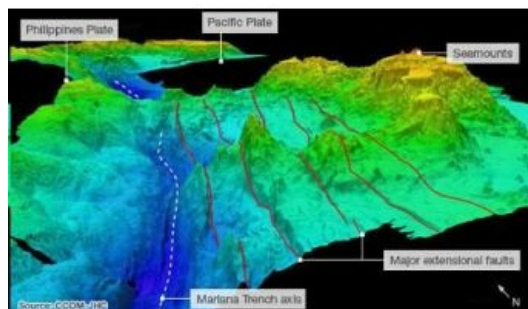


Sea Floor 'Ridges' Discovered Across Mariana Trench



Marine geophysicists from the University of New Hampshire, USA, have found huge 'ridges' which cross the Mariana trench about a mile above the bottom, reports Rob Waugh in the Mail Online. Such ridges are created when mountains on the sea floor are pulled into the Earth's crust by enormous geological forces. Sticking up from the Pacific ocean plate, the mountains form 'ridges' as the Pacific plate disappears into the Earth's crust under the neighbouring Philippine plate.

The ridges are created when undersea mountains are pulled into the Earth's crust - forming ridges across the trench where two tectonic plates collide, said University of New

Hampshire scientists.

One of the ridges was detected in low resolution in the nineteen-eighties, but Gardner's team has made three more sightings, according to OurAmazingPlanet. Some of the ridges rise up to 6,600 feet above the trench, and are up to 47 miles long.

The scientists used a multi-beam echo sounder to map the area. They mapped the sea floor in the Mariana trench with multi-beam echo sounders, and found four ridges across the trench, created when mountains are being pulled into the earth's crust. The researchers are examining the process of how underwater mountains are 'pulled under' another tectonic plate.

A hydrographic ship from the U.S. Navy recently mapped the Marianas trench. The ship, associated with CCOM, the Centre for Coastal and Ocean Mapping at the University of New Hampshire, mapped the whole of the Marianas Trench to a 100m resolution.

Gardner says that there might be life on the 'ridges' - adapted to harsh, freezing conditions and pressure up to eight tons per square inch. 'The instrument allows you to map a swath of soundings along the line of travel of the ship,' said Dr Jim Gardner to the BBC. 'It's like mowing the grass.'