

Tondelayo's Voyage

Rarotonga, Beveridge Reef, and Niue - The Road to Tonga

July 9 - July 23, 2003

Jul 9 - Sailing to Rarotonga. 535nm, 225deg m. The first three days were beautiful sailing. We were running 120-130 mile days. Then on the third night, the wind started to veer north. We went through a little squall line and then the wind veered again to the NW and was stronger. So, we started close reaching and heading into it a bit. By daylight we were close hauled, with wind out of the west, being pushed south or our course. At daylight, we were only 68 miles from Avatiu Harbor. The wind continued through the day to build up and eventually we had all the reefs in and the storm jib up front and were pounding into it, tacking every few hours. Since the wind was slowly veering ahead of us, we were usually heading straight into the wind chop from the previous hours. We did finally get in on the afternoon of the 5th day. The last 68 miles took 34 hours!!! Ouch. We were very glad to drop the hook and get a nice meal ashore. We found Portafino's and ate a pizza and pasta as well. Oh, we did catch 2 nice bonito along the way, 1 was 12lb, and the other about 20lb.

 tangaroa_t.jpg (22315 bytes)

Jul 15 Some friends, Eric and Lisa on Hoonah, arrived and were glad to get out of the weather! Officially checked in with the Harbormaster, John, and ran around doing errands. Amazing how quick things you can get things done when you speak the language. Got all the stuff on my 'to do' list complete. I think the highlight was the massive pile of laundry the we had done for very cheap. Had the couple from Hoonah over for dinner, I made tuna steaks and some pasta. Food was good, but a bit bland for my taste.

Left: Tangaroa – the chief God of the Cook Islands

- Jul 16 Nothing really. Oh, Collin on Manu Tara arrived along with a German singlehander, Manfred.
- Jul 17 Moved boat over to the quay on the other side of the harbor. The swells were rolling into the anchorage section of the harbor. That night we went to the movies!!!! We saw the new Matrix for a couple bucks. Awesome.
- Jul 18 Tried to do a few things on the boat like cleaning, but the boat was pitching so much that everything was difficult. That night we went Trader Jack's with Collin, Eric and Lisa. Had excellent food, beer, and dessert, for a reasonable price. The local ale here is pretty good, and they actually use hops, unlike everywhere else I have been to in the last few years.
- July 19 Another play day. Collin and I went on a bike ride around the island. Stopped several times for refreshments while dodging rain showers. The other guys went on the cross island hike and up to the "Needle."
- July 20 Major work day. Took about half the stuff in the boat and hosed things down, painted, sealed up leaks, etc. By the end of the day we were quite tired. Had a few beers at Trader Jacks with Collin and went to bed. The harbor was finally settling down as the wind was backing to east from where it should be.
- Jul 21 Another killer hike. Went up Te Manga (653m) the tallest mountain on the island. Pretty cool hike that was well maintained with lots of ropes to help. Had a dog which followed us all the way to the top,

so we named her Summit. Unfortunately, the view from the top was not too exciting since it was cloud covered. Did not get back until well after dark.

- Jul 22 Work Work Work. Lots of stuff again today. Finally got to replace the engine mount bolts with proper hardened ones. Also a few other tidbits on the engine and also getting ready to leave.
- Jul 23 - Heading out of Rarotonga. Heading for Palmerston Atoll, first about 80 miles out of the way to Niue. Making good time, over 135 mile days in brisk winds with choppy seas. Lots of spray and green water coming aboard. Found 2 more new leaks. Got to about 20 miles south of Palmerston just as the wind was veering North making getting there difficult. The anchorage is also exposed in this direction, so we decided not to beat into it and instead headed WSW to Beveridge Reef. The wind continued to veer west and then south, so we ended up beating into it the whole way. In the wee hours of the 5th day, the wind died and we started running the motor. After about 8 hours, I heard a strange sound and quickly discovered a pretty big exhaust leak in the elbow where the cooling water gets injected into the exhaust. So we shut the motor down and started sailing again. Luckily, the sea had gotten pretty flat by this point, so the sailing was slow, but not too bad. Ran the pass into the Reef under sail in light wind, but turned on the motor for a minute right in the middle to make sure we could get through the current. Sailed across the lagoon in brilliantly clear water, 30 feet deep. Anchored under sail. Went about cleaning up the boat, and then out for a snorkel. I would estimate visibility to be in the 120 to 150 foot range, definitely the clearest water I have ever snorkeled in. Saw good sized white and black tipped sharks.



Sunset at Beveridge Reef

- Jul 29 Started the day working. Got the exhaust elbow off and found a hole in the elbow about 1 inch by 2 inches. Repaired with epoxy putty and a couple of hose clamps. Should get us to Tonga at least if we have good wind. Also fixed the 2 new leaks and rebedded one of the portlights which I suspect has been leaking a little since I put it in. Went snorkeling near the reef edge and found a lot of pretty cool coral formations and more unusual fish I had not seen before. I also shot 3 soldierfish for a lunch of fish and ramen noodles. Pretty good, and we did not get any ciguatera! Made some pretty damn good pizza for dinner.

- Jul 30 Tested out the exhaust repair, and everything seemed fine, so headed to the other side of the lagoon for some access to better snorkeling. Snorkeling was pretty good. More brilliantly clear water, tons of fish, coral, clams, etc. Probably the most biologically diverse snorkeling I've seen anywhere. Without much human access or traffic, the reef has a fairly untouched ecosystem, so the number of species is excellent. Saw a nice gray reef shark on the way back, about 6 feet.
- Jul 31 Headed out for Niue. Had to motor for quite a while so I got a good test for the exhaust repair. We ended not sailing until about daybreak the next day. Arrived at Alofi, on the west side of Niue in the afternoon and were met by the customs and quarantine officials at the boat. They were very nice young fellows, who obviously enjoyed their job of viewing yachts, chatting up yachties, and filling out a few forms.
- Aug 1 As yet another low pressure system comes our way, the wind again veered westward and made the anchorage uncomfortable, and venturing ashore became interesting. The crew and I along with Collin, and Eric headed to shore again for some fish and chips, followed by a trip to the local bar. The bar was definitely the sparsest I've ever seen. A big warehouse with 1 pool table, a small bar in the corner with a mini fridge with some beers, and just a few of the more inebriated but friendly locals. After a painful game of pool between all the cruisers, we went to the night club, which was actually pretty busy and filled

with young Niueans. After a few more Stienlagers, we headed back to the ever rolly anchorage and the boat.

Aug 2 More Crappy weather, with rain as well today. Nothing going on in town so we hung out on the boat reading.

Aug 3 Monday, still raining off and on, but we decided to go for a bike ride anyway, and explore a bit of the scenery. Niue is a raised atoll, which means after millennia of growing and dying coral built up the island, it was thrust upward about 100 feet or so. this means the island is flat on top, with steep cliffs all around the coast. There are no beaches, but there are numerous caves and chasms. We went up the north coast to look at a few. Pretty cool stuff as you can see from the pics. Naturally it poured pretty good on the way back, but we were able to hide out for a while in a little fishing lodge type restaurant, and bar.



[canoe_t.jpg \(28001 bytes\)](#)

[cave_t.jpg \(17596 bytes\)](#)

Left to Right: An Arch through an Arch, Traditional Mahogany Canoe, Andrew next to a column

Aug 4 Checked out for Tonga. Were planning to leave the next day, but the wind was so nice we decided to head out that afternoon. 240nm to go, so we should arrive 2 days later in the afternoon.

Next [Tonga - Bars, Boats, and Beautiful Anchorages](#). Lots of R and R and just a bit of work as well.