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~ **Recent Rocks and Geology in the News** ~
updated 01/29/2007

Huge mudflow "inevitable" from NZ volcano's lake

Jan 29 - A crater lake on a New Zealand volcano used as a backdrop in the "Lord of the Rings" films is on the verge of collapsing and could send a torrent of muddy water down the mountain in coming weeks, media reported on Monday. Melting snow on Mount Ruapehu has filled the lake to within 1.5 metres (5 feet) of its lip, according to the New Zealand Herald newspaper. . . . [read more at reuters.com](#)

3 Antarctic hill surprises experts

Jan 28 (BBC) - For the first time, a drumlin - a mound of sediment and rock - has been observed mid-formation. The streamlined, elongated hills form underneath ice-sheets as they scrape up material as they move. While many relic drumlins are well known features in once ice-covered areas, this is the first time an active one has been observed. . . . [read more at news.bbc.uk](#)

Mega-marsupials once roamed Australia

Jan 25 - Marsupial lions, kangaroos as tall as trucks and wombats the size of a rhinoceros roamed Australia's outback before being killed off by fires lit by arriving humans, scientists said on Thursday. The giant animals lived in the arid Nullarbor desert around 400,000 years ago, but died out around 50,000 years ago, relatively shortly after the arrival of human settlers, according to new fossil skeletons found in caves. . . . [read more at cnn.com](#)

Mud Volcano In Java May Continue To Erupt For Months And Possibly Years

Jan 24 (Durham Univ.) - The first scientific report into the causes and impact of Lusi, the Indonesian mud volcano, reveals that the 2006 eruption will continue to erupt and spew out between 7,000 and 150,000 cubic metres of mud a day for months, if not years to come, leaving at least 10 km² around the volcano vent uninhabitable for years and over 11,000 people permanently displaced. . . . [read more at sciencedaily.com](#)

Winged dinosaur flew like biplane

Jan 23 (Agence France-Presse) - An early flying dinosaur probably spread two pairs of feathered wings, acting like a biplane to glide between trees, scientists say. With long feathers on its hands and legs, the small four-winged Microraptor would drop from its perch, swoop back up and fly up and down in an undulating motion from tree to tree, they report. The bird's ancestor could potentially cover a distance of at least 40 metres, according to the study published today in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. . . . [read more at abc.net.au](#)

Terrifying American Carnivore Was an Early Bird

Jan 23 (Jeanna Bryner) - A 7-foot-tall prehistoric bird with a monster-size noggin arrived in North America from South America long before a land bridge connected the two continents, a new study reveals. The flightless, carnivorous terror birds—that's what scientists call them—likely hopped to North America via islands that came to form what is today the Isthmus of Panama, said Bruce MacFadden, a paleontologist at the Florida Museum of

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Natural History and lead author of the research. . . . [read more at livescience.com](#)

Geologist Gets To The Bottom Of Chicxulub Impact Crater

Jan 22 (Univ. of AK) - Since its discovery in the 1980s, the Chicxulub crater has left its own impact. Despite the spotlight on the theories surrounding the impact, Michael Whalen, associate professor of geology at University of Alaska Fairbanks, has managed to stay "out of the limelight, yet into the limestone" with his work sampling the core of the crater. On Jan. 20, Whalen will be traveling with a team to the Chicxulub site for a week to obtain more core samples in order to get a better understanding of how the crater filled in and how the earth itself recovered from the massive impact. . . . [read more at sciencedaily.com](#)

Deep In Arctic Mud, Geologists Find Strong Evidence Of Climate Change

Jan 20 - (Univ at Buffalo) -How severe will global warming get? Jason P. Briner is looking for an answer buried deep in mud dozens of feet below the surface of lakes in the frigid Canadian Arctic. The Arctic as a region is an excellent harbinger of future change, Briner said, because the signals or clues that signify climate change are so much stronger in the Arctic than elsewhere on the planet. . . . [read more at sciencedaily.com](#)

Ancient Reptile Had Two Heads

Jan 19 (Ker Than) - Scientists have unearthed the fossil of a young, two-headed marine reptile that lived when dinosaurs still walked the Earth. The discovery, detailed in upcoming Feb. 22 issue of the journal Biology Letters, marks the earliest known occurrence of a well-known birth defect, called axial bifurcation, in living reptiles. This double-noggin phenomenon occurs when an embryo is damaged and some body parts develop twice. . . . [read more at news.yahoo.com](#)

Comoros volcano tremors weaken, island still on alert

Jan 15 (Reuters) - Earth tremors from Comoros' Mount Karthala volcano weakened on Monday but the archipelago's largest island remained on high alert, officials said. Strong tremors at the weekend forced thousands of nervous residents to sleep outside for fear their homes would collapse, after Mount Karthala, one of the world's largest active volcanoes, began glowing red and emitting fumes on Friday. . . . [read more at reuters.com](#)

New Method Provides Better Earthquake Warnings

Jan 13 (Swedish Research Counsel) - A new method of stress analysis in earthquake research has been developed by FOI, the Swedish Defense Research Agency. The new method of analysis makes it possible to estimate the complete stress tensor and monitor changes in the magnitude of stress and the instability of faults, which roots the analysis in physics in a manner that earthquake methods normally lack. This makes the method more generally valid, thus facilitating efforts to provide warnings. . . . [read more at sciencedaily.com](#)

Small tsunami waves hit Japan after 8.2 Pacific quake off Kuril Islands

Jan 13 - (Reuters) - Small tsunami waves hit northern and eastern Japan on Saturday after a powerful earthquake in the Pacific prompted tsunami warnings in Japan, Russia and Alaska. The USGS (U.S. Geological Survey) put the quake magnitude at 8.2, a "great" tremor, and said its epicentre was in the northern Pacific, 525 km (325 miles) east northeast of Kurilsk, Kurile Islands, and 1,710 km (1,065 miles) northeast of Tokyo. . . . [read more at reuters.com](#)

First stars in telescope's sights

Jan 12 (Paul Rincon) - Since it was launched in 1990, the telescope has become one of the most important



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instruments in the history of astronomy, making critical discoveries that have vastly enriched our understanding of the cosmos. But the James Webb Space Telescope, named after a former administrator of Nasa, is not going to repeat the science carried out by its predecessor. While Hubble gazed at the Universe in optical and ultra-violet wavelengths, JWST will look primarily in the infrared. *read more at bbc.co.uk*

Bringing Together The Study Of The Earth And Sky

Jan 12 (Univ WI, Madison) - Integrating studies of the Earth with those of the atmosphere and beyond, the Environmental Remote Sensing Center (ERSC) recently joined the Space Science and Engineering Center (SSEC) in the University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School. . . . *read more at sciencedaily.com*

Fossil skull, artifact, help date human migration

Jan 11 (Maggie Fox) - An ancient skull from South Africa and carved tools and ornaments from Russia paint a rare picture of the time when modern humans migrated out of Africa to colonize Europe, researchers reported on Thursday. The two reports in the journal Science link the far reaches of Europe to southernmost Africa across a short time span of 36,000 years ago to 45,000 years ago. . . . *read more at news.yahoo.com*

Fossil DNA Best Preserved in the Ground

Jan 11 - (Rossella Lorenzi) - The best way to preserve fossil DNA is to follow nature's lead and leave the bones buried in the ground, according to a study that compared "fresh" and "old" fossils. As the only remains of extinct species, fossils can provide a wealth of information if their DNA can be retrieved. However, the most easily accessible samples, those stored in museums after standard conservation procedures, including handling, washing, brushing and storing at room temperature, yield little or no DNA, a French experimental study has concluded. . . . *read more at discovery.com*

Long-Term Global Forecast? Fewer Continents

Jan 9 (William J. Broad) - Kiss the Mediterranean goodbye. Ditto the Red Sea and its wonderland of coral reefs and exotic sea life. And prepare for the day when San Francisco has a gritty new suburb: Los Angeles. Indeed, much of Southern California, including the Baja Peninsula, will eventually migrate up the west coast to make Alaska even more gargantuan. Now, drawing on new insights, theories, measurements and technologies — and perhaps a bit of scientific bravado — they are forecasting the shape of terra firma in the distant future. . . . *read more at nytimes.com*

Even closer to finding Ithaca

Jan 9 - Researchers are several steps closer to finding Homer's Ithaca, thanks to new results released today from geologic tests that support the hypothesis that the ancient kingdom of Ithaca may in fact be on western Kefalonia, not the modern-day Greek island of Ithaki, as has been suggested for several centuries, and is reported this month in Geotimes. . . . *read more at geotimes.org*

Diamonds From Outer Space: Geologists Discover Origin Of Earth's Mysterious Black Diamonds

Jan 9 (NSF) - If indeed "a diamond is forever," the most primitive origins of Earth's so-called black diamonds were in deep, universal time, geologists have discovered. Black diamonds came from none other than interstellar space. In a paper published online on December 20, 2006, in the journal Astrophysical Journal Letters, scientists claim an extraterrestrial origin for the unique black diamonds, also called carbonado diamonds. . . . *read more at sciencedaily.com*

Authorities find U.S. home hit by meteorite

Jan 08 (Reuters) - A metallic rock that smashed through the roof of a home in New Jersey was a meteorite, authorities said on Friday. The small, oblong rock, weighing 13 ounces (377 grams), crashed into a home in Freehold Township, 50 miles south of New York, on Tuesday evening and was embedded in the wall on the top floor of the two-story house. . . .*read more at reuters.com*

