

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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COLD WEATHER EFFECTS

To the traveler in cold climates the low temperature of the air provides both advantages and disadvantages. Writing of their explorations in northwestern Alaska, P.S. Smith and J.B. Mertie say:

"Fresh fish caught in February immediately froze and remained in that condition until it was thawed and eaten in May. Meat was kept without spoiling indefinitely during the winter, although it often became frozen so solidly that it could be cut up only by means of a saw or an ax. The refuse from camps remained for months without putrefying. Some foods, however, do not stand freezing well, as after the water in them has become separated through freezing it does not reunite, so that after repeated freezings and thawings the original qualities are practically destroyed. Canned goods are especially subject to deterioration of that sort. Tooth paste and shaving cream are among the articles that lose many of their good qualities through freezing and become granulated and ineffective. Electric dry batteries when subjected to low temperatures fail to function, and their activity can be restored only by warming them. Cold interferes seriously with the effectiveness of lubricants; in fact, during the extremely cold months lubricants become so stiff that they must be removed completely from such articles as guns by a thorough washing in gasoline. Some of the instruments failed to function well owing to the stiffening of the lubricant or the precipitation of the minute particles of frost from the air they contained. This was particularly noticed in the action of the shutters of cameras, and a small moving-picture camera was entirely useless all winter from this cause."

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