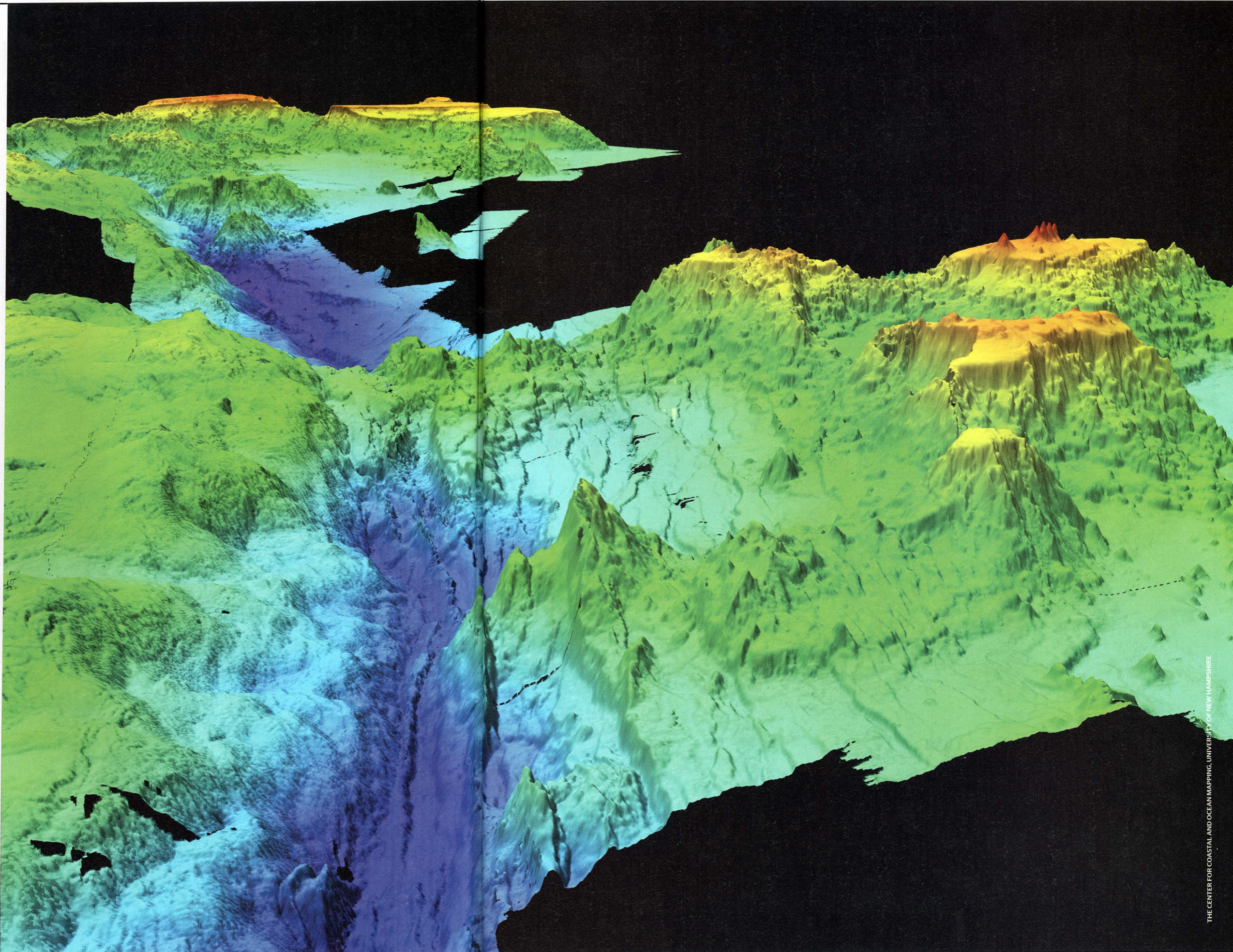


BATHYMETRY IN THE MARIANA TRENCH

This perspective-view image looks north-northeast along the Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean. As well as showing the path of the trench (dark blue), it also depicts several guyots (yellow), or flat-topped seamounts, that are being carried into the trench as the Pacific tectonic plate subducts beneath the Mariana plate. It was created by a team from the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping (CCOM) at the University of New Hampshire, which surveyed the trench and the adjacent West Mariana Ridge at 100-metre resolution to produce a series of such images.

More than 2,500 kilometres long, the trench is the site of the deepest point in the world's oceans, known as Challenger Deep, which has been measured several times during the past 60 years. The CCOM team believes that its figure of 10,994 metres below sea level (with an error of plus or minus 40 metres) is the most accurate to date.

Among the other features the team mapped are a series of large volcanoes near the southern end of the West Mariana Ridge. About 2,500 metres high, they have bases between 20 and 30 kilometres in diameter. They also found that water flowing from the ridge has eroded the seabed to create a system of channels that look like those of terrestrial rivers and streams, the largest of which is two kilometres wide.



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