

A BEAUFORT WIND-SCALE FOR CANOE-SAILORS

Beaufort Force (what about sailing?)	Description [miles per hour]	Land signs	On the water signs		Canoe-Sailors criteria [Suggested appropriate sail area for most people in typical cruising situations in square feet - capable canoe-sailors do push these guidelines at times, especially in decked canoes and/or when using outriggers - see notes below]
			Inland (on open stretches)	Coastal - open sea state (wave height in feet)	
0 (not worth it - might as well paddle)	Calm [<1]	Smoke rises straight up Leaves do not stir	Like a millpond/mirror	Calm (0)	Don't bother to use sails; just paddle. Use sponge to mop brow and swat flies [0!].
1 (barely worth it - paddling would be quicker) Competence Level 1 - see below	Light air [1-3.5]	Smoke drifts Wind-vanes unresponsive	Only ripples - like scales.	Calm (0)	Burgees unreliable. Sailing very leisurely. Paddling would probably be faster downwind, and definitely upwind. Use sponge as headrest. Move slowly and carefully in boat to avoid disturbing sails [60+!].
2 (pleasant) Competence Level 1 - see below	Light Breeze [3.5-7]	Wind felt on face Leaves rustle Light flags not extended	Small, smooth wavelets, short, not breaking but more pronounced.	Smooth (0.5-1)	Burgees respond. Good conditions for learning and relaxed cruising. May need to balance boat. Sailing downwind is faster than paddling but paddling upwind would probably be faster for the keener paddler. Use sponge to sit or kneel on. Tacking needs to be smooth [40-50]
3 (good) Competence Level 2 - see below	Gentle Breeze [7-12]	Light flags extended Leaves in constant motion	Larger wavelets, crests occasionally breaking; ie a few whitecaps.	Smooth (1-3)	Ideal. (Maybe too exciting for learners!) Boat moves well. Need to balance boat when reaching and beating. Tacking needs to be smooth. Downwind very rewarding; upwind may get spray in boat. Use sponge to mop out. [30-40].

4 (exciting) Competence Level 3 - see below	Moderate Breeze [12-18]	Most flags extended Small branches move Dust may be raised	Small waves growing longer. Fairly frequent whitecaps.	Slight (3-5)	Exhilarating conditions. Too much for beginners and inexperienced - may be wise to reef or even paddle. Beam/broad reaching is fast: may even plane if pushed hard. Downwind is exciting: with surfing but risk of broaching. Upwind is fairly hard and wet: use bailer as required. Tacking may fail due to waves stopping boat. Gybes also need great care. [20-30].
5 (very exciting!) Competence Level 3+! - see below	Brisk/ Fresh Breeze [18-24]	Small trees sway Tops of all trees in motion	Moderate pronounced waves. Many white-caps. A little spray.	Moderate (6-8)	Canoe-sailors gale for the less experienced. Too much for most people. Upwind is very difficult:- reefing and bailing required - beam or broad reach for safe shoreline, being careful of surfing too fast and broaching: or stow rig and paddle [15-20].
6+ (forget it!! - unless you are very keen and capable) Competence Level 3+!! - see below	Strong Breeze [24-31]	Large branches in motion Overhead wires whistle	Large waves. Extensive foam crests and spray.	Rough (10-13)	Survival conditions for most:- stow rig and drop mast if possible; keep low and paddle for safety [0!] Keen and experienced canoe sailors can still sail effectively if well reefed - [probably 10-20]

(offered as advice with open-decked canoes in mind; skilled and experienced canoe-sailors using strong, well-designed, decked sailing-canoes are able to push these limits/guidelines and it is beneficial to take advantage of opportunities to practice sailing in challenging conditions, especially when support from others or preferably a safety boat is available)

See also Competence Levels and Safety pages on OCSG website - ocsg.org.uk