

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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WEEKLY WEATHER RECORDS

In the vast statistical literature of weather and climate we find values of the different meteorological elements given for single days, for months and for the year, but rarely for other periods of time. Limited use has been made of the "decade," or ten-day period, in compiling such records, and also, especially in British publications, of the week. Concerning the advantages of the latter Sir Napier Shaw writes:

"The week is quite definitely the most suitable unit intermediate between the day and the year, both of which are fixed by causes beyond human control. Meteorological statistics grouped in months are of little use in reference to agriculture, trade, commerce or public health, even if the months be of equal length, for the simple reason that a month is too long a period; it is not generally possible to characterize effectively the weather of 28 days, but a period of seven days is more naturally susceptible of definition and is indicated for the statistics of trade and commerce, which in the present organization of society and religion have inevitably a weekly period. Medicine seems to have special associations with the month - the use of the words 'lunacy' and 'lunatic' implies as much - yet the statistics of public health are already based generally on the week."

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