



3. Philippines 2018

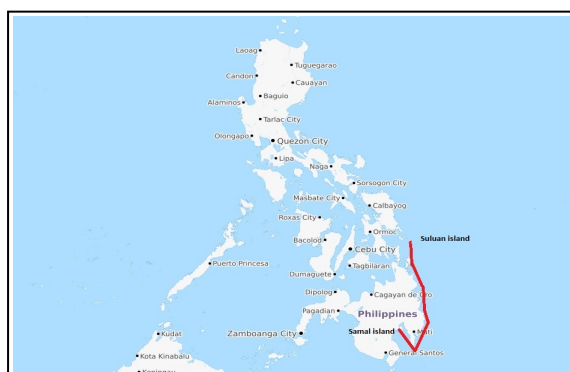


by Johan Kjellander 2018



After three weeks on Guam it was time to continue our long journey across the Pacific. The end of this years sailing season was approaching and we wanted to reach the Philippines and leave the boat there to enjoy summer in Scandinavia. As usual, I contacted several different marinas but only found one that would let us leave the boat on land for a longer period and that was Holiday Ocean View Marina on Samal Island near the city of Davao in the southern Philippines.

To take advantage of the North-easterly trade and avoid the risk of getting trapped in the doldrums south of us we chose not to sail straight on to the south of the Philippines. Instead we aimed for Suluan Island in the entrance to the Surigao strait, 1100 NM from Guam.



From Suluan Island we followed the coast of Mindanao south, with stops in Daco Island, Dapa, Cagwait, Bislig, Barcelona, Manay Bay, Pujada Bay and Kanikian Point before we reached Samal island. About 300 NM mostly motoring. We had now sailed 6100 NM since we left Tahiti in November 2017 and more than 20.000 NM since we left Sweden in 2011. More than half way around the world and on our way home again. A strange feeling.



In spite of the many miles we have sailed, Bird of Passage is still in relatively good condition. Our main area of concern is the running rigging. The forces that can act on various lines are considerable. The picture above shows some of the rigging details that have broken and must be replaced. Until next season we will also have to replace our main halyard, our preventer lines and our jib sheets. Quite normal I think. This year we also replaced the macerator pump on one of our toilets. The original Johnson pump gave up and instead I mounted a pump from Jabsco. You can see the difference above. The Jabsco pump is bigger and in my opinion more effective and much more reliable.



We arrived to Suluan Island early in the morning and the first thing we saw as the sun came up was a number of strange looking boats anchored along the shore. They looked like big spiders with long legs sticking out on both sides. We now know that they are called *bangka's* and are common all over Southeast Asia.



They normally have two outriggers and most of them have engines. Quite different from Polynesia and Micronesia where canoes only have one

outrigger and no engine.



They come in many sizes and are used for fishing or transportation.



When you come to a new country on a private boat, you are not supposed to move around ashore without first checking in with Customs and Immigration. Suluan Island did not have any office for Customs or Immigration so after a days rest at anchor we continued to Dapa on Siargao Island where we had heard that it was possible to check in. This showed not to be true but at least we were now ashore for the first time and found that even the Phillipine motorcycles had outriggers.



There were not many cars but lots and lots of motorcycles of many different types.



Most common taxi was a motorcycle with sidecar. The Philippines call them Tricycles.



The old type manual Rickshaw taxi seemed to be outdated.



We also noted that we were once again in a country with stray dogs running around. This one had found a coconut for supper.



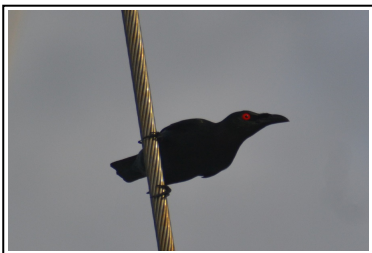
We had fairly good winds all the way from Guam to the Philippines but now we were heading south and into the doldrums where there is often very little wind. We had to motor almost all the way from Dapa to Holiday Ocean View Marina on Samal Island. To save fuel I often turn one of the engines off and bring the speed down to about 4 knots and if there is any wind at all I also try to have the sails up and motorsail. Proceeding slowly and only sailing during daylight takes time but you get to see a lot. After two weeks we arrived to Samal Island.



Before we left Guam I had been in contact with Sherry McCampbell on a catamaran named Soggy Paws. Sherry and her husband Dave had been in the marina on Samal Island several times and were now there again preparing their boat for the coming season. They have spent a long time together sailing in the Pacific and Sherry is well known in the sailing community for her website Soggy Paws where she publishes compendiums covering different parts of the Pacific with very useful information for cruisers.

In the marina we also met Terry Sargent, now retired from sailing but living in his boat Valhalla. Terry has spent 40 years sailing in the Pacific. On his website about Valhalla you can find lots of useful information about electronic navigation and also download charts, routes and anchorages that he has prepared.

Sailing in South East Asia is more complicated than many other places in the world. There are no good cruising pilots, charts are not always reliable, local fishing boats and fishing devices can show up anywhere and the bureaucracy is extensive. Fortunately enough people like Sherry McCampbell and Terry Sargent make cruising in South East Asia much easier.



We now saw the Asian glossy starling (Sv:Orientstare, Lat:Aplonis panayensis) for the first time. Beautiful black bird with with bright red eyes. Another beautiful little bird is the Forest Kingfisher (Sv:Skogskungsfiskare, Lat:Todiramphus macleayii) with a shiny blue back. The Mangrove heron (Sv:Mangrovehäger, Lat:Butorides striata) is not as colorful but funny to watch as it serches for food along the waterline. I took all these three pictures within only a few minutes from our boat in the marina.



There are many species of very fine hardwood in Asia but they are usually very expensive. A new type of wood, which is cheaper, is the Cocowood where planks are cut from the trunk of a coconut palm. This wood can replace more expensive wood in many applications but is less weather resistant.



So, after a couple of weeks in the marina it was time to haul out. There are many ways to get a boat out of the water but the method they used here was new to me. A cradle with wheels is pushed down a ramp by an excavator at high water. The boat is placed on the cradle and then you wait for the water to go down.



Finally, when the boat sits steady on the cradle the excavator pulls her up using a long steel wire with blocks to increase pulling power. A slow method using simple technology. Quite noisy as the excavator on its steel bands crawled around on the boat yard.



The last days in the marina were very hot so when we were offered to buy a second hand air conditioner by a fellow cruiser we said yes. The price was very reasonable and the result was better than I expected. I mounted the unit in the opening of a hatch in our mid cabin. The cold air slowly spreads out to the rest of the boat and thanks to the fact that the boat is well insulated the temperature inside is easy to keep at a comfortable level.

This was the end of our sailing season 2017-18. We will now spend some time working with our new house in Aland but we will be back later this year to continue our voyage around the world.



End of Philippines 2018

