

CoralFISH

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Ecosystem-based management of corals, fish and fisheries in the deep waters of Europe and beyond

CoralFISH is assessing the interaction between corals, fish and fisheries, in order to develop monitoring and predictive modelling tools for ecosystem based management in the deep waters of Europe and beyond.

Background

In 2006, the UN General Assembly Resolution (61/105) called upon fisheries management organisations worldwide to:

1. assess the impact of bottom fishing on vulnerable marine ecosystems;
2. identify/map vulnerable ecosystems through improved scientific research/data collection;
3. close such areas to bottom fishing unless conservation and management measures were established to prevent their degradation.

In European deep waters there is also a need to establish monitoring tools to evaluate the effectiveness of closed areas for the conservation of biodiversity and fish and their impact on fisheries. Two FP6 projects ([PROTECT](#) & [HERMES](#)) have already identified the need for information concerning the interaction between fish and cold water coral habitats.

CoralFISH brings together a unique consortium of deep-sea fisheries biologists, ecosystem researchers/modellers, oceanographers, economists and a fishing industry SME, who are collaborating to collect data from key European marine eco-regions. The consortium numbers 17 partners from 11 countries.

CoralFISH aims to:

1. develop essential methodologies and indicators for baseline and subsequent monitoring of closed areas;
2. integrate fish into coral ecosystem models to better understand coral fish-carrying capacity;
3. evaluate the distribution of deepwater bottom fishing effort to identify areas of potential interaction and impact upon coral habitat;
4. use genetic fingerprinting to assess the potential erosion of genetic fitness of corals due to long-term exposure to fishing impacts;
5. construct bio-economic models to assess management effects on corals and fisheries to provide policy options;
6. produce habitat suitability maps both regionally and for OSPAR Region V to identify areas likely to contain vulnerable habitat. The latter will provide the EU with the tools to address the issues raised by the UNGA resolution.

Further Information

	Project Duration June 2008 - May 2012
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