



WWF *for a living planet*[®]

WWF International
Avenue du Mont-Blanc
1196 Gland
Switzerland

Tel: +41 22 364 9111
Fax: +41 22 364 8307
www.panda.org

Background Info

20 July 2012

Some additional info on bottom trawling and deep water species:

- So far considerable areas have been closed to bottom trawling as a result of 10 years lobbying work by scientists and NGOs inside and outside EU waters, by the Council as well as by NEAFC - see status maps at <http://www.charlie-gibbs.org/charlie/node/7> but still this is a piecemeal approach which Damanaki obviously wants to overcome now.
- WWF's position statement on Council Regulation (EC) No734/2008 on the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems in the high seas from the adverse impacts of bottom fishing gears - see Commission report at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0651:FIN:EN:HTML>
- Following the Lisbon treaty and co-decision rules, such closures and similar technical measures are no longer included in the annual fishing opportunity regulation but adopted in the format of interim regulations by Council and EP.
- The deep-sea zone begins around 200 metres (650 feet) down, where most light cannot penetrate, and ends at the bottom of the ocean, an average depth of 4,000 metres (over 2 miles)
- The depth that is considered deep sea does vary but is generally considered as the shelf break, normally around 200m depth. In Antarctica the shelf is deeper because the weight of ice sheets presses the continental mass down.
- Sunlight penetrates to 1000m (i.e. it can be detected to that depth), but photosynthetically available light obviously penetrates much shallower, generally considered as 100-150m depth in clear waters (epipelagic zone) although plants have been found deeper on seamounts.
- Below 1000m the only light is biological in origin.
- The EC regulation 734/2008 is applicable to "Community fishing vessels carrying out fishing activities with bottom gears in the high seas" but not to Community fishing vessels whose areas of operation lie within areas (a) under the responsibility of an RFMO/A with competence to regulate such fishing activities or (b) for which a process for the establishment of a RFMO is under way; where the participants in such process have agreed on interim measures to protect VMEs from destructive impacts resulting from the use of bottom gears.

This press release and associated material can be found on www.panda.org

WWF – World Wide Fund For Nature (also known as World Wildlife Fund)



for a living planet[®]

- The FAO Deep Sea Fisheries Guidelines apply to: (para 8) Fisheries that occur in areas beyond national jurisdiction and have the following characteristics: **i.** the total catch (everything brought up by the gear) includes species that can only sustain low exploitation rates; and **ii.** the fishing gear is likely to contact the seafloor during the normal course of fishing operations. States and RFMO/As should consider, as appropriate, the application of elements of these Guidelines to similar fisheries in areas beyond national jurisdiction, including those targeting medium productivity species.
- The list of deep-sea species in the proposal is very similar to the list of 46 species in the original deep-sea fisheries regulation (EC Regulation 2347/2002 at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:351:0006:0011:EN:PDF>) adopted by the EU in 2002. The list includes major target species (current or past) in deep-sea fisheries in the NE Atlantic such as grenadiers, orange roughy, blue ling, black scabbard fish, as well as smoothheads, over a dozen species of deep-sea sharks and others. It is almost identical to the list of deep-sea species 'regulated' by NEAFC (e.g. see the NEAFC list on page 5 of the 2009 reported catch at http://www.neafc.org/system/files/catch_info_2009_final_from_am2010-43.pdf).
- The proposal would not prevent bottom fishing on the slope altogether - e.g. bottom trawl fisheries for monkfish (a species not on the list) would be exempt from the regulation as would fisheries taking deep-sea species as bycatch provided the 10% threshold would not be exceeded. It probably would cover most of the fisheries below 1000m and quite a few in the 500m - 1000m range. The proposal contains a number of additional helpful elements including requiring impact assessments for bottom fishing in new fishing areas (we would like to see this changed to all fishing areas and that all assessments be independently reviewed) and relatively strict measures on setting quotas or preventing fishing in the absence of good science and data on the status of the stocks.
- On the scope of the proposed regulation - the regulation (like the 2002 regulation - the Commission proposal is essentially a set of amendments to the 2002 regulation) covers all EU waters (EEZs) except those in the Mediterranean, the high seas of the Northeast Atlantic (again excluding the Mediterranean), and a large area of the Central East Atlantic. It does NOT apply to bottom fisheries by EU vessels in any other region (e.g. NAFO). The Commission will make a separate proposal for a new regulation (technically an amendment to a very good regulation adopted in 2008) for all bottom fisheries on the high seas either late in 2012 or early 2013.