

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed March 22, 1935

FISH KILLED BY COLD

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An effect of the severe freeze of last December in Florida, not mentioned in press reports at that time, was the killing of immense numbers of fish. It is not uncommon for fish to perish of cold in shallow coastal waters, especially in the subtropics. In Florida the process is described as "freezing," though the water is not usually cooled in such cases to the freezing point, so that "chilling" would be a more accurate term.

The most destructive case on record on the Florida coast occurred January 12, 1886, when freezing air temperatures prevailed over most of the state except the Florida Keys and even at Key West an unprecedented minimum of 41 degrees was reached. The countless thousands of dead fish washed up during this freeze were used as fertilizers at many places. Residents near shore went fishing by strolling along the beach with a basket under the arm and picking up selected specimens as fast as they were washed ashore.

Even large marine creatures, such as barracuda and sharks, are sometimes thrown up on the southern Florida beaches during severe cold spells.

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