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# WHO IS FISHING THE SEAMOUNTS?

## BOTTOM FISHING IN NUMBERS

Seamounts – underwater mountains found throughout the world’s ocean – harbor diverse and biologically rich ecosystems, often formed by cold-water corals, sponges and other deep-sea habitat forming species.

Only about **0.015%** of the global marine fish catch in recent years comes from bottom trawling on seamounts in the deep ocean in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

That’s less than **12,000** tons of fish per year.

Yet seamounts and underwater mountain ridge systems across vast swathes of the international waters of the ocean are trawled to achieve this catch. A single pass of a trawler can bulldoze an area of seabed up to **one** square kilometer or more – that’s **12** times the size of the UN HQ site in NYC.

An estimated **20** vessels per year are reported to be bottom trawling on seamounts in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ).

### Just six countries are involved in the fisheries

**Australia – Cook Islands – Faroe Islands – Japan – New Zealand – South Korea**

The largest reported catch in 2014, the last year for which catch information is available across all ocean regions, is by Japan at **4,744** tons from **six** vessels.

The second largest reported catch is by New Zealand at **1,028** tons from **five** vessels and a further, estimated **3,000** tons from two New Zealand vessels flagged to the Cook Islands.

### UN General Assembly resolutions 61/105 – 64/72 – 66/68

These UN resolutions adopted by consensus over the past **ten** years by all member nations of the UN commit countries that permit their vessels to deep-sea fish on the high seas to prevent damage to vulnerable deep-sea ecosystems.

Yet these commitments are being flouted and the UN

General Assembly will once again this year spend time and energy to convince States to fulfill their commitments to the international community to refrain from destroying fragile, biologically diverse deep-sea habitats.

**It’s time to put seamounts off limits to bottom trawling to protect their biodiversity.**

## WE KNOW DEEP DOWN YOU CARE

Country	Region	Reported catch 2014	Number of trawl vessels	Estimated Unreported Catch
Australia	Indian Ocean	Unreported/“confidential”	1 (fished for 14 days)	Est <400t
Australia	SW Pacific	104t	2-3	
Cook Islands	Indian Ocean	Unreported/“confidential”	2 (417 days mid & bottom trawl)	Est <3,000t
Faroes Islands	NE Atlantic	380t	1	
Japan	NW Pacific	4,744t	6	
New Zealand	SW Pacific	1,028t	5	
South Korea	NW Pacific	543t	2	
<b>Total</b>		<b>Reported: 6,799t</b>	<b>19-20 vessels</b>	<b>3,400t</b>

These calculations are based on the reported catch in 2014 using bottom trawl gear fishing in seabed areas in ABNJ only and not from areas claimed as extended continental shelf.

Most of the high seas bottom trawl catch (over 100,000 tons) occurs in relatively small areas of the extended continental shelf where the seabed lies within national jurisdiction.