

Migaloo Migration 2020

Another ocean race, and not too many errors – just one big one, that booted honk down the fleet big time. Let me check again. 39th, tsk, tsk.

Right... routing a WX every now and then before the start, two pretty radically different options kept coming up. To head more or less directly due north for Australia, or to head a good bit east of north for New Zealand – not the way that Migaloo would be wont to go, which should have been a hint. The more direct route north occurred slightly more frequently, which could have been a further hint. And finally and obviously, the direct, real life Migaloo route was substantially shorter, which ought to have been a final hint.

bonk took the hints and out of the blocks headed north. I think it was a beat to start with and fifi said take a short hitch north east to get further into the bend, then go about to curve gradually north on starboard tack. Sensibly, I felt, I ignored taking the hitch. Everything was looking good until, after several steady WXs, a new WX said head for New Zealand. Aner59 and RICOTINA, who I always pay close attention to, went. I'm sure others did too and so did I.

The situation was that there was a ginormous ridge lying across the ocean from the Australian to the New Zealand coast. It had been possible to avoid the worst of it by staying close (but not too close in) to the Australian coast. But that option had disappeared, which left the other option of going close (but not as close) to the South Island coast as the only alternative.

The huge blue bubble was moving about with no obvious trend (as bubbles often do, especially atop a compass), and slowly but surely, the track along the New Zealand coast got pushed ever further east, increasing the detour length, whilst along the Australian coast, there, where all had been blue, a narrow steak of warm yellow (wind!) started to establish itself, at which stage fifi said "90° turn, go to Australia".

One thing is sure, if you follow that sort of router advise, and that is that you will consolidate your loss. But what is not sure is that when you get to where is best, it will still be best. So, one sails on, especially if luminaries such as SimeMali, DIKKEHENK, SCARABOCCHIO, Exmeremotu and LimesInferior have all been working north east since the get-go and are further east and to the right of you. We all sailed on, buoyed by each others' convictions. On the other hand, most of the Aussies were closing on New South Wales. That too might have been a hint, if a late one.

But we were wrong, and RICOTINA, who pretty much alone made the painful decision to bail out, was right, crossing the finishing line many days later in 14th spot, seven places ahead of our primus inter pares, SimeMali, who together with his compatriot Leelu decided 'I'll be a sheep and not a lamb' and fairly banged the eastern corner to pick up more wind and overtake the rest of our eastern motly crü.

Lessons learned then, but still not sure which, although certainly salutary!

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