

Hawaii volcano offers view of rolling, spattering lava (Update)

September 12 2016



In this Sept. 10, 2016, photo released by the U.S. Geological Survey shows the east edge of Halemaumau Crater spattering lava at the south corner of the Kilauea's summit lake after it rose over the weekend, to within about 5 m (16 ft) of the floor of Halemaumau Crater, before dropping back down slightly with the onset of spattering in the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, in Hawaii. (Tim Orr/U.S. Geological Survey via AP)

The lava lake at the summit of Hawaii's Kilauea volcano has been rising in recent days, offering visitors a dramatic view of rolling, spattering hot rock.

Hawaiian Volcano Observatory research scientist Don Swanson said Monday scientists don't know exactly why the lava is this high.

It's relatively unusual, though. Lava overflowed onto the crater floor in May of last year, raising the rim that confines the lake by another 30 feet. Before last year, it was last this high in the 1974 and in the late 1960s.

Swanson says the lake is particularly colorful to watch at night from the Jaggar Museum at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. "People from the museum can see the incandescent lava and watch the spattering that's taking place along the edge of the lake," Swanson said.

He encouraged people to take a look for themselves. "It's really quite pretty," he said.

Kilauea volcano has been erupting continuously since 1983. It is one of the world's most active volcanoes.

It is currently erupting from two places. One is from the summit's Halemaumau crater. The other is from the Puu Oo crater in the volcano's eastern rift. Lava recently started flowing into the ocean from the latter eruption for the first time in three years.



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