

The ABA Beacon

Quarterly Publication for American Boating Association Visa® Associate Members

Boating Safety

Weather or Not

In 1916, in an implausibly happy ending to one of the greatest survival epics of all time - Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton and every member of his crew returned alive from a two-year voyage on which they were shipwrecked in the Antarctic. Their research vessel, the *Endurance*, had been trapped in the ice through a southern winter, then was crushed and sunk when the icepack shifted with the thaw. After dragging a lifeboat to open water and gaining a makeshift sanctuary on the Antarctic shore, the group split in two. Shackleton and a crew of five sailed the small craft to the island of South Georgia, a distance of some 800 miles in wind-driven seas that often reached a height of 80 feet. They then returned to the subcontinent in a rescue vessel to retrieve the remainder of the crew.

Shortly after receiving heroes' welcome at home, Shackleton and several of that first crew signed up for another journey similar to the odyssey they had just survived. Questioned about their motives, one member observed that he was leaving England because of the climate - which, in his opinion, was the worst in the world.

No doubt that story entails more than a little British humor, but it also points up one of the great truisms: we don't all see weather in the same way. And without some agreement about terms and the conditions they represent, one boater's romp can be another's debacle.

One of the most enduring attempts to codify a lexicon of maritime weather conditions was Sir Francis Beaufort's 1805 scale establishing a numerical relationship between the speed of the



Sea State 1 Conditions

wind and the state of the sea. An English rear admiral, Beaufort devised a rating system numbering from 1 to 12; with variations and adornments it is still used today by most of the world's navies.

The United States Navy incorporates the Beaufort Scale in its modern Sea State Chart, although the latter starts at zero and contains

two less steps. The next time you hear a reference to sea state in a marine forecast, this should give you a more exact picture of what to expect.

Zero on the Navy scale describes a sea state that can range from mirror-like to mildly rippled, without the formation of foam crests; this describes a dead calm or light airs of up to 3 knots. Sea State 1 on the Navy chart ranges from small wavelets with glassy crests up to large wavelets whose crests are just beginning to break, with scattered white horses and winds up to 10 knots - for Beaufort, a "gentle breeze."

Sea State 2 features wind speeds to 13.5 knots, waves averaging 1.4', a moderate breeze and frequent white horses. Sea State 3 is winds of 14-16 knots with wave heights averaging 2' - comfort limit for smaller recreational powerboats.

Sea State 4 has moderate waves, taking a more pronounced long form, with many white horses and the chance of some spray. What Beaufort describes as a "fresh breeze" has a wind velocity of up to 20 knots - good news for a 19th century ship of the line, but less good for sailboats under 30' and a good outside limit for power. Sea State 5 results from a strong breeze (up to 27 knots) and large waves (up to 20', but half that height on

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ABA Associate Member Benefits

- *The ABA Beacon*sm Newsletter
- ABA Visa® Credit Card: 800-FIRSTUSA
- ABA Calling Card: 800-657-4711
- *ABA Online*sm: www.americanboating.org
- ABA Signature Items Catalog: 800-480-2053
- ABA Theme Park Discounts: 301-865-1776

Check Out ABA Online

ABA launched its web site www.americanboating.org on April 1, and is experiencing quite a bit of activity. Have you checked it out?

ABA Online is a quick and easy way to stay in touch with what's happening with ABA and your membership. When you log in, you can read the latest *ABA Beacon*sm newsletter as well as all of the past issues. They are chock-full of safety tips, cruising information, upcoming boat shows, and member benefits and special offerings. It's a quick and easy read, too.

The *ABA Signature Catalog* is ready for your orders with a simple point and click. It features top quality shirts, jackets, hats, bags, and more, including *ABA Kids* apparel for our young ABA members. You can even personalize your items with your boat name for you and your crew.

Planning a trip to a theme park this summer? ABA Theme Park Discounts can be ordered through *ABA Online* for major theme parks across the country including Universal Studios®, Busch Gardens®, Sea World®, and HersheyPark® to name a few.



You can also order your ABA Discounted Calling Card through *ABA Online*. It's one of the best calling cards out there at 14.9 cents per minute with no monthly minimums or fees (you may find a card with a lower cost per minute, but chances are it also charges a monthly fee and/or a minimum!). Plus, every time you use the card, you support ABA.

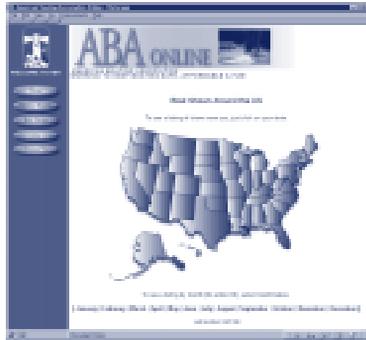
Planning to attend a boat show or two this summer or

fall? *ABA Online* is the resource for you. You can check out the shows for every state in the U.S. to see which ones will be running and when. We link you to the shows' web site if there is one available, tell you the dates and location, and provide you a phone number so you can get additional information.

ABA Online can help you link to other boating resources. Just click on *Links*, and "surf" the myriad of other boating sites. You can also communicate with ABA simply by dropping us an email.

Check out *ABA Online*. Drop us an email and let us know what

you think. Are there other subjects or areas you'd like to see us include? Remember to put www.americanboating.org into your "favorites" file and visit *ABA Online* regularly! ☺



Boater Quiz Barometer Forecasting

Match the barometer reading and wind direction with the coming weather.

Barometer/Wind

1. 30.2 or higher, steady; wind SW/NW
2. 30.1 to 30.2, steady; wind SW/NW
3. 30.0, falling; wind NE/SE
4. 30.1 to 30.2, falling; wind NE/SE
5. 30.1 or higher, falling; wind NE/E
6. 29.8 or lower, falling fast, wind N/E
7. 30.1 to 30.2, rising; wind SW/NW
8. 30.1 or higher, falling fast; wind NE/E
9. 30.1 to 30.2, falling fast; wind SE/S
10. 30.2 or higher, falling; wind SW/NW

Coming Weather

- a. Summer - rain in 1 day; winter - rain or snow in 12 hours
- b. Fair for a few days, rising temperature
- c. Fair, but rain in 48 hours
- d. Fair, small temperature change
- e. Wind and rain in 12 hours
- f. Fair for 1 or 2 days; steady temperature
- g. Rain in a few days
- h. Summer - light winds, rain in 3 days; winter - rain in 1 day
- i. Heavy storm and rain warning; winter - snow and low temperatures
- j. Wind and rain in 12 hours

Key to Answers: 1d; 2f; 3g; 4f; 5h; 6i; 7c; 8a; 9e; 10j

Boat Shows

July 17-19

Clinton Harbor Boat Show, CT
(860) 529-2123

July 21-25

American Boating Jubilee, CA
(714) 633-7581 www.scma.com

July 20-28

Dallas Summer Boat Show, TX
(972) 550-1052

August 19-22

Georgia Boat & Sports Show, GA
(305) 531-8410

Racine In-Water Boat Show, WI
(312) 946-6262

August 25-29

Seattle Boats Afloat Show, WA
(206) 634-0911

August 26-29

Michigan City In-Water Boat Show, IN
(440) 899-5009 www.lemta.com

September 9-12

Atlantic City In-Water Powerboat Show, NJ
(215) 732-8001

September 10-12

Carolina Fall Boat Show & Sale, NC
(336) 855-0208

September 11-12 & 15-19

Northern California Fall Boat Show, CA
(510) 834-1000

September 15-19

North American Sail and Power Boat Show, OH
(440) 899-5009 www.lemta.com

September 16-19

Tampa International Boat Show, FL
(305) 531-8410 www.boatshows.com

Indianapolis Fall Boat Show, IN

(800) 892-1723 www.renfrosportshows.com

Liberty Landing Boat Show, NJ

Liberty Landing State Park, Jersey City

Newport International Boat Show, RI
(401) 846-1600

September 17-19

Fall Boat Show, OR
(503) 246-8291

September 23-26

Lido Yacht Expo, CA
(714) 757-5959

Norwalk International In-Water Boat Show, CT
(212) 922-1212

Sunfest Boat Show, MD
(410) 213-1721

September 25-27

New Jersey Fall Boat Show, NJ
(732) 449-4004

September 30-October 3

Houston International In-The-Water Boat Show, TX
(713) 526-6361

Weather or Not -

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average) start forming, many with white foam crests.

Sea State 6 is a moderate gale, with wind to 30.5 knots, average waves of 14' (but up to 29'), the sea heaps up, and spindrift combines with froth from the breaking waves. Sea State 7 is Beaufort's "fresh gale," with wind to 40 knots and highest waves of 58'. Blowing spray affects visibility.

Sea State 8 combines Beaufort's "strong gale" and "whole gale," with winds ranging from 41 to 55 knots and very high waves (up to 121' with overhanging crests and an average length of 810'). Great patches of foam blow in dense, parallel, white strips and the entire sea surface is predominantly white. The rolling of the sea is heavy and shocklike. Sea State 9, the top of the Navy's scale,

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Some Sea Creatures to Think Twice About

For anglers, swimmers or anyone who ventures on the sea, dangerous marine animals divide into three broad types: biters, stingers, and poisoners.

Among the biters, sharks are the ones with the longest rap sheet. And even though the human race has always been thousands of times more dangerous to sharks than vice versa, in many cases they deserve their notoriety.

Makos, for one of the best examples, are now classified as a game fish and are widely harvested for their food value - but they are also fast, savage and can be extremely dangerous, with a long history of attacks on people and even on boats. Found in warm waters of the Atlantic, in the summer they are reported as far north as the Canadian Maritimes, and variations of the species range the whole Pacific. Growing to 13', they have prominent teeth, slender shapes, and stealth colors: blue-gray or deep blue when viewed from above, with a white belly to reduce visibility from below.

The Tiger Shark is at least as ubiquitous in all the world's warm oceans, and is the most common species in the tropics. Easily recognized by its short snout and sharply pointed tail, it usually outgrows the striping from which it derives its name; adult Tigers, up to 20' long, are gray or grayish brown, darker toward the dorsal. Primarily scavengers, they can be fast in a chase but are generally more sluggish than the Mako and somewhat less inclined to human attacks.

Hammerheads are probably the most striking in appearance of the dangerous varieties, with their futuristic/primeval design featuring a winglike, cantilevered skull terminating at each end in a black and yellow eye. Fast, powerful and up to 15' long, they have been known to attack swimmers and small boats. The favored cinematic heavies of the shark world are the Great Whites, thanks to the movie *Jaws* and with a boost from reports in the press some years ago that one of them ate the Prime Minister of Australia. They deserve their reputations. Aggressive, fast, with lethal triangular teeth and a history of boat attacks, at a length of



A Biter - the Barracuda

15' they can weigh more than a ton and a half.

Other noted biters include the Orca (or less fashionably the Killer Whale) which, *Free Willie* notwithstanding, has been known to lunge right up onto the shore in pursuit of warm-blooded prey and is rightly regarded as one of the most dangerous animals on earth. The Moray eel - another Benchley subject,

after the Great White - can grow to 10', has an extremely destructive, tearing bite, and is easily provoked to attack, especially in response to blind probes by divers or to offers of finger food (pun intended.) And no list would be complete without the ubiquitous barracuda, a school fish designed like a mackerel with serious overbite, growing up to 8' but less than half that length on average, some species of which are considered more dangerous than the average shark.

Did you know that the shy, reclusive octopus is a biter as well? But it has more in common with the stonefish or the sea snake than with the sharks: its bite is poisonous. The characteristic two small punctures can cause extensive bleeding from the anti-coagulant in its venom, and the wound soon becomes swollen, inflamed and hot. There is no treatment for the bleeding other than to staunch the flow and wait for the venom to wash out of the system.

Other poisonous sea creatures are: cone shells - snails whose venom can produce paralysis and even death; sea snakes - true air-breathing snakes capable of staying submerged in the ocean for hours and whose venom can be several times more deadly than a rattler; a wide variety of jellyfish, most notably the sea wasp and Portuguese Man of War; the spiny sea urchin; and a host of toxic teleosts that range from catfish, toadfish, weever fish, scorpionfish, and stingrays all the way to the Zebrafish.

And just when you thought it was safe to go into the water again! Well, that's the point of this list. If you know what to watch out for and have the common sense to avoid unnecessary risk, boating is safer than ever. ☺

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is what happens just after you think things just can't get any worse. Spanning Beaufort's last two categories of "storm" and "hurricane," winds from 56-71 knots form waves of more than 164', ample for hiding even medium-sized ships from sea-level viewing for long intervals. With the driving foam and spray, visibility can drop to nearly zero.

In this age of weather satellites, global positioning systems and the many new technologies of air-sea search and rescue, Shackleton's ordeal of almost a century ago may seem like ancient history. But the power of wind over water remains unchanged. And thanks to Beaufort and his successors, so does our ability to describe the effects of that power in a common language. ☺