

# Latest eruption at Hawaii's Kilauea takes breather

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In this photo taken Tuesday, March 8, 2011 and provided by the US Geological Survey, a view looking down onto the northeastern vent of the Kamoamoao eruption is seen in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park on the Island of Hawaii. The latest eruption from Hawaii's Kilauea volcano is decreasing in activity and has taken a breather from spewing out lava. (AP Photo/US Geological Survey)

Kilauea volcano's latest eruption has decreased in activity and taken a breather from furiously spewing out lava for five days.

The Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory said Thursday that the Kamoamoao fissure eruption that started Saturday "paused" by 10:30 p.m. Wednesday, with lava starting to recede from the channels a few hours earlier. Seismic activity and sulfur dioxide levels are also down but remain above normal.

"Our take is that it's paused," volcanologist Janet Babb said. "We're not using the word 'stopped.'"

Kamoamoia has paused before, but not for this long. And a break can last anywhere from hours to days, Babb said. Scientists headed back to the remote east rift zone Thursday to see if the eruption had restarted but no activity was observed as of 3 p.m. HT.

Kamoamoia has been unleashing loads of lava and gasses since the fissure cracked open Saturday. Lava shot as high as 100 feet and low-level fountains created several fiery lava flows, blanketing more than 120 acres.

Kilauea, one of the world's most active volcanoes, has been in constant eruption since Jan. 3, 1983. The latest eruption is in the same area of the east rift where it started 28 years ago.

Because of the volcanic activity, the National Park Service has closed the Chain of Craters Road and all east rift and coastal trails, along with a campground until further notice. However, the park's most popular overlooks and summit trails remain open.

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