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Stories from The Mercury News

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Humans, dogs alike enjoy lake cruise

BY LINDA GOLDSTON

Picture this: three women and three dogs on a 47-foot houseboat for five days on Lake Shasta.

Both my dog, Lucy, a hearty 14-year-old, and the 6-month-old pup, named Pal, learned to swim, and I'm not sure who was proudest, the old girl or the young upstart. Both dogs were pretty pleased with themselves and the human "moms" were beaming, of course.

It was doubly touching watching Lucy swim back and forth in some of the lagoons because there was no sign of her arthritis in the water -- just her little head bobbing steadily along as she dog-paddled around.

She clearly looked and felt rejuvenated, as did the humans. The only bad thing was having to leave to drive home.

If you haven't tried houseboating with your dog, it can be so magical, especially at Lake Shasta. We saw so many varied types of wildlife, including an eagle, a young buck who calmly came up to the boat in search of treats, and all kinds of ducks and geese with

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treats, and all kinds of ducks and geese with their babies.

Fish were abundant, clearly visible through the water, but I'm happy to say we didn't kill any of them. One of my friends caught a young bass but we were able to safely return it to the water. And after that, we agreed to remove the hooks from the lure and enjoyed casting without having to worry about whether we would hurt any more fish.



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My friends went for hikes most days, but I confess my greatest exertion was for the daily rock skipping contests -- something even the dogs enjoyed watching.

Lake Shasta is wonderful any time of year, but if you decide to go, I'd recommend the week before Memorial Day weekend. The rates are cheaper and you have much of the lake to yourself, with only the occasional jarring drone of those stupid jet skis.