

# newsletter

deepsea  
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## HOW MANY DEEPSEA COMMUNITIES WILL BE WIPED OUT IN TWO YEARS TIME?

### Fisheries Resolution Compromised

As of late Friday, the DSCC learned that negotiations on the Fisheries Resolution will be continued today. As we understand it, Costa Rica's proposed moratorium language has been deleted from the new Coordinator's draft. Instead, the UNGA will defer action to States, individually or through RFMOs. RFMOs with competency to regulate bottom fisheries will be asked to urgently address the impacts of bottom trawling, and those without such competency will be asked to expand their mandates. **The UNGA would review progress towards these goals only in two years time!**

Despite considerable support for addressing the serious threat high seas bottom trawling poses to deep sea biodiversity, States have allowed Iceland and perhaps a few others to prevent meaningful action from taking place. While the international environmental community is likely to take this up with Iceland directly, States must not allow a minority position to prevent them from meeting their obligations to protect biodiversity.

How many delegates actually believe that this approach will deliver the **short-term action** which governments committed themselves to at the last meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity? We would venture to guess that no one seriously thinks this will happen. As noted in the DSCC paper, *A Net With Holes: the*

*Regional Fisheries Management System*, "Indeed, in the North Atlantic, the failure of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) and the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) to regulate the impact of bottom trawl fishing on deep-sea ecosystems is a long-standing failure of the past four decades or more. The General Fisheries Council of the Mediterranean and the Southeast Atlantic Fisheries Organization have yet to regulate any deep-sea bottom trawl fisheries – the latter has only recently entered into force and its Commission and related infrastructure have yet to be fully established." (See: <http://www.savethehighseas.org/publicdocs/RFMO.pdf>.)

So in two years time, it is quite likely that we will discover that little progress has been made. At best, one or two RFMOs will have taken measures to protect certain representative areas (see NEAFC story below). At worst, two years down the road, the bottom trawling industry will have expanded its reach and countless additional deep sea communities will have been destroyed. This is a complete abrogation of responsibility and legal obligation as outlined in the DSCC's Critique of the EU position ([http://www.savethehighseas.org/publicdocs/DSCC\\_EU\\_critique.pdf](http://www.savethehighseas.org/publicdocs/DSCC_EU_critique.pdf)).

**At the very least, the UNGA should review progress towards these goals beginning at UNCIPOLOS 2005. If governments believe in the approach outlined in the Coordinator's draft – that these measures will deliver short-term**

**action – they have nothing to lose by moving up the review date.**

## Will NEAFC Step Up to the Plate?

The DSCC has reviewed the proposal of Norway to NEAFC, which would protect deep sea fish species by closing 6 sites, located in different parts of its area of jurisdiction, to trawling. The proposal acknowledges that current data on species targeted by deep-sea fisheries in the North East Atlantic are insufficient to form the basis of a management strategy. NEAFC itself suggests that the only current option for management of deep-sea fisheries is to close areas to trawling of any kind, hence the Norwegian proposal.

There are, of course, other seamounts and deep water banks in the NEAFC area which are also important to protect. The western slopes of Rockall Bank, for example, are known to host extensive cold-water coral reef habitat. The DSCC therefore considers the Norwegian proposal to be a step in the right direction, though not entirely sufficient from a precautionary perspective.

The critical question is whether NEAFC member States will be prepared to take this first step, and thereby demonstrate their commitment to take short-term action as expressed within the context of both the CBD and UNICPOLOS / UNGA.

## DSCC Launch in Argentina

DSCC member CeDePesca in Argentina hosted a workshop on 25-26 October for NGOs, scientists, fishing industry and government representatives to discuss the need for the high seas moratorium on bottom trawl fishing. Most participants came away from the meeting with an appreciation of the importance of the issue and there was general agreement over the course of action advocated by CeDePesca and the DSCC.

## Thousands Speak Out for the Moratorium

On Wednesday, 27 October, Greenpeace delivered the first batch of a projected 100,000 postcards calling on UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to work with States to establish a UN moratorium on high seas bottom trawling. The postcards were

handed over at a meeting with Marta Mauras, Director, Executive Office of the Secretary General, who pledged to raise this with Kofi Annan.

## Oceana and WWF in El Pais

An ad by Oceana and WWF in Spain appeared in El Pais on Friday, reminding the government that it was a leader in the fight to ban driftnets and called on it to do the same with regard to the moratorium on high seas bottom trawl fishing.

Las redes de deriva son algo del siglo **PASADO**, porque España jugó un papel importante en su eliminación.

2004: España debe evitar que el arrastre de fondo sea una pesadilla para el **FUTURO** de los océanos.

La pesca de arrastre de fondo arrasa todo lo que encuentra en su paso, destruyendo los fondos marinos y el hábitat que los seres marinos necesitan para alimentarse y protegerse.

Los conflictos de esta pesca de arrastre de fondo arrastra:

- buques de cordas de MILES de años de antigüedad
- especies totalmente desconocidas
- poblaciones de peces muy jóvenes, algunas nacidas en el siglo XIX
- las perspectivas de futuro en la pesca en alta mar

Pídele al Gobierno español que apoye la moratoria contra el arrastre de fondo en alta mar. Firma en: [www.pescaparasiempre.org](http://www.pescaparasiempre.org)

En noviembre, bajo una Asamblea de Naciones Unidas y queremos que el Gobierno español lleve la adhesión de una resolución que permita UNA MORATORIA DE LA PESCA DE ARRASTRE DE FONDO en aguas internacionales que asegure la protección de los hábitats sensibles como los arrecifes de coral de las montañas submarinas.

En 1998 se eliminaron las redes de deriva y ahora, con tu apoyo, podemos conseguir que 2004 sea el año de la protección de los fondos marinos.

**DSCC** **OCEANA** **WWF**

## Who is Determining the EU Position?

In a letter to Oceana dated 15 October, the German Foreign Ministry has said that “a moratorium on high seas bottom trawling should be considered.” We know that other EU countries are supporting language that is stronger than that which appears in the EU position. So who is calling the shots?

## For More Information

For further information on why a high seas moratorium is needed now, how it can be implemented, and why the action recommended by UNICPOLOS V in June is simply not good enough, visit our website at [www.savethehighseas.org](http://www.savethehighseas.org).

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