

Hawaii coast line collapses, lava flows

December 1 2005

A 40-acre section of the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's coastline collapsed this week, producing a six-foot-thick geyser of molten rock.

The Tuesday collapse exposed a 60-foot cliff face, with the lava spurting from a lava tube that was ripped open. But the lava geyser was quickly disappearing as the molten flow hardened and began forming a new coastal rock bench, the Honolulu Advertiser reported Thursday.

The collapse was the largest since the Kilanea Volcano began erupting in 1983, the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory said.

The event started shortly before noon Tuesday and continued for several hours, accompanied by explosions, flying gobs of molten rock, and boulder missiles, the Advertiser reported.

The collapse opened an underground stream of lava that flowed from the cliff face at the rate of about four truckloads of lava per second, rangers told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

State officials had kept visitors away from the area since June, following warnings from geologists of an imminent collapse.

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