

Sun protection & safety before leaving



To be prepared for the tropics, the crew of Zeezwaluw decided to make a new large sun tent. Not only should the cockpit be covered but the whole area up to the mast. The material to use should not be too heavy due to the size of the cover, 6x5m.

By coincidence our neighbours Marjo & Edwin of "SY Orion" were using a sun cover of special fabric, normally used in agriculture. Theirs was made in the Netherlands. Luckily the same material was available at the shop where they sell Sunbrella we used for the bimini.

To get a bargain or large discount the two crews bought 24m of this material, good for 3 sun tents. 2 for the Orion (for and aft) and 1 for Zeezwaluw.

The first one for the Orion, was sowed in the cockpit of Zeezwaluw. It became a real struggle to handle the large piece of fabric in the narrow space.

As soon as the front sun cover for Orion was ready and up, Edwin organized a sewing atelier on the fore deck of the Orion.



The second cover, to protect the aft ship was produced underneath the new cover in the shade. The space and comfort at this place was great and within no time, the second tent was ready!

So, the Orion was covered from bow to stern and guesses what?

They were freezing....(a joke) but very happy.

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Two weeks later, Zeezwaluw's sun tent was also ready. Cover from bimini to the mast 6m long! It's a different design as the Orion's. To create a nice arched "roof" and to be able to mount the sun cover higher, the crew inserted 3 flexible plastic tubes.

It's amazing how it looks after this improvement while the amount of shade it provides is unbelievable! The sewing jobs are done now.

In the meantime while Ineke was sewing the sun tents at Orion's deck, Riens installed our new AIS system. It is a stand-alone piece of equipment so we are still able to sail without plotters or the continuous use of a computer.

However it is possible to connect it to the laptop to have an overlay over Open CPN digital charts. So safety has increased at Zeezwaluw and the crew hopes it will be easier to predict course and speed of the big commercial ships a bit earlier as in the past.

The other gain is, to call the big ships by name on the VHF if the crew have doubts about course to or distance passing by Zeezwaluw. All jobs are done, time to set sail!



Zeezwaluw will set sail on Friday June 6.

Finally they will leave Las Palmas after 1,5 years of working hard to get Zeezwaluw ship shape again.

The intention is to spend the summer months hopping along the south coast of Portugal and Spain. During these months the crew will use and test off all the new installed equipment as well as relax a bit. Due to the Northerly wind, sailing straight to Portugal or Spain, isn't possible at the moment.

Therefore the first stop will be Madeira, have a look around the island while the strong winds along the Portuguese coast will fade away. From Madeira it will be a piece of cake to sail to Portugal.

Where Zeezwaluw will make landfall is still a question so if interested, follow us through the AIS tracking system at the website of Marine Traffic and you know where Zeezwaluw hangs out.

