

Polynesian Navigation Techniques

The Polynesians were among the best sailors in the world. They could travel to islands thousands of kilometres away and still find their way back. They used a number of sources in nature to help them navigate.



CLOUDS: clouds move more slowly over land than over sea. Nearer land clouds have more colour



STARS: always rise and set at the same place on the horizon

SUN: The sun always rises in the east and

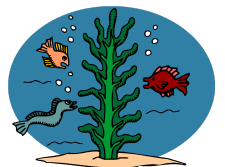


sets in the west.



BIRDS: seabirds fly out from land to their fishing grounds early in the morning and fly home in the evening. Most seabirds fly within 30-50kms of land.

DRIFT OBJECTS: drifting seaweed and other objects show the direction of currents.



UNDERWATER LIGHTNING: streaks of lightning flash out through the water from the direction of land.

WHALES: when Takitimu left Hawaiki a school of whales came to escort the canoe.

