

Exploding meteor wakes Niue with a start

August 8 2011

An exploding meteor was believed to be responsible for a huge bang that reverberated around the Pacific island nation of Niue last week, police said Monday.

Niue police chief Mark Chenery said the loud bang on Wednesday night woke the island's 1,200 residents and he initially thought a boat had exploded in the harbour.

Chenery said there was widespread speculation about the cause of the noise but the Carter observatory in New Zealand had told him it was likely to be a meteor exploding 20 kilometres (12.5 miles) high in the [atmosphere](#).

"There was a large (noise), a huge clap of thunder but it was its normal starry night outside," he told Radio New Zealand.

"People have described seeing a white light, like a flare, shooting across the sky. Niue is 64 kilometres around and it was heard in Lakepa in the northwest down to Avasele in the southeast, so it was certainly heard island-wide."

Chenery said there were no reports of damage.

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