

Bites from the Deep

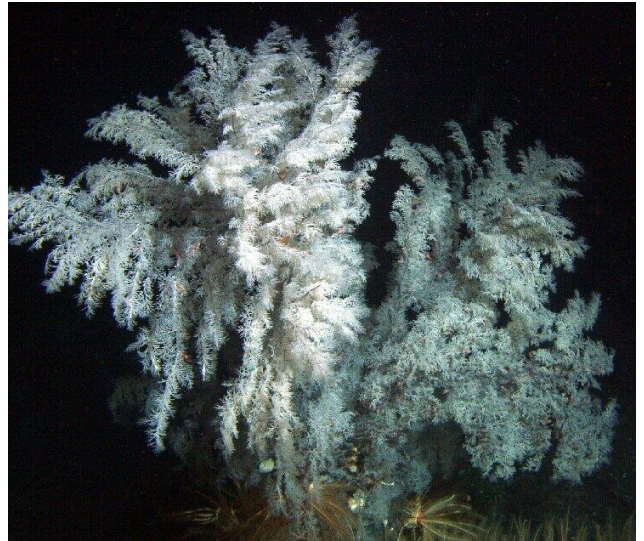
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JANUARY TO JUNE 2019: THE PAST HALF YEAR

DEEP-SEA FISHERIES

- At the [January meeting](#) of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation, the DSCC worked diligently to prevent a weak agreement on regulations for areas open to bottom trawling. While the agreement did pass, the DSCC was able to prevent several particularly egregious elements from being adopted.
- The DSCC's Matthew Gianni was invited to speak on international efforts to protect vulnerable marine ecosystems at a meeting of a Mediterranean deep-sea project funded by the EU in March.
- In partnership with ECO, Greenpeace, WWF, Forest and Bird and LegaSea, the DSCC launched an [online petition](#) calling for New Zealand to end bottom trawl fishing on seamounts. Posted in May, the combined tally of signatures accrued by end-June was over 35,000. Earlier this year, the New Zealand government argued at SPRFMO that a vessel owned by one of New Zealand's largest fishing companies, Talley's, should not be put on the IUU blacklist on the basis that it would be prosecuted in New Zealand. Despite clear evidence that the vessel had repeatedly fished in closed areas, the company is being treated leniently. The court case has been postponed until after the winter fishing season. The vessel has meanwhile been allowed to continue trawling (for a second season since the still-unprosecuted incident) and two of its sister ships have been issued permits to trawl in the high seas. The [story](#) caused a political storm between Greenpeace, the fishing company and a key industry-aligned politician (see [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)), while the Minister of Fisheries has been [seen as ineffectual](#).



Christmas tree coral. Photo credit: NOAA Okeanos Explorer Program, INDEX-SATAL 2010.

DEEP SEABED MINING

- In January Peter Thomson, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for the Ocean (and former President of both the Assembly and the Council of the International Seabed Authority (ISA)), [made a statement](#) at the World Economic Forum about a moratorium on deep seabed mining until the UN Decade of Ocean Science is complete.
- Working with Members of European Parliament and Seas At Risk, we obtained strong provisions in a [resolution](#) adopted by the Parliament in January. The resolution calls for

transparency in the work of the ISA, protection of the marine environment from seabed mining and a moratorium on deep-sea mining until the environmental risks are fully understood.

- For the February ISA Council meeting the DSCC prepared [interventions](#) on key elements of the draft mining regulations. At the Ad Hoc Working Group on Financial Matters we emphasized the importance of an accurate valuation of deep-sea ecosystem services and damage to biodiversity.
- At the Economist World Ocean Summit in February, the DSCC participated in a panel entitled "[Race to the bottom—the outlook for deep-sea mining](#)". Other panelists included the Secretary General of the ISA and the chief scientist for a prospective deep seabed mining company.
- In February, The DSCC published a [blog](#) on deep seabed mining, written by Matthew Gianni and Sian Owen, on the Economist's World Ocean Initiative website.
- In May the EU's Long Distance Fishing Fleet Advisory Council (LDAC) [adopted a resolution](#) advising the European Commission and Member States to support a moratorium on deep-sea mining in international waters.
- The DSCC attended the ISA's May workshop on the "[Development of Standards and Guidelines for the mining code](#)" in Pretoria, South Africa.
- The DSCC hosted a breakout session on deep seabed mining in June at a high level event on the high seas hosted by the Blue Marine Foundation.
- In June, the DSCC participated in an workshop organized by Seas At Risk entitled "Deep sea mining: changing the narrative". The meeting convened a range of civil society groups to explore the risks of deep seabed mining and how to address the driving forces behind the push for exploitation.



This octopus was spotted on the side of a fault scarp during a geologic traverse by the ROPOS Remotely Operated Vehicles. Photo credit: Submarine Ring of Fire 2002 "Explorer Ridge" Exploration, NOAA

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

July to December 2019: The Next 6 Months

- July 1-5: SIOFA Sixth Meeting of the Parties. Mauritius.
- July 1-26: ISA 25th Annual Session of the Legal & Technical Commission, Finance Committee, Council and Assembly. Jamaica.
- July 29-August 2: 7th International Symposium on Deep-Sea Corals. Colombia.
- August 19-30: Third session of the Intergovernmental Conference on an international legally binding instrument under UNCLOS on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. USA.
- September 23-27: NAFO 41st Annual Meeting. France.
- September 23-25: UN Global Compact Leaders Week. USA.
- October 7-23: SPRFMO 7th Meeting of the Scientific Council. Cuba.
- October 21-November 1: CCAMLR 38th Meeting of the Commission. Australia.
- October 23-24: Our Ocean 2019. Norway.
- November 12-15: NEAFC 38th Annual Meeting. UK.