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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed Jan. 26, 1935

BIRDS AND PACK ICE

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Authority on Meteorology

The ring of drifting pack ice that surrounds the Antarctic continent varies greatly in size from year to year. One way in which the navigator may learn of its proximity is described by Lieut. L. C. Hill, R.N.R., chief officer of the "Discovery II," who writes in the Marine Observer:

"When nearing pack in the Antarctic the change in bird life is most marked. The Antarctic petrel, a small brown and white bird, is invariably encountered about 400 miles from the ice-edge. The snow petrel, a pure white and dove-like bird, never ventures far from the pack edge, his approximate range being 100 miles. The Arctic tern was seen by us on several occasions when on our Pacific Antarctic cruise. This bird was only seen near the ice edge; never more than 40 miles from it. The Arctic tern has a very wide range and comes south to the Antarctic in the northern winter. Observers in the northern hemisphere should look out for it as an aid to the detection of pack."

Having seen these birds, the next thing for the navigator to do is to look out for the drop of three or four degrees Fahrenheit in the temperature of the sea water usually experienced from 10 to 20 miles from the ice edge. Sea or swell decreases, and finally the ice blink gives unmistakable warning that the ice is at hand.

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