



Lava Lake Found on Frozen Island Near Antarctica

What are lava lakes?

- Lava lakes are lakes of molten lava found in a crater of a volcano.
- There are only eight permanent lava lakes in the world.

Scientists have found a rare lake of fiery lava in a rather unusual place — on a frozen island next to Antarctica!

The South Sandwich Islands are a group of tiny subantarctic islands, only about a thousand miles from the Antarctic coast.

It's an incredibly cold place, usually covered in snow and spends much of the year surrounded by sea ice.

However, in the middle of one of these remote and icy islands, scientists have discovered a blazing lava lake!

The molten lake is inside the volcano of Mount Michael on Saunders Island, one of the South Sandwich Islands. The lake could be up to 215m wide — that's about the size of two football pitches!

Scientists think that the temperature of the lava inside the lake could be about 1000°C or ten times the heat needed to boil water.

For over 20 years, scientists have suspected that Mount Michael had a permanent lake of lava inside it; the volcano's heat suggested a source of magma inside.

Unfortunately, it was incredibly hard to find out for sure. The volcano is very steep and nearly a thousand metres tall.

To make things even more tricky for explorers, the thick snow on the volcano is far too powdery to walk on. Anyone trying to reach the top would have to dig their way through.

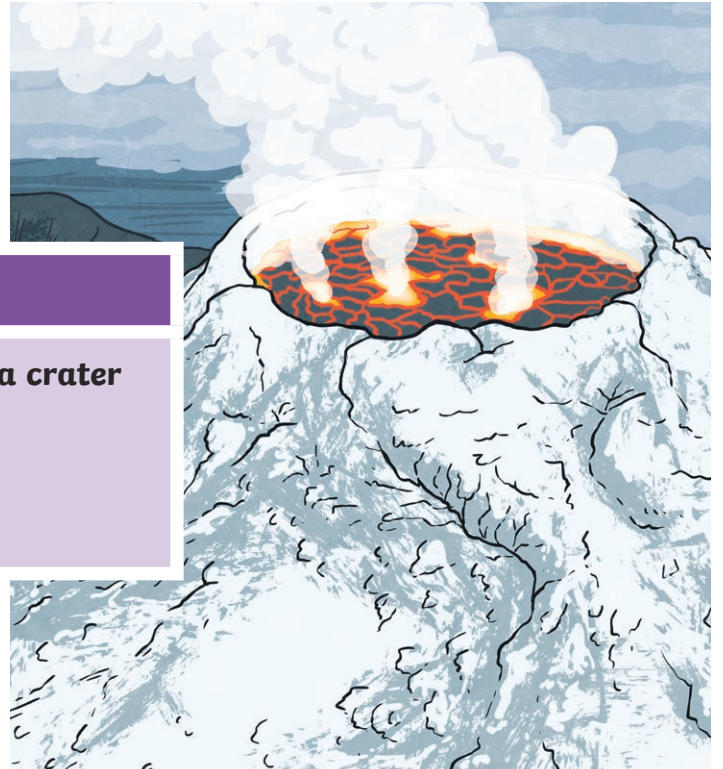


Illustration: The lava lake on Mount Michael.

That's wouldn't exactly be safe to do on the side of an active volcano!

Instead, scientists used satellite images to examine deep inside the volcano. There, they found clear evidence of a molten lava lake.

These lava lakes are incredibly rare — across the entire world there are only eight! Shockingly, however, it's not the only Antarctic lava lake. Mount Erubus, on Antarctica, also has a swirling lava lake.

This discovery just shows how many wonders of the world we have yet to discover!

Glossary

lava	Hot, molten rock which has come from a volcano or fissure.
molten	melted and turned to liquid by intense heat.
volcano	A mountain or hill with a crater through which lava has erupted.
magma	Hot fluid rock found beneath the Earth's crust.

Questions

1. Find a word in the opening paragraph which means very hot.

2. Find two reasons why Mount Michael volcano is hard to explore.

1. _____

2. _____

3. 'Instead, scientists used satellite images to examine deep inside the volcano.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'examine' in this sentence.

exit

study

test

travel

4. Why do you think scientists are excited by this discovery?

5. How many larva lakes are there in the Antarctic or subantarctic region?

6. Tick the headline you think best summarises this news story.

Lava Lake in Antarctica Freezes Over

Yet Another Lava Lake Discovered

Explorers Travel to South Sandwich Islands

Scientists Excited by Rare Lava Lake

7. Do you think scientists will discover any more lava lakes in the future? Explain your answer.

Answers

1. Find a word in the opening paragraph which means very hot.

fiery

2. Find two reasons why Mount Michael volcano is hard to explore.

Accept any two answers from it is very steep, it is nearly a thousand metres tall or explorers would have to dig their way through powdery snow to reach the top.

3. 'Instead, scientists used satellite images to examine deep inside the volcano.'

Tick the word which is closest in meaning to 'examine' in this sentence.

- exit
 study
 test
 travel

4. Why do you think scientists are excited by this discovery?

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to how rare larva lakes are, e.g. I think scientists are excited this discovery as larva lakes are very rare and it's surprising to find one in the Antarctic region.

5. How many larva lakes are there in the Antarctic or subantarctic region?

two

6. Tick the headline you think best summarises this news story.

- Lava Lake in Antarctica Freezes Over
 Yet Another Lava Lake Discovered
 Explorers Travel to South Sandwich Islands
 Scientists Excited by Rare Lava Lake

7. Do you think scientists will discover any more lava lakes in the future? Explain your answer.

Accept any reasonable answer which refers to the news story, e.g. I think scientists will find more lava lakes in the future as the news story says that there are many wonders of the world we have yet to discover.