

Huge ice chunks are giving parts of Cape Cod an arctic vibe

March 12 2015, byStephan Savoia



Curious onlookers walk around large chunks of sea ice washed up on Wellfleet Harbor Beach and left stranded at low tide Thursday, March 12, 2015, in Wellfleet, Mass. Icebergs aren't a common sight in Massachusetts, but massive chunks of ice have washed up on some beaches. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia)

Parts of Cape Cod look a little bit like the Arctic Circle this week.

Icebergs aren't a common sight in Massachusetts, but massive chunks of ice have washed up on some beaches—and they're drawing curious onlookers.

Children have been climbing some of the icy mammoths that cropped up along Duck Harbor Beach in Wellfleet. Despite a brief warmup earlier this week, there were still big chunks 5½ to 6 feet high on the beach Thursday.

"It's amazing. They're like mini-icebergs," said Jessica Hornung, 33, who drove up from Connecticut with her three young children just to check out the unusual sight.

"It would be awesome if there were a polar bear on one of them," she joked.

Technically, the chunks aren't icebergs, which are defined as large pieces that break off glaciers or polar ice shelves.

Instead, meteorologists say, they're fragments from the extraordinary amount of ice that built up in Massachusetts Bay and were carried by currents into Cape Cod Bay and the Cape Cod Canal—a startling reminder of an epic winter that held much of New England in an icy grip for weeks.

Michelle Norcross, of Chatham, ventured out with her husband and daughter Thursday to snap photographs of the huge chunks at low tide, when they're most visible.



Cylus Kellereher, 7, of Portsmouth, N.H., jumps of an iceberg onto the beach at Wellfleet Harbor, Thursday, March 12, 2015, in Wellfleet, Mass. Icebergs aren't a common sight in Massachusetts, but massive chunks of ice have washed up on some beaches. Cylus came to see the rare Cape Cod icebergs with his grandparents. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia)

Some of the pieces are so big they dwarf humans.

"I'm hoping they're right when they say this is a once-in-a-generation occurrence. It's beautiful, but it's very unusual," she said.

"I don't want this to happen every year. It's kind of freaky."

Local officials say the ice chunks are melting and the phenomenon won't last long.

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