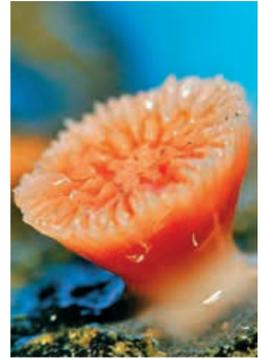




Huge area too deep to bottom trawl protected from bottom trawling



NO. 1 IN THE USA



BERING SEA

Expedition to known coral and sponge habitat finds corals, sponges

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Wednesday, February 10, 2010

Newsline

- Spin & Propaganda
- Immigration
- Bering Sea
- Bottom Trawling



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Seattle-based fleet decries "outsiders" meddling in Alaska fisheries

Council to Bering Sea: we're sorry!

- Sea is as unforgiving as ever
- Foaming has yet to subside



©Kate Davison/Greenpeace

Study finds Alaska Pollock defecting to Russia



©J. W. Orr/Greenpeace

USA Today Snapshots

Where does all the Pollock go?



Illustration by Andrew Fournier/Greenpeace



©Kate Davison/Greenpeace

Trawl captain declares war on deep sea corals

John Henderschedt
USA TODAY

ALASKA— From his seat at the helm of the trawl ship *Shelly*, Captain John Gauvin solemnly addressed his crew and several disinterested sea birds to announce his plans to wage war again this year on the undersea coral habitats "lurking insidiously in the canyons of the Bering Sea."

Despite their almost entirely stationary existence and decline in number, Gauvin declared that these coral regimes, "by providing refuge to highly desirable terrorist fish species, pose a grave and growing danger."

Having successfully waged war on deep sea coral and decimated populations of non target fish species in 2007, 2008 and 2009, Gauvin has high expectations for finally demolishing the as yet frustratingly resilient Bering Sea canyons. The captain plans to drag heavy nets equipped with large metal wheels along the sea floor and canyon walls in hopes of destroying everything in their path. "Any fish caught in the path of freedom which we are blazing will be incidental and will be sold to benefit the crew and used to fund this war to its glorious conclusion," says Gauvin.

The Bering Sea is home to some of the largest submarine canyons in the world. The canyons support diverse coral habitats ranging from relatively dense fields of gorgonians (*Plumarella* and *Acanthoprimnoa*) and groves of sea whips (*Halipteris willemoesi*) to isolated boulders with large arborescent corals.

"Rare coral like these," he said, "and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world and prevent average citizens from accessing delicious fish in their grocer's freezer."

Historically peaceful and completely unarmed, coral has not traditionally defended itself with much success from the onslaught of attacks from Gauvin and other bottom trawlers, sometimes taking hundreds of years to recover.

Gauvin assured those listening that "this would not be a campaign of half measures and we will accept no outcome but victory." Adding, "every effort would be made to spare the lives of innocent species. Sort of." The coral had no comment.



©Malcolm Pullman/Greenpeace

NOAA Habitat Conservation Division launches new initiative to actually conserve habitat

Jane Lubchenco
USA TODAY

In a startling announcement today, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) Habitat Conservation Division spokesperson Jon Kurland pledged that his team would begin dedicating themselves to protecting marine habitats. When asked why the Habitat Conservation Division would be making such a dramatic course change, Kurland seemed happy to explain.

"It's long been obvious even to us that deep sea coral and sponge assemblages provide vital habitat for marine life, including many commercially important species," he responded. "But it wasn't until our new intern noticed that the words 'habitat conservation' were included right in our division's name that it occurred to us it was actually our job to protect them."

In an unrelated development, the intern has been re-assigned to NOAA's Omaha, Nebraska office, reportedly after the agency received an angry call from a fishing industry lobbyist who demanded to know "what's next? Is the Sustainable Fisheries Division going to start trying to manage fisheries sustainably? This is an outrage!"



©Robert Visser/Greenpeace

FAMILY FAVORITE FISHSTICKS

"Pollock pulp mashed and reshaped into a food item not found in nature"



"Make sure your kids turn into picky eaters"

©Todd Warshaw/Greenpeace



Now at usatoday.com

Disappointed bidder wins Pollock at Sotheby's Auction



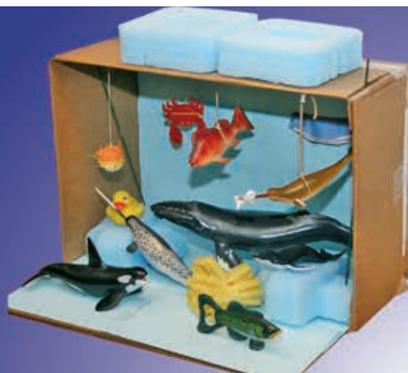
Photo illustration Michelle Frey/Greenpeace

"I thought it would be a painting, not a fish!"

usatoday.com

COMING SOON: Bering Seaquarium and Diorama!

Alaska's Bering Sea is one of the wonders of the natural world, but decades of unsustainable fishing is causing rapid changes to this unique ecosystem. Have no fear, soon you will be able to see the Bering Sea preserved in all its glory at the Bering Seaquarium and Diorama! In addition to being able to see live sea lions and fur seals in a natural tank habitat, you will be thrilled by our diorama of replica whales, seabirds, fish, and corals. You'll swear you can feel the ocean spray on your face!



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Study finds Fur Seals “depressed and anxious”

Marine Psychologist documents adorable seals making sad faces

Douglas DeMaster
USA TODAY

A new study published in the American Journal of Sea Animal Psychology documents the mood and feeding patterns of the fur seals that reside in the Bering Sea. The research was pioneered by noted Seal Psychologist Dr. Andrew Trites.

Over six months, the reclusive psychologist conducted extensive research on these extremely cute animals. Using underwater and land photography, he kept a record of facial expressions and behaviors, and noted how much time the seals engaged in activities such as “playing,” “looking cute,” “looking for food” and “lying around despondently.” He attempted to give the seals the standard human tests, but found that they could not hold pencils or talk.

“We’ve noticed that these extremely charismatic creatures have become increasingly sad and anxious as their food sources have disappeared. This is no doubt due to the stress of their declining populations—both deaths in their families and near-constant hunger seem to be significant stressors for the seal population.” He also noted that when he brought fish to feed to the seals, their moods improved rapidly. Anti-depressants proved ineffective.

©Daniel Beltra/Greenpeace



“I got to know several seals extremely well during the course of the study. One seal, who I called Andrew Jr., confessed to me through a series of sad flipper gestures that he felt fur seals were becoming endangered.”

“At first, we tried to convince the seals that the pollock population was well-managed, but they didn’t seem to care.”

“The conclusion of the study tells us that if we want to make cute animals happy, we’re going to have to end overfishing in the Bering Sea and take a more precautionary, ecosystem-based approach,” said Trites in a rare public interview.

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Lobbyists argue, “Steller Sea Lion not that hungry”

Ben Stevens
USA TODAY

During a meeting with several environmental NGOs and the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council (NPFMC) this week, lobbyists for the fishing industry questioned assertions that dwindling Steller Sea Lion populations are a result of food shortages. Citing its gaping maw, 900 lbs of blubber, and “silly fur” one lobbyist argued, “there is no way that thing is hungry, look at it.”

Environmental organizations suggest that unsustainable fishery management has sent pollock populations into decline, affecting the main food source for the endangered sea lion. Lobbyists questioned this logic in hopes of preventing further restrictions on pollock catch limits.

Lobbyists refuted presenting scientists, enumerating “the thousands of other healthy food options” for the “disgustingly flabby” animal and cited studies on morbid obesity. In response to a presentation by marine biologist, Dr. Sam Connors which showed Steller Sea Lion numbers declining precipitously since the 1980s, several lobbyists demanded to know, “what that fat baby is crying about.”

“It is clear to me,” said one lobbyist “that these animals could stand to lose a little weight.” Plans for the fishing industry to dump 10 cubic tons of Healthy Choice frozen dinners into the Bering Sea are underway.

Factory trawlers announce new “magic gear”

“Bottom trawling” to be rebranded “clean trawling”

Paul McGregor
USA TODAY

In a press conference late yesterday, several factory trawler captains announced a new initiative to invest \$2 million in research of new “magic trawling” equipment that will keep gear suspended two and a half inches from the seafloor at all times.

Captain Ivan Totrawlatot, a spokesperson for the trawlers said: “We don’t know how this works exactly, but we have been noticing when we trawl the bottom of the Bering sea, certain fish don’t end up in our nets. For example, we have never caught a mermaid or a sea monster.”

After several captains documented these surprising findings, a decision was made to replicate their nets which will now be used for “clean trawling” of the bottom of the sea. One improvement has been changing the color of the nets to pink, a color which coral and sponges are known to avoid.

“We were really inspired by several of the government’s sustainable initiatives. When we heard about ‘clean coal’ we started asking ourselves, ‘Why not clean trawling?’ It’s not perfect yet – we’re still disrupting the ocean floor and killing a lot of sponges and coral, but we’re optimistic that with continued research, we can drag these nets along the bottom of the ocean without causing any kind of damage.”

The pollock trawl fleet, already successful in changing the name of their fishing to “mid-water” trawling despite their continued impact on the seafloor, appears poised to take things to the next level. “Right now, our nets are in contact with the ocean floor just 44% of the time,” said industry lobbyist and sustainability award nominee Jim Gilmore. “We have defined clean trawling as anything less than half of the time. So far, it seems to be a success.”

This new development was timed to the beginning of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. A spokesperson from NOAA said, “We don’t believe clean trawling exists, but we just can’t be sure. It sure *sounds* better.”

When asked about the technology, Totrawlatot shrugged. “We’re not really sure how or why this would work, so right now we’re just chalking it up to magic.”



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Expedition to known coral and sponge area documents corals, sponges

Sarah Palin
USA TODAY

That Bering Sea canyons are home to corals and sponges is a big fat secret. Of course, the National Marine Fisheries Service Observer Program has documented tons of corals and sponges taken from canyon areas as bycatch. And a NOAA expedition using a Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) to explore the upper reaches of Pribilof Canyon documented the presence of groves of sea whip corals providing habitat to rockfish. However, in the upside down world of Alaska fisheries management, this type of information is technically referred to as “doesn’t count” data.

So it came as a shock when a Greenpeace expedition to survey Zhemchug and Pribilof Canyons found corals and sponges. “What a remarkable find!,” said Pat Livingston, Chair of the Science and Statistical Committee. “If only we’d known previously that these coral and sponge areas contained coral and sponges, we would have taken action immediately to protect these vulnerable habitats.”

Of further shock to the Council Family was the discovery that dragging tons of fishing gear across the seafloor was impacting the seafloor. “Who could have foreseen this kind of destruction?” asked Advisory Panel member and bottom trawl lobbyist Lori Swanson. “The deep trenches into the seabed, the long swaths of broken and uprooted corals and other habitat-forming marine life... it’s an underwater apocalypse. I think it may be time for a career change. I’m just so ashamed.”



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