

Safe & enjoyable Cruising with the Wanderer Class Owners Association

The Cruise Leader is encouraged to discuss his plans for the day with other experienced cruising sailors present. The proposed passage plan should take account of relevant information available including, forecast weather, tides and the conditions expected on the day. A briefing should be held shortly before the cruise gets under-way. The Cruise Leader should encourage Buddy pairing and remind sailors to look out for each other when on the water. The proposed course may need to be changed so be aware!

It is the responsibility of each skipper to decide whether to go afloat and not the responsibility of the cruise leader. The skipper is responsible for the safety of all those on board and must act accordingly. Skippers should have adequate sea sailing experience suggested equivalent to those outlined in RYA "Seamanship skills".

Please be courteous to others trying to launch and recover. Remember you also might want some assistance. Be aware of winches and winch wires if you are not sure how they work then keep clear and let more experienced people deal with them. Boats and trailers are heavy so manoeuvre to a position where the foreshore is firm so making it easier to handle. Beware overhead power cables. Remember we are an association so give each other a helping hand remembering in particular those who may be less fit or less experienced.

Always maintain your boat and equipment in good condition. This includes an outboard motor if carried. Check everything before you go afloat as it is always easier to make minor repairs or adjustments ashore. Boats must have adequate buoyancy so that they will float with their crew if capsized. Should the conditions be such that capsize is likely then consideration should be given to fitting suitable masthead buoyancy.

WCOA recommends the following as a minimum requirement for a cruise.

Life jackets or buoyancy aid of the right size and type for each person on board.
Buoyancy aids are generally considered more suitable if a dinghy might need to be righted.

A suitable anchor attached to a length of chain and sufficient rope to secure the boat at sea or when the crew is ashore.

Paddle or oars.

Bailing bucket

Tow line.

A painter that is properly secured to the boat.

A means of reefing the mainsail. Give consideration to your abilities to reef afloat.

Laminated local chart and a compass.

A means of raising an alarm in case of difficulty (air horn, whistle etc.)

First Aid Kit

Drinking water

Spare ropes, shackles, and a small tool-kit

Make sure everything on board is properly stowed and secured.

When ashore make sure that your boat is securely anchored and that you have made allowance for the tide. For those with outboard motors ensure the tank is full and that you have spare fuel. A spare kill cord and shear pins may prove invaluable.

Some WCOA members have portable VHF radios and license. These should be used to communicate to each other and for emergency use in line with accepted Marine VHF practice.

The Skipper should make sure everyone on board has or does the following:

Wears the life jacket or buoyancy aid all of the time while afloat or near the water.
Wears clothing suited to a days sailing and the anticipated weather conditions. Warm clothing is useless if it is saturated. Consider taking extra clothing with you. Take gloves and a hat. A whistle tied to your buoyancy aid is an excellent way of drawing attention. Sunglasses and sun block creams.
Remember to bring some food for a picnic, a flask of hot drink, and some money so you don't miss out at any refreshment and ice cream stops!

Let the cruise leader know if you have any doubts about you or your boats capabilities for the suggested cruise. Should you suffer from a medical condition that could affect the cruise please inform the cruise leader and those on board. Should any member of the crew feel unwell, again please let the cruise leader know. The planned cruise can always be altered if need be. Any First Aiders should inform the cruise leader of their qualification. If your boat capsizes you should be able to right the boat and get back into the boat without outside help. Righting lines, safety lines around the hull or a small rope ladder are worth considering. You may not all be as fit as you think!
The shock to our bodies when submersed in cold water, even for a short time, can sap the energy from us in no time at all.

It is important to note there will be no support boat present for the duration of WanderWest.

WOCA cruises are based on a 'Cruise-in-Company' principle. The course and rest stops are agreed before setting sail. There may be muster points during the cruise. This means that we have the freedom to sail our own course, regrouping at these points along the way. We are an association, and as such we sail as one. Individual boats may be faster than the main group and as such will find themselves ahead of the fleet. If the lead boats get beyond a reasonable distance from the main group, they should turn about and sail back to the vicinity of the fleet. It is recommended that we keep each other's boats in sight at all times. During the cruise circumstances on the water can change. In this situation the course may be changed. It is imperative that all helms are able to be told visually or by radio about any such alteration. Should a helm wish to sail back, or separate from the main group, the cruise leader should be informed. It is easy to become separated from the main group while enjoying yourself on the water, it is also easy to make a mistake and experience a problem situation. If we all keep an eye out for each other, we can help out if needed.

Please keep a good look out and avoid collisions at all times!

Be familiar with the "Collision Regulations" in particular the right of way rules. As well as the normal sailing rules, there are various local rules that apply depending on where we sail. Details of these should be mentioned during the briefing. Helm: Communicate with your crew so they are aware of what manoeuvre you are planning.

Crew: Assist your helm by maintaining a good lookout at all times. Regularly check the area where visibility is obstructed by your sails. Let your helm know of other vessels around you. He may not have seen that 40ft yacht which has just tacked!

Dinghy cruising is great fun, so let's make sure we all have a safe and enjoyable sail.