



Extraordinary Winter Lake Phenomena

Lakes are extraordinary, and, in New Hampshire, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to enjoy them in many ways throughout the year. During summer, we can wade, swim, and boat in them to cool off. During winter when the temperature drops and they safely freeze over, we can bundle up, put on snowshoes, ice-skates, or cross country skis, and venture across them.

Some might think that winter is a time when the lake is quiet and in a state of rest—this isn't necessarily the case! While out enjoying our lakes during winter you might observe some extraordinary—and rare—natural phenomena!

Singing lakes?

Frozen lakes have the ability to create their own, unique music and the sound can be unbelievable—often described as electronic music or sound effects that would accompany lasers. As the temperature fluctuates during winter, lake ice expands and contracts. The freezing and thawing causes the ice to move, sending sound waves throughout the ice. The sounds, which can be haunting to those on the ice, may seem nearly impossible to be a natural phenomenon and are heard best when the ice is free from snow cover and when major temperature fluctuations occur. **To hear some amazing examples of winter lake music, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=OC7_zpyqCrU.**

Ice boulders?

Take a walk along the lake during winter and you might notice large, perfectly rounded balls of ice lining the shore. No, your neighbor isn't preparing for a huge snowball fight (we don't recommend throwing the frozen balls as they can be very heavy); the lake made these! When chunks of ice break off from ice sheets, they may continue to grow. The growing chunks may then tumble through the waves, their edges being rounded and smoothed until a perfect ball is formed and washed ashore.

Erupting ice needles?

As spring approaches and temperatures steadily rise, you might be one of the lucky few to observe a natural phenomenon known as 'ice chandeliering' and described by some observers as "an eruption of ice needles at the water's edge." When temperatures warm, the ice cover on lakes becomes increasingly weak and brittle as it thaws during the day and refreezes during the night. After several of these cycles, the ice sheet resembles what looks like a honeycomb containing thin, needle-like ice crystals. The winds then blow the ice toward shore. Along the shoreline,



Ice boulders

(Photo source: www.nydailynews.com)

the ice crystals may be pushed out of the ice sheet, piling on top of each other and creating a beautiful, but quite loud, spectacle. **To see a fascinating video of ice chandeliering, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_uWsRM-vSg.**

If you explore the lake this winter and happen upon any of these phenomena or other unexplained happenings, please share with us your experience! Of course, before you go out on the ice, we encourage you to prepare for a safe trip—for ice safety tips, visit <https://www.wildlife.state.nh.us/outdoor-recreation/documents/ice-safety.pdf>.

NH LAKES is the only statewide, member-supported nonprofit organization working to keep New Hampshire's lakes clean and healthy, now and in the future. The organization works with partners, promotes clean water policies and responsible use, and inspires the public to care for our lakes. For information, visit www.nhlakes.org, email info@nhlakes.org, or call 603.226.0299.

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