

Beaufort Scale

Beaufort Number	Wind Speed knots* (mph)	Seaman's Term	Sea State	Effects on Land	Effects on Paddling
0	Less than 1	Calm	Sea like glass, flat, calm.	Calm; smoke rises vertically	Easy going, perhaps boring for some. Good canoeing on sheltered bay. Practice your edging.
1	1 to 3 (1 to 3.5)	Light Air	Ripples with appearance of scales, no foam crests	Smoke drifts with wind direction; weathervains do not move	Still easy to kayak or canoe. Go fishing out of boat. Perfect your strokes.
2	4 to 6 (4.5 to 7)	Light Breeze	Small wavelets (6"-8") Crests begin to break; scattered whitecaps	Wind is felt on face; weathervanes do not move; leaves rustle	Novices learn what the heck weathercocking is all about. Experienced paddlers can still canoe.
3	7 to 10 (8 to 11.5)	Gentle Breeze	Large wavelets (2') Crests begin to break; scattered whitecaps	Leaves, small twigs move; small flags extended	Good for intermediate paddlers to practice in. Fun trip for most. Take the canoe home. Buy a kayak.
4	11 to 16 (12.5 to 18.5)	Moderate Breeze	Small waves (3') with numerous whitecaps	Dust, paper, leaves raised up. Small branches move	Novices worry, early intermediates may be apprehensive. Experienced paddlers have lots of fun.
5	17 to 21 (19.5 to 24)	Fresh Breeze	Moderate wave (6') and many whitecaps and some spray	Small trees in leaf sway. Large flags ripple	Novices watch TV. Hard padding into the wind for most kayakers. Intermediates worry especially in following seas. Rescues are not easy.
6	22 to 27 (25 to 31)	Strong Breeze	Large waves (10') whitecaps everywhere with much spray	Larger branches of trees in motion; whistling can be heard in wires and sailboat rigging	Small craft warnings. Intermediates watch TV. Experienced kayakers wish they were watching TV. Rescues become difficult. Tsunami Rangers are having fun.
7	28 to 33 (32 to 38)	Moderate Gale	Large waves (13'). Foam blown in streaks. Sea heaps up	Whole trees are in motion, resistance felt while walking against the wind	Headway very difficult. Hard to turn. Wind may rip paddle from kayaker hand. Very difficult to communicate.
8	34 to 40 (39 to 46)	Fresh Gale	Moderately high waves with longer length (18'). Crests break into spindrift	Small branches and twigs are broken off. Hard walking against wind	It's every man for himself. Constant battle to paddle. Kayak rescues are a miracle if they happen at all.
9	41 to 47 (47 to 54)	Strong Gale	High waves (23') Sea begins to roll; visibility is affected	Light structural damage occurs. Roof shingle torn from roof	Intermediates dream they can handle this. Advance have nightmares thinking about it. Kayak rescues are all but impossible.
10	48 to 55 (55 to 63)	Whole Gale or Storm	Very high waves (30') sea looks white as foam is blown in dense streaks; heavy sea roll. Visibility is restricted	Moderate structural damage occurs. Some trees uprooted	This is a survival situation. The only options which may or may not work, are running before the wind or using a sea anchor.
11	56 to 63 (72.5 to 72.5)	Violent Storm	Exceptionally high waves (35') Visibility is poor	Heavy widespread structural damage. Large trees uprooted	Agnostics find religion
12	Over 64 (74)	Hurricane	Waves may reach 45' in height. Air is filled with foam and spray, visibility very poor	Very heavy structural damage. Coastal areas evacuated, very large trees broken or uprooted	Atheists who swear there is no heaven find religion

* 1 knot equals approximately 1.15 miles per hour

** Effects on paddling depend on many factors, whether wind is onshore or offshore, sheltered waters or open sea, skill level of kayaker, fetch, duration, ect.

Know your skill level and be honest with yourself about them. Paddle accordingly

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