



**Kong snap hook**

**Embedded flag**

**New snap shackle**

**Former snap shackle**

**New double tether**

## Coming Soon to a West Near You

As we were wrapping up this evaluation, we received a few of West Marine's new tethers, which are made by Stearns and due to be released this spring. Look for a tether test update soon.

What's new? The most notable features of the tethers we examined are the new Kong Tango 715 snap hooks at the boat end and the embedded-flag stress indicators. The aluminum Kong hook weighs 110 grams, less than most stainless hooks. Total weight for the single tether with a Kong hook is about 0.7 pounds, an average weight savings of about 5 ounces when compared to the single tethers tested. The Kong hook

requires a squeeze to open, but manufacturers claim it's easy to open with cold or gloved hands. Satisfying ISAF recommendation 5.02.3, the new products have colored flags embedded in a doubled-over section of the tether. When a tether is stressed to the point of overload, the colored flag is exposed, indicating it's time to buy a new tether. (To review the ISAF regulations on tethers, check out [www.sailing.org](http://www.sailing.org) and select Offshore Special Regulations.) The tethers' snap shackles also appear to have been changed. The metal on the shackle is shinier, and the head opening is smaller.