

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WINDS AND STARS

A curious notion connecting the winds and the stars prevails in the Marshall Islands. This group lies in the trade-wind belt of the North Pacific, so that the prevailing winds are from easterly quarters. The native sailors look to the east about 4 o'clock in the morning for weather signs.

Certain bright stars are supposed to have power over the winds. When one of these is seen close to the horizon at the hour mentioned, the islanders believe that it stops up the east, so to speak, and thus prevents the wind from blowing. If, however, it is 20 or 30 degrees above the horizon, there is space enough below it for the wind to get through. A strong and stormy wind is then expected to blow until another influential star rises, with the progress of the season, below the first and the horizon is again obstructed. When Spica, for example, is about 20 degrees above the horizon a gale is expected, but it lasts only until, some time later, Arcturus becomes visible on the eastern horizon before dawn.

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