



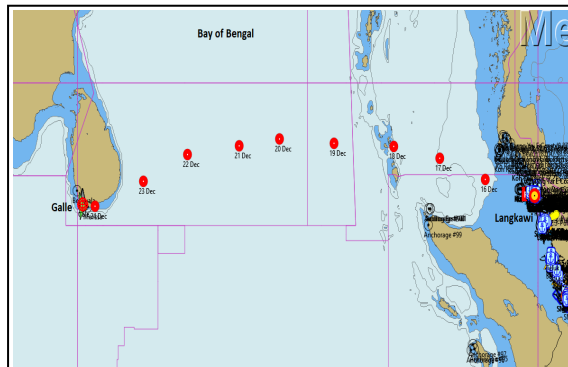
1. Sri-Lanka 2020



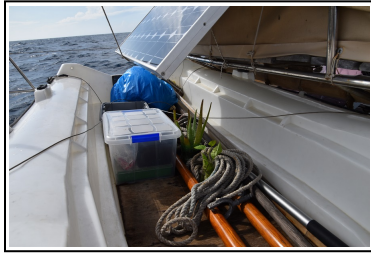
by Johan Kjellander 2020



By the end of December 2019 we were ready to leave Langkawi in Malaysia. I had mounted the new mixing elbow for the starboard engine and everything else was in order. We checked out and filled our tanks. The original plan was to sail to Port Blair in the Andman Islands but that plan had to be changed because the authorities in Port Blair did not accept our Indian E-Visa. This was a surprise to me and not in conformance with information I recieved earlier. So, we decided to skip the Andamans and make a stop in Sri-Lanka instead.



Checking the wind forecasts for the bay of Bengal showed better winds if we followed a slight northerly route. Still we had to motorsail a lot and used almost 200 liters of diesel to keep the daily distances up. We averaged about 130 NM per day so it took us 9 days to do 1220 NM from Langkawi in Malaysia to Galle in Sri-Lanka. We arrived to Galle before dark on the 24:th of December.



As always on a long crossing you have plenty of time for different activities. Andrei likes to fish and caught two nice tunas of more than 10 kilo each. While pulling in his fishing line he discovered another line hanging after the boat. We pulled that in and it showed to be the end of a big chunk of ropes and floats and other junk that was caught in one of our propellers. It took us at least an hour to get rid of it and we saved what we could in a plastic bag on board to dispose when we arrived to Galle. See the right picture above.



Sundowns at sea are always exciting. Will there be a green flash or will something else happen? This time a big rat came out of the dark.



As we approached Galle we passed Dondra Head Lighthouse. The south tip of Sri-Lanka.



Galle harbour lies inside a naval base. It took us almost a day to get clearance with all the authorities before we were tied up and free to move on land. Another day to get water and electricity and everything has to be handled through an agent. Very old fashion you might think, but with the recent history of civil war and terrorist attacks it is understandable that security is a big issue.



The harbour is well protected and we were offered a berth alongside a concrete quay next to a small park with trees, flowers and a lots of wildlife. There were many colorful Kingfishers (Sv:Kungsfiskare) and also many Red-wattled lapwings (Sv:Rödflikvipa, Lat:Vanellus indicus).

There were also Dogs, Lizards, Doves, White Herons, Crows, Mynjas, Squirrels and Mosquitos.



Close to the harbour lies Shahana Beach, used by local fishermen with traditional long and narrow outrigger fishing boats with only one pontoon. Many of these old wooden boats were covered with glassfibre and polyester.



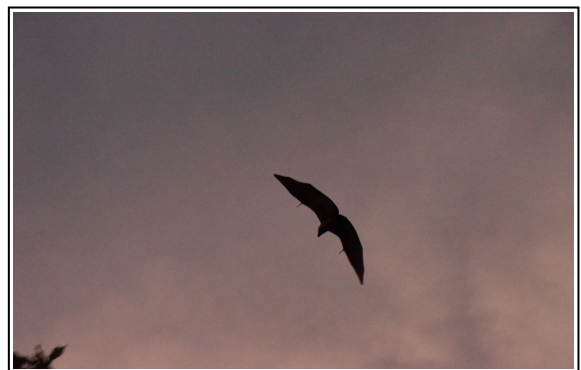
On the south side of the beach is the Peace Pagoda. Built by Japanese Buddhist monks. A beautiful landmark.



The north side of the beach, close to the harbour is used for surfing. Mostly young westerners. A real tourist ghetto with many bars and restaurants.



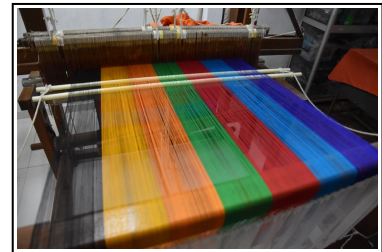
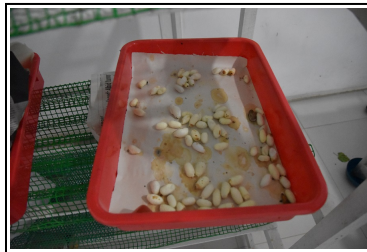
And also other attractions. This salesman had a snake around his neck and a monkey as his companion.



As night comes, flying foxes show up. Some of the trees along the beach seem to have fruits these bats like to eat.



Further south, Habaraduwa beach is used by turtles for laying eggs. Local people pick the eggs for eating but some eggs are preserved by a turtle hatchery to help the turtles survive.



We also visited a silk factory. Interesting to learn about how they grow silkworms and carefully unwind the thin thread from the cocoons.



Sri-Lanka (former Ceylon) is perhaps most famous for its tea. We visited a tea plantation and saw the plants grow and learned about the process. The tea plant is like a bush, about one meter high. To give them shadow and protect them from too strong sunlight, small trees are grown among the tea plants. From the tea plant you pick the fresh young light green leaves.



After picking, the leaves are dried and then grinded.



Grinding and sorting uses various machines including a machine that can sort by color.



The result is a number of fractions of different size and color. The final product is then created by mixing fractions from different kinds of plants.



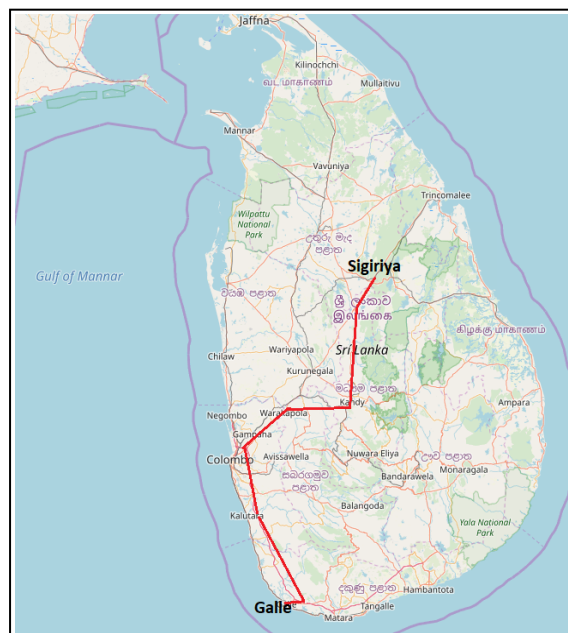
The tea plantation we visited claims to produce the worlds most famous (and expensive) tea, the "Virgin White Tea", which is only served in a very exclusive tea salon in Paris. The price was said to be 1.500 USD/kg.



Another strategic product from the old colonial times is rubber. The method of production today seems not to have changed very much. The white milk, also called Latex, is collected from the rubber trees, rolled into sheets and cured. Then sold on an international market that sometimes still needs natural rubber. Most rubber today however is synthetic.



In the middle of the tea plantation we found a Termite nest. Strange that insects can build such large structures.



We now made a two day tour to the interior of Sri Lanka. First day we visited Sigiriya, an old historical site where kings lived on a high spectacular

formation called the Lions Rock.



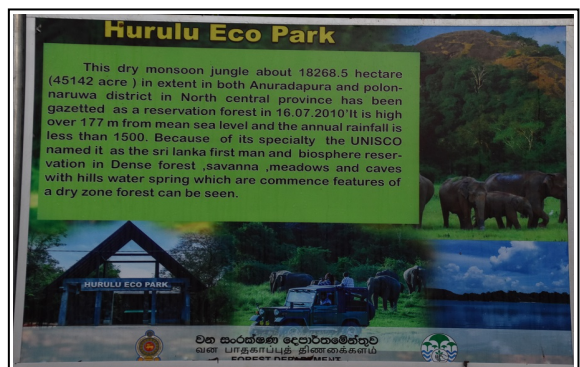
Lions Rock in Sigiriya.



The Lion Rock is surrounded by beautiful gardens and here we found a colony of Ceylonmacac's. This made us think about Angkor Wat which we visited a year ago in Cambodia.



We also saw many small Palm squirrels and even a number of the red nosed gigant squirrel.(Sv:Jättekorre)



The second day of our tour we started early in the morning for an elephant safari in Hurulu Eco Park, one of Sri-Lanka's big nature reserves.



The morning mist had not yet completely vanished. The view over the landscape was truly magic and here we would see wild elephants. No fences, no feeding.



We spotted the first elephants after about an hour. Our driver took us quite close without frightening them. It was a family of five. Two adult females, two "babies" and one "teenager".



We now learned about tusks and the difference between African and Asian elephants. African elephants all have tusks, male and female. Asian females never have tusks and many of the males as well.



An hour later we found another group of elephants and on our way back we also found a Peacock sitting in a tree. Animals that we had only seen in cages before. These were the real, live ones and that felt nice.



On our way back to Galle our driver wanted to show us the "Golden Temple" in Dambulla. A very nice Buddhist temple with an interesting museum.

On the morning of the 8:th of January we checked out from Galle. Next port would be Cochin in India, 325 NM north west. You can read about that in the next Log Book.



End of Sri-Lanka 2020

