

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed December 24, 1934.

THOSE OUTDOOR WEATHER PROPHETS

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Authority on Meteorology

In the year 1913 the meteorologists of the Deutsche Seewarte, at Hamburg, undertook to find out to what extent fishermen and sailors along the German coasts depended upon proverbial rules and personal "weather wisdom" in anticipating a short time in advance the weather changes affecting their occupations. The result of this inquiry was rather surprising.

People who spend their lives on land and mostly indoors generally suppose that sailors, as well as farmers, hunters and others whose activities require them to keep close watch of the weather acquire an extraordinary skill in its prediction. The belief is largely mythical. Most of the seafaring men questioned by the Seewarte had a certain amount of faith in a number of traditional prognostics, but their general attitude was probably expressed by the statement of a veteran pilot that the belief in the existence among seamen of infallible weather prophets is found only among landmen.

It appears that sailors, farmers and other outdoor dwellers have been credited with a great deal more skill as weather prophets than they themselves, as a rule, claim to possess.

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