

An island off the coast of Sicily—submerged like the Atlantis of myth—might soon rise again. Fishers report sulfurous gases and dead fish in the area, divers say the water is unusually warm, and scientists are monitoring events.

The volcanic seamount, 22 kilometers offshore, last rose above the Mediterranean

Out of the Depths, Again

before crumbling—but not before Sicilians claimed it as Ferdinandea, after their king. The peak now lies less than 10 meters below the surface.

Ferdinandea's rebirth would not surprise Enzo Boschi, president of the Italian National Institute of Geophysics. Sicily has been a seismic hot spot since September, when the first of several earthquakes shook the island and Mount Etna's violent eruptions gathered pace. "We want to determine how all these events are all connected," he says, adding that it is not clear when Ferdinandea might resurface. There is a remote chance that an eruption, or the island's collapse, could cause a minor tsunami, he says. But Sicilians aren't worried. "They're more excited about increasing tourism."



Ferdinandea makes its last appearance off Sicily in this 1831 oil painting.

In the 1950s, nervous U.S. Navy sonar operators wondered if the mysterious "boing" they heard in their headphones was an enemy submarine. Later, researchers guessed that the weird groan was produced by a large fish or marine mammal—noting that it was heard only in winter in a narrow swath of the North Pacific. Now, scientists say they've tracked the baffling boing to its source: a minke whale.

Baffling Boing Identified

The aural breakthrough came early last month aboard the *David Starr Jordan*, a U.S. research vessel cruising Hawaiian waters in search of whales and dolphins. Government biologist Shannon Rankin says that hydrophone operators first heard the puzzling sound on 7 November, launching the ship on a several-hour chase. Guided by software that allows researchers to home in on noise sources, the crew eventually observed a 7-meter-long North Pacific minke whale surfacing in the vicinity of the boings.

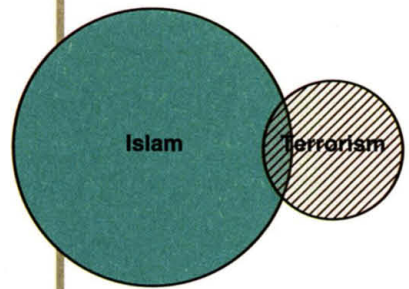
The discovery also revealed a minke breeding ground, says Rankin and biologist Jay Barlow, a colleague at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, California. "They were hiding, all this time, in the rough winter waters of the central North Pacific," says Barlow. Based on the behavior of related whales, the researchers believe that the noise is the love call of a male minke. To hear the boing, visit www.whaleacoustics.com/audiofish.asp.

A new coalition of indigenous groups is aiming to sink biopirates. Representatives from nearly 20 groups met in Bellagio, Italy, last month to launch the Call of the Earth Circle initiative, which hopes to give native peoples greater control of natural resources and traditional knowledge—and prevent outsiders from cashing in without sharing profits and respecting local customs.

The World Trade Organization and other international bodies already have groups devoted to the same goal, but they often lack grassroots participation, says Alejandro Argumedo of the Indigenous Peoples Bio-

diversity Network in Cuzco, Peru, an organizer of the new effort. Now, 19 groups—including Peru's Quecha, Uganda's Muganda, Nevada's Northern Paiute, and Sweden's Saami—are joining forces to hammer out common positions and give tribal leaders a greater voice in policy debates. They also hope to create a cadre of indigenous experts on intellectual-property law. Planners envision the Tokyo-based effort, which is partly supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and the United Nations University, to last at least 3 years.

Indigenous People Power



Islam and terrorism (not to scale).

A new report* on terrorism by a group of eminent U.S. social scientists contains this peculiar attempt to depict the overlap between Islam and modern terrorists. "No one knows the exact percentage, but the point we wanted to convey is how small it is," explains sociologist Neil Smelser, chair of the National Research Council panel that issued the report. So why publish a diagram—the only one in the 80-page report—when there are no hard data? "We thought it reinforced our point that the vast majority of Islamic peoples have no connection with and do not sympathize with terrorism," says Smelser.

How Big a Threat?

* *Terrorism: Perspectives from the Behavioral and Social Sciences*, National Research Council, November 2002.



New coalition aims to give local people, such as these Andean farmers, greater control over natural resources.