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## **Rainbow Warrior campaigns for deep sea life**

**Thursday 26 May 2005:** The Rainbow Warrior, Greenpeace's flagship vessel, leaves today from Auckland for international waters around New Zealand and Australia to highlight the destructive impacts of bottom trawling and the lack of effective government action to protect deep sea life.

"Bottom trawling is the most destructive fishing practice in the world," said Carmen Gravatt, Greenpeace New Zealand Oceans campaigner, at a press conference on board the Rainbow Warrior in Auckland harbour. "The deep sea is the largest pool of undiscovered life on Earth. Bottom trawling these unknown worlds is like blowing up Mars before we get there."

When the Rainbow Warrior sailed to the Tasman Sea last year, the crew documented New Zealand and Belizian bottom trawlers hauling in huge amounts of by-catch, rocks from the sea floor and bottom dwelling marine life, including endangered black coral.

Around the world, scientists and environmental groups are calling for a United Nations moratorium on high seas bottom trawling to allow time to take stock of the ecosystems around deep sea mountains and other parts of the sea floor.

"Each day bottom trawling continues more deep sea life gets wiped out and the situation becomes more critical," said Danny Kennedy Campaigns Manager for Greenpeace Australia. "This probably includes extinction of species we haven't even discovered."

The New Zealand and Australian Governments began formal negotiations last year to establish a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation to manage fishing on the Tasman Seas.

"But they have been talking about this for 15 years already and so far failed to come up with any effective biodiversity protection. By the time they sign any agreements, it will be too late, the fish, the other deep sea creatures and their ecosystems will be gone" said Danny Kennedy.

"The New Zealand and Australian Governments are risking their international reputations and contributing to the destruction of ancient ecosystems we know little about, for the sake of relatively few fish. We need a moratorium now to protect life in the deep sea."

"The Australian and New Zealand Governments should be joining other countries in leading the global push for a moratorium at the United Nations in November this year" said Danny Kennedy.

**For more info:**

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