

Karman Vortices

Each of these swirling clouds is a result of a meteorological phenomenon known as a Karman vortex. These vortices appeared over Alexander Selkirk Island in the southern Pacific Ocean. Rising precipitously from the surrounding waters, the island's highest point is nearly a mile (1.6 km) above sea level. As wind-driven clouds encounter this obstacle, they flow around it to form these large, spinning eddies.

Landsat 7 data acquired 9/15/1999

1" = 4.3 miles (6.9 km)

