

The Dictionary of English Nautical Language: A comprehensive nautical dictionary, complete with usage, examples suggesting good seamanship, images of ships and gear and a nautical blog.

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AH, FOR A LIFE ON THE ROLLIN' SEA!

My inbox is often full of interesting comments and questions. I welcome your ideas, and encourage you to let me know what you are thinking.

Some of your questions are difficult to answer concisely, such as this one from John Keenan in Australia:

"I wish to respectfully point out that your definition of a cutter is incorrect:

1) A sailboat in which the main mast is stepped just forward of the center line and which carries several head sails.

The term cutter rig is applicable only to a sloop. Your definition leaves it open to apply to vessels with more than one mast. The correct term for a vessel with multiple masts (ketch, yawl etc) is "twin headsail". Having made that point, I wish to compliment you on your glossary."

This was my reply:

Thanks very much for pointing this out to me. In fact you are quite correct, and I will be changing the definition in the next day or two. I will send you a new link pointing to the revised definition for your further comments.

In fact, the usage for cutter is changing over the years, and deserves to be updated. There are also many other uses for the term that do not involve a sailing vessel at all, and I really should include them too. Please keep in touch. I obviously need your help!



Here is a wonderful example of the true "cutter": Reliance & Shamrock III dueling at the start in the 1903 America's Cup Race (Open Source, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Detroit Publishing Company Collection)

Mike

Then John replied:

G'day mate,

Thank you for that very nice reply. I am afraid the widespread use of the term cutter to include all yachts with two headsails is one of those little things catches my attention and I tend to point it out (we all have these little foibles, don't we?) And you don't need my help at all (but thank you for the compliment). You have done a fantastic job which must have involved years of work. I really am in awe.

Do you have a question or a suggestion for SeaTalk? [Let me Know](#)



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