

Multimedia Library Collection: Archival Gems

## Photograph: Alfred Wegener's propeller sled *Schneespatz*, 1930

Kehl, Franz



Propeller sled *Schneespatz* (photograph by Franz Kehl, 1930)

© 1930 Franz Kehl. Courtesy of the Alfred-Wegener-Institut für Polar- und Meeresforschung (AWI).

This work is used by permission of the copyright holder.

One of the Wegener exhibition's motorized snow sleds. (© 1930 Franz Kehl. Courtesy of AWI.)

This image appears in: Kehrt, Christian. “[The Wegener Diaries: Scientific Expeditions into the Eternal Ice.](#)” Environment & Society Portal, *Virtual Exhibitions* 2013, no. 2. Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society. <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/7856>.

An essential precondition for Wegener's ambitious scientific program was the construction of an overwintering station in the center of the ice sheet, some four hundred kilometers from either

coast. Thus logistical questions—including the transport of materials, instruments, and supplies—were of utmost importance. The expedition was, however, delayed for several weeks due to the fact that the sea ice had not melted, and the general difficulties of transporting materials across the ice sheet. Furthermore, it was not only very difficult to load the propeller sleds onto the ice, it was also a challenge using this untested new technology for the transport of equipment across the ice. The detailed diary entries from August and September 1930 provide an impression of the drama and the difficulties that confronted Wegener. Propeller sleds occupied a key position, for they were the object of great expectations. On the one hand, Wegener was full of enthusiasm about the new possibility of transporting large loads across wide stretches without stopping. On the other, the failure of the propeller sleds seemed to reflect the failure of the mission in general.

—Christian Kehrt

Read more [here](#) .

**Websites linked in this text:**

- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/exhibitions/wegener-diaries>
- <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/4518/>