

Meteorological Madness

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METEOROLOGICAL MADNESS

? Meteorology is a branch of Earth sciences that focuses on weather forecasting. It's been around for centuries, but it only took its modern, scientific look in the 1700s.

? The Medieval Warm Period (MWP) was a period of warming in the North Atlantic from about CE 950 to 1250. The warming allowed the Vikings to build settlements in Greenland which were subsequently abandoned due to climate conditions changing.

? Mawsynram, India holds the Guinness World Record for the most rainfall in a single year, with 1,000 inches in 1985. The village averages 467 inches of rain per year.

? Today, most television news weather presenters in the US have degrees in meteorology, but back in the 1960s, they were usually "weather girls" who were known more for their looks than their knowledge.

? The Weather Channel (TWC) began airing on May 2, 1982. The channel was rated as the most trusted media network in a 2022 Economist poll.

? A hurricane is a storm system that rapidly rotates and is marked by a low-pressure center, or "eye." In most locations, these are known as cyclones, but in the North Atlantic and Eastern Pacific, they are hurricanes.

? About 2,000 people are killed by lightning strikes every year. Florida leads the US in deaths by lightning, with about ten killed each year.

? Mount Washington in New Hampshire holds the record for the fastest recorded wind gust on the land at 231 mph in 1934. It held the overall mark until higher gusts off the coast of Barrow Island, Australia were recorded in 1996.

? Meteorologists use many tools to predict the weather, including satellite technology. Doppler weather radar has been used since the 1960s, with weather radar networks forming in the 1980s.

? The Maya storm god was named Huracan, which may be the origin of the word “Hurricane,” although some believe it was derived from the name of a Taino god.

? The Russian research station, Vostok Station, in Antarctica is the site of the lowest recorded temperature on Earth. On July 21, 1983, the lonely station hit -128.6 °F.

? Hurricanes/cyclones spin counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere, but cyclones in the southern hemisphere spin clockwise. This because in the southern hemisphere, winds traveling toward the equator will move eastward, and winds traveling toward the South Pole will curve west, which is known as the Coriolis effect.

? The largest piece of hail recorded was found in Vivian, South Dakota on July 23, 2010. It weighed nearly two pounds and was eight inches in diameter.

? First published in 1818, the Farmers' Almanac was one of the first publications to make meteorological predictions. Despite skeptics, the Almanac retains a loyal following.

? The Armistice Day Blizzard of 1940 left 154 people dead across the Upper Midwest, making it one of the worst snowstorms in American history.

? Like a hurricane, a tornado is a rapidly rotating storm with a low-pressure center. It also rotates clockwise or counterclockwise depending on which hemisphere it is located in.

? The highest recorded temperature on Earth was 134 °F. It was recorded on July 10, 1913, at Furnace Creek, California, in Death Valley, on July 10, 1913.

? The “Little Ice Age” refers to the climatic period after the Medieval Warm Period, from the 1500s through the 1800s when the Earth cooled as much as 3.6 °F.

? If you’ve ever hiked high in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, you may have noticed pink snow. It’s that color because of a type of algae called *chlamydomonas nivalis* that thrives in cold environments.

? The US experiences more tornadoes than any other country, with about 1,200 per year. Within the US, more tornadoes happen in the Plains states, which are known as “Tornado Alley.”