

Scientifically Sound Weather Superstitions

Fill in the gaps with the words from the box:

respite wreaked havoc frigid proverbial murky

1. Clear moon, frost soon.



Anyone who lives in the north-central part of the country can tell that clear days in winter provide a mixed blessing. On the one hand, you enjoy a 1)_____ from the long march of dim, dreary days. On the other hand, clear days – and clear nights – often mean 2)_____ weather, brought to you by a dry, continental high-pressure zone. During the day, the sun's shortwave radiation is absorbed by Earth and converted into heat. When the sun sets, the planet begins radiating this heat at various rates depending upon the materials involved. Lacking clouds to capture that heat and hold it in, the surface and atmosphere grow increasingly colder through radiative heat loss.

3. Snakes slither away from earthquakes.



The legend dates back to the first account of such behaviour in 373 B.C.E., when snakes and a number of other creatures are said to have hit the 6)_____ highway several days before a major earthquake that 7)_____ on the city of Helice in Greece. But do snakes really have earthquake-predictive powers? Scientists do acknowledge that serpents and other animals can sense earthquakes a few seconds before people do because they are better able to feel the initial wave. The area that remains 8)_____, however, is whether animals can detect a quake days in advance of eruption. Are animals able to feel the ground tilting or electrical or magnetic field variations? As of now, scientists don't know.