



Various vessels from sailboats to commercial fishing boats rely on the Ilwaco Boatyard to remain in operation each season.

they turned it into crab processing. The Ilwaco Boatyard is a godsend. This place is wonderful.”

Johnson has had his 48-foot vessel F/V Dove at the Ilwaco Boatyard for a few weeks, primarily to replace a worn-out propeller shaft.

“We pulled the back shaft and it was old and rusty because it was mild steel. The shafts we’re buying are all 2.5” stainless steel with new flanges,” he said.

The new shaft will allow the boat to operate more quietly with less vibration, an important consideration for tuna fishing.

“It should make a lot less noise going through the water, which doesn’t matter so much for salmon but with tuna noise is a big deal. If you can have a silent boat and troll tuna lures at 7 knots you can catch more fish. They come right up behind the boat sometimes.”

Still, tuna fishing can be especially elusive, Johnson explained.

“Tuna are way more frustrating than salmon for me. There will be thousands in one area the size of this boatyard just boiling, and sometimes they bite but sometimes they don’t.”

The F/V Dove was built by Sunnfjord Boats Inc. in Auburn in 1979. Johnson has owned the vessel for five years after purchasing it in Alaska.

“We spent two and a half years looking for this boat. The kid and I with two Labradors fish it all summer long.”

The vessel is powered by a 170-horsepower GMC Detroit Diesel Series 6-71 engine, widely produced from 1938 until 1997.

“They’re ubiquitous engines, they’re ancient and everywhere. They were designed as tank engines during WWII.”

Johnson also replaced several plastic parts with more durable brass fittings from Englund Marine. The brass part cost \$50 compared to the \$15 for plastic, he said.

“When your life depends on the boat, you don’t look at costs. We spend a fortune down here. We’re putting a lot of money into it. Every year we try to make the boat better.”



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