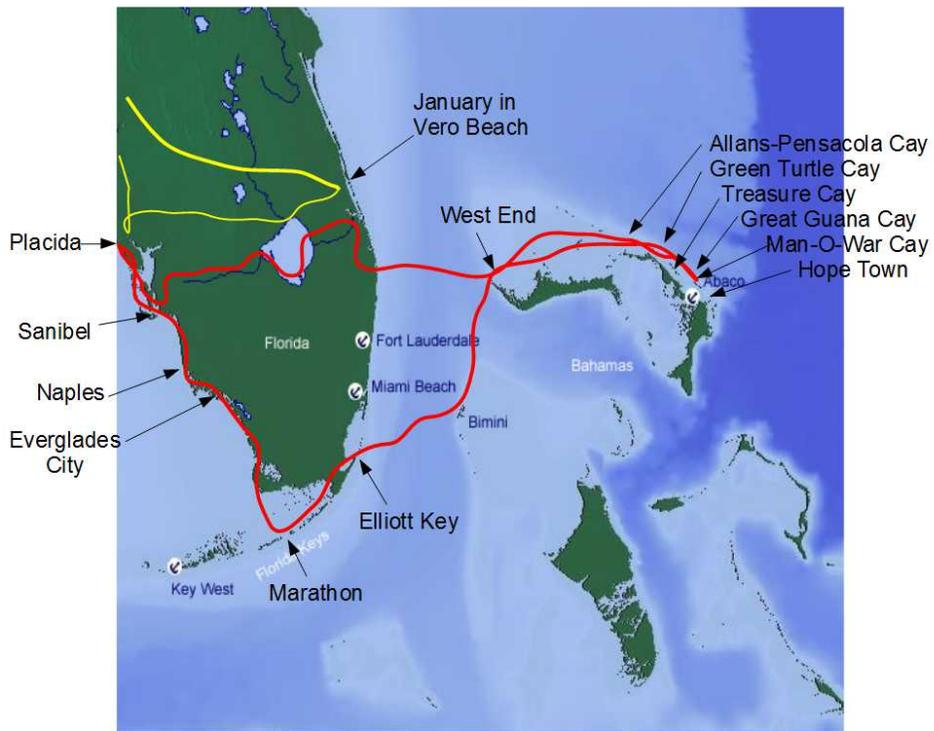


# Cruising Aboard Roam to Florida and The Bahamas Rich and Cheryll Odendahl – 2015



Here is our route.





After spending January in Vero Beach, Roam was trailered across the state and launched at Palm Island Marina in Placida for a Rendezvous with 18 Ranger Tugs in early February.



After the Rendezvous, we joined Mike and Jess Rizzo aboard Illusions for the balance of the trip. Here, we're cruising south past the Sanibel Island Light.



A curious manatee joined us in Everglades City.



After three weeks in Marathon, we found a weather window for crossing the Gulf Stream to the Bahamas. We departed the US on the morning of our crossing from a spot near Elliott Key. Nearby, this raft had been apparently abandoned by Cuban refugees. The hull is constructed of styrofoam blocks lashed together.



The weather was perfect, and we left for our 55-mile, 8-hour crossing to the Bahamas in the early morning. These piles mark the winding passage through the reef and out into the deep water.



We arrived in Bimini without incident, cleared customs and headed out to explore. This beach is near Bailey Town on North Bimini Island.



These are piles of discarded conch shells. A sharp knife is shoved into the shell to pry the conch out. The flesh has to be hammered with a meat tenderizer to make it palatable.



This is Mike and Jess aboard Illusions on the Sea of Abaco. The turquoise, clear water made us feel like we were cruising in a swimming pool.



We rented this golf cart for a day on Green Turtle Cay to explore the town of New Plymouth.



We found this starfish while snorkeling off Green Turtle Cay.



The four intrepid travelers are taking a break on the beach at Bluff House Resort, Green Turtle Cay.



The waters were generally quite calm. An exception was the three-mile Whale Passage in the Abacos. Illusions is following us here through the four-foot swell.



Nippers is a bar on Great Guana Cay that has been attracting yachtsmen for decades. Their deck has a fabulous view.



We spent two days in Hope Town on Elbow Cay waiting for a "cold front" to pass. Cheryll has spied a boutique and refuses to waste time posing when there is shopping to be done.



The Hope Town Lighthouse rises above two Bahamian cottages.



The view in the opposite direction from the lighthouse. Where's Waldo? Try to find Roam moored in the harbor crowded with much larger yachts. At 25 feet, Roam was the smallest boat cruising the Bahamas so far as we could tell. Illusions was tied for second smallest at 27 feet. Our regular insurance company refused to cover us for this trip unless Roam grew another foot and sprouted a second engine. We chose to take out a separate policy with a different company.



Roam behaved generally quite well, but our autopilot had a hydraulic issue and quit for a couple of days. Rich is happy to have it steering again after he and Mike were able to make repairs.



The beach at Treasure Cay has been voted the best beach in the entire Caribbean. The miles of sand were the texture of flour.



Waves breaking as we round “The Whale” during the return trip.



Roam is anchored here at Manjack Cay. Her Bahamian courtesy flag is snapping in the fresh breeze, but the protected, shallow water is relatively flat.



Tradition requires that visiting yachtsmen leave a token on this tree when visiting the uninhabited Allans-Pensacola Cay. Cheryll has contributed a cardinal-shaped clip and some Mardi Gras beads in tribute to her mother.



It's time to head back across the notorious Gulf Stream to Florida. We set ourselves up to be in position to depart on a day with a mild forecast. Departure was at 6:00 AM. This is Illusions following as the sun rises after an hour at sea.



Successful completion of our adventure calls for a fine celebratory dinner. We don't yet know where Roam will bring us next, so stay tuned at;  
<http://odendahls.com/roam/>

