

What created this huge crater in Siberia?

July 17 2014, by Jason Major



n 80-meter-wide crater recently discovered in northern Siberia (video screenshot)

What is it with Russia and explosive events of cosmic origins? The 1908 Tunguska Explosion, the Chelyabinsk bolide of February 2013, and now this: an enormous 80-meter wide crater discovered in the Yamal peninsula in northern Siberia!

To be fair, this [crater](#) is not currently thought to be from a [meteorite impact](#) but rather an eruption from below, possibly the result of a rapid

release of gas trapped in what was once frozen permafrost. The Yamal region is rich in oil and [natural gas](#), and the crater is located 30 km away from its largest gas field. Still, a team of researchers are en route to investigate the mysterious hole further.

Watch a video captured by engineer Konstantin Nikolaev during a helicopter flyover below.

In the video the Yamal crater/hole has what appear to be streams of dry material falling into it. Its depth has not yet been determined.

Bill Chappell writes on NPR's "The Two-Way":

"The list of possible natural explanations for the giant hole includes a meteorite strike and a gas explosion, or possibly an eruption of underground ice."

Dark material around the inner edge of the hole seems to suggest high temperatures during its formation. But rather than the remains of a violent impact by a space rock—or the crash-landing of a UFO, as some have already speculated—this crater may be a particularly explosive result of [global warming](#).

According to The Siberian Times:

"Anna Kurchatova from Sub-Arctic Scientific Research Centre thinks the crater was formed by a water, salt and gas mixture igniting an underground explosion, the result of global warming. She postulates that [gas](#) accumulated in ice mixed with sand beneath the surface, and that this was mixed with salt – some 10,000 years ago this area was a sea."

The crater is thought to have formed sometime in 2012.

Source: [Universe Today](#)

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