



Stichting Deep Sea Conservation Coalition
Postbus 59681
1040 LD AMSTERDAM
Netherlands

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR - DSCC ANNUAL REPORT, 2015

It is with pleasure that I present the Annual Report for the Stichting Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015. The content has been prepared in accordance with Part 9 of Book 2 of the Dutch Civil Code, under advice from Benvolor.

Deep-sea fisheries

In 2015 the DSCC continued its work to ensure that the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions committing nations to protect the deep sea from the damage caused by bottom fisheries on the high seas are effectively implemented on the water. The program has focused on three main areas:

- i) New legislation in the **European Union** (EU) for the management of deep-sea fishing in the Northeast Atlantic,
- ii) Monitoring and engaging with regional fisheries management organizations (**RFMOs**) to adopt new regulations to implement their UN commitments, and
- iii) Working with the UNGA, the **United Nations** Food and Agriculture Organization (UN FAO) and other bodies to review, reinforce and strengthen this international process.

European Union

During 2015, the European Council began actively negotiating a position on the new EU deep-sea regulation, first under the Latvian presidency and then under Luxembourg. The DSCC worked with key EU member states on our priority provisions of the draft regulation. We further applied pressure to achieve a positive formal Council position by running public events and online petitions, mobilizing the scientific community, holding meetings with representatives in Brussels and officials in capitals, media outreach and coordinating the activities of our members.

In November, almost 3½ years after the European Commission released its proposal for a new regulation, the Council finally adopted a position which included provisions for protecting deep-sea ecosystems and a ban on bottom trawling below 800 meters depth. This reintroduced the language around a ban into the negotiations after it was narrowly rejected by European Parliament in December 2013, and paved the way for finalizing the new regulation via Trilogue (a three-way process of negotiation involving the European Parliament, Council and Commission) in 2016.

Regional Fisheries Management Organizations

The DSCC sends policy, legal and scientific experts to relevant RFMO meetings to push for better and more comprehensive regulations to protect deep-sea ecosystems. Although unglamorous, the work is vital to ensuring that the protection measures agreed by all nations at the UN are actually carried out on the water. Some important measures were achieved in 2015, including,

- The South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization (SPRFMO) in January agreed measures on data standards, a compliance and monitoring scheme, boarding and inspection procedures and a transshipment measure. The DSCC also participated actively in the Scientific Committee to counter attempts to weaken measures on bottom fishing.
- At its second Commission meeting in March the South Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) agreed an interim recommendation against damaging deep-sea gillnet fishing and made progress towards measures on bottom trawling.
- The Annual Meeting of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) in September concluded with an agreement to eliminate a loophole in the deep-sea fishing regulations which allowed for 'exploratory' bottom trawl fishing (in effect commercial fishing) on seamounts that were technically closed in 2008 to bottom fishing by NAFO. The DSCC had been calling for the closure of this loophole for several years.

United Nations

Since the UNGA resolutions pertaining to protection of the deep sea from bottom fisheries were adopted, the Assembly has scheduled a series of reviews to assess implementation by states and RFMOs. UNGA negotiators have scheduled the next review for 2016. The DSCC participated in a number of meetings of the UN FAO in 2015 to review the measures taken by states and RFMOs to implement the UNGA deep-sea resolutions and began preparing a DSCC review of the implementation of the UNGA resolutions for use in the debate at the UNGA in 2016.

Deep-seabed mining

In 2015 the DSCC's work on deep-seabed mining focused on two areas: the International Seabed Authority (ISA) and the application by Chatham Rock Phosphate to undertake phosphate mining in New Zealand waters.

International Seabed Authority

The ISA is the official UN body charged with governing and managing the growing push to mine the deep ocean beyond areas of national jurisdiction. Among other tasks, the Authority grants licenses to companies and countries for exploration or prospecting for minerals.

In 2015 the ISA produced a draft framework regulation for commercial deep-sea mining. The DSCC provided extensive comments on the draft and continued to advocate for precautionary measures including no-mining areas, comprehensive systems of protected areas, and for the application of the best available science and management practices. A central focus of our work at the ISA is the transparency of processes that have traditionally been closed to all but a handful of national and corporate interests and which involve making decisions on contracting out vast tracts of ocean that belongs to all humankind.

The DSCC also helped fund and participated in a scientist's initiative to draft a Strategic Environment Management Plan for the international seabed area of the Mid-Atlantic Ridge and Atlantic Ocean Basin. This initiative will continue into 2016 and 2017, concluding with a science based proposal to the ISA for the identification of Areas of Particular Environment Interest in the Atlantic Basin and other environmental factors that need to be taken into consideration in future regulation of seabed mining in the area.



Chatham Rise

In 2014 the DSCC joined forces with Kiwis Against Seabed Mining and Greenpeace to oppose the application by Chatham Rock Phosphate to mine phosphate at depths of 450 meters in a 5,200 km² area off the east coast of New Zealand. The DSCC and its partners convened a team of independent experts to demonstrate that the activity of seabed mining in this area could not be carried out without creating unacceptable damage to the marine environment. The DSCC actively participated through lawyer and expert witnesses in the 3 month-long hearing process. A decision was reached in February 2015 to refuse consent for a bid to mine phosphate from the Chatham Rise's deep seabed, which was a widely noted important decision to protect the deep seabed. Following the hearings, the government came under intense pressure from the mining industry to weaken the legislation sufficiently to allow seabed mining to proceed. Civil society represented a vital counterweight to this.

Outreach

Across its campaign areas, the DSCC continued to develop and share materials and undertake legacy and social media work to raise awareness about the vulnerability of the deep ocean. The News feed on the home page of the [DSCC web site](#) was regularly updated with original material, as well as relevant content developed by partners and featured in public media channels. The DSCC closed the year with over 1,700 Twitter followers. Communications around the European deep-sea fisheries legislation work were particularly intensive during 2015, with campaign activities profiled on a dedicated [sub-site](#).

In addition to working closely with a number of its member organizations, the DSCC collaborated with the [High Seas Alliance](#) toward achieving a UN agreement to begin the process of negotiating a new treaty to protect biodiversity in the international areas of the world's ocean. This campaign bore fruit in January 2015 when States took a major step toward urgently needed ocean protection, agreeing to develop a legally binding agreement to conserve marine life in the high seas. This will be important to the work of the DSCC to deliver on our two overarching goals to:

- Substantially reduce the greatest threats to life in the deep seas; and
- Safeguard the long-term health, integrity, and resilience of deep-sea ecosystems.

Accounts and operation

Governance and Membership

The Stichting DSCC Board of Directors is composed of: Chair — Lance Morgan, Secretary — Sebastian Losada, Treasurer — Susanna Fuller.

To support the Board, a coordination team works with a [steering group](#) that currently consists of the Ecology Action Centre, Greenpeace International, Marine Conservation Institute, the Natural Resources Defense Council, The Pew Charitable Trusts, Seas at Risk, and WWF. The DSCC has developed a formidable international team of scientists, policy and communication experts, lawyers and political activists who, on behalf of the deep sea, have established a strong reputation and profile on this issue at the UN and in other fora.

The DSCC also has an affiliate foundation in New Zealand. Its Board of Directors is identical to that of the Stichting.



The Coalition is made up of more than 70 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), fishers organizations and law and policy institutes, all committed to protecting the deep sea. Our [web site](#) contains a list of DSCC members and information on each one.

Financial report 2015

All of the DSCC's work is made possible through the generous support of foundations and member organizations. The DSCC does not receive any funding from governments or corporations, nor does it have any paid members of staff. In 2015 the DSCC received in-kind support from many of our member organizations and financial support from: Adessium Foundation, J.M. Kaplan Fund, The Ocean Foundation, Oceans 5, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Synchronicity Earth.

The annual accounts 2015 were drawn up by Weller Tax and Accounting according to generally accepted accounting principles in the Netherlands, and were audited by Boonzaijer & Merkus Accountants & Adviseurs.

Audited Statement of Operations year end 31 December 2015	
PROJECT REVENUE	
Fisheries - EU	248,209
Fisheries - International	65,593
Total Fisheries	313,802
Seabed Mining	145,388
Total Project Revenue (€)	459,189
PROJECT EXPENSES	
Administration	18,057
Advocacy	118,643
Communication	246,935
Outreach	47,587
Science	27,967
Total project expenses (€)	459,189
General Overhead	-
Excess of expenses over revenue	0

DSCC in New Zealand contributed to the legal case on seabed mining through funding experts and lawyers.

Sincerely,

Lance Morgan
Chair of the Board of Directors
Deep Sea Conservation Coalition