

# THE MAREP “WEATHER REPORT”

## Unexpected Conditions

### 01-10-18

Last time I was talking about how wind and tides can work with or against each other to produce conditions which are somewhat different from what you might have expected. In early September Gay and I experienced this situation in that lively stretch of water from Atkinson to Roger Curtis. We were trying for a few days in Desolation, but had been held up by a persistent strong northwesterly wind. Finally it abated and backed around to moderate southeasterly (admittedly in advance of yet another front due in 36 hours), with a promise of a window of more friendly seas.

A moderate southeasterly wind at the mouth of Howe Sound presumably does not have enough fetch to create tough seas. However, what we found was that this wind had enough power to dramatically shorten and steepen the heavy swell left over from the northwesterlies -- also carried along with an ebb tide. The result was a very nasty short period six to seven foot sea which was no fun at all. Thinking that this might abate away from the turbulent conditions around the entry to Howe Sound, we rounded the north side of Bowen and tried again at Gibsons – only to find the conditions worse as the southeasterly picked up fetch.

We spent three great and very quiet days in Centre Bay on Gambier, after retrieving the flotsam and jetsam all over the cabin, from the hammering we had received. Interesting experience, which I passed along and the commercial operators also warned each other about on Channels 68 and 69. Another good reason to have a scanner on your VHF.

Incidentally, Environment Canada has a new all-encompassing web address for its services, including Marine Weather. It is:

[http://www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/natmarine/index\\_e.html](http://www.weatheroffice.ec.gc.ca/natmarine/index_e.html)

Besides all the usual forecasts and buoy reports you can now obtain Radar, Satellite, weather maps (current and forecast), and weather model forecasts from the menu bars.

### DID YOU KNOW...

## TIPS FROM THE MARINE WEATHER HAZARDS GUIDE

### ENVIRONMENT CANADA

(thoughts for this winter)

“**Strong winds.** Outflow winds in Howe Sound [and to a lesser degree Indian Arm] with speeds up to 40 knots – the “Squamish” – occur in winter. Wind speeds generally increase from Squamish to the mouth of the Inlet and then spread out in a jet over the Strait of Georgia. Pam Rocks is a good indicator of Squamish winds, but Point Atkinson is not, due to sheltering.”

“**Steep waves.** Flood-tide currents set from Trincomali Channel through Porlier Pass into the Strait of Georgia at about 9 knots maximum speed. Northwest winds against this current creates steep, rough seas just outside Porlier Pass. Waves generated by easterly outflow winds from the Fraser Valley in winter, steepen on the flood currents, creating hazardous conditions for small vessels.”

Note that both of these conditions often accompany those bright clear winter days when a day cruise to warm up the boat seems to be a good plan. Be safe, check **ALL** the weather!

**P/Cdr John Northey, MAREP Officer**