

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 12, 1932

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VARIETIES OF SEA ICE

Besides icebergs, a great many distinct forms of ice are found floating on the sea or attached to shores, all of which have been given names by sailors and polar explorers. Thus there is the flat "field ice," which often makes great areas of the ocean un navigable. An "ice field" is defined by a recent authority as "a sheet of ice of such extent that its limits cannot be seen from the masthead." Contrasted with this is "drift ice," defined as "loose open ice; where the area of water exceeds that of the ice."

An area of ice whose limits are within sight is called a "floe." Chunks somewhat smaller than icebergs are called "bergy bits." Still smaller are the dangerous "growlers," so called on account of the sound they make when rolling in the waves. "Pancake ice" occurs in flat circular pieces with raised rims. "Brash" is a collection of very small pieces, through which a ship can easily force her way. There are many more terms in this picturesque vocabulary, which was originally formulated by the arctic explorer William Scoresby, Junior, more than a century ago, and has undergone a number of modifications at the hands of later authorities.

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