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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FOG DISTRIBUTION

Where do we find the most fog? The Weather Bureau recognizes two degrees of fogginess, light and dense. A fog is considered dense if it obscures objects at a distance of 1,000 feet from the observer. On the basis of this distinction the Weather Bureau has made a map showing the average number of days with dense fog during the year.

If you like fog seek either the Pacific or the North Atlantic coast. Almost anywhere along the Pacific you find more than 40 days a year with fog. The Maine coast also will furnish from 30 to 40 foggy days. The fog along the Pacific is of value to agriculture during the dry season. Locally, the crops of beans depend on fog moisture. These ocean fogs are due to the presence of cold water near the shore, which readily chills warm moist winds to their dewpoint.

Two other marked foggy regions where more than 20 foggy days occur are the southern Appalachians and the western Gulf coast. The mountain district has valley or radiation fog, produced by nocturnal cooling, and the Gulf coast fogs are also of the radiation type, for there the water offshore is warm. Over the Gulf states and Texas in particular, there is an indraft of vapor laden air from the Gulf. In the west at night the upper air is dry enough to allow considerable cooling and the lower moist current is chilled and becomes foggy near the coast. Florida has little fog, apparently because the upper air is too moist and cloudy to permit this nightly cooling.

The Great Lakes have a reputation for fog, but provide only 10 to 15 foggy days per year along their shores. Naturally the interior of the country is freest from fog. Five to ten foggy days are usual in the Mississippi Valley and less than five days in the Rockies and western plains.

(Tomorrow: Autumn Best for Mountain Climbing)

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