

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coral damage continues, Australia silent on bottom trawling

The crew from the Rainbow Warrior has captured images of endangered black and red corals being hauled aboard a bottom trawler in international waters near Norfolk Island. The unintentional catch of coral illustrates the highly destructive nature of bottom trawling and the fallacy of the notion that bottom trawling nets can "fly over the surface of the sea floor" without damaging the ecosystems that live there.

Meanwhile the Australian Government is yet to support global moves for a moratorium on bottom trawling.

Carmen Gravatt, Greenpeace Oceans Campaigner onboard the Rainbow Warrior said "Again and again, we have caught the bottom trawling industry red-handed with the evidence of deep sea destruction in their nets. How many more pictures of clearfelled coral forests do governments need to see before they recognise that a moratorium on bottom trawling in international waters is urgently needed?"

The nets of the Waipori, owned by the Tasman Pacific company, seemed to have few fish but many pieces of the corals. Greenpeace also filmed a range of bottom dwelling species that were also in the haul of the New Zealand vessel, including a rare crab (*Paralomis* /cf. /yaldwyni/).

The images were taken on Sunday on the West Norfolk Ridge, just over 200 miles off the coast of northern New Zealand. These stunning images are available from Greenpeace.

A scientific expedition in 2003 identified this region as a 'biodiversity hotspot'. "This area has been described as a marine 'Jurassic Park' – with ancient species that are as old as dinosaurs," said Dr Steve O'Shea, Senior Research Fellow, Auckland University of Technology. "The 2003 expedition discovered more than 100 deep-sea species that were either unrecognised or are new to science."

The United Nations Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea met in New York last week to prepare recommendations on the conservation and management of the oceans for the consideration of the United Nations General Assembly in November this year. A growing number of countries is moving to support a moratorium as the only responsible way to immediately protect deep sea biodiversity.

"The New Zealand Government has got the message and made strong moves to get governments globally to take responsibility for the destruction of bottom trawling in international waters" said Danny Kennedy Campaigns Manager, Greenpeace Australia Pacific. "Where is the Australian government? Australia should support the growing numbers of countries wanting a UN moratorium on bottom trawling in international waters" he concluded.

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Quality visual images [stills and video] are available from Michelle Thomas on 0404 096 556

or view at <http://www.greenpeace.gen.nz/gallery/press>