

## Giant snowballs appear on Russian beach in Siberia

5 November 2016

Europe section of BBC



Natural snowballs of varying sizes have covered part of the Gulf of Ob

A strange and beautiful sight greeted locals in the Gulf of Ob, in northwest Siberia, after thousands of natural snowballs formed on the beach.

An 11-mile (18km) stretch of coast was covered in the icy spheres.

The sculptural shapes range from the size of a tennis ball to almost 1m (3ft) across.

They result from a rare environmental process where small pieces of ice form, are rolled by wind and water, and end up as giant snowballs.

Locals in the village of Nyda, which lies on the Yamal Peninsula just above the Arctic Circle, say they have never seen anything to compare to them.



Locals in the frosty region say the ice balls were a complete surprise



Alexei Primak captured an amazing "snowball wall" formed from the melting spheres



Image caption

The village of Nyda lies just above the Arctic Circle

Russian TV quoted an explanation from Sergei Lisenkov, press secretary of the Arctic and Antarctic Research Institute:

"As a rule, first there is a primary natural phenomenon - sludge ice, slob ice. Then comes a combination of the effects of the wind, the lay of the coastline, and the temperature and wind conditions.

"It can be such an original combination that it results in the formation of balls like these."