

For the publishing house, see Éditions Karthala.

Mount Karthala or Karthola (Arabic: القرمالة Al Qirṭālah) is an active volcano and the highest point of the Comoros at 2,361 m (7,746 ft) above sea level. It is the southernmost and larger of the two shield volcanoes forming Grande Comore island, the largest island in the nation of Comoros. The Karthala volcano is very active, having erupted more than 20 times since the 19th century. Frequent eruptions have shaped the volcano's 3 km by 4 km summit caldera, but the island has largely escaped broad destruction. Eruptions on April 17, 2005 and May 29, 2006 ended a period of quiet.

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Volcanic activity[edit]

April 2005 eruption[edit]

The eruption, which carried a risk of lava flows and deadly volcanic gas, caused the evacuation of 30,000 residents. The crater was clearly changed by the eruption. A grey field of ash surrounds the crater and the caldera itself seems larger and deeper. The crater lake, which formed after Karthala's last eruption in 1991 and once dominated the caldera, is now gone completely. In its place were rough, dark grey rocks, possibly cooling lava or rubble from the collapsed crater.

May 2006 activity[edit]

On May 29, Reuters reported that residents of Moroni could see lava spewing at the top of the volcano.[4] Within a few days the volcanic activity subsided.

Flora and fauna[edit]

The mountain is covered by moist evergreen forest up to about 1800 metres above sea-level. Higher up the vegetation consists of stunted trees and heathland where the giant heather *Erica comorensis* grows. The mountain's forest is threatened by logging and the spread of agriculture. Many of the species found on the mountain are unique to the Comoros and four bird species are found only on the slopes of Mount Karthala: Grand Comoro drongo, Humblot's flycatcher, Karthala scops owl, and Karthala white-eye.

Important Bird Area[edit]

A 14,228 ha (35,160-acre) tract encompassing the upper slopes and summit of the mountain has been designated an Important Bird Area (IBA) by BirdLife International, because it supports populations of Comoros blue pigeons, Comoros fodies, Comoros olive pigeons, Comoros thrushes, Grand Comoro brush warblers, Grand Comoro bulbuls, Grand Comoro drongos, Humblot's flycatchers, Humblot's sunbirds, Karthala scops owls, Karthala white-eyes, and Malagasy harriers.[5]

Karthala National Park[edit]

Karthala National Park

Parc National du Karthala

Coordinates 11°46′S 43°21′E﻿ / ﻿11.767°S 43.350°E﻿ / -11.767; 43.350

Area 26,214 ha (101.21 sq mi)

Designation National park

Designated 2010

Administrator Comoros National Parks Authority

Ramsar Wetland

Designated 12 November 2006

Reference no. 1649[6]

Karthala National Park protects an area of 262.14 km² on the mountain. It was designated in 2010.[7]

See also[edit]

List of Ultras of Africa

Notes[edit]