

## Asian Quake Made Water Levels Jump in Florida Wells

Mon Jan 24, 2005 10:03 AM ET

By Jane Sutton

MIAMI (Reuters) - The undersea earthquake that triggered last month's deadly tsunami in Asia caused water levels to jump by up to 4 inches in monitoring wells deep under Florida some 8,000 miles away, scientists said on Friday.

Hydrogeologists with the South Florida Water Management District saw the spike about an hour after the 9.0-magnitude quake struck off the coast of northern Sumatra on Dec. 26.

Water levels jumped, then receded quickly in some monitoring wells deep within the Florida aquifer, the underground layer of porous limestone that covers most of the state and provides water for millions of people, businesses and farms.

"Normally, water level changes in the Florida aquifer happen slowly," said John Mulliken, who oversees the district's water supply planners, environmental scientists and hydrogeologists. "The spikes were sudden and very unusual. The speed at which the shock wave moved was absolutely awesome."

Scientists with the U.S. Geological Survey estimated that seismic waves from the earthquake traveled across the globe at approximately 7,400 mph, causing small water-filled crevices in the Florida aquifer to expand and contract.

That forced water in and out of the wells, which ranged in depth from 1,350 to 1,900 feet in southern Florida, the scientists said.

The quake did not cause any damage to the aquifer or affect the water supply, the scientists said.

Scientists in other states reported similar readings in deep wells, resulting from the earthquake off Sumatra.

Florida scientists have recorded smaller spikes in the aquifer wells after previous far-away earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, "but this one really rocked it," water district spokesman Randy Smith said.

"This is certainly one of the larger ones that the (Florida) scientists have ever seen," Smith said.

The quake and tsunami killed more than 225,000 people in Indian Ocean nations.

---

All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Reproduction or redistribution of Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Reuters. Reuters and the Reuters sphere logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Reuters group of companies around the world.