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Ship Wave Clouds Over the Crozet Archipelago

If you've ever found yourself mesmerized by that v-shaped bow wave created by the hull of a ship as it pushes through the water, you might be interested to learn that it doesn't actually matter whether it's the ship or the water that's moving. If one were to, let's say, replace the ship with a 2,500-foot-high dormant volcano and the water with a moist air mass, you might end up with something that looks like this.

Clouds can form anytime around the Crozet Islands in the southern Indian Ocean. On May 5, 2014 however, moisture condenses from a smooth flowing air mass as it is forced up the mountain slope. The resulting clouds split evenly around the enormous obstruction on Ile aux Cochons (Pig Island), and with no turbulence to distort their shape, produce a series of ship wave clouds that form a natural vector describing the direction and velocity of the air.

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