

SEAMANSHIP



Though not prone to seasickness, Skip felt that 62 hours of Force 8 winds would start to exact a toll.

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Mistakes Come When Fatigue Starts to Affect Judgment

Fatigue, dehydration, and possible injury aboard a small boat in a gale is a very real concern and can eventually lead to poor decision-making, something I was well aware of and wanted to avoid.

During my 62 hours in Force 8 and greater, I tried to stay safe, rested, hydrated, and fed. Most of my time was spent belowdecks, where it was warm and relatively dry. Instant soup, oatmeal, crackers, dried fruit, gorp, and canned stew provided fuel. Earplugs came in handy as the constant whine of wind in the rigging caused apprehension and mental fatigue.

I also listened to music and AM radio at night, and maintained a twice daily communication schedule with my ham radio friend. I minimized expensive sat phone calls home, preferring to not worry relatives or run down the sat phone battery, in case its use became urgent. Reading was not possible due to the motion of the boat. I had considered seat belts across my sea berth to hold me in place, but wanted to be instantly ready to be vertical and ready to take action.

—S.A.