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Journal of Marine Research, Sears Foundation for Marine Research, Yale University
PO Box 208118, New Haven, CT 06520-8118 USA
(203) 432-3154 fax (203) 432-5872 jmr@yale.edu www.journalofmarineresearch.org

*Thermostad, the Antonym of Thermocline*¹

R. C. Seitz

*Chesapeake Bay Institute
The Johns Hopkins University*

In standard oceanographic usage the suffix “-cline” denotes a layer in which there is a relatively large vertical gradient of the given property. However, oceanographers have no term available to denote the contrasting feature: a layer of water in which there is a relative minimum of the absolute value of the vertical gradient. As a result of discussing several possibilities with R. B. Montgomery and E. D. Stroup it is proposed that the suffix “-stad” be used to express this idea.

This suffix is derived from the Greek root *ἵστημι*, which means to make stand, to fix, or to set upright. The Greek word *στάδην* (adverb) means upright.

For example, a layer in which the vertical gradient of temperature is a relative minimum would be denoted by the term *thermostad*. The 18-degree water of the western North Atlantic Ocean (Worthington 1959²) is a well-known example of a major permanent thermostad.

In similar fashion, layers with minimum vertical gradients of other properties may be denoted by terms with the suffix “-stad”. Examples of such terms would be *halostad*, *steristad*, and *oxystad*.

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2. Worthington, L. V. (1959): The 18° water of the Sargasso Sea. *Deep-sea Res.*, 5: 297-305.