



**CONFIDENTIAL**

# CASE FILE: THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

INVESTIGATION #I945-2024

**OBJECTIVE:** Solve the mystery of the Atlantic's most dangerous waters.

**STATUS:** UNSOLVED / OPEN

**INVESTIGATORS:** Year 6 Detective Unit

## THE LOCATION

The "Bermuda Triangle" is a region in the western North Atlantic Ocean.

FACT: It is not an official name recognized by the U.S. Board of Geographic Names.

TRAFFIC: This is not a desolate area. It is a busy shipping lane and a major flight path for commercial planes.

THE MYSTERY: Despite the heavy traffic, ships and planes have been alleged to mysteriously vanish here without a trace.





## COLD CASE #1: THE ELLEN AUSTIN (1881)

- THE SHIP: A 210-foot American schooner sailing from London to New York.
- THE ENCOUNTER: In the Sargasso Sea, the crew spotted a ship moving erratically. When they boarded, they found no soul on board.
- THE CLUES: Cargo of mahogany intact. Food rations untouched. Only the Captain's logbook and nameplate were missing.
- THE TWIST: The *Ellen Austin* captain placed a 'Prize Crew' on board. A storm separated the ships. When found days later, the Prize Crew had vanished too.

## COLD CASE #2: THE USS CYCLOPS (1918)

**THE VESSEL:** A massive Navy collier (coal carrier) returning from Brazil.

**THE LOSS:** The ship disappeared with 306 crew members and passengers.

**THE SILENCE:** No distress signal was ever sent. No wreckage was ever found.

**THE MYSTERY:** How does a 19,000-ton steel ship simply vanish?



# COLD CASE #3: FLIGHT I9 (I945)



THE LOST SQUADRON - FLIGHT 19

**DATE:** December 5, 1945.

**THE MISSION:** "Navigation Problem No. 1." A routine training flight from Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

**THE SQUAD:** Five TBM Avenger torpedo bombers.

**THE CREW:** 14 naval aviators.

**CONDITIONS:** The weather was favorable. The sea state was moderate. It was supposed to be a simple practice run.

# THE TRANSMISSIONS

15:45 - THE TROUBLE BEGINS.

**STUDENT PILOT POWERS:** "I don't know where we are. We must have got lost after that last turn."

**FLIGHT LEADER LT. TAYLOR:** "Both of my compasses are out and I am trying to find Fort Lauderdale... I am sure I'm in the Keys but I don't know how far down."

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**THE CONFUSION:** Lt. Taylor believed he was over the Florida Keys (south of Florida). He was actually over the Bahamas (east of Florida).

**THE FATAL DECISION:** Taylor ordered the fleet to fly North/East, thinking it would hit land. In reality, this course took them further out into the open Atlantic.

# WE ALL GO DOWN TOGETHER



**THE END OF FLIGHT 19:** As fuel ran low and night fell, the weather turned stormy. Taylor's last message: "When the first plane drops below 10 gallons, we all go down together."

**THE FAILED RESCUE:** A PBM Mariner seaplane with 13 crew launched to find them.

**THE EXPLOSION:** At 19:50, a merchant ship, the SS Gaines Mills, reported a ball of fire in the sky.

**THE CAUSE:** The Mariner was known as a "flying gas tank." It is believed a fuel leak caused a mid-air explosion.

**TOTAL LOSS:** 27 men and 6 planes vanished in a single day.

## COLD CASE #4: STAR TIGER (1948)



**THE FLIGHT:** Passenger plane G-AHNP flying from the Azores to Bermuda.

**THE CONDITIONS:** Flying extremely low (2,000 feet) to avoid strong headwinds.

**THE LAST CONTACT:** At 03:17, Radio Officer Robert Tuck requested a bearing. The signal was received.

**THE SILENCE:** No distress call. No debris. The plane simply flew into a gale and never came out.

**INVESTIGATOR'S NOTE:**

Why was a long-distance plane flying so low?



# THE SUSPECTS



CASE FILE #1:  
USS CYCLOPS 1918



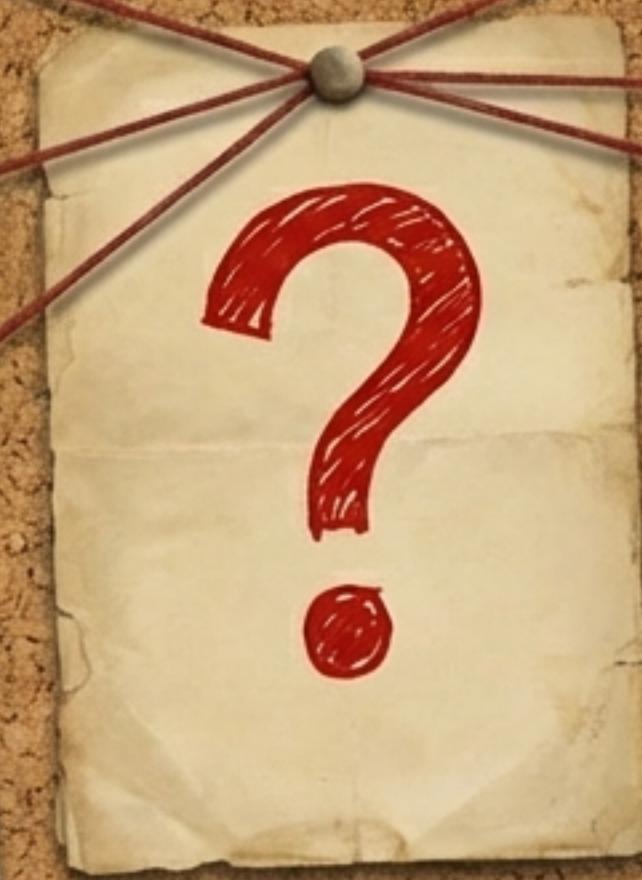
CASE FILE #2:  
THE COLLIER  
1940s?



CASE FILE #3:  
FLIGHT 19  
1945



CASE FILE #4:  
STAR TIGER/STAR ARIEL  
1948/1949



Aliens?

Atlantis?

Science?

We have the case files.  
Now we need the explanations.  
Is it supernatural? Aliens?  
Atlantis? OR IS IT SCIENCE?

Let's examine the evidence  
from oceanographers and  
meteorologists.

## SUSPECT #1: HUMAN ERROR



**DISORIENTATION:** In the Flight 19 case, Lt. Taylor was new to the area.

**THE COMPASS FAILURE:** Without compasses, pilots rely on landmarks. Taylor mistook the Bahamas for the Florida Keys.

**THE "BROKEN" LAND:** Taylor reported "I am over land but it's broken." This description fits both island chains.

**THE VERDICT:** The "mystery" was likely a tragic navigational mistake compounded by stubbornness-Taylor refused to switch his radio frequency to the search channel.

*is continue to  
move down*

## SUSPECT #2: THE GULF STREAM



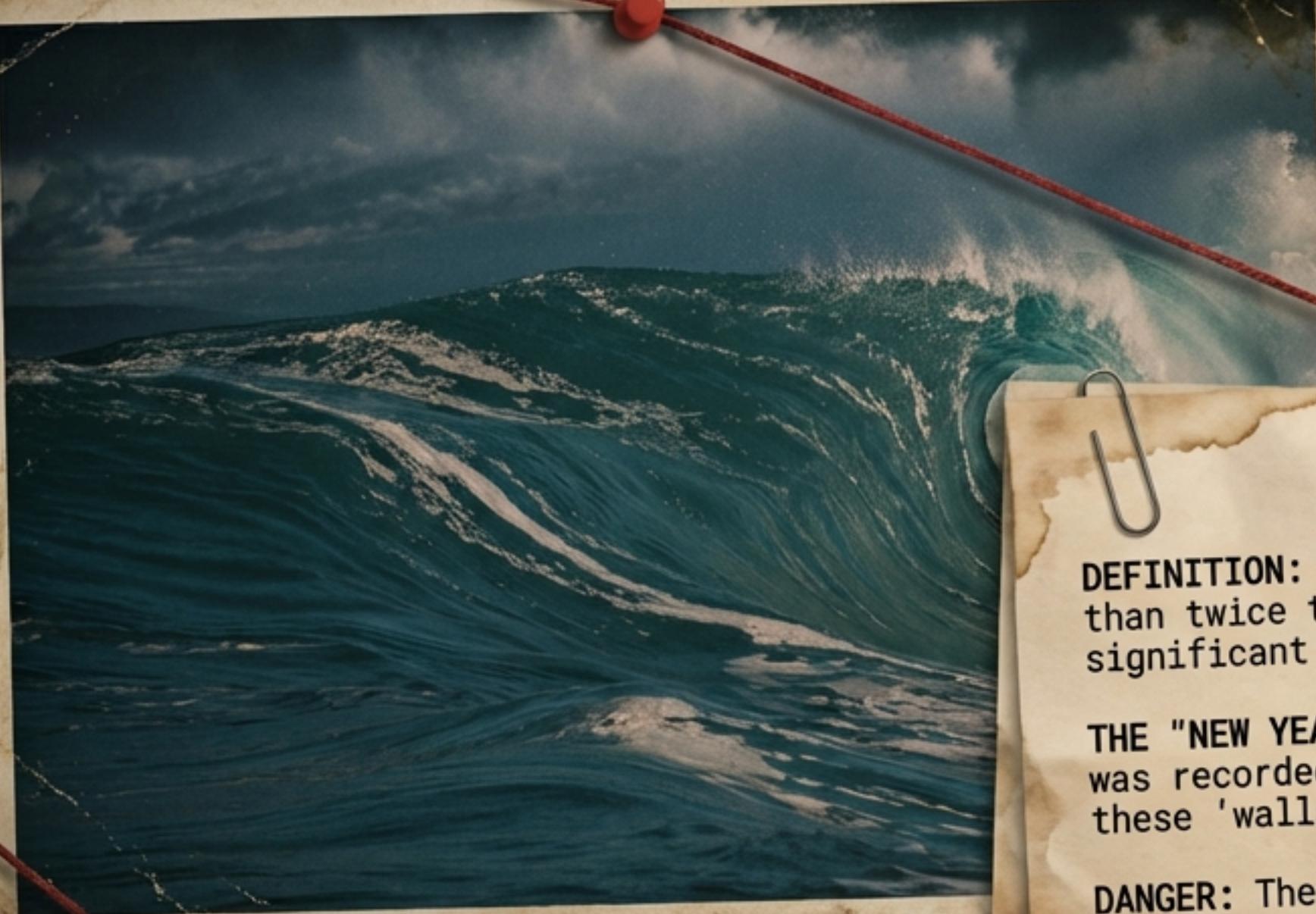
**WHAT IS IT?** A powerful, warm, and swift Atlantic ocean current.

**THE EFFECT:** It acts like a river within the ocean. It can cause rapid, violent changes in weather.

**EVIDENCE:** The Star Tiger was flying directly into a gale (strong wind storm).

**THE 'ERASER':** The current is so strong it can quickly scatter wreckage, making it look like a ship or plane vanished without a trace.

## SUSPECT #3: ROGUE WAVES



**DEFINITION:** Extreme storm waves that are more than twice the size of the surrounding significant wave height.

**THE "NEW YEAR'S WAVE":** In 1995, a 25.6-meter wave was recorded at the Draupner Platform, proving these 'walls of water' are real.

**DANGER:** These waves appear suddenly in open water. They can overwhelm large ships (like the Cyclops) or low-flying planes (like the Star Tiger).

**SOURCE:** Oceanography Journal (2011).

## SUSPECT #4: METHANE "BURPS"



**THE THEORY:** The ocean floor contains "gas hydrates" (ice-like methane).

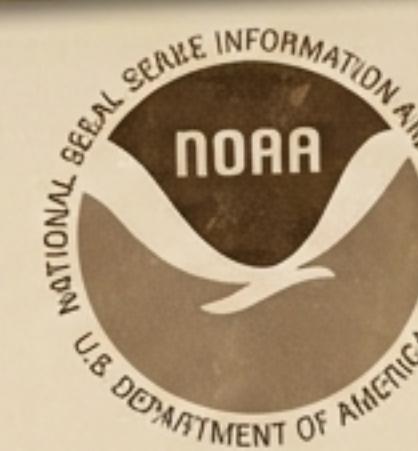
**THE EXPLOSION:** Warm water or geological shifts can cause this gas to explode upwards—a massive "ocean burp."

**THE DANGER FOR SHIPS:** The bubbles reduce the density of the water. A ship can lose buoyancy and sink like a stone.

**THE DANGER FOR PLANES:** Highly concentrated methane gas rising into the air could potentially cause engine explosions.

**EVIDENCE:** Similar craters found in Siberia (Yamal Peninsula) suggest these gas blowouts are powerful.

# THE VERDICT



**WHAT NOAA SAYS:** "There is no evidence that mysterious disappearances occur with any greater frequency in the Bermuda Triangle than in any other large, well-traveled area of the ocean."

## THE REALITY:

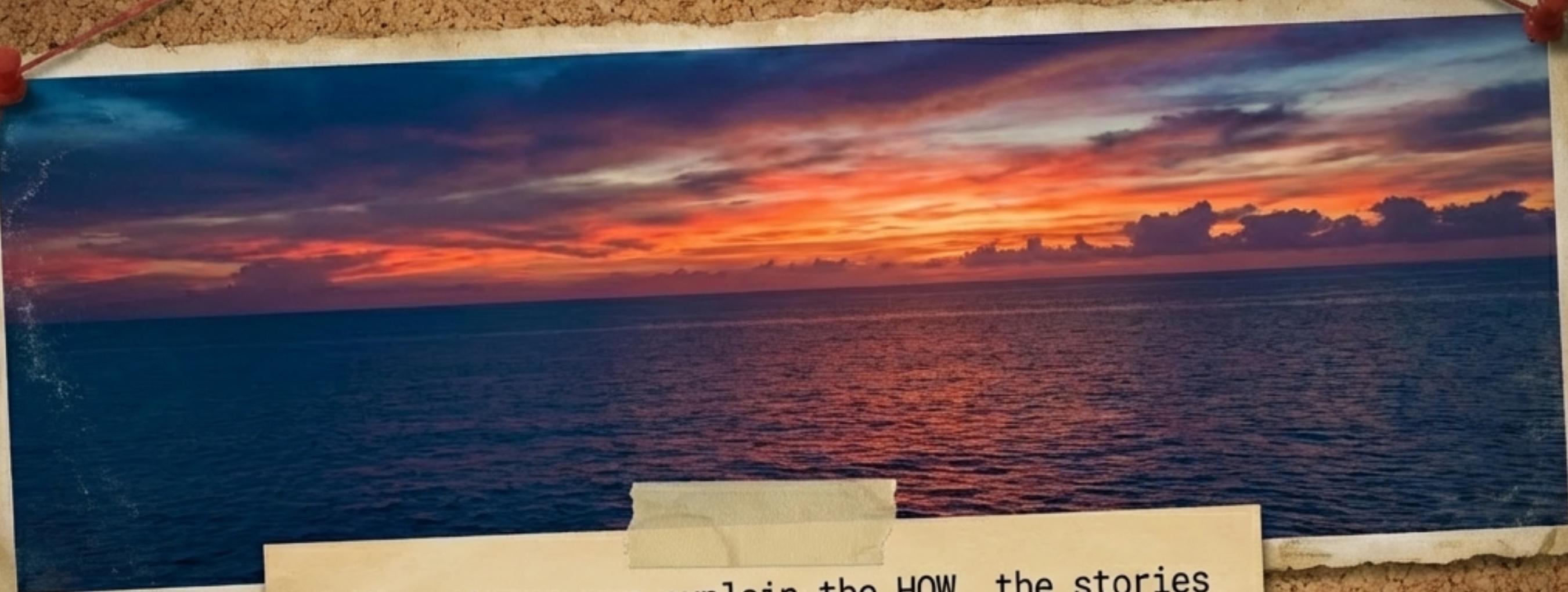
1. Sudden Storms
2. Navigational Errors
3. The Gulf Stream

**CONCLUSION:** The ocean is a vast, powerful, and sometimes dangerous place. It does not require magic to explain why things go missing—only the forces of nature and human mistakes.

**CASE CLOSED**

CASE CLOSED?

~~CASE CLOSED~~



While science can explain the HOW, the stories of the Ellen Austin, Flight 19, and the Cyclops remain a haunting part of maritime history.

Always respect the power of the ocean.

End of File.  
OCT 26, 1947.

DET. VANCE

## DETECTIVE EXAM: COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the three points that make up the Bermuda Triangle?
2. What strange thing happened to the 'Prize Crew' of the Ellen Austin?
3. How many planes were part of the 'Lost Patrol' (Flight 19)?
4. What equipment failure did Lt. Taylor report during Flight 19?
5. What was the likely cause of the PBM Mariner rescue plane's explosion?
6. The Star Tiger was flying at a very low altitude of \_\_\_\_\_ feet.
7. How is a 'Rogue Wave' defined in terms of height?
8. How can Methane Gas bubbles cause a ship to sink?
9. Does the U.S. Board of Geographic Names officially recognize the 'Bermuda Triangle'?
10. According to NOAA, do disappearances happen more often here than in other parts of the ocean?