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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,  
of Clark University,  
discusses:

SPRING FOG

Two types of autumn fog are seldom seen in spring,- the radiation fog or "land fog" that collects at night in lowlands, and the steam fog that forms over bodies of water. In spring, the air is generally drier than in fall as the temperature trend is upward. When air is warming, more and more water vapor can be present in it without condensing and becoming visible. Again, in spring green vegetation is not so abundant and is giving off less moisture. Since the nights are shorter than in fall, there is less time for nocturnal cooling to reduce the temperature of the air to its condensation point. As lakes and oceans heat less rapidly than the air, in spring they do not "steam" any more than cool soup would steam in a hot room. On cool autumn nights, however, warm lakes frequently "steam".

Spring, however, does not lack fog of a different type - the chill fog. These fogs form by day as well as night and though appearing over water bodies are quite different in origin from steam fogs. One way is as follows: A warm off-shore breeze blows far out over the ocean or a large lake which is still cold. This air is chilled and becomes foggy. Presently a low pressure area on land, approaching the coast, draws this foggy air back off the ocean. Or, in the case of a lake, the chilled air simply reaches the opposite shore. The fog creeps in to shore as long as the wind is light, but if the wind becomes heavy, the fog is soon dispelled.

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