

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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ANIMAL FOGS?

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Authority on Meteorology.

In his book "The North Pole" explorer Peary writes: "When we started the thermometer was minus 53 degrees, the minimum during the night having been minus 55; and when the twilight of evening came on it was down to minus 59 *** the dogs as they traveled were enveloped in the white cloud of their own breath. I traveled ahead of my division this march, and whenever I looked back I could see neither men nor dogs -- only a low-lying bank of fog glistening like silver in the horizontal rays of the sun behind it to the south -- this fog being the steam of the dog teams and the men."

Dogs do not perspire through the skin, but human beings, horses and other animals that do are capable of producing a moderate amount of "fog" around them from evaporated and recondensed perspiration as a result of vigorous exercise in cold weather. Horses perspire profusely and are sometimes seen enveloped in steam when hauling heavy wagons.

Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson in a recent letter to the Chief of the U.S. Weather Bureau wrote of having seen some remarkable clouds of steam surrounding animals in intensely cold weather in northern Canada. In one case he saw "what resembled the smoke of a small brush fire from a band of half a dozen caribou a mile away beyond a hill." Dr. Stefansson advanced the novel idea that enough steam might be produced by animals in some cases to simulate an ordinary ground fog about a village or town; but this hardly seems plausible. It would be interesting, however, to get further testimony on the subject.

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