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MEDIA RELEASE

Trawl ban a drop in the ocean

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The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition today said the decision by Australian fishing company Austral to be part of an industry proposal to close parts of the Southern Indian Ocean from bottom trawl fishing shows they are aware of the need to protect deep-sea life from the destruction caused by bottom trawling, but warned this alone will not solve the problem.

“It sounds like a large area but it is a tiny fraction of the South Indian Ocean – maybe as little as 2 per cent” said Lyn Goldsworthy, Australian representative of the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition.

“It’s effectiveness in addressing deep sea destruction will depend on significance of the areas involved. It could be areas already fished out. It may cover areas that are unfishable. And it may not cover all the areas under threat – particularly fishable seamounts. The devil is in the detail,” she said.

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition will continue to work with industry but is still calling on governments to put in place a global moratorium on high seas bottom trawling to allow time for adequate scientific research and to put in place the governance arrangements to guide these sort of decisions.

“There is plenty of evidence of bottom trawling’s devastating impacts. However there is not enough information around to be able to select particular areas without knowing the impact of leaving other vulnerable areas open to bottom trawling,” said Ms Goldsworthy.

“The only effective measure is a temporary ban on bottom trawling on the high seas while the research is carried out and the governance arrangements are put in place,” concluded Ms Goldsworthy.

In November 2006 the United Nations General Assembly will consider specific recommendations to address the destructive impacts of high seas bottom trawling.

For further information contact:

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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 Members: Australian Conservation Foundation,
The Wilderness Society and Greenpeace Australia Pacific.