

A proposal to check the accuracy of the GEBCO Gazetteer

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The GEBCO Gazetteer is the authority of the world's undersea feature names. Every map maker, including Google, relies on it when making their maps. So, maintenance of the GEBCO Gazetteer is the first priority task of SCUFN and GEBCO.

However, during its review work relevant to the SCUFN-23 action items to Y. Ohara, JCUFN has found several flaws in the GEBCO Gazetteer, that may spoil the reliability of the GEBCO Gazetteer, and GEBCO itself.

I think this issue needs thorough investigations by SCUFN members.

The file names of the checked Gazetteer are the following 9 files (the file names are exactly as they are):

- gazet_may2004.xls
- gazet_dec2005.xls
- gazet_mar2006.xls
- Gazet_070606.xls
- Gazet_Sep09.xls
- B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Jan10.xls
- B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Aug10.xls
- B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Mar11.xls
- Gazet_Reserved_Sep09.xls

Here I show some examples that are relevant to the accuracy and/or reliability of the GEBCO Gazetteer.

(1) Raicho, Tancho, and Toki Escarpments

JCUFN has only a single file of the reserve section of the Gazetteer, which was used for the reserve section review work for SCUFN-23 (the file name = Gazet_Reserved_Sep09.xls).

Following the actions SCUFN 15/46 & 15/47, these three names should have been in the reserve section of the Gazetteer (these names were revisited during SCUFN-19 (2006, AWI)). However, these three names are not included in Gazet_Reserved_Sep09.xls. In other words, at some stage, these three names were removed from the Gazetteer for unknown reasons.

(2) Parece Vela Basin

The Parece Vela Basin is a long-time-accredited name in the GEBCO Gazetteer. For example, it is included in gazet_may2004.xls. However, it disappears from gazet_dec2005.xls. However, it appears again in gazet_mar2006.xls. Surprisingly, it disappears again from Gazet_070606.xls, Gazet_Sep09.xls, B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Jan10.xls, B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Aug10.xls, B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Mar11.xls.

JCUFN never understands why this “on-and-off” of the name from the Gazetteer has occurred.

(3) Oki-Daito Terrace

According to Page 7 & 8 of SCUFN-15 Report (2002, Monaco), the feature was accredited; therefore it should have been included in the Gazetteer (there is another issue on this feature name; please see the last paragraph below). It is therefore included in gazet_may2004.xls, gazet_dec2005.xls, gazet_mar2006.xls, and Gazet_070606.xls. However, it disappeared from Gazet_Sep09.xls, B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Jan10.xls, B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Aug10.xls, and B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Mar11.xls.

We do not understand why the feature suddenly disappeared from the Gazetteer at the version of Gazet_Sep09.xls.

Please note that this issue is relevant to the file “Ohara-1_Re-SCUFN-14_Pendings.doc”. JCUFN has no official records that it approved the feature name. However, the written statement in page 7 & 8 of SCFUN-15 Report is very suspicious, and JCUFN does not understand why these statement happened.

(4) Vitoria-Trindade Seamounts

This feature is appeared as “Vitoria-Trindade Seamount Chain” in gazet_may2004.xls, whereas as “Vitoria-Trindade Seamounts” in B-8_GEBCO_Gazetteer_Mar11.xls. JCUFN does not understand why the “seamount chain” has changed into “seamounts”.

The generic term is important as indicated by the [attached note-verbale by the US government](#) to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, dated August 25, 2004. In this note-verbale, the US government explicitly referred to the generic term, i.e., “seamount chain”.

This particular case indicates that the GEBCO Gazetteer is the authority, that can influence international affairs. This suggests that the SCUFN and GEBCO should be most careful in reviewing the name proposal, as well as maintaining the GEBCO Gazetteer.