



Framing an Iceberg South Atlantic Ocean

In June 2016, the Suomi NPP satellite captured this image of various cloud formations in the South Atlantic Ocean. Note how low stratus clouds framed a hole over iceberg A-56 as it drifted across the sea.

The exact reason for the hole in the clouds is somewhat of a mystery. It could have formed by chance, although imagery from the days before and after this date suggest something else was at work. It could be that the relatively unobstructed path of the clouds over the ocean surface was interrupted by thermal instability created by the iceberg. In other words, if an obstacle is big enough, it can divert the low-level atmospheric flow of air around it, a phenomenon often caused by islands.