

Seamounts and deep sea creatures at risk from bottom trawling for another year

Canberra: Tuesday 29 November 2005

Greenpeace Australia Pacific today expressed frustration at the lack of concrete steps to address the destructive impacts of bottom trawling on high sea biodiversity. Oceans Adviser to Greenpeace Australia-Pacific Lyn Goldsworthy said "The UN has called for urgent action, the UN has recognised the need for accelerated progress on that action, but it has been unable to go the extra step and put in place any specific measures."

On Monday 28 November in New York the United Nations General Assembly discussed matters relating to Oceans and the Law of the seas. There were renewed calls from the scientific community and a growing number of nations indicating their support for a global moratorium on bottom trawling on the high seas.

The General Assembly once again called on nation states to take urgent action to address the destructive impacts of bottom trawling on the biodiversity of the high seas and urged the need for accelerated progress. They were unable, however, to advocate or propose any specific actions.

A series of processes have been put in place for 2006 which will consider the adequacy of actions taken to date.

Australia has indicated general support for the resolutions but noted that the UN should not limit its attention to bottom trawling.

"But while governments ponder, the bottom trawlers keep on trawling. Deep sea creatures and their diverse habitats are being destroyed while the talks drag on," said Ms Goldsworthy.

"Australia says it is a champion of our oceans – but thus far will not support the urgent action required. We need countries to act rather than talk, and ensure that 2006 is the year for the protection of deep sea life," concluded Ms Goldsworthy.

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Images are available of damage created by deep sea bottom trawling