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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WHERE IT RAINS ALMOST EVERY DAY

One of the rainiest places in the world is Bahia Felix, Chile, a station lying just north of the Straits of Magellan. Here it often rains at least a hundredth of an inch on 325 days per year; in 1916 it rained this amount or more on all but 18 days. Possibly it sprinkled a trifle on these 18. The total rainfall averages well over 200 inches, sometimes exceeding 240. In cool temperate latitudes the rainfall on west coasts often is greater than 100 inches, though/in its wettest spot, while about 120 inches, in western Washington, is the record in the United States. Some Alaskan places are somewhat wetter. In the British Isles, west coast maxima range from 80 to nearly 200 inches. In raininess, western Ireland ranks high, with rainy days numbering up to 275 per year, but still some 50 days short of Bahia Felix.

Tropical rainfalls are heavier than any experienced in temperate regions, exceeding 400 inches in eastern India, the Hawaiian Islands, and the west coast of Colombia. But tropical rainfall is likely to be more concentrated, and so the number of rainy days may be no greater. At Cherrapunji, India, the annual number of rainy days averages 158.5, or less than half that at Bahia Felix, though Cherrapunji's rainfall averages 428 inches, or more than twice as much. At Hawaii's wettest spot, Mt. Waialeale, there is no observer, only a huge tank that will hold over a year's rainfall.

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