



## **Spring 2007 Whale Watching April 21**

This spring I was convinced by a few of my handier friends that I could de-winterize my skiff on my own rather than take it to a shop. With a bit of study, a lot of help, and some frustration I managed to pull it off, doing basic maintenance on the engines (greasing, spark plugs, changing gear oil), getting the battery ready, changing the fuel filter system, and changing a trailer tire (okay, one my friends actually executed that last one while I watched, but still). The result was a cheaper, much more satisfying job. So last Saturday Dru hauled my skiff to the North Douglas boat ramp and we took off with my new roommate Erik for a spring trial run. The engine started flawlessly and the day was fantastic. There's not much better than spring on the water (except perhaps for September)! A glassy ocean, blue sky, stunning white mountains...hardly a boat to be seen, it was just us, the ubiquitous sea lions, a seal or three, and lots of whales. There was a moment of excitement when I struck a gray PVC pipe (my first collision in the skiff), but thankfully the damage was minimal.

We made our way up Saginaw Channel and poked our nose through North Pass, but mostly we just shut down and drifted outside of Handtroller's Cove, listening to the growling of the sea lions on a distant buoy and the eight or so whales blowing around us. Adrift on the water, slowly getting sunburned, whales passed within 40 feet or so and one a little farther out lobtailed for awhile. I think there was a breach (or at least a caudal-peduncle throw) but we were all looking at another whale and only saw the splash.

It was good stuff. So, happy spring everybody! Can't wait to get to the homestead. Hope you enjoy the photos below.





