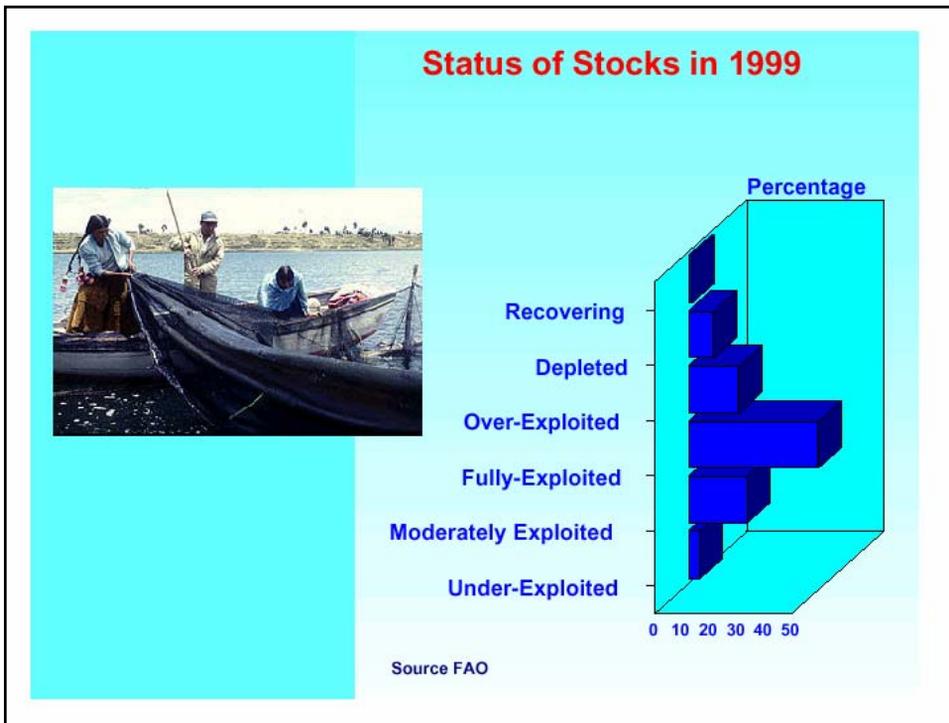
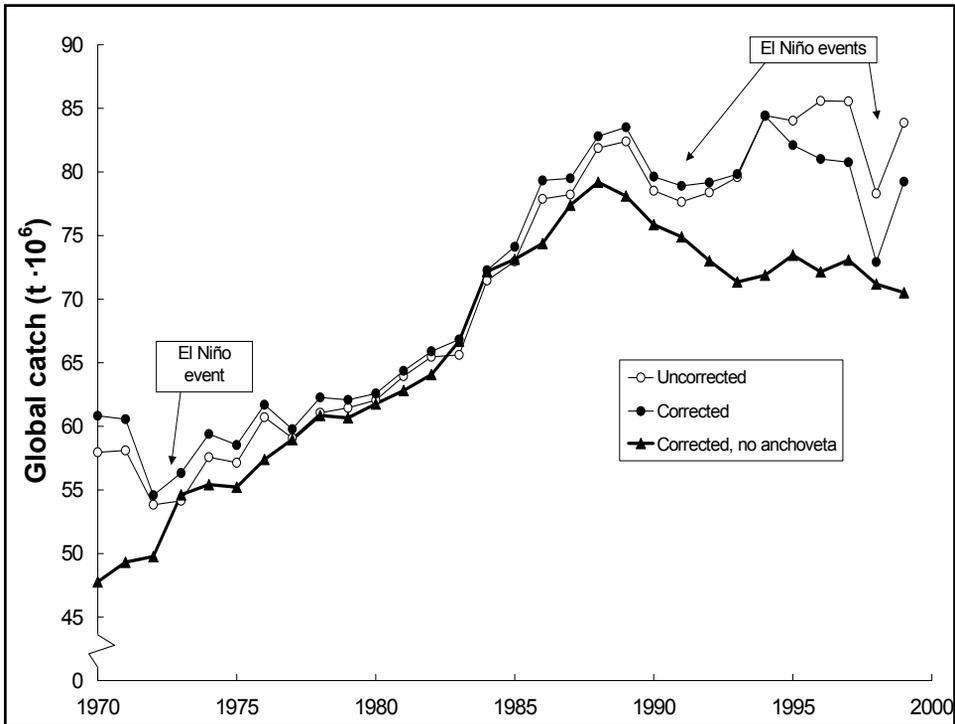


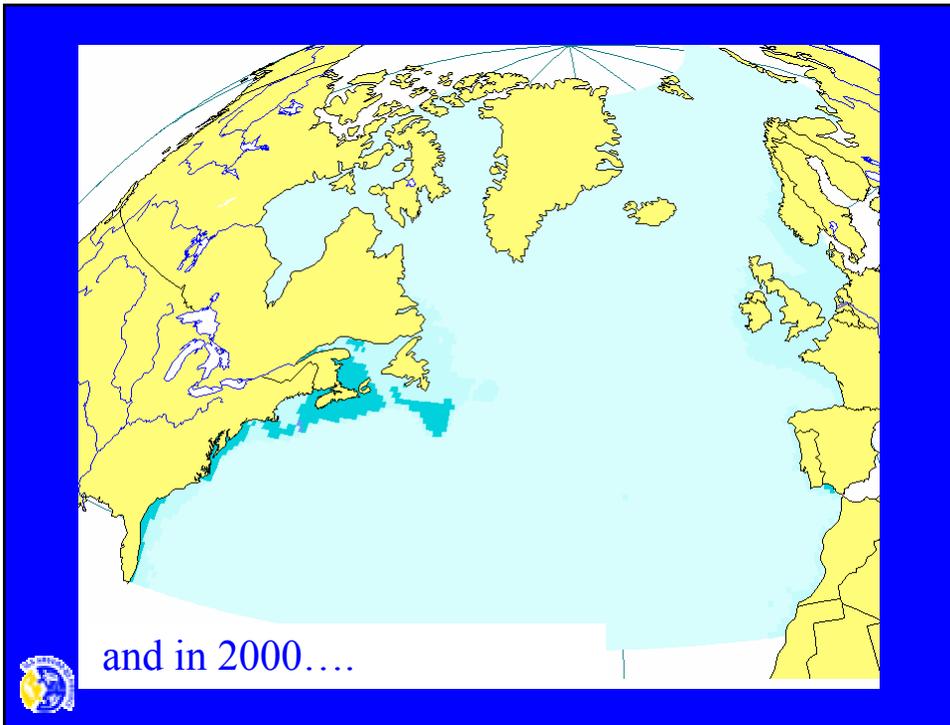
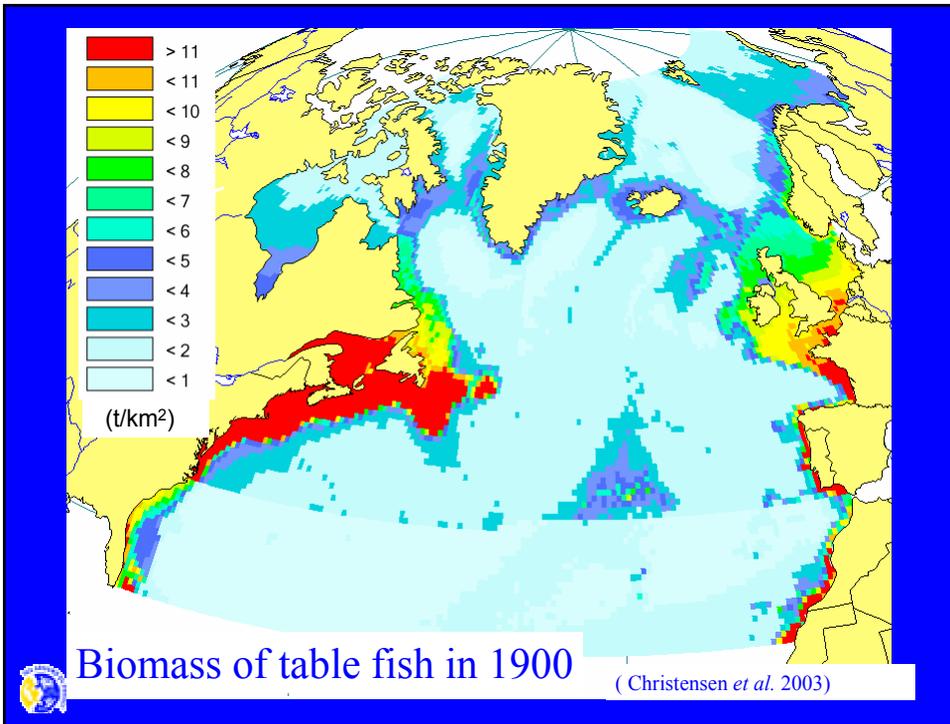
# High Seas Bottom Trawl Fisheries and their Impact on Deep Sea Environments

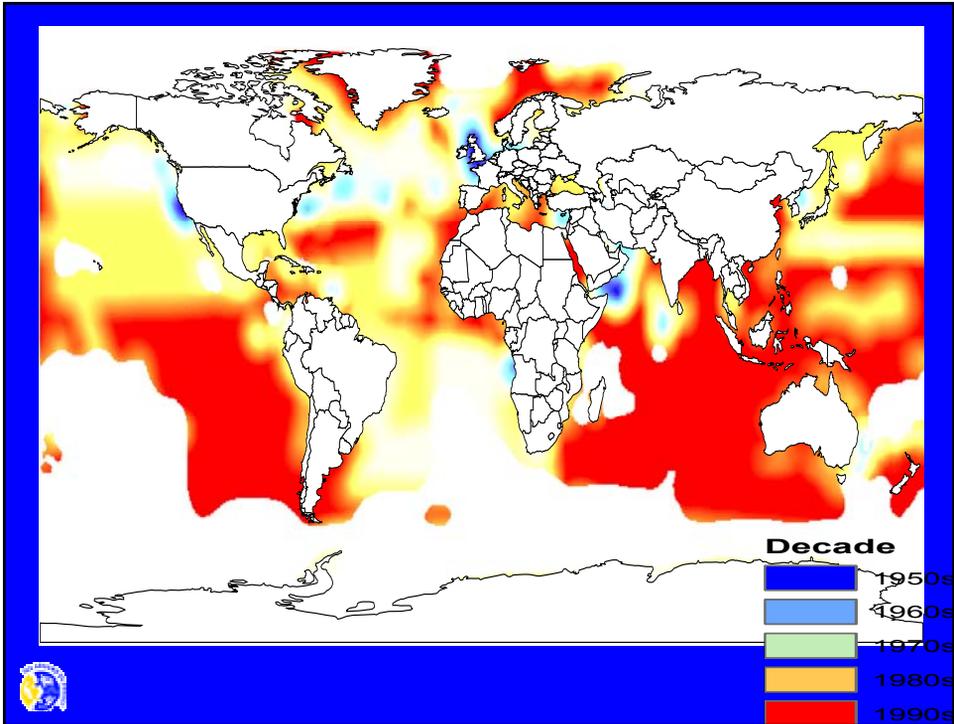
*Lisa Speer*  
*Senior Policy Analyst*  
*Natural Resources Defense Council*

## Deep Sea Conservation Coalition

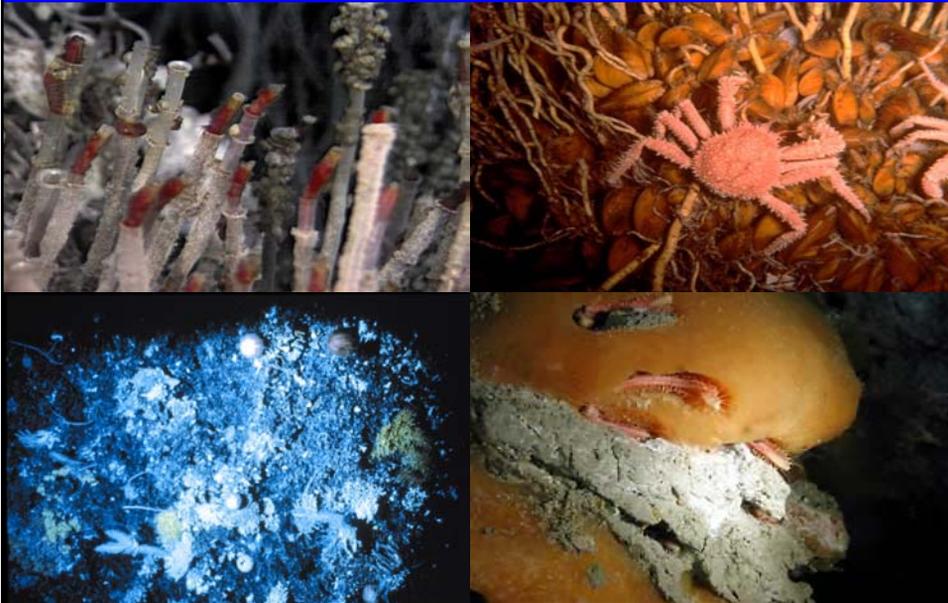




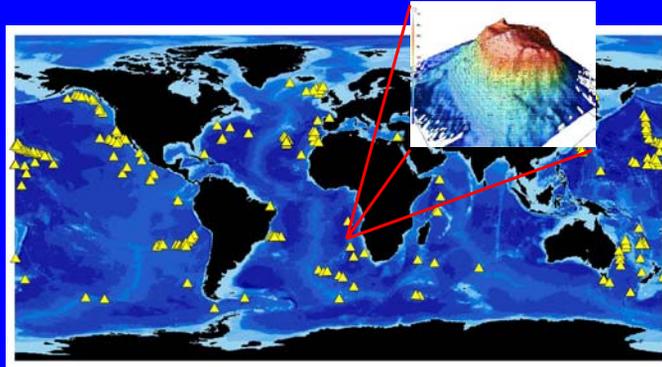




## Deep Ocean Ecosystems Discovered in Past 30 Years



- **~50,000 – 100,000 seamounts, half on the high seas**
- **< 1% biologically sampled**



## Seamounts and cold water corals

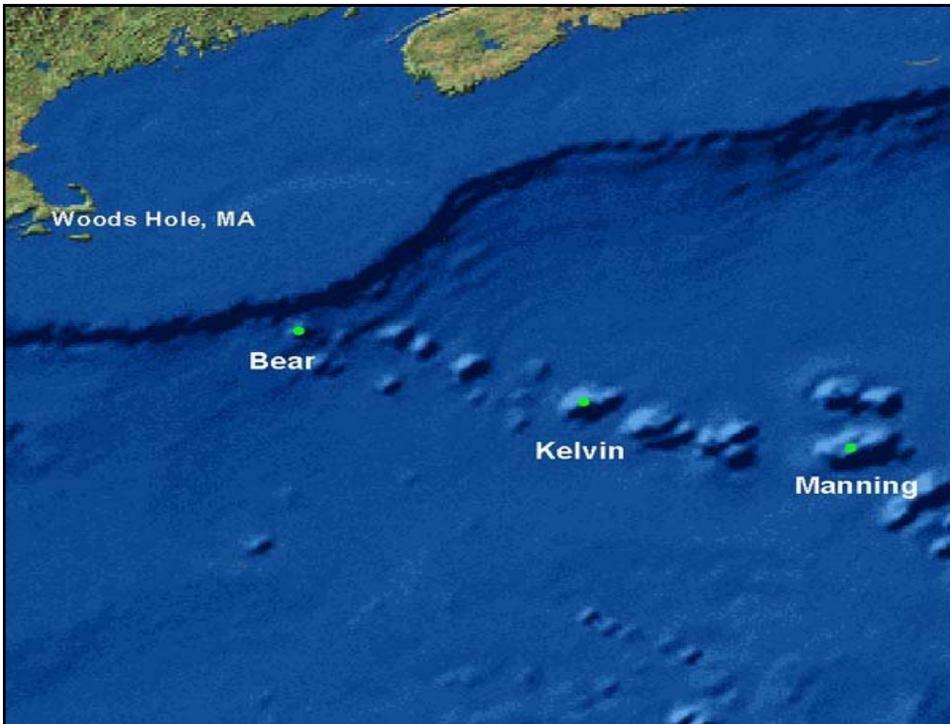
- Important nursery and feeding grounds



- Host vast numbers of benthic animals
  - Hard, soft, horny corals, sponges, sea lilies, sea squirts
  - Habitat and food for other animals

- Host high levels of endemism
- Stepping stones for spreading of species across ocean basins
- Refugia for relict species





## Bottom Trawling



**Trawling gear is extremely robust – doors can be up to 5 tons each**



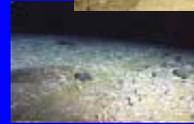
# Bottom Trawl Fishing



# Bottom trawling on Seamounts



Untrawle



trawled

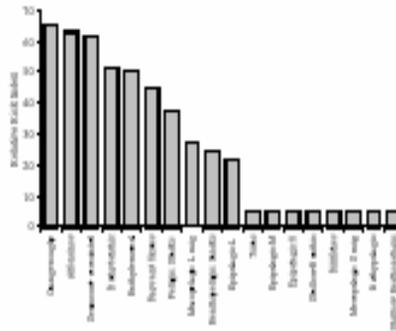
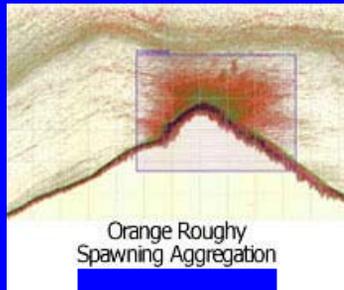


Figure 5. Relative risk of extinction for fish groups used in a genetic assessment response model (Hovde and Fjell, 2004).

## Orange roughy



## Scientists Statement on Protecting World's Deep-sea Coral and Sponge Ecosystems, February 2004

- ***“the UN General Assembly should adopt a moratorium on deep-sea bottom trawl fishing on the High Seas effective immediately”***



### Current status of High Seas bottom trawl fishery: (IUCN, NRDC, WWF, CI)



- 170,000 – 215,000 mt  
≅ 0.2% of world capture fisheries [UN FAO 2001]
- Value = US\$300- US\$400 m in 2001  
<0.5% of total value of world capture fisheries production [UN FAO 2001]
- Negligible contribution to global food security

## Current status of High Seas bottom trawl fishery: (IUCN, NRDC, WWF, CI)

- 11 countries responsible for over 95% of reported catch (2001)  
Spain; Portugal; Russia; Lithuania; Latvia; Estonia;  
Iceland; Norway; Faroe Is (Denmark); New Zealand; Japan  
(most OECD and/or Parties to UNFSA)
- 100-200 vessels - full-time, year round  
3.1 million vessels worldwide [UN FAO 2001]



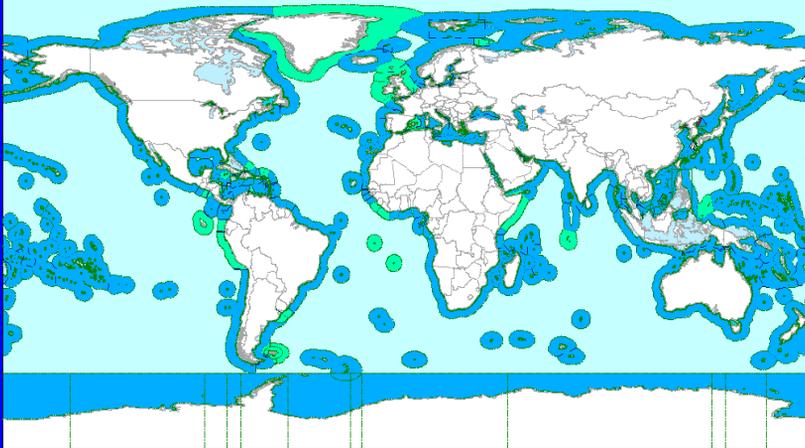
## Gaps in Governance

- Bottom trawling in most areas of the high seas is completely unregulated
- In those high seas areas with RFMOs, few if any have restricted bottom trawling to protect vulnerable habitats

45°N, 00°E



## 64% Of World's Oceans Lie Beyond National Jurisdiction



## International Agreements



- UNCLOS
- CBD
- UN Fish Stocks Agreement
- FAO Code of Conduct
- RFMO Agreements
- Antarctic Treaty System
- Regional Seas Agreements

## UNCLOS

- Article 117: duty to take measures necessary to conserve high seas living resources
- Article 118: duty to cooperate in the conservation and management
- Article 192. duty to protect and preserve marine environment
- Article 194.5: duty to protect rare and fragile ecosystems and vulnerable species



## Convention on Biological Diversity

- Article 3
  - Parties “to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or to areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.”
- Article 5
  - Parties to cooperate in respect of areas beyond national jurisdiction for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity



## 1995 UN FISH STOCKS AGREEMENT

- Assess and minimize the impact of fishing on non-target and associated or dependent species and their environment [5(d),(f)]
- Protect biodiversity in the marine environment [5(g)]
- Protect habitats of special concern [6.3]

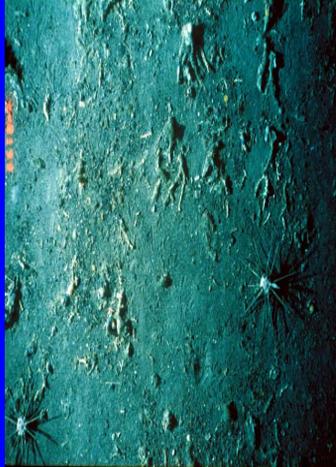


## UN World Summit on Sustainable Development

### Plan of Implementation

“(a) Maintain the productivity and biodiversity of important and vulnerable marine and coastal areas, including in areas within and beyond national jurisdiction;”

## UN General Assembly Resolution A/57/141 (2002):



- “Encourages relevant international organizations, ..., to consider urgently ways to integrate and improve, on a scientific basis, the management of risks to marine biodiversity of seamounts and certain other underwater features within the framework of the Convention;”

## United Nations General Assembly Resolution A/58/19 (2003)



- Paragraph 51  
“.....reiterates its call for urgent consideration of ways to integrate and improve, on a scientific basis, the management of risks to the marine biodiversity of seamounts, cold water coral reefs and certain other underwater features...”.

## Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 7 - 2004:

- COP 7, Decision VII/5:

30. Agrees that there is an urgent need for international cooperation and action to improve conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in marine areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, ...



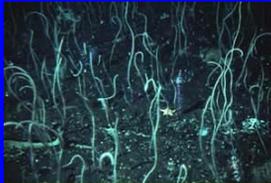
## Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 7 - 2004:

- COP 7, Decision VII/5:

61. **Calls upon the United Nations General Assembly ... to urgently take the necessary short-term, medium-term and long-term measures to eliminate/avoid destructive practices**, consistent with international law, on scientific basis, **including** the application of precaution, for example, on a case by case basis, **interim prohibition of destructive practices adversely impacting the marine biological diversity**



## Moving from CALLS for urgent action ... to ACTION ...



## Immediate Moratorium on High Seas Bottom Trawling

- a 'time out' for high seas bottom trawl fishing to initiate a UN Coordinated approach to:
  - assess deep sea biodiversity & ecosystems + vulnerability to fishing;
  - negotiate, adopt and implement legally binding regimes to protect, conserve and sustainably and equitably manage High Seas biological diversity.



