

Beat: Travel

Powerful earthquake strikes near Falkland Islands, no damage

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USPA News - A powerful earthquake struck off the Falkland Islands in the south Atlantic Ocean on early Monday morning, seismologists said, but there were no reports of damage or casualties. It was the region's largest earthquake ever recorded.

The 7.0-magnitude earthquake at 2:27 a.m. local time (06:27 GMT) was centered in the Atlantic Ocean about 314 kilometers (195 miles) southeast of Stanley, the capital of the Falkland Islands. It struck about 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Some residents on the islands reported being woken by the earthquake, but there were no immediate reports of damage or casualties. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center initially cautioned about a small possibility of a local or regional tsunami that could have affected nearby coastlines, but no unusual sea level changes were recorded in the hours after the earthquake. "A destructive widespread tsunami threat does not exist based on historical earthquake and tsunami data," the center said in a bulletin. The tremor was the largest of five earthquakes exceeding magnitude 5 that occurred in roughly the same area over approximately two hours, including a 5.6-magnitude earthquake that struck just 24 seconds prior to the large quake. It marked the largest earthquake ever recorded near the Falkland Islands, which is a self-governing British overseas territory but is also claimed by Argentina. "Though this region experiences moderate-sized earthquakes relatively frequently, large events are fairly uncommon," USGS seismologists said about Monday's earthquake. They said the agency recorded only 15 earthquakes exceeding magnitude 5 within 250 kilometers (155 miles) of Monday's earthquake epicenter over the past 40 years, the largest being a 6.6-magnitude earthquake in September 1993.

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