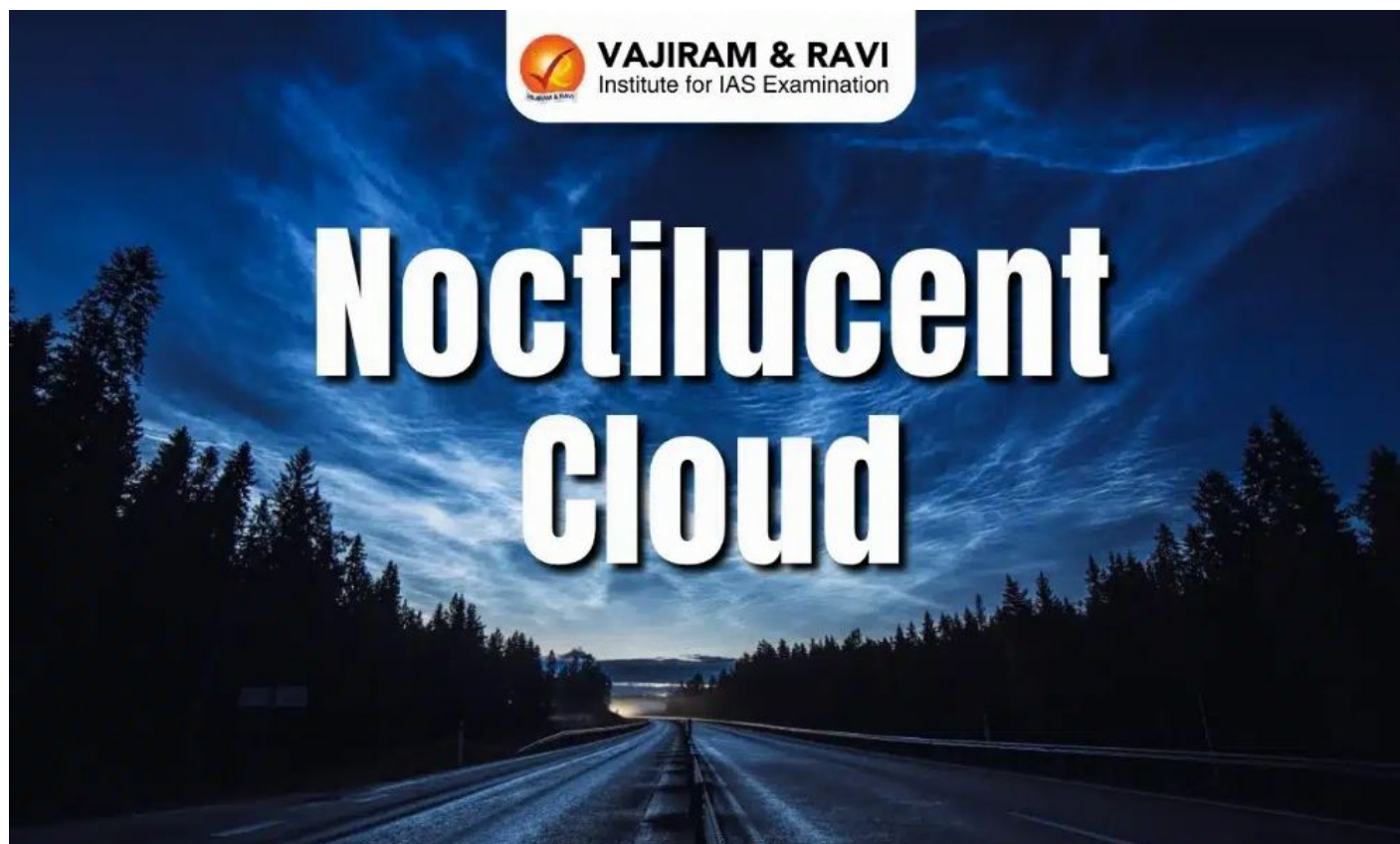


Noctilucent Clouds

July 15, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



Noctilucent Clouds Latest News

Rare noctilucent clouds that form in summer high up in the Earth's atmosphere have been recently seen from parts of Scotland.

About Noctilucent Clouds

- They are **thin, wispy clouds** that **glow with a blue or silvery hue at night when illuminated by sunlight from below the horizon**.
 - **Horizon** refers to the apparent **line that separates the Earth from the sky**—specifically, the point below which the Sun appears to set.
- The name 'noctilucent' is derived from the Latin words "nocto" and "lucent" which translates to "night" and "shining" respectively.
- They are sometimes referred to as **polar mesospheric clouds**.
- Most of our planet's clouds form in the Earth's troposphere. Noctilucent clouds are **located in** the third layer of Earth's atmosphere, the **mesosphere, making them Earth's highest clouds**.

- They **only appear during the summer months**, and **only at latitudes between about 45 and 80 degrees** north or south of the equator.
- In the **Northern Hemisphere**, they can appear from the **end of May to the beginning of August**, with sightings more likely during June and July.
- In the **Southern Hemisphere**, noctilucent cloud sightings are **much rarer**, but they can be visible from the **end of November to the beginning of February**, with sightings most likely during December and January.
- In these months and at the right latitudes, the **Sun only just sets below the horizon at nighttime**.
 - That means these very **high clouds** can still be **lit by bright sunlight from below**, even though the **rest of the surface is in darkness** – making the **clouds appear to glow**.
 - The **Sun sets increasingly less below the horizon the further north** you go, which means **northern latitudes** will experience noctilucent clouds for longer during the night.

How are Noctilucent Clouds Formed?

- They are **formed of ice crystals**; in the **summer** the **mesosphere becomes cold enough** to allow **ice to form on suspended dust particles** floating in the atmosphere.
- The **dust particles** may originate **from micrometeorites falling to Earth** from space, or the **dust left over from volcanic eruptions**.
- Humans have also accidentally seeded our own noctilucent clouds through the **exhausts of rockets** propelled into space.

The **ice crystals** that form **reflect the sunlight when** the **Sun hits them from below**, causing the clouds' characteristic shimmer.

Source: [BBC](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/noctilucent-clouds/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.