

Possible new fish species found in Pacific

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A new undersea mineral chimney emitting hot, iron-darkened water that attracts unusual marine life has been discovered in the Pacific Ocean off Costa Rica.

The vent, located about 8,500 feet beneath the surface, was found by a U.S.-led expedition exploring a section of volcanic ridge.

Expedition members from Duke University; the Universities of New Hampshire, South Carolina and Florida; and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution named their discovery the Medusa hydrothermal vent field. That name was selected because numerous spiky tubeworm casings that festoon the vent chimney bring to mind "the serpent-haired Medusa of Greek myth," said expedition leader Emily Klein, a Duke University geology professor.

Bell-shaped pink jellyfish sighted near the vent "are really unusual, and the ones we found may be of a different species because nobody has seen types of this color before," said Karen Von Damm, a University of New Hampshire earth sciences professor.

The researchers are working aboard WHOI's research vessel Atlantis, and the expedition is funded by the National Science Foundation.

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