

New Zealand volcano lets off steam

August 20 2013



This image taken from a webcam on the White Island crater rim and released by the Institute of Geological and Nuclear Sciences (IGNS) via the GeoNet monitoring service on August 20, 2013 shows steam rising from the White Island Volcano off the North Island's Bay of Plenty.

A volcano off New Zealand sent a plume of steam two kilometres (1.24 miles) into the air Tuesday, although volcanologists described the eruption as small and said it was over in minutes.

The GeoNet monitoring service said White Island, an uninhabited

landmark off the North Island's Bay of Plenty, erupted at 10:23am (2223 Monday GMT).

"The eruption appears to have continued for about 10 minutes and mainly produced steam," it said, issuing an aviation warning for the area around the island but reporting no damage.

The volcanic activity is not believed to be related to a 6.5-magnitude earthquake which rocked Wellington Friday on the other side of the North Island.

New Zealand has a number of [active volcanoes](#).

Mount Tongariro, in the middle of the North Island, rumbled to life on two occasions last year after lying dormant for more than a century, spewing out clouds of ash that disrupted air traffic.

An eruption at Mount Ruapehu in 1953 caused New Zealand's worst rail disaster when it triggered a massive mudslide that washed away a bridge, causing a [passenger train](#) to plunge into the Whangaehu River with the loss of 151 lives.

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