



for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

## Fisheries Council's reduction in deep-sea fishing quotas will not avoid overfishing

**Brussels 15.11.2016:** BLOOM, the DSCC and Seas at Risk are disappointed by the decisions on fishing limits for deep-sea fish stocks taken by the Fisheries' Council of Ministers yesterday evening. Ministers did reduce the total allowable catch for most of the deep-sea stocks but this decision will not stop overfishing. Most of the quotas are set well above the levels recommended by the scientific community to achieve sustainable fishing and will consequently allow continued overfishing of vulnerable deep-sea species.

Monica Verbeek, executive director of Seas At Risk said: "We had high hopes that the Fisheries Ministers would complement the political agreement for the protection of the deep-sea environment taken earlier this year by adopting precautionary deep-sea fisheries quotas. It is utterly disappointing that the Ministers decided to ignore scientific advice and continue overfishing. "

As far as specific species are concerned, Ministers completely ignored scientific advice for sustainable fishing when establishing catch limits for fish stocks like red seabream, black scabbard, greater forkbeard, putting these species at risk. Ministers also allowed continued fishing of roundnose grenadier which has been classified as an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature in its first ever Red List of European marine fish species published in 2015. Deep-sea species are generally slow-growing, late-maturing and have a low reproductive rate, which makes them particularly vulnerable to overfishing, especially when there is limited scientific knowledge.

The Council also adopted total allowable catches for deep-sea sharks, several of which are listed as endangered or critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, reversing the zero quotas for deep-sea sharks that have been in place for the past several years. "This points to a fundamental flaw in the management of deep-sea fisheries" said Matthew Gianni, advisor to the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition. "Council should ensure that deep water fisheries are managed to prevent the catch of endangered species rather than abdicating its responsibility by setting a quota to allow the bycatch of these species in non-selective fisheries".

Following the political agreement on the new deep-sea fisheries regulation earlier this year, which will significantly increase the protection of deep-sea habitats, expectations rose towards this Council decision to complement the new deep-sea fisheries regulation with sustainable fisheries for deep-sea species. This would have been in line not only with the Common Fisheries Policy, which establishes to end overfishing by 2020, but also with international commitments taken at the UN General Assembly, where it is clearly stated that when the scientific information available does not make it possible to identify sustainable exploitation rates, no fishing opportunities should be allocated for the fisheries concerned.



**deepsea**  
conservationcoalition



**SEAS AT RISK**

for the protection and restoration of the marine environment

**Further information:**

Please find the [recommendations](#) and the [annex](#) of Seas At Risk and the Fisheries Secretariat, which have been sent to the Council Ministers ahead of the Council decision.

Seas At Risk is an umbrella organisation of environmental NGOs from across Europe that promotes ambitious policies for marine protection at European and international level.

The Deep Sea Conservation Coalition is an organisation of more than 70 non-governmental environmental organisations, fishers' groups, and law and policy institutes that are committed to protecting the deep-sea.

BLOOM is a non-profit organization that works to preserve the marine environment and species from unnecessary destruction and to increase social benefits in the fishing sector.

**Contact**

Patricia Roy, email: [Patricia@communicationsinc.co.uk](mailto:Patricia@communicationsinc.co.uk), Tel: +34 696905907

Sara Tironi, Seas At Risk, email: [stironi@seas-at-risk.org](mailto:stironi@seas-at-risk.org), Tel : +32 028930970