

Scripps team to finish Chile quake mapping

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LA JOLLA — Scientists from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography plan to complete an earthquake-related voyage along the coast of Chile tomorrow.

The researchers, whose employer is part of the University of California San Diego, have spent the past week exploring the rupture site of a magnitude 8.8 temblor that struck in late February.

A Scripps ship was in the area when the quake hit, giving the team the unusual chance to immediately to study changes in the sea floor that resulted from movement along faults and submarine landslides. The scientists are using multibeam sonar to create detailed topographic maps. They also are placing depth sensors on the ocean's bottom to record future changes.

“This is a unique case in which we have the shipboard assets, the scientific agenda and the funding all in place,” said Bruce Appelgate, associate director for ship operations and marine technical support at Scripps. “The earthquake was a tragedy for the people of Chile, but we hope this opportunity enables important new discoveries that can help us plan for future events.”