

8.9 Magnitude Earthquake, 13-Foot Tsunami Hits Japan



A powerful tsunami spawned by the largest earthquake in Japan's recorded history made an impact on the the eastern Japanese coast on 11th March 2011. Boats, cars, homes and people were swept away as widespread fires burned out of control. Authorities said at least 32 people were killed. The magnitude 8.9 (according to USGS, USA) offshore quake was followed by at least 19 aftershocks, most of them of more than magnitude 6.0. A tsunami warning was issued for the entire Pacific, including areas as far away as South America, the entire US West Coast, Canada and Alaska.

Dozens of cities and villages along a 1,300-mile (2,100-kilometre) stretch of coastline were shaken by violent tremors that reached as far away as Tokyo, hundreds of miles (kilometres) from the epicentre.

Even for a country used to earthquakes, this one was of horrific proportions. It unleashed a 23-foot (7-metre) tsunami that swept boats, cars, buildings and tons of debris miles inland.

Large fishing boats and other sea vessels rode high waves into the cities, slamming against overpasses. Upturned and partially submerged vehicles were seen bobbing in the water.

Waves of muddy waters swept over farmland near the city of Sendai, carrying buildings, some on fire, inland as cars attempted to drive away. Sendai airport, north of Tokyo, was inundated with cars, trucks, buses and thick mud deposited over its runways. Fires spread through a section of the city, public broadcaster NHK reported.

The tsunami roared over embankments, washing cars, houses and farm equipment inland before reversing directions and carrying them out to sea.

- [Tsunami warning](#)
- [Earthquake Report](#)
- [Detailed earthquake information](#)