

Open File 2391

Multichannel Seismic Reflection Profiles Across the Vancouver Island Continental Shelf and Slope

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Abstract

Approximately 700 km of multichannel seismic reflection lines were obtained across the continental shelf and slope off Vancouver Island during September-October, 1989. Data were also obtained from several sonobuoys and by recording the airgun source at land stations. Along with previous data (Yorath et al., 1987, GSC Open File 1661), a total of 9 lines are now available across this subduction zone margin. A regional interpretation of the structure and Tertiary tectonic history of the margin based on previous marine data and adjacent LITHOPROBE land seismic reflection data across Vancouver Island is given in Hyndman et al. (Can. J. Earth Sci., 27, 313-329, 1990), and interpretation of the previous continental slope data in Davis and Hyndman (Geol. Soc. Am. Bull., 101, 1465-1480).

The objectives of the new survey included:

1. Determination of the structure and of the processes of sediment accretion and deformation along this convergent margin. It provides an example of a 'live' fold and thrust belt in process of formation.
2. Delineation of the deep thrust plane beneath the slope and shelf along which very large 'megathrust' earthquakes could occur. Constraints are sought on which part of the fault plane is in the 'brittle' seismogenic regime.
4. Definition of methane hydrate ice-like layers that have formed beneath the continental slope. Since methane is a very strong greenhouse gas, it may play an important role in global climate change. Seafloor hydrate within sedimentary accretionary wedges is the largest global reservoir of methane, and thus studies of the nature, distribution and mechanism of formation of such hydrate are important.
5. The seismic reflection data is a critical component of the site survey required for proposed shallow scientific drilling on the lower continental slope off Vancouver island in 1992 to address the above problems.

The new data provide excellent definition of the downgoing oceanic plate beneath the slope and shelf that corresponds well to that from Benioff-Wadati seismicity and seismic refraction. The two narrow terranes that provide the backstop to the sediment accretion are imaged beneath the inner shelf on several lines. At the deformation front, several lines exhibit particularly clear landward dipping thrusts that extend through the entire ~3km sediment section to near the crustal basement. Midway up the continental slope, a bottom-simulating-reflector (BSR) is interpreted as the base of the frozen methane-hydrate layer.

SEISMIC ACQUISITION:	SEISMIC PROCESSING:
Contractor Digicon Geophysical	Contractor GSI-Haliburton Geophysical
Source 7800 cu.in. airgun array	Processing True amplitude recovery
Hydrophone array 3600 m; 144 channel	Designature Velocity analysis
Recording DSS 240	FK demultiple
sample rate 4ms	Deconvolution
freq. 3 - 80 Hz	Equilization
shot interval 50 m	Statics
hydrophone group interval 25m	Normal moveout
navigation Star Fix	Common depth point stacking
	Deconvolution
	FK migration
	Time varying filter
	Time varying scaling
	Sections
	Stack, migration and depth

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Prepared at the Pacific Geoscience Centre

