

Beat: Miscellaneous

UPDATE 5 -- Powerful quake off Canada's west coast triggers small tsunami

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USPA News - A powerful and shallow earthquake struck a largely unpopulated island off Canada's west coast on Saturday evening, generating a small tsunami which hit coastlines in British Columbia, Alaska, along the U.S. West Coast, and in the U.S. state of Hawaii, officials said. There were no casualties.

The 7.7-magnitude earthquake at 8:04 p.m. local time (0304 GMT Sunday) was centered on Moresby Island in the Queen Charlotte Islands, or about 202 kilometers (126 miles) south-southwest of the Canadian port city of Prince Rupert. It struck about 17.5 kilometers (10.9 miles) deep, making it a shallow earthquake, according to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The agency estimated some 9,000 people near the epicenter may have experienced "moderate" to "strong" shaking which could result in light to moderate damage while around 103,000 others may have felt "light" tremors. Computer models showed major damage was unlikely, and there were only reports of minor damage. "A major earthquake occurred in the Haida Gwaii region," the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC) said on its website. "It was felt across much of north-central BC, including Haida Gwaii (the Queen Charlotte Islands), Prince Rupert, Quesnel, and Houston. There have been no reports of damage at this time." A tsunami warning was immediately issued for nearby coastal areas, prompting thousands of people in the warning area to move inland or to higher ground. The largest tsunami wave near the epicenter, relative to normal sea level, was a 50-centimeter (19.6-inch) wave off the coast of Langara Island in British Columbia. As small tsunami waves were being recorded along the coasts of British Columbia, Alaska, and the U.S. West Coast, a tsunami warning was issued several hours later for the U.S. state of Hawaii. The warning prompted more than 100,000 people to evacuate, but tsunami wave activity peaked at just 76 centimeters (2.5 feet) in Kahului on the island of Maui. Saturday's earthquake was one of the largest earthquakes ever recorded in Canada. In November 2004, a strong 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck off Vancouver Island, generating a small tsunami but causing no damage or casualties. The country's deadliest quake on record happened in 1774, when a powerful quake of unknown magnitude killed at least 300 people on the island of Newfoundland.

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