

Unusual Earthquake Swarm Hits Around Yolo County

Drew Bollea, CBS Sacramento, 11-21-16

YOLO COUNTY— A swarm of earthquakes shook parts of Yolo County Monday morning.

“That’s pretty amazing,” said Andy Timko, a Yolo County resident.

In a rural area.

“It’s a shock to me,” said Joe Moreland, a Yolo County resident.

A rare rumble.

“I didn’t feel a thing,” Moreland continued.

More than a half dozen earthquakes have struck beneath miles of farmland in the last seven days. The largest happening Monday morning, a magnitude 3.0 hit 10 miles beneath the earth’s surface near the intersection of Co. Rd. 27 and 94.

“They don’t produce a whole lot of shaking on the ground,” said Dr. John Parrish, the California State Geologist, “they’re very weak.”

He says this swarm of activity is unusual.

“It’s a very quiet part of the state,” said Parrish.

California gets about 500 to 700 earthquakes a week. Parrish says most of the tremors are along the famous San Andreas Fault system west of Yolo County.

“They are acting apparently on some faults we do not have mapped,” said Parrish about the recent swarm.

Minor quakes, under a magnitude 3.0 don’t cause much alarm. Parrish says they’re relieving tectonic stress. But are still worth monitoring.

“We still like to watch them because we don’t know if this is the onset of something larger,” said Parrish.

“They could certainly do a lot of damage if you got a big enough one,” said Duane Chamberlain.

Chamberlain is a Yolo County Supervisor and farmer. Several of the quakes happened on his land. An earthquake greater than a magnitude 3 or 4 could cause significant damage especially to irrigation systems.

“An earthquake could break underground pipe lines,” said Chamberlain.

Tectonic trembles miles below the Earth’s surface are a far distance from many minds.

“I got a lot of other things to worry about,” said Chamberlain with a laugh.