

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 alone will have you question everything that happens in it.

When you think of nature, it is often the beautiful breathtaking landscapes that come to mind, such as 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.

Most of us are familiar with snow, where each snowflake is a unique work of art. However, there is another fascinating wonder of nature called ice circles. These are slow-rotating circles of ice that are found in rivers in cold climates, especially in North America and Scandinavia.

How Are Ice Circles Formed

Ice circles can only form when there is a delicate balance between the eddies of a slow-moving river and the temperature of the river, which has to be either at freezing or below it. Eddies refer to the swirling movement of a liquid, which can create a reverse current when the fluid flows past an obstruction. These swirling movements are where ice circles begin. This balance is crucial because if the river is moving too fast, the eddies can be disrupted, and if it is moving too slowly, the eddies can freeze. Therefore, the river has to move at just the right speed to allow the eddies to form without being disrupted, and the temperature has to be cold enough to freeze the eddy over time, eventually resulting in a circle of ice that will continue to move in the direction of the eddy.

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Ice circles frequently appear around bends in rivers where eddies have a higher chance of forming. These ice circles can vary in size but have been recorded to get as big as 50 feet in diameter. They are generally found in North America and Scandinavia, although they are 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