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The Sailor's Wind



Synopsis

Sailors from novices to experts will treasure this simple yet authoritative guide to the winds. Stuart Walker's intelligent, straightforward explanation of why wind behaves as it does and what it is likely to do next draws upon his sixty-plus years of sailing experience and his vast knowledge of meteorology. The *Sailor's Wind* first describes each aspect of wind behavior in context—challenging readers to analyze wind flow as though they were experiencing it on the water—then explains what principles determined the wind's behavior, using recent meteorological research, instrumented observations, and studies of computer models. This book enables sailors not only to understand the wind but also to harness it. .

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The intent of this book is to explain why the air in which we sail behaves as it does." So begins Walker, who combines 60 years of sailing (more than 6,000 races) and teaching experience for an in-depth study of one of nature's greatest forces. Gradient winds and their variations (weekly, seasonal, offshore flow) and thermal winds (upslope, downslope, offshore, lake breeze) are covered equally in chapters that explore such topics as the offshore sea breezes of St. Petersburg, the mountain winds of New York's Finger Lakes, and the differences between thunderstorms and downbursts. Fundamental principles of physics are necessary to understand wind flows and can be intimidating; at first glance this looks like a classroom textbook, but Walker's explanations, supplemented by more than 100 drawings and many tables, provide a thorough--yet challenging--overview for sailors or anyone studying the physics associated with wind flow.

Information for popular international and bicoastal sailing venues, for example, Puget Sound or Acapulco, make this an educational source for sailors of all waters. Brenda Barrera

Stuart Walker's research and writing is thorough and orderly, and "The Sailor's Wind" tackles a subject whose scientific nature requires such a rigorous treatment. There is never any doubt that he knows his subject inside and out, and that his years of racing make this material valuable and unique. -- Cruising Club News, Tim O'Keeffe, December 1998 Walker is a renowned sailor, member of the US Olympic Team, and author of several books on racing.... One reason for his success has been his meticulous note-taking following every race. Here, he brings that same painstaking analysis to low-level wind flow.... The book has clear diagrams and tables and, although his subject is complex, Walker writes in a relatively simple style. -- Choice, S.H.M. Reekie, February 1999

While, I'm sure a lot of what Dr. Walker writes about is groundbreaking stuff and no where else will you find the detailed descriptions of winds at various major racing locations, I found this book very technical and difficult to read. I was constantly referring to the glossary to see what terms meant. I finally went and bought Wind Strategy by David Houghton and High Performance Sailing by Frank Bethwaite, both of which I found easier to read.

I am a meteorologist and bought this book as we sometimes give talks to our local sailing club. Reading this book was an exercise in total frustration. Mr Walker has undoubtedly catalogued all the winds he has experienced in different parts of the U.S. in detail. But unfortunately he does not seem to have the ability to explain how the wind patterns come about. His language is too wordy and ambiguous, his sentences too long, and leaves one in doubt as to how much he really understands weather patterns and dynamics. If he understands them, he does not seem to have the ability to communicate his understanding to others. For example, in one part of the book he mentions the environmental wind blowing inland. Anyone would then presume a thunderstorm at the coast would be advected inland. But instead he says such thunderstorms move parallel to the shoreline. This leaves one totally mystified. There are countless other such peculiar descriptions in the book. The positive reviews on the back of the book jacket are written by the author's old sailing friends and by his magazine editor, people who would for the sake of long acquaintance, undoubtedly write something good. One wonders how the average sailor (for whom the book seems to be written) would rate it, if they managed to survive reading the book. The book is valuable in that there are many examples of the types of wind flow one can get under different terrain and synoptic situations.

However one is left knowing the wind pattern but not understanding how the wind pattern comes about. It is a great pity because this book would have been a very informative one if only the author knew how to explain the meteorological part clearly. Verdict : Buy it if you want a catalogue of the types of winds around the U.S. coastal areas. However if you want to understand how these wind patterns come about, forget it.

Worth at least ten places at last week's 60th anniversary Lightning regatta at Skaneateles in the New York Finger Lakes region. (175 or so boats in three fleets, 87 boats in our fleet) All those little thermal downslope lifts coming off the side streams... 180 degree wind shift from downslope thermal to gradient wind right before leeward mark....just exactly as Walker described ! Alexander P. Vucelic

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