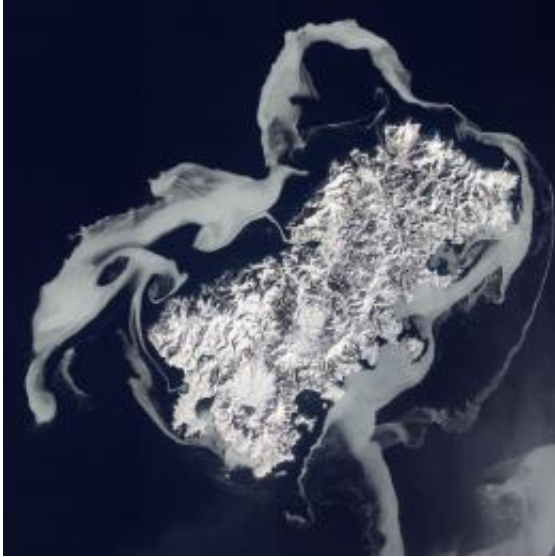


Ghostly, Ethereal Island as seen from space

February 22 2011, By Nancy Atkinson



The volcanic island Ostrov Shikotan as seen by The Advanced Land Imager (ALI) on NASA's Earth Observing-1 (EO-1) satellite. Credit: NASA

Looking rather otherworldly, this haunting view of Shikotan-to island shows ghostly swirls of sea ice surrounding the snow-covered volcanic island. Also known as Ostrov Shikotan, this island is at the southern end of a volcanic archipelago called the Kuril Chain, which is part of the Pacific Ring of Fire. The chain stretches approximately 1,300 km (810 mi) northeast from Japan, off the coast of Russia. The Advanced Land Imager (ALI) on NASA's Earth Observing-1 (EO-1) satellite captured this natural-color image of Shikotan on February 14, 2011.

When the ice around the island forms, it is shaped by the moving

currents – giving it a swirly appearance. North of the western end of Shikotan, eddies have shaped the ice into rough circles.

The island’s rugged appearance comes from millions of years of volcanic and seismic activity, multiple tsunamis, and weathering from wind and rain. The total land area of Shikotan is 225 square km.

Although this island is a part of Russia, [Japan](#) maintains a claim to it as well. And although you wouldn’t guess it from this image, there are two different settlements of about 1,000 people each. The name of Shikotan derives from an ancient Japanese dialect and means “land with big communities.”

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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