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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SHELLFISH WEATHER PROPHETS

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The belief prevails along the coast of Maine, and probably on ocean shores elsewhere, that the whistling sounds made by mussels and barnacles are an indication of fair weather and that these sounds are not heard when stormy weather is at hand. There appears to be even less foundation for this belief than for some of the other popular beliefs attributing significance as weather prognostics to the behavior of various members of the animal kingdom. The United States Commissioner of Fisheries says on the subject:

"It is well known that when oysters, mussels and barnacles close they produce characteristic noises, which are familiar sounds along the shoreline. These organisms are normally open and feeding during the greater part of the time that they are covered by water; when the fall of the tide exposes them, they close, forcing out some of the water held within the shells or mantle cavities. If, for any reason, the greater number of these organisms are already closed when the lowering of the tide exposes them, naturally no sounds are produced. The exact conditions, such as waves of unusual force, falling temperature, or sediment in the water, which may at times influence closing during otherwise normal feeding periods, are only generally known. As for the organisms, while under favorable conditions, being able to predict future unfavorable conditions and to close in anticipation of these events, there is absolutely no evidence in support of such a supposition."

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