

John Deere helping deer

Drowning deer are pulled to safety aboard a John Deere-powered vessel



It's a rare event that a John Deere marine engine would assist in a rescue of wild deer, but that's exactly what happened at Taku Inlet, Alaska, this past fall.

Tom Satre and his family were cruising aboard the *Alaska Quest* when they spotted four black-tail deer swimming toward their 19-m (62 ft.) charter boat.

Were the deer lured to the smooth call of the PowerTech 6081AFM marine engine? Not likely. The cold and tired deer were about 2 km

(1.2 mi.) from shore and just minutes away from drowning, looking for a desperate escape from the frigid water.

"They swam right toward the boat," he said. "They were swimming in 2-ft. (60 cm) chop, unable to see over the waves. They were circling the boat and looking as if saying 'help us, help us.'"

Tom knew something had to be done and did some fast thinking to get them onboard. "I formed a lasso with the mooring line and dropped it around their heads one at a time," relates Tom. "They were about 85 pounds (39 kg), sopping wet. We were fortunate to have a low swim step at the stern, and I was able to pull them onboard. If we had to haul them over the side, I couldn't have done it."

Putting their wild, skittish instincts aside, the deer willingly came onboard and collapsed, too tired to even shake off the water. "They were absolutely gassed," he recalls. "The last one was in really poor shape. He was very hypothermic. I massaged him for 20 minutes trying to warm him up. He bleated like a little lamb. I think he was appreciative."

The *Alaska Quest* headed to Taku Harbor, and during the hour-long ride, one deer stood up. When the *Alaska Quest* arrived to harbor, the deer hopped onto the dock, looked back, then leapt into the waters of the harbor, swam to shore, and quickly disappeared into the forest. Two others followed suit, after a bit of prodding and assistance from the group. The last one had to be wheel-barrowed off the boat. Tom says all four deer survived the ordeal.

Although the event was unusual, it almost seems fitting for the *Alaska Quest* to be involved in that sort of mission. The vessel spends many cruising days giving eco-tours in southeast Alaska to view whales, porpoise, and bears. Swimming deer are more of a rarity.



The *Alaska Quest* was repowered with a new PowerTech 6081AFM marine diesel just months before the rescue.

Engine Model	PowerTech 6081AFM75
Displacement	8.1L
Rated Power	224-kW (300 hp) @ 2200 rpm
Cylinders	6
Aspiration	Air-to-water aftercooled
Distributor	Cascade Engine Center Tukwila, Washington (206) 764-3850 www.cascadeengine.com
Dealer	Shoreline Marine Diesel Port Townsend, Washington (360) 379-8344



Tom Satre used his mooring line to lasso the deer and pull them on deck. The four deer lay exhausted aboard the *Alaska Quest* after being pulled from water.

With an appreciation for the environment, Tom chose to upgrade his vessel with a new low-emissions, fuel-efficient PowerTech 6081AFM marine engine last spring. The new engine was purchased and installed by Mark Jochems of Shoreline Marine Diesel Inc. in Port Townsend, Washington. Mark paired the 224-kW (300 hp) engine to a Twin Disc transmission with a 3:1 gear ratio. The engine turns a 36x31-inch (91x79 cm) prop and consumes just 18.5 l/h (4.9 gph) at 8.7 knots at 1600 rpm.

“That’s phenomenal for a 60-ton (54 mt) boat,” says Tom of the steel-hull, full-displacement vessel. “The engine is phenomenally powerful. It has all of the power and torque I need. If I ask for 2200 rpm, I get it immediately.”

A love for Alaska and a passion for the environment, Tom and his wife, Tish, enjoy sharing their enthusiasm with others aboard the *Alaska Quest*.

“What we do is go out and see if clients can have as much fun as we’re having,” says Tom. “We get to show them what we love, and that’s Alaska. And it’s not just the beauty that they love, it’s the people who reside there, too.

“The people are pretty special here,” says Tom. “They’re willing to lend you a hand when you are in trouble.”

Certainly the four rescued deer could only agree.

For more information on the deer rescue or the *Alaskan Quest* eco-tours, visit <http://alaskaquestcharters.com>

Cold and tired, four tired young bucks approach the *Alaskan Quest*, looking to escape the water.

