

Earthquakes Great and Small: how they become large and how they evade detection

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The occurrence of giant earthquakes in the last 12 years has provided a rare and unique opportunity to learn about their rupture behaviour. Using the back-projection method developed in response to the 2004 magnitude 9.3 Sumatra-Andaman earthquake, the rupture characteristics of three largest earthquakes in the 21st century are shown to exhibit features that distinguish them from their smaller counterparts. The technique also shows that regional monitoring networks, such as those operated by Japan Meteorological Agency, may have areas where their earthquake catalogues are missing a substantial number of events.