

Beat: Sports

## Couple dies while awaiting rescue on New Zealand mountain

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**USPA News** - A Japanese man and his Kiwi companion died early Monday while awaiting rescue on a mountain on the North Island of New Zealand, police said. Two other climbers who were part of their group were able to reach safety the previous day.

The incident began on Saturday when two groups of four climbers set out to climb Mount Taranaki, located in the Taranaki region on the west coast of New Zealand's North Island. The first group descended safely later that afternoon, but the second group became trapped during the evening as weather conditions deteriorated. Two of the climbers, suffering from mild hypothermia and some cuts and bruises, were able to reach a visitor center by Sunday afternoon after spending the night on the 2,518-meter (8,261-feet) high mountain. The other two climbers remained stuck in a snow cave while texting directions to rescue workers. Police Inspector Blair Telford said rescue workers spent Sunday evening and early Monday morning on the mountain trying to locate the climbers, but their efforts were significantly hampered by severe weather conditions that forced them to return to a staging area while a second team was deployed. The second team was deployed at approximately 3:30 a.m. local time on Monday and reached the climbers at 7:30 a.m., but 31-year-old Japanese man Hiroki Ogawa had passed away overnight. His Kiwi companion, 29-year-old Nicole Sutton, was still alive and attempts were made to evacuate her. "All efforts were then focused on getting the surviving climber off the mountain and providing further medical assistance," a New Zealand police spokesperson said. "The weather continued to hamper rescue efforts. Nicole was conscious and speaking with rescuers initially, but then slipped into a state where she showed no signs of life." The rescue team stayed with Sutton for several hours while attempts were made to recover her body, but the group was forced to descend back down the mountain as weather conditions became extreme. A break in the weather on early Tuesday allowed Air Force personnel to drop Alpine Cliff Rescue team members on Mount Taranaki, after which they winched the pair off the mountain. "We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of the victims," Telford added.

### Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1534/couple-dies-while-awaiting-rescue-on-new-zealand-mountain.html>

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United Press Association, Inc.  
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168  
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[info@unitedpressassociation.org](mailto:info@unitedpressassociation.org)  
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