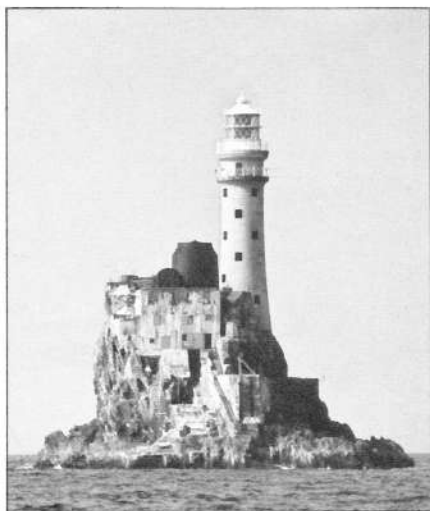


The Visual Encyclopedia of  
**NAUTICAL TERMS**  
**UNDER SAIL**



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# The Wind

Many of the terms used at sea to describe wind and weather are self-evident, being the same as those used ashore. The only terms included here are those which are specifically nautical, particularly those that are no longer in use. Furthermore, the terms used in modern meteorology – depressions, anti-cyclones, fronts and so on – are also omitted, not only because they are not specifically nautical, but also because they did not come into use until the First World War.

**Wind.** Air in motion. Winds may be *warm* or *cold*, *moist* or *dry*.

## Wind Direction

**North wind, south wind** and so on.  
Point of the compass from which the wind blows.

**Wind veering, or wind hauling.**  
Altering direction clockwise, for instance SW to NW.

**Wind backing.** Altering direction anti-clockwise, for instance SW to S.

**True wind.** Point of compass from which the wind is coming, regardless of ship movement.

**Relative wind.** Wind direction as felt in a moving ship, and shown by a mast-head pennant. Expressed in points or degrees from the ship's head.

**Variable wind, or erratic wind.**  
Converse of steady wind. Light variable winds are termed *fluky*.

**Head wind, or dead wind, or dead on end, or wind in the teeth.** Wind blowing from right ahead.

**Beam wind.** Wind coming from the beam.

**Quarter wind.** Wind blowing from the quarter.

**Following wind.** Wind coming from astern.

**Foul wind, or contrary wind.** Wind blowing from the direction in which the vessel wishes to sail, or which may set her into danger. A vessel in port unable to sail because of a foul wind is said to be *wind-bound*.

**Fair wind.** Contrary to FOUL WIND.

**Slant of the wind.** Air of which advantage may be taken.

**Slant wind.** Unfavourable but not foul wind.

**Leading wind.** Abeam or quartering wind; free or fair.

**Soldier's wind.** One which serves either way; allowing a passage to be made without much nautical ability. (Mariners never had a very high opinion of the soldiery.)

**Round wind.** One which changes direction 180° during daylight hours.

**Prevailing wind, or reigning wind.**  
The average or characteristic wind at any place.

**Sea breeze.** Onshore wind which occurs in daytime on a coast in settled weather, between about 10 am and sunset. Caused by the land heating up under the sun's rays.

**Land breeze.** Offshore wind occurring after a day of SEA BREEZES, during the night when the land cools and cold air flows out to sea under the influence of gravity. Usually weaker than the sea breeze.

**Young wind.** Commencement of land and sea breezes.

## THE BEAUFORT SCALE

Beaufort Number	Limits of wind velocity in knots	Description of wind	Sails worn by a Man-of-war for each wind strength
0	Less than 1	Calm	Full sail
1	1-3	Light air	Full sail will just give steerage way
2	4-6	Light breeze	Full sail and clear full gives speed of 1-2 knots
3	7-10	Gentle breeze	Full sail and clear full gives speed of 3-4 knots
4	11-16	Moderate breeze	Full sail and clear full gives speed of 4-5 knots
5	17-21	Fresh breeze	Close-hauled the ship could carry: Royals etc. Single reefs and topgallant sails. Double reefs, jib, etc. Triple reefs, courses, etc. Close reefs and courses.
6	22-27	Strong breeze	As for Beaufort number 5
7	28-33	Moderate gale	As for Beaufort number 5
8	34-40	Fresh gale	As for Beaufort number 5
9	41-47	Strong gale	As for Beaufort number 5
10	48-55	Whole gale	The ship could only just bear close-reefed main topsail and reefed foresail.
11	56-63	Violent storm	Storm staysails
12	64 and over	Hurricane	No canvas