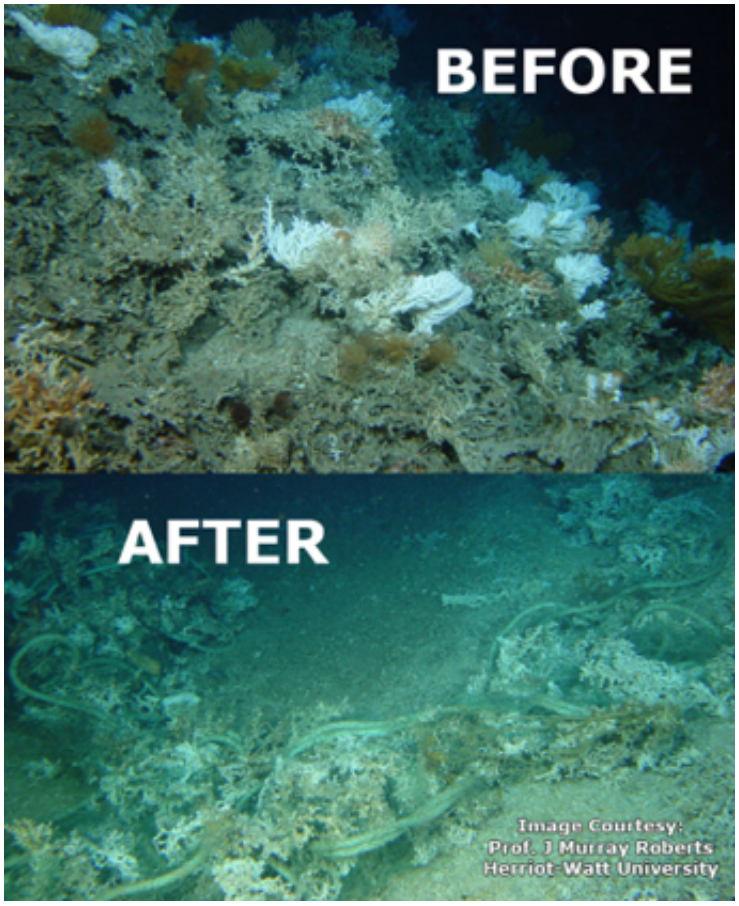
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News | 09.12.2013

Fisheries

Time to ban destructive deep-sea trawling

One of the key food related items on the agenda of the plenary of the European Parliament this week is the vote on the report on Deep Sea Fishing in the North-East Atlantic.



The biological characteristics of deep-sea species and the specific features of deep marine ecosystems make them particularly sensitive to human activities. Since the environment these species live in is very cold and without light they are very slow-growing and only reach sexual maturity when several decades old. The result is that these species reproduce only very slowly and are very vulnerable to over-fishing. Threats facing deep-sea stocks, and the fragility of deep-sea ecosystems have been recognised both globally by the United Nations General Assembly and its Food and Agriculture Organisation and at regional level (e.g. North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission, NEAFC). In July 2012, the European

Commission proposed a new set of measures to review the initial Deep Sea Stock regulation. It considers that deep sea species are to be formally defined by a list. It also set that vessels targeting these species using trawls or gillnets (both of which can damage the sea floor, its coral and sponges) would be phased out after two years. Other vessels catching these species as bycatch would be allowed to continue to fish but subject to stricter controls and reporting provisions. In other words, a ban on deep-sea trawling would not be a ban on catching deep-sea fish. It would only be a ban on the most destructive fishing method. Yet, to counter this progressive proposal the fishing industry has grossly exaggerated the numbers of fishers that would be affected by such modifications in the regulation. Industry claims managed to cause concern for most MEPs about the impact of the proposal on their local fleet, even when there would be none. They claimed that hundreds of vessels would be put out of work from a wide variety of Member States. However, in Europe at most a few dozen trawlers would be seriously affected, mostly French and Spanish. As a result of this lobbying action, while the initial report presented in the European Parlaiment's FISH Committee was fully supportive of the Commission approach, the report as voted crawled back on the Commission proposal to phase out targetted fishing for deep sea species using either trawls or gillnets. Primarily because of the removal of the ban, the Greens/EFA Group abstained in the vote in the Fisheries committee. For the vote in plenary this Monday our MEPs have tabled an amendment to reinstate a ban on trawling and gillnets, adding also a depth limit - these types of fishing would be prohibited below 600 meters. The Greens/EFA MEPs will not back down on this crucial point. If together with us you wish to play your part and try to help the vote in plenary, it is not too late.

To learn more about Deep-sea trawling check out this comic :

- http://www.penelope-jolicoeur.com/2013/11/take-5-minutes-and-sign-this.html

To take action sign and share the petition here:

- **Bloom Association Petition on Avaaz**
- http://petition.bloomassociation.org/stop-the-destruction-of-deep-sea/

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