

A Wonder of the World, Ice Circles

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Photograph © Kaylyn Messer

Nature is Astonishing

The forces at play in nature are nothing short of astounding. The sheer artistry that unfolds within nature's embrace will leave you pondering the mysteries of our environment. The things created in nature and the environment alone will have you question everything that happens in it.

When you think of nature, it's often the beautiful breathtaking landscapes that come to mind. The gentle flow of a river under clear skies, framed by magnificent mountains in the distance, or the serene beauty of the world's landscapes in freshly fallen snow. Nature also displays its beauty with devastating power in volcanic eruptions, shaping and reshaping the landscape.

What's amazing about nature is how specific phenomena can happen in environments completely void of human activity. The beauty of these environments is a work of art. They're masterpieces on Earth's landscape.

We're all familiar with snow, each snowflake a unique work of art on its own. However, there exists another captivating wonder of nature, ice circles. They are exactly as the name suggests, slow-rotating circles of ice that can be found in rivers in cold climates, especially in North America and Scandinavia.

How Are Ice Circles Formed

In order for these ice circles to form there has to be a delicate balance between the eddies of slow-moving rivers and the temperature of the river has to be at freezing or below freezing. An eddy is a fluid dynamics term that means the swirling of a fluid, which can cause a reverse current when the fluid flows past an obstacle. This is the reason why it is a delicate balance, if the river is moving too fast then the eddies can be disrupted, however, if it is moving too slow then the eddies can freeze. The river has to be moving at just the right speed so that the eddies are not disrupted, and cold enough that the eddy forms, but slowly freezes over a period of time which will eventually cause a circle of ice to form and continue moving in the direction of the eddy.

These ice circles will most often be seen around bends in rivers, where there is a higher chance of an eddy forming. These ice circles can vary in size, but have been recorded to get as big as 50 feet in diameter and are generally found in North America and Scandinavia, although can also be found in other places around the world with cold climates.

This is a testament to the astonishing beauty and complexity of nature, a constant source of wonder that never ceases to amaze.

Information from here. (<https://www.geolounge.com/ice-circles/>)

Photo of ice circle by Kaylyn Messer