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MEDIA RELEASE

Bottom trawling by-catch photos highlight need for immediate action as talks commence

Canberra, Sunday 12 February: Today Greenpeace New Zealand released 185 images of a wide diversity of deep-sea life dragged up from the deep-sea floor by bottom trawl fishing. The photos include bizarre crabs, strange octopus, ancient Gorgonian corals and CITES-listed endangered black coral.

The images taken by fisheries observers on board bottom trawlers, were obtained from the New Zealand Ministry of Fisheries under Freedom of Information legislation.

“These photos embarrass the fishing industry and Governments such as Australia who do not support moves to protect deep-sea life from bottom trawling in international waters” said Deep Sea Conservation Coalition Australia-Pacific Coordinator Ms Lyn Goldsworthy.

This week the New Zealand, Australian and Chilean Governments host an international fisheries meeting at Te Papa, the Museum of New Zealand. The meeting, with around 150 delegates from 25 countries, will discuss setting up a Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (RFMO) to manage the international waters of the Tasman Sea and South Pacific Ocean.

Ms Goldsworthy is part of the Australian delegation to this meeting.

“A temporary ban on bottom trawling in the areas under discussion is essential. History has shown us that bottom trawling companies are ruthless. If we wait for years until the talks are resolved, habitats and species deserving protection could be gone forever”, said Ms Goldsworthy.

Meanwhile in New York this week a special United Nations session will discuss options for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in the high seas. The meeting will be chaired by an Australian official.

“These meetings are important but it’s really time for action not talk. These vulnerable ecosystems need immediate protection. That’s why we need a global moratorium on high sea bottom trawling until we get a better picture of the biodiversity impacts from scientists and to allow time for the governance arrangements to be put in place”, said Ms Goldsworthy

For further information contact: Clare Henderson on 0419 266 110

The images can be viewed at www.greenpeace.org.nz/rfmo/oia.

Credit to © NZ Ministry of Fisheries

Print-quality copy images are available from Greenpeace New Zealand Communications Officer Dean Baigent-Mercer on 0011 64 21 790 817

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition is an alliance of over 50 international organizations, representing millions of people in countries around the world. It is calling for a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling until the nations of the world can establish strong management measures for deep-sea fisheries and protect biodiversity on the high seas.

Australian Member: Australian Conservation Foundation