

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE WINTER'S PROGRESS

Now that winter is well along, its major features are beginning to stand out. The central states and the South have stood the brunt of the cold weather. Temperatures have averaged moderate and snowfall light in the Northeast. The Great Plains have had mild weather. Alaska has been uncommonly free from low temperatures, and low pressure has been persistent there. California remained generally dry and snowless till just recently.

These conditions appear not unrelated. The great low pressure area persisting over Alaska and the adjoining North Pacific has kept the ridge of highest pressure, which normally forms over the cold continent, east of its average position. This has favored more southerly winds over the western plains and more northerly flows than usual over the mid-west and into the South. The Northeast, being out of the direct path of most of these cold winds, had but little cold weather in December or January. Some cold waves occurred but they were of very short duration.

As usual at this season there is now a tendency toward an increasing number of southern Pacific lows and northeastern highs. Just recently both have been marked, resulting in more California rainfall and more storminess and cold weather in the Northeast; but it is still too early to define the character of February.

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