

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE DOING?

This month the meteorological services of the world are undertaking to find out what the atmosphere is doing. It is not that they are not always trying to find out, but that they are making a special effort with all means at their command. The U.S. Weather Bureau is making special observations of motions of clouds, especially the high cirrus, this month, and the meteorological kites are being kept in the air more than usual. Pilot balloons for direction and velocity of the wind up to a considerable height are being released three times daily instead of the usual two at some 30 stations of the weather Bureau and Signal Corps. An airplane of the U. S. Navy is taking part by making daily observations to heights of 2 or 3 miles. The Mexican Government is also employing airplanes for this purpose this month, and releasing many pilot balloons. For the high atmosphere the sounding balloons alone can give adequate information.

An especial concentration of effort was made May 7 and 8, and throughout last week, kites being kept in the air so far as possible day and night at our five kite stations, and sounding balloons being sent up twice or three times daily.

An enormous body of data is being collected the world over, for the longest consecutive period ever before attempted. Each continental official designated by the International Commission for the Exploration of the Upper Air will be responsible for summarizing the observations for his continent up to 8 or 10 kilometers. The commission will then take these summaries and all the original data, fit them together, work out the conditions of the high atmosphere, and, we hope, publish conclusions of great interest.

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