

GLOSSARY OF NAUTICAL TERMS

Abaft	behind, such as 'Abaft the Beam'.
Abeam	abreast of, or at right angles to, the fore and aft line of the vessel.
A-Cockbill	anchor lowered clear of hawse pipe (or bow roller) and hanging vertically.
Aft	towards the "stern" or rear of the vessel.
After peak	narrow space below deck in the after end of the vessel.
Amidships	in the middle section of the vessel.
Anchor aweigh	anchor has been hove out of ground and is clear of it.
Astern	behind or in the back of the vessel.
Athwartship	across the vessel; at right angle to the fore and aft direction.
Azimuth	see Bearing.
Back (Backing)	anticlockwise change in wind direction. (see Veer)
Back splice	splice made at the end of a rope to stop it from unlaying or slipping through the block.
Backing a sail	holding a sail against the wind when the wind is very light.
Bar	a shallow area formed by sand, mud, gravel or shingle, near the mouth of a river or at the approach to a harbour. A measure of atmospheric pressure.
Beam	width at the widest point of the vessel.
Bearing	the direction of an object.
Bend	to tie two ropes together.
Bight	a loop in a rope.
Bilge	the lowest inside part of the boat.
Bilge keel	small fin keels on the sides of or in lieu of the main keel.
Bitter end	the secured (tied up) end of rope.
Bits	a pair of posts for securing (tying) mooring lines.
Block	a pulley.
Bollard	a post for securing (tying up) ropes – on vessel or jetty.
Bolt rope	rope sewn into the leading edge of a sail. It slides in the groove of a mast.
Bombora	a shallow area where waves may break.
Bosun's chair	a sling with a wooden seat for hoisting a person aloft.
Bow	the front end of a vessel.
Bow chock	see Fairlead.
Bower anchor	the anchor in the bow of boats.
Bowsprit	spar projecting out of the bow and taking one or more headsails.
Breaking out (the anchor)	to make ready and free the anchor for letting go.
Broached	vessel turned beam on to the following sea and capsized.
Brought up	vessel is riding to her anchor and cable, and the former is holding.
Bulkhead	a vertical partition in a vessel (equivalent to a wall in a building).
Cable	one-tenth of a nautical mile, 185 metres at the equator.
Camber	the transverse (sideways) curve in a deck, just as a road has camber for drainage.
Capstan	anchor winch with vertical axis. (see also Windlass) (Both types illustrated in Chapter 7)
Cardinal points	the four main points of a compass: N, E, S, W.
Careening	running a boat onto a suitable beach for repairs.
Cathead	a structure in the bow to suspend the anchor in a small vessel.

Centerboard (Centre Plate)	a board or metal plate lowered through the bottom of some sailing boats to reduce leeway or to increase the size of the keel. (see also Lee Board)
Chain stopper	a short chain temporarily holding a wire rope under load.
Chine	the angle formed where two non-curved sections of a boat's hull join. (as opposed to a round hull)
Clear anchor	see Breaking Out the Anchor. The term "Clear Anchor" is also used when weighing anchor to indicate that it is in sight and clear of turns in the cable or other obstructions.
Coaming	a fence around an opening to keep the water out, such as around a hatchway.
Cock-a-bill	see A-Cockbill.
Con	to direct a person at the helm in steering of a vessel.
Course	ship's heading.
Counter	an overhanging stern, or the underneath of that overhang.
Dan buoy	a marker buoy with a pole and a flag.
Davit	a boom for lowering a lifeboat or large liferaft.
Devil's claw	a metal claw to secure the anchor in its stored position.
Downstream	proceeding down a river or harbour out to seaward.
Draft (Draught)	the depth of boat in the water at the deepest point of the keel.
Drift	the distance traveled by the vessel due to current or tidal flow.
Drogue	see Sea Anchor.
Ebb tide	falling or running out tide.
Eddy	circular movement of water.
EPIRB	Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon.
Fairlead	a smooth, non-chafing channel through which mooring ropes and wires are passed.
Fairway	any navigable channel.
Fender	a tire or a padding placed between the vessel and wharf to prevent chafing.
Flare	the overhang of the ship's bow.
Fluke(s)	the sharp end(s) of the anchor that dig into the seabed.
Flood tide	the rising or run in tide.
Fore and aft	in line with the stem and stern; in line with the keel.
Forecastle (Focsle)	the compartment or the built-up deck in the bow (fore part) of the ship.
Forepeak	narrow space below deck in the forward end of vessel.
Forward	the front or towards the front of a vessel.
Foul anchor	anchor caught in an underwater cable, or it has brought old hawsers to the surface with it, or it is fouled by its own cable.
Foul hawse	both anchors are out and the cables are entwined or crossed.
Foundered	vessel filled with water and sunk.
Frames	vessel's ribs, usually running transversely (side to side)
Freeing ports	opening in the bulwark to allow water washing on deck to run off.
Gantline	a line used for hoisting through a block at the masthead.
Give way	reduce speed, stop, go astern or alter course so as to keep out of another vessel's path.
GPIRB	EPIRB with a built-in GPS (See EPIRB)
Growing	the way the anchor cable is leading from the hawse pipe, e.g., a cable is growing aft when it leads aft.
Gunwale	pronounced "gunnel", the top edge of the vessel's sides.
Gypsy	a cogged wheel on the anchor winch (windlass) over which the anchor cable runs.
Hard-a-port (or Starboard)	see "Helm Orders" below.
Hawse pipe	the tube through which the anchor cable goes from the vessel to the anchor.
Heave to	steering into the wind and sea to make minimum headway.
Helm	tiller. The steering wheel is also sometimes referred to as the helm. See "Helm Orders" below.
Hitch	tying a rope to something.
Hog	bending down of the fore and aft parts of the hull due to uneven loading or wave riding. (opposite of sag)
Hove in sight	the anchor is completely out of the water (when picking up anchor)
Jury rig	a temporary arrangement replacing a failed mechanism on board, such as a jury rudder.
Knots (speed)	one knot is a speed of one nautical mile per hour, or 1.852 km/h.
Kedge	a small anchor used for light duties.

Langs lay	the rope strands are laid in the same direction as the yarns.
Lanyard	a short rope or cord for securing or holding something.
Lazarette	a space between decks in the after part of the vessel.
Leads	marks used in channels and at bar entrances which when in line indicate the centre of the navigable channel.
Lee Board	vertical wooden board, pivoted in forward edge, attached to the side of some flat-bottom sailing boats and lowered into water to reduce leeway. (see also Centreboard)
Lee Shore	the shore onto which the wind blows. This term is often misunderstood. It is the shore in the lee of the vessel - not the vessel in the lee of the shore.
Lee Tide	a tidal stream setting to leeward or downwind. The water surface has a minimum of chop on it, but the combined forces of wind and tide act upon the vessel at anchor.
Leeward	downwind side.
Leeway	wind blowing the vessel sideways.
Length Overall (LOA)	the distance measured parallel to the designed (loaded) waterline from the foremost part of the hull to the aftermost part of the hull, excluding appendages, such as outboard engines, fenders, pulpit rails, bow door or ramp, sponsons, rubbing strip, bowsprits, bumpkins, etc. Bulwarks and areas of deck that overhang beyond the extremities of the hull are included in LOA.
Let go	drop anchor in the water.
Lizard	a line or wire with an eye in the end for another line to be attached or rove through.
Lloyds Length	See Measured length.
LOA	See Length Overall.
Log	a speed and distance measuring instrument; a record keeping book.
Long stay	the anchor cable is taught and leading down to water close to the horizontal.
LWL	length at waterline.
Made fast	secured.
Making way	moving through the water (by engine, oars or sail)
Masthead	the top of the mast.
Measured Length	It is the length measured from stern to stern along the weather deck or 96% of the vessel's shoe-box length, whichever is greater.
Midships	see Amidships.
Mooring lines	ropes for securing (tying) a vessel to jetty, etc.
Monkey's fist	a heavy knot on the end of a heaving line to help it to be thrown at a distance.
Nautical mile	one minute of latitude, which is 1852 metres at the equator.
Neap tide	tide at the first and last quarters of the moon when there is smallest rise and fall in tidal level.
Nipped cable	an obstruction, such as the stem or hawse-pipe lip has caused the cable to sharply change its direction.
Overfalls	dangerous steep waves due to a current meeting an opposing wind; rippling or sudden race of water due to sudden increase of depth.
Painter	a small mooring line for a small boat or liferaft.
Panting	heaving of the bow and stern hull in and out due to variations in water pressure during pitching.
PFD	personal flotation device (lifejacket or buoyancy vest)
Poop deck	a short raised deck in the after part of the vessel.
Port side	the left hand side of a vessel when you are looking forward from the stern and the side on which a red light is displayed.
Port 10	See "Helm Orders" below.
Pulpit	guardrail around the bow of a boat.
Pushpit	guardrail around the stern.
Quarter	the part of the hull on each side of the stern.
Rake	the lean in masts, funnel, etc.
Racking	twisting of the hull during rolling.
Reef points	short lines for tying up unwanted sail.
Sag	bending of the hull in the middle due to uneven loading or wave riding. (opposite of hog)
Samson post	a vertical post used for tying mooring lines.
Scope	the ratio of the anchor cable in relation to the depth of water.
Scupper	a drain hole on deck.
Scantlings	timber or other material used in the construction of a vessel.

Sea anchor	a parachute-shaped bag tied to a liferaft or vessel to reduce her drift.
Sea cock	a valve fitted on a pipe at the hull to allow liquid in or out.
Set	the direction in which current or tidal flow will cause the vessel to travel.
Sheer	The dip in the middle of a deck, or the upward curve of deck fore and aft.
Short stay	the anchor cable is taught and leading down to water close to the vertical.
Slack water	the turn of the tide when the tide neither floods or ebbs for a short period.
Snub	to stop a rope or anchor cable running out by turning it around the bitts or braking the cable.
Sounding	measuring the depth of water, fuel its.
Sponson	a wooden or rubber fender fitted around a boat to safeguard hull against chafing and rubbing.
Spurling pipe	pipe through which anchor chain leads into the chain locker.
Spring tide	a tide of relatively large tidal range occurring near the times of a new or full moon.
Stand on	to maintain the same course and speed.
Starboard side	the right hand side of the vessel when you are looking forward from the stern, and the side on which a green light is displayed.
Starboard 10	See "Helm Orders" below.
Stay	a rope supporting a mast.
Steady	see "Helm Orders" below.
Steaming light	masthead light.
Steer	see "Helm Orders" below.
Stem	the front of the bow.
Stern	the back or rear of the vessel.
Stopper	a short rope or chain, temporarily holding a larger rope under load. (See also Chain Stopper)
Stringers	fore and aft timbers or beams joined with the frames to add rigidity to the hull.
Surge	allow cable or rope to run out or slacken while being hauled.
Tack	the direction of a sailing vessel in relation to the wind; a sailing vessel changing course.
Transit	lining up two objects. (see Leads)
Transom	the flat stern (opposite of cruiser or round stern)
Trim	the difference the fore and aft draft of a vessel.
Tumblehome	a hull built with a bulge in it between the waterline and gunwale. Vessel has greater beam on the water than on deck.
Underway	not at anchor or made fast to the shore or ground, if you are drifting you are underway.
Up-and-down	anchor cable leading vertically down to the water.
Upstream	proceeding up river or into the harbour.
Veer	let out rope or cable under control; clockwise change in wind direction. (see Backing)
Walk back	see Veer.