

FS SONNE

Voyage SO309 CoralNewZ

16.01. – 15.02.2025

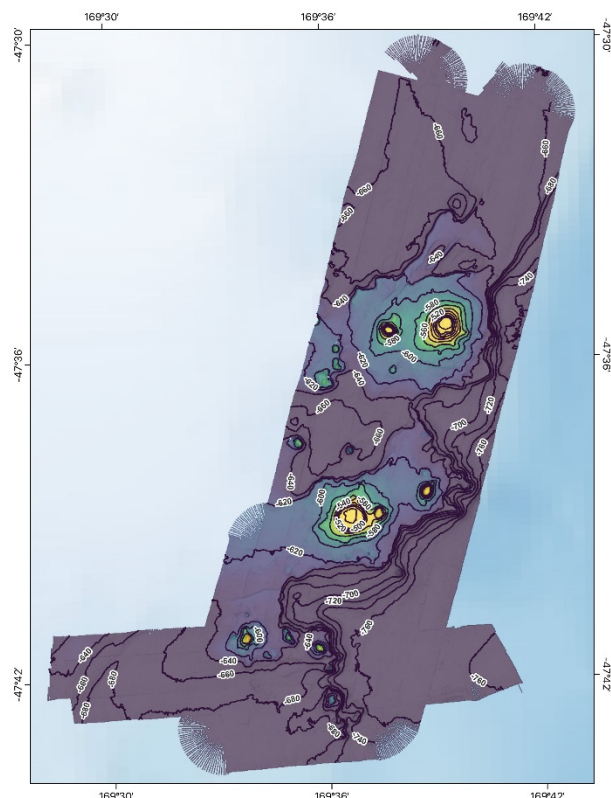
Wellington – Wellington (Neuseeland)



1st weekly report (January 16th - 19th, 2025)

At 4:15 p.m., the RV SONNE left Wellington - slightly delayed due to a necessary medical examination by one of our scientists. To our relief, we also received the Clean Vessel Pass that day, which had been requested from Southland Environment the day before to get the final approval to sail the fjords in Fiordland. For this a demanded biosecurity screening of the SONNE's hull via a certified diver was the last official requirement. A stiff breeze from astern awaited us at the eastern end of the Cook Strait, as did numerous schools of dolphins. The destination was the work area on the upper continental slope east of Stewart Island in the south of New Zealand, two and a half days' transit away. A bearing failure on the starboard drive shaft reduced the cruising speed to 7 knots. On the way, we took CTD profiles north and south of the west-east trending Chatham Ridge. The entire transit was also used to record multibeam echo sounder, parasound and ADCP data. It was interesting to observe a large number of albatrosses in the area of the subtropical front that runs parallel to the southern flank of the Chatham Ridge.

On January 19th we reached the working area east of Stewart Island in the morning, where we immediately gained a first insight into the continental slope structured by mounds with a short survey station. We could hardly wait to use the MARUM video box grab (vKG) in the early evening. Are these structures, which are up to 100 m high, actually coral mounds? This question could not be answered at the time of writing this weekly report. The vKG brought a rich sediment sample consisting of coral rubble, balanid plates, stylasterids, bryozoans and mollusks, embedded in a white foraminiferal ooze, back on deck. A more comprehensive mapping of the area began that night.



Mounds covered with coral rubble of (still) unknown nature east of Stewart Island, South New Zealand.

FS SONNE at 47°41.07S / 170°00.43E

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