



Food and Agriculture
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United Nations

UN
environment
programme



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COMMON OCEANS PROGRAM



PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND BIODIVERSITY
IN THE OCEAN AREAS BEYOND NATIONAL JURISDICTION

Deep-sea fisheries

Deep-sea fisheries bring economic benefits and are an important source of employment, livelihoods and nutrition. Yet, stock depletion is a major challenge while impacts on ecosystems raise environmental concerns. The **Common Oceans Deep-sea fisheries project** is committed to making deep-sea fisheries in the ocean areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) more sustainable and reducing their ecological footprint.



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WHAT WE DO

Strengthen and implement regulatory frameworks

Promote adoption of and compliance with international fisheries obligations to improve management of deep-sea fish stocks and reduce impacts on bycatch species in over 3 billion hectares of marine habitats – about 3 times the size of Europe.

Improve deep-sea fisheries management

Ensure that an additional 25% of deep-sea stocks – around 50 000 tonnes of catch – come from sustainably managed stocks by 2027 by supporting science-based fisheries management with improved catch monitoring and reporting.

Reduce environmental impact

Improve measures to protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VME) from the impact of bottom fishing on 42 million hectares – 35% of the total VME areas – currently closed to bottom fisheries.

Promote effective deep-water shark conservation measures.



GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY
INVESTING IN OUR PLANET

Deep-sea fisheries take place between depths of 200 and 2 000 meters, targeting demersal species on continental shelves, seamounts and ocean ridges using bottom and deep mid-water trawls, gillnets, longlines and pots.

They are an important source of employment, livelihoods and nutrition. Yet, overfishing and resulting stock depletion pose a major threat to deep-sea species, while impacts on the ecosystem, especially by bottom trawls, are a cause of environmental concern.

The Deep-sea fisheries project aims to make deep-sea fisheries more sustainable, focusing on data-

poor stocks, deepwater sharks and vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs). From 2014–2019, it helped establish and protect VMEs in 18 new areas with a large coalition of partners – including the eight regional fisheries bodies responsible for the management of deep-sea fisheries, Regional Seas Programmes, the fishing industry and international organizations.

In the years ahead, the Deep-sea fisheries project will continue to promote science-based advice to strengthen regulatory frameworks, improve deep-sea fisheries management and reduce its impact on the environment and biodiversity.

FACTS & FIGURES

2.5%
of ABNJ area supports
bottom fishing

226 000
tonnes of ABNJ catches in 2016
were from bottom fisheries

In 2016, the status of 51 deep-sea fish stocks were

16 fished sustainably
10 subject to overfishing
25 unknown

63
countries in 8 regional management
bodies involved in conservation and
management of deep-sea fisheries

Source: FAO. 2020. Worldwide review of bottom fisheries in the high seas in 2016.



The Common Oceans Program is a global partnership funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), promoting sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation in areas beyond national jurisdiction (ABNJ) with a particular focus on tuna and deep-sea fisheries, the Sargasso Sea and cross-sectoral cooperation. Led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Program brings together the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), regional fisheries management organizations, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, civil society and academia.

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IN COLLABORATION WITH:



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