



## **Grounded in the Caspian Kazakhstan**

A wide variety of ice forms in the Caspian Sea, which stretches from Kazakhstan to Iran. Brown areas (top left) are part of the Volga River Delta. Just offshore, a well-developed expanse of consolidated ice appears bright white. Farther offshore, a gray-white field of chunky, hummocked ice has detached and is slowly drifting around a polynya, an area of open water surrounded by sea ice. That darker patch is actually growing young, thin ice and nilas, a term that designates sea ice crust up to 10 centimeters (4 inches) in thickness.

The close-up shows nilas and a white, diamond-shaped piece of ice. It might look like this chunk is on the move, cutting a path through thinner ice. But it's more likely that the "diamond" was stuck to the sea bottom and the wind pushed ice around it.