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SECOND UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
STANDARDIZATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES  
London, 10-31 May 1972  
Item 14 (c) of the provisional agenda

NAMES OF FEATURES BEYOND A SINGLE SOVEREIGNTY

UNDERSEA FEATURES

Addendum

International nomenclature of ocean bottom features

Paper submitted by the Government of Canada\*

International efforts to obtain approved nomenclature of ocean bottom features covers a period of more than 20 years. The forthcoming International Hydrographic Conference, to be held in Monaco in 1972, and the United Nations Conference on Cartography to be held in London during 1972 will both be considering the topic of ocean bottom features nomenclature. The purpose of this brief is to document efforts made by the International Hydrographic Bureau (IHB) and International Association of Physical Oceanography (IAPO), to achieve an approved nomenclature, and to help establish the Canadian positions at the two forthcoming international conferences.

A brief history of international efforts may be summarized as follows:

1. On 22 September 1952, general principles governing the selection of terms were adopted (see ref. 2)
2. 1952 to 1962; specific terms were selected, defined and circulated (see refs. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9)
3. International Hydrographic Bureau reported on progress to the Eighth International Hydrographic Conference (see ref. 10) and proposed the new nomenclature be adopted (see ref. 11, 9)
4. Discussion of the proposed nomenclature revealed the existence of two nomenclatures (see ref. 12)

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5. The Eighth International Hydrographic Conference decided to refer the nomenclature to the IHB for consideration by correspondence (see ref. 13)
6. The IHB prepared a comparison of the two nomenclatures and circulated same for consideration (see ref. 14)
7. Canada replied that we could not offer an opinion at that time, but would endorse any action on the part of the Bureau which would facilitate the matter (see ref. 15)
8. The IHB requested IUGG, at its thirteenth General Assembly, to reform the IAPO Committee on Ocean Bottom Nomenclature in order to arrive at an approved list (see ref. 16)
9. First meeting of the reformed IAPO - GEBCO Committee on Ocean Bottom Nomenclature (see ref. 19 and 19a)
10. At the Ninth International Hydrographic Conference the IHB reported on the work of IAPO - GEBCO Committee on Ocean Bottom Nomenclature (see ref. 21)
11. The Ninth International Hydrographic Conference resolved that a member of the Directing Committee of IHB shall serve on the GEBCO Committee and on any other international committee or sub-committee which may be formed to take up the nomenclature of ocean bottom features (see ref. 22)
12. The results of IAPO - GEBCO Committee on Ocean Bottom Nomenclature published in the International Hydrographic Review, January 1971 (see ref. 27)
13. United States proposed that the official GEBCO nomenclature (see ref. 27) be used by all compiling nations of GEBCO (see ref. 29)

After over 20 years of effort a proposed nomenclature of ocean bottom features has been prepared. It should be noted, that to date, there has been no official resolution put forward to the Tenth International Hydrographic Conference to be held in Monaco 1972 to have the proposed nomenclature approved. There is a resolution (see ref. 29) before this same conference which assumes that the nomenclature proposed (see ref. 27) has been approved.

#### Summary

The arguments for approving or rejecting the proposed nomenclature may be summarized as follows:

#### Factors favouring approval of nomenclature

1. The IHB expressed the opinion that IAPO was the qualified body to define these terms (see ref. 16)
2. Canada supported the IHB view (see ref. 15)
3. Over 20 years of effort have been expended on the proposed terms

Factors opposing approval of nomenclature

1. Canada strongly opposes the proposed generic Strath
2. Canada feels that the connotation for safe navigation incorporated in the definition for Bank should be deleted. It is not possible to predict what banks will be safe for surface navigation 20 years from now
3. The limiting depths for Shoal and Reef are already well out of date
4. The placing of numerical values on feature definitions should be avoided
5. Some definitions are too restrictive (see valley)
6. The latest USBGN definitions differ from the proposed international definitions in five places (see refs. 26 and 28)

Conclusion

Several of the definitions require further clarification and some terms should be deleted, with an additional one added.

With the advent of a United Nations Committee considering the subject, it would appear to be more advantageous to obtain international approval of a common nomenclature both at the United Nations and the International Hydrographic Organization simultaneously.

Recommendation

The proposed nomenclature should be rejected and referred to the United Nations and IHB for further refinements.

Chronological development to arrive at an internationally approved list of undersea terminology

<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title and description</u>	<u>Source</u>
1	1932	Terminology of submarine relief, special publication, 22c	IHB
1a	1942	Report of the committee on the criteria and nomenclature of the major divisions of the ocean bottom. International Hydrographic Review, vol. XIX, 1942	IHB
2	Sept. 1952	International committee on the nomenclature of ocean bottom features (minutes of meeting held at the IHB at Monaco, 22 September 1952). Published in International Hydrographic Review, vol. XXXI, 1954	IHB

<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title and description</u>	<u>Source</u>
3	June 1953	Definitions of features on the deep-sea floor, by John D. Wiseman and C.D. Ovey - Deep-Sea Research, vol. 1, 1953	Wiseman and Ovey
4	Sept. 1954	General principles governing the naming of new small oceanic features. International Hydrographic Review, vol. XXXII, 1955	IHB
5	1955	General principles governing the allocation of names, by John D. Wiseman and C.D. Ovey. Deep-Sea Research, vol. 2, 1955	Wiseman and Ovey
6	1958	Circular letter 8, 1958	IHB
7	May 1958	French translation of nomenclature of ocean bottom features. International Hydrographic Review, vol. XXXV, 1958	IHB
8	1960	Bathymetric nomenclature adopted at the 62nd meeting of the Board on Geographic Names, 19 July 1960	USA
9	Jan. 1962	French translation of nomenclature of ocean bottom features. International Hydrographic Review, vol. XXXIX, 1962	IHB
10	1962	Report on work of IHB, B.25, international committee on the nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Eighth international hydrographic conference, Monaco, 8-18 May 1962. Report of the proceedings, p. 31	IHB
11	1962	Proposal 71, nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Eighth international hydrographic conference, Monaco, 8-18 May 1962. Report of the proceedings, p. 135	IHB
12	1962	Proposal 71. Discussions of nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Eighth international hydrographic conference, Monaco, 8-18 May 1962. Report of the proceedings, p. 342	IHB
13	1962	Proposal 71. Decision regarding nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Eighth international hydrographic conference, Monaco, 8-18 May 1962. Report of the proceedings, p. 413	IHB
14	1963	Circular letter 10, 1963. Annex 1, comparison of nomenclatures. Annex 2, principle differences between the nomenclatures	IHB

<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title and description</u>	<u>Source</u>
15	July 10 1963	Canadian reply to circular letter 10, 1963	Canada
16	July 17 1963	International Hydrographic Bureau's reply to Canada re: circular letter 10	IHB
17	June 27 1963	Undersea feature terms and definitions adopted at the 11th meeting of the advisory committee on undersea features. Board on Geographic Names, 27 June 1963	USA
18	Aug. 1963	International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics general assembly at Berkeley in August 1963, at the request of the IHB reconstituted the IAPO - GEBCO Committee	IUGG
19	May 1964	General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans, nomenclature of ocean bottom features (list and definitions)	GEBCO
19a	May 1964	Announcement of above in International Hydrographic Bulletin, May 1964	IH BULLETIN
20	July 1965	Sea floor names in principle and practice by F.M. Edvalson, presented to the 10th Pan American consultation on cartography, Pan American institute on geography and history, Guatemala City, June-July, 1965	USNOO
21	April 1967	Report on work of IHB, B.8.4, nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Ninth international hydrographic conference, 1967. Report of the proceedings, p. 48	IHB
22	April 1967	Proposal 87. Nomenclature of ocean bottom features. Ninth international hydrographic conference 1967. Report of the proceedings, p. 642	IHB
23	1969	CB order No. 150. Names of ocean-bed features	UK
24	July 14 1969	Naming of ocean-bed features	UK
25	1969	Ocean bottom features - Terminology and Nomenclature Encyclopedia of Oceanography	Fairbridge

<u>No.</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Title and description</u>	<u>Source</u>
26	1969	United States Gazetteer for Undersea Features of the World. Approved as of 1 April 1969, by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names	USA
27	Jan. 1971	Nomenclature of ocean bottom features. International Hydrographic Review, 1971	GEBCO
28	April 1971	Letter from Secretary U.S.BGN to Secretary CPCGN, dated 16 April 1971, indicating that ACUF has recommended and U.S.BGN has approved dropping <u>Strath</u> as both generic and designation in favour of <u>Valley</u>	USA
29	Aug. 1971	Circular letter 22, 1971. Annex 7, General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) geographic names overlay	USA

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