



# SEA HISTORY for kids

## Sailing Solo

**S**ir Robin Knox-Johnston, who is interviewed on pages 10–12 of this issue, is a famous sailboat racer, most famous for **solo, or single-handed, ocean racing**—meaning he is alone on his boat. In 1969 he won the first solo 'round-the-world non-stop race in his wooden 32-foot sailboat, named *Suhaili*. Sailing at an average of 4.3 knots (nautical miles per hour), it took him 312 days! That's a very long time to be all by yourself on a small boat without making a single stop along the way. Today, there are several highly competitive single-handed races crossing oceans and going around the world. Sailors in these modern races have high-tech boats and equipment and can do it much faster than Knox-Johnston was able to go. Last January, Francis Joyon broke the record for the fastest single-handed circumnavigation, completing his voyage in 57 days!



*Joshua Slocum, on the deck of Spray during his solo circumnavigation, was the first to sail around the world alone.*

There are sailing and adventure organizations and memorials named in his honor—there's even a Slocum River in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. One of Sir Robin Knox-Johnston's fellow competitors in that 1968–69 'round-the-world race was a French sailor named Bernard Moitessier. In that race, Moitessier sailed in a boat named *Joshua*, in honor of Captain Slocum.



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*Robin Knox-Johnston at the end of a long solo voyage.*

Of course, Knox-Johnston was not the first person to sail alone around the world. A sea captain named **Joshua Slocum** was the first. In 1898, he completed a circumnavigation in a 37-foot boat named *Spray*. His voyage took him more than 3 years to complete! Of course, he was not racing anyone and a speedy return was not important to him. Slocum became very famous after completing his world voyage because, after he returned home, he wrote a book about his experience that became a best-seller. ***Sailing Alone Around the World*** is still in print today and is considered a great adventure story, in case you are looking for a good book to read.

Slocum's feat has inspired many people to seek out adventure at sea and ashore.

*Slocum sailed around the world in a wooden sailboat, the Spray, in the late 1890s.*

