

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WARMTH IN THE PACIFIC

A recent report from Seattle tells of ocean surface temperatures along the north Pacific coast of the United States 12 degrees Fahrenheit above the usual figure. The water is said to be even warmer than that along the coast of California. In conjunction with the extraordinarily mild winter and spring along this coast, followed by exceptional periods of extremely hot weather, this observation has led people to talk of some connection between the high sea temperature and the warm weather.

The presence of numerous Portuguese men-of-war, pretty little tropical jelly fish with sails, indicates that the warm waters observed are of tropical origin. And this suggests that the Japan Current has been warmer or more rapid than usual. It is not at all unlikely that the warmth of the sea by expanding the air has been in part responsible for a slight northward displacement of the usual high pressure belt that crosses our north Pacific coast in summer. With this high over and to the north of this district, clear skies and hot northerly and easterly winds from the interior have been favored, causing hot weather on land and probably helping to raise the sea temperature further. Normally, the winds here in summer are on-shore and the weather, in consequence, cloudier and cooler.

At Portland, Oregon, from June 22 to the end of July the temperature averaged six degrees above normal and there were 11 days with 90 or higher, including one with 104 degrees Fahrenheit for the maximum.

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