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| Curtsey To Surtsey Friday, November 12th 2010 |

By Sydney Franks

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ow down to Surtsey because not only did it provide shelter for animals and research for scientists, but it also didn’t cause any damage. Surtsey has had many eruptions in the time frame of 1963-1967. With all of these eruptions from Surtsey piling layers of lava on top of each other an island was formed, also called Surtsey. Surtsey is the newest island on the planet.



Surtsey is located in the icy waters south of Iceland 33 kilometers from the mainland of Iceland. Surtsey coordinates are 63 ˚N and 20 ˚W. The North American Plate and the Eurasian Plate spread apart and magma filled up the gap which created an underwater mountain chain, that included Surtsey, which erupted to form an island. Surtsey’s first eruption began on November 8th, 1963, but was visible above sea level November 15th, 1963; the eruptions ended on June 5th, 1967. Surtsey sits on the middle of a divergent boundary. Some people believe that there is a hot spot in the mantle below Surtsey, but others believe that a submarine volcano that was 130 meters below sea level created Surtsey. Surtsey is also an active volcano.

Surtsey is a harmless and helpful volcano. It created good things instead of a great deal of damage. There were no fatalities during the eruptions because they took place in the middle of the sea. The good things that Surtsey did is that it created a new place from animals and insects to live. Surtsey inhabits 12 species of birds, grey seals, starfish, sea urchins, limpets, slugs, flies, butterflies, spiders, beetles, and other insects. Surtsey also provided research for scientists to study about the volcano, island formation, and life on the island. Using a small hut for shelter, scientists stayed on Surtsey and collected this data. The only other human made object on Surtsey is an abandoned lighthouse foundation.

Surtsey was named for Surtur, a giant of fire in Icelandic mythology. Surtsey erupted magma and ash. It was the longest eruption to occur in the history of Iceland. The volcanic ash clouds produced by Surtsey separated electrical charges, which caused many lightning storms. The first few days of eruptions were a gentle flow of lava, but when the volcano reached sea level the water pressure decreased and activity became explosive. Surtsey is part of the Vestmannaeyjar submarine volcano system. Surtsey is now 1.5 kilometers in diameter and has an area of 2.8 square kilometers.

While we are on the subject of volcanoes here are some interesting facts about them.

- There are 1,500 active volcanoes in the

world.

- Magma comes from the Greek word

meaning “dough”.

- There are no active volcanoes in Australia.

- The word volcano has its origin from the

name Vulcan, a god of fire in Roman

mythology.

- About 500 million people live close to an

active volcano.

- As you are reading this, 20 active volcanoes

are erupting.

- Olympus Mons, Mars is the highest volcano

in the Solar System.

- More than 80% of Earth’s surface is

volcanic in origin.

- The danger area around a volcano covers a

20-mile radius.



Volcanoes can be very dangerous, so we are lucky that Surtsey was peaceful. If you would like to visit Surtsey you will need to get a permit from the Surtsey Research Society. If you do go visit Surtsey you must not disturb anything on the island or use firearms within 2 kilometers from the island. Even with these rules, Surtsey would be a fun and educational trip to make.

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