



NorthWest Sailing Association

NWSA Glossary

ABAFT - farther toward the stern; the mizzenmast is *abaft* the mainmast.

ABEAM - at right angles to the centerline of the boat, but not on the boat.

AFT - toward the stern of a boat.

AFTER - closest to the stern

ALEE - away from the direction of the wind, usually referring to movement of the helm or tiller.

AMIDSHIPS - in or toward the center of the boat.

ASTERN - in the direction of, and beyond, the stern; opposite of AHEAD.

ATHWARTSHIPS - at right angles to the centerline of a boat.

BACKSTAY(S) - standing rigging that supports the mast from aft.

BATTENS - flexible strips of wood or fiberglass placed in a sail to help the leech retain its proper shape.

BEAM - the greatest width of a vessel.

BEAM REACH - sailing with the wind at right angles to the boat.

BILGE - the lowest part of a boat, designed to collect water that enters the boat

BITTER END - the last part of a rope or chain. The inboard end of the anchor rode.

BOOM - spar to which the foot of a sail is attached, and which is itself attached to the mast.

BOOM VANG - a tackle running between boom and deck which flattens the sail's curve by downward pull on the boom.

BOW - the forward part of a vessel.

BROAD REACH - sailing with the wind more or less over either quarter.

CATAMARAN - a twin-hulled boat, with hulls side by side.

CENTERBOARD - a plate or board that can be raised or lowered through a slot in the bottom of a boat.

CHUTE - colloquial for spinnaker-a lightweight headsail set from a boat that is reaching or running before the wind.

CLEAT - a horned fitting of wood or metal to which lines are made fast.

CLEW - the lower after corner of a sail.

CLOSE-HAULED - sailing as close as possible to the wind.

CLOSE REACH - sailing with sheets eased and the wind forward of the beam.

COMPANIONWAY - the main entrance to the cabin, usually including the steps down into the cabin.

CUTTER - A sailboat with one mast stepped more than one third of the way aft, capable of carrying two or more sails ahead of the mast; also, a Coast Guard boat.

DECK - a permanent covering over a compartment, hull or any part thereof. DISPLACEMENT - The weight of water displaced by a floating vessel, thus, a boat's weight.

DINGHY - a small open boat, usually carried aboard a yacht for going ashore

DOCK - a protected water area in which vessels are moored. The term is often used to denote a pier or a wharf.

DOLPHIN - a group of piles driven close together and bound with wire cables into a single structure.

DOWNHAUL - tackle attached to the underside of the gooseneck, to tighten a sail's luff by pulling down on the boom.

DRAFT - the depth of water to the lowest point of a vessel's keel.

EASE - to slacken.

EBB - a receding current.

FATHOM - a unit of length equal to six feet (1.8 meters).

FENDER - a portable anti-chafe device, usually tubular, placed between a boat and a pier or another boat.

FLOORBOARDS - the surface of the cockpit on which the crew stand.

FLUKE - the palm of an anchor.

FOOT - the lower edge of a sail.

FOREPEAK - a compartment in the bow of a small boat.

FORESTAY - a stay below and aft of the jibstay on a yacht carrying two headsails.

FORWARD - toward the bow.

FREEBOARD - the minimum vertical distance from the surface of the water to the gunwale.

GALLEY - a boat's kitchen.

GENOA SAIL - a large headsail set on the headstay and overlapping the mainsail.

GOOSENECK - the moveable fitting connecting mast and boom.

GUNWALE - pronounced *gunnel* - the upper edge of a boat's side.

HALYARD - line or wire used for hoisting sails.

HARD ALEE - the command given to put the boat about, by pushing the tiller to leeward.

HEAD - (1) the upper corner of a triangular sail; (2) the ship's toilet

HEAD UP - to head into the wind.

HEADSAILS - sails set within the foretriangle, i.e. forward of the mast and usually on a stay. Headsails include jibs and staysails.

HEEL - to tip to one side.

HELM - the tiller or wheel. The 'person' steering is thus the helmsman.

INBOARD - more toward the center of a vessel; inside; a motor fitted inside a boat.

INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY (ICW) - bays, rivers, and canals along the coasts (such as the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts), connected so that vessels may travel without going into the sea.

JACOBS LADDER - a rope ladder, lowered from the deck, as when pilots or passengers come aboard.

JETTY - a structure, usually masonry, projecting out from the shore; a jetty may protect a harbor entrance.

JIB - triangular sail set ahead of the foremost mast.

JIB SHEET - line controlling the jib.

JIBE - to bring the wind to the opposite side of the boat when sailing with the wind aft, by turning the stern across the wind.

JIBING (Gybing) - is the easiest way of referring to a process whereby a sailor or boater turns the boat's stem in order to shift the blowing of the wind from one side of the boat to the other.

KEEL - the fixed underwater fin on the hull which helps provide stability and prevents the boat from slipping sideways.

KEEL BOAT - a boat with a fixed, ballast keel, as opposed to a centerboard boat.

KETCH - a two-masted sailboat in which the smaller aftermast - the mizzen - is stepped forward of the rudder post.

KNOT - a speed of one nautical mile (6080 feet) per hour. A knot is not a measure of distance, but of rate of speed.

LATITUDE - the distance north or south of the equator measured and expressed in degrees.

LAZARETTE - a storage space in a boat's stern area.

LEE - The side away from the direction of the wind, also used in context to refer to a sheltered place out of the wind, as in the lee of the island.

LEECH - sometimes spelled leach - the after edge of a fore-and-aft sail.

LEEWARD - pronounced loo-ard, the direction away from the wind.

LINE - rope and cordage used aboard a vessel.

LONGITUDE - the distance in degrees east or west of the meridian at Greenwich, England.

LUFF - (1) the forward edge of a sail; (2) also, to head up into the wind, thus causing the sails to ripple.

MAINMAST - the principal mast of a boat.

MAINSAIL - the sail that sets abaft the mainmast.

MAINSHEET - the sheet controlling the mainsail.

MARCONI SAIL - the name of a three-cornered sail whose luff sets on a mast-as opposed to the four-sided gaff-rigged sail; also called a Bermuda or jib-headed sail.

MARLINSPIKE - a tool for opening the strands of a rope while splicing.

MIZZEN - the sail set on the aftermast of a yawl or ketch.

MIZZENMAST - the aftermast on a yawl or ketch.

MOORING - an arrangement for securing a boat to a mooring buoy or a pier.

OUTHAUL - device for stretching the foot of a sail along the boom.

PINCH - to sail a boat closer to the wind than she can efficiently go.

POINT - ability to sail close to the wind. Also, $1/32$ of a circle. ($11\frac{1}{4}$ degrees)

PORT - the left side of a vessel, looking forward.

PORT TACK - sailing with the wind coming over a boat's port side.

QUARTER - the part of a boat lying within 45 degrees of the stern; every boat thus has a starboard and a port quarter.

REACH - the point of sailing between close-hauled and running.

READY ABOUT - preparatory order given before, "Hard alee," to put the boat about.

REEF - to reduce the area of the sail.

REEF POINTS - short lines set into the sail to aid in reefing.

RIGGING - general term for the lines (wire and rope) that support the spars (standing rigging) and control the hoisting and set of the sails (running rigging).

ROACH - the curve in the leech of a sail.

RUDDER - a steering device at the stern of a boat.

RUNNING - sailing with the wind astern.

SHEET - the line used to trim a sail.

SHROUD - standing rigging that supports a mast athwartships.

SLOOP - single masted sailboat whose working sails are main and jib.

SPARS - general term for masts, booms, gaffs, etc., which have in common that they hold sails extended.

STARBOARD - the right side of a vessel. facing forward.

STARBOARD TACK - sailing with the wind coming over a boat's starboard side.

STAY - rigging supporting the mast from forward or aft.

STERN - the after part of a boat.

STOW - to put in place.

TACK - (1) to come about; (2) the lower, forward corner of the sail; (3) sailing with the wind on one or the other side of the boat.

TELLTALE - a wind direction indicator made of a bit of cloth, or other light material, tied to a shroud (or sail).

TILLER - the lever with which the rudder is turned.

UNDER WAY - said of a boat in motion and under control.

WINDWARD - the general direction from which the wind is coming.