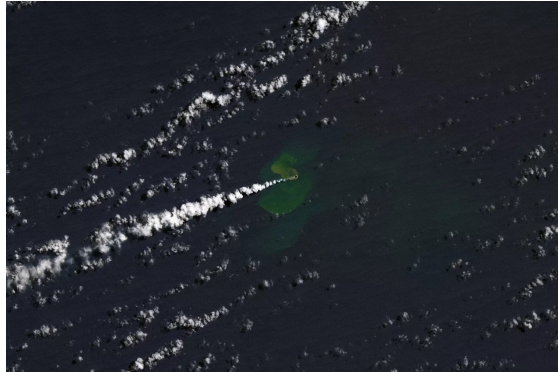


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# Underwater Volcanic Eruption Creates New Island In Tonga

BY ASHLEY ALVARADO - 244 WORDS



The September 10, 2022 eruption of the Home Reef seamount has resulted in a new island (Credit: USGS)

The Polynesian Kingdom of Tonga is home to a new island. The land mass results from the **lava** and ash **spewed** by the Home Reef seamount, an **undersea** volcano that came to life on September 10, 2022. While the volcano has been **erupting** steadily since, it **poses** no risk to the residents of the South Pacific **archipelago**.

The **circular** island began to form about 33 feet (10 meters) above sea level within just 11 hours of the **initial** eruption. The newly-formed land mass **measured** just one acre (about 4,000 square meters) on September 14, 2022. But recent satellite imagery from the US Geological Services indicates that the baby island now **extends** an **impressive** 6 acres (24,000 square meters)!



**Figure 4:** WorldView-3 satellite imagery at 1:2,000 of Home Reef captured at 10:40 AM, Wed, 28th Sep-22 showing the effusive lava flow eruption forming the island. The island measured 268m

North-South and 283m West-East with an approximated area of 15 acres.

The circular island has grown steadily since September 14, 2022 (Credit: USGS)

Before packing your bags, be warned that the **emergent** island is far from a tropical **paradise**. In fact, it is not even **sturdy** enough to walk upon yet. "It's more like a large layer of ash, steam, and **pumice** over the ocean," Rennie Vaikomunga, a **geologist** at the Tonga Geological Services, told the *Washington Post*.

NASA researchers do not believe the new island will be around for too long. Land masses from underwater eruptions typically get **eroded** by ocean waves and currents within a short period of time. However, there have been some **exceptions**. An island created by the 1995 eruption of the nearby Late'iki volcano lasted 25 years. Whether the newly-born Home Reef island will survive for that long **remains** to be seen.

Resources: NPR.com, Washingtonpost.com, earthobservatory.nasa.com, space.com

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