steady industry for these remote atoll villages. I asked Tiaiheu how many pearls farms there were in Kauehi, and he told me there

used to be fifty-two, but that the current number was four! This he attributed to excessive taxation by the government in Tahiti (which has just changed).

Before taking us back to town, he gave us a quick tour of the airport. Kauehi's airport is brand new. Before, people had to make a forty-two mile trip by boat to Fakarava. Tiaihau was very proud of "his" airport. Tiaihau has built a half dozen or so tiny "bungalows" for tourists at the pearl farm. They cost about \$35/day to rent; \$70 a day if you want three meals included (clearly a good choice as there are no restaurants on the island!) You can learn about the pearl farming, go diving and just generally laze around. Should you be interested, you can contact him at tel&fax: 689-58-25-49!

Some of our group decided to stay on a few days at Kauehi to peruse Tiaihau's harvest pearls, but we felt the need to move on, and so departed the next morning for Fakarava.

Baraka (2008): We arrived with s/v Warm Rain at daybreak, and watched a German ketch go through the passage just ahead. We followed, on the tail end of the outgoing tide. The pass boiled like Active Pass in the Gulf Islands, and the south edge featured a rolling bore, but it posed no problems for us. We popped inside, then motored across the 5-mile lagoon to the village, where we are now anchored. It has been a very long time since we have been at anchor without the rolling swell of the ocean rocking us. Feels strange to be this still.

We dinghied ashore, tying up to the church quai. We met several German cruising couples, all dashing in after seeing the plane from Papeete land. The weekly plane delivers stock to the single store on this atoll. Today's haul included fresh baguettes, sold out in 30 minutes, still at 60 cents each despite the par avion delivery.

We walked to the NE side of the atoll, and beachcombed, finding a few shells, and a lot of plastic debris from distant places. The exterior reef looks very unforgiving.

It is very beautiful here, and different from the verdant and steep Marquesas. The atoll is flat - no more than a dozen feet above high water. You can see that the storm surge of a cyclone could overtake the atoll. The sea inside is a calm lake of kodak-postcard colors, pale pastel aqua, emerald, turquoise, teal, then deep blue falling away into depth.

The next day, we explored the town motu, walking down streets to the waters edge, then looping back to the cemetery. Half the gravestones, grouped together, were for tiny children, less than 5 years old. Epidemic? High child mortality rate? Dunno, but town cemeteries are always interesting,

The supply ship Mareve Nui arrived today, dropping off supplies by barge, including a new pickup, rumored to cost 100K, and picking up copra, dried coconut, which will be processed into oil in Papeete. Diesel is delivered in drums to fuel two generators, so the town has electricity and even satellite TV. But except for the single small grocery, there is nowhere to spend money, no shops, no restaurants or pensions, and no tourism. Everything must be ordered and delivered. I think it is a very happy life for those who are content without a lot of material possessions, who can appreciate the natural beauty of these atolls. But the people must be hardy, to survive with collected rainwater, withstand drought, and pull their living from the lagoon or coconut tree. We also wonder if these atolls will be affected by global warming. In one account, estimates are 50-100 years before sea levels rise enough to cover the atolls in storm surges. If the rise is slow enough, can coral growth keep up?

4.13 Taiaro (No Pass)

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 88-89

4.14 Anaa (No Pass)

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 90-91

4.15 Fakarava (Pass, Supplies, Fuel, Wifi, Dive Shops, Airport)

There are two passes in Fakarava. The North pass is near the town of Rotaova, which has typical small town services. The South pass is about 25 miles south, and has almost no services, but great diving. There are several anchorage places between the two main anchoring locations.

Guide Books:

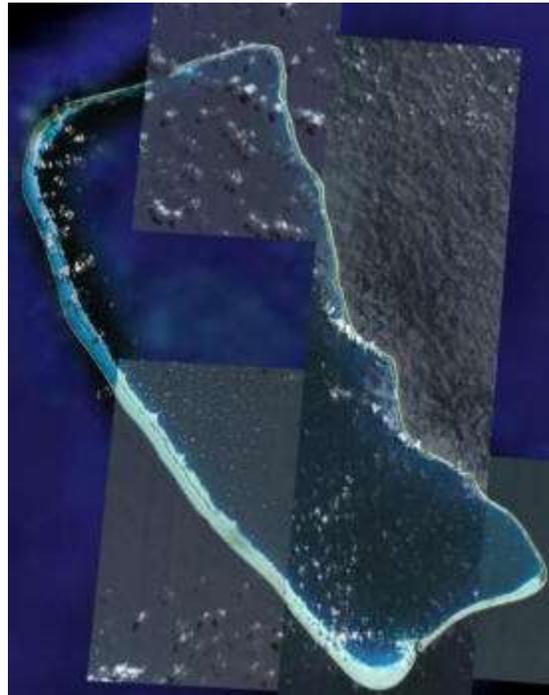
South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 27

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 73-79

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 84-86

Mary Anne II – 2017: As a UNESCO biosphere reserve, not all of the FAKARAVA atoll is 'open' for navigation, anchoring, fishing, watersports etc. For details, see the pdf on Marine Protected Areas in French Polynesia (now in the Soggy Paws files section for easy download).

- Any fish/crabs/lobster are ONLY for consumption within the Atoll
- Anchoring in the Fakarava administered Atolls is prohibited
 - on coral (may only anchor on sand)
 - within 200m of shore
 - Close to fish farms/parks (must be at least 100m downwind and down current of any)
 - Anchoring is also fully prohibited in certain areas (e.g. NP zones - see maps)
 - e.g. For FAKARAVA ATOLL In the area marked 'NP' zone: if you don't have the image then the imagine fakarava as a big rectangle.. the 'NP' zone is the SW quadrant (a very short distance west of south pass, and south of Motus Topikite/Tapehoku) Note the 'NP' zone also extends as a thin strip along the western inner atoll coast to almost the North passage
 - Local literature says you must report on arrival to Town Hall
 - there is a very small tourist fee to pay (As of June 2017 it was minimal 55CPF per person / per night) - there is also a 1000CPF fee to deposit for trash on the island (for 1 week).



- Practicalities of reporting on arrival make this a little difficult, but if you do make your way to town on a work day - it is only fair to go in and pay the dues. Against reported expectation, but it appears acceptable to make this visit when convenient and not make it your first anchorage (there are no obvious checks on who has paid - at least this is what we did).
- South pass anchorages
 - Be very sure to stay in the anchor area and don't drift too far west into the protected area (see NT area on map in link provided). Some locals advised us that this area (to west of south pass) cannot be used as an anchorage at all. If you are found anchored where you should not be you will be moved off (may be easier to just anchor to N of south pass which gives easier access to village too).
 - South pass has the 'village' of TETAMANU

4.15.1 Fakarava North Pass and Town of Rotoava

Nehenehe – Feb 2019: On a return trip to Rotoava I also checked two of the moorings there. The one closest to the pier was in excellent condition and appears to have been renewed in the last few months. Everything was new and proper. The ones in the group to the east of this all appeared to be much older showing signs of heavy usage and are reported to have been renewed a little over a year ago.

Nehenehe – December 2018: Faka Delices now only has custom made cakes to order and is retiring next year and moving to Tahiti.

We found that there was no fuel available here and the next supply ship (low season) only comes once a month with fuel, so its 25 days to they have fuel again at the dock.

There is garbage disposal at the Wharf between the pier and the white building, it's free and labeled GARBAGE.

There are now two groups of mooring buoys at Rotoava. There are about seven moorings 2,000' SE of the pier and another group of three about 500' SE of the pier. All were installed in 2015. We anchored 500' south east of the pier and felt coral vibrations on the chain in 40' of water and moved the next day to the mooring 40' away. The 1-1/4" line at this mooring looked brand new with a new SS thimble in the eye and all the moorings in the area were 'renewed ' supposedly in October 2017. All moorings are Rated up to 30 tons.

There are moorings inside the North Pass to port as you enter.

Fakarava Yacht Services is a total Gem, we love the business attitude. The internet is free but we always tried to buy something when we came, at 2000xpf flag and latte the first time and a propane fill the second time. These folks are so very kind and generous, can't say enough good things about them.

Kokopeli – October 2018: Moorings have been installed, and are available without charge. This may be part of Fakarava's being established as a world heritage site. The moorings are as follows: (note, waypoints are Degrees Minutes Seconds, NOT Degrees Minutes Decimal Minutes)

Passé Nord

145°41'51.63" W, 16°04'29.71" S

145°41'39.03" W, 16°04'52.70" S

Aeroporto

145°39'05.62" W, 16°03'15.09" S

Village Rotoava

145°37'15.30" W, 16°03'38.92" S

145°37'10.89" W, 16°03'48.03" S

145°37'09.02" W, 16°03'50.46" S

Near the village moorings, you can also anchor. It's deep (60'ish) but fairly clear of bommies.

We did drift dives in the north pass with Kaina Plongee, they were great! Located north of the town's main wharf.

We saw signs of the new fiberoptic cable that's being installed. There were two large spools of cable near the post office, marked as undersea fiberoptic.

Jacaranda – September 2018: The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage.

In 2017 a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauehi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette. This warning does **NOT** include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings.

Asolare – October 2016 – Leaving the Boat at Fakarava for 2 Months: We were keen to leave the our boat in the Tuamotus when we returned to the UK for 2 months. Our draft of 2.2 meters and tonnage of 20,000 make us too large to be hauled out at Apataki and so we explored other options.

Although we were still in the "hurricane" season, provided the boat is on a mooring, we are insured. On the advice of yachtie friends we decided to leave the yacht (Amel 54) on a mooring at Pakokota Yacht Services under the superb care of Matthieu and Agnes.

Matthieu speaks excellent English, has a yacht of his own, and skippers a 60ft charter catamaran around the Society Islands and Tuamotu Atolls in the season. He is thus superbly qualified to take care of any boat.

Matthieu could not have done enough for us. He put down a heavy-duty screw anchor mooring for us, which will hold the boat up to around 50 knots. Whilst we were away, he moved the boat to the village to protect it in a storm of around 35 knots, and brought it back safely to the Pakokota mooring.

He and Agnes helped us with so much. Agnes did food shopping for us so when we returned we had some provisions on the boat. They both drove us into the village for provisioning when required. Agnes cooks excellent food in their "home" restaurant, which is a pleasure especially a

few days before we left and when we had so much to do. On top of this, PYS has the best wifi in the Tuamotus – free of charge to all customers – and to be a customer, all you need to do is have a beer in their little bar!

We had a problem with our main inverter, which needed replacing. Matthieu (with his excellent French) sourced one in Papeete, had it flown to Fakarava, collected it from the airport and then installed it. He is knowledgeable with electronic equipment, and so to have the inverter working again is a joy. We needed our refrigerators and deepfreezers re-gassed, and again Matthieu found someone in the village, who came to the boat with the right equipment and did it.

Without Matthieu's help we would have had to return to Papeete for these repairs, which we really did not want to do until later in the season.

Pakokota Yacht Services is a real little gem in Fakarava and in the Tuamoto Atolls. We would not hesitate to recommend PYS to any yachts that want to leave their boat to return home or are too large to be hauled out, especially now that there is at least one heavy duty mooring available!

Jacaranda –2016 – Services Update:

Moorings: The mooring balls in Fakarava & Toau are made up of a heavy 3 strand line with a large loop back spliced into it. The line is run thru a small float. It is the loop floating on the surface that you pick up using a boat hook.

We have noticed some boats using a single line as a bridle on the moorings. A number of the new moorings already are showing excessive wear due to boats not attaching lines correctly. If you pick up the mooring and run a single line from the starboard side of the bow thru the mooring eye and then back to the port side of the bow it will act as a saw. As the boat moves from side to side with the wind and swell this line will also slide from side to side thru the mooring eye causing chafe. It will damage your line and also damage the mooring eye which we have seen happen to a number of moorings both in the north and south pass. In a stiff gusty wind, this can saw through the line in only a few hours and set your boat adrift! (not to mention wrecking the mooring for all the other cruisers behind you).

To hook up to a mooring line, we run 2 lines, one from each side of the boat thru the mooring eye and then back to the same side.

Fuel is available from Fakarava Yacht Services. You can purchase by the liter (200F per liter). fakayachtservices@gmail.com Channel #77 87753484

Internet: Available at Fakarava Yacht Services - You can bring your computer and sit on their comfortable porch in a lounge chair. See Fakarava Yacht Services below in the guide.

Vegetables: Sofie is the vegetable lady in Fakarava. Sofie fakafaapu@hotmail.fr 87325678

She runs a small store, located across from Top Dive, that is open from 8-2pm. The service she provides is very unique. If you are headed to Fakarava North and know about when you will arrive chances are you will be completely out of fresh veggies. Send her an email or phone her ahead of time with your order. She will respond when the next ship is due to arrive. She will then either email you or send you a text message when your order is ready. How cool is that!! We arrived the day the ship came in and she had our order ready the following morning. Prices are similar to the 2 grocery stores.

Pastries: Fakadelices - French Pastries!!! A great shop that has wonderful deserts and home made jams (Hibiscus and Tiare) from Fakarava. Located on ocean side of main road and further beyond Fakarava yacht services.

Eating Out: Paillotte (mentioned by Starry Horizons, below) is owned and operated by a French woman that used to have a restaurant in Paris. This is a great place to meet for a sundowner. Plus they have a small dinghy dock available for cruisers to use that are eating at her place. Look for the bright pink/purple building on the lagoon side.

Rotoava Grill: If you are hungering for a good hamburger try Rotoava Grill. We had a great hamburger, fries and salad. Even came back the next evening for a repeat. Its located next to the first store south from the town quay

Asolare – October 2016 – North Pass Anchorage Storm Protection:

The weather forecast predicted a storm gusting up to 40 knots veering in sector NNE – NNW, so we made our way from the South Pass to the North Pass anchorage, which offers protection from that quadrant.

There are 2 mooring balls just east of the pass at Otohu Bay. We picked up a mooring being a little uncertain of its condition but local advice suggested they were good. By the time we arrived the wind conditions were too strong to dive the mooring, and so we took a chance, knowing that if necessary we could rely on the anchor if we needed it.

Fakarava was hit with winds gusting up to 70-80 knots. We saw 61 knots on our boat (an Amel 54 - 20,000 tons), but the trees on the motu that we hid behind protected us.

Unusually, it raged non-stop for 4-5 days. If there were a weather station in the Tuamoto's the storm would have been named and plotted and the locals warned. These were the highest winds Fakarava has seen for years, lasting longer than anything in living memory. Thankfully there were no casualties, although there was damage to trees, bridges, crops and buildings.

The mooring held really well, and although we used anchor alarms and were on anchor watch throughout the storm, we were safely tethered. The mooring provided excellent shelter in gale force winds, which is good news for any yachts facing storm conditions in the Tuamoto Atolls.

Soggy Paws – 2010 – Services (with updates from others through 2016)

The hours for stores and the Post Office seem to be 7:30-11:30 and 3-5:30. The PO is closed one afternoon in the middle of the week. Everything is closed on Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

Airport: A number of cruisers had friends fly in and out from Fakarava (via Tahiti). We heard one tale about a crew member who had come with the boat from Panama, and flew out of Fakarava. He was briefly detained at the airport in Papeete because his passport stamp from entering in the Marquesas is apparently NOT a legal entry into French Polynesia. He was told that the correct procedure was to go to Port in Papeete to officially enter the country, and then he could fly out. He managed to talk his way out by talking to a supervisor, and made his plane. We heard no similar reports out of people with crew flying out of the Marquesas, so it may have been a fluke. It would be wise to check with your agent, if you have one.

Banking: (Update from Evenstar – July 2014) In Roatava on the North end of Fakarava there now IS an ATM attached to the outside of the post office. It only has options to take out up to 25,000 XPF at a time, but it does work. (Jacaranda 2016 - Still 25,000 max at one time but multiple withdrawals are allowed (we did 3 withdrawals back to back))

Fuel: The Yachtsman's Guide says fuel is available in Rotoava in barrels of 200L. In actuality, if you want to buy fuel, you have to buy it directly off the supply boat when it comes in. Get there as soon as they are tied up, and take cash (CFP). Some of the supply boats will sell to you by the liter, others will only sell in 200L barrels, and they want the barrels back before they leave. Arrange a group of yachties to make a 200L barrel before the boat comes in, just in case.

Internet: In May 2010, we got usable wifi in the anchorage at N Fakarava from Manaspot. laoranet had a much stronger signal than Mana, but did not seem to be working. I think there is one computer available at the post office.

Provisioning: The town of Roatava in N Fakarava is the major provisioning stop for those who have been cruising in and around this area. In 2010, the weekly supply ship usually came on Thursday or Friday. To find much of anything fresh or frozen, you have to hit the stores just after they have restocked from the supply ship. The **supply ship** is scheduled to come in every Thursday morning (arrives at dawn), but holidays and/or other events can affect when it actually shows up. The best fresh stuff can be gone by noon.

There are 3 grocery stores, all on the south side of town. In 2010, we used a small beach to the south of the town dock for the dinghies, as it was much closer to the stores. The most-frequented store is **Magasin Rotoava**, though you do have to go to all 3 stores to make sure you have found everything there is to find. And if you are very price conscious, there are price differences. I think Magasin Rotoava will accept US dollars and maybe Euros, as well as credit cards. But ASK FIRST.

All the stores keep their meats in toploading freezers that are unmarked. If you see a freezer, open it up and take a peek. Usually the prices are posted nearby (in French) somewhere.

Almost across the street from Magasin Rotoava is the **Boulangerie Havaiki**. This is a bakery, and has recently expanded to have a grocery store, with frozen meat products from NZ, and a good selection of veggies. They have plans to expand further later this year. If you get there early in the morning, you might be able to find baguettes without ordering them ahead, but the best way to ensure having baguettes is order and pay for your baguettes the day before. Both Margaret and Coco, the owners, speak English, and they encourage cruisers to stop by.

A hundred meters further south out of town, across from the Te Ava Nui dive shop, is a veggie and fruit stand. Turn left here and go up the side road, and there is a 3rd grocery store. They have more floor space and maybe more freezer space, so meats and refrigerated stuff might be easier to find here.

Veggies available when the weekly supply ship gets here are: onions, potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, green peppers (sometimes), cabbage (sometimes), apples, pears. Every grocery store gets an allotment when the ship comes in, but it is usually all gone 12 hours later. So if you see something you want—buy it then and there!

There are also a number of private individuals in town that grow vegetables in their back yards, for sale. We found some both north and south of town. Look around and ask around. One popular lady in 2010 was 'Hawaya', about a quarter mile north of the town dock. She had fresh tomatoes, eggplant, leafy lettuce, bok choy, bananas, papayas, mint.

We also went south of town to find another vegetable farm owned by Mr. Topaz. Take your dinghy to the dock at Pension Havaiki, about a mile south of the anchorage, and walk out to the main road, and turn right. The farm is about 200 yards south on the main road. There we found Mr. Topaz working in his gardens. He is growing tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, and papayas.

At his house, ¼ mile north of the farm, he also has citrus and bananas. We met his sons and his wife and had a good old time trying to talk to them in our very poor French. After chatting a bit, his wife went back into the house and came back with a pumpkin each for Susie and I as a gift. Very nice and very Polynesian.

During peak cruiser season (late May, June, early July) the gardens tend to get picked over. And they are always expensive.

Starry Horizons – May 2016: Along with two other boats, we made the pass from Kauehi by getting up very early and catching the first slack tide. The 30 mile passage was a nice beam reach, in beautiful weather. The pass went well, but turning to head into town left us going 20 degrees to the wind. We motored in.

Mooring Balls: When you approach the village, you will see two rows of WHITE mooring balls. One row is to the left of the wharf (north) and the other is to the right (south). (other mooring balls belong to the dive services). We started to anchor in between the mooring balls and the shore and were told (by Top Dive via VHF) that it is a small boat channel and no anchoring is allowed. The mooring balls are free to use. All the mooring balls were full for us, so we headed north to anchor outside the mooring balls: 16°03.274 S / 145°37.453 W

Dinghy: There are several options for your dinghy. You can use the wharf to tie up, but since the land is long and narrow, it can mean a long walk. Most of the time, people beached their dinghies. There are plenty of small beaches between buildings on the shore, including one right where the paved road curves away from the shore. This beach has low hanging branches for your painter. It is only a few blocks from Fakarava Yacht Services.

Fakarava Yacht Services has a small house/office with a porch. The wifi is available during open hours (8 am - 5 pm) for customers. Purchasing a juice for 250 CFP qualifies us. The porch is often crowded with cruisers taking advantage of the wifi. fakayachtservices@gmail.com
Channel #77 87753484

Eating Out: We had an excellent meal at a new cafe, Paillotte, just a block south of the bend in the road. The cafe serves ice cream, paninis, and crepes, and has wifi available. We thought lunch was delicious and reasonably priced.

Pearl Farm Tour: FYS can help you arrange a pearl farm tour. Hinano picks up cruisers every day from FYS and brings them to the farm for a tour. We found it very informative, and free, but of course, they are hoping you purchase pearls. There are a wide variety of qualities available, so no need to break the bank.

Provisioning is decent here - I bought the first gala apples I'd seen since the Galapagos in Magasin Rotoava. Thee Boulangerie Havaiki is well stocked too. There is also a produce stand called Faka Fa'apu with a good selection of fruits and vegetables.

Don't miss the Catholic Church all decked out in Polynesian influence!

Medical – Slipaway May 2011: Rotoava (North Fakarava) now has a **doctor** in the village. His name is Dr. Stephane Burglin (cell 21 08 30), and his office is located about 200 meters south of the Top Dive Shop (pka Te Ava Nui Dive Shop) on the left-hand (inland) side of the street. There is a sign in the yard of his office.

Office visits cost 3600 XPF, and that often includes any medications he might give you. Each of us had separate minor medical issues for which we visited Dr. Stephane, and we found him to be

very thorough in his examination and diagnosis. He speaks English pretty well and is a very personable guy.

Pearl Farms – Slipaway May 2011: We went on the pearl farm tour with Gunther at Hinano Pearls and also purchased some pearls from him.

Heipoe Pearls (aka Dream Pearls) is another pearl store/farm in North Fakarava. We initially steered clear of that store because it looks pretty upscale, and we thought their prices would be higher. However, at the recommendation of Margaret in the Boulangerie, we decided to check it out. Dream Pearls' prices were very comparable to Hinano's. The owners are Lucien (Lulu) and Emilienne (Mimi) Steiner. Lucien is Swiss, and Mimi is French. Their English is limited, but passable, and they were absolutely delightful. They also offer a tour of their pearl farm.

Anchoring & Weather – Tackless II 2005: Weather, specifically bad weather, bracketed our stay in Fakarava like a set of parentheses. The two-day radio forecast we listen to every morning warned of strong winds from the northwest, so we and many other boats headed for the northern end of Fakarava atoll, the second largest of the Tuamotus. There the northern reef edge slants away to the southwest providing the best-looking protection from the northwest. When we actually arrived at the anchorage off the village of Rotoava (**16°03'S; 145°37'W**) -- just in time for the best sunset we have seen in the South Pacific--, there were only a couple of other boats, but by the end of the next day maybe fifteen had assembled, many of them fellow Puddlejumpers rushing northward from the atoll's southern pass.

Atolls are a mixed blessing in the protection department. While the motu-topped fringing reef encircling the lagoon keeps out the usual ocean waves, when the winds switch around you can find yourself with your back in a corner and plenty of fetch inside the atolls for waves to build.

And that's exactly what happened to all of us tucked so carefully up at the north end. That two-day forecast made no mention of the fact that the winds would proceed to back right round the compass, from N to NW to W to SW! After one night of protection, the wind blew 20-30 knots from our exposed side for two to three days. Seas built up to four feet setting the boats rocking and bopping like hobby horses while our anchor chains wound up around coral heads 50' feet down. Several boats had their snubbers snap when the coral stole their catenaries (the sagging stretch of anchor chain that acts as a shock absorbers), and several others had their dinghies popped when they got yanked into their stern steering vanes. One European boat actually took himself inside the brand-new rectangular concrete basin of the quay, only to find when the wind and waves switched that he was trapped in a washing machine! He did us all a service, because no matter how uncomfortable things got out at anchor, all we had to do was glance his way at his mast whipping back and forth like a metronome to feel better about our own situations.

Rotoava was a very pleasant village. A fair step up from Kauehi, it was big enough to have a paved road, a couple of eateries, a dive shop, several hotels and pensions, two groceries and its own bakery (in Kauehi village the baguettes had come in frozen!) As the weather settled down, the cruisers could be found packing baguettes, enjoying soft serve ice cream or steak frites at the harbor Snack, pedaling around on rental bicycles, and diving for pearls at one of the local pearl farms.

The other highlight of Rotoava was a visit to the **Havaiki Pearl Farm** and Guest House (www.havaiki.com). This pretty guest house sits at a turn in the road south of the village, with its pearl dock reaching out into the azure water of the lagoon. It is operated by a young German, Joachim, who married Havaiki, a local girl and they offer visitors the chance to dive for your own pearl oyster, a fun sort of gamble where you "pays your money and takes your chance" that the

oyster you pick will have a perfect \$100 pearl inside instead of a bumpy lumpy reject! A number of the cruising gals indulged while we were out diving, and at least one came up a winner. For those who don't want to get wet, Joachim also has a nice display in his guest house where you can simply pick out that perfect pearl already set into a necklace. The black pearls of the Tuamotus are not exclusively black. The colors range from gray, to green, to blue, to lavender, to champagne. There were some tempting items, and some francs changed hands, but when all was said and done I refrained. Jewelry just isn't a place I need to spend our money.

Baraka (June): Today the supply ship Cobia 3 visited the village at the N end of Fakarava. We dinghied in hoping to get gas for the outboard. At the quai a cashier's table was set up. After eyeballing our tank, they decided 18 liters would fill it and charged me about \$7/gallon. With receipt in hand, I walked our dinghy tank over to a man standing next to a pallet of fuel drums. He filled our tank, cranking a pump by hand.

Mission accomplished, we walked to a resort where pearls are sold. Some beautiful pieces, but we were foiled, as their system to authorize Visa charges was down. This village is too small to have a bank or ATM, or gas station. Back in the village, the grocery had unloaded today's supply ship delivery. Romaine lettuce! Grapes and apples! We haven't seen anything beyond a few wizened carrots for weeks. We stocked up, then returned to Baraka to stow for the passage south down the inside of the reef.

Blue Plains Drifter told us where to find Poata Creations, to buy black pearls, and Tiffany provided valuable advice ("If in doubt, buy both!")

Diving - Soggy Paws May 2010: There are (at least) 3 dive shops at the N end of Fakarava, one at the S end of town, and 2 more at resorts about 2-3 miles S of town (anchorage possible off these 2 places which are side-by-side)

The pass at the north end of Fakarava is much further from the anchorage, so we contracted with Te Ava Nui (<http://www.divingfakarava.com/>) dive shop for a package of 3 dives. With 5 of us and 3 dives each, we managed to negotiate a package price of \$50 US a dive, using our equipment and their tanks.

There are 2 other dive outfits at the north end. These two are almost side-by-side about 3 miles south of town. You can anchor off in this area, but then it is a long hike (hitchhike/bicycle ride) to town. Both Top Dive (<http://www.topdive.pf>), associated with Sunset Beach Resort, and Fakarava Diving Center (<http://www.fakarava-diving-center.com>) get good reviews from divers, but Diving Fakarava is a smaller outfit with a more personal touch. On scubaboard.com they got rave reviews, but you probably need to book them in advance to make sure you get the dives you want in a limited time.

Te Ava Nui is the biggest outfit, so they always have dives going someplace. Typically they want to you do the outside-the-pass dive with them first, so they can assess your ability and comfort in the water. Their pass dive is quite challenging. They do not time the dive for slack current, so you are often diving in fairly strong current. And the first stop of the dive is at 100', which is pretty deep for a novice diver. They basically take you to the bottom quickly, and anchor you there--holding on for dear life to the dead coral--to watch the sharks and other pelagic fish. After 10 minutes of flapping in the current, the group lets go and drifts a fast drift up to about 70'. Toward the end of the dive, there is a depression in the bottom, and they take you down into this area to get out of the current and give you some time to look around.

All 3 north Fakarava dive shops also make trips to the south pass. Typically this is done as a 2-dive all-day trip, for about 2.5 times the normal cost of a 1-dive north pass dive.

Our preference overall was the South Pass, hands down. The ability to wait for slack current and drift more slowly was a big one. So if you only have time for one or two dives, our recommendation is the South Pass.

Diving - Tackless II 2005: Don and I finally made our scuba date with Te Ava Nui "Centre de Plongée" (www.divingfakarava.com) three days late. We had decided to spend the bucks to go with the local shop because the Garue Pass, around which most of the sites in the north end were situated was a long four miles away - much easier to ride there in the shop's high speed dive boat. The best known dive is the Garue Pass Dive itself, a deep drift dive that the shop would not take people on without seeing them on an easier dive first. For me, still plagued by anxieties about recurring DCS (decompression sickness) symptoms, I was looking for a shallower dive anyway, so the first dive to the outer wall was more my speed.

Shallower my ***. Obviously the French have different feelings about depth than Americans! They briefed a depth of 20 meters, and then promptly ignored that, getting as deep as 90 feet. They use these 100 cu ft steel tanks that last forever but are incredibly heavy. Even though I had dropped half the weight on my belt I was uncomfortably over-weighted, which made trying to maintain a shallower depth over top all the other divers a bit of a struggle. However, grouching aside, the dive was impressive. The visibility was well over a hundred feet. The "wall" - really more of a steep bank - was clothed in short hard corals, all in pristine condition. There were lots of bright tropical fish, including our first Napoleon wrasse, a bulky fish some four long with a big humphead and a disturbingly-human expressiveness. To me, the Napoleon was the real herald of being in South Pacific waters.

But the star of the dive was the ten-foot manta. When the divers first dropped down, the manta was sighted way off in the deep water and the videographer scooted down there to film him. There were also a few sharks (the motto of this shop is "Every dive without a shark is free!") down with the manta. But later, on the return pass on the reef crest, when all the other divers were back up with me, we looked up to see the manta gliding right towards us! Now the Two Captains have seen a manta or two here and there. In the Virgins, they were very rare and always small. In the Galapagos, they were big shadows seen through the murk. In Cocos they seemed to love to slide under the dinghy but disappear the moment you tried to get in. And in the Sea or Cortez most of them were the tiny, popping mobulas. So, really, this was our first big manta, up close and in good viz. She (after looking at the video back in the shop, the pros decided it was a pregnant female!) described circles and loops around the group for a whole half hour, and of course, the videographer was still there to record it all. Needless to say, we got suckered into buying the video.

Don went back in the afternoon to do the deep, drift shark dive in the Pass with another cruiser, and it seems I didn't miss much. Being as we were at the low point in the lunar cycle, the currents in the passes were slower than usual, which made for a drift dive with no drift and a shark dive with few sharks. Unfortunately, the deep part was still deep, so I would have been very unhappy!

4.15.2 Pakakota Yacht Services

Lungta – Feb 2019: We looked into leaving our boat for a few weeks with Pakakota Yacht Services watching over it in our absence. Mathieu seems like a really solid guy, who we would be

confident would make good decisions on our behalf. Unfortunately (for us!), he only provides that service during the "high" season. During the cyclone season (November-March), he instead works on other projects around his own property. He told us that he found that watching after boats took most of his time and interfered with his ability to get those other projects done. So he splits the year between the two roles rather than doing both inadequately.

He suggested that we contact a friend of his in Tahiti who has started watching boats in Baie Phaeton. We did, and found Marc to be responsible and competent. He is looking after more than 20 boats now! He gave us periodic email updates. He speaks English well, and has a long history with boats. He and his daughter make a good team! His email address is: marcusgrandus@hotmail.fr There is a small marina here, but most of the boats are anchored put in this big bay with a thick mud bottom. It appears to be a good hurricane hole as well!

Nehenehe – December 2018: We moved down to Pakokota Yacht services and wow--this place is fantastic. I can't say enough good things about the folks who run this place.

We noticed a trough/convergence zone will be directly over us for Christmas and maybe Boxing Day. There has been thunder and lightning throughout the day, maybe about 4 to eight miles away, as many as four squalls on the horizon and 32 kn winds.

We got out of Rotoava because it's been since October of 2017 since the moorings there were serviced and when we set our anchor.... We felt too much coral. We have only touched coral once (with our anchor chain) in the last year of cruising by picking our spots carefully. With our 23" draft; We are used to anchoring in around 8-15 feet of water or at most 30 feet and I can dive on the anchor at that depth. I could not easily find a spot at Rotoava to do this.

Then we heard such great things about Pakokota YS... and the moorings being serviced very frequently that we just headed down here. The winds look like they could really pick up in the next 24 hours and we had 32 knot winds on the sail down here and about 100 foot visibility for a short time. Now that I am here, I am very glad we moved.

Kokopeli – October 2018: Between the north and the south ends of the island we came down the marked channel near the east side motus. Stayed overnight at on a mooring at Pakakota, very nice and hospitable. 145 deg 33.413 min W, 016 deg 13.528 min S. Best wifi (free with a beer) we've found north of the Societies. Even reaches the boats on the moorings, without an on-board booster.

Daisho – May 2018 – Pakakota Yacht Services: (by Fulvio formerly sv Bulbo Matto). I would like to confirm how great and helpful people are Mattieu and Agnes of Pokokota Yacht Service in Fakarava. Good food, friendly atmosphere, any problem tackled and solved if any chance is possible. Mattieu really got me out of a heavy engine/contract problem on rented Daisho.

Jacaranda – July 2016: Linda and I have had a couple meals at Pakokota. Both times we ate family style with Agnes and Matthieu along with his family that was visiting. Both meals were very good. We encourage cruisers to support Pakokota Yacht Club by having dinner there. Arrange 24 hours in advance.

Naoma – July 2016 – Tapehopu / Pakokota Yacht Services

There is an operation called Pakokota Yacht Services (different from Fakarava Yacht Services) that is owned by the same family that runs the Pakokota Lodge. Their names are Matthieu (sounds like Matthew) and Agnes. Nice people. It is also know as Pakokota Yacht Club.

Pakokota is located just off the marked channel approximately 10nm south of Rotoava (the town on the north end of Fakarava) at 16°13.528 S / 145°33.413 W

Matthieu is a sailor and understands our needs. He recently worked as captain of a local 60' live-aboard dive catamaran operating in the Tuamotus and he is an avid offshore fisherman. He is a wealth of information on diving and sailing in the atolls. Previously in the "real world" he worked as a signal engineer in Tahiti/Moorea and as a professional diver (divemaster and commercial diving). He speaks excellent English.

They have four FREE moorings rated to 20 tons (they plan to install two more in a few weeks.) The moorings are deep sand screw professionally installed and appear to be in excellent condition.

Aside from the moorings there is enough room for at least a dozen more boats to anchor. 25-30' sand bottom with a few widely scattered small bommies. Similar bottom as Hirifa. The anchorage is situated in a shallow indentation in the coastline that offers excellent protection from NE to SE, possibly even S as there is a sand point on the southern end.

The shoreline is beautiful, wild, and undeveloped with trees that help block the wind.

There is a dock and an easy sandy/shelly beach to land your dinghy.

The lodge currently consists of 3 small bungalows and a bar/restaurant that is open to cruisers.

They monitor VHF 16 & 72

pakokotayachtservices@gmail.com

www.pakokotayachtservices.com

(689) 87 799 526 / 87 747 118

Some Pakokota Services and Prices (as of 7-13-2016):

Wifi Internet (exceptionally strong signal in the anchorage) - FREE for customers, even if you just buy a beer or whatever.

Moorings - FREE

Laundry – 800F/load for "simple" or 1200F/load for "dry and folded" [Note: Nicole says she did the best we've seen in FP]

Gaz fill (butane) - 400/Kg

Transportation into town and back maximum 3 people - 1000 total and includes stops at stores, etc.

Diesel is available on site 150F ltr.

They are available to watch your boat if you must leave FP. Fakarava has regular flights in/out and they can drive you to the airport. As I mentioned Matthieu is a professional captain and sailor and your boat will be secured to one of their moorings.

For 1000 F Nicole, myself, and Sylvia (SV Cinnabar) hired Matthieu to take us into town for provision. He took us to two magasins (including one near the lodge where we filled our gasoline jugs for 200/L), a local who sells bananas, a woman with a large vegetable garden, and the post office. He translated, helped us find what we needed, etc. For a half days work we ended up with plenty of fresh veggies including fresh broccoli, mangoes, a giant stalk of

bananas, the usual other food stuff, laundry finished, gasoline jugs filled, etc. If we wanted we could have also done a butane fill and purchased diesel. All while anchored along a beautiful wild stretch of coastline with good free wifi and only two other boats.

You can see why we feel comfortable strongly recommending a stop here if you're stopping in Fakarava and need any of the above.

4.15.3 Anchorages & Passage Between the North and South Pass

The passage from North or South or vice versa is pretty easy. There are large markers marking the way (placed ON large coral heads). There are a number of places to anchor up and down the lee side of the east side of Fakarava.

Daisho – May 2018 - Motu Hirifa: (by Fulvio formerly sv Bulbo Matto). At the very south east corner of FAKARAVA the Motu Hirifa offers good shelter, sandy bottom and a vast turquoise lagoon with sandy islets. Nearby the lagoon Mrs. Liza, a lively and friendly lady, lives with husband and son in a nice house with large porch where she offers very good dinners on a minimum half-day advance notice at 2000/2500 CFP, highly recommended.

Starry Horizons – May 2016: We made one stop midway down the atoll:

16°13.871 S / 145°33.505 W

We anchored in sand with a few coral heads around. We snorkeled the nearby point, with lots of coral heads and fish.

(Jacaranda says that this is near Pakokota)

YOLO – May 2011: Most cruisers complete a quick one day voyage between the Fakarava south pass and the Rotoava village near the north pass. Rotoava is located at the northern tip of Fakarava and provided us with good protection from the strong winds pouring in from the east. The few merchants also enabled us to secure warm bread, fresh vegetables, and a few other items. Instead of rushing down the channel between Rotoava and the south pass, we decided to spend a few days enjoying the shoreline anchorages.

From Rotoava we followed the well marked channel heading south. Keeping the red markers to starb'd and the green markers to port resulted in a carefree voyage. The long motu to the east minimized the chop during our entire trip. At 16 degrees 15.6 minutes south we motored a short distance due east to

Tonae our first anchorage, 16-15.560 S / 145-32.829 W.

This anchorage location is 20 feet deep, mostly sand, and has a few coral heads. It offers protection from winds coming from the north, east, and south directions. We did not observe any private or commercial signs of life at this anchorage. Over a dozen boats could anchor in this remote setting.

The next day we spent several more hours sailing down the coast via the marked channel. At Tukaega (16 degrees and 20.3 minutes south) we left the channel and headed east. We dropped the anchor in 27 feet of water, mostly sand with a few coral heads at

Tukaega – 16-20.310 S / 145-29.742 W.

This anchorage can hold a dozen boats and offers the same protection from winds as Tonae. No goods or services are available at this location.

The next day we continued south on the marked channel. Within a few minutes we left the main channel at 16-21.3 S / 145-29.7 W and sailed southeast in uncharted waters according to our C-Map NT+ software. Our goal was to anchor at the extreme eastern point of the Fakarava lagoon. After leaving the main channel we stayed in 60 feet of water or more, followed the shoreline, and used eye-ball navigation. In good light the few reefs and large coral heads are obvious and easy to avoid. During this section of the coast green or red markers note MOST large reefs. We also had to make a few turns to avoid unmarked reefs. When we reached Hirifa at the eastern end of the lagoon we dropped our anchor in

Hirifa in 20 feet of sandy bottom at 16-26.842 S / 145-21.869 W.

There were a few coral heads in the anchorage area which could hold dozens of vessels. This location gives you great protection from wind and waves coming from the NNW, N, NE, E, SE, S, and SE. Your only significant exposure would be from strong winds from the west.

A small resort is located north of this anchorage and you will see their power boat shuttle guests between the nearby sandy beaches, restaurants, and dive spots. Most homes on the nearby motu are abandoned. However, several related families have remained behind and welcomed us with open arms. The locals speak mostly French and a few words of English. Within ten minutes of meeting them they insisted that we have a seat, chat, and enjoy their home made coconut beer (which has a high alcohol content and tastes more like wine).

The local families showed us around their homes, made sure we drank out of freshly hacked coconuts, viewed the six foot shark inside the fish pen, sampled a few crabs, etc. Walking the sandy beach was good exercise and you can avoid the no-see-em's if you visit from 1000 to 1600. During the early evening the locals build fires to help reduce the local bug population before they retire for the evening. Given permission we placed our large bag of garbage in their fire. If you have tin cans or bottles with screw-on caps, give them to the locals. They use them as plant starter pots and beer containers. If you want, the resort will send a shuttle boat to your yacht and take you ashore for a traditional dinner which costs 3,000 XPF (without drinks).

About 7 miles west of Hirifa is the Fakarava south pass. We again followed the shoreline in 65 feet of water or more and avoided the main large obstacles with red or green markers on them. Eye-ball navigation between Hirifa and the south pass was easy given good light.

Infini 2010: Today was one of those days that started off with promise, deteriorated in weather conditions that sucked, and ended up in the discovery of a place not even mentioned in the guides. We had departed the north anchorage of Fakarava for what was to have been an uneventful motor sail down to the south pass anchorage. About a third of the way down the wind picked up until it blew 22 knots on our nose, accompanied by a short two foot chop that would have been OK, but the tide changed against us and we were doing about 1.5 knots over ground. Dark clouds were scudding past and it was obvious we weren't going to make our destination.

We had previously anchored in a spot mentioned in Bonnette's "Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia" but I recalled a beautiful small sandy beach cove nearby that anchorage that looked enticing, so we turned around and took another hour to get to that spot. What a great place (lat/long noted above). **16-15.558S / 145-32.851W**.

We dropped anchor in 31' of sand, there weren't too many bommies, and we listened to the wind howl in the rigging. The most I saw in one of the many squalls that poured rain on us was 33 knots, but we were snug and secure behind a small promontory of land that protected us

from the NE winds in the squalls, without uncomfortable swell. We spent a very pleasant night in a beautiful spot;

Slipaway – May 2011: There is a very nice anchorage half-way between the north and south ends of Fakarava which offers excellent shelter in a north wind. It is near the motu of Kaukuraroa. **Anchorage Location: 16 17.42 S, 145 30.73 W.**

We anchored in about 35 feet, with only a few coral heads. When entering this anchorage, make sure to have a lookout on the bow - there is a reef that comes to the surface in this bay, but there is plenty of room to anchor a safe distance from it. We swam to the reef and snorkeled it while there. This anchorage will likely offer good protection from the west to north to east, but it is open to the south. I would not choose this anchorage in strong southeast winds.

Soggy Paws 2010: In a strong blow from the E, when we went to the SW side of the pass, a few other boats went to **Hirifa**, ENE of the South Pass, at approximately 16-26.9S / 145-21.9W. They reported by VHF that this was a nice sheltered spot in east winds.

Sea Fury also reported several good anchorages on the way between N Fakarava and S Fakarava, by tucking up in the hooks in the shoreline, there is decent protection from ESE.

Out in the Middle: In 2010, Visions and Soggy Paws went exploring in the uncharted area in the middle of the atoll. Navigation—even under sail—was pretty easy. The depths are either very deep or very very shallow. A good watch is required, and decent sun. We were confident we could find a good anchor spot in the middle of the atoll, but after checking several of the interior motu's, we finally ended up heading east and anchoring along the east side of the atoll.

The reefs were lined up ESE-WNW (the direction the wind typically blows), and so hard to find shelter behind.

The interior motus were small, and dropped off from 1' to 80' immediately. We couldn't find a safe place (with sufficient swinging room) for 2 boats to anchor.

4.15.4 Fakarava South Pass and the 'Town' of Tetumanu

Nehenehe – February 2019: At the Fakarava south pass; I dove on the mooring buoy that we temporarily tied to while waiting for slack water. I was able to just barely get down close to where the mooring buoy was tethered. (This was the second white mooring ball from the pass) There was chain wrapped around the coral head (as should be) in about 35-40 feet of water. This had a 1-1/8" braided line attached to the chain with an underwater float about five feet up the line that was meant to keep the line off the coral head. Unfortunately, the line had somehow still gotten caught under the coral head in the lowest five foot section and the float was keeping it pinned there.

Any boat on the mooring would start pulling hard enough to start abrading the section of line that was caught under the coral. I tried to free the line but my lack of time at this depth and the force with which the float was pulling up on the line; both prevented me from freeing it or inspecting the damage that may have already occurred. I also noticed that the 1-1/8" line was only just slightly longer than what was needed to reach the surface and that this would place undue strain on the mooring system without the anchoring boat playing out a good deal of line between its bow and the tie-off loop on the mooring system.

So, I reiterate the comments not to use the moorings in the south and north without diving on them first. The one we used would be unsafe to use other than very temporarily, in settled weather, and then only with a very watchful eye.

Kokopeli – October 2018: Moorings have been installed, and are available without charge. This may be part of Fakarava's being established as a world heritage site. The moorings are as follows: (note, waypoints are Degrees Minutes Seconds, NOT Degrees Minutes Decimal Minutes)

145°27'19.53" W, 16°30'21.96" S

145°27'17.78" W, 16°30'21.23" S

145°27'23.30" W, 16°30'23.19" S

145°27'21.21" W, 16°30'22.33" S

145°27'30.54" W, 16°30'28.77" S

145°27'28.80" W, 16°30'27.00" S

At the south pass, we did drift dives with Mattius of Enata Diving", phone number 87701508. They're now based at Hirifa. They picked us up and dropped us off at our boats, on the moorings. In the area of the south pass moorings we had, for the first time in French Polynesia, usable cellular wifi over our Google Fi phones(!). Still a bit slow, but definitely there. Maybe it's the first sign of the new fiberoptic cable that's being installed.

We did the passes relying on the Current Guestimator. It seemed good, but generally we had to input a significant wind/wave factor to get it to match up more closely with what we observed. But this is much as noted in it, south pass generally ebbing, etc.

Jacaranda – September 2018: The moorings in Fakarava at the village and the south pass are NOT maintained. A 38' sailboat had a mooring break (2018) at the south pass and ended up on the reef causing extensive damage.

In 2017 a mooring broke off the village of Rotoava and the vessel ended up on the rocks. There are fewer moorings at the village of Rotoava & the S Pass now because mooring have parted and not been replaced.

USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauhi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette. This warning does **NOT** include Pakakota Yacht Services, who DOES maintain their moorings.

Mary Anne II – 2017: This is not so much a village as a collection of dive huts and hut style accommodation - but oh, so beautiful!! There is also a nice little church and graveyard here

The hut that stands out on the water (inner east corner of south pass) and has the banner 'Tetamanu Dive Center' serves fixed meals (buffet style / no menu) but you need to reserve for either Lunch (3,000CPF) or Dinner (3,500 CPF). In the afternoons you can get cold beers here and enjoy the view (But don't turn up with wet feet)

After not getting a response from the local dive shop we successfully snorkeled without dinghy or guide on the south pass (on incoming tide) - swam ashore from boat, walked through 'town'

and entered the pass at the shallow spit just beyond the church and let the current drift us in. We saw plenty of healthy coral, colorful fish, and of course sharks (black tip and reef sharks).

There are sharks around the anchorage and in the pass.. However, the most sharks we saw and most easily photographed were all in knee deep water just inside of Tetamanu Dive Center shack (the shack seem to throw snacks out the kitchen window from time to time too which really excites the sharks).

We also spent some time snorkeling just in 1-3 m near the anchorage (we were east of pass and west of Top Dive shack, inshore of the mooring balls) where we came across our first Tuamotu Moray eel who was very good at keeping well out of his hole for photo ops.

Duplicat – June 2017: The SW anchorage at the south pass as mentioned by a few is no longer an option. There is some rare coral there so in conjunction with UNESCO, it is no longer a legal anchorage. The only option is on the eastern side which is quite difficult given the densely packed bommies on that side. Boats that anchored in the SW anchorage recently were asked to move, and Fakarava Yacht Services confirmed the changes to us.

Spunky – May 2017: Annabelle does not have/sell eggs anymore. We had a nice buffet lunch at her place for 3.000 francs each. Try to make a reservation, as seating is limited.

The six mooring balls are a nice anchorage esp. with western winds.

Jacaranda – August 2016: We recently discovered a terrific snorkeling spot at the South Pass of Fakarava. Thanks to Tom & Sylvia on SV Cinnabar for turning us on to it. Located just around the second range marker (furthest in - Red tower SW side of pass) is a bight in the reef that is out of the current and when the tide it is flooding full of fish and sharks. There is a number of sandy spots further into the bight that you can anchor your dinghy in 10' (16 30.6871 S 145 27.9957 W). It is shallow, full of bommies and very clear.

As long as you do not swim out into the channel you will find this spot with little current. Do a couple drift snorkels in the pass and then on the last one drift down to this spot and have a look.

Jacaranda – July 2016 – North Side of Pass: There are now 6 free moorings that are on the NE side of the pass. They are WHITE mooring balls that appear in excellent condition. The mooring line runs thru the foam mooring ball and you will need a boat hook and then loop you own line thru the spliced eye on the mooring line. Aim for Soggy Paws' lat/long and you will see the moorings spread out along the shoreline.

Pension Motu Aito now has a wood fired pizza oven. We really enjoyed the pizza and can recommend it. They often do not respond to calls on the VHF so you need to take your dinghy in to arrange a dinner. 24hours advance notice is required.

We recently discovered a terrific snorkeling spot at the South Pass of Fakarava. Thanks to Tom & Sylvia on SV Cinnabar for turning us on to it. Located just around the second range marker (furthest in - Red tower SW side of pass) is a bight in the reef that is out of the current and when the tide it is flooding full of fish and sharks. There is a number of sandy spots further into the bight that you can anchor your dinghy in 10' (16-30.6871 S / 145-27.9957 W). Its shallow, full of bommies and very clear. As long as you do not swim out into the channel you will find this spot with little current. Do a couple drift snorkels in the pass and then on the last one drift down to this spot and have a look.

Starry Horizons – May 2016 – Snorkeling the Pass: We arrived at the south pass and choose the North East side of the pass. By talking to other cruisers, we discovered that the mooring balls

were free. The depth was 40 feet and coral heads were abundant, so we picked up a mooring ball.

Snorkeling south of the mooring balls was excellent, with sharks and large grouper. The beach is more shell than sand so we didnt venture to shore.

One morning we grabbed some friends and went to drift the pass. We dinghied to the northwest side of the pass until we found a mooring ball. We did not use the mooring ball, but jumped out and dragged our dinghy behind us. We were at slack tide, and we really had no current. The pass forms a V-shaped trench. The base of the trench is a narrow strip of sand and the sides were coral. We didn't see as many sharks as we were expecting (the reputed hundreds) but we did see some. The water was too deep for us to really get a view. We continued to swim through the pass and followed the trench until we hit a coral plateau on the north side. The coral was 20 feet deep and stretched as far as the eye could see. Black tipped reef sharks and gray reef sharks swam above the coral, and with the excellent visibility the view was much better than in the trench. We saw up to 20 sharks at one time. The area between the plateau and the trench is a steep drop off, and also provides a great view.

Pass and Anchorage – Soggy Paws 2010: We visited the South Pass area twice—coming from Tahanea on an overnight the first time, and a month later, from the N Pass, and leaving to go back to Tahanea.

The first time, we were following friends, who anchored on the NE side of the pass. This anchorage is really not a very good anchorage—it is deep and corally. We anchored at **16-30.29S 145-27.37W**, but I can't really recommend that anchorage, except in fairly settled weather.

Here we enjoyed a very nice dinner ashore with Manihi, the gentleman that owns Pension Motu Aito Paradise.

Pension Motu Aito Paradise (<http://www.fakarava.org/>) is a lovely Polynesia-style hotel just ashore from the above anchor spot (it had a red roof in 2010)—with just a few rooms, but nicely appointed and lovely service. Manihi invites cruisers to come ashore for a nice Polynesian lunch or dinner—he prefers groups of 8-10 people at a time and you must schedule it ahead—try calling him on VHF Channel 08, or go in and talk to them.

This would also be a place to have visiting guests stay ashore without having to stay in the town in N Fakarava.

Note: A 2017 report from Duplicat (see above) indicates this is no longer a legal anchoring area. The much better anchorage is on the SW side of the pass. It is not hard to get in there in reasonable light, and it is shallower, more sand, less coral, and much better protection (especially from NE winds). Here are the waypoints we used:

Wpt #1	16°29.65 S	145°28.05 W	In the Fairway N of S Pass (if coming in the S pass, skip this)
Wpt #2	16°30.27 S	145°28.55 W	SW 0.8 NM, between 2 reefs
Wpt #3	16°30.58 S	145°28.68 W	SSW 0.3 NM
Wpt #4	16°30.97 S	145°28.53 W	SSE 0.4 NM
Wpt #5	16°31.27 S	145°28.34 W	SE 0.3 NM, the Anchoring area

You MUST keep a good lookout on the bow coming in, as there are isolated (but easily seen in reasonable light) coral heads.

(Email from someone in 2011: We successfully used your waypoints into the west anchorage at Fakarava south. However, another boat, drawing 7.5', **went hard aground** quite close to the 2nd waypoint at 6-30.293S 145-28.542W. They were able to use an anchor to heel the boat and get off the rock, but it's quite close to waypoint #2)

REPEAT: KEEP A GOOD LOOKOUT AND AVOID ISOLATED CORAL HEADS!!!

The anchor spot given is in about 12-14 feet with good sand holding, and wide spacing between coral heads. But depending on your preferred depth, you could anchor anywhere between Wpt #4 and Wpt #5, or even go a little further in than Wpt #5.

This general area could accommodate 20 boats, and is the best place to be for bad weather. This spot has 270 degree protection, only exposed to the NW, which almost never has any strong winds.

The only downside is that there is no dinghy shortcut from the anchorage through the reef to the pass—the reef nearly dries at low water. We found a semi-shortcut, and the dinghy distance is only $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile longer than anchoring in the coral on the N side of the pass.

Running the Pass: The South Pass at Fakarava really rips in and out. In mild wind conditions, you don't have to wait for perfect slack, but you do want to avoid strong wind against strong current. Since the pass faces SE, the outgoing current is the one to avoid at this pass.

In mild wind conditions, the low slack is about 1 hour and 15 minutes BEFORE the published Rangiroa Low Tide, with the high slack coming about 6 hours later. With the wind blowing 15-20 out of a southerly quadrant, or a large south swell, creating a 2 knot wind/wave factor, the low slack usually is delayed about 45 minutes, and the high slack is only 5 hours later than the low slack. (these are real rough guestimates).

Nakia - July 2013: The anchorage on the SW side of the pass was a favorite of ours in 2010 when we were one of only a handful of boats who ventured over to this side of the pass. Most cruisers opt to anchor in deeper water to the east of the pass in front of Manihi's lovely pension/restaurant amidst the fir trees he and his wife planted on their motu. But this season we found many more boats were anchoring on the west side in spite of the longer dinghy ride for snorkeling/diving the pass. Neville and Catherine of Dream Time, along with help from several other cruisers, created the Fakarava Yacht Club beach "bar" on a sandy motu. We enjoyed many bonfire evenings there and we hope it survives cyclone season to open in time for next season's visitors.

Slipaway – May 2011: Pension Tetamanu (Annabelle's place) has a mooring at the South Pass - actually in the pass, just across from their dock. I think it is free of charge and available on a first come/first served basis, but I'm sure there is an expectation that anyone who uses it will either dive with their dive shop or eat a meal or two at their restaurant. They serve lunch for 1800 xpf per person, dinner for 2000 xpf per person, and dives cost 5500 xpf per person. When we experienced north and northwest winds while at the south pass, the boat that was tied to the mooring ball seemed to be having a much smoother ride than the rest of us.

Diving - Soggy Paws 2010: We did 4 dives at the South Pass in Fakarava, and each dive got better. 3 of the dives were on the low tide slack and one was on the high tide slack. Best clarity was on the high tide slack... go just before the end of the flood, when all the clean ocean water

has been washing in for the past 6 hours. You just need to be careful not to mis-time it, and end up being carried out on a strong ebbing tide.

Basically we estimate the time of slack, get to the pass a little early, where you can actually see the conditions, and wait until it looks about right. Once the current slows, we get the rest of our gear ready, wetsuits on, etc, and take the dinghy into the pass, a little up-current from where we want to be. Then, without anchoring, we jump in the water, go down quickly, and then do the dive, drifting with the current and towing the dinghy behind us on a 100' leash. With the light winds we've had, towing the dinghy is not hard at all. It drifts at about the same pace we do, 75 feet below it.

The waypoint we used as our dive spot was 16-31.086S 145-27.679W. If the sea is calm you can start a little further out, but on a day with any offshore wave action, be careful going much further out. This spot is over a big sand trench that is easily visible from the surface. From here, once on the bottom, you head for the NE side of the pass (the one with buildings). The sharks are most numerous about 10 minutes into the dive (at a slow drift in). We heard that other side of the pass is good too, but the NE side was so good, we never got to the SW side.

On the best dive we had, the visibility was over 100', that's double or triple the visibility on a typical 'good vis' Florida dive!

The big attraction of the South Pass is the sharks. There are over a hundred fairly docile sharks just hanging out in the pass. Mostly gray reef sharks, some black tips and some white tips.

Once you're tired of watching the sharks (thankfully, they just sit there mostly), there is a nice sloping wall full of coral and lots and lots of fish. And at the end of the dive, about a half mile of 15' reef. In the shallower water after the incoming current has picked up, you just fly over this part.

There is a dive shop in the South Pass (<http://www.tetamanuvillage.pf/us/dive.htm>). They declined to fill our tanks, though. Liability issues, they claimed. They did encourage us to dive with them, but we didn't see that they added much value to our approach with the dinghy. Though a first dive with them would probably be a nice way to get your feet wet.

Tackless II: The south pass of Fakarava (**16*30'S; 145*27'W**) is very different than the north pass. Here the atoll edge is comprised of a number of small motu with channels between them, one of which is the pass itself. The "anchorage" lies behind a couple of motus just to the east of the pass, which itself splits into two channels around a triangular reef on the inner side. The area west of the pass is very shallow, and coral reef shoals are scattered all around the "anchorage." I put the word "anchorage" in quotes because for the first time in our lives we were dropping the hook in coral. Not live coral, mind you, but coral without even the pretense of sand in between. Instead of setting the anchor with lots of scope as we usually do, we just dropped enough chain to hook on to something.

The rustic pension Tetamanu stands guard over the pass whose pristine reefs and thick shark population is a magnet for scuba divers and snorkelers. Again, we broke down and paid money to dive with Tetamanu's dive boat. Here the issue was not the long ride, but the lack of any friends around to be our surface watch, an absolute must in the stiff current. Along with the pension's one guest, Anik, a thirty-something gal from Brazil by way of Switzerland, we were dropped into the water just above the line where the pass pours out into the open ocean. If you don't time the tidal current right, this could be a bad place to be, with down "drafts" sucking you into the briny deep.

At the right time, though, one can hang over the edge looking out into the abyss at the deep-water sharks that pass by! Then you can turn into the pass and enjoy about a mile-and-a-quarter free ride through a chute of coral ridges and bowls almost to the very back of your boats at anchor in the lagoon! The visibility is awesome, the corals pristine, and the "bowls" are filled with sharks! Most of these are black tip and gray reef sharks not known for being aggressive*, but nonetheless it is really something to soar above a bottom shifting with literally hundreds of sharks.

And if that weren't enough, by fortuitous timing we were there during the very short annual season that the marbled groupers assemble to spawn. Thousands of these fish (all perfect eating size) carpet the reefs! This was very hard on Don, who sorely misses the spearfishing of the Sea of Cortez . But even if ciguatera (fish poisoning) were not a concern, were are told that the local guys have about ten seconds to spear the fish and get it either out of the water or into a box before the sharks will be on it! This effectively kept temptation at bay!

I made the pass dive once on scuba and several times just snorkeling while Don was able to dive the pass three more times in the company of Greg, Ruth and their crew Tom of the Hallberg Rassey 53 *Bravo Charlie* after they joined us in the anchorage. Greg and Ruth have made a "career" of diving the Tuamotus, by commuting back and forth from Hawaii each year for the past four, and of it all this spot is their favorite. On their last dive Greg and Ruth made a video for us which is just like being there!

I mentioned that bad weather bracketed our stay in Fakarava, and sure enough we had a rerun of the nasty stuff we'd experienced not a week previous. This time, demonstrating that we do have a learning curve, we and the other boats in the anchorage did not run north, and this proved to be the right move. The winds backed yet again from North through West to South, but this time the area's scattered reefs provided a sea break against any fetch that could build. Each time the wind shifted, we let out another length of chain, and although our rode on the bottom resembled some kind of macramé knot, we sat relatively steady for all three days that the system passed over us with the wind generator cranking out plenty of amps. Who could ask for anything more?

Baraka (June, pre-2010): We arrived at the south anchorage of Fakarava in time to join 3 other cruising boats for a dinner at Annabelle's dive resort. After a damp dinghy ride in, we enjoyed a great meal of parrot fish and curried chicken. The evening entertainment was supplied by the dozens of black tip reef sharks circling under the restaurant, which is built on pilings over the water. The other 3 boats have done the pass dive repeatedly and gave us advice.

The next day we dinghied in to Annabelle's dive resort and tied up to explore the ruins of the old town. This was once the capitol of the Tuamotus, until wiped out by a cyclone. The 1874 church still stands, with its mother-of-pearl altar.

We walked over to eyeball the pass for our drift-snorkel, figuring out where to drop in. Soon it was time to go. We dinghied through the pass toward open ocean against the flood tide, then slid into the water holding onto ropes attached to the dinghy. The current carried us inbound through the pass over a coral garden, full of small tropical fish. At least they looked small - we were seeing them through 30 feet of clear blue water. Brett spotted a ray. As we got into shallower water we started seeing lots of black-tipped reef sharks. They stayed below and didn't seem interested in us as we glided overhead. Inside the lagoon, we climbed back in the dinghy and did it a second time. We never saw the larger grey sharks. As we climbed out, a good-sized reef shark wandered by, maybe 8 feet away. Fantastic experience! Can't believe we would ever

deliberately snorkel in shark-infested waters. Back at Annabelle's, the girls from Meridian threw peanuts into the water so I could photograph the sharks and remoras that swarmed in response.

We had another sloppy ride home to Baraka, but are learning to put clothes in a dry bag and commute in bathing suits. At dusk we went ashore again, on a lobster hunt, but only found a few large hermit crabs walking on the coral beach.

The wind is unrelenting. It has been howling for a week. We are happy to be tucked securely here, though even inside the atoll, the boat is bouncy at anchor.

Later, at Annabelle's, I bought 30 eggs for \$16, happy to have them. Annabelle has 22 chickens, so the eggs are fresh. Tomorrow we will start back north to Rotoava, the village at the north end of Fakarava, maybe stopping overnight along the reef for one more remote anchorage.

At anchor tonight the wind is still howling, gusting to 30 knots. All our dinghy rides from the anchorage to the pass have been very wet, waves breaking over the bow. We seriously considered wearing masks and snorkels to see as we motored through the slop caused by wind opposing current.

4.16 Aratika (Pass, Village)

Aratika is a daysail from Toau. Charlie's Charts says that both passes are 'challenging for the experienced cruiser and hazardous for the first time sailor'.

Guide Books:

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 29

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 80-81

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 65-68

Jacaranda – September 2018: USE EXTREME CARE when using the moorings in N & S Fakarava, Kauehi and Aratika. The moorings were put in a few years ago by the environment service and no service has been done since. These moorings are now about 3+ years old and with no maintenance it's like playing Russian Roulette. This warning does **NOT** include Pakakota Yacht Services in Fakarava, who DOES maintain their moorings.

Chaos – August 2018: Aratika was our best visit of the Tuamotus.

The atoll is not frequented by cruisers & only gets about 3 boats per year.

We had no problems with the west pass--we believe it may have an unfair reputation. It was about 50 meters wide and well-marked We entered about 3 hours before the flow stopped (tide change?) on an outgoing flow and only had about 4kts of current. There was no swell or wind at the time. Apparently it can flow at 8kts at times.

On entering take the left hand fork in the pass.

The supply ship "Cobia 3" (approx 50m long) that services the atoll biweekly uses this pass, and exits at night.

None of the locals recommended trying to use the Eastern pass

The town has a small Breakwater that gives a sheltered tie-up. We stayed in there for 3 days. Its depth is about 2 Metres on the inside of the breakwater. It would pay to check it out by tender before you went in there.

The Atoll has no services but you could possibly order stuff to arrive on the supply boat. There are 2 very small shops selling some supplies but nothing frozen because there is no power.

The locals are super friendly.

We met some locals Herve & Temarama & had an amazing few days with them, they are what made our stay so great at Aratika. They took us to collect coconut crabs, spearfishing & even cooked us some local cuisine. Temarama taught our daughter to hoola & our son to weave.

Herve speaks good English & is worth calling when you get to the atoll. They will try to help you with whatever you need while at Aratika ph +689 89561550

White Princess 2010: This atoll has 2 passes, one east and the other west, both towards the north of the atoll. Both passes have outgoing current except at HW springs. The outward current can reach 8 knots or more, the east pass is the deeper at 7m but is narrow & winding. The edges are outlined by fish traps. The W pass is straight & beacons, as is the lagoon. Depth in W pass is 4.5m min.

The village is in the middle of the north motu, with the airport about 1m to the east. There appears to be a small harbour by the village--look for the radio tower. There are pearl farms.

Anchoring - shelter can be found along the N & E coasts, and also behind the reef just inside the W pass in settled conditions.

Both passes are only about 25 meters wide. Our recommendation is that the east pass should only be attempted if winds are 15 knots or less, and if the light is good. We entered 3 hours after low water springs & while the ocean swell was low, & found 2 knots ingoing. We found entry straightforward but a bit heart-stopping as you can't see the channel until you're at it's entrance. There is some interesting snorkeling just inside this entrance but watch the currents. Sailing across the lagoon is easy.

4.17 Toau / Anse Amyot (Pass but Good Alternate Anchorage at Amyot)

Toau is a daysail from Fakarava. There is a pass to go in the lagoon in the SE side of the atoll. But most boats go to Anse Amyot on the NW side. (See picture below)

Anse Amyot is a 'false pass' with no access to the lagoon, and NO current issues—it is very easy to navigate.

Guide Books:

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 29 "The pass into this lagoon (Passe Otugi) is notorious and is considered dangerous by the locals. It should only be attempted right at slack water."

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, pg 80-84

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 82-83

4.17.1 Anse Amyot

Nehenehe – December 2018: Gaston and Valentine don't have the restaurant open in the low season. There were five mooring buoys available at this time of year, but sounds like there are many more in the main season. We were there Dec 20th. Very gracious. Lobsters were 3000xpf each. Moorings 700xpf but they charged us only 500. They asked for limes and we gave them some of ours.

Jacaranda – September 2016: Much has been written about Anse Amyot. A word of caution regarding the moorings. A neighbor dove his mooring and found it in shocking shape. 80% of the chain wrapped around the bommie was worn away. Of the 3 mooring he inspected 2 were in bad shape, one was good. He replaced the mooring he was on with new chain, shackle and 3 strand line provided by Gaston. Strongly suggest you dive your mooring to inspect it, and if you have any spare chain, shackles, or line, offer to fix your mooring up in exchange for mooring fees.

Telephone Service: There is a cell tower midway between the Otuigi pass and Anse Amyot that was working when we were here (9-16) we were able to connect with our data card to get limited wifi. Plus our cell phone worked most of the time in Taou.

Nakia (July 2013):

Fuel: Anse Amyot is not the poorly supplied remote location it once was. The Cobia 3 supply ship now comes in every 15 days and brings fuel (gasoline and diesel) and other supplies. Diesel can sometimes be purchased from the Cobia just like at Fakarava, however it depends on what their schedule is. Bring your jugs and they have a metered pump which they will use to fill them. You pay up front for how many liters you want and take the receipt to the pump.

Gasoline can sometimes be purchased by the liter. It depends on if they have an open barrel available to dispense. They do not have a metered pump for gasoline. But if you have a marked jug, one that says 20 liters on it for instance, you can pay for 20 liters and have that jug filled.

If you absolutely have to have fuel and the Cobia is on too tight a schedule to sell you metered fuel, ask Gaston if he has an extra 200 liter barrel. You can easily buy diesel or gasoline in 200L quantities. It goes without saying that you cannot keep the barrel so you must be prepared to transfer the fuel to another storage.

Gaston may, from time to time, have gasoline and diesel available to sell directly to cruisers. If you are in need and do not have time to wait for the Cobia you may be able to get small quantities of fuel from him.*

Pearl Farm: Gaston and Valentine's pearl farm is now completely decommissioned. High taxes and limited time forced its closure.

Moorings: There are now 9 moorings. The price for mooring is still 500 CFP per day. Paying for a meal at the restaurant still covers the mooring fee (meals are 3000 CFP per person). However Valentine doesn't have as much time to run the restaurant as she used to so if you come in for one or two days it's likely you will miss a chance at dinner and have to pay for the mooring.

Trading (giving Valentine some goods instead of payment), while not directly refused, is not appropriate. Because the Pearl Farm is no longer in operation the atoll is cash poor. Please be courteous and pay Valentine directly and promptly for the mooring.

Leading Marks: The lights on both leading marks are out. The red and green entry pilings are both unlit. Entering at night in anything but the most calm conditions is not recommended. (Update; the light on the back leading light worked for one night, but it is intermittent).

Telephone Service: In 2010 a pay phone was installed at Anse Amyot. It worked for a year or two and then broke down and has not worked since. Fortunately, a cell phone repeater has been installed on a motu about half way up Toau so now Anse Amyot has full cell phone service. Late Update: The cell phone repeater went down in July 2013 and sometimes takes months to repair. So, it appears even cell phone service cannot be counted on.

Protection: We have had terrible weather this year. The wind has blown hard most days and has clocked from East to North to North West to West then back into the South and finally South East. Never dropping below the teens. The other day even though the wind had blown with some force from the 'unprotected' direction for quite some time the wave action in the bay was pretty light. The entrance was rough, but the worst of the waves didn't seem to make it into the bay. Even so, when the forecast called for West and/or high wind, Valentine asked all the boats on moorings to put out an anchor off to the side of the mooring as a backup.

* Side note: At least Gaston is not in the position of begging for gas to go get lobster any more. We bought 50 liters of gasoline to give to him as a gift remembering all the hassles of gasoline last time only to find a full barrel of gasoline in the generator shed :-)

Soggy Paws (2010): We came to Anse Amyot for 2-3 days and stayed over 2 weeks. This is our favorite place in the Tuamotus.

There are now 13 moorings here (we helped renew a couple and put in 3 more in 2010). Each mooring is 3/8-inch chain wrapped around a large (dead) coral head, with 3/4" line up to a floating buoy. Most buoys have a floating 'tag line' with a loop in the end. You need a sturdy 20-30' line from your boat ready to tie onto the loop. If all the moorings are full, there is room to anchor in 3-4 places. As always with moorings, it's a good idea to check yours out yourself.

There is no charge for the mooring if you come ashore for dinner with Valentine. In 2010, her Polynesia feast, which included lobster, poisson cru, several kinds of fish prepared different ways, and dessert, was 3000 CFP. If you opt **not** to eat ashore, the mooring charge is 500 CFP per night.

The little lagoon has 350 degree protection—it is only open in a small slot to the NW. The only NW winds we had lasted only 12 hours and were very light, so it was not a problem. Most strong winds during May/June are from a southerly quadrant, which is nicely protected by the very shallow coral reef inside the lagoon.

Entry is easy with red and green posts marking the entry, and a lighted range (white posts with green lights at night) to guide you in. During daylight it is very easy to enter, with the shallow areas very clearly distinguishable from the good spots.

For divers with their own equipment and compressor, this is a paradise. The anchorage area is in the lee of an atoll with a beautiful wall that runs for a mile in either direction. Gaston has installed 2 dinghy mooring balls for divers, and it is also very easy to drift the wall with dinghy in tow with a 75' 'leash'. Our favorite dive spots are as follows:

Name	Lat (S)	Long (W)	Description
Yellow Dog	15-47.468	146-08.698	Dive buoy with deep sand canyons 50m east of buoy. Best dive at Anse Amyot. Start at 9m and go over the wall to ??.
Snapper Hole	15-47.608	146-08.832	A sand crevasse full of snappers. No buoy, but anchor your dinghy in 25-30 feet, or start here and do as a drift down the wall toward the SW.
Amyot Pass	15-48.040	146-09.360	Dive buoy just outside the pass in 10m, close to the wall. Dive the wall, or slow drift into the pass on incoming tide.

Caves and Grottos	15-48.674	146-09.906	This is a series of large grottos along the wall SW of the anchorage. Each one is very nice, and there's a lot of nice wall to explore in between. Possible to do as one long dive or a series of shorter dives. 20-40 feet deep in and around the grottoes, and the wall to as deep as you dare to go. If you only have time to do one spot, the middle one is the best.
	15-48.806	146-10.066	
	15-48.938	146-10.206	

All these spots are along the wall just outside Anse Amyot. Diving is best in E to S winds.

For snorkelers, inside the reef close to the anchorage is a beautiful snorkeling area in 5-20' of crystal clear water. (You need to wait until 2-3 hrs after low tide for the incoming tide to get the clearest water). In a 15 minute snorkel you will see hundreds of fish, large and small, moray eels, lion fish, if you look carefully, and only an occasional shark. If you are adventurous, drift snorkeling outside the reef is also very nice in 10-30 feet of water.

For safety when going outside the reef, we tried to always go in pairs, and always took a hand-held VHF—this would not be the place to have a motor problem! It's a long drift to Papeete.

There are really no facilities ashore except for Gaston and Valentine's hospitality. Their restaurant is the focal point, in which they arrange dinners 2-3 times a week as boats come in. Valentine likes to do the dinners in small groups of 8-10 people. It is possible to press her to handle more, but the meal and the service will suffer. Unless you are lucky, do not expect to come into the anchorage late in the day unannounced and be able to eat dinner ashore that night.

Sometimes Gaston may be able to arrange for fuel if you need it, but do not count on it. Sometimes it may be possible to get a few supplies, if they make a run in their speedboat to Apataki or Fakarava, but do not count on it.

There is a 'pension' (small guesthouse) on the island, run by Valentine's sister.

It is possible to burn your paper trash ashore, but keep the glass, heavy plastic, and cans aboard for disposal elsewhere with better facilities.

There is limited cell phone coverage at Anse Amyot—Gaston stands on the roof and can reach the cell tower at Fakarava most of the time.

They collect rainwater in cisterns ashore and usually have enough to spare for passing cruisers in need (though when you need it most, they may also need it most!).

Gaston has a covered shed which can be used for dirty repair jobs out of the sun (outboard motors, etc). (Ask permission).

They are gracious hosts, and very generous in typical Polynesian fashion. But always remember that this is their home (the whole island), so ask permission before you do anything.

When things aren't too crazy with too many cruisers, and when ample gasoline is available, they offer trips into the lagoon to see their small pearl farm, a motu with a beautiful pink sand beach, and maybe a swim with manta rays. (Late May and early June when the bulk of the cruisers are passing thru, they are usually too busy to do this).

Small gifts are always appreciated... wine, liquor, beef, coffee, and peanut butter seemed to be the most appreciated.

Migration: Though Toau does have a pass but we continued on to Anse Amyot—a false pass on the north side. Here, two families had installed some moorings (welcome relief from having to clear the anchor chain), and ran a small restaurant. We had a lot of fun with Valentine and Gaston, and their dogs.



You can see why Anse Amyot is a false pass. A reef blocks the inner passage into the lagoon.

Mr. John: North end of Toau, good harbor, entered from OUTSIDE the fringing reef. Said to be flat in almost all conditions, Easy to enter with ranges (lights) and marks

Mooring balls available but plenty of room to anchor

you cannot go into the lagoon through this hole... it is a blind pass with a coral bar at the inner end.

Gaston and Valentine are most welcoming to yachts, they run a Pearl Farm.... They provide a “Feast” ...said to be good value for money...You can work alongside Gaston and learn about Pearl Farming in this area. There is a dinghy dock. Check with other boats by radio before going as they sometimes need supplies from other islands which you can pick up for them (payment in full on arrival). This would then make you very popular!

Baraka (June): We then bashed out through the pass (at Fakarava) against an incoming tide, and sailed to an atoll just north, Toau, to tiny Amyot cove. Several boats ahead of us advised of this peaceful and pretty stop on the lee side of the reef. We arrived late afternoon after a boisterous sail, and are happy to be moored in this quiet spot, planning to spend several days. A skiff motored out to greet us and tie is to a mooring ball, our first since Catalina Island in 2006.

We are attached to a mooring buoy at Toau. Yesterday and today we had nearly continuous rain, sometimes a pounding deluge.

Brett and I rowed ashore to meet Valentina. She and Gaston had just killed a young pig, hanging from a rafter, and the boats in the anchorage were invited to dinner. At 7pm we dinghied in for the feast, meeting several European boats and joining Pax Vobiscum, a group altogether of maybe 20 people. Valentina served tuna sashimi, goat stew and rice, baguettes, fresh grilled

fish, and cake for dessert. We were happily stuffed. Tomorrow morning we will go ashore to learn more about the pearl farm.

The supply boat Cobia visits Toau once a month. coming to the lagoon at the other end of the atoll, so it is hard for the dozen people living here to get supplies.

4.17.2 Pass Otuigi

Jacaranda – September 2016: We sailed over from Fakarava in a 15kt NE breeze and hit the pass at almost full ebb. Meaning current against wind and swell. By staying to the far left hand side (south side) of the pass, we were able to motor sail in fairly calm conditions with no standing waves. Minimum depth we saw on the southern side was 8 meters.

We had mostly clear water as we headed SE in the lagoon but needed to keep an eye out for a few reefs along the way. We noticed the water much more clear than in Fakarava, being able to see depths in excess of 50' from the boat.

We also stopped at a number of spots along the motu south of the pass. With good light it poses no issues with finding a clear patch to place your hook. Be prepared to float your chain.

Some Cruiser ~ 2009: Pass Otugi is straightforward and has a range beacon way in the center that you can align to make your entrance. Good comfortable anchorage off the motu South of the pass (as the charts and guides show). Good anchorage in the NE corner of the atoll. This atoll is intermittently inhabited giving a nice feeling of isolation.

Warning: In spite of the lack of human evidence, the sharks here were the most attuned to spearfishing than at any of the other atolls, where they seemed barely interested.

White Princess 2010: The comments in the South Pacific Anchorages are gibberish. There is nothing wrong with Otugi pass (as long as you get your timing right). We entered 3 hours after low water with 25 knots of wind and steep seas behind us, and had about 2.5 knots of ingoing current (we wouldn't attempt Aratica in those conditions). Entry couldn't have been easier; you need to watch the cross-current at the entrance, but the pass is wide & straightforward & has a leading line to guide you in. Minimum depth in the pass was 8 meters, & the lagoon is deep (mostly around 20m) with few shallow areas which are easily avoided.

4.17.3 MakoMako Motu

Jacaranda – September 2016: This motu was our favorite anchorage in normal trades E- ESE - SE 15 58.9162S 145 52.9467W 30' with bommies. This provides good protection but not as much as the wooded motu would further up in the SE corner. Still very nice and worth a visit.

4.18 Niau (No Pass)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 29

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76

4.19 Takaroa (Pass, Village)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 64-66

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31

Note: Charlies Charts says: No entry allowed to lagoon due to Pearl Farming.

Dr No – July 2018: We left from Ua Pou, Marquesas for Raroia, but it was close hauled and a bit too tough for the small kids. So we eased the sheets a bit and aimed for Takaroa instead. We had no tidal info.

We arrived on 14th July (national holiday) early morning. As it was new moon, the night was pitch black. The north coast of Takaroa appeared faintly on my radar screen from a distance of 4 NM.

We kept a distance of 2 NM from the (invisible) shore, well outside of the 1000m depth contour. There was about 0.6 knots of current in SW direction. We could see the lights of the village from about 3 NM distance. The unlit buoy “DCP” shown on Navionics, did not show on my radar.

At 0400 we took the sails down just in front of the passage, to wait for dawn. We entered at 0600 apparently with the start of the ebb, and had about 2 knots of counter-current.

Least depth at the bar was 5.5 meters. Very tricky narrow passage with current going all directions.

We anchored at S14°27'.519 W145°01'.440, close to the airport. We anchored as close inshore as possible, to avoid the chop from the NE. Close by was a yacht sunk in 2017 (mast visible) because its anchor was not holding when the wind shifted to the east.

The new quay at the airport (called “marina” by the locals) is very well protected and would have been ideal; however we found by hand-soundings from our dinghy a least depth of 2 meters (sand) which is not enough for Dr NO. The marina is only used for personnel transfers to the pearl farms, and a yacht would not have bothered anybody (to the contrary, expect children to come and play).

There is free internet at the town hall. 30' walk from airport, but every car will stop to pick you up – not that there are many.

The town hall was not able to provide tidal info.

We obtained water from the municipal watermaker at the town quay.

Note: the town quay, at the entrance of the passage, would have appeared a good alternative but we were told by the locals that there had been some serious problems with youngsters and alcohol, and that the town quay was not considered safe.

All in all we recommend Takaroa as a stop-over, people very friendly, helpful and welcoming.

Note: skipper proposed to his mermaid while at anchor in Takaroa. She said “yes” !

2010 Info: A couple of boats stopped here in 2010 on their way in from the Marquesas, and they anchored outside the lagoon. Apparently the information in Charlies Charts is a little dated—the locals asked them why they didn't come into the lagoon!

4.20 Takapoto and Tikei (No Passes)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 68-69

4.21 Kaukura (Pass, Village)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-77

4.22 Apataki (Pass, Village, Boatyard)

Guide Books:

South Pacific Anchorages: Warwick Clay, 2nd ed; page 31

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, Pages 85 – 90

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-79

4.22.1 SW Pass (Pataka Pass) & Anchorage

Nehenehe – December 2018: There are people living at Rua Vahine and the house is now fairly large by island standards. The water was awesomely clear and good snorkeling with black tip and reef sharks, lots of fish.

The SW pass town has a good pier that looks easy to tie to and the small enclosed small boat basin appeared easy to enter and stern tie to a Wharf. We stayed away because of what we read in the 2017 guide, but in going by 30 feet away from the opening at Slack Water, we would not hesitate to enter it this time of year.

There was plenty of space for us to stern tie the trimaran in late December. Wished we had stopped here. Both passes are very easy at slack water.

Jacaranda – September 2016: We had 4 different sources for tides and all gave much different times for low water!!. We used the tide for Arutua (atoll close by) which was for 11am. It had been windy SE 18-20 for about 4 days. We arrived at the entrance at 13:00 (2 hours after predicted low water) to find the pass flat calm but as we approached the dogleg the water became agitated and we saw 3 knots still flowing out.

We were told by numerous cruisers including a French charter boat captain who were very familiar with Apataki SW pass that it is best to enter on a flood tide regardless of the wind direction. This is contrary to the norm on other passes which we always tried to enter with tide and wind in the same direction.

The pass is well marked with range markers and Port / Stb marks at the dogleg.

Very straight forward.

There was a boat tied to the quay as we entered.

SW Pass to Apataki Carenage: Once past the dogleg on the inside of the pass there should be clear sailing to the boatyard. The three waypoints we saved are as follows:

Waypoint #1 abeam of the inside port hand mark. 15 34.113S / 146-24.343W WP is approximately 60m S of the mark

2nd waypoint once you are inside the lagoon via the S pass: 15-34.477 S / 146-21.376 W

Waypoint #3 in front of the boat yard: 15-33.523 S / 146-14.911 W

Waypoints of two bommies. If you follow the above waypoints you will be way clear of both these bommies listed below.

Bommie #1 15-33.878 S / 146-19.042 W

Bommie #2 15-34.298 S / 146-17.668 W

YOLO (2011): YOLO arrived at the southwest Pataka Pass of the Apataki atoll 2.5 hours after the slack tide noted by the Current Guestimator. Prior to arrival the winds were 10 knots or less from the east for at least 72 hours. There was a 2.5 knot current running out of the lagoon. There was a small amount of chop outside the pass.

We observed two yachts tied up at the Hiutahi village concrete wharf in the pass when we motored on the south side of the pass. Once inside the lagoon we set a way-point at 15-34.123 S / 146-24.311 W and then headed east to the Totoro motu at waypoint 15-33.384 S / 146-14.641 W. We used eye-ball navigation while inside the lagoon since we did not have charts covering this area. The waters between these two way-points were usually 100+ feet deep and we observed only one reef near 15.33.926 S / 146.19.132 W. A local had marked the reef with a large vertical tree branch, which will probably disappear with the next storm. Just prior to this reef we had to zig and zag around several pearl farm floats.

When we reach the Totoro way-point we were greeted by Tony from Apataki Carenage Services (www.apatakcarenage.com). Tony was in his dinghy and pulled alongside YOLO. He gave us a warm welcome, pointed out the numerous nearby pearl farm buoys and surface level coral heads. Most of the coral heads were marked with a steel re-bar rod sticking out of them. Tony invited us to use one of the four free moorings located nearby. He even assisted in securing our two bow lines to the mooring.

Alfred and Pauline manage the Carenage and offer many potential goods and services. While we were there in early June it was too early in the season for fruits, too late in the season for veggies, lunch and dinner service were available, baguettes could be ordered from the village, and fresh eggs from the 200+ chickens on the property could be purchased. They also have several other side-businesses such as jewelry making, pearl farming, and fishing. We didn't purchase a meal, however a yachtie on the mooring next to us described his dinner as, "Expensive, and so-so in terms of a meal." Chicken and rice was the meal-of-the-day. Eggs cost 65 cents (USD) per egg, the same price observed at several atoll stores.

FYI, Alfred's yacht lift (a hydraulic chariot) can handle monohulls and catamarans up to 20 tons, yet he likes to limit their weight to less than 17 or 18 tons. Pauline reviewed the prices for haul-out and storage, and they appeared slightly less than those we have experienced in the USA and Caribbean in recent years. Parts and supplies are delivered from Tahiti via the three weekly airplane flights to Hiutahi village. We watched one monohull get lifted from the lagoon and placed in the storage yard. Alfred and his team did a professional job and everything went according to plan.

After a few days on the mooring we traced our route back to the Pataka Pass. We sailed through the pass about 1.5 hours after slack tide according to the Current Guestimator, with 12 knots of wind out of the east. The lagoon was ebbing and the current through the pass was over 4 knots, making our SOG over 10 knots. Four yachts were rafted at the village wharf and the largest wave in or near the pass was about a foot high.

Nakia (2010): There is a dive type buoy just outside the SW pass on the south side. We began our approach there at 0930 with a two meter swell and 10 knots E wind. We had 1-1.5 knots of outgoing current against us. By 1000 we noticed it was slack, and by 1030 the flood had started with chop at the inner end of the channel (E wind had increased to 10-15).

Charlie's Charts (4th edition) is not accurate in the placement of the range at the entrance, nor does it have the additional marks beyond the range. Patrick Bonnette's 1st edition is accurate with good chartlets. The entrance range is located to the E of the main pier bearing 071T. This will take you right down the middle of the deep entrance. Past the main ship pier off the village are two sets of marks for the dogleg to starboard. First are two green to starboard, and then farther in are two red to port (topped by triangles and circles respectively). Least depth encountered here was about 30'. You're clear of the channel once you pass the second red mark. There is another mark indicating a reef but it's well to port and of no consequence to the entrance. For dinghy access to the village we anchored in 37', coral with some sand (took a little doing to raise anchor, but we were somewhat protected from the E chop):

Anchor Spot: 15-33.941'S 146-24.211'W

We chose to anchor here after seeing S/V Prinz Karl (an Amel ketch out of Papeete) up anchor and move to the quay after we cleared the pass. The area south of the pass was well covered with pearl buoys and the area north of the pass is shown to be shallow on the chart. We took the dinghy and tied up at the E end of the concrete quay. Walk S on the street at the W end of the quay one block and Magasin Pahai is marked with Coke signs. They were well stocked with the usual items. No baguettes that morning. The only vegetables we saw were onions and garlic even in the refrigerated cases, but we didn't ask for anything specific. They had a display case of pearl jewelry with outrageous prices for what looked to me like inferior pearls. There is also a small hardware store attached to the magasin. We didn't do any further exploration of the village other than finding that the small anchorage basin described in Charlie's does exist. The entrance is marked by two black and white pillars W of the quay. The entrance is maybe 30' wide, the basin is about 10' deep and very small (with no room to swing). It may be possible to stern tie to the quay with an anchor off the bow. For adventurous or very small yachts only!

We then made the nine nm trip to the E side of the atoll. The passage is mostly clear with one reef at approximately:

Reef: 15-33.926'S 146-19.132'W

There is a tree branch sticking up at the S end of the reef. We also saw a few sets of pearl buoys along both sides of our track, but we didn't note their positions since we assume these change location over time.

We were tired of motoring all day so we headed straight for the W end of the first big motu rather than continuing E to where four other boats were anchored (or maybe moored because I think I saw buoys with the binoculars; will have to confirm that for you). We think they're in front of the Carenage dock and we can see one mast and foresail in amongst the palm trees. We anchored in 24', clear sand, and ended up in 40':

Anchor Spot: 15-33.780'S 146-15.343'W

There are small scattered coral heads in the 40' area. During a brief squall from the N we saw 17' as we swung closer to a sand bar off the reef.

This morning we took the dinghy over to visit the Carenage. Of course it's a bare bones yard but the few boats there look well secured for cyclone season. We met Tapio and Eva from S/V Irene (Finland) who are back for their second haulout over cyclone season as they return home to Finland. He was very pleased with the experience. We met with Alfred and his wife Pauline and told them we'd like to see their pearl jewelry (made by their son, Tony, who's studied at jeweler's school for two years in Papeete), and they encouraged us to move to their anchorage

to be closer. So this afternoon we joined Anteros I, Irene and another boat. There are two mooring buoys but we are anchored in 24' behind Anteros (also anchored) at:

Anchor Spot: 15- 33.534'S 146-14.628'W

The ramp here can only take boats which draw up to about two meters, and I'm sure that depends on the tides too. The hydraulic lift trailer is French made. Alfred ordered it in 2008 and it arrived in 2009. Our concern would be if it broke down when you were ready to launch again because he doesn't have any backup trailer.

I made the mistake of asking Alfred about the availability of vegetables (from the write-up in the book) - tomatoes (for Dave!) in particular - and he immediately took me out to the tiny garden behind their kitchen/dining building. Before I could stop him he plucked the only three Roma style tomatoes that were barely beginning to blush red and gave them to me. I felt terrible about it. Right now he's still in the "test garden" phase to see how things grow here, and they really don't have enough extra to sell to cruisers. His mother does sell eggs, but we didn't buy any after spending a fortune on pearls so I don't know how much they are.

Pearls--I was shocked to find such high prices here. We bought a pair of beautifully matched 9mm, Class A, round earrings for 30000 CFP and a loose 10mm, Class A, semi-round pearl to have mounted as a pendant later for 5800 CFP. Both are gifts for my sister's 50th later this year. All the finished (mounted) jewelry was in jewelry boxes with the prices written on them, and we were given an invoice. They had carved pearls on Greek leather necklaces for 5000. I'm very happy with what we bought since this was our last Tuamotan opportunity for purchasing pearls, but I just hope we don't find the same prices with better selection in Papeete!

Sloepmouche (2002): SW pass is tricky but not bad if you time it right and have good light! But the SW pass was worse on the ingoing current than the outgoing! (*Ed note: This is classic wind-against-current situation*)

The two passes of Apataki are unusual in that they seem to be rough with overfalls on the ingoing tide. (*Again, both passes are on the west side of the atoll, so the incoming tide opposes the normal east wind*)

The little harbor mentioned in Charlie's Charts exists but has a narrow entrance so we didn't chance it with our 25ft beam and we are not sure about depth! Also you have to turn at a 90-deg. angle from the current in the pass so it may be tricky maneuvering! Otherwise, there is no safe anchorage near the village in prevailing winds. Calm anchorage in 25ft. of coral sand close to the pearl farms in the SE corner of the lagoon.

We anchored in front of Alfred's pearl farm. The whole family welcomes you so warmly! They truly enjoy meeting travelers and you will be able to learn plenty about all their activities (black pearls, copra, fishing, vanilla cultivation, egg farming and more). We truly had a great time with this welcoming family! Fill their guest log!

Mata'irea: We anchored in front of Assam's (Ah Sam) pearl farm. It isn't included in our cruising guide (Charlie's Charts), but a French cruising guide features this as one of the better anchorages in Apataki (approx 15-32.9S / 146-14.7W). *Note from YOLO in 2011: You might want to research and change the anchor location noted by Mata'irea in the Tuamotu Compendium. They noted an anchorage at 15-32.9 S / 146-14.7 W. If you drop the hook at this location you are in the middle of a pearl farm in about 85 feet of water and almost a mile from shore. I'm guessing that the correct longitude should read 146-14.07 (add a zero) or 146-14.1*

(replace the 7 with a 1). This location is near shore, sandy bottom with a few coral heads, 20 feet of water, and no pearl farm floats.

Our friends on Phoenix visited Assam and his family a few weeks ago. They had such a great experience that we thought we would check it out. When we arrived the other evening, Assam's son Alfred came out to guide us to a good spot to drop anchor. Yesterday evening, just as it was getting too dark to see the coral heads just below the water's surface, Beatrice and Antoine on the trimaran Manutea, with whom we had shared the anchorage by the pass the other night, arrived. Before we spotted them, Alfred was already on his way out to guide them in. Assam's family is very welcoming of cruisers. Last year 56 boats visited their pearl farm. Mata'irea and Manutea are the 28th and 29th boats that have visited them this season.

This morning we all headed in to shore to visit Assam, his wife MeMei (NiNi), their son Alfred, Alfred's son Tony, and Tony's girlfriend Ocean. Assam and Ocean showed us around his farm. When they first relocated here 20 years ago, there was hardly anything growing on the atoll. We were impressed with how many different kinds of plants they were able to grow in the coral rubble that passes for soil on an atoll. Their secret ingredient is chicken droppings, which they mix with ground coconut, and feed to the roots of the trees. As a result, they are able to grow mango, vanilla, banana, and noni plants. The poulet poo comes from the hen house where MeMei, wearing threadbare clothing, a hat woven from palm fronds and a luminous pair of pearl earrings, tends to 240 chickens. They sell the eggs in the village for approximately \$6 a dozen.

There currently isn't any Ciguatera in the fish in Apataki. So fish was on the menu. For bait we were using hermit crabs. MeMei, still wearing those spectacular pearl earrings and woven hat, showed us how to yank them out of their shells, then rip off the portion with an exoskeleton, which she tossed on the beach to crawl around until they realized that their guts were missing. (there is a lot more on Mata'irea's blog, but it's too long to put here).

4.22.2 NW Pass (Tehere Pass) & Anchorage

SV Irene Tapio & Eeva – June 2017 – Getting from Tehere Pass to Apataki Carenage: Below are the updated waypoints which I promised to send to confirm the way down to the Pearl Farm. The farm has removed a large number of buoys, and has installed new ones early 2017. The channel through the buoy fields is wider now and nearly in its original place where it was before the changes in June 2016. The only changed coordinates are those of APA03, which is in the middle of the channel at its narrowest point. APA04 has been added to avoid outermost buoys of a new buoy field 0.6 nm north of APA03. All waypoint names have been changed to form a more consistent set. The coordinates were downloaded directly from Open CPN to this message to avoid typing errors.

s/y Irene's waypoints from passe Tehere (north pass) to Apataki Carenage Updated 29.6.2017

ID	Latitude	Longitude	Comment
APA00	S15°33.412'	W146°14.504'	Apataki Carenage anchorage
APA01	S15°33.225'	W146°14.351'	Coral head on W side of route
APA02	S15°30.867'	W146°14.410'	Oyster buoy field on E side of route
APA03	S15°28.971'	W146°13.871'	Narrow channel btwn two oyster buoy fields
APA04	S15°27.651'	W146°13.801'	Oyster buoy field on W side of route
APA05	S15°26.835'	W146°13.847''	Sandbank on E side of route

APA06	S15°23.539'	W146°12.968'	Single buoy and sand bank on E side of route
APA07	S15°23.040'	W146°12.295'	See anchorage note below
APA08	S15°22.550'	W146°13.078'	Big coral head on SW side of route
APA09	S15°22.146'	W146°14.754'	Difficult to see small subm coral head N of route
APA10	S15°21.159'	W146°17.310'	Coral head S of route
APA11	S15°20.074'	W146°20.906'	Coral head S of route
APA12	S15°19.795'	W146°22.508'	Coral head N of route
APA13	S15°19.358'	W146°23.954'	Entrance to passe Tehere
APA14	S15°18.683'	W146°24.846'	Outside of passe Tehere

Notes:

These waypoints leave a safe distance to all coral heads known to us along the route. The total length of the route is 24.0 nm.

There is a narrow channel between oyster buoy fields west and east of APA03. The field on the west side extends to the middle of the lagoon and the field on the east side goes very close to the shore. APA04 was added in June 2017 because two new oyster buoy fields have been installed further north on W side of APA04. This area is subject to changes in future as the route goes through an active oyster farm. Normally the farm leaves a channel close to the shore for local boat traffic.

The area E of APA07 is our favorite **anchoring** spot in NE Apataki. There is fine sand bottom at 10 m depth with few coral boulders. There is a submerged small coral head with appr. 2,5m water depth over it at 15 23.011 S 146 12.189 W between the anchorage and APA07.

Asolare – October 2016: We had a great downwind sail from Rangiroa to Apataki, skirting along at 8-9 knots in 2m following sea and N-NW winds of 22 knots average. We thus reached **Tehere Pass** 15.00, and a high tide of .81m predicted for 03.54 that day. 1 nautical mile before the pass the wind and swell dropped considerably, and there was no chop whatsoever in the pass. The entrance was thus easy, with a 1.5 knots incoming current.

We made for “Apataki 1” waypoint (as issued by s/v Irene and confirmed by s/v Jacaranda) and sailed to the Tehere Anchorage (about 1 NM away) anchoring on coral at **15 18.6572 S – 146 23.8207 W**. This anchorage provided good protection despite the coral in N-NW winds that were still gusting up to 20 knots.

As the weather had turned to, for now, light S-SE winds predicted to strengthen, we decided to move across the atoll and followed the “Apataki way points numbers 1-5”, and continued to “Jacaranda Anchorage”, putting our anchor down in 7m on mostly sand at 15 23.0148 S – 146 12.0962 W. En route we steered clear of the exposed coral and reefs highlighted on our chart plotters and exposed bombies noted in the Tuamotu Compendium. We also spotted exposed coral reefs at 15.21.9966 S – 146 13.9551 W, and 15.22.9317 S – 146 12.7249 W.

Jacaranda – September 2016: We exited this pass on a ebb tide late afternoon (17:30) and had no issues. Outflowing current was about 3-4 knots and the wind was 20+ from the E. Pass was calm. There is a fish trap on the east side of the pass. We used Irene's WP listed below and they were spot on.

Anchorage between Pass and Pearl Farm: Pretty motu with mostly sand bottom 30'. Makes a nice stop to/from yard to N pass. Excellent shelter(NE-E-SE) 15-22.994S / 146-12.0980 W

Sloepmouche (2003): Easy lagoon to sail across pass to pass or even diagonally with few reefs easily avoided with good light! As always, keep an eye out for pearl farm buoys even in the middle of the lagoon.

The NW anchorage about 1.5 nm from the NW pass is calm in NE winds but roly in E winds and dangerous in S winds (because of the long fetch) as an US sailboat found out this season.

You can dive on this 34-ft wreck in 40 ft of water in the indicated anchorage. Look for a coral formation on shore that looks like an anvil or ask local fishermen. And watch the weather so as to not suffer the same fate!

Matairea: We left Ahe too late in the day to make it through the pass at Apataki before sunset. So, rather than risking the pass in the dark, we spent the night hove to in the lee of the atoll, waiting until the sun was high in the sky to make a go at the pass. Patience paid off. If we had relied upon the chartplotter, which thus far in French Polynesia has been completely accurate, we would have either put ourselves on the reef coming through the pass or hit an unmarked reef once we were inside the lagoon. So, umm, glad we didn't do that.

We spent our first two days here tucked behind a small reef, about a mile from the pass. We took advantage of the close proximity to the pass to drift snorkel it three times. We saw plenty of fish, including Napoleon wrasse, grouper and tuna, moray eels, and sharks, mostly black tip, but I did have one large grey reef shark swim out of the depths to check me out.

Later we headed across the lagoon to anchor in the south east corner, in the lee of a motu, protected from the prevailing winds. Our trip over was a bit slow. We had to tack back and forth to make any progress upwind to the anchorage. We also had to tack around reefs and pearl farm buoys. As the afternoon wore on, the wind petered out. It is frustrating enough to have to approach your destination in segments, 45 degrees off your target, but to do so slowly is just annoying.

4.22.3 Apataki Carenage (Haulout Facility)

Jacaranda – September 2016: We did not see any moorings but in good light the bommies are clearly visible in the anchorage outside the boat yard.

Based on information I received from Pauline at Apataki Carenage

The operation includes:

- The haul out using hydraulic trailer
- High pressure wash
- Blocking the vessel
- 2 days of no charge parking (Haul out and launch days are not counted)
- Launch

HANDLING

MONOHULLS 1021 CFP TTC / Foot

CATAMARANS 1214 CFP TTC / Foot

TRIMARANS 1515-CFP TTC / Foot

PARKING DAY EXTRA IN EXCESS OF 5th DAY

MONOHULLS 67 CFP / foot / day

MULTICOQUES 67 CFP / foot / day

Stationing on land long term (Wintering (Storage))

1 month

monohulls 966 CFP / foot / month

multihulls 1159 CFP / foot / month

3 months

monohulls 906 CFP / foot / month

multihulls 1087 CFP / foot / month

6 months

monohulls 803 CFP / foot / month

multihulls 1006 CFP / foot / month

The site has water and electricity

Note: There is no liveaboard fee. I confirmed with Pauline.

Also there are a couple of rooms for people to rent. Even though the website says there is a restaurant we asked about it and were told by Pauline there is none and no food is served

Wifi: Decent wifi (2G) available 500 per day or 2000 per week. We were able to get a good signal from the boat with the use of a wifi antenna. Not sure this comes with haulout since we were anchored out.

Fuel

Diesel = 156 liter

Gasoline = 159 liter

Cooking gas transfer is available

Contact info: apatakicarenareservices@gmail.com

Telephone: (689) 727 813 (689) 714 529

See the website for further info: <http://www.apatakicarenage.com>

Supplies: The supply ship Cobia comes weekly. The yard has some paint in stock and some supplies but you can order via the yard to load on the ship and they will pickup at the wharf. If urgent items are needed weekly flights can be used. They can also facilitate ordering of veggies and other items from Papeete.

A comment from Linda and myself - This seems like a well-run yard but a long trip for food to the village. Suggest you stock up on food before hauling out. Very limited selection of boat yard stuff (paints, etc).

The yard is full of mosquitos.

Kalliope – December 2015: What Cruisers Can Expect at Apataki Carenage

These words about Apataki Carenage come from Deb and Gregg Burton in December, 2015: If the reader is not fluent in French (s)he may have some difficulty with the Carenage web page or an awkward translation so we offer these personal observations.

Kalliope and her crew had only the basic services of haul out and secure storage for 40 days. We carefully sought to know the cost in advance. A printed price list was provided and when we had questions they were answered clearly. Approaching the management this way was quite satisfactory and we feel the prices compare favorably with our previous two haul outs in north and Central America. We did not have the yard do fiberglass or paint work and cannot comment on costs for those services.

We have an easy entrance through Apataki south pass and crossing to the Carenage location. Anchoring in less than 30 feet, sand, near the Carenage ramp is easy and safe as long as you don't try to get in too close. This location is sheltered from trade winds.

On shore we meet a young man who is one of the the youngest of the three generations operating Apataki Carenage. Tony gives us a tour, answers our questions and responds professionally to our several concerns. He asks for passports, boat registration and a copy of the customs declaration document (equipment list) filed upon entering French Polynesia. Apparently an occasional visit from the authorities is expected.

At the appointed time, we move through the coral heads, nudge the ramp and surrender our precious vessel to the crew of five who haul us out and pressure wash the hull. The hydraulic "chariot" is powered by a small yellow tractor. The crew carefully positions the pads and dives and nudges until they are satisfied, then the tractor pulls us up the concrete and steel ramp to the wash station.

After 24 hours, we are moved to a long term site, our 37' monohull is lowered onto blocks, propped up with ten adjustable steel posts set in the gravel and held down with six concrete blocks and web straps. Anyone who leaves their boat in the southern summer is encouraged to remove all canvas and carefully secure their dinghy. All boats have their masts up.

There is a new, clean, but unlighted shower and toilet facility and clear non-potable water is provided in a barrel at the boat. Internet access (fee) is provided at a very pleasant shelter a two minute walk through the family compound from the boatyard. Drinking water is available in limited quantities from a tap near this shelter. Eggs and frozen chicken are available at attractive prices. Trash disposal is provided and includes recycling glass and tin and aluminum cans.

Photos on the website do not do justice to the beauty of the place. Tamoro Motu where the family built their life and their business is wider than many atoll motus and the natural vegetation plus the mature growth of coco palms result in a secure feel to the yard where there is room for about fifty boats on a gravel pad.

The yard has a ready supply of small power tools in good condition and electric power as required. Their crew is ready and willing to remove old paint, apply new and do minor fiberglass repairs. The boat owner is also welcome to do any of this work herself. Assistance is available to bring in any parts or materials needed, but be prepared to wait at least a week.

As a matter of fact, this is such a pleasant place, we suggest you plan a week of "free time" to take dinghy excursions, walks on beaches and trails, explore the tide pools on the ocean side and snorkel in the lagoon and back bay. At this time there is no ciguatera at Apataki atoll. There will probably be opportunities to visit with the family operating the Carenage and with other cruisers.

If you fly out of Apataki, one of the crew will take you across the lagoon to the airport in the launch and pick you up on your return. There is a plane once a week on Friday. There are rumors of flight schedule irregularities but no cruiser we met was inconvenienced. A passenger carrying supply boat is another option to get to Tahiti.

Quixotic – 2010 (as relayed by Nakia):

I just wanted to let you know that we've hooked up with our friends, Ed and Nila, on the catamaran Quixotic. They hauled out at Apataki to travel by camper van in New Zealand last season. They concur that the people are friendly and want to be very helpful BUT there were major issues over the final bill and it turned unfriendly very fast. A couple of the issues were:

- Thinking he would throw some extra business to the nice family, Ed hired Tony (Alfred's son) to assist him with some fiberglass work. That labor (which was very spotty and slow) ended up costing him \$50/hour! Ed didn't keep close track of Tony's hours and feels the bill was padded in that area.
- There is some sort of a price break for hauling out before a certain date, which Q planned to do. However it was very windy on the appointed date and everyone agreed it would be best to wait a few days. Alfred assured them (but not in writing) that he would honor the special rate. Come the splash date, with the boat raised off the jack stands, and it was time to settle the bill. When Ed disputed some of the charges, Alfred refused to splash the boat until he was paid in full.

All of this was very disheartening because Ed and Nila truly enjoyed their stay in Apataki and had good relations with everyone up until it came time to pay the bill. They recommend getting everything in writing (even if you have to write it up yourself and have Alfred/Tony sign it) and keeping close track of every detail. They circumnavigated the atoll and thought it was lovely. Oh, and FYI, they found bottom paint cheaper to buy in French Polynesia than it would have been in NZ.

A couple of more data points for Apataki from Ed and Nila

- There is a \$40/day liveaboard fee even if you don't use their water or electricity. Quixotic reports that another cruiser installed a handle on the door to the outdoor bathroom, Q provided the TP and something from which to hang it, and there is no shower completed yet (we saw it still very much a work in progress). There are also no bungalows or anywhere to rent a room if you had guests or didn't want to live on the boat (the web site description is over zealous with what's actually available).
- They were charged \$30 to ride with the family on their periodic trips to town for provisions. The daughter in Papeete who handles orders for supplies charges \$50/hour for her services and this was not split between boats as Quixotic thought it would be when two or more boats were ordering from the same chandlery.

Bottom line again: get everything in writing, and maybe pay in advance to get the "in full" price locked in, to avoid any surprises on your return.

4.23 Manihi (Pass, Village, Fuel, Internet)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 64-66

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31

The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 116-125

Services:

Fernando is the 'go to' guy in Manihi. He and his wife own the bakery on the waterfront, with a small café adjacent. He speaks reasonably good English, and has a long list of services (for pay) that he offers to the visiting yachtsmen. But in addition to his business side, he genuinely wants everyone who visits to have a great time.

Fuel: The Yachtsmen's Guide says fuel is available in small quantities, via jugs. Another cruiser reported having fuel in a 55 gallon drum delivered to the boat by Fernando.

Internet: Internet (for pay) is available in the anchorage off the village in the SW corner of the atoll (see Slipaway anchor spot below) There is both Manaspot and WDG Hotspot.

Chart Accuracy in Manihi: (Soggy Paws May 2011): Unlike all the other French Poly locations we have visited, we were surprised to find that the chart of Manihi is slightly off in the CMap (CM93 computer charts Dated May 2010) charts. Someone else reported the same issue with their Raymarine chart plotter with a 'brand new chip'. However, the Garmin Mapsource charts (2008) and a Furuno 2009 C-Map chip was accurate and had more detail than the CM93 Cmap/Maxsea charts.

Slipaway (May 2011): Here are some waypoints taken off our track when we entered Manihi Atoll.

#1 - Outside the pass:

14 28.065 S
146-04.014 W

#2 - Just inside the red and green marks at the entrance:

14 27.529 S
146-03.668 W

#3 - About half way through:

14 27.307 S
146-03.511 W

#4 - At the Cardinal Mark:

14 27.217 S
146-03.466 W

These waypoints are based on WGS-84 datum. We have a Furuno chartplotter with a C-Map chip (purchased in 2009), and it was very accurate for the pass.

When you reach the Cardinal Mark, you will turn to starboard to come to the anchorage. There is clear water on both sides of the Cardinal Mark, but it is best to leave it to starboard. Follow the green markers along the edge of the atoll to the anchorage about 1/2 mile southeast of the

village. Keep the green markers to starboard as you head to the anchorage. Here are some waypoints that will keep you out of trouble:

To Anchor 1 14.27.401S / 146.03.382W

To Anchor 2 14.27.574S / 146.03.268W

To Anchor 3 14.27.770 S / 146.02.953W

Anchorage 14 27.89 S / 146-02.19 W

If you send an email to Xavier Michel (xavier.michel@mail.pf), who runs the Sailmail station here, he will send you tide info. It can also be obtained by referencing the AHE tides in the "Tides & Currents" program that comes with Nobeltec, and we also have Ahe tide info on the C-Map chip in our chartplotter. I assume you can also get tide info for Ahe through www.shom.fr. Or you can use Rangiroa as a reference and add about an hour to get high/low at Manihi.

Per Xavier, slack water in the pass normally occurs about one hour after high or low tide.

If you prefer to have someone lead you through the pass, "Fernando" will do so if he is available. You can hail "Fernando" on VHF 16. He works at the airport, so if there's a plane coming in at the same time, he might not be available. There is a charge for this service. His price list says 2500 XPF (about \$30 US) per boat to bring you through the pass and another 2500 to escort you to the anchorage. That price may be negotiable. When we came in, we had three boats following one another through the pass. He came out, led us through the pass and then led us to the anchorage, and he charged each of us 2000 XPF.

Here is our take on Manihi. It is pretty here, but not the most beautiful atoll we have seen. The anchorage is deep (about 50 feet), the water in the anchorage is not very clear, and the snorkeling near the anchorage isn't great. We are still here, so have not yet tried to weigh anchor, but there is definitely coral on the bottom. We did drift snorkel through the pass several times on the incoming tide several times, and that was very good - clear water, healthy corals and good sea life. We saw several large eels, some lion fish, a couple of flounder, and a couple of octopus, as well as some sharks and numerous other of the more common fishes.

CAUTION: One word of caution when snorkeling this pass. About 3/4 of the way through, there are some old fish pens. One needs to be careful not to get tangled up in those. These are typically old rusty re-bar and chicken wire, sometimes not visible or partially visible above the surface. There was an incident of that during our stay in Manihi, and fortunately, the folks involved were not injured. It would be a good idea to scout this out on your way out to snorkel, and make sure everyone in your party is watching for it.

The real attraction at Manihi are the people. We can't say enough nice things about Fernando - it appears it is his goal that everyone who visits Manihi will have a good experience. He is a bundle of energy and always has a smile on his face. When we were here, Fernando had a family member visiting from Hawaii (a Hawaiian State Senator), and they were planning a family picnic at a blue lagoon at the eastern end of the atoll. At the time, there were 4 cruising boats (11 people) in the anchorage, and he invited us all to the picnic. Although he runs for-hire day-trips to the blue lagoon, he told us this was a "special" event, and we only paid for the fuel for the boats to take us there (about 15 miles away). It was a very "special" day - we snorkeled, fished, gathered coconuts and enjoyed a meal that was prepared from food gathered off the land and from the sea. There were five of Fernando's family members present, and after we

ate, they brought out their ukeleles and guitars and played music and sang. It was most definitely a highlight of all our travels.

Fernando does run a business and offers numerous services to cruisers - trash pickup, baguette delivery, laundry, assistance with a stuck anchor, pearl farm tours and some other day trips. He has a price list for all of these services.

While at Manihi, we also met Xavier Michel, who runs the Sailmail station. He is a retired commander from the French Navy. In his last post, he was in charge of the French fleet throughout the entire Pacific. Xavier is happy to have folks visit him, and he will show you his sailmail operation, as well as give you a tour of the house he and his wife are building on their island. Xavier is also very friendly and charming, and we enjoyed a couple hours visiting with him. You can also hail Xavier on VHF 16.

Mr John IV (2009): Much improved in way of navigational marks since my first visit, when it was 'heart in mouth' as we charged in with 6 ½ feet draft and a full tide under us. A lot of pearl farms here and anchoring can be difficult.

Apart from a tour of the Pearl Farms (and they were charging) there didn't really seem a lot to do.

Slapdash (Aug 2008): *Note: This was their first and only stop in the Tuamotus.* We are anchored in the crater of some ancient volcano. Exhausted after a long and squally night (on passage direct from the Marquesas) we arrived at our destination at 8:30 this morning.

It's kind of a funny thing to roll up on an atoll after a few days at sea. You can't see them at all until you are a couple of miles away, and then all you see is a row of palm trees poking up from the waves projecting a very isolated and mirage like image.

An atoll makes its debut as a volcano. Then a reef forms around the volcano. Eventually the volcano recedes back into the sea and you are left with this big coral rim with a nice sheltered lagoon where the crater was. Submerge a salad bowl in the sink so that just the rim is showing and you will have yourself a mini porcelain atoll. In the real life version, way out here in the middle of the ocean, people actually live on that thin rim.

That's where we are now but first we had to get from the horrible davit smashing ocean into this nice calm and clear fish filled water. There is only one way to do that and it involves a tricky passage through the **Tairapa pass**.

The guide recommends caution and to make this passage only during slack tide. The reason being is that all the water of the Pacific is trying to enter the atoll during a flood tide and all the water of the atoll is trying to rejoin the Pacific during the ebb. So every 6 hours the passage looks quite pleasant for roughly 30 minutes and the rest of the time it looks like pictures from your friend's white water rafting trip.

Based on the horribly inaccurate information we had we thought our timing was perfect. By the time we had figured out that it was far from perfect, and that we were in the middle of an ebb (outgoing) tide we had committed ourselves to the channel. Jaime was on deck watching for the reported coral reef and I was at the helm trying to push slapdash through the rushing current and standing waves. It sounds bad but things were actually going really well. We've experienced similar conditions in the Bahamas and this channel was a luxurious 60 feet deep, initially.

Of course our luck would change. Soon it was 30 feet, then 20. Turning around in this narrow passage at this point under these conditions was out of the question. All we could see was white

water to the left and a big exposed reef to the right. Things were looking grim with no way out when the sounder counted down below 20, rocketing through the teens to 10 feet. With no answer and a nasty outcome seeming inevitable Jaime started signaling for a turn to port. That would take us into white ripping water that appeared to be about 6 inches deep but away from the gnarly looking reef. I had no additional information from my position available so the boat was completely in Jaime's hands at this point. I took a deep breath and swung the wheel over. Nine feet, eight feet... waiting for a big crunch. I don't think either of us exhaled for the next 15 seconds and our butt-pucker-terror-alert-level was orange (high) but the crash didn't come. In agonizing slow motion the sounder gradually clawed its way back into the teens and finally to a sphincter relaxing 40 feet. Jaime maintained her position on deck to watch for coral heads and we threaded our way through the lagoon over to our anchorage.

We spent the day recovering from our passage. This means catching up on much needed sleep and slowly transitioning ourselves and the boat from passage mode to anchorage mode. Cleaning up, eating a decent meal, shaking the salt out of... everything! The trip was only 500 miles but it seemed like a really tough slog. Maybe it's because we've put on so many miles over the last couple of months but these passages are going down like barbed wire lately. We are both looking forward to some extended shore time once we get to New Zealand but that's a lot of miles away still so in the meantime...

Next day: I went back to the infamous Tairapa pass today armed with a snorkel, mask and fins. The trip through the pass with a snorkel was much more rewarding than the trip with the catamaran. We drifted out through the pass with the tide floating past black tip reef sharks, unicorn fish, parrots, angels, moray eels, and a million others.

Later on Jaime and I hit the town. The town is tiny, it didn't hit back. They have a post office, two little general stores, a bakery, clinic, and one small restaurant which consists of a couple of tables in someone's back yard.

Our guide reads: "The best anchorage is in a bight about .5 miles ESE of the village where it is sheltered from the chop of the southeast trade winds and has only modest coral to foul the anchor rode."

I decided to check on our anchor. Once I was 50 feet down I saw that in reality the "modest" coral fouling our anchor rode looked more like the Ewok forest of Endor. Our chain wove a path of the most extreme resistance through the forest. It was laughable. As I followed the chain towards the anchor thinking about how this would be a great dive site and wondering how on earth I would ever be able to retrieve it without a windlass, the thing shot straight up towards the sky. This was interesting. The last time I checked anchor chain was not buoyant and yet here I was following ours up, up, and up. It turns out that the chain was draped over a rocky arm jutting out from a massive stone structure large enough to nearly break the surface. I came up, took another breath and followed the chain back down the other side.

Eventually it led to our anchor. You could hardly say that the anchor was set, only the end had found purchase in a small crack. Like a rock climber would wedge the tips of his fingers into a tiny hold. Having seen the scabbled terrain the anchor would have cope with if dislodged I wasn't the least bit worried about it dragging. On the contrary, retrieval would be our concern this time. The wind howled all night. We slept soundly.

A few days later: The squalls of the past couple nights have twisted and wound our chain through the Endor forest even more thoroughly. After we had 20 feet of the 200 retrieved we were hooked solidly around our first obstacle. I donned the mask and fins and followed the

chain to the bottom. The problem was obvious. Jaime was at the stern waiting for me to surface. I would come up and provide instructions for the helm based on what I saw, then would dive back down as she worked the boat forward. With slack in the chain I could free it from the obstruction, surface, swim back to the boat, climb aboard, go forward and start heaving in chain again until we reached the next obstruction.

Then we would repeat the process. It was completely exhausting. We could have really used a third crew member and a windlass for this little exercise but a half hour later we had chain and anchor safely stowed away. I collapsed in the cockpit as Jaime took us back towards the channel of death.

Having snorkeled the pass a couple of times by now we were much more confident taking Slapdash through here than we were a week ago. We circled around for a half an hour or so waiting for the tide to lose some of its momentum and then pointed it through. This time we were running with the tide so it was a faster ride. Fortunately our timing was much better which made for a nice smooth atoll egress.

Outside the passage we were met with a big swell and a stiff wind pushing waves in an opposing direction. We pitched and rolled while I set the sails but before long they were up and finally we were pointed towards Tahiti.

Amante (): We really didn't give the Tuamotus a fair visit. This was a combination of awful weather (Maramu winds) and a bad choice of an atoll, which was Manihi. If we had to do it over again, we'd probably sail for Fakarava or maybe Rangiroa.

(Pictures of them in a dinghy with snorkel gear on) Here we appear to be playing around, but we're really trying to get the dinghy across the lagoon in 25kt winds and an awful chop. We had Maramu winds for over a week, which kept us pinned down behind a motu (island) with murky, green, remora-infested water to play in.

When we tried to raise the anchor we discovered it was wrapped under a coral head. We had an idea it might be a problem after the admiral dropped her glasses overboard and we were forced to dive amidst schools of remoras. If you haven't been visited by a remora, be advised that what they want to do is attach themselves to your body somewhere; We've seen them on turtles, whales and boats, not just sharks. We noted that the chain went under a mushroom-shaped head but thought we could unwrap it. Wrong. After struggling for 30 minutes we gave up and sent the Captain overboard to unwind the chain.

Manihi was a disappointment. It's not clear why, but the lagoon there has been ruined. The water is a murky green and all the coral is dead. It turns out that much of the coral in French Polynesia is dead, possibly killed by an El Nino or global warming. If you're planning to visit the Tuamotus, skip Manihi.

4.24 Arutua

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 76-77

4.25 Ahe (Pass, Village)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 65-65

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 31-32

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia: 2001, (Pages 62-64)

Consensus (72 ft Oyster with deep draft) – July 2017: We found this atoll to be less visited by yachties recently. The pass and inside the lagoon was well marked with buoys. Lots of pearl long lines in the lagoon but these are well clear of the main channel. Good snorkelling on the lagoon boomies. We saw a seahorse, sharks, healthy coral, many colourful giant clams, and pearl oysters.

You can arrange lunch at a family run pension near the airport with pickup from the anchorage at the south end of the atoll in their speed boat. Anchoring near the airport might be ok if the wind is suitable.

Anchorage at northern end is a pretty spot to be based. Anchoring inside the village basin may be ok for small boats but there are numerous shallow coral heads inside the basin, so we anchored outside of it between large bommies and were able to dig in ok. Cute little walk around the village, very small store, post office with free half hour of wifi, and friendly locals. We tried to visit a pearl shop in the village, white house on the water with red trim, but no one was around at the time. Easy village dock to tie tender up to. Time the pass with the tide so the current isn't too strong, but it is very well marked and easy to navigate.

4.25.1 Pass Tiareroa

Sea Dragon – August 2017: We're writing from Kamoka Pearl Farm, Ahe, Tuamotus to let the cruising community know about the unique set up & services available to cruisers who visit the atoll.

Kamoka is located 1.5 miles South of Passe Tiareroa. The pearl farm is owned & operated by Patrick Humbert, who sailed to Ahe with his family in the early 1970's. The atoll & its people made an impact on his life & he returned in 1990 to start Kamoka Pearl Farm.

The heart of Kamoka- the Pearl house- is situated atop a large coral head about 300 yards from shore. Most of the oyster & pearl work happens here, & more importantly- the daily family style feast. There are 2 Tahiti-tie style **moorings** set up at the house which can accommodate vessels up to 55feet. The coral head & the house provide protection from wind & seas from NE-->SE. Another mooring is set up at the farm's oyster grafting shack on a coral head almost 1/2 mile from shore...this mooring offers much privacy and the coral protects from wind/seas from NE-->SE. Another mooring exists close to the Pearl house which is not protected by reef during normal trades, but is perfect in stormy conditions when the wind s are from SW-->NW.

Kamoka offers a deal similar to what you find at Anse Amyot in Toao: \$5/night for mooring or \$30 for mooring & a delicious meal. Though still a working pearl farm, the pearl industry has slowed down, & Patrick has put out the welcome mat to help keep the farm afloat. In addition to meals & mooring, Patrick sells his amazing freshly baked bread & bottles of honey harvested from his bee hives on shore. There is also a small magasin run by Rosaline at the motu next door- she sells basic groceries & Hinanos!

Anyone wanting a unique experience in the Tuamotus should visit Kamoka.

You should try to contact Patrick before you arrive to possibly arrange for escort into the pass & to the farm (patrickhumbert@yahoo.fr or +689 87 21 12 64)...otherwise, just keep to port when entering the pass, & begin to follow the marked channel towards the village until you reach the 2nd Red channel marker (14*29.188'S, 146*21.334'W)... From the red marker you will see the

grafting shack & the Pearl house to the West, & there is a mostly buoy-free channel going to Kamoka (keep south of the oyster shack when approaching the Pearl house).

SPECIAL UNTIL FEB 2018

There's a sailmaker staying at Kamoka Pearl Farm with heavy duty machines for sail & canvas work. Sail repairs & modifications possible for boats up to 50 feet. Special machine to accommodate all canvas needs for any size vessel (Dodgers, biminis, stack packs, UV covers, other canvas covers, & custom wind scoops)

Jacaranda – Sep 2016: There is only one pass into the lagoon located on the NW side. Its deep and easily managed. We went thru mid Ebb with 20-25 knots ESE blowing and had about 5 knots outflow. Some turbulence on the outside of the pass but could steer around it.

The waypoints we used to get into the lagoon favors the N side of the pass

Outside the Pass - 14 27.1940 S / 146 22.0558 W

Entrance to the Pass 14 27.3832 S / 146 21.6025 W

Turn to Port (~ 90dM) 14 27.5567 S / 146 21.2455 W

Turn to the Village 14 32.1498 S / 146 21.6086 W

Once inside we followed the marked ship channel to the village of Tenukupara. It is a wide channel marked with port & stb beacons.

Mata'irea – Before 2011: Today we headed back across the lagoon to the pass in our dinghy. We each did two drift snorkels through the pass on the incoming tide. While one of us snorkeled, the other hovered nearby in the dinghy to pull the swimmer out before we reached the turbulence caused by the current hitting the wind chop at that inside of the pass. It was cool. Really cool. We moved through the pass at about 5 knots. It felt like we were flying over the seabed below. The water was crystal clear - like gin. The coral growth was really healthy and colorful. There were lots of pretty fish. And we saw barracuda, nurse sharks and a black tipped reef shark. Wicked cool.

4.25.2 Pearls & Navigation

Jacaranda – Sep 2016: There are two marked channels in Ahe. One runs from the Pass to the village. The second marked channel runs from the pass to the airport. Both are clear of obstructions. Heading to the village favor the eastern side of the channel appears to be better as pearl floats are starting to encroach on the western side of the channel.

Ahe appears to be the very heart of pearl country in the Tuamotus. Over 50 pearl farms in the lagoon. Ahe supplies much of the oysters to Arutua, Apataki, Tikehau, Rangarioa, etc. We asked dozens and dozens of people about the lagoon what they thought about us following close along the S side of the lagoon as we headed to the E end. EVERYONE said no head back to the pass and go up the marked channel to the airport before heading over.

NOTE: Do be aware that when you enter the pass and turn to stb to the village the standard French marks Green to Stb red to port apply. But the same mark system applies if you were to go thru the pass and turn port to the airport. Green to stb & Red to port. Not your normal setup in FP.

4.25.3 Village of Tenukupara

Jacaranda – Sep 2016: The anchorage is a U shaped area almost completely protected by exposed reef to the N & W and motu to the NE-S. What a nice change from other anchorages in the Tuamotus not having to be so concerned with wind shifts. Plus its very close to the village.

There is a stb and port marker that marks the opening or entrance to the main wharf area and anchorage. Give the port hand (Red) marker plenty of space as it does not sit right on the edge of the reef. Our turn point between the two marks was 14 32.2713 S 146 21.5041 W.

We found a clear sandy patch in 30' of water to drop the hook. We buoyed our chain with 3 floats allowing our 100' of 3/8" chain to float over the bommies. Anchored at 14 32.2020S 146 21.4229W. BE CAREFUL in this area as there are a number of bommies coming close to the surface. Good bright sunlight helps with picking a spot to anchor.

Be sure you are anchored away from the wharf as two supply ships came in while we were here. One of them at night. Boats have reported they were asked to move as they were too close to the wharf. We were told that our anchored position presented no problems to the freighters.

We were one of seven boats(9-16) to stop in Ahe in 2016. 2015 had even less. Much different than before GPS as it used to get 40-50 boats a season. PreGPS saw most of the yachts traveling from the Marquesas to Tahiti taking the northern route Manihi-Ahe-Rangaroa-Tahiti. My sister and her husband stopped here in 1976 preGPS on their vintage Lapworth 36 Gambit!

There are a couple small **stores** close to the wharf that carry basic food stuffs. One had a couple of deep freezers with shrimp, chicken, steak, etc. We found fresh veggies from Tahiti at a snack shop. The snack shop (there are two) is located up the main street from the wharf past the post office, turn right at the first street(at the phone booth) and its about 100m on your left.

Cooking Gas is available at the small shop across from the post office about 50m up from the wharf. Arre is the owner. No deposit is required if you bring the French bottle back to him. Very convenient and close to the wharf.

No bakery. Bread comes in via the ship and occasionally from Manihi. If coming by the ship its bag in groups of 25. Way to much for our needs.

Garbage: Recycle - up the street from the wharf next to the post office there are two small green structures. Plastic and bottles. Nonrecycle- Up the street past the post office to the sercond cross street and turn left. Just around the corner is a raised platform. It next to the first snack shop and phone booth. About 50m further than the recycle.

Mr John (2008): Ahe is much the same as Manihi except that there is a somewhat more secure anchorage off the main town. Very easy in and out with a well-marked channel all the way to the basin. DO NOT charge around inside the basin as there are many Coral Heads and seeing some of them is difficult. It may be better to anchor outside the basin if in any doubt.

Whatever; do not block the channel as there is regular freighter service to main wharf.

There are a couple of small stores, a little hardware, sometimes fresh bread and not much else.

My anchor position was : 14 32.210 S / 146-21.439 W

4.25.4 ENE side

Jacaranda – Sep 2016: We approached this area in good light with excellent GE charts. The water is not as clear as other atolls and you do need to keep a sharp lookout for both bommies

and pearl floats. Because we could not see the bottom in 30' we used our fish finder to try and find a sandy spot. After 30 minutes of driving around we realized that there probably isn't any spots big enough to swing at anchor. Plus the bommies are more like pinnacles.

We anchored at 14 26.927S / 146 13.319W. Floated the anchor chain with 4 floats. Luckily a week later the anchor came up without a chain wrap

Airport: Located in the NE part of the atoll.

Cocoperle Lodge

We heard excellent reports from friends on Domino who were here a few years ago. We were hoping for a anniversary dinner at the lodge. But we can now say they are not interested in having yachties visit. We emailed them via their website with no reply and called and spoke with them 3 times each time they promised they would call back. Never did hear from them. Oh well...

Pension Raita

14 27.1637S / 146 13.3116W Monitors channel VHF 11. Phone #87221480

Owned by Willy & Raina. Its a wonderful friendly place and welcomes yachties to stop in and have dinner(1 day notice). We are so glad Cocoperle never responded because we had 2 wonderful dinner at Pension Raita. They speak excellent English and the food was delicious. They also offer fishing trips, visits to a pearl farm, etc.

4.25.5 Ancient Old Growth Forest

Jacaranda – Sep 2016: Linda discovered some information about a motu (Motu Manu) that has been designated as a reserve containing the last stand of old growth forest in Tuamotus! Many of the atolls were heavily forested before the coconut farms. A short dinghy ride from our anchorage we walked thru the forest which had large trees (12' + in diameter). Ferns, orchids and cleared walking trails made it a wonderful way to spend a enjoyable hour. Best enjoyed during the heat of the day or in the evening when the sea birds come back to roost. A short walk across this motu brings you to the outer reef with a sand beach and not much reef at this spot. Sea turtles use this area to lay their eggs.

Approx location 14 26.3688 S / 146 13.4745 W. Pension Raita has a couple of small tables and chairs in this area which we took advantage of.

4.26 Rangiroa (Pass, Village, Fuel, Wifi)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 72-75

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 32-33

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia 2001, pages 91-103

The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 84-105

Rangiroa is 45 miles long and 15 miles wide, and is the largest Tuamotu, and the second largest atoll in the world. There are two passes, but one anchorage that yachts seem to favor, near the Tiputa pass.

Services

Fuel: The 2009 Yachtsman's Guide published in Papeete says fuel is available in Avatoru in barrels of 100L or at the gas stations.

Wifi: (2010) Iaroanet's website lists 'Tiputa Pass Anchorage' as a location for Iaroanet Wifi, located in the "6 Passengers Dive Center". Hotspot also lists Rangiroa in their ads.

(Salamander 2010): For internet access, Iaroanet comes up on my connection list, but never actually connects to the internet and the WDG Hotspot signal is too poor to use (but we are a little way from the aerial at TopDive and have no booster!). There is access available from some pensions/hotels for a small fee and we saw an internet cafe near the airport as we went past.

Banking: (2010) There are 2 ATMS in Avatoru and 1 in Tiputa

Diving: see Diving subsection below

Transportation: (2010) Taxis cost 2000 CFP, regardless of journey. One guidebook said that there isn't enough traffic on the atoll to hitchhike, but s/v Salamander reported that they got rides right away the two times they tried (to/from the supermarket). Other cruisers reported walking, and being offered rides occasionally.

Slipaway – May/June 2011: Anchoring Tax. Once or twice a week (Wednesday and/or Thursday mornings when we were there), a local policeman and the tax collector come to the anchorage off the Kia Ora Resort to collect a tax - 150 XPF per person per day. If you are off the boat or anchored somewhere else in the lagoon, you may miss out on the opportunity to pay the tax. *(Ed: This tax is reportedly being used to improve services for visiting yachts, including improving the dinghy dock area and adding showers.)*

New Morning - July 2011: Anchoring Tax: When we were in Rangiroa, we were approached by Gendarmerie by boat, requesting that we pay a tax. It was 150PF/night x number of people on the vessel.

From what we gleaned, most cruisers are unaware of this tax. In the past, Gendarmerie assumed that cruisers would come to the Gendarmerie to pay the tax, but most cruisers are unaware of this requirement so now the Gendarmerie come to each vessel to collect.

Slipaway – May/June 2011: Airport. The airport is just a couple of miles from the Kia Ora (Tiputa) anchorage, and in settled weather, one can tie the dinghy up at a concrete wall/wharf just in front of the airport to pick up guests. In higher winds/rougher seas, it's better to take a cab from the wharf at the Tiputa pass.

Slipaway – May/June 2011: Pearls. A number of folks went on a pearl farm tour with the Gaugin Pearl shop, and feedback was good. From what we heard, Gaugin sells good quality pearls and jewelry, but one could find some items that were not too expensive. As mentioned previously, a woman at the Para Dive Shop also sells pearl jewelry. It is less expensive and lower quality, but it may be just what you're looking for.

Cruiser's Reports on Misc Stuff

(see specific stuff on each pass, and on diving in Rangiroa, in separate sections further down.)

White Princess 2010: Rangiroa does not have any well-sheltered anchorage near either of the two passes, a big swell is generated parallel to the shore by any wind south of NE. *(Note: we queried several cruisers anchored at the Tiputa Anchorage in May 2011 about protection in normal 15-20kt E-ESE winds, and they thought the anchorage (near Sea Flyer's waypoint in the*

Tiputa anchorage) was 'great'. White Princess' warning is important to remember if a frontal passage is expected, where the winds will be strong out of the SE for a day or two). Remember that when the GRIB files are showing 20 knots, it may well be 20-30 knots.

Fly Aweigh 2010: Rangiroa is the place that I was most excited about seeing in French Polynesia, ever since Allan saw a documentary piece on the dolphins swimming in the strong current here, and was so entranced with the place we almost made it our honeymoon destination 5 years ago.

And now, here we are. But so far, it's a little disappointing. Beautiful, but a bit, oh, fallen. The main hotel on the island, the Kia Ora, in front of which we are anchored, is closed for renovations. So it's a bit desolate in it's abandoned state, and so far no restoring seems to be in progress. And no dolphins. Not on the dive that was supposed to have "tons of dolphins, like pets!" according to one cruiser. And none in the pass where we went at sundown, the place featured in the documentary of 5 years ago. Yesterday, no drift dive, because there was no incoming current due to the high winds blowing so much water into the atoll that the current just kept going out. And today, no Blue Lagoon.

We had planned a day trip to the south side of the atoll to snorkel and picnic in the Blue Lagoon, a beautiful "don't miss" about 3 hours away. But the weather didn't cooperate. The wind gusted to 26 un-forecast knots. The sea was raucous, the poor dinghy was hanging on for dear life. We looked hopefully to the south, through the wet, gray sky, the tossing sea, toward the Blue Lagoon, and knew it was the wrong day for this little adventure in paradise. The anchorage would be rocky, the sea would be too much for our little dinghies to get around, maybe even too rough to land them on the beach, and the rain looked like it intended to stick around on and off all day. So, almost halfway there, we turned around.

Now I don't want to leave the impression that we haven't had a good time in the last few days, despite the setbacks. We've had two dives with the Top Dive folks, and they've both been good. Not as good as Fakarava, and not as good as the snorkeling in Toau. But anytime we're in the water is a good time. We saw a huge sea turtle, a few sharks lurking in the deep, and slews of other colorful Polynesian fish.

Mata'irea: The passage from Apataki to Rangiroa was short but uncomfortable. It started with an easy downwind sail in the flat water of the lagoon. Then we rode through the standing waves in the southern pass at Apataki, which is shaped like a dogleg. It was easily our hairiest pass run yet. The trip is only 90nm but you have to go through the passes and lagoons at both atolls in good light, so basically it is an overnight no matter how you look at it. We had to go slowly so as not to arrive too early at the Rangiroa pass. To slow us down, we had only the jib up, then kept furling in a bit more as the wind built through the night. Usually we use the main to keep us from rolling, but it would have been too much sail for this passage. With only a scrap of jib up, no main sail, and wind chop from the south east crossing swell from the south west we rolled all night long. Lets just say neither of us got much sleep last night.

Mr John (2008): There are two passes on the north coast, both can be very bad with wind against tide. The Eastern pass is most handy for the main yacht anchorage however, when it is blowing, the western pass seems to me to be far easier and shorter. However once through you then have to go five miles east on the inside. Under ideal conditions it would be best to enter through the east pass and exit through the west.

Nice anchorage but open if the wind clocks round, we had a good swell even in a strong SEly as the waves built up a swell inside the lagoon and this worked its way into the bay.

Had a Free Pearl Farm Tour here organized through the local hotel. It was very good and the drift dive on the pass can be rewarding in settled conditions.

If you get the weather right, you can do Papeete from here in just one overnight.

From an SSCA Article 2006: The smaller pass (west one) is more yacht friendly. You can anchor in front of the luxury hotel. The hotel's Blue Lagoon tour is really worth it. Diesel must be jerry canned. There is one notoriously dishonest taxi driver on the atoll, be warned. When anchored in Rangiroa, keep an eye on the weather. The fetch is long, over 20 miles, and the passes can close, leaving you stuck on a lee shore, which, as one friend says, "is no fun atoll!"

4.26.1 Pass Tiputa – Main Pass & Anchorage

Consensus (72 ft Oyster with Deep Draft) – July 2017: We entered in Tiputa pass and had a nice snorkel and shallow dive in the aquarium at the end of the pass inside the lagoon. Protected marine reserve and you can tell! Coral was in great shape and huge schools of snappers, sharks, and other reef fish. We anchored to the north side of the pass near the dive shops.

There were several restaurants and supermarkets within walking distance. Still hard to find fruits and vegetables, but few were there in poor quality at great expense! Fresh bread was available in the supermarkets though. There were quite a few dive shops and the average price was USD \$70 per person for a dive outside the lagoon with mantas and dolphins, and a dive through the pass. This isn't the sharky pass, we were told that was elsewhere. We didn't pay for a dive, but it was possible to drift snorkel the pass holding onto the tender. But with wind against tide in the pass, the waves really built up and there was a breaking swell in the pass, which was pretty sketchy! There were few large fish and broken up coral we saw in the pass snorkel, conditions weren't ideal when we went though.

You can rent bikes and bike the length of the island.

There was **wifi** available onshore at the two restaurants opposite each other near the dock. It was ok to tie your dinghy up inside the wharf area, the outside dock was used for a ferry and large boats refuelling when we were there. Skip having a very! Expensive drink at the Bali Hai bungalow resort near the anchorage!

Sea Flyer – May 2011: We did an overnight from Manihi and came in the Tiputa (eastern) pass at dawn, at slack current. Entry was easy even in that light—you could probably do it at night once you'd been there once. Our anchor position was: 14-58.03S / 147-38.13W. This is just west of Tiputa pass in 30' of clear water mostly sand and some low coral. It is a nice anchorage in the current conditions (light ENE wind), but directly on the path of local boats coming and going to work at 'morning rush hour'.

Slipaway – May/June 2011: We entered Rangiroa via the Tiputa pass. We used WX Tide 32 tables for Rangiroa - one of the local dive shops told us that's what they use, too. The currents really rip through the passes here, so it's best to try and time your entrance/exit close to slack. Conditions were fairly settled for our entrance (10-15 knots of wind from the east), and we came in about 10 minutes before the estimated high tide. We found a slight outgoing current (about 1 knot) and had no problems getting in.

Our last week in Rangiroa was quite windy, and per the local dive shop, the tides were only out-flowing for several days. The Tiputa Pass faces northeast and is VERY UGLY with an outgoing current and strong E-NE winds. Although the winds had settled quite a bit by the time we departed, we chose to exit through the Avatoru pass because it faces just west of north. We departed 1 hour after the estimated low tide, and still had about 1 1/2 knots of outgoing current, but again, we had no problems with the exit. Be careful coming in the Avatoru pass on a strong incoming current. It may look OK from the outside, but on the inside, where the pass shallows, it can get really rough.

Anchorage Near the Passes. We spent the majority of our time anchored just inside the Tiputa pass, in front of the Kia Ora Resort. The resort is closed for renovation, and they are doing quite a bit of construction on the bungalows. This anchorage is comfortable in ENE to NE winds. If the wind is blowing from the east, a bit of swell starts to come in the anchorage making it a little roly, but it's still OK. When the winds get anywhere south of east, the swell gets bigger and the anchorage can get quite roly - uncomfortable, but not unsafe. The anchorage is sand and scattered coral heads - closer in to the resort is more sand and better holding than the deeper areas.

Dinghy Landing. Dinghies can be landed at the concrete wharf on the western edge of the Tiputa pass, or they can be landed on the beach just west of the wharf and tied to a tree. When landing at the wharf, it helps to use a stern anchor to keep the dinghy from getting caught under the wharf. Also, make sure to leave room for the water taxis which come and go from here. If it's a day when the supply ship is in, wharf traffic is very busy. Also, there are often children playing and swimming at the wharf, and they love using the dinghies as a platform for their frivolities. Consequently, we often landed on the beach between the anchorage and the wharf, tied the bow to a tree and dropped a stern anchor to keep the dinghy off the shoreline.

Services Near Tiputa. There is a snack restaurant on the wharf on the western edge of the Tiputa pass, and a couple of pensions with restaurants (reservations required) within walking distance. There is a dive shop (Para Dive) just across from the wharf, and a woman who works there sells some pearl jewelry. There is a magasin (grocery store) a short walk from the wharf. The magasin sells baguettes, although one usually needs to order a day ahead of time, unless you get there very early in the morning. The magasin also rents bikes for 1000 XPF for a whole day, and 500 XPF for a half day.

Water taxis run between this wharf and the town of Tiputa on the east side of the pass (250 XPF/person each way), but unless it's really rough, it's easy enough to take your own dinghy, and there is also a wharf on that side where you can land a dinghy. There are a couple more magasins in Tiputa. There is also a post office with an ATM. We visited Tiputa only once during our time here, and on that day, the post office ATM was not working.

Mata'irea: We spent our first few days in Rangiroa anchored in front of the Kia Ora Resort. 3 years ago, this felt like the end of the world. Since then we've been places that make Rangiroa (with an airport, two villages, two nice hotels, several pensions, three restaurants, and half a dozen shops) feel like a big city.

On our first day here, we took care of our top priorities - getting a cheese burger, fries and a giant salad at the restaurant at the quay. The restaurant is on a terrace that overlooks a coral garden, where we saw the biggest moray eel yet. After lunch we traded some books at the Kia Ora, snorkeled the pass, and went back to Kia Ora for \$15 cocktails.

We went to a magasin and spent \$20 on 2 cucumbers, 2 tomatoes, a small head of lettuce and 2 baguettes. Seriously.

4.26.2 Going Out Into the Lagoon

Asolare – October 2016:

15/10/2016 - As the SE winds were forecast to gradually drop from 12 to 6 knots over the next 4 days we decided to travel across the atoll to the **Blue Lagoon**. We followed the chartered navigation 'Fairway' between Avatoru Village and the Blue Lagoon without difficulty. We anchored at **15 04.876 S / 147 55.079 W** in 15m of mostly sand and no coral in evidence, and had excellent holding in 12 knots of SE wind at 130 degrees magnetic. We spent the night, awaiting better visual navigation to get closer to the lagoon the next day. We had a fairly comfortable night, but as we're a bigger heavy displacement boat, we can withstand the pitching.

The next day we made our way closer to the Blue Lagoon, anchoring in mostly coral and some sand a **15 05.657 S - 147 55.378 W**. The entrance to the Lagoon by dinghy is fairly obvious: follow the motor launches that bring 12-20 people to the lagoon each day from the hotels, (here by 10am, gone by 2pm). We spent the morning alone swimming in the Lagoon in perfect idyllic conditions. There are many baby black-tipped sharks in the lagoon, which, unfortunately, both inside the lagoon and outside on the reef, are fed by the local tour operators for the 'benefit' of their clients. Nevertheless, the Blue Lagoon is spectacular and well worth the effort getting there.

The following day, the wind shifted during the day, although light, and as we wanted to head further South to the Island of Reefs, we decided to head back to the **Freeway**. We spent the night at **15 01.607 S – 147 52.071 W** in a calm anchorage with good hold and sandy bottom despite precipitation and rain, intending to take the dog leg down to the Island of Reefs the following day.

Waking to cloudy skies we decided not to go off the Freeway to the Island of Reefs (17nm away) without good visual navigation, and made instead for **Pomariorio Motu**, coming off the Fairway for about 1 nm, and anchoring in 10m of water at **15 00.308 S – 147.53.363 W** on a fairly rocky but comfortable sea bed. After a couple of days of R & R, we made our way to the Kia Ora Anchorage without mishap.

Having left the Kia Ora Anchorage in the morning, we made our way to **Motu Faama**, traversing the atoll. We sailed the first 4 miles down the 'Fairway' to 15 02.1736 S – 147 39.2761 W, and then plotted a direct course towards the Western end of Motu Faama. We encountered a patch of shoaling, but never had less than 20m. From there we sailed to 15 04.37 S – 147 39.82 W and on to 15 07.30 S – 147 40.63 W without obstruction. At 15 08.6636 S – 147 41.0040 W there is a patch of exposed coral/rock about 5m in diameter and very shallow which would be very dangerous without good visual navigation. At 15 11.1947 S – 147 41.6548 W we found another shallow sand patch about 50m across which we avoided. We made our way to a lovely anchorage on the West side of Motu Faama as we had a 12-15 knots E wind. The approach was straightforward as the shoaling water was gradual. We anchored at 15 14.0876 S – 147 42.4115 W, in 10m of sand. The volcanic formations of the reef and the little islets are spectacular and well worth a visit.

Slipaway – May/June 2011: We had very settled weather for a few days, so we went down to the **Blue Lagoon**. We anchored at **15 05.64S, 147 55.37W**. It's a beautiful spot and highly recommended if you have the right weather conditions. The anchorage is open to the east, and even 10 knots of wind can make this anchorage pretty uncomfortable, but we were very lucky and had the right weather conditions. You can also take a day tour to the Blue Lagoon.

When we had strong southeast winds for a few days, we headed to the south side of the lagoon to try and find a more comfortable anchorage. We followed the navigation instructions in "Guide to Navigation & Tourism in French Polynesia" and sailed the dog-leg route to Motu Faama. This is a gorgeous spot. We found a good **anchorage is at the east end of Motu Faama at 15 13.74S 147 42.41W in sand and some coral heads**. It was very comfortable in east and southeast winds, but when the wind backed to north of east, it got rolly.

At the **west end of Motu Faama (near 15 14.08S 147 42.41W)**, there is a lagoon, pink sand beaches and beautiful volcanic formations - well worth exploring, and we had it all to ourselves.

When we sailed back to the Kia Ora anchorage, we sailed straight back to the anchorage, rather than take the dog-leg route recommended in the cruising guide, and we saw no obstructions.

Mata'irea – Before 2011: Today the wind shifted, providing us with a good opportunity to head to the far end of the atoll. We started the 25 mile trip by commissioning our new autopilot - 9 months after leaving Newport. The water was pretty flat and the wind light. As we approached the south east tip of the lagoon, the water became much shallower and filled with coral heads and a few small white motus.

As we approached each coral bed, the water would slowly change from blue to aqua, then lime green just over the coral heads. I spent the last hour of the trip standing on the pulpit, one arm wrapped around the forestay, calling directions to Sten as he steered us around the coral. It is a beautiful anchorage. We're looking forward to spending the next few days here.

(Later) Our first morning anchored in the southeast corner of the lagoon I woke with a start. It took me a minute to figure out what had woken me up. Nothing. The boat wasn't rocking. The halyards weren't making any noise against the mast. The dinghy painter wasn't slapping on the water. My pre-coffee brain slowly absorbed these environmental clues and quickly shot back questions. Why weren't we moving? Why was it so quiet? Were we on shore? I stood up to stick my head out of the hatch over our bunk and look around. The water was a mirror. There was no wind. No wind means no wind chop in the water. No chop equals no movement. No movement equals no noise. It was the quietest moment we've had on board in months.

Based on our first two days here, during which the wind was light and the sun constant, I would encourage every cruiser coming through the Tuamotus to check out this anchorage. It is stunningly beautiful. But if we hadn't had those two days before the high winds, clouds and squalls set in, I wouldn't be recommending the spot.

But two days later, the weather turned, with the windward side of the reefs explored and our snorkeling options exhausted, we were both ready to move on. During the past few days we had seen several boats approach our anchorage and turn back, presumably deterred by the coral fields that we had navigated on our way in. With a break in the clouds around noon today, we upped anchor to motor to a motu off of which we had seen several of those boats anchor.

Unlike Apataki and Ahe, where the beaches were coral rubble, the beaches here are pink sand, giving the spot the name Les Sables Roses.

4.26.3 Pass Avatoru

Nehenehe – December 2018: Arnauld at Rangiroa Diving located immediately at the pier on the west side of the NE pass Tehre is a fantastic operator to dive with the group sizes were ½ to a ¼ the size of Top Dive, and this results in very personal attention on a group dive! We thought he was an excellent guide and I also took some instruction from him.

There is garbage disposal at the pier labeled “Volier”.

There were regular (2x week) deliveries of food stuffs and great vegetable selection for the Tuamotus. This is a good spot to reprovision. Very friendly folks in Avatora.

Asolare – October 2016: 13/10/16 - We entered Avatoru pass at 12h30 with NOAA high tide prediction of 3ft at 14h03pm, and found an incoming current of 3 knots. The pass is wide and the entry was easy. The following day it was low water and still in the pass at 14h00.

We anchored outside Avatoru village at 14 57.0310 S - 147 42.0170 W in 22m of mostly sand. We are a bigger boat so were reasonably comfortable in 13 knots of wind in a S direction, although the anchorage is exposed to SE winds and a little pitchy.

To get to the little wharf in Avatoru village by dinghy, make sure to go around the South Buoy to the west and follow the well-marked short channel into the little harbour area. This area is exposed to strong current and choppy waters still affected by the current from the pass.

Avatoru Services: The people in this village are helpful and friendly, many speaking a smattering of English.

There is a good magasin next to the wharf with comprehensive provisioning.

We were able to book flights at the Air Tahiti office in the village.

The bank in the village does not dispense cash so we took a taxi (thankfully air-conditioned!) at 500 francs per person to the airport bank where there is an ATM. The price for the taxi does not seem to depend on distance, as we were happily taken to the secondary supermarket in the village (less well provisioned) before returning to the wharf. Phone Beline 87.21.00.30 for an excellent taxi!

We found **wifi** at Rangiroa Plange Pension some 300 meters south of the wharf Vini Spot/Mana Spot is not good in the village, even in the Post Office where the postmaster told us it was not adequate.

There is a good snack opposite the wharf with reasonable prices and very generous portions! Rangiroa Plange offers a varied menu although we did not eat there.

There is a leaflet put out by Tourism Rangiroa with all services and phone numbers, which was extremely helpful to us. For all land line numbers insert 40 before the number and for all mobiles, insert 87.

Slipaway - May/June 2011: We came in the Tiputa Pass, which was relatively easy.

Our last week in Rangiroa was quite windy, and per the local dive shop, the tides were only out-flowing for several days. The Tiputa Pass faces northeast and is VERY UGLY with an outgoing current and strong E-NE winds. Although the winds had settled quite a bit by the time we departed, we chose to exit through the Avatoru pass because it faces just west of north. We departed 1 hour after the estimated low tide, and still had about 1 1/2 knots of outgoing current, but again, we had no problems with the exit. Be careful coming in the Avatoru pass on

a strong incoming current. It may look OK from the outside, but on the inside, where the pass shallows, it can get really rough.

The cruising guides also show an anchorage in front of the town of Avatoru. We anchored there for about an hour one day in very settled weather just to pick up some provisions. The anchorage was full of coral and very exposed - definitely not a place where we wanted to spend much time.

Services Near Avatoru. We didn't spend much time exploring Avatoru, but they do have a couple of good magasins, and diesel and gasoline can be purchased there. There is also at least one bank with an ATM in Avatoru. Avatoru is about 5 miles from Tiputa. A number of cruisers rented bikes from the magasin near the Tiputa pass and rode into Avatoru. One can also take a cab from the wharf to Avatoru.

4.26.4 Diving & Snorkeling in Rangiroa

Guidebooks:

The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 84-105 list dive sites for Rangiroa. There is at least one dive shop in the town (which implies, hopefully, repair capability for dive gear, and tank refills).

The Diving in Tahiti Guide also lists 15 diving sites in Rangiroa

Nehenehe – December 2018: Arnauld at Rangiroa Diving located immediately at the pier on the west side of the NE pass Tehre is a fantastic operator to dive with the group sizes were ½ to a ¼ the size of Top Dive, and this results in very personal attention on a group dive! We thought he was an excellent guide and I also took some instruction from him.

SlipAway – May/June 2011: We did three dives with "The Six Passenger Dive Shop", and we would highly recommend them. They seem to be one of the larger dive operations in Rangiroa and have a very nice facility. They are located about half-way between the Kia Ora anchorage and the airport - look for a reef extending out into the lagoon and a flag on shore. We were recommended to them by a cruiser whose dinghy broke down near their dive shop, and they towed him back to the anchorage. The proprietor of the shop, Freddy, is a really nice guy and runs a good operation. He likes cruisers and gives us the 10-dive discount even if you don't dive 10 times, plus an additional 10% discount if you have your own equipment (i.e., they provide only tanks and weights). The dives were outstanding - great fish life, dolphins on every dive, and lots of sharks on the pass dive.

Snorkeling is excellent at the "Aquarium," which is on the western edge of the reef inside the Tiputa pass. There are mooring buoys to tie up your dinghy, and there is no current here. The fish are used to being fed and will swarm around you if you bring bread, pancakes or some other food.

(from an SSCA Article 2003): There are several commercial dive operators here and they have made diving this atoll world famous and justifiably so. Rangiroa was Dee's first post-certification dive about 20 years ago and we were anxious to go back and see if it was as great as we remembered. It was still wonderful but the truth is that the other atolls are better diving. The dive magazines don't write about them because no one but cruisers with their own compressors ever get to see them. Our first pass dive by ourselves in Rangiroa was a bust and we saw very little so on the next try we received some guidance from one of the commercial dive boats and had a much better dive. The walls outside were interesting as well. Just inside Tiputa pass is a fantastic snorkeling area called the aquarium.

Salamander (2010): We did a dive in Tiputa Pass with Paradive who insisted we use their tanks due to the one year test issue (in EU the visual test is 2.5 years, so seems odd for French Polynesia to be on the US system). They are a small local operation, right next to the dock, very friendly etc.

Slip Away (May 2011): On our first explorations here, we snorkeled the Tiputa Pass and were very disappointed. However, at the end of the pass run, just inside the pass, is a very nice snorkel spot with lots of fish.

4.27 Makatea

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 33

sv Maui – May 2018, by Fulvio (formerly sv Bulbo Matto*).

On our route from Tahiti to Tikehau we made a very pleasant stop at the island of MAKATEA. The island is about 135 miles north of Papeete and about 50 south of Tikeau. It has no reef barrier and just three mooring buoys in a 50m deep area on the northwest coast, sheltered with predominant east winds. No airport, really off the beaten track! The remains of concrete structures once devoted to ship loading of the phosphate minerals mined here in large quantities from 1906 to 1966 lay in front of the buoy. In between there is a landing cove sheltered at least in settled weather.

One can call in advance Julien at 87744522, the mayor of the 80 people village, to know about the sea condition of the landing area, the availability of the buoy (you may possibly reserve one) and set a time for a guided tour of the island including lunch, which we strongly suggest.

In French or in a good English Julien and his son in law will show you the most beautiful spots of this tiny island (the view point, the eastern beach, the fresh water cave) along with the remains of the big hand-mining operation who bought here in those days more than 3000 workers and families. But also very remarkable is the lunch Julien offers in his house: good food, fish, beer, everything included in the tour for 5000 CPF!

4.28 Tikehau (Pass, Village, Fuel)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 33

Guide to Navigation and Tourism in French Polynesia 2001, pages 104-109

The French Polynesia Dive Guide, pages 106-115

According to a diving friend of ours, Tikehau is really good diving (however, he never went anywhere else in the Tuamotus).

4.28.1 Pass

Jacaranda – August 2018: We came up from Mo'orea and arrived at midnight, so we came in close to the atoll to gain shelter and hung out till the morning. We calculated slack for 10am (using the Rangiroa tide point) and came in at 08:30 with no current.

Jacaranda – Oct 2016: We entered the pass at what we calculated was close to the end of the Ebb and had 1-2 knots outgoing and it was flat calm in a SE breeze of 15 knots.

There are fish traps along the inside of the pass on both sides that present no problems. There are no markers in the pass but its straight forward and in decent light no issues.

CM93 & OpenCPN charts along with INavx are accurate for the pass and passage to the village.

Asolare Oct 2016: We entered Tuheiava Pass from Tahiti at 12 noon with NOAA low tide predictions for Rangiroa at 10 am. We had done our preparation and also observed the pass carefully before entering, but still encountered a strong inward current of approximately 5.5 knots taking us into the lagoon with wind against current, giving substantial standing waves once we entered. We are 16.4m yacht with a displacement of 19 ton so for us it was manageable, but it may not have been so easy for smaller, lighter yachts.

13/10/2015 - We exited Tuheiava Pass at 06h15 with low tide predicted by NOAA (Rangiroa) at 07h52 of -0.3ft. We went through the pass on a strong 5.5 knot outgoing current. The pass was challenging, but safe. We chose to navigate straight down the middle, but sailing closer down the starboard side, however, we would have met fewer waves once through.

White Princess Sep 2010: We can't comment on the diving as we never got the chance to do any ourselves - there was bad weather coming & we wanted better shelter so we've gone to Moorea. The following should be useful however:

Pass: The pass is bad. We entered 10 minutes before the direction of the flow changed & had 3 knots of ingoing current and very steep overfalls on the inside of the pass - they stretch right across the pass, & would swamp a dinghy. Slack is very brief, less than 10 minutes. The outgoing tide isn't so bad, it is said to peak at over 10 knots, which is probably correct. We left 1 hour before low water and had 5 knots of outgoing current, & there were no overfalls on the outside, just some whirlpools, so you get turned a bit.

Diving: The reef outside the pass is very well protected in normal trade winds - much better than Anse Amyot in Toau, but don't even think about diving or snorkeling the pass due to the current. If diving here, the best time to go out is about 1 hour before low water, so you can get back in the lagoon after your dive, before the tide turns. That is when the local dive operators do it, but it should only be attempted if you have a powerful & reliable outboard on your dinghy as you will need to go in against an outgoing current. There is a dive buoy just outside the pass but it is popular, so if you use it, use a long painter, but there should be no problem anchoring as there is a sizable ledge before the dropoff.

4.28.2 Pass anchorage

Jacaranda – Oct 2016: This anchorage is mostly sand with occasional bommies. There are two moorings with floating lines that are very long (beware when getting close to them that you should keep to windward of them). We anchored instead of picking up a mooring.

This anchorage looks like it is more protected than it really is. It offered decent shelter but in normal trades it can get a bit bumpy especially if the wind is S of E.

White Princes – 2010: The anchorage by the pass is not as sheltered as appears on the chart. There is a large gap in the encircling reef that allows swell from the main lagoon to go straight in. The bottom is sand, very good holding, but you will pitch continually. If the winds are light it would be OK.

4.28.3 Village Tuherahera

Jacaranda – Aug/Sep 2018: The **supply ship** Dyory arrives on Tuesday for a couple hours to discharge cargo. Usually by the afternoon the shop in town has their order sorted out and available. If you see the supply ship tied up and you need vegetables, be sure to go directly to the little store. We were there a few days ago when the supply ship was in and the store sold out of fresh veggies before the ship even departed!!

Eating Out: Tkehau Village Resort - We walked down to the resort just opposite the airport for lunch after calling and making a reservation. They had a set menu which was reef fish. Since we don't eat reef fish they served us chicken wings. Water, lunch and desert was 2500xpf each. Meal was fair. Nice setting overlooking the lagoon. Can easily bring dinghy into their beach. Dive boat uses this location to pickup and discharge passengers.

There is another snack located to the right (west) of the marina that was recommended to us by a few locals. Located on the same street as the Post Office.

Marina: According to the sign at the head of the dock there is now a 300xpf charge per meter per day to tie up on the marina dock. There were no cruising boats tied up there when we visited this time. Only a few local boats (small pangas). Not sure if there is a charge to tie up to main wharf. The marina is only big enough for a few boats and I would sound depth using a dinghy first before entering. Perfect for tying up your dinghy and loading groceries (for which there is no charge).

WIFI: There is decent WDG wifi broadcast in the village. If you have an external wifi antenna, we were able to connect at anchor off the village and even 12 miles away at the Garden of Eden. Prices continue to increase each year for WDG and it is one of the most expensive internet / wifi sites we have used. But it works ok. Connect with your browser and you are able to buy internet time via their website unlike Vini-Spot which online purchase have been broken for the past 18 months. Our Vini hotspot router did not work here.

Tikehau Pearl Resort: We again tried to visit this resort calling ahead and mentioning we were scouting a resort for our sons upcoming honeymoon. Nope they said NOT to come and were not interested in any business from us!

Ninamu Resort run by an Aussie (Chris) located near the village(1.3 miles NW) on Motu Tavararo was most welcoming. He said we could anchor in front of his resort and schedule a dinner or come in and have a drink. Really nice guy and the place is fully booked out when we were there.

Jacaranda – Oct 2016: On the route from the Pass to the Village, we found a well marked channel and we found no issues during this transit. We made this leg in good light.

In winds E or N of E the village anchorage can be bumpy.

We anchored just to the E of the Quay in sand 25-30' with widely scattered bommies.

Anchored 15 06.8862S / 148 14.2587W Be sure to give the quay plenty of space as the supply ship may need room to maneuver.

There was a French boat tied up on the inside(northwest side) of the long jetty and said it was very comfortable there except when the Tikehau Pearl Resort roared in and out. They did not have to move when the supply ships came in as they use the end of the wharf ("T"). Protected from the NE thru the SW

Marina

There is a small protected marina inside of the breakwater that contained a couple boats. One French cruising boat was tied to the new finger and a 60' power boat was side tied to the inside wall. It was very calm and protected in there and looked inviting. A local dive shop said there was no charge to tie up.

The village has a **bakery** and a couple small shops. The bakery bakes bread Monday - Wed and Friday-Saturday. Closed Thursday & Sunday. The bakery has bread available at 4pm (unlike most bakeries which open at 5-6am). You can preorder the day or morning before.

Fuel: Available at the bakery. Diesel was 180ff per liter(10-2016).

Dive Services: There is a dive shop offering pass diving, Mantra Ray cleaning station trips etc. Located just up from the wharf at the intersection of the main road to the airport.

Eating Out: We had a good lunch at a place located about 400M N of the post office. It seemed to cater to the tourists in the village as it was full when we arrived. Good burgers and Linda said here Steak-Frites was very good.

WIFI: There is wifi at the post office. Also we were able to get good Vinispot connection on the boat with a good wifi antenna.

Tikehau Pearl Resort: 15 06.1200S / 148 11.9000W mostly sand with some bommies

A beautiful 4 star resort with a lovely location. But when we went ashore to try to book dinner for 4 people we were basically told to leave. Not interested in our business and would not allow us to buy a drink in the bar. Hmmm maybe it's time we get haircuts and buy some new clothes.... Do you think? Anyway we departed the next day for Garden of Eden

Anchorage slightly east of Pearl Resort: The Village anchorage became bumpy so we moved NE about 2.5 miles further E and anchored at 15-05.8725 S / 148-11.6943 W in about 30-35' (sand and some bommies - we used a fish finder to find a large sandy spot) and found it protected from the SE-E-NE. It's only a few miles from the village, so it is easy to transit if the anchorage at the village gets bouncy. Holding is very good. No wind protection from the E-SE as there are no motus to block the wind, but the reef does block the swell. Depending on trades if a lot of water is spilling into the lagoon the water in this anchorage can be clear but if the wind is light then water is a bit murky.

4.28.4 Garden of Eden

Jacaranda – Sep 2018: Once again we visited this great spot for some fresh veggies and fresh eggs. They accept visitors M-F 8am-11am 2pm-5pm. On Sat & Sunday they are closed to visits.

The veggies and fruits are picked while you wait - Can't get much fresher than that! One of the guys that works there told us they are restarting the pearl farm. He said the pearl farm is marked by 4 yellow buoys marking the perimeter location. We looked with binoculars and could NOT see these yellow buoys but did see some pearl floats in that location. The location is towards the middle of the lagoon off the Eden motu. Just a FYI

We anchored about 1/3 - 1/2 mile north of the Garden of Eden in 35' all sand bottom behind the thickly wooded motu. It provided us a GREAT spot to sit out a strong Maramuu(25+ kts) and be protected from winds NNE to SSE. In addition the motus knocked the strong SE wind down during the windiest part of the Maramuu. Easy dinghy ride to the Garden of Eden's dinghy dock.

The snorkeling here is not good as the water is cloudy and not many fish on the bommies closer to the beach. The number of Hoas are shallow and not able to snorkel them.

Jacaranda – Oct 2016: Transiting from the village towards the NE side of the lagoon using good light we saw only one set of pearl floats at the surface at

15-03.2252S / 148-07.5151W

We anchored at the Garden of Eden at 15 00.5630S 148 03.6070W mostly sand bottom with occasional bommie. 32'

We were able to obtain fresh figs, lettuce, Bok Choy, Papaya, etc.

The anchorage is very calm and comfortable. You could easily move a bit further NE if we did not want to anchor close to the farm. We had winds in the 15-18kt range that moved from ESE to NE and the anchorage was very comfortable

MV Domino – 2016: If you thought that nothing grows in the Tuamotus, think again. Following the scientific principles established by a group of engineers (so much for science) and put in practice by an army of volunteers (so much for civilization), the "Prophet" from Taiwan has established a thriving biological farm.

Papaya, tomato, green beans, vanilla, even breadfruit and Acerola cherry grow in abundance. Pigs and chickens provide natural fertilizers. There is even a sea salt production shed that gives the best "fleur de sel" I've ever tasted. The pearl farm is no longer in production, however, sunk by the diving price of Tahitian pearls. After an obligatory stop at the gift shop where we couldn't pass up on the sea salt, we left the Garden of Eden, loaded with fresh spinach! Sometimes, you can buy more fresh produce, depending on the season and production.

4.28.5 Motu Puarua (Bird Island)

Jacaranda – Oct 2016: 14 58.4252S 148 05.9589W sand 35'

A small island that is heavily forested located in the middle of the lagoon that is the home of a number of species of nesting birds. Noddies, Fairy terns, Boobies, etc.

We traveled from the Garden of Eden anchorage to Motu Puarua in a direct line.

BEWARE: There are a number of abandoned pearl farms that contain submerged pearl floats and lines. We safely passed over them as we could not see them until directly on top.

The anchorage was surprisingly calm and we could have easily spent the night. It was a shallow sandy area in the lee of the motu (wind was blowing 18 from the E - ENE). We hiked around the island and saw many birds nesting and young chicks. After a few hours we returned to Garden of Eden anchorage staying slightly west of our inbound track and still passed over a number of submerged pearl floats!!

4.28.6 Motu Mauu (Manta Island)

Jacaranda – Sep 2018: If you are planning on anchoring on the WEST side of the motu be aware that there are numerous (we counted more than 10!) sunken pearl floats left over from the old pearl farm located here. We were there when the water was very clear and we shocked to see how many sunken floats we saw. Most if not all of them are deeper than 10' below the surface but present a nightmare to anchored boats. Neighbors snorkeled the area and saw a spider web

of lines held up by floats! As we were pulling our anchor up we saw another float just inches from our anchor (whew!).

We moved to the eastern side and anchored in 55' sand with a few bommies and NO sunken floats.

4.29 Matahiva (No Anchorage Possible)

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 70-71

4.30 Pukapuka (No Pass)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 25: This remote atoll lies east, roughly on the route from Gambiers to Marquesas. It is a 2.4 mile diameter atoll that has a lagoon that is drying up. In fine weather it is possible to anchor on a coral shelf off the village at the west end of the atoll.

4.31 Tepoto (No Pass, Possible Anchorage Settled Weather)

Guidebooks:

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 24

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 96

From and SSCA Article 2003: We spent one calm night anchored outside off Tepoto, which has no pass entrance. The wall was so steep that it was like throwing your anchor against the Empire State building. I had to dive down and place the anchor by hand but the two dives to set and retrieve the anchor were stupendous. The healthiest coral anywhere and teeming with fish. The wall was so steep that the anchor was in 20 feet of water and the stern in over 300'.

Soggy Paws – August 2010: We ended up passing the twin islands of Tepoto and Napuka, which are directly on the route between Raroia and Fatu Hiva, by sailing (on visual, during the daytime) close up to the SW corner of Tepoto, and sailing close around the western end. Interestingly, our Garmin Mapsource charts looked like they were more accurate than the CMap/Maxsea charts, but they ended up being off in position. According to the Garmin charts, we sailed right across the middle of Tepoto! Though our CMap chart only showed a 1000-meter depth curve for Tepoto, it seemed positionally more accurate.

We did not turn on the radar, but the land seemed higher than most Tuamotu atolls, and so should give a pretty good radar return from at least a few miles out (at least the west end).

Migrations (2009): See Migrations report on Tepoto under Napuka, below.

4.32 Napuka (No Pass)

This island isn't listed in any cruising guide, but it is shown on the overview map of the Tuamotus in Charlie's Charts (on page 63). It is out by itself, near Pukapuka.

Migrations (2009) Enroute from Makemo to Marquesas: It was a quiet and calm six-day sail. Occasionally frustrating as the wind often blew directly from the direction we wanted to go, or it didn't blow at all. We made a brief detour to the remote atolls of ~~Takapoto~~ Tepoto and Nepuka, but without passes and with very steep coral shelves, the anchoring was too dicey for us. These are known as the Îles Disappointment—they were for us, as well as for some of the

locals who gathered on the wharf waiting for us to come ashore. *(Note: the website says 'Takapoto' in one place and Tepoto in another. Looking at the island locations and their probable route, I think he meant Tepoto).*

At Napuka we were two boat lengths away from the breakers on the outer reef and still in over 100 feet of water.

5 Gambiers

Guidebooks:

Charlie's Charts of Polynesia: 5th ed 2005; pages 102-103

South Pacific Anchorages: 2nd ed; page 20-21.

Sea-Seek.com has a downloadable PDF file for Gambiers (in French)

http://sea-seek.com/ebook/Les_iles_Gambier.pdf

The Gambier Islands are a very unique place, with the combination of turquoise waters, healthy reefs, colorful hills and mountains, pretty beaches and friendly people. They are also becoming more and more popular with cruisers trying to get off the beaten path. For those cruisers who have secured a Long Stay Visa, the Gambiers is also far enough south and east that it is pretty much out of the cyclone zone.

5.1 *The Trip to The Gambiers*

5.1.1 *Direct from the Galapagos*

Irie – 2013: Many sailboats, and most catamarans, heading to the Gambier from further east, change their minds and decide to turn towards the Marquesas a few days into the trip. Probably a wise decision. The sail to the Gambier is pretty rough, with winds on the beam (in our case 25-35 knots most days) and confused seas. No milk run at all. Mark and I arrived on May 28th, 2013. We stayed two months, until June 27th, when we couldn't deal with the cold weather any longer.

If you have never crossed an ocean, and 6-8 foot waves are all you've experienced while sailing (as was the case with us, prudent Caribbean sailors, always waiting for a good weather window to move), the Pacific will be an eye opener. Whatever its name indicates or whichever stories you have heard, this is real ocean sailing. This ocean is not a peaceful one (where did that name come from?) and should not be underestimated. Cross swells of over 12 feet, winds of 30 knots, confused seas, bumpy wind chop and squalls are very common. We were on all points of sail at some time or another and could not stay on course regularly either, when the wind came from dead behind or in front of us. Some days are sunny; the nights are chilly.

Irie's passage can be broken down into 5 parts: a few days of being becalmed in flat seas and barely moving, eleven days of uncomfortable and unsettled conditions, while making good, but bumpy progress, a couple of fair "transition" days, three days of comfortable and peaceful, albeit slow sailing, and two awful days of beating into wind and waves during stormy, squally, windy and frustrating (many wind shifts, constantly varying wind speed, high and rough seas) weather when a front/low pressure system passed overhead.

Amongst cruisers, this particular trip west is called "the Milk Run" because it is supposed to be an easy, straightforward, downwind journey. For us it was as much a milk run as there was a milk man around: not. I do have to specify here that Mark and I sailed from the Galapagos to the Gambier islands, instead of the Marquesas, French Polynesia's most popular arrival destination. The route to these more northern islands is said to be less challenging than the one to the Gambiers. Reports of frequent squalls and confused seas reached us from that area as well, though, but no fronts go that far north and you don't sail on a beam reach (uncomfortable wind and waves from the side).

Irie Trip info and tidbits:

- * Route: Galapagos islands - Gambier islands, French Polynesia
- * Distance: 2938 miles
- * Time: 21 days, 0 hours, 0 minutes (May 7 - May 28th, 2013)
- * Hours under engines: 12 (half getting into the anchorage of Rikitea)
- * Hours under sail: 492
- * Average speed: 5.8 knots
- * Wind direction: SSE-SE-E-ENE, when front passes: all directions
- * Wind speed: an average of a perfect 15 knots, but we never saw 15 knots, instead it blew a weak 10 knots or a heavy 25-35 knots!
- * Squalls: 42
- * Favorable current: 0 knots: a few days + 0.5, a few days - 0.5 early on
- * Sail configuration: spinnaker, main (reefed at night and during heavy weather) and jib
- * Sail changes: multiple times a day.
- * Gallons of diesel used: 9
- * Gallons of water used: 47, including 5 gallons to rinse off after showering and 2 gallons for laundry
- * Other boats encountered: 2
- * Objects encountered: 1 floating pole with a black flag, some garbage, and one whale shark (we think)
- * Planes spotted: none
- * Fish caught: 1; a smallish mahi mahi, too rough to fish most of the time
- * Lures lost: 3
- * Sea life "scooped up": 5 squid, 38 flying fish
- * Flying fish whacking Mark on their way into the cockpit: 3
- * Time zones traveled through: 3
- * Latitude travel: from 1° S to 23° S
- * Longitude travel: from 90° 58' to 134° 58' W
- * Days of having fun: Mark: 1, Liesbet: 4
- * Seasickness medicine taken (Liesbet, who used to be very prone to motion sickness): 5 days - 3 days preventive, 2 because of nausea
- * Sky: blue, grey or black
- * Water: deep blue
- * Waves hitting the bridgedeck: Too many to count
- * Books read: Mark 6, Liesbet: 1

* Movies watched: Mark 7, Liesbet: 2

* Casualties ("boat bites"): bloody toes, scratched eye, bruised legs, bumped heads, sore knees, burnt arm - nothing serious or unusual

* Things we have learned/realized during this passage:

- Why people take planes to cover 3000 miles
- How long one can go without a shower (6 days)
- That it takes a long time of not washing up before one gets smelly (> 6 days) *
- That we really, never ever get bored; I was going to remove my "Boobie blue" nail polish from my toes, one toe every day. I arrived in the Gambiers with 8 blue toes and the trip sure took longer than 2 days...
- That crossing the Pacific Ocean is not a leisurely "sit back, relax, and enjoy the weather and the ride" kind of sail
- That this was the longest amusement park ride of our lives (not in a fun way)
- That sailing is not easy
- That the wind is never consistent
- That living in a "stable" house with conveniences must be so nice
- That it was much colder than expected, especially at night. Winter clothes and comforter needed!
- That a passage to the Marquesas would have been easier and more comfortable (a confirmation of what we knew)
- That the days are short and the nights long (Southern Hemisphere winter)
- That there is little time or energy to do the things you like or plan to do, because of exhaustion or sea state
- That the Pacific doesn't harbor as much wildlife (whales, dolphins, ...) as we thought
- That one cannot be in a hurry

* in non-sweaty, Southern Hemisphere conditions

Twelfth Night (May 2004): We made a 25-day passage from the Galápagos Islands that began on April 23, 2004. It was the longest passage we have ever taken. During the transit, we listened to many of the boats that went to the Marquesas. We found that our weather tended to be slightly more robust than those boats headed on the Coconut Milk Run. Our winds also tended to be more on the beam during the voyage than those winds experienced by the other groups. Our arrival in Gambier confirmed that we had chosen a wonderful place to make land fall. Gambier is breathtaking to see, and the visage of Mount Duff is simply grand.

5.1.2 Via Easter Island and/or Pitcairn

Soggy Paws – 2010: We left the Galapagos on 1 March 2010, and arrived in Easter Island about 14 days later after a mostly pleasant sail. We stayed in Easter Island for a few days and then were chased out by weather. We had a 10 day passage to Pitcairn, again mostly in good

weather (with just one hairy 24 hour period). We stayed 2 full days and one night in Pitcairn, and had a nice 3 day downwind passage to the Gambiers

Nine of Cups (2009): The short 3-1/2 day passage from Pitcairn to the Gambiers (378 nm) was not a very pleasant one. Winds of 30-35 knots with seas to 20' and heavy rains, made the ride blustery and downright uncomfortable for two days, followed by no wind and contrary wind... all soon forgotten once we were in French Polynesia. We sighted the islands about 30 miles out.

5.1.3 From New Zealand

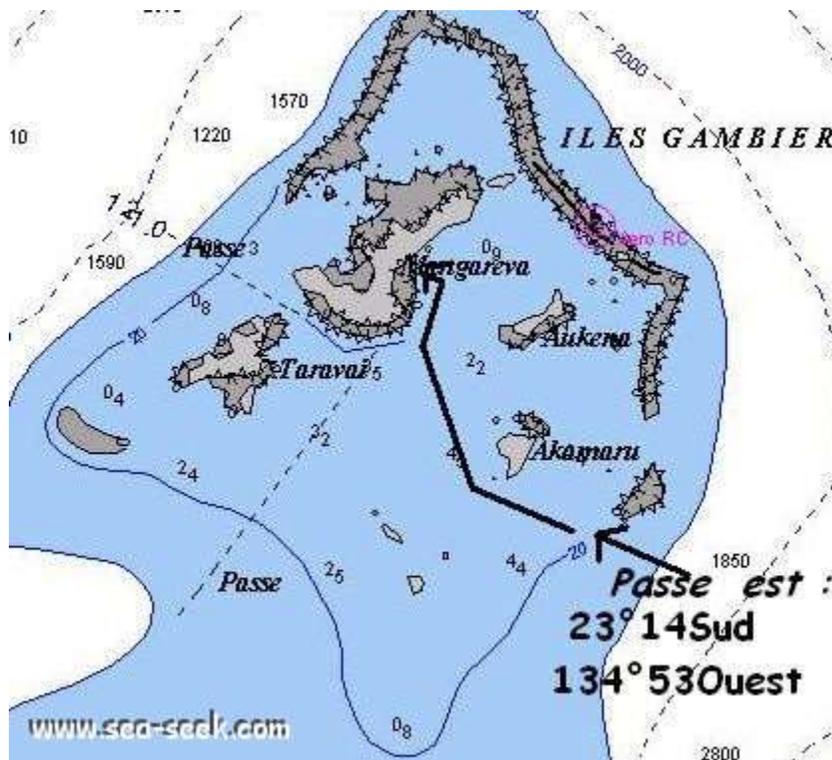
Soggy Paws: Several boats we know have actually made the trip from NZ back to the US West Coast via the Gambiers. Basically you leave NZ and head south to the westerlies, and stay in them all the way to French Polynesia. It can be a hairy trip, make sure you know how to heave-to, because the Antarctic lows pass through with regularity.

From the Gambiers, they head north on a direct course to the California coast.

5.2 Arrival Information

5.2.1 Arrival and Formalities

Pitufa – March 2015: We arrived at the Gambier islands for the first time on May 17th, 2013 (an El Niño-neutral year), after a 24-days passage from Isabela, Galapagos (distance 2900 nm). We slowed down on our last day to avoid arriving at night.



The entrance via the west pass was no problem, since it is well marked (IALA buoy system A like in Europe, so leave red on your left when coming in...), wide and deep (Pitufa's draft is 2.20 meter).

South of Mangareva we experienced strong headwinds and choppy waves (which made our previously squall-washed, salt-free deck totally salty again)—Mt. Duff creates a noticeable acceleration zone here.

Turning north, a shallow, but

nevertheless deep enough gap in the bank between Mangareva and Aukera needs to be crossed. The French charts are detailed and accurate, so these passes and channels are easy to navigate.

To check in, walk south from the main dock on the main road to the Gendarmerie. You walk by the “Mairie” (mayor’s office), where you can get an info brochure with some history and walks described. The Gendarmerie is located on the same road (theoretically open from 7 to 4 with a lunch break between 1 and 3, but the opening hours seem to vary a bit...) and entry formalities can be done here. For EU citizens there’s not much bureaucracy involved: the gendarme wants to see passports and ship’s papers (he wasn’t interested in insurance papers or the zarpe from the last port), we filled in the customs-declaration form and were told to send it to Tahiti. We were told to report to the custom’s office on arrival in Tahiti, unless we were visited by the custom’s boat ahead of that. According to current regulations (new in 2014) EU citizens can stay in French Polynesia unlimited without visa, but have to pay import tax on the yacht if they stay longer than 3 years. Non-EU-citizens can stay 3 months with a visa, but have to pay a bond (unless they arrange their visit via an agent).

You can easily spot the post office from the anchorage, it’s the building with the big satellite dish and high antenna. The post office is open Monday to Friday from 8 to 4 (no lunch break), you can change USD or EUR for French-Polynesian Franc there (there’s no ATM on the island!).

Irie - September 2013 - Once you reach the outer most channel markers to get through the wide NW entrance and into the Gambier lagoon, navigation is very easy and the channel has sufficient depths. The shallowest point is around 20 feet, when you go over the inner reef towards Rikitea. That being said, many boats arrived during a squall, the small land mass of the archipelago is often veiled in clouds. In our case, the last 15 miles or so took us 5 hours, motoring into wind and steep waves, the decks getting smothered by salt water. The area did not resemble a lagoon at all to us and it was an unpleasant arrival in paradise after a pretty uncomfortable three week passage from the Galapagos.

There are no check-in fees, except for the stamp to mail the customs form to Papeete.

Soggy Paws and Visions of Johanna (April 2010): There are 3 passes into the Gambiers. We arrived in the Gambiers after a long trip hairy trip from Easter Island (with a wonderful short stop at Pitcairn in settled weather). The wind was blowing 15 kts, and we had a very very large long swell from the south. We entered the SE pass at 23-16.23S / 134-56.05 in the middle of a squall just at daylight, and it was easy. From there we went north up to the lee of Isle Akamaru, where we anchored temporarily to wait for our friends and better light.

We found the C-Map charts for the Gambiers to be extremely accurate, where there was coverage.

Check-in was a breeze at the Gendarmerie—and greatly facilitated by our French for Cruisers book. The official who cleared us in was so impressed with the book that he tried to buy my copy!

Once our paperwork was done, we were instructed to go to the Post Office to buy a \$.50 stamp and mail the paperwork to Papeete.

Later, we went on a fishing expedition out the SW pass, and came in the NW pass. All are deep and easy to navigate in good light.

Nine of Cups (2009): We entered the reef through the Southeast Pass then picked our way carefully through the reef to the anchorage off Rikitea on the island of Mangareva. To the right, land ho!

We took a bearing on the island of Kamaka and used it to find the cut through the reef to the lagoon.

Iron Bark (June 2007): As we approached the Îles Gambier lagoon on the morning of 11 June, the wind picked up to about F5 and headed us. The breaking waves distorted colours and hid the coral heads: beating across with an inadequate chart would have been folly, so we ended up motorsailing to the anchorage in Rikitea (23° 06'S, 134° 58'W), which rather took the shine off an otherwise perfect 22-day passage. But if the lagoon looked uninviting in the prevailing conditions, the little town, dominated by the twin towers of its church, looked the more appealing. The anchorage is not only perfectly sheltered and adequately roomy, but is in an attractive setting, with several shops and pleasant walks near at hand.

Hawk (2007): We arrived at the archipelago of the Gambier Islands one week ago, and as often happens, we have been busy since our arrival with all the things that need to be done after a 4,000 nautical mile passage (from Costa Rica).

We came through the wide, well-marked pass on the northwest side of the lagoon, and anchored just inside the pass for the night before moving to the town anchorage in daylight. We needn't have bothered – the French have placed buoys and lights all through the lagoon, and we could have safely navigated it in the middle of the night

Thalassia (April-May 2006): Upon arrival go to the Gendarmerie to clear formalities. Paperwork is easy and the officers are very friendly. Take your signed form to the Post Office and it will be sent to Tahiti.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): After arrival, head south west from the city dock and contact the local Gendarme Marine to clear in. Their office is clearly marked and on the way into town, just past the Municipal Building. You will find the officers polite, friendly and easy to deal with.

5.2.2 Navigation in the Atoll

Pitufa – March 2015: We use Navionics, CM93 2011, and Garmin Bluechart charts and found them mostly reliable. We will mention some inaccuracies further below.

Irie – May/June 2013: Navigating in and out of Rikitea is easy with the green and red channel markers (right GREEN return!). Throughout the lagoon it is also relatively easy to find your way, but good light is required when approaching any of the islands. There are many pearl farm buoys (sometimes connected under the water surface) scattered throughout many areas in the lagoon, especially on the way to Aukena and Akamaru. Keep a good eye out for these! When visiting Aukena from Rikitea, it is best to follow the northern edge of the inner reef towards the southern tip of Aukena and keep all floats to port.

One of the red markers into Rikitea is missing and when not paying attention, you may stray into a field of floats. There is a new red marker along the channel to the airport, position (PA) 23°06.124'S, 134°54.511'W. It would appear that the channel to the airport has been moved slightly to the west based on this new marker, and the location of some pearl farm floats.

We found both Navionics and C-Map charts to be very accurate, where the waters were charted. Many of the places you may want to go, there are no soundings, or very limited. We found images from Google Earth to be extremely helpful in planning the trips around the islands and would recommend becoming familiar with Google Earth as an aid to navigation.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): There are two routes into the main harbor of Rikitea, which is located on the big island of Mangareva. The routes are well marked with day markers that are in excellent condition. Remember, this is the French buoy system, so you'll be keeping greens to your starboard as you arrive in the harbor. Cruisers entering into the harbor need to make landfall in day light. There are unmarked shoals and many submerged lines and buoys from pearl farms that await a boat that has strayed slightly off course in the darkness.

5.2.3 Mangareva Harbor & Rikitea Town

Pitufa – March 2015: The marked entrance to the anchorage off Rikitea runs along a curved channel. It took us a bit to get used to the scale (the legs between the marked gates are shorter than we thought) and to figure out that the first red marker was actually missing... (it was replaced later). When the big supply ships manage to go in and out here, it shouldn't be a big deal for a small yacht either.

The anchorage is well protected from the waves (particularly further N behind the reef marked with cardinal signs), but open to the prevailing winds. It is big enough for at least 30 boats. The depths are around 14 to 20 m and the holding is superb. The situation only gets tricky when the anchorage is packed with boats and strong gusts howling down the mountains start shoving them into different directions (usually when there's a strong wind blowing with a westerly component).

Irie – May 2013: . We were surprised to count around 30 boats, spread out in the archipelago, the whole time we were there. All of them use Rikitea as a base and when a front comes through, this is where most sailors return to. Most cruisers stand by on VHF #16, others use #77.

Mangareva with the capital Rikitea offers many great hikes with amazing views. Most of the trails are well-maintained. You can also follow the paved road around most of the island. You can visit the majestic church in town or the grave of the last king up one of the hills.

In general, the people on Mangareva are pretty friendly, saying "bonjour" in town and waving while driving their big trucks. Sometimes, during a longer walk, you will encounter locals handing you pamplemousse (massive grapefruit) or other fruit. The people living in the other islands of the archipelago are even more welcoming, friendly and social. The exception is the pearl farmers in the village of Aukena, where they prefer yachts not to anchor.

Soggy Paws – April 2010: The harbor itself is covered in other cruiser's reports, so I will not comment here, except to say that the reefs protecting the Rikitea harbor made excellent protection in almost any conditions. In 2010, the harbor easily accommodated around 15 cruising boats, including several 60-footers and one 100-footer.

Migration (June 2008): After a nice downwind run from Pitcairn, we arrived in Îles Gambier on 4 June.

After visiting Totougege, we returned to Rikitea and, in between squalls, rainstorms and heavy winds, biked around the island, hiked a little more, visited with friends, did boat maintenance and spent several days filling our propane tanks. Every few days we bicycled up to a small farm to buy fresh bok choy, cabbage, onions and parsley. We ate our first pamplemousse—a delicious tropical cousin of the grapefruit.

One night we set up our projector in the community hall and showed Mary Poppins (surprisingly well-dubbed in French) for the kids of the town. Another evening we attended the Rikitea Music

Fete where the girls competed in traditional Polynesian dance while the boys danced hip-hop (badly).

We were anxious to leave as the weather was just too cold and rainy for our taste. And frankly, except for some significant exceptions (Christiane and her students, for example), many of the people of Rikitea were a bit cool as well. They are quite well-off (everyone is driving a new 4WD truck—ridiculous on a small island where gasoline is very expensive) and focused on their pearl farming businesses. The celebrated hospitality of Polynesia wasn't evident there..

Hawk (2007): Coming out on deck the morning after we arrived, I got my first real look at the Gambier Islands. We were anchored behind the largest of the islands in the lagoon, called Mangareva, off a large peninsula at its southern end that extended out from the main body of the island to the northwest to create a large, coral studded harbor. The island was covered with bright green vegetation that ranged from palm trees to some species of pine tree as well as a dozen other types of greenery. From where we were anchored, we could see four of the other five islands that dot the lagoon. The largest of these lay to the south of us, and a sailboat lay at anchor in its lee. The water was that vivid blue color midway between royal blue and purple, a rich, vibrant Technicolor that hardly looked real. We could see right to the bottom through the shimmering blue, where a scattering of coral boulders lay on a bed of sand. As I pulled up the chain, I watched it lift from the sand thirty-five feet below me, raising a cloud of silt around it, and then I saw it take up against the anchor and lift first the shank and then the flukes off the bottom.

After a week here, we're starting to get a bit of a feel for this archipelago. The town, Rikitea, is amazingly prosperous. Houses are mostly concrete block painted in primary colors with corrugated tin roofs and with brightly-colored curtains flapping to the breeze in the open windows. The two streets that run through the town are both concrete, though at the edge of town the concrete gets pretty potholed and it's obvious that only in the center of town is there regular maintenance. A variety of trucks, scooters and SUVs made their way along this street, and it seems as if there is some sort of vehicle parked in front of almost every house. A great deal of building seems to be going on, and at the main wharf where the supply ships dock, large slings hold gravel that has been imported from Indonesia. The people are smiling, friendly, well-fed and in good health. Women push babies in strollers down the paved street, and kids ride by on bicycles. It all feels very first world, yet it also has that indefinable air of the tropics – the smell of luxuriant flowers, the brightly colored plants, the palm trees swaying to the tradewind breeze.

The town stretches along the shore behind the anchorage, running for more than a mile. Most of the communal buildings are clustered at its southern end, almost certainly the town center when the town was being developed. The Gendarmarie, the Marie and several small churches are all to be found in this area, along with a half a dozen one-room shops that have a wide range of merchandise. A large cathedral with two towers sits on a slight rise at the base of Mt. Duff, the high volcanic spine of the island, readily visible from the anchorage. Around it, there are several substantial buildings made from stone and mortar. These lovely building are the legacy of the island's sad and troubled history.

When the French nuclear testing was going on in Mururoa, a few hundred miles to the northwest of here, French military were stationed here, and the nuclear weapons were stored here before detonation. Evans thinks this may be why the standard of housing on the island is so high, and indeed many of the houses look like military style boxes, not barracks but a step up from that. The islanders resented the French and believed that the nuclear testing was

poisoning them. The French have carried out soil and air tests of the islands on a regular basis, but they have refused to release the results. The islanders believe that the attack on Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior in Auckland was to prevent the ship from coming here to take independent samples. Yet, as Evans pointed out, it is not difficult to take such samples and send them to a lab, and you would think someone would have done it by now. In any case, the islanders seem sympathetic to Greenpeace and at odds with the French administration, though they clearly benefit greatly from all the French subsidies.

For the island is prosperous, as our first impressions indicated. Apparently the base of the economy is the black pearl industry. When we were entering the anchorage where we are now, we saw several of the pearl shacks on the reef that we have seen in the Tuamotus. These, however, were far fancier than anything there. One of them is a large house with multiple rooms that looks as if it is in the process of getting a large addition. There are also several small areas of buoys from which the oysters are growing in the water, like the mussel farms we have seen the world over though on a smaller scale. We understand that some of the other anchorages that we might have

There are five other boats anchored in the town anchorage with us, and two of those are also on their way to Chile. All but one of the boats in the lagoon is metal, and three of them are crewed by singlehanders. It's been fun getting to know crews that we will most likely see a great deal of over the coming months. We're enjoying our time here, knowing that the passage from here to Chile, the last 1,000 miles or so of which will be in the Southern Ocean, will be a challenging, stormy, cold one.

Thalassia (April-May 2006): Thirteen days after leaving Easter Island we entered the pass through the reef at the Gambier Islands with high waves and 30 knots of wind. We found a spot and were relieved when the anchor finally dug in.

Our anchorage is in front of the main town of Rikitea. Nearly all of the 1000 inhabitants of the archipelago live here. Only a handful is spread among the other islands.

From hills (that are remains of the volcanoes that once created the archipelago) we have a great view of the bay and the inner coral reef surrounding it. The mountains are covered with tropical flora and the trails that go through the dense forests are a welcome change from all the blue we saw in the past weeks.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): We were in a group of six or so boats that used the harbor as a cruising base. Half of the boats in Gambier were French, and their crews were friendly and helpful in dealing with locals who spoke a mix of French and French Polynesian. Like many other venues, an honest effort to speak the language is sincerely appreciated.

Once inside the harbor of Rikitea, cruisers will find a secure anchor age in 40' to 50' of water. The bottom is muddy sand, and the holding is very good. The harbor can comfortably accommodate a dozen or so cruising boats. You should avoid anchoring in front of the main dock, as supply ships make regular visits to the island and you will be asked to move if you are close to the dock.

There are nice hikes to the summit of Mount Duff that provide splendid views of the area. You can rent bicycles locally and see the island for your self. We found Gambier's climate particularly pleasant after a lengthy stay in the tropics. It is cool in the evenings, bug free (no mosquitoes or sand fleas), with day time temps in the mid to upper 70s. Water temps hover around 72°

5.2.4 The Weather

Pitufa – March 2015: Between June and September it is Winter. Really! (Okay, no snow of course, but for the tropics it gets rather cold.)

According to the Gambier leaflet, which we got at the mayor's office in Rikitea, the coldest months are July, August and September with average peak temperatures below 22°C and average minimum temperatures around 19°C (see image to the right). The frequency of depressions moving by further south increases to at least one per week. Each such system shifts the wind direction counter-clockwise around while it passes by and sends fronts with lots of rain and squalls. The wind roses do not show much of a prevailing wind direction during those winter months (see wind roses here: <http://www.pitufa.at/gambier-islands/>). Southerly winds bring chilly air masses. The water temperature dropped from 26°C in May to only 21°C end of July.

We left the Gambier at the beginning of August after many weeks of waiting for a weather window to sail north to the Marquesas. The many frontal systems allowed only for very short windows and the mood on Pitufa got worse since we were really stuck on the boat. It was too rainy for hiking, too cold for snorkeling, too splashy for dinghy rides. We learned not to make any elaborate plans anymore, but to spontaneously use the rare and short, calm and sunny periods for activities.

The Gambier islands are surely a little paradise and we are glad we came here, but we definitely did not expect the weather to be so bad around July.

So we can only recommend to visit these islands either early in the season and move on already in June or to consider coming here in the southern-hemisphere summer, which is in the cyclone season. We did the latter and returned to the Gambier islands in the beginning of November 2013 and again for the cyclone season 2014/15.

November had still a few massive fronts that got stationary around the area and so brought cold and rainy weather for several days. Really beautiful and hot weather started with the beginning of December. The water temperature was already up around 25°C when we arrived in November 2013 and climbed to around 28°C in December.

January and February were still hot, but in March the temperature dropped noticeably again. (according to locals that was very early in the year... In the following year (2015), we had beautiful and hot weather in March.) Summer is ideal to explore the archipelago as there's only little swell and exposed anchorages are an interesting option.

Irie – June 2013: Aha! And here is the little (little-known?) fact that can change this paradise into something more like hell... Usually, June is still a relatively pleasant month in this southern hemisphere winter, but in 2013 it was not meant to be. We arrived after a cold front and the temperature dropped substantially and would not go up anymore until the spring. For two months, the air temperature was less than 60 degrees during the day, less at night, requiring a comforter and sometimes extra blanket. We were not in "the tropics" anymore and didn't realize this before arriving. We did encounter a few sunny days with pleasant temperatures when the wind was down. There are no trade winds during this season and more often than not, the wind comes from the south (Arctic) and is very chilly! During the day we could often wear shorts and T-shirts, but at night long clothes were necessary. Forget showering in the ocean or cleaning the bottom of the boat! Snorkeling was also barely possible, even with a wetsuit. I lasted about 20 minutes in the 60 degree water with a shorty, on the days the sun was present and the wind not.

On top of that, low pressure systems and cold fronts keep passing over the archipelago or close-by, messing with the wind speed and direction. Not only did they bring grey clouds and some rain, but fluky winds turning the busy anchorage of Rikitea into a massive chaos, with dragging boats and vessels bumping into each other. It is hard to have enough scope out to be able to turn 360° in 45-60 feet of water with so many neighbors... The other bays could have gusty winds, up to 50 knots (we had N gusts of 40-50 knots in Aukena) and wind shifts that can change 180°! Luckily, most bays are pretty deserted. But, if you don't have to worry about your neighbors, you have to worry about surrounding reefs! When we were tired of not being able to shower the way we are used to, to eat or even sit in the cockpit and to be cold all the time, we waited for a weather window (also hard to come by this time of the year) to sail to the Marquesas. If it wasn't for the winter weather, we would have stayed a couple of months longer in the Gambier Islands. Sailors be warned of the Gambier winter!

Soggy Paws – April 2010: When we left Mangareva harbor, all we had taken note of was wind SPEED when we looked at the forecast. We had assumed that we were in the “trade winds” and the wind direction wouldn't vary very much.

It turned out that the reason the wind is dropping off is because of an approaching front. Last night the wind backed about 180 degrees. It left us sweating how close we were to a specific coral head. Just at dusk we had the foresight to swim out a second anchor to help keep us centered--we ended up hanging on that anchor all night long.

Fortunately, this 'front' was VERY mild. We had one rain shower and clocked 20 knots, but it didn't last long. Though the wind was most of the night coming from across the atoll, it was under 10 knots and so not a problem. Now, 24 hours after we arrived, it has back on around to the SE, and we are now hanging behind the reef again.

We are still getting used to this 'upside-down' weather. The cold fronts come from the south. And when they approach, the wind goes NE-N-NW-W and then blows hard, with cold air from the South after the front passes. Weird. And there is no Herb/Southbound II, Chris Parker, or Bob McDavitt here to explain the weather to us. Once we get a little further west and north, there are more nets and some weather gurus, but especially in this part of the Pacific, it's just us and the GRIB files.

We are finally in the French Polynesia weather area. But, besides the GRIB files, the weather we can get from Saildocs is sparse, for only 'today and tomorrow', and in French. Here's yesterday's forecast for our area:

GAMBIER

SECTEUR EST 11/16KT MOLLISSANT 07/10KT A MI-ECHANCE PUIS REVENANT AU SECTEUR SUD-QUEST EN FIN DE PERIODE, RAFALES 25/30KT SOUS GRAINS, MER AGITEE DEVENANT PEU AGITEE, AVERSES EPARSES OU GRAINS ISOLES.

Practice your French! (note French weather terms we found helpful are provided in the Appendix).

Nine of Cups (2009): Rain, rain, rain. It seemed we had one cloudburst after another for days on end. The first couple of days gave us the chance to do chores and just enjoy being at anchor.

It seems to rain a lot here and in buckets when it comes down. When a clear, sunny day appears, we're anxious to get ashore and hike.

Thalassia (April-May 2006): Although the weather in the Gambier Islands is usually beautiful, the wind is quite something other than we expected. We were under the assumption that the easterly trade winds would rule here for the majority of the time. Reality is that the wind blew from the northwest for weeks and weeks, and of course northwest happens to be the direction we have to go. After 10 days of waiting, we got a small window and decided to take it. (10 days passage direct to Tahiti).

Half an hour after our arrival in Rikitea, Meteo Gambier gave out a warning--the storm we had arrived on had now become an official tropical depression and winds were predicted to increase to 60 knots. We stayed busy putting out a second and a third anchor until well after dark. The strongest winds were expected at night, so we didn't get much sleep. All together, our first days in the Gambier Archipelago weren't exactly as we had imagined, but the good thing about bad weather is that it always ends.

On the third day after our arrival the storm had passed, the sky turned blue, the rain stopped and we got a chance to get some extra sleep and relax.

5.3 Boat Services

5.3.1 Fritz

Pitufa – March 2015: Fritz the German lives in the blue house at the northern end of the anchorage. He came here with the foreign legion about 30 years ago, stayed and runs an open house for yachties. He has a washing machine and helped us to get kerosene for our stove. He's always happy to have some company and runs the only "bar" in Rikitea (his fridge), (but you have to abide the German "schlager" music he's playing non-stop at full volume).

Irie – June 2013: Fritz is a German man who has lived in Rikitea for over 30 years. He usually has gasoline and diesel for sale, provides internet service (\$2-\$4/hr depending on how much you purchase), has a good-working European-style washing machine and lines to hang wet clothes, and a water spigot. He sells the water for next to nothing, or you can take an incredible shower with hot water and good pressure in his bathroom.

Nine of Cups (2009): Didier "Fritz" Schmack, a German and former French Foreign Legionnaire, has lived in Rikitea for 37 years. He provides several cruiser services including use of his washing machine and clotheslines (for a fee or a bottle of rum), free fresh water fill up, sells telephone cards and is the TransOcean host (German cruising club). While I was doing a bottle of rum's worth of laundry, Fritz generously allowed David to use his workshop to fabricate a replacement engine bracket support.

5.3.2 Dinghy Dock

Pitufa – March 2015: There are several possibilities to leave the dinghy. The best-protected option is to leave the dinghy on the floating pontoon of the main pier in the southern end of the anchorage. Further N is a concrete wall to tie up to in front of the bakery--only short term, but handy when you only want to pick up baguettes or do some quick shopping. There's another big pier on the northern end of town (the multi-purpose hall is just behind it) that is quite popular with cruisers, but it can get a bit rough there in winds from the SE. The public garbage bins are located there.

Nine of Cups (2009): The dinghy dock is safe and secure, located at a small pier where some of the local boats tie up as well.

5.3.3 Groceries

Pitufa – March 2015: There's a tiny minimarket right next to the main dock (shack on the left hand side) with take-away food evenings only.

Walking up the main road to the right you reach a minimarket with an attached bakery. The bakery no longer accepts reservations, but switched to a first-come-first-serve system. It's only open around 5 in the morning and around 3 in the afternoon—that's when the baguettes get out of the oven and can be picked up warm.

The shop next door to the bakery is usually open from morning till evening without lunch break. On Sundays it's closed during church and in the afternoon.

Walking further north you'll see Jojo's, another small shop on the right hand side with a little restaurant (lunch only) attached.

The Pizza place is yet further up the road (just before the multi-purpose hall), where you can eat really good pizza on the one table they have—it's usually free, because the locals only seem to like take-away pizzas (open Friday to Sunday from 17.15). The pizzeria has no license for alcohol, but they don't mind if you bring your own bottle of wine.

If you take the main road to the left (south) coming from the main dock you'll find the biggest mini-market on the left hand side (it's a bit set back from the road under a big tree).

Walking further south past the Centre Medical and the Gendarmerie you'll see another shop on the right, and a little minimarket next to the Air Tahiti building further on.

The prices seem to vary quite a bit, so it pays off to make some comparisons. The red-labeled prices are subsidized by the state and usually the cheapest.

The shops are stocked with basic food, but even these items can run out when the supply ships are delayed. After the arrival of the supply ship you have to be quick to get fresh vegetables (cabbages, potatoes, carrots, sometimes tomatoes, apples, cucumbers, or even grapes) and fresh dairy products.

The vegetables in the markets are sometimes half-frozen when they arrive and don't last very long.

Local produce isn't available in the shops, but when you talk to people and make friends you'll find that many grow their own fruits and veggies and are willing to give some away for free or to trade veggies for not so readily available goodies (rum is precious in French Polynesia). This way we got pamplemousses, lemons, papayas, bananas, manioc, reddish, breadfruit, tomatoes, green peppers, pok choy, lettuce, string beans, etc.

There's a local chicken farm where you can purchase **eggs** directly. Walk up the road towards the pass, after 5 minutes you'll probably smell it (on the left side of the road, next to the geophysical station).

Irie – June 2013: When you arrive in the Gambier Islands with a stocked-up boat, all you need money for is some produce, eggs and baguettes. Staples like rice, sugar, flour, pasta, tomato sauce and chicken is subsidized and affordable. Eggs are expensive, about 60 cents apiece. Internet was the biggest expense for us. Alcohol is not available in restaurants and is frowned upon. There are no bars. Beers are expensive, about \$4 a bottle.

If you eat as the locals do, you'll be totally fine and actually have some cheap months while being here.

There are a few stores with basic staples in Rikitea, but don't expect much.

The **bakery** has delicious baguettes for around 80 US cents and croissants and pain au chocolate during the weekends. You have to reserve what you want beforehand.

There is a good supply and assortment of frozen **meat**, the chicken being subsidized and quite affordable. In regards to fruit and vegetables, onions, garlic and potatoes are ever-present.

Fresh produce When one of the two supply ships arrives (they each visit once a month), cabbage, carrots, apples, pears, oranges, kiwis, and sometimes lettuce and other goodies (once ginger!) are for sale. The best time to go and purchase these items is the morning after the supply ship leaves. The local supply is gone within a day or two of the ship arriving.

Your best bet is to befriend a local near town with a vegetable garden and trade fresh veggies for things they might desire. We baked goods and brought them as a thank you for the heaps of vegetables we collected over the weeks we were there.

Everybody asks for or wants to trade for **alcohol**, but we believe it is not right to encourage the drinking behavior of the local people. We have experienced the results of that. Spirits are very expensive here for reasons more than the remoteness of the place and an increasing number of community members do not want yachties to visit anymore because they bring and distribute alcohol among the Mangarevans.

Nine of Cups (2009): With the island's population of ~1,000 people, there are only 4 or 5 magazines (mini-marts). Prices on "luxury" items are quite high (1-ltr Coke \$5US, variety pack of Kellogg's cereal \$10US), but on subsidized staples (e.g. flour, rice, sugar), quite reasonable. Eggs are at a premium, however, at 75 cents each and fresh veggies are like gold.

For cruisers following in our wake, here's some idea of food availability and costs in Rikitea. Prices are approximate and in US\$.

Olive oil (.5L): \$18	Small bag chips: \$2.50
UHT milk (ltr): \$1.25	Cocktail Peanuts: \$2.50
Flour (1kg): \$1.65	Pork & Beans: \$1.00
Eggs (each): 75 cents	Tomato sauce(8oz): \$1.45
NZ cheese (8oz): \$1.75	Cigarettes (pack/20): \$8.50
Potatoes (kg): \$1.75	Beer (.5L): \$3.50
Carrots (kg): \$3.50	Canned ham (1 lb): \$9.50
Cabbage (kg): \$4.50	Box wine (ltr): \$10
Tomatoes (kg): \$8.50	Bottle wine (750ml): \$15
Brown sugar(kg): \$4.50	Fresh bread: \$4.50/loaf
White sugar(kg): \$1.65	Pain au chocolat(ea): \$1.65
NZ Butter(500g): \$2.50	Nescafe coffee (170g): \$7.50

Migration (June 2008): We had been warned about the price of food in French Polynesia but we were still surprised. In Rikitea, eggs were \$1 each and a baguette cost \$2.75. (We later found that most things, especially bread, were much cheaper in other places in Polynesia).

Iron Bark (June 2007): One or two other yachties had been helping themselves or simply asking for fruit. Approached in the right way, the islanders were very generous, but not surprisingly, they took rather a dim view of visitors who felt that they had a right to their produce, even if it were otherwise going to waste.

Because of the extraordinary way in which the French run their Pacific colonies, there is very little incentive for people to go in for a bit of market gardening to increase their income, and this makes it ridiculously difficult to buy local fresh produce. When it is for sale, it's often at least as expensive as imported food. Bread is subsidized and we could buy the standard yard of bread for about 20p, but in an area with high levels of diabetes, it seemed stupid to be putting a huge subsidy on white bread while whole wheat loaves were about eight times the price and completely unavailable on the smaller islands.

We soon discovered that it was worth ordering bread in advance. If you arrived when it was delivered – about 0645 – you could sometimes buy one of the extra few loaves ordered on spec, but these were all gone by 0715. But there are worse ways of starting the day, than taking down the anchor light, climbing into the dinghy and rowing ashore to collect warm bread for breakfast. Tinned butter was also affordable and I would often make a litre or so of café au lait to wash down the crusty bread and butter.

Hawk (2007): We have so far found half a dozen stores along the main road of the town, and I doubt we have yet found them all. We had been to visit many of the stores late last week, and I was surprised by the variety of things available, especially since the bi-monthly supply ship was due in at any minute. The ship came on Saturday, and we went shopping yesterday morning. I was able to buy tinned butter, UHT yogurt, raisins, applesauce, eggs, potatoes and carrots. They had all sorts of other things, from canned goods to cereal, but I'm still stocked up on most things from Costa Rica. Of course, things are very expensive. I spent \$18 for three tins of butter and a dozen eggs. But I can get just about anything I will need by the time we leave here. Another ship comes in on the 7th of September, so I will stock up then for the trip to Chile. The only thing I've been disappointed in has been the lack of fresh fruit and vegetables. At least we can make up for that with canned and freeze dried stuff, but I miss fresh. I ate my last Costa Rican tomato today (it lasted a month – better than I expected), and it tasted wonderful. No more fresh stuff now for some time.

Thalassia (April-May 2006): The most remarkable thing on Mangareva is the incredible abundance of tropical fruits. Mangoes, coconuts, breadfruit, papaya, bananas and especially grapefruits are so plentiful that they fill the air with their fragrance.

Rikitea has a few small shops, but supplies are very limited. Chinese Edmond (on the main street; house with the giant tree) has the best prices, although most things are still awfully expensive. To give an idea: expect to pay \$8USD for a liter of orange juice, \$6USD for six eggs and \$3USD for a can of beer. Edmond also sells fresh baguettes and frozen meat, both sponsored by the government and therefore affordable. Make sure to order your baguettes one day ahead: if your name is not on the list he won't sell you any. Onions and potatoes are usually available.

Fresh vegetables are scarce, if not non-existent. The soil couldn't be more fertile, yet there is only one farmer on the island. His name is monsieur Tekura. You will find his garden if you follow the road out of town to the north. He is always there between 8 AM and 5 PM; it's best not to go around lunchtime.

None of the shops sell fruit. There is simply so much of it on the island that people just never buy any! This doesn't mean that you can just pick your own: every single tree belongs to somebody. When asked, many people are happy to give you a generous share of their grapefruits, papayas and bananas. We always made sure to give a bottle of wine or some packs

of cigarettes in return. This is much appreciated, since both articles are extremely expensive here.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): Ashore, there are six or so small shops where you can obtain most of the items cruisers care about. Food stuffs, including wonderful loaves of French bread and pastries, can be found there, as well as supplies of eggs (US\$6/dozen), frozen meats, canned and dry foods, and other house hold items.

Cruisers hoping to get fresh vegetables should time their shopping to the arrival of supply boats and the weekly air flight from Tahiti. Try to shop within three or four hours after the arrival of the supply boat, or within an hour or so after the boat that goes to the airport to meet the weekly flight re turns to the dock. The quality and selection in the shops were very good, and the prices about what you might expect for this part off the world. We paid US\$2.50/ kilo for potatoes, and US\$5/kilo for tomatoes. Celery, cucumbers, cabbage and car rots all looked quite good.

5.3.4 Restaurants

Soggy Paws – 2010: The pizza parlor in town is only open Fri-Sat-Sun, so Saturday after our friends on another boat got in, we all went in for pizza. It was good--better than South American pizza, but we just about choked when we did the math and found they cost about \$11 each for what was essentially a personal-sized pizza.

5.3.5 Fuel

Pitufa – March 2015: For small amounts of gasoline you can ask locals or try at the minimarkets (e.g. Jojo's). Diesel is available in 200-liter barrels directly from the supply ships. We saw yachts going alongside the supply ship to fuel up from the pump hose (you have to take at least 200 liter).

Irie – June 2013: When the supply ship is in town, you can buy gasoline or diesel from them in quantities of 200 liters or more. Some cruisers get together to split a barrel.

Soggy Paws – April 2010: Gasoline and Diesel is available directly from the supply ship. Go onto the quai when the ship docks. Some captains will sell to you in jugs, some want sell a full 200 liter barrel. Though others state that you can buy from businesses in town, we found that they don't stock diesel, and trying to get them to sell you gasoline was like pulling teeth—they always sent us somewhere else where we might be able to buy it.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): You can purchase diesel and gasoline from several stores in town, though the supplies can run short just prior to the arrival of the supply boats. We paid \$6 a gallon for gasoline, and \$4.50 a gallon for diesel.

5.3.6 Cooking Gas (Propane / Butane)

Irie – June 2013: Propane bottles are available, but they are of the local kind and you will need the right fittings and a lot of patience to slowly fill your own tanks. There are no local propane fittings available in Rikitea, so filling a bottle is impossible unless you meet another boat that has the FP fitting you can borrow.

Migration – 2008: The propane fittings in French Polynesia don't fit our US bottles. It required several hoses, connectors, and many hours to fill our tanks

5.3.7 Trash Disposal

Soggy Paws – April 2010: The trash bin is north along the waterfront from the main quay to the small quay in the middle of the west side of the harbor. They do not want you to put your trash bags into the barrels at the main quay.

5.3.8 Banking

Irie – June 2013: There is no cash machine. One of the stores accepts credit cards or can give you a cash advance, more than likely for a hefty fee. The post office changes dollars and euros into CFP, French Polynesian francs.

Soggy Paws – April 2010: There is no bank and no ATM. You can exchange US dollars and Euros for CFP in the Post Office.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): Most stores accepted US dollars for payment. The Boutique accepts US credit cards and will give a dollar for dollar charge against your credit card for cash. The local Post Office also acts as a point of money exchange if necessary.

5.3.9 Internet

Soggy Paws – April 2010: laoranet and Manaspot, both available in the harbor if you have a good wifi antenna. loaranet seemed easier to pick up but was maybe a little slower. The laoranet antenna was located along the shore somewhere in the middle of the bay, while the Manaspot antenna is at the post office on the south side of the bay. If you can't pick it up onboard, you can go sit at the Post Office (covered benches outside).

Nine of Cups (2009): Though remote, we have wifi on the boat! The "laoranet Net" covers all the major areas of French Polynesia except the Australs. Prices range from about \$3-\$5/hour depending on volume. You can order on line and pay with PayPal or buy cards locally. How neat is that???

5.3.10 Mail

Twelfth Night (May 2004): We found that letters and cards mailed to the USA arrived about 10 days after posting.

5.3.11 Water

Soggy Paws – April 2010: In 2010, there did not seem to be any system for charging for water. We never needed any anyway—it rained often enough that we kept our tanks filled up.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): Water is available, and can be purchased by going to the Mayor's office and purchasing a water "ticket." The ticket costs US\$5 for 1,000 liters of good quality, drinkable water. The water can be picked up at the small dock next to the Quonset hut that houses most of the city's equipment. We have seen several boats take on water and fuel from 50-gallon drums at this small dock.

5.3.12 Pearls & Other Souvenirs

Soggy Paws – April 2010: If you are coming through French Polynesia via the Gambiers, that's the place to buy the famous black pearls. They are reputed to be better quality and less cost than anywhere else in French Polynesia. We found lots of pearl farms there, but only one pearl

'shop' in Rikitea. The pearl farms in the Gambiers do not seem to want to sell directly to the public.

The Poeiti Shop is located well to the south of town, on the waterfront road. Turn left when coming off the wharf and keep going left until the road dead ends at what looks like a church (it's not, it is a monument). The shop is there to the left. It is also the neatest nicest grocery store. They took U.S. cash as well as CFP.

Iron Bark (June 2007): The culture of black pearls is now a major industry in French Polynesia. Mangareva, being a long way south, has cooler water and apparently this makes for better-coloured pearls. The farming is on a large scale and many inventive ways have been devised to use pearls of all shapes and sizes, as well as the oyster shells themselves. I have always loved pearls and was fascinated to see what was for sale in Rikitea's little shops. While the large, black, perfect pearls are very beautiful, I much prefer the baroque and many-coloured misfits, that are used in less formal jewelry. The smaller ones are known as keishi and are arguably more 'honest' than the flawless ones, being formed around chips of shell. The perfectly spherical ones are built up around small plastic balls, which account for between 75% and 90% of the finished pearl. Should you have a necklace of the latter and wear it constantly, you can wear away the nacre down to the plastic, while keishi pearls are formed entirely of nacre. A local jeweler had made a gorgeous little necklace of local keishi, ranging in colour from white, through kingfisher blue and aubergine down to the deepest black. I fell in love with it and Trevor bought it for my birthday.

A teacher arranged for the yachties to visit the local craft school and watch the students working on the pearl shell. This is polished and made into a variety of articles from dishes to jewelry and little is wasted. The standard of workmanship was very high, but the most impressive thing was that the craftsmen were all schoolgirls ranging in age from 11 to 15. They were brought in from the Tuamotus and other Gambier Is and it was a required subject.

A couple of days later we saw the best on display in the mairie: the standards were extremely high. The shell is often used very imaginatively – for instance, several pieces will be shaped and polished and then threaded on a band of material to make straps for a dress. The effect can be truly stunning. The girls' wares are regularly sent to Tahiti to be sold there, but we could buy on the island. The teacher marked each piece to identify its creator and it was lovely to see the girls' delight when they were introduced to the person who'd bought something they'd made. I think they got more pleasure from that than from the money.

Hawk (2007): We've had several people trying to trade with us for their black pearls, obviously of inferior quality. They have all been young men interested only in hard liquor – we believe the island has only beer and wine for sale in the shops and both are quite expensive. The only liquor we had aboard when we arrived was two-thirds of a bottle of gin that I've been trying to get rid of since San Francisco and a bottle of good red wine. Just to get rid of the guy who came by the day before yesterday, I finally agreed to trade him the wine and the gin for half his handful of pearls. But I've never really liked black pearls – they resemble nothing so much as ball bearings as far as I'm concerned. But maybe someday I'll find some use for them or someone who wants them. In the meantime, we're out of alcohol, which the coconut telegraph will relay far and wide, so we shouldn't be bothered any more.

Twelfth Night (May 2004): Ashore, you can visit the vocational school and see some of the craftwork done by students from Gambier and the surrounding islands. We bought presents for friends and family from the selection of students' craftwork done in mother of pearl.

There is an opportunity to buy pearls here, and it is strongly recommended that if you are interested in this, you should have a good idea of price and value of black pearls prior to entering into any bargaining with local vendors. Caveat emptor: let the buyer be ware.

5.4 Things to Do Around Mangareva

5.4.1 Hiking Mt. Duff & Other Walks

Pitufa – March 2015: Mangareva is great for hiking. A partly paved road leads around the island (leaving out only the mountainous southern tip) and you can do nice round trips via the two ‘Chemin traversier’, the pass over the saddle and the coastal mainroad. The hiking tracks were reasonably well maintained when we were there.

Round-trip Kirimoro: Walk up the chemin traversier Kirimoro (dirt track opposite the shop with the restaurant clearly marked by a sign) that leads you through a beautiful forest up the ridge and down again to the westcoast of the island. Walking left you then follow the coastal road along the turquoise lagoon. When you reach a crossing take the left road that leads you up the saddle (there’s a viewpoint on top, follow the sign “Belle vue”) and back over the saddle to Rikitea (ca. 2-3 hours).

Round-trip Taku: Walk north along the coastal road, until you reach the chemin traversier Taku (marked by a sign). The track also leads you up the ridge with great views of the anchorage. When you reach the mainroad on the other side, walk right. You’ll soon reach the abandoned village Taku with its pretty church. The main road leads then to the northern cape of the island (two marked viewpoints) and back along the eastcoast to Rikitea (ca. 4-5 hours).

Mount Duff and Mokoto: Walk left from the main dock and up the main road to the pass (viewpoint “Belle vue” on top). Descending on the other side you’ll find the clearly marked track to either Mount Duff or Mokoto. The first part of the track’s the same for both mountains, approximately a third of the distance up you’ll reach a sign that leads you either left up Mount Duff (slightly higher, steep, but not difficult unless it’s muddy and slippery after a rain) or on the right to Mokoto (slightly steeper). From both peaks you have incredible views all over the lagoon and the islands. It takes 1/2 hour to get to the beginning of the track and then 1.5 hours up to the top.

Soggy Paws – April 2010 - Hiking Mount Duff: One of the cruiser things to do here in Mangareva is to hike to the top of Mt. Duff. Without much information about where EXACTLY the path to Mt. Duff was, we set out on the road out of town.

I actually stopped and asked directions. One of the storekeepers in town that speaks English drew me a sketch map that helped us get on the right road. But his sketch was rough and turned out to not be quite accurate. He showed a path coming off the left side of a curve in the road, and that was accurate, it was WHICH curve that was the problem.

While Bill and Sue explored the path on the first curve with a path that we came to, I stood out on the side of the road and waited for someone to drive by. We had been passed by several pickups and motorcycles on the walk up, but of course when I WANTED a car to come, none did. Finally some guy came by on a motor scooter and I got him to stop. In my horrible (almost non-existent) French I asked where the path to Mt. Duff was, and we were able to communicate enough that I knew THAT path wasn’t it. He indicated (sign language) that it was just ahead on the next curve.

We walked around the first curve, and there it was, properly marked with a sign that said Mt. Duff.

Once on the right path, it was actually a very pleasant walk thru a pine forest--a nice improved path for the tourists. We were joined by a skinny friendly dog of German Shepherd descent who was having a good time romping along with us.

We got to a Y in the path, with 2 signs in Polynesian, one pointing one way and one pointing the other. Neither said Mt. Duff! (this is a British name). If we had actually known when we started WHICH peak was Mt. Duff, it would have been easier. Our dog friend wanted to go to the right. We almost followed him. But Bill said the path to the left looked a little more worn. Hmm... follow the dog who lives here or the cruiser who doesn't?? We followed Bill and went left.

After the Y in the path, we started scrambling up, still in pine forest. The slippery pine needles made the going tricky. In a few spots, there were lines between trees with knots in them, placed to help us go up and down the steep slope. At the very end, we got above the tree-line, and the path switched to wading through high grass. By this time, Bill was way ahead of us, out of sight, and Jo and Sue and I kept telling each other that there were no snakes in Paradise. (ha ha)

We finally made it to the top and climbed up on the rock outcropping. Wow, wow, WOW! What a view! We could see 50 miles in every direction. Out to the surrounding reef and well beyond. It was a beautiful clear day and we got some great shots of the clear water below.



Migration (June 2008): The four of us set off on a hike to the top of Mt. Duff—the highest point in the Gambier. It was easy to find the trail heading off the road, and easy to follow the white marks painted on the trees through the forest. Well, easy for a while. Somewhere we went wrong and found ourselves on a hillside covered with brambles. James had his trusty machete so, thinking we only had to go a little ways to get through, off we went; James in the lead braving the thorns and cutting us a path.

About a mile later we were still in the brambles on the saddle of a ridge and clearly not on Mt. Duff. And the ridge was covered with... brambles. I gave James a break, took the machete and we forged ahead, finally freeing ourselves from the prickles and actually finding the mountain, then scrambling up its steep peak where we all plopped down to rest and nurse our scratches.

We were nearly blown off the narrow peak when we stood up but the view from the top was awesome. It made the crazy hike worth it. We were more careful on the way down and, though we were lost briefly, managed to avoid too many more scratches.

Iron Bark (June 2007): One of Mangareva's attractions is a number of excellent walks. The roads are reasonably empty (one wonders that there are any cars on such a tiny island) and there are several trails that are managed and marked; we spent quite a lot of time ashore, walking and exploring.

Some of the trails are obviously very old and some follow roads built by the tyrant priest, Père Laval. Between 1836 and 1871, he forced the islanders to build a cathedral, 10 churches and a convent, in addition to roads and other buildings. Many of them died in the process: his response was they the got to heaven sooner! I'm sure he had the best of intentions and he set up schools so that the islanders could learn to read (the Bible) and organised threading and weaving mills using locally grown cotton. But overall, although many islanders revere his name as the man who converted them to Catholicism, he must have done more harm than good.

The local mairie had a small tourist brochure, which portrayed Laval as an enlightened benefactor, but when I questioned one of the locals about this, he told me he'd laughed aloud when he read this bowdlerized version of what was obviously a mad man. (This same brochure says that the 'era of the French nuclear test ... gave a new life to the Gambier'!)

One of the best walks we took was to the top of Mount Duff, which overlooks the anchorage. This entailed a long hike through undergrowth and forest, which kept us pleasantly in the shade. We followed a ridge up the side of the mountain, occasionally hauling ourselves up using ropes provided for that purpose, and finally came out into the open, well above the town. At the top of the mountain, the ridge became a razor back and it was frankly daunting picking one's way along the narrow track with sheer drops on one side or the other and, finally, on both. But the view and sense of achievement made it worthwhile.

The island was generally well wooded, with a surprising number of Scotch pines, which seemed inappropriate in the climate. Wandering through the woodlands was a delight with vast numbers of marvellous fig trees, which covered large areas, sending down aerial roots and creating great wooden cages. Water (coco)nuts abounded and a machete was worth taking. I included a couple of plastic drinking straws in the backpack, which made the nuts a lot easier to drink! We had to resist the temptation to scrimp delicious pamplemousse and papaya that grew in abundance and often fell to the ground.

5.4.2 Pearl Farm Visit

Soggy Paws – April 2010 - Visiting a Pearl Farm: We had an opportunity to visit a pearl farm here in the Gambiers. They supposedly produce the best 'black pearls' here of all of French Polynesia.

There is no tourism industry here in Gambiers, so no one is really set up for tours. However, if you ask the right person, they may give you a short look around. Bill from Visions of Johanna set up our trip with Benoit at his pearl farm about a 20 minute walk out of town.

The first thing we learned is that the pearl farming work is usually done at a little building on stilts built over the water. We had thought those quaint little houses on the water were for living in, but it turns out to be a convenient way to deal with the pearl activities without stinking up the town. And easier for the coming and going of the oysters, etc. People commute to work from town everyday in launches with outboard motors.

We arrived on shore and waved. They sent a launch for us and loaded all 9 of us up in the launch and took us out to their building. Benoit's son gave us a nice explanation of the process.

The first step in the pearl farming process is get oysters of the right size and development and implant both a seed pearl and a tiny chip of oyster shell into the gonads. The Japanese perfected this technique and some pearl farmers still use skilled Japanese workers to do this, though the French Polynesians are also learning how to do it.

Then they tie the oysters into racks and take them out in strings to their open water 'farm'. In the Gambiers, you can see many pearl farm bouys scattered around the open parts of the lagoon.

Periodically, they must retrieve the racks and clean the oysters, as clean oysters are happy oysters, and produce better pearls.

Some pearl-producing oysters are recycled, seeded again, after producing a good pearl. Others are saved for their shells. You can also eat the oyster muscle (similar to a scallop).

The hope was, at a pearl farm, that not only would we get some insight into pearl farming, but also be able to buy some pearls at a discount. Alas, it seems that all their production is controlled and they are not supposed to sell their pearls from the farm. There is a nice shop in town that has individual pearls and pearls in settings (rings, earrings, bracelets, and necklaces).

On our walk back from the pearl farm, someone invited us into their yard for free 'pampelmousse' (large sweet grapefruit grown on the island). We gathered all that we could carry!

Nine of Cups (2009): On Mangareva, we met "Dada", a pearl farmer. He offered to take us to his pearl farm for a tour one morning and picked us up around 0900 on shore for a 20 minute ride via truck to a waiting launch which took us to his pearl farm (there is lots of info on pearl farms on Nine of Cups website, not included here).

5.4.3 Polynesian Dancing

Irie – July 2013: Since Mark and I arrived in the Gambier Islands, the end of May, the two competing dance groups (troupes) of Mangareva, the main island, have been practicing for their big local festival in July. Every evening we were anchored in Rikitea, we could hear the drumming echoing over the bay, from two directions. We had dinner on Irie with live Polynesian background music, I did the dishes on the rhythm of the drums and we fell asleep imagining the band and the dancers, the now familiar beats fresh in our minds. A few nights, while being on shore in the evening, we checked out the rehearsals and they were impressive.

The Heiva festivities took place from July 5th through July 14th (Bastille Day in France and the day the Polynesians were allowed to start practicing their dances again after years of them being banned by the missionaries), right behind our boat. The first weekend, the weather was awful. Mark and I managed to make it to shore for the first evening, when the dance groups were being introduced. The event happened in a big hangar, where the impressive sounds were reflected on the walls for an even more imposing effect. The costumes were a bit weak, but the dancing was great. The following afternoon, the sun peeked out for a little while. Most cruisers went ashore for a private performance. One of the groups passed by all the houses and by a location for the boating crowd, to collect some money. The festival usually starts with this tradition, called "tapena", but the weather was too crappy that first day.

Too much wind and too much rain made us miss out on the Miss and Mister Mangareva elections. We were all stuck on our boats until the following Thursday, when the dance competition started in earnest. That evening, both troupes performed the "Pe'I" dance, a typical Mangarevan dance where stomping on the ground with the feet is prominent. The dances are long and depict a story. The stage is decorated with replica huts and other props for the scenes, bamboo rafts and weapons are carried and the costumes are very exotic. It was an entertaining evening.

On Friday night, the Polynesian dances “Ote’a” and “Aparima” took place. The weather allowed both groups to dance and drum outside again. The costumes were amazing, the drumming fantastic and the performances incredible. It was a cultural experience pleasing all our senses. Taking pictures was hard again because of the low light, but we all enjoyed the performances a lot.

Saturday night, many people stayed home again, because of the cold and windy weather. In the hangar, the best female dancer, best male dancer and best couple dancers competed before the jury, as well as both bands. The effect indoors is very different from outdoors. The participants received a lot of applause, but the results would not become known until the following day. It was a short night, so Mark and I still managed to watch a movie warmly tucked in bed, while Irie bounced around at anchor. At least the wind produced enough electricity for our needs.

On Sunday, the 14th of July (14 juillet), the closing ceremony started at 11 am. Together with most villagers, all dressed up, and cruisers, the sun was present for a few hours. Mark and I rowed ashore to give ourselves more flexibility in the shallows and heading back out later. Our sometimes unreliable dinghy engine could get us in trouble with the strong onshore wind. The female mayor gave a speech and both troupes showed more dancing and drumming. The award ceremony and prize giving went satisfactory according to our preferences and tastes; we mostly agreed with the jury. The event was concluded with free drinks and snacks, while a group of performers and locals spontaneously started playing music, singing and dancing. This is the only day in the year that alcohol is not frowned upon, but a real party never emerged. By 9pm, the Heiva festival was finished. Forget about fireworks. We have never been anchored so close to shore with festivities going on, while they were barely noticeable and we could sleep at night!

Being here for the Polynesian festival was great (although the one in Tahiti would have been more impressive and lively) and not to be missed, but the weather could have been better. The cost for this cultural experience – other than some cash to support the groups – was two pairs of flipflops, which were stolen from our beached dinghy last night. From now on Rikitea will be different, without the daily sounds of the drumming... and without shoes!

Nine of Cups (2009): We had heard drumming on several evenings and asked one of the locals about it. He said that many members of the community, including he and his wife, were involved in a local dancing troupe that were practicing for a traditional dance presentation in Tahiti in June. We went and watched the practice several times. Intricate, complicated moves performed with precision.

5.4.4 Snorkeling and Diving

Pitufa – March 2015: Interestingly enough, you don’t have to go far to find good snorkeling spots. Just outside the anchorage off Rikitea you find a beautiful coral garden with plenty of fish.

The fish are generally big and not scared of divers. The reason for this behavior is a disease that occurs quite often in subtropical and tropical waters: Ciguatera. Microscopically small Dinoflagellates containing ciguatoxin live on the reefs. The toxin is harmless for fish, but accumulates in individuals and along the food chain (big predators that feed on reef fish contain especially large quantities).

Ciguatoxin’s extremely dangerous for humans and other mammals. It’s a neurotoxin and the symptoms reach from nausea, tingling sensations in the limbs to cramps and death. People who survived a strong case of ciguatera may suffer from it for the rest of their lives.

Locals know which fish are safe to eat, but the safest solution for cruisers is not to eat any fish caught in the lagoon. That's bad for the menu on board, but guarantees a marvellous underwater world!

Soggy Paws – April 2010: There are no dive shops that we saw in Rikitea. The pearl farms often use tanks to service their pearls, so there are likely compressors around, but we never saw any. We snorkeled and later dove a 'dinghy pass' on the south end of the island that the airport is on. In calm weather it was a nice dive and a good way to get wet after a long hiatus from diving. In early April the water and weather was warm enough that light wetsuits were fine for swimming.

5.5 Cruising the Gambiers

Irie – June 2013: We could never stay as long as we pleased in any of the outer anchorages, because of the changing wind, heavy gusts out of different directions or incoming swell. Most bays are pretty deep, with the exception of Akamaru and Aukena.

The charts, where they exist, are good and reliable, but parts of the region are left uncharted. For example, the south bay in Taravai is a blank spot on the charts, so good sunlight to read the water and detect the many dangerous reefs is imperative.

Don't forget the sun sits in the north, which makes approaching uncharted areas from the south (Taravai's SE anchorage) a bit tricky to enter during the winter months.



Pitufa's Tracks Around the Gambiers

Interactive Version: <http://www.pitufa.at/gambier-islands/>

5.5.1 Northern Part of the Atoll (Motu Puaumu)

Puaumu is a small island inside the NE corner of the reef.... (the Polynesians pronounce every vowel, so this is pronounced Poo-ah-oo-h-moo)

Pitufa – March 2015: A great deal of eye-ball navigation is necessary to go to the smaller motus, particularly to the ones further N of the airport. It is a good idea to talk to cruisers who have been around the Gambier for a while and they might be able to provide you with GPS tracks.

Anchoring off **Puaumu** may be tricky as sandy spots between the countless coral heads are small. Many of those coral heads reach up to the surface. We highly recommend to either buoy your anchor chain or to use a Bahamian mooring to avoid fouling your chain and damaging corals. One of our anchoring spots there for N winds is at 23°01.146'S 134°55.294'W in 6m with all bommies deep enough within swinging room. For E-NE winds we prefer to anchor at 23°01.226'S 134°55.147'W in 4.5m.

Soggy Paws – 2010: With encouragement from a French catamaran we met, we explored the unmapped zones in the north of the atoll pretty thoroughly. In good light, it was easy to proceed NE from the Rikitea Harbor to the airport, and then turn north and work your way NNW along the reef. Pick your spot. We spent several days anchored up by the Puaumu atoll in the NE corner of the lagoon.

We left Rikitea harbor yesterday morning to go out to the outer reef and hang out for a few days. Bill on Visions of Johanna had gotten some waypoints from a French boat for going up into the 'unsurveyed' part of the atoll. And we could see a light wind period coming up, for a few days.

So about mid-day, us and Infini and Visions and Steel Band all headed out of the harbor, east to the edge of the reef, and north along the reef. We left first and ended up in the lead. It turned out to be a 'no-brainer' for us (we don't need no stinkin' waypoints!)--the water is really clear and easy to read. It is mostly very deep--60-80 feet. There are brown spots that are submerged coral heads at about 20 feet.

There is a solid reef all along the eastern side of the Gambiers atoll, with periodic 'motus'... little sand/coral islands. A few have palm trees... they look JUST like that Windows background with the sailboat and the island.

When we arrived at the island that our French friends had put an anchor waypoint on, we worked our way into shallow water. It turned out to be a little harder than we anticipated to find a good anchor spot. There are too many very shallow coral heads. We picked the largest open area and dropped our anchor in what we hoped was the middle. The depth was only 10 feet, nice sand, so we didn't need a lot of scope. When Visions and Infini arrived, they didn't like the shallow coral-studded area and went back out into deeper water.

Pascal from Steel Band is a 'hunter/gatherer' of the first kind. When we asked him where the best place was to get something to eat on the reef, he told us we probably won't find any lobster while snorkeling. And unfortunately, spearfishing is very risky here... **ciguatera** is very prevalent in Gambiers and those big fat grouper looking at us from under every coral head could be lethal.

Apparently, the way to find spiny lobster here in the Pacific is to walk on the reef for them at night. The best time to do this, according to Pascal, is on a rising tide on a new moon (when it is

darkest out and the buggers can't see you coming). The lobster are supposed to be coming up onto the reef top to feed around that time.

OK, well, we are not generally night people. It is safest to be back aboard when it gets to be dark, and we are usually not ready with dinner until 7:30 or 8pm. However, this sounded like a lark, and Visions was up for it too. We had an early dinner and withheld the drinks til after our adventure.

We gathered on the east end of the beach at Puaumu at 7pm, armed with sturdy tennis shoes, bright flashlights, gloves, and mesh bags. Dave also brought his Keys 'tickle stick' and net, which turned out to be useful. Pascal said we should be walking along the top of the reef (old dead reef) a couple of meters just inshore from the breakers. You just spot them with your flashlight and pick them up. How cool is that?

Gram from Visions and Pascal from Steel Band tromped off down the reef pretty quickly. Bill and Jo and Dave and I were much more tentative. Dave had to go back to the dinghy for something, and while he was gone, Jo found a smallish slipper lobster and Bill bagged him. When Dave came back, he already had 2 more.

We proceeded out to where Pascal said we should be--it was more difficult--deeper, rockier, and some wave action. After 10 minutes of nothing, we went back inshore a little where we'd found the other slipper lobster, and eventually found a total of 7 of them. It was slightly easier to bag them with the net and tickle stick, but it was not that hard to just grab them with a gloved hand.

Meanwhile, Pascal and Gram came back from way down the reef, with a stone crab and a good sized lobster.

We had had enough, and had at least something to show for our efforts. We ate Lobster Penne and Lobster Alfredo for dinner the next night, and it sure beat 'old frozen chicken (again)'

Ashore: When we finally went ashore on the Puaumu motu, we found an abandoned house, and some pigs and chickens. They came running up when we came to the beach, looking for food. We found out the next day that someone comes from the 'mainland' every few days to feed them coconuts.

5.5.2 Taravai

Pitufa – March 2015: The charts around Taravai are generally detailed, only the southern side of the island is uncharted. Also, some of our Garmin detail charts were offset. There were some minor chart inaccuracies, such as W of the village around 23°08.97'S 135°00.38'W where it has 9 m instead of the charted 20+ meters, but otherwise the depths were either deeper than or the same as charted.

The water clarity around the west pass and W of Taravai was incredible: coral in 15 m depth seemed only a sleeve length away. Such visibility invites to diving and snorkeling.

Taravai has beautiful, uninhabited bays on the western side: Baie Anganui and Baie Onemea. After being in Rikitea for a while, where the sun merely disappears behind the mountains, in those two western bays proper sunsets can be enjoyed again. We heard reports that thick swarms of mosquitoes befouled these beaches, but we cannot confirm those reports, even though it rained a lot at times when we were there. Flies might be a nuisance (not only here but all around Taravai).



(click for larger image online)

Baie Anganui: We approached from the N and anchored at 23°08.739'S 135°02.947'W in 13-15m depth in sand with good holding. The bay has 2 long sand beaches in the E and SE and some smaller ones in the S, separated by rock formations. Dinghy access may be difficult at low tide as we haven't found channels through the coral reefs. At high tide it's no problem to go straight over the coral. We found the sand at the long beaches very soft, sinking in with every step, so we preferred the smaller

beaches S with firm, white coral sand. Once we hiked up the ridge S, however, there are no paths (only goat tracks that disappear under the shrubs), so you have to make your own path. What looked like grass to us from the distance, turned out to be 2m-high reed.

The snorkeling was great around the reefs further out of the bay. Closer to the beaches, the visibility decreased. There were many curious black-tip reef sharks. Close to the beaches, baby reef sharks patrolled back and forth.

Baie Onemea: This is one of our favourite anchorages in the Gambier islands. Approaching from the N via Baie Anganui is easy through the deep channel close to the shore. See the screen shot below with our tracks. The sandy area to anchor between the reefs is larger than shown on the charts. (Double-check with satellite imagery.) We dropped the hook at 23°09.022'S 135°03.311'W in 6-8m sand with good holding. On our Garmin, the chart was offset.

The two beautiful beaches with golden and reddish sand are easily accessible at any tide through sandy channels. Also here we hiked up the ridge to the S. Plowing through the shrubs, reeds and ferns was strenuous, but the view over the bay as well as over to the S of Taravai and Ile Agakaitai was stunning.

Anchorage between S of Taravai and Ile Agakaitai: Unfortunately this area is uncharted, but satellite imagery reveals the reefs and shows how big the sandy area to anchor is.



Click for larger image (online)

We approached from the S to the waypoint 23°10.108'S 135°02.581'W. This location is close to the rocks and at times with big swell waves break on both sides of you. From this waypoint we kept a straight bearing towards the house ashore at 23°09.349'S 135°02.273'W.

There is one shallower patch with around 4m depth on the way in before reaching the large, coral-free area for anchoring. We anchored around 23°09.63'S 135°02.28'W. See the screenshot below with reef outlines (thanks to Mark on SY Irie!) and our tracks. The anchorage is well-protected from all sides but SW, from where some chop may build up. At times with stronger winds, particularly when the wind has a northerly

component, it can be very gusty. Once we measured 50kn while it was blowing 20-25kn from the N elsewhere.

In the house in the southern bay of Taravai, Eduard and Denise made their little paradise. They are used to visits by cruisers and have a guest book.

There is also a house on Agakauitai. It's idyllically placed behind the beach in front of the cliff, however, it's permanent residents seem to be only pigs.

Village anchorage: There used to be three small buoys to mark an entrance about 250m NE of the tiny islet Motu-o-ari. (You were supposed to leave those buoys closely to your port side when going in). In case those buoys have not been reinstalled, you may follow these waypoints:

Approach from the east.

WP1 S23 08.954' W135 01.111'

WP2 S23 08.944' W135 01.149'

WP3 S23 08.927' W135 01.175'

WP4 S23 08.902' W135 01.193'

WP5 S23 08.912' W135 01.230'

Once we had only about 1m under our keel (2.2m draft), so it gets pretty shallow. For anchoring we cannot recommend the shallower (6-10m) fringe area of the basin as there is only a thin layer of sand on coral plates with bad holding. In the deeper area (15-20m) of the basin the holding is better. We often anchored close to Motu-o-ari around 23°08.95'S 135°01.36'W in good-holding muddy sand.

Be aware of the many corals in this anchorage and also of debris such as submerged buoys and lines from abandoned pearl farms. In strong E winds this anchorage gets very bouncy. For N winds it is best to anchor in the northern basin S of the tiny islet around 23°08.6'S 135°01.49'W in about 15m depth in good-holding muddy sand.

The village consists of a church with manicured gardens and a handful of houses. Only two houses seem to be permanently inhabited: Herve, the caretaker of the street and church, lives at the northern end of the village with his wife Valerie and kids Alan and Ariki. The friendly couple is used to having cruisers around and speaks English. As Polynesians they are obliged to drop everything whenever visitors arrive so keep in mind that they've got work to do as well and don't overstrain their hospitality.

Somewhat separate, further south of the church is another house which belongs to the former mayor of Rikitea. Now, Pierre and Lolo, a French cruiser couple, live there. They have their steel ketch on a mooring in the bay and have an 'open house' for cruisers. They have cultivated a big patch and sell veggies and fruits to cruisers—very convenient, cheap and good quality!

There is a hiking trail connecting the village and the bay in the S (at least 1h one way). Ask for directions. For a not too difficult side trip with great views, you can follow up the SE ridge (mostly under pines) to a peak overlooking the village and lagoon (add another hour for this detour).

Irie – 2013: Taravai has different picturesque bays to anchor in. The few families who live on shore are very friendly and enjoy the company of visiting yachts. Snorkeling is pretty good and if you feel up to it, you can bushwhack your way to the top of the hills. Onemea, a small bay on the west side of Taravai holding two to three boats is very pretty, with good protection and a

yellow beach lined with palm trees. The village anchorage is deep and has a lot of scattered coral heads. A visit to the village can be made by dinghy from the southern bay as well. Walking around the well-kept grounds and seeing the little church is recommended.

You need good light to enter the uncharted areas, especially the southern bay of Taravai. Don't forget the sun sits in the north, which makes this bay a bit tricky to enter during the winter months. There is a dangerous (large) reef in the middle of the bay. Once you are past that, the way into the anchorage is clear. To avoid this reef, round the SE corner of the southern island and move midway between this corner and the rock off shore. (The waypoint for this spot is 23°10.08'S/135°02.59'W). Once at this midway point (or waypoint), line yourself up with the white house on shore to the north and proceed into the bay. The large reef will be on your port side (but you may not see it until you are past it). Edouard and Denise on shore have a light on in their garden at night, as a bearing for anchored cruisers.

As luck would have it, the sun popped out right in time and the correct part of sky turned blue for 20 minutes. With me on the bow and Mark gently moving the boat forward, we slowly entered the reef strewn bay. For some reason, there was a lot of glare in the water and the visibility was poor. Instead of seeing all the dark spots ahead of us, I could just make out the rocky bottom 30 feet in front of us and an area as wide as Irie. Not good; you want the sun high in the sky and behind you to read the water... At that point, we realized or remembered that the sun in the southern hemisphere always sits in the north, even at her highest point, around noon, the time we approached the anchorage. It was the direction we needed to go. We proceeded at a snail's pace and at some point, when I looked back, I noticed that we had barely missed a shallow reef! Mark made a sharp right to get into less shallow water and we continued deeper into the bay, our hearts racing and our minds in minor shock.

Once settled in the anchorage, we noticed the beauty of this place. The beaches, the hills, the rocky outcrops and the greenery, the different shades of blue in the water and the colorful reefs, visible from above – when looking into the right direction – created a very beautiful picture indeed! The first couple of days, we had to stay onboard, unfortunately, because the wind was gusting from different directions and the weather was playing tricks on us. Being surrounded on three sides by very shallow reefs and being anchored in deep water, we wanted to make sure the anchor re-set correctly, every time, we made a violent 180° turn. When the wind mellowed out a bit, we managed to explore the area and meet some friendly locals.

One day, we had lunch two bays away with our friends from Pitufa, who were anchored in the third bay to the west of us. This "picnic bay" was a little tropical paradise; uninhabited, golden sand fringed by palm trees, some pretty rocks along shore and reefs in the water. The wind seemed to be coming from only one direction, but that might have been coincidence. Either way, we might check this sweet little spot out one day with Irie, when the weather is right and we feel confident enough to move again.

Mark and I also met the family who lives in our bay. They made us welcome with some fresh fruit from their garden and some freshly caught fish from the bay. We chatted for a while in French and brought some things in exchange later. We also took our dinghy, weaving through coral heads, to "the village" of Taravai. Only two families live here full-time now (when the French did their many years of nuclear testing in the neighboring Tuamotus and used Rikitea as their base, many people from the Gambier archipelago moved to "the city" to work, and stayed afterwards) and they maintain the area splendidly; the historic church, the white beaches and

the lush yards and gardens look very inviting to visitors, and inhabitants. The atmosphere is relaxed, friendly and hospitable. Not a bad place to live!

Soggy Paws – 2010: We fully circumnavigated the island of Taravai. We found the absolute best harbor in the ‘unsurveyed’ south bay, anchoring at 23-09.60 S / 135-02.25 W. You can enter this bay either from the south around the southern tip of Isle Agakani, and inside of Ilots Tekorou at about 23-10.08 S / 135-02.59 W, or from the west at about 23-09.72 S / 135-03.62 W. Good light is strongly recommended for either approach. Once inside, we had 6 or so boats anchored comfortably inside, and nearly 360 degree protection, between the island and the surrounding reefs.

In this anchorage, the house to the north is Eduard and Denise. Eduard was born on Taravai (many years ago). Go in and say hello, they are very friendly and interesting people. They have pigs and ducks and many coconut trees. They also grow their own vegetables and have a fresh water supply they welcomed us to use. Denise speaks some English and good French. The house to the east, on Agakani, was also inhabited by a friendly local.

We also anchored in the uninhabited Baie Anganui, on the west side of Taravai, to stage for leaving to head north. This is another very pretty and very protected anchorage. The only downside as a leaving spot is that it is so protected from the east wind that you don’t have a good feel for conditions outside. But it is very easy to depart from this bay.

There is also an anchorage in front of the town of Taravai. It looks exposed to the east but is actually fairly protected by the reef out front. There is supposed to be a channel marking the way in—pearl farm buoys, near Motu-O-Ari. But we didn’t see them or know about them, and made a ‘frontal assault’, coming straight in over the reef towards the church, which shallowed to about 9-10 feet at its shallowest. Good light and visual navigation is imperative. The ‘town’ is no longer a town. The church is maintained, but not regularly used. There are 3-4 houses there, and the inhabitants have fruit trees and grow vegetables. Walk on the path both left and right from the church, and introduce yourself. They will trade for or sell bananas, pampelmousse, sweet potatoes, eggplant, tomatoes, cucumbers, limes, and avocados. If you are heading north through French Polynesia, these will be the last avocados you will see for a long while.

Nine of Cups (2009): We moved out of the anchorage at Rikitea and positioned ourselves off the little island of **Taravai** (23S08.94 / 135W01.32) planning an early departure the next morning. No sooner were we anchored, than a handsome fellow zoomed out in his skiff and suggested a better place to anchor and an invitation to visit to his home, meet his family and take on some fresh fruit. Valerie & Herve Tuihani were our friendly hosts while visiting Taravai. True to his word, Herve gave us lots of pampelmousse, banana, limes, avocados, oranges and even sweet potatoes from his garden.

5.5.3 Totogegie

Pitufa – March 2015: Totogegie is a long and narrow motu on the eastern barrier reef, the airport of the Gambier islands is located on the northern part (usually one plane arrives per week, during the summer two).

Be aware of pearl farm buoys when navigating up to Totogegie. We encountered buoys even in the charted channel N of Aukena.

You can anchor off the tiny harbor at the airport, for instance at 23°05.034’S 134°53.356’W in 8m sand (convenient when picking up or dropping off visitors) and further east in a sandy basin

after the cleared area of the airport. We anchored in that basin at 23°05.815'S 134°52.631'W in 14m depth with good holding.

We experienced that the holding in the shallower areas of the basin was poor as the ground there comprises of coral or rock plates with only a thin layer of sand on top. The water along this motu has a high coral-sediment content which causes bad visibility and a strong turquoise coloring.

Keep in mind when navigating here that depths between around 4m and 20m show about the same color.

Close by the basin anchorage there's a cut in the outer reef that's a popular snorkeling spot. When the tide is high enough you can take your dinghy out through this tiny pass (e.g. for a drift snorkel).

Irie – June 2013: Totegegie or “airport island” offers a walk along a dirt road in the middle of the narrow stretch of land, a view over the outer reef, protected areas to snorkel and some great views of the area while you walk the beaches on neighboring islands. We found the holding less than adequate over there and it is deeper than what is reported on the charts.

Migration (June 2008): We sailed across the lagoon to the coral atoll of Totegegie and spent a few days away from the town and the other boats. It was our first taste of Polynesian snorkeling and we were amazed by all the species of fish that were new to us. The coral was beautiful and Alene spent as much time in the water as she could. Unfortunately it was cold so that wasn't as much as she would have liked.

5.5.4 Aukena

Pitufa – March 2015: Aukena cannot be approached directly as thousands of buoys for pearl farming block the way. We were told to stay in a narrow channel between the buoys and the reef that connects Mangareva and Aukena.

Don't rely on the charts here but use your eyes! A chart inaccuracy seems to be around 23°07.90'S 134°55.46'W, where we navigated even closer to the reef to avoid a wrongly charted coral head as well as the many buoys. The buoys reach very close to the reef so you have to wiggle through at some places... A further complication's the fact that new buoys are set continuously (on the way back we wanted to follow our GPS track which had been blocked by a new set of buoys in the meantime...)

As soon as you've reached Aukena you can sail further up north hugging the coast closely. Take great care to navigate around the numerous coral heads along the shore of Aukena.

We stayed rather S and anchored at 23°07.962'S 134°55.027'W in good-holding sand. However, anchorages off the southern part of Aukena can be somewhat rolly. Better spots can be found further NE just above P.te Puirau.

The church of St. Raphael can be found in the southern part of Aukena. Antonio, who takes care of the church and its surrounding gardens, lives alone in the small house at the beach and always appreciates company. Whenever we came by he gave us dozens of Papayas.

Further NE, in the middle of the island, the house of Bernard and his family is nicely located behind the long beach. Bernard prefers when cruisers ask for permission prior to anchoring off his beach close to the house.

The northern part of Aukena is privately owned and visiting yachts are not welcome.

Irie – June 2013: Aukena is another beauty. Anchoring is possible in different areas along the south western shore, but not in front of the village at the North. Depending on the incoming swell, one might want to move more to the north, in front of a long beach. Watch the coral heads. There are easy trails to the southern point of the island and all throughout the forest to some ruins and a nice beach. Snorkeling on the SE side of the island, protected by reefs, is amazing. Antonio, who takes care of the church grounds is a good source for info on the trails and is generous with his fruit. He doesn't drink or smoke, but he likes baked goods! There is also a trail to the top of the mountain range, with a spectacular view. To find the trail, look for Bernard along the beach or bushwhack your way up like we did (not recommended).

Twelfth Night (May 2004): We took our dinghy and explored the outer islands and found them lovely, with good shelling and serene beaches. On nearby Aukena, we found excellent snorkeling on the southern tip of the island. Some cruising boats have anchored off Aukena, but the bottom is marginal sand over coral hard pan, and the holding is at best fair and often poor in quality.

We recommend you visit the island by dinghy. There are several reasons for doing this; best among them is that pearl farming has strewn the path across the bay with many, many hazards. Submerged lines and buoys lay beneath the surface waiting for your running gear. Some of the submerged lines run for 1,000 feet or more. It is nearly impossible to cross the bay without a good eye on the bowsprit, watching for hazards.

5.5.5 Akamaru

Pitufa – March 2015: To navigate into the inner lagoon N of Akamaru, your boat must draw less than 1.4m (clearly we did not go there). Best to ask other cruisers who have been around the islands for a while for the way in.

We anchored about 0.5nm N of the small island Mekiro in the still deeper basin at 23°09.993'S 134°55.237'W. The charts are not much use here and coral heads are numerous. We used fenders to float our chain.

On days with little southerly swell (<1.5m according to meteo.pf, i.e., 'fr.poly' from saildocs.com) anchoring is also possible west of the gap between Mekiro and Akamaru. We anchored on a sandy patch around 23°10.77'S 134°55.45'W in less than 10m.

Akamaru features a pretty church, manicured houses and gardens and a handful of friendly people. It's almost too kitschy-perfect to be real

Irie – June 2013: Akamaru has a mooring ball in the deeper water north of the island, which the locals do not recommend. Vessels with a deeper draft can anchor in front of the mooring ball. Shallow draft sailboats can weave their way through dense patches of reef (call Bertrand on VHF #77, he speaks some English, to guide you in) into a beautiful anchorage that is 4-6 feet in depth. Some swell rolls in, over the reefs, at high tide. We anchored there during extreme tides and it was pretty uncomfortable, even on our cat, so we only stayed one night! The little village and church are worth a visit, people are friendly and Bertrand, who lives in a houseboat, is a great guy to get to know. He sells good quality pearls that are affordable.

Once anchored, we explored a small beach and jumped ashore near "the village", where about eight houses are spread out and three or four families live full-time. The church was charming and pretty and the grounds around it, once again, very well-kept. We hung out with a couple of friendly and healthy dogs and met a local family. My French is getting better! After a stroll

through the neighborhood, we stopped at Bertrand's houseboat on the way back to Irie and had a chat with his family. His daughters are in school in Rikitea where they learn to carve pearls and shells. The designs and the work are amazing, but unfortunately, only one of the shells was finished and it was not for sale.

Unbeknownst to us, it was already 5:30pm and extreme low tide. While the sun set, we saw 4.2 feet on our depth meter. Irie has a draft of 3.5 feet. We had never been anchored in water as shallow as this and normally would not be too worried, being anchored in good holding sand, but around us were a few small coral heads. Usually those are not a problem either, unless you have less than a foot under the keels and some of these corals are over a foot high... It was too late to move, so we hoped the wind wouldn't shift too much at night, which it was not supposed to do, but you really never know around here. We didn't sleep too well and heard grinding sounds during the night. Luckily, it was only our anchor chain rubbing over some coral pieces on the bottom.

As is always the case, the tide rose and around midnight it was very high. The higher than normal waves crashed over the reefs that usually protect this anchorage, and the big swell made its way into our anchorage. For about four hours, Irie bounced back and forth, left and right (here we were, in a washing machine again, at anchor!), preventing any sleep.

The following morning, we climbed the small island neighboring Akamaru and reached the cross on the top for a beautiful view. We had to hurry back, because the tide was rising again and our dinghy did not have a lot of room, where we pulled it up. I already got swamped on the way in, trying to keep the dinghy, and Mark, from flipping over or running into the rocks. On hands and feet, we slid back down the steep hill, using clumps of grass and mostly trustworthy rocks to slow us down. Back at the water's edge, we timed it right, launched the dinghy into the swirling water, jumped in, grabbed the oars (peddles) and propelled ourselves into deeper and safer water, before starting the outboard engine. A dry escape, this time!

Back on Irie, she was rockin' and rollin' again. The protection from the heavy winds was OK, but the boat movements were very annoying, for almost half of the day. During low tide, it was dead calm, but then we had other worries.

After some discussion, worrying about another night of little sleep, Mark and I decided to use the relatively clear skies to move again to a better anchorage.

5.5.6 Other Motus

Pitufa – March 2015: The approach of **Tauna** to the east is relatively straightforward and several nice anchoring spots can be found in well-holding sand with good protection in easterly winds.

UPDATE 2015: the long and magical sandbank that used to extend Tauna to the S has fallen victim to a storm and disappeared. This used to be a popular launching spot for kite surfers.

Tekava, 1 nm south of Tauna, has a sandy spot around 23°09.785'S 134°51.29'W. We anchored there only for a quick daytime visit as it was too roly to stay overnight. It might be okay there in calm conditions without much southerly swell.

The lesser visited **Motu Kouaku** lies in the SE of the archipelago. Several isolated, shallow reefs lie in the approach from the N, the approach from the W (or SW) is easier. Anchoring is somewhat demanding because of the many coral heads. Most of them are deep enough and surrounded by good-holding sand, but the anchoring maneuver requires careful planning to

protect the corals. Since the barrier reef is mostly submerged in the S, incoming swell may make this anchorage uncomfortable.

For the first time there we anchored at around 23°12.462'S 134°51.803'W in 11m with a stern anchor to keep us aligned to the impressive incoming swell (according to meteo.pf 2-2.5m from the SW) and the chain away from the coral heads.

Now we prefer to anchor on the sufficiently large sandy patch at 23°12.409'S 134°51.446'W in 7m depth.

For the infrequent periods of W-NW winds (or in dead calms of course), **visiting Motu Tenoko** just N of the NW pass is a nice alternative. The approach from the S is straightforward and a good anchorage can be found on the large sandy area S of the motu at 23°04.649'S 135°00.751'W in 4-5m depth.

We can recommend snorkeling right SW of the anchorage along the many narrow sandy channels through healthy coral, clear water and plenty of fish

6 Appendix A – French Weather Terms

I copied this from somewhere online (sorry, don't remember where). **All cruisers headed for French-speaking locations should purchase [French for Cruisers](#) before they leave!!**

est stableis stable
remonteis rising
	...baisse./...chute	...is dropping/....is falling
	A ... heures Temps Universal (TU)	At ... Universal Time
	a la fin	at the end
	ailleurs	elsewhere
les	alizes	trade winds
l'	amelioration	improvement
l'	anticyclone(A)	high (H)
	au debut	at the beginning
l'	averse	showers
	Avez-vous la (previson) meteo?	Do you have the weather forecast?
l'	avis	warning
les	bancs de brouillards cotiers	coastal fog banks
le	barometre	barometer
	bientot	soon
la	brise de mer	sea breeze
la	brise de terre	land breeze
la	brouillard	fog
la	bruine	drizzle
la	brume	fog
le	Bulletin cote	coastal forecast
le	Bulletin grand large	high seas forecast
le	Bulletin large	offshore forecast
le	bulletin meteo	weather report
le	Bulletin meteorologique Special (BMS)	Special Weather Bulletin
la	carte meteo (-rologique)	weather map
	ce soir	this evening
	centre	center
	cet apres-midi	this afternoon

	cette nuit	tonight
le	ciel	sky
	clair	clear
	couvert	overcast
le	creux	trough
le	CROSS	CROSS(broadcasts weather)
le	cyclone tropical	tropical cyclone
	dans le nord	in the North
	dans le quadrant sud-est	in the southeastern quadrant
	dans un rayon de 20 mn autour du	within a 20 nm radius of
	degage	clear
le	degre	degree
le	deplacement	movement
la	depression(D)	low(L)
	devenant	becoming
le	diametre de l'oeil	diameter of the eye
la	dorsale	ridge
l'	echelle de Beaufort(B)	Beaufort scale
	eclaircie	sunny period
les	eclairs	lightning
	en cours	in progress
	en journee	during the day
	ensoleille	sunny
	epars	scattered
	est	East
	et au sud du 21 nord	and South of 21 North
la	force	force
la	foudre	lightning that strikes something
	fraichissant	freshening
	front chaud	warm front
	front froid	cold front
le	grain	squall
la	grele	hail

les hectopascals(hpa) millibars
 heure locale local time

l' humidite relative relative humidity
 Il fait un temps de chien The weather is awful.
 Il pleut It is raining
 Il y a une alerte cyclonique There is a hurricane warning
 isole isolated
 La mer est agitee moderate Force 4 1.25 – 2.5 m
 La mer est belle smooth Force 2 0.1 – 0.5 m
 La mer est calme Calm – glassy Force 0 0 m
 La mer est enorme phenomenal Force 9 (>) 14 m
 La mer est forte rough Force 5 2.5 – 4 m
 La mer est grosse high Force 7 6 – 9 m
 La mer est peu agitee slight Force 3 – 5 0.5 – 1.25 m
 La mer est ridee Calm – rippled Force 1 0 - 0.1 m
 La mer est tresse grosse very high Force 8 9 – 14 m
 La mer est tres forte very rough Force 6 4 – 6 m
 la nuit at night
 le long du 20 ouest Along 20 west
 Le vent va fraichir. The wind is supposed to increase.

la ligne de grains squall line
 localement locally
 matin morning

les millibars millibars
 moderer moderate
 mollissant moderating

la neige snow

les noeuds (nd) nuh knots (kts)
 nord North
 Nord-est Northeast
 Nort-ouest Northwest

les nuages clouds
 nuageux cloudy

occasionnel occasional
 On attend une grosse houle d'ouest vendredi There is supposed to be a large swell from
 the west on Friday
 On s'attend à avoir des grains We're supposed to get squalls.
 On va avoir du mauvais temps We're going to have bad weather
 l' onde tropicale tropical wave
 l' orage thunderstorm
 orageux stormy
 ouest West
 parfois sometimes
 la perturbation disturbance
 la pluie rain
 plus tard later
 la position position
 la position prévue forecast position
 la pression atmosphérique atmospheric pressure
 la prévision météo or just (météo) weather forecast
 prévu forecast
 prochain next
 Quel beau temps ! What nice weather
 la rafale gust
 revenant backing
 s'atténuant dissipating
 s'atténuant dissipating
 s'étendant jusqu'à 180 mn extending up to 180 ns
 s'orientant turning to
 se comblant filling
 se décalant vers moving forward
 se dissipant dissipating
 se dreusant deepening
 se renforçant ...lentement strengthening ...slowly
 le secteur sector
 la service de météo weather service, met office

la situation general synopsis
 stationnaire stationary
 sud South
 Sud-est Southeast
 Sud-ouest Southwest
 suivant following
 sur l'extreme nord-est in the extreme Northeast
 la temperature temperature
 la tempete storm
 la tempete tropicale tropical storm
 temporaire temporarily
 le temps weather
 le temps a grains squally weather
 la tendance ulterieure outlook
 le thalwegtrough
 le tonnerre thunder
 la trajectoire du cyclons track,hurricane
 la trombe waterspout
 valable a partir du valid beginning
 valable jusqu'au valid until
 variablevariable
 variable depressionnaire variable in depression
 venant becoming
 le vent wind
 vent - fort coup de vent strong gale Force 9 41 – 47 kts
 vent - bonne brise fresh breeze Force 5 17 – 21 kts
 vent - calme calm Force 0 0 – 1 kts
 vent - coup de vent gale Force 8 34 – 40 kts
 vent - grand frais near gale Force 7 28 – 33 kts
 vent - jolie brise moderate breeze Force 4 11 – 16 kts
 vent - legere brise light breeze Force 2 4 – 6 kts
 vent - ouragan hurricane Force 12 64(+) kts
 vent - petite brise gentle breeze Force 3 – 5 7 – 10 kts

vent - tempete storm Force 10 48 – 55 kts
vent - tres legere brise light air Force 1 1 – 3 kts
vent - vent fraise strong breeze Force 6 22 – 27 kts
vent - violente tempete violent storm Force 11 56 – 63 kts
vent assez fort fairly strong wind Force 6 22 – 27 kts
vent dominant prevailing wind

virant veering

visibilite visibility

visibilite mauvaise poor visibility

visibilite bonne good visibility

visibilite entre 2 et 5 milles marins Between 2 & 5 nm

Visibilite inferieure de 2 milles marins less than 2 nm

visibilite superieure a 5 milles marins greater than 5 nm

la vitesse speed

la zoine de hautes pressions high pressure area

la zone zone

la zone de basses pressions low pressure area