

## Paper for Consideration by SCUFN-37

## Follow-up SCUFN36/03.6/01

Features named in scientific publications that do not align with current definitions of generic feature terms, do not conform to current principles for specific names. After fruitful discussions, SCUFN agreed that B-6 clause I.C remains applicable and recommended a flexible and case-by-case approach.

<b>Submitted by:</b>	Mike Coffin (SCUFN Member)
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This proposal recommends that the name of the existing undersea feature “Ontong-Java Rise” be updated to “Ontong Java Plateau”
<b>Related Documents:</b>	None
<b>Related Actions:</b>	SCUFN36/03.6/01

## Introduction/Background

1. This action arises from the observations that the undersea feature currently on record as the “Ontong-Java Rise” does not meet the definition of the generic term ‘rise’, but does meet the definition of the generic term ‘plateau’, and has been overwhelmingly termed the “Ontong Java Plateau” in scientific publications since at least 1971. It is currently termed the “Ontong Java Plateau” in Wikipedia (English and French editions).
2. According to the *GEBCO Gazetteer of Undersea Feature Names* and the *Summary Report of the Sixth Meeting of the GEBCO Sub-Committee on Geographical Names and Nomenclature of Ocean Bottom Features* (SCGN, 1985), Dr. Jacqueline Mammerickx (Scripps Institution of Oceanography, USA) successfully proposed “to replace Solomon Rise” with “Ontong-Java Rise.”
3. Results of the first scientific ocean drilling of the feature at Deep Sea Drilling Project Site 64 in 1969 were published in Winterer, E. L. et al., 1971, *Initial Reports of the Deep Sea Drilling Project, Volume VII*. Washington (U.S. Government Printing Office), pp. 473-606. In this volume, the feature is termed the “Ontong Java Plateau.” [n.b., E.L. Winterer and J. Mammerickx were colleagues at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, USA.]
4. Results of the first comprehensive investigation of the feature were published in 1972 by Dr. Loren Kroenke (Hawaii Institute of Geophysics, USA) as his Ph.D. thesis and as *Hawaii Institute of Geophysics Report Number HIG-72-5*, entitled “Geology of the Ontong Java Plateau.” In the introduction to the thesis, Kroenke wrote:

*“The Plateau was first called the Ontong Java Rise by Fairbridge in 1954 (unpublished ms. and personal communication), after the largest atoll centrally located in the southeastern half of the Plateau [Ontong Java Atoll]. The name was subsequently established in the 1958 edition of the Times Atlas and again by Fairbridge (1962). Fairbridge (1966) and Coleman (1966a) have both referred to the area as the Ontong Java Rise. J. Ewing and others (1968) termed the region the Solomon Islands Plateau, and referred to it again as the Solomon Plateau (M. Ewing and others, 1969). Heezen (1969) preferred to call the area the Solomon Rise, as have Chase and others (1968a). Coleman (1966a) also used the term Ontong Java Platform. The term Ontong Java Plateau retains the prior geographic name while changing the generic classification. It is preferred by the writer since the region morphologically resembles a submarine plateau. Further confusion with the term the Solomon Islands Plateau, used by Murray (1895) for the northern border of the Solomon Sea, is also thereby avoided.”*

5. A Google Scholar survey of the international, peer-reviewed scientific literature since 1972 shows thousands of citations to publications on the “Ontong Java Plateau,” and no instances of the name of the feature as “Ontong-Java Rise.”
6. B-6 clause I.C. states: *Names used for many years may be accepted even though they do not conform to normal principles of nomenclature. Existing names may be altered to avoid confusion, remove ambiguity or to correct spelling.*

### **Analysis/Discussion**

7. As documented by Kroenke (1972) and many subsequent publications in the international, peer-reviewed scientific literature (e.g., Mayer et al., *Proceedings of the Ocean Drilling Program, Initial Reports, Volume 130*, 1991; Hagen et al., *Proceedings of the Ocean Drilling Program, Scientific Results, Volume 130*, 1993; Mosher et al., *Proceedings of the Ocean Drilling Program, Scientific Results, Volume 130*, 1993; Phinney et al., *Journal of Geophysical Research*, 1999; Inoue et al., *Geochemistry Geophysics Geosystems*, 2008), the generic term ‘plateau’ (B-6: *A large, relatively flat elevation that is higher than the surrounding relief with one or more relatively steep sides.*) is appropriate for the feature. The generic term ‘rise’ (B-6: *A broad elevation that generally rises gently and smoothly from the surrounding relief.*) is not appropriate for the feature.
8. As found in a Google Scholar survey of the international, peer-reviewed scientific literature and documented by Kroenke (1972), the name “Ontong-Java Rise” has not been used scientifically since the 1960s, and the name “Ontong Java Plateau” has been overwhelmingly used scientifically since 1972.

### **Recommendation**

9. On the basis of the evidence and justification presented above, that the name of the world’s largest submarine plateau be updated to “Ontong Java Plateau.”

10. Regarding the specific term, despite the current version adopted in 1985 by the SCGN which is hyphenated “Ontong-Java”, in accordance with the quote provided in paragraph 4 above, the specific term should be “Ontong Java”, without hyphen.

**Justification and Impact**

11. The updated name will align with the B-6 definition of ‘plateau’ and with usage in the international, peer-reviewed scientific literature since 1971.

**Action required of SCUFN**

12. SCUFN is invited to:
- a. Note this proposal.
  - b. Consider the recommendations in section 9 and 10.