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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MORE SEA SOUNDS

Reference was recently made in these notes to the "calling of the sea" and other sounds made by the ocean that figure in European folklore as weather signs. Similar prognostics are mentioned by Thoreau. The following passage is from "The Wellfleet Oysterman" in his book "Cape Cod":

....."a sudden loud sound from the sea, as if a large steamer were letting off steam by the shore.... The old man said that this was what they called the 'rut,' a peculiar roar of the sea before the wind changes, which, however, he could not account for. He thought that he could tell all about the weather from the sounds which the sea made.

"Old Josselyn, who came to New England in 1638, has it among his weather signs that 'the resounding of the sea from the shore and murmuring of the winds in the woods, without apparent wind, sheweth wind to follow.'"

Probably the physical basis, so far as there is any, of these ideas about sea noises is that sounds of all kinds carry farther with the approach of a cyclonic storm; partly because the temperature of the air becomes more uniform with increasing cloudiness and humidity.

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