

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

SOME EFFECTS OF COLD

Verkhoyansk, Siberia, still holds the world's blue ribbon for frigid winter weather as compared with any other place where temperatures are regularly measured, though its preeminence in this respect is threatened by the Siberian district of Oimekon. Vladimir Zenzinov, in "The Road to Oblivion," says of some effects of the severe cold at the former place:

"You take a glass of water and dash it high into the air, the liquid will come down in the form of ringing crystals of ice. Spittle will freeze before reaching the ground. All live things seek deep shelter during the winter. Partridges dig themselves far into the snow and stay there. There have been cases of their falling like stones while in flight, freezing to death in the air. Marmots hide in underground holes where they hibernate, assuming the shape of a little clay-like ball. The ice becomes so hard the axe rebounds from it. Live wood becomes petrified, and when one chops it, sparks fly as if from flint. In the spring I amused myself at Verkhoyansk by extracting, with the aid of an axe and a crowbar, marmots that looked dead and were as hard as stone, so that they could be split in two. I would leave them for several hours in the unheated hallway of my house. Gradually they would come to life, and begin to run about."

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